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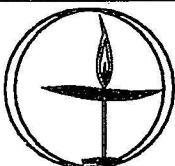
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# Prairie Fire



Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society  
2010 Whenona Drive, Madison, WI 53711

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**Vol. 31, No. 21, 11-23-93**

The deadline for the next issue of **Prairie Fire** will be Sunday, December 5. Submit items for December 9-23, 1993.

## CALENDAR

### Sunday, November 28

9:00 AM

Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM

CHILDREN'S SPIRIT CIRCLE. Children will begin the morning downstairs.

"RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS: Thanksgiving Intergenerational Service" This service will be focusing on those random acts of kindness that have beautified and perhaps electrified our lives. Come with your stories to share, both grand and simple.

11:30 AM

POTLUCK LUNCH. Please bring a dish to share.

### Sunday, December 5

9:00 AM

Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM

"UNPLUG THE CHRISTMAS MACHINE: Plans for Change" presented by Judy Skog. (See related story)

11:45 AM

Program committee meeting for Racial Justice series. At Prairie in the Middle School room after the service.

### Tuesday, December 7:

7:30 PM.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING at the Nettleton's, 645 Sheldon Street.

### Thursday, December 9

6:00 PM

PRAIRIE MEN'S GROUP MEETS at the Meetinghouse. All men are invited to attend.

### Saturday, December 11

7:00 PM

Carol Singing at the home of Norma and Mike Briggs, 2404 Fox Avenue. (See related story)

### Sunday, December 12

9:00 AM

Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM

"PRECIOUS MEMORIES" presented by George Calden.

### Monday, December 13

6:30 PM

SPANISH SPEAKERS' POTLUCK at the home of Rosemary Dorney, 4205 Odana Road, 238-4382. All skill levels are welcome. (See related story)

### Sunday, December 19

9:00 AM

Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM

NIFTY GIFTY. No regular RE sessions. Gift making for all children instead.

"WHY THE PYGMY DANCE" presented by Rick Ruecking. (See related story)

### Sunday, December 26

9:00 AM

Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM

"YULETIDE CELEBRATION." An intergenerational service (including our traditional symbol tree).

### Sunday, January 2

WILD WINTERING. No regular RE sessions. A special event to celebrate the season instead.

### Today's Quote

"Adversity reveals genius, prosperity conceals it."

-HORACE

## NEWS & VIEWS

### Plans for Change

On December 5, at long last, after evaluating who does what, ranking our values, checking in on spirituality, and imagining a dream holiday, we're ready to figure out 2 or 3 things we can change. We will also decide a couple things we can do to make our goals a reality. You may want to think about this some before then. You want your goals to be achievable, and things over which you have direct control. You can't change someone else's actions, but you can try to structure the environment so that it facilitates the change you want. For instance, "I want my husband to be sober this Christmas" doesn't work as

*...As the prairie stretches out until it becomes one with the sky, let us reach out to touch and be one with the natural world and with one another. PRAIRIE'S BOND OF UNION*

The Oldest and Largest Lay-Led Society in the UUA

well as "I want to include more holiday activities that my husband actively enjoys."

Random thoughts on the holidays: Unplug the Christmas Machine began as a series of workshops. The authors have talked to many men, women, and children over the years. They feel that children want a few well-chosen toys plus: 1) Relaxed and loving time with the family. 2) Realistic expectations about gifts. 3) An evenly-paced holiday season. 4) Strong family traditions. (Don't we all...)

For those of you who experience Christmas as painful due to the loss of a family member or close friend, there is a Compassionate Friends newsletter with many good ideas about the holidays. It's on the meeting room bulletin board. If certain rituals are too painful, why not skip them this year. How about putting a red ribbon somewhere outdoors in that person's memory, or share favorite stories or photos with family member. Help other people by volunteering your time at a homeless shelter or holiday meal.

I hope you have all had a chance to do some reflecting on what you like/don't like about the holidays and how you could change things (if you wish) to have a more personally fulfilling time.

-Judy Skog

## Why The Pygmy Dance

In the Sixth Egyptian Dynasty, an expedition to the source of the Nile discovered a diminutive race of people, the Dancers of God, living in a forest paradise beyond the Mountains of the Moon. Over 4,000 years later, European explorers confirmed the mythical reality of the Mbuti people—those whom we know as the Pygmies.

As a part of the U.N. Year of the Indigenous People, Rick Ruecking will describe these people focusing on their religious beliefs and practices. You may be surprised to learn why the pygmy dance.

## Spanish Speakers' Potluck

Spanish speakers will have a little Christmas celebration at Rosemary Dorney's (4205 Odana Road, Madison) in December. Unless the weather is really forbidding, we will put out luminarias (you know, the little votive candles in the paper bags half-filled with sand) as Mexicans and Mexican-Americans do. *(They look beautiful, but getting them together and out-of-doors involves a lot of bending, which my knees aren't up to these days, so come and help.)* We'll then have a feast and maybe sing. If you ever learned a carol in Spanish, this is the time to bring and share it! Maybe we'll even have a piñata.

Have you ever participated in, or do you know of, any customs from Spanish-speaking countries that you could tell about? We'd love to hear about them, and to have the pleasure of your company. Bring a dish to share, if you can (but come anyway if you can't—we always have lots of food!). It doesn't have to be Latino food, either. For a ride or further information, call me at 238-4382. Por favor, celebremos Uds. la Navidad con nosotros!

-Rosemary

## Yuletide Celebration

Calling Children, Youth, and Adults...

Would you like to be a reader, candle-lighter, actor or musician for our December 26th Yuletide service? Could you provide a tree for our Symbol tree? Do you have suggestions for a reading, song or special tradition? Please contact Aileen Nettleton, 233-6053, by December 12, or come to a brief get-together at 11:30 AM Sunday, December 12, to get your part for the service. Talents of all kinds welcomed!

## Attention Prairie Musicians!

Our Sunday service January 23, 1994, will be devoted to the lives and music of Robert and Clara Schumann and their friend Johannes Brahms. Robert Schumann was a manic-depressive, and his story can tell us something about how it is to live with occasional madness in the family. The Schumanns and Brahms wrote a great deal of beautiful music for the piano, strings, chamber groups, songs for solo voice, and choral music. If you can play on the 23rd (all age levels are welcome), please inform Warren Hagstrom, 238-4970. Let him know what you wish to perform, or, if you're uncertain, ask him for suggestions. If you need an accompanist, let Warren know that as well.

## Prairie Patter

Our Program Committee has an active and dedicated number of volunteers this year. They are working with the lay ministers to provide us with quality Sunday morning services. They are also coordinating the intergenerational services and scheduling other programs of interest for the society. We need your cooperation to help make our programs appealing and attractive. What qualities are important to you as part of your Sunday morning experience at Prairie UU? Decisions about what's important to include as part of the program are based on personal experience and information from members and friends.

Some of the committee's goals are to start the program at 10:00. Since we have a new piano many musicians are playing a prelude and postlude for our enjoyment. For those members who enjoy a quiet meditative moment more of these will be included as part of the service. We have started to have a few closing words as a way of marking the conclusion of the service. Joys and Sorrows have been moved to the beginning of the morning to include RE teachers and students. Along standing Prairie tradition has been to ring the bell to signal the beginning of the service. I am not sure whether we want to continue this tradition or to move to using the prelude as a signal to close the coffee doors, move into the meeting hall and be ready for welcoming words.

Conversation, coffee, and words are important parts of our Sunday morning rituals. We want time to include all of these items. Therefor we are considering either moving the coffee hour to after the service or closing the coffee doors 5 minutes prior to starting to help us be ready to start at ten. Let the Program Committee know if you have a preference.

Blessed be  
-Julie Bonser  
President

## Finance Committee Report

1) Information on loans requested at Parish meeting:

a) Veatch: We owe 16 payments of \$1,071.30 over 4 years totalling \$17,140.80 to finish the loan.

b) M & I Bank: As of 11/15/93, monthly payments are \$644.35 including interest (initial bill \$66,000). Paid \$6,634.36 (that does not include the interest payments) and we hope to renegotiate interest in 1994.

2) Pledges: If you want to know the current state of your pledges for 1993, it is best to call Finance Committee Head, Jim Harvey, at 839-5115.

## Carol Sing

A singing get-together is planned for 7:00 PM on Saturday, December 11, at the home of Norma and Mike Briggs, 2404 Fox Avenue, Madison. Bring finger foods to share. We will use the Prairie Song Book and the new UU Hymnal. Bring your new Hymnal if you have one. If you have a favorite carol which is not in one of these books, please bring along multiple copies. Also, if you have

a copy of the Oxford Book of Christmas Carols, bring that, too.

## Weekend Ski Trips

Dear Prairie UU Skiers,

We at First Unitarian are once again scheduling 2 weekends at **Trees For Tomorrow** in Eagle River, Wisconsin. As in years past we've extended the invitation to those of you who may want to join us.

The weekends we have reserved are January 21-23 and January 28-30. The cost is Adults—\$80.55, Children (10-17)—\$56.70, Children (5-9)—\$44.50, and under 5 years old—free.

This includes 5 meals plus a chili dinner on arrival Friday evening, 2 nights lodging, bedding and towels supplied for adults (children should bring their own), and last but not least some really wonderful skiing.

Ski rentals are \$14/adult, \$12/child. Ski instruction is available at \$12/person eight and older.

I am requesting people to pay in full ASAP. This money will be completely refundable up until 2 weeks prior to the scheduled weekend. Please have checks payable to First Unitarian Society and mail to the church marked:

Attn.: Trees For Tomorrow

The address is:

First Unitarian Society  
900 University Bay Drive  
Madison, WI 53705

Any questions? Please feel free to call me (David Welo) at 273-2639.

Hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,  
David Welo

## That's a Whopper!

José Rodriguez caught a 10" white bass from the bank right in front of the Lodge at Upham Woods during the retreat. He was pretty excited (and no wonder...)!

## Snow Wonder...

Dunns Marsh Neighborhood Association is losing some valuable members. These wonderful Prairie Neighbors have kept our sidewalks shoveled for many snowy years (THANK YOU! WE'LL MISS YOU!). Please network with neighbors, Prairie members, guests and friends to find some folks who will be interested in bartering for use of Prairie space in exchange for their high tech snow blowing machinery and physical stamina. Oh yes, and let me know when

you've found this wonderful person so I can stop worrying and looking myself!

-Karen Gross

Housing & Property Chair



### Nursery/Preschool

Last Sunday, with the help of Metje Butler, the children decorated the walls of their main room with wonderfully colorful and expressive prints and paintings. Green paint hand prints became grass, and then birds, flowers, suns and people were added with brushes. Come down and see their wonderful designs. Thanks to Metje for helping with this project, Emilie Dickson for organizing it, and Nora Bosch for helping even though she'd been at the all night cast party the night before!

### Treasure Hunting (K-1-2)

On the morning that the preschool children painted walls, the children from this group joined them for the project. Anne Pryor and Dean Schroeder helped Larry Murdock with the children this morning.

The following week, Shirley Grindrod led the children in a project of making "helping hand" centerpieces for their Thanksgiving tables.

### A Stepping Stone Year (3-4-5)

There were 13 children in attendance one week, followed by only 3 the next week. This group is hard to plan for because of that wide range in attendance (that could probably be said of all the levels), but the leaders do a great job.

The week of the 13 had the children making (and eating!) pudding in order to experience the earth's lava and layers. They also explored other aspects of the universe's origin by swinging weights, to see how gravity holds bodies in orbit, and by blowing up balloons with spots, to simulate the expansion of the universe. They also discussed the Big Bang theory of creation.

In the following week's session they talked about the changing nature of life, and about changing perspectives. For understanding relative size, they looked at hair, sand, cloth and cracker through a microscope and then

watched the fascinating film, "The Powers of Ten." Adults were invited to come down after the service and watch it too. Paula Pachciarz and Rick Ruecking led these two weeks.

### We Believe (6-7-8)

One week the theme this group pursued was "Each and every person is important." They played "positive word Bingo" and they read a story about Dorothea Dix. They pretended to be in jail and discussed social action, especially what they might be able to do as a future project. This session was led by Bob Purvis.

The following week Randy Converse led a session on justice (being treated fairly). First they heard Jesus' story about the "Golden Rule." Then they drew a town, "Our Happy Town," on paper complete with school, factories, homes and a mall, and talked about what rights and responsibilities are exercised in each place. Then they meditated on and discussed their own self-worth, especially with the idea that if each of us is important then we deserve rights and must demonstrate responsibilities.

## R. E. Service Project

On Sunday, Nov. 28, we will be baking corn bread and muffins to send to the homeless shelter when Prairie volunteers go there on Tuesday morning. The food we bake will be part of the men's breakfast that morning. All RE children, Kindergarten age and older, are invited to participate. We'll begin as soon as everyone has finished eating at the potluck.



## Contra-Dance!

McDuff's Ceilidh Band plays for New England Contra Dancing at the Dunn Town Hall on November 19th and at Prairie on December 17th. The dances start at 7:30 PM. Admission is \$4.00. Call 238-1227 for more information.

## For Sale!

Queen-size waterbed/mattress/heater—best offer.

Bathroom sink/cabinet—best offer or free to a good home.

Judy or Ken Skog, 273-4813.