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Prairie Fire



Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society
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Vol. 33, No. 15, 9-14-95

The deadline for the next issue of Prairie Fire is Sunday, September 24. Submit items for September 28 through October 13.



Sunday, September 17
9:00 AM

Choir Practice

10:00 AM

"THE ECOLOGICAL THEATER AND THE EVOLUTIONARY PLAY," A discussion led by Michael Sheehy. First in an ecology-based lay ministry series. (See story.)

11:30 AM

WOMEN'S GROUP meets, potluck lunch.

Monday, September 18
7:30 PM

PRAIRIE BOARD MEETING, at Prairie, including a discussion of the administrator/ newsletter editor position. All invited to attend.

Tuesday, September 19
7:30 PM

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE meets, at Prairie. All welcome.

Sunday, September 24
9:00 AM

Choir Practice

10:00 AM

"VIETNAM: HEALING AND RECONCILIATION," presented by Mike Boehm, Vietnam veteran and peace advocate. (See story.)

Saturday, September 30
7:30 PM

PLAYREADERS, home of Al and Aileen Nettleton, 645 Sheldon Street, 238-6053. All welcome. (See story.)

Sunday, October 1
9:00 AM

Choir Practice

10:00 AM

"WISDOM IN ONE SENTENCE," second in a series on UU history and thought, presented by Barbara Rames. (See story.)

Sunday, October 8
9:00 AM

Choir Practice

10:00 AM

"CAN HUMANS SAVE THE EARTH FROM HUMANS?" second in a lay ministry series, facilitated by Michael Sheehy. (See story.)

Saturday, October 14

PHILOSOFEST XII, Annual all-day event sponsored by North Shore Unitarian Church, Deerfield, IL. (See story.)

Friday-Sunday, November 10-12

ANNUAL FALL RETREAT, at Upham Woods, Wisconsin Dells

TODAY'S QUOTE

"God has no ears...God is a spirit"

—Barbara Rames



President's Column

Following paths; living with uncertainty

The church year is off to a quick start with new classes in Religious Education and two of the year's lay ministers, Barbara Rames and Mike Sheehy presenting programs in the first weeks of the year. Prairie will have opportunities to explore individual religious paths while considering humankind's trail through the ecosystem, as Barbara and Mike wend their tales. The Program Committee has these and other programs planned through the end of 1995, but what comes next? Betty Jallings in 1996 (a campaign theme?) Contact Program Chair, Bob Reuschlein with new program ideas if you would like to see them presented any time soon.

Fire bells, witnessing the presence:

Prairie members and friends are stepping forward to answer the call for volunteers for circle dinners, membership committee chair, and Upham Woods registration (program coordinator still needed). The Board will consider the administrator/newsletter editor post at its September 18 meeting. Let me know now of your interest.

Interdependent Webs:

It may be a mystery to many, but a recent evolutionary lifeform, the World Wide Web, plies the ether around us. Members are suggesting Prairie establish a "Home Page" linked to yet another Home

...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

Page called Unitarian Universalist Internet Resources. This is a millennial prospect - taking us into an expanding electronic universe - which I am encouraged to support. Let me, or other Board members, know of your ideas before the September 18 meeting.

Sometimes God answers, "No."

Rick Ruecking

Bits of Wisdom

"Great Ideas of Western Man" was a series of ads in newspapers. But what about great ideas of women? We will look at and evaluate some of the wise words of well-known people at our October 1 meeting, when Barbara Rames brings us another service in her lay ministry.

Web of Life

Mike Sheehy's six-part lay ministry series--"Web of Life"--begins on Sunday, September 17, with a program entitled, "The Ecological Theater and the Evolutionary Play." He will lead a discussion on metaphors and philosophies describing the ecosystem/universe and our role in it; the dynamic nature of the ecological theater itself; and finally a potpourri of recent ecological news. The series continues on Sunday, October 8 with a discussion entitled, "Can Humans Save the Earth from Humans?" The program will be based on Al Gore's book, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*. The ministry, which evolved out of Mike's interest in land stewardship, deals with major ecological issues of our day and will continue into 1996. Other upcoming programs include:

November 5: Wisconsin State Representative Spencer Black will speak on a topic of his choice, possibly current ecological issues in the legislature.

December 3. Robert Dahl of The Nature Conservancy will talk about that organization's work in purchasing and protecting land of key ecological importance in Wisconsin and elsewhere.

Several ecological topics for the remaining programs are currently under consideration.

Vietnam Healing

Vietnam veteran and peace advocate, Mike Boehm, will discuss two important Vietnamese peace projects on Sunday,

September 24, in a program titled "Vietnam: Healing and Reconciliation." He will describe the creation of the Vietnam Peace Park, 30 miles northeast of Hanoi, and modeled after The Wisconsin Peace Park. Boehm will also discuss the rotating small loans program for Vietnamese women which has proved successful in helping Third World families. He will illustrate his talk with slides of both projects.

Choir Rehearsals

Choir rehearsals take place at 9 a.m. on most Sunday mornings. (See calendar). If you always wanted to sing, this would be a great time to join. No previous choral or singing experience is necessary. Come and sing with us. If you have questions, call Barb Park at 273-8775.

Playreaders

Prairie Playreaders meet once a month at members' homes. Everyone is welcome to attend, whenever the spirit moves you. Theatrical experience is not necessary; neither is a commitment to the group. All you need is an enjoyment of literature and theater, an enjoyment of open discussions, and the desire to get together for a social evening. Information on play titles, dates and locations will be printed in the Prairie Fire about two weeks before each meeting. Please join us if you can.

Following is the schedule of meeting dates and hosts for the 1995-96 year. We hope it will help you avoid conflicts when planning other events. September 30, Al and Aileen Nettleton; October 21, Paula Pachiarz and Carl Wacker; November 18, Shirley and John Grindrod; December, no playreading; January 13, Rachel Siegfried; February 17, Susan Hagstrom; March 23, Pat Watkins; April 20, Rosemary Dorney and Tim Fast; May 24, annual fish dinner.

Editor Sought

The Prairie Fire needs an editor to begin within the month. This function has been most recently performed by Fran Zell, our administrator, who has resigned. The newsletter takes about 8 to 10 hours every two weeks and is *an essential church function*. Experience with the Macintosh operating systems is helpful. If you are interested in this position or know of someone who is, please call Rick Ruecking at 238-2924. The Board will take up the

question of replacing the administrator at its next meeting on September 18.

Upham Woods

Plan on attending our fall retreat November 10 to 12 at Camp Upham Woods near The Dells. Put the dates into your family calendar now. We still need a program coordinator for this event. If you have attended in the past and have not filled one of these positions, we have an opportunity for you! There are files from past years to guide your efforts.

Circle Dinners

Circle Dinner groups are currently being organized by Warren Hagstrom and Doleta Chapru. Each circle consists of a small (6 to 12 people) group that holds potluck gatherings in one another's home on selected dates throughout the year. This is an excellent opportunity to get to know Prairie members and friends on an informal basis. To sign up see Doleta or Warren after the service on Sundays or call them at 238-4970.

Storytellers Needed

Please call Bob Reuschlein, 233-6031, if you are interested in presenting a five-minute children's story at upcoming fall, winter, or spring services.

Philosofest

"Revisioning liberal religion and the free church in a post-modern world" is the theme for Philosofest XII, an annual UU event to be held on Saturday, October 14 at the North Shore Unitarian Church, 2100 Half Day Road, Deerfield, Illinois. The program includes presentations by prominent UU ministers on topical issues, and the opportunity for participants to debate these issues with the speakers and other UUs from the Central Midwest District. For further information, call 708-234-2460.

UU Christians

The Christian Exploration Group at James Reeb UU Church, 2146 E. Johnson Street, is gearing up for another year of activities. This is a fellowship for both Christian and non-Christian UUs, providing an opportunity to discuss Christian spirituality and to worship. Meetings are held at 5:30 p.m. on the first

and third Sundays of each month at the church. For information call 242-8887.

New Members

Welcome Rachel Long, Martin Arnold, and their two children, Reuben, age 3, and Madeline, age 2. They are the newest members of Prairie Society, having signed the membership book on September 10. They drive in each week from their home in Monroe. Rachel is interested in talking to other parents of young children, especially regarding family rituals at bedtime, grace before meals, and/or other ways you share your religion with your small child. Look for her on Sundays after the service.

Jonathan Park

Some Prairie members will remember Warren and Patty Park and their family, of Minneapolis, who participated in our activities over the years during their visits here with Bob and Barb Park's family. Last month the older of their two boys, Jonathan, died following open heart surgery. He was 17. The following poem, written by Jonathan last spring, was reprinted on the back of the program for his memorial service, held at First Universalist Church in Minneapolis on August 16, 1995.

WHOLE

*The unmistakable cries of my kin
So genetically engrained as familiar
Spill over our tables of conversation,
Our dinners and holidays of connection
That keep us all whole.*

*One by one, the table will continue to empty,
And continue to fill,
to change
to grow;
but the connections are the essence,
And the essence will remain,
The ever-lasting essence must remain.*

*I know every voice
Every laugh
Every smile*

*And they know mine-
Their presence screams in my head
and pounds in my blood.*

I am connected.

*-Jonathan Park
May 10, 1995*



Social Action Survey

Please take some time to fill out the questionnaire enclosed with this issue of the Prairie Fire. We value your opinions and will use them in designing Social Action activities that reflect the interests of the congregation. Return the survey by mail to Prairie, c/o Social Action Survey, or bring it next time you come and leave it in the Social Action box in the basement-level office. We will keep you apprised of the results. If you would like to be involved further, come to the next Social Action Committee meeting on Tuesday, September 19 at 7:30 p.m. at Prairie.

(Due to technical difficulties, this survey did not reach you with the last newsletter, as promised.)

Homeless Shelter

Thank you, Prairie members and friends. You have responded enthusiastically to our renewed call for volunteers to staff the Grace Episcopal Homeless Shelter on our fourth Monday of the month shift. The shifts are 7:45 to approximately 11:30 p.m. on the fourth Monday and 5:00 to 8:00 a.m. the following Tuesday morning. The evening shift includes serving dinner and bringing a gallon of milk, and the morning shift includes serving breakfast and bringing milk and cereal.

If you can't give the shelter your time, perhaps you can help by contributing money and/or coupons for milk and breakfast cereal. Leave coupons and/or checks in the Social Action box in the basement-level office. Call Fran Zell at 233-0213 if you can volunteer.

Blood Needed

Bob Steinhoefer is the latest of our Prairie Society members to give a pint of blood to an unknown friend. Heidi Oliverson gave a pint in August. Let's increase the score of donors on the big chart in our lobby. It was made by Gordon Cunningham of First Society to show us how many UUs are reaching out. Cards

with donor center hours are at our Greeter's Table. Take one!

Lost and Found

Our Lost and Found items will be given away unless owners claim them soon. Look over the items on the coat rack and take anything that belongs to you. Thanks.



From the DRE

Well, RE began with a rush of excitement and minimal confusion. More children than we expected, but the rearranged space was accommodating.

On September 15, I will be meeting with the PYGs (Prairie Youth Group) advisors, Rick Owens and Gary Giorgi. We should have a schedule of sorts that will be sent to all PYGs participants from last year. Both First and James Reeb Societies are interested in joining the middle schooler group.

Anyone interested in helping out with the "Fall Frolic" (scheduled for October 21), should contact Erin Bosch, 238-6285, Dean Schroeder, 256-8813, or the DRE, John-Brian Paprock, 274-4405.

Parent-teacher coffees will begin with the newest class, the teen group, on September 24. Parents are encouraged to come down and visit with the teachers after the service. Check the RE calendar for other dates.

A lot of work went into the first day of RE. The teachers and the RE Committee deserve a pat on the back for their efforts. Two that went above and beyond: Kathy Converse and KK Anderson.

John-Brian Paprock

Upcoming Events

October 21: Fall Frolic (We need some help planning this annual event.)

October 27-29: MADCON 4 (Central Midwest District teen conference)

December 10: Nifty-Gifty (Start now to save natural items and recyclables for this annual winter event.)



Hospitality

We need people throughout September to help with hospitality tasks on Sunday mornings at Prairie. Duties include greeting members and visitors; preparing coffee; and coffee clean-up after the social hour. If you can help, please sign up when the hospitality sheet is passed around on Sunday mornings. Or look for the sign-up clipboard in its permanent home on the wall at the back of the meeting room.

UUA Bookstore

The UUA offers extensive resources on a wide variety of spiritual, political, and other topics through its bookstore in Boston, MA. Books, tapes, and videos may be ordered through the 1995-96 UUA Bookstore Catalog, which is now available at Prairie. Pick up a copy from the magazine rack at the back of the meeting room. To place an order or request additional catalogs call the bookstore at 1-800-215-9076.

Homeshare

The Homeshare Program at Independent Living, Inc. matches older adults who have a room to spare with working persons and students in need of low cost housing and able to provide some help around the house. Homeseekers are carefully screened. If you would like to explore homesharing, call 274-7900.

Exploring Violence

The Madison Urban Ministry announces a four-month series of assembly programs entitled, "Confronting Violence in Our Community." The first program, "Understanding the Personal Affects of Violence," takes place at 7 p.m., Tuesday, October 3 at St. Benedict Center in Middleton. "Dealing with Violence in Our Neighborhoods," is the topic at 7 p.m. on November 7 at South Madison Neighborhood Center, 2001 Taft Street. All programs are designed to open dialogue in the community. See the flyer on the

Prairie Bulletin Board for information on other programs.

Beginning in October, the Urban Ministry also launches a new program called Study Circles. In its first phase the Study Circles will also focus on Confronting Violence in our Community. The circles break issues down into manageable subdivisions so that controversial topics may be dealt with in depth. For further information about the study circles and the assemblies call 256-0906.

Art Show

John-Brian Paprock invites Prairie members and friends to visit his exhibit of pastels, "Moments Along the Path" at Espresso Royale, 208 State Street (across from the Civic Center.) The show runs from September 18 to October 18.

Adult RE

First Society's Adult Education program gets underway this month. There are a number of classes to choose from, such as "Islam: Faith and Fervor," "The Celestine Prophecy: Journey of the Spirit," and "Rise Up and Call Her Name," a women-honoring journey into global earth-based spiritualities. Most classes are \$5 for members and \$10 for affiliates and friends. For a complete listing see the First Society Newsletter on the upstairs bulletin board, or call the First Society office, 233-9774. (Note, there are no phone registrations. You must use the form included with the First Society newsletter.)

Topeka Trek

The UU Fellowship of Topeka, Kansas is sponsoring a bed and breakfast weekend for those who wish to attend the "Treasures of the Czar Exhibit," a collection of royal Russian artifacts on display at the Kansas International Museum through December 31. A special weekend package is available September 29-30, and includes exhibit tickets, 2 nights B&B, Friday wine and cheese, Saturday dinner and entertainment, and Sunday brunch. Cost is \$175 per couple; \$90 per single; and \$25 per child 12 and under. Through December, bed and breakfast alone will be available for \$25 single, \$30, double, and \$5 each additional person. The fellowship notes that there are numerous other attractions in the Topeka area. For further information contact Carol Blizzard at 1-800-777-6415.

UU Guide

The UU Church of Canton, New York, has published a booklet, entitled *Visiting a Dying Friend*, which is available by mail. Address orders to the Memorial Committee, Unitarian-Universalist Church, East Main Street, Canton, NY, 13617. Books are \$1.50 each, postage paid, for one to nine copies, and \$1.25 per copy, postage paid, for 10 or more copies.

Program

The Program Committee meets at 7 p.m. on Thursday, October 5. All are welcome to attend. This is a good opportunity to have some input on upcoming Prairie programs.

Camp Upham Woods

November 10-12

Annual Prairie Retreat

Fun for All Ages

Save the Dates

See Story on Page 2