



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waynesboro

From Hall House to Chalice House

By Sylvia Woodworth

Sixty years ago, UUFW bought what was known in Waynesboro as the Hall House, built in 1908. We call it Chalice House and use it for our children's education program, offices, and meetings.

Have you, like I, wondered what family life was like in it in years past? It was easy to find public information about Samuel Hall, but not his wife Eliza. Sam was the son of a shoemaker. His mother died when he was two. He started a grocery store in Waynesboro which evolved into a successful wholesale grocery business. A pillar of Waynesboro civic, educational and religious life, he was remembered as kind and soft-spoken. He served as president of the Rotary Club, a councilman, and mayor. He was on the school board and a director of the foundation started to save Fishburne Military School from being sold for other purposes. At the overcrowded 1400 member First Presbyterian Church, he was chair of a committee to plan and construct a new church, Westminster Presbyterian Church.

I learned that his wife Eliza bore two daughters and lived to be 100! One daughter was a successful business woman in South Hill where she owned a dress shop, was the first

female president of the Chamber of Commerce, and a church organist. Eliza and Sam's other daughter, Marion, was passionate about politics. She had three daughters who each answered my letter. They brought to life their grandparents and family life at Hall House.



The granddaughters remember the house as a great place for visiting grandchildren! They loved the yard, the boxwoods, which Mama Eliza had planted, and the apple trees. They climbed from the roof of the lawnmower shed into the dogwood to "hide." Mama Eliza loved to work outside, filling the yards with red and yellow roses. She was known for digging

holes with her mattock. The children thought she would dig her way to China! She would take her mattock to a neighbor's yard if she thought it unsightly.

The front porch had a swing on each end and Martha says she can still hear the sound of the chain rubbing against the metal hooks as Daddy Sam pushed them higher and higher.

Inside, they loved sliding down the banister while Mama Eliza told them to "STOP!" or they would weaken the spindles. Rev. Paul's office was the dining room.

The kitchen was warm with good smells like fried apples, sausage, biscuits, and Sally Lund bread. They remember the scary, dark, staircase leading upstairs where they would sometimes hide to eavesdrop on the grown-

ups. At the back of the living room, they gathered around the grand piano while family and guests played. The living room is where they put the family Christmas tree.

The grandchildren have conflicted memories of the attic, on the one hand, a “treasure of a place to play,” but on the other, the place where their own family’s maid would have to sleep when coming along on visits. The grandchildren usually slept on the summer porch, where the RE crafts supplies are stored, but sometimes they’d join Fanny in the attic. Kate confirmed what most of us who have been in the basement probably suspected but didn’t want to believe, upon seeing the toilet. Sadly, the Hall’s maid lived in the basement, which was probably considered normal at the time.

Mama Eliza was apparently quite a character. One story has it that she sent a turkey to her sister through the US mail. The oldest of 12 children and a former school teacher, she was compelled to correct the grandchildren’s grammar. But Martha, Kate and Sara remember getting lots of love from Mama Eliza and Daddy Sam on those visits. That’s what we want for the children and youth of our Fellowship—to receive lots of love and nurturing from all of us when in that house.

New Art Show at UUFW

Julia Leschiny, our new artist whose show begins March 2 and ends April 27, considers herself a student of nature, examining it with passion and patience. She works in both oil and pastel, letting what she sees around her guide her choices for subject matter. Light and

shadow really capture her attention, as you will see in her paintings for this show, entitled “Landscapes of Virginia.” She does not begin with drawings but begins painting right away while blocking in lights and initial color notes. Julia often begins in the field but finishes in her studio. She also enjoys painting still life subjects and florals. Julia began her painting journey in Russia, her home country, in 1998 and currently has a studio in Crozet.



Membership Update

The UUFW Membership Team hosted a “New to UU” class on March 1. This class is for regular visitors who may consider becoming members. A large class of nine attended, and all of them have now signed our book!

Our new members are: Gareth Bartholomew, Jed Baul, Annie Garrison, Andrew Jones, Elizabeth Jones, Jordan Norton, Rosario “Sari” Marroquin-Flores, Laura Prochaska, and Steven Woodruff. They will be introduced in upcoming newsletter issues. But in the meantime, let’s make them feel welcome.

LOOKING TO PURCHASE: A single-level home in a quiet neighborhood in the Waynesboro/Staunton area. Basement and garage preferred. Text/call members Ron & Barbara Harrison. They do have access to a realtor and online listings but hope word of mouth will assist in their search.

