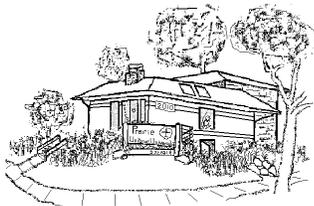


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PRAIRIE FIRE

... 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.

Tuesday, March 04, 1997

e-mail version available

PRAIRIE'S BOND OF UNION

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

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Editor -- Arleigh (608)245-0851 birchler@students.wisc.edu

President's Column:

Once again I have to compliment all who participated in the "Cabin Fever Reliever" (with special thanks to Reed Miller for bringing and setting up all the equipment). I am constantly amazed at the depth of talent within the Prairie community and the willingness of people to put thought, time, talent and energy into Prairie events. I was especially gratified as choir director to have what seemed like half of the audience stand up to sing. What a great group!

Coming up is an opportunity to participate in the vital life of Prairie in another way. We have scheduled an All Committee Night for March 19th.. This means that Prairie committees will all hold their meetings at Prairie on Wednesday, March 19th at about 7:00 preceded by a pot-luck at 6:00. This is an opportunity to "sample" the workings of one (or more) committees that you think you might find interesting or in an area where you feel you can make a contribution. The committees include Program, Finance, Membership (also in charge of coffee, greeting and clean-up), Housing and Property, Religious Education, Social Action, Denominational Affairs and Long Range Planning. These committees are the real back bone of the day to day operation of the Society. Without them, things just don't work. All the committee could use new recruits. No prior experience is necessary. Pick what tickles your fancy and join us on the 19th.

Yours in Faith, Barbara Park

Softball Anyone??

We've heard of a "church league" for softball and are wondering if there would be any interest at Prairie to form a team to play in it. It's for ages 12 on up, coed, very low key, Sunday afternoons, probably Bowman Field on Fish Hatchery Rd. We would most likely need about 20 people. Even though there's only 10 people on the field at a time, we'd need a lot to accommodate vacations etc.

Erin Bosch and Rick Owens

National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC-DC)

Potluck celebrating Women's History Month. Pat Pases talks on Jeanette Rankin, first woman in Congress.

March 12, 6 PM Potluck at 5209 Tolman Terrace. Call for directions.

Rachel Siegfried, 271-2173

Prairie Playreaders

A reminder that the Playreaders theater party is coming up. Everyone is invited to join the group at **Guys and Dolls**, on Sat, April 12 at 7:30 PM at the Wisconsin Union Theater. Tickets are \$15 and you are responsible for your own ticket. If getting to campus is a hardship, contact Pat Watkins.

Pat Watkins

Working For a Just Economic Community

You have now had the opportunity to read, attend Prairie programs and critique the three UUA resolutions which will be amended (for which we thank you for your input) at the 1996 General Assembly. We hope you will not allow these to be the extent of your interest in the subject matter of these resolutions. To this end I will be inserting material on these topics in the Prairie Fire from time to time.

*Pat Watkins,
Denominational Affairs*

"Working For a Just Economic Community" lets UUs voice their concerns about union organizing for the first time. In addition, it calls for increased community accountability by corporations and corporate executives. This resolution is based on the premise that for over the past two decades, the US has increasingly experienced an upward redistribution of wealth, accompanied by a downward mobility of the middle and lower classes. The combined wealth of the top 1 percent of US families is nearly the same as that of the entire bottom 95 percent. The income gap in Manhattan is worse than in Guatemala. In the US one out of four children is born into poverty. (Source: Holly Sklar, *Chaos or Community*, as quoted in "Gap Between Rich and Poor Widens in New York," by Sam Roberts, *New York Times*, Dec. 24, 1994.) The average salary for a CEO is \$2,100 per hour. (Source: *Too Much* a quarterly newsletter from the Council on International and Public Affairs, Spring 1996.)

In addition to vast income disparities, large corporations and their shareholders benefit from huge tax breaks and federal subsidies. Ralph Nader identified 153 such examples of "corporate welfare" totaling \$167 billion in 1995. Furthermore, corporations have

been steadily downsizing their work forces. Between 1979 and 1992 the total worldwide employment of the Fortune 500 companies dropped from 16.2 million to 11.8 million. (Source: *Fortune Magazine*, April 18, 1994, pp. 210-13, as reported in *Chaos or Community*.) However, downsizing is shortsighted and often does not result in future long-term corporate and employee economic health.

R. E. CORNER

(news of Prairie's Religious Education Program)

On the other side of a series of RE activities, I am honored and tired.

Nine Prairie Youth and another from First Society participated in the truly awesome Youth Sexuality Weekend. Everyone that contributed in any way must be held accountable for its success! "Warm Fuzzies" to all, including representatives from three local agencies and two UU Couples. For those that supported the weekend but could not participate, thank you as well. Upon reflection, there are things that could improve, some edges to be smoothed. Overall, I was most impressed with the youth: their openness, honesty and willingness are inspirational. One representative from Men Stopping Rape wrote in a letter (2/12/97): 'I respect the programming you are bringing to fruition for these lucky youths.' I can't help feeling that the adults involved (including myself) need to be included in that "lucky"ness.' Photos from the weekend will be on display through March (somewhere in Prairie's lower level).

The theme of "love" was a thread that tied together my first complete UU Sunday service. I had a lot of fun planning and facilitating the Intergenerational Program and hope the Valentine 'see can become another of Prairie's Special Traditions. Thank you to my helpers: Mei-Lien, Isaac, Katrina, Tara, Ian and Erik.

Attending the Meadville/Lombard Winter Institute the week between, exposed me to UUs from across the continent. This deepened my understanding and appreciation for UUs and UUism. For the first time among UUs, I felt free to discuss my experiences and beliefs without feeling guarded. I was encouraged to share with Prairie; to be more open about what was referred to as my "unique perspective" by several UU ministers I met there. More on this another time.

In March, Secret Friends will have their after service party (3/16). Due to the Intergenerational Service, Secret Friends got off to a rocky start. Nonetheless, 18 intergenerational pairs have begun. Twelve of the adults have either "never" participated or participated "long ago" - "Now, I feel like part of the church again." Obviously, this is a very special tradition.

In Service,

John-Brian Paprock

*Director of Religious
Education*

3, 4, 5th Grades

The religious education class of third, fourth, and fifth graders has been looking at seven principles that unite Unitarian Universalists in their beliefs. They have heard several Prairie Society members talk about how these common beliefs are used in their respective weekday lives.

One of our new members, when asked for a get acquainted interview for Prairie Fire, responded, "New members want to get acquainted with other, long-time members!" To prepare such a collection of word-portraits would be interesting, but a daunting long-term task.

Therefore, I suggest that at a well-attended meeting on a Sunday morning, we each write a paragraph or two about ourselves, and that the total be bound into a book that can be circulated to new members with a copy of the old "picture" directory. Will you cooperate?

Barbara Rames

Upcoming Programs

March 9 -- What About the Kids? Challenges of Gay & Lesbian Families in Madison

Prairie young people gave a fairly rosy picture of life for lesbian and gay youth in the Madison schools they attend. Lesbian mother, long-time gay rights activist and member of the Lesbian Mothers Network Sunshine Jones has quite a different story. Not only are gay or lesbian youth harassed, but so are the straight children of lesbian and gay parents. Sunshine will tell true stories of harassment experiences. Several young people who have lesbian mothers will also relate their own experiences with homophobia. In addition, Sunshine will also suggest ways we can help reduce harassment.

Those attending the service will be challenged to take a simple but maybe courageous action during the following week. Come find out what it is. (Don't let this scare you. There's always a choice, AND your reasons, reactions, and feelings are really what we're interested in.)

Speaker Sunshine Jones lives in the Prairie neighborhood with her partner and daughter. All are members of the James Reeb Congregation.

March 16 -- How Homophobia Hurts Heterosexuals

Really? Come and see what you think. Hear an interesting song, too. (Reading material for the next (final) service will be available: "We Can Make Changes.")

March 23 -- From Porches and Sidewalks to 6-Lanes and Cul De Sacs: The Evolution of American Neighborhoods

Guest speaker David Cieslewicz will do a slide presentation on the evolution of land use in Wisconsin since World War II. He will show how we are slowly losing the historic and natural character of the state to sprawl.

April 6 -- Wellsprings: Movement to Classical Music

Well-Springs uses fine music, spontaneous movement, coloured fabrics, and chalks to relieve stress, to release emotions, and then to rebound with high energy to life. When we truly let go, we can respond more freely, more lightly to the challenges that we face each day. Do join in on Sunday, April 6th as we celebrate life and renew ourselves!

April 20 -- Individual and Community Strategies

Expect to recap Mary Mullen's lay ministry on the Welcoming Community. Discuss how your attitudes and knowledge have changed (or have not) - and hear how others have been impacted by this series or over their lifetime. What can we do to prevent hate-group activities and damage in our community? What is our next step at Prairie and in the Madison area and beyond?

Outdoor Prairie service in June:

This June we will hold an outdoor Sunday a.m. service similar to the one that was held last May in the woods near the Picnic Point entrance. The theme of last year's program was "Nature and Spirituality", and a nature theme would probably be appropriate again. It was suggested that this might become an annual event to celebrate our spiritual connection with nature. The exact date depends on scheduling of other June programs, but we are hoping for Sunday June 21, the first day of summer. Our second choice is June 14. Please let Mike Sheehy (273-3895, mjsheehy@execpc.com) know by the end of March if you are interested in coordinating this outdoor program.

*Michael Sheehy, Program Chair,
273-3895*

Shaarei Shamayim Invites Prairie Members

Sat. Mar. 22 7:00-9:30 PM -- Community Purim Celebration featuring a Purim-spiel (a comic play with local talent selected on the spot), Academy (of kids) Awards, and a Hamentaschen-eating fest. Come in costume (grown ups and kids) and please bring props, dress up accessories, and loud noisemakers. The sillier the better; it's Adar! Bring your favorite Hamentaschen or other sweet to share.

Sat. Apr. 26 5:00-9:00 PM -- Community Passover Seder with a pot-luck Seder meal. (instructions for preparing kosher for Passover food will be provided for your newsletter)

Tues. Jun. 10 (overnight) -- All-night study session, this event may well not be held at Prairie, but please reserve the space for now and I will notify you next month if we plan to hold it elsewhere. for the holiday of Shavuot it is traditional to stay up all night studying and end with a dairy breakfast at dawn.

Thank you and I look forward to working with you.

B'Shalom,

Judith Burstyn, 238-5545

Mark your calendars: Prairie's annual Spring Meeting - April 13th

Calendar

SUNDAY		FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>March 9 9 AM Choir Practice 10 AM What About the Kids? Challenges of Gay & Lesbian Families Sunshine Jones RE: Secret Friends after program Social Action Bake Sale, Letter Writing, & Committee Meeting</p>	<p>Monday, March 10 7:30 PM Board Meeting</p> <p>Wednesday, March 12 6 PM NWPC-DC 5209 Tolman Terrace Rachel Siegfried, 271-2173 ALL COMMITTEE NIGHT AT PRAIRIE 6 PM Potluck 7 PM Committee meetings</p>	<p>March 14 7:15 PM Shaarei Shamayim</p>	<p>March 15 9:30 AM Shaarei Shamayim</p>
<p>March 16 9 AM Choir Practice 10 AM How Homophobia Hurts Heterosexuals Mary Mullen after program Secret Friends' Party Women's Discussion Group</p>	<p>Monday, March 17 6:30 PM Spanish Speakers' Potluck Prairie Kitchen 7:00 PM Preserving Family Photos At Prairie</p>	<p>March 21 7 PM Sage's Spring Soirée Reid Miller -- 437-3388</p> <p>Friday, March 21 – Sunday, March 23 WisconCon III -- YRUU at James Reeb Home Hospitality Needed Genni Birren at 233-6693</p>	<p>March 22 6 PM Shaarei Shamayim Purim party Prairie Members Invited</p>
<p>Sunday, March 23 9:00 AM Choir Practice 10:00 AM The Evolution of American Neighborhoods David Cieslewicz RE: Service Sunday after program PYGs Bake Sale</p>		<p>Friday, March 28 7:15 PM Shaarei Shamayim</p>	
<p>Sunday, March 30 9:00 AM Choir Practice 10:00 AM Spring Intergenerational Reid Miller</p>			