

Prairie UU Society, 2010 Whenona Drive, Madison WI 53711-4843  
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Located off the south frontage road (West Beltline Hwy Rd.) near the Seminole Hwy exit.



# 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 20, 2007**



*Prairie Fire is the semi-monthly newsletter of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. View past issues at [www.uuprairie.org](http://www.uuprairie.org).*

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

## **PRAIRIE CALENDAR**

### **Saturday, April 21**

\*7:00 p.m. Earth and Spirit Songfest with Jim Scott, at Prairie  
7:30 p.m. Playreaders at the home of Susan Hagstrom

### **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, April 25**

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

### **Sunday, April 29**

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal  
\*10:00 a.m. "Human Rights in Occupied Tibet" presented by Students for a Free Tibet

### **Wednesday, May 2**

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

### **Sunday, May 6**

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal  
\*10:00 a.m. "The Genius of Irving Berlin" presented by Warren Hagstrom and Prairie musicians  
\*12:00 noon. Humanist Union potluck and program led by Randy Converse

### **Monday, May 7**

6:00 p.m. EnAct potluck and discussion  
7:30 p.m. Hospitality and Membership Committee meeting

### **Wednesday, May 9**

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

### **Sunday, May 13**

\*10:00 a.m. "Memories, Meanings, and Mother's Day" presented by the Rev. Ralph Tyksinski

### **Wednesday-Sunday, June 20-24**

UUA General Assembly, Portland, Oregon

**NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, MAY 6**

(\* = Details follow in this issue.)

## DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

### 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."

### Sunday, April 29

Students for a Free Tibet is an international organization that recognizes the legal and historical status of Tibet as an independent country and supports the right of the Tibetan people to determine their own future. The mission of their organization is to educate people about the situation in occupied Tibet and work towards human rights through non-violent political, economic, and social campaigns.

Tom Boman, Hilary Edwards, Annie King, Abi Scott, and Asius Vangio, from the University of Wisconsin, Madison chapter, will speak about the current state of Tibet within China, focusing on the Beijing 2008 Olympics and the recent massacre at Nangpa-la Pass, where Tibetans were shot down by the Chinese Armed Police while traveling to Nepal to escape persecution.

The service will also include Tibetan music and religious readings as well as a Tibetan story for all ages. Jampa Khedup-la, a professor at the university and former monk, will lead Prairie in musical meditation.

The Madison demonstration got big coverage in the *Asian Wisconzine* for this month. Check it out at <http://www.asianwisconzine.com/>, or get the print edition at grocery stores, banks, etc. Lots of fantastic photos! Great job, Madison!

### Sunday, May 6

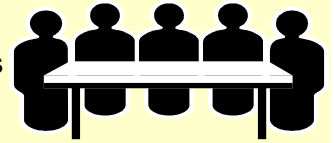
Our program will be about the life and music of Irving Berlin. Performers of all ages will do pieces such as "Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better" and "Alexander's Ragtime Band."

## OUR SOCIETY

### PARISH MEETING AGENDA, APRIL 22, 2007

Agenda:

1. Minutes of the 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: Sue Herr-Hoyman

R.E.: Karen Deaton

Social Action: Kathy Converse

Denominational Affairs: Nancy Schraufnagel

### ATTENTION PRAIRIE MUSICIANS!

Our program on May 6 will be about the life and music of Irving Berlin. Performers of all ages and experience will be welcomed. We will need to assemble instrumentalists, any instruments, for "Alexander's Ragtime Band," and we will need a men's chorus for "Oh How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning." Contact Warren Hagstrom or Doleta Chapru (238-4970, warrenolaf at aol.com, dchapru at aol.com) if you wish to perform. Act now if you wish to reserve one of your favorite pieces. (Doleta and Warren already have "Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better") If you want suggestions, or sheet music, or need an accompanist, ask us. You have lots of songs to consider, from "Won't You Play a Simple Melody" (1915) to "There's No Business Like Show Business" (1954). Note that it may take time to arrange sheet music and accompanists.

We may be able to give a demonstration of how to become a famous composer even if you can't read music and play only on the black keys of the piano. And we will point out that mixed marriages can be very happy, even if parents object.

## REV. RALPH'S RUMINATIONS

I bring good news from the Central Midwest District Assembly held Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 13, 14, 15 at the Oak Brook Marriott just outside of Chicago.



The message that I heard from numerous voices, from ministers, lay members and district staff persons, is that our UU congregations in Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana and Missouri are growing and some are growing in dramatic numbers. This growth in membership makes our district the second largest in the UUA.

How can one account for this kind of increased membership? There is no single explanation. But I venture the observation that in some way it involved a committed and passionate person willing to share their faith with another person. This kind of "reaching out" has been part of our movement's history of growth in Wisconsin going back to the 1870's. It should be a part of our Prairie UU Society's mission for growth.

One of those committed and passionate individuals was a young man of Welsh immigrant parents named Jenkin Lloyd Jones (an uncle of Frank Lloyd Wright) from Spring Green, Wisconsin. At the age of eighteen he enlisted as a private in the sixth Wisconsin Battery of the Union Army. His "An Artilleryman's Diary" is fascinating reading.

He attended Meadville Theological School (then located in western Pennsylvania). After short periods of ministry serving congregations in Winnetka, Illinois and Janesville, Wisconsin, he served as Secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference from 1875 to 1884.

J. L. Jones writes "...in 1875, there was but one state conference (Wisconsin); there was no headquarters [office], no periodical. There were only 43 active societies, and they were in debt for over \$100,000 [collectively]. In 1880, there were 61 active societies, church indebtedness had been reduced almost \$50,000; the Women's Liberal Union of the Conference was maintaining a Chicago office with a full-time office secretary and [the periodical] Unity was a cheerful, widely welcomed courier of Conference news, liberal morale, and advanced theological and social

opinion. And there were now six state conferences . . . [pp. 136-137].

How was our movement's dramatic growth in Wisconsin and environs accomplished? In an 1871 lecture entitled "The Missionary Spirit," Jenkin Lloyd Jones begins with the Biblical parable of the Sower and the Seed, and suggests that his Unitarian brothers and sisters need to foster greater zeal in the spread of the good news of liberal religion. "Scatter the seed everywhere," he says, "and leave the consequences to God. [Let us] preach this gospel to every living creature!"

But, Jones laments, we're not very good at this. While other faith traditions rejoice in the opportunity to spread their word, we tolerate the idea (and expenses) of missionary work. Why, he asks, is this the case? In response to this question, Jones offers three reasons, and it seems to me that they have curious ring of truth for us today, one hundred and thirty-six years later, as well as for those living in his historical time.

First, we'd like to think we don't need to make that effort, that societal forces will bring people to our doors. As people become more educated, as the influence of science and technology expand, the beauty of a liberal religion based in reason and the principles of science will become apparent to people, and they will find us. Jones agrees—"our age," he says, "is ripe for a more genial religious faith. Thousands all over our land are hungering for better spiritual nourishment and wherever the believer of our liberal faith does speak of it out loud, willing listeners are universally found" [pp. 8-9].

Second, he notes that we prefer to do our proclamation through the printed word—today we might include the Internet and the visual media as well—rather than through the testimony of a living soul.

But, he argues, ". . . if the history of religion teaches us anything, it is that the thrilling voices of inspired souls, the kindling earnestness of quickened breasts, the sympathetic eloquence of a human presence stand first among the means of regenerating the world, of helping [humanity] along" [pp. 11-12]. Our gospel, he says, is one best taught by living human example, not by words on a page [p. 14].

Thirdly, it is Jones' contention that we often consider our faith to be ". . . of such a refined and sublimated character that none but the more ethereal . . . can receive or appreciate it" [p. 15]. Today, some would refer to this as "elitism," or being among the "esoteric", expressing the idea that not everyone is intellectually or culturally capable of appreciating our faith. J.L. Jones uses his own story as testimony—the story of the barefoot farm boy who learned to love the liberal teachings of Unitarianism in the rural, hillside community west of Madison. What we need, he claims in the parlance of his era, is "a stronger faith and a holier zeal. We need to find and encourage those who are eager to stand up and speak our gospel, who see the success of our movement as greater than the success of a given church [p. 28].

I heard it said at our CMWD assembly from different persons coming from different CMWD congregations that we hold something of exceeding value in our hands, something unique, something that grows as we give it away, as we share it with others. That something is, of course, our liberal religious movement based in freedom of conscience and belief, reason and tolerance, love and compassion.

May we at Prairie UU Society say to those in our neighborhoods that they are welcome here. Hopefully, we can do more than that. Let us, let each one of us—at least occasionally—take the risk of speaking out with zeal and conviction! Let us teach our faith by our example; in doing so, we can celebrate, and we can honor, and—most importantly—maybe we can continue our precious heritage of growth in this enchanting prairie area of Madison, Wisconsin.

Journeying with you,

*Ralph*

### **HUMANIST UNION POTLUCK AND PROGRAM**

The ideas from Randy Converse's brother's monograph, *Free Enough: Doing What Comes Naturally*, will be the topic of the Humanist Union discussion, led by Randy. Potluck at noon, presentation and discussion starting about 12:20 on **Sunday, May 6**.

### **UPCOMING BOOK CLUB SELECTION**

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.

Prices are those current at <http://amazon.com> as of November 18, 2006.

**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 pp, \$1.15 & up.

### **JIM SCOTT SONGFEST SATURDAY, APRIL 21**

Don't miss your chance to hear composer, guitarist and singer Jim Scott at Prairie Saturday evening, **April 21**, at 7:00 p.m.



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 (for example, "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. Come lend your voice to an extemporaneous vocal celebration of earth and peace. Renew your spirit and celebrate our ideals in song.

Tickets will be \$12 at the door.

### **PRAIRIE ELDERS MEETING**

Prairie Elders 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.

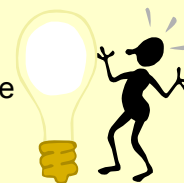
DIRECTIONS: Oakwood Village West is in the 6100 block of Mineral Point Road several blocks west of Whitney Way. Follow the main entrance road veering left and up the hill. Heritage Oaks is the new building on the right. Its visitor parking entrance is directly across from Oakwood's one-storey Resale 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.

## GET CREATIVE! DESIGN A PRAIRIE LOGO!

The Communications and Publicity committees are in the process of developing a distinctive Prairie UU logo or graphic, suitable for all kinds of uses: T-shirts, signs, coffee cups, bumper stickers, Web site, etc. We believe that consistently using an appealing and recognizable logo in our publicity materials will help us get the most recognition and interest we can from people who would enjoy coming to Prairie.



We are collecting ideas, sketches, and samples. On May 20 and 27, we will display the contributions and collect feedback before and after our services, to aid in selecting one. Here are some guidelines, if you are interested in creating something:

- The image should include the words "Prairie UU" and the phrase "Open Hearts, Open Minds".
- You may also wish to include a chalice (there are many chalice images on the UUA Web site: [archive.uua.org/CONG/chalices/](http://archive.uua.org/CONG/chalices/))
- The image should be very bold and simple. Think of solid areas of black ink on white paper, rather than shaded pencil or watercolor images. This simplicity will allow the image to be printed at different sizes and on different backgrounds without losing its impact.
- If possible, please submit a digital image. Refer to this Web site for more detailed specifications: [cafepress.com/cp/info/sell/images/](http://cafepress.com/cp/info/sell/images/)
- If you are not comfortable using computer graphics, give us a paper copy (on a pure white background), and we will scan it into a digital file.
- If you have a great concept, but are not an artist, give us a rough sketch, as soon as possible.

Give your creative work to Karen Deaton ([karendeaton@tds.net](mailto:karendeaton@tds.net)) or Dirk Herr-Hoyman ([hoymand@danenet.org](mailto:hoymand@danenet.org)) by e-mail, mail, or in person.

We will use a well-established and reputable Internet business, Cafe Press ([cafepress.com](http://cafepress.com)), to have our image printed onto all kinds of merchandise (T-shirts, magnets, coffee cups, even thong underwear, if anybody wants it!).

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### SPRINGING INTO SPRING

As our RE program is getting closer to finishing up another successful year I have observed our young students blossoming like the beautiful flowers all over the neighborhood. They're more active which I feel has to do with us being blessed with sunny skies and warmer temperatures, despite the small, cold setback last week.



April 14-15th was our spring fling event. We had 19 children attend! Students took advantage of the nice Saturday evening by spending their time at the nearby park. Ultimate Frisbee was played with it being briefly interrupted by dinner and then played for several more hours.

Maya Urbanski taught some of our younger RE students a new game, which was played indoors. Later on in the night Wink was played but this time with not as much energy. Our youth were pretty tired from playing so much outside. This proved to be beneficial to our overnight volunteers to have everyone sleepy and ready for bed pretty early!

Many thanks to all who helped make this another successful event: Barbara Boyd, Erin Bosch and Anne Urbanski for helping supervise and clean up after dinner. And many thanks to those who stayed the night: Ian Park, Randy Converse and Patty Stockdale. Patty also got up early to prepare breakfast.

April 29th will be a presentation given by Students for a Free Tibet, which was rescheduled from February. There will be a story upstairs for children of all ages. Classes will resume as usual except for the middle and high school classes who will be attending the upstairs service.

Classes will be finishing in May. The RE Committee and I are in the process of planning next year's program: World Religions. There will be more information coming out for parents, students and anyone thinking of being a teacher. I'm especially excited about this program since I have spent the past eight years studying world religions. I have attended many different places of worship in the U.S. and abroad and hope to share

Once we've selected our graphic, we can get it set up on Cafe Press in a matter of minutes. Cafe Press provides a free online shop to make our products available. If you are not an online person, we will assist you in shopping. Cafe Press produces each item when ordered, using a print-on-demand technology. We have no volume commitments or set-up fees to deal with. Cafe Press handles all payment transactions and shipping, and manages returns and exchanges. They also provide customer service via toll-free phone and email. We will be selling our merchandise at cost rather than using this as a money-making opportunity.

To give you an idea of the possibilities, Dirk has set up a sample online shop at <http://www.cafepress.com/uuprairie>. *Please don't buy anything yet!* The designs are not finalized, and there will be even better stuff if you wait just a few weeks!

*Karen Deaton*

### 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.

*Mike Briggs, President*



## **WORKSHOP OFFERED: WHOSE BIBLE IS IT, ANYWAY?**

Through thematic lectures and prophetic/political discussions around Biblical texts, Dr. Norman Gottwald will help participants examine the major fault lines in disputes over biblical interpretation:

- Is it the academy's Bible or the practicing religious community's Bible?
- Is it the Jews' Bible or the Christians' Bible?
- Is it the literalists' Bible or the contextualists' Bible?
- Is it the left wing's Bible or the right wing's Bible?
- Is it the Bible of the mainstream or the marginalized?

Dr. Norman K. Gottwald is an ordained American Baptist minister and Wilbert Webster White Emeritus Professor of Biblical Studies at New York Theological Seminary, a multi-denominational and multi-ethnic school serving the churches of metropolitan New York. Presently

he is Adjunct Professor at Pacific School of Religion and previously served on the faculties of Columbia University, Andover Newton Theological School, American Baptist Seminary of the West and the Graduate Theological Union.

Dr. Gottwald is a pioneer in social critical study of the Hebrew Bible. He is author of *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel 1250-1050 BC*, *The Hebrew Bible - A Socio-Literary Introduction*, *The Hebrew Bible in Its Social World and in Ours*, *The Bible and Liberation, Political and Social Hermeneutics* and *The Politics of Ancient Israel*. He has contributed two volumes in the popular Proclamation guides to preaching. He and his wife, Laura, have developed a dialogue format for exploring the interaction of storyteller and audience in the parables of Jesus.

Register online at <http://www.wichurches.org/events/index.html> or phone 608-837-3108.

*Wisconsin Council of Churches*