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."

August 24, 2007









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

President: Rachel Long, (608) 328-4899

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, August 26

*10:00 a.m. Ingathering Water Ceremony 10:00 a.m. Religious Education classes begin

Tuesday, August 28

*2:00 p.m. Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood East to discuss children's books for adults

Sunday, September 2

*10:00 a.m. Labor Day program led by Ruth Gundlach

Thursday, September 6

7:30 p.m. Committee on Ministry meeting

Saturday, September 8

4:30 a.m. Serve breakfast at the Men's Homeless Shelter, Grace Episcopal Church

Sunday, September 9

*10:00 a.m. "Revisioning Our Vision" presented by the Rev. Ralph Tyksinski 12:00 noon. Humanist Union potluck and meeting

NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

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

Wednesday, September 12

*7:30 p.m. Pre-Retreat Folk Dance Practice

Friday-Sunday, September 14-16

*Prairie Retreat at Bethel Horizons

Sunday, September 16

*10:00 a.m. Key Log Ceremony, Bethel Horizons *2:00-4:00 p.m. Interfaith Hospitality Network open house at Midvale Lutheran Church (corner of Midvale and Tokay); short program at 3:00 p.m.

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, August 26

As we begin our new program year, this service will be our annual ritual of ingathering commonly celebrated in most UU churches—the Water Ceremony. Please bring to the service a small container of water which is a reflection of a meaningful story from your summer weeks. The source of the water might be almost anything—laughing, or crying with others, sharing a special moment, or scene, or event; learning something

new about yourself and the world we live in. Let your imagination have wings. We will blend our offerings of water as symbolic of our joining ourselves in community to begin a new program year. (If you forget to retrieve some water you will be allowed to offer a "virtual" sample for your sharing!)

Sunday, September 2

To honor Labor Day, we will hear from Ruth Gundlach of AFSCME on major issues facing labor today.

Sunday, September 9

In "Revisioning Our Vision," Rev. Ralph will explore the desired elements for a revision of a Prairie Vision. What can be realized and achieved by the year 2112? Bring your hopes, dreams, and wishes and Ralph will bring his.

OUR SOCIETY

FAMILY FALL RETREAT— FOR EVERYONE!

Kids and Adults: Activity at the Nature Center...
Hike the trails of beautiful Bethel Horizons with the naturalist...Watercolor painting...Ping pong tournament...Ultimate Frisbee...
Origami...Balloon Contest... Folk
Dancing...Bring your Digital Camera for a Special Treat...Bring your Board
Games... and more!

Attention Recorder Players: Dust off or oil up your recorders and join Doleta Chapru, Ruth Calden, and Mary Franz for a fun play-together at the retreat. The first half hour will feature easy pieces for players at all levels. The remaining hour will be more advanced pieces for all who wish to give them a try. There will be no instruction so bring fingering charts if you're a bit rusty (rest assured you won't be the only one.) If you have them, bring a range of recorders and a music stand.



Book Discussion: *Midnight at the Dragon Café* by Judy Fong Bates. (See page 3.) Read the book, come and discuss together.

Storytelling: We are a storytelling species. The drive to tell stories that reflect who we are, where we have been, when we experienced special moments and why we are who we are today, is powerful. One of the most revealing perspectives is to explore our own experiences of Transitions/Turning Points/Loss. We will share what stories emerge from our own defining moments and how to shape into a story.

UU General Assembly Ware Lecture Video—Diplomacy and Iran

Humanist Union Video: "A Brief History of Disbelief", Part 3, BBC production shown on many PBS stations, with narrator Jonathan Miller.

Round Singing: A chance to sing familiar and new rounds with Karleen providing music. Enthusiasm, but no music experience required!

Talent Show: This is your opportunity to shine and share your talents!! We ask that you keep your "act" to 2-4 minutes. Read a dramatic piece? Prepare a short skit with friends? A musical piece? Be creative! Bring your props, costumes, etc. There is a microphone available. Sign up at the retreat for a spot on the program.

Key Log Ceremony: In early Wisconsin logging days, log jams often occurred on the Wisconsin River when logs were floated to the sawmills. Loggers knew how to find the one log that was holding back the others—the Key Log. People also get jammed up. At this ceremony, we can share examples of how others freed us from personal jams.

And more! Hope to see you there! Questions? Contact Aileen Nettleton or Robin Proud.

DIRECTIONS TO BETHEL HORIZONS

To get to Bethel Horizons, take highway 18/151 west to Dodgeville, then highway 23 north 4 or 5 miles, past the entrance to Governor Dodge State Park, to County Highway ZZ. Turn right and follow ZZ for about 1 mile. There will be a sign on the right at the entrance to the Bethel Horizons property. The address of the retreat center is Bethel Horizons, 4651 Cty Hwy ZZ, Dodgeville. Camp Phone is 608-935-5885.

CHOICE OF RETREAT ACCOMMODATIONS

Here is some clarification on the various buildings available at Bethel Horizons. The Prairie Center is the main building where meals and most of the activities will be. This is the best location for anyone who wants a minimum of walking and a maximum of amenities. Each room has its own bathroom with shower. Rooms hold 4-7 people. Usually couples do not have to share, but if there is a lot of demand it is possible. If you have a health issue that requires a private room, just indicate that on your registration form.

The Barn Center is down the hill and is a bit more basic, and the bathrooms are shared. Usually a couple or single person can have their own room, so if you are looking for quiet and privacy, this is a good choice.

The Farmhouse has a number of rooms with bunks and a shared bathroom. This could be a good choice for an extended family or a couple of families who want to be together. This is also down the hill from the main center.

No matter which building you are staying in, you need to bring soap, sheets, towels, and pillowcases (unless you want to pay extra to rent linens). Blankets and pillows are provided.

Camping is available for individuals, couples or families, and you have the option of coming for any part of the retreat, for example, during the day Saturday without staying overnight.

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEET AUGUST 28

TIME: 2:00-3:50 p.m., Nakoma Room, Heritage Oaks Building, Oakwood Village West.

TOPIC: A children's book that has special meaning in your adult life. This could be a book from your childhood, a book you read to your children or a book you discovered as an adult. There is no age limit for loving children's books – or for writing them. The last book Theodor Seuss Geisel wrote and illustrated was his 1990 publication *Oh, the Places You'll Go*. Much beloved Dr. Seuss was 85.

We alternate a round-robin "show and tell" topic with discussion of a current issue. At the July meeting, one person came armed with a copy of the Constitution, others shared ideas about

salvaging our democracy and we conducted a serious Prairie-style discussion about the precarious state of our nation.

We begin and end our gathering with casual conversation. The Nakoma Room will be open at 1:30, half an hour early.

REFRESHMENTS: Please bring a small handful of snacks to pass. Beverages are furnished. Bring your own beverage cup if you can.

ABOUT US: Prairie Elders aims to provide good times and mutual support for Prairie UU Members and Friends over 65.

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

PRE-RETREAT FOLK DANCE SESSION

A pre-Retreat folk dance session will be held on **Wednesday**, **September 12** at 7:30 p.m. in the meeting room after the potluck. Prairie folk dance enthusiasts and musicians are invited to a work session to learn circle and line dances Doleta Chapru will be leading at the retreat. It would be helpful to inexperienced dancers and to Doleta to have some people at Bethel Horizons who are familiar with the dances. To get music ahead of time, instrumentalists can contact Doleta.

Dances will be selected from the list below. None require partners and are fairly easy. Some faster dances will have alternative slower steps so more people can be included.

The work session is open to adults and older RE people and is not limited to those attending the retreat. While "work" is the operative word, we plan to have fun. The session at the retreat will begin with a couple of dances easy enough for younger children or babes in arms.

Hashual - Israel
Carnivalito - Bolivia
Bannielou Lambaol - Brittany
Savila Se Bela Losa - Serbia
Milanova Kolo - Yugoslavia
Lesnoto - Macedonia
Bak Kardeshim - Turkey
Hineh Ma Tov - Israel
Mythos - Greece

BOOK CLUB SELECTIONS FOR THE FALL

All are welcome to the Book Club discussions listed below. We meet at Prairie after Sunday services, except in September. Participants bring food to share. The meeting usually begins about 11:30 a.m. and continues until 1:00 or 1:30 p.m. For more information or to be put on the e-mail list, contact Mary Mullen, mmullen (at) chorus.net, 608-298-0843.

Saturday, September 15

(at Prairie's annual Bethel Horizons' retreat; exact time to be announced later.)

Midnight at the Dragon Cafe by Judy Fong Bates, from \$2.19.

www.amazon.com/o/ASIN/1582431892/105-3315333-7491661?SubscriptionId= 09GE3K6JDGSKCKXKEJG2. This is a Chinese immigrant story set in Canada where 6-year-old Su-Jen Chou meets her father for the first time when she and her mother come to join him where he runs a restaurant. It's a first novel by the author. Booklist says, "The haunting characters in that lonely greasy spoon evoke a tradition stretching back to Carson McCullers." 317 pages (Suggested by Al Nettleton, from an Oregon "everybody reads" program)

Sunday, October 14

Man Gone Down by Michael Thomas, from \$5.95 at http://www.amazon.com/Man-Gone-Down-Michael-Thomas/dp/0802170293.

The narrator of this first novel is a man who was born poor, black, and brilliant in a Boston ghetto, married a white upper class woman, became a father, and at 35 is struggling to reconcile his upbringing and his life as a black father. He has four days to come up with \$12,000 to rent an apartment, pay the tuition at his children's private school, and rescue his family from New England where they've spent the summer with their Brahmin grandmother. Flashbacks to his 1970's childhood as a "social experiment" and the son of an abusive mother and absent father blend into his more recent history. The New York Times Book Review notes that in his critique of American Society Thomas relies heavily on "Invisible Man" and also on T.S. Eliot. 432 pages (Suggested by Donna Murdoch)

Note: In each case, the Amazon URL give access to used books at reasonable prices and includes brief reviews of the books. Prices are those current at http://amazon.com as of June 10, 2007.

The Web sites have brief reviews as well as links to buying the books.

SUMMER READS

On Sunday, August 12, Rose Smith led us in a program titled "How Can I Keep from Reading?" Attenders shared books they had read recently that they highly recommended. The following list notes the person who shared (where known) and the book they talked about.

Homer, *The Iliad* (trans. by Robert Fagels). Pat Watkins

Noddings, Nel, *Critical Lessons: What Our Schools Should Teach* (2006). Mary Frantz Niven, Jennifer, *Ada Blackjack: A True Story of Survival in the Arctic* (2003). Mary Mullen Gildiner, Catherine, *Too Close to the Falls: A Memoir* (1999, 2002). Rose Smith Pullman, Philip, *Golden Compass Trilogy*. Amy Armstrong

Dickens, Charles, Great Expectations. Amy Armstrong

Pollan, Michael, The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals (2006). Galen Smith

Brennan, Tom, Cold Crime: How Police Detectives Solved Alaska's Most Shocking Cases (2005). Galen Smith

Rita Golden, Tales of a Female Nomad Tsukiyama, Gail, Women of the Silk (1991). Sonya Sidky

Tsukiyama, Gail, *The Language of Threads* (1999). Sonya Sidky

Sayers, Dorothy, *Strong Poison*. Anne Urbanski Sayers, Dorothy, *Have His Carcase*. Anne Urbanski

Fergus, Jim, One Thousand White Women: The Journals of May Dodd (1998). Heidi Hughes Gruen, Sara, Water for Elephants (2006). Jean Matos

Yann, *Life of Pi* (2002). Jim Cunningham & Martel *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (most recent translation). Kathy Ducat

Grogan, John, *Marley and Me* (2006). Kathy Ducat

Eugenides, Jeffrey, *Middlesex* (2002). Anne Lundin

Peck, Richard, *A Long Way from Chicago* (2000). Mary Lou Diehl

Peck, Richard, *A Year Down Yonder* (2001). Mary Lou Diehl

Nesbitt, E., *Five Children and It.* Robin Proud Eager, Edward, *Half Magic*. Robin Proud Kingsolver, Barbara, *Prodigal Summer*. Gennifer Lawrence

Kingsolver, Barbara, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* (2007). Gennifer Lawrence

Mortenson, Greg, Three Cups of Tea (2005) Ferguson, Niall, The War of the World: 20th Century Conflict and the Descent of the West (2006). KK Anderson

Park, Wilford, Pocket Dairy 1917 unpublished (http://parkscrapbook.us) (family member). Bob Park

LA Theater (sound rec), Proof and Going to St. Ives. Erin Bosch

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

REV. RALPH'S RUMINATIONS

I hope you have received and by now have had an opportunity to read the Letter to the



Congregation sent by Rachel and myself, dated August 12. The letter was not intended to be alarming nor was there any intention to "throw darts," "grind axes," or "point fingers."

If you have discovered any misinformation or know of any factors that were not considered in our letter please let us learn of them. We need to be as informed and educated about this aspect of our congregational life. But it is not the only area of a congregation's life. In the coming weeks we will be developing and planning group meetings to focus on Strategic Planning for Prairie.

What does Strategic Planning mean? Some have called this process Long Range Planning and Prairie has been engaged in this activity for several years. Here's my current thinking about Strategic Planning.

Simply put, strategic planning determines where a congregation (like any organization) is going over the next year or more, how it's going to get there and how it'll know if it got there or not. The focus of a strategic plan is usually on the entire scope of activities the congregation is engaged in, for example, Sunday Programs, Religious Education (both Children's and Adult), Social Action projects and participation, Membership Growth, Identity and Outreach to the wider community, Financial Health.

In a conference call with UUA Financial Consultant, Wayne Clark, it was suggested to our executive committee and me that one way for the Prairie community to refocus on its vision and mission, or long-range plans, is to engage in a process that is called Appreciative Inquiry (AI).

Al is a major breakthrough in congregational/ organization development, training, and "problem solving," in general. Al is based on the assertion that "problems" are often the result of our own perspectives and perceptions of phenomena, e.g., if we look at a certain priority as a "problem," then we tend to constrain our ability to effectively address the priority and we continue to struggle, bringing on constraints in our personal development, in our lives and especially in our social relationships. Prairie has "problems" that need to be identified and using the Appreciative Inquiry approach we may be able to develop Strategic Plans for their resolution.

Al is a philosophy so a variety of models, tools and techniques can be derived from that philosophy. For example, one Al-based approach to strategic planning includes identification of our best achievements and/or experiences during the best situations in the recent past of our congregational life. In this process, the wishing and

thinking about what worked best then, envisioning what we want in the future, and building from what worked best in order to work toward our vision can lead to a specific set of strategic goals, with benchmarks for knowing when goals have been met.

What I have been observing since beginning my service as minister with Prairie last November is a congregation that identified the challenges it was facing, made substantial efforts to respond, but has not been able to respond effectively in achieving its goals.

Now is the time for Prairie to focus on organic growth through leadership development and skill building, with the full participation of it membership in this challenging process. Intentionally investing congregational energy in organic growth will pay dividends for years to come. Organic growth demands that leaders set aside the continual pressure just to do "anything" and replace it with a response to select the "something" that is the best match to the situation. Doing just "anything" to relieve leaders' and congregants' anxiety is usually ineffective. It can feed the tendency toward burnout. Doing the "right something" is more effective and is certainly more rewarding to those leaders who want to see something positive and lasting accomplished. In effect, fostering organic growth and strengthening the habits of continual improvement are closely related. Building internal congregational systems that assume we will always need to learn is vital for achieving and sustaining congregational health.

Congregations that create a culture of continual learning find that they are always involved with learning skills and acquiring knowledge, applying these skills and knowledge, and evaluating their accomplishments. Once a congregation learns a new technique, carefully applies what it has learned, and evaluates how to make improvements, it has modeled a cycle that can be repeated over and again to meet the demands of the future. Such a cycle becomes an expected process, and the habit of process becomes a part of congregational identity.

If Prairie continues to aspire to grow larger numerically, organic growth is mandatory. Numerical growth will make systems growth mandatory, or conversely, the lack of

systems growth will stop numerical growth completely. Failure to grow effective systems truncates healthy growth faster than does new Religious Education space! If Prairie does nothing more in the coming months than build robust congregational systems, we will be fabulously effective in achieving our dreams.

Glad to be journeying with you,

Ralph



WELCOME BACK PRAIRIE STUDENTS

Welcome back everyone! And welcome to all the newcomers. It seems like only yesterday I was wishing our graduating senior, Mei-Lien, good luck in college and recognizing our transition students, Gavin McFarlane and Seth Gutknecht.



Even though classes are starting I refuse to say summer is over. It's not over, we still have a month left! Even though we've had some crazy heat and crazy rain this summer season I want to cherish every minute before the cool air comes in and the leaves begin to fall.

We have a very exciting year. Classes begin August 26th with our annual Ingathering Water Ceremony. Bring your jars of water from your summer vacation and prepare to tell us about your summer. I can't wait to hear all about it.

After classes we will have lunch at Prairie and then off to the pool in Middleton for our first ever Prairie Pool Party! This will be a fun opportunity for students to get together and catch up and a great chance for our newcomers to get better acquainted with their classmates. It's also a nice time for our parents and teachers to meet and just have some fun.

I'm really looking forward to this year. We have some interesting speakers lined up for our World Religions program this year and some very cool field trips to various churches and temples in Dane County. As always, if you would like to lend a hand with RE please let me know.

Rebecca Malke (YREC) youthcoordinator (at) uuprairie.org



Interfaith Hospitality Network

invites you to an open house and tour at Midvale Community Lutheran Church

Join us to learn more about how IHN changes the lives of homeless families:

- · See our work first hand
- Meet staff, board of directors and program graduates
- This event also counts as part I of volunteer training
 - Bring someone you know who is new to IHN

Sunday, September 16th 2007

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Brief presentation at 3:00 p.m.

Midvale Community Lutheran Church 4329 Tokay Blvd. Madison, WI on the corner of Midvale and Tokay

Light refreshments provided

For more information, contact Cyndi Wood at 294-7998 x311

September Open House

Midvale Community Lutheran Churchwill be all set up for the IHN guests to arrive that evening, but you can get a "sneak peek" of their operations in the afternoon. There will be tours of the space throughout the afternoon and a short program at 3:00 featuring the executive director and a program graduate. This will be a great opportunity for those who have never seen the shelter program in action. If you already participate in the shelter network, please bring a friend or a family new to IHN.

Note: this Open House can serve as part I of volunteer training.

Homes for Families Tours

Please join us to learn more about how Interfaith Hospitality Network changes the lives of homeless families. IHN offers this one-hour tour for people to see our work first hand. We invite you to come and meet our director, board members and some of the staff. You will not be asked to make any donation, but we will ask for your advice and feedback. No RSVP is necessary.

Tuesday, Sept. 18th at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept 26th at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 10th at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 23rd at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 14th at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 18th at 5:30 p.m.

The IHN day center is attached to the church on the corner of University Avenue and Charter Street. Free parking is available behind the building and is accessed from Charter Street between University and Johnson.

Interfaith Hospitality Network of the Madison Area (IHN) serves homeless families with children in collaboration with local faith communities and organizations.

1121 University Ave., Madison, W153715 608 294 7998 www.ilomadison.org

PRAIRIE UU SOCIETY FALL RETREAT

Bethel Horizons Center, September 14-16, 2007

Names:	Phone:
Address:	
ACCOMMODATIONS : Requires sheets, towels, and soap. Accommodations have heat, electricity, and showers, except campground.	
	ldren (under 12)
Prairie Center: (4-5/room, private disability-ac	cessible bathrooms, 72 beds total)
2 nights: # x \$52 = \$ 2 n	ights: # x \$26 = \$
1 night: # x $$36 = $$ 1 nig	ght: #x \$18 = \$
Note: The Prairie Center will be fully booked and possibly less private than the Barn Retreat Center. Please propose people with whom you would be comfortable sharing a room:	
Barn Retreat Center: (26 single beds, shared bathroom)	
2 nights: # x \$40 = \$ 2 n 1 night: # x \$30 = \$ 1 ni	ights: # x \$20 = \$
1 night: # x \$30 = \$ 1 ni	ight: #x \$15 = \$
Farmhouse/Bunkhouse Center: (17 single beds, shared bathrooms)	
2 nights: # x \$36 = \$ 2 n 1 night: # x \$24 = \$ 1 ni	ights: # x \$18 = \$
1 night: # x \$24 = \$ 1 ni	ight: # x \$12 = \$
Camping (\$8/person or \$20/family per night): \$	
Sub	total of Accommodations: \$
MEALS	
(Vegetarian Options on the Meals, indicate number of persons: #)	
Adults	Children
Saturday breakfast: # x \$6.00 = \$ Saturday lunch: # x \$7.00 = \$	# x \$3.00 = \$
Saturday lunch: $\#$ \times \$7.00 = \$ $ \cdot$	# x \$3.50 = \$
Saturday dinner: # x \$9.00 = \$ Sunday breakfast: # x \$6.00 = \$	X \$4.50 - \$ #X \$3.00 = \$
Sunday breaklast. # x \$0.00 = \$	# X \$5.00 \$
Or All Meals: # x \$28.00 = \$	
	Subtotal meals: \$
My family needs a partial scholarship of: \$ (subtract)	
	Donations for scholarships: \$
(Make checks payable to "Prairie UU Society") Total Due: \$	
<i>.</i>	
Send this form to Robin Proud, 114 Glen Hwy, Madison, WI 53705 (608-661-0776) or bring to Prairie by Sunday, September 2.	
Rooms are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis after accommodation for age & disability.	