

Our Stories—Patience Peck

Growing up exploring the hills and ponds of Matunuck by bicycle with older brother Terry in the 1950s and '60s was pretty idyllic mused Patience Peck in looking back on her childhood. It was here, surrounded by abundant mountain laurel, rhododendron and arbutus that her deep appreciation for the natural world developed. She and Terry pretty much had free rein within the 13 acres of their family's property.

Patience knew she was a Unitarian and the family traveled to Providence for the occasional funeral or wedding service but regular church going was not a family practice. When she was 10 or so years old she attended a Catholic mass with a friend and was entranced with the magical qualities of the incense burning and the Latin words. She attended boarding school for her high school years at Wheeler School in Providence and there they were required to attend religious services every Sunday at a church of their choice. None of these early explorations led to a particularly religious life. Patience found her spirituality in the natural world and the creativity that she was discovering within herself and which was nurtured in the phenomenal classes at the school.

She attended Skidmore College and the University of Rhode Island and finally the Swain School of Design. Unable to find a job in the art world she worked as a social worker, a job she really loved until the emotional burden became too much after about a dozen years. Without specific training in advertising art and marketing she learned to design, write and illustrate advertising materials. She particularly enjoyed later jobs as Art Director and VP of Advertising and Marketing at two different manufacturing companies, both in Pawtucket. In these jobs she was responsible for supervising a whole art department. Of this period in her life Patience says, "I applied myself in these jobs with excitement, intelligence and determination. I gained self confidence as an artist which was significant in my becoming the woman I am today."

About to face major surgery several years ago Patience felt moved to seek a religious connection. She picked up the phone and called UUCSC. Rev. Betty Kornitzer paid her a home visit; Patience started attending Sunday service and she has been with us ever since. Patience has been active within the congregation serving on the Decorating Committee creating arrangements for the alcoves and singing in the choir for about a year. She is currently on the Membership Committee and designed their bulletin board in the Oneto Room. She is also responsible for putting together the hallway art shows that you have likely enjoyed, showcasing the many artistic and creative people in our congregation.

Making art continues to play a very important role in Patience's life. She has exhibited her pastels, collages and original prints in solo and group shows. She has found she is equally as excited about the teaching of art. She likes to teach one or two students at a time, meeting them wherever they are in their creative journey, helping them to find the joy in art making.

Her favorite things about UUCSC? Rev. DL is at the top of the list. She very much enjoys the choir and the musical component of the service. She likes being part of the community and she hopes to eventually serve on the Board in some capacity, believing that it is important to have many points of view.

Facing an upcoming hip replacement she is glad to have UUCSC to add to her spiritual supports. As do so many of us, she very much misses church services during the Pandemic shutdown. She is particularly sad to be missing the summer services led by congregation members. She truly wishes the church could find a way to hold some sort of services, outside with masks. She looks forward to the day when we can be back at the church. She has lots of art shows lined up for the hallway gallery and has plans to have a children's art show, feeling that it is important to encourage all artists.

Elizabeth Donovan, July 2020