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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. *From Prairie's Bond of Union.*

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## PRAIRIE CALENDAR

### Oct. 9-11

**Upham Woods Retreat** for Prairie Members and Friends.

### Saturday, October 10

1:00pm; **Working for a Just Economic Community Study Group at Upham Woods.** Please plan to attend if you are a member of this group, as only three of the ten members attended the last scheduled meeting, and we have the surveys ready for distribution.

### Monday, October 12

7:30pm; **Prairie Board Meeting** at Prairie.

### Tuesday, October 13

6:00pm; Madison Urban Ministry: **"My Job Plan, Today's Reality"**. Am I doing what I set out to do? How can we make work/volunteer time more enriching? Moderated by Patty Loew of WHA-TV. Starlight Room, Madison Civic Center.

### October 16-18

**Creating a Jubilee World: A regional Anti-Racism Conference**, hosted by the Racial Justice Committee of the James Reeb UU Society.

### Sunday, October 18

9:00am; **Choir Rehearsal**

10:00am; **"Sidney and God"**, a play by Anne Urbanski with a cast of Prairie members  
11:30am: Prairie Women's Group meets downstairs. Finger-food potluck.

### Monday, October 19

7:00pm; **Spanish Speakers' Potluck**, at the home of Rosemary Dorney, 4205 Odana Rd., 238-4382.

### Saturday, October 24

7:00pm; **Prairie Playreaders** at the home of Paula Pachciarz and Carl Wacker 273-4806.

### Sunday, October 25

9:00am; **Choir Rehearsal**  
10:00am; **Medical Aid to Iraq**, coordinated by Pat Watkins, Robin Carre and Paula Pachciarz.  
12:00-12:45pm; **PLEDGE KICK-OFF LUNCH.**

### Sunday, November 1

**No Choir Rehearsal.**  
10:00am; **"All Souls' Day"**, coordinated by Ruth Calden & inspired by a trip to Mexico.

### Saturday, November 7

**Chicago Art Institute Bus Trip** to exhibit "Mary Cassatt: Modern Woman."

### Monday, November 9

7:30pm; **Prairie Board Meeting** at Prairie.

### Saturday, November 14

7:30pm; **Prairie Play Readers** meet at the home of Jean Matos, 324 So. Mills Street. 255-2209 if you have questions.

## **Sunday, November 15**

11:30am; **Prairie Board Budget Meeting.**

11:30am; **Potluck Lunch following service.**

12:30pm; **Fall Parish Meeting.**

## **Wednesday, November 25**

7:30pm at First Unitarian Society.

**Thanksgiving Eve Worship service, sermon by Max Gaebler.**

## OUR SOCIETY

### **PLEDGE DRIVE KICK-OFF LUNCH**

Sunday, October 25, 12:00-12:45pm is Prairie's Pledge Drive Kick-Off Lunch.

It's pledge time!!!! Prairie's Proposed Budget for '99 will be revealed! Find out about Prairie's goals and needs and how you can help financially. Pick up your pledge packet. SOUP, BREAD AND BROWNIES!!! Your generosity keeps our Prairie alive and growing! Join us! Child care provided.

### **By law Information**

Several suggestions for changes in bylaws have been received by the ad-hoc bylaws committee. Text of proposals will be published in the next Prairie Fire. Any additional proposals to be considered at the Fall Parish Meeting should be given to Al Nettleton, Barb Park, or Rick Ruecking by October 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Fall Parish Meeting Notice and Call for Agenda Items**

Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society will hold its annual Fall Parish Meeting on Sunday, November 15 at 12:30pm at Prairie. Please submit any agenda items to Nancy Schraufnagel at 273-3195 or e-mail to my attention at prairieu@execpc.com by Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup>. Agenda and proposed by-law revisions and amendments will be published in the next Prairie Fire.

### **Changes and Opportunities**

I accepted with regret Mark Wehrly's resignation as Prairie's Executive Board Secretary and Cinda LaMar's request to step down as one of Prairie's Channing-Murray representatives. Thanks to both of

you for your ideas, work and time. Any members interested in either opportunity may contact Dean Schroeder or other members of the Committee on Committees.

### **Prairie Board Seeks Secretary**

The Prairie Executive Board is in need of a Secretary. Responsibilities include attending monthly Board and semi-annual Parish meetings and recording the minutes. If you are willing to consider this opportunity, please talk to any of the members of the Committee on Committees, including Dean Schroeder, Marilyn Ruecking, Rachel Siegfried, Kay Frazier and Barb Park.

### **Channing Murray Representative Needed**

Prairie is in need of a volunteer to represent us, along with Bob Park, to the Channing Murray Board. This Board meets quarterly, and oversees the operations of the Channing Murray Society on the UW Campus. (Activities include social meetings and events for student and grad student UUs.) If you would be interested in this opportunity, please contact a member of the Committee on Committees, including Dean Schroeder, Marilyn Ruecking, Rachel Siegfried, Kay Frazier and Barb Park.

### **Four UU Societies' Joint Thanks-giving Eve Worship Service**

**Ideas and help is requested.** Prairie, First Unitarian, James Reeb and the Free Congregation Sauk City are planning a joint Thanksgiving Eve worship service. **Max Gaebler** will deliver the sermon, the four societies will collaborate in planning the music, liturgy and refreshments. Ellsworth Snyder is especially interested in a choir composed of members from each congregation. Bring your ideas to your congregation's Ministers, Presidents or Denominational Affairs Chairs

### **Prairie Choir**

The Prairie Choir will begin rehearsals at 9:00am on October 18<sup>th</sup>. This is a great time to join us and try out singing on a regular basis. No previous experience necessary! All are welcome.

### Celebration of Sukkot at Upham Woods

On Saturday at Upham Woods we will attempt to build a Sukkah, a temporary structure traditionally erected by Jews for the celebration of Sukkot, or the festival of the tabernacle. We need materials (corkboard, plywood, etc.) for the superstructure as well as plants, leaves, fruits, berries, popcorn or other things to hang from it. Poetry and artwork to place on the structure are also encouraged. Everyone, young and older, is welcome to come by the Sukkah (at a site to be determined) to help build and decorate, sit inside and meditate, break bread with others, or just visit. If you have questions about what you can bring, call Robin Carre at 286-9165.

### Madison Area Interfaith Hospitality Network (MAIHN)

There will be an informal question and answer forum about MAIHN Oct. 18<sup>th</sup> directly after church. Look for Shannon Hayes. I will be there to answer your questions. I have agreed to coordinate our volunteers for the upcoming year. I currently have 15 families/individuals who have expressed interest in being involved. In addition, I plan to contact Shaarei Shamayim to see if they would like to join us in this endeavor. I will have information about the interfaith hospitality network and a general interest survey at this forum and also at Upham Woods. Feel free to contact me at home at 274-0553 or at work at 250-2236.

Shannon Hayes-Social Action Co-chair

### Have You Lost A Jacket?

There are several jackets on the coat rack in our building's front hall. Please check to see if one of these belongs to you or someone in your family.

### **NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE IS 10/19.**

***“Maybe tomorrow the blade will cut me down, but today I will bloom.”*** By Sophie Zermuehlen

### Two Gentlemen of Verona

Bob Lawrence and Rick Owens vanquished the wasps that had halted planting of the two new juniper shrubs above our lower level door. Their achievement took courage as well as knowledge of what to do, plus some effective chemicals. The new shrubs seem to be doing well.

### AMENDMENT TO THE PRAIRIE BY-LAWS

At the November Parish meeting, I will once again ask Prairie members to vote on an amendment to our By-Laws defining membership. When this amendment was put to a vote two years ago, I was, regrettably, out of town, and therefore, unable to justify, defend or explain its rationale. Last year, we had no quorum and were therefore unable to consider it. I am explaining the reasoning behind the amendment in advance, in the hope that you will think about it and discuss it with each other. The proposed change (addition is underlined; deletions lined out) is as follows:

*Members of the Society are those persons sixteen years or older who are in sympathy with the Bond of Union of the Society and principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and have signed the official Membership Book, and have either made a monetary pledge equal to or exceeding the annual area, district, and national dues, or have requested in writing a waiver of all or part of these dues. Membership shall be in effect until a member dies, or resigns in writing or fails to return the pledge/indication of membership form by February 1st of the new fiscal year. , or the membership committee, per Article VII, has determined that the person has discontinued contact with the society for two years or longer.*

Two objections have been voiced to this amendment. The first is the fear that this change will have an adverse effect on pledges, but it seems highly unlikely that Prairie members would interpret a request for a written indication of membership intent from non-pledgees as a reason to decrease or eliminate their own pledges. The second objection and the one I have heard most frequently is based on the assumption that it institutes a monetary requirement for membership. To this, I can only reply, PLEASE re-read the proposed amendment. **No monetary pledge has ever been required for membership in Prairie, nor is it being required by this amendment.** The amendment simply asks that people indicate in writing, on the confidential pledge form, whether they are Prairie members or friends, and whether they are making a pledge, paying all or part of your fees, or are unable to do so. The annual pledge form will be designed to enable you to do this without embarrassment, and will indicate what the annual fees are.

From the above explanation I hope you can see that the intent of this amendment is not to make a pledge a requirement of membership (although we certainly hope everyone will financially assist Prairie to the extent possible),

but to give the treasurer, the finance and membership committees the information they need to determine what Prairie's membership is in the most convenient and expedient way. Under the present system, we consult the Membership Book, but many of those listed have not been seen in a long time. We know where some of them live, while the whereabouts of others are unknown. What do we do? Are they still members? Under the present By-Laws, someone must take the time and effort to track them down, determine their status, and persuade them to write a letter of resignation. Otherwise, we must carry them on the books for two years before removing them from the rolls. You may ask what difference an accurate membership count makes, but it matters in several ways whether we have a correct, dependable, and easy way to determine membership. Prairie currently pays \$53 per year in fees for each member. And, if you have signed the Membership Book, have not pledged, are no longer interested in belonging to Prairie, and have not written a letter of resignation, we must continue to pay these fees for you, even though you may no longer consider yourself a member. The number of delegates the society is entitled to send to General Assembly is determined by the number of the Society's members, and several awards given to congregations are based on the participation of a percentage of their membership. It is very disconcerting to read documents and reports made by Prairie, to find, as I did last year, that in Sept '95 our membership was reported as 113, in July '96 (the same church year) it was published as 119, in April '97, it was listed as 103, and one month later, in May '97, it was listed at 128. Are these figures possible, or is there a problem in the way we are counting people?

I urge you to vote for this amendment. Simplify the definition of membership, remove the burden of locating and verifying membership from our volunteers and shift the responsibility of confirming membership to our members. Save Prairie the expense of paying for people who no longer consider themselves members, and finally, enable us to accurately report the correct membership figures for our society.

Submitted by Pat Watkins

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

**October 9-11**

**Upham Woods Retreat**

Pre-registration was required.

**Sunday, October 18**

**“Sidney & God”**, a dramatization by Anne Urbanski based on a short story by UU Doug Muder. Is Genesis true, or is evolution true—or could they both be true simultaneously? Did the “creation” take six days or 10 billion years? And what the heck does Einstein have to do with all this? Our cast will include

George Calden, Warren Hagstrom, Al Nettleton and Anne.

**Sunday, October 25**

**“Medical Aid to Iraq”**, coordinated by Par Watkins, Robin Carre and Paula Pachciarz.

**Sunday, November 1**

**“All Souls’ Day - Rituals of Remem-**

**brance”**, coordinated by Ruth Calden. Ruth went with an Elderhostel study group to Michoacan, Mexico to observe the three day festival of the Days of the Dead. She came back with an appreciation of a culture which acknowledges and even plays with death and where grief and memories are not private, but shared with a community.

During the service Ruth will tell us the highlights of her experience. Then people will be invited to share their memories of someone close to them who has died. Participants are encouraged to bring a photo, plus one object that would help define the person they have lost.

A one hour meeting will be held at Upham Woods for those who would like to help plan this service. Anyone who can't attend can call Ruth at 233-5717.