



Prairie Fire

August 22, 2009

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News

The full-featured **Prairie Fire** is published on the 22nd of every month. The **Prairie Fire Bulletin** is a calendar-only newsletter that is published on the 6th of every month. Both are published by Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. View past issues at www.uuprairie.org

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Calendar

Sunday, August 23, 2009

10:00 am - "Elements of Nature," an intergenerational service presented by Rev. Selena Fox.

11:45 am - Prairie Book Club meets to discuss Harbor Lights by Sherryl Woods.

Tuesday, August 25, 2009

2:00 pm - Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood. Topic: protecting civil discussion in health care reform.

Wednesday, August 26, 2009

7:00 pm - Program Committee meets at Prairie.

Saturday, August 29, 2009

9:00 am - noon - New Member Orientation.

Sunday, August 30, 2009

10:30 am - service - "Ingathering and Water Ceremony," presented by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski.

12:00 noon: Summer Splash RE Pool Party.

Tuesday, September 1, 2009

6:00 pm - Long Range Planning Committee meets.

Saturday, September 5, 2009

8:00 am – 12 noon: UU Blood Drive at JRUUC. Contact Gordon Cunningham for details.

9:00 am - Prairie WOW group meets for breakfast potluck at Prairie.

Sunday, September 6, 2009

10:00 am – service - "Labor Day: Key Issues Facing Workers Under the Obama Administration," presented by Prof. Frank Emspak.

11:45 am - Humanist Union meets for a picnic at Marlborough Park. Rain location: Prairie UU.

Sunday, September 13, 2009

10:00 am – service - "Honoring Your Elders," presented by Erin Bosch and Rebecca Malke.

11:45 am - Prairie Board meeting & potluck.

Tuesday, September 15, 2009

6:30 pm - Spanish Speaker's Potluck at the home of Mary and Andy Somers.

Wednesday, September 16, 2009

7:00 pm - Program Committee meets at Prairie.

Upcoming Sunday Programs

Sunday, August 23, 2009, 10:00 am "Elements of Nature," presented by Rev. Selena Fox. In this intergenerational service, learn about wisdom, lore, and traditions of communing with Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Spirit and their relationship with dimensions of life, Body, Mind, Vitality, Emotions, and Soul. Explore ways of working with the Elements for personal and planetary well-being and to deepen rapport with the greater Circle of Nature. Rev. Selena Fox is Senior Minister of Circle Sanctuary which serves Nature religion practitioners worldwide and which is headquartered at Circle Sanctuary Nature Preserve near Barneveld, Wisconsin. Selena travels internationally in connection with her work, which includes teaching, writing, and facilitating Nature spirituality experiences. She also is a counselor and spiritual psychotherapist, with a MS in counseling from the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

Prairie Web Sites:

Society Home Page
www.uuprairie.org

News Group
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairie_news/

Views
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairie_views/

Social Action
<http://socialaction.madisonwi.us>

Humanist Union
<http://humanist.madisonwi.us>

Input Deadlines:

Calendar items and program descriptions are due on the 1st and 15th of each month. Feature articles for the full *Prairie Fire* are due on the 15th of each month. Please send to Kate Liu at admin@uuprairie.org or call 271-8218.

Sunday, August 30, 2009 10:00 am - "Ingathering and Water Ceremony," presented by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski. On this Sunday we begin our new program year. We'll have a kickoff parade with our Religious Education teachers and children. Our worship program will also include a ritual of ingathering: the Water Ceremony. Please bring to the service a small container of water (small because we'll be blending each individual collection into a common vessel) which might represent or symbolize a meaningful story, event or place from your summer weeks. The source of the water might be almost anything--let your imagination have wings. The blending of our offerings of water is symbolic of our joining ourselves in beloved community to begin a new program year at Prairie UU Society. Come and let us celebrate together.

Sunday, September 6, 2009, 10:00 am - "Our Challenge: Building Decent Jobs and a Just Society," presented by Prof. Frank Emspak. Every aspect of family life is under stress. The stress increases as income levels deteriorate. For most working people, income levels have deteriorated or remained stagnant for almost a generation. Now jobs are disappearing along with retirement income and employer based health insurance. What to do about these trends and the role that unions could play will be the focus. Frank Emspak is the Executive Producer of WIN Workers Independent News, (WIN), which is a news service focused on the issues and concerns of working people. He is the former President of United Faculty and Academic Staff Local 223 AFT-W, and retired from the School for Workers UWEX. He is also a former machinist and union officer IUE Local 201- Lynn MA.(1976-1987), and holds a PhD in History from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Sunday, September 13, 2009 "Honoring Your Elders: Celebrating Grandparent's Day," presented by Erin Bosch and Rebecca Malke-Eliganti. This service will explore the special relationships between those of grandparent age and those much younger. These bonds can form even if there are no actual blood ties, and come with their own joys and challenges.

Sunday, September 20, 2009 "How Gen X Ministers are Changing Unitarian Universalism," presented by Erik David Carlson. Erik will present on how technology is affecting ministry and how ministry affects technology within Unitarian Universalism and society at large. Erik's experience as a technology provider and religious leader within the UU community affords a unique perspective on how we as religious liberals look at technology in the 21st Century. Erik David Carlson is a Meadville Lombard graduate and a candidate for the UU ministry. Erik served three New Orleans area congregations as ministerial intern during the 2007-08 academic year. Erik is recognized as an expert in ministry and technology and was a featured essayist in the 2007 Jenkin Lloyd Jones publication *Reverend X: How Generation X Ministers are Shaping Unitarian Universalism*.



Religious Education News

Last weekend we had our annual Summer Spree event. We had to cancel it for July so this was a shorter version of the event but just as fun. Students in 6th grade and up attended the event which included games at the park, miniature golf at Vitense Golf and then camping at Prairie. We all enjoyed grilling hot dogs and brats and then later roasted marshmallows for some very tasty s'mores. Many thanks to Erin Bosch, Bob and Ian Park and Paula Pachciarz for volunteering. I'd also like to thank Dan and Robin Proud for making breakfast the following morning.

There will be an orientation for RE teachers and substitutes on Sunday, Aug 23, after service. Anyone who is interested in being a helper during the year is also invited. Lunch will be served. Any teachers who can't attend on that date should let Robin Proud know to be sure you get all the necessary information. Thanks to all the dedicated teachers and helpers.

Religious education classes are almost here! Sunday, August 30th will be the start of the 2009-10 religious education year. RE registration will begin at 9 a.m. This is a time for parents to sign-up their child(ren) for classes, go over behavior policies with their child and sign themselves up for various duties throughout the RE year. It is important to get to Prairie early to register your child since we have a lot more families this year.

Classes will begin at 10 a.m. but before we start class students will line up outside to take part in a parade led by two bagpipers. The procession will lead into the church where families will be the first to take part in our ingathering service. Afterwards students will be led downstairs for their own water ceremony.

RE youth will meet their new teachers and classmates, play icebreaker games and take part in a dedication ceremony for our new RE space. The painted walls and soon to be new floors will be recognized with songs and readings.



The morning will end with our annual Summer Splash family pool party. More information will be posted on our web site, which is www.uuprairie.org/re

It's been a great summer and I look forward to seeing all of you and hearing about your summer vacations!

Rebecca Malke-Eliganti
Youth Religious Education Coordinator

Our Society

Prairie Elders Meet August 25th

Prairie people over 65 are invited to the PRAIRIE ELDERS meeting Tuesday, August 25. Prairie Elders aims to provide good times and mutual support for Prairie UU Members and Friends over 65. Current participants range from age 65 to 90-something. We welcome other UUs who live in the facility where we meet. Informal conversation begins at 1:30 pm, more formal discussion is from 2:00-4:00. Location details are below. Newcomers are always welcome.

This month's topic is protecting civil discussion at town hall meetings on health care reform. There are ways U.U. seniors, as we are able, can promote civil discussion on health care options and defend "the use of the democratic process in society at large." Bring your knowledge and your suggestions to the August meeting.

Our "round robin" format gives all who wish to an opportunity to speak and to hear. On any given topic there may be people who prefer just to listen. Topics alternate between general issues and personal interests.

We meet in the Nakoma Room, in the Heritage Oaks building of Oakwood Village West. You can park in front or underneath the building. You may bring snacks to share if you wish, and please bring your own beverage cup. Call contacts below for directions or a ride.

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

Humanist Union News - Fall Family Picnic Open Invitation

On Sunday Sept. 6 (Labor Day weekend) the Humanist Union of Madison is planning a fall family picnic in Marlborough Park to which it is inviting the Madison Skeptics, the Madison Brights, the FUS Doubters Group and all greater Madison area free thinkers, humanists, skeptics, nonbelievers, agnostics, atheists, and their friends and families. This includes everyone at Prairie, so if you do not have other plans that weekend, please join us. If the weather cooperates, we plan to start the picnic at noon in and near the park picnic shelter. If it rains we will picnic indoors at Prairie, starting at 11:45 am. Bring your own food and beverage, or plan on joining Humanist Union folks in our usual potluck approach to food.

Spanish Speaker's Potluck

The next Spanish Speaker's potluck will be Tuesday, September 15th at 6:30 pm at the home of Mary and Andy Somers, 4467 Crescent Road in Fitchburg. Please call the Somers at 276-8397 for directions, or Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382 for more information.

Adult Education at Prairie UU Society Announces Fall 2009 Offerings

Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society is pleased to be offering an array of classes and workshops this Fall designed to challenge and inspire adult learners on the journey of intellectual curiosity, spiritual exploration, moral development, faith formation, deepening of on-going social relationships, cultural arts and enrichment, and other learning opportunities to strengthen your involvement in our Prairie Community. What follows below is an outline of classes that will be offered. A complete brochure and registration form will be available at Prairie Society and on the web shortly.

Want to Learn More About Unitarian Universalism?

A beginning session: "Sharing Our Faith," Sunday, October 4, 11:45-12:30, followed by two additional gatherings to learn more: "Introduction to Unitarian Universalism," Sundays - Oct. 11 & 18 11:45 – 12:30 pm. Leader: Rev. Ralph Tyksinski.

Building Your Own Theology (Part I)

Four Tuesday Evenings from 7:00 – 9:30 pm, Oct. 13, Oct. 20, Nov. 10, Nov.17
Leader: Rev. Ralph Tyksinski

Building Your Own Theology (Part II)

Four Tuesday evenings beginning in February 2010



Menu for the Future

The Green Sanctuary Committee will be presenting this six-session course exploring the connection between food and sustainability. Developed by the Northwest Earth Institute.

First session will be offered in late Fall or early in the Winter 2010. (Dates and time to be announced)

Church of the Larger Fellowship Online Courses

Individuals can access the Church of the Larger Fellowship's Online Learning Center, an educational facility that provides courses designed to serve a variety of people—from complete newcomers to Unitarian Universalism who want to learn more about our liberal faith to long-time CLF members who are hoping to deepen their spiritual and ethical lives. Web site: <http://clf.uua.org/re/>

Spanish Conversation Group

6 Sessions, September 13 & 27, October 10 & 24, and November 1 & 15; all Sundays except October 24th which is at the retreat. Leader: Marcia Johnson.

Ingrid West

Adult Education Chair

Prairie Family Fall Retreat, October 23-25, 2009

This fall, the weekend of October 23rd will be the date of Prairie's fall retreat. For the first time, our retreat will be at Pine Lake, in a beautiful, wooded area about a 1 ½ hour drive north of Madison. The website for the camp is <http://www.wisconsinumc.org/PineLake/>, if you would like to see some pictures. The registration form for the retreat will be available in the September 22nd Prairie Fire as well as at the meeting house. If you have any questions, please contact me, Phyllis Long, or Robin Proud, who has agreed to be our registrar again this year. Hope to see you all there!

Phyllis Long, Retreat Program Coordinator
plong373(at)gmail.com, 608-325-7397

Housing and Property News

Work on the basement continues. The flooring in the entire basement will be redone with linoleum during the weeks of August 23rd and 31st. This material is a green alternative and has the benefit of not needing to be waxed. Due to the constraints of storage space, the flooring will be completed in two phases; details are below. New windows have been ordered for the basement, with installation still to be scheduled (likely in September or October).

For the flooring project, we can still use several volunteers to help move items from the classrooms and the office into the central area on Sunday, August 23, after the service. Please let Robin Proud know if you haven't yet signed up but can help. The more people we have the faster it will go.

On Saturday, August 29, starting at 1:00 p.m., we will be moving items back into the classrooms with their newly installed floors. This would especially be a good time for teachers and RE Committee members to help get things set up for the first day of classes.

The last phase of the project will involve moving items from the central area and the "couch room" into the completed areas so that the remaining area can have the new flooring installed. This will happen after service on August 30 and should be even quicker, as fewer items will be involved. Then on Saturday, September 5, at 10:00 a.m., Al Nettleton will organize the final work of moving things back to the central area.

Many thanks are due to our volunteers who came in to paint the basement. They are: Paula Pachciarz, Kathy and Randy Converse, Mary Hudson, Ralph Tyksinski, Jim Carpenter, Wayne Hammerstrom, Ruth Calden, John Eliganti, Rebecca Malke Eliganti, Susan and Rachel Herr Hoyman, and Kate Liu. Thanks are also due to Aileen Nettleton and Robyn Perrin for providing lunch, and to Katherine and Aaron Liu for washing the outside of the basement windows.

Al Nettleton, H&P Chair, aanett (at) execpc.com
Robin Proud, RE Chair, prouds (at) tds.net

Prairie UU Society Begins Yearlong Discussion of Ministerial Relationships

At the request of the Prairie Board, the Long-Range Planning Committee has begun planning for a yearlong congregational exploration of ministry and ministerial relationships, and specifically the topic of whether to call a settled minister. For those unaware of the terminology, a "settled" minister is one who enters a long-term relationship with a congregation, as contrasted with a contractual ministerial relationship that is of definite or limited-term duration. In the May 22, 2009 and July 18, 2009 Prairie Fire Newsletters, Rev. Ralph Tyksinski provided an overview of different types of ministerial-congregational relationships within Unitarian Universalism. Throughout the rest of 2009 and early 2010, we will continue learning, discussing, sharing, and envisioning our future in the context of different ministerial relationships.

The Long-Range Planning Committee has begun information-gathering, including talking with members of other congregations who have undergone similar explorations in recent years to learn from their experiences. In the coming weeks we will be focusing on several areas, including 1) becoming aware of what information we as a congregation need to have a full and healthy discussion, and 2) planning a process that will be as fully participatory as possible. To guide our efforts, the Committee has also adopted the following covenant:

To facilitate a good decision-making process for the Prairie UU congregation, members of the Long-Range Planning Committee will strive to:

- Promote transparency
- Promote inclusive participation by all members of the congregation
- Provide information by a variety of means to enable informed decision-making
- Facilitate meaningful congregational discussion
- As a committee, be neutral regarding decision outcome

We will be asking for your input in coming weeks as to the types of information about UU ministerial relationships that would be helpful for this discussion and planning events. In the meantime, please feel free to contact any of the Long-Range Planning Committee members with your thoughts. The members are Robyn Perrin (chair), Ken Skog, Aileen Nettleton, Christina Klock, and Mary Mullen.

*Robyn Perrin
Long Range Planning Chair*

Tip of the Week from the Green Committee

You can make your own environmentally friendly all-purpose cleaner. This cleaner is something you can use for just about every surface in your home, from kitchen counters and appliances to bathroom surfaces and walls. To make the cleaner, put 2 tablespoons white vinegar and 1 teaspoon borax into a 16 ounce spray bottle. Fill the rest with very hot water, and shake to blend until the borax is dissolved. Add a quarter-cup of liquid castile (vegetable based) soap after completing these steps.

-from the Environmental Task Force of UU's for Social Justice

Prairie Book Club Meets August 23rd

The Prairie Book Club meets once a month to discuss a book over potluck lunch after the service. Here are the upcoming books and the dates they will be discussed: Sunday, August 23rd, Harbor Lights by Sherryl Woods; Sunday, September 20th, 1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus, by Charles C. Mann; and Saturday, October 24th (at the retreat,) What Was She Thinking: Notes on a Scandal, by Zoe Heller.

WOW group

Prairie's Women's group, known as WOW, will meet on Saturday, September 5 at 9:00 am at Prairie for breakfast potluck and conversation. New members are always welcome. For more information or to get on the Prairie WOW email list, contact Mary Somers, 276-8397 or [marysomers44\(at\)charter.net](mailto:marysomers44(at)charter.net).

Movie Group

On Thursday, September 17th, 7:00 the Movie Group will view "When the Levees Broke" (part 1 of 3), Spike Lee's documentary on Hurricane Katrina. He combines interviews with news footage and amateur video, giving voice to the residents and asking why the events unfolded as they did. Per Netflix, "With a detached unsentimental eye, he delivers a poignant account of a major moment in recent U.S. history." The film for October 15 is "Black Narcissus." Bring snacks to share.

Membership News

New Member Orientation

New members, visitors, and Prairie UU members and friends are invited to our end-of-summer orientation on Saturday, August 29, from 9 am to noon. This is an opportunity to meet each other, get an overview of the history of Unitarian Universalism, and learn about Prairie UU's history. We will also talk about how Prairie runs, how members can contribute, and answer any of your questions about committees, schedules, why things are done they way they are done, and so on. We will have handouts, so please contact Dan Proud (661-0776) or [prouds \(at\) tds.net](mailto:prouds(at)tds.net) to let us know you will attend.

Circle Dinners to Begin

The annual Prairie Circle Dinner program is being organized! A sign-up sheet has been started at Prairie, and the Hospitality and Membership Committee will be organizing Circle Dinner groups in September. Please sign the sheet or contact Dan Proud (661-0776 or [prouds \(at\) tds.net](mailto:prouds(at)tds.net)) to indicate your interest. If you would be willing to lead a group, please indicate that. We will post groups and group leaders as soon as we can and start the dinners in the next month.

If you have not participated before, you are especially invited to sign up! Belonging to a circle dinner group is a great way to get to know Prairie folks, and the food and camaraderie is wonderful. It is not required that the group meet in your house, or that you be a gourmet cook. (I like to bring bread!)

Please look for the sign-up sheet at Prairie and put down your name, or contact Dan Proud, Hospitality and Membership Committee Chairperson, right away!!

*Dan Proud
Hospitality and Membership Chair*

Rev. Ralph's Ruminations

I was filled with gratitude and pride during our August 16, Sunday service that was presented by Rachel Long and Ingrid West. My gratitude was inspired by not only the messages that were expressed but also the enthusiasm and the energy that went beyond the words that Rachel and Ingrid used to convey them. My pride was in the fact that Prairie has reached a higher level of congregational excellence by its higher level of financial support for underwriting costs and giving its "moral support" to send two members to our General Assembly in Salt Lake City.



I want to also suggest that Prairie needs to share in another source of my gratitude and pride. It was at the **Service of the Living Tradition** on Friday, June 26, that I was honored (in absentia) as one of the forty-nine ministers receiving Final Fellowship status by the UUA Fellowship Committee. For me, this was no small achievement. It began in 1996 when I first applied for fellowship status. I can now truthfully say that since 2006 this was not only my achievement but a shared achievement with Prairie. Our traveling the path of "Shared Ministry" has made this a most remarkable journey.

Please imagine Prairie in the pronouns used in this **Litany of Affirmation** that was voiced by the hundreds who attended this service (including Rachel and Ingrid). Then may you also share in this feeling of my great gratitude and pride.

Rev. Agate: You have been tried and tested. Your call has been challenged. Your contributions to congregation and community have been examined, appraised, and measured. And you have succeeded.

All: We give thanks for your devotion and celebrate your success.

Ms. Devor: The UUA credentialing committees have scrutinized you and found you worthy. Your expertise and skill have been evaluated, accepted, and appreciated by those you have served.

All: We affirm your calling and rejoice in your achievement.

Dr. Arnold: As you stand before us tonight we name you and proclaim our confirmation of your full credentials as Unitarian Universalist ministers in Final Fellowship, Masters Level religious educators, and credentialed musicians.

All: We give thanks for your leadership and pray these blessings will be yours: growing excellence, deepening satisfaction, and profound awareness of the Spirit of life and love surrounding and upholding you always. Amen.

Karleen and I will be embarking, beginning Sept. 1st, on a month-long vacation trip to visit National Parks out west (Glacier, Yellowstone and Yosemite) and friends and family in California and Santa Fe, NM.

Thankful to be journeying with you,
Rev. Ralph

Denominational and Community News

Following up on The Omnivore's Dilemma

The All-Prairie Book Read service on Michael Pollan's [The Omnivore's Dilemma](#) (pictured to the right) led to a lot of thoughtful discussion. Were you inspired by the discussion and interested in learning more about the subject? Here are some things you can do:

*Read the follow-up book to Omnivore's Dilemma, Michael Pollan's book [In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto](#) .



*Hear Michael Pollan speak - Thursday, Sept 24, 7pm, Kohl Center, free; or Saturday, Sept 26th 10am, tent in 200 block of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. at the Food for Thought Festival

*Attend the Food for Thought Festival, Sat., Sept 26, 8am-1:30pm, 200 block of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., sponsored by REAP

*Join or give to REAP group, an organization (Research, Education, Action, and Policy on food) that is building a regional food system that is healthful, just, and both environmentally and economically sustainable.

*Take a look at the UUA website section on the Congregational Study Action Issue on Ethical Eating - <http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/issuesprocess/currentissues/ethicaleating/index.shtml>

Heidi Hughes

Denominational Affairs Chair

MUUSA

We are just back from MUUSA --Midwest U/U Summer Assembly-- at a YMCA facility near Potosi Missouri in the Ozarks, 75 miles south of St. Louis, a 6.5 hour drive from Madison. This is a new location for us, formerly for some 50 years we met at Lake Geneva. It is held annually during 4th of July week with a choice of interesting workshops, many recreational opportunities, excellent accommodations, good food (and plenty of it), separate living facilities and programs for Junior High as well as separate living and programs for Senior High. The younger kids have all day organized activities. Parents, are you listening? Quite a few YA and singles, too. The camp is on a lake with a couple of hundred acres of property. You can be as active as you wish all day...or not. Rates are reasonable. We had 375 campers this year, 46 from Wisconsin, 8 from Madison. Plenty of room for lots more. For more info, google the MUUSA website &/or call Ed Kolner (my 33rd consecutive year) or KK Anderson at 845-8257.

Interfaith Hospitality Network / The Road Home Backpack Program

Prairie is a buddy church for this wonderful organization. The Road Home gives each child in their programs a donated backpack full school supplies to start the school year off right. This year, because of their expanded programs, they have many more children who need backpacks! Please consider helping one of our kids with a successful back-to-school by purchasing a backpack and filling it with the necessary supplies. If you have a child going back to school just follow their list, or use the lists found in many stores. Please label the back pack with a grade level. Remember, middle and high-school students need backpacks, too!

Erin Bosch



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