

Prairie UU Society, 2010 Whenona Drive, Madison WI 53711-4843

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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)

November 21, 2003

Prairie Fire is the semi-monthly newsletter of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. The two most recent issues may be seen at <http://www.prairie.madison.uua.org>

President: Ken Skog; (608) 273-4813
(608) 661-0776

Editor: Dan Proud, prairieu@execpc.com;

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, November 23

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m. "Death by Legislation," presented by Arthur Thexton.

Tuesday, November 23

Breakfast at the Men's Drop-In Shelter

Wednesday, November 26

7:30 p.m. Joint Thanksgiving Service, First Unitarian Society.

Sunday, November 30

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m. Thanksgiving Service and Potluck. "Tyson Workers Explain the Strike: An Intergenerational Program on Social Justice."

Sunday, December 7

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m. "Choosing Transformation." Second in the "Journey of Healing" series by Amy Owen.

Sunday, December 14

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m. "Mozart: Life and Music." Music presented by members of the congregation and coordinated by Warren Hagstrom.

***Next Prairie Fire deadline is
Sunday, November 30, 2003***

Sunday, December 14 (continued)

10:30 a.m. Holiday Trip to the Milwaukee Public Museum/Milwaukee Art Museum. Details inside.

Sunday, December 21

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m. Symbol Tree Intergenerational Service, led by Erin Bosch.

DETAILS OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, November 23

"Death by Legislation." Arthur Thexton will share his thoughts on how UUs can respond to the three pending efforts to introduce capital punishment to Wisconsin. The death penalty was abolished 150 years ago in this state, and we have a lower crime and murder rate than most states with capital punishment. Does it matter?

Arthur Thexton, a lay minister at James Reeb UU Congregation, is an "upraised UU," and attended Meadville Theological School (near Chicago) for two years. He is an OWL (Our Whole Lives, the sexuality and relationships curriculum) teacher and YRUU (high school youth group) advisor, and a part-time night chaplain at Meriter Hospital. He is also president of the Wisconsin Coalition Against the Death Penalty Fund, Inc. [www.wcadp.org].

Sunday, November 30

Employees of Tyson Foods' pepperoni plant will explain their strike protesting wage cutbacks. We will break bread together, enjoy get-acquainted activities, sing fun songs, collect voluntary contributions to the strike fund and help lift the spirits of these Jefferson residents fighting to maintain their standard of living. Check out their website at www.tysonfamiliesstandup.org. Please bring a generous amount of food for this potluck.

Sunday, December 7

"Choosing Transformation" This is the second in a series of three programs on forgiveness given by Amy Owen. We will revisit what forgiveness means and how uncovering the true impact of a painful event can help us forgive, and move on to examine what barriers might be preventing us from making this healing choice. We will also begin to focus on the person who hurt us, and consider how our view of that person impacts our own well-being.

Sunday, December 14

Although there is a regular Sunday service at Prairie, an alternative offering is a holiday trip to the Milwaukee Public Museum or the Art Museum. The bus leaves Madison about 10:30 a.m.

If you choose to visit the Milwaukee Public Museum, you can view an I-Max film on bugs, and see the new reptile exhibit and the live butterfly exhibit. The cost is \$32 (adults) or \$20 (children 18 and younger), which covers transportation, the film, and the special exhibits.

The Milwaukee Art Museum has an exhibit on "The Quilts of Gee's Bend." Transportation to the museum is

\$25, and you have to pay separately at the Museum for general admission tickets (\$14 adults; \$12 seniors; \$8 without the quilt exhibit for adults; \$6 for seniors, without the quilt exhibit).

The bus will leave First Unitarian Society at 10:30 a.m., with stops at Nakoma Plaza, South Towne Mall, and East Johnson Street, depending upon the number of children participating. Departure points and times will be given in your confirmations by mail two weeks before the trip. There will be a lunch stop on the trip. Expect to return to Madison by 6:00 p.m. or 6:30 p.m.

The paid reservation deadline is Friday, November 21. Make check payable to Prairie UU Society and send them to Pat Watkins, 230 N. Meadow Lane.

OUR SOCIETY

PRAIRIE ENDORSES THE EARTH CHARTER

At the parish meeting on November 9, the congregation voted to formally endorse the Earth Charter as was proposed by the Social Action Committee. Here is the letter that Ken Skog sent to the Earth Charter International Secretariat:

Dear Sir/Madame,

We are pleased to inform you that Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society of Madison, Wisconsin, USA, at our November 9, 2003 parish meeting, has voted to formally endorse the Earth Charter as a good example of the integration of the principles relating to the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development which we believe our earth needs.

We will seek to apply its principles in our programs, policies and educational activities.

*Kind regards,
Ken Skog, President*

[Ed.: Brochures describing The Earth Charter are on display at Prairie. You can also look at the Web site, www.earthcharter.org.]

PROGRAM

NOTES ON RECENT PROGRAMS

On November 2, Jani Koester described the plight of homeless children in Madison and her work in educating them. She is another one of Prairie's helping heroes.

On November 9, Rose and Trevor Stephenson gave us a dramatic presentation of the career of Susan B. Anthony, with 18th-century music by Trevor on his harpsichord.

Our planned speaker for November 16 was Jane Esbenson Moore, about Humanism in the UU movement. A family emergency forced her to cancel her visit on the preceding Monday. (We hope to have her give a presentation next year.)

On this short notice, Doleta Chapru organized a great program about the work and experiences of Prairie members in the labor movement and the workplace. Everyone she called agreed to participate. The introductory panel consisted of Al Nettleton, Susan Hagstrom, Bob Durkin, and Jack and Betty Jallings, with help from Rick Ruecking. In the following discussion, several members described their experiences in the workplace and with unions.

Additional praise to Prairie women singers for working up "Bread and Roses" and singing it the same morning, to Aileen Nettleton for writing down the Joe Hill music via telephone dictation, to Paula Pachciarz for shortening the children's story she was given the day before the service, and to Ruth Calden for making a special trip to the library so she could read excerpts from the book *Packing House Daughter*.

The program was followed by perhaps the tastiest potluck in recent Prairie history.

PrairieNews Group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/>

PrairieViews Group:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/>

Social Action: <http://socialaction.homestead.com>

Office Hours for the Prairie Office Administrator

Mondays 7–9 p.m.; Saturdays 10 a.m.–12 noon

Prairie Web Sites

Prairie UU: <http://my.execpc.com/~prairieu/>

SOCIAL ACTION

CAN YOU HELP SCRAMBLE 252 EGGS?

The holidays feel like a time of plenty to many of us. We worry about what to include in our dinner--not about getting enough to eat. The men at the Drop-In Shelter often don't know where their next meal is going to come from, but they know they can count on the generous breakfast Prairie brings them every month.

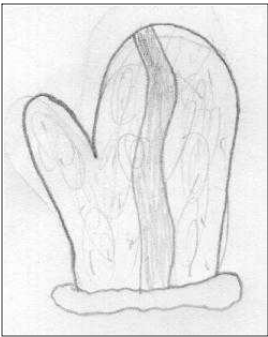
If you can spare the time in the early morning next Tuesday, November 25, or Tuesday, December 23, your assistance with cooking and serving the breakfast would be appreciated. Please let Paula Pachciarz know if you can help out (273-4806, pachwack@chorus.net). Thanks.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

CALLING ALL LONELY GLOVES!

We have a project pending in R.E. which can use all your old single knit gloves. It's fine if they're threadbare in spots—we'll put them to good use. There will be a box upstairs for them, or find one of the RE folks to "hand" off to. Thanks!

Rachel Long



Drawing by Toby Wacker

Shaarei Shamayim Calendar

Tues. 3:45–6:15 p.m. & Sat. 8:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.

Prairie Liaison: Celeste Robins 249–5933

CelestialR@charter.net

LONG-RANGE PLANNING

SOME THOUGHTS ON GROWTH

(Quotations are from the UUA Congregation Handbook on the UUA website). Some of the information or issues raised may be well-known to long time or highly involved UU members; for some of us I hope it gives a little more context and definition to may seem a painful process to grow and change.

Long-range planning is designed to help a congregation clarify its preferred future and to figure out what it needs to do to get there. Long range tasks include; designing a process that fits the congregation, developing a timetable, building commitment among various parts of the congregation, and assisting the congregation in articulating its vision and mission.

Effective long-range planning has to consider the needs, style, and capacity of the congregation. Typically a long-range planning process for a given change requires a timetable of a full calendar year. “To succeed there has to be some sensitivity to the Congregation’s culture, style, and way of doing things.” The UUA Congregational Handbook. This also means that for some members change comes too quickly and for others not nearly fast enough.

“A congregation either grows or dies. Every congregation has a lifetime of around twenty years. Unless it renews itself by welcoming members of the next generation before the current members become too old to make that happen, con congregation will grow older and become weaker and less able to maintain itself.” UUA Handbook. According to the UUA most Unitarian Universalist congregations experience “modest” membership and church school growth. Obviously, a few, like FUS experience much greater growth, but that is not the norm.

There are certain stages in the life of a congregation in which the resistance to further growth needs to be addressed. If not, the congregation will stall or decline in membership. Congregations of around seventy members face this wall of resistance, as do congregations at around 150 and 350 members. When

a congregation reaches a certain size, it must experience a transformation in the way it see itself.

Changes in organization, ministry, volunteer and professional staff, programs , service content, and sometimes meeting place are required. To grow we need to think larger and think of ourselves as a larger community.

MEMBERSHIP

Updates:

Barb Bailly
15 N. Hancock St. #9
Madison, WI 53703
bibi228@aol.com

LETTERS

UU NIAGARA EXPERIENCE

Dear Sister UU Congregation,

Please help our small UU Church publicize an important fundraiser—a 4-day UU Niagara Experience you may wish to enjoy July 18-21, 2004.

Come experience the wonder of Niagara Falls, including some great educational opportunities while being taken care of like royalty. The UU Church of Niagara is conducting a 4-day UU Niagara Experience, which is a lifetime opportunity to encounter the Falls up close from every prospective, even safely riding beneath a tethered balloon. Spend four days with us exploring the rich historical and natural wonders around the Falls. For information visit our web site:

<http://www.uunex.net/>

We hope some of your members will return to you with such rave reviews that we will be able to make this an annual event.

*Peter Diachun, Event Chairman
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara
639 Main Street, P.O. Box 2566
Niagara Falls, NY 14302*

Email : info@uunex.net
Telephone : (716) 791-4453

UUA FIRE RELIEF FUND COLLECTION AT PRAIRIE

Thank you, all the members of your congregation, for reaching out to support those UUs affected by the fires. I know that your generosity to the larger UU community will be greatly appreciated!

Thanks for letting us know!

Best regards,
Carol Hosmer, District Office Manager

OTHER NEWS

REEB CELEBRATES 10 YEARS ON DEC. 5

James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation invites Prairie members to a reception celebrating the first 10 years of the Reeb fellowship's existence. The reception, with special guest the Rev. Jonalu Johnstone, will be held December 5 from 6 to 9 p.m. at James Reeb, 2146 East Johnson St., Madison. RSVP to Connie Nadler (242-5537) before Dec. 1.

UUSC E-MAIL BULLETIN

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee: advancing human rights and social justice in the United States and throughout the world.

Programs update: Follow-up on UUSC Conference Call

The following is a summary of discussion from the November 4 UUSC Conference Call. The next call is Monday, December 1, 2003.

Kim McDonald, programs senior associate for education and action, recently lead 15 people, ages 16 to 70, on UUSC's On the Border Just Works workcamp: a joint project with BorderLinks, an interfaith human rights organization providing travel and educational opportunities on the U.S.-Mexico border. The workcamp focused on immigration issues, including the systemic problems that force many to risk their lives in

search of better life in the United States.

Participants met UUSC's staff in Tucson, Arizona, where they visited the U.S. Border Patrol. While there, they learned first-hand what dehumanizing an experience our border can be. Border Patrol staff spoke about the impact of 9/11 on their work, as they have become a U.S. "paramilitary" force. This "frightening and eye-opening" experience will not soon be forgotten by workcamp participants.

They continued on to the House of Hope in Sonora, Mexico, where a grassroots community group provides breakfast and lunch for up to 300 children daily, with no governmental assistance. Workcampers built cob bricks from mud, which they used to repair a playground wall at a nearby daycare center. They also visited a shelter providing emotional and psychological support for those unable to find work, and considering crossing the border. There they learned from migrants passing through that people in the area have migrated for centuries, and so many do not recognize the artificial border created by the U.S. government relatively recently.

Workcampers were struck by the level of poverty they witnessed in the border towns they visited. Infrastructure, including sanitation, is exceedingly dilapidated. Though food costs just as much in these towns as it does in our own, the average maquiladora worker makes only \$48 a month. Most homes, built of rocks and anything else one can find, have no electricity and plumbing is limited. Following NAFTA, communal farms have been taken over by agri-business corporations, resulting in an extreme lack of work and heightened poverty. The Fair Trade of the Americas Act threatens to worsen this situation throughout the Americas.

Workcamp attendees will be holding workshops in their communities, helping others to learn about their experiences and these systemic issues.

Things we can do:

- Learn more about the Free Trade of the Americas Act and Central America Free Trade Act. Visit: www.stopftaa.org.
- Write the U.S. Trade Representative and your congressional representatives.
- Get involved with UUSC's shareholder advocacy program.

- Link with local community organizations to act for change.
- Take action for systemic change. We must use our vote influence over our government to help people outside of the U.S. as well as within.

Kim McDonald is working with Cultural Survival and the UUA to plan our next workcamp, which will focus on Native American issues and be held in New England in March 2004. Read about our recent workcamp at

www.uusc.org.

Action Alert: Protest move by GOP leadership to block approval of Cuba travel amendment

On Nov. 12, 2003, the Republican leadership stripped the Cuba travel amendment from the FY04 Transportation-Treasury Appropriations bill. The action took place behind closed doors and without giving an opportunity for the full House-Senate conference committee to vote. The bill was before the conference committee to reconcile differences between the versions passed by the two houses. However, the wording of the Cuba travel amendment was the same in both the House and Senate bills. Both the Senate and House are controlled by the Republicans but President Bush had threatened to veto the bill if it included the Cuba amendment.

Action

It is important to keep the pressure on your elected policymakers:

- Contact your two senators and your representative to loudly protest this subversion of democracy.
- Contact President Bush to protest pandering to Florida electoral votes, and urge him to support the will of the vast majority of Americans.
- To send an immediate message by e-mail or fax to your members of Congress or President Bush, or to find the phone number of your elected representatives, visit our online Legislative Action Center at <http://www.uusc.org/info/capwizinfo.html>.

Message

-- The amendment to end the travel ban represents the bipartisan will of Congress and the American people. There is no justification for the leadership to remove the Cuba travel amendment, without even a vote by the full conference committee. The votes by the House and Senate represent a clear statement of policy intent by

Congress. Since the identical amendment was approved by both houses of Congress, there was nothing for the conference committee to reconcile.

-- The White House and the Republican leadership should not have the power to remove the amendment against the will of the people and the Congress.

-- Polls and the work of the UUSC show that the American people favor an end to the travel ban.

Background

Last month, the Senate voted 59-36 to include an amendment that would eliminate funding for the enforcement of the Cuba travel ban. The House had approved the identical amendment in September by a vote of 227-188. In a further show of strong Senate bipartisan support for ending the travel ban, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved a bill, S. 950, to lift the Cuba travel ban entirely.

Supporters of the Cuba travel amendment have said that if the conferees produced a conference report that excluded their amendment, they would consider all parliamentary options available to them to respond.

In passing the Cuba travel amendment, the Senate joined the House in challenging the Bush administration's hard-line Cuba policy. The vote came less than two weeks after Rose Garden remarks by President Bush in which he announced that he would increase the crackdown on people traveling to Cuba illegally and would make it more difficult to secure licenses to travel legally. The administration has regularly threatened to veto any bill that would ease the embargo, but strong bipartisan majorities in the House and now the Senate have soundly rejected this pressure and voted to end restrictions on U.S. citizens' right to travel to Cuba.

Because the language that passed the Senate is identical to the amendment that passed the House, it is technically not subject to change or removal by the conference committee.

Even though the president has threatened to veto any bill easing the embargo on Cuba, the approval of the travel amendment was a tremendous victory. He would have to expend a lot of political capital and credibility to veto a major bill or a huge omnibus bill, which may be what happens to the remaining appropriations bills.

This vote is truly a display, for the first time, that both chambers support an end to the travel ban and a re-thinking of the current policy. We should applaud this

display, but also urge the Republican leadership to respect the wishes of the majority of American people and allow this important measure to reach the president's desk.

For additional background from an earlier alert, visit <http://www.uusc.org/news/alert103103.html>.

For more information, visit the Web site our colleague organization, the Latin American Working Group at www.lawg.org.

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