



# 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 15, 2008**



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

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## **PRAIRIE CALENDAR**

### **Sunday, August 17**

\*10:00 a.m. "Eighteen Years in Asia and Latin America: Some Observations and Impressions" presented by Dave and Marcia Johnson

### **Wednesday, August 20**

\*5:30 p.m. Downstairs cleanup party for RE rooms

### **Sunday, August 24**

\*10:00 a.m. "A Journey Through Bilingual Education" presented by Jamie Kobishop-Herold  
\*11:45 a.m. Prairie Book Club potluck and discussion

### **Tuesday, August 26**

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

### **Sunday, August 31**

\*10:00 a.m. "The American Worker—From Joe Hill to Joe Walmart" presented by Steve Blank

### **Wednesday, September 3**

\*5:30 p.m. Downstairs cleanup party for RE rooms

### **Friday-Sunday, September 5-7**

Fall Retreat at Bethel Horizons, Dodgeville  
Book Club discussion  
Teacher orientation  
Talent show  
Sunday morning Key Log Ceremony

### **Sunday, September 14**

\*10:00 a.m. Religious Education classes resume

### **Saturday, September 20**

\*8:00 a.m. Prairie rummage sale

## **INSIDE**

- RE news and rummage sale
- Fitchburg land sale
- Rev. Ralph's Ruminations
- Registration form for the Annual Retreat

**NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7**

(\* = Details follow in this issue.)

## DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

### Sunday, August 17

Prairie members Dave and Marcia Johnson will share some of their unique perspectives based on living in different parts of the world, including the Peace Corps. Marcia will share the children's book she wrote, and Dave will give a reading. International music will add to the colorful flavor of the morning.

### Sunday, August 24

Bilingual education is a controversial topic not only in our communities, but also in the education system. Jamie will talk about bilingual education and the struggles she faces in school. She will also talk about bilingual education across the U.S. and the need for what she believes is "the human right for children to learn in their first language."

This fall Jamie will begin her fifth year as a bilingual education teacher for Carl Sandburg Elementary School. She graduated from UW-Madison where she earned her B.A. in Journalism, and a B.S. in Elementary Education. She has a Masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis on literacy from UW-Oshkosh. She received a teacher's certification in Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language. She lives in Madison with her husband.

### Sunday, August 31

Steve Blank will be leading a celebration of labor and an examination of the changing landscape facing working people here and abroad. Recorded Music will be played and sheet music distributed for singing along to "Joe Hill," "This Land is Your Land" and "Solidarity Forever."

Steve Blank is a social justice activist currently volunteering as a counter recruiter and literacy tutor in local schools and as news preparer for WORT. He is also a member of the Prairie RE committee. Before moving to Middleton, Steve lived in the Chicago area where, among other things, he volunteered with Chicago Jobs With Justice, a labor organization.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### NEW RE YEAR BEGINNING SOON!

We are fast approaching our RE school year. If you're like me you're still trying to enjoy every last bit of the warm summer air, budding flowers and, yes, even the bugs before all gets cold and begins to fade.



The RE Committee and I are working hard at this upcoming 2008-09 school year. Our theme: DO JUSTICE! will begin on **Sunday, September 14th**. That is also the deadline to bring in any items for our rummage sale which will take place **Saturday, September 20th** at 8 a.m. right here at Prairie. Bring in any items or baked goods you would like sold at the sale. All proceeds will go to our religious education department.

As I finish up the RE brochure and calendar I begin to imagine what this year will be like. I'm confident that this will be a very strong year. We have all but one teacher position filled. We have a very strong group of talented and very committed teachers for the school year. Many have dedicated a big part of their life to social justice.

The RE chair, Karen Deaton, and I really want our children to get involved locally and globally. Our kids, your kids, all of our children here at Prairie will really be getting into important issues and doing a lot of hands on work. My goal is to have them aware of the injustices of the world but still be positive that they have the knowledge and the capabilities to make a difference, a real difference in our world today. I want everyone at Prairie to take responsibility in shaping our future through our children.

On a lighter note, we'll have a pool party after church on **Sunday, August 31st**. This will be a time to sit back, relax and soak up those afternoon rays of sun before heading off to school.

At our retreat **September 5-7** there will be a teacher's orientation for those who are teaching this year and for anyone wanting to learn more

about what will be going on in our program. I also will be leading a Teen Talk and my husband, John and I will be leading a traditional Indian game played by both children and adults.

As you can see, we have plenty of ways for Prairie members and friends to get involved in our RE program. If you would like to help out in any way but you're not sure what you can do, give me a call, email or stop me before or after Sunday service to talk. I'd love to hear from you!

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

## **OUR SOCIETY**

### **FITCHBURG PROPERTY SOLD**

I am pleased to report that we closed on the Fitchburg property 8/8/08 as planned, and the money we received is in the bank. We have already paid off our mortgage on the Whenona property, and will soon have paid back our promissory note holders. We will then be free of debt, and have money in the bank to invest in our current property, begin a growth fund, or both. We will also put back in our budget items that were on hold pending the land sale.

We learned a great deal in this process which will help us when we finally do make a decision to move to a larger space. Thanks again to everyone who participated in moving Prairie on to our next phase.

*Rachel Long, President*

### **ADMINISTRATOR / OFFICE MANAGER**

Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society (PUU) is seeking a part-time staff member for administrative duties including editing, bookkeeping, business operations, communications and web layout. Qualified candidates will have basic knowledge of bookkeeping and strong organizational and communication skills. This position will report to the PUU President. Schedule is variable and averages 10 hours per week.

E-mail resume to Anne Lundin, Vice-President ([alundin@wisc.edu](mailto:alundin@wisc.edu)). The initial review of applicants will begin on **Friday, August 15th**.

### **COME TO DOWNSTAIRS CLEANUP EVENTS**

We'll be cleaning up, rearranging, and sorting through supplies to get ready for the 08-09 RE year. Come to Prairie at 5:30 p.m. (or later) on the evenings of **Wednesday, August 20** and **Wednesday, September 3**. We'll provide pizza. There is a job for you, whether you are able to move furniture, organize the supply room, or test felt-tip markers (and be sure that the permanent markers are not mixed in with the others).

Questions? Contact Karen Deaton or Rebecca Malke-Eligenti.

### **PRAIRIE ELDERS MEETS ON AUGUST 26**

Prairie Elders meets **Tuesday, August 26**, 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 are welcome. Call the contacts below for directions or a ride.

**AUGUST TOPIC:** Escapades, adventures, accomplishments and other noteworthy memories of our teenage years. This promises to be a fascinating exchange, given the snickers and wincing observed when the topic was proposed. Share whatever you deem of interest: your first job, a scout award, a candystriper good deed, the day you were bucked off a horse, shenanigans your parents never knew about or the first meteor shower, remarkably up to 3000 hits per hour, ever observed by radar. We use a "round robin" format so all can hear.

**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.

**CONTACTS:** Donna Murdoch 238-3802, Gordon Cunningham 230-3367, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382 or Rose Smith 233-3363.

## CIRCLE DINNER SIGNUP HAS BEGUN

This year, based on feedback from last year's dinners, we are trying something different: theme-based Circle Dinner groups.

When you sign up, please indicate which theme or themes from the provided list interest you. You may also suggest a new theme—you are not limited to those on the list—or choose no theme at all and try your luck with a random dinner group assignment. You may also indicate which size group you prefer. You can always sign up after the groups are organized, too. The drawback would be that the dinner group organized around your favorite theme may be full.

Rev. Ralph and Karleen Tyksinski will be floaters. They will not belong to a particular group, but will take turns participating in different Circle Dinners throughout the fall and spring.

For those of you unfamiliar with them, Circle Dinners are dinner parties for small groups of Prairie members and friends who like to eat delicious food and engage in stimulating conversations. It is a great way to meet newcomers and old timers. The style is casual and potluck, the talk is good, and the food delicious.

Here's how they work: At the end of August, the Hospitality and Membership Committee organizes names on the overall list into groups of usually 8-12 people. Typically, 3 or more households are represented in a Circle Dinner group. The households can be composed of families, couples and singles. We ask one household to convene the first dinner in September, usually at their home, but the dinner can be held anywhere that is agreeable. It can be held at a park, at Prairie, etc. Once the Membership Committee sets up a group, it is up to members of that group to find a date, time and place to meet.

Below is the list of suggested themes, which you are free to add to.

You may wait to sign up at Prairie or email your name, contact information and theme choice to either Kris Long (kklong5(at)yahoo.com) or Paula Pachciarz (pachwack(at)sbcglobal.net).

\*board games

\*travel experiences

\*politics & current affairs

\*playing music/singing together

\*gardening

\*food & wine

\*movies & film

\*books

\*arts & cultural affairs

\*religion & spirituality

\*children of similar age

\*add your own!



## BOOK CLUB SUMMER MEETINGS ANNOUNCED

The Prairie Book Club meets after the Sunday service on specified dates, usually starting at 11:45 a.m. Participants bring food to share and meet in the couch room downstairs. Everyone 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, August 24**, *La Linea* by Ann Jaramillo tells the story of a teenage brother and sister who undertake an illegal border crossing to join their parents in California. The author is a middle school teacher in a Texas border community who wrote the story for her students. This book was suggested as an all-Reeb read by the James Reeb Congregation.

**Saturday, September 6** (at the Prairie Retreat, Bethel Horizons), *Born on a Blue Day: Inside the Extraordinary Mind of an Autistic Savant* is a memoir by Daniel Tammet, a high functioning man with Asperger's Syndrome, born in England in the 1970s. Daniel sees numbers as shapes, colors and textures and can perform extraordinary math problems in his head. He also learned to speak Icelandic fluently from scratch in a week.



Read a fascinating call-in discussion with him at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/discussion/2007/04/11/DI2007041100813.html>

He says he enjoyed a novel about an autistic boy, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, that our book club read. But he doesn't agree that Asperger's is incompatible with having religious faith. 256 pages. Suggested by Barb Park.

### SUMMER UU BLOOD DRIVE

Our summer UU Blood Drive will be Saturday, August 20, from 8 a.m. to noon at James Reeb UU Congregation, 2146 E. Johnson. Let's try to reach—even exceed—our goal this time!

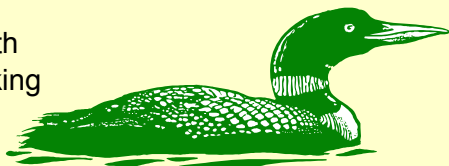
Of course, I'm prejudiced: I needed several donations after an operation, so I'm grateful to folks who took time to donate!

Even if it's the first time, please donate. Now 16-year-olds can donate with parental permission. To schedule an appointment, contact Anne Mosser at 845-7458, or [agmosser@tds.net](mailto:agmosser@tds.net).

Gordon Cunningham

### REV. RALPH'S RUMINATIONS

During the month of July I was taking vacation. You may ask,



“What do ministers do on vacation?” Like most ministers, our thoughts are not far from the congregations we are invited to serve. We not only think about the here and now—Sunday programs, the Religious Education program, building needs, etc.

But what about the future? Prairie has been deeply engaged in reframing our mission and identifying a specific vision for our future. We are a small congregation (small is usually defined by church consultants as less than 100 members) Prairie's size fits this definition and has for the past 10 years.

Allow me to share some observations that I found relevant to our discussions about Prairie's future. Here is what one knowledgeable church

consultant sees for the future of religious organizations:

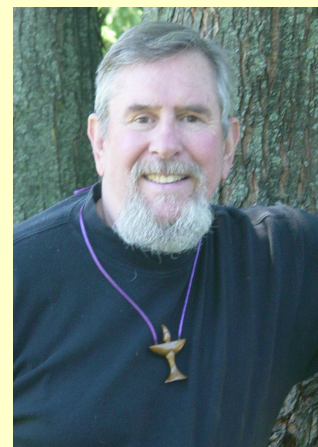
The church will be “unrecognizable.” It will “draw on sources we have not considered.” There will be “no steeples, pews or organs” but congregations will meet in “warehouses and commercial sites.” The congregants will be of all ages, the worship participatory and the music of all kinds, live and professional, the theology “multi-faceted.” Worship will not only be on Sunday, but at other times, convenient times, for the people who will meet together, sometimes even in living rooms.

This will be a “high-demand faith” with a “significant commitment of time and money,” civic-minded, and mission-centered. People will want to be involved, and this church will “change their lives in some fundamental way.”

And here is what another knowledgeable observer has to say about the future:

The church will be “more experimental and experiential and less conventional” and will “meet in places that don't look like ‘churches.’” It will be “mission-driven,” “counter-cultural,” and “community-centered.” The “churches which have not adapted will have withered and died.” There will be “greater church diversity in personality, form, and function.”

Consultant Number 1 sees the future church as large churches. . . churches that, when they reach 900 members or more, divide in two—and that some of these large UU churches will eventually reach 2500 members plus. That vision belongs to Mike Durall, Unitarian Universalist and author of “The Almost Church” and “Beyond The Collection Plate”.



Consultant Number 2 is David Ray, United Church of Christ Associate in Small Church Development and author of *The Indispensable Guide For Smaller Churches*. He sees the future of the church in the small church, many and varied, of all religions, and working together with interfaith cooperation.

Do these views make any sense in your view of fashioning Prairie's vision? Do you believe, as these two observers believe, that whatever we are doing now will need to change and evolve for Prairie to survive, and thrive?

It seems evident from my observations during our "visioning workshops" that Prairie members believe in the power, intimacy, and strength of the small congregation. If this observation "clicks" with your sense of Prairie's "identity", then are we ready to: experiment with our Sunday services; be willing to include our children in everything we do; expand our ways of caring for one another in times of need; push one another to spiritual growth?

Change is hard. It's scary. It's different. Prairie HAS changed, and we will continue to change. Where do you as a valued part of Prairie fit into this picture of the future? Are you ready to experiment, or are you stuck in old ways? What are your favored and meaningful rituals, and what new ones can we create together? Will you be willing to try something new and challenging? Or are you comfortable doing the same old thing? Will you be part of creating a Prairie of the future?

These are some of my Summer vacation ruminations. As always, I welcome your responses, reactions and suggestions.

Glad to be moving forward with you,

*Rev. Ralph*

## **DENOMINATIONAL NEWS**

### **CALL FOR CHALICE LIGHTERS**

According to the Central Midwest District, Prairie had 20 Chalice Lighter members at their last count (2006). We are going to try to double that number this fall by having a sign-up table in the lobby on September 14 and at least two other Sundays.

In case you are not familiar with Chalice Lighters, the concept began in the 1980 with the idea that many people giving a small amount of money could create a major difference in the ability of a UU congregation in the District to provide a much

needed service which would ultimately promote or enable growth. Individual congregations request a Chalice Lighter grant, and these requests are screened by a committee and grants are awarded to one or more congregations. The grant money comes from all of us who have signed on to the program by agreeing to remit a check for \$10 or more only three times a year. To date, more than 33 congregations in the CMwD have received grants totaling more than \$217 thousand dollars. The latest Chalice Lighter grant was awarded to James Reeb to expand the scope and hours of their D.R.E. Please plan to stop at our table and sign up.

*Pat Watkins*

### **SAUK CITY JOINT SERVICE**

This service was a great success, and three people stopped me to comment on how nice it was to see so many Prairie people turn out. I counted 22 of us there, and I may have missed someone. Thanks so much to Barb Park and Doleta Chapru for their excellent presentation and music, and to all of the others who were involved.

*Pat Watkins*

### **FUNDRAISING FOR TENNESSEE UU CHURCH**

There are two separate fundraising efforts in response to the violence in Knoxville, TN last month.

The Knoxville Relief Fund was established by the UUA in collaboration with the Thomas Jefferson District to bring ministry, spiritual care, and practical financial assistance to those affected – in its immediate aftermath – by the tragedy in Knoxville, Tennessee.

And in the wake of these events, the UUA launched a separate fund, the Knoxville *New York Times* Ad Fund to support full page ads in several publications—including the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and the *Knoxville News Sentinel*—which invite their readers to stand in solidarity with those affected, and proclaim what we stand for as a people of faith.

To read about what's been happening, President William Sinkford's statements, and how you can help, go to [www.uua.org/news/knoxville](http://www.uua.org/news/knoxville), or contact [campaign@uua.org](mailto:campaign@uua.org) with any questions you might have concerning donations.

## **DRE POSITION IN KANSAS**

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan, Kansas, is seeking applicants for a newly created half-time Director of Religious Education position.

Details, including contact information and position requirements, are posted at Prairie. The deadline to submit applications is September 5, 2008.

Please direct questions to:

Carolyn Ferguson, chair

DRE Search Committee

UU Fellowship of Manhattan, Kansas

PO Box 910, Manhattan, Kansas 66505

[dresearch\(at\)uufm.net](mailto:dresearch@uufm.net)

## **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>

# PRAIRIE UU SOCIETY FALL RETREAT

Bethel Horizons Center, September 5-7, 2008

Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** Requires sheets, towels, and soap. Accommodations have heat, electricity, and showers, except campground.

Adults

Children (under 12)

**Prairie Center:** (4-5/room, private disability-accessible bathrooms, 72 beds total)

2 nights: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$58 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_      2 nights: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$29 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

1 night: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$42 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_      1 night: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$21 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Barn Retreat Center:** (26 single beds, shared bathroom)

2 nights: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$46 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_      2 nights: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$23 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

1 night: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$34 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_      1 night: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$17 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Farmhouse/Bunkhouse Center:** (17 single beds, shared bathrooms)

2 nights: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$40 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_      2 nights: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$20 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

1 night: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$28 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_      1 night: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$14 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Camping** (\$8/person or \$20/family per night): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Subtotal of Accommodations:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## MEALS

(Vegetarian Options on the Meals, indicate number of persons: # \_\_\_\_\_ )

Adults

Children (under 12)

Saturday breakfast: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$6.50 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_      # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$3.25 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday lunch: # \_\_\_\_\_ x 8.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_      # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$4.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday dinner: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$10.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_      # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$5.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday breakfast: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$6.50 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_      # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$3.25 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

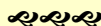
Or All Meals: # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$31.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_      and # kids \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15.50 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Subtotal meals:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My family needs a partial scholarship of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (subtract)

**Donations for scholarships** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Make checks payable to "Prairie UU Society") **Total Due:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_



Send this form to Robin Proud, 114 Glen Hwy, Madison, WI 53705 (608-661-0776)  
or bring to Prairie by Sunday, August 24.

☞ Rooms are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis after accommodation for age & disability. ☞