



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."

April 6, 2007



Prairie Fire is the semi-monthly newsletter of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. View past issues at www.uuprairie.org.

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Editor: Dan Proud, admin@uuprairie.org; 661-0776

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, April 8

*10:00 a.m. "A Line of Poetry Strays into Memory," presented by Anne Lundin and Mary Mullen

*11:30 a.m. Book club discusses *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*

Wednesday, April 11

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Friday-Sunday, April 13-15

Central Midwest District Assembly, with the theme, "Congregations Alive!", Oakbrook, Illinois

Saturday-Sunday, April 14-15

Spring Fling for Prairie youth

Sunday, April 15

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Evolution and How It Impacts Your Daily Life," presented by Kathy Converse

Monday, April 16

7:00 p.m. Prairie Film group shows "Saraband"

Wednesday, April 18

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

*6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers meet and eat at home of Mary Somers, 4467 Crescent Rd.

*7:30 p.m. Program Committee meeting

Saturday, April 21

*7:00 p.m. Earth and Spirit Songfest with Jim Scott, at Prairie

Sunday, April 22

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Earth Day 2007: John Muir, Pioneer Conservationist," presented by Galen Smith

11:45 a.m. Parish meeting and potluck

Tuesday, April 24

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

Wednesday-Sunday, June 20-24

UUA General Assembly, Portland, Oregon

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, APRIL 15

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, April 8

"A little Madness in the Spring / Is wholesome even for the King." So wrote Emily Dickinson around 1875. This Easter Sunday, April 8, Anne Lundin and Mary Mullen will lead a program of "poetic madness" to celebrate National Poetry Month. We hope you have some spring poems to share. They need not be the "sweetness and light" type of spring poem. In fact, expect a dialogue between the image of spring as a time of lovely awakening and spring as the cold, rainy, and even depressing time of year. Of course spring is also a metaphor. Or spring may be just incidental to a poem that references the season.

If you have a favorite poem related to spring, please contact Mary at mmullen(at)chorus.net or 298-0843, so your poem can be put into the mix. A spring poem committed to memory that you could recite would be especially welcome.

Meanwhile, ponder on these words from Robert Frost's poem which begins, "Nature's first green is gold," and ends, "Nothing gold can stay."

Sunday, April 15

Understanding evolution is important as every day we encounter news, products, medicines, or conservation decisions that are strongly linked to evolutionary theory and research. We will have tables with show and tell displays of many examples and discuss how they impact us and how we feel about it. Some examples are antibiotic resistance, land and species conservation decisions, and control of insects and disease in crops.

Sunday, April 22

On the 47th Earth Day we will celebrate the life of John Muir (1838–1914), inventor, farmer, explorer, mountaineer, geologist, botanist, writer, and especially lover of and conservationist of nature. We will focus on his impact on American nature conservation and the inspiration he can provide as we confront the siege on nature that we are now experiencing. One of John Muir's most famous writings is: "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find that it hitched to everything else in the universe."

OUR SOCIETY

PARISH MEETING APRIL 22

Prairie's spring parish meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, April 22**. We'll begin the meeting at 11:45 a.m. Bring a dish to pass for a potluck lunch. The agenda includes the election of officers for 2007-2008, consideration of several changes to our bylaws, a discussion of Prairie's plans for building a new meeting house, and reports from committees and officers. If there is anything else you would like to have on the agenda, let me know.

In this issue of *Prairie Fire* you'll find background pieces on the proposed bylaw changes and planning for a new meeting house. Please do your best to read these before the meeting so that our deliberations can be kept as short as possible. Call or email me with questions or concerns.

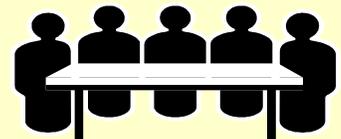
Peace,

Mike Briggs
President

PARISH MEETING AGENDA, APRIL 22, 2007

11:45 Agenda at the meeting house:

1. Minutes of previous meeting
2. Election of officers
3. Building plans
4. By-law changes (text at the end of this issue)
5. Reports of officers and committees



Slate of officers:

President: Rachel Long
Vice President: Anne Lundin
Secretary: Jerry Simmons
Treasurer: Kate Liu
Finance: Norma Briggs
Hospitality and Membership: Paula Pachciarz
Housing and Property: Al Nettleton
Long Range Planning: Marilyn Ruecking
Program: Mary Mullen
R.E.: Karen Deaton
Social Action: Kathy Converse
Denominational Affairs: Nancy Schraufnagel

BUILDING A NEW MEETING HOUSE

One of the important decisions we'll make at our parish meeting on **Sunday, April 22** will be whether to proceed with taking the next steps toward building a new meeting house on our land at Fitchburg Center.

When Prairie bought a 1 3/4-acre parcel there about 18 months ago, we agreed with the sellers that if we don't plan to begin construction within two years of the purchase date they have the right to buy back the land, paying us what we paid for the land plus three per cent a year.

Bill Dalrymple, who is our contact at Fitchburg Center, has said recently that they will exercise that right next fall, if by this spring we haven't actively started to raise money and take other steps toward building.

Our architect, Bob Shipley, has given us new building plans that should enable us to construct a building more than 150 per cent of the size of our present building for \$750,000. Based on a spreadsheet prepared by Ken Skog (thanks, Ken!), we should be able to afford that without bankrupting ourselves and without taking on a huge debt. If we can relocate as planned, our regular operations will be fully funded and we'll be able to afford a half-time professional minister.

Copies of the architect's sketches and his proposed budget, plus a copy of Ken's numbers, will be on the welcome table for your review over the next few weeks.

Some of our newer members (and some of our older members) might appreciate some background. This short history of Prairie's growth planning over the last few years is based on material prepared by Mary Mullen last year (thanks, Mary!).

Since August 2001, Prairie UU Society has been working toward two goals: obtaining a part-time minister and growing our membership.

The first goal has been partially met. Last year we were served by Jody Whelden as our quarter-time consulting minister. On October 22, 2006, we voted to have Ralph Tyksinski as our quarter-time consulting minister. (Ralph is actually working half-time, donating a quarter of his time to us to meet his credentialing requirements.)

Prairie's long-range plans foresee up to 200-250 adult members and a youth religious education program of at least 70 children ranging from infants through high school.

In April 2003, the Parish passed a resolution stating a goal to move to a larger space by April 2008. The resolution indicated that a larger space was needed to "...provide more and better space to meet our growth needs, because it is not feasible to meet those needs in Prairie's present building."

Progress toward relocation

During 2003 the Long Range Planning Committee identified and evaluated 11 properties/buildings to determine if they could be suitable for us. This included property in the Fitchburg Center.

In a March 2004 resolution, the Parish voted to form a committee to work with Fitchburg Center and an architect to prepare concept drawings (requested by Fitchburg Center), and negotiate an agreement to purchase land for the Parish to consider.

In July 2004 that committee interviewed four architectural firms and chose BWZ Architects of Middleton, Wisconsin, to prepare the conceptual drawings.

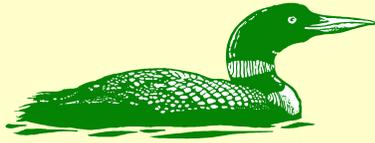
When some limitations were discovered with the original location at the Fitchburg Center, the committee determined that a different site, adjacent to Eagle School, would serve us better.

Based on ideas solicited from Prairie committees, BWZ developed a program statement and presented three conceptual designs to the committee in late autumn 2004. Prairie members provided feedback throughout.

On April 10, 2005, the parish approved a resolution to offer to purchase the land adjacent to Eagle School as a site for a new meeting house. The land was bought for \$300,000, with approximately \$90,000 in funds from Prairie's CDs and long term loans from Prairie members and friends, on the condition that the congregation break ground on the new church building within two years, because Fitchburg Center does not want its land sitting idle.

REV. RALPH'S RUMINATIONS

In the last issue of *Prairie Fire* I shared with you some of the marks of "Healthy



Congregations" that were introduced by Peter Steinke at last year's General Assembly in St. Louis, as part of the UU University program. As part of that same program Barbara Bates (a member of the First Unitarian Society in Newton, Massachusetts, where she has served in many capacities including chair of the board of trustees) teamed up with the Rev. Dr. Terasa Cooley (District Executive of the Massachusetts Bay District) and presented a workshop on decision-making in congregational life. They defined effective decision-making as a process that is systematic, balances risks and benefits appropriately, is efficient, and is wise in that it uses the head *and* the heart, using emotional systems and spirit. No decision, they stressed, is purely rational.

The main problem with decision-making is when a group jumps right in and doesn't first agree on a shared process. There must be agreement on the process, though the process can be adjusted as the process unfolds. There must also be agreement on who to involve and how, although this too should be "held lightly," allowed to change as the process unfolds.

Before outlining the recommended process, the presenters gave some tips on decision-making:

- Agree on the process ahead of time
- Avoid the rush to judgment, the rush to closure
- Use clear and jargon-free language to reduce anxiety about the process
- Listen in order to understand—hear what's behind the words being said
- Use a flipchart or other means to transcribe the words said. People will feel heard, this minimizes repetition (and time), and it builds trust.

Decisions are usually about resources, processes, identity, or courses of action. An important step is to clarify what the group is deciding about.

The method intentionally chosen for making the decisions—authority, minority decision, majority decision, supermajority decision, consensus, or unanimity—depends on three factors: time, importance, and whether the group desires that the decision is implemented through compliance or commitment. Consensus was defined as "when all members find a proposal acceptable as the best course of action under the current circumstances and all things considered, even though it may fall short of the ideal."

As *Prairie* moves forward this month and the next to make major decisions about its future these observations may offer some guidance. They suggest that the discernment process in congregational decision making is not always logical and rational. It should involve the whole self and the whole self of others in the congregation.

Grateful to be journeying with you,

Ralph

UPCOMING BOOK CLUB SELECTIONS

The *Prairie* Book Club meets monthly after the Sunday service at *Prairie*. Bring food to share. Anyone who has read the book or simply wants to listen to the discussion is welcome to attend.

Remember that there's a link to the poster of our book club selections on *Prairie's* Web site. See <http://uuprairie.org/NovDecBooks.htm> or find the page through the *Prairie* calendar entries for book club meeting. Prices are those current at <http://amazon.com> as of November 18, 2006.

Sunday, April 8. *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* by John Perkins. Non-fiction, "a former respected member of the international banking community describes how, as a highly paid professional, he helped the U.S. cheat poor countries around the globe out of trillions of dollars by lending them more money than they could possibly repay and then take over their economies." (*Democracy Now*) 320 pp, \$6.44 & up.

Sunday, May 13. *The Plot Against America* by Philip Roth. Fiction, "an alternate history where Franklin Delano Roosevelt is defeated in the presidential election of 1940 by Charles Lindbergh ... and Jewish-American families like the Roths are persecuted on various levels. The narrator and central character in the novel is the young Philip, and the care with which his confusion and terror are rendered makes the novel as much about the mysteries of growing up as about American politics." (Wikipedia) 400 pages, \$1.15 & up.

LOST AND FOUND, GOING, GOING...

It's the time of year again when hats, scarves, gloves, and even coats get left behind at Prairie. By the time we get ready to leave from church, it sure does seem like a nice day, doesn't it?

April 15—Tax Day—is the day when owners get their last chance to reunite with those castoff clothes. We've got a really nice black leather coat. Come and get it.

CALL FOR DELEGATES

You can represent Prairie UU Society and join the larger UU community at the District and National Assemblies. Delegates will vote at business meetings, as well as attend educational sessions and network with other UU's. The Central Midwest Assembly, with the theme "Congregations Alive!" will be **April 13-15** in Oak Brook, Illinois.

General Assembly will take place June 20-24 in Portland, Oregon. If you are interested in attending either of these events, please contact Nancy Schraufnagel, Denominational Affairs Committee, at 273-3195 or schraufnancy (at) hotmail.com.

Delegates must be appointed by the Board, but any UU is welcome to attend these conferences.

SPANISH SPEAKERS WILL MEET

Spanish Speakers will meet on **Wednesday, April 18**, at 6:30 p.m. for potluck and conversation. The meeting will be at the home of Mary Somers, 4467 Crescent Rd, phone 276-8397. For questions or rides, call Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382.

EARTH AND SPIRIT SONGFEST WITH JIM SCOTT SATURDAY, APRIL 21

7:00 p.m. at Prairie

Come lend your voice to an extemporaneous vocal celebration of earth and peace. Renew your spirit and celebrate our ideals in song. Drawing on his own music and other songs of ecology, diversity, community and peace from classical to jazz to world folk music, Jim turns the audience into a choir, taught by ear and with an invitation to all to join in. The joyful music of all sorts will inspire and educate. It's a great demonstration of music that can be used in spiritual gatherings and in the greater movement for social change. Come listen or participate. No experience necessary!

Composer, guitarist and singer Jim Scott was formerly a member of the Paul Winter Consort and was co-composer of the *Missa Gaia/Earth Mass*. He's toured the world, recorded a number of CDs of original music and many of his songs are published as choral arrangements. Several of his songs are in the UU Hymnbook (*Gather the Spirit*). He helped create the "Green Sanctuary" program for churches to become more sustainable, and has gathered and written the "Earth and Spirit Songbook," a collection of 110 songs of Earth and peace by many contemporary composers. He leads courses in improvisation at such prestigious music schools as Oberlin College and has a knack for putting participants in touch with their innate creativity and demonstrating the power of musical expression.

Tickets will be \$12 at the door.

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEETING

Prairie Elder will meet **Tuesday, April 24**, 2:00-3:50 p.m., in the Nakoma Room, Heritage Oaks Building, Oakwood Village West.

The Nakoma 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. We must vacate the room by 4:00. Participants are welcome to come and go as necessary for appointments, rides, chair attendants, etc.

TOPIC: "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Being Elder." Come tell your funniest personal story or get a good chuckle from others' humorous adventures. For the benefit of participants with hearing loss, we use a round-robin format. From month to month, by mutual agreement, we alternate general topics with personal vignettes on a selected theme.

REFRESHMENTS: Please bring a small handful of snacks to pass, if convenient. Beverages are furnished. Special thanks to Gordon and Vera Cunningham for bringing hot drinks.

REMINDER: To reduce landfill trash, bring your own beverage cup if you can.

DIRECTIONS: Oakwood Village West is in the 6100 block of Mineral Point Road several blocks west of Whitney Way. Follow the main entrance road veering left and up the hill. Heritage Oaks is the new building on the right. Its visitor parking entrance is directly across from Oakwood's one-storey Resale Shop. The parking lot's automatic door is to the right of two yellow posts and marked by a yellow arrow on the driveway. Drive in and find a spot near the clearly marked elevator shaft. The Nakoma Room is on the first floor. From the elevator go to the right and past the mail boxes. Turn left by the reception desk.

There are also a few handicapped stalls farther up the hill in front of Heritage Oak's main entrance. Enter there and turn right immediately past the receptionist's desk.

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 directions, rides, parking and further information please contact Donna Murdoch 238-3802, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382 or Rose Smith 233-3363.

PRAIRIE SEEKS GENIUS DESIGNERS

We are looking for designs representing Prairie UU to be used on T-shirts, bookmarks, tote bags, signs and anywhere else you can think of. We welcome submissions from children and adults.



ANOTHER MOLLY IVINS PRESENTATION

Those of you who missed the March 25 program on the life of Molly Ivins may wish to catch it at the Socialist Potluck on **April 14**. Paula Pachciarz and the Raging Grannies have been asked to provide the program at 6:30 at the Wilmar Center; following a 5:30 potluck.

The original program is available on tape from the communications cabinet in the Prairie foyer. Feel free to check the tape out by writing your name and date, and please return it to the cabinet when you are finished with it.

Here is a short description of the presentation: Many of us have long relied on Molly Ivins' political insight and humor for an understanding of how poorly conceived government policies come to be. Paula Pachciarz and the Raging Grannies use words and music to celebrate Ivins' life and causes—our causes. They plan to follow Ivins' advice to raise hell and have fun doing it.

CHANGES TO PRAIRIE'S BYLAWS

At our parish meeting on **April 22**, your board will recommend the following changes to the bylaws:

1. Provide for a system of electing Prairie's president that would involve a member serving as president-elect for one year, as president for one year, and as past president for one year. This could be modified if someone wishes to serve as president for two years. The position of vice-president would be abolished. This change is to provide better continuity of leadership for Prairie.
2. Change the definitions of a member and of the membership committee to bring them up to date and reflect current practice.
3. Change the descriptions of professional and lay ministry to bring them up to date and reflect current practice.
4. Provide for a youth member of the board for more engagement by our younger members.

The texts of the proposed bylaw changes are included at the back of this issue.

Mike Briggs, President

2007 UUSC HOLIDAY CARD CONTEST

Creative UUs of all ages are invited to submit original designs for 2007 UUSC holiday cards. Create an original design that reflects the joy of the holidays, and justice, equity, and compassion. Please visit www.uusc.org/ia/holiday_cards/2006/contest2007.html for submission guidelines and to the 2006 award-winning card. Submissions must be received by **April 27**, 2007. Mail submissions to UUSC Holiday Card Contest, 130 Prospect Street, Cambridge, MA 02139 or use e-mail: volunteerservices@uusc.org

MEMBERSHIP

Please welcome our new member:

Heidi Hughes

5525 Manitowish Way, Madison, WI 53704
hughesha (at) yahoo.com
244-9844

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SPRING IS HERE!

On Sunday, March 25th we had another service Sunday project. RE students worked very hard picking up garbage around the neighborhood. Preschool-2nd grade picked up garbage outside of Prairie and the nearby park. Students in grades 3-12 went through the neighborhood and gathered many, many bags of garbage. Both groups received thank you's from passersby. One gas station owner was so grateful he rewarded the students with a bag of chips!

I would like to say, "thank you, thank you!" to all the RE students who helped make our beautiful Earth a little brighter that day. I would also like to thank our volunteers: Jori Conca, Randy Converse, John Eligandi and Doug McFarland. They did more than just supervise they also had their own bags of garbage.



Coming up is our annual Spring Fling overnight event. The fun starts at 5 p.m. **Saturday, April 14** right here at Prairie. There will be games at the park, dinner and then indoor games. This is for children of all ages with their friends welcome to attend. We are in need of volunteers for Saturday evening and for people to stay overnight to supervise our children. I am also looking for someone willing to come in the morning to prepare breakfast. If interested please let me know ASAP.

There have been two changes to the RE program calendar. To make up for the snow day we had in February, there will be no Easter intergenerational service on **Sunday, April 8**. We will have regular classes held that day.

The Students for Free Tibet service that was cancelled upstairs has been rescheduled for **April 29**. High school students will be attending that service instead of their usual Humanism lesson.

As many of you have noticed, we have not been having a children's story upstairs. This is temporary and the RE Committee and I will update you on if it will be reinstated. Since the SFT service had originally planned on a story, we will have all children meeting upstairs on April 29, then going downstairs for regular classes.

As always, I am open to any suggestions or concerns. Please feel free to stop me on Sunday mornings to talk or to just say "hello".

Rebecca Malke (YREC)

youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org

PRAIRIE WEB SITES

Society Home Page: <http://uuprairie.org/>

News Group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/>

Views: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/>

Social Action: <http://socialaction.madisonwi.us>

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

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST NEWS

JOURNEY TOWARD WHOLENESS NEWS

Join Just Journeys to Explore Workers' Rights April 20-May 6

You can join UUSC to explore one of the most hotly debated topics of our time: the effects of globalization.

As a participant on the Globalization and Workers' Rights JustJourneys trip to Mexico (<http://www.uusc.org/justjourneys/mexico.html>), you will visit a maquila, discuss free trade agreements with government official and business people, meet women labor organizers and workers; travel to the countryside to experience daily life in an indigenous community; connect with faith-based grassroots organizations; and visit migrant workers and their families.

Holly Zeeb, a participant in the recent JustJourneys trip to Guatemala (<http://www.uusc.org/blog/2007/02/i-could-not-help-but-cry.html>), said her JustJourneys experience was "Provocative, moving, inspiring. Overall deeply satisfying."

The Globalization and Workers' Rights JustJourney takes place **April 29-May 6**. See: <http://www.uusc.org/justjourneys/index.html>

RAISE THE DRUMBEAT FOR DARFUR AT GA

As genocide devastates Darfur, we must be relentless in our efforts to end it. You can help. At the 2007 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association, UUSC will hold a full-day activists' training to increase awareness and organize action to bring peace & justice to Darfur.

What: Activists' training

When: **Wednesday, June 20**, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Where: Ambridge Events Center, Portland, Ore.

Co-sponsors: UU-UNO, UUA, Africa Action, Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur, and Fidelity Out of Sudan.

This landmark event will feature three inspiring speakers: Darfurian activist Omer Ismail, author

and activist Frances Moore Lappé, and UUSC President Charlie Clements. Small group workshops facilitated by experienced activists will help you build the skills necessary to help organize a Drumbeat for Darfur within your own community.

Each participant is encouraged to organize one to two others from their congregation to attend as well, and to be allies for raising the Drumbeat for Darfur within their own communities.

There is no charge for attending, and registration for GA is not required. Lunch will be provided.

For registration info, contact Rachel Jordan at volunteerservices@uusc.org or 617-301-4307.

Also see: www.uusc.org/drumbeatfordarfur/generalassembly.html.

UU VACATION TRIPS AND CAMPS

April 13–15 D.C. Annual Cherry Blossom Festival: www.cedarlane.org/cbfestival.pdf.

June 24–July 3 Northcentral Alaska: www.wuurld.org

July 3–12 Southeast Alaska: www.wuurld.org

July 15–17 Niagara Falls: <http://www.uunex.net/> or (716) 791-4453

July 16–30 Alaska: www.wuurld.org

July 29–Aug. 4 UU Camp LaForet, Carbondale, CO

OTHER NEWS

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK BULLETIN

Did you know that 75% of those who enter the Second Chance Apartment Project have housing when they leave? The Apartment Project is a collaboration between IHN, the YWCA of Madison, and sponsoring organizations that creates supportive transitional housing for homeless families with multiple barriers to housing.

Last month, one family in the project graduated with a remarkable degree of success: After a serious injury and a divorce this mother and her son found themselves homeless. They moved into a Second Chance Apartment two years ago following a brief stay in shelter.

After a few months of rehabilitation from the accident, the mom enrolled at MATC in pursuit of a nursing degree. She is a member of Phi Theta Kappa and in May she will graduate from MATC with honors. She plans to complete her nursing degree at Edgewood College in two years. The son has also done very well in elementary school and gotten involved in a variety of extra-curricular activities.

Meanwhile, this family has had such a successful relationship with their landlord that they have now taken over the lease on their own and will stay stable in this same apartment for as long as they like.

MADISON INSTITUTE PRESENTS "BEYOND ECONOMIC GROWTH"

The Madison Institute invites the public to attend the first of our free 2007 forums, featuring Joshua Farley, Ph.D., co-author of *Environmental Economics*.

9 a.m.-Noon, **Saturday, April 14, 2007**

The Pyle Center, 702 Langdon Street

Joshua Farley, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Community Development and Applied Economics at the University of Vermont is a Fellow at the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics, and co-author with Herman Daly of *Ecological Economics*. "Traditional economists see natural resources as a subsystem of the world economy. This book presents the economy as a subsystem of the global ecosystem....a must read." (Amazon)

The speaker, Dr. Farley, is the son of well-known Madison physicians, Linda and Gene Farley. His analysis is important to understanding contemporary realities and to the formation of wise public policies for the future. Also see www.themadisoninstitute.org

PROPOSED BYLAWS CHANGES, PARISH MEETING, APRIL 22, 2007

PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGE: Youth Member of Board

OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

- A. The officers of the Society shall be: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, a Youth Member, and the elected chairpersons of the following standing committees – Finance, Religious Education, Program, Social Action, Housing and Property, Long Range Planning, Denominational Affairs, and Membership. These officers constitute the Executive Board.
- B. Only Members may be elected to office. Officers shall serve for a term of one year and shall not serve more than three consecutive terms in the same office. Officers shall take office following a joint meeting of the outgoing and new Boards, to take place within four weeks of the election.
- C. Any officer who fails to perform the duties of his/her office or who ceases to be a Member may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote at a business meeting of the Society. Due process shall be observed.
- D. Duties of Officers.
 1. The President is chairperson of the Executive Board and presides at all business meetings of the Society and of the Board. He/she is an *ex officio* member of all committees except the Committee on Committees and the Committee on Ministry, and is the official representative of the Society.
 2. The Vice-President acts in place of the President during his/her absence and shall perform such duties as may be prescribed.
 3. The Secretary keeps records of the transactions of all business meetings of the Society and of the Executive Board. All records of the Secretary shall remain the property of the Society. The Secretary is responsible for giving proper notice of all business meetings.
 4. The Treasurer receives and safeguards all money and other property of the Society entrusted to his/her care, and may disburse the same under the direction of the Executive Board. The Treasurer shall keep the Finance Committee informed on the financial status of the Society. He/she keeps a complete account of the finances of the Society, which shall be open for inspection at any time to members. He/she shall render a current statement at each regular meeting of the Board and of the Society. His/her statement for the fiscal year may be audited and certified by persons designated by the Executive Board.
 5. The Youth Member is a person between the ages of 16 and 24. She or he is a fully participating officer of the society, and is responsible for such duties as may be determined from time to time by the Executive Board.
 - 5.6. ~~Chairpersons of standing committees are responsible for the functions assigned to their committees (Article VII). They shall call meetings (at least once a year) and cooperate with the chairs of other committees, the Executive Board, and the minister(s).~~
 - 6.7. ~~All outgoing officers and appointees shall consult with their successors and invite them to participate in the activities of the officers during the time between election or appointment and taking office, to familiarize the successors with their duties. To this end, they shall convey a detailed list of duties and suggestions to their successors.~~

PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGE: Definition of member

- A. ~~Members of the Society are those persons sixteen years or older who are in sympathy agreement with the Bond of Union of the Society and principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association and Association, who have signed the official Membership Book, and who contribute to and participate in the Book activities of the Society. Membership shall be in effect until a member dies, resigns in writing, or the membership committee has determined that the person has discontinued contact with the society, per Article VII discontinues participation in the society for two years.~~
- B. ~~Friends of the Society are those who have not signed the Membership Book, but non-members who participate in the activities of the Society or give evidence of their support and wish to be identified as a friend.~~

ARTICLE VII: STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. Committees with elected chairs serving on the Board
 3. *Program Committee*
 - a. This committee is responsible for selecting lay ministers in accordance with Article VIII.B, planning Sunday morning services, including liturgy, and other adult programs, in cooperation with the lay minister. It is responsible for seating and room arrangements for all programs.
 - b. The program committee shall also make public announcements of time, place, and topic of Sunday services. It shall arrange publicity about events, programs, purposes, personnel, etc., which would encourage those seeking a liberal religious organization to become acquainted with the society.

PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGE: Duties of the Board

- E. Duties and responsibilities of the Executive Board shall be to:
1. Carry out the wishes of the Society.
 2. Hold ~~monthly~~ scheduled meetings open to Members and Friends of the Society at least quarterly. A quorum of the Executive Board shall consist of a majority of the number of elected officers.
 3. Call business meetings of the Society.
 4. Determine and recommend, in coordination with the Finance Committee, the operating budget as outlined in Article IX.
 5. Acquire, lease, and lend facilities and building space according to the wishes of the Society.
 6. Appoint non-elected committee chairpersons.
 7. Fill temporarily any office which becomes vacant after the fall business meeting. Any office which becomes vacant earlier shall be filled by special election.
 8. Approve the hiring of all employees of the Society (except ministers), and fix their compensation.
 9. Appoint lay ministers, if the lay ministry option of Article VIII is in effect
 10. Act at the direction of the Society in making official agreements and pronouncements. In general, the Executive Board functions as the Executive power of the Society, always subject to the ultimate control of the Members, as specified in Article V, Section D.
 11. Maintain a Policies and Procedures Manual for the Society.

PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGE: Hospitality and Membership Committee

- A. Committees with elected chairs serving on the Board
- ~~8.8. Hospitality and Membership Committee~~
- ~~a Committee. This committee shall:~~
- (a) ~~(1) recruit and retain members by greeting visitors, introducing newcomers to others, inviting persons to join the society, members, and conduct orientation meetings. Meetings in cooperation with the denominational (sic) Affairs Committee, and contact inactive members. Denominational Affairs Committee.~~
 - (2) ~~(2) [sic] (b) Maintain the official membership list by identifying annually those persons who have signed the membership book and have maintained active membership by attendance, contribution, or other expressions of interest. Members who have list.~~
 - (c) ~~Publish a directory of Prairie Members and Friends periodically.~~
- ~~discontinued contact with the society for a period of two years will no longer be considered to be members. A directory of members and friends will be published periodically and (d) Report required information for UUA membership and benefits will be reported to appropriate denominational organizations.~~
- (3) ~~Provide hospitality for members and friends by arranging refreshments at Meetings and programs; sponsoring circle dinners and potlucks; and organizing other social events.~~
 - (e) ~~Provide opportunities for Prairie Members and Friends to connect with each other socially.~~

PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENTS: COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

- ARTICLE VII: STANDING COMMITTEES
- C. ~~Committee on Committees~~ Nominating Committee
1. This committee shall consist of five members, who shall serve a term of one year. Three shall be elected at the Annual Meeting; one appointed by the ~~outgoing~~ on-Committees from its own membership; and one appointed by the incoming Executive Board from its own membership. The Committee shall choose one of its members to be chair. Only the ~~Committee on Committees~~ member elected by that committee the Committee may serve a consecutive term, and that member may not serve a third consecutive year.
 2. Before the committee makes its nominations, it shall be encouraged to consult with the Board and other Members, soliciting their suggestions for nominees.
 3. The duties of this committee are to:
 - a. nominate Members, with their permission, for each elected office ~~and the chairperson of the Ministerial Relations Committee, for presentation at the Annual Meeting.~~
 - (1) ~~The list of nominations prepared by the committee shall be included in the notice of the Annual Meeting.~~
 - (2) ~~Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting, provided the consent of the nominee is obtained.~~
 - b. encourage members of the Society to serve on committees according to their talents and interests, and to recommend such persons to chairpersons and to the Executive Board.
 - c. ~~if the lay ministry option of Article VIII is in effect, to solicit and interview candidates, and announce at the Regular Spring Business Meeting the names, terms of service, and prospective roles of lay minister candidates for the coming year. These names, along with any additional recommendations from members, shall be passed to the Executive Board for approval.~~
 - d. ~~c. Verify Prairie's representation on the Channing Murray Board of directors and recommend, when necessary, representatives for appointment by the Prairie Board.~~
 4. ~~Except for the one member it elects, this committee, as a whole, may not nominate its own successors.~~

PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENTS: MINISTERS

- Article VIII MINISTRY
- ~~Style of Leadership: The Society shall determine by a majority vote which of the following options it prefers. The selected option shall remain in effect until modified or revised.~~
- A. ~~Professional Ministry~~
1. ~~An ad hoc Ministerial Search Committee, elected by the membership, solicits and interviews candidates and makes recommendations to the Executive Board, which reviews the recommendations for the membership.~~
 2. ~~The minister shall be selected by a three-fourths vote at a business meeting. A Professional Minister.~~
 1. ~~A "professional minister" is a person whose credentials have been approved by the UUA's Ministerial Fellowship Committee.~~
 2. ~~The society may employ one or more professional ministers, either as settled ministers or as contracted ministers.~~
 3. ~~A "settled minister" is one who is expected to serve the society for an indefinite term.~~
 4. ~~An ad hoc ministerial search committee elected by the membership shall solicit and interview candidates and make a recommendation to the board that a candidate for the position of settled minister be called. The board shall review the committee's recommendation and, if it approves, present the recommendation for calling the candidate, and a draft agreement for ministry, to the membership at a business meeting. If the membership approves the recommendation and the draft contract on a three-fourths vote, the board shall call the candidate and enter into an agreement with her or him to serve as a settled minister of the society, providing among other things that she or he shall serve the society for a initial probationary period not to exceed one year.~~
 5. ~~If the society desires not to continue its relationship with a settled minister beyond the probationary period, or desires to extend the settled minister's period of probation beyond one year, it shall so inform her or him in writing, not less than 90 days before the end of the probationary period, setting forth its reasons.~~
 3. ~~Once selected for the position, the minister need not be reelected yearly, but a review of his/her tenure shall be undertaken. Upon her or his successful completion of the probationary period, the performance of a settled minister shall be reviewed at least every three years by the Ministerial Relations Committee board.~~
 4. ~~The 7. A settled minister may not be dismissed except by a three-fifths vote at a business meeting. In the event of dismissal, the settled minister's salary and fringe benefits shall be continued for three months after the date of the vote to dismiss.~~
 5. ~~The dismiss. A settled minister must give three months notice when resigning.~~
 8. ~~A "contracted minister" is one who serves the society for a definite term pursuant to a contract between the minister and the society.~~

- ~~9. A candidate for the position of contracted minister shall be selected by an ad hoc ministerial search committee appointed by the board to solicit and interview candidates and make a recommendation to the board. The board shall review the committee's recommendation and, if it approves, present the recommendation, and a draft agreement for ministry, to the membership at a business meeting. If the membership approves the recommendation and the draft agreement on a three fourths vote, the board shall enter into a contract with the minister.~~
- ~~10. The performance of a contracted minister shall be reviewed annually by the board. A contracted minister may not be dismissed before the end of the term stated in her or his contract, except for breach of contract or other good cause and by a three fifths vote of the society at a business meeting. In the event of dismissal, a contracted minister's salary and fringe benefits shall be continued for one month after the date of the vote to dismiss. A contracted minister must give at least one month's notice when resigning before the end of the term stated in her or his contract.~~
- B. ~~Lay Ministry. During any period of one year beginning July 1 and ending June 30 (a fiscal year), the Minister. The society may be served by one or more lay ministers to lead services and undertake such other duties as may be prescribed. A lay minister Lay ministers shall be selected by the program committee, which shall decide the scope and length of her/his ministry their ministries. The membership, at the spring business meeting, shall determine whether to offer an honorarium to the lay minister or ministers to be selected for the following fiscal year.~~
- C. ~~Other options for ministry may be adopted if specifically set forth in a resolution adopted at a business meeting.~~