

Dear Members and Friends,

December 20, 2007

Wishing everyone the happiest of holidays and the loving company of friends and family!

– *Michael*

2nd Annual Crazy Quilt Holiday Celebration

Not fond of all the hype that goes with the winter holiday season, yet still like to brighten these darker days of winter by sharing with your friends and family? Then come join the Free Congregation at Park Hall this coming Sunday morning,

December 23rd at 10:00 am

For a come-as-you are, relaxed morning of sharing
Be it a musical moment,
A reading or special story that you'd like to share
Or a special treat...

All are welcome!!

So bring your instrument, or your singing partner,
Your musings or your tasty tidbits
And help brighten this bit of the world with your presence.

Letting Maria Hansa (524-1147 or mhansa@hughes.net) know ahead of time
what you plan to bring would be helpful
but is not absolutely necessary

See You Sunday!!!

And on Sunday, December 30: Special Program with Outing and Potluck!

The *Outwardly Bound / Inwardly Free* Subcommittee of the Program Committee has not been sitting on their hands. Au contraire, they have thoughtfully fashioned a doozy of a Sunday to see the Old Year out and the New One in.

It begins at Park Hall at 10:00 a.m. with a program titled "Sacred Sites of Southwestern Wisconsin" presented by Chloris Lowe, Jr. – who happens to be Jack Keenan's uncle (in the traditional way of the Ho-Chunk Nation). Chloris will show slides of some of the sites and petroglyphs he has found in SW Wisconsin and talk specifically about his work with the State Historical Society in preserving burial sites in Wisconsin, what the laws are regarding sacred sites, and the responsibilities we all have in preserving these endangered sacred places.

Following the program at the Hall, you are invited to find your way to Devil's Lake State Park – hereafter referred to as "Spirit Lake" – where we have rented a shelter for the day and evening. Chloris will hike with us to a few impressive mounds close by our shelter.

At this time, it looks like the potluck will take place after the hike, i.e. midday. Following that, we will have both indoor and outdoor activities. Bring your equipment – skis, snowshoes, ice augers (I'd have to check on that!). We have heard there's a great cross-country trail near our building. Here's what else you should know.

Shelter Times: We are renting from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Shelter: We are in the Red Oak building, which is next to the South Shore Concession. It has a seating capacity of 100, with tables and chairs. Four electrical outlets. It is heated and has a fireplace, which we plan on using throughout the day and evening.

Firewood: By next week we will let you know who's in charge of making sure we have an adequate supply. If you have some to spare, please consider bringing it.

Facilities: Heated bathrooms are adjacent to the shelter.

Potluck: Jim Mundt is bringing a gallon of split-pea soup (with ham). That's a start!

Beverages: It is our understanding that alcohol is permitted this time of year. We'll confirm next week.

Dishes & Silverware: For now, let's plan on bringing our own service. That will keep us from having to buy and then dispose of a ton of paper/plastic products.

Admission Sticker: These are required and they do make a point of ticketing cars that are unstickered. For Wisconsin residents a daily pass costs \$7.00 (\$3 for 65 and over). A 2008 annual pass, available now and valid from the date of purchase, costs \$25.00 (\$10 for 65 and over). As far as I know all passes can be purchased at the entrance to the park.

Carpooling: Always a good idea; even better if you don't want to buy a pass.

Music and Dance: Does someone have a good boom box? Everyone has good music to bring! Don't forget dance music!

Musical Instruments: Yes, bring 'em!

If you have more questions, please contact Reece Donihi at 643-8326. And thanks to the OB/IF Subcommittee! (Reece and Jim Mundt)

Next to Last Call for Park Hall Philosophy Class on "The God Questions"

Andrew Kerr, who spoke to us last spring on "Aspects of Atheism" and will be speaking in February and March on "Rational Theism", will guide us through eight sessions of reading, discussion, and exploration on, well, God-stuff. The first four sessions will deal with Theistic positions, the next four on Skeptical and Atheistic positions. Could the subject matter be more timely? The intensity of the debate on this question right now – especially here in America – is probably greater than at any time in any of our lifetimes. To explore that question from within the calm and consoling embrace of philosophy – as so few have done recently – promises to be refreshing and exhilarating.

We'll meet from 7:00-8:30 p.m. on eight Wednesday evenings at Park Hall beginning January 9th through March 5th with February 6th as the week off. (A ninth and social session will be held at

Michael's house sometime in March – and will no doubt result in the long-sought resolution of all questions on this subject.) The fee will be approximately \$60 per person. Please contact Michael asap for more details: spikeyboy@earthlink.net or 608-588-2048.

Application Deadline Extended for Minister/Speaker Position

The Search Committee has extended the deadline for applications to January 25th and once again urges all members and friends to contribute to the effort by spreading the word among your personal networks. Two very solid applications were received by the initial deadline of December 7. However, upon the recommendation of the Central Midwest District of the UUA and because the Committee has only recently posted the position in a couple of new places, Search Committee members have thought it best to allow time after the holiday madness for candidates to find us and submit their applications. Meanwhile, the Committee is putting the interim to good use by preparing for the applicant screening stages, including interviews and, where appropriate, site visits. You may find – and direct people to – all materials related to the position search on our website: www.freecongregation.org Thank you for your help and patience!

The Search Committee members are:

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| Mary Ellen Sabourin | 355-3839 | mesabourin@wisc.edu |
| Curt Meine | 643-2015 | curt@savingcranes.org |
| Eleanor Chiquoine | 524-2478 | chiq@jvl.net |

They are being assisted by Beth Persche (FCSC Board President), Fred Clark (Past President), and Michael Whaley (FCSC Administrator).

Upcoming Programs and Events at Park Hall

Sunday, December 23, 10:00am – Informal Holiday Gathering. Come share holiday treats, stories, songs, memories, feats of holiday endurance with fellow members and friends. There will be no speaker or R.E. program this day.

Sunday, December 30, 10:00am – 5th Sunday Special Program: Chloris Lowe Jr. of the Ho-Chunk Nation will speak to us about “Sacred Sites of Southwestern Wisconsin”. We’ll then remove ourselves, those that are willing, to Spirit (Devil’s) Lake, where we’ve rented a shelter for the day and evening. We’ll finalize details in next week’s newsletter.

Sunday, January 6, 10:00am – Spiritual Reflection Hour: The topic is “Birthday Angst” and the roundtable discussion will be facilitated by Maria Hansa.

Special Announcements from, and about, Members and Friends

FCSC member Sally Ryan has ten pieces of her embroidery work on display through the month of December at the Art Gallery and Gift Shop in the Mini-Mall in Lodi. Their hours are 10-5:30 weekdays and 10-2:00 on Saturday and Sunday. Sally also has a piece in the Local Artist’s Store at the Portage Center for the Arts.