



# The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist  
Fellowship of Waynesboro

## Mowing Season

My lawn service is giving my untamed patch's mix of grass and weeds its second mowing of the season today. I used to mow my own yard. When I was a kid, my brothers and I took turns mowing our yard. From the time my older brother was old enough that Dad trusted he wouldn't injure himself while mowing until the time my youngest brother moved out when he was in college, Dad never had to mow. I remember grumbling about having to interrupt recreational activities to mow. What kid doesn't grumble when required to do something? Then when I got married, I mowed at each of the seven rental houses where my wife and children and I lived. When Walter and I joined our lives together, I was the lawn mower. That is, until we lived on land we called The Sabine Farm – named after the ancient Roman poet Horace's country retreat.

*"This was my prayer: a piece of land, not of great size,/ With a garden, and a permanent spring near the house,/ And above them a stretch of woodland. The gods gave/ More and better. It's fine. I ask for nothing else, O Son/ Of Maia, except that you make these blessings last,"* Horace wrote. And when Walter and I bought our rural acreage, we similarly treasured the woods and pasture, the streams and hills, and hoped that the blessings would last. I started our years there mowing the three acres of yard we had carved out of hilly pasture. I used a gas-powered push mower. Finally, after too many times when sweat-soaked jeans rubbed my skin raw, I suggested paying someone to mow for us. Our labor on our Sabine Farm, tilling the soil and planting in large flower beds

and vegetable gardens, was labor that blessed us. But mowing? Not so much. And so, for most of the current quarter century, I have "allowed" others to do this householder's task for me as a way of helping the "blessings" last.

When we first moved to Waynesboro, our lawn man was a prima donna who "fired" us because we asked him a question he took as a criticism. The next was a bit flighty but kept us from being ticketed by the city. And our third has lasted. He wants to be paid in cash. At first, I wondered what that was all about. But then I thought, that's not on me. To deal fairly with him is on me. Besides, every dollar bill has text on it assuring the user that *"This note is legal tender for all debts, public and private."* Services rendered, cash is suitable payment. And each year, the first mowing has come the week before Easter. At least that is how I tell it.

I read years ago about an unusual folkway of a mostly Christian people in East Africa who lived in the countryside and small villages where they had to deal with threats from wildlife. Their belief – or superstition, if you look on it that way – was that lions never attack on Easter. I certainly don't know if they believed that Easter was a day *literally* safe from lions. But we do that sometimes. If I didn't stop to do a mental tally when someone asked me when first mowing happens here in Waynesboro, I would, with an air of certainty, say that first mowing comes in the week before Easter. It surely is better shorthand, we might think, than holding to a tradition that constrains the instincts of wild

beasts. But the claim in either case asks of us a little faith in something that probably is not objectively true. And this is the season when we rise to new life in ourselves and in the world around us.

Peace and Blessings,  
Rev. Paul

## Farewell to a Valued Employee

By Laura Riggan, RE Team Leader



**Stephanie Taylor** has been a fixture in Chalice House for longer than many of our members have been attending our services. But unless you've been the parent of toddler in the last eight years, or volunteered in the nursery in that time,

you may not recognize Stephanie. After eight years of devoted service, we bid her farewell on Sunday, but we don't want to let her go without noting the impact she has made on our families (and therefore on all of us).

First, there is the sheer amount of time she's been with us. She thinks it's eight years, measured against the age of her son, Logan, when she arrived. "Two, I think" she said. Logan, now 10, was listening. "What?!" Daughter Aubrey, now 6, came two years later. Stephanie pointed to the baby bouncer, which has been a fixture for nursery dolls, but not so much for most actual babies, as the nursery only takes children who are at least 6 months of age. "That was for Aubrey when she was born, so I could bring her with me."

Stephanie said she never intended to stay so long, but she's been here through a number of

changes. Encouraged to apply for the nursery attendant position by then Director of Religious Education, Sarah Skaar, she is now working with her third DRE, Shannon Mills. The job was initially appealing to her because of the location (she could walk from her house), the minimal hours and the volunteers who joined her each week. She helped out during two summers with the UUFW Summer Day Camp and watched as the front yard was transformed with a new playground.

Recently, the Taylor family moved to a new home outside of Waynesboro. Stephanie's business, Stretch and Grow, which brings fitness programs into local elementary and preschools, has itself grown so that she has been able to hire an additional employee. As her kids have grown, the family would like to be able to plan more weekend excursions.

Stephanie said she feels very connected to kids, parents and adult volunteers who have found their way to Chalice House. "I've really enjoyed getting to know different volunteers," she said. Though she had no UU connection when she arrived eight years ago, she has been a vital part of the UUFW community. She has welcomed toddlers and children to the nursery space in all that time, and in doing so has made both those children and their parents more comfortable at UUFW.

## Help Wanted

Peggy Anders is looking for someone to take a load of building materials from her house in Waynesboro to the Augusta County landfill—mostly wood boards from a small demolished shed. Nothing is heavy or hazardous, but a pickup truck will be best for transport. Peggy will pay \$100 to UUFW. Contact Peggy directly if you can help with this task.

