



# The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist  
Fellowship of Waynesboro

## Virginia Edwards: Our Very Own Piano Virtuoso

By Diane Ganiere

Since 1993, Virginia Edwards has accompanied our congregational singing and has graced us with her musical interludes. She wants you to know that she is feeling better. And so it is time for a **thank-you celebration!** It will be on Sunday, April 8, 1:30, at [Birch Gardens, 12 Royal Drive, Staunton](#). (Located just west of Fishersville on Hwy. 250)

First on the program will be 30 minutes of her DVD, "Playing the Classics in the Blue Ridge," taped from her Afton Mountain home in 2012. Intermission will include refreshments provided by Birch Gardens and expressions of our gratitude. The party will conclude with the last half of the taped concert.

Virginia began playing piano when she was seven, inspired by a concert she attended



featuring Rachmaninoff himself playing Prelude in C# minor (also her first piece on the DVD). She attended Marshall College, the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, and the University of Chicago. Her performances have included a solo concert at Constitution Hall in Washington D.C. and accompanying Ingrid Von Stetten from the Hamburg City Opera in Stuttgart and Berlin. Locally, she has accompanied church choirs, and provided piano concerts of the great classical works as well as contemporary love songs and country western music. Over time she has taught—and accompanied on occasion—more than 200 students in her piano and voice studio in Waynesboro. We are grateful for the gift of her music and that she had the forethought to commit it to DVD for posterity.

If you plan to attend this celebration of Virginia and her music, please let Diane Ganiere know so that she can give an estimated head count to Birch Gardens. Tickets are not required, but if you wish to have a copy of the DVD, a charitable donation may be made to the Fellowship.

## Spirituality and the Arts

By Maribeth Nolde

Is there a special relationship between art and spirituality? Are the arts part of our religious or spiritual experiences? Every religion uses various dances, artworks, music selections, writings and symbols as aids to meditation (or prayer). So, the arts seem to be a means of

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**Spirituality and the Arts (Cont.)**

expressing and making connections with the transcendent. Can you feel something deep inside, a spiritual awakening or connection through a piece of art, a dance, a music selection, a written poem or a story? Art does not have to be “religious” in nature to move us spiritually. A beautiful landscape or sunset, a powerful dance that interprets a theme of social justice/life forces/or expression of love, a music selection or writing that communicates strong feelings or takes us to another plane of spiritual existence is something I hope we have all experienced in our lives.

When I was in Florence, Italy many years ago, I visited the Accademia Gallery, which I knew had Michelangelo’s *David* in it. However, I was not prepared for how the experience of seeing it would make me feel. I entered the museum and viewed some works in a short hall right inside the door. This hallway then turned right suddenly, and as I made that turn, there in the distance was this iconic statue. I can hardly describe how I felt. I lost the ability to breathe and had to sit down. (I think that is why there were benches located there) I was mesmerized by the sight and sat there for a long time. It was so beautiful, so amazing, so...indescribable. While that experience was special, I have had connections with the arts in other ways that also touched me spiritually, and I sometimes struggled to make sense of what I was feeling at times, but I knew it was special and known only to me. I often have this experience when taking my photographs—that I am capturing a moment in time that may not come again in just that way. I know it when I feel it. It is a transcendence to another place. When I view the arts as a spectator, I feel like I

am being given a gift from the artist, the writer, the dancer, the musician. I am feeling something special from the art *they* created. Perhaps in those moments we become better connected to ourselves, to humanity...to the cosmos. In the arts, we can believe that everyone is connected to everyone else, whether from the past, the present or the future.

Thomas Merton said, “We are already one, but we imagine we are not. And what we have to recover is our original unity. What we have to be is what we are.” Can the arts do that for you?

On April 8th, the Worship Team will be having a morning service with the theme of spirituality and the arts. As part of that, you are invited to share one piece of visual art that moved you in a spiritual way. **This is NOT art you created**, but purchased or was given as a gift to you. With permission, members’ pieces may remain on loan as our art show in the Fellowship Hall during April and May.

If you are willing to lend your art piece, you may bring it to the Fellowship on the next three Sundays. I will ensure it is safeguarded and properly hung before the service on April 8. Please let me (Maribeth Nolde) know if you have questions.

**A Note on Use of Contact Info**  
 Members’ personal email addresses and phone numbers are not published in the newsletter because they can be easily accessed by anyone visiting our website. Check your member directory or the next email blast for information on how to get in touch with a person named as a point of contact here or on any page of our website.

