

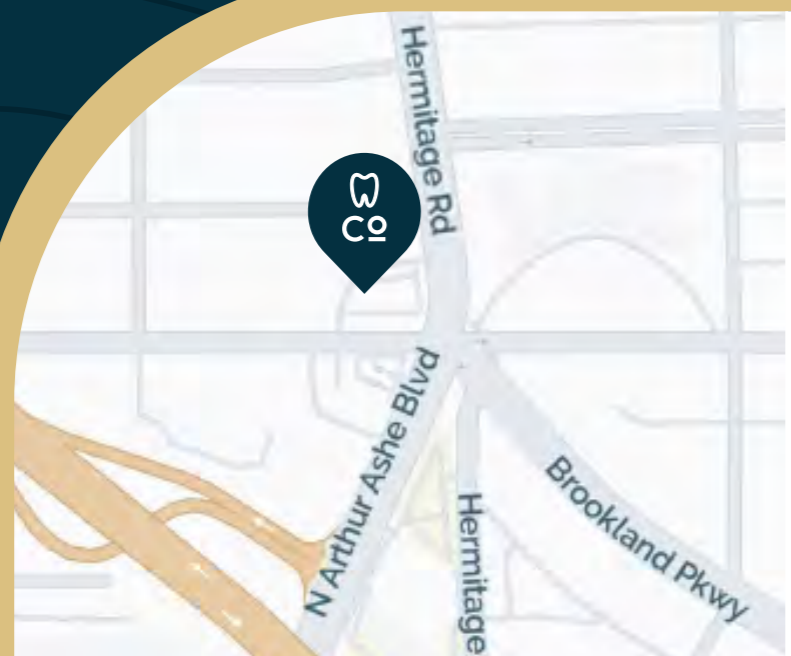
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TABLE of CONTENTS

- 4 DIVERSIONS Elevate Your Holiday Spread With These Buzzworthy Treats**
This holiday, whether you are hosting or were raised right and know not to attend a party empty-handed, think beyond the dip. There are so many delicious and aesthetically pleasing dishes that can elevate a spread - and be the talk of the party. Here are a few of my favorites...
- 6 SEASONAL OFFERINGS December Events**
Christmas on MacArthur Attracted Hundreds, Holiday Faire at Richmond Waldorf, FallFest Art and Jazz Show Raises \$1,200 for Feed More
- 10 FROM THE ARCHIVES Joe Stankus: Santa Is Alive And Well And Living in Bellevue**
Sometimes, people choose the right heroes or role models and by degrees, through years of emulation, become greater than themselves. Joe Stankus is one such man.
- 12 COVER Colette Miller: The Better Angels of Our Nature**
In 2012, Colette Miller would create a pair of angel wings on a corrugated fence near the American Hotel on South Hewitt Street in downtown Los Angeles. Almost immediately folks responded to the wings, and today her Angel Wings Project has gone global.
- 16 HIDDEN HISTORIES A Tale of Two Centenarians, Henry Kissinger and Norman Lear**
This month, two culture-changing centenarians died within a week of each other. They couldn't be more different in their individual lives and in their effect on the world.
- 18 PERSPECTIVE A Short History of a Long War in Four Parts: Part 1, The Balfour Declaration, the Sykes Picot Agreement, and the Arab Rebellion**
In a speech marking the Balfour Declaration's 80th Anniversary, Edward Said, the Palestine-born Columbia University literary professor, called for an honest discussion and dialogue between Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews concerning the ways that the two people are inextricably connected.
- 20 BOOK REVIEW Where the Wild Things Are Right In Your Own Backyard**
Nancy Lawson, author of "The Humane Gardener," has written a thoughtful new book about how you can appreciate and nurture the natural world in your own back yard. In "Wildscape," Lawson says, "Studies show that being around nature makes us smarter, happier and kinder." Boy, does the world need that.
- 22 ART Art Classes at Studio Art 1229**
Studio Art 1229 offers classes in painting, from acrylics to oils to watercolors, for beginning, intermediate, and advanced painters. The two instructors at the studio are owner Brenda Stankus, and her fellow artist Elizabeth Eubanks.

COVER PHOTO: Cover courtesy of Colette Miller. Photo by Richard Corman.

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DIVERSIONS

Elevate Your Holiday Spread With These Buzzworthy Treats

by FAYERUZ REGAN

THE HOLIDAYS ARE UPON us, and chances are you'll be at a party standing before a spread with the usual suspects: hummus and crudites, crackers and cheese, cookies – you get the idea.

While all these foods are delightful, they're staples. We almost come to expect them at gatherings. People tend to stick to familiar foods while grocery shopping, but partygoers are in a different mindset altogether. They're unwinding, and willing to experiment with new foods. Especially when they aren't paying for them. Worst case scenario, the offending canape quietly ends up in a napkin.

This holiday, whether you are hosting or were raised right and know not to attend a party empty-handed, think beyond the dip. There are so many delicious and aesthetically pleasing dishes that can elevate a spread – and be the talk of the party. Here are a few of my favorites...

ROQUEFORT GRAPES

For a recipe that requires only four ingredients and zero cooking, the end product is a real showstopper. Little spheres can be piled together to resemble a cluster of grapes, but are in fact a little charcuterie in each bite.

Ingredients

-1/2 pound of Roquefort cheese

-1/2 pound of cream cheese

-1/4 pound of pistachios

-1 bunch (about a pound) of seedless green grapes

Instructions:

In a food processor, chop the nuts finely and add them to a large plate.

In the now-empty food processor, blend the cheeses well.

Cover and refrigerate the cheese mix for two hours.

While the cheese is cooling, remove the grapes from their stems.

When the cheese is cooled, place a small amount of the cheese mixture in your palm, then gently roll the grape around

in your palms to coat it.

Transfer to a wax paper-lined tray and refrigerate for three hours until firm.

Once firm, gingerly roll the grapes in the chopped pistachios until they are completely covered.

Pile the grapes into clusters to resemble a real cluster of grapes.

At the top of the cluster where the stem should be, place a few leaves to resemble where it was plucked from the vine.

Roquefort grapes are elegant and uncommon – something you'd see at high tea. And should you wish to replace green grapes with red, or replace the Roquefort with Stilton, substitutions are fine.

The next recipe is an upgrade to the old standby artichoke and spinach dip. Only this handheld bite offers the airy crunch of a toasted baguette and the oozing sharpness of parmesan cheese.

ARTICHOKE PARMESAN CANAPES

Ingredients

-3/4 cup mayonnaise

-3/4 cup shredded parmesan cheese

-1 large jar of marinated artichokes, chopped and drained

-1 small can of chopped green chiles

-3 cloves of garlic

-1 French baguette

-Salt and pepper

Instructions:

Mix all the ingredients, save for the bread

Slice baguette into capape discs

Toast these rounds slightly at 400 degrees Fahrenheit

Remove from oven and top with the artichoke mixture

Toast for five minutes longer, until the topping starts to bubble and ooze, and becomes slightly brown

When your guests tuck into these, you'll hear the distinctive crunch. And when you hear this sound, you'd better be quick. I guarantee that they will run out.

There are so many ways to wow your guests when putting together a spread.



Sometimes setting up the table is more fun than the party itself because it's like an art project.

Tips for an unforgettable spread

If any of your appetizers require toothpicks, be sure to lay out a ramekin to hold the used ones, so guests don't wander around looking for a trash can. Place a toothpick in the ramekin so your first guests will know what to do.

If serving cured olives, make sure they're pitted.

Use a gorgeous tablecloth.

Use cake dishes and other platforms to lay your food at varying heights. The eye likes to travel, and it creates the feeling of abundance.

Encourage your guests to circulate around the table, rather than being stationary and reaching. Lay a festive centerpiece down the center of the table. Then circle your dishes around it.

So there is no fire hazard, use low tea candles, rather than towering taper candles. That way, no errant sleeve catches on fire.

Bring the outside in. It's winter, but that doesn't mean the world is dead. Pine cones, spruce branches, winterberries and strung magnolia leaves look gorgeous running along the length of a table. Feel free to add bowls of ornaments for good measure.

Happy holidays! 

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Christmas on MacArthur Attracted Hundreds

THIS YEAR'S CHRISTMAS on MacArthur, held on December 9, was a huge success, netting more than 1,500 gifts for Toys-for-Tots, and leaving hundreds of children and adults with vivid Christmas memories. Marines picked up the toys after the event, and eight lucky kids, who had donated toys, each won a brand new bicycle.

Hundreds swarmed along the 4000 block of MacArthur Avenue from mid morning till early afternoon under a cloudless blue sky. There were many kid-friendly activities, including ornament-making, along with street vendors selling handmade arts and craft items, and other merch. There was also live music with bagpipers playing at the north end of the street, and on the parklet in front of Stir Crazy Cafe, Elana Lisa, Evy Watts, Steve Young and David Schieferstein performed holiday favorites. And of course, Santa Claus and his helper were there listening to Christmas wishes. This Northside tradition is made possible by the Bellevue Merchants Association, the Bellevue Civic Association and NORTH of the JAMES, which has been a proud sponsor of this event since its inception.



1.) Artist Rob Ullman was one of many vendors selling their wares.

2.) A visit with old Saint Nick.

3.) Selling memberships to the BMA along with a Bellevue Christmas ornament.



4.) Present and past presidents of the Bellevue Merchant's Association, from left Tim Pfohl and Jerry DeVoss.

5.) The few, the proud.

6.) Bright smiles, warm drinks, and sweet treats from Stir Crazy.

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HOLIDAY FAIRE AT RICHMOND WALDORF

Richmond Waldorf School hosted its annual Holiday Faire on December 2 at its RobinHood Road campus in the Northside. More than 300 people attended this seasonal event that's kid and family friendly. There were numerous activities for the children, along with puppetry, live music, holiday family photo sessions, and a menu featuring hearty soups, and libations, from hot apple cider to mulled wine.




1.) Valerie Hogan and Maggie Kirsh at the event entrance.
2.) Susannah Meyer, RWS teacher takes a food order from a student.



3.) RWS parents lead a felted acorn craft.

4.) Pocket Fairy Sarah Hayward with Mary Catherine Berry and student.

FALLFEST ART AND JAZZ SHOW RAISES \$1,200 FOR FEED MORE

Held November 11 at the Lewis Ginter Recreation Association on Hawthorne Avenue, the FallFest Art and Jazz Show, sponsored by area artists, raised more than \$1,200 for Feed More. The 34 artist who participated donated wine and beer to the open bar and dedicated ten percent of their sales to Feed More. About 125 people attended the event, which included live music ranging from jazz to Cajun. The group plans another show in late April or early May. 



Artists and their work at FallFest Art and Jazz Show.

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Santa Is Alive and Well And Living in Bellevue

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN, originally printed in 2008

In December of 2008 this was the cover story. Joe Stankus still plays Santa Claus across the Commonwealth and beyond, and ever year he listens to children's wishes at Christmas on MacArthur. And his beard is real.

SOMETIMES, PEOPLE choose the right heroes or role models and by degrees, through years of emulation, become greater than themselves. Joe Stankus is one such man. From the time he was relatively young he decided to run a business that stressed compassion and fairness toward all employees. It wasn't a particularly popular notion because profit among many unbridled capitalists has always been the overriding principle—get as much as you possibly can for as little as you possibly can. But Joe Stankus remained true to core beliefs. He also volunteered his time to organizations committed to helping others. Today, he wears long white hair and sports a full white beard that frames his round face. Wire-rimmed spectacles ride down his nose and he looks, whether in costume or not, just like Saint Nick.

Classic Touch Cleaning occupies two of the largest storefronts on Bellevue Avenue. The windows here are always decked out with decorations, everything from ceremonial masks to alligator skulls, and, of course, during the holidays with a legion of Nutcrackers and other decorations befitting Yuletide. It's all part of the massive collection owner Joe Stankus has accumulated over the years from yard sales, flea markets, junk shops and estate sales. Both he and his wife and partner in business, Brenda, grew up in Northside. Joe lived on Noble Avenue, moved to East Seminary and settled with Brenda on Princeton. He attended Benedictine, went to college at Notre

Dame where he studied government and city management, then returned to Richmond and eventually went to work with Morton G. Thalhimers, where he eventually became president of their janitorial division.

When he first went to work for Thalhimers he oversaw about 100 employees; by the time he left ten years ago to start his own company he managed 700 workers. Those workers cleaned Reynolds Metals, Philip Morris, the James Center, Signet Bank, the Federal Reserve building, to name but a few.

It was during those years that Joe formulated his philosophy of putting people, who couldn't find jobs at other companies, to work. "Sometimes they might have a physical or mental handicap, sometimes they might have had an incarceration for something minor," he says. "When the job market's like it's been people don't give anybody a chance. And I wanted to give people a chance. That's the way I was brought up. One of my purposes here on the earth is to help other people less fortunate than me."

He mentions one employee named Mark who came to work for Thalhimers when he was about 20 years old. He'd been charged with possession of marijuana and went through a halfway house for treatment. At the time Joe worked closely with two halfway houses for those with drug and alcohol addictions. "Mark went from being an hourly to a highly paid salary employee," says Joe. "He works out of Las Vegas now with a very major chemical supply company."

In Joe's eyes everybody deserves a chance to work, and needs to be shown human compassion.

"It was something my parents instilled in me and then Notre Dame instilled in me," he says.

These days, his business focuses primarily on residential cleaning. "Janitorial got to be basically real cut-throat and the larger clients dictated what you could pay and it's not what we could consider a fair minimum wage or a fair living wage," he says. "We could not get that out of some of these contracts, so we turned to residential.

In addition to running the business, alongside his wife, Brenda, Joe puts in about 30 hours a week in community service, notably with the Kiwanis. He is district administrator for one of the Kiwanis major youth-oriented programs—Key Clubs, overseeing some 14,000 high school students from Delaware, Maryland, D.C. and Virginia.

"It's the largest student run service organization in the world," he says. "Our best known projects are UNICEF at Halloween and the March of Dimes. Our district this year is working on the Heifer Project to raise money to help stock animals in overseas villages. It's an international organization and our goal is \$20,000."

Joe's Key Clubs also raised \$17,000 last year to purchase mosquito nets for parts of malaria-plagued Africa. They're now working on other programs in Africa to deal with the AIDS epidemic there. "The best ways to fight AIDS is through edu-



cation," Joe explains. "And we're doing it through soccer camps. As you know AIDS is rampant in Africa. Young girls will walk several hours to get to camp and while they're there, they're given life lessons. The soccer is just to get them there."

This time of year Joe donates time to the Salvation Army's Angel Tree program. When it's time for distribution at their center, he heads up parking and logistics. He's been doing this for the Salvation Army for the past nine years.

And this time of year he also plays Santa Claus for non-profits, people who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford a visit from Saint Nick. "I do a lot of inner-city schools," he says. "So far this year I've done Birmingham, Alabama; Asheville, North Carolina; and Charleston, West Virginia. Normally they collect gifts and I present them. Each one is different. Like the one in Alabama they're all mainly seventh graders through high school and they are basically kids that are almost 'un-adoptable.'"

He also plays Santa to younger children with special needs. And like the man at the North Pole, Joe takes his

show around the world. "I've been to Bangkok, Malaysia and Singapore playing Santa on goodwill tours," he tells me. "You pay to fly in there and then tour around. As always we were at orphanages and visiting children with disabilities. I was the only one that had a real beard so my line was hundreds long, and the other Santa's only had ten people in it."

Whenever he plays Santa, regardless of the prevailing religious beliefs of the country he is visiting, the response is universal. Santa Claus seems to transcend the narrowness of dogma, seems to be closer to universal spirituality than almost anything else. "I was in Bangkok, it was 80 percent Buddhist and they spoke no English," says Joe. "In Malaysia it's 100 percent Muslim and no English. But when the kids would come up their eyes would light up and they would call me Father Christmas."

He tells a story that happened down in Emporia not long ago. He was visiting a school for children with. One of the girl's parents told him that their daughter would never come up to him. And then, low and behold, she scrambles into his lap, looks into his eyes, and his gloved hand rests on her small shoulder. "Even her grandparents hadn't held her at that point," Joe tells me, adding that Santa Claus is "the personification of good and how little kids know that, I have no idea."

Next Saturday, Joe will be playing Santa Claus at Christmas on MacArthur Avenue right in Bellevue. It's an annual event sponsored by local merchants. And it's a great time for the kids to give Father Christmas their wish lists. They can even tug his beard to see if he's real or fake, but it's not going anywhere. Joe Stankus is the genuine article. **BT**

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COLETTE MILLER

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EARLY IN THE MORNING SHE AND HER FRIEND, BOTH AMERICANS,

would leave their rooms and make their way into the street and join a group of others who were waiting to be selected for a day of work either picking olives or plucking oranges in the groves just outside of this coastal town called Chania on the island of Crete. Some days they found work; other days they would sit and while away the hours with others who had not been selected, and they would play chess and drink Ouzo. One night, after a long day in the orchards, just as she was falling off to sleep, she heard a man pounding at her door, trying to break in. As she opened her eyes, Colette Miller saw a stout, old man—easily in his eighties—at her bedside. This apparition rose into the air and drifted to the door and told the man on the other side to leave. And just like that, the would-be-intruder was gone.



Harlem, New York City, courtesy of Colette Miller. Photo by Luis Pons.

“It was weird because after that I slept like a baby,” Colette remembers. “I felt so peaceful and calm, and so in touch with the universe. It was kind of like a miracle.”

Years later, in 2012, Colette would create a pair of angel wings on a corrugated fence near the American Hotel on South Hewitt Street in downtown Los Angeles. The public reaction was virtually instantaneous with people posing in front of them, so that in photos these wings, crafted of butcher paper, seemed to sprout from the subject’s shoulder blades. At the heart of it all though, there was something much more stirring than a photo op. For these angelic wings were reminders that every human being on this planet is endowed with a spark of the divine, can transcend the baser instincts—hatred, greed, prejudice,

violence—and instead embrace the better angels of our nature—love, compassion, acceptance, gratitude.

After living in a variety of places, Colette’s family finally settled in Vienna, just to the east of Reston, at a time when that part of Northern Virginia was decidedly rural, well before the great wave of suburbanization washed away the splendors of nature, replacing trees and fields with tarmac and concrete.

“My parents were a bit eccentric,” Colette tells me. “My father had been a psychologist for juvenile delinquents, and he taught philosophy and art, and he had worked

in the (Newport News) shipyards. My dad designed our passive solar house between Vienna and Reston, and my three sisters and brother and mother all helped build it. That was back in the late seventies.”

After graduating from South Lakes High School in Reston, Colette headed south to Richmond where she studied painting and printmaking at Virginia Commonwealth University. During that period she lived for a time in the old Richmond Dairy Building, often called “the milk bottle building” because of the three 40-foot tall masonry milk bottles on three corners of the building. By the time Colette

lived there, Richmond Dairy had long since passed, and its old home had become a haven for artists and local musicians, most notably GWAR, Richmond’s thrash metal sensation.

“I was with GWAR in their formative years,” says Colette. “I was Amazina, that was my character, and I helped sculpt things.” For a time she also dated GWAR’s lead singer, the late Dave Brockie, who portrayed Oderus Urungus, and was one of the band’s founding members. She had joined up with GWAR in late 1986 and they played gigs at The Flood Zone and Rockitz, but by 1987 things went south, and boys of the band voted Colette out. “I probably wasn’t the right member,” she says. “It just didn’t work out with me and the guys.”

Shortly after leaving GWAR, Colette graduated from VCU, and then she hit the road with all deliberate speed and began some serious globetrotting. “My life had been terminated from the Richmond scene,” says Colette. “So I traveled with nothing to the Middle East and Europe. I went to Crete and Israel and Egypt and Cyprus. I went to Gaza.”

When she returned stateside, Colette moved up to New York City, and there hooked with people who had similar aesthetic inclinations. She went to work at the Stockwell



Heathrow Airport, Hounslow, UK. Photo by Colette Miller.

Gallery on the Lower East Side before the unholy gentrification came. “I was working on painting, and I sold a couple of paintings,” she says. “I was working at the gallery, and though they weren’t really paying me, they took care of my living expenses.”

Pamela Stockwell, the woman who owned the gallery, got into a lifestyle that didn’t appeal to Colette. “She got into some heavy partying, and I never really like that world, so we fell apart,” Colette tells me.

After leaving the gallery, Colette moved in with Peggy and David Vigon who lived in Williamsburg over in Brooklyn. “I paid a little bit of rent and we formed a perfor-

mance art and music band called ‘The Dayglow Aborigines,’ Colette remembers. “I was trying to make it the modern and the primitive together.”

She spent about a decade in the Big Apple, but things there were tough for artists. “New York was impossible for an emerging artist,” says Colette. “If you don’t have a trust fund or the connections, what are you to do?”

Move. Which is what Colette ended up doing. On the cusp of a new millennia.

“I thought, ‘I’ll try the next world city in the United States,’” she says.



Angel Wings of stained glass with Judson Studios, Los Angeles. Photo by Colette Miller.



Little boy with Angel Wings in Havana, Cuba. Photo by Colette Miller

“And if LA doesn’t work for me, I will leave America as an artist.”

As it turned out, LA was the right fit.

“I got into the union, and started working on film sets,” says Colette. “It was fun, and to me it was so much money and they gave you good health care.” She quickly became adept at filming and editing. “I worked for EcoNews,” she says. “I learned in the field. We went to Tibet. We went to the Arctic Circle.”

On about Christmas, back in 2011,

Colette, who had meditated and practiced yoga earlier in the day, found herself an open vessel to the divine as she tooled along 101, the aorta of LA. As she drove, Colette considered the buildings that flanked the highway, and then her mind projected the image of a pair of wings on the vacant canvases of these facades. She might have just passed by the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels when a thought crystallized in her mind.

“I started thinking of angel wings,” she recalls. “I started thinking it would be a great symbol to put up, and we are the City of Angels. And I wanted to keep it simple and I just look at a wall and imagined wings on them. And I started doing them in my head, and I went home.”

Because she planned to place the first pair of wings illegally, Colette knew she had to have something that was somewhat portable. So she pre-painted the wings on a heavy-duty butcher paper, that would later be glued down with art gel or wheat paste. Her very first installment was on a corrugated metal fence in downtown LA, but she had accomplices, including her best friend.

“I had my friends around, and they were doing lookout for the police,” says Colette. “And my best friend Stevie Casual (Bryant) was looking out for me.”

As it happened, Colette and her team installed the wings just days

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN



before a neighborhood street festival began. “The response was immediate,” Colette tells me. “Somebody put a step there, and everyone was in a line to take a picture with this art I had just put up. I hadn’t signed it and then I did a few other illegal ones and they took off on social media, which was just coming of age.”



Even though Colette had illegally placed those early Angel Wings, no one said anything about them. “I think it was because the energy was so good,” she suggests. “It wasn’t something dark like, ‘Kill the President;’ it was angel wings. How can you be upset with angel wings?”

Since that day in 2012, Colette has created well over a hundred pairs of Angel Wings both in America and abroad. These wings appear from street level to the 124th floor of the tallest building on Earth in Dubai, and the wide world over they are universally loved.



“I’ve done private and public installations,” she says. “Some are temporary installations. Some are commissions, and some I did for the universe. Some are interior, some are on trucks, some are on canvas, some are on windows, some are on skyscrapers.”

It’s mind-boggling how many of these Angel Wings she has created. When I ask about those in America, she pauses for a moment, and then says, “I’ve got to think about the states, one by one.” After that pause, she says, “In New York they’re in Harlem, the World Trade Center, Brooklyn. In DC at the Embassy Road Hotel. They’re in South Carolina, in Florida, Indianapolis, Michigan, Iowa, and a lot of other places.”

Her Angel Wings have found permanent homes around the globe. “They’re in Dubai, Ukraine, Moscow, Cuba, Kenya, Juarez, Sydney, Perth, Melbourne, and six or seven pairs in Japan,” Colette says. “And there are others, too.”

However, there is only one pair of Angel Wings in Richmond, the



In Dubai on glass windows on the 124th floor of Burj Khalifa, the world’s tallest building. Photo by Colette Miller.

city Colette called home for many years, and it in a private location on a brick wall of the patio behind Lift Coffee Shop & Cafe in Jackson Ward. People erroneously believe that Colette created the Angel Wings on the building that formerly housed Tinker’s on Westwood Avenue. “Someone else did that one,” she says. “They got the idea from seeing some of mine out in LA. But I really would like to have a large public wall in Richmond. It just makes sense because of my connection with the city.”

Along with the International Angel Wing Project, Colette continues to write and produce music, and to paint with oils on canvas. There’s currently an exhibit of her Planet series gracing the walls of the Fine Arts Building at 7th and Figueroa Streets in downtown Los Angeles. And next year will see the release of a documentary film on The Global Angel Wings Project.

These celestial wings and their meaning seem more relevant now than ever, with the wholesale slaughter in Gaza and Ukraine, the droughts and famines in Ethiopia and Somalia, and the attempted toppling of democracies around the world.

“These are really dark times,” says artist Colette Miller. “The angel wings are a reminder to us all of our higher nature. We can go dark, or we can go light. That’s what the Angel Wings mean.”

To find out more about Colette and The Global Angel Wings Project please visit <https://colettemiller.com/>

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A Tale of Two Centenarians, Henry Kissinger and Norman Lear

by JACK R JOHNSON

THIS MONTH, TWO CULTURE-changing centenarians died within a week of each other. They couldn't be more different in their individual lives and in their effect on the world.

The first centenarian to pass was Henry Kissinger, age 100. The Rolling Stones titled his obituary with unsurprising bluntness: "Henry Kissinger, War Criminal beloved by America's Ruling Class, finally dies." With a little headnote, bathed in acrimony, "GOOD RIDDANCE."

The reason for the antipathy should not be a surprise either, for those who follow such things. According to the Stones obit, penned in fury by Spencer Ackerman, "Every single person who died in Vietnam between autumn 1968 and the Fall of Saigon — and all who died in Laos and Cambodia, where Nixon and Kissinger secretly expanded the war within months of taking office, as well as all who died in the aftermath, like the Cambodian genocide their destabilization set into motion [i.e., the Khmer Rouge] — died because of Henry Kissinger."

Ackerman elaborates, "The Yale University historian Greg Grandin, author of the biography Kissinger's Shadow estimates that Kissinger's actions from 1969 through 1976, a period of eight brief years when Kissinger made Richard Nixon's and then Gerald Ford's foreign policy as national security adviser and secretary of state, meant the end of between three and four million people. That includes "crimes of commission," he explained, as in Cambodia and Chile, and omission, like green-lighting Indonesia's bloodshed in East Timor; Pakistan's bloodshed in Bangladesh; and the inauguration of an American tradition of using and then abandoning the Kurds."

Hannah Arendt who famously coined the phrase 'banality of evil' about another mass murderer, Adolf Eichmann, missed the mark with Henry Kissinger, for whom

banality was verboten. He was quite flamboyant, a playboy of sorts, dating Jill St. John (America's first Bond Girl!), earning the moniker of Washington's 'Greatest Swinger,' as well as carefully crafting an image of power broker for the elites with his so called 'Realpolitik' Surprisingly, Kissinger didn't actually like the label, "The advocates of a realist foreign policy are caricatured with the German term Realpolitik," he sniffed in 2012, "I suppose to facilitate the choosing of sides." But, in fact, his insistence on brutal calculations of power and persuasion are nothing if not realpolitik, and those calculations, which are designed to ignore the perspective of the hundreds of thousands of millions they might effect, are exactly the problem.

But he's right in one sense, realpolitik may be the wrong word for something whose outcome is so decidedly disastrous. Calamitypolitik might be closer to the mark. Maybe Kissinger never imagined the Khmer Rouge rising out of the ashes of all the mothers and children he and Nixon bombed in Cambodia, but they did, and Pol Pot's genocidal efforts wiped out somewhere between 1.5 and 3 million Cambodians. Kissinger was saddled with his own ideological limitations whether he wanted to admit it or not. One quote is fascinating. When he insisted on overthrowing the democratically elected government of Allende in Chile, he quipped, "I don't see why we need to stand idly by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people." Dismissive language, easy enough to toss from America's most powerful throne, if you regularly ignore the wishes of 'the masses.'

To his credit, he did help facilitate a tentative détente with Russia and even arranged a visit from Nixon to China. It's just a shame a few million people had to die before the ceremonies could begin.

Two qualities lacking in Kissinger's worldview, imagination and empa-



Photo credits to Emily Schultz and Bruna Araujo.

thy, are found in abundance in the other centenarian who died recently, Norman Lear at the age of 101 (a wit on social media quipped, thank God, Lear beat him!)


One might say Lear's entire career was about expanding perspectives and empathy. He got his start as a writer for radio and TV, and was responsible for a string of hit series in the 1970s that broke taboos on broadcast entertainment and helped define a generation. His shows routinely tackled serious social issues, some rarely seen on TV, from racism, rape and abortion to menopause, homosexuality and religion. He became a legendary television producer who created the groundbreaking series "All in the Family," "Maude," "The Jeffersons" and "One Day at a Time," to name a few. Rumor had it he would interrupt any meeting (including a live interview on CNN) to take a phone call from his family. Even with an incredibly busy schedule, he'd always take that call from his kid. It helped keep him human, I suspect.

"Norman Lear was a social justice warrior long before that phrase ever existed," said Laura Mackenzie Phillips, 64, who starred alongside Valerie Bertinelli and Bonnie Franklin in the hit 1970s series, One Day At A Time, which followed a single

mom and her two daughters. "We were dealing with losing your virginity, birth control, Julie became a religious convert, we dealt with things nobody was talking about. If you just don't look, it's not happening. And Norman made us look."

According to Yahoo News, Phillips also reflected on Lear's championship of women's rights and racial equality. "His ultimate goal through his work was to change the world. ... one day at a time..." Cue laughter.

Even if the subject matter was divisive, Lear believed the audience would be bonded by humor. "To be able to laugh in a rehearsal at something you hadn't expected, and then to stand to the side or behind an audience laughing, and watch them, their bodies — a couple of hundred people as one — when something makes them laugh, I don't think I've ever seen a more spiritual moment than an audience in a belly laugh!" Lear said, "The soundtrack of my life has been laughter."

So what's the moral of this particular comparison? Lear would probably want a wrap up, his shows always did. So, here goes: in a world over saturated with realpolitik cruelty, be the person who always takes that phone call from his kid. 

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A Short History of a Long War in Four Parts

Part 1, The Balfour Declaration, the Sykes Picot Agreement, and the Arab Rebellion

by JACK R JOHNSON

IN A SPEECH MARKING the Balfour Declaration's 80th Anniversary, Edward Said, the Palestine-born Columbia University literary professor, called for an honest discussion and dialogue between Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews concerning the ways that the two people are inextricably connected.

"Like it or not, this is the historical reality," he explained. "We must better understand them [Jews], and they must better understand us [Palestinians]. We must make clear the link between the Shoah (the European Jewish Holocaust) and the Nakba (the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948). Neither experience is equal to the other, and neither should be minimized. We must emphasize this link not for short-term political gains, but because we cannot continue to work apart as two wounded yet incommunicado communities. We have to begin to admit the universality and integrity of each other's experience of suffering. As Arabs, we demand acknowledgment and reparations. We cannot accept that the 'redemption of the Jews' required the dispossession of millions of Palestinian people. We must rethink our common past if we want to have a future, and it is time to honestly state that we are fated to have a common, not a separate, future."

Brave words, mostly unremarked in the Western Press, and not especially well received in the Arab world, but important nonetheless.

The choice of venue was relevant. If you want to understand the Israel Palestinian conflict now torching the Gaza strip and to a lesser degree, the West Bank, you need to start, as they say, at the beginning. That's when a



Photo by Jorge Fernández Salas.

British gentleman named Lord Arthur Balfour, over a hundred years ago, signed a declaration in the middle of another big war—The Great One.

Lord Arthur Balfour was an old school conservative who served as Prime Minister of Great Britain for a stint in the early 1900s and later served as foreign secretary in the Lloyd George ministry. He was sympathetic to the Zionist cause—the basic belief that Jews have a right to a homeland—which had been rattling around Europe and Russia for the better part of two centuries. There was a late 18th century effort at assimilation (the Haskala, or Jewish enlightenment), but the Russian pogroms and virulent anti-Semitism of Western Europe made this difficult, if not impossible. Curiously, Zionism was also revived in the early 19th century by Christian millenarians who believed that the return of Jews to Israel was necessary for Jesus to return to Earth as its king,

i.e., the Second Coming. Many contemporary Evangelicals hold similar beliefs, a fact that goes a long way toward explaining the odd support of U.S. rightwing politicians for Israel, despite many of them being personally anti-Semitic.

Back in the early 20th century, as a foreign secretary, Lord Balfour knew Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann since his Prime Minister tenure in 1906, and he opposed Russian mistreatment of Jews and increasingly supported Zionism as a program for European Jews to settle in Palestine. His motives may not have been entirely humanitarian, however. He supported the Aliens Act 1905, one of whose main objectives was to control and restrict Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe into Britain. As political scholar Yousef Munayyer has noted, Balfour wrote in 1919 that the Zionist movement would: "mitigate the age-long miseries created for Western civilization by the presence in its midst of a Body

[the Jews] which it too long regarded as alien and even hostile, but which it was equally unable to expel or to absorb."

Balfour issued the Balfour Declaration of 1917 on behalf of the cabinet, which supported a "home for the Jewish people" in Palestine. With a typically paternalistic attitude toward British subjects, especially those from the further flung colonies of the Empire, Balfour promised a piece of the British Mandate in Palestine to the Jews. Never mind that the Arab citizens of that area fiercely opposed this action.

The Balfour declaration alone was not sufficient to grant control over the area of Palestine, of course. Technically, that control came about because of a secret 1916 treaty between the United Kingdom and France, with assent from the Russian Empire and Italy. The agreement was based on the premise that the Triple Entente would defeat the Ottoman

Empire during World War I. The Sykes Picot agreement, as it came to be known, effectively divided the Ottoman provinces outside the Arabian Peninsula into areas of British and French control and influence. The British- and French-controlled countries were divided by the Sykes-Picot line. The agreement allocated to the UK control of what is today southern Israel and Palestine, Jordan and southern Iraq, and an additional small area that included the ports of Haifa and Acre to allow access to the Mediterranean. France was to control southeastern Turkey, the Kurdistan Region, Syria and Lebanon. Signed in secret 102 years ago, the Sykes Picot agreement signified the brutal nature of the so called 'Great Game', when colonial powers divvied up land and resources without consideration for the people who lived upon that land, nor who owned those resources.

After the end of World War I, self-declared Zionists built up the Jewish urban and rural settlements in Palestine and relying on the promise of the Balfour declaration began actively encouraging Jewish immigration. In March 1925 the Jewish population in Palestine was officially estimated at 108,000, and it rose to about 238,000 (20 percent of the population) by 1933. Jewish immigration remained relatively slow, however, until the rise of Hitler in Europe. With this increase of settlers, the Arab population feared that Palestine would eventually become a Jewish state and bitterly resisted Zionism and the British policy supporting it. When the intentions of the British and their rapport with the Zionists became apparent, the Arab Palestinian population openly rebelled

British forces struggled to maintain order in the face of the Arab uprisings that lasted from 1936 until 1939. The Arabs demanded independence and the end of the policy of open-ended Jewish immigration and land purchases with the stated goal of establishing a "Jewish National Home." Finally, the long and angry revolt led Britain to reassess its policies. In hopes of keeping the peace between Jews and Palestinian

Arabs and retaining Arab support against Germany and Italy in World War II, Britain placed restrictions on Jewish immigration in 1939.

The new restrictions were pretty much a disaster all around. They weren't enough to appease the Arabs and were violently opposed by Zionist underground groups such as Lehi or "the Stern Gang" and Irgun Zvai Leumi, which committed acts of terrorism and assassination against the British and organized illegal Jewish immigration to Palestine. What might be shocking to many contemporary readers is how willing the Lehi or Stern Gang was to align themselves with Fascist Italy and even Nazi Germany in order to found the Jewish state

Stern Gang Publications used language that strikes a note of cognitive dissonance. According to Yaacov Shavit, professor at the Department of Jewish History, Tel Aviv University, articles in Lehi [Stern Gang] publications contained references to a Jewish "master race", contrasting the Jews with Arabs who were seen as a "nation of slaves." Sasha Polakow-Suransky writes that "Lehi was also unabashedly racist towards Arabs." According to Polakow-Suransky, Lehi advocated mass expulsion of all Arabs from Palestine and Transjordan, or even their physical annihilation.

From these early guerilla groups such key figures as future Israeli Prime Ministers Yitzhak Shamir and Menachem Begin would emerge. The first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, would succeed in fusing these violent underground Jewish militias with the much larger, more moderate Haganah militia used primarily in the defense of the Jewish settlers. Unlike Lehi or Irgun, the Haganah initially followed the organized Jewish community's policy of havlaga or "self-restraint." Ben-Gurion combined these forces into a national army that would evolve into the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) that we know today. **NB**

Next Month, Part II, Birth of Israel and the Nakba



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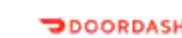
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BOOK REVIEW

Where the Wild Things Are Right In Your Own Backyard

by **FRAN WITHROW**

NANCY LAWSON,
author of “The Hu-
mane Gardener,” has
written a thoughtful
new book about how
you can appreciate and
nurture the natural world in your own
back yard. In “Wildscape,” Lawson
says, “Studies show that being around
nature makes us smarter, happier and
kinder.” Boy, does the world need that.

Lawson discusses how we can use our
five senses to deepen our connection
to wild spaces, as well as how wild-
life uses these senses to survive. For
instance, the “scentscape,” which in-
cludes the new field of aeroecology, is
revealing new details about how birds
and insects use odors to navigate.
Aeroecology also shows how we are
harming wildlife by focusing only on
the ground beneath us. Did you know
there was such a thing as odor pollu-
tion? Me neither.

While man-made noise pollution is
detrimental, natural sounds can be a
source of calm for humans. “Listening
to natural soundscapes ‘rivets us to the
present tense,’” says Lawson. Lawson
notes how, during the pandemic-in-
duced anthropause, when we left the
natural world alone and hunkered
down at home, people could hear
more birds than ever before. Now that
I am aware of this, I sit outside with a
heightened sensitivity to leaf blowers,
trucks, lawn mowers, and cars in my
neighborhood.

Experts have discovered a great deal,
but much is still shrouded in mystery.
Take the sense of taste, for example.
Obviously, in the natural world, every-
thing is there to eat and be eaten, and
the world cycles in and out of abun-
dance. But what about the types of
things available to eat? Native plants
give wildlife the biggest bang for their
buck, says Lawson. Do non-native

food sources affect wildlife, like in-
sects, over time? Do these food sour-
ces alter their chemistry? Make them
unable to reproduce properly? Inhibit
their ability to survive to adulthood?

Good questions. We know a little
more about the importance of touch
in nature. Lawson again says native
grasses and flowers offer the best food
and shelter for wildlife. Trees planted
near each other interlock their roots,
making them stronger and sturdier.
Animals, like Lawson’s adorable Mr.
Chippie the chipmunk, aerate the soil
and disperse mosses for a variety of
wildlife. Snags (dead tree trunks) pro-
vide homes for beetles and fungi while
woodpeckers drill them for food.

And we can’t overlook the sense we
rely on the most: sight. It is well known
that many creatures have vision that is
far sharper than ours. Even so, we can
help them out, Lawson says. Turn out
your lights to help birds that are mi-
grating find their way. Put decals on
windows to decrease the chance of
birds striking them, and, of course,
drive more slowly.

I don’t take for granted that I am privi-
leged enough to have a back yard. If
you too have the gift of a yard or ac-
cess to a wild space, go outside. Take a
look around. What do you notice, and
what is noticing you? There is a whole
world just waiting out there to make
you smarter, happier, and kinder. **NJ**

“Wildscape: Trilling Chipmunks, Beck-
oning Blooms, Salty Butterflies, and
other Sensory Wonders of Nature”

By Nancy Lawson

Princeton Architectural Press

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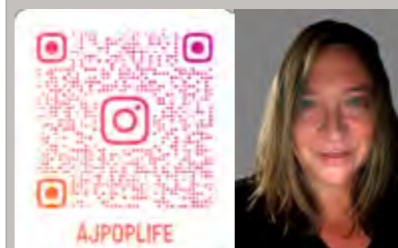
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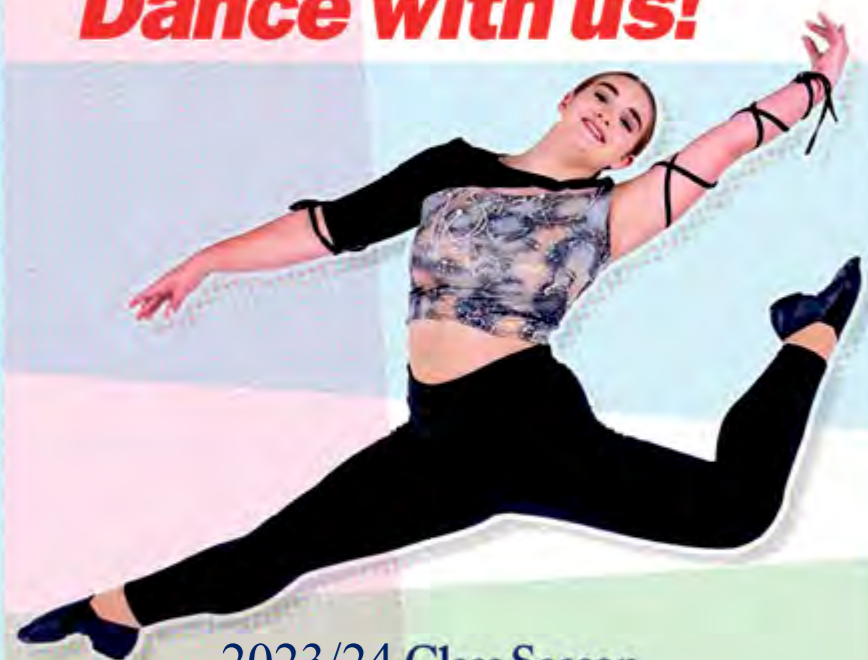
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ART

Art Classes At Studio Art 1229

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN



Class in session at 1229 Studio Art in the Northside.

RIGHT NEXT DOOR to Little House Green Grocery in the heart of Bellevue there's Studio Art 1229 which offers classes in painting,

from acrylics to oils to watercolors, for beginning, intermediate, and advanced painters. The two instructors at the studio are owner Brenda Stankus, and her fellow artist Elizabeth Eubanks,

Brenda, who has a long history of teaching adult studio painting classes, opened her Northside classroom studio about ten years ago. She had previously taught adult painting at the Pine Camp Arts and Community Center, and the Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen

"I stress the individual, their learning style and how each student can progress in their own way, minimizing vulnerabilities and helping students learn what the materials can do," says Brenda. "Color is my love, but painting is my passion and teaching others is my joy."

Brenda's 10-week session classes run four times annually. These three-hour classes begin with group instruction and then move into individualized instruction.

This January Brenda will be teaching Fundamentals of Acrylic and

Fundamentals of Watercolor, both weekend workshops. These workshops are meant to be a fun way for beginners and long-term students alike to fill in the blanks and get an organized appreciation of the basics in each medium.

Elizabeth Eubank is a classical painter and works with her students individually, giving them a good foundation in design principle and composition, using critiques, and one-on-one instruction, which helps her students reach their goals.

Elizabeth also stresses planning before actually painting. She encourages her students to use thumbnail sketches that simplify value and shapes; color ledgers and color mapping to determine harmonies; and careful attention to accurate lines, angles, and scale. "This preparation allows students to paint more freely because the technical details have been addressed first," Elizabeth says.

Both Brenda and Elizabeth both enjoy meeting their students before they begin classes to find out more about what the student wants from the studio art class experience.

For more information on classes at Studio Art 1229, call or text (804) 564-6979, or drop by the Studio at 1229 Bellevue Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227 and ask for Brenda.

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