



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waynesboro

My Monarchs

By Marilyn Nash

Last week I saw my first monarch butterfly of the year. If you talked to me last summer you might recall how smitten I was with “my” monarchs. It all started when five volunteer milkweed plants popped up outside my kitchen door. Milkweed was not included in my haphazard landscaping plan, but monarchs need milkweed, and I have a mission to increase wildlife habitat on my property. So, I encouraged those gangly plants to thrive.



I had a general knowledge of monarchs— they’re beautiful, the caterpillars can only eat milkweed, their numbers are decreasing, etc. But I wasn’t

particularly invested in them. Not much happened for a while, and then to our complete surprise, we found a beautiful green and gold monarch chrysalis on the side of the house! Upon further inspection we found tiny monarch caterpillars on the milkweed! This discovery led to untold hours of watching, worrying about and studying these babies go from one-fourth inch to three inches of gorgeous yellow/green, black and white caterpillars. I felt I knew each as individuals and followed them around the plants.

Did you know that the black and orange adult colors are a warning to other animals not to eat them? The toxic chemicals in the milkweed make

them taste bad; or that a typical monarch weighs about the same as a paper clip, yet, using the sun as a compass is capable of traveling 3,000 miles between Canada and Mexico? And get this— when they form the chrysalis, their caterpillar body turns to mush and specialized cells in the mush turn into wings, legs, antennas, etc. Who could make this stuff up!

As the summer wore on, there was heartbreak in our journey together. A few didn’t make it. But at least 10 or 12 did, and I’m proud of the tiny part I played in their lives. I hope they all made it to Mexico and don’t care how unrealistic that wish was.

So, what can we learn from these beautiful butterflies? Eat what’s right for you. No matter your physical stature, you can travel far in life. Unbelievable transformation is possible.

My milkweed is returning and I’m planting more. Perhaps you should plant some and watch the magic unfold. But I warn you, it’s addictive!!

UUFW Transitions



This Sunday the 14th, we will honor Duncan Guest as he moves into adulthood in the first UUFW Bridging Ceremony for several years.

Duncan was introduced to Unitarian Universalism early, with occasional

attendance at UUs in the San Francisco Bay Area and nearly annual visits to UUFW during stays with his grandmother, Charlotte Shnaider. Duncan and his family joined UUFW when they moved to Waynesboro in 2019. Duncan graduated Stuart Hall School—and turned 18—on May 22. He will be attending Piedmont Virginia Community College in the fall, with plans to study history and transfer to UVA or JMU after two years.

Duncan also plans to give back to UUFW as an RE volunteer. RE Director Shannon Mills, who will lead the Bridging Ceremony, said, “We can’t wait to see all that Duncan will accomplish as an adult. We are so proud to see him on this important life journey.”

Religious Education News

By Shannon Mills, RE Director



Summer crashed on the imaginary beach of “Castaway Island,” our brand-new Summer Children’s Camp Curriculum! The children have been shipwrecked and just barely made it to a mysterious island, where with the help of friends and our UU Shared Values, they can learn to survive and even thrive until help arrives. This summer will be full of water and beach themed crafts, activities and stories for the Children’s RE Class. The Teen RE Class will take a much-needed summer break to return in the Fall.



This past Saturday, Duncan led a small group of UUFW congregants and the RE teens and children on an interpretive talk and walk through the *Frontier Culture Museum*, where he had previously volunteered as an interpreter. This was a valuable experience for all ages, and we hope to explore having shared-age events and field trips like this in the future.



Community News

Three UUFW members (Roberta Patterson, Silvia Gederberg, Tom Gederberg) assisted with Staunton Democratic Committee’s Adopt-a-Spot last Saturday. Four times a year, the Committee is committed to clean up both N. Lewis St. and N. Central Ave, between Churchville Ave. and Johnson St.



As UUFW members, we support our beloved congregation with our time, talents and treasure. Another way we contribute is with our votes. The **Annual Meeting of the Congregation**, coming up on Sunday, is our opportunity to participate in Fellowship governance. And, importantly, we must have a quorum to hold this required meeting. So, members please do your best to attend.

