... 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.

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February 4, 2001

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, February 11
9:00am
Choir Rehearsal
10:00am
Valentine Intergenerational, presented by Randy Converse. (Note: Prairie Potluck has been postponed till February 18th.)
11:30am
Owl orientation for parents.

Saturday, February 17
7:00pm
Daisy Peterson US of A Citizenship Party. (See RSVP for details.)

Sunday, February 18
9:00am
Choir Rehearsal
10:00am
Robin Carre’ OWL Lay Ministry, Part IV
12:00pm
Prairie Potluck. Join us and bring a dish to pass. Enjoy the company of fellow UU’s. Women’s group participants can grab a plateful and meet downstairs.

Monday, February 19
6:30pm
Spanish Speaker’s Potluck at Prairie Meeting House. Bring a dish to pass. (See RSVP)

Thursday, February 22
7:00pm
New and Old – Come Share Your Questions and Beliefs. (See RSVP for details.)

Saturday, February 24
Playreaders
Host is Rachel Siegfried, 271-2173.

Sunday, February 25
9:00am
Choir Rehearsal
10:00am
"Socially Acceptable Bragging". Erin Bosch will lead Prairie in discovering something to shout about.

Sunday, March 4
9:00am
Choir Rehearsal
10:00am
Susan Hagstrom continues her lay ministry. Her title for this second discussion is "Skepticism, Character, and Joie de Vie".

COMING...ANNUAL PRAIRIE SERVICE AUCTION...Saturday, March 11, 12:00...Mark your calendar...watch for details. Start thinking “donations”...what can I give...
Next Prairie Fire deadline is Sunday, February 18, 2001

DETAILS OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, February 11
Valentine’s Intergenerational Service
On February 11th, East and West will meet in the Valentine's Intergenerational Service!
Come celebrate the Japanese version of Valentine's Day. It is called Tanabata or the Star Festival. How does Tanabata compare to our celebration in the West? Making cookies, cards, Origami, music, and dance are all possibilities! You may have a change of heart!

Sunday, February 18
Robin Carre, Introduction to Our Whole Lives for Adults (part 2)
Robin will continue his overview of the OWL curriculum, which he began on Feb. 4. Topics from the second half of OWL for adults include sexuality and relationships, sexuality and family, and sexuality and aging. If you didn’t have a chance to complete the survey on sexuality distributed during the Feb. 4 service, Robin will make copies available during the next two weeks.

Sunday, February 25
Socially Acceptable Bragging
After a brief introduction, we’ll get into small groups and share one or two things about which we are proud. This will be a great opportunity for others to hear something about you. These can be large (Nobel Prize?) or small (comforted a friend?). Come share.

OUR SOCIETY

January 21, The Nature of Time
On January 21, Prairie welcomed Reverend Joan Armstrong from First Society. Reverend Armstrong began with a story illustrating the concept of eternity. She went on to explore why we feel the need to fill what we perceive as empty time and how time seems to speed up as we age. Her presentation led to a wide-ranging discussion. Along with many other topics, we talked about the implications of slowing down or stopping light, and what life changes affect an individual's perception of time. Someone even presented the theory that the world is spinning faster because of the increase in the number of joggers! Another interesting thought was the reason time goes faster the older we get is as we age we have more experiences to call upon. Children, with a smaller itinerary find time moves slowly — “Are we there yet?”

Sunday, February 4: U.U.’s and Sexuality
In the third program of his lay ministry, Robin Carre’ gave us a good feeling for the OWL program. (Our Whole Lives is the new series of human sexuality curricula developed jointly by the UUA and the UCC). We started by thinking up “ground rules” for OWL sessions, and we found that our ideas came close to those officially recommended. Next, Robin asked us to have some fun with PG rated limericks. This opened the door for an uninhibited look at our views about sexuality. He then invited us to participate in a sexual attitude survey, the results of which will be unveiled on February 18. Finally, Robin drew poetic parallels between sexuality and spirituality, and we explored this with our own haiku’s. In all, it was a fun and heartwarming program, and we look forward to more on February 18.

A Reminder: OWL Orientation For Parents
Orientation for parents will be on Sunday, February 11th, 11:30-1:30 if your child is in 2nd-5th grade and participating in the OWL program this spring. Childcare and pizza for all will be provided.
~ Randy, Rachel, John, Amy and Kerri.

Service Auction Donations Needed
March 11th is the Sunday for the Annual Prairie Service Auction, so start thinking about what you can offer. Last year we had exotic dinners, cottages or cabins, childcare, legal or professional services, nature, music and art, and internet training, among many offerings. We had meditation, house cleaning, firewood, garden tilling, car washing, clothing alterations, home repair, dog sitting, notecards, family fantasy stories, and a will. More fun than a barrel full of Unitarians! Call or leave a message, Bob Reuschlein 848-5248. There will be bidding during a pizza lunch with Prairie world-famous auctioneer Orange Schroeder!
Treasurer’s Report
Judy Skog will remain our treasurer until the spring election and the new board is installed. (Yeah!) So, you can still send checks to her.

How Can We Attract New Members to Prairie?
There will be a meeting for all interested Prairie people to make plans on how to attract new members. Our fall effort brought in some new folks and we would like to attract more. The meeting will be held at Thursday March 1st, 7pm, at Ken Skog’s house, 626 Orchard Dr., Madison. This is a continuation of the ad hoc committee on attracting new members that met last fall. New members are welcome!
~ Ken Skog 273-4813

Sign Up For Secret Friends
Have fun getting to know a younger member of the congregation through letter exchange and a party. Letter exchange begins February 18th, party on March 18th. Sign up during a service or call Randy Converse at 238-1856.

From the RE Contingent
Preschool
The Ethnic Connection brought us guests to entertain. We told some very original UU stories.

K-2 and 3-5
We shared activities centered on the people-plant-animal connections in our world. We connected ourselves with yarn in a food web. We also did some serious smelling/seeing/feeling of plant-based products. It was a great way to feel connected to our plant friends!

6-7-8
We continue to have great fun reading the play “The Good Times Are Killing Me”. We also played a game to learn how our UU forebears lived their lives based on principles of justice. The game made us think how we might do the same.

High School
OWL has been in our midst for three sessions now. We have been approaching the subject with the grace of an OWL in flight!

An Alternative to the War on Drugs
Your comments requested by February 18th. Prairie’s Parish poll winner, “An Alternative to the War on Drugs” is the Study/Action issue, selected by General Assembly (G.A.) and is in its first year of study and action. Your comments, and any local activities & workshops suggestions for G.A. are requested. The Denominational Affairs Committee has reviewed this issue and suggests the following changes:

KEY: bold font = additions
( ) = deletions

An Alternative to the War on Drugs

Issue: How can Unitarian Universalism contribute to a reformulation of drug policies which would reduce drug use without infringing on civil liberties, scapegoating minority communities, interfering with the internal affairs of other countries, or dehumanizing drug users?

Background and Reasons for Study:
In 1998 over 500 world leaders declared that the war on drugs was doing more harm than the drugs themselves. Coercive measures have had little impact in reducing drug use, but they have clogged our criminal justice system and produced an unusually large number of non-violent offenders in United States prisons. The drug war has been particularly hard on the poor and on people of color. African Americans use about 13% of the drugs and do 74% of the prison time for simple possession.

Drug war interventions in Central and South America have undermined democratic institutions, driven peasants into greater poverty, and damaged rainforests. Innocent (collateral) victims of this war include HIV babies and people living with AIDS, glaucoma, and other diseases for which they are denied adequate medicine. All this had resulted without significantly (slowing) decreasing the use of drugs. U.S. drug war policy-makers (continually) use political rhetoric and mythology to disparage expert opinion, scientific facts, and alternative drug management strategies that have been successfully used (by) in other countries. Our national leaders have refused to recognize the mandate of eight states for the unrestricted use of marijuana for medicinal purposes.
Most of the more than $18 billion dollars budgeted by the federal government to fight the drug war is allocated to police action. Unitarian Universalists have opposed this punitive approach to drug abuse for two decades. Legislators who would support a more balanced approach to drug use need the support which a strong Unitarian Universalist statement on this issue can provide. We can make a difference to the world we inhabit, it’s now time to revisit this issue.

~ Nancy Schraufnagel, Denominational Affairs Chair 273-3195

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 current primary contact is Linda Sheehy, 273-3895.

THE COMMUNITY

Allied Drive Food Pantry
Reminder: The collection box for the food pantry at Allied Drive is back. Also, we are trying out a second collection box for the Joining Forces for Families organization in the Allied Drive neighborhood. You are encouraged to donate diapers, baby formula and toiletries to this organization. Both boxes are in the foyer.

RSVP/You’re Invited – The Social Events Calendar

Open Book Club: February 11
Come join the Prairie Book Club as they discuss “Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China” by Jung Chang on February 11th after service. Bring a bag lunch and take part in the discussion.

February 24: Playreaders
Join Rachel Siegfried at her home for an evening of playreading, and a dessert break. Call 271-2173 for further information.

Let’s Have A Party for Our Fellow American
February 17: 7:00pm
Put on your red white and/or blue attire and come celebrate. Daisy Peterson, seventeen years after setting foot in this country, is now a full-fledged naturalized United States Citizen! Let’s make it truly official by joining her and her family for an evening of mirth and merriment at the Prairie Meeting House. Children are welcome. RSVP 273-1821.

February 18: 1:00pm CTM Theater Party
The 6th, 7th, and 8th grade R.E. class is planning to attend the production of "The Good Times Are Killing Me," at the Isthmus Playhouse. They also will be eating together before the show. One of the actors in the production is Paula Pachciarz. Pat Watkins is coordinator.

February 19: 6:30pm, Spanish Speakers Potluck
This month’s get-together will be at Prairie Meeting House on Monday, February 19th at 6:30. All levels of Spanish are welcome. If you’re able, bring food to share—any style of cooking is welcome. If you have questions or need a ride, call Rosemary, 238-4382.

February 22: 7:00pm, Come Share Your Questions and Beliefs
Newcomers to Unitarian Universalism or to Prairie often wonder “Just what do you believe?” In fact, long time members may not know what other members believe. To fill this gap and bring our community closer together, we’ve scheduled a get-together at Prairie to talk about our core beliefs, share questions and listen. All people new to Prairie are especially invited as well as people who’ve been here awhile – and longer. We promise an interesting evening. For further information, call Mary Mullen, 238-7904.

Shaarei Shamayim Calendar
Tuesdays 4pm–6pm Children’s Classes
2nd, 3rd & 4th Sat 9am–2pm Religious Sv
Sunday 2/11, 2pm–9pm Special Meeting
Prairie Liaison: Bill Littman 829-1909