



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro

Two Random Summertime Thoughts

1) Toward the end of last year when I was starting my weight loss journey, I thought I wouldn't mention it at all at the Fellowship. It didn't take long, though, before people started noticing and commenting on it – at first with the question whether it was intentional or its corollary concern whether I was well. And then my clothes started hanging off of me, requiring me to buy new clothes. I'm in my fifth round of such purchases now. As this change became more and more obvious to everyone, I decided that I wouldn't make a big deal out of it but would answer basic questions that naturally arose.

Weight loss is such a personal thing, it is not what everyone needs, and it is morally neutral. For too many people, issues around weight are a locus of shame and judgment. Those who decide to go on this journey have their own motivators guiding or pressuring their individual decisions. And each has their own challenges in trying to achieve their desired outcomes. What is right for one probably isn't right for the person next to them. Me, I had a plethora of family health history matters urging me to reduce risks by losing weight. And for all that is wrong in our world, I feel lucky to live in a time when the help I needed to achieve this goal was readily available to me.

2) When I was growing up in rural Illinois in the mid-twentieth century, there were birds everywhere. As I rode my bike on gravel roads in the summertime, redwing blackbirds were ubiquitous. Whether it is just because I am not often on a bicycle between farm fields anymore or because of the reduced presence of insects so many birds eat, it has been quite some time since I saw lots of birds near me. But because of this, I pay attention occasionally to things I would have taken for granted back in the proverbial day. Last October when friends and family gathered at a remote Illinois cemetery to bury my partner Walter's ashes, there was a lone bird, a raptor, a hawk, I think, hovering overhead. My friend Leslie pointed it out before singing "*El Malei Rachamim*," a Jewish memorial prayer for the departed, because in Jewish tradition one symbolic image of the divine presence is a bird, often a raptor. The bird was back the next month when we buried my dad, and again earlier this month when we buried my aunt.

Recently, in the process of hanging art on my walls that had been in storage since Walter and I arrived in Waynesboro eleven years ago, I began filling some spaces with newly acquired pieces, including a Chagall print depicting Bezalel, the chief architect and master artisan charged in the book of Exodus with building the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant. He is significant as the first

person in the Bible described as being filled with the divine spirit. And in this print, it is a bird that Chagall depicts talking into Bezalel’s ear. If Bezalel’s place in the story is important for us at this vast distance from the storytelling of Exodus, it is in how it illustrates the spiritual value of creativity, aesthetics and carefully honed vocational skills. Chagall’s bird looks a little weird, but it is speaking to and for humanity, for life and beauty in this world.

So, two random thoughts.

Peace and Blessings,
Rev. Paul

New Member Spotlight



Wendy Repass is not new to Unitarian Universalism. She was a member of the Charlottesville UU congregation with her ex-

wife. After divorce, it was time to continue her spiritual journey some place new. As she lives in Crozet, it was not too hard to find us.

In childhood, Wendy lived in many different places as the daughter of an Air Force member. She was born in Hawaii and moved to Mississippi and California before the age of eight. While living in the Netherlands, Wendy attended an international school where she met many interesting people from different backgrounds. She graduated high school in Northern Virginia and attended UVA where

she majored in art. She went on to graduate school in London, where she continued art studies.

Oil painting has been her preferred medium for a long time. But she also invests her time and talent in music and song writing. Some of her recordings can be found on Spotify. Wendy currently is focused on writing poetry.

In her professional life, Wendy is a user experience designer and data visualization developer for UVA Health. In other words, she builds “dashboards” so users will be able to visualize and understand complex details without having to dig through raw data. For example, she has worked on projects to monitor superbugs and to make sure surgical equipment is cleaned properly. Her work has given her knowledge of medical issues and the opportunity to work with a variety of medical professionals.

In addition to art, music and poetry, Wendy enjoys card games, karaoke and hiking. She lives with her Red Tick Hound, Lily.

Member News

Margo Keily is in memory care in Staunton. She misses being more connected to UUFW, and cards and visits are very comforting. Her address is Brightview, 31 Woodlee Road, Staunton 24401.

Glen Patterson now lives at Legacy, 1410A N. Augusta in Staunton. Although still grieving the loss of his wife, Pat, three months ago, Glen is more cheerful and spends more time socializing with other residents. He enjoys visits from his UUFW friends.

