

Prairie Fire

February 23, 2010

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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

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

2:00 pm - Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood. Topic is personal fitness.
7:00 pm - Program committee meets at Prairie.

Thursday, February 25, 2010 - 7:00 pm - Caring Committee meets at Prairie.

Sunday, February 28, 2010 - 8:45 am - Choir rehearsal.

10:00 am – service - "Community Supported Agriculture: A Green Solution," presented by CSA Farmers.
11:45 am - Prairie Service Auction! Lunch served.

Thursday, March 4, 2010

7:00 pm - Finance Committee meets at the home of Barb Park.

Saturday, March 6, 2010

9:00 am - Prairie WOW meets for breakfast potluck and conversation.

Sunday, March 7, 2010 - 8:45 am - Choir rehearsal.

9:00 am - RE committee meets.
10:00 am – service - "Famous UU's You Must Know," presented by Religious Education classes.
11:30 am - Mystery Friends Potluck - downstairs.
11:45 am - Humanist Union meets for potluck lunch, presentation by Doleta Chapru.

Sunday, March 14, 2010 - 8:45 am - Choir Rehearsal.

10:00 am – service- "Father and Daughter: Bronson and Louisa May Alcott," presented by Robin Proud.
11:45 am - Prairie Board meeting. Potluck at 11:45, meeting begins at noon.

Tuesday, March 16, 2010

7:00 pm - Housing and Property Committee meets at Prairie.

Sunday, March 21, 2010

8:45 am - Choir rehearsal.
9:00 am - RE committee meets.
10:00 am – service - "The Rev. Alison Cornish: What Can't You Eat?" presented by Rachel Long.
11:45 am - Book Club meets to discuss Remarkable Creatures: Epic Adventures in the Search for the Origins of Species by Sean Carroll.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

2:00 pm - Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood. Topic is A Report Card for President Obama.

Upcoming Programs

Sunday, February 28, 2010, 10:00 am: "Community Supported Agriculture: A Green Solution," presented by CSA farmers. As the earth still lies dormant buried in winter cold, farmers around the area are planning what they will plant to feed us this coming year. Come join us for a lively panel discussion featuring Ridgeland Harvest Farm (Cate and Mat Eddy,) Shady Blue Acres (Blue Strom and Skye Zitkus,) and Tipi Produce (Beth Kazmar and Steve Pincus.) These CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farmers will share: Why they plant what they plant, why they do what they do and what they know about the whole organic/local farm movement, as well as much more! This seemed like a very natural way for the Green Sanctuary and the Denominational Affairs Committees to come together and continue to explore the issues of ethical eating and environmental justice. If you are not part of a CSA yet, it is a great opportunity to gain knowledge and to possibly take the plunge and sign up!

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, March 7, 2010, 10:00am: "Famous UU's You Must Know," presented by the Prairie Religious Education Classes. This year's theme in Religious Education is "Our UU Principles and Heritage". Students have been studying our UU principles, history and famous Unitarian Universalists. Each class chose to study either a famous Unitarian, a Universalist, or a Unitarian Universalist and will present what they have learned and why that person is an important part of our history. Some of the people being presented are children's author Beatrix Potter, a Unitarian who lived from 1866-1943; writer/poet Henry David Thoreau(1817-1862) another Unitarian, and Clara Barton (1821-1912), teacher, nurse, humanitarian, and a Universalist.

Sunday, March 14, 2010, 10:00 am - "Father and Daughter: Bronson and Louisa May Alcott," presented by Robin Proud. Louisa May Alcott is best known for her children's books, but recent research has shown the complexity of her character and the variety of her achievements. A major factor shaping her life was her idealistic but impractical father, Bronson. Growing up in the communal experiment of Fruitlands, as well as in Concord with Emerson and Thoreau for neighbors, Louisa was influenced by all the main Unitarian figures and trends of her time, yet struck out on her path to success.

Sunday, March 21, 2010, 10:00 am - "The Rev. Alison Cornish: What Can't You Eat?" presented by Rachel Long. This is the second of Rachel Long's lay ministry with sermons on DVD from some of the most interesting and inspiring ministers the UUA has to offer. Today, Reverend Alison Cornish of the UU congregation in Bridgehampton, New York will give a sermon on sustainable and ethical eating titled "What Can't You Eat?" The sermon was written to address General Assembly's 2008 adoption of the study issue on ethical eating and environmental justice, and won the 2009 Commission on Social Witness Award at General Assembly.

Religious Education News

Mystery Friends is underway. Letters started on Feb. 7th and will continue until the end of the month. So far there have been a lot of guesses but I haven't heard anyone with the correct match. We have children as young as 5 and adults as young as 83! This is really a great way for adults and children to get to know one another a little better. On March 7th. at 11:30, after the service, there will be a potluck party downstairs where the mystery will be revealed.

The high school class is preparing for their trip to Boston next month. The class has been going through the Coming of Age program led by Barb Park, Ann Pryor and Bob Cape. Barb will go with the students to take part in the Heritage Trip, a trip to Boston



where students can see firsthand the UUA and its youth ministry offices in action. They'll also visit other UU congregations and various historical sites. Their stay will be at the Eliot and Pickett houses, the UUA's B&B.

Coming up is the RE service on March 7th titled, "Famous UU's You Should Know". Each class has been studying famous UU's and why they are important. Students have been busy making displays to present along with posters and skits. If you want to know more about our UU principles and heritage, this is the service for you.

There has been a lack of participation in RE and I welcome all comments and suggestions on how we can make RE more accessible to families and members of the congregation. Please contact me, RE chair Robin Proud or anyone on the RE Committee: Karen Deaton, Estrella Donald, Kurt Gutknecht, youth member Cheyenne Hale, Yvonne Hiebert or Heidi Hughes.

As always, see you on Sunday!

Rebecca Malke (YREC)
youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org

Our Society

WOW to Meet March 6th

Prairie's Women's group, also known as WOW, meets monthly for breakfast potluck and conversation and an occasional project. We will meet next on Saturday, March 6th, at 9:00 am. Our topic for the day is "Surviving the Winter Doldrums." Come and join us for great food and conversation.

Ask Not What... Become a Sunday Program Assistant. It's Easy and It's Fun!

Take it from someone who knows. Volunteering for an easy job at Prairie can be more fulfilling than you think. While the job isn't hard, your few minutes on a Sunday morning can help Prairie a lot. It's an ideal and feel-good way for a newer or too-busy-during-the-week sort of person to get involved at Prairie.

All this is to get to the request for a cadre of Prairie folks to become "Sunday Program Assistants" to the Program Committee. Absolutely no meetings are required, and all the "work" can be done on a Sunday morning while you listen to the choir practice. A word to the wise: sometimes the best choir performances are during practice!

OK, what's the job? In general, a Sunday Program Assistant's job is to set up the meeting room for the Sunday service: things like setting out the hymn books and orders of service; getting out the chalice, matches, mics, and offering baskets; and attending to the environment of the room. And also you get to carry the mic and serve as one of the ushers during the service!!!

If you think you might possibly be interested in dipping your toe into the river of involvement at Prairie in this way, please contact Program Chair Mary Mullen <mmullen@chorus.net> or 608-298-0843, or talk to her or to Rev. Ralph on a Sunday. An inquiry doesn't obligate you to volunteer. We don't expect you to volunteer until you understand what the job is and are convinced you want to actually try it out.

By the way, we have a detailed checklist of what to do so nothing will get forgotten, and either Rev. Ralph or someone from the Program Committee will show you the ropes your first time and be available to help out on a second time too, if you want.

If you are even slightly tempted to think about this, now is a good time to shoot off an e-mail or a call to Mary.

Mary Mullen
Program Chair

ADULT EDUCATION SURVEY AND PLANS

Let us know what you'd like Prairie to offer as Adult Education. The new Prairie Adult Education Committee hopes you'll respond to our survey to help us plan workshops and classes that Prairie can provide a unique role in offering you. We hope to reach all members either in person or by email. If we miss you, please contact Aileen Nettleton, 238-6053, or aanett at execpc.com

The committee will assist in coordinating and supporting workshops and classes for next year. If you are interested in leading one of the classes or have a course you'd like to propose, you can get a "course proposal" outline from Chair, Ingrid West, iwest at wisc.edu . The committee will review the surveys and proposals to plan offerings for the 2010-2011 year. Thanks for your input.

Committee members: Ingrid West, chair, Anne Lundin, Aileen Nettleton, Rick Ruecking

Prairie Elders meetings

Prairie Elders is a group of over-65 Prairie members who meet once a month (generally on the 4th Tuesday of the month) and Oakwood, in the Nakoma room, for conversation and mutual support. New members are always welcome. Topics alternate between general interest and more personal items. The topic for February 23rd is personal fitness: physical, mental, and emotional. What makes you laugh? How do you keep you body stretched? What's your best diet? What exercises you brain? Who or what gives you comfort and lifts your spirits? How can you do aerobics when you have creaky knees? The topic for March 23rd is "A Report Card for President Obama." All meetings begin with informal conversation at 1:30 pm, followed by discussion beginning at 2:00 pm. If possible, please bring some snacks to share and your own beverage cup. For more information about the group or to arrange a ride, please call one of the following: Donna Murdoch 238-3802, Gordon Cunningham 230-3367, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382 or Rose Smith 233-3363.

Childcare Opportunities

We're happy to report that there are a lot of infants and toddlers in our nursery. Several years ago we had not a single child in that room and now it's full of laughter. More children means more fun, but it also means more volunteers are needed. Having so many babies is certainly a great problem to have!

There's a need for families to make their voices heard at Prairie, but sometimes it's difficult to do that when you are parents to young children. To make Prairie welcoming and accommodating to all we need people to have help in the nursery for parish meetings, workshops, potlucks and other events that come up throughout the year.

Currently we do have two childcare providers, but if one of them is unable to come to Prairie for whatever reason we need someone to call on to be their backup. Also, it is possible that we might have more babies in the nursery at once than one person can reasonably be expected to handle by themselves!

If you are unable to help in RE classes during the year, but really would like to lend a hand this is your chance. Being on the list doesn't mean we'll call you - it just means that you are willing to help us if it's needed. Having a list of people to turn to ensures we'll always have someone to help families attend important meetings with the knowledge that children will be safe and well cared for during those times.

If you would like to be on the list as a backup childcare provider, please contact Kate Liu, Prairie's administrator, at 271-8218 or admin(at) uuprairie.org . It is the administrator's responsibility to arrange for childcare for all non-RE-class times - so in addition to getting on the childcare list, you need to contact Kate if you need childcare for a meeting or other Prairie function.

Thank you for your support of Prairie,
Rebecca Malke, Youth Religious Education Coordinator
Robin Proud, RE committee chair
Kate Liu, Prairie Administrator

Fundraising Trip to Art Institute of Chicago

Prairie Unitarian-Universalist Society invites you to join our bus trip to the exhibit Matisse: Radical Invention, 1913 – 1917, at the Chicago Art Institute, on Saturday, April 10, 2010.

This exhibition includes approximately 100 paintings, sculptures, drawings, and prints primarily from the 1913 through 1917 period, and as such will be the first sustained examination devoted to the work of this important period. After leaving Chicago, the exhibit will open at the New York Museum of Modern Art on July 18, 2010.

While at the Art Institute, you may also wish to view the following exhibits: FOUR FOLLOWERS OF CARAVAGGIO, IN THE VERNACULAR, and THE IMPRESSIONISTS AND POST-IMPRESSIONIST PAINTINGS.

We will leave Madison at 8 am from the rear of the UW Credit Union; 3500 University Avenue, 8:10 am from Capitol Lakes (Maingate), and 8:20 am from the South Town Mall McDonalds. Return will be approximately 7:45/8pm, with a rest/snack stop on the return trip. Indicate boarding location on memo line of check, and include a telephone number. Cost of \$ 54.00 covers transportation and all museum exhibits. Lunch is on your own. Write checks to Prairie UU Society and mail to Pat Watkins, 230 N. Meadow Lane, Madison 53705-3331, to arrive by or before Sat., March 13th. Written confirmation and detailed schedule will be sent to you by Saturday, March 27th. Questions? Phone Pat Watkins at 233-5795.

PRAIRIE'S ANNUAL SERVICE AUCTION COMING FEBRUARY 28TH!

Prairie's annual Service Auction is scheduled for February 28th, right after the service, with Orange Schroeder again acting as our auctioneer. We will be offering a simple lunch of soup, bread and cookies. See the list below for items you might be interested in:

Evening Musicale, 2 hours of washing windows, Crossword Puzzle solving lesson, Class: Making beaded snowflake ornaments, Batch of fudge: either chocolate or white macadamia nut, Karaoke Party, Oat cakes, Personalized photo calendar, 1 photo per page plus special dates, Simple Mending, Private yoga lesson, Deliver a Balsam spruce tree for X-mas, Come to Coloma and cut your own x-mas tree plus lunch and fellowship, Class in making birds out of woven paper, Carve a jack-o-lantern pumpkin: 1 cat; 1 "something else", Two Hour Horseback Riding Lesson /Ride , Orange Tree Imports gift certificate, Home-made raspberry liqueur, Home-made cranberry liqueur, Bollywood night, Wild Alaska Salmon Dinner, Chocolate Chip Cookies, Ginger- A Summer Picnic, Cooking the Vegan Way, Charades and popcorn party, Peach Marmalade, Banana Nut Bread, Scrabble Party, Bike Hike with Picnic, Frozen Soups to take today- 20oz - 4 vegetarian & 4 not, Ride to the airport, weekend of Childcare, Afghan Evening in Monroe, Homemade Pesto, "Everything But The Kitchen Sink" Soup (vegetarian), Prairie Schooner Day Excursion (RV trip to Horicon Marsh), French Lessons, Herb Dinners Recipe Book, Use of Pick-up truck for the day, Balloon Sculptor.



A list of items with descriptions, including any minimum bids or limits on the number of participants for activities, will be available on the tables at the auction, and on Prairie News later this week.

When you arrive for the auction, you will be given a bidder number and a table tent with your number on it as well. Use the tall card to bid on items, and place the table tent in front of you on the table so that our "runners" will be able to bring your purchased item slips directly to your table. To make check out flow as smoothly as possible, you can use the slips from the runners to total up your purchase and have your check or cash ready to give to Kate.

This is Prairie's big fund raiser of the year, but it needs your participation to be a success. Join in the fun by coming for lunch and bidding! And thank you for your support!

Barb Park
Finance Committee Chair

Humanist Union to Discuss Gay-Affirming Religious Groups

The Humanist Union's March program will be presented by Doleta Chapru on the topic "*Gay-Affirming Religious Groups: Good News for Human Rights*". An increasing number of Christian denominations and individual churches are publicly adopting a positive, welcoming stance toward the LGBT community. Doleta will provide an overview of progress to date, briefly outline recent push back from opposing factions and discuss implications for Humanists and similar groups.

We will start with our usual potluck lunch at 11:45 am, with the presentation and discussion from 12:30 to 1:30 pm. All who are interested in the topic are invited to attend.

*Doleta Chapru
Humanist Union*

Prairie Annual Retreat Scheduled!

Prairie's annual fall retreat has been scheduled for the weekend of September 17 - 19, 2010, at the Pine Lake Camp in Westfield, Wisconsin. This is the same location we used last year, and we are hopeful that the earlier date will bring us both warmer weather for enjoying all the camp has to offer, and the possibility that the folks at Sauk City UU will be able to join us this year.

From the feedback received about the retreat last year, one of the most common comments was that the lodging was rather pricey. In an effort to help with this, we have added a new lodging option in the Birch Cabins. These cabins are like bunkhouses, with bunk beds and a shared bathroom, but the price will be half of the more "hotel-like" accommodations at the Rader Retreat Center. If you would like to see the cabins, you can visit the Pine Lake web site at <http://www.pinelakecamp.org/> . We will also have all the options available that we had last year as well - rooms in the Rader Center, the Wesley House, Oak cabins, and camping.

We will also be adding a new activity this year: we will be cooking dinner together on Saturday night! Plans are underway for a simple spaghetti and salad meal together up in the Oakwood building. Vegetarians, vegans, and carnivores alike will be well taken care of.

Every year the retreat is run with tremendous volunteer support. People are always needed to coordinate programs, help with publicity and registration, help with childcare, and more. If you are interested in volunteering to work on the retreat, please contact me.

Looking forward to a great retreat,
*Kate Liu
Prairie Administrator
271-8218 & [admin\(at\)uuprairie.org](mailto:admin(at)uuprairie.org)*

Social Action Notes

Even though the chair of social action is wintering in Tucson, Arizona, the committee has still been very active, working on projects both here in Madison and Tucson.

In Madison, Robert Park is keeping the social action calendar updated. Barb Park, the social action treasurer, is paying the bills and managing the monies. Dave Johnson has been keeping Prairie's commitment to the Men's Homeless shelter the first Saturday of the month and attending the Allied Partner's meetings.

In Tucson, Nancy Graham and Andy Somers have brought the play SEVEN JEWISH CHILDREN to Tucson and have several performances scheduled, two at UU churches. Mary Somers is working with NO MORE DEATHS, the ministry of the UU church in Tucson. This is a program where volunteers go to the desert and give water, food and medical aid to migrants who are in distress from crossing the border. Mary who is an RN has received the NO MORE DEATHS training to be a volunteer. (This is the program Lelia Pine spoke about in November at Prairie.) Mary, Nancy and Andy are attending workshops on immigration reform and border issues and hope to involve Prairie in immigration reform this spring.

Steve Blank, a health writer with WORT radio in Madison, has interviewed Mary and Andy about border issues and the court proceedings OPERATION STREAMLINE. Steve is also interviewing Roberto Rodriguez on February 11th on Haiti and immigration reform.

*Mary Somers
Social Action Chair*

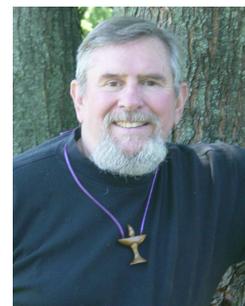
Rev. Ralph's Ruminations

Dear Prairie Members and Friends:

The excitement, the hoopla, and the attention paid to our nation's annual ritual of "Pigskin Pieties" called The Super Bowl is now past. (I must confess that I am a fan of the game, but take it in moderation!) For many this annual spectacle has become a form of "Civil Religion". It rivals, and for many, competes, with the religious practices found in those more hallowed places that are called churches, synagogues, mosques, etc. We who live in Packerland know intimately the burden of living out of the legacy bestowed on the winners of the Vince Lombardi trophy. Perhaps there is a hidden directive for our congregation as we pursue the goals of our Strategic Plans in 2010. Let us be reminded that Lombardi's original admonition was that: "Winning is not everything -- but **making the effort** to win is." (This has a much different meaning than the saying that is popularly ascribed to Coach Lombardi: "*Winning isn't everything, its the only thing!*")

Making the effort to achieve goals is also what congregational life is all about. And I have observed that our efforts are bringing results for achieving Strategic Planning goals.

Where the larger society says, "Life is about competing to amass power and prestige. "Compete! Win! And leave the losers behind!" **Our UU message** says, "Life is about forming a *beloved community*. Journey together; support one another in the trekking. And remember the least among you."



Where the larger society says "Speed up! Work harder! Do more! be a multi-tasker!" **Our UU message** says, "Take or make time for "time outs!" Observe a Sabbath. Reflect. Meditate. Practice quietude!"

Where the larger society says "Keep adults and children and youth apart. Keep the rich and poor, the gays and straights apart!" **Our UU message of inclusiveness** says "Let's gather all these folks together as "a *welcoming congregation!*"

Where the larger society says, "Your worth is measured by what you achieve, and by what you possess." **Our UU message** says, "Each of us has inherent worth and dignity. We share because we are part of the interdependent web of existence."

Where the larger society says, "Buy!" "Be a Conspicuous Consumer!" Hoard!" "Keep it for yourself!" **Our UU message** says, "Giving is an expression of our interdependence! Generosity is a hallmark of a life well-lived! You can't take it with you when you go!"

Where the larger society says, "Concentrate on yourself and your own clan, or racial or ethnic circle of friends." **Our UU faith** says, "Keep widening your circle to include people you'd never otherwise meet. Learn from them. Let them challenge you, and reveal a new perspective on the human community. Try to love your neighbor as yourself- and remember, it's not "all about you"."

As Prairie moves forward in 2010 may the efforts that are being made by the congregation show forth achievements that can be measured and be healthy sign of our reaching worthwhile goals. Our Unitarian Universalist message offers abundant and transforming meanings to serve as a voice of liberal religion for those who are seeking this kind of life enhancing message. Let's keep our beacon shining brightly in all our efforts ahead.



*Glad to be journeying with you,
Rev. Ralph*

Denominational News

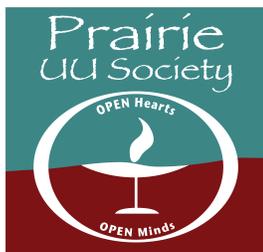
The **Central MidWest District Meeting** is approaching! It will be held the weekend of **April 30th-May 2nd** at the Westin Chicago North Shore in Wheeling, IL. You still have some time to plan, so mark your calendars!

"There will be the usual inspiring banner parade, moving worship services and the winner of the sermon award will present their award-winning words as part of the Sunday morning worship. And there will be the important sharing of resources, experiments and successes around the issue of growth that religious leaders are always clamoring for." It is always an uplifting weekend. Brochures will be available at the Prairie meetinghouse starting February 28th.

Also, the UUA **General Assembly** is being held in Minneapolis, this year, **June 23-27th!** We are hoping since it is so close, we can get car loads of Prairie folk to attend! "General Assembly is the way that our faith does business. Actions of social witness are passed at GA, elements that make up future policies are discussed... and YOU have a voice in the discussion. You'll hear terrific speakers. There will be hundreds of entertaining programs and informative workshops, offering excellent support and learning for leaders in our congregations. You'll be able to join the witness for our faith and values, in moving and exciting ways."

Please let Heidi Hughes, DA chairperson, know if you are planning on attending either or both conferences - or if you are interested in being a delegate for either meeting and would like more information.

Heidi Hughes
Denominational Affairs Chair



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