

**Prairie UU Society, 2010 Whenona Drive, Madison WI 53711-4843**  
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Located off the south frontage road (West Beltline Hwy Rd.) near the Seminole Hwy exit.



## 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)

**July 9, 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](http://www.prairie.madison.uua.org)*

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### **PRAIRIE CALENDAR**

#### **Sunday, July 11**

☞ 10 a.m. "Nothing Left to Lose: The Life and Times of Janis Joplin" presented by Susan Urban.

#### **Sunday, July 11-Sunday, July 18**

☞ Prairie volunteers with the Interfaith Hospitality Network

#### **Saturday, July 17**

9 a.m. Work Party at Prairie.

#### **Sunday, July 18**

☞ 10 a.m. "Pledging Allegiance" presented by the Rev. Sarah Oelberg.

11:45 a.m. Book Club meets at Prairie to discuss *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, by Azar Nafisi.

## **Sunday, July 25**

10 a.m. "Same-sex marriage: a Unitarian-Universalist perspective" presented by Mike and Norma Briggs.

## **Tuesday, July 27**

☞5:00 a.m. Prairie cooks breakfast at Men's Drop-In Shelter at Grace Episcopal Church

## **Sunday, August 1**

10 a.m. Four-Congregation Joint Service, Sauk City

## **Saturday, August 7**

☞Prairie Fundraiser Trip to the Chicago Field Museum exhibit, "Splendors of China."

## ***Next Prairie Fire Deadline: July 18***

## **Friday–Sunday, September 17–19**

Annual Retreat, at Bethel Horizons

☞ = Details follow in this issue.

## ***DETAILS OF COMING EVENTS***

### **Sunday, July 11**

In the course of her short, tempestuous life, (1943-1970), blues-rock singer Janis Joplin pushed back the boundaries that kept women "in their place" for hundreds of years. Without conventional beauty or "proper" feminine restraint, she sang from the depths of her soul, and showed women everywhere that they could be who they were and win. But she suffered from the self-doubt and loneliness often experienced by those who are light-years ahead of their time.

This service will explore, from a Unitarian Universalist viewpoint, the musical and cultural legacy that this remarkable woman left for us.

Susan Urban is a Unitarian Universalist songwriter and singer. In 1987, she began creating services for her then home congregation, Second Unitarian Church of Chicago. In 1997, Susan started to present services for other UU congregations on a regular basis, and is now what might be called a "UU circuit rider." She is a member of the Marquette Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, although she still lives in Chicago.

### **Sunday, July 18**

The program talk "Pledging Allegiance" will be given by the Rev. Sarah Oelberg. Summer is the time of festivals and celebrations. Many are meant to be patriotic. The

Milwaukee festival board has decided all should include a "Christian element" in order to draw more people. We find ourselves repeating the pledge many times—from sports events to community picnics. What are we pledging allegiance to?

## **OUR SOCIETY**

### **TORNADO DOWNS FRIEND'S TREES, HELP NEEDED**

Hugh Iltis' home area was hit by the recent tornado that downed many hardwood trees (oak, basswood, etc.). Hugh would welcome any Prairie people and friends to bring a chainsaws and take as much wood as they want. Please call him first at 256-7242.

Hugh also wants to give away his heavy canvas center-pole tent (12' x 8' or 10') that he used many times camping in Mexico. It has a floor and zippered opening and can sleep 3 or 4. He also has bags of dolls and stuffed animals that we will bring to Prairie for anyone who would like to have them.

Rose Smith

### **PRAIRIE ELDERS MEET**

A new "Prairie Elders" group has been formed for fellowship, mutual support and good times. It is primarily for seniors over 65. Meeting times alternate so more people can be involved. Contact Doleta Chapru at [dchapru@aol.com](mailto:dchapru@aol.com) or 238-4970 if you wish to be contacted about the next meeting. Give her your preference for meeting times. Gatherings will be held at Oakwood Village and Meriter Heights.

### **STUDY SERIES ON TUESDAY NIGHTS**

Two adult forums meet on alternating Tuesdays at 7 p.m. at Prairie: Iraq; and Challenge Corporate Power/ Assert the People's Rights.

For more information, call Nancy Graham at 244-6595.

*In the Baha'i faith, July 9 marks the remembrance of the Martyrdom of the Bab, one of the three central figures of the religion. Work is suspended on this day.*

*---Multifaith Calendar 2004*

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Update for the Religious Education Director:

Melissa Lucky  
[m\\_a\\_gl@att.net](mailto:m_a_gl@att.net)

## **PROGRAM**

### **RECOMMENDED READING**

Prairie members recommended the following books at our June 27 meeting:

#### **Non-Fiction**

- *Autobiography of a Face*, by Lucy Grealy
- *Truth and Beauty: A Friendship*, by Ann Patchett
- *Black Eye: The Story of a Marriage*, by Judy Strasser [reviewed by Orange Schroeder]
- *The Exception to the Rulers*, by Amy Goodman [reviewed by Nancy Graham]
- *Meditations for the Humanist: Ethics for a Secular Age*, by A. C. Grayling [reviewed by Alan Nettleton]
- *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, by Dee Brown [reviewed by Ruth Calden]
- *The Discoverers*, by Daniel Boorstin [reviewed by Paula Pachiarz]
- *Land of the Firebird: the Beauty of Old Russia*, by Suzanne Massie [reviewed by Rose Smith]
- *Flora of North America North of Mexico*, by the Flora of North America Editorial Committee [mentioned by Galen Smith]

#### **Fiction**

- *The Time Traveler's Wife*, by Audry Niffenegger [reviewed by Robin Proud]
- *Pompeii*, by Robert Harris [reviewed by Larry Nahlik]
- *Midwives*, by Chris Bohjalian [reviewed by Paula Pachiarz}
- *The Dew Breaker*, by Eldridge Dandicat [reviewed by Ruth Calden]
- *The Big Ones*, by Janet Evanovich [reviewed by Susan Herr-Hoyman]

### **PRAIRIE OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR HOURS**

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

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **MEET OUR NEW RE DIRECTOR**

The Religious Education Committee is very pleased to announce that Melissa Gjestvang-Lucky has accepted the Director of Religious Education position at Prairie effective immediately.

Melissa has been a UU for over 8 years and been active with groups both at First Society and James Reeb. Her wide experience with children has included working with the Interfaith Hospitality Network families, with GLBT youth as a GLSEN Board member, and as a Girl Scout leader.

Please introduce yourself and welcome Melissa to the Prairie community.

*K.K. Anderson*

## **SOCIAL ACTION**

### **HOMELESS MEN'S BREAKFAST**

Once a month, Prairie supplies breakfast for homeless men at the Grace Episcopal Drop-In Shelter. Our involvement is definitely appreciated and makes a difference.

If you would like to volunteer to buy and deliver groceries (reimbursed by the Social Action Committee), or to arrive at the shelter at 5 a.m. and cook up turkey bacon and eggs for over a hundred men (a real educational opportunity), please contact Paula Pachciarz ([pachwack@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pachwack@sbcglobal.net) or at 273-4806).

We also rely on Prairie folks to donate to the breakfast fund when we pass the Breakfast can on the Sunday before. Thank you to all who continue to support this community service!

### **INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK**

Summer goes by fast and Prairie's third volunteer shift this year with Madison's IHN is coming right up. The next week that we assist Midvale Lutheran in hosting several homeless families will be July 11-18. Those who have volunteered before and would like to do so again, please mark your calendars and let Paula Pachciarz know how you would like to help out.

Those who would like to volunteer but are new to IHN can contact Paula for more information at (608) 273-4806 or [pachwack@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pachwack@sbcglobal.net).

There is also an information sheet on the Social Action bulletin board that describes the different ways one can support this wonderful community service. Our next and last shift

will be in November, during Thanksgiving week.

## **UU'S REGISTER VOTERS IN GO VOTE COALITION**

Members from First Unitarian Society, Prairie, and James Reeb have been active this spring and summer registering voters for the coming fall elections. Every election, a smaller percentage of eligible voters are bothering to cast their ballots. Working with the League of Women Voters, the GO VOTE Coalition has been spearheading a non-partisan voter registration and voter mobilization effort.

We are in need of volunteers throughout the summer who can attend community events to register voters. In the fall, we will need volunteers to call voters, drive voters to the polls, and act as poll-watchers.

For more information on how to get involved, talk to Dan Proud (661-0776).

## ***DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS***

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR SOUGHT AT JAMES REEB**

James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation is seeking a Religious Education Coordinator.

#### **Position Description:**

1. Attend JRUUC on Sundays, 10:30 to 12:30, to connect with parents, teachers, kids.
2. Coordinate parent volunteers for classroom.
3. Sunday orientation of RE to new families.
4. Communicate with parents and teachers.
5. Track attendance of the RE program.
6. Convene and attend the RE committee monthly.
7. Problem-solve issues that arise on Sundays.
8. Coordinate work with office/professional staff.

#### **Qualifications:**

1. Good organizational skills
2. Good communication skills with adults & kids.
3. Ability to work well with volunteers and office/ professional staff.
4. Child Development or Education background desirable.

**Hours and Pay:**

Approximately 4 hours/week x 3 weeks/month x 10 months/year

Stipend: \$120 month for 10 months

**How to Apply:**

To apply, send a letter of interest by July 15 to: James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Attention: RE Committee

2146 E Johnson Street

Madison, WI 53704

or to: [Jruuc@terra.com.net](mailto:Jruuc@terra.com.net)

**OTHER NEWS****PRAIRIE FLORA: SUMMER GLORY**

[Galen Smith gave a tour of Prairie flora on April 18. By popular demand, he continues his description of our little green friends in this, the fourth in the series.]

A variant of Sargent crabapple was recently planted by the Bruce Company to replace the unsatisfactory crab that Pat Watkins planted in memory of her mother several years ago. The new tree should have many small bright red fruit throughout the fall and winter that the birds will eat in spring.

In early July the prairie planting at our church is approaching the height of its summer glory. Still flowering is:

- The lovely blue-flowered common spiderwort or blue-jacket (*Tradescantia ohiensis*), which is common in most of eastern U.S. In 1753 Linnaeus named this New World temperate and tropical genus of about 70 species after John Tradescant, the 17th-century gardener of Charles I of England.
- Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), with large yellow and brown “flowers” (really heads of flowers)

Lesser amounts of the following are in bloom:

- Fleabane (*Erigeron* sp.), with white and yellow heads
- Prairie coreopsis (*Coreopsis palmata*), with bright yellow heads
- Wild bergamot or bee-balm (*Monarda fistulosa*), with pale lavender flowers

- Lead-plant (*Amorpha canescens*), with bright blue and yellow flowers and grayish leaves and stems (one plant next to the steps on the walk to the front entrance)
- Prairie alum-root (*Heuchera richardsonii*), with cream flowers
- Cypress- or graveyard spurge (*Euphorbia esula*), with yellow “flowers” (actually, groups of tiny flowers with yellow leafy bracts), a serious weed.

The first of the prairie grasses, switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*) is almost ready to flower. The rock garden is also beautiful, with pink-flowered coral bells (*Heuchera sanguinea*), yellow-and white-flowered *Sedum* spp., and pink-flowered baby’s breath (*Gypsophila repens*) now in flower.

*Galen Smith*

## UUSC E-MAIL BULLETIN

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

### **Congress must oppose U.S.-sanctioned torture**

Events at Abu Ghraib prison, Guantanamo Bay and in Afghanistan have shone a disturbing light on U.S. use of torture as an interrogation technique. At UUSC, we are committed to bringing an immediate halt to such activities and ensuring they never happen again. That is why we have established our STOP (Stop Torture Permanently) Campaign to work to bring an end to U.S.-sanctioned torture anywhere in the world.

Please take a stand to end torture. For an action alert on urging Congress to oppose U.S.-sanctioned torture, visit:

[www.uusc.org/programs/STOP/alert040701.html](http://www.uusc.org/programs/STOP/alert040701.html).

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### **GA approves UUSC's call to hold corporations accountable for human rights abuses**

A 215-year-old federal law that allows victims of human rights abuses to hold U.S.-based multinational corporations accountable was endorsed by the annual General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association. In response to an appeal by UUSC, the delegates to the annual convention voted overwhelmingly to express support for the Alien Tort Claims Act. The ATCA is under attack by the U.S. business lobby as well as the administration of President George W. Bush, which wants to dismantle or repeal the statute. Visit: <http://www.uusc.org/info/article070104.html>.

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### **ExxonMobil responds to advocates on workplace human rights standards**

In response to a commitment by ExxonMobil Corporation to uphold fundamental worker and human rights, a group of shareholders that includes UUSC have agreed to withdraw a proposal they had planned to present at this year's annual meeting. The proposal urged ExxonMobil to adopt a workplace human rights policy based on the 1998 International Labor Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles at Work.

UUSC leverages its role as an investor to advocate for more responsible corporate behavior on the part of targeted companies. To learn more about this recent success, visit: [www.uusc.org/info/article050704.html](http://www.uusc.org/info/article050704.html).

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### **Burundian refugees face new challenges**

The signs of Burundian refugees returning home after years of exile are vitally positive and signify an end



to war. However, there are concerns as to whether Burundi is ready to receive a large influx of refugees at such a fast pace given the country's instability, continued violence in rural areas, its inadequate infrastructure, and lack of resources. Nongovernmental organizations such as UUSC program partner, the Burundian Association of Women Heads of Households, are doing their part to help refugees through this difficult transition. For more info, visit: [www.uusc.org/info/article062204.html](http://www.uusc.org/info/article062204.html).

## **PRAIRIE WEB SITES**

*Prairie UU:* [www.prairie.madison.uua.org](http://www.prairie.madison.uua.org)

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

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

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

## **COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD**

[*You can find more about these announcements on the information table in the fellowship hall.*]

Saturday, July 17. German Fest, Historic Park Hall, 307 Polk Street, Sauk City, WI. 4:30-9:00 p.m.

Sunday, July 18. Coming Out, Coming Together (COCT) Gay Pride March. 1:30 on Capitol Square.

July 30-August 1. Green Spirit Festival: A Celtic Lughnassad Celebration. Registration due July 19.

## **JOURNEY TOWARD WHOLENESS NEWS!**

*A cyber newsletter bringing you news from the UUA's Journey Toward Wholeness anti-oppression, anti-racist, multicultural initiative*

*Editor:* The Reverend Dr. William Gardiner, Director for Congregational Justice Making ([wgardiner@uua.org](mailto:wgardiner@uua.org), (617) 948-6450

*Manager:* Lili Maselli, Administrator for Congregational Justice Making ([lmaseilli@uua.org](mailto:lmaseilli@uua.org), (617) 948-4265)

### **Searching for the Truth in Whitewashed History Textbooks by Lois Fahs Timmins, Ed.D.**

Dr. James W. Loewen, the author of *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, is a professor of sociology at the University of Vermont. After teaching many years in Mississippi, he wrote the first revisionist high school history textbook published in the United States, *Mississippi: Conflict and Change*. Dr. Loewen studied twelve history textbooks widely used throughout the U.S. in high schools and occasionally in junior high schools and colleges. He uses textbook quotes about prominent leaders and contrasts these with primary sources and facts well known by historians. Direct quotes below are in quotation marks; other ideas have been encapsulated and slightly rewritten.

"Facts that are well-known to professional historians are hidden from teachers, students, and the general public." "Some of the information provided is incorrect, some confusing, some unverifiable, along with startling omissions." Some groups cannot find themselves in the history books, and consequently are unable to identify with the heroes portrayed. "This makes history hard to learn for students of color, children of

working class parents, girls who notice a dearth of female historical figures, and those in any group which has not achieved economic success."

### **The Textbook's Major Purpose : Promote Patriotism**

"The goal is to indoctrinate students so they will be 'good American citizens' with a fervent love for their country. Stories present every problem as if it is already solved in the U.S. They reiterate endlessly, "Look at what the U.S. has accomplished."

### **Credit Is Given to Whites for Everything**

The textbooks promote the belief that the most important developments in world history are traceable to white Europeans, while the contributions, courage, and rebellions of African Americans, Native Americans, or Hispanics are downplayed or omitted altogether. This process is known as "whitewashing."

The impression is left that white Europeans were the ones who taught simpler people to do important things. [Euro-centrism or Ethnocentrism] For example, Henry the Navigator of Portugal is portrayed as "discovering" the Azores and the Madeira Islands. The textbooks do not mention that it is now believed that Afro-Phoenicians sailed these same routes as early as 600 B.C.E.

### **Conquest, Exploitation, Racism Portrayed as Heroic**

The texts portray Christopher Columbus as America's first great hero. The textbooks don't say that Columbus' voyages set the precedent for the transatlantic slave trade for the next four hundred years.

The texts don't report that on his second voyage, Columbus came armed with 17 ships (instead of three) plus 1200-1500 soldiers, cannons, crossbows, guns, cavalry, and attack dogs. "With his military might he easily overpowered the Arawaks....He extorted gold from the Arawaks by a system of tribute." Thousands of Arawaks rebelled by committing suicide, others were shipped as slaves to other places in the Caribbean and Europe. Within 60 years after Columbus' arrival, the Arawaks were all gone—victims of genocide.

"Only one textbook mentions the genocide in Haiti. Only six out of twelve textbooks say that the Spanish enslaved or exploited the Indians anywhere in America."

"No sensible Indian person," wrote George P. Horse Capture, "can celebrate the arrival of Columbus." The rest of us celebrate it with a national holiday in October.

### **Idealistic Activism Is Either Ignored or Vilified**

Courageous leaders are silenced by not quoting their impassioned speeches, and are vilified with slur words. "Slavery is treated without racism and abolitionism without idealism."

Only textbooks after 1970 expressed any sympathy for John Brown or for his cause, though he was the most radical white abolitionist. "One text called him 'deranged,' 'gaunt,' 'grim,' 'terrible,' 'crack-brained,' 'probably of unsound mind.'" Texts only recount his violent insurrections at Potowatomie, KS and Harper's Ferry, VA. (In truth, John Brown made many trips back and forth to Canada escorting groups of runaway slaves on the Underground Railroad. He also conducted organizational meetings in Canada and helped to teach people how to adjust to their new lives there.)

After he was hanged in 1859, John Brown's beliefs and actions inspired many others. Soldiers, black and white, marched into battle singing "John Brown's Body Lies A-Mouldering in the Grave." A few years later it was given new words to the same tune by Julia Ward Howe, and we sing it today as "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

During the Reconstruction Period after the Civil War, for the first time many Blacks were elected to public office. Yet, the textbooks tell us that during Reconstruction "the Blacks 'failed' because of lack of knowledge and education." During the same period many Blacks and Whites went to the South to help with the Freedmen's Bureau and to establish schools and colleges for emancipated Blacks. Schools and churches were burned and idealists were threatened with violence and death. Many Blacks were killed. The textbooks attribute the efforts of the idealists to "self-interest" and "ambition" and lump them all together into one undesirable group with the label "carpetbaggers" and "scalawags."

### **Eternal Progress in the U.S.: the Message**

"Ten out of twelve textbooks offer no clue that race relations in the U.S. systematically worsened during the period between 1890 and 1920. During this time every southern and border state legally made African Americans into second-class citizens." They were disenfranchised by voting restrictions; the Supreme Court upheld segregation in schools, colleges, hospitals, on railroads and ships, in public accommodations, and in the Armed Services. Blacks were barred from being mail carriers and playing baseball in the Major Leagues where they had previously done well. The Kentucky Derby eliminated black jockeys after they had won 15 out of the first 28 Derbies. Rewriting of the dramatic scripts of Uncle Tom's Cabin "changed Uncle Tom from a martyr who gave his life to protect his people to a sentimental dope who was loyal to his friendly master." The number of houses bombed, churches burned, and Blacks lynched escalated wildly during this period.

Many of these regressive racist policies were continued until the Civil Rights Movement from 1954-1970. A number of Civil Rights workers were killed: Medgar Evers, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, Viola Luizzo, Michael Schwerner, and the Rev. James Reeb (a Unitarian minister). The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X were assassinated. Public opinion was galvanized enough to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Although some things are better now, and only older people can remember the worst days, violence continues and racism is still rampant in the U.S. "People of color are still blamed for being on the bottom. Whites are still exonerated for violence and oppression. Massive racial disparities still exist."

"The siren song of progress (and growth) lulls us into thinking that the problem is over and nothing more needs to be done. When we make racism invisible we obstruct our ability to see the truth in the present."

Racism has gotten worse in the past and can easily get worse in the present and the future. Have we stopped searching for the truth about racism simply because we don't see it? If so, like the textbooks, we are whitewashing history.

[James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your History Textbooks Got Wrong.* New York, The New Press, 1995. Distributed by W.W. Norton, Inc. 500 Fifth Avenue, NY 10110]