



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 21, 2008



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

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Tuesday, September 23

*1:30 – 3:30 pm Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood.

Thursday, September 25

*7:00 p.m. Movie group views "Catch-22"

Sunday, September 28

9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal. New singers welcome.
*10:00 a.m. "This I Believe" coordinated by Anne Lundin.

Saturday, October 4

*Men's Shelter Breakfast

Sunday, October 5

9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal
*10:00 a.m. "The High Holidays: A Jewish Reconstructionist / Renewal approach"
12:00 noon, Humanist Union

Saturday, October 11

*Prairie WOW (women's group) meets offsite.

Sunday, October 12

9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal
*10:00 a.m. "Iran: Myth and Reality,"
presented by Majid Sarmadi.

Sunday, October 19

9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal.
*10:00 a.m. "Growing Our Spirit" presented by
Rev. Ralph Tyksinki.

Tuesday, October 21

*7:00 p.m. Final Choices workshop

Thursday, October 23

7:00 p.m. Movie group views "Sicko"

Sunday, October 26

9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal
*10:00 a.m. "A Spiritual and Humanistic Approach
to the United Nations Universal Declaration of
Human Rights" led by Pat Watkins.

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

INSIDE

- RE news
- Retreat News
- Rev. Ralph's Ruminations
- Registration form for Final Choices workshop

NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, September 28

"This I Believe" - coordinated by Anne Lundin. Fifth in a series of programs focusing on spiritual backgrounds and beliefs, the panel will consist of Sarah Babcock, Jim Carpenter, and Orange Schroeder. Come hear how these individuals from Prairie have shaped their own spirituality with their unique stories.

Sunday, October 5

Our friends from Shaarei Shamayim have recently moved on to larger facilities at First Unitarian Society in Madison after years of sharing our meeting space here at Prairie. It is a great pleasure to welcome several members of their congregation to Prairie on Sunday, October 5th, to present a program entitled "The High Holidays: A Jewish Reconstructionist / Renewal approach." Judith Burstyn, Zoe Werth, and Eric Shatzberg from Congregation Shaarei Shamayim will be sharing the themes found in the High Holidays and the unique approach that Jewish Reconstructionist / Renewal communities take for this time of year. Traditional holiday music will be part of the program, as well as a shofar, the ram's horn that is blown to mark the beginning of the new year. This will be a wonderful opportunity to hear from Madison's Progressive Jewish community, and to wish them the very best for their future in their new meeting space.

Sunday, October 12

"Iran: Myth and Reality," presented by Majid Sarmadi. Majid Sarmadi is currently Rothermel Bascom Professor at UW. He received his PhD from Virginia Tech in 1986 in Textile Science, is the author or coauthor of more than 60 papers and holds four patents. As an Iranian American who was deeply saddened by September 11 and the loss of thousands of innocent lives, professor Sarmadi has tried to use his religious background to bring people of different faiths together. He has given many presentations to churches, service clubs, and high schools in southern Wisconsin. In his program on Iran, he will address the question

"What do we really know about the country that we might attack?"

Sunday, October 19

"Growing Our Spirit" - presented by Ralph Tyksinski, Consulting Minister. We explore and celebrate our identity as a Unitarian Universalist congregation. We also remember on this date in 1735 the birth of John Adams, 2nd President of the US, and member of First Parish (Unitarian) in Quincy, Massachusetts.

Sunday, September 28

United Nations Sunday: "A Spiritual and Humanistic Approach to the UN Universal Charter of Human Rights" presented by Pat Watkins, chair of the Denominational Affairs committee. December 10th of this year will mark the 60th anniversary of the proclamation and unanimous adoption of what many people feel is one of the most important documents in world history. Yet, it has been estimated that fewer than 10 % of the world's people have ever read the Declaration. Have you? And, how many of us are familiar with how far-reaching this document is? We will address that this Sunday as both our youth and our adults will read the Declaration aloud and light candles for those in the world who are being deprived of these rights. If there is time we will ask for congregational citations on some ways in which some specific rights are being denied.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

NEW RE YEAR BEGINS!

The start of the school year has begun. I'm sure all of our students are happy summer is finally over and they're back in classes! That may not be true for all but I'm sure everyone can agree that they're happy RE classes have begun.



Classes started at Prairie on Sunday, September 14th and we had a huge turnout of students. We

OUR SOCIETY

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEETS ON SEPTEMBER 23

Prairie Elders meets **Tuesday, September 23**, 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.

SEPTEMBER TOPIC: Your reactions to the political conventions and subsequent political events. This session is a sharing of opinions based on specific information gleaned in the past few weeks. Documentation useful for further discussion would be helpful.

While we all aspire to live by U.U. principles, Prairie Elders participants are most certainly not of one mind. Our "round robin" format allows all participants to express their opinions and people with limited hearing to fully participate. We also welcome those who prefer just to come and listen. Our topics alternate between general issues and personal sharing.

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.

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

SILENT AUCTION SUCCESS, AND OTHER RETREAT NOTES

Apparently having a silent auction as part of the retreat gained good favor. It was the first year such an event was held and people seemed to be quite intrigued by it, even though few were truly prepared, either by having a good chance to consider potential items to sell, or to have budgeted to buy items. But, for all that, we received a total of \$386 in bids for Prairie. In addition to the sale, we printed out photos taken during the weekend and invited folks to take

started off the year with two bagpipers leading a parade of our young people into the meeting area at the start of the water ceremony. I'd like to thank Cheyenne Hale and Judy Wacker for holding our Prairie banner and leading the procession of students.

After each class was introduced teachers and students went downstairs for a moment of introductions and to check out their new classrooms. Many thanks to RE chair, Karen Deaton, and Paula Pachciarz for helping me move furniture around and rearrange each classroom in preparation of the new school year.

The first day of class was actually our first Service Sunday of the year. With this year's theme being Social Justice we had our students separate all the rummage sale items that were donated for next week's RE Rummage Sale. Classrooms once empty were filled with clothes, books, household items and so much more. With such great items we're sure to have a large turnout on Saturday, September 20th.

Money earned from the sale will be divided up between classes for students to decide democratically where the money should be donated to.

Last Sunday proved we are off to a good start and it will only get better. We have a strong group of teachers who are committed to teaching our youth. If you see any of the teachers below please thank them for donating their valuable time and energy to our children.

Preschool-K: Patty Stockdale and Kim Truog

1-3rd grade: Robin Proud, Robyn Perrin and Marcia Johnson

4-6th grade: Kathy Converse and Dan Proud

7-8th grade: Randy Converse and Karen Deaton

9-12th grade: Steve Blank, Anne Urbanski and Carl Wacker.

Rebecca Malke (YREC)

youthcoordinator(at)uuprairie.org

them along, and accepted donations for them to be added to the auction funds. Photos are posted at <http://dorothyk.net/RetreatPhotos/>

Once all the math has been done, the final total will be about \$450... a huge success in my book, so people can definitely look forward to a silent auction becoming an annual event as part of the retreat. Thank you to everyone that was involved in any way!

The retreat itself went very well, with about 35 families attending. We had lovely weather, a great talent show, and a fun evening of folk dancing. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of the retreat.

Due to scheduling conflicts within Bethel Horizons, the only weekend they can offer us for our retreat next year is Labor Day weekend, which is simply not a good option for us. We will be seeking a new location for the next retreat, so if you have any great ideas about places we should look into, please contact Kate Liu at admin@uuprairie.org.

Dorothy Krause & Kate Liu

PRAIRIE WOW TO MEET

The Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society's women's group, better known as "WOW," will be resuming meetings in October. Our next gathering is at the home of Kathy Converse, on October 11th, at 9:00 a.m. Meetings consist of pot luck breakfast (and chocolate!) with a check-in format, occasionally focussed on a topic of mutual interest. The topic for October will be school and graduation memories – bring pictures to share if you can, and think about apple dishes. For more information, please contact Kathy Converse at conversekr@mtds.net.

MOVIE GROUP

The Movie Group will meet at Prairie, 7:00, Thursday, September 25th to view "Catch 22." Mick Nichols directing. Joseph Heller the novelist and Buck Henry the screenplay. Acting by Alan Arkin, Martin Sheen, Art Garfunkel, Martin Balsam, John Voit, Bob Newhart, Anthony Perkins, and Orson Wells. This all-star group tells the story of a group of WW II fliers "trapped in the

insanity of the Mediterranean" and the snafu of the war. The film starts at 7:00. Bring snacks to share.

UPDATE ON OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Prairie Board has taken the results of our 3 planning workshops and 5 Congregation review sessions, which resulted in 5 year statements of Vision and Outcomes (below) and prepared 6 particular priority Actions to take during the 2008-09. These will complement many ongoing activities.

We modified the draft Actions in response to congregation discussion sessions at Bethel Horizons and after the Prairie Program on Sept 14. The revised draft Actions are shown below. The Board will be deciding responsibilities for taking these actions at a coming Board meeting.

At the November Parish meeting the Board and Long Range Planning Committee will provide a strategic plan that we will ask the congregation to approve. It will include the Vision, Outcomes and Actions below, more details on implementation, and an indication of areas for action in the second year out to the fifth year.

Our Vision of the Prairie Community

We support each other's personal development and spiritual growth, Our caring for each other is evident to all who enter our doors, We act in the world to further social and environmental justice, and Our society is recognized and respected in the wider community.

Outcomes

1. Participants at Prairie will share in a culture of inquisitiveness in the Unitarian Universalist tradition. A diverse array of beliefs and opinions will be encouraged and supported through open and respectful discussion.
2. Prairie will offer opportunities to engage in a wide variety of activities that encourage development and growth, including services, educational offerings, lay leadership, and discussion and musical groups.
3. Prairie will be a welcoming and joyful community filled with fun, humor and laughter. Strong bonds of friendship and

community will be encouraged, across age and social group.

4. People seeking a community like ours will have many ways to discover us.
5. Prairie will foster personal and spiritual development of our youth, including education in Unitarian Universalist values.
6. Members will be well-informed about social justice and environmental issues that affect the wider community and the world, as well as opportunities for action.

- b. Better utilize current space, doing minor remodeling as necessary
- c. Establish specific responsibility for improving aesthetics of our space, allocate time and resources, and consider engaging help from a consultant

5. Systematically engage in long-range planning.
 - a. With possible aid from or CMwD, UUA or other consultants:
 - b. Develop step-wise plan for staffing, including decision making about ministerial presence
 - c. Develop criteria for when to consider moving to a larger space, and
 - d. Start a growth fund

6. Continue steps to improve decision-making and governance.
 - a. Continue to develop, monitor and assure implementation of the strategic plan, with regular feedback to the congregation
 - b. Develop policy and procedure manual for Prairie including job descriptions for volunteer positions, train members as to its use
 - c. Utilize UUA training available, consider internal training workshops
 - d. Recognize all those individuals who take on Prairie volunteer responsibilities, and celebrate our successes.
 - e. Evaluate decision making processes for our congregation.

Actions

In the 2008-9 year, we will accomplish the following:

1. Explore more fully our UU identity
 - a. Evaluate our members spiritual and religious educational needs
 - b. Build understanding about the range of ways to meet these needs by learning from other UU societies,
 - c. Offer a number of Sunday programs about the range of belief and faith among UU's and individual programs spanning that range.
 - d. Develop a task force to coordinate adult religious education, increase offerings, and advertise these to the general public
2. Continue and enhance our small group offerings
 - a. Evaluate, coordinate and publicize our current small groups
 - b. Recognize those individuals who lead these groups [we should recognize more people who contribute so I have added below...]
 - c. Explore specific offerings promoting spiritual growth
3. Focus our social action efforts
 - a. Work toward becoming accredited as a "Green Sanctuary," as outlined by the UUA, and publicize our efforts
 - b. Engage in other specific intergenerational and youth social action projects
 - c. Continue our broad education on social justice issues in Sunday programs and religious education offerings
4. Improve our facility in attractiveness and function.
 - a. Engage consultant(s) to evaluate options for physical improvements and expansion

Ken Skog, Long Range Planning

“FINAL CHOICES” WORKSHOP SERIES

A free series of 3 workshops on “Final Choices” related to making end-of-life decisions will be offered this fall to Prairie members and friends, sponsored by the Prairie UU Caring Committee. The goal of the workshops is to help each of us thoughtfully plan for our own and/or our parents’ end of life. We hope the workshops will provide valued information related to this topic in a friendly and trusting setting of our Prairie congregation.

Each participant will receive a copy of the booklet “Final Choices: A Guide for Making End-of-Life Decisions” developed by First Unitarian Society. Each session will address topics presented in the guide, additional background from the leaders (Rev. Ralph Tyksinski and Linda Sheehy and KK

Anderson from the Caring Committee), and sharing and discussion from your personal experiences and concerns. The leaders, Ralph, Linda and KK, see themselves as explorers and discussants on topics that have relevance and meaning for everyone living in this age of important “need-to-know” issues. Checklists will be included to assist in specific planning. The topics include:

1. Estate Planning and Checklist
2. Advance Directives: Power of Attorney/Financial and Health Care
3. Declaration to Physicians
4. Hospice
5. The Right to Die
6. Choosing a Funeral Home
7. Choosing the Disposition of Your Body (Embalm, Cremate, Donations, etc.)
8. Memorial or Funeral Service Planning Decisions
9. Guidelines for Final Arrangements by Survivors

The sessions will be held 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Tuesdays, October 21, October 28, and November 11 at Prairie UU.

If you are interested in taking part in this workshop series, **please return your response to Aileen Nettleton, Caring Committee, by Sunday, September 28. Bring your form to Prairie or E-mail: [aanett\(at\)execpc.com](mailto:aanett(at)execpc.com)**; Phone: 608-238-6053; Mail: 645 Sheldon St., Madison, WI, 53711. ****Forms are located at the end of this issue.****

MEN'S SHELTER BREAKFAST

Prairie UU will be taking its turn coordinating the Men's Shelter Breakfast on Saturday, October 4th, 2008. Volunteers are always needed to shop and cook and serve. For more information, please contact Kathy Converse, Social Action Chair, at [conversekrtn\(at\)tds.net](mailto:conversekrtn(at)tds.net).

NEW MEMBER PROFILES

Sarah Babcock

From Paula Pachiarz: Sarah has belonged to Prairie since March of this year but because of email glitches we are just now printing the bio she

kindly wrote up for us. It was worth waiting for! Please welcome Sarah and Ian. We hope to meet Brad and Sydney soon.

From Sarah: I am 36, married to my soul mate and yin to my yang, Brad. We have two kids, Ian (3) (always “in character” and generally dressed in a costume of some sort) and Sydney (almost 1). Sydney hasn't made her debut at Prairie, but once she stops taking a morning nap, I'm sure she'll become a fixture. My husband is a churchphobe. He likes the opportunity for social action, but is less concerned with the spiritual part and ritual of gathering. I'm sure he'll make an appearance at some point, but he won't be a regular.

We moved to Madison from Denver, Colorado this past winter to be closer to my family. We live in Cottage Grove not far from my brother and cousin, who also live there. My sister is in Oconomowoc. I was involved in a vibrant UU church in Denver that really introduced me to UU and was certainly there when I needed it. When we moved, I was looking for a Unitarian church that was smaller and had a focus on RE. And, wow, did I find it! It has been a difficult transition for us all with a lot of illnesses over the past winter and emotional ups and downs. With the seasonal change, it has gotten easier with bike rides, outdoor play, and gardening.

I am an environmental engineer and have worked on Superfund sites across the country. I now work for a small firm in Madison doing brownfield cleanup work to redevelop blighted properties in small communities. I have a passion for the environment and outdoors – getting to know it better through gardening and landscaping with native plants. I love the challenge of making better choices and want to be a good example for my kids and my community. I want my kids to grow up camping and being a part of nature.

I hope to get more and more involved in Prairie as the kids get older; for now, getting here on Sundays is hard enough! I would like to eventually sing in the choir and teach RE courses – maybe even start a mother's support group. I will participate in a “This I Believe” this coming fall. With that in mind, I won't go into the details of my spiritual journey, but here are the Cliff's notes: I was brought up in a UCC church always questioning it in my scientific mind. I have gone through two very difficult times in my life that challenged and shaped my idea of a god and spirituality. I came through them scarred but stronger and still wondering. Wondering what it all means and how, if it all means nothing, why it is

that I love my kids to the core with all my being? How is it that I would willingly give my life for them—on any day—and how they have made me happier than I ever thought possible?

I'll close with a quote from Starhawk, one of my favorite authors, that kind of sums up my journey:

"We are all longing to go home to some place we have never been — a place half-remembered and half-envisioned we can only catch glimpses of from time to time. Community. Somewhere, there are people to whom we can speak with passion without having the words catch in our throats. Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us, eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our own power. Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done. Arms to hold us when we falter. A circle of healing. A circle of friends. Somewhere where we can be free."

Bob Cape and Amy Armstrong

"Where Everybody Knows Your Name"

Bob and Amy joined Prairie ten months ago and the attempts to gather information from them for this profile make quite a saga. The Hospitality and Membership Committee is happy to finally introduce this dynamic couple more thoroughly.

Amy Armstrong grew up in New Concord, Ohio, and was raised Presbyterian. When she began attending Earlham College, founded by the Quakers, she "headed down that slippery slope of free thinking" and process of exploration which ultimately led to her finding and identifying with the principles of UUism.

Bob Cape's path, before he and Amy met up at Earlham, began in Highland, Illinois. At college, he found that he had much in common with Amy--besides agreeing on the UU principles, they fell in love with each other. After graduating from medical school in Chicago in 1980, Bob moved with Amy to Lansing, Michigan for his residency. They married and had two twin daughters, Abby and Julia. They moved to Madison in the mid 80s, where their son, Charlie, was born. (Abby recently completed her MA in Museum Studies [and is job hunting]; Julia works at Blackberry Ridge Spinning Mill in Mount Horeb; Charlie loves his job cooking at a bar and grill on Mackinaw Island.)

Amy and Bob looked for a UU society in Madison and found First Unitarian, which they attended for over twenty years. Their children benefited from the excellent RE program there for youth. However, both parents felt a lack of personal connection in the large church; they felt that no one knew them. In addition, Randy and Kathy Converse, who were near neighbors to Bob and Amy for years, spoke warmly of the supportive community at the UU society that they attended — Prairie. When the kids finished the RE program at FUS, Amy and Bob sought us out.

Amy says she wanted to feel part of a community, where "everybody knows your name." The first time she came to a Prairie service with Bob, not only did she and Bob get the opportunity to introduce themselves, her name was called out when she won a raffle for a free CD. She says that by the end of the service she was positive that everyone present knew who she was!

They've been coming back ever since. They have enjoyed the monthly film nights and have been active in church committees: Amy on the Finance Committee, and Bob, until recently, on the Hospitality and Membership Committee. Bob is a family practitioner, a true avocation for him. He greatly enjoys and makes time for camping and backpacking, having recently returned from a trip to the Sawtooths. He and Amy joined Hoofers last year and took up a new passion—sailing. Amy, as many of you know, founded "The Sow's Ear", a yarn and coffee shop in Verona. She relinquished ownership last year and is now happily employed there. Besides creating beautiful clothes by knitting and spinning, she loves gardening and has a special interest in native Prairie plants.

A key part of Bob's character that this writer observes is his dedication to incorporating humanity into his medical practice. And who can disagree with Amy's self-description as a person with a positive outlook who likes to find humor in things, and who enjoys people? Prairie is fortunate to have them.

Paula Pachiarz, Hospitality and Membership Chair

REV. RALPH'S RUMINATIONS

As we approach the November 4, 2008, Presidential election the issues



surrounding religious freedom, blurring the boundaries between religion and government, using religious beliefs as a verbal attack weapon against those who hold differing beliefs or are of a non-believing persuasion, are becoming increasingly a major concern for thoughtful and informed citizens. Therefore, as a clergy member of the Interfaith Alliance I have joined thousands of other clergy similarly concerned about our religious freedom by signing a pledge to uphold certain standards in our congregations during this election season. I am sharing this with Prairie members and friends because the feverish pitch of election campaign rhetoric can sometimes blind us from observing our covenant of good relations that respects the right to hold different political views and have different political party affiliation and still be a member in our beloved community. One need not be a Democrat or a Republican or of another political party to be a Unitarian Universalist. The pledge I have made is as follows:

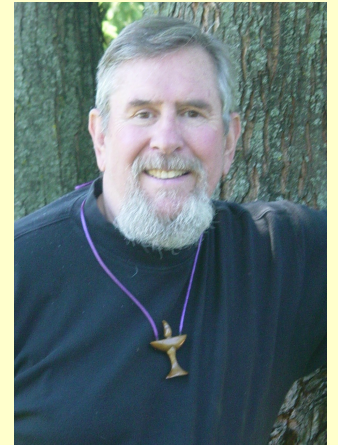
- * To educate members of our congregation about how our faith relates to issues of the day.
- * To refrain from endorsing any candidate, either explicitly or implicitly, in or on behalf of our house of worship.
- * To prevent partisan speech from candidates or their surrogates, as well as the distribution of partisan materials, in our house of worship.
- * To resist using or soliciting the resources of our house of worship for the exclusive benefit of any candidate or party.
- * To respect candidates whose religious beliefs are different from my own, and stand against the use of religion to divide our communities.
- * To encourage members of our congregation to take an active role in civic life, including casting informed votes.

This pledge already has been signed by some of America's most prominent clergy, including:

- * The Rev. Dr. Joel Hunter - Senior Pastor, Northland Church (Longwood, Florida)
- * Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein - Senior Rabbi, Central Synagogue (New York, New York)
- * The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori - Presiding Bishop, Episcopal Church
- * The Rev. William G. Sinkford - President, Unitarian Universalist Association
- * Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed - National Director, Islamic Society of North America

WHAT IS THE INTERFAITH ALLIANCE?

The Interfaith Alliance celebrates religious freedom by championing individual rights, promoting policies that protect both religion and democracy, and uniting diverse voices to challenge extremism.



BELIEFS

- * We believe that religious freedom is a foundation for American democracy.
- * We believe that individual rights and matters of personal conscience must be held sacred.
- * We believe that religious and political extremists are a threat to individual liberty and democracy.
- * We believe that celebrating religious and cultural difference is the way to achieve a vibrant community.

HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Interfaith Alliance is the only national interfaith organization dedicated to protecting the integrity of both religion and democracy in America. We stand for faith and freedom.

- * National Policy – We promote legislation that protects the boundaries between religion and government, so that politics doesn't infringe on

your faith and matters of faith don't infringe on your freedom.

* Grass-Roots Activism – Our local affiliates mobilize individuals on the grass-roots level to make a difference in their own communities. We offer a forum to challenge bigotry and defend religious freedom on local issues, including candidate education, religion in the public sphere, and interfaith relations.

* Election – We help religious leaders and politicians navigate the boundary between politics and religion in a way that safeguards the separation of church and state.

* Education – We facilitate interfaith dialogue to enhance mutual understanding and respect for religious differences.

WHY IT MATTERS

As religion plays an increasingly prominent role in American politics, preserving the boundary between religion and government is more vital than ever. The Interfaith Alliance works to ensure that faith and freedom flourish so that individuals can worship freely or not worship at all, so they can embrace matters of personal conscience without fear of government intrusion, and so that all can live in a vibrant, healthy society.

HISTORY

The Interfaith Alliance was created in 1994 to celebrate religious freedom and to challenge the bigotry and hatred arising from religious and political extremism infiltrating American politics. Today, The Interfaith Alliance has 185,000 members across the country made up of 75 faith traditions as well as those of no faith tradition. To learn more about the Interfaith Alliance go to their website: www.interfaithalliance.org.

I hope you will observe with me in this election season the principles embedded in the beliefs of the Interfaith Alliance of guarding religious freedom and opposing the tyranny of religious and political extremism and can agree with me that they are closely connected to what our Unitarian Universalist principles are founded on: freedom of conscience, tolerance, reason, and truth as they bear on matters of religion and faith.

Glad to be journeying with you,

Rev. Ralph

DENOMINATIONAL NEWS

THE CRADLE CLUB

The UU-UNO is requesting that all UU congregations participate in the Cradle Club program again this year to show their concern and generosity to those not as fortunate as we, while also sharing in the successful implementation of United Nations Millennium Goals # 4 (to reduce child mortality) and # 5 (to improve maternal health). To do this, the UU-UNO has joined forces with The Southwest Indian Relief Council to provide baskets of baby supplies to Native American mothers of newborns who have attended 75% of their prenatal appointments and at least two parenting classes. Since its start a few years ago, the "Cradle Club" has increased prenatal care from 20 to 80% in some areas of the southwest.

Congregations are being asked to collect new supplies for these baskets. Donations can be as small as a single pacifier, thus giving all members, regardless of financial ability, a chance to participate. We will have a box or other container at Prairie beginning on October 26th with the UN-Sunday service and continue soliciting gifts until Thanksgiving, after which we will mail our supplies to Arizona, where the baskets will be made up and delivered. Begin looking now for items to purchase and donate, so you can take advantage of any sales which come up. All merchandise must be new--no used or hand-me-down items-- and must be appropriate for infants living in the hot, desert climate of the American Southwest (no snowsuits, please). For those for whom shopping would be a burden, cash would help a lot with the shipping costs (which can be substantial). As examples of what can be contributed, the following was sent by Prairie in 2006: cotton swabs, cotton panties, nasal aspirators, teething rings, pacifiers, bottle brushes, stuffed animals, baby bottles, travel cups, babyview car mirror, washcloth sets, waterproof crib sheets, thermal crib blanket, Carters sleep and play suits, baby wipes, and baby oil. Not

listed, but also needed are baby towels, some food items, baby aspirin, band-aids, eating implements, booties, socks, playsuits, nightclothes, rubber / plastic waterproof panties, etc.

Additional information can be found on the UU-UNO website--www.uu-uno.org or by contacting Vera Cunningham at 230-3367.

Pat Watkins, Denominational Affairs Chair

WHAT IS ASSOCIATION SUNDAY?

Association Sunday 2008, which will be held on October 12th, is a day to celebrate our Unitarian Universalist heritage. All across the United States, UU congregations will be celebrating this day with a

service focused around this year's theme: "Growing Our Spirit." A special collection will be taken to support the work of the UUA.

FUNDRAISING FOR TENNESSEE UU CHURCH

Prairie UU Society raised \$230 to support the Knoxville Relief Fund, established in the wake of the tragedy which struck the Knoxville, Tennessee church in August, 2008.

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>

“FINAL CHOICES” Workshop Series: October-November

Sponsored by the Prairie UU Caring Committee

A free series of 3 workshops on “Final Choices” related to making end-of-life decisions will be offered this fall to Prairie members and friends. The goal of the workshops is to help each of us thoughtfully plan for our own and/or our parents’ end of life. We hope the workshops will provide valued information related to this topic in a friendly and trusting setting of our Prairie congregation.

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Estate Planning and Checklist

Advance Directives: Power of Attorney/Financial and Health Care

Declaration to Physicians

Hospice

The Right to Die

Choosing a Funeral Home

Choosing the Disposition of Your Body (Embalm, Cremate, Donations, etc.)

Memorial or Funeral Service Planning Decisions

Guidelines for Final Arrangements by Survivors

The sessions will be held 7:00-9:00 p.m. **Tuesdays, October 21 and 28, and November 11** at Prairie UU.

If you are interested in taking part in this workshop series, **please return your response to Aileen Nettleton, Caring Committee, by Sunday, September 28. Bring your form to Prairie or** E-mail: aanett@execpc.com; Phone: 608-238-6053; Mail: 645 Sheldon St., Madison, WI, 53711.

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_____ Yes, I will participate in the Final Choices Workshop Series.

_____ I will need a ride.

Name(s) _____ Address _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

Topics I have experience with and would be willing to share in a workshop (see list above):

Recommendations from positive experiences-- lawyers, physicians, funeral homes, crematoria, cemeteries:

