

Prairie Fire

February 2014



Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

- Sat. Feb 1 9-11 am - **WOW@Prairie**
Sun. Feb 2 10 am **Service - "Letter to My Grandchildren"** - Sandra Ingham
RE Mystery Friends begins
12 noon - **Humanist Union potluck and discussion**
5:30 pm - **Men's Group**
Sat. Feb 8 6 pm **Barb Park's Birthday Bash**
Sun. Feb 9 10 am **Service - "What the Bad River Watershed Means to Me"** Tracy Hames
11:45 am - **Prairie Book Club**
Sat. Feb 15 7-10 pm **Valentine's Day Party**
Sun. Feb 16 10 am **Service - "People, Places or Things that Inspire Awe"**
Soup Sunday
Sun. Feb 23 10 am **Service - "What Really Happens at G.A.?"** - Sandra Ingham & Kate Liu
11:30 am **Mystery Friends Party**

WOW @Prairie: Women of Wonder meets every 1st Saturday of the month 9-11 am at Prairie. Bring a breakfast/brunch dish to share. Contact: Anne Urbanski 221-4053 anneu53714@gmail.com

"Letter to My Grandchildren": This service was originally scheduled for December 29, but did not happen on that day. However, as someone pointed out at a recent Program Committee meeting, what better time than Groundhog Day to be repeating things (sort of repeating). A more accurate title for this service would be, "Letter to Future Generations". Whether or not you have grandchildren or children is irrelevant. Our job as adults is to pass along a livable world to the generations coming after us. How do we do this? I'll offer my advice and try to leave adequate time for you to offer yours.

Humanist Union will have an open discussion of program ideas for this year. Areas we might consider are science (we'll have John Richards talking about the IceCube project at the south pole and John Hawks talking about fossil digs in Africa), human rights (including freedom of thought around the world), humanist giving (through groups such as the Foundation Beyond Belief), and music (the British Humanist Association Choir being an example). We will have our usual potluck lunch starting by noon, discussion from 12:30 to 1:30 pm
Contact: Bob Park 273-8775 humanistunion@gmail.com

Men's Group: The Men's Group meets the 1st Sunday of the month at Prairie. Bring a dish to pass. Contact: Dan Proud derrproud@att.net

Birthday Party for Barb Park at Prairie: Help our president celebrate her 70th birthday with food, music and dancing. We'll start at 6 pm with a potluck supper, which will conclude with birthday cake and ice cream. Then from about 7 to 10 pm we will have music and dancing. Try a

folk dance or two, then listen to music performances by Prairie members and friends. (Let Bob Park know if you want to be on the list of performers.) Finally we'll have more dancing, including some swing dancing. (Ian Park has some swing dance moves to show us.)

"What the Bad River Watershed Means to Me": Tracy Hames, executive director of The Wisconsin Wetland Association will update us on the Bad River and how he became a champion of our water resources.

Prairie Book Club will be discussing *The Land Remembers* by Ben Logan. It is a story about a farm and its people in southwest Wisconsin, between Viroqua and Mt. Sterling, where Logan grew up with his parents, 3 brothers, and a farmhand in the 1930s. It's a "classic American memoir". The newer edition contains an after word of two never-before published chapters. In 2008 Logan signed an agreement with the Mississippi Valley Conservancy to protect the farm and keep it in agricultural use. 128 pages.

Valentine's Dance will be held again. We'll provide beverages. Barb Park has already agreed to bring her ever popular ice cream punch, cheese and a chocolate fountain. Music and valentine themed games will complete the evening. Childcare provided from 7-9 pm. There's a suggested donation of \$10/person or whatever you can afford. Please RSVP to Rebecca Malke dre@uuprairie.org or Barbara C. Frye (bchatter10@gmail.com).

"People, Places or Things That Inspire Awe": Kathy and Mei Lien Converse will produce a PowerPoint presentation of members' photos or images that inspire awe for the member. Kathy is looking for contributions to this program. Any photo or image that raises the hairs on the back of your neck is eligible. This is our Valentine's ode to things we love.

"What Really Happens at G.A.?": As part of our celebration of DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS MONTH here at Prairie, Kate Liu, Rev. Sandy & friends (that would be anyone else who has been to General Assembly & wants to be a part of this service) will regale you with their experiences attending the annual Unitarian Universalist General Assembly. They will also pass along a few helpful hints and interesting tidbits that might entice you to attend this year's event. Why might you want to do this? Join us this Sunday and we'll tell you why!

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 of us the option of speaking. Topic this month is TBA. If convenient, bring your own beverage cup and a few snacks. Newcomers welcome. Nakoma Room, Heritage Oaks building, Oakwood Village West. Call for directions, parking or a ride. Rosemary Dorney (238-4382) or Donna Murdoch (238-3802).

Prairie News

Perhaps you've missed seeing **Lorry Bond** the last few months. She has had a rough time with her MS and a stroke, but she is getting around some and hopes to be at Prairie soon. In the meantime, she welcomes phone calls and visitors, and especially enjoys getting out to a restaurant or store sometimes, which is much easier if there's somebody with her to help if her wheelchair gets stuck in the snow. She has moved to the east isthmus, near the Willy Street Co-op. Lorry's new address is: 1115 E Wilson St. #203 Madison, WI 53703 Phone: (608) 852-3315.

Sandy Sez: Did you know that February is DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS MONTH at Prairie? OK, maybe not officially, but as your minister, I have taken the liberty of making this declaration! I have done this for several reasons: registration for our annual general assembly will begin in March and if you register by the end of that month, you get a discounted rate; the annual district meeting (now more accurately called a regional meeting) will be in mid-April in Wausau, an easy drive from here; in February, we will be asking people to become Chalice Lighters (and we will explain what that means, too!); it's always a good idea to give people as much information as possible about the bigger organization of which Prairie is a part; it's winter and we need distractions and events to plan for and look forward to.

Sandy also Sez ... WOW! No, I'm not talking about our women's group, but about the service on Sunday, January 19, celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. As so many of our services are, that one was moving and meaningful and memorable. However, these Sunday morning events don't just magically happen. A lot of work goes into the planning, production and delivery of a Sunday service. Many of these services are coordinated by Penny Eiler, Program Committee Chair. The Program Committee needs more committee members if it is going to be able to continue to deliver high-quality Sunday programs. Think about it!! You could be part of the action, part of something exciting and worthwhile. Seriously consider joining this committee; think about how powerful you will feel if you do! (That last part is supposed to be funny!) Talk to Rev. Sandy or to Penny Eiler for more information.

Participants are Needed: Rev. Sandy and Kate Liu are looking for people who have been to General Assembly and would be interested in talking about their experiences at Prairie's service on Sunday, February 23. Please let Sandy or Kate know if you would be willing and able to participate with us on that day. We aim to make it fun, as well as educational!

The Annual Service Auction is scheduled for March 9, 2014, 12 noon immediately following the Sunday program. We will follow our fun-filled tradition of having Orange Schroeder as our auctioneer. We will also have a silent auction table again this year. Remember this is a service auction, which means that you donate services or item(s) you make.

Let's see if we can top our previous years in donations of original contributions. Of course we want everyone to attend, even if you can't donate a service, to bid on services offered by others! If you will be gone, you can get donated items to me. The program will start with a soup Sunday lunch and childcare will be provided during the auction. In previous years donations have included homemade breads, cakes, cookies, liquors, and salsa; honey from local bees, knitted items, handmade cards and jewelry, musical evenings; several different home cooked dinners for 8 plus people, canoe trips, bike rides and picnics, guitar lessons, pet sitting, housecleaning, rides to the airport or medical appointments, child care, swim parties, portrait sessions, and assistance with various computer, CD and webpage projects.

It never fails to amaze me how many talents and skills emerge in time for the auction. Consider what service you can offer that others might appreciate. Got an idea? Send me an email or give me a call. Kathy Converse at conversekrm@gmail.com, 608-238-1856, 608-239-9385 (cell).

Nominations for Board and Committee Chairs: Each year, Prairie's Nominating Committee is charged with coming up with a slate of candidates for the open Board positions for the coming year (which starts in July). The open positions include: President, Secretary, At-Large (2).

If you have someone you think would be a good fit for any of these positions, please send your nominations to any member of the Nominating Committee. Those members are:

Ken Skog, Chair, kenskog@gmail.com

Paula Pachciarz, pjpchz@gmail.com

Mary Frantz, maryjohnfranz@gmail.com

Dirk Herr-Hoyman, hoymand@gmail.com

The Nominating Committee is also looking at our Committee Chairs and will be in touch with current Chairs to see who is interested in continuing on and if need be coming up with nominations here too, over the next month or so.

Note that with our new Bylaws, the congregation votes on the Board members at the annual meeting and the new Board appoints Committee Chairs. The Nominating Committee continues to work on who might serve in all of these leadership positions.

The Caring Committee is pleased that Cheryl Robinson is joining our committee! Other members of the Caring Committee are Erin Bosch, Randy Converse, Karen Deaton, Anne Lundin, Linda Sheehy, and Aileen Nettleton (chair). Prairie members are each “assigned” to one of our Caring Committee members. You can check the list of Caring Groups on the bulletin board at Prairie or check with Aileen, if you need to find out who is your contact person, or just contact any one of us.

The Caring Committee is available to give you support if you are ill and need a visit or a meal, if you need respite care for a spouse or kids, or just need to check in with another member. In addition, you are encouraged to contact our minister, Sandra Ingham, 920-217-236, for counseling or other needs.

The Caring Committee is considering facilitating 1-2 sessions on “Supporting Our Aging Parents”, “Final Choices” on making end-of-life decisions, or dealing with personal realities/feelings of death and dying. If you would be interested in exploring one of these topics with a small group, please contact Aileen Nettleton, 238-6053 or [aanett\(at\)sbcglobal.net](mailto:aanett(at)sbcglobal.net) in the next few weeks.

Artists of the Month – Prairie Knitters and Friends: Over the past year or two, the front of Prairie's meeting hall has been graced by a variety of artworks ranging from photographs to paintings to ink and charcoal drawings. Currently, a very different type of art is being displayed – knitting created by members of Prairie and several guest knitters. The knitting includes pieces such as sweaters, shawls, hats, scarves, and even a pair of Lithuanian mittens. Prairie knitters featured are: Amy Armstrong, Kathy Converse, Karen Deaton, Mary Franz, Kate Liu, Barb Park, and Orange Schroeder. Be sure to take a closer look so you can appreciate the ingenuity and creativity that went into these functional works of art.

The CROP Walk, done by the Prairie Team of five was a great success in the community. The entire amount raised in Madison was \$38,955.00. A portion of that (\$9,700.00) will support local food pantries and meal programs. Prairie raised \$205.00 with only 5 walkers! Thanks to the Five! We hope to walk again next fall. Won't you join us?

The men's drop-in shelter at Grace Episcopal Church in downtown Madison needs volunteers! Thank you to Martin Whitehead, Bill Parmenter, Doug Renk, and Gary Gates for cooking and serving breakfast for the past few months, for donating their time and labor during the difficult winter months. I'm hoping to schedule Prairie's volunteer commitment to providing the breakfast for the next four months. Please check your calendars and think about volunteering two hours early on a Saturday morning. First time volunteers are welcome. Volunteers can either shop or help cook and serve the food. The shopper buys and delivers the supplies on the Friday before. You are provided with a grocery list and Prairie reimburses you. The cooks work with one or two other volunteers from James Reeb or Prairie to cook and serve the food and are finished by 7 am. I, or other volunteers will be happy to share our experiences with you. Thank you for considering this. - Paula Pachciarz

Coffee, Coffee, Coffee! Many thanks to those who have already served: Beth Gerou, Marcia Johnson, Barb Park, Glen Pawelski, Doug Renk, Patty Stockdale, Carl Wacker, and Jessie Whitehead. Thank you!

BUT! We do need more volunteers! You can sign up on the bulletin board in the foyer of the meeting house or contact Paula or Barbara C. Frye. No experience needed, training provided:<D Volunteers should arrive by 9:15 on the days they are to make coffee.

For your inspiration, here are the lyrics to the "Coffee, Coffee, Coffee" song, sung to the tune of "Holy, Holy, Holy". The last verse is new and reaches out to all you tea drinkers. Thank you for signing up! ~ Paula Pachciarz

Coffee, Coffee, Coffee

Coffee, coffee, coffee
Praise the strength of coffee,
Early in the morn we rise with thoughts of only thee.
Served fresh or reheated
Dark by thee defeated,
Brewed black by perk or drip or instantly.

Though all else we scoff, we
Come to church for coffee;
If we're late to congregate, we come in time for thee.
Coffee, our one ritual,
Drinking it habitual,
Brewed black by perk or drip or instantly.

Coffee the communion
Of our Uni-union,
Symbol of our sacred ground, our one necessity.
Feel the holy power
At our coffee hour,
Brewed black by perk or drip or instantly.

Welcome diversity,
Now we offer herbal tea,
English breakfast, harvest spice or even blackberry!
Cocoa and hot cider,
Our circle ever wider,
Drink what you like in our community.

...and Now a Word from the Rev.

~ Sandra Ingham

You know you have cabin fever when you find yourself looking forward to committee meetings! This has been an amazing winter and, as I write this, we still have almost a week of January left. I don't remember a winter this harsh since I first lived in Madison, in the mid-1970's. I am learning to be patient and to relax and "go with it" -- it being snow and ridiculously cold temperatures. I don't think that I will ever be able to handle ice, though, no matter how much I tap into my inner Buddhist.

Our newsletter editor asked this question: "How do you beat the winter blues?" I have many strategies, some effective, some not so much. Really good dark chocolate is a given... a good mystery book is useful, too. Phone conversations with far-away friends not only catches me up on what's happening in their lives, but also provides LOL -- in this case Lots of Laughter. Getting to know Prairie people better with face-to-face conversations often does the same.

Planning for General Assembly and for the April District Meeting reminds me that it probably won't always be January, and the dark of winter. Being at Prairie on Sunday mornings, whether I am doing the service or not, helps keep me within the range of normalcy (I hope!). And, last, but definitely not least, there is that clipping of the baseball player on my refrigerator reminding me that as of about a week ago, there were only 70 days until opening day, meaning spring training is practically right around the corner... But, hey, who's counting?! Stay warm & watch out for the ice...

RE Circle of Friends

~ Rebecca Malke, Director of Religious Education

Our religious education classes will be wrapping up the Abrahamic faiths in the coming month. On January 26th we used Skype to talk to Rachel Long's niece, Fatima, a practicing Muslim from Jordan who now lives in Seattle, Washington. A special thank you goes to Fatima for sharing her faith with us and taking time out from her busy schedule to answer all of our questions. And thank you, Rachel, for making this happen.

After class we took a field trip to Temple Beth El, located at 2702 Arbor Drive, Madison, where a member of their congregation, Linda Berman gave us a tour of their sanctuary and explained their religious symbols. The children and adults had an opportunity to be a part of the faith tradition by dressing up in prayer shawls and kippahs. Children also performed a mini-wedding complete with the smashing of the glass and all of us yelling "Mazel Tov!" which means "good luck". We were also very fortunate to look at one of their Torah's. Linda told us it was written by a man in the 1840s who used a quill feather and crushed berries for ink!

Karen Deaton and Kent Wenger have been teaching Bible stories from a UU perspective which helped my six-year-old son, Indy, understand the imagery in the temple as well as the rabbi's talk on Moses. If parents of young children are interested in seeing the temple and learning a bit more I plan on going back in the next month or so. Let me know if you'd like to join us!

Wild Wintering!

Prairie's Religious Education (RE) program had a Wild Wintering party on Saturday evening, January 25. A good crowd of 35 people came for the evening festivities, 20 kids and 15 adults. We welcomed a family from the neighborhood with 3 children who came to Prairie for the first time (Thanks to Rebecca for inviting them!). We also welcomed Christina Robotka's 2-month-old baby Atticus, who came to Prairie for the first time, and was willing to be held by



many baby-cuddlers.

It was too cold to play in the snow much, so we played indoors, making exploding (non-destructive) bombs out of popsicle sticks, doing Twister, juggling bean bags, building with the big cardboard blocks, and playing Magic: The Gathering. Other activities included running around squealing and giving each other piggy-back rides.



John and Rebecca made a delicious spaghetti dinner. Susan Herr-Hoyman made taffy for pulling - most of us had never had a taffy-pull before! In the morning, Martin Whitehead prepared breakfast for the over-ten-year-old crowd, who stayed at Prairie overnight (along with a few adults). Thanks to all who came and made a dreary winter night into a fun time to be with friends! - Karen Deaton, the overnight hostess with the mostess!

Wisconsin Winter Wisdom for Beating the Winter Blues

Going for a walk in the snow, if it's not prohibitively cold, warms me up and helps me to appreciate that I really do like the changeable seasons (some more than others!). - Mary Frantz

Listen to Garrison Keillor's "Prairie Home Companion" on NPR, Saturday nights, 5-7pm. He makes much of the virtues of Midwest winters, how it improves our character and makes us characters! -Anne Lundin

Visit Prairie's website (see below) for further information



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