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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.

From our Bond of Union.

The Prairie Fire is the newsletter of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society and is published semi-monthly.

An e-mail version is available at <http://www.execpc.com/~prairieu>

July 26, 2000

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, July 30

10:00am

No program at Prairie Meeting House.

Instead, take a short drive and enjoy a joint program at Sauk City entitled "The Less Traveled Road, Our Common Cause". A potluck luncheon will follow the service.

Sunday, August 6

10:00am

"Living the Dream: The Census Calls Us Nomads"
Thrill to the vagabond life as told by Dick and Julie Bonser and Nancy Graham.

Monday, August 7

7:00pm

Housing and Property Committee meeting at Prairie

Sunday, August 13

10:00am

"Million Mom March, Mothers Taking Action for Gun Control". Guest speaker is Stephanie LaBella-Luke.

Sunday, August 20

10:00am

To Be Announced..

Sunday, August 20

12:00pm

Prairie Women's Group meets downstairs right after the service. Bring a snack to pass and enjoy the company of other women.

We would like to continue meeting the third Sunday of each month. Keep this in mind when planning your Sunday calendars.

Monday, August 21

7:00pm

Board Meeting. (Note the earlier time.). Open to all interested members.

Tuesday, August 22

7:00pm

Spanish Speakers Potluck at Jean Matos' home.
See RSVP for details.

Sunday, August 27

10:00am

"Women and Globalization". Our guest speaker is Margaret Thompson.

**Next Prairie Fire deadline is
Sunday, August 20, 2000**

DETAILS OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, July 30

There will be NO PROGRAM at the Prairie meeting house. Instead, travel to Sauk City and at 10:00 am, participate in a joint program with Sauk City Congregation, First Society, James Reeb and Prairie. The topic for discussion is “The Less-Traveled Road: Our Common Call”.

Each congregation will present a short talk regarding the following themes:

- (1) what is unique about each congregation (how we view ourselves) and
- (2) what we have in common with each other.

We’re invited to join the Sauk City congregation for a potluck out in their park (adjoining the church) after the joint service. They’ll supply the set-up and beverages. We’re asked to bring a dish to pass and hymnals: Sauk City has only about 30.

To get to Park Hall in Sauk City, follow Route 12 NW from Middleton. After crossing the Wisconsin River bridge, turn right at stop light, turn left on Polk, travel three blocks to 307 Polk St. If necessary, you may leave a message at (608) 643-3131.

The following thoughtful letter by Jack Ferver helped inspire the theme for Sunday’s service:
To: Editor, Capital Times
From: Jack Ferver, 770 Water Street, Prairie du Sac, 53578. (608) 643~3988
Re: Response to Michael Schuler’s June 16, “What is Religion, Let me explain”.

I always enjoy reading the articles in the Cap Times by First Unitarian Society’s Michael Schuler. As a long-time member at First I gained a great respect for him both as a minister and as a human being, and I read your June 16 article by Michael on “What’s religion? Let me explain” with great interest.

He is right about many things, but he and his Unitarian-Universalists are dead wrong about one important point, they hold that, as Michael says, “Religion without God is not impossible”. It is impossible. Without God there is no religion and no need for a church. Without God there is no Spirit of God and no basis for religious spirituality.

It is one thing to reject the Christian Trinitarian creed that would locate an external male God up in Heaven and turn the great teacher Jesus into God,

but growing millions of us believe that there is a living, creative spirit in all of nature, which includes us, within us, flowing through us, connecting us with every other human being that now lives or ever has lived. To us this is “God”, the basis for our spirituality and our renewed interest in finding a “new age” religion.

All of this is not some new-fangled notion, but actually is the ancient source of most spiritual traditions. Here are a few examples. Christianity: “The Kingdom of Heaven is within you”. Islam: “Those who know themselves know their God”. Buddhism: “Look within, you are the Buddha”. Yoga: “God dwells within you as you”. Confucianism: “Heaven, earth and human are one body”.

The truth in all of this struck home to me after I joined our local Unitarian Fellowship in Sauk City, a Fellowship that is part of the Free Congregation of Sauk County. Ours is the last remaining congregation in the United States of what once was a flourishing “free thought” religious movement, a non-creed movement that relied on large doses of reason and “humanism” and little if any doses of God and Spirituality. It seems that it was not possible for other free thought congregations to survive without “God”. To make it possible for us to continue to survive we have now added a “Human Spirit” meditation-discussion group to our programming to respond to the need of some of us to strengthen our spiritual base.

Not only have free thought congregations failed but many main-line Christian churches are in trouble today, and so are many Unitarian congregations.

What is religion? Let me explain. It is walking and talking quietly, lovingly, with the Spirit of the God within. The theme song of our Human Spirit group expresses this well. It is the great song from Carousel, “You’ll Never Walk Alone”.

Sunday, August 6

Dick Bonser, Julie Bonser and Nancy Graham will talk about their vagabond lifestyle. Dick and Julie have been living full time in a motorhome since July 4, 1996. Nancy has been on the road part of the year with her trailer since 1997. They plan on talking about what influenced them to try this way of life. You’ll find out how they handle banking, mail, phones, finding a place to stay, and what life is like

with this style of living. There will be time for questions.

Sunday, August 13

Stephanie LaBella-Luke is the organizer of the local chapter for The Million Mom March. She'll talk to us about the national Million Mom March, what it meant to her and how she plans to continue the campaign for gun control.

Sunday, August 27

Globalization--the buzz word of the next millennium--is hailed as the panacea for many world problems, but the reality is that it has had devastating impacts on more marginalized groups, including women, particularly those in the Global South. Margaret Thompson, Marian Thompson's daughter, will talk about some of these disparities, and then outline efforts by the international women's movement including alternative women's media to counteract some of these trends.

Margaret has been working as a journalist for an international women's Internet radio in Costa Rica for the past year, so has gained some interesting insights on this topic. In September she will return to the University of Denver where she is an associate professor of international communication.

OUR SOCIETY

Kudos to IHN Volunteers

Many thanks to the volunteers who helped with the interfaith hospitality network this past week. The contingent from Prairie included Katy Helm, Ann Urbanski, Arleigh Birchler, Barb Rames and coordination by Shannon Hayes.

Erin Bosch will handle future coordination – she 'll be asking for volunteers for October 15 – 22.

Get Your Budgets Ready

Will all committee chairs and other interested parties please submit suggestions, changes and prepare a tentative budget for 2001 before the August 21st Board Meeting (or soon thereafter). Starting with the 2000 budget, what differences would you like to see? The Finance Committee will be meeting soon to plan the budget campaign for this Fall, so start

thinking now about the budget for next year and your pledge. Please contact Bob Reuschlein, 848-5248.

RE Teachers – We Need You!

The RE committee is getting panicky. They're searching for grown-ups willing to get acquainted with children in grades 3 – 5, middle school and high school. Contact Robin Carre 238 -8725 before he calls you.

Hospitality

The Society needs help during the Sunday service. We are particularly short during the summer months. Please consider, doing both the greeting and coffee set-up if your schedule allows it.

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

July 30 etc.	
Lawn Mowing	?
August 6	
Greeting	Rachel Siegfried
August 20	
Greeting	Ann Urbanski

Please consider filling in those jobs not listed. - many hands make light work. We thank those who have volunteered.

Update from Mary Sanderson

Yesterday July 8 the town I visited, La Union was taken over by soldiers and paramilitaries. Six young men, leaders of the Peace Community were assassinated and the other people were told they have 20 days to evacuate! This is breaking news; Mary will send more information for our bulletin board when she has additional facts.

Mary Sanderson- June 18 Program Correction

In line 8 of the PF article, "coca bean" should read "cocoa bean". We hope there was no misunderstanding of the meaning.

Note: The summary of the programs presented by Jack Barisonzi and Dan Rodman will be in the next issue of Prairie Fire.

Wheel of Life

On August 17th, **Betty and Jack Jallings** will be married 60 years. They're celebrating this gala event with a party at the Fitchburg town hall. See RSVP for further details. We congratulate them on this joyous occasion.

Do You Know The Spanish Speakers Group

We are a very informal easy-going group who have been meeting monthly for more than ten years to try to maintain or increase whatever levels of Spanish we have. Some are fluent but most of us are operating on our high school Spanish. The bottom line is we have a lot of fun and learn from one another. We welcome all to come to our monthly potlucks. Any suggestions? Call Rosemary Dorney, 238-4382.

THE COMMUNITY

A Word About James Reeb from Arthur Sexton

James Reeb Unitarian-Universalist Congregation , 2146 E. Johnson St, Madison, is relatively new, 7 years old, population 130 book-signed members. Most members are new to Unitarian Universalism. We are trying to be a multi-cultural congregation, and have succeeded in being 1/3 gay or lesbian, but only have 3 African-American adult members, 2 of whom are on the Board. A number of our most active members have adopted A-A or mixed race children, so our RE program is one-third non-Euro-American. We have no Asian or Hispanic members at the moment.

Our building is a storefront built in the '50s with two large display windows and no architecture to speak of. It is right behind East High School, and we are often hit by graffiti. Our sanctuary seats 120 and we have 4 classrooms, a nursery, a library, two offices, and a large open area rented to an Aikido club which has a 20x30 mat on a raised floor that the YRUU kids LOVE to play wink on.

Our first minister, Jonalu Johnstone, was promoted to be the Growth Consultant in the SW district, so left us for Oklahoma City. Our interim, Paul Daniel, starts August 4, and our search committee is actively working on finding us a new settled minister, who I am sure will be a black, female,

Spanish-speaking, disabled, transgender lesbian, Canadian jewish pagan humanist who does buddhist meditation.

As for me, I am a lifer, having been raised UU since 6th grade and never knowing any other religious tradition. I attended University of Chicago Divinity School, obtaining a Masters in Religious Studies. I have been to two GA's and am presently the chair of our building committee and a YRUU advisor, as well as a lay minister (one of 13). I am active also in our racial justice and membership committees. I taught the OWL curriculum to our 7-9th graders this past year. I seem to be on the CMD nominating committee, a position I find somewhat mysterious but pleasant. Arthur Thexton can be reached at athexton@hotmail.com or 249-2702.

RSVP/You're Invited – The Social Events Calendar

August 13: Video, Dessert and Discussion Offered by Fran Zell

Jack Barisonzi's excellent presentation at Prairie on June 25 about the Protest in Seattle and the World Trade Organization, has inspired me to present an opportunity for further discussion. I have an excellent short video (about 30 minutes) produced during the demonstrations by some of the protestors. I would like to invite Prairie members and friends to view the video and discuss it over dessert at 7 p.m. at 324 S. Mills Street. Contact Fran Zell, 283-0983.

August 18: 60th Anniversary Party

Jack and Betty Jallings invite you to join them in the celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary. The party will be held from 7 – 10 pm at Fitchburg Town Hall, located at Fish Hatchery and Lacy Road. If you plan to attend call 835-3746. No gifts please.

Tuesday, August 22: Spanish Speakers' Potluck
The Spanish Speakers plan to meet at Jean Matos home, 324 South Mills St, 255-2209 on **Tuesday** at 7:00pm. All are welcome. If you can manage it, bring a dish to share.