

Prairie Fire

May 22, 2010

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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

Saturday, May 22, 2010

7 - 8:30 pm - Margaret Fuller Conversation Salon, presented by the CMwD Women's Connection.

Sunday, May 23, 2010

8:45 am - Choir Rehearsal.

10:00 am – service - "A Visit from Margaret Fuller," presented by Robin Proud.

Tuesday, May 25, 2010

2:00 pm - Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood. Topic is "Housing Transitions."

Tuesday, May 27, 2010 - 7 pm - Choir Rehearsal.

Sunday, May 30, 2010

8:45 am - Choir Rehearsal.

10:00 am – service - "Memorial Day: Meditation, Reflection, Memories," presented by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski.

11:45 am - Prairie Book Club meets to discuss [A Tree Grows in Brooklyn](#) by Betty Smith.

3:00 pm - Memorial Service for Mary Lou Diehl, at Prairie

Saturday, June 5, 2010

9 am - WOW (Prairie's women's group) meets for breakfast potluck and conversation.

all day: Milwaukee Museum trip with Pat Watkins.

Sunday, June 6, 2010

8:45 am - Choir Rehearsal.

10:00 am – service - "Reverend Abhi Janamanchi: Faith in the Borderland," presented by Rachel Long.

11:45 am - Joint Board Meeting, outdoors at Prairie (indoors downstairs if poor weather.)

11:45 am - Humanist Union potluck with John Rummel, photographer, presenting at 12:30pm.

Tuesday, June 8, 2010 - 7 pm - H&P committee meets at Prairie.

Sunday, June 13, 2010

8:45 am - Choir Rehearsal.

10:00 am – service - "Flower Communion," presented by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski.

Sunday, June 20, 2010

10:00 am – service - "Father's Day," presented by Nick Abts.

11:45 am - Retirement Party for Rev. Ralph Tyksinski.

Upcoming Programs

Sunday, May 23, 2010, 10:00 am: "A Visit from Margaret Fuller," presented by Robin Proud. On the occasion of her 200th birthday, Margaret Fuller will introduce you to her life as a scholar, writer, war correspondent, editor of the Transcendentalist magazine *The Dial*, and America's first feminist. An intimate of Emerson, Thoreau, Alcott, and Hawthorne, Fuller will convince you (with a little help from Robin Proud) that she should be better known and appreciated, especially by Unitarians.

Sunday, May 30, 2010, 10:00am: "Memorial Day: Meditation, Reflection, Memories," presented by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski. I will be exploring the many meanings that this federal holiday offers for our reflection on and recognition of those in our military who died in battle. It began after the Civil War in 1868 as Decoration Day. One hundred years later, the name officially switched to Memorial Day. As a people we UU's practice working for peace and justice, we must, however, never forget the men and women who have given it their all—sometimes giving everything—to work for what they think is true and right. By celebrating Memorial Day, we work to make sure fewer people have to leave their homes, families and friends to fight in war.

Sunday, June 6, 2010, 10:00 am - "Reverend Abhi Janamanchi: Faith in the Borderland," presented by Rachel Long. This is the third of Rachel Long's lay ministry with sermons on DVD from some of the most interesting and inspiring ministers the UUA has to offer. In this last presentation, Reverend Abhi Janamanchi of the Clearwater, Florida congregation will give the sermon "Faith in the Borderland." As an Indian American UU he has experienced many borders between cultures and often felt the outsider. Hear about his journey in search of a true religious home, and the multiple identities we all experience as Unitarian Universalists.

Sunday, June 13, 2010, 10:00 am - "Flower Communion and Capek's Gift," presented by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski. We celebrate the beginning of Summer by observing one of our Unitarian Universalists most cherished rituals: The Flower Communion. I will also be offering my reflection on one of Norbert Capek's core philosophical principles: That our lived experience is not determined by Fate or Chance, irreversible and beyond our ability to change, but that daily we can choose the spiritual temperament of our lives.

Religious Education News

The RE school year has now ended and summer is just around the corner. We had another successful year learning about our UU principles and our heritage. Thanks again to all who made RE possible.

The year came to a close on Sunday, May 16th with our annual Transition service. We honored our newest UU, Vivian Perrin Thayer, with a child dedication ceremony and we recognized graduating senior Madeline Arnold. Madeline has been with Prairie since she was a toddler. She's a talented musician, a role model for our youth and just an all around great person to know. We'll miss her greatly but wish her much success while studying at Carleton College this the fall.

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.

There will be no classes until Sunday, August 30th. That will be the start of the new RE year and the Water Ceremony service. From now until that time we will have childcare provided in our nursery for all infants and toddlers.



For those students in preschool and up we will have activities planned by various members of the congregation. We are in need of people to sign up for an activity on any Sunday this summer. You can weed in our Prairie community garden, play in the park, do arts and crafts, play instruments, etc. The possibilities are endless for leading a group activity; have fun and be creative!

As always if you have any questions or concerns or ideas for the RE program please let me know by talking to me on Sunday mornings, emailing me at: youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org, or calling me at 271-8218.

Thank you and see you Sunday!

Rebecca Malke
Director of Religious Education

Our Society

Results of the Spring Parish Meeting, Sunday, May 16th

The Spring Parish meeting very productive, and was completed in under 1-1/2 hours. We heard brief updates on a number of issues, and more discussion on a proposed bylaws change, and the proposed 2010-11 budget. We elected a new slate of officers. The full minutes will be available shortly, but for now, here are the highlights.

Our new slate of officers is as follows:

President - Barb Park

VP - Rick Ruecking

(secretary - on hold - duties to be done by administrator, Kate Liu)

Treasurer - Amy Armstrong

Youth member - unfilled

Committee Chairs:

Communications - Dorothy Krause

Denominational Affairs - Christina Klock

Finance – Kathy Converse

Hospitality & Membership - Dan Proud

Housing and Property - Al Nettleton

(Long Range Planning - on hold)

Program - Nick Abts

Religious Education - Robin Proud

Social Action - Elizabeth Macasaet

These officers and committee chairs will officially take their new positions after the joint board meeting on June 6th.

A bylaws change was proposed that would change how we change our bylaws. Any proposed change to the bylaws would need to be published 60 days before a parish meeting, to provide ample time for input, but could not be amended on the floor of the meeting; it would need to be an up or down vote only. There was overwhelming support for the concept of having bylaws changes voted up or down without amendments from

the floor, but strong support for including specific opportunities for members to discuss and potentially amend any proposal, including a congregational meeting. Questions were also raised about whether the deadline for the draft to be published should be changed. It was ultimately decided to send this issue back to the board for refinement.

Our finance chair, Barbara Park, led the presentation of the 2010-2011 budget. Due to the down economy we are still somewhat short on pledges, and some cuts were made to the budget to reduce the amount of money drawn from the reserves. We are offering a 10 month contract for a minister instead of a full year, and slightly reduced the amount offered for health insurance from the UUA's guidelines, though still offering what the board felt was a reasonable amount for our area. Some new fundraisers will be coming up, such as a once-a-month after service lunch and some raffles. The budget includes taking \$16,000 from our reserves to balance the budget, but as Barbara pointed out, we planned to take out \$10,000 for this past budget year and ended up not needing to use it. We are in a good financial position to help our members weather this economic down time and feel confident that we are making prudent use of our reserves in this case.

Full text of the minutes will be made available at Prairie soon; in the mean time if you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Rachel Long, President

Kate Liu, Congregational Administrator

WOW to Meet

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, June 5th, at 9:00 am. Please bring a dish to pass and enjoy the great food and conversation.



Memorial Service Planned for Mary Lou Diehl

The memorial service for long-time Prairie member Mary Lou Diehl will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 30, at Prairie. You are invited to join the family after the service for a potluck meal and music in the backyard of Mary Lou's home, 5729 Elder Place. You are encouraged to car pool, as street parking is limited. You may bring an instrument, in case the band invites others to join in.

Prairie Book Club Update

Prairie's book club meets once a month after service to discuss a book over potluck lunch. This is an open book club, and you are welcome to come even if you haven't read the book. Here's what the book club is reading up through July:

For Sunday, May 30 - [A Tree Grows in Brooklyn](#) by Betty Smith (fiction, 528 pages) – Rarely does the book club read a “classic.” This month's book is an exception. First published in 1943, it is a *bildungsroman* or coming of age story. The novel takes place in the first 2 decades of the 1900s in Brooklyn, NY and follows Francie Nolan and her 3-generation Austrian/Irish-American family who are struggling against poverty. The main metaphor of the book is the Tree of Heaven, an Asian import now considered invasive that is common in vacant lots in New York City. Suggested by Barbara Park.

For Sunday, June 27 - [Elegance of the Hedgehog](#) by Muriel Barbery (French fiction, 320 pages) Told through 2 narrators – *concierge* Renée Michel (in first person) and an intellectually precocious girl named Paloma Josse, (through her journals) - it features erudite characters. It is full of allusions to literary works, music, films, and paintings. Themes relate to philosophy, class consciousness, and personal conflict. Suggested by Rose Smith and Al Nettleton.

For Sunday, July 18 - (Date may be changed) [Roads to Quoz: An American Mosey](#) by William Least Heat-Moon (608 pages) is about a series of short trips – total of 16,000 miles - rather than one long trip as Heat-Moon's other books were. In this book he covers Maine's North Woods by car, a trip along the coast from Baltimore to Florida by boat, one in Idaho's Bitterroot Mountains by rail bike (bike fitted out to cruise along

abandoned railroad tracks), and others. "Wherever he is, Heat-Moon's thought is often tethered to questions of sustainability and equitability...deep ecology." It's a long book, and you may choose to read it over the summer while on a trip or while trapped at home. Feel free to select whatever trips appeal to you. Suggested by Al Nettleton.

*Mary Mullen
Book Club Coordinator*

Prairie Elders meetings

Prairie Elders is a group of over-65 Prairie members who meet once a month (generally on the 4th Tuesday) at Oakwood, in the Nakoma room, for conversation and mutual support. New members are always welcome. Topics alternate between general interest and more personal items. For May 25th the topic is "Housing Transitions." When, why and where do we choose to move if we can no longer stay alone in our home? What are good outside sources of information and advice? When do alternatives to moving make sense? Some of us have made transitions, some are pondering them and others have current or prospective help at home. Let's share what we know.

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.

Membership News

- The new member orientation, originally scheduled for May 23, 25, and 27, has been postponed. Stay tuned for more information.
- New Prairie phone directories will be available shortly! They will be distributed primarily through Prairie News, though if you want a paper copy you can order one, and Kate Liu, our administrator, will send it to you or set it aside for you to pick up at Prairie. If you need a large-print version, you can also let Kate know that when you place your order. Contact Kate by email at admin (at) uuprairie.org or by phone at 271-8218.

Looking Ahead: Prairie Fall Family Retreat!

Please set aside the weekend of September 17-19 for the annual Prairie family retreat at Pine Lake Camp in Westfield, Wisconsin. Once again, Phyllis Long will be serving as Program Coordinator. If you are interested in offering a program, please let her know. It would be helpful, if you want to offer a program, to let her know when you will arrive at Pine Lake and how long you plan to stay, and to tell her if you will need any special materials. We will also need people who would be willing to devote an hour or so to child care, as we expect some babies and toddlers. You can contact her by email plong373 (at) gmail.com, or call 608-325-7397. Of course, you can also let her know Sunday morning! We hope to have the program mostly put together by mid-July, and registration will open in early August.

If you have any questions about the retreat, please contact Phyllis or Kate Liu (Prairie's administrator.)

*Phyllis Long, Retreat Program Coordinator
Kate Liu, Prairie Administrator admin (at) uuprairie.org*

Spanish Speaker's Potluck

The Spanish Speakers potluck group has been going strong since 1986! Any level of Spanish speaking ability is welcome to join these once-a-month potlucks. For June, we will meet on the 21st at the home of Kate Tucker, 4504 Camden Rd. For directions, please call Kate at 221 2168; for information about the group or to arrange for a ride, please call Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382.

Humanist Union News: John Rummel Photography Presentation June 6

We are in for a treat the afternoon of Sunday June 6th when talented local amateur photographer John Rummel will present a photographic slide show at Prairie that he calls "The Capitol and the Moon, a Modern Stonehenge". All are invited to the 11:45 - 12:30 potluck followed by John's 12:30 - 1:30 pm presentation. The event is sponsored by the Humanist Union, and will take the place of our usual monthly meeting and discussion.

A wealth of examples of John's photography can be seen on his website at <http://webpages.charter.net/darksky25/index.html>, where his special interest in photography of the night sky will be obvious. John works at James Madison Memorial High School and is an ardent supporter of the planetarium program there.

*Bob Park
Humanist Union*

Housing and Property News

There was a successful work day at Prairie on Saturday, May 15. There was weed pulling, stump removal, and shrub trimming by Bob Cape, Galen Smith, Bob Park, Barb Park, Toby Wacker, Paula Pachciarz, Gordon Cunningham, Kim Troug, and John Eliganti. Thanks to each of you for all you did during the Prairie Work Day last Saturday. Thanks to each of you for helping to make Prairie a more attractive and inviting place.

*Al Nettleton
H&P Chair*



Social Action Notes

The Social Action Committee is collecting new, clean, white cotton socks for the No More Deaths humanitarian aid group based in the Tucson UU Church. The No More Deaths group is frequently in need of socks to dress blistered and bleeding feet of immigrants making the dangerous crossing through the desert. Prairie members and friends who summer in Wisconsin and winter in Arizona will deliver the socks this fall. There is a basket in the foyer to accept your donations. Thank you for your support of this initiative.

*Mary Somers
Social Action Chair*

Interfaith Hospitality Network

Occasionally, I like to remind Prairie folks of our connection to the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN). Homeless families are housed at Midvale Lutheran Church (ML) four times a year and Prairie is a buddy church to ML. Our volunteers go to ML to serve breakfast or dinner, stay overnight, or provide food. IHN has stressed that it is important that volunteers receive some training, and a tour is part of that. I have already been trained, but I will be happy to go to the tour with any of you who would like to explore volunteering for this very worthwhile organization. Either of these upcoming dates would work, so please contact me if you are interested: Wednesday, May 26 or Tuesday, June 15.

Here is a story that illustrates the great work being done by IHN and its umbrella organization The Road Home:

Nine-year-old Antony has learning and emotional disabilities. While his family was homeless, he fell far behind in his reading level and his behavior was out of control. He could not get along with his family or other children, had little opportunity for fun, and was frequently in trouble at school. Over the last six months, since they have been in an apartment, Antony's family has worked closely with The Road Home, an in-home family counseling program, his school and an after-school daycare to help him succeed. Because of this stability and collaboration, Antony is now reading at grade level, behaving well and getting along with his peers. He is

reaping the benefits through rewards for good behavior, a reading award at school, and— perhaps most important— invitations to play at the homes of the new friends he’s made and the chance to have them over to his home, to play in his very own bedroom.

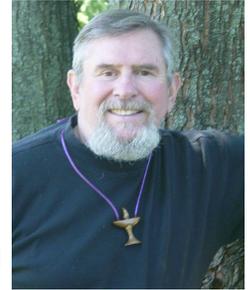
Please contact me if you would be interested in getting involved with Prairie's commitment.

*Erin Bosch, IHN Coordinator for Prairie
238-6285*

Rev. Ralph's Ruminations

What Kind of Growth for Prairie?

For those who attended the Sunday Service on May 16th it was indeed a celebration of Transitions. It included a time of saying “Hello and Welcome!” to infant child, Vivian Perrin Thayer, and an opportunity for wishing a “ Fare Thee Well” to young adult, Madelline Arnold, as she will be leaving the Prairie community to begin attending Carleton College in the Fall. What do these kinds of events mean to our understanding of Prairie and to its identity? What kind of Growth does it mean to have a new child in the community and to send off a graduating young person to young adulthood? As an intergenerational community Prairie must continue to ask the hard questions about where it wants to go, and why and how we need to consider these questions for the long range health of the congregation.



As your Consulting Minister I have raised these questions in previously written “Rev Ralph’s Ruminations” in both explicit and implicit terms. To be a healthy congregation is to develop responses that are sound and reasonable. To be healthy is to be vigorous and vital, to have strength, and to use these qualities in taking action. When a congregation sees clearly its place and possibilities and understands its mission and purpose, it will make decisions that serve itself and its community well. Such a congregation will continue growing because of its health. Such a congregation is ready to serve people who need Unitarian Universalism.

Congregational health and well-being are topics of much interest to most Unitarian Universalist congregations because there has been substantial or some growth in a few (less than 100) but most (approx. 900) have experienced a decline in growth in the past 30 years. Since health and growth are related, growth should be a topic of equal interest and study. Since I began serving as Prairie’s Consulting Minister we have seen membership increase slightly since we listed our certified membership in 2008 as: 94. In 2009-2010 we are listed as having a certified membership as: 106. The actual number of pledging units is less.

Here is my concluding message for Prairie as I end my service as Consulting Minister. Prairie has shown some signs of growth in managing conflict and building consensus for making major decisions. Prairie has seen a slight increase in the number of families with children attending our Religious Education program. Prairie has found and fostered a sense of renewed energy in the way it has embraced the Green Sanctuary program. Prairie has moved (albeit slightly) from a “lay-led” identity to one of a “shared ministry” identity with the addition of having a Consulting Minister.

These are observable signs of Prairie’s growth in past 5 years. However they are young and tender green shoots of growth. How will Prairie tend to them? If you wish to be a part of a healthy and vital religious community it is your task to select those efforts which best match your skills, talents, and yes, your financial gifts, to support the mission and ministries of the congregation, to water and nurture their energy, perhaps even to prevent their being trampled, and to honor their new place in the life of Prairie UU Society.



It has been a deep privilege and honor to have served Prairie these past four years.

Grateful for the opportunity to have journeyed with you,
Rev. Ralph

UU & Wider Community News

PFLAG Conference

"Dear Friends of Marriage Equality: Please join us on August 13-14 in beautiful Decorah, Iowa, for what promises to be an outstanding conference, bringing together a wide variety of individuals and organizations from throughout the Upper Midwest to strategize on "Achieving Marriage Equality in the Heartland" using lessons from Iowa's experience. Save the date! We'll be sending out registration information soon."

The PFLAG Northeast Iowa Conference Committee

For further information, contact Bill Musser at billmusser@hotmail.com

First Unitarian Society presents "The Joy of Living: an introduction to the practice and science of meditation"

FUS is please to present a talk with Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche and Dr. Richard J. Davidson at 7pm on Friday June 4th. Tickets are \$10 and are available for purchase at the FUS meeting house, or though their website, www.fusmadison.org



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