

Dear Members and Friends,

January 24, 2008

It's holiday time again! Free Congregation holiday, that is. In late January, this means Painesfest: a rather unusual looking word – these days it almost certainly would be PainesFest or Paine's Fest – but this is the original name given to it by the Congregation's founders. (And our good friend Joe Salmons from the UW German Department assures me that this is yet another interesting way that Germans find to exercise the principle of “Why use two or more words when one infinitely composite word will do”!) Let's enjoy Painesfest... then all look forward to our summer/spring holiday: Fruhlingsfest!

– Michael

Please Join Us for Our Painesfest Celebration!

For the 156th consecutive year we will be gathering to honor and celebrate – with music, fine words, and great food – the contributions that Thomas Paine made to the principles and character of this congregation and to the nation's freedoms. Also, to celebrate his birthday: he was born 271 years ago on January 29th. The 156th Painesfest Address, “In Search of a Good Party”, will be given by Mike McCabe, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign – a nonpartisan election watchdog agency that has been working, since 1995, for clean elections and *real* democracy. Mike has been a featured speaker at Fighting Bob Fest on several occasions.

And It's a Potluck, of Course!

Our last potluck, on Founders Day (October), was resplendent with good food and great organization. Let's aim that high again, shall we! Here's how:

- **We'll need about seven or eight main dishes.** Be bold, go for it! And let Michael know, if you've a mind to so prepare. (608-588-2048; spikeyboy@earthlink.net)
- **Salads:** Last names beginning with S to Z.
- **Side Dishes:** Last names beginning with A to J.
- **Desserts:** Last names beginning with K to R.
- **Beverages:** We'll provide milk, cider, lemonade. Other contributions welcome!

If this sounds too programmatic for freethinkers, please, then, surprise us with your best effort!

Also, to add the crucial finishing touches to potluck organization, **we'll need a few *good-under-pressure* volunteers** to hightail it downstairs immediately upon the conclusion of Sunday's program.

Tyrol Basin Ski Trip Planned for February 10

Following the program on February 10th, Reece Donihi will lead a ski trip to Tyrol Basin, near Mount Horeb. (Or plan to convene at 1:00 p.m. at Tyrol.) At least 12 participants are necessary for us to get the group rate. An early sign-up saves us money. A sign-up sheet will be distributed this Sunday. If you can't make it this Sunday, but plan to ski, please contact Reece asap. Attached to this newsletter is the Tyrol group rate sheet. Reece has generously offered to give lessons... and answer any questions you have about clothing, equipment, and which leg re-setters not to go to. (Kidding, we're just kidding.) Reece Donihi – ramphoto@verizon.net – 608-643-8326 (home) – 608-345-0339 (cell).

Search Process Update

The Search Committee happily announces that we now have four applicants for the position of Minister/Sppeaker. (The application deadline is this Friday, January 25th.) The Committee met last Tuesday, and will meet again next Tuesday, to finalize interview questions and schedules. The Free Congregation Board of Directors approved the addition to the Committee of Beth Persche (President) and Fred Clark (Past President), who have been active throughout the search process in an advisory

capacity. The addition stemmed from a) having some difficulty ensuring that at least two of the three original members are at a meeting, b) the Committee's decision to interview all candidates, then recommend one among them (and, if necessary, two) to the Board for a second interview; and c) Beth and Fred's considerable experience, both with the Committee and with the FC. Here is the contact information for Committee members:

Eleanor Chiquoine	chiq@jvl.net.com	608-524-2478
Curt Meine	curt@savingcranes.org	608-643-2015
Mary Ellen Sabourin	mesabourin@wisc.edu	608-355-3839
Beth Persche	oldblue@merr.com	608-355-0565
Fred Clark	fclark@clarkforestry.com	608-356-0063

Directory Available upon Request

The new Free Congregation Directory of Members and Friends is available, now by request. That means, please let Michael know that you need one, and he'll print and bind it for you. Ideally, these would be picked up at the Hall to save on mailing costs (\$1.26 or thereabouts). Or, you can receive it via email and print it yourself.

Upcoming Programs and Events at Park Hall

Sunday, January 27, 10:00am – 156th Annual Painesfest Celebration and Potluck! Mike McCabe will be our guest speaker. (*see above*)

Sunday, February 3, 10:00am – Spiritual Reflection Hour – Marilyn Fuss will facilitate a roundtable discussion and sharing on the topic of "Life Transitions".

Sunday, February 10, 10:00am – UU Service – Mead Lombard Seminarian Scott McNeil will be our guest minister for this service.

Non-Violent Communication Training Coming in February

"Learning the Language of the Heart" – A Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Training will be offered at Park Hall on Friday (6:30-9:30pm) and Saturday (9:30am-5:30pm), February 15-16. It will be facilitated by Jeff Brown, a certified trainer with the Center for Nonviolent Communication. The cost is \$95/person; **space is limited**. To register, contact RuthAnn Corrao or Jean at 608-643-3488 or rutabegga_2000@yahoo.com