



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro

Since the pandemic limitations began in March of 2020, our Fellowship has not been able to gather together to remember the members we have lost since then. In this special issue of the UUFW Newsletter, some of our members who knew them best share their memories and appreciation.

Rosemary Hall, 1921-2020

By Sylvia Woodworth

Fittingly, Rosemary Sullivan Hall met her husband in the French Club in high school in New Jersey. They raised five children and she taught French and English. She made several solo trips to her beloved France.



Rosemary moved to Raphine, VA from Hancock, NY after retirement. Not one to sit still, she got a license to sell real estate, became a substitute teacher, worked for a travel agency and at the Augusta County

Library over a period of years. In the community she sang in the Staunton Choral Society and served as a docent at the Shenandoah Valley Art Center.

For fun, Rosie liked to square dance and was an avid reader. As her eyesight diminished, she was an active client of the Talking Books Library in Staunton. She liked to walk, walk, walk, in Paris, in her neighborhood at the Stuarts Draft Retirement Community, up and down the corridors of Royal Care Senior Living, wherever she happened to find herself.

She was famous at the Stuarts Draft Retirement Community for the limericks she wrote and contributed to the newsletter.

Rosie and I shared a common love of France, the French language, food, and just about anything French. When she first came to the Fellowship, she was living at her house in Stuarts Draft. At some point, she dug up some of her lily of the valley for me to transplant at my house. When she no longer had a garden of her own, I, as is the French custom, would take her a bouquet of her lily of the valley on May 1. I have been thinking a lot about my dear friend Rosie lately.

Mary Echols, 1922-2020

By Steve Kasdan

It was around 1988. I found myself with some free time to spare, so I went back to School (Queens College, Flushing, New York) to finish my long-abandoned degree in art. I was living in Stuarts Draft, and one of the first things I did was join the

Shenandoah Valley Art Center in Waynesboro. It was there that I met Mary Echols. Whenever I saw her at the monthly openings featuring the



latest works of the members, she had kind and meaningful comments about my work.

Around 1992, Mary and some other local artists decided they would establish a cooperative gallery (CoArt) in Staunton where local member artists could show their work. She invited me to become a founding member, and I have been a member ever since. It would be no exaggeration to say that Mary’s encouragement, then, and over the years, has been instrumental in building my identity as an artist.

Several years later, Mary joined the UUFW, and I had the pleasure of helping her coordinate the exhibiting of art in our Fellowship hall by both UUFW members and members of the wider artist community.

Virginia Edwards, 1927-2020

By Diane Ganiere



Virginia Edwards was encouraged by her piano teachers to be a concert pianist. She did play for concerts, but not as her life’s profession. In her 80’s she gave a concert at Constitution Hall in Washington, DC. She performed peerlessly, but later confiding that she may have speeded up “The Flight of the Bumblebee” a little too much. She appeared in a blue satin gown of her own design and

making, and sparkling jewelry given her by her husband, Bill. But we knew her best as our UUFW pianist. Until she was in her 90’s, we reaped the benefits of her daily three-hour morning practices.

As her piano student, I came to know her as the most observing, waiting, and trusting teacher, qualities I wished, on reflection, that I had brought to my slowest of students. We closed our lessons with tea, cookies, and chats.

Virginia and her husband Bill rescued hungry cats that came to the door of their stone mountain house. She named the cats for characters from operas, and other respectables, like “Purrier and Ives,” except for one interloper, a wild baby mountain kitten. “Toughy” eventually left of his own accord, much to the relief of the other cats. But Virginia was proud of having been chosen by him: “Wild cats know not to be seen, and he must have sensed that we were trustworthy.”

Virginia terraced the side of their property with daffodils, iris, peonies, roses, and wild phlox, all of which she shared. At Birch Gardens Assisted Living, she became a favorite listener; staff would come to spend their breaks with her.

Her life was a gift. And Virginia respected her own gift enough to leave us the DVD, *Playing Classics in the Blue Ridge*.

David Rudiak, 1943-2021

By Ed Piper

Dave grew up in the Pittsburgh area. After serving as an Army officer during the Vietnam War, he eventually moved to Staunton, where he was employed as a computer technician for the city government. He joined our Fellowship



in 2000, where he met his long-term companion Barbara Wright. They dated for a few months and then moved in together. According to Barbara, they did not marry for fear it would turn out like Dave’s three failed marriages. Free of the family responsibilities in their previous lives, they were able to enjoy many wonderful adventures during their twenty years together.



Dave was a music lover, played piano, sang in the UUFW choir for several years, and was especially fond of doo-wop music. His other pastimes included bowling and bicycling. I fondly remember riding

together in the Shenandoah Fall Foliage Bike Festival several years ago. Dave maintained his quiet courage and sense of humor as he faced the challenges and limitations of a progressively worsening heart condition during his final years.

He passed away at home on April 24 under the care of Barbara and Hospice of the Shenandoah.

David Kirk, 1947-2020

By Pat Donovan

I first met David at McCormick’s Pub and Restaurant in Staunton, where I was running the bakery and occasionally waited tables. David was a regular customer who came in to have lunch several times per week and got to know me and my former husband, Dennis Young, who was the executive chef at McCormick’s. Back then David was in the tax preparation business. He suggested that we file “income averaging” for the past several years

that Dennis was in school. So we scheduled a meeting to get our taxes done. David was always cheerful, kind and had a great sense of humor. You would see him talking to staff and customers alike in McCormick’s. He seemed to know everyone and everyone was his friend. David always remembered me and made a point to stop in the bakery to say hello and ask about the boys. He was one of the first people in Staunton who took the time to get to know the two “Yanks” from New York.

David continued to do our taxes, and I would meet him in his small office in a building that used to be a shoe repair store. I had young children back then and my son Larkin was quite active to put it mildly. I had to bring him to the meeting with me due to not having any family or friends to help out.

Larkin in true form had to touch everything. He wound up stapling his finger with David’s electric stapler.

Through it all, David remained calm and explained to Larkin that the stapler automatically stapled when something was placed under it. He then distracted Larkin by showing him how to staple paper and allowed him to try it a few times.



So I will always remember the kind, thoughtful, understanding man who took an interest in the “Yank” in the bakery and put up with my overactive child with a smile and kind word.

David loved travel and learning. He took college classes until just a few years ago. David was a member of UUFW for over 20 years and considered us his family.