



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."

September 7, 2007



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

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, September 9

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

Monday, September 10

*7:30 p.m. Hospitality and Membership Committee
7:30 p.m. Committee on Ministry meeting

Tuesday, September 11

*7:00 Program Committee meeting

Wednesday, September 12

*6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie
*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.

Sunday, September 16-23

*IHN Volunteer Week for Prairie at Midvale Lutheran Church

Wednesday, September 19

*Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Thursday, September 20

*7:00 p.m. Prairie Film Group meets at Prairie

Sunday, September 23

*10:00 a.m. "Breaking Barriers Between Old and New" presented by Marion Nelson

Tuesday, September 25

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

Wednesday, September 26

*6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie
*6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers meet at the home of Prudence Barber

Sunday, September 30

*10:00 a.m. "G.A. Inspiration" presented by Mike and Norma Briggs and Barb Park
11:45 a.m. Congregational meeting and potluck

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

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.

Sunday, September 16

The Key Log Ceremony will be held at Bethel Horizons Retreat Center as the final event of our all-church weekend. This is always a poignant ceremony when we really come together as a community through personal sharing.

Sunday, September 23

Marion Nelson has been going to India for 35 years – first going to Auroville in southern India and now working with Tibetan refugees in Dharamsala, Darjeeling and Kalimpong. She visits the same people learning about their life styles and rituals. She works directly with artisans to bring back handicrafts to her center near Spring Green called Global View. From Indonesia – Bali come carved items or textiles, from the island of Lombok baskets or pottery, from Java puppets, and handmade textiles from all over. She will be showing slides of these artisans and will have a selection of handicrafts for sale.

Sunday, September 30

There's a wider world of Unitarian Universalism out there beyond Prairie, ideas and trends that are usually brought out at the Unitarian Universalist Association's (UUA) annual General Assembly (G.A.). This summer our delegates to G.A. were Norma and Mike Briggs, who had never attended a General Assembly before. Barbara Park, a veteran G.A.-er, also traveled to Portland, Oregon for the event. Each of the three had the opportunity to choose from among hundreds of presentations and workshops as well as the business meetings of the UUA. Our Prairie folks probably also roamed the many booths in the exhibition hall. Come to the "G.A. Inspiration" service on Sunday, September 30, to find out what they learned and perhaps go away inspired yourself.

OUR SOCIETY

FAMILY FALL RETREAT: YOU ARE STILL WELCOME TO SIGN UP!

If you would like to attend the retreat and haven't yet registered, please call Robin Proud (661-0776) as soon as possible. There is still room. Some highlights of the retreat include

- singing sessions
- recorder playing
- bridge playing
- book discussion
- storytelling
- watercolor painting
- nature hike
- service project
- children's activities for all ages
- talent show
- our traditional Key Log Ceremony



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.



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

MIDWEEK MEAL @ PRAIRIE RESUMES

Next Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. we will resume our potluck meals at Prairie. The meals began on January 19, 2005, the brainchild of Dirk and Susan Herr-Hoyman. This is an excerpt from the Prairie Fire article that announced the meal:

"I'm ready to make an official type announcement of a meal at Prairie on Wednesday evenings. Barb Park came up with a good name: Midweek Meal, and I'm adding the "@ Prairie" so we can claim Internet hipness.

"The idea is we have our Wednesday dinner at Prairie. No planning or committees involved, we just all show up with whatever we feel like bringing. Cook something or buy something, same thing that you would have done at home. Clean up afterwards—yes, of course we will do that, too (for those that don't cook or buy)...."

Wednesday midweek meals have regularly attracted two or three tables of people. It's a great way to get to know each other! Friends of Prairie and guests are always invited.

FIFTY-SEVEN YEARS AND COUNTING

Stay after the service on **Sunday, September 9**, and help Rose and Galen Smith celebrate 57 years of wedded bliss. Congratulations!

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. 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 the annual retreat; exact time TBA)

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

PRAIRIE FILM GROUP MEETS SEPTEMBER 20

The Movie Group will meet at Prairie, 7:00 p.m., **Thursday, September 20** to view the movie **The Bicycle Thief**.

If anyone wishes to be placed on the Movie Group email list, contact Al Nettleton.

IHN WEEK CAN USE YOUR HELP

The week of **September 16-23** is our week to help Midvale Lutheran host homeless families. Those who are interested in participating in this worthwhile community service may sign up via the Midvale Lutheran Web site:
<http://www.midvalelutheran.org/>

If you would like more information about the various volunteer tasks, please contact me. There are several ways in which individuals and families can help out. I encourage you to volunteer.

Thanks,

Paula Pachciarz

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEETS SEPTEMBER 25

TIME: **Tuesday, September 25**, 2:00-3:50 p.m., Nakoma Room, Heritage Oaks Building, Oakwood Village West.

TOPIC: The 2008 Presidential Candidates. Briefly relate some aspect of a candidate's voting record, legislative initiatives, career, statements or other information that isn't drilled into us daily by the sound-bite media. Share ways to become as informed as possible before Wisconsin's February 19 primary election. Listeners are most welcome.

We alternate a round-robin "show-and-tell" topic with discussion of a current issue. At our August meeting, fifteen of us happily reminisced about our favorite children's books including *Heidi*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Little Women*, a boys' rowdy adventure story, and Milne's tear-producing tale of Christopher Robin's pending departure. Having the Somers' grandchildren as guests was a special treat.

Typically, we begin and end our gathering with casual conversation. The Nakoma Room will be open at 1:30 for those who wish to come early.

REFRESHMENTS: Please bring a small handful of snacks to pass and your own beverage cup. Beverages are furnished.

DIRECTIONS: Oakwood Village West is in the 6100 block of Mineral Point Road 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 across from Oakwood's one-story Resale Shop. Drive to the right of two yellow posts. An arrow on the driveway points to the automatic entrance door. Park near the elevator shaft and take the elevator to the first floor. From the elevator go to the right and past the mail boxes. Turn left by the reception desk and go straight ahead to the Nakoma Room. 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 welcome 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.

SPANISH SPEAKERS POTLUCK AND CONVERSATION NEXT ON SEPTEMBER 26

Spanish Speakers will meet for potluck and conversation on **Wednesday, September 26**, 6:30 p.m. at the home of Prudence Barber, 1104 Mound St, Apt. C, Madison. Contact Prudence at 251-0852 or Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382.

I dream a world where man
No other man will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn.
– *Langston Hughes*

REV. RALPH'S RUMINATIONS

As we begin a new Prairie year (marked by our Water Ceremony service on August 26),



I have tried to find some words of encouragement and meaning that might have application to enhancing our participation in the dynamics of congregational living.

I recently learned that the most popular course at Harvard University is "Positive Psychology" with a total of over 1,400 students registered each semester. Also called "Happiness 101", the course is taught by Prof. Tal Ben-Shahar. He does not claim to be an original thinker and is not ashamed to have his books listed in the category of "self-help" writings.

Suspend your critical and analytic skills for a moment and consider the following "Six Happiness Tips" from Prof. Ben-Shahar as possible resource themes for helping us as Prairie UU Society members achieve meaningful goals for the coming 2007-2008 year.

1. Give ourselves permission to be human. When we accept emotions — such as fear, sadness, or anxiety — as natural, we are more likely to overcome them. Rejecting our emotions, positive or negative, leads to frustration and unhappiness.

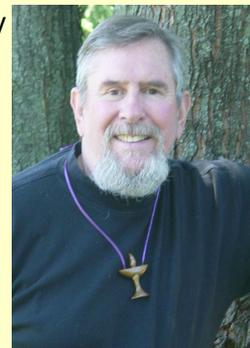
2. Happiness lies at the intersection between pleasure and meaning. Whether at work, at home, or at our religious communities, the goal is to engage in activities that are both personally significant and enjoyable. When this is not feasible, make sure you have happiness boosters, moments throughout the week that provide you with both pleasure and meaning.

3. Keep in mind that happiness is mostly dependent on our state of mind, not on our status or the state of our bank account. Barring extreme circumstances, our level of well being is determined by what we choose to focus on (the full or the empty part of the glass) and by our interpretation of external events. For example, do we view failure as catastrophic, or do we see it as a learning opportunity?

4. Simplify! We are, generally, too busy, trying to squeeze in more and more activities into less

and less time. Quantity influences quality, and we compromise on our happiness by trying to do too much.

5. Remember the mind-body connection. What we do — or don't do — with our bodies influences our mind. Regular exercise, adequate sleep, and healthy eating habits lead to both physical and mental health.



6. Express gratitude, whenever possible. We too often take our lives for granted. Learn to appreciate and savor the wonderful things in life, from people to food, from nature to a smile.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve as your consulting minister and look forward to sharing in the positive ways we can enrich our congregational lives together.

Happier to be journeying with you,

Ralph

MEMBERSHIP

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SMITHS

Sunday, September 9, Rose and Galen Smith have their 57th wedding anniversary. They are bringing a cake to serve after the program for anyone who cares to stay. Congratulations to a dynamic and contributing couple!

PRAIRIE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

Once known as the "telephone" directory for the society, our directory is just as much a resource for e-mail and street addresses.

The directory is being updated and will be ready for distribution at the Retreat at Bethel Horizons the weekend of September 14-16. If you have any changes to make to your contact information, please send them immediately to Dan Proud at admin (at) uuprairie.org or call 661-0776. A copy will be at the front table if you want to check your listing.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

This year the children's classes are studying religions of the world. Each month we will note religious holidays observed around the world in some of the major religions.

SEPTEMBER

- 4 - Janamashtami (Hindu)
- 8 - Feast of the Birth of Mary (Christian)
- 8 - Nativity of the Theotokos (Christian)
- 8 - Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Christian)
- 8 - Paryushana (Jain)
- 11 - Ethiopian New Year (Rastafari)
- 13 - Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
- 13 - Ramadan (Muslim)
- 15 - Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu)

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWS

JOURNEY TOWARD WHOLENESS NEWS

ACTION: Key Election Reform Vote in House This Week

As early as Thursday, September 6, the House of Representatives could vote on Rep. Rush Holt's Voter Confidence bill, HR 811. This legislation, which is supported by the UUA, would require paper records and mandatory audits of electronic voting machines to ensure their accuracy and guarantee secure, verifiable elections. In the next 24 hours, we will have our best and, most likely, our last, opportunity to ensure that electronic voting machine ballots are backed by paper records in the critical 2008 elections.

To support this critical legislation, call your Representative at (202) 255-3121 as soon as possible and ask them to support HR 811. Our friends at Common Cause are encouraging callers to share the results of their efforts.

For more information about the bill, see http://www.federalelectionreform.com/holt_bill.htm.

The UUA General Assembly adopted an Action of Immediate Witness on Electronic Voting in 2004; and a Responsive Resolution in 2007 on Voting Rights for Communities of Color.

ACTION: Immigration

This Thursday and Friday, the Unitarian Universalist Association is partnering with the American Friends Service Committee and other faith groups to call our senators and tell them that we oppose the Immigration Enforcement and Border Security Act of 2007 (or S. 1984). This bill threatens to further criminalize immigrants, add border fences and patrol agents, and increase the holding capacity of detention centers. The bill was introduced in the Senate on August 10, and is currently in committee. You can access the AFSC's Web page for a toll-free number to your senator's office and tips on how to talk to your senators about the bill. You can also view the text of the bill by going to <http://thomas.loc.gov/> and searching for S. 1984.

Iraq Statement by Tom Andrews

Tom Andrews, a former Congressman, a UU, and the current director of Win Without War recently gave a statement at a National Press Briefing about Iraq. The UUA has been a member of the Win Without War coalition since its inception and Tom Andrews currently sits on the board of the UU Service Committee. He said,

"Ladies and gentleman, there are some problems in this world that cannot be solved by U.S. military power and the civil war in Iraq is one of them. If anything, the U.S. military presence fuels the conflict, ensuring that it will go on indefinitely. At best, it might slow down the pace of a civil war in the short term in some sections of the country, but it has not and cannot bring it to an end.

"Allowing this mission impossible to continue may accommodate the fantasies of some political leaders or kick the can down the road to another administration and Congress, but giving it more time means deciding to condemn hundreds more U.S. soldiers to die and another \$10 billion dollars to be spent every month AND ALL TO END UP RIGHT WHERE WE ARE NOW, OR WORSE."

For the complete statement, see: <http://winwithoutwar.org/>

The UUA is currently working to release an update to our Moral Balance Sheet. In it we will continue to advocate for our Representatives to assess our human, financial, and moral losses and to end this war. If you would like to partner with the UUA Washington Office in carrying a strong message to Congress, please contact Adam Gerhardtstein at agerhardtstein@uua.org.

Deadline for new Congregational Study Action/Issue submissions

The deadline to submit proposals for new Congregational Study/Action Issues (CSAIs) is October 1. This is the process by which an issue is chosen for study, action, reflection, and dialogue by and between Unitarian Universalist congregations for the next four years. The four-year process culminates in a Statement of Conscience (SOC), which represents the views of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations on this issue. The certification forms necessary to submit the proposals are now online at www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/44091.shtml. Proposals must be submitted to the Commission on Social Witness by the October 1 deadline.

Journey Toward Wholeness is an online newsletter of the Congregational Advocacy and Witness, Unitarian Universalist Association.

UUSC HAS NEW ADDRESS

We're moving! Effective September 1, 2007, our new address is:

UUSC
689 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139-3302

Our phone number and e-mail address will remain the same:

Phone: 617-868-6600
Fax: 617-868-7102
E-mail: info@uusc.org

You can still sign up for the Prairie retreat! Don't miss it! (See pg. 2.)

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>

OTHER NEWS



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



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, WI 53715
608.294.7998
www.ihnmadison.org