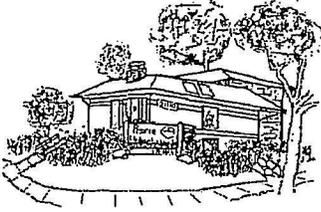


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PRAIRIE FIRE

... 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

Sunday, December 15, 1996

e-mail version available

<http://www.execpc.com/~prairie/>

To subscribe, change address or cancel, call Arleigh at (608)273-9811, or e-mail birchler@students.wisc.edu

President's Column

"We wuz goin' along pretty good 'til the ice give out", said a man from Prairie du Chien who chose one winter night to forgo the bridge and drive across the ice covered Mississippi River. Wherever there is a chasm, we humans try to build bridges (whether to the next century or the far shore). Generally, if a bridge has been built it is prudent to use it. For even when it appears frozen, the water in our lives is always flowing - churning along in migratory passage. I find that if I don't know of a crossing, it's best for me to join the flow and work toward the distant bank.

Because I have chosen to leave Madison for a few months this winter, I asked the Prairie Board to accept my resignation and elect Barbara Park as President of Prairie Society effective January 1, 1997. With the Committee on Committees fast on our heels, I suspect that Barb may be asked to run for President in election at the Annual Spring

Meeting. But, whether she accepts to run or not, it is important to this Society that its members continue contributions to the committees and help to share the burdens of Prairie's operations.

I want to thank all those who gave so much time and effort to keep this Society functioning despite having a navigator looking at the ice (if not the bridge). Archivist Jack Jallings informs me that I have had the longest tenure as chief Chief in Prairie's history. That's, 3 ¼ of the past twelve years. It's no wonder that the ice gave out, but I'm not done crossing this river. I'll be back to cast my ballot at the annual meeting.

—Rick Ruecking

From Fran Zell

It is with both regret and satisfaction that I have stepped down from my task of coordinating Prairie's effort at the Grace Episcopal Men's Homeless Shelter. The satisfaction comes in knowing that so many members and friends support Prairie's commitment to the shelter and have been coming forward each month to staff our monthly evening and morning shifts. The regret is that I've simply become too busy with other volunteer and work-related activities to continue my part in it. (I'm currently a Big Sister to a charming six year-old, help coordinate the Council for Wisconsin Writers' annual awards competition, and am looking forward to a week of teaching poetry in the schools in January, and spending the entire month of February in a writing residency at Ragdale, a foundation for visual and literary artists.) I still hope to volunteer at the shelter when I am able.

—Fran Zell

Administrator & Prairie Fire Editor needed. Willing to spend up to ten hours per week at Prairie. Paid position. The current administrator and editor will continue to do many tasks, and will assist or train as needed. Call Barb Park.

Some New Members

KATHY CONVERSE first heard about Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society when her husband, red-bearded Randy, told her about posters and words on the walls of the building that housed Sunrise Day Care Center. They visited one of our meetings together, after attending Friends' Meetings for about a year. Kathy liked the interactive style of the Prairie programs; soon she was asked to co-teach in a religious education class. She has served there in many ways, most recently as organizer of Nifty Gifty.

Kathy was born in rural Springfield, Vermont, youngest-of four children. She loved the great outdoors -- camping, hiking, and fishing. She was part of a born-again Christian church (Baptist). After high school, she earned an R.N. degree at University of Vermont, and practiced nursing for ten years. She then at age twenty-eight went back to school: she earned an undergraduate degree from U. of Connecticut and a Ph.D. from U. of Massachusetts in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology.

Immediately she was hired by Natural Wildlife Health Center here in Madison. Her work as wildlife disease specialist takes her to many parts of our country, primarily investigating disease outbreaks in free-living wildlife (animals not in zoos). She and Randy have been married for nineteen years; their children are Tara, age 14, and Mei-Lien, 7. They live at 610 Pickford Street, with one dog, one cat, one bird, and seven frogs.

REBECCA DURLAO grew up in western Pennsylvania and earned a bachelor's degree at Penn State in home economics education with a strong minor in family life. There she was courted by Trin Dumlao an official in the state's Department of Health. She and Trin were married in 1978 and moved to Oregon. Her daughter, Amara, and son, Makana, were born in Corvallis. Their names reflect their father's Polynesian ancestry. Trin died of heart disease when Makana was yet an infant. As a single parent, Rebecca was helped by a loving Cambodian family which lived next door and who invited the Dumlao's into their family. While Rebecca earned a living as a writer of technical books, she pursued a masters degree in scientific and technical communication at Oregon State University. She carried additional course work in family studies. At a friendly professor's dinner party her speech and communication teacher strongly advised, "Go for the Ph.D."

Trin had explored Madison in an employment search and his glowing report encouraged Rebecca to look here soon after his death. At the UW she was befriended by helpful new acquaintances, housing search assistance, and even a waiver of fees. A wise and perceptive faculty member urged, "Take time to get used to being a single parent." That person is now Rebecca's advisor offering professional help but also practical "sitting" occasionally.

When graduation day comes in May, Rebecca will receive her Ph.D.; her thesis subject is "How Adolescents Make Sense of the Conflicts They See on TV". Amara is now thirteen years old and Makana ten. The Dumlao's live at 613 N. Blackhawk Avenue; telephone 233-4378

GOOD NEWS! More than a year ago, our Sunday morning speaker was Sam Lin, a first year graduate student at UW who shared with us his thoughts about "American Culture Through Chinese Eyes". His words shone with the philosophy of Confucius. A few months later, he visited Prairie Society after our morning service, telling us that he had inoperable cancer, and asking us for any paths we knew in "alternative medicine". He returned to China briefly, then came back to Madison, where his wife and child had kept their Eagle Heights apartment. We heard no further news of his illness. Last week an announcement that Weiren (Sam) Lin would receive his Ph.D. degree on December 22 was GOOD NEWS!

Backpack News

The in-house newsletter of Lincoln School this week has a front page designed by fourth grader Judy Wacker, and her short poem is included:

Summer's gone,
Winter's here,
Now the weather's
Cold and drear,
All the flowers are under the snow,
All the birds are saying go, go, go.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

December 22

"Intergenerational Pagan Celebration & Symbol Tree"

Melissa Pokorney & Nancy Graham

The Winter Solstice is a time for tradition. We will be exploring traditions as old as Stonehenge, and as new as Maya.

December 29

"Newspaper Reading"

Mike Sheehy

Bring a newspaper. Share what you read, if so moved.

January 5

"Time and the Crystal"

Al Nettleton

In the dead of winter we pause briefly to consider time. What is it? Does it have a beginning or an end? How do we measure it? Can we control it? How do we perceive it?

Midwinter gives us the winter solstice and the start of a new year.

Al Nettleton will continue his lay ministry with a program where we will consider time from a number of different perspectives.

January 12

"Working for a Just Economic Community"

Jean Darling

(Draft General Resolution Referred For Study)

The 1996 General Assembly approved by majority vote three draft General Resolutions (as amended) to be referred to member congregations and districts for review and study.

The member congregations and districts may submit comments about proposed amendments to the draft resolutions to the Commission on General Resolutions by no later than March 1, 1997. Final action on each of the general resolutions is scheduled for the 1997 General Assembly.

The draft resolutions are entitled Working for a just Economic Community; Earth, Air, Water, and Fire; and Toxic Threats to Children.

January 12

"Biblical Perspectives on Homosexuality"

Mary Mullen

Become your own "expert" on this subject instead of relying on all the rumors you've heard from the right-wing Christian media.

(Reading material for the next service is available: "How This Society Oppresses Lesbians and Gay Men.")

January 12

"UUA Resolution"

to be announced

(Draft General Resolution Referred For Study)

? UU World Magazine?

Barbara Rames would like to borrow the issue with Robert Fulgham on the cover to show to an R.E. Class.

Food Pantry

Our contributions to the Allied Drive Food Pantry are taken the fourth Tuesday. Have you added the "Food Pantry" to your weekly market list?

Give Blood

Perhaps the most valuable gift you'll give is that pint of blood. Rob Steinhofer, Linda Sheehy, and Barbara Rames are the most recent Prairie Society blood donors. Recent news announcements highlight a national change in organ transplant priorities. You can join a donor list by signing the back of your driver's licenses (now!). In the event that you are killed, your liver or heart can live on! It's also important to tell your nearest relatives of that decision.

UPHAM WOODS UPDATE

We have been informed by the staff at Upham Woods that next year they will charge us the adult rate for kids as well as adults. Before you go ballistic, the increased rate will add approximately \$6 to the bill for the entire weekend (food and lodging) for each child. This is a VERY reasonably priced weekend for everyone. If the extra charge is a problem for your family, remember that there is scholarship money available.

While I'm on the subject, I would like to propose that we pad the bill a couple dollars per person in order to make this weekend a SMALL fund-raiser for Prairie. It will also guarantee that we have enough scholarship money available for those who need it.

--Judy Skog

Cross Country Ski Weekend

Prairie members are invited to join First Society members Jan 17-19 or Feb 14-16, 1997 at Trees for Tomorrow Camp in Eagle River, WI. There are many excellent trails for x-country skiing in the area. Equipment rental and lessons are possible and child care is available on site January 17-19. This is a fun experience for the whole family. For info call Judy Skog 273-4813. Space fills quickly.

Finalized agreement with Shaarei Shamayim -- They're pleased.

NOTE -- Who's on the Committee on committees?

Calendar

Saturday, December 21

10:30 PM
Denominational Affairs
Committee
with coffee and pastry
Prests
3444 Lake Mendota Dr
Call Pat Watkins for info

**Sunday, December 22

9 AM
Choir Practice
10 AM
Intergenerational Pagan
Celebrtion & Symbol Tree
Nancy Graham & Melissa
Pokorney
after program
PYGs Bake Sale

Monday, December 23

7:45 PM--11:30 PM
Men's Homeless Shelter
Grace Episcopal Church

Tuesday, December 24

5 AM--8 AM
Men's Homeless Shelter
Grace Episcopal Church

Friday, December 27

7:15 PM
Shaarei Shamayim

Saturday, December 28

9:30 AM
Shaarei Shamayim

**Sunday, December 29

10 AM
Newspaper Reading
Mike Sheehy
after program
PYGs Bake Sale

Tuesday, December 31

Evening
Scottish Dancing
Mike Briggs

**Sunday, January 5

10 AM
Time and the Crystal
Al Nettleton
after program
PYGs Bake Sale

Saturday, January 11

9:30 AM
Shaarei Shamayim
7:30 PM
Prairie Playreaders
Rachel Siegfried & Mona Birong
271-2173

**Sunday, January 12

9 AM
Choir Practice
10 AM
Working for a Just Economic
Community
Jean Darling
after program
PYGs Bake Sale

Monday, January 13

7:30 PM
Board Meeting

Friday, January 17

7:15 PM
Shaarei Shamayim

Saturday, January 18

9:30 AM
Shaarei Shamayim

**Sunday, January 19

9 AM
Choir Practice
10 AM
Biblical Perspectives
Mary Mullen
after program
PYGs Bake Sale
Women's Discussion Group

Friday, January 24

5:30 PM
Shaarei Shamayim

**Sunday, January 26

9 AM
Choir Practice
10 AM
UUA Resolution
after program
PYGs Bake Sale

Saturday, February 1

9:30 AM
Shaarei Shamayim

**Sunday, February 2

9 AM
Choir Practice
10 AM
Seasonal Celebration
Nancy Vedder-Shults
after program
PYGs Bake Sale

Saturday, February 8

7:30 PM
Prairie Playreaders
Aileen & Al Nettleton
238-6053

**Sunday, February 9

9 AM
Choir Practice
10 AM
UUA Resolution
after program
PYGs Bake Sale

Monday, February 10

7:30 PM
Board Meeting

Friday, February 14

7:15 PM
Shaarei Shamayim

About the Calendar & Mailing List -- To schedule events at Prairie, please place a post-it on the calendar in the foyer at the meeting house. PEOPLE WHO DO SO MAY ASK OTHERS TO LEAVE. You may ALSO phone Arleigh at 273-9811. Check the calendar in Prairie Fire carefully and notify Arleigh of any omissions or errors ASAP! (Don't wait until the next time you see him on Sunday morning.) Visitors and other people who request Prairie Fire are added to the mailing list for the NEXT FOUR editions. They are asked to call Arleigh and let him know if they wish to continue to receive the newsletter. THERE IS NO SOLICITATION OF DONATIONS -- The call is only to insure that we are not sending Prairie Fire to anyone who no longer wants it! Folks planning a service are asked to submit a 40-80 word synopsis EIGHT WEEKS in advance for UPCOMING PROGRAMS. The synopsis may be updated or revised as needed in subsequent Prairie Fires.