... 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.

February 8, 2000

President: Nancy E. Schraufnagel (608) 273-3195

UPCOMING

Sunday, February 13: An Intergenerational Valentine’s Day - Chinese New Year’s Day Service directed by DRE Randy Converse. We’ll explore the loving connections amongst friends and relatives through a celebration of the Year of the Dragon with a Chinese New Year’s Parade, Puppets, Food, and Zodiac Animals.

Sunday, February 20: Warren Hagstrom delivers a perspective on one of the classical and universal folklore personalities: the “Trickster”.

Sunday, February 27: Must we always be “nice” or are there means available for us to disagree without causing injury. This topic is dear to people concerned about the health and well-being of families and small communities (such as Prairie). Jennifer Parker and Doleta Chapru lead the service for “Respectful Disagreement: Between Nicey-Nice and Spilling Blood”.

Sunday, April 2: A guest speaker from Domestic Abuse Intervention Services will present the program “Domestic Violence: Challenges We Face in the Future”. Since its inception in the 1970’s, the Domestic Violence (DV) movement has been challenged and has grown wiser as a result. What are the current areas of difficulty facing the movement? What must the movement do to continue providing a voice and place of healing to the hundreds of thousands of domestic abuse survivors they assist each year? The speaker will discuss current challenges facing the DV movement including issues of women who use violence and joint custody of children in violent homes.

Next Prairie Fire deadline is Sunday, February 20, 2000
Volunteer Schedule
The Society has a few regular activities for which we need help at each Sunday service. These include staffing the visitor’s greeting table, and doing the coffee set-up, program taping, and kitchen clean-up. Please come prepared to pitch-in and get these jobs done.

Hospitality
Greeting   Feb 13  Anne Urbanski
           Feb 20  Anne Urbanski
Coffee set-up   Feb 13  Judy Skog
               Feb 20  ........
Program taping  Feb 13  Bob Park
                Feb 20  Bob Park
Kitchen cleanup  Feb 13  Robin Carre / Beth Potter
                  Feb 20  Barb Rames / Aileen Nettleton

Snow Shoveling
February 6-12  Dean Schroeder
February 13-19  Paula Pachiarz
February 20-26  Robin Carre
February 27- March 4 -  

Thanks, many hands make small work.

OUR SOCIETY

Annual Spring Business Meeting: April 9

1. Election of Officers
A slate of nominees must be prepared by the Committee on Committees by March 5th (By-Laws). Here’s your chance to become more involved in the workings of this lay-led Society!! The available positions include:
   Vice-President
   Denominational Affairs Chair
   Program Chair
   Social Action Chair
   Membership Co-Chair
   Housing and Property Co-Chair
A descriptions of the duties of these positions is in the By-Laws (a copy of which is in the Meeting Room).

2. Approval of Lay Ministers Needed for 2000-2001
Please share your unique perspectives as a Lay Minister. The Committee on Committees urges Prairie members with ideas for future programs to submit a proposal for 4-6 services with an interwoven theme. As you know, our services include a wide range of topics which may include intellectual exploration as well as creative and artistic components. We would like your proposal to be approved by the membership at the Spring Meeting.

Please call a member of the Committee on Committees to volunteer yourself for one of these positions. They are Linda Sheehy, Aileen Nettleton, Erin Bosch, Rachel Siegfried, or KK Anderson.

Service Auction – March 19

Donations Needed
March 19th will be the Sunday for the Annual Prairie Service Auction. Start thinking about what you can offer for auction. Last year we offered barbecues, bread, beans, brass, and bakery; cleaning, cheesecake, chocolate, child care, car wash, and car lifts rents; errands, egg rolls, Easter egg lessons; food, firewood, flats fixed, and farm weekends; garden tilling, greens, and Glen picnic; music, meals, and massage; poems, pendants, pins, photos, playing, and plants; repair and (bas) relief, songs, sitting, surgery, shelves, and soup; (yard) work and a will.

More fun than wheel of fortune, just pick a letter! Call 848-5248 to leave a message with Bob Reuschlein.

We will hold a bake sale in the lobby and conduct bidding during a catered lunch.

Membership Questions for You
The membership Committee tries to keep our records current for directory updates, our newsletter, UUA, etc. A new directory is in the offing. If you have a new street address, telephone number or e-mail address please contact Rita Reffner at ritareffner@yahoo.com or provide the information through the Prairie Office.

Ring Found at Prairie
A ring was found at Prairie Society on January 23rd. To claim it, call Nancy Schraufnagel and describe the item.

Choir Rehearsals
The next rehearsals are at 9:00 am February 13 and 20.

Women’s Group
meets the second Sunday each month.

The next meeting is February 13th.

First Call for Help
The Caring Committee has been established to help Prairie members in need. The types of support offered are writing notes, rides, telephoning, preparing food, home visits, child care, support for people dealing with life crises (e.g., grieving), tape delivery, and as a community resource list. The primary contact person has a list of volunteers with specific support roles.

The February primary contact is Rosemarie Lester 255-7039.

Cuban Partners Express Concern
CAMBRIDGE, MA — For the past two years the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has worked with Cuban non-governmental organizations to improve the health of Cuban women and children, which has been negatively affected by the U.S. embargo. Our work has convinced us that the normalization of relations between
the Cuban and U.S. people and governments is a key component of improving the lives and futures of Cuba's children. That is why the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is concerned about the delay in returning young Elian Gonzalez to his father in Cuba, this six-year-old boy's only remaining parent. There have been modest but important steps in the past few years to move toward normalization between our two countries.

We must not allow this issue to deflect our attention from the real issue: to improve the lives of Cuban children like Elian by improving the relations between our two governments. It is a miracle and a blessing that Elian survived a Thanksgiving day disaster at sea which took the life of his mother as she attempted to reach the United States from Cuba with her son and boyfriend. But, to lose his mother in this way and now to face the prospect of, in effect, losing his father is more than any child should have to bear.

Given the state of U.S.-Cuban relations, it is no surprise that on January 10, a state-court judge ordered that the child remain in the United States until a guardianship hearing is held in March. It is also no surprise that on January 8, Rep. Dan Burton subpoenaed the boy to appear before Congress. Although belatedly, the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) had indeed made the correct determination that the boy belongs with his father. Now, it is up to the White House to accelerate any federal government steps necessary for a speedy implementation of the INS ruling that Elian be returned by January 14. This boy is a child, not a political pawn.

Our government must first respect established practice in international child custody cases. Then as American people, we must refocus our attention in the year ahead where it belongs: pushing for concrete advances toward normalization of relations between the governments of our two countries.

Valora Washington, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

Religious Education Corner

SECRET FRIENDS: Sign up by February 13th for the fun of exchanging letters with an anonymous partner. There will be a “secret friends” party on March 12th when your friend is revealed.

Wild Wintering! Wow, what a fun time! Twenty young people attended. We sled in the moonlight, played a lively version of chair switching, propelled ourselves around a clever obstacle course, and did some soapstone carving. Thanks Metje, Larry, Ann, Robin, Rachel, Erin, Kay, Carl, Paula, and John for all your help.

Pre-School: We have begun using a curriculum based upon art projects as they mirror UU values. We are in the fledgling stage since our population can vary each week.

K-1-2: Our good-humored K-1-2ers have been “clowning around” learning how to make laughter good medicine. They have been dressing up as clowns and reading funny poems.

3-4-5: Week #1 was spent learning about the principle of compassion. We read about compassionate Horton from the book Horton Hatches the Egg. Week #2 saw us contemplating difference and similarity among cultures as we learned about UU principle #3 – learning together to accept differences. We read and compared European with Native American folktales.

6-7-8: Small classes kept our discussions cozy!

High Schoolers: We got into the Duke’s music in a BIG way! We also pondered the principle of the importance of integrating spiritual practice into our daily lives.

Owl Overnight
The OWL Program will have another overnight on March 17-18 from 6pm to 4 pm.

Social Action Notes

Interfaith Hospitality Network: Thanks to those who helped during the week of January 23-30. We prepared food and staffed evening meals, breakfasts, and nights. Our volunteers reported enjoying the four families in residence. One family was anticipating getting their own apartment at week’s end. This is a great program – learn more about it when we next ask for volunteers (June). If interested, please call Shannon Hayes at 274-0553.

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, founded in 1939, is a private, nonprofit organization that uses advocacy, education and partnership to improve the lives of women, men and children in the United States and internationally.
Men's Homeless Shelter: It's wonderful how we've been able to keep up our level of involvement at the shelter. We will be seeking volunteers to help later this month. Thanks. Paula (273-4806)

Central Midwest District Annual Assembly
April 28-30 2000 in Appleton

“Circle of Drums”, “Sweet Harmony”, Joyful Noises”, “Musical Chairs”- these are just some of the workshops offered at the upcoming Central Midwest Annual Assembly. The theme is “Music: Our Unifying Spirit.”

You won’t want to miss the keynote speaker, Carolyn McDade, composer of “Spirit of Life”. Also participating will be Trevor Stephenson, keyboard artist of the 18th and 19th century instruments. There will be lots of great food and fun. Registration brochures can be found at Prairie. Apply by March 31, and the cost is $55 per adult ($75 for late registrations). Margit Kindl at Fox Valley UU Fellowship mkindel@pop3.famvid.com has added information.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Millennium Heroes
That’s the name for blood donors who continue to “give from the heart”. In January, Prairie Society members Linda Sheehy, Fredericka Schilling, and Phoenix Wardell were donors...and did we honor John Peterson and Osh Anderson for their pint-size gifts on December 24?

Hours at the Sheboygan Avenue Center:
Monday Noon - 4 PM.
Tuesday Noon - 6 PM
Wednesday 9 AM - 1 PM
Thursday Noon - 7 pm.
Friday 9 AM - 1 PM.
Saturday 8 to noon.
Monday, 12-4 PM; Tuesday, 12-6 PM;
Wednesday, 9-1 PM; Thursday, 12-7 PM;
Friday, 9-1 PM; Saturday, 8 to noon.

Invoking the Fire Dragon
Nancy Vedder-Shults again offers this workshop on Saturday, February 26th from 9am to 5pm in the West Living Room at First Unitarian Society. Invoking the fire dragon ushers eros into our lives, infusing us with the playful energy that is the source for ecstatic movement, sensuality and pleasure. Within a ritual format involving story, dance and song, this “playshop” will explore how to call up this elemental energy as well as how our culture reins in this assertion of the life force through such myths as the Biblical story of Eden. Sponsored by WSpR (1) Circle at FUS. For more info call 231-3362. To register send name, address, and a check for $70 (payable to First Unitarian Society) to Mary Ellen Bell, 1928 Commonwealth Ave., Madison 53705.

Walking other sacred paths
The Wellspring Retreat Center is offering healing medicine wheel teachings and traditional sweat lodge ceremonies with M’qmac Elder & Healer Albert Ward and Cree Medicine Man Archie Cheechoo from Eastern Canada on February 18-21. Reputedly no profits are being made from these gatherings. Contact John-Brian Paprock at jonbrian@chorus.net or coordinator Tom Bussler 312-645-1551 for added information.

RSVP – The Social Events Calendar

Spanish Speakers Potluck
Wednesday, February 16, at the home of Bill Shaffer, 3718 Gregory St., 233-8266, at 7 pm. For information call Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382.

Prairie Playreaders
Prairie Playreaders, a Prairie group dedicated to reading plays together, now has a schedule of times and hosts.
This Saturday, February 12, it’s at the Nettleton’s home, 645 Sheldon St. 238-6053

Sunday Afternoon at the Movies
Marilyn and Rick Ruecking invite you to join us after the service on February 27th in making plans for lunch and a movie. Perhaps we’ll try the Stoughton Cinema where they serve both food and films. Coffee and discussion at our home following. No RSVP.

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. You playing small doesn’t serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are born to manifest God's glory within us. It's not just in some of us; it's within everyone. And, as we let our own light shine we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others.” Nelson Mandela

Shaarei Shamayim Calendar

Tuesday, February 8, 3:30-5:30 Children’s Service
Tuesday, February 15, 3:30-5:30 Children’s Service
Friday, February 18, 7-9:30 pm, Evening Service
Tuesday, February 22, 3:30-5:30 Children’s Service