



The CommUunicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waynesboro

White Supremacy and Me

By Debora Hoard

It was March of 2017 when the UUA and Unitarian Universalists at large came face to face, once again, with racism in our faith tradition. The shock waves that followed a “business as usual” hiring decision rocked our denomination from its top leadership positions to the teaching of our youngest children. (For those of you who were not following this painful series of events last spring, see this [summary article](#) from the Summer 2017 issue of *UU World*.)

And when I am honest with myself I wonder. I wonder why it was such a shock. I wonder why we were not prepared. I wonder why I was so comfortable with incremental change. And how I will learn to live with my own complicity.

This righteous outcry, which began with people of color in our denomination, came two years after we (UU’s) endorsed an Act of Immediate Witness at GA in support of Black Lives Matter – and yet, workshops and signs of support remained controversial. Race in America was making news nightly, and still it took an internal event for us take a hard look at ourselves and begin acting in ways that reflect our values.

We at UUFW responded with the requested White Supremacy Teach-in on April 30, 2017. We disrupted business as usual, changed the service, took the time, asked some hard questions. And then?

We opened ourselves up to study. We marched. We got busy with other things. There were times I found myself wanting to shout that I was not part of the problem – wanting to list the reasons I was not one of “those” white people. Reluctantly, I examined my history awash in the benefits of systematic white supremacy. I am working through the shame of those times I found myself silent, ignorant, or too comfortable to bother.

The Rev. Bill Sinkford offers us a simple equation, or is it a challenge? *“If we (UU’s) have any hope to retain our prophetic voice, this is a path we must walk.”* I have hope. The prophetic voices are all around us, turning up the volume for the many who have felt invisible and silenced. I am ready to keep walking and know in this fellowship I am not alone.

We will take up the issue of White Supremacy again at our second teach-in on October 15, 2017. Where we go from there is up to us.

(For more information on coming to grips with our own history as UUs, see the Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed’s UU World Article [“The Black Hole in the White UU Psyche”](#))

Bill Berry: Still Going Strong

At age 91, one might think it is time to slow down and take it easy – not Bill Berry. Nearly every day he works on a painting in a corner of his apartment living room at Brightview Senior Living in Staunton.

Continued

Bill Berry: Still Going Strong (Cont)



Bill and Bea with a favorite painting

Soon after Bill and Bea moved to Brightview, he assumed the natural role of community leader. Bill turned a weekly social hour known as “Wed@4” into a special event for residents by organizing interesting presentations and talented performances.

According to Mary Long, Vibrant Living Director, the outstanding quality of these programs is above and beyond all expectations and a credit to Bill’s resourcefulness.

Bill Berry’s paintings are on display in the UUFW Fellowship Hall through the end of November. From the quiet serenity in his scenes of nature, it is easy to see that landscapes are his favorite genre. His preferred medium is acrylics, and he typically paints from photos that he has taken or that people give him along with a request for a painting.

For Bill, painting has been a passion that began at age two in his native New Zealand. Yet painting is more of a hobby than a professional pursuit. He has occasionally shown his art in Staunton’s galleries, and several UUFW members are lucky enough to have acquired a Berry painting at the service auction. Currently, Bill’s rendering of storefronts along Staunton’s

Beverly Street is on display for sale in the Golden Tub Bath Shop. But most of his paintings grace his home—or the homes of family and friends to whom Bill has given away the majority of his works.

Bill and Bea have been married for 37 years and have eight grown children between them from previous marriages. They have been members of UUFW since 1988. Newer members might not know that Bill Berry is responsible for the design and construction of our Fellowship Hall. He considers this his most satisfying architectural achievement from his life as a professional engineer and draftsman.

New Member Spotlight



Duties at the Lyndhurst Country Store, which **Donna Nicely** owns with her husband, kept her from coming to UUFW sooner. Extra help at the store has made it possible for her to join us, a result of her looking for an open-minded spiritual community. Donna loves to travel. A favorite destination is Colorado to visit her children and grandson. Welcome Donna!

Member News

Nancy Frumen is recovering at home after a heart attack. A cardiac catheterization identified blockage in more than one artery, which may require additional procedures. She asks that visits be limited, but calls are welcome.

