



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." (Bond of Union)

August 12, 2005

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

President: Mike Briggs (608) 835-0914

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

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, August 14

*10:00 a.m. "Mist Around the Bend," presented by Susan Urban

11:30 a.m. Parish meeting on bylaw changes

Wednesday, August 17

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Sunday, August 21

8:30 a.m. Prairie Board meeting at Prairie

*10:00 a.m. "Citizenship, Politics and Liberal Religion," presented by the Rev. Jody Whelden.

*11:45 a.m. Prairie Book Club potluck and book discussion at Prairie.

Tuesday, August 23

*2:00 p.m. Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood West.

Wednesday, August 24

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Saturday, August 27

12:30 p.m. Playreaders Organization meeting. Call Pat at 233-5795.

Sunday, August 28

10:00 a.m. "Darfur" led by Sarah Lord.

Wednesday, August 31

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Sunday, September 4

*11:00 a.m. Labor Day celebration at Wingra Park.

Friday, September 16 to Sunday, September 18

*Annual Prairie Retreat, Bethel Horizons

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, August 14

We are very pleased to have this marvelous service presented by Susan Urban and Sandy Andina: "Mist Around the Bend."

From the old Irish tales of the Faerie folk and the English legend of Avalon, to modern vampire lore and ghost stories, stories of other realities coexisting with our own, although not ordinarily accessible to us, are common in cultures all over the world. Do alternate realities actually exist, or are they pure fantasy? Do they become "real" when we have the experience of brushing up against them? We will consider these questions in song and spoken word.

Sunday, August 21

This program will be presented by the Rev. Jody Whelden. We will reflect on being citizens, liberal religious folk and members of a political system. Liberal religious people can be politically or fiscally conservative. Some of us identify more as global citizens than as U.S. citizens. We will focus on how our liberal religious faith might inform how we interact with this complex set of identities—both individually and as a community.

NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE: SUNDAY, AUG. 21

These reflections reflect the ongoing dialogue in our country concerning the separation of church and state. Where do we stand as liberal religious people? How do we allow ourselves to be influenced by others with differing perspectives? How do we respectfully influence things to our perspective? What is the appropriate mix of faith and national concerns? Where are the lines drawn for expressions of faith versus expressions of policy for the country, its citizens, the animals and nature? We won't cover this all this week, but we will consider some beginning thoughts and ideas.

Sunday, September 4

Join in the fun Sunday, September 4, celebrating Labor Day at Wingra Park. It all begins at 11 a.m. with a potluck followed by canoeing/paddle boating/row boating (available rentals or bring your own), frisbee, (softball anyone?), badminton, or bocci. Bring some food, drink and tableware, bring a game, bring family or friends and let's party! Be sure to let us know if you are coming by calling Susan Herr-Hoyman at 250-0559 and leave a message or sign up at Prairie.

OUR SOCIETY

PRAIRIE ELDERS

Prairie Elders meets Tuesday, August 23 at 2:00 p.m. in the second floor activity room of the Oaks Building at Oakwood Village West. Latecomers are always welcome. If convenient, please bring a few cookies, fruit, cheese, crackers, etc. Beverages will be furnished.

Discussion Topic: "Best Movies," moderated by Pat Watkins. "Best" is according to each person's definition. Everyone will have the opportunity to share the title of a choice film. Have in mind three in case of overlap. We range from hard core movie buffs to occasional movie-goers to at least one person who avoids movies but still plans to participate. With a broad range of films to choose from, this topic promises to have something of interest to all.

Prairie Elders was organized in 2004 to provide mutual support and good times for Prairie UU seniors age 65 and over [we don't card], seniors formerly affiliated with Prairie, and other UUs living in the facility where meetings are held. We average

around seventeen at each gathering. In July, with at least eleven regulars out of town, at other events, or in for some patching up, a somewhat smaller bunch still carried on a lively discussion. We look forward to seeing those who are now back in town or on the mend.

Newcomers who need directions or further info, please call Donna Murdoch 260-8551, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382, or Doleta Chapru 238-4970.

MAGGIE SIEGFRIED SINGS AGAIN

Our own Maggie Siegfried regularly performs in the jazz-surf-classic country group, Catfish and Costello. You can catch them at the Mill Street Grill in Cambridge from 6 to 9 p.m. on three upcoming Saturdays: August 13 and August 20.



PRAIRIE RETREAT SEPTEMBER 16-18

The annual retreat at Bethel Horizons (September 16-18) always features an abundance of activities, including a nature walk, workshops, games, the Saturday night variety show, and an outstanding Sunday service. This year's activities include:

- Used Book Sale. Clean out those bookcases! We're looking for donations of fiction, nonfiction, and children's books. Bring donations to Prairie or to the retreat, or call Corrine Hornbeck (274-3895) if you need to schedule a pickup.
- UU Team Trivia Challenge. About 30 people participated in this trivia game on July 10 at Prairie. We're offering it again at the retreat for those who missed the fun.
- Intergenerational Singing
- Creating Stories Workshop
- Family Banner Making
- Yoga for Adults and Yoga Animals for Kids
- "What Does it Mean to Have a Minister?" led by Jody

Please fill out the registration form enclosed in this issue and mail it in.

DANE DANCES AT MONONA TERRACE

The Dane Dances! event continues on August Fridays. All Prairie Folks are invited to attend and dance the night away on the rooftop of Monona Terrace. This is a family-friendly event, and children are very welcome to come and dance. If you want to meet other Prairie folks, we will congregate to the left of the band as you are facing them.

If you want me to particularly look for you, you can contact me. I plan to get there about 7:00, unless I hear from some families who are going earlier.

Here is a bit about this event: Dane Dances! was one result of the Task Force on Race Relations. The task force was created to develop a strategic plan for respecting diversity and undoing racism in the city of Madison where 18% of its citizens are African-American, Asian, or Latino.

Along with the implementation of the Study Circles on Race, it was felt that a social environment that included music and dancing would help break down barriers and just add "FUN" to the mix. In August of 2000, 3 dances were held on the Monona Terrace Rooftop and crowds ranged from 500 to 1000 at each event. As the word has spread, each year the dances gain more and more devoted attendees.

You can find out more at this Web site:
<http://www.danedances.org/default.aspx>

Erin Bosch

ARCHIVIST NEEDED

Prairie is currently without an archivist, and records keep propagating! If you are interested in collecting and organizing artifacts that will make up the history of our Society, please contact Mike Briggs (835-0914) or K.K. Anderson (255-3596).

BOOK CLUB PLANS NEXT TWO MEETINGS

The Prairie Book Club announces its next two meetings:

Sunday, August 21, *Year of Wonders* by Geraldine Brooks. This is a novel set in 1655 in a small village in England at the time of the Black Plague. It is based on the real village that voluntarily decided to quarantine itself when hit by the Plague. The theme is the conflict between God and Nature (or religion and science). For an excellent discussion of the

theme, an interview with the author, and a discussion guide, go to www.penguinputnam.com/static/rguides/us/year_of_wonders.html.

Saturday, September 17, *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini; discussion at the annual Prairie retreat. This is a novel about a privileged boy of Afghanistan who emigrates to the United States to bury the memory of a tragic event involving his good friend who is his servant's son. Success and love in his new country isn't enough to make him forget, and he returns to Afghanistan to try to make things right. The author was born in Kabul and his family emigrated to the U.S. in 1980. For more details about the story and a study guide, consult http://www.penguinputnam.com/static/rguides/us/kite_runner.html.

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK

Did you know that there are more homeless families in Dane County in the summer months than in the winter? We tend to think of homelessness when the weather is cold, yet the largest numbers of families in our area become homeless in the warm months. Some of the factors that lead to increased family homelessness in the summer are leases that end in May and August; increased evictions when the weather isn't bitter cold; and families' likelihood to move when children are out of school.

Shelters regularly turn away families at this time of year, while trying to help those in the direst circumstances. IHN's shelter has been running over capacity, and we currently have 15 families on our waiting list, all of whom are staying in unstable situations with family, friends, or (in one case) strangers. A couple currently staying at IHN spent several nights in their car with their two pre-school-aged children before there was room for them in the shelter. That family is now in a safe and welcoming place, and working towards housing, while others continue to wait for stability and opportunities.

WILL WORK MOPPING AND VACUUMING

I furnish hard work. You furnish transportation, instructions, equipment, supplies, ample work space, and a sturdy banister on basement stairs. Please, no ladders, furniture moving, or heavy lifting. References available on request. Call 608-271-8365.

Thomas "Phoenix" Wardell

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

PRAIRIE UU ANNOUNCES NEW DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Join the RE Committee in welcoming our new Director of Religious Education, Robert Radford. Bob is a long-time UU and a three-year member of First Unitarian Society. We are very excited to bring Bob's experience and skill to our program. Expect to see both him and his spouse Kelly around Prairie on Sunday mornings. Watch for a longer introduction to Bob in a future Prairie Fire article.

We will be saying good-bye to Melissa Gjestvang-Lucky, our DRE for the past year, August 21. In the time she's been with us, she has been invaluable in keeping our program running smoothly, and in helping new families feel welcome. Be sure to thank her for all her hard work, and for the warmth and enthusiasm she brought to Prairie.

Rachel Long, for the RE Committee

MEMBERSHIP

Please note the following member update:

Patricia Cautley
Room 312B
6201 Mineral Point Road
Madison, WI 53705

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

ACTION OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS FROM THE 2005 UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On the final day of the 2005 General Assembly, delegates passed our proposed Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) titled, "End Crimes Against Humanity in Darfur, Sudan." The resolution urges the US government to take significant action to help stem the violence in Darfur, including supporting an expansion of the African Union peace-keeping mission, assigning a Presidential Special Envoy to Sudan, and cooperating fully with the International Criminal Court's investigation. The full text of the AIW is found below.

Tools for advocacy can be found on the Darfur section of the Web site <http://www.uu-uno.org/>.

Action of Immediate Witness:

"End Crimes Against Humanity in Darfur, Sudan" Passed by the delegates to the 2005 UUA General Assembly

WHEREAS the government of Sudan, allied with Janjaweed militias, continues to inflict systematic violence on innocent civilians in Darfur, Sudan, including murder, rape, torture, and destruction of villages;

WHEREAS these forces systematically rape the women of Darfur, and those who survive are forced to bear the children of their oppressors, and are thus obliged to cooperate in their own ethnic extinction;

WHEREAS deaths from the conflict are estimated at 300,000 to 400,000 since February 2003;

WHEREAS roughly two million Darfurians are currently displaced, many living in refugee camps where hunger and disease are rampant;

WHEREAS, according to the World Food Programme, 3.6 million Darfurians, more than half the region's population, will require aid to survive the "hunger season" (August through October);

WHEREAS the United States Congress, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, and President George W. Bush declared that genocide is occurring in Darfur;

WHEREAS the United Nations Security Council has referred the conflict to the International Criminal Court;

WHEREAS the Reverend William Sinkford, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, was arrested on August 26, 2004 in protest at the Embassy of Sudan over genocide in Darfur;

WHEREAS in March 2005, over 400 Unitarian Universalists, in a joint action of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, and Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office, faxed letters to President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urging action to end the atrocities in Darfur;

WHEREAS the Unitarian Universalist Association co-sponsored the Save Darfur Rally in Central Park in New York City, at which the Reverend Charles Blustein Ortman of the Unitarian Church of Montclair, New Jersey and member of the Unitarian Universalist Association Board of Trustees delivered a keynote address;

WHEREAS pressure from the international community has yet to end the atrocities in Darfur;

WHEREAS the African Union Mission in Sudan, currently the only peacekeeping force in Darfur, lacks the size, resources, and mandate to protect the region's civilians; and

WHEREAS humanitarian workers in the region continue to be harassed by rebel and government forces;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the 2005 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association that Unitarian Universalists should advocate for immediate action to end the crisis in Darfur.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, given that the civilian population is at risk and aid workers and International Criminal Court investigators are intimidated and prevented from acting effectively, the 2005 General Assembly endorses United States government legislation that calls for:

- Support to the African Union, at no charge, to immediately expand its peacekeeping mission in Darfur;
- United Nations Security Council action to obtain international support for the African Union force;
- A Presidential Special Envoy to Sudan;
- Logistical support for the implementation of a no-fly zone over Darfur, provided by a multi-national force, to prevent attacks by the Sudanese government on the people of Darfur.
- Complete cooperation with the International Criminal Court.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office support United Nations Secretariat efforts to achieve the necessary Security Council action and to keep Unitarian Universalists informed of current events at the United Nations concerning Darfur; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Unitarian Universalist Association urges similar action on the part of members of the International Council of Unitarian Universalists in those countries that comprise the Security Council.

*Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office
777 United Nations Plaza, Suite 7G, New York, NY
10017 (212) 986-5165*

PRAIRIE WEB SITES

*Society Home Page: prairie.madison.uua.org
News Group: groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/
Views Group: groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/
Social Action: socialaction.madisonwi.us
Humanist Union: <http://humanist.madisonwi.us>
Long Range Planning Committee:
www.execpc.com/~prairieu/planning (no space)*



Prairie's Paula, Mike, and Patty at the Pride Parade

JOURNEY TOWARDS WHOLENESS NEWSLETTER

News and resources about UUA and UU efforts in coalitions for peace and democracy.

(1) Join the grassroots advocacy campaign to support bi-partisan legislation calling for withdrawal of US troops from Iraq and the September anti-war mobilization.

(2) UUA President Bill Sinkford accepts an award in James Reeb's honor from the New Democracy Coalition that is working to renew the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Ending the War in Iraq

Tom Andrews, Director of Win Without War <http://www.winwithoutwarus.org/>, has described this summer as "the beginning of the end of the war in Iraq." As a member of that coalition, the UUA has initiated a Summer of Peace.

The Homeward Bound Act (<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c109:H.J.RES.55>), a proposal for bi-partisan legislation, was introduced in Congress in mid-June and calls for the U.S. President to develop a plan for a phased withdrawal of US troops from Iraq by the end of 2005 and to initiate the plan as soon as possible and no later than Oct. 1, 2006. An intensive grassroots advocacy campaign in support of this legislation has begun and will continue this fall. A major mobilization for peace (<http://www.unitedforpeace.org/article.php?list=type&type=91>) is planned for September 24-26 in Washington, DC.

Having observed the sixtieth anniversary (http://www.uua.org/news/2005/050720_hiroshima/index.html) of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, we are now presented with the opportunity to increase our public witness of the destruction wrought by war and actively seek peace. For the complete story, please go to: www.uua.org/

This is a cyber newsletter from the UUA's Journey Toward Wholeness, an anti-oppression, anti-racist multicultural initiative. Every six weeks this features a story from a UU congregation or organization about their efforts to build anti-oppressive justice-making congregations, organizations, and communities.

RENEWING THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

(Boston, August 4, 2005)

The New Democracy Coalition yesterday honored UUA President William G. Sinkford with the first "Rev. James Reeb New Democracy Service Award" at a ceremony at the Massachusetts State House.

The award ceremony was the final event in a morning "teach-in" held by a coalition of civil rights groups working to raise awareness of the need to extend key provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which is due to expire in 2007. The events were organized by Kevin Peterson of the New Democracy Coalition and chaired by the Hon. Judge Charles Walker, who presented the Reeb award to Sinkford "for work in the area of civil rights on the 40th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act." Speaking to a deeply moved crowd, Walker recounted Reeb's heroic sacrifice in Selma and read excerpts from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's eulogy of the slain Unitarian Universalist minister: "One day the history of this great period of social will be written in all its completeness...When this glorious story is written, the name of James Reeb will stand as a shining example of manhood at its best." Full story here: http://www.uua.org/news/2005/050804_reeb.html

Audra Friend

Assistant, Office for Congregational Advocacy & Witness, Unitarian Universalist Association

LETTERS

Dear UUs,

We at the Unitarian Universalist UN Office would like to thank you all for your continued support and hard work in bringing peace and justice to Darfur, Sudan. At the 2005 UUA General Assembly last month, UU delegates from around the continent overwhelming passed an Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) put forth by our office entitled "End Crimes Against Humanity in Darfur, Sudan" (<http://www.uu-uno.org/content.htm?gaaaw05.htm>), making Darfur an urgent priority for the UUA and its members and congregations.

As the crisis continues, another opportunity for us to advocate Congressional action has arisen. It comes in the form of the new DARFUR PEACE AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HR 3127), introduced on June 30, introduced by a strong bipartisan

coalition in the House. It is expected to be scheduled for floor action within the next few days!

Discussions are beginning on a possible Senate companion.

HR 3127 includes:

- Sense of Congress language reaffirming the finding of genocide, urging expansion and a stronger mandate for the AU mission; calling on the U.S. to render assistance to efforts of the ICC in Darfur; calling for "additional, dispositive measures" if the AU mission fails to stop the genocide; and calling for appointment of a Presidential Envoy for Sudan;
- Asset and travel sanctions against individuals designated by the President as responsible for atrocities in Darfur (allowing a Presidential waiver);
- Denial of entry at U.S. ports to cargo ships or oil tankers engaged in business or trade in the oil sector of Sudan or involved in the shipment of goods for use by Sudan Armed Forces;
- Direction to the Administration to pursue passages of a United Nations Security Council resolution expanding AMIS, pressing on peace talks, imposing individual sanctions, and calling for suspension of Sudan's rights and privileges of membership in the General Assembly.

This July will mark one year since Congress declared genocide in Darfur in a united bipartisan voice. Unfortunately, the violence drags on in Darfur and the crisis is slipping from the headlines. Legislative action by a united Congress in the coming weeks would send an important message to Khartoum and help keep Darfur on the agenda.

Please call, email, and fax your Representative in the House. Go to <http://www.visi.com/juan/congress/> and obtain your Representative's contact info by entering your address into the form. Talking points for letters, as well as a sample letter, can be found on our Web site at <http://www.uu-uno.org/darfur/lettertoreps.htm>

Sincerely,

*Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office
777 United Nations Plaza, Suite 7G
New York, NY 10017
(212) 986-5165*