

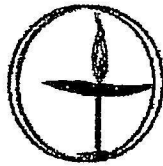
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# Prairie Fire



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

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The deadline for the next issue of  
Prairie Fire is Sunday, April 7.  
Submit items for April 11-April 25

## CALENDAR

Friday, March 22  
6:00 PM  
Fish Dinner Circle

Saturday, March 23  
7:30 PM  
Prairie Playreaders meet (See Story)

Sunday, March 24  
9:00 AM  
Choir Practice  
10:00 AM  
"Spring Equinox" - Nancy Vedder-Shults  
1:00 - 2:30 PM  
"Sandwich Generation" Discussion  
Group will meet downstairs.

Tuesday, March 26  
7:00 PM  
Social Action Committee

Friday, March 29  
7:00 PM  
Shaarei Shamayim

Saturday, March 30  
7:30 PM  
Shaarei Shamayim

Sunday, March 31  
9:00 AM  
Choir Practice  
10:00 AM  
"The Chalice and the Blade" - Betty Jallings  
NOTE: There will be NO R.E. because of Spring Break.  
11:30 AM  
General Resolutions (See Story)  
1:00 - 2:30 PM  
"Sandwich Generation" Discussion Group

Thursday, April 4  
7:00 PM  
Program committee

Sunday, April 7  
9:00 AM  
Choir Practice  
10:00 AM  
Easter "Fun is a Family Value" - Doleta Chapru  
Intergenerational Service - NO R.E.

Sunday, April 14  
9:00 AM  
Choir Practice  
10:00 AM  
"Das Kapital" - Betty Jallings  
11:30 AM  
GA Participants (See Story)

Friday, April 19 -  
Sunday, April 21  
Central Midwest Annual Meeting  
Rockford, IL

Sunday, April 21  
9:00 AM  
Choir Practice  
10:00 AM  
"Mordecai Vanunu" - Sam Day  
11:00 AM  
Spring Service Sunday (See Story)

Monday, April 22  
7:00 PM  
Spanish Speakers' Potluck (See Story)

Wednesday, April 24  
French Circle Dinner (See Story)

Saturday, April 27  
5:00 PM - 9:00 AM  
Spring Fling

Sunday, April 28  
9:00 AM  
Choir Practice  
10:00 AM  
"Beltane" - Nancy Vedder-Shults  
12:00 Noon  
Annual Spring Meeting and potluck  
(see story)

Thursday, June 20 -  
Tuesday, June 25  
UUA General Assembly  
Indianapolis, Indiana

### Soglin Coffee

The coffee for Paul Soglin, which was scheduled for March 24th, has been canceled. Watch for a new date.

...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

## President's Column

Spring is now upon us and I say "it's about time." It's about time for some rebirth; it's about time for some more light; it's about time for some greenery on this St. Patrick's Day and it's about time to discover my newest secret friend. This winter has taught me again how precious and fragile and fleeting is life. During its season, we have shared the deaths of friends and family. Among the dead is my brother-in-law Don Sroat. I remember that as Don learned of the complexity of the human body in medical school he thrilled an idolizing boy (me) by marveling that it could support life at all. Now, his body has made me confront that marvel once again and I'm left to organize my memories of him and memorialize all those who have been dear. It's a winter of lives we shall commemorate with new friends and changing relationships.

In related developments, solar winds breathe upon earth's brow as we watch blinking meteorites flare and exhaust themselves after nascent journeys of millennia. Our life's journeys are brief and messy. We strew stuff about in our processes of creation and use and waste. Comet Hyakutake is now visiting the solar system, spewing debris in its wake. It can be greeted high in the northern night sky. Tonight is your opportunity to marvel at its journey and wonder at its fate.

While you are here, you might consider Prairie's fate and how you will respond as the Committee on Committees (Prairie's nominating committee) carries out its spring work. They will be attempting to fill a slate of candidates for officers of this society. My dream is to one-day see a contested election. That may be a flight of fancy, but do consider how you can serve Prairie in the coming year. The Annual Spring Meeting and elections will be on April 28.

## Missing Hymnals

Have you, possibly, carried home a hymnal that belongs to Prairie Society? We need each one! Please return it! Would you like to give one or more hymnals to our Society? We can buy them quickly, at \$27.00 each, from First UU Society, Madison. Orange Schroeder is willing to have frontispieces printed to honor persons or groups.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

### March 24 - Equinox Service

Nancy Vedder-Shults will guide participants in a service based on the Spring Equinox. The service will be held on March 24 at Prairie Society. She will reflect on "Balancing the Dark and Light in Our Lives." The service will be conducted within the framework of a pagan ritual, using a short guided visualization, stories and songs, including several from Nancy's recent recording "Chants for the Queen of Heaven."

### March 31 - The Chalice and the Blade

Betty Jallings will continue her "Books That Made a Difference" series. This book by Riane Eisler is the most recent in a thousand years of women scholars working to realize their talents and at getting their society to permit them to work in non-traditional vocations. There will be no R.E. classes today.

### April 7 - Fun is a Family Value

Doleta Chapru will present this intergenerational service. Families of one, families of seventeen, partners, sigs, toddlers, grandparents, teenagers, visiting relatives, friends — everybody's invited to Prairie's April 7 "Get Acquainted" program. Through fun activities, Prairie's back row folks, front row people, and basement inhabitants will meet face-to-face. Wear your brightest colors, put a flower in your hat, and come help cultivate our Prairie family. There will be no R.E. classes today.

### April 14 - Das Kapital

Betty Jallings will continue her "Books That Made a Difference" series. She will review the Marxist Theory of history and its various applications which are still being developed.

### April 21 - Mordechai Vanunu

Sam Day, a Madison writer and peace activist, will speak about Mordechai Vanunu, a former nuclear technician now in his tenth year of solitary confinement in Israel for blowing the whistle on that country's secret nuclear weapons program. Day is coordinator of the U.S. Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu, part of an international movement which also seeks elimination of nuclear weapons in Israel and throughout the world. A former managing editor of *The Progressive*, he was the winner of the 1992 Martin Luther King, Jr., peace award of the U.S. Fellowship of Reconciliation.

### April 28 - Beltane

Nancy Vedder-Shults will guide participants in a service based on the ancient Celtic celebration of Beltane.



Well, it's hard to believe that we're moving into the final 8 weeks of the RE year. Still ahead, the annual Spring Fling (scheduled for Saturday April 27) and a "service sunday" (April 21st) that will be local outdoor work for the Allied Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Center.

RE will not be meeting the 31st of March (due to MMSD Spring break) nor the 7th of April (the Easter Intergenerational Program).

Secret Friends was a lot of fun this year. 21 pairs of adults and children, who had been passing notes for the past few weeks, finally met on St. Pat's Day. In what I consider a very successful intergenerational program, Secret Friends allows children an opportunity to get to know adults safely. This year, everyone seemed to have a very good time at the Party. It was a great concert! (if you don't know, you'll have to ask!) Thanks to all of the participants.

—John Brian Paprock

## Visioning Workshop A Big Success

Prairie's Visioning Workshop, held on March 9th, was well worth the effort. Almost 30 people participated in some or all of the workshop, which began around 10:00 AM and ended around 3:15 PM. Our facilitator was Doug Van Nostran, a college administrator who belongs to the UU Church of Evanston, IL. The participants divided into 4 small groups of 5-7 people and were instructed to try to reach consensus within the small groups about possible goals for our religious community.

The consensus of participants was that Prairie should focus on recruitment and assimilation of new members into the congregation, and a greater emphasis on social responsibility.

The group also identified other important goals and issues, including:

- \* high quality Sunday services and programs;
- \* social fellowship opportunities;
- \* pastoral care (developing more formalized ways for members to help each other in times of need);
- \* leadership development (encouraging/enabling more people to serve on the board and to be lay ministers);
- \* more joint activities with other UU groups;
- \* the Welcoming Congregation process; and
- \* spiritual growth.

Using the same kinds of consensus-building techniques, the participants listed actions that our congregation should take to achieve the goal of better member recruitment and retention. Among the suggestions are: getting newcomers involved quickly, especially in Circle Dinners; having more intergenerational services to appeal to new families; offering tours of the meeting house; holding orientation meetings twice a year; developing a data base of people's skills and interests; printing brief biographies of new members in the Prairie Fire; and holding a potluck for newcomers in conjunction with occasional All-Committee Nights.

I'd like to express my appreciation to everyone who attended the workshop, for their hard work and thoughtful attention to the issues discussed, and especially to Doug Van Nostran, whose combination drill sergeant/cheerleader attitude was just what we needed to keep us focused on our tasks and to get us thinking positively

about the future of our congregation. Good job, everyone! Now we really have our work cut out for us ... Stay tuned for how you can help us accomplish these goals.

—Anne Urbaneki,  
LRP chairperson

## Prairie Annual 1996 Spring Meeting

The Annual Spring Meeting is scheduled for April 28 following services and potluck at Prairie. Committee reports, elections of officers, and GA delegates, and by-law amendments are on the agenda.

### Proposed By-Law Amendments

The following amendments to the By-Laws are being proposed by Pat Watkins.

Amendment #1:

Article VII, A, 7

Denominational Affairs. This committee shall maintain for Prairie Society relations with other Unitarian Universalist organizations and will act as the contact and liaison to the Prairie Board for persons wishing to represent Prairie at denominational meetings and affairs.

Amendment #2:

Article VII, C, 2, c, (1): to be added after the first sentence

Also, verify Prairie's representation on the Channing Murray Board of directors and recommend, when necessary, representatives for appointment by the Prairie Board.

## Central Midwest District Annual Meeting

Delegates from the 69 churches and fellowships in the Central Midwest District of the Unitarian Universalist Association will gather in Rockford for the District's Annual Meeting on the weekend of April 19-21, 1996.

## GA Participants

All Persons desiring to attend General Assembly, either as a delegate, alternate, or general participant, should notify Pat Watkins or Rachel Siegfried before April 1st. Please save a few minutes after the April 14th service for a brief meeting.

## General Resolutions

Please read the following Resolutions in advance of the Parish Poll, which will be held on Sunday, March 31st.

The commission on General Resolutions summarizes as follows this year's General Resolutions that are admitted to the Parish Poll:

### G-1 Breast Cancer Prevention

Especially in view of new suggestions of environmental causes of breast cancer, increased funding for breast cancer research is essential. The results of this research should be disseminated widely to the medical community and to the public.

### G-2 Earth, Air, Water, And Fire

Protection of the environment — the earth, air, water, and sustainable energy — requires new and renewed support and advocacy. The first Unitarian Universalist conference on ecology and justice will be held at Meadville/Lombard Theological School in Fall 1997.

### G-3 Support For People With Mental Illness

Budget cuts are threatening programs for the mentally ill. More and more mentally ill are homeless. We must provide increased funding for research and care of the mentally ill, and we must provide leadership to assist congregations in supporting people with mental illness.

### G-4 Total Ban On Anti-Personnel Landmines

Long after their initial deployment and the cessation of hostilities, anti-personnel landmines are killing civilians. The 1977 Protocols to the Geneva Convention must be ratified in order to outlaw attacks on noncombatants. We must work for a total ban on the manufacture, shipment, and deployment of anti-personnel landmines.

### G-5 Toxic Threats To Children

Seventy thousand new, mainly untested chemical compounds have reportedly been added to our environment since 1950, potentially threatening especially to children. Unitarian Universalists must work to reduce toxic threats and to get corporations to become more environmentally responsible.

### G-6 Working For A Just Economic Community

The common wealth of our country has been intentionally re-directed into the pockets of a very small wealthy minority at the expense of the greater majority of American families. A living wage, single-payer health care, full employment, an equitable tax system, corporate accountability and labor law reform are necessary in order to fulfill our democratic ideals in the 21st century.

## New Members

Our Membership Committee hopes to introduce new members of Prairie Society with a series of articles about them. Here is a beginning acquaintance with Susan and Dick Prest, who live at 3444 Lake Monona Driver (232-9919).

They are a well-traveled couple! Dick was a native Nebraskan, a psychiatrist who was chief of psychiatric services for California's Department of Corrections when he met Susan, a psychologist, in one of the prisons. Each had three children from a previous marriage. When Dick retired from his state position Susan was a senior executive with health care companies while Dick did consulting in the several states in which they lived. Now settled in Madison, they have their own firm, Prest and associates, providing psychiatric opinions to clients across the country, using FAX, phones and express mail but not seeing patients professionally any more. Their most recent home was in Nevada, where they were part of a small Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Exercise is a vital part of their current lifestyle; Susan even has signed on for a summer class in Kayak and canoeing skills, in Northern Wisconsin.

Remember the greenery and candelabra on the platform at Prairie Society recently? That was the wedding day of Chris Liu and Kate Gann, January 14. They met when both were teaching assistants in the chemistry department at UW. Kate is still a student there, working full-time in technical support for a software firm. In leisure time Chris enjoys biking and swimming; he learned about Prairie Society through the Channing Murray organization on campus, and he is our newest member. He and Kate live at 2564 Branch Street in Middleton (831-7231).

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### Prairie Playreaders

Mark March 23rd on your calendars for the next get together of Prairie Playreaders, one of our society's many small group social activities. Participants read from and discuss a wide variety of plays. Call Pat Watkins at 233 - 5795 for more information.

### Spring Service Sunday

Join the R.E. kids and Prairie Partners for a community spring spruce-up at the Allied Neighborhood Center after the service on April 21st. Slightly grubbier duds recommended. Meet at Prairie at 11:00 AM.

## To The Family Of Carol Dopp:

Prairie Members express our heartfelt sympathy to Bob, Erin, and Dana Dopp on the death of Carol Dopp on March 8. Carol, Bob, and their daughters were active members of Prairie when their daughters were younger. Carol taught in the R.E. program, was on the Prairie Board, and volunteered with many other jobs. They continued to participate in Circle Dinners.

Those of us who had the pleasure of knowing Carol will miss her warmth, sharp intellect, and strong sense of social justice.

## An Open Letter To Our Prairie Friends:

Carol Dopp and her family would like to thank all of our many friends who made her long illness easier with their love. Prairie People have always been central to our friendship circle, and cancer has magnified the effect. This experience has revealed the pure goodness in so many people. We have been shown love in ways we wouldn't have dreamed possible. Friends have called, visited, and sat with Carol for tireless hours. They have taken her out for rides in the beautiful countryside, and enjoyed Michael's Frozen Custard. They have discussed the deeper meaning of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, or read the light adventures one can have in "A Year in Provence". Notes would arrive in the mail — sometimes a composite from dozens of dear friends, and sometimes individual cards with thoughts and compassion. On the street, we would see Prairie friends and they would always come to talk, often making them late to their destination. Carol lived as fully as she could right up to the last day. This was possible because of the only medicine that really works: Friendship and Love. Thank you.

With greatest fondness

—Bob Dopp, Erin Dopp, Dana  
and Marc Weniger

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### Spanish Speakers' Potluck

The Spanish Speakers' Potluck will be at Kate Tucker's home on Monday, April 22nd, at 7:00 PM. Please phone 221-2168 or 276-9827 for more information.

### C'est Magnifique

So it was for our first French circle dinner at the Arthouse Cafe. Plan ahead for our next gathering on April 24th. Call Bob Steinhofner at 221-9417 to insure a place.

## To All Who Thought Of Me:

I was going to write a long account on how I got to be in the hospital for surgery and how lucky I was to have found my heart problem in time. Getting well and taking care of myself is very important to me and it's my top priority. Some of you already knew that I had started a program to take care of my health back in June of last year which is why I was a little surprised this happened. Makes it a little more important to continue to work toward good health.

However, this letter is not about my health. This letter is to thank all of you for the kind deeds, calls, visits, and cards. I know that there were times (so I'm told by others) when I might have gotten just a little sentimental while talking to you and I do remember some of the conversations. It's interesting how one acts and speaks while under the influence of medication (I call them my happy drugs). They make it easier to say things that you normally won't say. Sometimes that's good and sometimes bad; that's why I don't abuse drugs or alcohol. Might have given you all my money while telling you what a rotten "son-of-a-gun" you are!

I would like to especially thank those very kind people from Prairie who put aside their normal daily schedules and came to my home to take care of me and to the others who were coming over on the second week, before the doctors said it was not necessary.

Thanks to my family. It feels good guys, you make some of the best medicine around.

To Kay, I don't know what you felt inside. But, I got the word from all around me how you handled it. I love you.

Thanks,

—Jose Rodriguez

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### Ethnic Dinner Circle

Save Friday evening, May 3rd at 5:30 PM for dinner at the China International Buffet (next door to the Hilldale theater). Call Pat Watkins for reservations (233-5795) before May 1st.

### Chess, Anyone?

After a hiatus of about forty years, Pat Watkins is developing a yen to play chess again. Is there anyone in Prairie who would be interested in meeting at Border's Book Store for a cup of coffee (or, whatever) and a game? Call Pat at 233-5795.