



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 Bond of Union)

June 11, 2004

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

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Editor: Dan Proud, prairieu@execpc.com; (608) 661-0776

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, June 13

☞ 10:00 a.m. "Save Gas with Community Car" with Amanda White

☞ 11:45 a.m. Book Club discussion at Prairie.
Topic is *Tortilla Curtain*, by T. Coraghessan Boyle.

Tuesday, June 15

☞ 7:00 p.m. Discussion focusing on Iraq War issues, held every other Tuesday at Prairie. Led by Nancy Graham.

Wednesday, June 16

7:30 p.m. Board meeting at Prairie.

Saturday, June 19

Prairie Bus Trip Fundraiser to Milwaukee

Sunday, June 20

☞ 10:00 a.m. "Labyrinth Walking Meditation" led by Judy Skog.

Tuesday, June 22

☞ 7:00 p.m. Study session, "Challenge Corporate Power/Assert the People's Rights." Meets every other Tuesday at Prairie.

Thursday-Monday, June 24-28

General Assembly, Long Beach, California

Sunday, June 27

☞ 10:00 a.m. "Favorite Books to Share for Summer Reading," led by Galen and Rose Smith.

Tuesday, June 29

☞ 7:00 p.m. Discussion on Iraq War, held every other Tuesday at Prairie. Led by Nancy Graham.

Sunday, July 4

☞ 11 a.m. Independence Day Picnic at Hoyt Park

Saturday, August 7

☞ Prairie Fundraiser Trip to the Chicago Field Museum for the exhibit entitled "Splendors of China." See flyer on Bulletin Board, or call Pat Watkins at 233-5795 for further information. Cost of \$52 is due by June 26th.

Saturday, August 14

1:30 p.m. Prairie Playreaders Organizational Potluck Lunch.

Friday-Sunday, September 17-19

Annual Retreat, at Bethel Horizons

☞ = Details follow in this issue.

DETAILS OF COMING EVENTS

Saturday, June 13

Always wanted to drive a Prius or a Honda Civic hybrid? Appalled that a tank of gas now costs \$20-30? Want to do something to stop Global Warming? Come this Sunday (June 6) to learn about Madison Community Car. It's a member-based carsharing organization that provides cars by the hour and by the day...and, get this, they pay for the gas!

This should be of special interest for those of you who work at the University. Through a unique

Next Prairie Fire Deadline: June 20

partnership with UW Transportation Services, UW faculty, staff and students get 5 *free* hours and 50 *free* miles to try out carsharing. For more information, attend on Sunday or visit www.communitycar.com.

Sunday, June 20

Come walk the Labyrinth with Judy Skog at Prairie on Sunday, June 20. Judy will borrow the wonderful canvas Labyrinth made by MUUYACM for our celebration of the Solstice. If the weather is nice, we will set it up in the back yard. If it rains, it will be set up in the meeting room. (Indoors will be a tight fit.) As this is a walking meditation, the usual service format will be abbreviated and rearranged. Our back yard is neither level nor smooth, so please bring a walking aid if you think your balance might be challenged.

Sunday, June 27

For our program on summer reading, please bring books you are prepared to talk about for a few minutes. If you have any that are inspirational to help us through these difficult times, we would love to hear about them.

Sunday, July 4

Independence Day Picnic at Hoyt Park, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

This is our traditional 4th of July picnic to enjoy fellowship and the outdoors. Please bring a dish to share and your own plates, cups and utensils and, if you wish, something to grill. As the shelter is in a woody place mosquito repellent would be good to have.

Near the parking lot are bathrooms and a playground with swings and structures to climb, a basketball court, and a big grassy space for frisbees (ultimate frisbee anyone?) etc. The park includes some nice walks through the woods. The shelter will protect us in light rain. If the rain is hard or cold, we will retreat to the meeting house.

Directions: Go west on Regent Street past West High School, Speedway, and Franklin to Hoyt Park on 3902 Regent Street. There is a drive-in entrance and spacious parking lot less than a block west of Glenway and Regent.

We have reserved the stone shelter surrounded by trees at the bottom of the hill below the parking lot. The shelter is handicapped accessible but there is no

parking beside it. Walk from the parking lot a short distance on the gravel drive downhill around the curve to the shelter, which is not visible from the parking lot.

OUR SOCIETY

STUDY SERIES ON TUESDAY NIGHTS

The Adult forum on Iraq will be meeting on Tuesday, June 15 at 7 p.m. at Prairie.

On June 1, eleven Prairie members attended the Adult forum series on Iraq. We had reports from news around the world to see how other countries were reporting U.S. activities and their information and opinions. News from New Zealand, Canada, Syria, and Brazil were available.

On June 15th we plan to have more countries like England, Spain, Italy, Indonesia and alternative news sources added. We also discuss the Daily News show. This group not only gives news, but serves as a support for these troubled times. Please join us. For more information, contact Nancy Graham at 244-6495.

A second series, "Challenge Corporate Power/ Assert the People's Rights," is a 10-week study course that begins Tuesday, May 25. This course, assembled by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, focuses on the root causes of corporate and state oppression, and on ways to direct efforts for change in law and culture. The reading materials have *not* been selected to provide a balanced view of corporate power and its impacts on all countries and people. We are already inundated with the corporate perspective on almost every issue. The materials were instead chosen to provide pieces of the largely untold story of how corporations have come to dominate our lives in the name of profit and at the expense of people and the planet. For more information, call Nancy Graham at 244-6595.

PRAIRIE BUS TRIP TO CHICAGO'S FIELD MUSEUM

On Saturday, August 7, we will sponsor another fundraiser to the exhibit entitled *The Splendor of China's Forbidden City: The Glorious Reign of Emperor Qianlong*. This exhibit explores China's forbidden city at the height of its glory in the 18th century, and features 400 objects, one third of which

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY WALK

Our Middle School/High School service project, a walk to benefit Habitat for Humanity on May 21, was a big success! We had 16 walkers, including 3 adults and 13 youth. We raised hundreds of dollars, even before completing the final count. Thanks to everyone who helped, including those who contributed, and of course to the great fund-raising walkers!

Rachel Long

June 16 marks the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji (1563-1606). Arjan built the Harimandir (Temple of God) in which Sikhs could meet for worship in the town of Amritsar. Sikhs remember Arjan for contributing to and compiling the Sikh Scriptures.
----Multifaith Calendar 2004

PROGRAM

READING RESOURCES ON SLAVERY

The Modern Slavery program of May 2 resulted in a number of requests for the names of books and Web sites relating to this topic.

Book suggestions are *Escape from Slavery*, by Francis Bok (slavery in the Sudan); the library has 9 copies; *Disposable People*, by Kevin Bales (slavery in various parts of the world--very informative and highly recommended); the library has 4 copies.

Web sites include: humantrafficking.com; antislavery.org; freethechildren.org; polarisproject.org; freetheslaves.net; iabolish.com; fusn.org/slavery.html

Information can also be acquired by phoning the Justice Dept. Hotline at 1-888-428-7571; the C.I.A.'s 79-page, year 2000 report "International Trafficking in Women to the United States: A Contemporary Manifestation of Slavery," the office of the (federal) Secretary of State (inquire why the European Union is not doing more about the slave traffic into and from Europe, and inquire about its annual report on human trafficking.

have never been on public view. They illustrate both his personal and political life during a 60-year reign, including artifacts from a concubine's chamber, his personal Tibetan Buddhist shrine and his funeral throne, along with the ornate robes, military gear and equestrian equipment used for imperial functions.

Make checks out to Prairie UU Society for \$52 and mail to Pat Watkins, 230 N. Meadow Lane, Madison 53705, **to arrive no later than June 26.**

GEAR UP FOR SUMMER PRAIRIE BOOK CLUB SELECTIONS

Please note the change in the sequence of our three summer selections from the announcement in the last *Prairie Fire* issue.

Sunday, June 13 -- *TORTILLA CURTAIN*, by T. Coraghessan Boyle, is a novel that contrasts the haves and have-nots in the form of two couples who live in close proximity in California's Topanga Canyon: "agnostic liberals with a passion for recycling and fitness" and an undocumented couple from Mexico. Both couples are pursuing the American dream. 355 pages. A more complete description and a reading guide can be found at www.readinggroupguides.com/guides/tortilla_curtain.asp

Sunday, July 18 - *READING LOLITA IN TEHRAN* by Azar Nafisi is a nonfiction memoir of a teacher's life in Iran, centered on a women's reading group she started. The group read and discussed books from the West that were banned in Iran. Takes place during the Iran-Iraq War. 384 pages. A longer description and reading guide is available at www.readinggroupguides.com/guides3/reading_lolita_in_tehran1.asp

Sunday, August 15 - *A FINE BALANCE*, by Rohinton Mistry, a novel set in India in 1975. It follows the fortunes of 4 characters who form an alliance during chaotic times: an uncle and nephew who are tailors who left their village that was racked with caste violence, a widow trying to preserve her independence, and a young student from the mountains. 624 pages. See a longer description and a discussion guide at www.readinggroupguides.com/guides/fine_balance.asp

PRINT YOUR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Don't forget, you can submit your announcement for the Sunday program until Saturday morning. Please consider whether your announcement will have better effect being carried home on paper than being forgotten amid the competition of conversations, other announcements, and the day's activities. Send your announcements to prouds@tds.net.

LETTERS

ON HUMAN DIGNITY AND THE AFTERMATH OF WAR



[For the full text of this excerpt and for related links, see the UUA Web site, <http://www.uua.org/news/2004/040511.html>. --Ed.]

My friends,

I write with a deep sense of sadness and concern for our country and for this complex world in which we all must co-exist....I am saddened and frustrated by the grinding progress of this war, this unending occupation which seems to hold no prospect of a positive outcome for any side.

....Today, questions resound in our consciousness. A pre-emptive war we were told was justified by the threat to our nation, we now know was based, at best, on flawed intelligence and, at worst, on outright lies. A war which was justified by the brutality of Saddam's regime has now resulted in young American women and men acting out a brutality almost as extreme. A war we were told we had won more than a year ago is today claiming more and more lives. Iraqis who once supported the invasion of their homeland in the hope that Saddam's removal would make their lives better have been disillusioned; many have turned against us.

...It is the role of faith communities such as ours to ask difficult questions, to work for the causes and beliefs we hold dear, and to join with those in our faith circles in supporting one another. I hope you will raise your own questions in your homes and in your congregations, and that you will make use of the resources for reflection and possible action which are posted on this site....

In faith,

William G. Sinkford, UUA President

MEMBERSHIP

Updates:

Julie and Dick Bonser
630 S. Whitney Way #111
Madison, WI 53711-1035
332-2293
julbon@earthlink.net
rbonser38@earthlink.net

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

UU CIRCLES OF SUPPORT FORMING AT FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY

Two Circles of Support for returning prisoners are being formed at FUS and all Madison UUs are welcome. This program would continue Prairie's study of Criminal Justice and Prison Reform, a GA topic of study this year. One circle will serve the needs of a returning prisoner who is a woman, and one will serve a man. The woman's circles will be made up of all women, and there are 5 or 6 slots to be filled. The circle for the man can include both men and women. Members of a circle need to experience the Madison Area Urban Ministry Returning Prisoner Simulation and participate in a two hour training. A six-month commitment of one or two meetings per month is needed. Contact Wendy Cooper, Social Justice Coordinator to learn more about the opportunity at wendyc@fusmakison.org, or 233-9774 ext. 25.

SUMMER DISTRICT EVENTS

The Central Midwest District is offering two events that may interest you. The Lake Geneva Summer Assembly will be held July 4 - July 10 at Lake Geneva. The WomanSpirit Summer Conference at Camp Ronona, "Standing Like a Tree" is August 6 -8 with an extended day on August 9. Anyone needing more information may call Mary Somers 276-8397 or email asomers@execpc.com.

TEXAS UU CHURCH STATUS RESTORED

The state of Texas has reversed an earlier decision to deny tax-exempt status to a Unitarian Universalist church because of its teachings.

The state comptroller's office originally ruled that Red River Unitarian Universalist Church in Denison

was not a religious organization for tax purposes because it does not have one system of belief. Church officials said it was the first time in U.S. history that a state had denied tax exemption to the Unitarians because of its teachings. The comptroller's office said the reversal came after Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn asked her general counsel to review it.

Wire services added this information: The Unitarian Universalist church grew out of two Christian religious movements: Unitarians who believed in the unity of God and Universalists who believed in universal salvation for all.

Unitarians support a free search for spiritual truth. Atheists and pagans are a significant part of their membership. Jews, Buddhists, Christians and others sometimes join to maintain their traditions without having to accept, wholesale, their denominations' creed.

Unitarians are famously resistant to dogma. They debate whether to describe their houses of worship as churches or even call themselves a denomination.

*Carol J. Hosmer
District Office Manager, Central Midwest District
708-236-0831*

FREEDOM SUMMER WORKCAMP: A CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNEY

In July 2004, UU youth and young adults will join the Service Committee on a civil rights journey to Atlanta, Selma, Montgomery and Birmingham. We will travel together by bus. During this trip, we will visit historical sites that were significant to young people who worked to register new voters during Freedom Summer, 1964. We will also hear the stories of people who were there. This trip will begin with inspiration and cause reflection. It will conclude with and electoral related skills training that will equip participants to return to their communities and campuses as activists.

For more information call 1-800-388-3920 and ask for Nguyen or email us at justworks@uusc.org.

*Susan Leslie
Director of the Office for Congregational Advocacy
& Witness, Unitarian Universalist Association
sleslie@uua.org*

EXPLORE OUR ROOTS IN TRANSYLVANIA
Second Unitarian Church of Chicago is organizing a trip to Transylvania September 21 to October 4, 2004. The church is opening up the trip to other people in the district who are interested in Transylvania and would like to visit, but don't have a congregational trip planned. It's also a great opportunity for the District folks in general. There is a brochure about the trip at Prairie.

For more information, you can contact Kimberly Bares, 2U/Partner Church Council District Networker, Central Midwest District, at 773-508-5885.

PRAIRIE OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR HOURS

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

SHAAREI SHAMAYIM CALENDAR

Saturdays 8:45 - 1:15

Prairie Liaison: Celeste Robins 249-5933

OTHER NEWS

TOMBOY GIRL FEST 2004

Join us Saturday, June 12 for a full day of music, comedy, vending and more at The Alliant Energy Center Exhibition Hall. This year's lineup features Michele Balan, Ellis, Ferron, Martine Locke, Pamela Means, Wishing Chair & Kara Barnard, and Cheryl Wheeler. Tickets are \$60 and can be ordered online at www.tomboygirl.com.

Other weekend events include a meet and great on Friday evening at Cafe Mariah. Cafe Mariah offers fabulous dinners and it will be followed by a song by each of the performers who are in town that night. This will be followed by drinks at the Harmony Bar for those interested.

There will be a Sprawl Dance following the festival on site at the Alliant Energy Center.

On Sunday we are hosting the second annual Tomboy girl GOLF SCRAMBLE. Tee time is 8 a.m. and you do not need to be a good golfer to enjoy the morning. Lunch will be served after the 9-hole scramble. Lots of prizes and good fun. You are also invited to just join us for lunch for a lesser price. To register for the scramble, go to Golf Scramble on www.Tomboygirl.com.

JUNE 22 – FINANCING WISCONSIN'S FUTURE: POLITICS, THE ECONOMY AND PUBLIC OPINION

A Discussion Sponsored by the Center on Wisconsin Strategy and the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families

Wisconsin faces a tremendous challenge in funding government services in the next biennium and for many years to come. Yet there is little open discussion about how the state and local governments can raise sufficient revenue, ensure that the tax burden is fair, and mesh revenue needs and economic growth.

Financing Wisconsin's Future will consider these and other issues relating to state and local revenue in Wisconsin. Along with a review of the basics of Wisconsin's current tax burden, the conference will present the results of a major opinion poll recently done on the Wisconsin public's attitudes toward that burden, and its possible reform. The conference will also bring in national experts on the economic effects of different tax structures and rates, and the political experience here and elsewhere of different sorts of tax reform.

Diane Feldman will present the results of the poll recently done by her firm, the Feldman Group. Dean Baker of the Center for Economic Policy Research and Michael Ettlinger of the Economic Analysis Research Network will respectively lead off the discussions of tax economics and politics. The presentations by these "outside experts" will be commented on, criticized, and enlarged upon by Wisconsinites familiar with our local experience. These commentators will include Wisconsin politicians from both major parties, representatives of Wisconsin business and labor, academics, activists, and others.

We hope this will be a lively, friendly, informed, and informing conference discussion, and invite you to participate.

The event will take place June 22, from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., at the UW-Madison Memorial Union.

Registration is \$40, which includes lunch. (Note that the starting time was moved up to 9 a.m. to add a short introductory session and to accommodate some of the panelists. The revised schedule follows below.)

The conference will be hosted by the Center on Wisconsin Strategy and the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. Co-sponsors include AARP, AFSCME, American Federation of Teachers, Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups, Institute for Wisconsin's Future, League of Wisconsin Municipalities, League of Women Voters, Survival Coalition, Wisconsin Citizen Action, Wisconsin Counties Association, Wisconsin Council of Churches, and the Wisconsin Education Association Council.

To register or obtain additional information, go to www.wccf.org (the link is on the left) or www.cows.org. Please register by Monday, June 14.

PRAIRIE WEB SITES

Prairie UU: my.execpc.com/~prairieu/

PrairieNews Group:

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

PrairieViews Group:

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

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

PRAIRIE FLORA: WEEDING REVEALS GEMS

[On April 18, Galen Smith gave a tour of Prairie flora (flowers, weeds, etc.). This is the third in a series examining our leafy residents more closely.]

On June 4, while many Prairie UU's worked on other outdoor maintenance projects such as weeding the rock garden, trimming trees and shrubs, and painting the railings, Donna Murdoch, Ruth Calden, Dirk Herr-Hoyman and I worked in our "prairie" (really a garden of native prairie plants) in front of our meeting house.

For cosmetic purposes we removed last year's dead shoots, especially of the very robust switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*) which dominates too much of the prairie. We also dug up baby trees growing from seeds carried there by wind, birds or squirrels. In a natural prairie before European settlement, this work would have been done by the fires set frequently by native peoples.

We also pulled the tops of a lot of cypress spurge (*Euphorbia cyparissias*), introduced from Eurasia

and probably the worst weed in our prairie, but it is impossible to remove the underground rhizomes that will keep producing new shoots.

We planted about a dozen new plants. Our tiny "prairie" is moderately successful, but it still has lots of non-native plants and mostly native non-prairie plants such as tree seedlings, which if allowed to grow would destroy the prairie plants, as has happened in many of Wisconsin's natural prairie remnants in recent years.

Some of the species are now spreading nicely by means of seeds. The spectacular prairie dock (*Silphium terebinthinaceum*) and compass-plant (*Silphium laciniatum*), shown in the photos, are even established in the rock garden, where we treat them as weeds!

Our management aim is to have a "prairie" that maintains itself with minimum labor. We should burn it more often in the spring or fall, plant more species to increase the biodiversity and to fill in the weedier places, and replace some of the switch grass with more desirable species.

NOTE: There was an error in the May 21 *Prairie Fire* piece on *Aquilegia*. The origin of the name *Aquilegia* was not as given; rather it is derived from *aquila*, Latin for eagle, in reference to the resemblance of the spurs of some species to the claws of eagles.

Galen Smith

Galen is a member of the board of directors of the Wisconsin Wetlands Association. He will lead another field trip on June 19, this time to Beaulah Lake Bog in Walworth County.



Prairie dock is in the middle of this photo.



Compass plant

AFS HOSTS NEEDED

Open your home and heart to an AFS high school exchange student and add an international branch to your family tree! AFS (formerly the American Field Service) has been leading student exchange for more than 55 years as a worldwide, nonprofit organization dedicated to building a more just and peaceful world. Share your daily lives with an outstanding young person from another country who is eager to learn what it's like to live and study in high school in the U.S. The benefits are tremendous! There are also opportunities to host AFS Visiting Teachers. Hosting with AFS is a way for all kinds of families—two-parent households with small children, teenagers, or no children at home; single parents; grandparents; or adults who do not have children—to have an international experience without leaving home.

AFS is largely a community-based organization with volunteers throughout the U.S. who provide ongoing support to students and their host families. AFS has one of the largest volunteer-based networks of its kind in the world—more than 8,000 U.S. volunteers and 100,000 around the globe. For more information about hosting in Madison, study abroad programs for high school students, scholarships, or local volunteer opportunities, contact Jessica Kluntz at 1-800-876-2376 Ext. 2241/jkluntz@afs.org or visit www.afs.org/usa.

UUSC E-MAIL BULLETIN

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

Action Alert: Urge Congress to keep pressure on Burma military junta to allow democracy, end human rights abuses

Burma's military regime has imprisoned over 1,500 political prisoners, conscripted 70,000 child soldiers, carries out a modern form of slavery and uses rape as a weapon of war. Help deny this brutal regime part of the hard currency it needs to stay in power. Contact your members of Congress and ask them to support and to co-sponsor the resolution to renew import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003. For the complete action alert, visit: <http://www.uusc.org/news/alert052804.html>

UUSC demands justice, accountability for U.S. human rights abuses in Iraq

As a human rights organization, UUSC deplores the alleged mistreatment of detainees in Iraq and Afghanistan by members of the U.S. Military, civilian contractors and/or "Other Government Agencies." We are calling for swift justice and accountability for these abuses as well as immediate implementation of procedures to guarantee that such abuses never happen again. To read UUSC's complete statement, visit: www.uusc.org/info/article051204.html

Survivors search for peace, justice at Guatemala massacre burial sites

Estimates say that up to a fourth of the primarily indigenous population of Rabinal, Guatemala, was killed during the devastating civil war. Decades later, family members are still searching for the bodies of their loved ones that disappeared during the 1980s. A recent UUSC delegation learned about the courageous work UUSC program partners are doing to bring the perpetrators to justice, including exhuming mass burial sites for evidence as well as to bring closure to families. To learn more, visit: www.uusc.org/info/article052804.html

Take 'em to court: UUSC urges Action of Immediate Witness at General Assembly

Join UUSC in voicing the concern of the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association over the attacks on the Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA). This measure is one of the few which permits multinational corporations with significant assets in the United States to be held accountable for their behavior around the world. To learn more, visit: <http://www.uusc.org/info/article052704.html>

Teen volunteers learn about Native American culture on spring 'vacation'

A group of teenagers from central Massachusetts spent their April school vacation learning firsthand about the life and culture of Native Americans in modern United States. Over the course of three days, the group learned about issues affecting a community of Mohawk people who have returned to the Mohawk Valley in upstate New York. To learn more about this workcamp, visit:

<http://www.uusc.org/info/article052404.html>

Young activists can defend democracy at summer 2004 workcamps

Have you signed up for the Defending Democracy Workcamps this year? Do you want to learn/enhance leadership skills? Join a committed group of social justice advocates who want to help empower others through voter registration and get-out-the-vote activities. Learn voter advocacy skills from interesting people in interesting locations, join us for a week in Boston, MA (Jul. 26-30) or New York City (Aug. 30-Sept. 2) or both! Take the skills that you learn back to your own community. For more about these and other upcoming workcamps, visit:

www.uusc.org/news/wcsched2004.html

UUA SUPPORTS MASS. GAY MARRIAGES

In a front-page story in the May 10 *Boston Globe*, writer Michael Paulson focuses on the UUA commitment to supporting marriage equality. He stated, "At a time when many of the major religious denominations of the United States are riven by divisive debates over homosexuality, a small Boston-based denomination...is preparing to supply ministers to officiate at large numbers of weddings of same-sex couples."

In the article, UUA President Sinkford is quoted as saying, "We have been hard at work on this for 30 or 35 years. This issue is one which actually helps to bring us together, and helps us to understand our religious identity, rather than tearing us apart." The Rev. Kim K. Crawford Harvie, Senior Minister of Arlington Street Church, who will marry her partner on May 20th, was quoted as saying about the coming events, "It's just exquisite to be alive right now...we've worked really long and hard for this."

For a summary of the struggle to achieve marriage equality in Massachusetts, go to www.uua.org/news/2004/freedomtomarry/massachusetts.html.

Deborah Weiner

UUA Director of Electronic Communication