

The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro

Losing Simone

By Sue Peason

Our home office is, to us, one of the most meaningful rooms in our house, decorated as it is with items that hold very special memories, trinkets from far-away places, carefully curated items that make us smile and reflect.

One wall is a particularly joyful photo gallery of our two kittens, lovingly hung many years ago. It gave me special delight to create that wall, then, and it brings me particular comfort, now, as, having recently borne the loss of yet another cherished pet, photos and memories are all that I have left of my Simone.



We thought that Simone and her brother would be the two kittens that we would grow quite old with, but fate does not always bend to our will, no matter how much we wish it so.

On this springtime afternoon, gloomy with the threat of rain, and in the quietude of this little room, my mind spools backwards, a silent movie, a highlight reel, if you will, to our all-too-short time together. The initial devastation of her loss has been banished to one corner of my mind, yet it resurfaces when I least expect

it. And when it does, I have to try to find pockets of wisdom and fortitude; for as I come to terms with my own personal loss, I need be a steadying influence for her brother, who lost his life-mate, as well.

As so often happens, after the initial outpouring of support and words of encouragement from friends and family, others move on with the immediacies of their own lives—and the silence and loneliness of a diminished household is deafening.

Everyone deals with grief in their own way, and it is helpful to understand that grief is not a linear process. There is an ebb and flow to grieving, be it a drought or tsunami of emotion—both unsettling and overwhelming.

Remembering the life of anything you have loved will be, ultimately, a celebration, but it is absolutely healthy and normal to be stricken and to lament the death of a beloved being in the interim.

My husband and I openly acknowledge, even after many weeks, that our grief is still a very raw and powerful thing. We speak Simone's name aloud and will frequently set aside a few moments of togetherness to reminisce about things we appreciated about her, things that made her such a valued part of our lives. Beloved toys remain in a suspended state of play; they are a visual reminder that she was and is a part of our shared history. Someday, when it feels "right", these toys will

be packed away along with other tangible mementos of our time together.

When I am feeling my saddest, I am humbled by the fact that I had such a deep and lasting connection with a truly beautiful being, that we traveled the same paths together for a time, and that my heart was open to such an experience and will be so, again.

New Member Spotlight



Like so many others, **Daryl Salmons and Jean St. Clair** retired from their careers in Northern Virginia and moved to our area in 2022 for its beauty,

slower pace and proximity to family. Their daughter lives in Staunton with her husband and two children. They also have a son, daughter-in-law and two more grandchildren in Chesapeake, VA.

Jean and Daryl met in college and have been married for 45 years. They were both born and raised in Delaware. Jean has an interesting connection to our Fellowship. She grew up in the UU Fellowship of Newark, Delaware, the very church building that served as the model for our Fellowship Hall. Our now deceased member, Bill Berry, designed both buildings and was a good friend of Jean's father before he moved here.

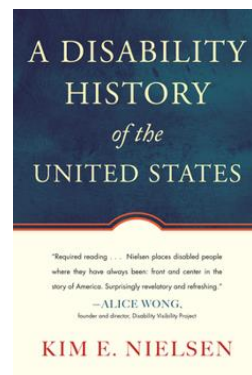
Daryl had a successful career as an electrical engineer, and Jean taught high school

math. Following their retirement, they found a five-acre property on Afton Mountain where each could pursue their favorite hobbies. Daryl is a wood worker and has made furniture for their home. Jean loves sewing. She quilts and makes clothes for her grandchildren. They both enjoy working together in their garden.

Over the years and when their children were young, Daryl and Jean tried different church denominations. They are pleased to have found our Fellowship and look forward to getting involved.

In Case You Missed It

As part of our Fellowship's new, ongoing Adult Education and Enhancement offerings, Rev. Paul will facilitate "Disability History", a discussion-style class centering on the book *A Disability History of the United States*, by Kim E. Nielsen.



The class will meet in Chalice House on five consecutive Tuesdays, from 7-8:30 PM, starting May 7. A discussion of UUFW's own mix of challenges and achievements when disabled persons are present with need for accommodation will be included in the class. In addition, we'll look at what's in the news and in current laws, as well as how to educate future generations of UUs to continue to respond to the issue.

Interested? We need 10 people to commit to regular attendance. Please register by emailing Savannah Fersner (administrator@uufw.org) by April 23.

