



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro

July 4th: Freedom's Cornerstone

By Clint Nicely

Fireworks. Always fireworks at the end of the night. But not the spectacular, dazzling displays we so often see these days; just a small community light show that lasted maybe ten minutes at best. But back in the 1950s, we all thought it was pretty great. The Sherando-Lyndhurst Ruritan Club was pretty much the only source, at least the only non-church-based source, of social events and activities in our small rural community, and the day-long Fourth of July festivities were perhaps the biggest, most anticipated celebrations of the year.

Sometimes, the county would send a fire truck, and usually a small contingent from the National Guard post would make a brief patriotic presentation. Local musicians performed, and there were of course speeches by local officials. Patriotic ribbons and buttons and small flags were available for everyone.



For us kids, there were pony rides, go-cart rides, sack races, balloons, and carnival games like ring toss,

coin toss, and rubber duck catch. The grown-ups enjoyed watching draft horse pulls, playing their own carnival games, and visiting the bingo tent. And of course there was food: hot dogs, hamburgers, fried chicken, and a feast of all the

standard picnic side dishes and desserts. Oh yes, there was cotton candy, watermelon, and homemade ice cream, as well. And the day's festivities were always capped off by an evening baseball game, usually an American Legion match, but sometimes a Little League or Babe Ruth level contest, all three groups, along with the Boy Scouts and Explorers, being sponsored by the Ruritans. Later, when the ball game ended, came the fireworks, lighting up the night sky out beyond the center field fence.

Sentimental, romanticized nostalgia? Perhaps. But the economic growth and prosperity of the post WWII era, the deep feelings of national and community pride, and an appreciation of public service, together, spawned an obligatory sense of determined accomplishment which was reflected by similar Independence Day celebrations in communities large and small throughout the nation. It was, we thought, a perfect tribute to our perfect democracy: We had survived The Great Depression, and we had rallied to save the world from a maniacal dictator. We were, we told ourselves, the greatest nation on earth, a pronouncement which did, after all, bear a fair degree of truth. So, like a plow horse with blinders, we plodded on, straight ahead, satisfied with our success, not seeing the broader field, guided by the ignorance of traditions and customs often unquestioned and simply accepted as the norm. But gradually, we shed the blinders, and we realized that the very same democratic concepts we so proudly celebrated—freedom, equality, justice, civil and human rights—were

not shared by everyone. And so we progressed, we evolved, slowly at times, but we made great strides as a society, as a culture, as a nation, finally recognizing the full meaning and promise of democracy for all. Today, many of our small community-based Independence Day festivities have been swallowed up by and incorporated into larger celebrations, or often have morphed into smaller group or family gatherings, but we still wave the flag, and we still pay homage to our democratic values. Is it perfect? Of course not. But we must keep trying, moving forward.

Unfortunately, in this election year, our fireworks are as much rhetorical and metaphorical as they are real, spewing from too many of our social and political functionaries (I hesitate to call them leaders), gaslighting all who do not agree with their views, and using mockery, scorn, insult, and condescension to threaten the very underpinnings and foundations of our democratic system and the values so integral to it. Their attempts to negate and reverse so many of our gains are steeped in outdated, segregationist and separatist language. And, sadly, any lie repeated loud enough, often enough, is too frequently believed as truth. The tenuousness and fragility of democracy, here and around the world, has never been more apparent, and as Unitarian Universalists, we must take this coming July 4th more seriously than ever. We must remember that our core UU values are those very concepts which define democracy, which ARE democracy. Our adherence to these values, our feelings of national and community pride, and our appreciation of public service, must be demonstrated as never before. Yes, we must UU the Vote; but we can't just Vote, we must Promote! We must make every effort throughout this election season to ensure that this

Independence Day is not our last Independence Day as a democracy.

Fireworks, cookouts, or quiet reflection — however you celebrate this July 4th, enjoy it, value it, and remain ever mindful of how important the promotion of our values is to the preservation of our democracy. We each have only one individual voice, but together our collective voice, guided by our core values, can give absolute credence to the words of Bill Clinton: “There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured with what is right in America.”

Hindsight, Humor, and Hope: Who, Me, An Elder?

The precious gift of extended time finds many people pondering deeply felt questions such as, “Who am I now?” and “What will I do that is meaningful?” To help older adults redesign their later years into a time of reflection, discernment, and new possibilities; the Adult Education and Enrichment Team will offer a six-week course starting on Saturday, September 21, from 10:30 am – 12 noon in the Fellowship Hall. The facilitators are the Director of RE, Nancy Lay, and Barbara Harrison. In addition to the weekly activities, there is also an at-home component. Each week builds on the previous one and integrates at-home projects and journaling.

The program goals are to:

- Encourage participants to support one another
- Identify and explore the positives about being an elder
- Use journaling as well as color and line as expressions of spirituality and creativity
- Lead participants to claim inner wisdom



- Help participants come to understand being an elder as a time of spiritual richness
- Invite participants to remain adventurous in thinking about the future
- Challenge participants to find ways to mentor others.

Week 1: “Elderhood – A Work in Progress” will introduce elderhood as a creative and important period of life, a time to search inside, integrate experiences, and cultivate wisdom. Weekly activities included sharing life experiences and journaling.

Week 2: “Solitude and Connection – The Stuff of Life” finds participants sharing their at-home journaling reflections on influential people in their lives. New activities will include stretching and guided meditation

Week 3: “Diving Through the Layers – The Fabric of My Life” is designed for sharing. Participants will come to the workshop with their lives laid out on paper in symbolic color and design. Each one has devoted time at home to creating a personal Life Map or Lifescape.

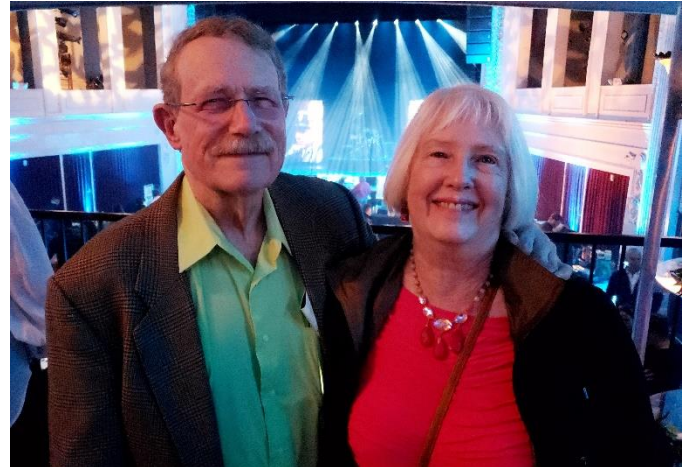
Week 4: “Creating New Visions – Building on Experience” has each participant sharing a cherished object of connection with the group. Plus, a new activity - creating a mandala.

Week 5: “Making Friends with Mortality” participants are invited to complete a *Five Wishes* booklet from Aging with Dignity, and share reflections on mortality.

Week 6: “Hindsight, Humor, and Hope” celebrates the work that participants have accomplished. Activities include how to honor, cultivate, and use our inner strength; and inscribing touchstones.

Please email administrator@uufw.org by September 6 to register. Limited to 8 participants who plan to attend all six weeks. Note: This course description was adapted from the [UUA Tapestry of Faith Programs for Adults](#).

Member News



Woody and Lorae McDonald celebrated 50 years of marriage at a small luncheon party with their children, grandchildren and a few long-time friends. They were married on June 15, 1974, at Rockford College Chapel in Rockford Illinois, with a reception at her parents’ home.

The McDonalds have lived in Rockbridge County for 45 years and have belonged to our Fellowship for 38 years, except for a few years in between when they and others tried to establish a UU congregation in the Lexington area. Their children, Jed and Piper, grew up in the UUFW.

Lorae has a long-time love of horses and riding. Woody is a singer in the Rockbridge Chorale Society. Together they are active supporters of the arts in Lexington and Rockbridge County. The photo was taken at a gala for the Virginia Film Festival.

Summer Break

The UUFW Newsletter is not published during the months of July and August. News about our members and activities of interest in the community, which are usually covered in the newsletter, may be forwarded to administrator@uufw.org for inclusion in the Wednesday email blast.

Thanks to all of our wonderful writers for your contributions to the newsletter during the past year. Be thinking about your next article!