

WALTER

A woman with a large, dark afro hairstyle is the central figure. She is sitting on a thick, weathered log in a wooded area. She is holding a large, messy pile of colorful plastic bags (red, blue, yellow, green, purple) in her arms. In the background, more plastic bags are hanging from tree branches, creating a dense, colorful canopy. The woman has a serious expression and is looking directly at the camera. She is wearing a dark, sleeveless top and a thin necklace. The overall scene suggests a commentary on environmental issues, specifically plastic pollution.

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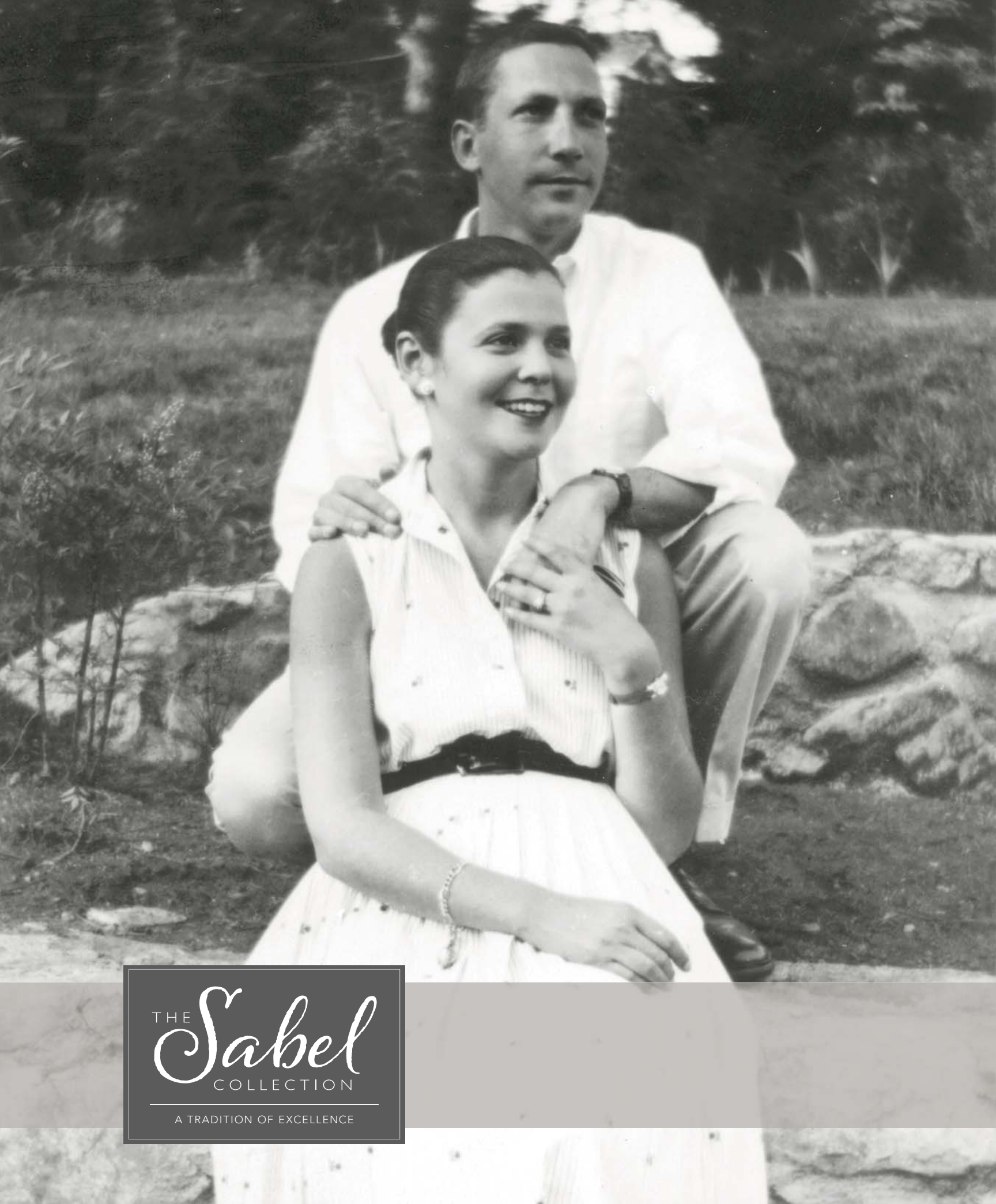


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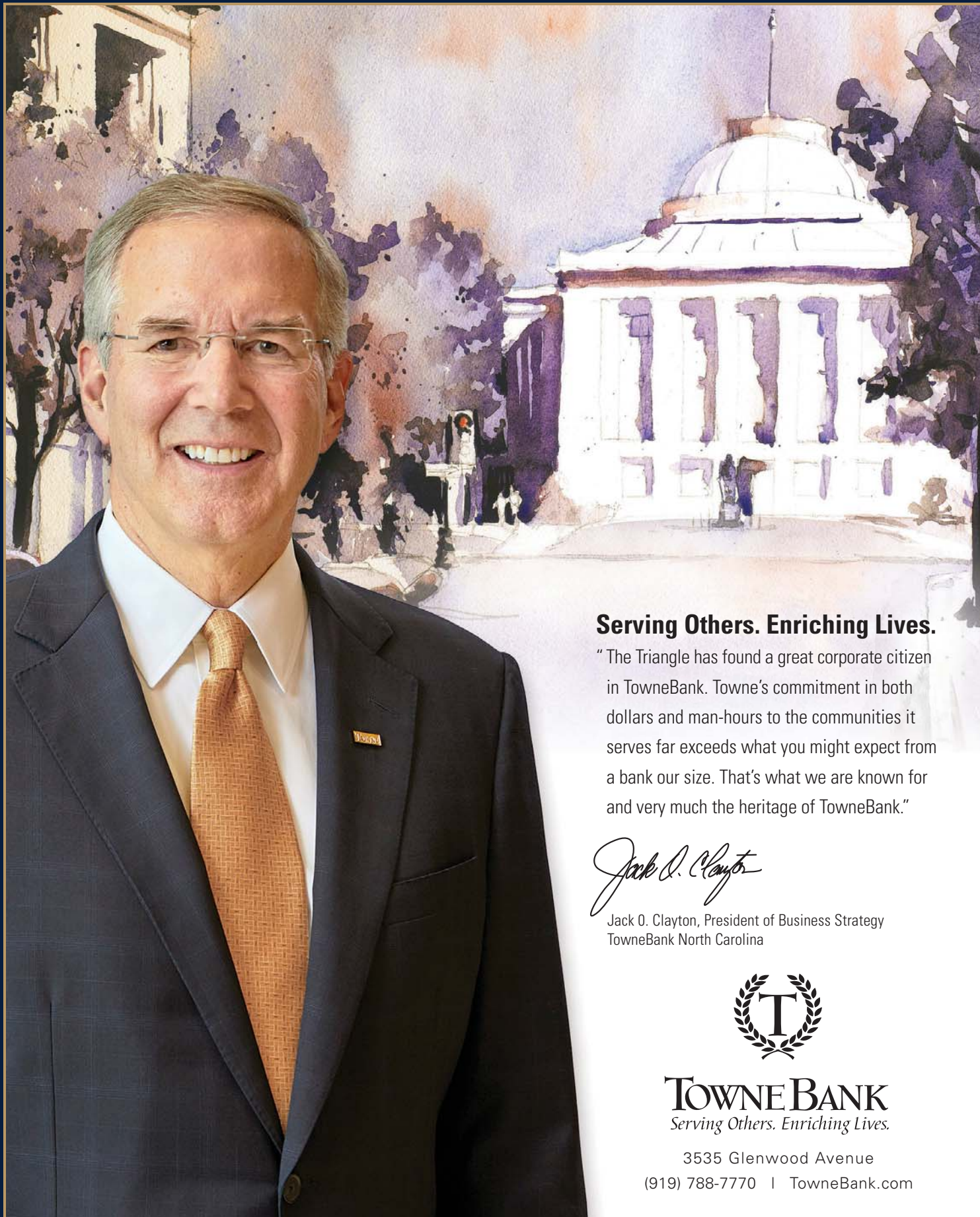
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Forrest Mason Media (BAR); Eamon Queeney (SMITH)



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LETTER FROM WALTER



Above, clockwise from top left: A selfie à la Billy Warden with a mask from Furbish Studio; a socially-distant WALTER team meeting (our first in months!); a watermelon cocktail inspired by Lily Ballance; working on our contribution to Maya Freelon's CAM exhibit.

When we started thinking about September as our Arts issue, we were holding out hope that by this time, we'd be able to go see an in-person performance or listen to live music shoulder-to-shoulder with other fans. Alas, no dice. But as the pandemic stretches onward, what we're learning is: no events, no problem. Makers keep making, venues are innovating—and it's all happening in a time where our collective consciousness is being raised about inclusivity, representation and celebrating the breadth of life experiences even within our small corner of the world.

Take Maya Freelon's art: she's made a name for herself by using the simplest of materials and manipulating it in complex and beautiful ways—innovation inspired by her ancestors, making something from nothing (pg. 48). In his architecture, Phil Szostak uses simple, economical materials to create structures that shine (pg. 56). David Menconi took a beat reporter job and turned it into a decades-long career of digging deep into North Carolina's musical roots, a reminder that through good times and bad, creativity can sustain us (pg. 74). And our Culture piece notes how our city is leading the way in making the arts more accessible to people of diverse abilities (pg. 42).

Also inside: comfort food to warm our bellies (pg. 82), mezcal cocktails to light fire in our hearts (pg. 37) and a fashion piece that's very... of the moment (pg. 98). We can always count on Raleighites to find joy and humor even in the strangest of times.

P.S. WALTER gets a behind-the-scenes look at Freelon's *Greater Than or Equal To* exhibit and we're taking you with us! This exclusive experience is sponsored by Fink's Jeweler. Visit waltermagazine.com/mayafreelon to learn more.

Ayn Monique
Ayn-Monique Klahre
Editor

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CHRIS CHARLES / PHOTOGRAPHER

Born and raised in Brooklyn, NY with dreams of becoming an architect, Chris studied Architectural Engineering at SUNY Farmingdale College of Technology prior to a "short" 12-year stint as a U.S. Army paratrooper. He then earned a degree in Graphic Design and has since used his technical training and natural ability to successfully carve a niche in his local market. Charles' client list includes Red Bull, Spike Lee, Moleskine, The Thurgood Marshall College Fund, Sony Music and many local and nationally recognized artists and organizations. "Maya Freelon is a consummate artist and I've had the pleasure over the past several years to witness her growth as she's continued to build her vision, on her terms."



JENN RICE / WRITER

Jenn Rice is a Raleigh-based food and travel journalist best-known for capturing subjects and places in an interesting way. Pre-pandemic, Rice traveled the world to seek out interesting places and storylines for magazines such as *Food & Wine*, *Vogue*, *Departures*, *VinePair.com* and *Wine Enthusiast*. Nowadays, you'll find her sitting on her Mordecai porch reporting locally about the food and beverage industry. "Lily Ballance's vibrant personality and the oddities found inside William & Company transported me to Mexico during our interview, and it was the greatest escape I've had in a while—plus her cocktails are out of this world."



LIZA ROBERTS / WRITER

Liza Roberts was honored to have the opportunity this month to profile Maya Freelon, who she has known for a few years and interviewed several times. Roberts has also followed Freelon's work closely for *The Art of the State*, a book she is currently writing about the art of North Carolina to be published in 2022. Roberts was the founding editor of *WALTER* magazine, and loves to tell the stories of creative people. "Maya Freelon's work is as singular and beautiful as the artist herself, reflecting the times we are in and Maya's sensibility with nuance and originality."



JUSTIN KASE CONDER / PHOTOGRAPHER

Justin Kase Conder put away his suitcases and moved to Raleigh four years ago. Having spent the previous seven traveling as an international photographer, the people he came to admire most were those who worked the land. Whether photographing a farmer five miles from downtown Raleigh or on the Himalayan plains of Mongolia, Conder appreciates the people who dedicate their lives to the laborious work of growing the foods that fuel our lives. "My time with Jonathan and Kayla was no different. I'm grateful that was able to illustrate such an important story of people who are really making a difference in the region."

YOUR FEEDBACK

We love seeing our community enjoying *WALTER*! Tag us in a photo with your issue of the magazine with **#wearewalter** and you just might find yourself on our pages!



Mike Noël of Sassafras Farm with a copy of the July issue of the South Durham Farmers Market

"I love your piece on Liz [Kelly]. Fantastic writing, beautiful pictures, and I think it captures the spirit of her work."
— Meredith Honig



"I had such a wonderful time sharing my home with *WALTER*! The pictures were stunning and the story was spot-on. I am so thankful to have such a great memory in a beautiful magazine that I enjoy reading monthly. Thank you for choosing our home!"
—Courtney Driver



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Happening

NOW



Hank Smith of Hank, Patty & The Current



Ben McKeown (BANJO); Stephen Althouse (Bound Hammer)

all month GREGG MUSEUM

The Gregg Museum of Art and Design has taken a creative approach to programming this fall. Take part in a virtual or in-person tour of an exhibit, sneak a virtual behind-the-scenes peek in the museum or listen in on a conversation with an artist. Kicking it off is the opening of its first exhibition of Fall 2020, *Objects of Intention—Photographs by Stephen Althouse*. Althouse is a fine art photographer whose images of well-worn agricultural implements (cloth, tools, machinery), both powerful and startling, provide commentary on the human condition. The museum is open on a reduced schedule, so if you would like to view the exhibit—which runs through January 3, 2021—a reservation for a timed entry is required. Or, tune in on Thursdays for a virtual program like *A Conversation about Art*, the first of three interviews with museum director Roger Manley on September 3 or “stroll” the galleries on a Virtual Guided Tour of the Gregg with the museum’s education staff on September 17. Think: Thursdays in the Gregg with Roger (and friends) and make art a part of your week.

See museum website for schedule of events and to make reservations; free; 1903 Hillsborough St.; gregg.arts.ncsu.edu

The events we have come to look forward to in September will be a bit different this year. Gathered here are new ways to enjoy what our community has to offer both in-person and virtually. This is what we know as of publication. For the most current information, please check the websites provided. We also continue to update a calendar of events online. Check it out at waltermagazine.com.



Get out. Give back.

Support the local scene while you enjoy a change of scenery. Chapel Hill, Hillsborough, and Carrboro invite you to revisit some of your favorite local spots. Or try something new in the towns you know so well. Pack your mask, wash your hands, and just do you, right here at home.

Get ideas at visitchapelhill.org/staycation

Happening Now

● 14-19 BUGFEST



Be a fly on the wall at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences annual BugFest: A Virtual Infestation! BugFest is going online for a week of buzz-worthy adventures featuring this year's theme arthropod: the fly (hooray?). Join super-fly entomologists from our state and around the world to learn all about the creepy, crawly, oh-so-squishable (but don't!) world of arthropods: spiders, scorpions, millipedes, crabs, cicadas and, yes, flies. You'll be itching to take part in the BugFest 2020 Theme Days including: Mosquito Monday, Beneficial Tuesday, Art and Culture Wednesday, Entomophagy Thursday, Prime Crime Friday and BugFest Bugstravaganza Saturday. Budding scientists: bring your curiosity, but please note that fly swatters are expressly forbidden.

See website for festival information and program schedule; free; naturalsciences.org/calendar/bugfest/



● 18-20, 25-27 GARDEN DAYS

Juniper Level Botanic Garden is a 28-acre campus brimming with over 30,000 varieties of plants from native perennials to rare and exotic flora. The nursery is only open eight weekends a year to the public for its Open Nursery and Garden Days, so take advantage of the opportunity for two weekends in September (18-20, 25-27) to marvel at the grounds and make a purchase for your own garden. There will be health and safety protocols in place, including social distancing measures for checkout. Get growing.

See website for hours; free; 9421 Sauls Road; jlbgo.org

● 19 VIRTUAL RACES



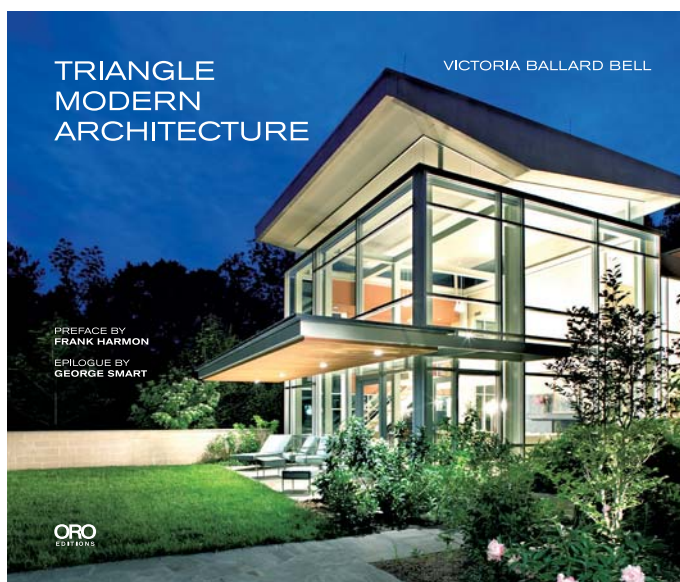
Slip on that kitschy kilt, green striped tube socks, orange fright wig or flip flops and give your neighbors something to talk about on your morning run or walk. The nOg Run Club is taking all of their fall races virtual on September 19. Register to participate in the St. Paddy's 4 Miler, The World's Largest Flip Flop 1K Walk and/or the Oktoberfest 4 Miler whenever and wherever it fits your schedule to raise money for the many charities the run club supports including: Neighbor 2 Neighbor, Read and Feed, Passage Home and Healing Transitions.

See website for all race information and registration; from \$27; nogrunclub.com

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New Book by Victoria Ballard Bell



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26

ART IN THE GARDEN

En plein-air: Sweet Peas Urban Gardens and the Well Fed Community Garden invite you to make Art in the Garden September 26. In this ongoing monthly series, participants gather at the Well Fed Community Garden for a guided watercolor class with artist leadership coach Annelies M. Gentile. Gentile guides you through basic painting techniques and the creative process as it relates to everyday life and stress-reduction. Painting is followed by a farm-to-table vegan lunch. No experience is needed and painting kits are provided (or bring your own supplies). Proper safety measures, including hand-sanitizing stations and social distancing, will be maintained as well. Creativity, community, cuisine? Color us happy.

10:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.; \$48; 1321 Athens Dr.; wellfedgarden.org

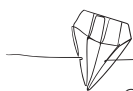
9/28-10/3 BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL



Pickin' and grinnin': The IBMA World of Bluegrass festival is coming to a screen near you. Here's the foggy mountain breakdown: The virtual event will feature all components of the in-person event, including the Business Conference, the Bluegrass Music Awards, the Bluegrass Ramble and Bluegrass Live! Tap your toes to live-streamed and on-demand sessions and performances during IBMA Bluegrass Live!—the festival portion of the week (October 2-3)—with a mix of remote performances beamed in from around the country and sessions recorded right here in Raleigh. “We’ve got some great partners around the city who helped set up secret shows at some iconic spots around downtown,” says David Brower, Executive Director of PineCone, the Piedmont Council of Traditional Music. To wit: The Steep Canyon Rangers perform on the rooftop of the Dillon; Chatham County Line play at Union Station and the Chatham Rabbits and Hank, Pattie & The Current jam in front of the Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts. Also of note: Shout & Shine: A Celebration of Diversity in Bluegrass showcases the voices of underrepresented and marginalized musicians and performers. Old Crow Medicine Show (with a nod to James Taylor) puts it best: *Headed down south to the land of the pines/And I'm thumbin' my way into North Caroline* (in our minds, of course).

For a full schedule of events, visit ibma.org

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TOWN

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School will look a little different this year, but we're still counting on teachers to motivate us. We asked some folks in education what advice from their own teachers most inspired them.

—Melissa Howsam



“An early exchange with my first-grade teacher, Mrs. Gwyn at J.J. Jones Elementary in Mt. Airy, North Carolina, stands out for me. ‘Why do I have to lay my head down on the desk and take a nap? I’m not tired or sleepy?’ I asked. She told me, ‘You have to lay your head down and nap so all that you have learned will stay in your head, otherwise you will have to learn the same stuff over and over again every day.’”

—**Dr. Paulette Dillard**
president of Shaw University



“The best French instructor I’ve ever seen teach told me I needed to be authentic with students, that students would know if I was not authentic. And that if caring about the students as individuals was not authentic, nothing I taught would ever matter.”

—**Cathy Moore**
superintendent of the
Wake County Public School System



“Early in my professional career, a wise educator—my mother Laura Duncan, who worked for the Los Angeles Unified School District for 40 years—told me to always show special appreciation for the school office manager and maintenance engineer, for they oversee the school and have keys to every door. That advice has kept me mindful and appreciative of the real heroes in every school.

It’s true in life, too: you never know what door you may need opened or what bit of information may be essential to your career.”

—**James Sanders**
director of career and technical
education partnerships at North
Wake College & Career Academy,
Wake Tech Community College



“The best advice an educator ever gave me was to prioritize connection over content in the classroom. Our students need to see, to know and to believe that we are their greatest champions. When you put relationships first, the instruction is more effective because students believe the teacher will support them through the entire learning process.”

—**Lindsey Evans**
social studies department chair at
Apex Friendship Middle School and
Wake County Teacher of the Year
2019-2020



“My tenth grade English teacher told me, ‘Finding reading difficult isn’t a reason not to do it—just find something you actually want to read.’ That permission to publicly struggle changed everything for me.”

—**Jeff Reaser**
professor of English at
North Carolina State University



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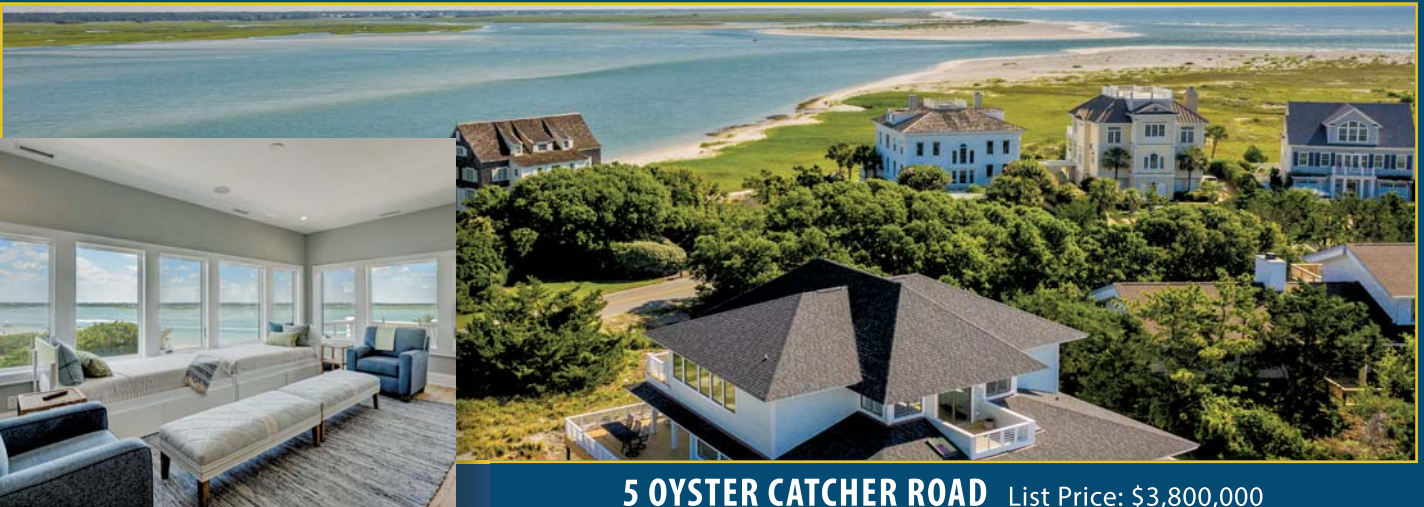
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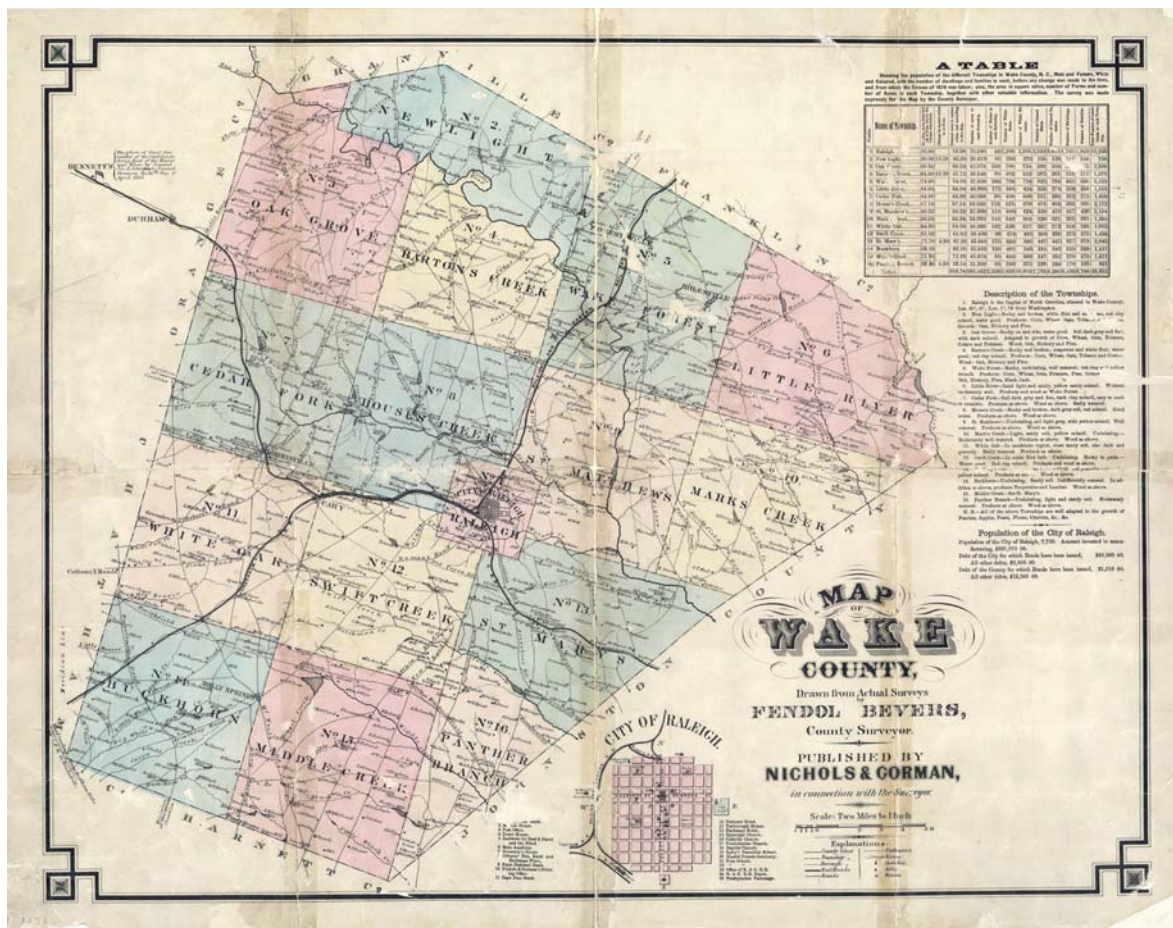
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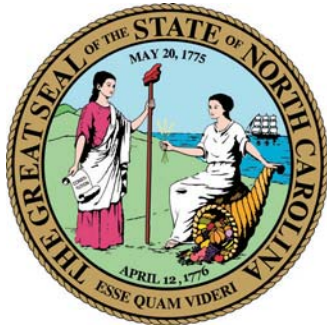


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4 WHAT IS THE OFFICIAL STATE MARSUPIAL OF NORTH CAROLINA?

- A. The brushtail wombat
- B. The ringtail bandicoot
- C. The North Carolina opossum
- D. The Virginia opossum, for some reason



5 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1893 ADOPTED THE LATIN PHRASE ESSE QUAM VIDERI AS THE STATE'S OFFICIAL MOTTO. WHAT IS THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION?

- A. To be rather than to seem
- B. To endure with stoicism
- C. To the mountains, to the sea
- D. To watch college basketball

6 WHERE DID SIR WALTER RALEIGH FIRST STEP ON TO NORTH AMERICAN SOIL IN THE LATE 18TH CENTURY?

- A. Jamestown, Virginia
- B. Salter Path, North Carolina
- C. St. Augustine, Florida
- D. None of the above

7 RALEIGH'S ORIGINAL MUNICIPAL WATER TOWER, BUILT IN 1887, INITIALLY DREW FROM WHAT LOCAL BODY OF WATER?

- A. Falls Lake
- B. Jordan Lake
- C. Walnut Creek
- D. A remarkable puddle on Blount Street



8 THE NORTH-CAROLINA MINERVA WAS THE CITY'S FIRST... WHAT?

- A. Omnibus
- B. Newspaper
- C. Commissioned sculpture
- D. Ill-fated riverboat casino

9 WHAT WAS NORTH CAROLINA STATE'S FIRST MASCOT?

- A. A ridged rooster named Pogo
- B. A bull terrier named Togo
- C. A baby wolf named Bitey
- D. A Virginia opossum

10 RALEIGH'S FLAG FAMOUSLY FEATURES AN OAK TREE ON THE FRONT. WHAT'S THE SYMBOL ON THE BACK OF THE FLAG?

- A. A Scottish broadsword
- B. The constellation Gemini
- C. Sir Walter Raleigh's family crest
- D. A stylized I-40 traffic jam

Answers page 30

What Moves You?



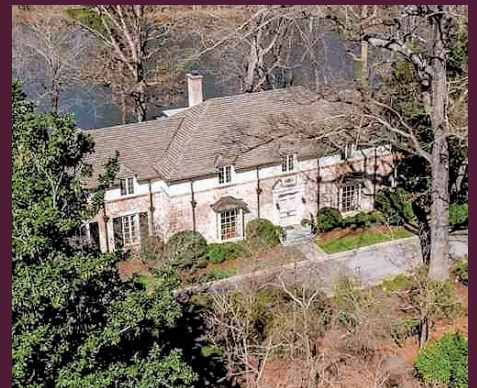
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Raleigh Quiz Answers (no peeking!)

1 C. Margaret Wake

In 1771, Wake County—then a sparsely settled wilderness—was established around a small settlement with a church, courthouse, jail and tavern. Early settler Joel Lane, who initially owned the property, named the county in honor of Margaret Wake, wife of colonial governor William Tryon. The reason why is lost to time. It's fun to speculate, though.

2 B. The Cherry Bounce

Raleigh's official cocktail, the Cherry Bounce, was a popular regional drink before the founding of the city in 1769 (it's said to have been George Washington's favorite). According to lore, the city fathers went through alarming quantities of Cherry Bounce when deciding upon the location of the capital. The original recipe was a hot mess of brandy, sugar and dubious spices, but you can find updated versions of the drink at many Raleigh establishments.

3 A. Bessie and Sadie

The 1993 bestselling memoir, an oral history of the famous North Carolina sisters and civil rights pioneers, is required curriculum for those who love Raleigh. Sarah "Sadie" and Elizabeth "Bessie" Delany wrote the book at age 103 and 101, respectively. Their story later inspired a Broadway play and a feature film. Double secret bonus trivia: The sisters' nephew is legendary science fiction author Samuel R. Delaney.

4 D. The Virginia Opossum

The only marsupial found north of Mexico is known as the Virginia opossum, which makes state marsupial designations terminally confusing. Luckily, North Carolina is the only state in the Union with an official marsupial, so that solves that. Opossums are omnivorous, nocturnal and adaptable to any habitat within their ecological range. Much like N.C. State University undergraduates.

5 A. To be rather than to seem

The Latin phrase is taken from a longer sentence in the treatise *On Friendship* by Roman orator and statesman Marcus Cicero. The full statement is *Virtute enim ipsa non tam multi praediti esse quam videri volunt*, which translates, kinda-sorta, as "Fewer possess virtue, than those who wish us to believe that they possess it." Can't argue with that.

6 D. None of the above

Walter Raleigh, namesake of our fair city, never actually set foot in North America—he tended to get distracted looting Spanish vessels in the Atlantic. Raleigh did, however, bankroll various expeditions and colonies along the eastern seaboard. Double secret bonus trivia: Raleigh was imprisoned in the Tower of London for secretly marrying one of Queen Elizabeth's maids of honor.

7 C. Walnut Creek

The Raleigh Water Tower, now a designated Raleigh Historic Landmark at 115 W. Morgan Street, was a marvel of engineering in its time. Walnut Creek, just south of the city proper in those days, delivered the water to steam engines, which then forced the water through sand filters to the top of the 85-foot octagonal structure. Double secret bonus trivia: The original water tank had a 100,000 gallon capacity.

8 B. Newspaper

According to records kept by the American Antiquarian Society, *The North-Carolina Minerva and Raleigh Advertiser* was the first newspaper to be published in the city, with the earliest issue dating to 1799. The *Minerva* joined several other delightfully named regional publications, including *The Herald of Freedom*, *The Anti-Jacobin*, *The Encyclopedian Instructor* and *The Horner's Nest*.

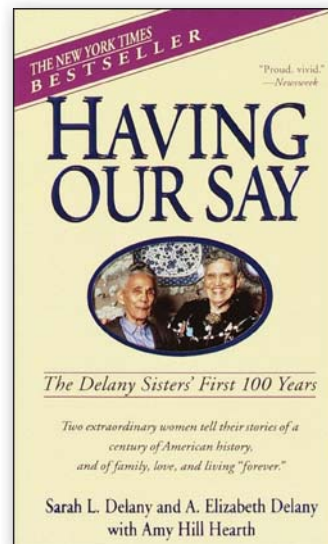
9 B. A bull terrier named Togo

Togo the bull terrier was mascot for N.C. State University teams in the 1910s, when the team name was the Red Terrors. In 1921, students adopted the Wolfpack moniker when someone wrote a letter to the school paper complaining that the football players were as "unruly as a pack of wolves." In the 1960s, students pitched in to buy a timber wolf mascot, which proved wildly popular... until it was revealed to be a coyote. True story.

10 C. Sir Walter Raleigh's family crest

According to municipal lore and the North American Vexillological Association, Raleigh's official flag was commissioned in 1899 and designed by a "Miss Kate Densen" for a fee of \$52. It's one of the few double-sided civic flags still flying in the United States. The Raleigh family crest on the back is topped with a figure of a deer or stag, for reasons no one remembers anymore.

At least it's not a possum. 🦊



HOW DID YOU DO?

1-3: You have underperformed. Sir Walter Raleigh is disappointed in you.

4-7: You have a working knowledge of Raleigh history. Go forth and prosper.

8-9: Your knowledge of city history is exceptional. Bask in the glory.

10: Treat yourself to a Cherry Bounce and send the bill to the Mayor.

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EXTRA *credit*

Four decades in financial services inform Maurice Smith's perspectives on challenge, stability and opportunity for progress

by ANDREA RICE *photography by* EAMON QUEENEY

Maurice Smith puts his community first. As the CEO of Local Government Federal Credit Union (LGFCU) and Civic Federal Credit Union (FCU), Smith has witnessed tremendous growth and change in the area over the years—

and weathered a few downturns, as well. In August, Smith celebrated his forty-first year in the credit union business.

Smith got his start in Durham at the State Employees Credit Union (SECU). He's been recognized for his contributions to the industry, including the 2020 Herb Wegner Memorial Award for

Outstanding Individual Achievement presented by The National Credit Union Foundation, and the 2019 Pete Crear Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the African-American Credit Union Coalition (AACUC), which also established the Maurice R. Smith Fund to offer scholarships for credit union

personnel to enhance their careers.

Born and bred in North Carolina, Smith hails from Southport, but has been in the Triangle since 1982. He is married with two adult children, and is also a Deacon at Wake Chapel Church. “The Triangle is a melting pot of people from different cultures, perspectives and backgrounds who’ve all come together to make this community what it is today,” he says. “That’s what I’ve found so gratifying about putting down roots here.”

We caught up with Smith to learn about his experiences, and how he thinks credit unions can help pave the path toward recovery.

WHY DO YOU CALL YOURSELF A “CREDIT UNION GEEK?”

A credit union is owned by its members. We are cooperative. LGFCU serves local governments in North Carolina: 545 municipalities and 100 counties, including public-owned hospitals, airport authorities, fire departments, police officers and libraries. Essentially all levels of government that fall under state government are part of our field of membership. Local government has similar qualities to our credit union: in government, we elect leaders to represent us and take care of the business of governing our communities; for the credit union, the board of directors is elected by members to do the same. In government, every citizen has an equal vote and a voice in how their government operates. Here at the credit union, all members have an equal single vote.

SO WHAT DOES THAT MEAN IN TIMES LIKE THESE?

In June, we learned that we are officially in a recession. That creates all kinds of havoc for our communities; for the employment of our citizens; for the viability of our businesses. If you are a citizen of the Triangle, and times seem a little unnerving to you, you want to know that the institution with whom you trust your financial resources helps you make good decisions and understands who you are. We don’t know

how to better do that than by having a democratic system so that all members are represented in what we do.

HOW IS YOUR CREDIT UNION PRIMED TO RECOVER FROM THE RECESSION?

What informs us about our viability in a market like this and our prospects for the future is how we have performed in the past. I came into this business in 1979, so in the four decades I have been in the credit union business, this is my fifth recession. I’ve seen inverted yield curves. I’ve seen unemployment go up and down. I’ve seen crime rates as high as 18 percent. I’ve seen trade imbalances. I’ve seen everything the economy can throw our way—except I have not seen a depression. In all of these economic cycles, the credit union model has done well. When the world seems a little uncertain, credit unions often grow faster because people are looking for safety.

HOW IS YOUR CREDIT UNION HELPING FOLKS HERE IN WAKE COUNTY?

When the recession began and the pandemic was ramping up, the federal government came out and asked financial institutions to be more generous with our depositors, offering extensions on loans, forgiveness on fees, forbearances and other arrangements. If a member says, “I think I’m going to have some trouble making my payments,” then we can help them weather the storm. We haven’t turned off our lending services, and we haven’t increased or changed our underwriting guidelines to make it tougher to get a loan. We have not closed out any lines of credit because we’re suspicious that somebody might not be

creditworthy in the future. This inspires confidence in the community.

HAVE YOU NOTICED MORE PEOPLE DEFAULTING ON THEIR MORTGAGES OR RUNNING UP BIGGER LINES OF CREDIT SINCE THE RECESSION BEGAN?

During the recession in 2008-09, many consumers had difficulty making their mortgage payments. This recession is different. Many of our members called up ahead of schedule and said,

“I’m going to have difficulty in the next 30 to 60 days. May I get help now?” That was tremendous; it shows that people have learned their lesson from the last recession. We think that’s going to shorten the recovery period, because we have learned to be smarter about how we help our members, offering financial counseling, planning services and consulting. But I like to believe it appears that the consum-

ers are much smarter this time around. That’s very encouraging to me.

“The Triangle is a melting pot of people from different cultures, perspectives and backgrounds who’ve all come together to make this community what it is today.”

IN A RECENT BLOG, YOU WROTE, “THE LESSON YOUR CREDIT UNION LEARNS FROM PROTEST IS THAT SOCIAL UNREST IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO MEET A REAL NEED FOR PRODUCTIVE CHANGE.” COULD YOU ELABORATE ON THAT?

You can look at protests from a constitutional perspective: we as citizens have a right to seek redress from our government and have our voices heard. Since we serve a local government, they enforce and protect those rights. The protests happening here in our community and around the world are an opportunity for dialogue. Sooner or later the protests will cease, and the dialogue will ramp up. What I’m hopeful about is that



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we see real solutions come to bear. Civic is a financial institution; we are trained to think about financial services and products first. But with social unrest and protests, we think: what product do we have that can make a difference? The underpinning for much of that is access to fair, affordable financial services so that all communities can become more economically successful. I believe we can make a difference there.

Q: HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY SIMILARITIES BETWEEN YOUR WORK AT CIVIC AND YOUR ROLE AS A DEACON?

There are remarkable similarities. The Biblical definition of a deacon is to be a servant. We are called to help people source the basic necessities for living—safe housing, food security and economic opportunities. Community service begins with a servant’s heart to be supportive to others. This commitment arises no matter how one defines their role. This is the underlying thinking of Civic. The very notion of cooperative credit is built on the ideals of civic responsibilities.

Members of Civic are not mere customers. They have an equity and philosophical stake in the institution. This is an important awareness for community growth. Members are right to believe that Civic’s main motivation for service is to advance the welfare of the community. It’s this interconnection that makes us a community in the first place. 🙌



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MEZCAL MAGIC

William & Company's Lily Ballance creates a sip of Mexico here in Raleigh with her spin on agave

by JENN RICE photography by FORREST MASON

Nestled on Person Street's culinary row is William & Company, a cozy 40-seat watering hole. Outside, brightly-painted metal tables invite patrons to linger; inside the dimly-lit space, deep, weathered sofas do the same. On a typical night, the bar is lined with mason jars overflowing with herbs and carefully labeled tinctures. Incense wafts through the room, and like

novena prayer candles, dried bouquets and painted skulls dot the space. It comes together as a sort of witchy *mercado*, enticing but a little mysterious.

The same could be said for Lily Ballance, the bar's owner and mixologist: behind her signature red lip is an almost mystical connection to the ingredients she puts into her cocktails, earthly intuition and a little black magic for getting the concoctions just right.

William & Company boasts one of the state's most impressive Latin American spirits list, including mezcal, pisco, cachaça and even Diplomático rum from Venezuela. They call back to her roots—Ballance moved from Mexico City to the United States at age 14, without knowing how to speak English—and she's worked to maintain that connection, and build it for her staff, by going back to the source. Earlier this year, Ballance flew her team

WATERMELON BASIL MEZCAL MARGARITA

Ingredients

2 ounces mezcal
2 ounces watermelon juice agua fresca (pureed watermelon)
1 ounce fresh lime juice
¾ ounce simple syrup
3 to 4 basil leaves
Pieces of watermelon
Tajín or a mix of chili powder and sugar

Directions

Dip a glass in water, then in the Tajín to rim it. Shake all remaining ingredients and strain over ice and garnish with basil and a watermelon slice.



to Oaxaca, Mexico, to learn the ropes of mezcal with sustainable producer Sombra Mezcal. Beyond getting an understanding for the process that goes into creating agave spirits, from planting to growing to distilling, Ballance says, “My whole team absorbed the energy of this magical land.”

In the tiny town of San Sebastián Tutla, Ballance and her team saw how agave spirits are more than just making alcohol: once the liquid is extracted for example, agave fibers can be used to dye textiles or to make bricks for hospitals and schools. It’s both environmentally

ahead of the game, and woven into the fabric of the land. “The work that goes into making mezcal is an art that can easily be lost,” Ballance says. “The city’s magic makes you feel closer to the earth, and feel happy you are in it.”

For the novice: tequila and mezcal are both derived from the agave plant, native to Mexico. Tequila is a particular type of mezcal that’s produced only from the Blue Weber agave; mezcal can be produced from many different species of agave plants. Mezcal is typically considered tequila’s smokier sister, as it is cooked in the ground rather than steamed before it’s distilled.

Agave is Ballance’s passion, with over 15 different mezcals behind the bar at William & Company—and counting. She also collects bitters ranging from local Crude Bitters to hard-to-find Mexican brands like Flor de Luna tea mix bitters, which offer natural healing benefits from the Aztec culture, and hoja santa from Herbolaria bitters. Del Maguey Vida Mezcal, she notes, is both perfect for mixing and one of her personal favorites to shoot straight. In a typical season, she says, “We work with seasonal ingredients and offer a different bar every day—a different menu, different music, different bartender—but still, everyone will know your name,” says Ballance. (Also of note: they offer “the best tamales in town,” she says, made by Coco Castro, a prep chef at Raleigh stalwart Five Star.)

As of press time, William & Company was shut down as a result of COVID-19 restrictions—but Ballance was still hard at work concocting. She’s perfecting kombucha from scratch, to incorporate on the menu when she’s able to reopen, and experimenting more with freshly grown produce. Half of the bar’s ingredients, she says, will come from her garden, or from her neighbors’ plots. “My spicy tequila is

made with fresh peppers like jalapeño, Thai chilies, habaneros or anything my neighbors bring me from their gardens.” She also commissioned The Wooden Witch, a local wood maker, to redo the bathrooms and add in a few personal touches throughout the space.

Two of her favorite libations include

a Spicy (but not too spicy) Paloma and a thirst-quenching Watermelon Basil Mezcal Margarita, made with mezcal instead of tequila. Traditionally, a Paloma is tequila-based, but Ballance’s version is a hybrid. She uses both mezcal and jalapeño-infused tequila, combined with lime, grapefruit, simple syrup and Tajín

“Making mezcal is an art that can easily be lost... it makes you feel closer to the earth.”
—Lily Ballance

(a spicy, tangy seasoning from Mexico made with chili, lime and sugar) to “salt” the rim. “Spicy tequila and mezcal are sisters, and they go well together because they have the same ‘agave mom,’” says Ballance. “Mezcal has a bittersweet and dry smoky flavor, which pairs well with grapefruit.” She serves this drink up in a traditional *vaso de barro* (clay vessel). “The earthiness of the clay seems to clean the mezcal while it goes down in a sip—that’s my feeling anyway—like a bit of filtration before it hits your lips.”

For the Watermelon Basil Mezcal Margarita, Ballance works magic on the simplest of recipes, carefully pairing seasonal ingredients with freshly-squeezed juices inside the glass. “Watermelon is a palate starter to train someone to love mezcal,” she says. Basil adds a sweet fragrance, along with simple syrup and lime juice. “You can always drink it with tequila, but something about mezcal and watermelon is meant to be,” she adds.

Ballance continues to look to her garden for inspiration and tap into her lengthy list of mezcals for the occasional mind trip to Mexico. And until we can slip into the world she’s created at William & Company, we can join her in spirit with these magical mezcal cocktails. 🍷



SPICY PALOMA

Ingredients

½ ounce of spicy tequila (recipe below)
 1 ½ ounce of mezcal
 2 ounces fresh-squeezed grapefruit juice
 ½ ounce fresh lime juice
 ¼ ounce agave
 Tajín or a mix of chili powder and sugar
 Grapefruit rind

Directions

Dip a clay cup in water, then in the Tajín to rim it. Shake all remaining ingredients, then strain over ice into the clay cup. Garnish with grapefruit rind.

SPICY TEQUILA

Ingredients

Blanco tequila
 Hot peppers (jalapeño or whatever you have on hand)

Directions

Let the peppers soak in tequila for a while—the more peppers and the longer you steep, the more heat in your drink.

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all-access ARTS

How Raleigh's cultural scene is welcoming people of all abilities

by ANDREA RICE

As the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, our arts scene is gaining attention for both elevating the voices of artists with disabilities and making spaces more inclusive to those who live with them. This summer, Raleigh was scheduled to host the John F. Kennedy Center's Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability (LEAD) Conference, but it was rescheduled for 2021 due to the pandemic. "We hope we'll be able to showcase some of Raleigh's access achievements then," says Sarah Corrin, arts grant director for the City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources.

PROMOTING PERSPECTIVES

Around one in four adults in North Carolina has a visual, auditory, motor or cognitive disability. And particularly in recent years, our arts institutions have recognized the talents and perspectives of artists with disabilities by showcasing work that offers a glimpse into disability life and culture. VAE hosted *The Everyday* (2018), a multi-faceted project that highlighted shared experiences of those who live with a disability, and *The Full Light of Day* (2020), which featured artists with disabilities drawing awareness to their lived experience. At CAM, Justin LeBlanc's *Probable Normal Hearing* (2019) told the story of the fashion designer's journey as a person with hearing loss. Last year, Artspace hosted Katie Shaw, a Richmond-based artist



Gus Samarco (LEBLANC); Courtesy VAE (EVERYDAY)

with multiple sclerosis, for a month-long residency followed by an exhibit. (The residency will be offered again, open to any artist that identifies as having a disability.) The Raleigh Little Theatre often casts actors with disabilities, including recent productions of *Pippin* (2019) featuring two actors that are blind and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2019), starring an actor who has autism, as does the character he portrayed.

Wiley Johnson, a painter who has autism spectrum disorder, has shown his work at multiple local exhibitions in recent years. "I don't think artists should be recognized because they have autism spectrum disorder or any particular disability," Johnson says. "I think that they should be recognized through acceptance in art like other artists." This summer, three of Johnson's paintings were accepted into a juried art call for the *ReAwakening* exhibit (through September 27) at Durham's Golden Belt Campus for the Arts and another at Pleiades Arts for Durham's eighth annual *Truth to Power* show in August. Corrin says that the most important shift she's seen over the past 30 years is the recognition of different disability perspectives. "A lot of that work is really cutting edge and thought-provoking," she says.

BRINGING ART TO ALL

In addition to showcasing these artists, our cultural institu-



Opposite: Justin LeBlanc at CAM. This page: Ryan Haddad performs as part of VAE's *The Everyday*.

tions have consciously incorporated more features and technologies that welcome audiences of all abilities. Corrin recalls her first job at Raleigh Little Theatre back in 1991, when the only accommodations that could be counted on were wheelchair ramps and audio description. “More organizations consistently offer a broader array of accommodations now, and they’re much better publicized,” Corrin says. “Advances in technology have been a game changer too—whether it’s beam robots in museums that allow people with mobility issues to attend exhibitions with friends without leaving home, or phone apps that provide verbal way-finding and artwork descriptions.”

Many of these advancements have been made possible (and free) through funding from the City of Raleigh Arts Commission and help from Arts Access, North Carolina’s first and only non-profit dedicated solely to making the arts accessible to people with disabilities. Founded in 1984, Arts Access works with arts professionals to improve how they engage with people with disabilities, including training on disability etiquette, language and

bias; promoting inclusion in classrooms and programs; making online communication accessible and gearing outreach to different audiences. Around the Triangle and statewide, the nonprofit has been integral to making arts and culture offerings inclusive of children and adults with disabilities.

“Our philosophy is rooted in both education and advocacy,” says Betsy Ludwig, its executive director. “When people with disabilities share stories of barriers and discrimination in accessing arts and cultural opportunities, we work as allies to help them navigate those challenges.” The group works with arts organizations to get tools and information to minimize barriers, which can be both physical and attitudinal. Johnson credits Arts Access for helping him gain opportunities to exhibit at events like the Raleigh Woman’s

Club Arts Festival and at *The Walls we Build: (dis)Ability* exhibition at Pleiades (2018), among others. “Most people I have come in contact with in the Raleigh art world have been kind and encouraging,” he says, “and I appreciate everything people have done to help me.”

The Arts Commission and the United Arts Council of Raleigh

“More organizations consistently offer a broader array of accommodations now, and they’re much better publicized.”
—Sarah Corrin

and Wake County have also partnered on the Arts Learning Community for Universal Access, a peer cohort devoted to increasing skills and knowledge of arts organization staff. The program was designed to catalyze change—from increasing Braille materials to enhancing website accessibility. Corrin says dozens of organizations have participated in the program so far, and not only have they implemented the recommendations, but that accessibility, in general, has started to become part of each entity's DNA. "It's no longer an add-on or afterthought," she says. "It becomes integral to how they develop programming."

Artspace is one such example: each of its galleries, classrooms, studios and public areas is fully accessible. They have an on-site wheelchair, signage with Braille lettering and exhibition brochures in Braille and large print (done through a partnership with the Governor Morehead School for the Blind). EnChroma glasses are available for visitors with color blindness, and recently, the gallery updated its tour program to include sensory materials for participants to feel and touch the materials used to make the work. They've also added audio descriptions to many exhibitions and set a goal to provide them for 50 percent of all upcoming exhibitions. And while the gallery remains closed during the pandemic, Artspace has been offering virtual tours and video interviews with closed captioning, as well as downloadable art activities and creativity guides. "Our educational programs are accessible to those with disabilities and we promote our willingness to make accommodations for students with disabilities in our program materials," says Artspace president and CEO Mary Poole.

Similarly, VAE aims to make all of its offerings available and accessible to all who appreciate art—from audio tours to American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation to making information available in Braille. VAE executive director Brandon Cordrey says that the gallery makes a concerted effort to include people with disabilities not only in its gallery space and artist programming, but also on its committees. "We make sure



Top: A scene from *A Series of Fortunate Events* with Janie Desmond and Sha-Leigh Comerford. Bottom: A painting by Wiley Johnson.

we're holding that accessibility lens to all of our work, even when it's not project-specific," says Cordrey. The North Carolina Museum of Art leads tours for visitors with disabilities, including audio descriptions, closed-caption video resources, tactile tours and ASL tours. As the NCMA remains closed during the pandemic, the museum is working to make their virtual offerings accessible, too—including a "field trip" for those who are deaf or hearing impaired in partnership with the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services—and encourages guests to reach out before these events to properly accommodate them with an ASL interpreter, captions or other needs.

Concurrently, Corrin has observed an increase in consideration for creating welcoming experiences for people with autism spectrum disorder and other sensory sensitivities. "There are a growing number of sensory-friendly performances by organizations like the North Carolina Symphony and special museum programs

at places like Marbles Kids Museum and CAM Raleigh," Corrin says. "Raleigh Little Theatre took a big plunge when it committed to doing a sensory-friendly performance for each of its *Family Series* shows."

Patrick Torres, artistic director at Raleigh Little Theatre, says the effort to offer sensory-friendly performances (which include a smaller audience so members can move around, noise-reducing headphones and quiet zones) began almost three years ago as part of a national trend toward making the theater more accessible to all. In the past five years, they also installed a hearing loop in the main theater and implemented a campaign to redesign the lobby to bring it up to ADA standards. "We have seen this multifaceted approach—classes, performances, accommodations—help us develop new and meaningful relationships with people with disabilities," Torres said.

Indeed, Triangle organizations have been working to promote arts accessibility across all ages. The Wake Arts Inclusion Project provides training to school- and community-based arts educators through a grant from the John Rex Endowment.

Early in the pandemic, Arts Access provided “accessible art kits” to students enrolled in special education classes at select partner schools. In addition, Arts Access has been working with the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to offer arts programs for older adults with Alzheimer’s and dementia in conjunction with the Reflections program at the Nasher Museum of Art. Cary-based Sina Bahram, who is blind, is the founder of the inclusive design firm Prime Access Consulting. Bahram has developed an international reputation for increasing the inclusivity of museum offerings around North America, including co-creating Coyote, a platform for organizations to describe and present their images. “The reason we surface the descriptions is because we want everyone to enjoy them—and because they are useful for far more than just folks with low or no vision,” he says. “That’s a critical point, and one that comes up constantly in our work.”

UNIVERSAL BENEFITS

Corrin says that while Raleigh has a lot to be proud of in terms of accessibility, there is still more work to be done. “It’s not a given that people with disabilities can enjoy all arts events at every venue in town,” she says. There are some aspects, like transportation, where the city could improve, says Alexandra McArthur, a VAE board member and former Chair of the Board for the National Disability Institute. McArthur, who uses a motorized wheelchair, says it’s not always easy for folks to get downtown, where much of the city’s art programming takes place. She’s an advocate for GoRaleigh Access, which offers a paratransit service, but says the service doesn’t cater to, say, First Friday spontaneity, since a reservation must be made in advance, and the fees outside of city limits can add up.

Julie Brakenbury, director of services at Visit Raleigh, says that the city is working to do better—from offering training to city staff on courtesy and language to coaching businesses on universal design (the principle of modifying structures to make them accessible to all people regardless of age, disabilities or other factors) when they submit renovation plans. “People think that making their business accessible costs a lot of money, when in reality small changes can open the door to a new demographic,” Brackenbury says. “Taking a universal design approach makes things better for everybody.” She gives the examples of curb cuts, which were created to accommodate people using wheelchairs, but are appreciated by parents pushing strollers, UPS drivers and people making deliveries, as well.

For Raleigh, being a leader in accessibility means continuing to foster the attitude of inclusivity and universal access of which our arts institutions are exemplary. As diversity, equity and inclusion remain at the forefront of the discussion, Ludwig says that Arts Access hopes to keep disability a part of the conversation. “Disability is an incredibly diverse experience,” she says. “There are still barriers and challenges, but good work is being done!” 🌱



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Writer **Lizzie Cheatham McNairy**
reflects on the serenity of her art-filled office

A Room of My Own



Art shown, left to right: *Chrysalis* by Heather Gordon, *Moon* by Susan Harbage Page, *Blue Bird* by Natalie Frank.

Courtesy Lizzie Cheatham McNairy

The sun is still rising as I arrive. The day is quiet and young, and I decide to leave my door open so I can hear the hum of the factory below. It's funny, the things that calm.

This is my favorite time of the day, when stillness is met with possibility, and I feel I might have a part in creating a day that I would be proud of. It is on mornings

like these, especially in this new world of hunkering down and staying at home, that I am most grateful for a room of my own.

A little over a year ago, I started *Matrons & Mistresses*, a digital community where I could share the stories of incredible women in the arts and speak to the works that inspired me. It was three years earlier that I began to feel the pull of the pen and found a subject that captivated

me more than the fear which told me I should not write.

Early on, I wrote from home, or at least I tried. And, as my precious and rather wild boys—Mac, eight at the time, and Keats, three—ran around me, I found myself somewhat fixated with the words of French-American artist Louise Bourgeois: “To be an artist, you need to exist in a world of silence.” While my home and

my life were full of so many wonderful things, silence was not one of them. So I tried to remind myself of the famous photo of Ruth Asawa in her living room, successfully creating her intricate wire sculptures as four of her six children played around her, the youngest diaper-less and self-sufficiently drinking from a bottle. Yes, all I needed was to learn to be more like her.

The problem was that, try as I might, I was not wired like Asawa, and I longed for the silence that Bourgeois cherished. So, when a little office opened up less than a mile from my home, I jumped at the opportunity. The fact that it smelled of lavender and once served as a place of meditation and crystal sound baths—well, I was finished. And now it is mine, and I feel as though I can breathe every time I enter.

I love it here, surrounded by my art. Heather Gordon's *Chrysalis* reflects not only change in intervals, but the skyline

of the city I love; Susan Harbage Page's *Moon*, a symbol of feminine strength; Stacy Lynn Waddell's *Every Body Loves the Sunshine*, a reminder of our inherent right to walk in the light. Natalie Frank's *Blue Bird* serves as a testament of the power of love to overcome; Stacey Kirby's *Bronze VALIDity* stamp, which made me

I love it here, surrounded by my art. Heather Gordon's *Chrysalis* reflects not only change in intervals, but the skyline of the city I love.

cry the first time I saw it, and Andrea Donnelly's *Four Exposures, for Anna* (No. 2, *Poppy*) speaks to the art and beauty of textiles and pays homage to Anna Atkins, considered to be the first female photographer to publish a book of her work. Among these incredible artists hangs a painting by my sweet Mac, for he, too, comes alive when he creates—and he has a way with color.

The newest work to join the mix is *I Have My Own*, a commissioned piece by the enchanting Zoe Buckman. Upon a vintage lingerie piece, sewn in red by Buckman's hand, are the words of the great Toni Morrison:

*'Well, if you want my opinion—'
'I don't,' she said. 'I have my own.'*

So now I call this little corner mine: art I love on the walls, piles of books from every discipline laying everywhere, a desk that could be neater (but what would be the fun in that?) and a cozy sofa that's perfect for fighting writer's block. This is my sacred place... my place to write, to learn, to sit in silence when I need to be still and to create alone when inspiration comes. 🍷



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delicate,
DECLARATIVE

Maya Freelon balances fragility and strength
in her ephemeral work

by LIZA ROBERTS *photography by* CHRIS CHARLES



Maya Freelon's tissue paper sculptures are abstract, a confluence of kaleidoscopic color and organic shape. They move with a breeze, the passing of a person, the opening of a door. They make powerful, lasting statements with impermanent, inexpensive materials. Most of all, they are inquisitive. *What is art?* they ask. *What's it made of? Who gets to make it? Who decides?*

The work is about “challenging norms—social norms, economic norms and art norms—by turning tissue paper into a fine work of art,” says Freelon. “It’s about the fragility of life, and transformation, and the ability to see beauty in a lot of different things.”

Often made in collaboration with groups of people, her work celebrates “the communal aspect... the ancestral heritage, the connection to quilt-making in my family and the African-American tradition of making a way out of no way.”

Metaphorically and literally, Freelon's work is a manifestation of its maker: beautiful and forthright, vulnerable but unflinching; lithe, elegant and defiantly individual.

RETURN TO THE TRIANGLE

This month, Freelon's massive water-stained tissue paper quilts, including pieces made by as many as 100 far-flung community collaborators, will hang from the walls and ceilings of Raleigh's Contemporary Art Museum (CAM) as part of the Durham artist's first solo museum exhibition in North Carolina. Also on view will be her tissue ink monoprints, images of streaking color and motion that capture the dripping ink of saturated tissue paper through a process Freelon patented. Some of these include archival family photos, some are on traditional rectangular canvases, some have been crafted in asymmetric shapes and coated in a thick epoxy glaze. Even if the museum can't open for the public to view these works in person, the show will be installed and shared virtually, says CAM director Gab Smith.

Freelon's fans around the country and the globe will be glad to hear it. At Miami Art Week last year, she was named one of five young artists to watch. In 2018, she installed massive, wafting tissue paper stalactites at the Smithsonian Arts and Industries Building in Washington, D.C. She's lived and worked in Madagascar, Eswatini and Italy as part of the U.S. State Department's Art in Embassies program. She's collaborated with Google and Cadillac, and her work is in the collections of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, the University of Maryland and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, among others.

Back here in Raleigh, locals helped Freelon use torn tissue and glue sticks to make quilts to hang from the trees outside the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) to celebrate the museum's expanded African art gallery in September of 2017. NCMA chief curator Linda Dougherty commissioned Freelon's “quilting bee” installation after seeing a sculpture she'd created for one of the embassies. “Maya had done this beautiful, suspended piece, and I was amazed,” Dougherty says. “I love the ephemeral nature of her materials... they're meant to be there for the moment, intentionally. It gives her a freedom to experiment. I love that open-endedness.”

INHERITANCE

Freelon's talent and expressive ability were apparent early on, and she comes by both naturally as the daughter of two renowned artists and the great-granddaughter of another. Her mother, the jazz singer Nnenna Freelon, is a six-time Grammy Award nominee. Her father was revered architect Phil Freelon, the architect of record of the African-American History and Culture Museum on the Mall in Washington, D.C. His own grandfather was Allan Freelon, a noted Impressionist painter whose work was celebrated during the Harlem Renaissance. Her namesake and godmother was the poet Maya Angelou (“Auntie Maya”), a close friend of “Queen Mother” Frances Pierce, Freelon's beloved grand-

mother. Angelou once described Freelon's work, which she bought for her own collection, as “visualizing the truth about the vulnerability and power of the human being.”

Freelon was a precocious teenage talent at Williston Northampton School in Massachusetts, where she transferred to finish high school after two years at the Durham School of the Arts. There, she mostly painted portraits, but “she was always a colorist, very good with color,” says Marcia Reed, her painting instructor at the school, who says that even then, she possessed an impressive “energy and driving force.” By 2006, she was a graduate student at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, living with her grandmother Pierce.

It was there that she came upon a stack of multicolored tissue paper in the basement of the house. The paper had most likely been in the same spot for fifty years. Drips from a leaky pipe had mottled the stack over time, moving the color from piece to piece, turning the sheets into gossamer rainbows. Freelon was transfixed, and soon consumed with turning the water-stained tissue paper into art, and using water herself to mark and alter tissue paper, intent on “making something out of nothing.” That discovery, borne out of her connection to her family, became her signature medium.

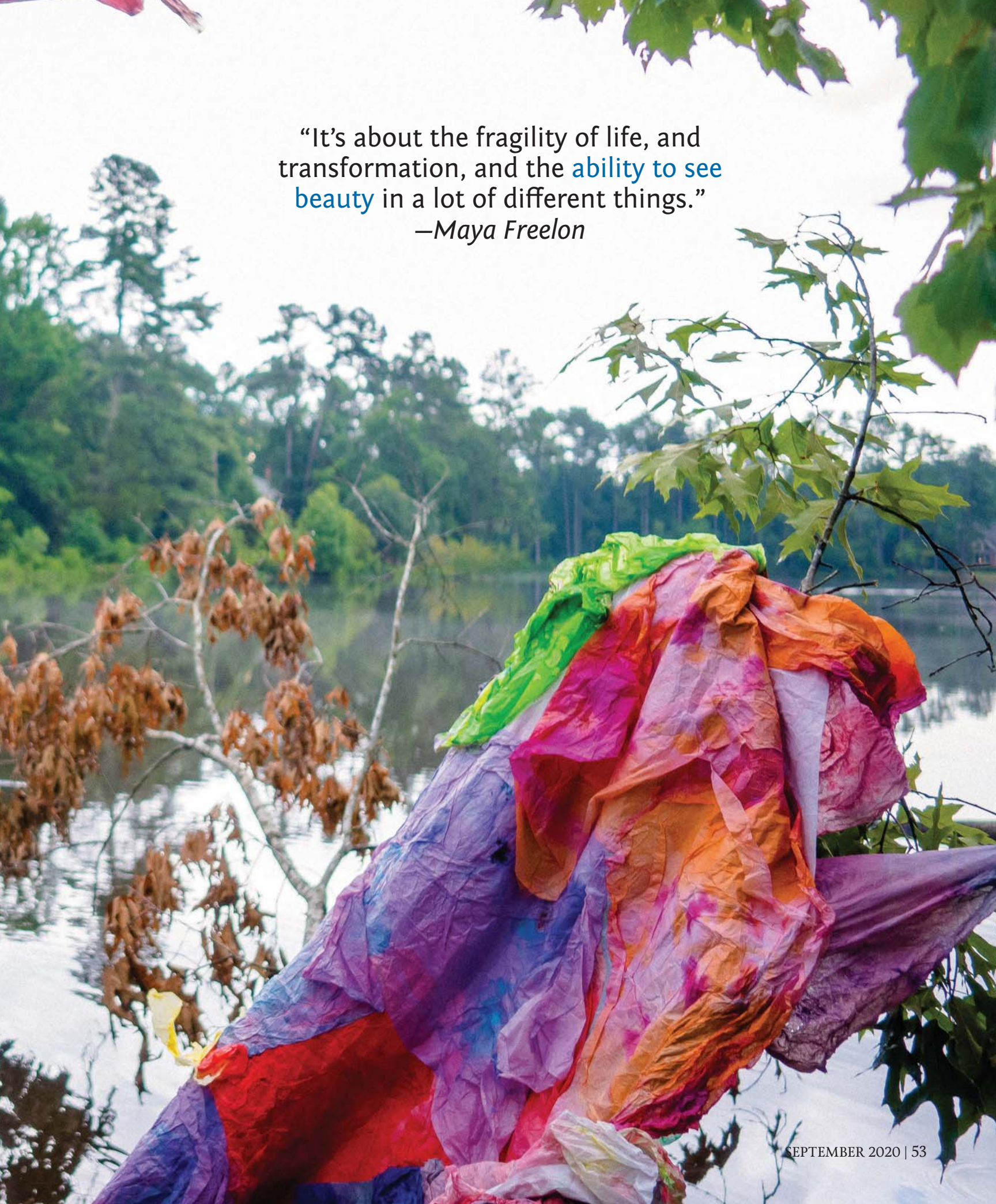
“Often, artists think they need to work with precious materials,” says Allan Edmunds, founder and director of the Brandywine Workshop and Archives in Philadelphia, where Freelon completed a residency years ago. Her use of tissue paper to make art both sets her apart and connects her to ingenious forebears, says Edmunds. “It's in the tradition of working with what is available to you and being even more creative because you've created a challenge for yourself. I put her in league with El Anatsui.” Coincidentally, it is work by this Ghanaian artist—glittering, undulating woven fabric of found bottle caps—that's a centerpiece of the NCMA's permanent collection in the newly-renovated African art gallery that Freelon helped celebrate with her collaborative tissue quilts.



Clockwise from top: A detail of Freelon's work. Freelon with son Aion and Maya Angelou in 2011. Freelon with her father, grandmother Pierce and Boston city council member Charles Yancey at her first solo museum exhibition at The National Center of Afro-American Artists in Roxbury, Massachusetts in 2007.





A photograph of a lake with trees in the background and colorful plastic bags in the foreground. The plastic bags are in shades of green, orange, pink, purple, and red, crumpled and tangled together. They are hanging from a branch in the foreground. The background shows a calm lake reflecting the sky, with a dense line of trees on the far shore. Some trees in the foreground have brown, dried leaves, while others have green leaves. The sky is overcast and grey.

“It’s about the fragility of life, and
transformation, and the [ability to see
beauty](#) in a lot of different things.”

—Maya Freelon

Maya Freelon works
on her 2018 installation
at the Smithsonian Arts and
Industries Building
in Washington, D.C.



Making something out of nothing is part of the inspiration for the title of Freelon's exhibit at CAM: *Greater Than or Equal To*. Freelon also sees the title as an inquiry: "As an artist, as a Black person, as a female, I am constantly raising this question to myself," she says. How is value—of a person, a life, a work of art—determined, and who determines it? "If we don't value lives, if we don't value making this world equal, then we end up having a situation where certain people's lives mean more than others." Her use of the symbol \geq "is to remind folks that it's a constant question... an opportunity for you to be aware of your judgement and where you're placing your value."

She knows where her revered grandmother Pierce would have placed that value. "I think of a

quote from my grandmother, which is that we come from a family of sharecroppers who never got their fair share," she says. Grandmother Pierce's grandchildren and "every Black person making the world a better place" were "our ancestors' wildest dreams," she also said. Freelon considers: "To have survived what it took to get here, and then slavery, and then segregation and racism—we're living within it, and we're still existing, and now we have a chance to thrive."

Personally, Freelon says she's more than thriving. "I've never felt prouder, or better or more grateful that I took the leap, that all of my focus goes to making art and sharing it with the world... I feel like I'm just getting started."

USING HER VOICE

As Freelon grows in her art, she's aware

of her growing platform, as well. In a video posted on social media on June-teenth, she says: "My artwork is about using accessible materials to challenge racist paradigms that have been set forth and perpetuated by the white art world." The video shows her setting fire to her art; an effort to seize attention in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, and to make her message heard. "It's about creating my own currency and value, and it's about making space for and inspiring

the next generation of Black artists." In social media and in conversation, Freelon encourages her fellow Black artists to stand up for themselves, to challenge structures that don't work for them and to know the value of their work.

One day in late June, the day before her birthday and not long before the first anniversary of the death of her father,

Freelon is reflective. She is at Vanhook Farm in Hillsborough, a bucolic place where she and her children spend a lot of time. The farm—Black-owned, Freelon points out—has long been in the family of her partner of two years, Jess Vanhook. The location is both a solace and a symbol for Freelon. "I've thought about our ancestors and how for them, possessing the land means that you are taking control of your own future," she says. "You're asking the earth to produce something for you that has value. I realized that I was doing that as an artist, cultivating something that's made by my own hands, determining my own value and worth."

Even as Freelon watches over her nine-year-old son Aion, her three-year-old daughter Nova, and Vanhook's five-year-old nephew Prince, she's

focused on her art and what's pressing on her mind. That includes supporting and mentoring younger Black artists, telling them the things she wished she'd known earlier on, both practical and philosophical: "Make sure you have an emergency fund. Make sure you apply to at least five grants a year. Be prepared to apply for art residencies that offer free studio space. Reach out to artists you admire, look at their CVs." In a July Instagram post, she asked followers for the names of Black women artists she can pass on to museums and curators. She wants them to believe in themselves, wants them to "know that their power is their work."

Freelon says she had to learn all of that "on the fly." If somebody had told her earlier, she says, "I could have made better choices, more informed choices. We need more community and connection between artists."

If Freelon sounds older than her 38 years, it could be because she experienced a lot early on. She has been married and wrenchingly divorced, and experienced tragedy with the death of a newborn baby, a three-day-old son named Wonderful. She connects her work directly with that experience. "There are just so many complexities to life, the fragility of it. And back to the artwork: it's tissue paper. If it gets wet, it will break into a million pieces, but when it is dry, it has power and strength. When you unify those elements, it becomes a force to be reckoned with."

Art has taught her, despite the challenges she has faced, that everything she needs is within her. "Nobody can determine your future," she says. As a younger woman, "I think I felt like I needed my parents, or I needed my husband, or I needed things or people to help push me to where I need to be, where in actuality, when everything was stripped away from me, and it was just me left, that's all I had. That's when I realized the drive and the energy and the purpose that's inside."

And that's what her art brings her. In her work, Freelon says, "I find peace. I find sanity. I find my purpose. I find—in working with my hands—I find community.

"I find love." 🍂

"It's tissue paper. If it gets wet, it breaks into a million pieces, but when it's dry, it has power and strength. When you unify those elements, it becomes a force to be reckoned with."



For the Avon Road House in Hope Valley in Durham, architect Phil Szostak designed an entry that opens up to a gallery that organizes the home's interior layout.



Jim Sink

Phil Szostak designs
welcoming structures
around the Triangle

WIDE OPEN SPACES

by J. MICHAEL WELTON

A good word to describe Chapel Hill architect Phil Szostak: *generous*. It applies to his relationships with his peers, his clients and the communities he serves. It manifests itself physically, in some of the most pristine, light-filled and wide-open spaces in the Triangle today. And it's the reason his classically modern buildings—public and private alike—seem built for the ages.

"Phil has a real love for design, and he shares his passion with others," says Bryan Bell, associate professor of architecture at N.C. State University's College of Design. "You see it in his details, designs and materials."

Bell came to know Szostak through a platform the older architect helped create. In 1992, Szostak and seven other local designers—Roger Clark, Kenneth Hobgood and Frank Harmon among them—came together monthly to critique each others' unbuilt work. What started as an informal peer review called the Triangle Area Design Society (TADS) has since grown into a fountain of camaraderie, and a forum where architects can explain, explore and defend their designs.

Bell arrived in Raleigh in 2000 to teach at the College of



This page: At the Duck Pond Road House two miles north of Chapel Hill, Szostak worked from the outside in, opening up the interiors to the countryside surrounding the home. *Opposite page:* The Old School Road House uses economy and elegance inside for maximum effect. The architect gave every room in the home views of the meadow that surrounds it.

left: Jim Sink; right: Catherine Nyugen

Design. Soon enough, he and his wife Victoria, also an architect (and author of the recently published *Triangle Modern Architecture*) were invited to a TADS crit session. “One of the wonderful things about this community is how welcoming it is,” he says. “Phil was the organizer behind that group, and it gave us an idea of who the architects to be admired were around here.”

Among them are designers who articulate a distinct modern vernacular they learned at N.C. State University’s School (now College) of Design, known as the Carolina School. Distinctive characteristics of this style of architecture include a thoughtful response to site and landscape, a celebration of natural light and an exploration of the relationship between volumes within volumes. It may have started decades ago, but it’s still being taught at the college today.

Szostak entered the School of Design in 1971 and graduated in 1975. That places him among the last to attend classes there while Henry Kamphoefner, its founder, was still an active dean. (Kamphoefner transitioned to dean emeritus in 1973.)

Szostak’s been practicing since he graduated. He started out

with Newberry Ashford (now defunct), then established his own Chapel Hill firm in 1980. By 1990 he was named North Carolina principal for NBBJ, the nation’s second largest architecture firm. Twelve years later, he went back out on his own.

Since then, he’s been working on every kind of commercial, cultural and residential project imaginable, from small additions to multi-million-dollar designs, including Raleigh’s recently expanded Capital Broadcasting headquarters and N.C. State’s new equine research center. They all adhere to the tenets of the Carolina School architectural style, and most share another common trait: they’re often bright-white beacons in their respective environments.

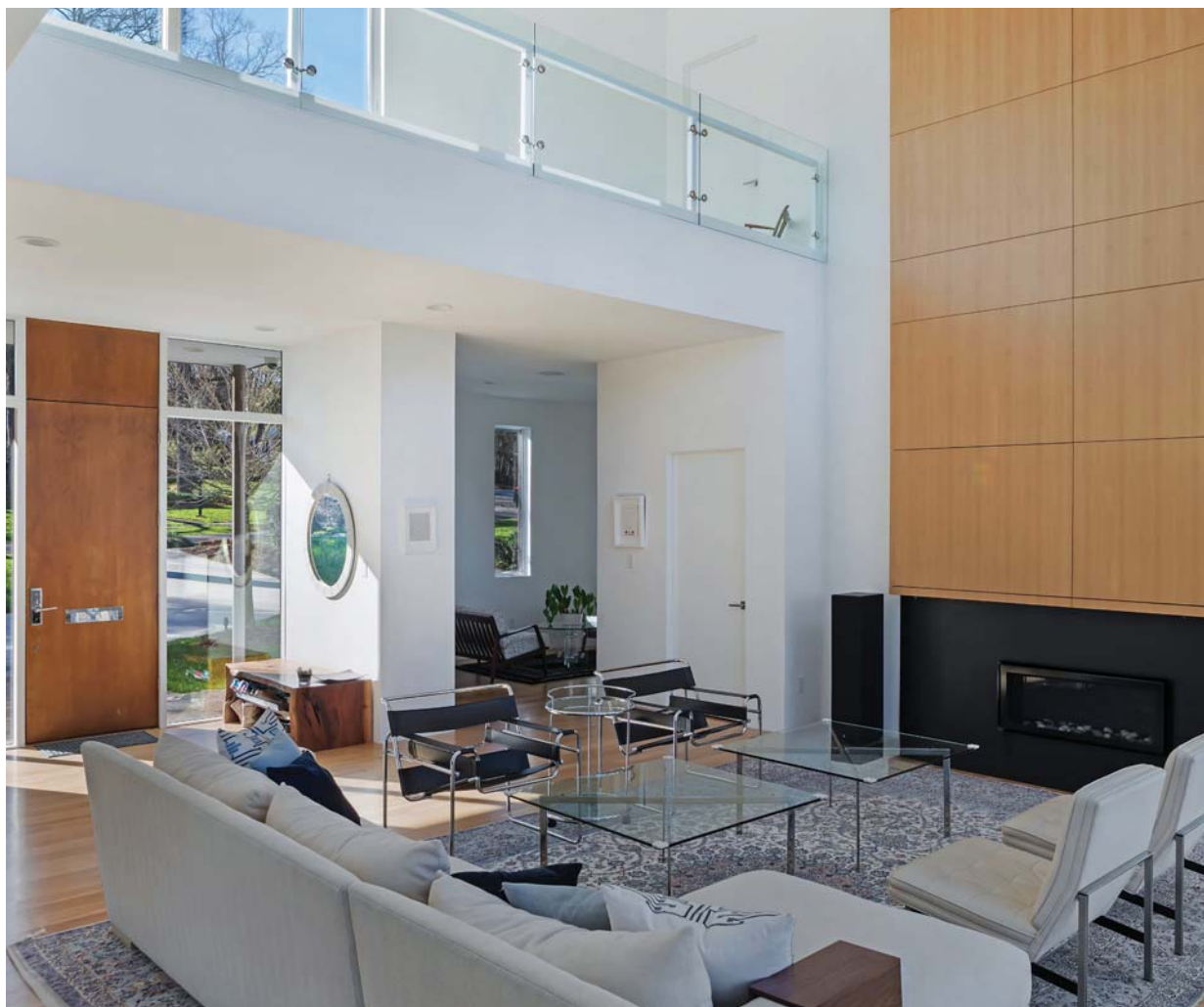
Nowhere has Szostak expressed his work better than at the Durham Performing Arts Center, built in 2008. It’s thrifty, practical, transparent—and stark white in color. And truth be told, it might not exist today without the architect who also served as its developer. “It was just about dead, and Phil stepped up and said, ‘I’m going to make it happen and deliver more than the client asked for,’” says Frank Harmon.

To bring it to life, Szostak personally sought sponsors





Opposite page: At the Hermitage Court House in Durham, Szostak paid close attention to the volume and scale of traditional residences around it, while speaking in a modern language. *This page:* Inside the Hermitage Court House, Szostak used materials and a neutral color palette to express space and volumes in experiential ways.



“Phil has a real love for design, and he shares his passion with others. You see it in his details, designs and materials.” —*Bryan Bell*

and served as co-guarantor for its financing, along with his team of developers. Today, DPAC is a performing arts center that—with a total cost of \$47 million, including his fees—is the least expensive of its type in the nation. That’s because it’s architect/developer built only what he could raise funds for. “I was ruthless in what we spent money on,” Szostak says. “Basically, it’s sheetrock inside. The halls are bright red and everything else is bright white.”

Its interiors may be painted wallboard rather than gleaming marble, but its exterior is a stunner. The building’s essentially a giant Japanese lantern, one that beams across downtown Durham at sunset. “The window wall at DPAC makes that building,” says Harmon. “It looks like a giant crystal at night.”

It was a labor of love and a gift to Durham, one that consumed most of Szostak’s time during five years of meetings with Durham City Council. Among those sitting in on an early design presentation to the council was Brad Brinegar, chairman (and later CEO) of Durham-based ad agency McK-

inney. The two discussed value engineering for the theater, and found they were in sync. “I like to think I had a role in making DPAC cheaper,” Brinegar says.

Soon enough, Szostak was designing a new home for Brinegar and his wife Missy on the golf course in Durham’s Hope Valley. “We wanted a retreat,” Brinegar says. “But also something timeless, something that could have been built either in 1930 or 2050.”

Now they live in a Szostak-designed home that’s essentially an art gallery with a studio where Missy, an artist, can paint. The interior is flooded with natural light from floor-to-ceiling windows, with views past the terrace and pool out to the third hole of the golf course.

Here, Szostak’s use of planes and volumes turned his simple material palette—he likes to economize with oversized, inexpensive bricks painted white—into an exploration of opacity and transparency. “We have this huge front entrance, but I enjoy privacy, so he came up with these stunning walls outside,”



This page: Szostak's Hathaway Road House in Hope Valley in Durham was designed as an art gallery and home in which a couple lives. *Opposite page:* His clients wanted their Hathaway Road home to be timeless, one that in 100 years would still be respected as beautiful piece of architecture.

left: Jim Sink; right: Catherine Nyugen

Missy Brinegar says. “They create a space where there’s no difference between indoors and outdoors.”

Szostak repeated the concept at a home for Elisabeth Benfey and her husband, Philip, on a 52-acre property on Old School Road in Chapel Hill. Benfey, a film instructor at Duke, wanted open sight lines to the surrounding landscape from inside her home. “This house allows me, from dawn to night, to be outdoors with all the comforts of shelter,” she says of her floor-to-ceiling windows.

Like the Brinegar residence, the exterior of Benfey’s home is pure white. Its design is the result of ample back-and-forth discussions between clients and architect—collective, collaborative and challenging. “It looks simple, but it’s complex,” she says. “One day he pulled out an all-white Rubik’s Cube, which I thought was hilarious: he designed a home with a white Rubik’s Cube in mind.”

For Nita Farahany and Thede Loder in Durham, Szostak respectfully inserted a white, two-story house into a lot surrounded by a subdivision’s more traditional residences. The new home’s scale and proportion align with those around it,

but it’s a distinctly modern Szostak design.

Looking out toward the street, the house succeeds largely because of how the architect addressed window placement and landscaping. “You look out and see the top of the trees, like you would in the country,” Szostak says. “It changes how you feel about the site by changing your perspective, because the view is up to the sky, versus looking out to traffic.”

Elsewhere in double-height spaces, sunlight slashes down from clerestories and pours through floor-to-ceiling windows. “He took time to study where the sun rises and sets,” Farahany says. “The kitchen is an amazing place to be in the morning and the master is oriented to the south-facing light, and there are great, wide-open spaces for our young children.”

As Harmon says, Szostak’s an architect with a gift for seeing the bigger picture. And now, with the recent passing of giants like Phil Freelon and Steve Schuster—and Harmon’s own retirement—the 66-year old Szostak is squarely positioned as senior statesman for today’s practicing Carolina School.

As such, one can only hope that his vision will continue to inspire us with wide-open spaces for years to come. 🌿



Feeding the community while furthering a mission

by **ADDIE LADNER**

photography by **JUSTIN KASE CONDER**

Just about 10 minutes from downtown, off Dover Farm Road, is a little patch of country. There, a hundred-year-old tobacco curing barn sits amid bountiful fig trees, aging tractors and baskets of eggplant, peppers and greens. Patrons pick their favorites, weigh them, then leave their money in a box.

The honor-code farm stand, run by the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle Farm, is a living example of the organization's mission to eradicate hunger in North Carolina and equip the community with tools to grow, shop for and prepare nourishing food. The Food Shuttle does this through dozens of programs, from classes on cooking healthy food on a budget, to community gardens, to food distribution and, of course, the farm.

Last year, the 14-acre farm, leased from conservationist Adryon Clay, grew more than 60,000 pounds of produce, says Jonathan Lee, its director of agricultural programs. And it's all thanks to the grit of their small staff of four and countless volunteers. Right now, they're prepping for fall by seeding broccoli, cabbage, carrots and kale. Near a shaded oak grove, they're using sun-filled hoop houses to give veggies like hybrid heirloom tomatoes and Persian cucumbers a longer growing season. "We try to have things to sell year-round at the farm stand," says farm production manager Kayla Clark. Practices like crop rotation and using cover crops keep the farm chemical-free.

What they plant is a direct response to the Food Shuttle's needs. "Whatever we can grow to support the Food Shuttle's programs, that is our goal," says Lee. Clark says they stay in touch with the Food Shuttle to see what the community needs and likes. "From mobile markets to Grocery Bags for Seniors, whatever we can help with, we will," Clark says.

Pre-pandemic, corporate groups would volunteer several times a week. But being mindful of COVID, they have decreased the number of people allowed on the farm. "We have what we call 'core volunteers' who come one to three days each week and are just as valuable as staff," says Clark. "We really come to rely on them." The fact that the proceeds from the farm stand go back into the Food Shuttle makes it a win-win.

Lee says the farm and farm stand get people plugged into the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle that might not be otherwise. "They might see the farm stand driving down Tryon, pull in to buy a basket of produce, then leave wanting to volunteer and donate," he says. Shop the farm's bounty weekdays from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.—and consider leaving a little extra in the box, knowing it's supporting the fight against hunger right here in North Carolina.



A man with a beard and short brown hair, wearing a dark blue and tan plaid button-down shirt over a checkered shirt and olive green pants, stands in a field of large green leafy vegetables. He is holding a wooden handle in his right hand and looking off to the side. The background shows a line of trees under a cloudy sky.

AT THE HELM

Jonathan Lee, agricultural director of the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle Farm, looks over a field of vegetables.



BIG PICTURE

This page: A field of cabbage and other cool-season vegetables. Last year, the farm produced more than 60,000 pounds of produce. *Opposite:* At the Dover Farm Road entrance of the farm, the Food Shuttle Farm Stand is open to the public and operates on an honor system. "It's a great entry point for people who don't know about the work of the Food Shuttle," says Lee.







ROOT FOR GOOD

This page: Kayla Clark, Production Manager and farmer in one of the greenhouses used for seeding vegetables. *Opposite:* Freshly-cut turnips.

MANY HANDS

This page: Volunteers from GSK Response Center Team harvest greens for distribution. *Opposite:* Some scrumptious-looking carrots.

“We have what we call ‘core volunteers’ who come one to three days each week and are just as valuable as staff. We really come to rely on them.”

— Kayla Clark, Production Manager





A close-up photograph of a person's hands harvesting green leafy vegetables. The person is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and a pink jacket. They are using a pair of scissors to cut the stems of the plants. The plants have large, curly green leaves and thick, light green stems. The background is a clear blue sky.

FRESH CUTS

Turnips, cabbage, mustard greens and carrots are just a few of the items grown at the farm to support the Food Shuttle and sell to the community.

Our signature event returns with a new virtual format. Join *WALTER* for a day full of workshops, networking and talks by local leaders on their career journeys and the lessons learned along the way.

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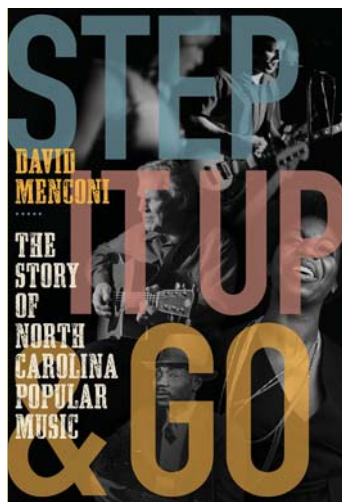
With a new book coming out, **David Menconi** reflects on a career made of listening

IT'S ALL ONE BIG STORY

by TRACY DAVIS

In his new book *Step It Up & Go*, David Menconi writes of North Carolina's musical history—its story—and in doing so, brings his own story full circle. The book percolated in Menconi's head for much of his almost three decades covering music and arts for *The News & Observer*, and draws on that trove of resources. It's "basically a boxed set anthology of my time there," he says, linked together by a common thread: Menconi's abiding interest in and appreciation for the artists who make the music.

As a kid, Menconi was a devoted fan of Casey Kasem's American Top 40, listening every weekend and tracking which bands were on the rise. He start-

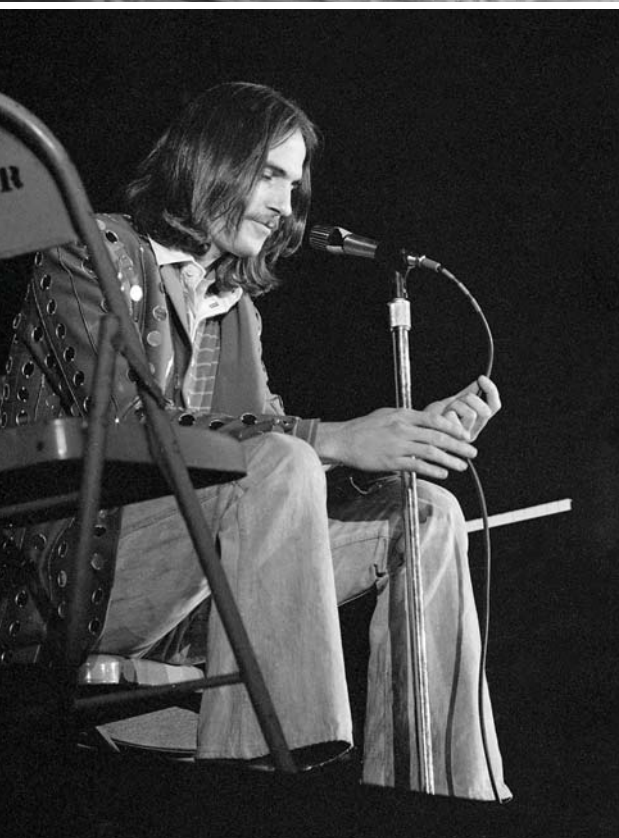


ed writing about music early, reporting for the college paper while earning a bachelor's degree in English at Southwestern University in Texas (this, after trying "all the well-paying majors"). In January of 1991, after getting his masters in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin and spending five years at the *Daily Camera* in Boulder, Colorado, he arrived in Raleigh as the music critic for *The News & Observer*. Once here, he put down roots.

If you've spent any time seeing live music or attending art exhibitions around town, you've seen Menconi in the crowd: pen and notebook in hand, sporting a distinctive mop of curls. He reported on the Triangle's art and music scene for 28 years before retiring from

Scott Sharpe







clockwise from top left: Juli Leonard (GERRARD); Robert Willett (WATSON); Juli Leonard (PARKER); David Menconi (STEEP CANYON RANGERS); News & Observer (TAYLOR)

The News & Observer last February.

Metro editor Thad Ogburn worked with Menconi for most of that time. “I’ve edited many of his stories through the years,” Ogburn says, “they always make me feel smarter.” Friends as well as former colleagues, Ogburn appreciates that Menconi used his journalistic platform “as intended—to inform and engage.” He sees Menconi as a natural ambassador and “a great guide, whether you know a lot or a little.”

While leaving the paper and colleagues that felt like family was wrenching for Menconi, he thinks his departure came at the right time. Journalism across the globe had transformed into a digital, “always-on” platform reliant on real-time reporting and online clicks—none of which comfortably co-exist with the kind of paper that lands with a pre-dawn thump. He misses that world. “When I talk about it, I still think of and refer to the paper as ‘we,’” he says, and “there is no better place to be than a newsroom when stuff is happening.” But he’s glad to be on the other side. “There are a lot more good memories than bad,” he says. “I greatly admire the people who stuck it out, and hats off to them.”

So in early 2019, Menconi dove back into *Step It Up*, which he’d worked on intermittently for years. In the introduction, he looks back to what he sees as the start of it all: a 1991 interview in Durham with Grammy award winner Alice Gerrard. As they talked, Gerrard played a record that included a 1929 recording by Clarence “Tom” Ashley, who performed throughout North Carolina with the likes of Doc Watson and the Carolina Tar Heels old-time band. For Menconi, the sound was a revelation—his “first inkling that this wasn’t just any other place.” The song sounded old as the

MUSIC SCENES

Photos from *Step it Up & Go*. Clockwise from top left) Alice Gerrard in her Durham home in 2015; Doc Watson in Clayton in 2003, just before he turned 80 years old; Maceo Parker in Kinston in 2016, the year he won a North Carolina Heritage Award; Steep Canyon Rangers in January at the Cat’s Cradle nightclub’s fiftieth-anniversary celebration; James Taylor on stage in 1971.

hills and it also evoked echoes of Menconi's new home of North Carolina. "A door opened," Menconi writes, "so I went through it."

"David was born to do this," says Ogburn. "To come to this area, to write this book... The music of the state he was drawn to is central to his life."

In *Step It Up*, Menconi gets his chance to plant his feet, dive into history, and tell the stories with sufficient space and ink to do them justice. He remembers a time when long-form journalism was more the norm, especially in magazines like *No Depression*, and was different from today's norm, where musicians arrange interviews in tightly-scheduled increments and "just really want to get off the phone and to reveal as little of themselves as possible." Back then, journalists could build a story starting at an earlier point, when artists were flush with the act of creation and genuinely felt like telling you all about it. There were more opportunities for connection, he says, and for those "soul-sustaining moments of, *this is why we do this*." He points to the 2002 release of Raleigh musician and artist Caitlin Cary's first full-length solo album, as one such moment. "It's always fun to talk to somebody when the record is new, before they're all burned out, and they're still excited about it, and under the spell of it," he says. "Not that Caitlin's ever been one of these jaded types, but there was sort of an optimism about it, and a freshness. And it was just such a good record."

Even those tightly scheduled interviews could yield conversations that clicked, though. He fondly recalls an interview with folk legend James Taylor


HIGHLIGHTS

More scenes from Menconi's career. Clockwise from top left: Shirley Caesar at Mt. Calvary Word of Faith Church in 2017; Chatham County Line at World of Bluegrass in 2014; Rhiannon Giddens onstage at the North Carolina Museum of Art in 2017, the year she won a MacArthur Foundation "Genius Grant" Award; Seth Avett on the floor of PNC Arena in 2017; Durham blues elder John Dee Holeman at his eighty-eighth birthday party in April 2017.

clockwise from top left: Chuck Liddy (CAESAR); Scott Sharpe (CHATHAM COUNTY LINE); David Menconi (AVETT); David Menconi (HOLEMAN)







“It’s always fun to talk to somebody when the record is new, before they’re all burned out, and they’re still excited about it, and under the spell of it.” –David Menconi

that concluded with Taylor saying, “I want to thank you. That was almost completely painless.” “I was happy with that,” Menconi says with a grin. “One of the proudest moments of my life.”

Musicians like Cary will always think of Menconi as part of the Triangle’s music family, and she appreciates his role in supporting the artists who make it. “You could absolutely feel his love of music, just seeing him in the crowd, and noticing the ways he pays attention,” she says. “And I’ve always admired what he does. If I had to go to a hardcore show and write about what it was everyone liked about it...” She trails off, mystified. John Teer, of Raleigh-based bluegrass outfit Chatham County Line, agrees. “In those very early days, you felt a real sense of community. There was such a diverse crowd and a real sense of ‘everybody’s welcome.’ I always felt that David was a big part of that. He’s a vital person in that scene.”

So, what’s next? He’s doing the freelance thing, and gearing up for his next book: the authorized history of Rounder Records, which “started as a hippie commune up in Cambridge some 50

years ago” and went on to become the biggest folk label of the past 50 years. The Rounder archives are housed at the University of North Carolina’s Wilson Library, so he’s looking forward to spending some time there.

Otherwise, Menconi is stuck inside like the rest of us. He’s watched summer lunch by from behind a window, and while he gets out for a walk every day, it’s “pretty much that and the grocery store.” The music scene is at a full hard stop, and artists he’s known for years are themselves in a state of anxiety-fueled reinvention. “I don’t know what arises out of the ashes,” he says, but he does see some bright spots. He points to Carrboro-based singer-songwriter Jonathan Byrd, who’s “done an incredible job reinventing himself” by hosting virtual songwriting workshops and a weekly online Americana residency with his band, the Pickup Cowboys. It’s all still unfolding, and he’s still following along.

He’s also started working alphabetically through his album collection and posting backstories and anecdotes on Facebook. It’s no surprise that Menconi has a lot of albums, and it took him two

solid months just to get from A to B in his “Archive Deep Dive” posts, which started as just a “fun little exercise.” The posts are peeks into music lore and Menconi’s own head. A snippet from the A phase includes Laurie Anderson’s *Big Science* (“my personal narrator of doom when it comes to world-rocking calamities”); Andrew W.K.’s *I Get Wet* (“mook metal” that’s “good stupid fun”); Julie Andrews’ *Best of Julie Andrews* (“squeaky clean theatricality”); Angry Samoans’ *The Unboxed Set* (“how-low-can-you-go schtick”). The posts prompt a robust sharing of stories among commentators, and Ogburn’s enjoying it too. “Music transports us back to a certain point in time,” he says. “David appreciates that there’s a lot wrapped around a song.”

The posts also expand on Menconi’s personal conviction that pretty much everything is connected, one way or another. “It’s all one big story,” he says, “far flung though it is.” 🍷

WORKING BACKSTAGE

Menconi reporting from behind the scenes at the 2019 Dreamville Music Festival, captured by friend and N&O staffer Scott Sharpe.

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by **GABBY AXNER & ADDIE LADNER** photography by **FORREST MASON**



Opposite page: The patio at Humble pie. This page: Chef Josh Young and owner Joe Farmer.

It's a balmy Friday evening downtown in the Warehouse District. Patio lights surround about a dozen tables, mostly full, but spaced apart. The Rolling Stones and The Beatles play in the background, while relaxed and jovial patrons enjoy a reprieve from the world's unsettling current events. One might, for a moment, forget there is a pandemic happening.

One couple, Pam and Steve Mayberry, reminisces about spending their Wednesday evenings with friends just a few feet away: inside, dancing on a black-and-white checkered floor. Local speakeasy jazz band Sidecar Social or Peter Lamb and the Wolves provided the soundtrack. "So many of our friends are from jazz nights. We have friends who got engaged here, there was this flash mob that I will never forget..." says Pam Mayberry. "If you knew all the friendships and relationships created through this place... it's really special."

This is Humble Pie, one of the longest-standing restaurants in Raleigh. It's known for its family-style food, camaraderie, artsy spirit and—pre-pandemic, and hopefully again, soon—Wednesday Night Jazz.

MUSICAL ROOTS

The restaurant was originally opened in 1990 by Grover Williamson, a lover of music and a fan of the English rock band Humble Pie, hence the name. Now run by pals Joe Farmer (owner), Jim Beriau (general manager) and Josh Young (chef), it has remained a hotspot over the years for both Raleigh natives and the growing number of transplants. "We wanted to keep that tradition of providing our guests and our community with a spirit of humility," says Farmer.

"It's the Raleigh *Cheers*—there's a lot of people that feel that way," says Pam Mayberry. The Mayberrys met at Humble Pie when Steve Mayberry was a bartender. They tied the knot seven years ago, and Humble Pie continues to be a place of comfort for them. "It's another home, and one of the main

**"Now what makes sense
is that I'm working with my
closest friends and providing
for our families."**

—Josh Young

reasons I worked here so long," Steve Mayberry says.

Wednesday Night Jazz, originally an idea of Farmer's to drum up business on weeknights, morphed into something more—and became one of the best-kept secrets in Raleigh. Farmer says it's this insider-y, supper club-style experience that made the restaurant special to so many. "It's such a cool vibe that you don't see at too many places in Raleigh. People come dressed in their best and it's this wonderful underground community of friends," says Farmer. Before becoming one of the owners, Farmer, a Raleigh native (fun fact: his first





Tuna Tartare with Spicy Mayo and Pork Rinds

Ingredients

- 2 cups (about 2 small fillets) yellowfin tuna
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Duke's mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon Sriracha
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 to 2 teaspoons of mirin or rice wine vinegar
- 2 to 3 teaspoons soy sauce
- 2 to 3 teaspoons wildflower honey
- 2 tablespoons minced shallot
- 2 tablespoons sliced chives
- 2 bags pork rinds
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Cut tuna into chunks, then dice into small pieces.

In a small bowl, combine the Sriracha, garlic, mirin, soy sauce, honey, shallot and chives. Pour over the tuna, then add in mayonnaise a spoonful at a time until you have a consistency that you like (you may have some left over).

Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve with pork rinds.



Clockwise from top: On the patio at Humble pie; the exterior, the brunch menu, two friends raise a glass; the front of the building.



Tandoori Lamb Chops with Yogurt, Brown Butter and Cucumber Tomato Salad

Ingredients

1 rack of lamb, cut into chops
 Salt and pepper
 Tandoori powder
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter
 4 garlic cloves, grated and divided use
 1 English cucumber, peeled and diced
 2 small tomatoes, diced
 1 small red onion, Julienned
 Small bunch of cilantro
 Splash red wine vinegar
 1 cup yogurt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mayonnaise
 2 teaspoons of olive oil

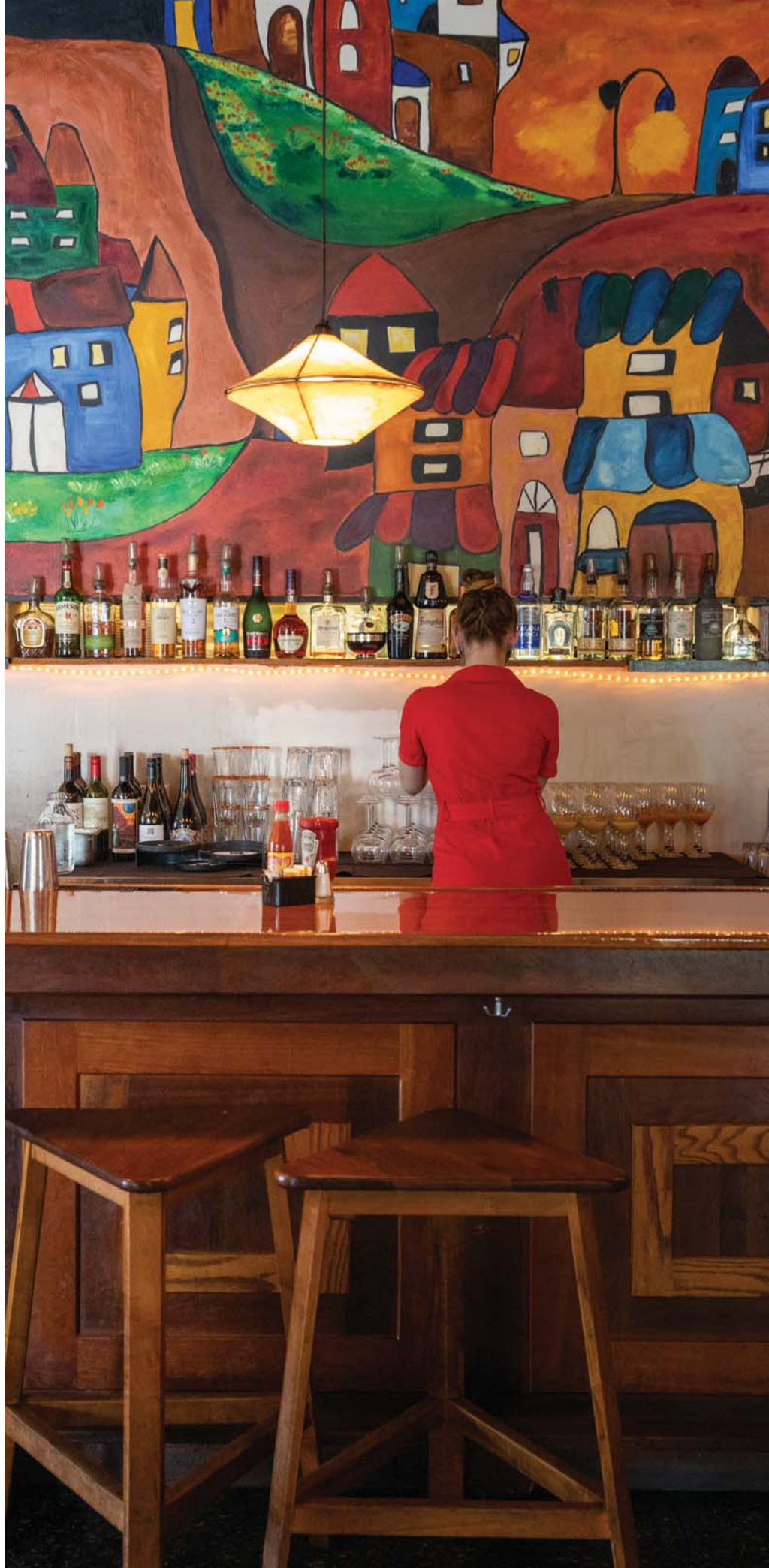
Directions

Season the lamb chops with salt, pepper and tandoori powder. Grill over charcoal heat until 135 degrees in the center, about 7 minutes per side. Combine yogurt, mayonnaise and two cloves of grated garlic in a small bowl. Reserve.

Brown the butter with the remaining grated garlic until fragrant, 3 to 5 minutes.

For the salad: Combine the tomatoes, cucumber, onion and cilantro. Season with salt, pepper, red wine vinegar and olive oil.

To plate, spread the yogurt sauce on a plate, top with lamb, then drizzle with brown butter. Serve with the tomato and cucumber salad.



job was delivering papers for *The Raleigh Times*), was the frontman for Johnny Quest, a local rock band in the 1980s and 1990s that toured along the east coast. He later moved to Los Angeles to work on film and music video production, only to return to his hometown of Raleigh just a few years later with his wife, Traci Lorraine, to start a family. It was only natural that he'd find a way to integrate music into the restaurant.

FOOD FOR COMFORT

At press time, the Wednesday Jazz Nights were on pause, but thanks to the spacious covered patio, limited indoor seating and a stellar playlist, guests can still experience the Humble Pie vibe. "We've had a lot of customers tell us that coming here has been their first time eating out," says Farmer. "That makes us feel good." The food feels good, too: while

Humble Pie is often considered a tapas-style restaurant, the intention is to serve food family-style more than anything. Large plates—with large serving spoons—hold everything from sliders to tuna tartare with housemade pork rinds to tandoori-seasoned lamb chops, all ready to be passed and shared.

"We liked the idea of people being able to try everything on the menu," says Young. He's constantly changing its offerings based on the season and customer preferences. The intention is for a truly communal dining experience. Appropriately, the current menu is inspired by summer at home. "Right now it's based on what I would eat at home if I were outside at a picnic table—nothing too fussy or fancy," Young says. "Lately, I'm much more minimal and trying to make it easy-going. The longer I cook, the more important that becomes."

And being in the South, their crowd-pleasing fried chicken and extra-crispy Brussels sprouts never leave the menu. "We want to be accessible to people in their early twenties or late sixties, to couples or to someone who just wants to relax at the bar solo," says Young. "We want the menu to make sense to all of them."

While the menu is meant to please all palates, at its core, it's about simple dishes, done right. "Now what makes sense is that I'm working with my closest friends and providing for our families," says Young. "And if people are showing up and eating and leaving happy, that is what matters most at this point." How humble. 🍷



Inside the restaurant.

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THE WHIRL

WALTER's roundup of socially distanced gatherings and celebrations around the Triangle.



Forrest Mason Media

Jenn Rice celebrated her 38th birthday with friends and plenty of rosé.

91 St. Mary's School Graduation **91** St. Timothy's School Eighth Grade Graduation
92 Every Rosé Has Its Thorn **94** TheGifted Arts Fundraiser **96** Barre3 Live Class



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TASTE OF THE WILD




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INTERIORS & RUGS

WALTER is heading to the kitchen to cook
along as Ricky Moore of Saltbox Seafood
and Matt Register of Southern Smoke BBQ
teach each other how to make some of
their signature dishes.

For more information please visit: waltermagazine.com/tasteofthewild

THE WHIRL

Courtesy Molly Painter (ST. MARY'S); courtesy Ana DeHart (St. TIMOTHY'S)

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL GRADUATION

St. Mary's School held a virtual graduation on July 24. Seniors were later invited on campus with their families to capture the moment in pictures.



Julia Painter, Louise Painter, Margaret Painter, Molly Painter, Michael Painter



Macie Gross, Ward DeHart



Loring DeHart, Ward DeHart, BJ Nowak



Allen Waller, Joe Diab, Tim Coleman, Ward DeHart

ST. TIMOTHY'S SCHOOL GRADUATION

St. Timothy's School held its Eighth Grade Graduation ceremony August 1.

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THE WHIRL

EVERY ROSÉ HAS ITS THORN

Friends hosted a socially distanced gathering on June 27 to celebrate Jenn Rice's 38th birthday with a Fourth annual rosé soiree. Wyatt Dickson from PICNIC cooked a whole hog from Green Button Farm for pulled pork tacos. Kyle Sutton also made brisket. Bestow Baked Goods created four mini cakes and a shelf of rosé was on display for guests to grab a bottle, along with a vintage coupe glass from Union Camp Collective. Friends spaced out with pillows and blankets throughout the yard and snacked on Boxcarr Handmade cheese. Taylor Meadows and Callie Haynes designed farmers market flower arrangements for decor. Guests walked away with Slingshot Coffee's new cold brew cans for a morning after perk-me-up.



Jenn Rice



Rosé to go



Jenn Rice, Wyatt Dickson



Kristen Covington



Josh Bizzell



The spread



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THE WHIRL

THEGIFTED ARTS FUNDRAISER

TheGifted Arts held its annual fundraiser August 6. TheGifted Arts is an organization that uses performing arts to help students of color build skills in leadership, communication, teamwork and problem-solving while also creating leadership pathways for students who might not have the opportunity otherwise. With schools operating virtually as well as in person this school year, TheGifted Arts plans to open day programming that will give students of full-time, essential workers a safe place to go for on-site tutoring and mentorship. The goal of this year's fundraiser was to secure a larger, permanent home for this endeavor.



Mija G, Nia D, Madison B, Michael L



CJ Morgan, Denver N



Nia D



Janaya J



Michael L



Tisha Carnes

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Katie Eveleth, Alston Hayes, Sahar McClure



The live class was the first in more than three months. Heart rates and spirits were raised.

Courtesy Sahar McClure

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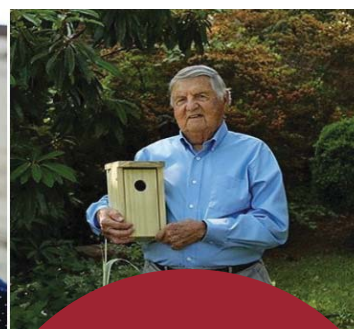
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#MAKEITFASHION

COVID-19 is a hot mess, but the mask may be the coolest thing to hit fashion since sunglasses. Like shades, masks grace your face with a touch of mystery. They can also express moods, ideas and personality quirks. And while pre-pandemic cosmetic surgery was prohibitively pricey, I can now tuck away my less-than-chiselled jawline for just a few dollars. Here's how to embrace the new normal with timeless style. — *Billy Warden*

POOLSIDE

Diving 'face naked' into a cool pool now counts as a kind of skinny dipping. But back on land, get properly attired—and make a stylish splash—with a floral mask and hat band. Then throw in enough bright orange to make the sun squint.



QUIET TIME

Stay sane while staying safe by meditating in a white mask adorned with homemade peace-and-love doodles, a linen shirt to let in the breeze and, to complete the communion with nature, a flower. I call this one the pan-ZEN-ic look.

OUT & ABOUT

An invisible virus lassoing and corralling our lives is dang frustrating. But instead of rebelling by going mask-less, opt for an outlaw look via the bandit bandana. Pair with a cap representing the MLB team you'd most like to see filling stadiums again.



BLACK TIE

Even at a formal socially-distanced wedding, your mask can still pack a little 'tude. Before landing on this model (\$12; *House of Swank*), I tried a black-and-white VOTE mask—but had to abandon it when folks took it as an invitation to talk politics (something that's rarely healthy).

BUSINESS

Look like a 'demic-era boss for that rare in-person business meeting in a mask that adds a third dimension to the ol' matching tie-and-pocket square combo. If you can line up all of this, you'll no doubt kill it on deal points.



COCKTAILS

#RetroPatio: throwback lounge shirt, tiki glass cocktail and—when not sipping—a David Bowie mask (\$25; *Edge of Urge*). Sure, the eras don't match up, but what a blast to relive those happy days when a "virus" merely meant an infected computer.

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