



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)

September 9, 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

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Friday and Saturday, September 9-10

District training for teens and youth advisors, overnight at James Reeb UU Congregation

Sunday, September 11

*10:00 a.m. Ingathering and Sharing the Waters Communion, led by Barbara Chatterton.

*10:00 a.m. Children's Ingathering, Water Communion, Teacher Dedication

Wednesday, September 14

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Friday to Sunday, September 16-18

*6:00 p.m. Annual Fall Retreat, at Bethel Horizons

Saturday, September 17

*Book Club meets at Bethel Horizons

Sunday, September 18

*10:00 a.m. Key Log Ceremony, at Bethel Horizons, led by Rick Ruecking

Wednesday, September 21

6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers potluck and conversation at the home of Prudence Barber, 1050 Jenifer St. Info: Rosemary Dorney, 238-4382.

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

7:30 p.m. Board meeting at Prairie

Sunday, September 25

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m. "Being Called to Greater Intimacy with Our Earth," presented by Penny Andrews

NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE: SUNDAY, SEPT. 18

Tuesday, September 27

2:00 p.m. Prairie Elders, Second Floor Exercise Room, Oaks Building, Oakwood Village West.

Wednesday, September 28

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Saturday, October 1

7:30 p.m. Prairie Playreaders meeting at the home of Mona Birong, 599 Glen Drive. Info: 233-5995.

Saturday and Sunday, October 15-16

Fall Frolic at Prairie

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, September 11

Please join us this Sunday at our 4th annual ingathering service. Join us in a water communion where we mingle the waters from our summer adventures into a common urn. This Unitarian service is celebrated at many congregations throughout the country. Please bring some water from your family swimming pool, the Atlantic or Pacific, the black sea, a canal in Venice or.... And then share a sentence or two about where the water comes from and its significance for you.

The first Religious Education classes start with their own water communion, described in detail in the Religious Education section that follows in this newsletter.

Sunday, September 18

The service, the traditional Key Log Ceremony, will be held at the Prairie Center at Bethel Horizons, completing the Annual Retreat.

Sunday, September 25

Hurricane Katrina and the Tsunami are the most recent examples of the power of our Earth's elements. After centuries of western thought looking at Earth as a mechanical problem to be solved, a new paradigm is emerging. September 25th will consider another type of relationship and look at the Earth Charter, a UU-influenced code of ethics, that suggests a pathway.

Penny Andrews is a UW Hospital chaplain. She grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, and was in Junior High School one of the times that the Cuyahoga River caught fire. She worked in the alternative energy movement in the 70's and has coordinated Madison's Earth Charter Community Summits for the past two years.

Penny was also one of the founding members of James Reeb UU Church, holds a Doctor of Ministry degree and is an ordained Interfaith minister.

OUR SOCIETY

MADISON PROJECT TO AID KATRINA EVACUEES

Prairie has been invited to support an exciting initiative created by JFF (Joining Forces for Families). Five buses are currently en route to pick up families left homeless by Hurricane Katrina and bring them to Madison. Barb Park is coordinating Prairie's commitment to clean, paint and stock one apartment in the Allied Drive area. At the picnic on September 4, we raised \$1,000. A large group turned out on Labor Day to work on the apartment, including a contingent from the Verona Players brought by Rick Owens.

Donations are still welcome to cover the costs of the buses, apartment rental, and other needs of the families. You can make checks out to Prairie Social Action Committee and send to Barb Park.

THE VIEW FROM MY BRANCH



The beginning of the church year always brings new hopes, new dreams, and new challenges. A congregation decides together what it wants and where it is going. The vista is wide. To paraphrase organizational consultant Margaret Wheatley's words, there are no prefixed, describable destinations. There are, instead, potentials that will form into real ideas, depending on who the creator is and what s/he is interested in creating.

I am excited to be stepping through the door with all of you as Prairie begins this year of potentials.

So, what will I do? I am here for 12 hours a week through May. My major job this year is to consult with you on the five areas the Board has chosen:

1. Aid the Caring Committee and congregation in understanding alternatives for providing pastoral care to members.
2. Aid the congregation in clarifying members commonalities and differences in values and aspirations with a view to healing and community building.
3. Provide UU perspectives via sermons once a month on topics that support the range of member interests and affirm connections and support.
4. Aid the congregation in understanding ways to attract and retain young couples and families.
5. Aid in providing ways to bringing the congregation together to envision and plan a future and associated needed actions for Prairie.

The Board and I have begun these tasks. I need to hear from any of you who would like to add to the conversation. Please let me know what you are thinking. I hope to be helpful to you as a congregation and as individuals. I am also available to do counseling sessions and respond to spiritual or personal needs you may be experiencing. I have a home office telephone that you can call, or a Prairie e-mail: **231-9707** or **minister (at) uuprairie.org**

I will be at the building for office hours on most Wednesdays, 4:00-6:00 p.m. Please drop by.

And, to further discuss what a minister does, I will be leading a workshop on Saturday afternoon at the Retreat about, "What Does a Minister Do?" Come join us for a fun hour of exploring this question. See you there!

Rev. Jody Whelden

PRAIRIE RETREAT SEPTEMBER 16–18

You can preview the planned activities at the annual retreat at Bethel Horizons online through the Prairie Web site: www.prairie.madison.uua.org.

Don't forget to bring your own linens.

Directions to Bethel Horizons: Take Highway 18/151 (Verona Road) west to Dodgeville. Turn right on Hwy. 23 and go north, past Governor Dodge State Park, until you reach County Road ZZ. Go right (east) on ZZ for a mile and follow signs on the right leading to the retreat center.

NEXT BOOK CLUB MEETS AT THE ANNUAL RETREAT

The Prairie Book Club will discuss the following book at the Prairie Annual Retreat: *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. 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.

PRAIRIE PLAYREADERS SCHEDULE

The Prairie Playreaders is one of the several social groups available to Prairie members and friends. Participation requires no commitment and neither expertise nor experience in theater. We meet once a month at the home of a rotating host/hostess, who chooses the play, assigns the parts, and provides refreshments during our intermission. We read and discuss the play, and also have a lovely social evening. We also have theater parties and an annual spring Fish Dinner, in which everyone is invited to participate.

Below is our meeting schedule for the 2005-2006 church year. Please put these dates and locations on your calendars and use them when planning other Prairie events, such as Circle Dinners. Titles of plays to be read will be announced as the playreading dates approach. Please join us some evening.

October 1: Host is Mona Birong
October 29: Theater Party, UW Theater: Crumbs from the Table of Joy, by Lynn Nottage
November 19: Hosts are Dan and Robin Proud
December: No meeting. Happy Holidays!
January 7: To be announced
February 25: Overture Center: The Chancellor Presents the UW Performing Artists of the Future
March 25: Host is Rosemary Dorney
April 15: Host is Donna Murdoch
June 2: Annual Fish Dinner; contact Pat Watkins

Pat Watkins

PRAIRIE MEMBER SEEKS WORK

I furnish hard work, such as mopping and vacuuming. 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 Phoenix at 608-271-8365.

WANTED: A ROOMMATE TO SHARE RENT

Have apartment, need a roommate. Any age, gender, or ethnic or religious background is acceptable. Please call Phoenix at 271-8365.

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).

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: www.execpc.com/~prairieu/planning (no space)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

LOOKING FORWARD TO A GREAT YEAR

The RE Committee, Director of RE, and teachers have met and talked and we're excited. We've got class lists in place, curriculum materials selected and distributed, teachers oriented, schedules printed, rooms cleaned and set up...now, we are ready for YOU!

We will have a nice children's ingathering service, like being planned for upstairs, on Sunday, September 11 at 10:00 a.m. Our service will include a water communion, with kids invited to bring samples that they have collected on their summer travels. We'll use that water to talk about the significance of 9/11 and how we each bring a special nature to our time together. We'll dedicate the teachers and tour our classrooms.

On Sunday the 18th, families are invited to be part of the Prairie Retreat and we will not meet for RE at Prairie.

As we plan for the next few weeks, there are a few things we're working on. If you missed the teacher orientation on September 3, please talk with Bob or the RE Committee to see about what we did and get your materials. Even though we have people and schedules in place, we may need substitute teachers and childcare providers - would you please volunteer your name for our backup lists? Some classes will be handling snacks differently for the next few months - talk with you teachers about what works best for your group. We will start arranging parent-teacher visits after classes in October and November. We are talking with James Reeb RE youth and folks about an overnight with them, maybe the last weekend in October.

It is an exciting time as the church year starts again. We look forward to renewing acquaintances and making new friends. Please keep you new DRE informed as you think and talk about what is going on in RE. We are a team making our Sunday mornings safe, meaningful, fun and bright.

Thank you. See you in church.

Bob Radford, Director of Religious Education

MEMBERSHIP

Please note the following member updates:

Rev. Jody Whelden
minister@uuprairie.org

LETTERS



A SPECIAL APPEAL

We have all seen the haunting images of physical devastation and human misery coming from New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. The assault of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast reminds us once again of the awesome power of natural forces. But it is also clear that government agencies were not prepared to deal with the impact of this ferocious storm. As people of faith, we simply must do something.

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) have jointly created the [Gulf Coast Relief Fund](#) to assist Gulf Coast UUs in the monumental tasks they will face in the coming weeks and months. The money we collect will go to local relief efforts and UU congregations so that their ministries in their communities can be restored.

Please help by making a secure [online donation](#) today.

Like so many others, I was shocked and saddened by the tragic loss of life and the massive destruction left in the wake of the hurricane. My prayers go out to those grieving for lost loved ones, and my hopes are with the thousands who face the daunting task of rebuilding their lives and communities.

I am especially mindful that those unable to evacuate from the affected areas, the poor, the elderly, and the community of color, have suffered disproportionately from the ferocity of this hurricane and the lack of timely disaster response from government agencies. Relief was too-long delayed, and their suffering continues and intensifies.

In addition to media reports on the widespread destruction across the Gulf Coast, we continue to receive information from both the UUA's [Southwest District](#) and [Mid-South District](#) for churches in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and the Florida Panhandle. The [Gulf Coast Relief Fund](#) will allow UUs in these areas to assist those most in need. No more than 5% of funds received will be used to cover costs of administering the aid, so you can be confident that your contribution will go directly to helping with local relief efforts and the ministries of UU congregations.

In this difficult time, I am proud that Unitarian Universalists are coming together to help lighten the heavy burdens of our brothers and sisters.

We know from early reports that three New Orleans-area churches are believed to be seriously damaged. "We're just expecting one tragic story after another," said the Rev. Steve Crump, minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Baton Rouge. "And the death toll in New Orleans is just going to be horrendous."

As UUs in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama struggled to pick up the pieces of lives uprooted by Hurricane Katrina, the UU congregation in Baton Rouge opened its doors and hearts to displaced UUs from the three devastated New Orleans-area congregations.

"The number of people who said yes to opening their homes is astounding," Crump said. "They've called from Louisiana, from Texas, from Olympia, Washington, and from Massachusetts. And there are lots of people from New Orleans who thought they'd be staying in a hotel for two or three days and are running out of money. We're trying to put these people together. The congregations in New Orleans are just not there and won't be for a long, long while."

Please make the most generous gift you can to the UUA-UUSC [Gulf Coast Relief Fund](#) today. The need is great and will be so for a long time.

Thank you for your generous and timely response.

In faith,

Rev. Bill Sinkford, President, UUA

UUA GULF COAST RELIEF FUND

Friends,

Unitarian Universalists are answering the call to help! Yesterday, just before noon, the UUA home page hosted a letter from Bill Sinkford that included a hypertext link for people to make contributions to the UUA Gulf Coast Relief Fund.

The response has been wonderful!

Larry Stritof, Campaign Specialist, is managing the online giving for this effort, and he just told me that we have received more than 380 gifts online, totaling \$50,000.

If people want to send a check by mail, please ask them to make the check payable to:

"UUA Gulf Coast Relief Fund"

And mail the check to:

UUA Gulf Coast Relief Fund
Attn. Larry Stritof
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

*Marcy Bailey-Adams, Deputy Director,
UUA Stewardship and Development
25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108
617-948-6511 or Toll free: 1-888-792-5885
mbailey@uua.org*

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

UU-UNO (UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST - UNITED NATIONS OFFICE) NEWS

In September 2000, world leaders assembled to articulate the fundamental values essential to international relations in the 21st century. This set of social and economic targets (known as the Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs), which the governments of the world hope to achieve by 2015, is as follows: (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) Achieve universal primary education; (3) Promote gender equality and empower women; (4) Reduce child mortality; (5) Improve maternal health; (6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) Ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) Develop a Global Partnership for Development.

How can Prairie can be involved in implementing these goals? The UU-UNO has a suggestion, which by means of this newsletter item I wish to pass on to the congregation, the Board, and the Social Action Committee for consideration and possible action.

The office has begun a project to increase congregational involvement in the UN by teaming up with The Southwest Indian Relief Council to provide baskets of baby supplies to Native American mothers of newborns who have attended 75% of their prenatal appointments and at least two parenting classes. So far, this program has increased prenatal care from 20 to 80% in some areas.

This project directly supports MDGs #4 and #5 which are to "reduce child mortality" and "to improve maternal health." Congregations are being asked to collect supplies for these baskets.

Donations can be as small as a single pacifier, thus giving all members a chance to participate. The pilot project was done at the First UU Church of Dallas on the first two Sundays in May and resulted in over 500 basket items plus \$250 in cash.

Additional information can be found on the UU-UNO Web site—www.uu-uno.org. This project seems one that Prairie could easily take on, and I would be very interested in your thoughts and reactions to the idea. E-mail me at : pwatkins@wisc.edu.

Those of you who have an interest in the United Nations are encouraged to consider looking into the Dane County chapter of the UNA-USA, which meets on the second Tuesday of each month beginning on **September 13** at 7:15 p.m. at Grand Hall, Meriter Main Gate, 333 West Main Street (free parking in the ramp opposite the entrance).

This month's speaker is David Piovanetti, Middleton H.S. Model UN Advisor and county UNA-USA Education Chair, who will speak about his five-week summer Fullbright Project in India. Also, save the date of **Monday, October 24** (the 60th anniversary of the founding of the U.N.), and consider attending the UNA-USA, D.C. annual dinner, which will be held 5:30 – 9 p.m. at Lowell Hall, with our "Mayor for Peace" David Cieslewicz as speaker. For more on the local organization, visit: www.una-usadanecounty.org

Pat Watkins

UUSC JOINS CALL FOR JUSTICE WEEKEND SEPTEMBER 24-26 IN D.C.

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) and the Rev. William G. Sinkford, UUA President, are inviting UU congregations to endorse and attend the upcoming Call for Justice Weekend in Washington, D.C. on September 24-26.

After the grim revelations in the last year regarding U.S. torture and abuse of detainees in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantanamo, there is little doubt that our nation faces a moral crisis. The time has come for us to take a united stand.

The goal is to educate the public and our national leadership about the grim realities of current U.S. practices, and to insist on immediate reforms.

Planned activities include:

Saturday, Sept. 24: educational workshops and panel discussions, with accommodation for those who wish to participate in the United for Peace and Justice anti-war rally and related events

Sunday, Sept. 25: Interfaith service at All Souls Unitarian Church, followed by a formal mock trial of Sec. of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, and former CIA Director George Tenet for violations of international and U.S. laws prohibiting torture. Actual laws and evidence, real lawyers, and real testimonies by Iraqi and Afghan torture survivors and an intelligence expert will be used.

Monday, Sept. 26: Interfaith ceremony, followed by a march to Capitol Hill led by the Rev. Sinkford and other clergy to begin a day of advocacy meetings with congressional representatives.

UUs are urged to join together for the Call for Justice Weekend. Today, we can remain neither silent nor passive about torture. Delegations from each congregation are urged to participate.

Members and friends who wish to attend should register online at www.uusc.org/stoptorture. For questions or further assistance, contact Jennifer Harbury or Nadya Khalife at UUSC at 617-868-6600 or at stoptorture@uusc.org.

[Ed. Note: materials about the Call for Justice Weekend are being posted at Prairie.]

OTHER NEWS

ISLAM IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

The Greater Madison Interreligious Association presents a talk and discussion on forms and practices of Islam, and challenges and possibilities facing Islam and its practitioners in the world today. The presentation is **Tuesday, September 13**, 7 to 9 p.m. at the First Unitarian Meeting House, 900 University Bay Drive, Madison.

UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE POTLUCK PICNIC SEPTEMBER 18

The Baha'is of Middleton are hosting a potluck picnic at the Lakeview Park Shelter in Middleton on **Sunday, September 18**, at 12:30 p.m. in support of the UN International Day of Peace. The observance will include speeches, music, and entertainment. Prairie UUs are invited to join the Baha'is for the event.

In 1981, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 36/67 declaring an International Day of Peace. In 2001, the same body adopted Resolution 55/282 declaring September 21 each year the International Day of Peace, so that the entire world could observe a day of cease-fire, peace, and nonviolence.

JOIN THE MILLION VOICE CHOIR SEPT. 21

On **September 21**, Gemma (who goes by just one name) invites all of Madison to join her in singing "We Rise" along with her Million Voice Choir. The event will take place on the Library Mall on the UW campus. This year, Kids for Peace and the Madison Children's Museum are co-sponsoring the peace event along with Kijiji School. If you would like to do a peace presentation, such as a song, poem, puppet show, etc., contact Judy Washbush at 271-3689.

Paula Pachciarz

MADISON PAGAN PRIDE DAY OCTOBER 1

Madison Area Pagan Pride Day happens on **Saturday, October 1**, 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Lakeview Park in Middleton (on the side of Allen Boulevard away from the lake, at Mendota Ave.).

Please plan on joining us for a day of education, activism, and community. During the day there will be a wide variety of vendors, workshops, entertainment, and rituals. See <http://GWPPD.org> for more information, or write to GWPPD@GWPPD.org. (I'm at the other end of that address, so no fear!)

Dorothy Krause

MADISON INSTITUTE FORUM ON NEO-CONSERVATISM PLANNED FOR OCT. 1

You are invited to the next open forum at the Wisconsin Historical Society, **Saturday, October 1**, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Do you wonder about the influence of conservative policies on this country? Then come hear "Gulliver in Lilliput, American Foreign Policy in a Neoconservative Age," given by Professor Shadia Drury of the University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Professor Drury has given intense scrutiny to Leo Strauss (1899-1973), commonly considered the force behind the current neo-conservative movement. This is a good opportunity to become well informed about the many influences on American foreign policy.

From the National Council of Churches

INTERFAITH SUNDAY TELECAST FOR KATRINA AND 9/11 FAMILIES

The Kentucky Council of Churches is planning a "Compassion Sunday" service remembering the victims of both the terrorist attacks of 2001 and the Gulf Coast hurricane of 2005. The service, at 2 p.m. CDT on **September 11**, will include religious leaders from many faith traditions, including Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu communities. NCC President Thomas L. Hoyt, Jr., the CME Bishop of Louisiana and Mississippi, will participate in the service. During the broadcast, information on organizations helping provide relief to hurricane victims will be provided. For information on watching the program on satellite television or Internet, see www.kycouncilofchurches.org.

WISH LIST FOR IHN

The Interfaith Hospitality Network in Madison has announced the following items that they are most in need of, for those who would like to donate:

Baby wipes
Bleach
Car seats
Diapers (sizes 2 and up)
Feminine hygiene products
Laundry soap
Madison Metro bus passes
Play kitchen (wood or very sturdy)
Razors
Riding toys (small)
Shaving cream
Toothbrushes
Toothpaste

Other needs:

African-American hair care products
Cleaning supplies (full size)
Deodorant
Dishes
First aid supplies, including infant items
Garbage bags
Infant formula
Light bulbs
Lotion (full size)
Paper towels
Phone cards
Pillows (new or unused)
Pots and pans
Postage stamps
Silverware
Small household appliances
Toilet paper

ALPHABET SOUP EXPLAINED

Here is a reprint of acronyms, abbreviations, and slang frequently heard in our conversations and newsletter articles. Please share any that we missed!

CMWD = Central Midwest District

CON = (youth) convention

CSS = Congregation Shaarei Shamayim (group who uses our building)

FUS = First Unitarian Society (the one designed by Frank Lloyd Wright)

GA = General Assembly of our denomination

IHN = Interfaith Hospitality Network

JRUUC = James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation (east side of Madison)

MUUYACM = Madison Unitarian Universalist Young Adult and Campus Ministry (pronounced moo-YAHK-um)

NCC = National Council of Churches

RE = Religious Education

UN = United Nations

UUA = Unitarian Universalist Association

UUSC = Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

UU-UNO = Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office

UUWF = Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation

YRUU = Young Religious Unitarian Universalists