



# Prairie Fire

**December 22, 2010**

## In this issue:

- Calendar
- Programs
- RE news
- Society News
- Board Highlights
- Green Tidbits**

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](http://www.uuprairie.org)

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## Calendar

### Thursday, December 23, 2010

5:30 HumanLight Celebration – Humanist Union holiday party.

### Friday, December 24, 2010

4:30 Service – “Candlelight Carol Sing,” presented by Doleta Chapru and Kate Liu.

### Sunday, December 26, 2010

10:00 All Society Potluck and post-holiday sharing.

### Tuesday, December 28, 2010

1:30 Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood; topic is Childhood Memories of Trains and Other Travel Modes.

### Saturday, January 1, 2011

Happy New Year!

Calendar items due for Prairie Fire Bulletin  
New Calendar / Tax year begins

### Sunday, January 2, 2011

8:45 Choir rehearsal

10:00 Service - "Kwanzaa as an Everyday Occasion," presented by Milele Chikese Anana.

11:45 Humanist Union: Potluck lunch 11:45 am, presentation and discussion

12:30-1:30 pm on "Bioethics beyond Terry Schiavo" led by Mary Frantz.

### Saturday, January 8, 2011

9:00 am Prairie Women's Group meets for breakfast potluck & conversation.

### Sunday, January 9, 2011

8:45 Choir rehearsal

10:00 Service

### Saturday, January 15, 2011

Article deadline for Prairie Fire

### Sunday, January 16, 2011

8:45 Choir rehearsal

10:00 Service - "In the Midst of Darkness," by Rev. Jane Esbensen. (Rescheduled from December.)

11:45 Prairie Book Club meets to discuss John Updike's Rabbit Redux.

### Wednesday, January 19, 2011

7:00 Program Committee meets at Prairie.

## Upcoming Programs

**Friday, December 24, 2010, 4:30 pm: ""Candlelight Carol Sing,"** coordinated by **Doleta Chapru and Kate Liu.** Join in singing familiar carols or come discover this lovely music from our UU roots. Sixteenth century Unitarian minister Francis David of Transylvania said, "We need not think alike to love alike." We also need not think alike to find beauty in traditional carols and their message of joy and peace. If you plan to attend, you are welcome to email the title of your favorite carol to dchapru (at) aol.com.

**Sunday, December 26, 2010, 10:00 am:** No formal service today at Prairie; but come in for an informal potluck and sharing of holiday stories.

**Sunday, January 2, 2011, 10:00 am – "Kwanzaa as an Everyday Occasion,"** presented by **Milele Chikese Anana.**

### Prairie Web Sites:

Society Home Page  
[www.uuprairie.org](http://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](mailto:admin@uuprairie.org) or call 271-8218.

**Sunday, January 9, 2011, 10:00 am** TBA.

**Sunday, January 16, 2011, 10:00 am: "In the Midst of Darkness,"** presented by **Rev. Jane Esbensen.** These are the contemplative days of winter, where the outside world often more poignantly reflects our inner world. Come and join us for a service of poetry and of peacefulness, of music and song and silence, as we attend to the darkness and find beauty and hope. (This service re-scheduled from December, when we were snowed out.)

## Religious Education News

Brrrr...it sure is cold outside! But inside we are warmed by the light of many candles and the hustle and bustle of RE. Even though the year is about to come to a close you wouldn't know it downstairs.

On November 21st our RE chair, Robin Proud, and her students in the 4-6<sup>th</sup> grade class presented Stone Soup for the Sunday service. The play was a retelling of a famous story with a UU twist. Robin made sure everyone who wanted a part had one. She even created new characters, writing the lines herself to insure everyone was involved. Thank you Robin!

Many thanks to all the talented young actors and actresses who worked so hard that whole month: Loren, Katherine and Aaron, Jessie, Rachel and James, and Meghan. I would also like to thank Katie Peterson for her lovely singing at the start of the service. I'd also like to thank those who helped behind the scenes to make the production a success: Rick Ruecking, Anne Urbanski and our newest childcare provider, Ifrah Mohamed.

The following Sunday I took the middle and high school class, along with their teacher Dan Proud and a parent on a field trip to Holy Wisdom Monastery as part of their studies on Christianity. We attended service, had a Q&A session with Sister Lynn and a tour of their green building. We learned a lot about Benedictine values and how they coincide with our own UU values and noticed similarities in their worship service.

Next month students in the middle and high school class will begin Hinduism with a tour at a Hindu temple on Fish Hatchery Road. If you would like to join us please let me know.

Due to the unfortunate weather and cancellation of Sunday service on the 12th we had to cancel Nifty Gifty. Fortunately we were able to reschedule this annual Prairie tradition for the following weekend. I was happy to see such a huge turnout! I saw



some faces I hadn't seen in a long time and was just delighted! Many thanks to the Converse family- Kathy, who as usual helped with the planning and creation of many of the crafts, and Randy and Tara for helping out that morning. And many thanks to all of our volunteers: Carl and Toby Wacker, Paula Pachciarz, Patty Stockdale, Robin Proud, Kim Truog and Heidi and James Hughes. I'd also like to thank our childcare providers Xena Anderson and Ifrah for helping our littlest UU's in making crafts for their parents.

Next year's RE calendar will be out this week. January 2nd is the first day of the second semester with our Wild Wintering family event scheduled for Saturday, January 29th. I'm thinking sledding and hot cocoa or if the weather is bad a night of family bowling.

As always, see you on Sunday!

Rebecca Malke  
Director of Religious Education  
Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society

## Our Society

### Finance Notes – the end is nigh!

The end of the year, that is. December 31<sup>st</sup> marks the end of the calendar year for tax purposes. In early January 2011, you will receive a statement from Prairie that will list your donations for all of calendar year 2010, which includes the second half of the 09-10 budget year and the first half of the 10-11 budget year. If you would like to pay all or part of your 10-11 pledge so that it lands in the 2010 tax year, please make sure that it arrives at Prairie postmarked no later than December 31, 2010. If you have any questions or concerns, you can speak to any one of the “finance team” : Kathy Converse (finance chair,) Amy Armstrong (treasurer,) or Kate Liu (administrator-bookkeeper.)

### Watch for New Adult Education Offerings!

UU Parenting and UU Views of Immigration will be offered in March and April. UU Parenting will be led by Rev. Jane Esbensen and Director of Religious Education Rebecca Malke. UU Views of Immigration will be “sponsored” by the Denominational Affairs Committee, chair Christina Klock, as this is the study topic for the UUA for the next three years. Each will consist of two sessions. These were two of the topics of highest interest to members when surveyed. We are excited to be able to offer these classes. Details will be announced in a few weeks. Watch for information in flyers, Prairie Fire, and online for registration.

*Aileen Nettleton, Acting Chair of Adult Education*

### Prairie Elders meeting

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, Heritage Oaks building, Oakwood Village West, for conversation and mutual support. The next meeting will be Tuesday, December 28th. At 1:30 we begin with a “round robin” for all who wish to share personal news. Topic discussion from 2:00 to 3:20. Call contacts below for directions, parking or a ride. If convenient, bring your own beverage cup and a few snacks. Newcomers welcome.

This month's topic: Childhood Memories of Trains and Other Travel Modes. This should generate fascinating tales of locomotives, trolleys, ferries, busses, subways, trucks, cars with no defrosters, perhaps even ship, wagon or dogsled. Share a story of any period from toddlerhood through high school years.

Prairie Elders aims to provide good times and mutual support for Prairie UU Members and Friends over 65 and UUs living at the facility where we meet. Our “round robin” format makes it easier to hear and gives all the option of speaking. Topics alternate between general issues and personal interests. Contacts: Donna Murdoch

238-3802, Gordon Cunningham 230-3367, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382 or Rose Smith 233-3363. Call Donna to add your name to the mailing list.

*Doleta Chapru*

### **Prairie Fundraising Trips 2011 Schedule**

We will be scheduling the following trips in the coming year. You will receive an individual notice of each trip, but mark your calendars now!

**\*\*26 February 2011:** Frank Lloyd Wright: Organic Architecture for the 21st Century at the Milwaukee Art Museum.

**\*\*18 June 2011:** The Rotary Gardens in Janesville and a luncheon boat trip on Lake Geneva.

**\*\*13 August 2011:** The Emperors' Private Paradise: Treasures From the Forbidden City at the Milwaukee Art Museum.

**\*\*8 October 2011:** A scenic overnight trip to Decorah, Iowa. Possible side trips to Grant Woods art collection at the Cedar Rapids Art Museum, the Laura Ingalls Wilder home and museum in Burr Oak, or the Villa Louis in Prairie du Chien.

**\*\*3 December 2011:** Impressionism on Paper: Drawings from Manet to Van Gogh at the Milwaukee Art Museum.

Contact Pat Watkins with any questions about the trips or to get on her mailing list.

*-Pat Watkins*

*pwatkins (at) wisc.edu, 233-5795*

### **WOW News**

WOW – Prairie's wild, outstanding women, meet once a month for breakfast potluck and conversation. Our usual meeting time is 9am on the first Saturday of the month, sometimes at Prairie and sometimes at a member's home. In December we tried to meet on the 4<sup>th</sup>, but bad weather caused us to have a very small turnout and the making of gift baskets was postponed to the January meeting. Our January meeting will be on Saturday the 8<sup>th</sup>, at 9am at Prairie. February we will return to the first Sunday of the month – February 5<sup>th</sup>.

For the making of the baskets in January, WOW folks are asked to bring small goodies to stock the baskets (lotions, soaps, food, etc) as well as actual baskets, tissue, and ribbons for decorating.

Any questions or emails to add to the email group call 276 8397 or email marysomers44 (at) charter.net or Kathy Converse at conversekrtn (at) msn.com.

*Kathy Converse, Winter WOW coordinator*

### **Prairie Book Club**

The Prairie Book Club meets monthly, usually the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month after the service at Prairie, at about 11:45 a.m. Bring potluck food to share. This is an open book club. You may come whether or not you have read the book. For more information, contact Mary Mullen, 608.298.0843 or mmullen(at) chorus.net.

Sunday, January 16 - Rabbit Redux, by John Updike. This one is the sequel to Rabbit, Run. It follows Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom, working a dead-end job in Brewer, PA. His wife leaves him and his 12-year-old son. During this chaotic time when the nation is also in chaos (1969), Rabbit and his son are joined in their household by an African American Vietnam vet and a wealthy white teenager, Jill. Published in 1971.



*Mary Mullen*

*Book Club Coordinator*

## **Prairie Burglary from October 2009 Resolved**

In late October of 2009, someone broke a basement window in what is now the nursery and entered the building, taking a television, a DVD player, and a small amount of petty cash from the building. In the course of the burglary, the responsible party left behind a few drops of blood, having scratched his knuckles while trying to get into the locked cabinet in the admin office. From this tiny amount of blood, the burglar was identified – he was a “repeat offender” who targeted churches. He was ecumenical in his house of worship burglaries, however, having hit a Unitarian Universalist church, a Jewish Synagogue, and a Protestant church, too.

As your administrator (and the one who called in the burglary,) I was subpoenaed to appear at his preliminary trial in late spring 2010. He waived his right to this trial as I was on my way in to the courthouse, so I wasn't needed for the trial, but I chose to stay for a while to talk with the DA and get some additional information to share with you. I also went up to the courtroom to see him appear to waive his rights. He is not a small man, and I am a little surprised that he was able to get into Prairie by the window he chose.

There was an offer on the table from the state at that time to cap his prison time at 7 years - rolling all of his current offenses into one package. The final disposition of the case on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010, was for him to serve 2 years in prison and 3 years on extended supervision.

Before the first trial had even occurred, we were able to put in a request for restitution – for him to pay back the monetary value of the items that were stolen. What I learned about the restitution process is that we are in line behind his other victims. He will receive prison wages of \$4 per week, of which 25% goes to restitution. We will be sharing that \$1 per week with the other victims, and the state would cut us a check once our portion builds up to \$10, and will continue to send us checks every time it builds up to \$10. So you can tell from that scenario that we will not be receiving our money back in any short order.

If you have any questions about the burglary, please feel free to ask me.

*Kate Liu, Prairie Administrator*

## **Humanist Union News**

The Humanist Union's next monthly meeting will be on January 2<sup>nd</sup> after the service, starting as usual with a potluck lunch at 11:45 am followed by presentation and discussion 12:30 to 1:30 pm. Our presenter will be Prairie member Mary Frantz and her topic is "Bioethics beyond Terry Schiavo." All who are interested in hearing Mary talk are invited to attend.

*Bob Park*

*Humanist Union*

## **Rev. Jane Esbensen marries in Sweden, December 6<sup>th</sup>!**

On a 32 degree day – practically a heat wave for Sweden – our own Rev. Jane Esbensen married Mats Karlsson. Jane related the following about her big day:

“Since I was stranded in Sweden, unexpectedly, I had no special clothes for the occasion, but that didn't matter either! Mats was there. Two of Mats' (and now my!) good friends (Sig-Britt and Kurt) were there as witnesses. And the officiant was there. What more could a person ask for?”

“An official wedding party will be held on Dec. 27th for our friends in Sweden who couldn't make this unplanned wedding. And then a very lovely wedding party will be held in the summer for Mats' and my children, and our friends, from both the States and Sweden ----- so if you're free in August, and want to make the trip to Sweden, you are very welcome to be there, too!”



*Jane and Mats*



## **Minister Search Committee forming**

Even as we extend our well wishes to Rev. Esbensen (and Mats,) we need to get ready for the task ahead of searching for a new consulting minister to serve Prairie beginning in mid-2011. Two people from the previous search committee have already committed to being on the new one, and we thank them for being willing to share their time and newly acquired expertise with the UUA search process. We will also be seeking new people to participate, so if you are interested, please let me know. It is a big job, so be sure you have the space in your calendar for the task. We will have Rev. Jane with us until the end of June, so let us enjoy that time with her and make the best use of her varied skills while she is with us even as we prepare for the future.

Barbara Park, Prairie UU Society President  
barpark (at) gmail.com

## **Prairie Board Meeting Summaries**

### Highlights from October 7, 2010

- The Board agreed that the Humanist Union is a Prairie organization. This has been debated in the past and is now clarified.
- Work continues on the new Prairie sign, including discussions with the city on placement.
- Our first Soup Sunday was a success and we will continue to offer these once a month, sponsorship to rotate amongst Prairie committees.
- The board discussed having representation via a liaison for committees not on the Board (such as the Caring Committee). Decisions on this will be expected to be informed by the work on Governance.
- The board agreed that the new announcement procedure may need a few tweaks but is working well to keep the focus on the program, so will be continued.
- Parish meeting will be on Nov 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Due to some generous increases from pledgers, we are now meeting our budget

### Highlights from November 4, 2010

- Discussion on retreat report and location for next year. Prairie lost around \$1100 on this year's retreat; this was due to undercharging for meals and some housing issues. Kate will be pricing a retreat at Pine Lake in 2011 based on a two-day, one night retreat format that will be just as family friendly but less costly on housing. Discussion and general approval regarding more visibility for scholarships/supplemental contributions directly in support of the retreat.
- Update on sign proposal. The board approved making an appeal to the city in support of a double-sided sign for the corner of our property.
- Update on By-laws change. An open meeting for all interested Prairie folks to discuss by-law changes will be scheduled soon - targeting the first week of Dec.
- Review new announcement procedure. Is this working? The board generally agreed that the new announcement procedure is working well. The board agreed that any fundraiser sales items should not be in the announcements, but can be posted on the bulletin board in the back of the meeting room.
- Publicity. Jane was interviewed today by the Isthmus (Bill Leuders) who will also plan to attend the November 14th service. Barb will ask Rebecca to be the lead on publicity for Prairie since Rebecca has done excellent work to gain Prairie more publicity and has a gift for good ideas and follow up.
- Consultant's Report. Deferred until a later time. The board did request that the consultant ball-park a general figure for an addition. This will be good information to have as Prairie contemplates future plans.
- Update about the Thanksgiving Service. Jane has been excluded from the ministerial planning for the Madison joint Unitarian Thanksgiving service to be held at FUS. This is very disappointing and the board was unanimous in support for Jane. We feel we should be a role model and turn out in force in support of ALL members of the Unitarian community. Barb is planning to call Mr. Morales regarding the disappointing lack of inclusion. This is stemming from the fact that Jane Esbensen is not Fellowshiped.

### Highlights from December 6, 2010

- Jane Esbensen got married today in Sweden. She will be fulfilling her contract with Prairie but moving to Sweden shortly thereafter. Prairie will be re-convening the Search Committee. Al Nettleton and Dorothy Krause will be the carryover members and others will be asked to serve.

- We continue to have problems with the sound system at Prairie and are actively working to resolve the issues.
- For the current budget year, payment to outside speakers can be determined by the Program Committee as long as they stay within their budget. The Program Committee may consider adjusting payments as part of the 2011/2012 budget.
- Options for the Retreat continue with Kate Liu at the helm. Pine Lake said that a one night stay would be no problem as long as we schedule in a timely fashion; Bethel Horizons will be setting their spring schedule for 2012 soon, so that may be an option. Stay tuned.
- Prairie will continue to be listed in the Yellow Pages and with a few changes, there is no charge for this listing.
- Dorothy Krause will be convening a meeting after the holidays to talk about updates/improvement ideas for Prairie's website. All are welcome.
- Rebecca will look into advertising the Sunday program in the Isthmus.
- The Board highlights will be published on Prairie's website.
- The Committee on Committees is actively working on matching Prairie's talent to open opportunities.
- RE is looking for a responsible child care provider on Sunday mornings. This is a paid position. Please see Robin Proud or Rebecca for more information.
- The UUSC has a 2-star rating on Charity Navigator. Christina will be looking into what the UUSC has to say on this matter and report back to the board.

## Membership News

We have had several updates and additions to our directory since the new one came out in October. Our Admin has prepared a supplement for you which went out on Prairie News a few days ago. If you didn't get one and need it, please call Kate (271-8218) or email her ([admin@uuprairie.org](mailto:admin@uuprairie.org)) and ask. Also, if you get a paper copy of the directory and need a paper copy of the update, please call her and she'll send you one.

## Green Tidbits

Did you know that you can bury wood under ground to improve the water holding capacity and fertility of the soil? It's called hugelkultur. Here is one link of many I found: [www.richsoil.com/hugelkultur/](http://www.richsoil.com/hugelkultur/). You can put the wood on top of the soil, or dig a trench to bury it. If you want to grow plants on it the same year, add compost because the decomposing wood will suck nitrogen out of the soil. Instead, the compost will feed it and your plants should do fine. Imagine doing this with all the sticks that fall on your yard over the course of a year. That's a lot of carbon sequestration! I'm saving all our sticks for next spring. Not quite sure where I will bury them yet...

And for the winter... You can get good traction when your car is stuck in the snow by putting a piece of carpet under each wheel. Carpet about the size of the samples you find in carpet stores works well, and it's easy to store in the trunk – and it sure beats having the bucket of sand tip over in your trunk. Coyle Carpet has a semi parked at the side of the building to hold the carpet that they take from people's homes. They send it out to be recycled. You can get a strip from the semi for free (bring your own sharp knife).

*-Judy Skog*

## UU – UUA - UUSC News

### **UUA President Issues Statement on International Transgender Day of Remembrance**

Though International Transgender Day of Remembrance has passed (it was November 20, 2010,) this is still a timely issue. Here is an excerpt of President Morales' statement:

“As long as anyone is harassed or ridiculed, we must demand an end to the bullying. As long as anyone is judged because of their gender identification or presentation, we must insist on a higher moral standard. And if, God forbid, anyone is ever again physically harmed or murdered because of his or her gender identity or expression, we must rise up and seek justice.

We must put our faith into action, not just on this day of remembrance, but every day.

In memory of those who have been murdered, to all who feel their loss, and to all who still struggle with oppression, you are not alone. We are with you, standing on the side of love.”

For the full text of the statement and information about how to get involved, please visit <http://www.uua.org/news/newssubmissions/173981.shtml>.

### **UUSC Targets Right to Water**

"Water Apartheid" - what is it? The United Nations Development Program has given this name to the distress caused by the unequal distribution of water, especially among the poor of the world. 1.1 million people worldwide have NO access to safe drinking water. Each year almost two million children die of dehydration and in the past ten years more children have died from lack of safe water than everyone who have died in all armed conflicts since World War II. The World Health Organization sets 26.4 gallons per person per day as a basic human rights requirement, but in many townships in South Africa and elsewhere, access to water is limited to 13.2 gallons per person per day. How many gallons per day do you use? On your latest water bill, divide the number of gallons shown by the number of days on the horizontal line under your name. Divide by the number in your household, then compare your usage per gallon with the UNHO's basic recommendation. Then compare your number of CCF's with the individual range of between 15-23 for Madison residents. To find out more, including how you can help, visit <http://www.uusc.org/actforwaterjustice>

*-Pat Watkins*

### **Ithsmus Article on Rev. Jane Esbensen mentioned in UU World online!**

The recent Ithsmus article about Rev. Jane was mentioned in the UU World blog page – <http://blogs.uuworld.org/media/>. This page has many interesting links to what your fellow UU congregations are up to around the country, including erecting wind turbines as steeples, finding alternate ways to celebrate “Black Friday,” and much, much more.



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