



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."

February 22, 2008



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

Saturday, February 23

*9:00 a.m. Congregational Planning Session

Sunday, February 24

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "This I Believe", 2nd in a series, with Mary Mullen, Dan Proud, and Jerry Simmons

*11:30 a.m. Lunch and Annual Prairie Auction

Tuesday, February 26

*1:30 p.m. Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood West

7:00 p.m. Building Your Own Theology class

Thursday, February 28

*7:00 p.m. Movie group at Prairie

7:00 p.m. Board meeting at Prairie

Sunday, March 2

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Evolution of Life on Islands" presented by Prof. Tom Givnish

*12:00 noon. Humanist Union potluck and talk by Prof. Givnish

Monday, March 3

7:30 p.m. Hospitality and Membership Committee

Tuesday, March 4

7:00 p.m. Committee on Ministry

7:00 p.m. Building Your Own Theology class

Saturday, March 8

*9:00 a.m. WOW breakfast potluck meeting, home of Kathy Converse, 503 S. Prospect Ave.

Sunday, March 9

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m. Program to be announced

12:00 noon. Congregational review of Plan Part I

Tuesday, March 11

7:00 p.m. Building Your Own Theology class

Wednesday, March 12

7:00 p.m. Program Committee

Saturday, March 15

*Fundraising Trip to Chicago Art Institute for Winslow Homer and Edward Hopper exhibits

Sunday, March 16

10:00 a.m. "Carl Sandburg Anthology" presented by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski

*11:45 a.m. Book Club potluck and discussion

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, MARCH 2

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, February 24

In this second service in the series "This I Believe," Dan Proud, Jerry Simmons, and Mary Mullen will be presenting the ethical and religious beliefs they hold. Like the speakers in the first service on January 6, they will tell us first about the religious background they grew out of—not necessarily a pun—and the turning points they may have experienced along the way. In explaining where they are now in the journey, they will probably deal with the sometimes thorny issues of what they believe about God, the Bible, and life after death. Come and hear what you have in common with them or how their beliefs are particular to them.

Anne Lundin, who is the lay minister for this series, notes that what we believe may have both "contradictions and continuities" with what we were taught as young people, and that the idea behind the services is to promote tolerance for different beliefs. The series will help us live out the third and fourth principles of the UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association): "Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations," and "A free and responsible search for truth and meaning."

After the presentation there will be plenty of time for people to share some of their own beliefs. A third "This I Believe" service will be held on April 27 with different Prairie people as presenters.

The "This I Believe" series is an adaptation of the National Public Radio program by that name. Many of us have heard the 3-minute essays on "All Things Considered" or "Weekend Edition Sunday." The current NPR program is based on the 1950s radio program "This I Believe" hosted by acclaimed journalist Edward R. Murrow. In creating "This I Believe," Murrow said the program sought "to point to the common meeting grounds of beliefs, which is the essence of brotherhood and the floor of our civilization."

Sunday, March 2

Darwin's visit to the Galapagos Islands strongly influenced his thinking on speciation and adaptation. Although Darwin does not even

mention the remarkable case of the Galapagos finches in "On the Origin of Species", it is clear from his autobiography and from his many mentions on island plants and animals in the Origin that evolution on islands played a major role in the development of his theory.

On this Sunday, Dr. Thomas Givnish, Henry Allan Gleason Professor of Botany, UW-Madison, will provide an update on what we have learned about the evolution of island organisms in the 99 years since the appearance of the Origin, and how it contributes to our overall understanding of the evolutionary process.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

R.E. CLASSES RESUME AFTER A WEEK OFF

Last Sunday we had to cancel church services due to the weather. This meant we had to cancel our Service Sunday project. It looks like we won't have a chance to make it up but there will be another Service Sunday in April. April is a time when the snow is melting and we get to see all the treasures that lay beneath the snow and ice. Usually it's paper, pop cans and cigarette butts but sometimes there's toys. Or at least, that's what I find on my lawn after the snow melts. Our young people will have the chance to clean up our neighborhood by picking up garbage and possibly pocketing a few treasures in the process.



This week our classes will resume as normal. Students in grades 1-3 will continue learning about Judeo-Christian beliefs. Grades 4-6 are learning about Christianity exploring topics like the Ten Commandments and punishment in the Bible. Young people in the high school class will start Judaism, which will be taught by Orange Schroeder.

We are in the process of putting together a new RE policy that will concern our students, their parents and all RE volunteers. These new guidelines will cover procedural policies for the classroom and RE events.

RE chair Karen Deaton and I will be talking to each family about these new procedures. Stay tuned for more information. In the meantime, Spring Fling, which was scheduled for March 8-9 will be postponed until further notice.

If you would like to plan an event for our RE students such as bowling, roller skating or a movie outing let me know. It would be fun for all of us.

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

BABYSITTER SEEKS WORK

Maya Urbanski, a Prairie 6th grader, recently earned a Red Cross baby-sitting certificate. She would like to sit for children ages 1-7. She is available Friday and Saturday evenings and during the day on Saturday and Sunday in Madison or nearby suburbs. Contact Maya at 608-221-4053.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH

26-March 1—Intercalary Days (Baha'i)

1—St. David of Wales (Christian)

1—Saturday of Souls (Orthodox Christian)

2—Four Chaplains Sunday (Christian/Jewish)

2—Meatfare Sunday (Orthodox Christian)

OUR SOCIETY

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION I: MISSION AND VISION, FEBRUARY 23, 9:00 A.M.–3 P.M.

Bring your kindness, honesty, enthusiasm, and comfortable clothes and get ready to dig in. We'll be working together to better understand what is special about Prairie, and who we want to be. Our work should be satisfying and enjoyable, and there will be fun activities for kids throughout the day too. What to expect:

- Chalice lighting
- Introductions, discussion of agenda, ground rules

- Small group discussions:
- Why am I part of Prairie?
- What do we do well?
- What can we do better?
- Lunch Break
- Our desired future—small group discussion and individual voting on direction-setting priorities for Prairie in four categories:
 - Individual
 - Congregation
 - Wider Community
 - Global
- Getting there—brainstorming and sorting priorities, reaching toward consensus.
- Possible action steps

See you there!

Rachel Long, President

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEETS FEBRUARY 26

Prairie Elders meets on **Tuesday, February 26**, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. in the Nakoma Room of Heritage Oaks, OakwoodVillage West. Or come at 1:00 p.m. for informal pre-meeting chats.

TOPIC: Love. Define it as you wish. First love, long time love, love of children, a friend, your pet goldfish, a special place, freedom, chocolate. Bring thoughts of love, personal stories, readings, a song, whatever. Or come just to hear what this spirited bunch of seniors conjures up about a timeless topic.

In respect for people who have difficulty hearing, we use a round-robin format with each person speaking roughly 3-5 minutes depending on attendance. We end with informal discussion as time permits.

SNACKS: If convenient, please bring a few snacks to pass and your own beverage cup.

ABOUT US: Prairie Elders aims to provide good times and mutual support for Prairie UU members and friends over 65. Newcomers, let us know if you need directions or a ride.

Contacts: Donna Murdoch 238-3802. Rosemary Dorney 238-4382 or Rose Smith 233-3363.

AUCTION MEAL WILL BE PIZZA AND SALAD POTLUCK COMBO

Just to set the record straight, the Service Auction meal on **Sunday, February 24**, will be a combination pizza and salad potluck combo. We are asking Dirk to bring his famous chili too.

For the rest of you, please bring salad or salad-like items. That will go well with the variety of pizzas we will order as well as Dirk's chili. The Finance Committee will ask you to donate toward the cost of any pizza you eat.

We'll set up the tables and start eating immediately after the Sunday service so that we can be well-fortified for making those fat bids!

HUMANIST UNION TO DISCUSS EVOLUTION ON ISLANDS

Diversity and adaptation are abiding themes in the research of UW Botany professor Tom Givnish in which he explores questions at the interface of ecology, evolution and biogeography. On **Sunday, March 2**, following a presentation on Evolution of Life on Islands during the morning service at Prairie, we will be joined by Prof. Givnish for a discussion we are calling, "More about evolution of life on islands, an informal discussion with Tom Givnish." Join us for a potluck lunch at noon, followed by Q&A with Prof. Givnish starting about 12:30 pm.

WILD OUTSTANDING WOMEN UPDATE

Join prairie women on the 2nd Saturdays of the month for fun and support. **Saturday, March 8**, we will meet at 9 a.m. at the home of Kathy Converse, 630 Pickford Street. This is a breakfast potluck. Save the following Saturdays as well: April 12 and May 10. Any questions call Kathy at 238-1856, or Mary Somers 276 8397.

CALL FOR LAY MINISTER AND LAY MINISTRY TOPICS

One of the remarkable things about Prairie is that we lay people can take the podium—or pulpit, if you please—for a series of services, not just once a year. Prairie people who may want to do a lay ministry of 3 to 6 services or may have suggestions for a lay ministry series should talk to

a member of the Program Committee, which always welcomes ideas and volunteers for single or pairs of services as well.

Please express your ideas to the chair of the Program Committee, Susan Herr-Hoyman, herrs(at)danenet.org, or any other Program Committee member: Mary Mullen, Dorothy Krause, Ann Lundin, Rose Smith, or Galen Smith. Or if your ideas are already quite fully formed, put them in writing.



BOOK CLUB WINTER SCHEDULE

The Prairie Book Club meets after the Sunday service on the specified dates, usually starting about 11:45 a.m. Participants bring food to share. We meet in the "couch room" downstairs. Anyone is welcome, whether you have completed the book or not. For more information, contact Mary Mullen, 298-0843, or mmullen(at)chorus.net.

Upcoming Prairie Book Club selections:

Sunday, March 16—Arthur Miller's autobiography, *Timebends*

This is a long (600-page) autobiography that you won't want to put down because it is so exceptionally well written. This book compliments *Call It Sleep* which the Prairie Book Club read earlier as the setting for Arthur Miller's childhood in Jewish society in New York City. If you are having trouble finding it, the UW has multiple copies.

Sunday, April 13 – *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time* by Greg Mortenson & David Oliver Relin (a Kansas City Community Read choice). 368 pages. Check out the Web site for this book for many reviews and an author interview you can listen to. <http://www.threecupsoftea.com/Intro.php>.

PLEDGE AND BUDGET UPDATE

A huge thanks to the Prairie community for your generous pledges this year. We have almost met our goal of 93,319 for budget 2. With 52 pledges received so far, Budget 1 to mortgage the Fitchburg land, we received \$82,448 pledges. Budget 2, to sell the land, received \$90,775.

This is \$20,000 more than the pledge amount was for our last annual year. Our overall pledge average has increased from \$111 a month to \$145 a month. This is fantastic.

There are also some pledges not received as people have been out of town so the expectation is that we will meet the goal of \$93,319. Thank you so very much.

Mary Somers

LETTERS

HELP A NEIGHBOR IN NEED

Joe Barus, a neighbor on Windflower Way, kindly suggested how we can show our neighborliness during this extremely snowy season:

“Many of the elderly or widowed neighbors in our community simply cannot deal with the snow removal from this storm. Even those who are able-bodied would have difficulty with the amount of snow if they were to try to shovel by hand.

“I just snow-blown my driveway and my widow neighbor ladies' driveway, and I know my neighbor two doors down also snow-blows the driveway of a second widower who lives door.

“I am asking that you look to your neighbors' yards and see if you can give them a hand. We have to take care of ourselves and our neighbors; this is a great community-building opportunity.”

In a paragraph I'm not including, Joe also remarked that we should be tolerant of early morning snow removal for those who may have to get to early morning jobs on a snowy day. With a snow like we had earlier this week, even those with 4-wheel drive have to blow the snow out of their driveways so they can get to work.

Mary Mullen

IN MEMORIAM: PAST MEMBER ALICE BULLEN

Dear Friends,

I had news recently from Pennsylvania that Alice Bullen, a long-time active member of Prairie along with her husband Lee, died in September after a brief illness. Alice and Lee were giving members of Prairie for many years before they moved to Pennsylvania in the '80s to be close to their grown children.

Alice had been a librarian at Kennedy School while was a printer; and for years they had put out the newsletter. (They were also printers of the famed “Prairie cookbook”, every step of which had been done by our congregation under their guidance.)

I recall that one time they had given us a program using the scale model printing press Lee had built to teach his craft and we'd come away with traditional folded newspaper “printer's caps.”

Kind and gentle people, they were also great role models, having lived through World War II with Lee in conscientious objector status, enduring malaria experiments—for which he of course had to contract the illness—as his alternative service. They are both gone now, but I remember them fondly.

Metje Butler



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

ORANGE TO BE HONORED AT RED CROSS DINNER

Long-time Prairie member Orange Schroeder has been selected as a "Real Hero" by the American Red Cross for her many contributions to the Madison community. In addition to co-owning Orange Tree Imports with her husband Dean and publishing a book on retailing, she has devoted her time and energies to the Madison Public Library, United Way, Monroe Street Merchants Association, Girl Scouts, Madison Children's Museum, American Players Theater, Friends of WHA-TV, Madison CitiArts Commission, Madison Children's Choir and the Susan J. Komen for the Cure Madison Affiliate, among other organizations.

Orange will be honored at the 11th Annual Real Cross Real Heroes dinner, always a delightful and inspiring occasion:

Wednesday, March 13

5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Monona Terrace

\$50 per person.

If you would like an invitation to the event, please contact Jane Richardson at 227-1290 or jrichardson@arcbadger.org

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK BULLETIN

Did you know? IHN makes every effort to move families into apartments that are "live-able" with furniture, housewares and cleaning supplies in place. These items make families feel welcome and at home while ensuring that they can cook nutritious food, sleep soundly and keep things neat and clean.

"Melinda" moved into her new apartment last week. With the help of IHN volunteers the move was completed in a single Saturday afternoon and furnished with a beautiful living room set, among other donated items. Melinda and her daughter

are very happy and comfortable in their new home and were impressed by the volunteers who took their weekend time to move her in the snow! In addition, because we could move Melinda quickly, there was space available in shelter for "Vicki" and her two children.

IHN needs more trucks and muscles! We have apartments and furniture ready but can't move these items quickly enough. If you are willing to be an IHN mover – with or without a truck – please contact Glenn Christians, IHN's volunteer furniture dispatcher, at g_christi@yahoo.com or 238-6912. Youth groups or other groups are welcome!

Rachel Krinsky, MSW, IHN Executive Director

PRAIRIE FIRE AND PLEDGE CONTRIBUTIONS

Prairie is in the midst of our Annual Pledge Drive. If you have already made your pledge, thanks. If you are not a member but can make a contribution toward your *Prairie Fire* or make a pledge toward our budget, please send your pledge or contribution soon. Your pledges and contributions are important! Thank you for your financial support of Prairie.

Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society: Year July 2008-09 Pledge--Newsletter Subscription

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

My/Our Pledge for July 1, 2008 -09 will be

\$_____ to be paid \$_____ per (mo/yr)

Prairie Fire Subscription/Contribution

\$_____ (\$35 or more recommended)

Return to: Mary Somers, 4467 Crescent Rd.,
Madison 53711 (or marysomers44@charter.net)