



PRAIRIE FIRE

"As the prairie stretches out until it becomes one with the sky, let us reach out to touch and be one with the natural world and with one another."

March 21, 2008



Prairie Fire is the semi-monthly newsletter of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. View past issues at www.uuprairie.org.

President: Rachel Long, (608) 328-4899

Editor: Dan Proud, admin@uuprairie.org; 661-0776

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, March 23

*10:00 a.m. "Was Jesus a UU?" intergenerational Easter program
7:00 p.m. Meditation session at Prairie

Tuesday, March 25

*1:30 p.m. Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood West
7:00 p.m. Building Your Own Theology class

Wednesday, March 26

*6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers potluck and conversation at the home of Prudence Barber

Thursday, March 27

*7:00 p.m. Movie Group views *Modern Times*

Sunday, March 30

9:00 a.m. Choir resumes rehearsals
*10:00 a.m. "Class Conscious" presented by Erin Bosch
11:45 a.m. Meditation session at Prairie

Tuesday, April 1

7:00 p.m. Building Your Own Theology class

Saturday, April 5

*9:00 a.m. Second Congregational Planning Workshop with Dan Wiseman

Sunday, April 6

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
*10:00 a.m. "Fannie Barrier Williams" presented by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski
*12:00 p.m. Humanist Union potluck and discussion
7:00 p.m. Meditation session

Monday, April 7

7:30 p.m. Hospitality and Membership Committee meeting

Sunday, April 13

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
10:00 a.m. "Seeking Truth, Living with Doubt" presented by Marshal Onellion

Wednesday, April 16

7:00 p.m. Program Committee meeting

Sunday, April 20

10:00 a.m. "Earth Day: Reducing the Carbon Footprint" presented by Galen Smith, Ken Skog, and Rev. Ralph Tyksinski

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, APRIL 6

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, March 23

We will look at the Unitarian Universalist principles and compare them to what Jesus taught. Do the UU principles align with Jesus' teachings and actions? Is there more in common than we think?

Sunday, March 30

In this election year, it might be interesting to discuss some issues of class that could affect our ability to effectively form coalitions with individuals from different economic classes. For example, professional-middle-class (PMC) progressives are often surprised that working-class people have negative reactions to the PMC subculture, in particular, values-based "alternative" lifestyles. Let's do some consciousness-raising in this regard.

Sunday, April 6

Rev. Ralph will explore and celebrate the extraordinary life of Fannie Barrier Williams (February 12, 1855-March 4, 1944) an African-American teacher, social activist, clubwoman, lecturer, Unitarian church woman, and journalist who worked for social justice, civil liberties, education, and employment opportunities, especially for women of color.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

PLANS FOR THE SPRING

Namaskarum! That is Telugu for "hello". As some of you may know, John, Indy and I will be in India from March 20th to April 11th. We will be in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh visiting family and friends.

We sure will miss everyone! I will not, however, be missing the snowy weather. I hear it's around 95-100 degrees in Andhra and getting warmer every day.



While I'm there I will be attending several Hindu temples, Christian churches and a mosque. I'm also hoping to get a chance to visit a Buddhist temple. I'll do my usual visit to the palm reader and astrologer. My vacation wouldn't be complete without their consultations!

While I'm gone our RE chair, Karen Deaton, and the RE Committee will be on hand to help. Yvonne Hiebert will be the substitute YREC on March 23rd and 30th. Karen Deaton will be my sub on April 6th.

If you have questions, comments or concerns please talk to Yvonne, Karen or any other committee member; Susan Herr-Hoyman, Heidi Hughes and Toby Wacker. They help keep our program running and will continue to do so while I'm gone. Thank you all for your hard work this year.

While I'm away, our students will continue learning about Christianity and Judaism. Recently students in grades 4-12 had the opportunity to learn more about Judaism from Edgewood High School student, Cory Elfman. Cory is a practicing Jew and took the morning to educate our youth on his life as a Jew. Cory also had a lot of questions about Unitarian Universalism. We had a nice sharing and learning session that, I feel, brought us all closer in our search for truth and meaning.

March 23rd will be our Easter Intergenerational service. The theme is "Was Jesus a UU?" Our UU principles will be compared to the sayings of Jesus of Nazareth. Students in grades 1-3 have been learning about our Judeo-Christian heritage all year and the service should prove interesting for adults and children. There will be Spring, Easter and Christian coloring pages for our younger students.

In April, high school students will learn about Christianity, particularly Roman Catholicism.

In May we will wrap up the year with Buddhism for grades 4-12. I hope my journey to India will be able to add to that discussion.

Peace and Love,

Rebecca Malke (YREC)
youthcoordinator(at)uuprairie.org

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

23—Easter (Christian)

26—Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (Christian)

6—New Year (Hindu)

6-14—Ramayana (Hindu)

13-14—Baisakhi (Sikh)

14—Ramanavami (Hindu)

OUR SOCIETY

A GUEST AT YOUR TABLE DONATIONS ARE WELCOME

We are participating in "Guest At our Table" to raise money for UUSC. If you have not picked up a box or donation envelope, they are on the table near the sanctuary door upstairs. We will be collecting the boxes and envelopes on Sunday, April 20th.

Kathy Converse, Social Action Committee

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

We're off and running in our planning process. We had terrific participation in both our first planning session and the review session for the draft plan part I we developed. We are still working on the wording of the outcome statements, with another draft in progress.

We have a vision statement that we think describes well who we want to be:

*Prairie UU Society is a place where
We support each other's personal development
and spiritual growth,*

*Our caring for each other is evident to all who
enter our doors,*

*We act in the world to further social and
environmental justice, and*

*Our society is recognized and respected in the
wider community.*

Next is our session on ministry **Saturday, April 5**, 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Ministry includes what we do for ourselves, our congregation, our community and our world.

By the time of our planning session, you will have received a modified draft of Part I of the Strategic Plan, and we will use this as our starting point. The four ministry areas we will explore in depth will correspond to the vision we have developed:

- Adult personal development and spiritual growth
- Youth personal development and spiritual growth
- Caring for each other
- Social and environmental justice

We will all have a chance at the beginning of the session to give our ideas about objectives and actions in each of these areas. We will divide into groups to further develop and prioritize these items, then report back to the whole group. By the end of our session, we will have good handle on specific goals to send to our Board and Committees to take from there.

We look forward to another exciting (and shorter!) opportunity to come together as a community and better define how it is we want to grow, and what we will do to get there. See you there!

Rachel Long, President

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEETS MARCH 25

The next meeting of Prairie Elders will be **Tuesday, March 25**, 1:30-3:30 p.m. in the Nakoma Room of Heritage Oaks, Oakwood Village West. Or come at 1:00 for informal conversation. Newcomers are welcome.

TOPIC: Technological advances in your lifetime: one or two you love or hate. In respect for people with limited hearing we use a round-robin format.

SNACKS: If convenient, please bring a few snacks to pass and your own beverage cup.

ABOUT US: Prairie Elders aims to provide good times and mutual support for Prairie UU members and friends over 65. We welcome other UUs who live in the facility where we meet. Come and go as necessary for appointments, etc. Let us know if you need directions or a ride to Oakwood.

CONTACTS: Donna Murdoch 238-3802, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382, or Rose Smith 233-3363.

SPANISH SPEAKERS GATHER MARCH 26

Spanish Speakers will meet for potluck and conversation on **Wednesday, March 26**, at 6:30 p.m. at the home of Prudence Barber, 1104 Mound St., Apt C. Everyone is welcome. For questions or to arrange rides, call Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382.

MOVE GROUP MEETS MARCH 27

The Movie Group will meet at Prairie, 7:00 p.m., **Thursday, March 27**, to view *Modern Times* with Charlie Chaplin as the Little Tramp. Need we say more? Bring snacks to share. And mark your calendars now for the **April 24** Prairie Movie Group evening.

HUMANIST UNION TO DISCUSS DAWKINS

On **Sunday, April 6**, the Humanist Union will discuss Richard Dawkins, the man and his message, following his March 11 appearance at the UW. We will start with a potluck lunch at noon, discussion from 12:30 to 1:30 pm. (For details see <http://humanist.madisonwi.us/events.htm>.)



BOOK CLUB SPRING SCHEDULE

The Prairie Book Club meets after the Sunday service on the specified dates, usually starting about 11:45 a.m. Participants bring food to share. We meet in the "couch room" downstairs. Anyone is welcome, whether you have completed the book or not. For more information, contact Mary Mullen, 298-0843, or [mmullen\(at\)chorus.net](mailto:mmullen(at)chorus.net).

Upcoming Prairie Book Club selections:

Sunday, April 13 – *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time* by Greg Mortenson & David Oliver Relin (a Kansas City Community Read choice). 368 pages. Check out the Web site for this book for reviews and an author interview you can listen to. <http://www.threecupsoftea.com/Intro.php>.

MEMBERSHIP

GETTING TO KNOW OUR MEMBERS: JIM AND MARGARET CARPENTER

The Carpenters, Jim, Margaret, and their daughter, Meggan, moved to Verona in June 2006 from Burlington, Wisconsin. When they lived in Burlington and in Racine for about four years, they were members of the Olympia Brown UU Church. After visiting the UU churches in Madison, Jim and Margaret have become members of Prairie. (Meggan has transferred here reservations about church participation from Racine to Madison.)

Meggan is a junior at Verona Area High School and greatly enjoys the diversity of students, in contrast to the lack of diversity in Burlington. Meggan's cousin, La China Clayton, is living with the Carpenters this year. She also attends Verona Area High School, and is a senior. Both Meggan and La China have attended a few functions at our church.

Margaret, who was born in Memphis, Tennessee, mostly grew up in Chicago, mostly in the Robert Taylor Homes housing project. Her way to pay for college was to join the National Guard. In spite of the fact that she is not basically a warrior, she attained the rank of Captain, and was full time for several years. She then started work in community liaison in the Chicago middle school where Jim was principal. Margaret subsequently became a teacher and a principal, mostly recently in the Kenosha Public Schools. She is currently Education Director for the Wisconsin State Department of Corrections, where she coordinates all education programs for the 24,000 adult prison inmates.

Jim grew up in Chicago as a Methodist. As a young adult, he and his first family joined the Third Unitarian Church. (His daughter, granddaughter, and first wife are active members of the Unitarian church in San Diego. His son and grandchildren are sometime attenders of a Unitarian church in Richmond, Virginia.) Jim has been a social worker, a salesman/entrepreneur, a teacher, and a school administrator. Along the way he earned a Ph.D. from Northwestern University and worked at one time as Research

Director for the Chicago Public Schools. When he retired he was principal of a Chicago middle school.

Although the above synopsis is mostly about work, the Carpenters do like to play, which was abetted by living on Browns Lake in Burlington. They also are very enthusiastic about traveling.

DENOMINATIONAL NEWS

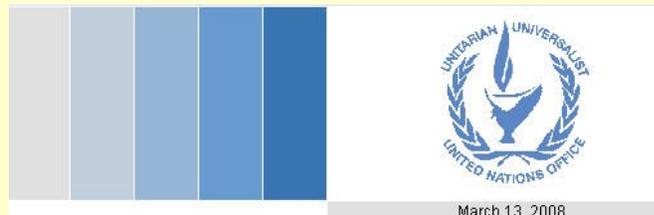
INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK BULLETIN

Did you know? IHN Graduates not only get jobs and move into housing, but also participate in the community, sometimes in ways we might not expect. This month we had two such surprises.

A Mom who stayed in shelter several years ago called and said, "I read in your newsletter about a dentist who gave free dental care to IHN families. Can I have his name?" I said I was sorry, but that had been a special event and we couldn't offer that assistance. "Oh no," she said, "I can pay for my dental work, I just wanted to support him because he helped IHN!"

The Madison Youth Choirs participated in IHN's breakfast last November and also performed two benefit concerts on our behalf this winter. Their music director e-mailed because he was thrilled to see that one of the new singers who signed up for the 8-10-years-old choir this spring is an IHN graduate who connected with the group through these events.

It is wonderful to see formerly homeless families developing community networks through schools, activities, congregations, neighborhoods and employment. Some of these networks have grown directly from the Interfaith Hospitality Network and others on their own. You never know where in Dane County you might cross paths with a former IHN family.



GRAPPLING WITH DARFUR

Bruce Knotts, the new Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office, is a retired US Foreign Service Officer who served as acting Deputy Chief of Mission in Khartoum, Sudan, from 1997-2000. Based on that on-the-ground experience and on concern long expressed by UU-UNO, in mid-February Knotts wrote to the US Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, and his Deputy to urge the U.S. Government to use its diplomatic clout and military resources to ensure that the UN peacekeeping force to Sudan's Darfur region is adequately equipped and that it operates with a mandate to protect Darfur's vulnerable civilian population.

In response to Knotts' overture, the US Mission to the United Nations invited him and representatives of five other non-governmental organizations (Care International, Oxfam, Amnesty International, MSF: Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders), and the International Rescue Committee) to discuss the explosive situation in Darfur and Chad. These organizations all are much larger and better financed than is UU-UNO, but the de facto partnership with the UU office may well be poised to create meaningful change.

Knotts is encouraged by the character of the meeting. "I expected a rather formal briefing," he says, "but it turned out to be a genuine exchange of ideas and information." The US Mission was represented by T. Kirk McBride, Deputy Political Counselor; Jesse S. Levinson, Political Advisor; and Fiona Shanks, Advisor on Humanitarian Affairs.

Care, Oxfam, MSF, and IRC have humanitarian workers on the ground in Chad as well as in Sudan. The US mission was interested in the news they could provide to fill in the large gaps in the US government's information on the region. For example, while recent attacks in Western Darfur appear to be worsening malnutrition and

rapes are on the rise, other indicators of health seem to be stabilizing due to humanitarian assistance on the scene. How do the NGOs see the situation?

The humanitarian NGOs are concerned that there be a separation between the UN peacekeeping missions in Chad and Sudan to ensure that the humanitarian workers have the space they need to work and that no confusion be created in the minds of the people between the respective roles of the UN peacekeepers and the humanitarian agencies.

Amnesty International is most concerned with prisoners in Chad. Knotts did not disagree, but raised the more global issues of what the US is doing to ensure that the mandates of both peacekeeping missions are adequate and that they are properly equipped. USUN said that putting more pressure on Sudan probably would have no effect and implied that China has the most influence in the country, that pressure needs to be applied to China. As for the UN mandate, the Chinese insist that the UN force be extended in six-month increments. This is disrupting and irritating, but probably can't be changed.

JOURNEY TOWARD WHOLENESS NEWS

*From the UUA Office for Congregational Advocacy & Witness
Email News and Updates, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108
(617-948-4656)*

Investors Against Genocide

Join the UUA, the UUSC, and Investors Against Genocide in the fight to end the Darfur genocide by saying NO to investments in genocide.

If you are a mutual fund investor in Fidelity funds, or those from 50 other companies, you have a vote in the way your money is managed. Investors Against Genocide has submitted shareholder proposals on genocide-free investing to more than 50 mutual funds. Shareholders now have the unprecedented opportunity to vote their proxies to tell mutual funds that they don't want their money invested in companies that abet genocide.

Proxy materials and proxy ballots that include this shareholder proposal are now being distributed by Fidelity for its Contrafund and eleven other Fidelity

funds holding shareholder meetings on March 19.

You can vote your proxy ballot up until the 19th if you own any of these Fidelity funds: Blue Chip Growth, Blue Chip Value, Capital & Income, Contrafund, Dividend Growth, Equity Income, Growth & Income Fund, Low Priced Stock, Puritan, Real Estate Investment, Select Health Care Portfolio, and Utilities.

UUA Treasurer Tim Brennan, who votes proxies for participants in the UUA Retirement Plan, will be voting in support of the resolution when possible. None of the Fidelity Funds being voted on March 19 are options within the UUA Retirement Plan.

Votes at more Fidelity Funds plus other major fund companies, including Vanguard, Franklin Templeton and Barclays, will follow in coming months. To see the latest list of mutual funds with votes pending on genocide-free investing, visit [Investors Against Genocide](#).

Pre-GA Activist Training Day

On Wednesday, June 25, the UUA and UUSC will offer a day-long (9 AM to 4 PM) activist training in Ft. Lauderdale. The program will feature organizing training, speakers sharing the latest thoughts on issues of peace and justice, and networking time for congregational activists.

Take Action! Stop Big Media

From our coalition partner: [StopBigMedia.com](#)

This is the moment of truth for the U.S. media. In December 2007, the FCC gutted the rules that protect local communities from media monopolies. The rule change is a big handout for Big Media and will let giant corporations get even bigger, gobbling up local news outlets in your town. This is bad for journalism, bad for media diversity, and bad for our democracy.

However, on March 6, members of the Senate stepped up to overturn the FCC's dangerous rule changes. A "resolution of disapproval" introduced by Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) would nullify the FCC decision and protect local news around the country. That's the good news.

The bad news is that we only have 60 legislative days to get this bill passed. We need your help to build the momentum and overturn the FCC's rule changes. Sign our petition at [StopBigMedia.com](#).

PRAIRIE WEB SITES

Social Action: <http://socialaction.madisonwi.us>

Humanist Union: <http://humanist.madisonwi.us>

Society Home Page: <http://uuprairie.org/>

News Group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/>

Views: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/>