"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."

January 12, 2007


President: Mike Briggs, (608) 835–0914
Editor: Dan Proud, admin@uuprairie.org; 661–0776

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, January 14
9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
*10:00 a.m. "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr; Artist, Prophet, Dreamer" presented by Rev. Ralph
*11:30 a.m. Book Group potluck and discussion

Sunday, January 14–Sunday, January 21
*Interfaith Hospitality Network Shift

Wednesday, January 17
6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie
7:30 p.m. Program Committee

Saturday, January 20
*7:30 p.m. Playreaders meet at the home of Mona Birong.

Sunday, January 21
9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
*10:00 a.m. “After the Amendment—What Now?” presented by Mary Mullen and Doleta Chapru
11:45 a.m. Potluck lunch at Prairie
12:30 p.m. Memorial service for Dr. Grant C. Stone, K.K. Anderson's father; Rev. Ralph Tyksinski presiding (all Prairie members and friends welcome)

Tuesday, January 23
*2:00 p.m. Prairie Elders at Oakwood West Tower Tea Room

Wednesday, January 24
6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie
*6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers meeting

Thursday, January 25
*7:00 p.m. Film group views “Bread and Chocolate” at Prairie

Sunday, January 28
9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
*10:00 a.m. "Propaganda, Corporations, and the Media," presented by Lea Zeldin
*12:00 p.m. Humanist Union potluck and program, "The Faith Healers" presented by Susan Hagstrom

Wednesday, January 31
6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie
7:30 p.m. Covenant Group, Left Hand of God

Saturday, February 24
*Trip to the Art Institute in Chicago to see "Cezanne to Picasso."

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, JANUARY 21
Sunday, January 14
In observing the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we will be exploring how the influences of Henry David Thoreau, Mahatma Gandhi, and Dr. Benjamin Mays, came to bear on Dr. King, and how his experience in the African American community helped shape his vision of prophetic justice and his living legacy for all Americans.

Sunday, January 21
On November 7, Wisconsin voters approved a constitutional amendment that bans gay marriage and civil unions. What now? It’s reported that State Senator Jon Erpenbach is drafting a proposed amendment to the state constitution that would ban discrimination and open the way for state-sanctioned civil unions and that Rep. Spencer Black intends to co-sponsor legislation allowing same sex couples to be married.

Fair Wisconsin, the organization that trained many volunteers to work against the amendment, has its “100 Day Plan.” The outgoing Wisconsin Attorney General, Peg Lautenschlager, recently issued a decision declaring that the amendment doesn’t prohibit public or private employers from providing domestic partner benefits.

Detailed plans aren’t quite firm for this service, but look forward to learning about various plans for “What Now?” and to giving your own opinion about that subject.

Sunday, January 28
“Propaganda, Corporations and the Media” is the second of a series dealing with propaganda and its effect on our lives. This January 28 service will be presented by Lea Zeldin who just recently returned from attending an international media conference in Jordan. Lea asks us the following questions:

How do you serve the community on the neighborhood community level? We know and have much information on issues of national import. But where do we go for data on the citizen impact when a neighborhood disappears, or a bus changes its route, or a supermarket moves? Who records the joy of a 4-year-old's birthday party, the lament of no snow for a 12-year-old with a present of snow shoes?

Can the corporation culture carry these concerns or must we create new structures? What license does the government hold or give to the private sector to incorporate their and our propaganda?

Lea received the Dane County 2007 Martin Luther King Jr. award this month. Lea Zeldin's nomination states: "Dr. King would have been proud to know Lea Zeldin, and would have held her as among the brightest examples of what an ordinary citizen can achieve, if we would lead a life of service, peace, and action, as he called us to do." Lea certainly fits that calling. Lea has been a health care advocate since the 1960s and has been instrumental in starting a free medical clinic on Madison's East Side. She started distributing free food to the poor in Madison and other Dane County municipalities long before there were other organizations doing so.

Lea Zeldin followed Dr. King's call for peace activism by joining the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. It was 25 years ago when Lea began inviting the whole community to dinner in honor of Dr. King and share a meal in the spirit of peace, justice and equality. Lea became a member of the King Coalition 20 years ago and the Dr. Martin Luther King Free Community Dinners have been sponsored by the King Coalition ever since.

Lea Zeldin also is active at WORT Radio where she is a food and popular culture critic. She is the host of "A Public Affair" and editor of "Health Writers," a bi-weekly information and call-in show covering health Issues. Lea is involved in starting a low-power, independent radio station in Madison.

WINTER BOOK CLUB SELECTIONS

Sunday, January 14. The Memory Keeper's Daughter by Kim Edwards. Fiction, about the decision of a doctor to secretly send his newborn daughter with Downs syndrome to an institution. 432 pages.


PLAYREADERS MEET JANUARY 20
Playreaders will meet on Saturday, January 20, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Mona Birong, 599 Glen Drive, to read from Tennessee Williams. For directions, call Mona at 233-5995 or co-host Donna Murdoch at 238-3802.

PRAIRIE ELDERS MOVE MEETING SITE
PRAIRIE ELDERS MEETING (note temporary room change): Tuesday, January 23, 2:00-3:50 p.m., Oakwood Village West, TOWER TEA ROOM. This is easily accessible from the lower parking lot. Directions below.

The TEA ROOM will be open at 1:30 for those who wish to come early for casual conversation. After 2:00 we introduce newcomers and share personal information. The topic portion of our meeting lasts from around 2:20 to 3:40.

TOPIC: POETRY AND PROSE that inspires us, deepens our thinking or gives us a chuckle. All are invited to share a short reading or simply come and enjoy listening.

REFRESHMENTS: Please bring a small handful of snacks to pass, if convenient. Beverages are furnished.

DIRECTIONS: Oakwood Village West is in the 6100 block of Mineral Point Road several blocks west of Whitney Way. From Oakwood’s entry road, take the first right turn into the parking area. There is further parking around the curve to the left, between the Oaks and Tower buildings. If this is full and you can walk a longer distance, there is parking up the hill on the main entry road. If in doubt, call one of the contacts below for a ride.

To reach the TOWER TEA ROOM, park near the Oaks where we usually meet. The TOWER ENTRY is on the east (left) side of the covered walkway. Go past the receptionist and through the lobby. Take the elevator to 2 then go right. The Tea Room is the open room on the right with tables and a small kitchen.

ABOUT US: Prairie Elders aims to provide good times and mutual support for Prairie UU Members and Friends over 65. We also welcome other UUs who live in the facility where we meet. For further information please contact Donna Murdoch 238-3802, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382 or Rose Smith 233-3363.

SPANISH SPEAKERS MEET JANUARY 24
Spanish speakers will meet on January 24 for conversation and potluck at the current home of Dave and Marcia Johnson, 7855 E. Oakbridge Way, #2A, Madison. For directions, call the Johnsons at 829-0270 or Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382.

IN MEMORIAM
George Calden passed away peacefully on Sunday, January 7, 2007, at age 91, with members of his family with him at the Hospice Center. We extend our warmest sympathy to Ruth, their children Lisa, Martha, Ginny, and Tom, and his brother Gene.

A service will be held Saturday, February 3, at First Unitarian Universalist Society, 900 University Bay Drive. The time had not been set as of the printing of this newsletter issue.

The family will hold a reception the evening of February 2 for people who cannot attend the Saturday service.
PRAIRIE FILM GROUP MEETS JANUARY 25
The Prairie Movie Group will meet Thursday, February 25, at 7:00 p.m. sharp, to view Bread and Chocolate, a 1974 Italian film directed by Franco Brusati. It is the story of an Italian immigrant to Switzerland who tries to find work but is only finds degrading jobs and extreme social stratification. “This bittersweet, Chaplinesque comedy delivers laugh while making a valid statements about class and injustice.”

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Prairie’s next turn to help host homeless families through the Interfaith Hospitality Network will be January 14–21. Prairie is one of the buddy churches helping Midvale Lutheran provide shelter, meals and support to those families.

If you are interested in volunteering or would like further information, please contact Paula Pachciarz, pachwack (at) sbcglobal.net or 273-4806.

Paula Pachciarz

HUMANIST UNION MEETS JANUARY 28
On Sunday, January 28, the Humanist Union will start with a potluck lunch at noon. Then starting about 12:20 p.m., Susan Hagstrom will present The Faith Healers, describing some of the techniques used by faith healers, and how James Randi and his colleagues uncovered their frauds.

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE DONATIONS ARE DUE THIS MONTH
The annual Guest at Your Table fund-raising program for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) will complete at the end of this month. Please return your boxes, envelopes, or just bring in a check (made out to “UUSC”). There is a basket outside the fellowship hall for donations.

Thank you in advance for your generous support of this most important social justice outreach from our denomination.

ART INSTITUTE FUNDRAISING TRIP PLANNED
On Saturday, February 24, you are invited to a special viewing of "Cezanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde" at the Chicago Art Institute. This exhibit draws upon a wealth of previously unpublished materials to shed new light upon the legendary career of Vollard (1866-1939), who launched the careers of some of the leaders of the modern art movement.

The exhibition includes masterpieces of Cezanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Renoir and Picasso, among others, in the context in which they were originally presented. A special feature will be the mini-exhibitions that mirror Vollard's most important shows. In addition, there are experimental artworks which Vollard urged his artists to develop in various media. Also at the Art Institute, you may view "The Silk Road", which includes art of China, the Islamic world, the Buddhist world and the Ottoman Empire.

The bus will leave Madison on February 24 at 8:00 a.m. from the rear of the UW Credit Union, 3500 University Avenue, and at 8:15 a.m. from the South Town Mall McDonalds. Return will be approximately 7:45–8:00 p.m., with a rest/snack stop on the return trip.

Indicate boarding location on memo line of your check, and include a telephone number. Cost of $62.00 covers transportation and all museum exhibits. Lunch is on your own. Mail checks made out to “Prairie UU Society” to Pat Watkins, 230 N. Meadow Lane, Madison WI 53705-3331, to arrive by or earlier than January 27. You will have the option of spending the entire day at the museum or half a day on another pursuit, such as shopping. Written confirmation and detailed schedule will be sent to you by February 10.

Questions? Phone Pat at 233-5795.

ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER COMING TO PRAIRIE
I have forms available to be filled out by those who want to have their pledges automatically transferred (monthly, quarterly, semi-annually...) from individual checking accounts to Prairie’s checking account. Contact me if you’d like to do this.

Norma Briggs
REV. RALPH'S RUMINATIONS

As a part of my continuing dialogue with the congregation on ways to stimulate growth in our numbers, I begin with an observation and offer an invitation for your response.

OBSERVATION: There are growing numbers of younger people—folks in their 30's and 40's, maybe even 50's—who see the world differently. They yearn for more of the overused and under-defined term "spirituality", a more gentle look at our faith; less academics and more ritual. And, if we want to—not even grow, but survive—into the next few years, we are going to have to put our heads and hearts together and figure out ways that satisfy both those people who have been around for a long time and have supported our congregation with their time and their monetary gifts, and those newer folks who want—who need—a spiritual nourishment they are not finding elsewhere.

We need to ask ourselves what binds us together (that's the root meaning of the word "religion"—to bind together) as a community. Is it that we're seekers all? Is it that we dare to speak our minds—even in the midst of disagreement? Is it that we treasure our diversity? What is the core center of our faith? Or what do you say after you say "I'm a Unitarian Universalist?"

If you feel you would hesitate in preparing your response, feel inadequate, would like to think about it and defer your answer, I invite you to attend the following course I will be leading beginning on Sunday evening, February 11, at 7:00 p.m. at the Prairie Meeting House. (Continuing on 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11)

INVITATION: ARTICULATING YOUR UU FAITH: A FIVE-SESSION COURSE

The focus of this course is on articulation—practicing how and what to say in various settings in which you might be called upon to declare yourself religiously or illuminate some angle on our liberal religious movement that has touched and changed so many lives for the better. Such moments are precious opportunities to deepen your own journey and perhaps grow a happy awareness in someone else about this rich "living tradition." This course will provide hopeful inspiration and practical resources, plus the opportunity for meaningful connection to fellow UU's. Each session will include a standard set of opening and closing activities, one or two exercises, plus worksheets and/or homework reading, which will be provided.

Signup sheet for registration will be available at the Meeting House.
NO FEE REQUIRED.

All the Best,
Ralph

MEMBERSHIP

NEW DIRECTORIES AVAILABLE

The new directories have been distributed. Those who picked up their copies at Prairie have been handed or mailed a sheet with corrections. You can cut out the right side of the sheet and tape or paste it over the inside cover of your directory.

If you have not received your copy of the directory, please contact Dan or Robin Proud at 661-0776 or prouds (at) tds.net.

PRAIRIE WEB SITES

Society Home Page:  http://uuprairie.org/
News Group:  http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/
Views:  http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/
Social Action:  http://socialaction.madisonwi.us
Humanist Union:  http://humanist.madisonwi.us
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!
I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and a very happy new year. Last month RE was very busy as December usually is a busy month for all of us. On December 17 we had our annual Nifty Gifty. A special thank you to the Converse family, especially Kathy Converse, for volunteering their time and talents to make the morning successful. Our RE children made many wonderful gifts for their friends and family. Projects ranged from homemade gingerbread ornaments and picture frames to Christmas tree decorations. If you would like to see the fun we all had, pictures are on the RE picture board upstairs thanks to Carl Wacker our RE photographer!

The morning of December 24 was Prairie’s Symbol tree service. Mike and Norma Briggs’s granddaughter led the St. Lucia procession and the children were able to share in the holiday spirit. Thank you to Erin Bosch for coordinating the day and Paula Pachciarz for helping our children get ready that morning.

January 2007 is already off to a good start. Classes resumed on January 7. The morning began with a Spirit Circle where our RE kids were able to gather together and share how they spent New Year’s Eve and their goals and hope for this coming year.

Coming up is another overnight event: Wild Wintering. We will gather here on Saturday, January 20, at 5:00 p.m. for games, pizza and movies. Prairie kids and their friends can then spend the night. The next morning breakfast will be provided with classes starting at 10:00 a.m. There will be no formal classes for middle and high school students.

We are in need of volunteers for the overnight. If you haven’t taken a turn at volunteering and would be interested in helping out, please call me at 608-695-3435 or send me an email at youthcoordinator (at) uuprairie.org.

I wish everyone all the best this coming year.

Rebecca Malke-Eligenti
youthcoordinator (at) uuprairie.org or 695-3435

GENERAL ASSEMBLY VIDEO NIGHTS AT FUS
Prairie members are welcome to enjoy Monday video nights at First Unitarian Society (FUS) at 7:00 p.m. The FUS Denominational Affairs Committee is showing the following DVDs from the 2006 GA in the next few weeks.

Monday, January 15: Bridging Ceremony. The annual Bridging Ceremony worship service honors the voices of youth and young adults and celebrates those youth who are becoming adults.

Monday, January 22: Plenary V. Recognition of Green Sanctuaries; Unitarian Universalist Women’s Federation; Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee Report; Breakthrough Congregation: Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Luis Obispo County; Ministerial Fellowship Committee Report; Committee on Socially Responsible Investing; President’s Report; Executive Vice-President’s Report.

Monday, January 29: Starr King President’s Lecture with the Rev. Rebecca Parker, Starr King President, and the Rev. Rob Hardies, minister of All Soul’s Church, Washington D.C. An exploration of the themes from Dr. Parker’s latest book, edited by the Rev. Hardies, including how Unitarian Universalism can respond to the realities of evil and suffering by reclaiming our theological voice in the public sphere.

FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY PLAYGROUP SCHEDULE
Weekday UU Playgroup meets 1-2 times/month for families with children 5 and under. Contact Teresa Nicholas, nicholasteresa@hotmail.com, 833-4652

Weekend UU Playgroup meets 1-2 times/month. Contact Erin Chudacoff, erinhchud@hotmail.com, 848-2405
These movies are presented by the First Unitarian Society Social Justice Council, whose mission is to promote the cause of justice that people may be treated with dignity, justice and understanding through advocacy, dialogue, dissemination of information, and service.

The Council is made up of 5 standing committees:

- Human Rights
- Economic justice
- Environmental action
- Welcoming congregation
- Peace and Justice

If you are interested in joining one of these committees, call Wendy Cooper, Social Justice Coordinator, at 233-7429 ext.25 or email at wendyc@fusmadison.org.

UUA POSITION ON IRAQ

In early March 2003, the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations announced its opposition to preemptive military action against Iraq done without the approval of the United Nations. This position was based on numerous statements approved by the General Assembly, the highest policy-making body of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, which identify diplomacy and the United Nations—not war—as the appropriate means through which international conflicts are to be resolved.

In 2003 the UUA General Assembly adopted an Action of Immediate Witness calling upon Congress to conduct open bipartisan hearings to examine the moral and legal justifications for the invasion of Iraq. An Action of Immediate Witness in 2004 called, among other things, for the timely withdrawal of US forces and transition to UN peacekeepers. In December 2005, UUA President the Rev. William G. Sinkford personally supported requiring the Administration to set a timetable for withdrawal.

The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations primary vehicle for advocacy and organizing against the war has been and continues to be the Win Without War Coalition (http://www.winwithoutwarus.org/).

The Association is supporting Win Without War's "America Says NO!" campaign based on the General Assembly resolutions which clearly calls for an end to the US occupation of Iraq and transition to UN-led forces, not an increase in US troops.

Position of the Unitarian Universalist Association on possible War with Iraq:

Letter from the Rev. William G. Sinkford to House of Representatives, December 5, 2006:
http://www.uua.org/uuawo/new/article.php?id=714

UUA Iraq Conflict Home page:

WASHINGTON ANTIWAR MARCH JANUARY 27

The Win Without War Coalition, of which the UUA is an active member, has endorsed the March on Washington against the war happening in Washington, DC, on Saturday, January 27.

Interested Unitarian Universalists are encouraged to participate in the March, local events in your area, and lobbying activities the following week.

More information about the march, including a possible UU meeting place, will be available through the UUA Washington Office in the coming weeks. Please note that the office does not have the capacity to help arrange transportation or housing for the event.
Honoring Dr. King: A Call for Truth and Reconciliation

Dear JTW-News Readers:

This issue of JTW-News honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., contains a call from President William Sinkford and other UU leaders of color, to move forward in our engagement to dismantle racism and economic injustice and engage in a process of truth and reconciliation within UUism and our broader communities. Rev. Sinkford’s statement begins:

On the day that we honor the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I have no choice but to speak. However, like many persons of color in our faith, and far beyond our faith, I struggle to find a voice, to find the words that might move us forward. It feels to me that Unitarian Universalists have been stuck around the issue of race for far too long. (See http://www.uua.org for the full text.)

Other messages are from Rev. John Crestwell, Davies Memorial Unitarian Universalist Church, Camp Springs, Maryland; Rev. Monica L. Cummings, First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles; Rev. Leslie Takahashi Morris, Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church Unitarian Universalist, Charlottesville, Virginia; and Taquiena Boston, Director, Identity-Based Ministries staff group. A final reflection comes from Reverend Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley (1949-2006), taken from her paper "Not by Ourselves Alone" (Birmingham Lecture).

An announcement of the establishment of the Reverend Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley Fund for supporting transformative multicultural work in congregations is included. See http://www.uua.org/giving/bowens-wheatley.html.

Dr. King said in his "Beyond Vietnam" speech:

Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism. With this powerful commitment we shall boldly challenge the status quo and unjust mores and thereby speed the day when "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain."

(From the MLK Stanford Papers Collection at http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/)

Thanks to all of you who sent in news of your MLK holiday activities. Let us move in their spirit all year long.

In faith,

Susan Leslie, Director
UUA Congregational Advocacy & Witness

MLK HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES IN MADISON

The Dane County-City of Madison King Coalition presents the 22nd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Observance on Monday, January 15, 6:00 p.m., Overture Center Capitol Theater, 201 State Street, Madison.

The official City-County observance features the presentation of the City and County Dr. King Awards presented by the Dane County Executive and the Madison Mayor, performances by the Martin Luther King, Jr., Community Choir, and "A Call To Action".

This year’s Keynote Speaker is Jack Holliday. A distinguished speaker and former Deputy Superintendent in Albany, Georgia, Jack Holliday is noted for his work to eliminate gang violence. He has lectured across the country on street, school, and prison gangs. He has served on the National Major Gangs Task Force, studied gang graffiti internationally, and contributed to a manuscript on gangs titled, “From the Streets to Prison: Understanding and Responding to Gangs.” He is a former Marine who served in the Vietnam War, a father of two, a grandfather of four, and mentor to countless other youth.
Other events sponsored by the King Coalition:

20th Annual Free Community Dinner, **Friday, January 12**, 4:30 p.m., Gordon Commons, 717 W Johnson. Information: Ruth Gudlach, 233-5880

9th Annual Youth Service Day, **Monday, January 15**, 8:00 a.m., Monona Terrace. This year’s Youth Service Day will also feature the 1st Annual Youth March on the Capitol Square as well as youth-led educational forums, community volunteer projects, and presentation of the President’s Student Service Awards. To register, contact Michael Swerdloff at 251-8550 or mswerdloff@ulgm.org.

Other Community Events during the weekend:

I Have A Dream Ball, **Saturday, January 13**, 6:00 p.m., Monona Terrace. For tickets, call Tina Murray, 277-9141. Sponsored by Women in Focus.

23rd Annual Urban League Guild Youth Recognition Breakfast, **Sunday, January 14**, 7:45 a.m. Edgewood High School, 2219 Monroe St., Cost: $5.00. Call 251-8550 for tickets.

For more information, visit the Urban League Web site: www.ulgm.org

CENTRAL MIDWEST DISTRICT ASSEMBLY
APRIL 13-15, 2007, Marriott Hotel, Oak Brook, IL
Theme: CONGREGATIONS ALIVE!
EMBODYING A STORY THAT MATTERS

WORKSHOP PRESENTER PROPOSAL FORM

NAME:

ORGANIZATION:

TELEPHONE(day):

EMAIL:

TITLE OF WORKSHOP:

(Workshop length is 1 hour)

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION (Approx. 50 words)

EQUIPMENT - We can only provide an easel, large notepad and markers. Additional equipment must be arranged on your own.

ANY SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR NEEDS:

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION (~ 30 words):

REGISTRATION INFORMATION: You must register for the District Assembly. You may apply for a scholarship if you have a financial hardship. If you will need overnight accommodations, call the hotel or indicate on your registration form that you prefer to have home hospitality.

Central Midwest District:
District Assembly Workshop Proposals Deadline January 14

If you would like to make a presentation at our Assembly in Oak Brook, Illinois on Saturday, April 14, please send your proposal in right away so we can include it in the District Assembly 2007 Brochure soon to be produced.

Complete the Workshop Proposal Form (right) and send it to:
Bret Lortie, cmwdoffice@yahoo.com, or by fax to 708-236-0829 NO LATER THAN JANUARY 14, 2007.