



# 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."

**October 26, 2007**



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

President: Rachel Long, (608) 328-4899

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

## PRAIRIE CALENDAR

### Sunday, October 28

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

\*10:00 a.m. "Day of the Dead" led by Dorothy Krause

### Monday, October 29

7:00 p.m. Communications Committee meeting

### Wednesday, October 31

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

### Thursday, November 1

\*6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers potluck and conversation at the home of Mary and Andy Somers, 4467 Crescent Rd., Fitchburg.

### Sunday, November 4

*Daylight Savings Time: Fall back an hour!*

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

\*10:00 a.m. "Keeping Religion and Government Separate" presented by Dan Barker  
\*12:00 noon. Humanist Union potluck lunch and presentation by Dan Barker

### Monday, November 5

7:30 p.m. Membership and Hospitality Committee

**NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4**

### Wednesday, November 7

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

7:30 p.m. Committee on Ministry

### Saturday, November 10

\*9:00 a.m. Prairie WOW (Women's Group) meets at the home of Kathy Converse, 630 Pickford St.

5:00 p.m. Fall Frolic begins at Prairie

### Sunday, November 11

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

\*10:00 a.m. "Deep Listening, Deep Lessons" presented by the Rev. Ralph Tyksinski

### Sunday, November 11–Sunday, November 18

IHN week

### Wednesday, November 14

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

7:30 p.m. Program Committee meeting

### Saturday, November 17

\*9:30 a.m. "Path To Membership", an orientation program to UUism sponsored by the Hospitality and Membership Committee

### Sunday, November 18

\*11:30 a.m. "Who Are UU" Q&A session on UUism led by Rev. Ralph for visitors and friends

(\* = Details follow in this issue.)

## DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

### Sunday, October 28

The Final Harvest" will be led by Dorothy Krause. This time of year is a time of endings, most especially the end of the earth's growth cycle and the final harvest. Many cultures honor and celebrate endings and passages in a variety of festivals during the fall. Prairie also traditionally offers a service at this time to honor and acknowledge various passings, particularly of people we want to remember, but also of other significant life events.

We will be inviting participants in this Sunday's service a chance to honor departed loved ones and ancestors in a very symbolic way. We will also be acknowledging other endings and transformations, a letting go of the old and looking ahead to the new. Please bring along photos or other items for our altar. The time of sharing will continue after the official end of the service with coffee and snacks, please feel free to bring along a snack favored by your loved ones.

### Sunday, November 4

From teen evangelist to atheist, Dan Barker knows both sides of systems of belief. He received a degree in Religion from Azusa Pacific University and was ordained to the ministry by the Standard Community Church, California, in 1975. He also spent 2 years as a missionary in Mexico. He used his musical talents for many years with such people as Manuel Bonilla, Pat Boone, Jimmy Roberts and Audrey Meier.

Dan says that if he had limited himself to Christian authors in his readings, he would still be Christian today. In 1984 he publicly announced he was an atheist.

Dan was PR Director of the Freedom From Religion Foundation from 1987 to 2004. He was elected co-president of the Foundation with Annie Laurie Gaylor in 2004. He is a contributing editor of *Freethought Today* and is involved with the Foundation's state/church lawsuits.

### Sunday, November 11

In the program entitled "Deep Listening, Deep Lessons," Rev. Ralph will be exploring some of the ancient traditions that suggest that listening can be a source for deep learning and wholesome living practices. He will also be sharing some contemporary studies that suggest that men and women differ in their listening behaviors. There are lessons to be learned about how we listen to one another.

## OUR SOCIETY

### SIYAHAMBA, THE SONG

"Siyahamba," sung recently at Prairie, was composed in Afrikaans as "Ons marsjeer nou in die lig van God" then translated into the Zulu "Siyahamba ekukhanyen' kwenkhos," both meaning, "We are marching in the light of God," per the Wikipedia.

The song was picked up by a Swedish choir and subsequently translated into a number of languages in song books throughout the world, including the UUA's *Singing the Journey*. Secular versions include "We will sing for peace throughout the world" and "We are standing in the light of peace."

The music and lyrics create joyful rhythms causing rhythm-focused song leaders to ignore the meaning of the text, therefore this belated explanation. Thanks to the Prairie congregation for a rousing rendition and to drummers and shakers who made Siyahamba even more fun.

*Doleta Chapru*

### WHO ARE UU?

Who wrote the Seven Principles? Are UUs theists? Where does UUism fit into history? Can one be a Buddhist and a UU too?

If you are new to Unitarian Universalism, you may have such questions as these and more. We invite you to attend a short introductory session at Prairie after the service on **Sunday, November 18**. Reverend Ralph Tyksinski will be on hand to supply answers and give an overview of the rich heritage of Unitarian Universalism.

## MUSIC PARTY PLANNED

**Sunday, October 28** at 7 p.m., a concert/farewell party for my friend and musical collaborator, Jeff Costello, who is soon heading for Austin, TX. Refreshments will be served.

All Prairie fans who enjoyed our Grateful I'm Not Dead concert last November have a last chance to hear us play together. Hope to see some of you at Rachel Siegfried's old house at 5209 Tolman Terr. For info, call 274-4535.

*Maggie Siegfried*

## SPANISH SPEAKERS MEET NOVEMBER 1

The next Spanish potluck will be at the home of Mary and Andy Somers, 4467 Crescent Rd. at 6:30 p.m. on **Thursday, November 1**. All levels of Spanish speakers are welcome. We share good food and conversation. It is a warm and friendly group. We always talk about politics and our many travels.

For directions or questions, call Mary at 276-8397 or Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382. Everyone is welcome.

## HUMANIST UNION HEARS "FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD ATHEIST"

On **Sunday, November 4** the Humanist Union's luncheon speaker will be Dan Barker of the Freedom From Religion Foundation. He will be talking about Losing Faith In Faith, about the intellectual and psychological struggle he personally experienced in moving from fundamentalism to free thought. We begin with a potluck lunch at noon. Dan's presentation will start about 12:30 p.m., and will be followed by discussion until 1:30 p.m.

## WOW PLANS NOVEMBER 10 MEETING

The next WOW meeting is **Saturday, November 10** at 9 a.m. at the home of Kathy Converse, 630 Pickford St. We plan to meet at Kathy's each month this year on the 2nd Saturday of the month. We begin our meetings with a quick sharing during a breakfast potluck. This month we will be making baskets with small gifts for people who are generally housebound. We will have a limited breakfast menu of fruits, breads, and beverages.

Please bring some items for the baskets, like small soaps, jams, and cards.

In December we will meet **December 8** and participate in Haiku, Footprints in Snow.

**January 12** we will begin our series on what brings us passion, how to find it in our lives and WOW members will begin sharing their stories. All Prairie women are welcome to participate.

Thank you, Kathy, for hosting us each month. Last month was just great. For anyone not able to make last month, we had 12 wows and lots of laughs and sharing. Kathy lives at 630 Pickford, off Monroe Street.

WOW is a group who wants to support the women of prairie while having fun. Any questions call Kathy Converse at 238-1856 or Mary Somers 276-8397.

*Mary Somers*

## BOOK CLUB MEETS NOVEMBER 11

All are welcome to the Book Club discussions. 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.

**Sunday November 11.** *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, by Mike Haddon, from \$2.22 at <http://www.amazon.com/Curious-Incident-Night-Time-Today-Show/dp/0385512104>

Another debut novel, this one has a 15-year-old boy with Asperger's Syndrome (a form of autism) as a narrator. Christopher finds his neighbor's poodle dead and is accused of murdering the dog. He spends the night in jail. Against his father's and the neighbor's wishes, but upon the encouragement of his school social worker, Christopher resolves to find out who-done-it and writes a book about his investigations: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Called "bitterly funny" and an "eye-opening work." 240 pages (Suggested by Robin Proud)



## PRAIRIE MOVIE GROUP VIEWS CINEMA PARADISO ON NOVEMBER 15

The Movie Group will meet at Prairie at 7:00 p.m., **Thursday, November 15**, to view *Cinema Paradiso*. This 1988 film directed by Giuseppe Tornatore. This film celebrates films by telling the story of a boy addicted to movies and his friendship with the projectionist at the local theater. It won the foreign film Oscar and the Cannes Special Jury Prize in 1989.

The film starts at 7:00. Bring snacks to share and a hunger for a good film.

The next film will be shown **December 13**.

## WALK THE PATH TO MEMBERSHIP

What does it mean to be a member of Prairie? What does the Prairie community have to offer as we continue our spiritual journeys, and what can we give back to that community? If you are a returning visitor and have found a kinship with Prairie that you would like to strengthen, you are warmly invited to attend our Path to Membership orientation on **November 17**, the third Saturday. We will together walk the path by which you may join this community, this church.

The Path to Membership orientation will be presented by the Hospitality and Membership Committee and Reverend Ralph Tyksinski. We will learn about Prairie's particular history, share something of our spiritual quests, discuss the time, treasure and talents that both individuals and the society have to share with each other, and end by welcoming new members into the church. Child care will be provided!

If you would like to participate in the Path to Membership in November, please contact Paula Pachciarz or Rev. Tyksinski. The orientation will be offered again in the spring.

*Paula Pachciarz*

## NEXT PRAIRIE ELDERS

Prairie Elders will meet **Tuesday, November 27**, 2:00-3:50 p.m. in the Nakoma Room, Heritage Oaks, Oakwood Village West. Details in next Prairie Fire.

## UU BLOOD DRIVE AT PRAIRIE

We will host our first UU Blood Drive the Saturday after Thanksgiving, **November 24**. You can sign up for any time between 8 a.m. and noon. If you don't know when you can donate, just walk in. Members of all three UU societies are being urged to donate if eligible: at least 17 and healthy!

Let's 'overdonate' the Red Cross' hope of 25 donations! Questions? Call or e-mail Gordon Cunningham at 230-3367, [gunning@wisc.edu](mailto:gunning@wisc.edu)

## SHELTER BREAKFAST UPDATE

Thank you, Jim and Margaret Carpenter and Meggan and Chyna for doing the shopping for the men's shelter breakfast **Saturday, October 6**. It was great to arrive at the shelter and have the food supplies already there. Recognition should also be given to Barb Park, who has been our steady shopper for most of the past two years.

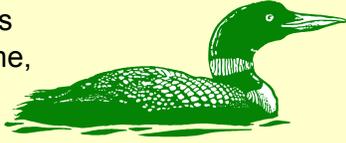
Steve Blank and Paula Pachciarz teamed up to make the breakfast this month, and enjoyed the opportunity to get to know each other better. Steve and his family have recently moved to Middleton from the Chicago area, and he spent a lot of time volunteering at homeless shelters there.

If you have never helped with the shelter breakfast, please consider trying it. Getting up early and getting to the shelter by 4:30 is difficult, but once you arrive the time goes quickly because you are busy preparing a delicious meal. And now that we have changed our long-standing commitment from the third Tuesday to the first Saturday, it should be easier to give up some time for this community service. The men always appreciate Prairie's breakfast.



## REV. RALPH'S RUMINATIONS

These late October days have brought forth for me, especially when the brilliance of a blue sky with that golden glow of light from the lowering sun, special moments for appreciation and reflection. As autumn colors peak and the leaves let go of their hold on their branches, it invites a time to reflect on what in our lives and the life of Prairie UU Society we could be considering a "letting go of." The late Robert Weston wrote these words to guide one's considerations about what we might learn from the beauty and sadness of this enriching time of the year.



### *Autumn Speaks*

#### *Out of doors*

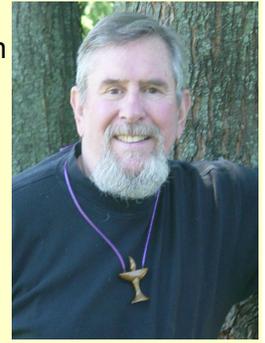
*The colors of bright autumn and the bright sun  
Tell of the beauty of that which dies  
But always comes again.  
They speak directly to the heart  
Of the eternal which outlives all moments  
And yet lives only in them,  
Outlives all forms, yet comes again in them as in  
ourselves.  
It is said that there is nothing new in the world,  
No thoughts, even, which others have not  
thought,  
Yet every thought is new to us who for ourselves  
Think it for the first time.  
Each miracle of life is also rebirth, life born again,  
Though every individual be new,  
Existing at birth for the first time.  
Life in each one, as in the leaf and flower,  
Accepts and yet cheats death.  
There is a sadness in the autumn leaf:  
I feel a sorrow that its beauty dies  
And feel its message for the lives of those,  
As of myself, whom I have known and loved.  
The leaf comes not again, though other leaves  
And flowers will bloom, and other lives,  
Richer that we have been, shall take our place.  
Perhaps the autumn teaches us a wiser grace  
Through which we live, by learning to let go.*

(Robert T. Weston. Seasons of the Soul: A Book of Meditations. 1963. p.55)

May we all have those special moments to learn what Autumn days can hold out to us as simple lessons of the season.

Happy to be journeying with you,

*Ralph*



## LETTERS



### THANKS FROM OUR NOBEL PEACE WINNER

Thank you! to everyone who congratulated me on the Awarding of the Nobel Peace prize to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (and my part among many hundreds of scientist contributors).

The IPCC brings scientists from all over the world to work together in teams that come to consensus on science concerning a wide range of climate change related questions/issues and they collectively have advanced our understanding substantially of climate change, need for action, and ways to act.

If you are interested in summaries of some of their recent work, see: [www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch)

Summaries for policy makers are one way to get a quick overview of the latest 3 reports for the fourth Assessment (to the right side on their main Web page). There will be an overall summary coming out in November.

Warmly,  
*Ken Skog*

## 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>

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### LEAVES, ISLAM, FALL FROLIC & TEACHERS

On **Sunday, October 21** students raked leaves of homes in the neighborhood for their first Service Sunday of the school year. After raking leaves they had some apple juice and bagels. Thanks to all the students who worked so hard that morning. I also would like to thank John Eligandi, Andy Garst, Doug McFarlane, Robin Proud, and Carl Wacker for volunteering their valuable time to be with our RE children.



Next week grades 4-12 will be attending the Islamic Center of Madison as part of their curriculum on Islam. Last week students met Yasmeen McNelly, a practicing Sunni Muslim, who talked to students about the differences between the religion and culture.

Coming up is our annual Fall Frolic event. This is a fun time for children of all ages to play games and have dinner at Prairie. Students have the option of staying overnight to watch movies and play Wink. The following morning breakfast will be provided. If you would like to volunteer and play games with our students please let me know. This is a great time to socialize with other parents and meet our RE students.

Going on this month are our Parent/Teacher coffee sessions. Teachers are meeting with parents to discuss their class and curriculum. If you are unable to attend, please let me or your child's teacher know. These sessions are important for your child's RE education. We welcome suggestions, comments, and concerns.

If you don't have any children in RE this year but would like to volunteer your time or have any suggestions for our program, you are most welcome. Our program is about education: education of staff as well as students.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Rebecca Malke (YREC)  
[youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org](mailto:youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org)

## UPCOMING RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

27 October—Reformation Day (Protestant)  
28 October—Milvian Bridge Day (Christian)  
31 October—All Hallows Eve (Christian)  
31 October—Reformation Day (Christian)  
1 November—All Saints' Day (Christian)  
1 November—Samhain (Wicca/Neopagan)  
2 November—All Souls' Day (Christian)  
9 November—Diwali/Deepavali (Hindu, Sikh, Jain)

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWS

### UU WOMEN'S CONNECTION FALL CONFERENCE

Shelly Jackson Denham will be the theme speaker and singer at the UU Women's Connection Fall Conference Feel The Rhythm **November 9-11**, 2007. Composer of five hymns in *Singing The Living Tradition*, she will help us reflect on "Who Am I?, What Is Sacred to Me?, and How Shall I Live My Life?"

The 25th Annual Fall Conference will be held at George Williams College Retreat Center at Williams Bay, Wisconsin. For a brochure and registration form go to [www.uuwomensconnection.org](http://www.uuwomensconnection.org) or call Sage Hagy 847-498-9333 or Emily Meter at 847-948-7147.

### UUSC HOLIDAY CARDS

You can share special holiday greetings with your loved ones, while helping to make a difference in our world, by purchasing UUSC holiday cards. Visit <http://www.uusc.org/holidaycards> today.

Three beautiful new UUSC holiday cards are now available, including an original design by Holiday Card Contest winner Megan Miley of Live Oak Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Goleta, Calif. Cards can be ordered on consignment or purchased directly.

Proceeds from the sale of holiday cards help UUSC advance justice and work for basic human rights in the name of UU principles. Order your holiday cards today!