



# The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waynesboro

## The Parable of My Basement

By Sharon Van Name

In my basement, there is a workshop and (cue the scary music) a storeroom. It's a large area lined with shelves designed to hold the accumulations of a handy homeowner. Unfortunately, the last three handymen left behind their "stuff", resulting in packed shelves unreachable because the entire floor was also piled hip deep.



When the January organizing bug bit me, I decided it was time to tackle this mess. It was filthy, exhausting, confusing work. I often didn't know what I was looking at: trash or treasure? And then, every once in a while, I would come across something that triggered a memory of one of those good men, and I needed to take an emotional break. But each day, I went back and did a bit more.

Finally, the floor was clear! I wanted to twirl round and round, like a little kid, savoring the open, empty space. I did send pictures of it to a few people who had seen the "before." I needed some applause.



But then it occurred to me that this was the most dangerous part of my basement project. I had made real, visible progress, and it would be so easy to declare the job done. Or at least, to decide

to move on to another mess and come back to this one later.

I thought about how often we stop when we've made a bad situation tolerable. I have a friend who was abused as a child. With support from loving relatives, they are now a functioning adult, but they have never really dealt with their issues. The strain of keeping the demons boxed up on the shelf means that their life doesn't have the peace, joy and authenticity that it should.

As a nation, we have cleared away some of the worst of the racism that has infected our country from its founding. We have repealed laws, enacted some safeguards, and created more opportunities for all of us. There is more room to move, and we should rejoice in it. And yet, our shelves are still jam-packed with the effects of systematic white supremacy. And even worse, many people refuse to see that there is much work yet to do.

As a faith community, UUs have also made progress in examining, admitting and

addressing the racism within our own institutions. We have tried to listen and learn, not always successfully. Part of our process has been to consider the adoption of the 8th Principle, which calls on us to accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.

There is an adage that warns us to not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. But there is also the temptation to let progress blind us to the stuff that is still stuck away in the corners of the shelves. We must continue our efforts, knowing that pulling those boxes into the light and sorting out the garbage is the only way to peace for all of us.

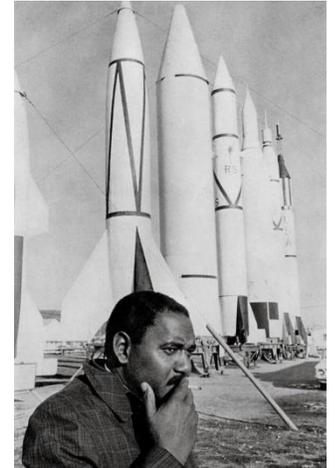
### Retraction

Last week this newsletter promoted an event by the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council based on a flyer that it sent around to UU congregations. It turns out that this organization is opposed to the UUA positions on addressing white supremacy and white privilege within the UUA, UU congregations and the larger society. It presents itself as anti-racist, yet it rejects inherent racial bias and condemns the UUA approach as being anti-white and in conflict with our seven principles. The UUA has prevented it from participating as an officially sanctioned organization at General Assembly and other forums. In response, UUMUAC has accused the UUA of cancel culture. The link to the UUMUAC flyer has been removed from last week's newsletter as the organization and its message do not reflect the views of the UUA and our congregation. However, you can visit

the [UUMUAC website](#) and make up your own mind as to what they are up to.

### Notable African Americans You May Not Have Heard Of

**Clyde Foster** was a scientist and mathematician who worked at NASA's Redstone Arsenal in Alabama beginning in 1960. His work for equal treatment for African Americans during the Jim Crow era in the South led him to become a



recruiter for NASA by traveling to colleges around the country calling on African Americans to study science. Foster was instrumental in developing a computer science program at his alma mater, Alabama A&M. During the 1970s he served NASA in its newly formed EEO program, and he served Alabama as a member of the Commission of Education. *You can learn more about Clyde Foster and much more about the history of African Americans in the U.S. and around the world at the website [Black Past](#). During Black History Month the newsletter will introduce you to other notable figures featured on this site.*

### Community News

Jennifer Lewis has set up a community pantry box at 4001 White Bridge Rd., Waynesboro. Anyone can drop off dry food stuff and personal care items or take things they may be in need of.

