



# 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)

**May 26, 2006**

*Prairie Fire is the semi-monthly newsletter of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. The two most recent issues may be seen at [www.uuprairie.org](http://www.uuprairie.org).*

President: Mike Briggs, (608) 835-0914 Consulting Minister: Rev. Jody Whelden, minister@uuprairie.org; (608) 231-9707 Editor: Dan Proud, admin@uuprairie.org; 661-0776

## **PRAIRIE CALENDAR**

### **Sunday, May 28**

No choir rehearsal

\*10:00 a.m. Kids Game Day

\*10:00 a.m. "A Century of Regime Change and What We Can Do About It," presented by the Rev. Jody Whelden, followed by Memorial Day Picnic at the home of Michael and Norma Briggs

### **Wednesday, May 31**

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

### **Sunday, June 4**

No choir rehearsal

\*10:00 a.m. "Racism Today" presented by the Prairie middle school R.E. Class

\*11:45 a.m. Prairie Book Club potluck and discussion, couch room

### **Wednesday, June 7**

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

### **Sunday, June 11**

No choir rehearsal

\*10:00 a.m. "Beatrix Potter; Unitarian Extraordinaire" presented by Rose Smith and Anne Lundin

\*11:45 a.m. Listening Session for the Congregation

### **Wednesday, June 14**

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

\*6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers potluck and conversation, home of Kate Tucker

### **Wednesday-Sunday, June 21-25**

\*UUA General Assembly, St. Louis, Mo.

### **Sunday, June 25**

\*5:00 p.m. Humanist Union potluck and joint program with the Madison Ethical Discussion Group; led by Midge Miller

(\* = Details follow in this issue.)

## **DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS**

### **Sunday, May 28**

This weekend we will honor the many soldiers who have served in the US Armed Forces. As we think of those human beings who gave their lives, we are drawn to reflect in the mirror of truth about our country's use of force in the world. Some of it has been service we can be proud of, some of it is not so pretty.

This morning we will examine the work of journalist Stephen Kinzer, who has just published a book called *OVERTHROW: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. After reviewing the patterns he exposes, we will integrate ideas for the future brought to us by Rabbi Michael Lerner, one of the co-leaders of the grassroots movement calling itself, "The Network of Spiritual Progressives," an alternative to the religious right.

**NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE: SUNDAY, JUNE 4**

## Sunday, June 4

The middle school RE class presents "Racism Today", a program about racism and stereotyping. The class did three interviews of people of minority races, one with a partner who is white. Our own Mei-lien Converse was one of our interview subjects.

The service will include a video made from these interviews, and a skit we created about racism in schools. The RE class has been studying racism all year and we want to share what we have learned with the congregation. The creators and presenters of the program will be Xena Anderson, Madeline Arnold, Phoebe Chastain, Rose Chastain, Seth Gutknecht, Gavin McFarlane, and Dylan Vorass.

## Sunday, June 11

In "Beatrix Potter: Unitarian Extraordinaire", Rose Smith and Anne Lundin will explore her life story and her wonderful stories for children, which adults also enjoy. She said that she was descended "from generations of Lancashire yeomen and weavers, obstinate, hard-headed, matter-of-fact folk. . . as far back as I can go. They were Puritans, non-jurors, nonconformists, dissenters. Your Mayflower ancestors sailed to America; mine at the same time were sticking it out at home, probably rather enjoying persecution."

## OUR SOCIETY

### SPANISH SPEAKERS MEET JUNE 14

Spanish Speakers will enjoy potluck and conversation at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 14, at the home of Kate Tucker, 4504 Camden Rd, Madison. All are welcome. For questions or directions, call Rosemary Dorney, 238-4382.

### HUMANIST UNION MEETS JUNE 25

The Humanist Union is planning to have Midge Miller speak to a joint meeting with the Madison Ethical Discussion Group at Prairie on June 25. We would like everyone interested to hear Midge report on the Spiritual Activism conference just completed at All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington D.C. The evening will start with a potluck at 5:00 p.m.

## THE VIEW FROM MY BRANCH



This month I am taking a one-month online course for first-year UU ministers. There are about 30 ministers sharing ideas and concerns. We began with a paper on the rhythm of the events and functioning of the church year. The second paper was on transformational leadership, that is, how to provide ministerial leadership in the congregation in building an environment where people can grow and transform.

Today I downloaded the materials for the third class---about 50 pages of material concerning anti-racism and anti-oppression work. I include them here for you to pursue, also. One article is about racism after 9/11 as experienced in the Sikh community:

<http://www.sikhspectrum.com/102002/valerieb.htm>

One article is published (pre-9/11) by the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. It is an overview on a ministry of justice concerning race, ethnicity and public policy:

[http://www.jewishpublicaffairs.org/publications/building\\_one\\_nation.html](http://www.jewishpublicaffairs.org/publications/building_one_nation.html)

The third is by a special review committee appointed by our own UUA concerning GA 2005. The charge to the Special Review Commission was to "review the trajectory of events which impacted the Unitarian Universalist community of color, especially the youth of color community, leading up to and during the Ft. Worth General Assembly-2005":

<http://www.uua.org/TRUS/apr06/D2a-src.pdf>

I hope you will consider reading one or all of these articles---or find some of your own to study. The study and dismantling of institutionalized racism is of unrelenting importance. As religious people we must aspire to continual love and service to healing the wounds which racism has imposed on us all.

(Anyone without Internet access is welcome to contact me at 608-347-0237. I will get you a copy of any of the articles you would like to have.)

*The Rev. Jody Whelden, Consulting Minister  
Office: 608-271-8218; Home Office: 608-231-9707*

## THAT WE MIGHT KNOW YOUR MIND

Last weekend the members of the Prairie Board, and Jody Whelden, our consulting minister, took a leap of faith and committed to sharing space, time and ideas to know each other's minds. We consciously spoke and listened to others with acceptance and without contention, even though we have differing opinions. Because this was so revealing and invigorating, the Board is offering every member an opportunity to do the same on Sunday, June 11, after the service. Please read on.

At our retreat we connected. We articulated what is most important to us about Prairie. We spoke freely and listened nonjudgmentally, and we exchanged ideas and concerns. We rediscovered the commonality of our commitment to and investment in our chosen church community, which we are continually reshaping by our very participation. We grew closer. In short, we bonded.

As mentioned above, we would like to offer the opportunity for all Prairie's members and friends to have a similar experience. Would you please join us Sunday, June 11, after the service, for a "listening session"? The purpose of the session is to share ideas frankly and respectfully about three topics: professional staffing, growth in membership, and the pursuit of a new building. The goal is to share thoughts and feelings freely without fear of recrimination and without comment from Board members or others in attendance. The plan is for each of us to listen to all who speak---not to discuss, not to promote a particular viewpoint, and not to come to consensus.

We will meet after the service, in small groups at tables. A board member will be present at each table to take notes and to remind participants of the rules of discourse, but not to participate in the discussion. Every voice at every table will be heard. Food and child care will be provided for all. The session will end at 1 p.m.

Please join us.

\*\*\*

*If there is a god, it doesn't care if you get its name right. It cares if you are kind. And that is still what matters most if there is no God.*

--Rev. Ken Sawyer, Winchester (Mass.) Unitarian Society

## BOOK CLUB JUNE SELECTION

On Sunday, June 4 after the service, the Book club will discuss *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, by Jared Diamond (592 pages). This book connects the fate of societies to their treatment of the environment. Diamond is well known for his bestseller, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, in which he looks at how environmental and structural factors explain why Western societies came to dominate the world. In his new book he looks at history's losers, like the Easter Islanders, the Anasazi of the American Southwest, the Mayans, and the modern-day Rwandans, as well as the early settlements in Greenland, to analyze why societies failed. Diamond teaches geography at UCLA.

Get an overview of the book at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collapse:\\_How\\_Societies\\_Choose\\_to\\_Fail\\_or\\_Succeed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collapse:_How_Societies_Choose_to_Fail_or_Succeed). Read a long review from *The New Yorker* at [http://www.newyorker.com/critics/books/?050103crbo\\_books](http://www.newyorker.com/critics/books/?050103crbo_books). Try out an online educational activity that apparently is based on this book at <http://www.learner.org/exhibits/collapse/>.

## LONG REST FOR THE CHOIR

The Prairie choir is taking a long rest after Sunday, May 21.

## MISSING SONGBOOKS!

There were 23 *Rise Up Singing* books in the meeting room and upstairs office Sunday, May 14. Prairie owns 28 copies. All are needed for congregational singing. Personal copies can be purchased at local book stores.

Individual copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* hymn book and the new songbook supplement are available through the UUA Bookstore at [uua.org](http://uua.org) or by calling 1-800-215-9076.

## PRAIRIE WEB SITES

Society Home Page: [www.uuprairie.org](http://www.uuprairie.org)

News Group: [groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/)

Views Group: [groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/)

Social Action: [socialaction.madisonwi.us](http://socialaction.madisonwi.us)

Humanist Union: <http://humanist.madisonwi.us>

Long Range Planning: [www.execpc.com/~prairieu/](http://www.execpc.com/~prairieu/)

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **END OF R.E. AND THE BEGINNING OF SUMMER**

Last Sunday Erin Bosch led yet another wonderful transition service. The transition service has always been a wonderful opportunity for us to get to know our RE children and witness their talent. The congregation was lucky to be entertained by the talented Reuben and Madeline Arnold and heard a passionate reading from Phoebe Chastain. Rachel Herr-Hoyman informed us of her plans this fall to attend college in San Francisco and gave advice to Madeline and Phoebe as they make their transition from middle school to high school.

We also had the honor of witnessing the dedication of our littlest member Samantha Truog. With Samantha smiling the whole time it wasn't hard for all of us to make a promise to help guide her on life's path.

Our dedicated RE teachers have been downstairs every Sunday guiding our young people. Their work is so appreciated, but unfortunately we don't always get a chance to express our gratitude after each Sunday service.

Last Sunday's service was also a time for us to thank our teachers. Again, thank you to all who have dedicated your time this RE year and thank you to all who have volunteered and substituted.

RE classes may have ended but that doesn't mean RE is done for the summer. We are currently planning on having more structured classes and age-appropriate activities for our RE children. We also are lucky to have two people to help out this summer in caring for our infants, toddlers and young people.

This summer there is General Assembly for any interested teens. GA will be June 21-25. And of course we'll have our Summer Spree, which will be July 14-16. If you are interested in volunteering please let me know. We need people to have fun, play games and help our RE kids have a good time!

One class that hasn't ended is our middle school class. On June 4 we will have the opportunity to see and hear what our students have learned this year about racism. Rachel Long and our middle school students have spent many long hard hours putting

together an exciting presentation that has never been done before by our RE students!

This summer will be filled with lots of fun activities. Again, if anyone has any ideas or suggestions for this summer see me after the service or send an email to [youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org](mailto:youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org).

*Rebecca Malke-Eligenti*  
*Youth Religious Education Coordinator*

## **UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST NEWS**

### **GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGISTRATION AND BUS INFORMATION**

You can register for General Assembly online at <http://www.uua.org/ga>. The site has plenty of details on housing, scholarships, transportation, volunteer opportunities and more.

Buses from First Unitarian Society are being organized and will leave Wednesday, June 21 and return Monday, June 26. The cost is \$125 per person (round-trip).

Contact Elizabeth Barrett at [ebarrett \(at\) chorus.net](mailto:ebarrett@chorus.net) to sign up for the bus.

*Nancy Schraufnagel*

### **UU CHRISTIAN COMMUNION—BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY**

The First Unitarian Society Christian Group is sponsoring a UU Christian Communion Sunday, June 4, at First Unitarian Society at 12:45 p.m. in the West Living Room. Everyone is welcome to our bread and wine communion service. Contact John Mosman for more information: [john445@sillymoose.com](mailto:john445@sillymoose.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

**JOURNEY TOWARD WHOLENESS NEWS**

\*\*\*\*\*

**UU MINISTERS ADVOCATE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IN THE CONSTITUTION**

When the Revs. Mel Hoover and Rose Edington, co-ministers of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Charleston, WV, sat down with their Senator's staff to lobby against the federal marriage amendment, they started by telling their own story. An interracial couple, Hoover and Edington had a unique perspective to communicate to Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV). "I might not be here if there had been a popular vote about my rights," said Hoover, an African-American and a former director of the UUA's Department of Faith in Action. "When we got married in 1970, the last miscegenation laws were still on the books. Those laws remained in place until 1973. My wife and I would hear the same arguments used around interracial marriage that we're hearing now about same-sex marriage. But the nation didn't collapse. Religion didn't collapse. Marriage didn't collapse."

Hoover, Edington, and Kelly Kaufman, a Unitarian-Universalist seminarian finishing her coursework at Vanderbilt Divinity School and the third member of the West Virginia delegation, were three of nine Unitarian-Universalists to participate in an interfaith "fly-in" lobby day against the federal marriage amendment. The UU religious presence was organized by the UUA's Washington Office for Advocacy in partnership with other religious and secular groups that oppose the proposed federal "Marriage Protection amendment." See [http://www.uua.org/news/freedomtomarry/060522\\_dc.html](http://www.uua.org/news/freedomtomarry/060522_dc.html) for the full story.

\*\*\*\*\*

**STANDING ON THE SIDE OF LOVE 2006: NO DISCRIMINATION IN THE CONSTITUTION**

**Phone Trainings for Lobbying Against the "Anti-Marriage" Amendment May 25 and 29**

If you are planning (or considering) lobbying against the Federal Anti-Marriage Amendment, this training is for you! Join UUA staff for a conference call briefing (no more than one hour) in which we'll go through the issue, the amendment, and basic lobbying skills. You'll also hear from at least one UU minister who's come to Washington, DC, to join other religious leaders in lobbying against the amendment.

We will provide a PowerPoint presentation accessible from our Web site. We're offering this briefing at two times:

Thursday, May 25, at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Monday, May 29, at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time

If you would like to participate, please send your name, email and UU congregation to [ebukey@uua.org](mailto:ebukey@uua.org). YOU MUST RSVP TO PARTICIPATE! Those who RSVP will receive instructions via email on how to access the presentation and dial-in. Again, please send your name, email and UU congregation to [ebukey@uua.org](mailto:ebukey@uua.org).

Please share this with other Unitarian Universalists who may be interested!

\*\*\*\*\*

**OPEN DEBATE ON IRAQ**

To date, 117 members of the House of Representatives have signed H.R.543, a discharge petition that would allow H. J. Res. 55, a bill that calls for the Administration to develop a troop withdrawal plan, to be brought to the House floor for debate. To succeed, the discharge petition needs to gather a total of 218 signatures.

For a complete list of signatories, please visit the campaign Web site (the new additions are bolded): <http://www.openiraqdebate.org/inner/roll-call.html>

From the Win Without War Coalition:

The Republican sponsors of H.R.543 are still unclear as to when we should expect the Republican-defined debate on the House floor. The sponsors, however, have communicated to leadership their terms for a debate: (1) an open-rule, allowing for any and all alternatives to be considered and voted on; and (2) a substantial 17-hour debate. The only way we can ensure the first honest and open debate on Iraq happens is to bring it to the floor with H.R.543, and we need your help in making it happen. Please look through the list of the non-signers above and let us know where you can help.

Thank you for your continued support... We've made amazing strides in the grassroots effort to end the war, and it was due to your commitment to this effort!

\*\*\*\*\*

**ACTION OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS ON THE IRAQ WAR**

ATTENTION UUA GA 2006 DELEGATES:  
TIME-LIMITED ACTION REQUEST ON IRAQ WAR

Dear GA 2006 Delegate,

As we have all witnessed, the war in Iraq is intensifying with more carnage and chaos being created every day.

Many of us have been heartened to hear about a new movement started by many people of faith that aims to bring the largest numbers of Americans together in order to take positive, non-violent action to stop the war. This new campaign is called, "The Declaration of Peace" (DOP). It is a campaign that will include calling on members of Congress to support legislation that brings the troops home, cuts off funding for the war, and includes a pledge to engage in concerted non-violent action if a concrete withdrawal plan is not established and begun by September 21, 2006 with a commitment to continue acting until the U.S. withdraws from Iraq.

We're looking for delegates going to this year's GA in St. Louis who are as convinced as we are that our denomination belongs in this new campaign to bring the Iraq war to a halt. We want to secure the requisite number of delegate signatures to put an "Action of Immediate Witness" (AIW) onto the GA agenda, a tool made just for such urgent action. Can you commit to signing this AIW herein attached? Can you help us find other delegates, especially delegates who would give us the spread we need according to the AIW regulations: 150 minimum signers, 25 congregations, 5 districts?

We welcome your suggestions about the draft below.

If you can commit, please tell us by subscribing to [www.uuadop-subscribe@lists.riseup.net](mailto:www.uuadop-subscribe@lists.riseup.net) or write to: [tomfluce@gmail.com](mailto:tomfluce@gmail.com)

Tell us:

1. Who you are,
2. From which congregation/district,
3. Your contact phone at GA,
4. If you will have e-mail at the GA.

This special listserv is intended to organize GA delegates for the passage of the AIW. If you can find others, please share this message and ask them also to subscribe to this listserv. We want our campaign to win overwhelming approval of the GA.

Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

Micky Duxbury, Sherry Larsen-Beville  
Tom Luce - First Unitarian Church Of Oakland

## **ACTION OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS (AIW) UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2006 "THE DECLARATION OF PEACE"**

WHEREAS:

The US war and occupation in Iraq has resulted in more than 2300 US deaths, more than 30,000 Iraqi deaths, and has consumed billions of dollars of resources while greatly intensifying hostilities in the Middle East; and

WHEREAS:

A growing national campaign, entitled "The Declaration of Peace" has been called to end the US War in Iraq and is endorsed by the following organizations: United for Peace and Justice; Clergy and Laity Concerned About Iraq; The Global Call for Nonviolent Resistance to the War in Iraq; Proyecto Guerrero Azteca por la Paz; The United Church of Christ; Methodist Federation for Social Action; Code Pink; Episcopal Peace Fellowship; Pax Christi USA; Iraq Pledge of Resistance; Global Exchange; Voices for Creative Nonviolence; Peaceful Tomorrows; Peaceworkers; Courage to Resist; The MK Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence; Los Angeles Interfaith Council United for Justice and Peace; Ecumenical Peace Institute/Clergy and Laity Concerned (Northern California); Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service; and

WHEREAS:

"The Declaration of Peace" calls for establishing a concrete deadline and timetable for a comprehensive withdrawal of US troops which will include the following:

- a. closure of all US bases in Iraq,
- b. supporting an Iraqi led peace process in the post-occupation transition,
- c. ending US control of Iraqi oil and the political and economic life of Iraq,
- d. making reparations and supporting reconstruction to address the destruction wreaked by the war,
- e. giving increased support to US veterans,
- f. prohibiting so-called "preemptive" war against other nations; and

WHEREAS:

"The Declaration of Peace" is a campaign that will include calling on all elected members of Congress to support legislation that brings the troops home, cuts off funding for the war, and includes a pledge to engage in concerted non-violent action if a concrete withdrawal plan is not established and begun by September 23, 2006 with a commitment to continue acting until the US withdraws from Iraq; and

WHEREAS:

The UUA joined in the Vietnam Moratorium and has consistently joined campaigns of peacemaking that promote reconciliation over war, redistribution of wealth over proliferation of weaponry, and non-violent resistance over acquiescence to militaristic government policies, and

WHEREAS:

Hundreds of thousands of US citizens have engaged in democratic opposition to this war and have been met with its continued escalation;

THEREFORE,

Let our unified voices be heard, and LET IT BE RESOLVED that, the UUA General Assembly of 2006 endorse "The Declaration of Peace", and urge all Unitarian Universalist religious leaders at the international, national, district, and congregational level to inform themselves about this campaign and participate to end the US war against Iraq.

\*\*\*\*\*

**SOCIAL JUSTICE GATHERING AT GA**

Come to General Assembly in St. Louis and meet other social justice committee members and anti-racism/anti-oppression, diversity committee folks and UUA staff to learn about and share effective social justice practices and resources.

WHEN: Wednesday, June 21, 2-5 p.m.

WHERE: RENAISSANCE GRAND HYATT  
800 Washington Avenue  
St. Louis, MO  
Room: Hawthorne, 21st Floor

WHO: UU social justice committees and anti-racism committees  
UUA Washington Office for Advocacy  
Director Rob Keithan  
[www.uua.org/uuawo/new/](http://www.uua.org/uuawo/new/)  
UUA Office for Congregational Advocacy & Witness Dir. Susan Leslie  
[www.uua.org/programs/justice/](http://www.uua.org/programs/justice/)  
UUA JUUST Change Consultant Paula Jones  
[www.uua.org/programs/justice/antiracism/consultancy.html](http://www.uua.org/programs/justice/antiracism/consultancy.html)  
Special Guest: Linda Stout, Executive Director of Spirit in Action, and featured Speaker at GA (Sat. at 2:15 p.m. From the Heart--Building a New Democracy Movement [www.spiritinaction.net/ezpublish/index.php](http://www.spiritinaction.net/ezpublish/index.php))

Please RSVP to Susan Leslie at [sleslie@uua.org](mailto:sleslie@uua.org) if you and other members of your committee will be attending.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Susan Leslie*  
*Director for Congregational Advocacy and Witness,*  
*Unitarian Universalist Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston MA 02108 (617) 948-4607*  
*sleslie@uua.org*  
*www.uua.org/justice*

**OTHER NEWS**

\*\*\*\*\*

**INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK BULLETIN**

\*\*\*\*\*

Did you know that the stigma of homelessness can be hardest for IHN's teens? Anyone who is homeless may face situations in which they are judged, or treated as failures. But middle and high school students, who are often tormented for the slightest differences, face the most blatant judgment and prejudice on a daily basis.

Last week a fellow student asked "Elly" why she gets picked up in that big blue van every day. Elly didn't answer, but the student figured it out by talking to other people. The next morning he taunted her in front of all the other students "You're in the homeless shelter!

You're in the homeless shelter!" IHN does not put any identification on our van for precisely this reason. But after Elly's embarrassing incident we have also agreed to wait a couple of blocks away from the school--at the unanimous request of our middle school students.

Imagine what it must be like to be judged for not having a home.