



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)

October 21, 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

Saturday-Sunday, October 22-23

*5:00 p.m. Fall Frolic for kids at Prairie

Sunday, October 23

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "United Nations Sunday: The Millennium Development Project and the Cradle Club," presented by Pat Watkins

*11:30 a.m. RE Parent-Teacher Coffee, grades 3-5

*11:45 Book Club potluck lunch and meeting at Prairie

Tuesday, October 25

5:00 a.m. Breakfast at Homeless Men's Shelter. Call Paula Pachciarz, 273-4806, for details.

*2:00 p.m. Prairie Elders meeting, Oakwood Village West.

Wednesday, October 26

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal@ Prairie

Thursday, October 27

6:00 p.m. WOW potluck and meeting at Prairie

Saturday, October 29

*7:30 p.m. Playreaders night out at Vilas Hall theater production

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

Sunday, October 30

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. All Souls' Day Celebration, led by Ruth Calden.

*10:00 a.m. RE Service Sunday

*11:15 a.m. Minister Startup at Prairie:

Congregational potluck and meeting and board-staff retreat led by the Rev. Jim Hobart, CMWD

Wednesday, November 2

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal@ Prairie

*7:30 p.m. "Minding Our Mind" adult religious education, session 1, led by the Rev. Jody Whelden, at Prairie

Sunday, November 6

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "The Ethical Humanist Society," presented by Thomas Hoepfner.

Wednesday, November 9

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal@ Prairie

*7:30 p.m. "Minding Our Mind" adult religious education, session 2, led by the Rev. Jody Whelden

Thursday, November 17

6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers Potluck at Mary Somers'

Friday to Sunday, November 18 to 20

Youth Con for ages 14 to 20

NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE: SUNDAY, OCT. 30

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, October 23

Our service on UN Sunday will consist of acquainting ourselves with the U.N. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and an open discussion of them: Are they achievable? Can they be achieved in the given time frame? What means can be taken to achieve them? Is there a part we can play?

The answer to the latter question is a resounding "YES!" and this Sunday will be the kickoff for Prairie's participation in the UU-UNO "Cradle Club," a six-week project (to end on November 27), during which period members of the congregation will collect, purchase, or make and donate new supplies for the use of newborn babies (cash is also acceptable).

At the end of that period, we will box up our donations and send them to The Southwest Indian Relief Council, which will deliver baskets of the baby supplies to Native American mothers who have attended a required number of prenatal appointments and at least two parenting classes. This project directly helps to reduce child mortality and to improve maternal health (Goals 4 and 5).

Please bring a donation on UN Sunday, and any time after that for the next six weeks. Suggested items include (but not limited to): pacifiers, bottles, wash cloths, baby towels, bibs, ointment, caps, brushes, combs, baby clothes, crib sheets, pads.

Sunday, October 30

Our American culture does a poor job helping people cope with loss, with expressing grief and remembering the dead. Oh yes, we have grief counseling groups, but these are isolated groups of the bereaved with little recognition by the larger community. Mourners are expected to "get on with their lives."

No wonder, then, that the speaker, Ruth Calden, says she was so struck by the comfort and psychological insight in the Day of the Dead celebrations in Mexico---a time set aside annually by an entire nation for sharing remembrances and comforting one another.

Since 1998, Prairie has provided a time for sharing remembrances of loved ones lost and recognizing their impact on our lives. The chalice candle is lit with the reading of names of Prairie dead. And it is our custom to bring a picture and/or object of a person you have lost. After lighting a candle and sharing a brief memory, place the picture and object on the table for later viewing. Or you may prefer to light a candle for someone in silence.

After the service there will be time to talk and sample a loaf of pan de muerto. As Rabbi Earl Grollman writes, "Grief shared is grief diminished."

Sunday, November 6

The full title of the November 6 program, led by Thomas Hoepfner, is "The Ethical Humanist Society: A passion for life with a blend of reason, compassion and commitment."

The Ethical Humanist Society is part of a humanistic, religious and educational movement inspired by the ideal that the supreme aim of human life is to create a more humane society. Our faith is in the capacity and responsibility of human beings to help create a better world. Our commitment is to the worth and dignity of the individual and to treating each human being so as to bring out the best in her or him.

The speaker, Thomas Hoepfner, is a member of the Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago and Associate Professor of Neurological Sciences at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. Tom teaches medical students about the nervous system, studying the underlying mechanisms that are involved in epilepsy, and works with patients who have difficulty controlling epilepsy.

A father of three children and grandfather of three, Tom enjoys making up new songs to sing and play with them.

OUR SOCIETY

PRAIRIE BOOK CLUB MEETS OCTOBER 23

The Prairie Book Club will eat and meet this coming Sunday at Prairie after the service. The book for **October 23** is *Bold Spirit: Helga Estby's Forgotten Walk Across Victorian America* by Linda Lawrence Hunt.

Here is a summary from the Web site, www.readinggroupguides.com/guides3/bold_spirit1.asp (discussion questions are given on this site too):

In 1896, a Norwegian immigrant and mother of eight children named Helga Estby was behind on taxes and the mortgage when she learned that a mysterious sponsor would pay \$10,000 to a woman who walked across America.

Hoping to win the wager and save her family's farm, Helga and her teenaged daughter Clara, armed with little more than a compass, red-pepper spray, a revolver, and Clara's curling iron, set out on foot from Eastern Washington. Their route would pass through 14 states, but they were not allowed to carry more than five dollars each. As they visited Indian reservations, Western boomtowns, remote ranches and local civic leaders, they confronted snowstorms, hunger, thieves and mountain lions with equal aplomb.

Their treacherous and inspirational journey to New York challenged contemporary notions of femininity and captured the public imagination. But their trip had such devastating consequences that the Estby women's achievement was blanketed in silence until, nearly a century later, Linda Lawrence Hunt encountered their extraordinary story.

Mary Mullen

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF PARISH MEETING
Prairie's fall business meeting will take place Sunday, **November 20**, at the meeting house, beginning at 11:45 a.m. The principal item of business will be consideration of the 2006 budget. Please submit other agenda items to me before October 30.

Mike Briggs, President

MODIFICATION OF PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINES AND PUBLICATION DATES
To avoid conflict with holidays, the deadline and publication dates for the Prairie Fire in November and December will be advanced by one week:

Deadline Dates Publication Dates

October 30	November 4
November 13	November 18
November 27	December 2
December 11	December 16

The normal publication schedule will resume in January.

THE VIEW FROM MY BRANCH



Okay, I admit it - I like Hollywood movies. I saw the movie *Batman Begins* last Spring. And, a few weeks ago I saw *Revenge of the Sith*, the latest in the Star Wars series. What I liked about both these films is that they show, in different ways, how moral choices and social justice go hand in hand.

Batman Begins is the story of a man who suffers frightening experiences and tragic losses as a child. He grows up confused and lacking direction. Eventually, he transforms himself, in the spirit of his father's message: "We fall down so that we can learn to stand up." He becomes Batman, determined to use his inherited millions to be a guardian of the people and save a city from sinister forces. As such, Batman represents a modern-day (albeit well-heeled) "David" taking on "Goliath," a system manipulated by criminals.

Revenge of the Sith tells the opposite story. In it, this young man, destined for greatness in fighting the evil empire but plagued by the need to save his wife, succumbs to the Dark Side of the Force. We witness his tortured twists and turns and his convoluted reasoning as he struggles to do right, us knowing all along, as Star Wars fans, that he will be redeemed by the love of his son in a later movie. Meanwhile, the film reminds us of how selfish motives result in selfish actions. The good of the Republic is sacrificed as Darth Vader and his evil mentors strive to become tyrannical controllers of the universe.

In today's real world, most of us are not faced with such dramatic, earth-shaking decisions. But we do struggle to lead ethical and moral lives as we search our consciences to "do the right thing" in our daily choices. No matter what religious, spiritual, or moral principles we adopt, most of us, I believe, strive to live by the words John Adams used when pressed by Thomas Jefferson to define his personal creed. Adams said, "Be just and good." If we use this idea to make our smaller choices in life, then we might, collectively, create a world in which we can all live, peacefully, together.

*The Rev. Jody Whelden
Consulting Minister*

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEET OCTOBER 25

The Prairie Elders will meet **Tuesday, October 25**, at 2:00 p.m. in the second floor exercise room in the Oaks Building, Oakwood Village West.

The topic will be “Nurturing Our Creativity,” a show-and-tell about creativity after age 65. Bring your painting, sing your song, read your poem, show off your wood carving, pass around your best photo, or whatever you define as creativity. If your creative muse retired early or never appeared at all, come tell about someone else who was creative in later years. Or just come and listen. Given the talents and interests of our group, this promises to be a colorful and fascinating gathering.

PARKING: From 1:30-1:50 p.m. Warren Hagstrom will shuttle people from the upper parking lot. Look for his tan VW Passat by the street entrance.

Prairie Elders aims to provide good times and mutual support for Prairie UU Members and Friends over 65, and other UUs who live at the Oaks. For information, please call Donna Murdoch, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382, or Doleta Chapru 238-4970.

MINISTRY STARTUP EVENT OCTOBER 30

The Central Midwest District (CMWD) offers the service of facilitating discussion on goalsetting for each congregation that starts up with a new minister.

The Prairie Board of Trustees has arranged with the District and our new consulting minister, the Rev. Jody Welden, a Startup on **Sunday, October 30**. The District Congregational Services Director, the Rev. Jim Hobart, will spend the day meeting with the Prairie membership and with the Board.

All members and friends are invited to attend an early potluck lunch at 11:15 and congregational meeting at noon. (Child care will be provided.) Discussion will center around such questions as, “Where are we going? What do we want?”

The Board and staff will meet with Jim later in the afternoon to go into more depth on these questions.

Startup Schedule

11:15 Potluck and fellowship

12:00 Congregational meeting with the Rev. Jim Hobart, CMWD Congregational Services Director

1:30 to 5:30 Retreat Meeting: Prairie Board and staff meet with Jim

WAYS TO HELP AT ALLIED DRIVE

Here are some ways to help out at Allied Drive:

- We are collecting items the following items for the Allied food pantry: cereal, rice or noodle mixes, Mac and cheese, Hamburger/Tuna Helper, corn muffin mix, spaghetti (dry), soda crackers, cookies, spaghetti sauce, corn, green beans, pinto beans, pork & beans, fruit, tomatoes, toilet paper, meal-in-a-can (like stew, Spaghetti-o's, etc.) canned soups. Bring the items to Prairie on Sunday, October 30. If you can't bring things then, just bring them any time, as several of us go over there weekly and can deliver them.
- Thanksgiving is fast approaching and the Food Pantry is planning to make up turkey baskets for families. Since they can get the turkey at a very low cost, they can put a basket with all the trimmings together for about \$15. If anyone would like to donate part or all of a basket, get the money to Barb Park by October 30 or at least call me with your intention to give so that I can let the folks at the Food Pantry know how many baskets we can help with. My telephone number is 273-8775. Just leave a message if I'm not there. Thanks to those who have already contributed.
- There are still families in the process of being resettled in the apartments in Allied Drive. They can still use volunteers to answer phone, do data entry, and drive people to clinic appointments. If you can help, call Rita Adair at 273-6342 or e-mail her at adair@co.dane.wi.us. Thanks again to all who have contributed time, money and food, and thanks for being there to fill future needs.

Barbara Park, Social Action Committee

DONATIONS FOR PRAIRIE'S KATRINA EVACUEES

Donations are still being accepted for Prairie-connected people affected by Hurricane Katrina. You can write checks to "Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society." In the memo line write "Prairie Musicale Benefit Checks." Checks may be mailed to the Prairie Treasurer, Dirk Herr-Hoyman, 503 S. Prospect Ave, Madison WI 53711.

Warren Hagstrom and Doleta Chapru

THANKS FOR NEW ORLEANS MUSICALE FOOD

On another note, many thanks to Ken Kopp IV of New Orleans Takeout for the much appreciated donation of jambalaya, red beans and rice, cornbread, and pralines that were eaten at the Musicale. New Orleans Takeout is at 1517 Monroe Street.

PLAYREADERS' THEATER PARTY

On **Saturday, October 29** at 7:30 p.m., we will be attending the U.W.'s Mitchell Theater for the performance of Lynn Nottage's "Crumbs from the Table of Joy." This thoughtful, touching and funny play takes place in 1950, when Godfrey Crumb has just lost his wife, and has turned to Father Devine's Peace Mission Movement for solace, and pulled up stakes and moved his teenage daughters to Brooklyn. The action is expressed as seen and experienced by his 17-year-old daughter, Ernestine, and aims straight to the heart in a story that deals with the boundaries of race, gender and society.

You can order tickets by calling 262-1500.

Pat Watkins

MEMBERSHIP

Please welcome our new member:

Barbara Boyd

5311 Manitowoc Parkway, Madison, WI 53705
(608) 233-1794
johnwboyd (at) earthlink.net

[Ed. Note: @ is replaced by (at) to keep these addresses from being used by creative cyber miscreants.]

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)

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MINDING YOUR MIND: A PRACTICAL CLASS ON INTELLECTUAL DIVERSITY

Consulting Minister Rev. Jody Whelden will lead a 4-week adult education class at Prairie on Wednesday evenings, 7:15 to 9:00 p.m.:

November 2, 9, 16, and 30

Our minds are tools no one gives us instruction books about. This class will give you a dependable, fun way to understand how your mind processes information and how to understand people different from you. It will be fun, relaxed, informative and we will apply the information to your life.

For more info or to sign up, call Jody at Prairie at 608-271-8218, at her home office phone, 608-231-9707, or by e-mail at minister (at) uuprairie.org.

Singing the Journey songbook supplement

Please buy _____ songbooks at \$15.00 each for Prairie. I'd like to have the songbook/s dedicated

In honor of _____

In memory of _____

from _____

Please make checks payable to Prairie UU Society and give them, along with this slip, to Orange Schroeder. Deadline for this order: November 10.



"Sharing" by Jessie

LETTERS



SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

Dear Prairie Members and Friends,

This has been an amazing year at Prairie. Our adult programs have been inspiring, thought-provoking and increasingly well-attended. Religious education enrollment has doubled. Our building has been literally reorganized from top to bottom, starting with the new roof. We have added new members to our rolls.

We have bought land on which we plan to build a new meeting house to serve our needs as we continue to grow. Our professional staff has expanded. Dan and Robin Proud keep us organized as our administrators, Bob Radford has joined us as director of religious education, and our consulting minister, Jody Whelden, began working with us on August 1. Her ministry promises to bring new life to Prairie, not only through her Sunday sermons but (as importantly) in helping us minister to each other in a variety of ways.

A vital part of our mutual ministry must be a commitment to support our community not only with hearts and hands and minds, but in more material ways. Some other UU societies formally require financial commitment from their members. Prairie doesn't. We give voluntarily. Nonetheless, if Prairie is to continue on its path of growth, we must give as generously as we can.

Soon, you will get a letter from the Finance Committee, detailing Prairie's proposed budget for 2006 and asking for your pledge of financial support. Please read it carefully, and respond as soon as you can and as well as you can.

I am encouraged by what has been happening at Prairie this year, and I want to see more exciting things happening next year. I hope you do, too, and I hope that you will join me and Norma in pledging your financial support to Prairie.

Peacefully,

Mike Briggs, President, 2005-2006

UUA CHALLENGE GRANT ANNOUNCED FOR HURRICANE VICTIMS

Dear Friends:

It is with gratitude and joy that we share some very special news. A generous challenge grant has been offered by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock to benefit the UUA-UUSC Gulf Coast Relief Fund. Beginning with contributions dated October 2, 2005, Shelter Rock will match each dollar given to the fund, up to a total of \$500,000.

This challenge grant represents a deep faith in the generosity of Unitarian Universalists, a faith that is well founded. Thanks to your previous contributions the Gulf Coast Relief Fund now provides a source of help and hope to people whose lives and ministries were tragically interrupted by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Because of you, communities will be healed and lives will be transformed.

It is clear that the recovery process will need to continue for many years. If Shelter Rock's challenge is met, the combined gifts will increase the fund by an additional one million dollars. This is money that is sorely needed. Additional contributions to the UUA-UUSC Gulf Coast Relief Fund will allow us to provide ongoing assistance to those most in need.

Three UU churches in the New Orleans area have been badly damaged, and at least one is beyond repair. The Gulf Coast Relief Panel and the UUSC Department of Rights in Humanitarian Crises have committed to providing long-term and effective interventions and solutions through intentional, judicious grants.

This tragedy has tested us like no other, but it has also given us an opportunity to respond in a way that is truly transformative. We ask you now to rise to the challenge offered by our generous friends in the Shelter Rock congregation, to envision what can be when justice-loving people join hands and hearts, and to make this vision a reality. Please give generously so that together we may extend hope and healing to more of our brothers and sisters through a widening circle of care and compassion.

In faith,

*The Rev. William G. Sinkford, President, UUA
Charlie Clements, MD, President and CEO, UUSC*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE MORE WE TEACH, THE MORE WE LEARN

The RE Children's program is full of energy, opportunities and responsibility. Our classes and activities are finding ways to help our kids seek faith and fellowship. Thanks for supporting our efforts.

And how can we support you and your family? What ideas or issues do you have that can make our classes more fun and valuable? We want our inter-generation services to make smiles and memories---let's think about celebrating Thanksgiving together. I hope to hear from you about Nifty-Gifty! Give a call and we'll talk!

Fall Frolic, October 22

Our RE Fall Frolic is coming up. Detail and permission papers are available. We meet at 5 p.m. on Saturday, October 22 at Prairie for a wonderful youth-oriented overnight. Younger kids can spend the night if they "bring a parent". Non-Prairie friends are invited to join us (they need a permission slip). We end with breakfast and our regular 10 a.m. service and classes.

We need help from adults: Can you cook breakfast? How about spending the night? I'm excited about the crafts hour from 7:30 to 8:30.

Service Sunday, October 30

October 30 in the morning we have a Service Sunday. The RE kids and volunteers are going to SERVE OUR MEMBERS. We have most of our work sites set: please call if you want our help. We need to borrow some rakes and tarps (labeled clearly). We'll be back in time to join the luncheon.

Last Parent/Family-Teacher Meeting October 23

We continue parent/family-teachers meetings to talk and visit. We meet in class groups in the room your children are using. We look forward to meeting each other and discussing any opportunities or issues that may be relevant. The schedule ends with Sunday, October 23 at 11:30 for RE class grades 3-5.

Second Teacher/Sub Orientation

As we plan for this year, there are a few things we're working on. We continue to talk with James Reeb and First Unitarian RE youth and advisors - several of us attended the FUS YRUU meeting 10/9. We're planning a second teacher-orientation and substitute-

preparation session for two hours, maybe Sunday, November 6 after service. We are glad to talk with adults interested in teaching or volunteering in other ways.

It is wonderful to be part of our RE. We can make our UU experience joyous and helpful.

Thank you. See you in church.

Bob Radford, Director of Religious Education

FALL FROLIC at PRAIRIE

Kids & Volunteers Wanted!

Saturday & Sunday, October 22 & 23

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Starts Saturday 5:00 pm, ends Sunday 10 am

...then, we go to church...

◆◆◆

STAY OVERNIGHT--Kids pick a bedtime

◆◆◆

Things to Bring

☞ \$5 For dinner and breakfast

☞ permission slip ☞ snack for evening

☞ a costume ☞ game clothes ☞ overnight gear

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST NEWS

SOCIAL JUSTICE VIDEOS AT REEB

The James Reeb Social Justice Council will present "The Power of Nightmares," a three-hour BBC documentary directed by Adam Curtis at James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation at 2146 E. Johnson St. from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. (with time for discussion afterwards) on **October 23, October 30, and November 6.**

Curtis presents the thesis that Western politicians claim, "The greatest danger of all is international terrorism, a powerful and sinister network, with sleeper cells in countries across the world, a threat that needs to be fought by a war on terror." According to Curtis "...much of this threat is a fantasy, which has been exaggerated and distorted by politicians. It's a dark illusion that has spread unquestioned through governments around the world, the security services and the international media."

This is a powerful and thought-provoking examination of the parallel rise of neoconservatism and Islamic fundamentalism. (One reviewer called it something like "a Noam Chomsky lecture channeled through Monty Python.") We think it provides a springboard for discussion of important issues.

Ellie Rogers, James Reeb UU Congregation

ART SALE AT FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY

First Unitarian Society is excited to be hosting our Fourth Annual Art Sale on **Sunday, November 6**, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Lower Meeting House.

Artwork includes jewelry, origami, paper boxes and journals, handweaving, decorative gourds, mandalas, photography, needle-felted dolls, clay sculpture, fabric art, talking sticks, batik, pottery, and more! Please join us for this once-per-year event!

*Leslie Ross, Director of Religious Education,
First Unitarian Society of Madison*

URGENT UUSC-UUA APPEAL TO HELP EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

Your help is crucial! The situation is desperate in the Himalayan regions of Pakistan and India, following the major earthquake of October 8. The relief effort has still not reached over one-fifth of the villages badly hit by the earthquake, because roads and bridges are out - and because the relief effort cannot meet the magnitude of the need.

Some 2.5 million people are without homes. People are dying of exposure and untreated wounds. Thousands are living out in the open in their

destroyed villages, without adequate food, water, or medical care in rapidly dropping temperatures and frequent rainstorms.

There simply are not enough doctors, tents, blankets, and medical supplies going out to people yet. It is essential to step up the aid distribution effort now.

Time is of the essence! Tens of thousands will die if they don't receive help very soon - and the brutal Himalayan winter is closing in. The window of time in which we can make a difference is closing.

What You Can Do

UUSC and the Unitarian Universalist Association have created a joint fund to respond to this disaster, and UUSC's Rights in Humanitarian Crises Program has kicked into high gear.

But we need your help!

Please make as generous a contribution as you can to help the thousands of people in desperate need in the earthquake-affected areas. Your donation, together with UUSC's expertise in responding to humanitarian crises, can make a difference. UUSC is already working with organizations in the area. But we all must act before the first snows inflict more casualties.

Your special contribution today---and your compassion---can save lives. Your contribution will help the most vulnerable people have a chance at surviving this disaster. Please donate today!

Donations to the UUSC-UUA South Asia Earthquake Relief Fund can be made online or by mail at P.O. Box 845259, Boston, MA 02284-5259. For more information about the UUSC-UUA response to the earthquake or to make a donation online, visit our website, www.uusc.org.

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