



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro

MUUSIC & You

by Erin Milnes

Music is one of the most powerful ways to connect, reflect and grow. And for UUs, many of whom (myself included) live richly in thought but somewhat less so in body, music is a particularly potent and meaningful mode for bridging differences, for personal discovery, for transcendence. Music opens a door through which we touch the ineffable. To foster all of these benefits (and to have some plain old fun!), UUFW has enriched its music offerings this fall, with lots of ways to contribute and create.

MUUSIC Sing-a-Lings, a drop-in sing-in on Wednesday afternoons, began in November. From hymns to show tunes, we've come together for three successful sessions, with more to come. The program is open to music of all genres and is SUPER relaxed. We don't care if your fourth-grade teacher told you you couldn't sing. She was wrong. Everyone can make music, and we want you!

Bill and Lorain Harouff, Nancy Frumen, Gene Blackmer and everyone else who has helped make this new program a huge success deserve a huge thanks! Keep your eyes on the weekly reminders for the next event. And if you have some favorite tunes you'd like to share or want to help lead a future get-together, contact Lorain.

If you noticed some new faces on choir Sunday, that's because our **worship music program** is blossoming. This fall we've welcomed two new members to the choir: Emmet Crawford and Garreth Bartholomew, whose strong baritones bring fresh energy and

harmonies to our ensemble. We're very grateful to have them on board and look forward to making more music together.

While we are in the process of finding a new pianist on choir Sundays, Charlotte Shnaider (my mom) is thrilled to add her soprano to the choir. For many years now she has done double duty as our stalwart pianist and choir director. Charlotte is an accomplished pianist, cellist, and music educator, but her first love is voice. She reports that she's delighted to be able to focus on her singing.

With Charlotte in the choir, I have stepped up to help direct until the new plan is formalized. My background includes voice studies, some elementary music education training, and participation in many choirs. I look forward to helping the choir program flourish so that more people can experience the sublime through song. *Because singing is good for you. Full stop.*

It releases the 'happy' chemicals that make you feel good. It introduces more oxygen into the blood, leading to better circulation and increasing lung function. It helps you de-stress and get out of your head. It helps memory and concentration. It enables self-expression and creativity, boosting confidence. When we synchronize our voice with others through song, we experience a sense of self-other merging, the foundation of social bonding. It's not happenstance that we sing rather than say our version of the Passing of the Peace. Each time we lock eyes while singing "From You I Receive," we recognize each other's spirit. Given all these benefits, aren't you ready to sing more?

Come to a Sing-a-Ling or let 'er rip on Sunday hymns. Or join the choir! The choir performs on the fourth Sunday of the month and rehearses twice a month, as well as before the service. All are welcome. You don't need to be experienced or be able to read music. And though we'd love you to commit to the year, you are welcome try it out for a few months. Want some help tuning your instrument? Reach out to Charlotte for voice lessons (her fee goes to the Fellowship). Contact me with your questions or ideas about choir.

Here's to our musical, spiritual journey together!

New Member Spotlight



Victor Monti was first aware of the UUFW when he attended the Poor People's Campaign event that we hosted several years ago. He got to know our members, AJ and Adrienne Young and Sharon Van Name, through volunteering at the River

City Bread Basket Food Pantry — a good example of how our engagement in the community can lead to new members.

Victor was born and raised in New York City, the son of parents who were both Argentinian immigrants. He attended Vassar College, studying International Relations. He served in the Air Force as an active-duty officer and then a reserve officer for a total of 23 years. Most of Victor's civilian career was spent in the DC area as a contractor for a variety Department of Defense activities.

Victor has lived in Nelson County for the past nine years. In retirement, he is hardly inactive. He serves as an election officer and is on

the board of two nonprofits, the Nelson County Community Development Fund and Unity in Community, in addition to his work at the Bread Basket. As part of his deep interest in international relations, Victor leads a regularly scheduled chat for foreign nationals for the UVA International Center. Students and faculty from around the world talk about how to navigate unfamiliar customs and cultural issues in this country. He also tutors an adult Ukrainian.

Victor has three grown children living in different parts of the country. He is looking forward to going to Raleigh to see his two grandsons this weekend.

Welcome, Victor!



Thank you, Pat, Dave, Barbara and the Hospitality Team for another enjoyable Holiday Party!



Rev. Paul, Judi and family, our hearts are with you as you grieve your loss.

