



# The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waynesboro

## Preserving Our Family Stories

By Susan Clark

What are the stories you remember most from your childhood? The time when you hit your first homerun? The aunt who always let you play 'dress-up' when you visited her house? What stories did your mom or dad tell you about his/her early life? These are the stories that make up **our history**. *We are a living history book of our experiences: when we are gone that history is gone.* You think you don't have any interesting stories to tell or write? Even the simplest event or anecdote can be fascinating to others, especially younger family members, and many stories fill in gaps of family history as well as help our descendants or relatives understand a certain family member much better when they hear the story of a significant event such as why Aunt Louise left home when she was sixteen.

You can re-discover your stories, some long forgotten with an easy technique. A very well-known national storyteller, Donald Davis, calls finding those long-lost stories "quilt gathering." Spend some time thinking of things that have happened to you at a certain time, maybe when you were in high school: memories of a certain teacher, a particularly good friend, an embarrassing moment. Make a list of anything related to that time period. Another list might be family memories: the most memorable Christmas, when your sister fell off the horse, your first boyfriend/girlfriend. Now you have some quilt scraps to start with. Your story might begin with "One Christmas when I was seven years old I wouldn't tell anyone what I wanted for Christmas. Mom and Dad kept asking

me and I wouldn't say a word but in my heart I knew all I wanted was a pony, not the stuffed kind, a real live pony...."

Storyteller and author Carmen Deedy says, "Those we love are never really gone as long as their stories are told." It's up to you to keep those stories alive! A wonderful book that will help you find those quilt scraps is Donald Davis's *Telling Your Own Stories*—available from Amazon. It will bring back a lot of memories!

*UUFW member Susan Clark has 30 years of storytelling experience with children and adults.*

## New Member Spotlight



**Tammy Gilligan**, originally from South Carolina, has lived in the Valley for 20 years. She resides in Fishersville with her 17 year old daughter and 13 year old son who attend Wilson schools. She is a clinical and school psychologist and a professor at JMU

where she directs the graduate program in School Psychology.

Tammy's interests include hiking, backpacking, yoga, and contemplative practices. In addition, she is a "HUGE" Clemson Tigers fan!

When asked what drew her to UUFW Tammy replied, "The kindness, commitment to social justice, and love that seems to flow throughout."

Welcome, Tammy!