

Prairie Fire

April 2014

Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)



- Sat. Apr 5** 9-11 am **WOW@Prairie**
5 pm **Spring Fling!**
- Sun. Apr 6** 10 am Service - "**Wild Women vs. Manly Men**" - Rev. Sandra Ingham
12 noon - **Humanist Union potluck and discussion**
5:30 pm - **Men's Group**
- Sun. Apr 13** 10 am Service - "**The Power of Vulnerability**" - Sara Goodman
11:30 am **Parish Meeting & Potluck**
- Sun. Apr 20** 10 am Service - "**DYI Hallelujah Chorus Lollapalooza and Karaoke**"
10 am **Easter Egg Hunt**
- Tues. Apr 22** 1:30 pm **Prairie Elders Meeting**
- Sun. Apr 27** 10 am Service - "**Environmental Ethics**" - Matt Tedesco
11:30 am **Prairie Book Club**

WOW@Prairie: Women of Wonder meets every 1st Saturday of the month at Prairie. Bring a breakfast/brunch dish to share. Contact: Anne Urbanski 221-4053; anneu53714@gmail.com

Spring Fling is just around the corner! Activities start with dinner at 5:30, followed by games (Wink in particular). **SPECIAL ACTIVITY:** Paint a chalice T-shirt! Have you noticed young Prairie members wearing hand-stenciled chalice t-shirts? Would you like to make one of your own? You can! - at Spring Fling - all ages invited! **Bring your own white or light-colored, prewashed, cotton t-shirt.** If you have fabric paint at home that you would like to share, please bring it. Questions? call Karen Deaton 278-8480.



"Wild Women vs. Manly Men": This is part II of Rev. Sandy's miniseries on "Wild Women of the West", continuing the stories about the Unitarian and Universalist, what was then considered the West. The women ministers were a force of nature, brightly shining for a while, but unfortunately, only for about 50 years. What happened to the Sisterhood? Why did it fall apart? There were several intertwined reasons for the demise of this group, one of the strangest being the backlash of a cultural movement to stop the spread of the emasculation of American males at the end of the 1800s.

Humanist Union will hear about "Evolution in the Courts" from Nick Schweitzer of the UW Law School and FUS. This is a historical review of court cases dealing with evolution. The presentation and discussion will be from 12:30 to 1:30 pm. As usual, we'll start with a potluck lunch a bit before noon.

The Men's Group meets the 1st Sunday of the month at Prairie. Bring a dish to pass. Contact: Dan Proud derrproud@att.net

"The Power of Vulnerability": Power is such a controversial topic; often the focus of

discussion is on taking too much power or the abuse of power. What's interesting about power is that sometimes the most powerful moments in our lives are times when we feel the least powerful. The times we make the most significant changes in our lives are often the times we are the most vulnerable.

The Parish Meeting & Potluck originally scheduled for April 27th will be held April 13th. We will start with an old-fashioned potluck, so bring a dish to share and the meeting will begin at 12:00. Agenda items include a formal approval of the Nominating Committee members and decisions regarding 2006 Whenona. If you have questions, feel free to contact me or Dirk Herr-Hoyman who is chair of the planning committee.

Prairie Book Club will discuss *Final Salute: The Story of Unfinished Lives* by Jim Sheeler. The book is an under told story from the Iraq war, an account of how the families of the dead are notified, the lost loved ones enshrined and their memories preserved and honored. Readers will learn how shielded we are from the casualties of war. We are reading this book in honor of Pat Watkins who recommended it to several of us a number of times for the book club.

"DYI Hallelujah Chorus Lollapalooza and Karaoke": This is for all you shower singers. Bring your loofah or hairbrush, whatever serves as your microphone, and join us in a full-throated rendition of Hallelujah Chorus Karaoke. (No music critics allowed.) This will be a joyful look at the Hallelujah Chorus with some different takes on the classic. Guaranteed to leave you with an earworm that will leave you smiling for the rest of Easter Day!!!

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 topic this month is "Hiking and camping: are they really necessary?" If convenient, bring your own beverage cup and a few snacks. Newcomers welcome. Nakoma Room, Heritage Oaks building, Oakwood Village West. Directions, parking or a ride: Rosemary Dorney (238-4382) or Donna Murdoch (238-3802).

"Environmental Ethics": In honor of Earth Day Prairie's resident philosopher, Matt Tedesco, will give us an overview of thinking on environmental ethics.

Parish Meeting will be VERY BRIEF to verify and elect Nominating Committee members. This meeting should take no longer than 15 minutes.

Prairie News

Denominational Affairs: REGISTRATION for the REGIONAL MEETING to be held in Wausau April 11th & 12th is now open. On-site registration is \$100. Registration for this year's GENERAL ASSEMBLY, to be held in Providence, Rhode Island, June 25-29, will open on March 3rd. You will receive a discount of \$50 or more if you register by April 30th. For more information on the regional meeting, go to midamericauua.org. For more General Assembly information, please go to uua.org/ga. For other information, contact Rev. Sandy or Phyllis Long, Chair of the Denominational Affairs Committee. THANKS!!

Prairie Family Retreat will be at Bethel Horizons in Dodgeville, June 6-8. Save the date, it will be tons of fun, more details coming soon!

Interfaith Hospitality Network Week is March 30 to April 5. One of Prairie's social action commitments is being a buddy church for Midvale Lutheran as they house homeless families as part of the Interfaith Hospitality Network, which is part of The Road Home. Please consider volunteering to serve dinner or various other jobs to help Prairie honor its commitment to this wonderful organization. Call Erin Bosch for more information about IHN and the various volunteer jobs (238-6285). You can sign up online by going to this address: <http://nordengs.com/ihn/group.asp?eg=29&u=true>

Men's Shelter Breakfast Update: If you would like to look ahead and let me know if you can help out in future months, that would be great. Shopping seems to be covered, so we would just need cooks for the early Saturday mornings (5 a.m.). Sat., Apr. 5; Sat., May 3; Sat., June 7
Thanks! Contact: Paula Pachciarz (pjpchz@gmail.com)

Mind/Heart/Body and Compassionate Consciousness for Everyday Living: Jody Whelden presents a workshop on using holistic tools for peace within and with others on Saturday, April 12, 2014, 10 am-12 pm at Prairie. No Fee. We can choose to be peaceful and compassionate with ourselves and with others. In that way, we contribute to a peaceful and just world. We will talk about and practice how to move your body/mind to expand compassionate awareness. *To sign up please write me at creatingpeacewo@gmail.com or call at 608-286-5287. I am a UU minister who served Prairie for one year and now have a community ministry business. I have a blog at www.jodywhelden.wordpress.com. Warmly, Jody*

Prairie Annual Service Auction: Thank you for another successful auction! A big thank you to everyone who donated items and everyone who bid! We're busy entering all the results. Watch your mailbox! We'll be sending out letters to all the donors and bidders.

Message from the President **~Barbara Park**

The planning committee has been meeting regularly with the architect to develop renovation plans for our expansion project including remodeling the house next door and adding a small parking lot. The 2006 Whenona planning committee has now scheduled 2 meetings to share these plans, get your input, and look at the budget.

April 6th: We will have two plans for everyone to examine and give their feedback. One plan will have more features at a higher cost and the other a low cost alternative. Committee members will be present to discuss these plans and to answer your questions. There will be two times to do this: 9:00 - 9:45am and 11:30 to 12:00. Come to either or both and familiarize yourself with the proposals. These sessions are the best time to make suggestions on these proposals, rather than at the Parish Meeting.

April 13th: This will be a formal parish meeting to discuss the plans, the budget, make a decision on which plan to use, and approve expenditure of funds. These are important decisions, and I encourage everyone to attend. The architect will join us at this meeting too. Please consider attending both meetings so you have a chance to think about what is being proposed ahead of time.

Musings from the Minister

~ Reverend Sandra Ingham

'Tis the season -- the season to make decisions about how to spend the spring and summer months: go to Unitarian Universalist Association annual meetings in April and June; attend a week-long mediation training workshop in Minneapolis in mid-May; take some study time in April; have adult religious education classes in the summer; plan a summer Board retreat? Or do none of these? This year, after our harsh winter and unrelenting cold weather, I am having an unusually difficult time discerning how "booked up" I want to be during my favorite time of the year.

We talked a lot about that word discernment in my seminary days. If we could just figure out how to be good discerners, surely that would make us wise ministers, able to help our parishioners find clarity in all sorts of situations. Alas, I have not quite mastered the art of discernment yet; I am frequently confused when I have so many options and possibilities for how to spend my time because I want to do everything, not only what I mentioned above, but also I want to be outside hiking, biking, enjoying as soon as the weather allows.

"So much to do, so little time" is a succinct way to summarize my current state of indecision, with a dash of anxiousness. A more eloquent way to say it was written by E.B. White, in one of my favorite quotes. "It's hard to know when to respond to the seductiveness of the world and when to respond to its challenge. If the world were merely seductive, that would be easy. If it were merely challenging, that would be no problem. But I arise in the morning torn between the desire to improve the world and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day."

And, to plan the spring and summer... I have managed to discern that I will be going to the district/regional annual meeting in Wausau April 11-13. From there, I will take a few days study leave in Door County, something I originally planned to do at the end of December, but, first weather, then illness, caused me to reschedule -- twice. I will be back in Madison on April 20... NOTE: As always, I will be checking email and phone messages while I am away.

RE Circle of Friends

~ Rebecca Malke, Director of Religious Education

Spring is here and that means it's time for Spring Fling. Our annual event will be Saturday, April 5th. Doors open at 5:00 pm with a kid's potluck dinner starting at 5:30. Everyone at Prairie UU Society is invited to attend this fun event. There'll be games and a sleepover but the highlight of the evening will be chalice t-shirt making. Bring a plain, white shirt and any fabric paint. Paint and stencils will be provided but extra paint is always welcomed.

In class students have finished up their lessons on Hinduism and have started Sikhism. Hinduism lessons for grades 4 and up included a talk by John Eliganti and a guest visit by Dr. Bikash, from the Shiva Vishnu Temple of Fitchburg.

Grades 1-3 also started lessons on Hinduism and were able to take part in our field trip. On March 16th our older students attended the Shiva Vishnu Temple for stories about Lord Ganesha, songs and a lesson on Vedic math. Afterwards our younger students joined in for lunch provided by the temple and then we all took part in the Festival of Colors also known as Holi. Brightly colored powder was thrown by everyone and no one escaped its path! There was a sacred fire, chai, Indian snacks and lots of running around and laughing. We had a wonderful time and have been invited back for their 3rd annual Hindu festival on Sunday, June 29th.

In two weeks we'll have a Sikh guest speaker and later a field trip to the Sikh Gurdwara of Middleton. If you're interested in taking part in any of these classes, you're welcome to join us.

And believe it or not Easter is coming up fast. We're having our 4th annual Easter egg hunt on Sunday, April 20th. We'll begin at 10:15 am, after the Story for All Ages. The egg hunt is for children 12 and under. Youth ages 13 and up are asked to attend the service that morning or help with crafts for our little UUs.

Community News

Friends of the Arboretum Native Plant Sale will have more than 100 species of native grasses, prairie plants, ferns, woodland flowers, shrubs, vines and trees for sale at the 25th Annual Friends of the Arboretum Native Plant Sale on Saturday, May 10 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. All proceeds from the sale benefit Arboretum programs. Volunteers welcomed. Tasks include assembling flats with the native plant sale garden mixes, labeling, watering, arranging plants in the tent and much more. To volunteer on May 6, 8, or 10, phone Anne at 608-345-9697 or send an e-mail to Anne: anne@roddgersrhyme.com Support our neighbor, the Arboretum!

Dear Prairie People: Like many of you, I get notices of projects sponsored by the UU Service Organization which does extraordinary work in areas of great need. This one caught my eye since we are big in urban gardens and farmers markets in this town. It would be an investment of \$250 to sponsor one for a family in Haiti. Read below and see if you'd like to join me. Ten of us could give \$25 each to do this from Prairie. We need seven more contributions in order to become a sponsor. Contact: Anne Lundin <alundin@wisc.edu>

Growing your own food and having the resources and opportunity to do so is powerful. That's why the UUSC is asking you to grow a garden of your own and sponsor one for a family in Haiti. You can grow a garden as an individual, as a family, youth group, small group ministry, congregation, or community group. These gardens are small and built in containers, and they produce delicious food! UUSC provides how-to resources to take you through each step in the gardening process. If 100 individuals and groups grow gardens, and you each raise \$250 or more for one family in Haiti to receive training and materials for their gardens, you can help 100 Haitian families grow their own food and achieve food sovereignty and sustainability! More information: http://actnow.uusc.org/site/PageNavigator/100_Congregations_100_Gardens.html

HEART & SOUL LIVING: THE JOURNEY HOME TO SELF is a workshop for women - "Skills, Experiences and Reflection" with Jody Whelden and Vida Groman. will be held April 4th & 5th, at Holy Wisdom Monastery: Friday evening, April 4, 2014, 7:00-9:00 PM Saturday, April 5, 2014, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, lunch included. \$225 regular, includes free session follow-up, or, NEW SPECIAL DEAL, bring 1 or 2 friends and you come for full rate and they each come for half the rate--work out money with each other. Have you ever wished..you knew how to live differently with less struggle and with more ease? Have you ever wanted.... to be connected to a sense of something bigger than yourself? If these powerful questions have meaning for you, we would love to have you at this weekend workshop. For more information: Jody at creatingpeacewo@gmail.com or Vida at vidagroman1@gmail.com 608-236-4811

Celebrating National Poetry Month

LIFE IS BRIEF

~ Ester Prudlo

How fast the future becomes the past.
Our parents are dead.
Our children have children.
The days are slow,
the seasons flick by,
and years which seemed so distant
are moments.

Time changes as we grow old.
Hard to believe that you
And I are that old man and this old woman
others find tiresome
because we are slow
and forget.

I am still that blonde baby,
that girl with skinned knees,
the ingenue of my own young life.
I am still pregnant with twins,
A divorcee, a second time bride, a teacher,
A poet, a cancer patient.

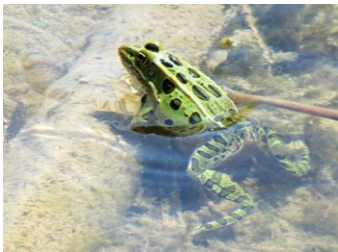
Life unrolls.
You are young in my eyes.
I see you as your were.

I joyfully link my arm with yours
the same as I did
whenever was
yesterday.

Published in *Life: Stories for The Fall*, Lulu Press (9/10/13)

Haiku memories of frogs

~ Kathy Converse



March

Returning males wait
Croaking like old rusty doors
Calling females home



April

Cattail stems heavy
Glistening jelly egg masses
Changing in silence



May

Sun warmed shorelines
Tadpoles gathering tightly
Escaping the cold



June

Metamorphosis

Growing changing jaws, lungs, legs

Metamorphosis



Leaving natal ponds

Distant grasses call them

Go, eat, grow, return

Bird Lovers

~ Ruth Calden

They sat together on a bench in a bird blind,
male and female, bird lovers, strangers,
barely introduced but assigned to watch
in an overturned box
for possibilities of lust,
for evidence of mating
among the vanishing Prairie Chickens
on a cold spring morning.

Together, hands groping in the dark of the blind,
fumbling for flashlights, binoculars, pencil and notebook,
eyes fixed to peepholes,
eager to witness the ancient spring ritual,
anxious to observe the congregating males
on the snow patched booming ground,
determined to try to make out the numbers
on foot bands of strutting males,
committed to sketch a facsimile
of the boundaries of the booming ground.

Suddenly there arose
a crescendo of ecstatic cries.
All the males, together, turned,
all orange neck sacs inflated
all tails raised and spread
all feet drummed the frozen earth
heralding the arrival of a small brown female.

She tentative, timid, scarcely turning to the expectant males
Skirted along the edge of the booming ground,
Lifted her wings and disappeared into the clear cold air.
Together, male and female, bird lovers,

they observed the flight of the female through the peepholes
and recorded in the notebook,

"6:15 a.m. Female Prairie Chicken arrived...no mating took
place."

They were united in disappointment
for the Prairie Chicken is vanishing from our landscape.
They were united in disappointment
for together they had held their breath
watching for evidence of lust
for the possibility of mating
among the Prairie Chickens
on a cold spring morning.

Published in the Wisconsin Academy Review, Spring 1992.

Note from Ruth:

My poem Bird Lovers was based on an incident of bird watching I did as part of local naturalist Jim Zimmerman's class called Reading the Landscape in the early 1970s. After sleeping overnight in my car I was assigned to share a blind in the very early morning with an unknown male classmate. He and I were so committed to the task of watching for mating among the Prairie Chickens that it was only afterwards I realized the amusing social incongruities. (I wrote the poem in 1991 for a Prairie service Annis Pratt and I did on bird watching.)

Shorts ~ Susan Herr-Hoyman

Tennies

"Ah," sigh the toes
As the hole widens above them.
"About time these dogs got a breather."

Stapler

Hungry mouth gaping
Silently waiting
Bites with intention

Shadow

Partner in black
Always a step away
Mimicking my every move.

Stiletto Heels

"No!" shouts the Big Toe.
"I will not dance with
the Little Toe!"

Visit Prairie's website (see below) for further information.



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