

# Prairie Fire



**January 2015**

## Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

- Sat. Jan 3** 9 am **WOW@Prairie**  
**Sun. Jan 4** 10 am **Service - "In the Beginning"** - Rev. Sandra Ingham  
11:45 am **Humanist Union**  
5:30 pm **Men's Group**  
**Sun. Jan 11** 10 am **Service - "A Book That Changed My Life"** - Robin Proud  
**Sun. Jan 18** 10 am **Service - "Reverse Racism"** - Rev. Sandra Ingham  
12 noon - **Prairie Book Club**  
11:45 am **Parish Meeting**  
**Sun. Jan 25** 10 am **Service - "The Road Home"**

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**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

**"In the Beginning":** In the beginning, no one sets out to be addicted to drugs, alcohol or anything else. For an organization that prides itself on being open-minded and "ahead of the curve", we rarely talk about addictions. A few years ago, there was a cover story in our "UU World" magazine about alcoholism written by a Unitarian Universalist minister, addressing this strange reticence of ours. There was very little follow up to this article. Since my seminary days when I took a semester-long course about "Spirituality and Alcoholism", I have been intrigued by this subject. I suspect there are very few people among us who have not been affected by addiction, either their own or a loved one's. What better time than the beginning of a new year for us to begin a conversation about addictions? PLUS an extra special treat for the offertory. On his last Sunday with Prairie, Dirk Herr Hoyman, will perform his swan song accompanied by Ron Frye. We will all miss Dirk and Susan, especially the program committee.

**The Humanist Union** program will be presented by Dan Barker of the [Freedom From Religion Foundation](#). He will give us a *Frontline Report from the Battle of Church and State*. We'll also have a chance to get the latest word on the major expansion of their Freethought Hall near the Square. We'll start at 11:45 am with our usual potluck lunch.

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

**"A Book That Changed My Life":** Those of us who read a lot are often dismissed as antisocial loners, unable to cope with the real world. But recent research shows that readers score higher on

tests of empathy than nonreaders. Come learn about this research and why it matters and then join in telling us about a book that changed your life.

**"Reverse Racism":** This will be a service of meditation and reflection in commemoration of Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. I will consider how my life experiences have shaped my views and attitudes towards people of color. There will be readings and moments of silence for you to reflect on your life experiences in this area. The emphasis will be on pondering the question, "Where do we go from here?" What can privileged white folks do in the "lily-white" community of Madison to help bend that arc of the universe towards justice? NOTE: There will be no Congregational Response time during the service. However, there will be an opportunity later in January for a discussion about this program.

**Prairie Book Club** will discuss *Bucolic Plague* by Jose Kilmer-Purcell drag queen sequel to *I Am Not Myself These Days*, suggested by Barb Park. "I adore the Beekman boys' story. Their unlikely story of love, the land, and a herd of goats is hilariously honest. If these two can go from Manhattan to a goat farm in upstate New York, then I can't help feeling there is hope for us all." –Alice Waters

**A Parish Meeting** will be held after the service. Agenda items include reports from President Gary Gates, Treasurer Al Nettleton. Finance Committee Chair Kathy Converse will present a budget for the 2015 fiscal year. The remodel of 2006 Whenona may be completed by January 18. If so, we'll have a walk-through!

**"The Road Home":** Prairie is a "buddy church" in the Interfaith Hospitality Network Shelter and members have volunteered in this program that houses homeless families. Since this program began in 1999 it has expanded to include services that not only relieve the immediate crisis of homelessness, but also build skills, resources and relationships that set the stage for long-term success.

## **Message from the President**

**~ Gary Gates**

At the November parish meeting we deferred action on the 2015 Budget to give us more time to ameliorate the pain of the cuts we would need to make to fit expenditures within projected revenues. We have scheduled another parish meeting after our service on Sunday, January 18 to adopt the 2015 budget.

We have received a few increases in the amounts pledged and made a few other adjustments. The budget we will be recommending will therefore, be a little less spartan than the one presented in November, but only a little. We will have to increase our volunteer hours to make this budget work and we will not be able to do some of the things we have done in the past.

A few of the specific changes are that we will no longer be using organic, fair trade coffee; the amount of coffee made will be decreased; there will be no increased janitor's hours for maintenance of our new building; we will not be reimbursing our minister for expenses of attending the UUA General Assembly; there will be a small reduction in childcare expenses for

RE; we will have significantly less ability to pay for outside speakers at our services; we will count only active, pledging members for determining Regional and General Assembly dues, etc.

There is still time to increase your pledge for 2015 if you want to help avoid some of these cuts. To do so, call either Dan Klock (271-8218) or Kathy Converse (238-1856).

The meeting agenda will also include voting on the Reproductive Justice Statement of Conscience and a presentation seeking more volunteers to serve on the committees that keep Prairie running. After the meeting ends we hope to take anyone who is interested on a tour of the house next door.

### **Musings from the Minister**

**~ Reverend Sandra Ingham**

First of all, a huge THANK YOU to Susan Herr-Hoyman for her service as the editor of "Prairie Fire". She stepped up to take on this responsibility when we desperately needed an editor and she has done a fantastic job. I have very much enjoyed working with her, not only on the newsletter, but also on the Program Committee and on the Religious Education Committee. (Susan and Dirk Herr-Hoyman are moving to Bloomington, Indiana. Dirk is leaving in January; Susan will be leaving later in the spring.)

I also want to thank Susan for unintentionally giving me a good laugh when she sent out the monthly reminder about the deadline for getting articles to her to publish in the next "Prairie Fire", in this case, the January issue. In that reminder, Susan said that people could send New Year's resolutions to her, if they were so inclined, for inclusion in the newsletter. However, she typed reVolutions, instead of reSolutions. I was delighted with this mistake (or maybe it was intentional??). I had never considered how those two words are the same, except for that one letter. How intriguing! Think about it -- New Year's REVOLUTIONS, instead of RESOLUTIONS!

I hope that our Prairie community opts for revolution as our 2015 resolution.... How? I can think of many ways to do this. The one that most "reaches out and grabs me" is a Prairie resolution to become VERY INVOLVED in the MOSES MOVEMENT to significantly reduce the prison population, especially among people of color, in Wisconsin's prisons, in the year 2015. Thus, we would turn our ReSolution into our very own ReVolution.

Aren't sure or don't have a clue about what I mean when I talk about MOSES?? Come to Prairie for the Sunday service on January 18th, and find out more.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that I have also enjoyed working with Dirk, as well as Susan. Dirk has served on Prairie's Board with me. (I am an ex officio member of the Board.) I have learned a lot from him about working with others, and about the use of mediation and the art of compromise. Speaking for the Prairie community, we wish the Herr-Hoymans well in your new venture and we hope that the move will be a good one for both of you.

HAPPY NEW YEAR, EVERYONE!! Rev. Sandy

## Prairie News

### Serving on a Prairie committee is an act of support and love

Each Sunday, we hear how Prairie UU Society runs on Love. That love comes in many forms, including coming to know the many Prairie friends and families. Being at Prairie offers time out from your busy schedules and lives to reflect and contemplate on what is really important and makes you happy. The first contact that most people have at Prairie is to attend Sunday Services. And then if you have children, come to know Holly, Prairie's Religious Education director, and the wonderful volunteers who teach and care for your children.

What you may not know is that most of the daily work of Prairie organization is done by volunteers who serve on its numerous committees. The list of committees and an outline of what they do are noted on Prairie's website <http://uuprairie.org/aboutus/#com>.

In this article, I will feature the work of individual committees that you may be interested in coming to know and serving on. This time I will focus on the Communication, Housing and Property, and Denominational Affairs Committees.

The **Communications Committee** is responsible for Prairie's website, email lists, staff email, Prairie Fire newsletter, audio for services, and publicity. The work tends to be computer oriented and is performed by Dirk Herr-Hoyman, [hoymand@gmail.com](mailto:hoymand@gmail.com), Chair person who is moving from Madison in January; Bob Park, who you often see with his recorder taping the services posted at <http://uuprairie.org/audio/index.php>; Dan Klock, who is Prairie staff and maintains the weekly programs on the home page and builds calendar; Susan Herr-Hoyman, who produces the monthly newsletter Prairie Fire in both print and electronic forms; Anne Urbanski, who posts to the Prairie's Facebook site, <http://facebook.com/uuprairie>; and Prairie's 2 email lists Prairie News and Prairie Views, the former announces "Prairie Business" and the latter provides a discussion forum. Other volunteers who provide technical services on Sunday mornings include Bill Parmenter, Al Nettleton, and Peter Anderson

Another committee is **the Housing and Property Committee** that has the ongoing challenges of maintaining Prairie's properties at 2010 and 2006 Whenona Dr. Committee members are Jim Lyne (co-chair, [jwlyne@gmail.com](mailto:jwlyne@gmail.com)), Randy Converse (co-chair, [conversekrtn@gmail.com](mailto:conversekrtn@gmail.com)), Al Nettleton, Martin Arnold Long, Dirk Herr-Hoyman, and Bob Park. Some projects the committee has completed are improving the space used by the religious education classes including general cleanup and preparation for the new school year starting in September; the daily repairs that a property always needs; and grounds work for prairie restoration and landscaping. As our new 2006 Whenona property is completed this spring and the winter moves on, the committee will be looking for gardeners for the grounds sub-committee to help make the properties beautiful.

**Denominational Affairs Committee** supports the connection to the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), Prairie's parent organization and is chaired by Phyllis Long, [plong373@gmail.com](mailto:plong373@gmail.com). This committee keeps Prairie connected through attendance to and participation with the UU General Assembly, [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org), and the Mid America Regional Assembly, [www.midamericauua.org](http://www.midamericauua.org). This year the UU General Assembly is in Portland, OR,

June 24-28, 2015 and the Mid America Regional Assembly is in Naperville, IL, near Chicago, April 17-19, 2015. Many Prairie members have attended these gatherings over the years to enjoy the variety of services, lectures, trainings, and social action activities that a gathering of fellow Unitarian Universalists in national and regional assemblies can offer.

Other activities that the Denominational Affairs Committee supports include the shared Sunday service at the Sauk County Free Congregation, the last German freethinking congregation in this country; and the annual Guest at Your Table service, which is in support of the UUSC, [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org). This committee provides ongoing backing for the Chalice Lighters Program, [www.uua.org/interconnections/interconnections/48570.shtml](http://www.uua.org/interconnections/interconnections/48570.shtml), and the MOSES program, also supported by Prairie's Social Action Committee, [mosesmadison.org](http://mosesmadison.org).

More committees to come in future Prairie Fire editions. Info provided by Patty Stockdale.

**Dirk Herr-Hoyman rolls on!** Dirk is taking a new position at Indiana University working at the HathiTrust Research Center (<http://hathitrust.org/htrc>) as the Operations Manager and Architect. HathiTrust is a collaborative academic digital library and the Research Center provides "computational access" for researchers. The Research Center is housed within the School of Informatics and Computing, which includes Computer Science. Dirk was a CS major at IU in '74-'78, so there's a bit of going back to his origins in this move. His position begins January 12<sup>th</sup>. He leaves Madison on the 9<sup>th</sup> to borrow the Mini from Rachel for a while.

**Editor's Note:** This is my last edition of the Prairie Fire. I have enjoyed the experience and have appreciated everyone's contributions to the newsletter from articles to poetry and pictures. Phyllis Long will be taking over the role of editor. Thanks again, Susan Herr-Hoyman

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



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