



# Prairie Fire

**September 22, 2010**

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The full-featured **Prairie Fire** is published on the 22nd of every month. The **Prairie Fire Bulletin** is a calendar-only newsletter that is published on the 6th of every month. Both are published by Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. View past issues at [www.uuprairie.org](http://www.uuprairie.org)

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## Calendar

### Wednesday, September 22, 2010

7:00 pm – Program committee meeting.

### Friday, September 24, 2010

5:30pm - 60th Anniversary Party for Rose and Galen Smith.

### Saturday, September 25, 2010

Fundraising trip with Pat Watkins to see *Henri Cartier-Bresson: The Modern Century* at the Art Institute of Chicago.

4:00 pm - 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday party for Mary Somers and Mary Mullen, including an appearance by the Raging Grannies.

### Sunday, September 26, 2010

8:45 am – Choir Rehearsal.

10:00 am – service.

11:30 am – Sunday Fundraising Lunch.

### Tuesday, September 28, 2010

1:30 pm – Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood. Topic is Immigration Issues. (*Note earlier time*)

### Friday, October 1, 2010

Prairie Fire calendar and program deadline

Registration deadline for Adult Ed course, "Designing a Rain Garden" with Judy Skog.

### Sunday, October 3, 2010

8:45 am – Choir Rehearsal.

10:00 am – service- "Association Sunday," presented by Rachel Long.

11:45 am – Humanist Union - Potluck lunch 11:45 am, 12:30 pm presentation on "Justice and the Common Good" by Richard Russell.

### Monday, October 4, 2010

7:00 pm – RE Committee meeting at Prairie

### Thursday, October 7, 2010

7pm – Prairie Board Meeting

### Sunday, October 10, 2010

8:45 am – Choir Rehearsal.

10:00 am – service - "Not Everything Under the Sun: What Does It Mean To Be UU?" presented by Rev. Jane Esbensen.

### Friday, October 15, 2010 - Prairie Fire article deadline

Registration deadline for Adult Ed course, "What it Means to be a UU" with Rev. Jane Esbensen.

# Upcoming Programs

**Sunday, September 26, 2010, 10:00 am: "Immigration: A Broken System," presented by Rebecca and John Eliganti .** While our national focus centers on illegal immigration, John and Rebecca Eliganti share the experience of John's legal fight to become a naturalized citizen of the United States. Prairie will learn about the grueling immigration process from an inside perspective and gain an appreciation for the difficulty that would-be citizens with pure intentions must endure. John (VeeraRaju) Eliganti was born in Andhra Pradesh, India and worked as a teacher and human resource coordinator for a nonprofit organization before marrying Rebecca in 2004 and immigrating to the U.S. in 2005. He became a naturalized citizen in July of this year and works as a nurse assistant in the UW Hospital Transplant Unit. Rebecca spent time volunteering at the nonprofit center in India and after their marriage spent nearly a year working on getting him a visa to come to the U.S.. After John's arrival she spent the next 5 years working with lawyers and the immigration center in Milwaukee to get him citizenship status. She is currently the Director of Religious Education for Prairie UU Society. They have two sons, Indiana and Kiran Eliganti.

## Prairie Web Sites:

Society Home Page  
[www.uuprairie.org](http://www.uuprairie.org)

News Group  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairie\\_news/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairie_news/)

Views  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairie\\_views/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairie_views/)

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

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

## Input Deadlines:

Calendar items and program descriptions are due on the 1st and 15th of each month. Feature articles for the full *Prairie Fire* are due on the 15th of each month. Please send to Kate Liu at [admin@uuprairie.org](mailto:admin@uuprairie.org) or call 271-8218.

**Sunday, October 3, 2010, 10:00 am: "Association Sunday," presented by Rachel Long.** Fifty years ago the Universalists and the Unitarians merged to form the Unitarian Universalist Association. Association Sunday, celebrated in our congregation as well as many other UU congregations this October 3, honors those 50 years, renews our knowledge of our history and the UUA mission, and gives people who attend the service an easy opportunity to contribute to the future growth of Unitarian Universalism. Rachel Long is the immediate past president of Prairie and an enthusiastic supporter of the UU mission.

**Sunday, October 10, 2010, 10:00am: "Not Everything Under the Sun: What Does It Mean To Be UU?" presented by Rev. Jane Esbensen.** Are you searching for a liberal religious home to call your own? Do you want to attend a church where asking questions is central to the search for truth and meaning in life? Are you interested in a religion that draws from the world's religions as well as from philosophy and literature, one that is inspired by prophetic calls to justice? Ours is a religion where we want to reach out to the world and let it know of our existence, but do not proselytize. Ours is a religion where we go to a place called "church" but where atheists, agnostics, humanists and theists sit side by side in a common goal toward world peace. We are a denomination that is old and yet we are everchanging as is the world in which we live. We are many things and yet we are one thing. So what *does* it mean to be UU? Come and find out. Maybe this church will become your church.

**Sunday, October 17, 2010, 10:00 am – "Gay-Affirming Religious Groups: Good News for Human Rights," presented by Doleta Chapru.** At one time Unitarian Universalists were among the very few religious denominations to support gay rights. No longer. Significant improvements in the area of gay rights have taken place even since presenter Doleta Chapru gave a similar talk to the Humanist Society this past March. In this presentation, she will give an overview of her original talk to the Humanist Union, discuss subsequent advancements, and provide information about religious groups detrimental to the cause. Doleta Chapru is a long time Prairie member. She has gay family members and has been following religious responses to gay rights for many years.

## Religious Education News

Welcome back! Although I'm still holding on to the last threads of summer we have begun our 2010 Fall children's religious education year here at Prairie UU Society. It's going to be a fantastic year studying world religions.



Classes began Sunday, August 29th and it was a lovely, hot summer day. We all gathered upstairs for our annual Ingathering ceremony and then went downstairs, students and teachers, for our own water ceremony. Then it was off to the classrooms for games and an introduction to the school year.

After class we had our annual RE pool party at the Goodman Aquatic Center in Verona. The sun was shining, the water was so warm and the company was great. Thanks to all who attended and made it a fun, family time.

We have a new structure to our services. Students will start upstairs each Sunday with their families. We will have one family highlighted each week as our chalice lighters followed by a Story for All Ages told by different members of the congregation. Having our children upstairs gives them an opportunity to not only see what happens during a UU service but take part in one as well.

After the story one child will be chosen each week to light a lantern and lead all the children downstairs to their classrooms for their own Joys and Concerns. While the children are sharing their stories the adults will be telling their own so there will be a connection between the two groups. We are all in this together, growing and learning, and it's important for children and families to grow in their faith together.

If you are a natural story teller and would like to tell a tale on any Sunday please let me know. I would love to have many different people sharing tales.

This fall the middle and high school class will be studying Islam, Wicca and Christianity. This past Sunday we had a speaker, Agus Belo, a Sufi Muslim, talk to our students. There will be a field trip to a local mosque on September 26th. If you would like to listen to our speakers or chaperon a trip please let me know. This experience is not limited to students.

As always, see you on Sunday.

Rebecca Malke  
*Director of Religious Education*

## Our Society

### WOW News

WOW – Prairie's wild, outstanding women, meet once a month for breakfast potluck and conversation. Our usual meeting time is 9am on the first Saturday of the month, sometimes at Prairie and sometimes at a member's home. The October meeting is October 2nd, at Prairie, at 9 am.

Any questions or emails to add to the email group call 276 8397 or email marysomers44 (at) charter.net

*Mary Somers, WOW coordinator*

## Spanish Speaker's Potluck

The Spanish Speakers will hold their next potluck at Prairie on Wednesday, September 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. Any level of Spanish speaking ability is welcome at these gatherings. Please call Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382 for more information about the group or to arrange a ride.

## Prairie Book Club Update

The Prairie Book Club meets monthly, usually the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month after the service at Prairie, at about 11:45 a.m. Bring potluck food to share. This is an open book club. You may come whether or not you have read the book. For more information, contact Mary Mullen, 608.298.0843 or mmullen(at) chorus.net.

Sunday, October 17 – Now and at the Hour, a novel by our own former Prairie member Marty Drapkin. (Contact Erin Bosch to get a \$6 copy from the author: 238-6285 or hillfarms2002@yahoo.com)

Sunday, November 21 - River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey by Candice Millard. This one is about Roosevelt's journey to the Amazon after his defeat for a third term. He nearly lost his life on this adventure. Said to be a "gripping account," it also gives "marvelous amount of detail ... on the wildlife that Roosevelt and his fellow explorers encountered on their journey, as well as the cannibalistic indigenous tribe that stalked them much of the way." The author was a writer for National Geographic. 432 pages. Published in 2006.



Sunday, December 19 – White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son is a non-fiction book by the anti-racist writer and educator Tim Wise. From Wikipedia: It is a personal account of how he became aware of white privilege and racism in American society through his experiences with his family and in his community, and how this led him to become an activist and writer against discrimination and racism The title is based on the book Black Like Me written by John Howard Griffin. 176 pages.

Sunday, January 16 - Rabbit Redux, by John Updike. Author John Updike's papers revealed how fastidious he was about learning the background he used in his novels. This one is the sequel to Rabbit, Run. It follows Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom, working a dead-end job in Brewer, PA. His wife leaves him and his 12-year-old son. During this chaotic time when the nation is also in chaos (1969), Rabbit and his son are joined in their household by an African American Vietnam vet and a wealthy white teenager, Jill. Published 1971. 368 pages.

*Mary Mullen*  
*Book Club Coordinator*

## Prairie Elders meetings

Prairie Elders is a group of over-65 Prairie members who meet once a month (generally on the 4th Tuesday) at Oakwood, in the Nakoma room, Heritage Oaks building, Oakwood Village West, for conversation and mutual support. The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 28. Note change: At 1:30 we will begin with a "round robin" for all who wish to share personal news. Topic discussion begins at 2:00. We must vacate the room by 3:30. Call contacts below for directions, parking or a ride. If convenient, bring your own beverage cup and a few snacks. Newcomers welcome.

This month's topic: Current Immigration Issues. What forces govern immigration decisions? Who is welcome or denied entry into the United States? Who is deported or incarcerated? Who is grilled at the borders or abandoned in the desert? How do new immigrants fare? Which immigrants or their

descendants wield power? How is immigration affected by trade agreements? How does immigration affect employment? How do employers affect immigration? What or who drives current anti-immigrant furor? What forces govern immigration decisions in the U.S. or worldwide? Bring personal stories if you wish.

Sixteen of us shared witticisms at our August discussion on humor and aging. Typically we average about a dozen of our twenty-plus participants. We have lost some dear, long-time Prairie members since we organized in 2004 but have gained at least nine people who “came of age” or joined Prairie in more recent years.

Prairie Elders aims to provide good times and mutual support for Prairie UU Members and Friends over 65 and UUs living at the facility where we meet. Our “round robin” format makes it easier to hear and gives all the option of speaking. Topics alternate between general issues and personal interests. Contacts: Donna Murdoch 238-3802, Gordon Cunningham 230-3367, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382 or Rose Smith 233-3363. Call Donna to add your name to the mailing list.

### **Humanist Union News**

The Humanist Union will meet on Sunday October 3, after the service. Potluck lunch 11:45 am, 12:30 pm presentation on "Justice and the Common Good" by Richard Russell. We will be discussing the issues raised by Michael Sandel in Chapter 10 of his 2009 book "Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?".

### **New Focus for the Committee on Committees**

There are an awful lot of jokes about how many committees we Unitarian Universalists have, and those jokes have a ring of truth. That's why the name "Committee on Committees" has a humorous charm to many of us. On the other hand, there are many kinds of work that Prairie members might find more satisfying than going to committee meetings. How do we help each other find the our niche at Prairie? How to we match the work to the person for whom that work would promote spiritual growth?



This year the "Committee on Committees" wants to look beyond solely finding spots for those of us who serve on committees. We plan to embrace the wider purpose of helping our members find the right kind of service for for each of us, whether it's work that challenges and stretches us, comforts or satisfies us, or gives us joy.

Don't be surprised when someone on our committee approaches you with questions to help us get to know you better. What we find out about you will assist us in matching you to opportunities to serve that are the right fit for you, and in so doing better fulfill part of Prairie's vision: "We support each other's personal development and spiritual growth."

*Rachel Long, Chair*

*Committee on Committees*

*Members - Dave Johnson, Phyllis Long, Paula Pachciarz, Rick Ruecking*

### **Register Now for Fall Adult Education Offerings**

A year-long covenant group, “Year to Live,” and two classes, “Designing a Rain Garden (October 19-26) and “What It Means to Be a UU” (November 6, 20) are being offered this fall. All members will be receiving a brochure of Prairie’s Adult Education Offerings for the 2010-21011 year. Please note that registration and a fee (or scholarship) need to be sent to the Prairie Administrator so instructors can order course materials for those who plan to attend.

We hope that everyone will find a choice among the full year's programs. You can register for the second semester classes, "UU Parenting" and "UU Perspectives on Immigration" later when specific dates are set. The newly-formed Adult Education Committee developed this year's programs based on the survey of interests conducted last spring. One surprising response was an overwhelming request for 2-session series, so we have designed classes based on your responses, plus a year-long covenant group.

We wish to especially thank Ingrid West, committee chair last year, for her leadership and resources. If you are interested in being part of the committee this year to evaluate these offerings and plan for the following year's program, contact Barbara Park. Thanks, also, to our instructors and leaders, for committing to our adult education program: Linda Sheehy, Paula Pachciarz, Judy Skog, Rev. Jane Esbensen, Rebecca Malke-Eligenti, and the Denominational Affairs Committee.

Mail in your registration and fee for fall classes to Kate Liu, Prairie Administrator for classes or contact Linda or Paula directly if you are interested in being part of the year-long covenant group "Year to Live." Please visit the adult ed website at [http://www.uuprairie.org/re/adult\\_ed\\_brochure\\_final2010-11.pdf](http://www.uuprairie.org/re/adult_ed_brochure_final2010-11.pdf)

*Aileen Nettleton*  
*acting chair of Adult Education*

## Ponderings From Atop a Prairie.....

Here I sit in the merry month of September in my downstairs office at Prairie UU. As I look upward through my windows I see the light tan stuccoed walls, the rust colored trim, a brown roof overhang and the soft blue, white cloud sky above. The day is perfect, as these early September days often prove to be, and it's hard to remember either the sweltering days of summer or the bitterly cold days of winter. Here we are in the midst of perfection and for a moment we can breathe easily, walk temperately, find tranquility and with that the resolve to do our best, to be our best in this world, in this neighborhood, to one another.



One thing about being new is that I come with an outsider's perspective on things, and while these "new eyes" that I bring are still new, I have been granted kind permission to speak my thoughts and my ideas outloud, to talk openly about my perceptions and my hopes and my dreams for how Prairie UU might become a more recognized place in the greater Madison area, and how it might even become more welcoming than it already is! And welcoming you are, to be sure – but there are even more things we can do to make this place welcoming, not only on the inside, but on the outside, too.

I do understand, of course, that change is not always easy and that a new perspective is not always welcome, so what I am hoping for are open conversations, thoughtful disagreements laced with respect, and ongoing brainstorming of other ways to do things here. And in the midst of all of that creative exchange, I want for us to remember that we all have the same end goal in mind: maintaining this wonderful place of meaning for whomsoever seeks a liberal religion to call their own.

I love being here and I am so looking forward to getting to know each and every one of you as this church year continues on. Thank you for trusting me to forward your mission and your vision in small ways and in large, for that is the true nature of ministry. And please know that although I am only here part-time in hours, I am here full-time in my heart.

Affectionately,  
Jane

# UU & Wider Community News

## Alzheimer's Walk

Grab your friends, family members and co-workers and join us for the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Dane County Alzheimer's Walk! This is the second year we are also hosting an Open 5K Run. Alzheimer's disease (AD) is an escalating health epidemic and is impacting more people every year. Every 70 seconds someone in the U.S. develops AD. The Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance supports people facing Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia and their care partners every step of the way. There is not yet a cure for Alzheimer's but there are strategies and treatments throughout the course of the disease that can help maximize the quality of life for all affected. Every dollar you raise supports LOCAL programs and services in south central Wisconsin and advocacy efforts statewide. Make a difference in your community by registering today and raising money to support the Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance. Please visit our website at <http://support.alzwisc.org>.

## Welcome a Guest at Your Table

Coming up in November, Prairie will be participating in the Guest at Your Table program. Guest at Your Table supports the human rights efforts of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC.) Families are encouraged to pick up a box and the booklet "Stories of Hope" which chronicles personal stories of people working with the UUSC. Every time you sit down to a meal together, put a little something in the box; then at the end of the collection period, bring your box back to Prairie and we will pool our collections together to make a donation to support the UUSC. If you have any questions, please contact Christina Klock, chair of Denominational Affairs, who will be organizing our participation.

## Interfaith Hospitality Network

Prairie is a buddy church for the Interfaith Hospitality Network. We send volunteers to help Midvale Lutheran house homeless families for a week. Midvale's next week of sheltering begins on **October 10**. You can sign up here: <http://nordengs.com/ihn/group.asp?eg=16&u=true>. Job descriptions are here: <http://midvalelutheran.org/ihnjobs.htm> Contact Erin Bosch with questions.

## Prairie Wins Two Awards

Prairie UU Society was recognized by the UUA as an Honor and Merit Congregation for the 2009 – 2010 fiscal year for our "Fair Share" support of the annual UUA program fund. From the letter we received: "We are keenly aware that the recent economic recession has posed great challenges, and despite the challenges your own congregation may have faced, your congregation made the choice to contribute at the full requested level." Our second award was the James Luther Adams award, from the UUSC, for our financial support to the UUSC after the earthquake in Haiti. Both awards will be on the bulletin board at the back of the meeting house. Thanks go out to everyone who contributed to these fundraising drives.

## Verona Road Construction Update

As many of you may know, the DOT is planning a huge project to revamp the road area around the intersection of Verona Road and the beltline, extending down towards the intersection that leads to the frontage roads that bring people to Home Depot and Prairie's neighborhood. This project will have far reaching implications for the neighborhood around Prairie. Two public hearings concerning this project are scheduled for October 13<sup>th</sup>, one at the Boys and Girls Club on Jenewien Road from noon to 3pm, and the other at the Cherokee Middle School on Midvale Blvd. From 6 to 9pm.



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