



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."

March 7, 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, March 8

6:00 a.m. Prairie volunteers serve breakfast at the Homeless Men's Shelter (Grace Episcopal)
*9:00 a.m. WOW breakfast potluck meeting, home of Kathy Converse, 503 S. Prospect Ave.

*** **POSTPONED: SPRING FLING** ***



Daylight Savings Time: Spring Ahead!
9 am becomes 10 am...

Sunday, March 9

*10:00 a.m. "Highlights from the American Association for the Advancement of Science Conference" presented by John and Mary Franz
12:00 noon. Congregational review of Plan Part I
7:00 p.m. Meditation led by Rebecca Malke

Tuesday, March 11

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

Wednesday, March 12

7:00 p.m. Program Committee

NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, MARCH 16

Thursday, March 13

7:00 p.m. Prairie Board meeting

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, a Prairie Universalist?" presented by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski
*11:45 a.m. Book Club potluck and discussion
7:00 p.m. Meditation led by Judy Skog

Tuesday, March 18

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

Sunday, March 23

*10:00 a.m. "Was Jesus a UU?" intergenerational Easter program
7:00 p.m. Meditation session at Prairie

Tuesday, March 25

*1:30 p.m. Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood West
7:00 p.m. Building Your Own Theology class

Wednesday, March 26

*6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers potluck and conversation at the home of Prudence Barber

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

Thursday, March 27

*7:00 p.m. Movie Group views *Modern Times*

Sunday, March 30

9:00 a.m. Choir resumes rehearsals

*10:00 a.m. "Class Conscious" presented by Erin Bosch

7:00 p.m. Meditation session at Prairie

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, March 9

John & Mary Franz present "Highlights from the American Association for the Advancement of Science Conference." This conference is a gathering of scientists in all fields, with a strong emphasis on science and public policy. This year's theme was Science and Technology from a Global Perspective. There were multiple presentations about science education from preschool to citizen learning, about the need for involvement of scientists in social and political action, as well as about new knowledge in multiple scientific disciplines.

Sunday, March 16

Carl Sandburg, one America's great poets, song collectors, social critics and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, was profoundly influenced by his early experiences living in Galesburg, Illinois, attending Lombard College, and working in Milwaukee and the environs of southern Wisconsin. With illustrations, recordings, and readings, Rev. Ralph will share little known events and observations that will give justification for considering Sandburg as an authentic Universalist.

Sunday, March 23

We will look at the Unitarian Universalist principles and compare them to what Jesus taught. Do the UU principles align with Jesus' teachings and actions? Is there more in common than we think?

Sunday, March 30

In this election year, it might be interesting to discuss some issues of class that could affect our

ability to effectively form coalitions with individuals from different economic classes. For example, professional-middle-class (PMC) progressives are often surprised that working-class people have negative reactions to the PMC subculture, in particular, values-based "alternative" lifestyles. Let's do some consciousness-raising in this regard.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SPRING FLING POSTPONED

Spring Fling, which was scheduled for the second weekend of March, has been postponed. We are in the process of putting together a new behavior policy that will affect RE students, parents and volunteers.



We would like to have the policy finished before we have another overnight event. We will reschedule Spring Fling for May when it's a little more "springy". I will keep you all posted on the exact dates.

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

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

- 6—Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)
- 9—Cheesefare Sunday (Orthodox Christian)
- 9—Passion Sunday (Christian)
- 10—Lent begins (Orthodox Christian)
- 16—Palm/Passion Sunday (Christian)
- 16—Orthodox Sunday (Orthodox Christian)
- 17—St. Patrick's Day (Christian)
- 20—Mawlid an Nabi (Islam)
- 20—Ostara Vernal Equinox (Wicca, northern hem.)
- 20—Mabon (Wicca, southern hemisphere)
- 20—Maunday Thursday (Christian)
- 21—Good Friday (Christian)
- 21—Purim (Jewish)
- 21—Nourouz (New Year) (Persian/Zoroastrian)
- 21—Naw Ruz (New Year) (Baha'i)
- 23—Easter (Christian)



ANNUAL SERVICE AUCTION RESULTS

Our annual Prairie Service Auction brought in over \$6,000. Thanks to everyone who donated, tallied, brought food, set up, and bid, and a special thanks to Mary Mullen, who solicited and wrote up the items, and to Orange Schroeder, our efficient and entertaining auctioneer.

WILD OUTSTANDING WOMEN UPDATE

Join Prairie women on the second 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.

CHOIR WILL TAKE A 3-WEEK REST

There will be no choir rehearsal March 9, 16, or 23 (Easter). Rehearsals will resume on **March 30**.

MYSTERIOUS ILLNESS STRIKES PRAIRIE

The last week of February, in the days following our gathering for potluck and the annual auction, over 20 Prairie members and children came down with similar and varying degrees of flu-like symptoms. Online discussion about the mysterious illness ensued:

“Looks like the sickness made the rounds hitting most of us about the same time—much, much longer than 2 hours after eating....this must have been a bug, not food poisoning....it might be a food-borne virus spread by contact rather than through the air. Here’s a website about the norovirus :<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/gastro/norovirus-qa.htm>”

SPANISH SPEAKERS GATHER MARCH 26

Spanish Speakers will meet for potluck and conversation on **Wednesday, March 26**, at 6:30 p.m. at the home of Prudence Barber, 1104 Mound St., Apt C. Everyone is welcome. For questions or to arrange rides, call Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382.

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 *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.

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>.

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEETS MARCH 24

Tuesday, March 24, 1:30-3:30 p.m. in the Nakoma Room of Heritage Oaks, Oakwood Village West. Or come at 1:00 for informal conversation. Newcomers welcome.

TOPIC: Technological advances in your lifetime: one or two you love or hate. In respect for people with limited hearing we use a round-robin format.

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. We welcome other UUs who live in the facility where we meet. Come and go as necessary for appointments, etc. Let us know if you need directions or a ride to Oakwood.

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

MOVE GROUP MEETS MARCH 27

The Movie Group will meet at Prairie, 7:00 p.m., **Thursday, March 27**, to view *Modern Times* with Charlie Chaplin as the Little Tramp. Need we say more? Bring snacks to share.

And mark your calendars now for the April 24 Prairie Movie Group evening.

STATUS OF OUR FITCHBURG PROPERTY

In late January for the 2008-09 pledge drive, Prairie's Board presented two budget scenarios for the coming fiscal year. The big difference between them is whether we keep or sell our Fitchburg property. Both scenarios allow us to pay back all our promissory note debt. We asked people to give us two pledges, depending on which scenario was adopted. The results of the pledge drive are as follows: the scenario in which we sell the land met its goal, whereas the one in which we keep the land came in over \$30,000 short. Based on these results, on 2/28/08 the Board voted unanimously to recommend a vote at the May 4th Parish Meeting to sell the Fitchburg land.

In anticipation of this action, the Board has already approached the Fitchburg Center. Unfortunately, they are not in a position to buy the land at this time, though they are willing to work with us regarding potential buyers. We will be contracting with an attorney to assist us in understanding our options.

We are working to find a buyer acceptable to Fitchburg Center in time for the Spring Parish Meeting so that we will be ready to sell should the congregation vote to do so. Recognizing that a buyer might not be found that soon, or in the event the congregation does not vote to sell property, the Board is evaluating options for remaining within our budget.

The process to get the Board to these recommendations has been a long and sometimes difficult one. We believe we are ready to move ahead as a Board and as a congregation. We hope that the sale of this property will close one door and open others, and we believe it is the best decision for the future of the Prairie community.

Rachel Long, President

REV. RALPH'S RUMINATIONS

Where we live, along a wide stretch of the Yahara River, south of Stoughton, the geese are still honking with gusto as they head out in V-formation in their morning flight to their feeding sites in the nearby surrounding corn fields.



In the evenings as they journey back to their nighttime havens, their calls are as resplendent, at least to my ears, as their morning choral crescendos. The listening to and seeing the geese in V-formation flight and their observed behaviors allows me to remind our Prairie congregation of the lessons from geese that may guide us in our ongoing long-range planning endeavors in the coming weeks and months.

(Adapted from numerous sources, including Milton Olson and Angeles Arrien)

Fact 1

As each goose flaps its wings it creates an "uplift" for the birds that follow. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

Lesson

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

Fact 2

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

Lesson

If we have as much sense as a goose we stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We are willing to accept their help and give our help to others.

Fact 3

When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.

Lesson

It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership (Shared Ministry?). As with

LETTERS

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



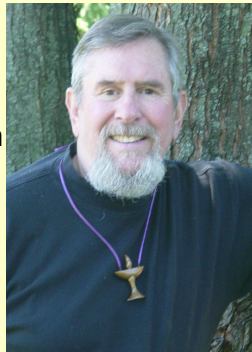
geese, people are interdependent on each other's skills, capabilities and unique arrangements of gifts, talents or resources.

Fact 4

The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Lesson

We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement, the production is much greater. The power of encouragement (to stand by one's heart or core values and encourage the heart and core of others) is the quality of honking we seek. It also



means we need to make our voices heard and listen to those whose voices are still developing.

Fact 5

When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.

Lesson

If we have as much sense as geese, we will stand by and care for each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong and healthy.

May we practice with modesty and humility an acknowledgment of our place in the interdependent web of all existence.

Glad to be journeying with you,

Ralph

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>

JOURNEY TOWARD WHOLENESS NEWS

*From the UUA Office for Congregational Advocacy & Witness
Email News and Updates, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108
(617-948-4656)*

To the Media: Stop Sterotyping People with Religious Affiliations

The television networks' presidential primary exit polls are reinforcing false stereotypes about religious voters by asking Republican voters more religion questions than Democratic voters, and in some cases ignoring Democrats' religion entirely. In Michigan and Iowa they didn't ask Democratic voters any religion questions at all. In every state, they have exhaustively analyzed Republican evangelicals and completely ignored evangelical Democrats.

Can you sign the petition asking that the media pollsters to stop stereotyping people of faith? We will deliver the petition with your name and comments to the networks' pollsters in the next two weeks -- before the March 4 primaries in Texas and Ohio.

The petition says: "The presidential primary exit polls, sponsored by ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox and the AP, must stop stereotyping people of faith. We call on the media pollsters to ask all voters -- Republicans and Democrats -- the same

religion questions on the exit poll surveys."

If we are silent, the media pollsters will continue to reinforce false stereotypes about religious voters. The wedge-issue "values voter" will be the face of faith in politics AGAIN. We must refuse to be pigeonholed.

To sign a petition, see
<http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/dia/track.jsp?v=2&c=G2pseTfDvocMB7G%2B8MR4fBhb44%2BGyz0i>

Globalization: At What Human Cost? -- Labor Rights and Economic Justice Journey to Puebla, Mexico, May 24 to June 1st, 2008

One of the promises of NAFTA was that it would create more jobs in Mexico and alleviate poverty. As in the US, the results in Mexico have not been black and white.

Join UUSC and UUJEC in a Journey to southern Mexico to get an in-depth look at the impact on workers' rights and a living wage; and strategize together to find new ways to organize across the border.

To apply or for more information visit our web page at www.uusc.org/justjourneys/upcoming.html; e-mail justjourneys@uusc.org or call 800-388-3920 and speak with Xenia Barahona