



PRAIRIE FIRE

"As the prairie stretches out until it becomes one with the sky, let us reach out to touch and be one with the natural world and with one another."

October 19, 2008



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

Minister: Rev. Ralph Tyksinski
minister@uuprairie.org; 873-6041

Youth Coordinator: Rebecca Malke-Eliganti
youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org 695-3435

Editor: Kate Liu
admin@uuprairie.org; 271-8218

President: Rachel Long
(608) 328-4899

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, October 19th

9:00 am – Choir Rehearsal
*10:00 am – service - "Growing our Spirit,"
presented by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski.
11:45 am – Prairie Board Meeting.
*7:00 pm – Meditation.

Tuesday, October 21st

6:30 pm – Final Choices Workshop begins.

Thursday, October 23rd

*7:00 pm – Movie Group will view "Sicko."

Sunday, October 26th

9:00 am – Choir Rehearsal
*10:00 am – service - "A Spiritual and Humanistic
Approach to the United Nations Universal
Declaration of Human Rights," presented by Pat
Watkins.
*11:45 am – Prairie Potluck Lunch.
*7:00 pm – Meditation.

Tuesday, October 28th

*1:00 pm – Prairie Elders meets at Prairie.
6:30 pm – Final Choices Workshop 2nd session.

Thursday, October 30th

*6:00 pm – Spanish Potluck.

Saturday, November 1st

* 9:00 am – New Member Orientation
* 5:00 pm – Fall Frolic begins

Sunday, November 2nd

9:00 am – Choir Rehearsal
*10:00 am – service - "Day of the Dead,"
presented by Dorothy Krause.
*12 noon – Humanist Union meets.
*7:00 pm – Meditation.

Wednesday, November 5th

Evening Board Meeting, time TBA.

Sunday, November 9th

9:00 am – Choir Rehearsal
*10:00 am – service - "Mending Fences, Building
Bridges," presented by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski.
*11:45 am – Fall Parish Meeting and potluck.
*7:00 pm – Meditation.

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, October 19

"Growing Our Spirit" - presented by Ralph Tyksinski, Consulting Minister.

This will be the second Association Sunday that Prairie will observe. On this day, we will be having a special collection to raise funds to support projects focused on deepening our Shared Ministry. I will be exploring the ways that Prairie gains from being a member congregation of the UUA. Its title is meant to inspire "Growing Our Spirit". The following specific initiatives were chosen based on a survey of Unitarian Universalist leaders—to which over 1,828 responded—whose 1st and 2nd priorities are represented in this plan.

50% of the funds raised for Association Sunday 2008 will support Lay Theological Education programs : Congregations, districts, and seminaries will have the opportunity to apply for grants to create programs which focus on spiritual and theological deepening. Specific Details: Preference will be given to programs which have a strong lay theological education component, that have built on an idea that has a proven track record of success, and that involve more than one UU congregation or entity.

50% of the funds raised for Association Sunday 2008 will be divided equally among the following Excellence in Ministry programs:

- 1)The Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association new initiatives for continuing education programs for ordained leaders through their CENTER programs.
- 2)Scholarships for promising students preparing for our ministry.

Sunday, October 26

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.

Sunday, November 2

"Day of the Dead," presented by Dorothy Krause. The ancient tradition of Mexico returns and captures our imagination for the annual Day of the Dead observance at Prairie. Please bring a memento of a friend or loved one who is now deceased... a photo, an object, a letter. (Take it back home with you after the service.)

This year we will hold a potluck after the service, with a meal remembering our honored dead. In planning what dish to prepare for the potluck, consider bringing something favored by the people you are honoring. As you are preparing your dish, keep in mind your memories of your loved ones and allow the energy of that relationship to meld with the ingredients of the dish. That will, in turn, nourish our soul/essence/spirit/? as well as our bodies.

Sunday, November 9

"Mending Fences, Building Bridges," presented by Ralph Tyksinski, Consulting Minister. Following the results of the November 4 election for President, it will be my task to address how we can begin "binding up the wounds" of the country inflicted from the political battles that have been waged in the past eighteen months. We explore how people with differing political beliefs and people with different religious faiths and beliefs can live together in a free society.

Sunday, November 16

"Facing Death," presented by Jean Feraca.

All of us face death, both the death of loved ones and of ourselves. It's a universal. Facing death is usually difficult, but it is also often life-changing in a very positive way.



In her recent book I Hear Voices: A Memoir of Love, Death, and Radio, author and Wisconsin Public Radio host Jean Feraca shares her experiences in facing the death of two close family members - her

brother and her mother. They are moving essays. Jean will speak about some of these experiences and read excerpts from those essays during our November 16 service called "Facing Death." We can look forward to a service that will contain both humor and insight. One might even be able to take away some pointers. As always, there will be time at the end of the service to ask questions and share experiences.

Longtime WPR listeners are probably quite familiar with Jean Feraca. Since 2003 she has hosted her weekend WPR show "Here on Earth," a program meant "to galvanize our international world community" and based on Jimmy Carter's Nobel Prize acceptance speech in which he said, "The bond of our common humanity is stronger than the divisiveness of our fears and prejudices." For the 13 years before "Here on Earth," she was host and co-producer of the award-winning call-in news and cultural affairs program "Conversations with Jean Feraca." Feraca has also published several books of poetry. A native of New York, she has been with WPR since 1983.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

FALL FROLIC NOVEMBER 1

An evening social event for our young people and their invited guests, will begin at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 1.

Dinner and fun activities for all ages take place that evening. Older children have the option to spend the night at Prairie.

Sunday morning's service will feature a halloween costume parade.



SERVICE SUNDAY; LEAF RAKING

On Sunday, November 16. During the Prairie service, our young people will rake leaves for neighbors who can use a little help.

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

OUR SOCIETY

VERONA ROAD CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT MEETING

The Wisconsin DOT has been analyzing a number of different solutions for the heavy traffic problems that exist on Verona Road from Nakoma Road to County PD. Any of the options that they might choose to change the traffic patterns on Verona Road will have an impact on Prairie and the surrounding neighborhood. On Tuesday, October 21st, the DOT will hold a meeting for businesses in the affected corridor (which does include us) at 6:00 pm at the Boys and Girls Club gymnasium, 4705 Jenewein Rd. to discuss the options under consideration for both interim and long term solutions, costs of various plans, and access to local businesses. Additional information is available on the DOT website at www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/d1/verona/index.htm.

MOVIE GROUP

The Movie Group will meet at Prairie, 7:00, Thursday, October 23rd to view "Sicko." "Sicko" is a 2007 documentary film by filmmaker Michael Moore that investigates the American health care system, focusing on its health insurance and pharmaceutical industry. The film compares the for-profit, non-universal U.S. system with the non-profit Universal Health Care systems of Canada, the United Kingdom, France and Cuba. "Sicko" opened to positive reviews, but also generated criticism and controversy. Some policy specialists have praised the film while others have criticized the film for its positive portrayal of the publicly funded health systems of Canada, the United Kingdom and Cuba, and for its negative portrayal of the health care system in the United States. "Sicko" was made on a budget of approximately \$9 million, and grossed \$24.5 million theatrically in the United States. This box office result met the official expectation of The Weinstein Company, which hoped for a gross in line with "Bowling for Columbine" 's \$21.5 million US box office gross. (Credit to Wikipedia for the information.)

The film starts at 7:00. Bring snacks to share.

POTLUCK ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26

Back by popular demand, Prairie will have an all-society, all-generations, all-comers potluck after the service on October 26. The Hospitality and Membership Committee is responding to one of the requests that came out of our recent strategic planning process--to have more regular, scheduled potlucks. Please bring a dish to share--a main dish, a salad dish, bread, fruit and a dessert are the usual offerings. Also expect to lend a hand in setting up or cleaning up on that day.

MEDITATION AT PRAIRIE

The first meditation of the fall took place on September 14. Paula Pachciarz led a Buddhist meditation on the Six Principles (earth, fire, water, air, space, consciousness). Prairie Meditators meet every Sunday evening at 7 p.m. for approximately 30 minutes. The originating purpose of the group was to provide a space and time both for those looking to continue ongoing meditation practice, and for those interested in trying meditation for the first time. There is no set format to the sessions: they can be guided; they can be silent; participants may listen to a tape or CD. All Prairie members and friends are invited to join us on Sunday evening. Pillows and mats are provided, or you may bring your own.

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEETS ON OCTOBER 28

PRAIRIE ELDERS: Prairie Elders meets Tuesday, October 28, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Prairie meeting house. (Note the location change!) Or come at 1:00 for informal conversation. Newcomers are welcome. Call the contacts below for directions or a ride.

OCTOBER TOPIC: Barack Obama's book The Audacity of Hope. Those who don't have an opportunity to read the book may wish to discuss it with someone who has, search for reviews on the web or just come and glean from others' comments. Our "round robin" format allows all participants to express their opinions and people with limited hearing to fully participate. Typically 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.

THANK-YOUS LONG OVERDUE

It is gratifying to hear from many visitors that they find Prairie warm and welcoming. All of us can take credit for helping to provide such a hospitable atmosphere because we are genuinely interested in visitors and we seek them out to talk to after the service. However, the Hospitality and Membership Committee would like to offer special thanks to recent volunteers who have come early or stayed late to make sure the coffee got made, that the visitors were greeted at the door, and that the clutter of cups and coffee makings were washed up.

Thank you, Phoenix Wardell, for the enormous amount of time you spend cleaning up in the kitchen. You not only get it done, but you make sure it's done right.

Thank you, Rose Smith. More often than not you are one of those gracing the greeting table on Sunday morning. Your smiling face and sincere welcome put visiting adults and children immediately at ease.

Thank you, Gordon and Vera Cunningham, Dave and Marcia Johnson, Dorothy Krause, and Karleen Tyksinski. Some of us do worship at the coffee pot and your making sure the brew is ready in time is greatly appreciated by many. (And Dave and Marcia don't even drink the stuff!)

Thank you, Elizabeth Macasaet, Karleen Tyksinski, Ralph Tyksinski, Kate Liu, Anne Lundin, and Galen Smith for Sunday morning hospitality.

Thank you, Ruth Calden and Amy Armstrong for greeting people on Sunday morning and for helping with important follow up. We get many visitors during the summer and it was a great relief knowing we could rely on you.

Thank you, Jean Matos and Robyn Perrin for cleaning up in the kitchen. We appreciate your being so reliable in doing what is often a thankless task. And thanks to Randy Converse and Bark Park, who often pitch in when they didn't sign up for the job.

Thank you, John and Mary Franz for sharing the bounty from your flower garden to beautify the meeting room.

We apologize for not including the names of others who have helped out this summer on Sunday morning. We did not keep all the sign-up sheets so can not include all who pitched in when it was needed.

The Hospitality and Membership Committee

SPANISH POTLUCK

Thursday October 30th at 6 pm there is a Prairie Spanish Potluck with a special invite to all Prairie members and the general public. Following the potluck, Pat Wright and Dave Ranney will speak. They have recently returned from a 10 day fact finding trip to Bolivia, where they talked to both critics and supporters of the government and met with community groups and government officials engaged in housing, economic and community development efforts. During the last two years they have also visited Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru. While in Bolivia they witnessed violent activities challenging the democratically elected government of Evo Morales who expelled the U.S. Ambassador who he accused of aiding a coup. The expulsion of Ambassador Philip Goldberg has been supported by the Presidents of Peru, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela. They will report on their observations and show some slides and then lead a discussion of U. S. foreign policy in Latin America.

ORIENTATION TO PRAIRIE, NOVEMBER 1

We are holding our fall orientation on Saturday, November 1st, and we invite anyone who is interested in getting to know us better, or in becoming Members. The orientation begins at 9 and will end at 12 noon. We provide a substantial brunch, and child care if needed.

The orientation includes several topics we think

are key to getting to know who we are: social action projects that Prairie people put their energy into; a condensed history of Unitarian Universalism; what use donations and pledges are put to; a tour of the building and grounds; Prairie's identity and vision. The heart of the orientation, however, is the time we set aside to share our personal journeys, where we are in our individual quests for a meaningful life or spiritual fulfillment.

Participation in the orientation does not mean that we expect you to join Prairie. We provide orientations two to three times a year to give people an opportunity to get to know us, and to answer any questions they may have. Some participants do go on to become Members; some stay Friends indefinitely, some decide that Prairie is not a good fit for them.

Please let me know if you are interested in attending. You are also welcome to bring other adult family members or friends.

Thank you,
Paula Pachciarz
Chair, Hospitality and Membership
273-4806

HUMANIST UNION TO HOST ANNIE LAURIE GAYLOR

On Nov. 2nd the Humanist Union will have a well known guest speaker, Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-president of the Freedom From Religion Foundation and co-host of Freethought Radio on Air America. She will be addressing the timely topic of politics and religion. Everyone interested in this important subject is encouraged to attend. We will start with our usual noon potluck, followed by Annie Laurie's presentation and discussion from 12:30 to 1:30 pm.

PRAIRIE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY FALL PARISH MEETING, NOVEMBER 9, 2008 11:45 A.M.

Our fall Parish Meeting is set for Sunday 11/9 at 11:45, preceded by a potluck lunch. Watch for several items by email ahead of the meeting, with written reports available at Prairie. You should receive a description of the activities of Prairie's committees on the last half year, an update on the strategic plan,

a slate of nominees for open Prairie positions, and the final agenda for the meeting. Plan to come!

Agenda:

1. Approval of May 4, 2008 Parish Meeting minutes
2. Approval of Strategic plan through 2009
3. Green Sanctuary Committee
4. Adult Religious Education Task Force
5. Election of vacated, completed, and new positions
 - Treasurer
 - Communications Committee Chair
 - Finance Chair
 - Youth Board Member
 - Green Sanctuary Committee Chair
 - Adult RE Task Force Chair
6. Formation of a growth fund
7. Funds for consultants regarding our building
8. Committee reports (written, emailed ahead)
9. Plan how we should change bylaws in the future
10. Re-authorize budget for the rest of the 08-09 fiscal year
11. Distribution of new Board and Committee policies (written and emailed ahead)

Rachel Long, President

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Come to Prairie's Pretty Good Pancake Breakfast!

On Saturday, November 15, 8:30-10:30 Prairie will welcome members, friends, and neighbors to a pancake breakfast superb! The menu of pancakes, sausage (meat and soy), fruit, and homemade breads, along with coffees (real and decaf), tea, cocoa and juice will get your day started in a most de-li-cious way! The meeting room will be glowing with autumnal hues and there will be live music while you eat and socialize. What a great way to begin the day and support this fund raising effort. Some other events such as a bake sale, face painting and a raffle are in the planning. Stay tuned for more news about the breakfast, but mark the date on your calendar now. Thank you!

How you can help:

- #1 - Come to the breakfast!
- #2 - Volunteer to help out that morning.
- #3 - Musical? Volunteer to play the piano or

another instrument for a 20 or 30 minute period that morning.

- #4 - Contribute a fruit salad.
- #5 - Contribute Pumpkin Bread.

There will be a sign up for volunteers, but you may also email Karleen at [mkt214\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:mkt214(at)gmail.com) or phone at 608-873-6041. Other committee members are Amy Armstrong, Kris Long, Paula Pachciarz and Mary Somers.

NEW MEMBERS

Prairie just keeps growing. Kate Franzmann and Brian Simmert joined in July and have been frequent attenders at Prairie, along with their children Luna, Greine and Zema (and a fourth on the way!). Robyn Perrin recently signed the book, but she has been very active in the RE program since last fall, and is currently a teacher in her daughter Ellie's class. We are delighted to have these wonderful families officially join our community. Be sure to check upcoming issues of the Prairie Fire for more in-depth profiles of these newest members.

REV. RALPH'S RUMINATIONS

With the international crisis in the financial world deepening day by day

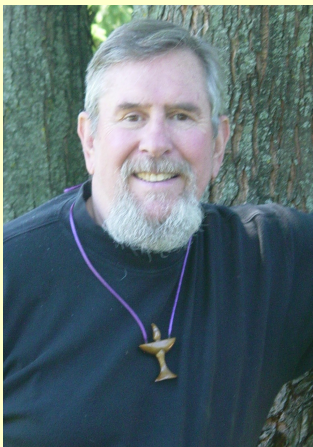


many of us are deeply concerned about very close-to-home realities (emptying food pantries are now being reported almost daily!). Many of us are wondering how this state of affairs will effect our lives. "How deep will this impact my retirement investments?" "What changes in my daily living will I have to make to meet the dark predictions of a devalued economy?"

While our thoughts and thinking can be stressed by these questions we must allow time and attention for interpretations of our world to give us deeper and more enduring meanings. Annie Dillard, in her book Teaching a Stone to Talk writes: "We are here on the planet only once, and might as well get a feel for the place. We might as well get a feel for the fringes and hollows in which life is lived . . . "

There is more than one way to get a feel for the place we are currently living in. These are times with jagged fringes and dark hollows. Events happening today are much like the ride on a roller coaster. As a kid growing up in Chicago I used to visit Riverview, a large amusement park on Western Avenue. There were several roller coaster rides in the park, from mild intensity (The Greyhound) to the wildly exciting (The Bobs). We can imagine ourselves today riding in the first car of a roller coaster, unknown tomorrows before us (election of Obama-Biden or McCain-Palin), the grimmest realities of an economic depression. We begin to ascend up slowly toward the first high peak of track, and before racing down into the depths of unknown fears and sensations there is the brief suspension of time and motion. In that instant we are suspended between past and future. The point of no return is coming. And yet there is more than one way to get a feel for this place we find ourselves in today.

As Unitarian Universalists we can take some comfort in believing that there are different ways to interpret the world that allows reasoning women and men opportunities to discover from their experience of the world some meaningful coherence. One may, then, investigate the world as it actually is for clues to a reality that is not immediately apparent. As we are getting a feel for the place of October-November 2008 we are more aware than ever that the place we are living is more like a place of quaking uncertainties rather than a place of calming platitudes of assurances (i.e., sound fundamentals are in place!).



Hopefully, in days and weeks ahead our Prairie community can serve for each of us as a place that is welcoming, caring, and affirming of our deepest values and purposes. Let us, as a liberal religious congregation, stay connected, combine our talents and skills, and travel the “roller coaster” days ahead of us with courage and steadfastness in our vision and bond of union. Let us continue to allow Prairie to be a sanctuary for us all. In the sense that Elie Wiesel describes: “Sanctuary is often something very small. Not ...grandiose, but a small gesture toward

alleviating human suffering, and preventing humiliation. The sanctuary is a human being. Sanctuary is a dream. And that is why you are here and that is why I am here. We are here because of one another. We are in truth each other’s shelter.”

Glad to be “sheltering” with you,
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 Millenium 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 tylenol, 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

FIRST SOCIETY TO DEDICATE CAMPUS

Celebration Weekend, November 14–16

The main event of the weekend, for us at First Unitarian Society, is the Saturday Dedication service at 4:30 p.m. This will be a grand celebration of our accomplishment as a community in completing this lovely new facility, our future potential as a place for spiritual growth, and as advocates for justice in the Madison area and beyond. Robert Fulghum (author of [All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten](#)) is generously coming to Madison for the entire weekend to help us celebrate during this official dedication of our new facilities. He is a retired UU minister, and one of the great inspirational speakers of our time. He will speak at this service,

as will Michael Schuler. There will also be a performance of "A New Leaf," a choral work by Stephen Paulus, which was specially commissioned for the dedication. There will be childcare available, and a reception will follow.

The first event of the weekend will be a lecture by Fulghum at the historic Orpheum Theatre downtown on State Street. This will be on Friday, November 14, at 7:30 p.m., and will be open and promoted to the public. You can buy tickets at http://www.fusmadison.org/fulghum_docs/ticket-info-form.shtml or at the information kiosk after services at First Unitarian Society. This is a lecture unlike any lecture you've ever been to, with Fulghum's wit and wisdom accompanied by fiddler extraordinaire Barbara Lamb.

On Sunday morning we will have services at the regular times, with a coffee hour between them. Robert Fulghum will speak at both of these services as well. Following the second service we will host an open house for the greater Madison community from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Tours and refreshments will be available to our guests.

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>