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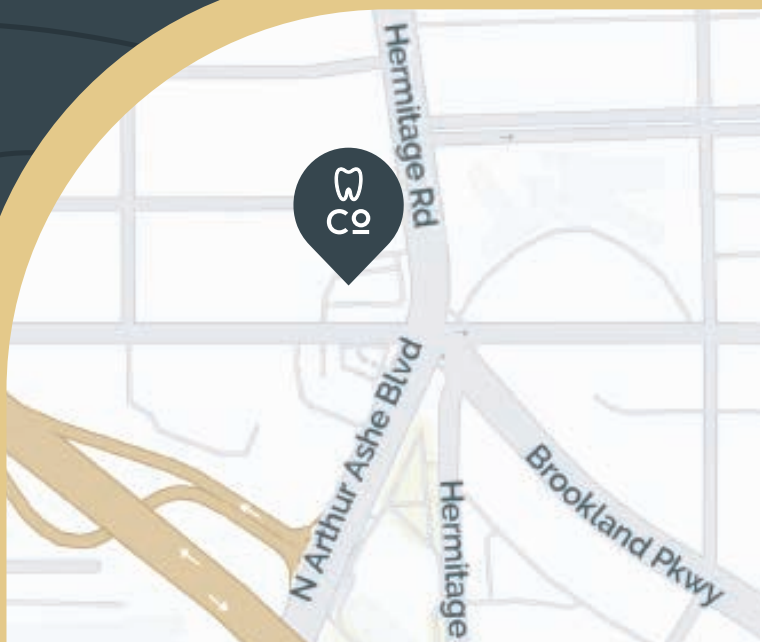
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# GHOSTS



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Since their opening about a year and a half ago, Northside Dental has attracted many folks. They have about 2,000 patients today, and that number will continue to grow. "We're newbies, but we're still expanding," Katelin says. "The response from the community was greater than we could have ever imagined."

### 20 HIDDEN HISTORIES A Short History of Anti-Vaxxers: The Early Years

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Cover illustration by Doug Dobey

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# Bellevue Halloween Party

**E**XACTLY ONE WEEK before Halloween, the Bellevue Civic Association (BCA) hosted a Halloween party at Once Upon a Vine on MacArthur Avenue. Treats for the kids, libations for the adults. One local boy dressed as freedom fighter Che Guevara—“the revolutionaries’ revolutionary”, and author of the ground-breaking memoir “The Motorcycle Diaries: Notes on a Latin American Journey”. Well over a hundred kids, all in costumes, ushered in the holiday. In all, some 250 people attended the event which was held in the parking lot and the gated rear of the neighborhood’s beer and wine shop. “We are all about giving back to the community,” says Jerry DeVoss, BCA president. The organization recently donated \$1500 for the Northside Mural project, and funded a small sitting park, created by Victor Ayala, at the intersection of Bellevue and Fauquier Avenues.

*Right, top to bottom:  
One local boy dressed as  
freedom fighter Che Guevara,  
the revolutionaries’ revolutionary.*

*Making their way over to the  
BCA Halloween Party.*

*Young rocket men at the  
BCA Halloween party.*



*Riverine volunteer maintaining purple martin house on lower Youngs Pond in Bryan Park on the Northside.*

## HELP PRESERVE VIRGINIA'S NATURAL RESOURCES AS A VOLUNTEER WITH RIVERINE

The Riverine Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalist Program have opened applications for their 2022 training class for prospective volunteers. Adults who are interested in conserving and managing Virginia’s natural resources can learn about training and volunteer service by visiting their website or emailing [getmore-riverineinfo@riverinemn.org](mailto:getmore-riverineinfo@riverinemn.org)

Virginia Master Naturalists are volunteer educators, citizen scientists, and environmental stewards helping Virginia conserve and manage natural resources and public lands. The Riverine Chapter is one of 29 chapters in Virginia and serves the greater Richmond area.

The chapter’s yearly training course for volunteers will start Thursday, January 6, 2022. The series of 14 classes will be conducted online this year, via Zoom. Cost is \$100 and a limited number of need-based scholarships are available. The training course is the first step in becoming a Virginia Master Naturalist Volunteer. It includes presentations in subjects such as ecology, geology, aquatic systems, botany, entomology, mammals, and ornithology. In addition, field trips are conducted.

Applications are available on the Riverine website [www.riverinemn.org](http://www.riverinemn.org)

The Virginia Master Naturalist Program is jointly sponsored by the following Virginia organizations: Cooperative Extension; Museum of Natural History; Institute of Marine Science Center for Coastal Resources Management; and the Departments of Conservation & Recreation, Environmental Quality, Forestry, and Wildlife Resources. The program is based in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation at Virginia Tech.



## BEFORE THE BENCH



**Todd DuVal, Esq.**

McDonald, Sutton & Duval

Each month, Todd DuVal, who has been practicing law for almost 30 years, will answer legal questions you may have so you can make the best decision about your representation in court.

### Richmond Pet Ordinance

A little bird told me that in the Northside of Richmond, many residents are pet owners. And, with everyone owning pets, disagreements often arise in connection with those pets, particularly with regard to barking dogs. A quick check of the Code of the City of Richmond finds that the applicable ordinance is City of Richmond Code Section 11 -30 which prohibits “any animal or bird” owned by a resident “to create any sound that ... is plainly audible at least once a minute for ten consecutive minutes.” That sound must be audible “inside the confines of the dwelling unit, house or apartment of another”, or “at least 50 feet from the animal or bird.” Quick read here: anything you can hear in your house coming from another property that occurs at least once a minute for ten straight minutes is a violation. The same holds if you are able to hear it outside of your home from at least 50 feet away. There are no time limitations included in the section, meaning these regulations apply at all times.

Unfortunately, most of these cases arise when the neighbors are unable to resolve the issues between themselves. If convicted of a violation, a first offense is a Class 4 Misdemeanor, meaning that a fine alone may be levied. However, multiple violations of this section result in more severe punishment, with a second offense within 12 months carrying a higher maximum fine, and a third (or subsequent) violation within 12 months results in a Class 2 Misdemeanor, which carries potential jail time, and even higher fines. The section also authorizes the City to petition for an Injunction against the offender as a remedy for “continuing” violations of the section.

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## BRIEFS

# Haunts of Richmond Announces New Tours for Winter Season

Haunts of Richmond, the longest-running ghost tour company in Richmond is proud to announce new tours for the 2021-2022 winter season.

Founded in 2004, Haunts of Richmond offers walking tours in Shockoe Bottom, Church Hill, Capitol Hill and along Franklin Street, along with a variety of special events, including haunted dinners and pub crawls.

In November 2022, Haunts of Richmond will partner with the John Marshall House to bring guests the spirited tales of Richmond's Court End neighborhood.

Starting with a 30-minute indoor ghost tour of the John Marshall House, led by John Marshall House staff and docents, this tour will provide a rare opportunity to get a spooky indoor look at one of Richmond's historic gems. The indoor tour will be followed by an outdoor ghost tour of the Court End neighborhood, led by Haunts of Richmond guides.

Tour capacity will be strictly limited to 12 guests, and guests will be

required to wear masks while in the John Marshall House. John Marshall House restroom facilities and the gift shop will be open to guests before their respective tours.

Starting in December, Haunts of Richmond will be partnering with Penny Lane Pub and Triple Cross Brewing to bring their guests a Haunted Pub Hop. You must be at least 21 years old to attend this event. The tour will begin inside Penny Lane Pub, where guests can enjoy a drink while Haunts of Richmond guides share some haunted history stories.

The tour will then shift outside for some more haunted history stories on the way to Triple Cross Brewing's downtown location. At Triple Cross Brewing, guests will receive a second beverage and have the opportunity to engage Haunts of Richmond guides with questions.

*Tickets for the new Haunts of Richmond tours and their other long-standing tours can be found on the company website, [hauntsofrichmond.com](http://hauntsofrichmond.com)*

## CONCERT BALLET OF VIRGINIA'S NUTCRACKER 45TH SEASON

The Nutcracker is back again, and so is The Concert Ballet of Virginia. Hampered by the March 2020 "lock down", the ballet continued to offer dance experiences to its members, followers and the general public. From zoom classes for company dancers to an outdoor "Nutcracker Suite". However, our regular season of repertory galas and tour engagements were canceled.

Fortunately, the company was able to continue rehearsing and dancing together and now that restrictions have been lessened or eliminated altogether, The Ballet has renewed its commitment to our annual holiday performance locations in the Monacan and Atlee high school theatres.

Now in its 45th year, the Concert Ballet's Nutcracker is Virginia's longest running version. It may also be the state's most toured—having been

presented in Emporia, Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, Lynchburg, Varina, Goochland, and in downtown Richmond's Empire Theatre and The Woman's Club Auditorium.

Acclaimed for colorful scenery and costuming, The Concert Ballet version is set in the late 19th century with the ladies in large hoop skirts, gentlemen in black tailcoats.

The ballet opens in the Monacan High School Theatre in Chesterfield on Saturday December 11 with performances at 1:00 & 4:00 pm. And repeats Sunday December 12 at 2:30 pm. Performance times will be repeated the following weekend in the Atlee High School Theatre, Saturday December 18 performances at 1:00 & 4:00 pm. The Nutcracker closes Sunday December 19 with a 2:30 performance.

Tickets are \$24. 

*For more information call 804 798 0945, or visit [concertballet.com/season/events-calender-tickets/](http://concertballet.com/season/events-calender-tickets/)*



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## DIVERSIONS

# Giving Thanks These Are a Few of My Favorite Things

by FAYERUZ REGAN

**T**HANKSGIVING HAS become a bit complicated. A greater understanding of Indigenous peoples has changed the narrative that we were given in elementary school. We skipped home in pilgrim buckle hats or feathered headbands made of construction paper, assured that the union of both cultures was but a Hallmark moment, free of nuance.

But the thing I do love about Thanksgiving, is that it encourages us to practice gratitude—a key component for true happiness. So, I'm taking stock of some of the people, places and things that I'm most grateful for in Richmond.

### CRITERION CINEMAS AT BOWTIE

In the 90s, we had to drive up to D.C. just to see *Trainspotting*, since there were no options in Richmond. Thanks to Criterion Cinemas at Bowtie, we can see independent films and Oscar bait, just like any major city.

### BLACK-OWNED BROOKLAND PARK BOULEVARD

All too often when a business district that had fallen on hard times starts filling in with new tenants, there's a fear of gentrification. The rise of Brookland Park goes against type. New Black-owned businesses are popping up, right next door to established Black-owned businesses, and people are taking care of their own—from specialized doctors and hair salons, to the now-famous Ruby Scoops.

### SAD TAGGERS

I'd like to thank the various youth who have repeatedly graced small businesses with "tags." While your graffiti is the equivalent of a dog's salute to a fire hydrant, it gives these businesses an urban flair. And yet, it pales in comparison to the joy that my son and I have when we place a Post-It next to your alphabetical urine stain that reads, "Still lives with his parents."

### ED TRASK

It wasn't VCU's painting program that catapulted his career, but Richmond's original hesitancy to give this punk rocker any gallery space. That's when he made the streets of Richmond his canvas. It's impossible not to respect the beauty he's brought to parts of the



city that needed it the most. Now, his talent isn't only featured in permanent collections and art shows around the world, but he's currently working on a new mural in Bellevue, which I get to pass daily.

### THE NEW YORKER SUBSCRIBER

I'd like to thank the mystery neighbor who leaves fresh stacks of *The New Yorker* in the library box in front of Morsels. I don't know who you are, but you're really giving the people what they want. And while I'm here, thanks to everyone who contributes to these library boxes. Thanks to you, I've finally gotten around to Gore Vidal.

### THE EVOLVING PURPOSE OF LEWIS GINTER BOTANICAL GARDENS

It's always been a beautiful place to take in nature, but Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens has become an influence on the way our city is blossoming, quite literally. They teach composting to help Richmonders live more sustainably and improve our soil. It's become an educational center on native plants, which reduce the need for fertilizers, pesticides and helps to stave off invasive species. Duron Chavis is their Manager of Community Engagement and has brought social change through urban farming. He's empowering locals to beautify with greenery and cultivate urban gardens to combat a prevalent issue in underserved communities—food deserts.

### SOCIAL PROGRESS

No one wants to find a dead bunny strategically draped over their "Ridin' with Biden" sign. Especially when Animal Control confirms that the rabbit wasn't roadkill. But it was proof that we had struck a nerve. Here on the Northside, I am surrounded by neighbors hell bent on progress. Our yards are peppered with BLM signs, rainbow flags, and banners welcoming neighbors in Arabic and Spanish, pushing back against any fires that were stoked for Islamophobia and white nationalism. From the Fan District to Lakeside, we've become a pillar of progress that we took to Monument Avenue last summer, and to the polls on Election Day.

### ...AND OF COURSE THE FOOD

I'm grateful for the dolmades at Demi's Mediterranean Kitchen, the dry-fried eggplant at Peter Chang, the burgers at Northside Grille, the Hot Cheeto-dusted elote at Soul Taco, the Lamb Vindaloo at Lemon, the croissants at Idle Hands Bakery, and the candy-spotted Rice Krispies treats at Morsel's.

I highly recommend the above dishes, and every magical place listed before that. I'd love for readers to offer their own recommendations, so I can find even more things to be grateful for. Happy holidays! **NJ**



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## BOOK REVIEW

# Reconsidering the “Throne”

by FRAN WITHROW

**W**HEN WAS THE last time you talked about your toilet? For most of us, bathrooms and body waste are not typical conversation topics. However, perhaps they should be. Chelsea Wald, in her book, “Pipe Dreams,” has no hesitation about discussing the worldwide sanitation system (or lack thereof) with candor, humor, and insight, and what she shares is worth your attention. You might be as surprised as I was at what you learn.

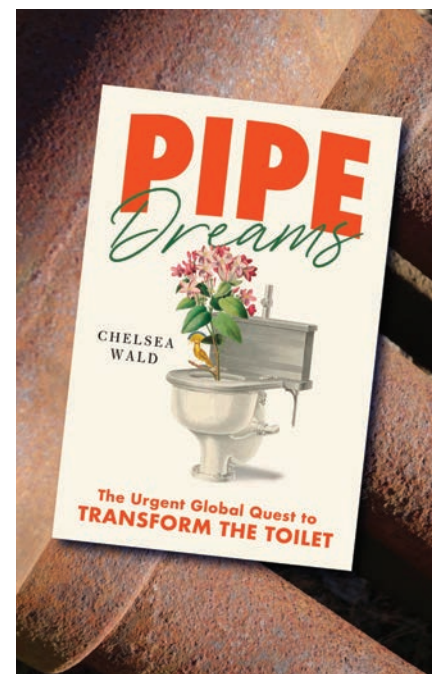
Most of us think lack of access to indoor plumbing is the only true sewage system concern. People who are forced to resort to alleyways, buckets, and pipes that lead to open areas of a back yard need better sanitation, as do those who use pit toilets which can overflow into our waterways or “helicopter toilets” that balance precariously above waiting streams and rivers.

And these issues do need to be addressed. It is not easy to create a sanitation method that is safe, sanitary, affordable, and respectful of the customs and habits of those who might use them. There are currently many entrepreneurs grappling with this problem.

But those of us with indoor toilets also need to take notice. We use gallons of water to flush our pee and poo. (Wald uses these terms liberally throughout her book, so if you find terms like “poop” or “s\*\*t” offensive, you are now forewarned.) Our country’s plumbing system is aging, and climate change as well as the fact that many sanitation workers are near retirement means an increasing likelihood of sanitation system collapse.

So what can we do besides flush it all away? Surprisingly, a lot. There are companies repurposing waste to make compost that can be used by farmers. Others are using excrement to create biogas which can be transformed into energy. Can we overcome our disgust about poo enough to be willing to use it in novel ways?

To utilize our waste, it needs to be separated. However, toilet designs that sort pee from poop for reuse, for ex-



ample, may be off-putting. (They may also be more problematic for women as well, as Wald explains in explicit detail.) Getting people to replace their old familiar toilets can also be a hard sell.

But Wald says how to get rid of our waste is not the only issue. Sexism and classism raise their ugly heads around elimination as well. Women take longer in the bathroom than men, since they have to menstruate as well as sit to urinate. Many places refuse restroom service to the general public, which can include the homeless. There is a social stigma related to bathroom behavior too: ridicule surrounding toileting needs can be found everywhere.

Wald concludes her enlightening, thought-provoking book with a small list of suggestions for how the average person might make changes to ease the burden on our sanitation system. Even altering the type of toilet paper we use can make a difference.

So don’t be afraid to talk about poop! And we can start soon: World Toilet Day is November 19. [NW](#)

**Pipe Dreams:**  
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# GHOSTS

## A-HAUNTING WE WILL GO

### AS EARTH TILTS EVER FARTHER FROM THE SUN AND THE DAYS BECOME SHORTER

and darkness gobbles up ever more light, the veil between the physical and the spiritual becomes gossamer thin so that the living and the dead are separated by no more than a membrane of stretched cobwebs. Or, at least that's what my ancestors—the Celts—believed, as did virtually every other human culture that ever inhabited the globe.



#### ABOUT THE TIME

Christianity spread to the hinterlands, Pope Gregory III wisely moved the festival honoring saints and martyrs from May 13 to November 1, giving birth to All Saints Day, and of course the night preceding it—All Hallows Eve, which in time became Halloween. Rather than trying to eradicate bred-in-the-bone pagan beliefs, the Church embraced them. They even observed these feast days in the same manner that Samhain had been celebrated from time in memorial with giant bonfires, parades, and plain folk masquerading as saints and angels, as devils and demons.

On Halloween and the short days and the long nights that follow it, we all seem more open to the existence of the supernatural. When the mortal coil has been reduced to a worm pudding or an urn of dusted kitty litter, something still remains, for embers of the living glow well beyond the grave.

As a matter of fact, about 60 percent of people worldwide claim to have had at least one ghostly encounter. One in three people insist they have either lived or stayed in a house they felt was haunted. And there are those among us who see ghosts quite regularly.

A couple weeks before Halloween I met with two women who have seen ghosts on more than one occasion. One generally sees orbs; the other sees vapors.

Our story—or at least one of them—begins more than thirty years ago out in Goochland County. Sandy had just lost a dear friend in a drowning accident. Throughout the summer Sandy thought about her friend, and then, on one particularly warm afternoon

as she meditated about her deceased contemporary, she asked if there was some way she could meet with her again. Almost instantly a deep chill fell on the room; it had become so frigid Sandy's breath fogged the air, and she was terrified.

"No, no I can't do it," Sandy yelled. "Please don't come." And as she finished the second sentence, the chill left the air, and the warmth of summer returned.

Sandy and I are talking about this long ago time as if it just happened yesterday. "It was an atmospheric change," she says. "I was open to it."

And that wasn't the first time Sandy had encountered a ghost, a spirit, an otherworldly presence.

"I think that for me it just seems normal," she says. "I think that any time that there is, as wild as it sounds, a spirit nearby I sense it just like I do a person in their physical state. So I think I've always been in tune to that and as a result of that I think I have been allowed to see things and hear things and experience things that involve people from the spiritual world."

When I suggest it's a gift, Sandy shakes her head. "I don't know that I would call it a gift," she says. "I think that anybody can sense spirits, if they're open to it."

Sandy invites me to think of early childhood. "When we're very young we see things," she says. "Some people call them imaginary friends. And I think that as we get older we're told, 'That's just a pretend friend, there's really nobody there.' And I think that you lose that ability because you start believing that it's not acceptable. And I think people that are in tune with it as adults think

that it's not only acceptable but it's real and there's no reason to turn it off. So I think that everybody can, I just don't think that they allow it to happen."

One of her earliest experiences with ghosts occurred when she was twelve years old. Sandy was in her bedroom alone while her parents were in the living room. She sensed that there was somebody there with her, but there was no one in the room with her. Yet the room changed, the temperature dropped, the air seemed different.

The following week, her cousin spent the night with Sandy in the same bedroom. As they were sitting in bed talking, Sandy's cousin sat bolt upright.

"Oh my gosh, what is this?" she asked.

"You feel it, too?"

"Yes, what is it?"

Just like before there had been a sort of atmospheric change.

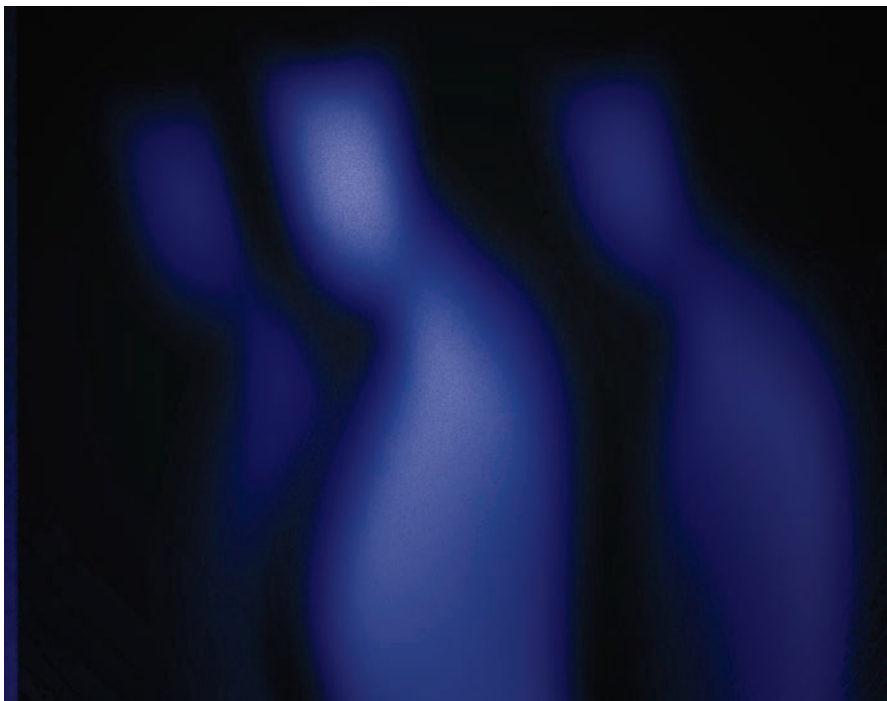
"I don't know what it is, but I think it's a ghost," Sandy said. "I think something's here, I think the home is haunted."

Over the course of her life, Sandy has encountered more than twenty spirits in one form or other. "There have been so many instances, and sometimes I just feel a presence," she says. "Other times they just look like a white vapor, like steam and it's typically large like a person. Most of the time they're not scary, they're just there. Charles, I've had some in my own home, but they've been not menacing at all, maybe even warm and welcoming."

That wasn't the case more than thirty years ago not long after Sandy had met the ghost of her friend who had drowned. Sandy was in her early twen-

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN





ties at the time, just starting off, and she was looking for a place to live in on her own. She saw a classified ad placed by another young woman who was seeking roommates. Sandy contacted the woman, met with her for an interview, and was one of four roommates the young woman selected. It was a gorgeous place, and spacious, an old, well-built clapboard on Hermitage Road in Richmond's Northside.

"And the home was plenty big for all of us," says Sandy.

But almost from the moment they moved in, something about the place seemed creepy. "This was just a few nights after we got there," Sandy remembers. "We were in the living room and our dogs all ran to this one spot and just started growling and barking and going crazy as if there was something there that they didn't like. And we just kind of laughed it off."

A couple nights later, Sandy's good friend Hannah dropped by for a visit. She had a friend in tow, another young woman whom Sandy had never met. When she greeted them at the door, Hannah entered, but her friend stepped back from the threshold and shuddered.

"I can't go in there," she said.

"What's going on?" asked Hannah.

"I'm out of here," her friend said, and with that she headed back to her car.

Sandy was stunned and a little hurt. Hannah said, "I'll be right back." She joined her friend at the car. Hannah's arms were folded across her chest as the pair spoke. A few minutes later Hannah returned to the house and had a talk with Sandy.

"Okay, so she said that she used to be a devil worshipper," Hannah told Sandy about her friend. "And she says your house is black and evil inside and she

cannot chance going into that home."

Not long after that, another event would occur that would convince Sandy and her roommates that it was time to move out. One night at about ten o'clock three of the young women were hanging out in the kitchen; the other two were out of town.

The young women felt safe in the house and had not bothered locking the front door. As they talked among themselves, they heard the front door open. They all looked at one another, and each said, at the same time: "Are you expecting anybody?" And each one of them shook her head.

"We were all a little freaked out by this point so we all got something, a knife, a bottle, to arm ourselves with," Sandy tells me. "So as we walked in there we heard whatever it was walking up the steps, and we yelled out, 'Who's there?'"

There was no response, so the trio started climbing the stairs all the while screaming, "WHO IS IT?" But no one answered.

They checked every room and made their way along the hall to the rear of the house to the stairwell that led to the kitchen. They descended the staircase together, closely knit, and then entered Sandy's bedroom which was right off the kitchen. They wanted to get out of the house and there was an exterior door in Sandy's room. As they left the kitchen, the door to the staircase was suddenly flung open and then slammed with force against the wall. But there was no one there.

"We heard someone walk over in front of where we were and they emitted this unintelligible sound," says Sandy. "It was somewhere between a man and an animal in pain. It was terrifying. We slammed the door closed as quickly as we could and then we turned around and ran out the back door."

As they were running to a neighbor's house, Sandy and one of her roommates froze and stared through the kitchen windows. It was unlike anything Sandy had ever seen before. Every cabinet door along with the refrigerator door and the oven door was opening and closing, over and over again. There was a clang and a clatter, and it would not stop.

"Every single thing in that kitchen that could move was moving," Sandy recalls. "And that's when I decided, it's time to move."

It took time to get out, though, and before they did, Sandy would experience one of the most frightening moments in her life. She was sleeping in her darkened room when footsteps roused her. She reached over to the nightstand by her bed and turned on the table lamp. She quickly looked around the room, and seeing nothing, took a deep breath and put out the light. The footsteps started again, and they were right next to her bed. She reached out again, but knocked the lamp onto the floor. Glass shattered and she felt something settle down on her mattress.

"And that's the only time in my life that anything's tried to communicate with me," says Sandy. "It was like a man's voice, but garbled. I was sitting there, tears were streaming down my face, and I said, 'I don't know what you want. I can't understand you and you're terrifying me.'"

Sandy grabbed her pet poodle, jumped off the end of the bed and made a beeline to one of her roommate's room. Unbeknownst to Sandy, this roommate had a male guest sleeping with her that night. But that didn't deter her.

"I jumped into her bed right between them and said, 'I don't care what you think or what you say, I'm staying here tonight,'" says Sandy. "And as soon as I lay down the blinds flew off the window from across the room and landed just behind us and fell down on the bed. That was terrifying. It was the only time I've ever really felt threatened by a spirit."

The very night after Sandy vacated the haunted house on Hermitage, she had another brush with the spirit world. "I needed a place to stay so I went to my cousin's house," Sandy says. "I was on her couch in the living room and I was getting ready to go to sleep and I looked up and there was this white vapor by the stairs. And I said to myself, 'I leave a crazy haunted home and now I see something here, too. This makes no sense.'"

Sandy ran to her cousin's bedroom and got her up.

"You didn't tell me there's something here," Sandy said.

Her cousin rubbed her eyes. "Oh no," she said. "You saw it?"

"Yes I saw it."

Her cousin assured her that this spirit was benign. "She said it had never bothered her but she knew it was there," Sandy remembers. "Every now and then it would hide something, which ghosts love to do. Or it would move something, or it would do something else to show its presence. That was on Hanover Avenue in the Museum District.

Just several blocks away from that house in the museum district, I enter the home of woman who lives on Stuart Avenue. Like Sandy, she has seen her share of ghosts.

We sit in the living room of Beth's elegantly restored row home. Sunlight streams into the room, and her dog, Sport, once he's sniffed me out, moves to a pool of light next to the fireplace and curls into himself.

This is the exact spot where, six years ago, Beth met an apparition who stood inches away from where I'm sitting.

Beth had just recently moved into the house. That early spring evening she was in the rear of her home in the small room on the other side of the kitchen. She tapped away at the keyboard of her computer, and in the background she could hear the former president on CNN saying something that was absolutely asinine about the size of his genitalia. She couldn't believe what she was hearing, but it wouldn't be the last time. That's when her dog, who was in the living room, erupted in a frenzy of growling and barking. She made her way to the living room. Sport was barking uncontrollably, running in tight circles on the living room floor.

"What is wrong?" she asked, cradling Sport in her lap as she lowered herself down on the couch. She was stroking her pet, reassuring him that everything was okay. And then she looked up, and her eyes widened as she stared into the dining room.

"I could see it plain as day walking past me, and Sport bolted after it," Beth says. "When I saw it walk past me, the first thing I thought was that I was having a frontal brain lobe stroke or something. I thought I was seeing things. I was freaked out."

When I ask Beth what she had seen, she says, "It was a gentleman in a tweed sports jacket. It was brown, and he was balding," then points to a spot right next to me, "And he just walked through there. It was solid but I could see through it."

The next day, after a restless night, she remembered two security cam-





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eras, one in the living and the other  
on the front porch.

"And so I thought, I can look at the video  
camera," Beth tells me. Though the cam-  
era did not catch an image of the apparition  
it did record another anomaly which  
confirmed what Beth had seen.

"I could see a white orb dropping  
from the ceiling in front of the video  
camera, right where you're sitting,"  
she says. "And outside there was a  
white orb that came down, too. And  
all I could think was, 'Oh my gosh, my  
house is haunted.'"

Beth then describes the translucent  
globes that appeared out of nowhere.  
"They were sparkly white orbs and you  
could definitely see them drop," she says.  
And try as she might, she could not calm  
her dog down. "He wouldn't quit bark-  
ing. He was just going crazy, and I was  
thinking that thing is still in here."

Shortly after this visitation, Beth de-  
cided to contact the Monsignor at  
nearby St. Benedict Catholic Church.  
"I made sure I got the top dog, I didn't  
want to talk to just a priest," she says.  
"When he got on the phone I said, 'I  
need you to come and help get a ghost  
out of my house. I just moved in, and  
I'm not leaving this house.'"

As good as his word, he dropped by  
the next afternoon. "So he came with  
his holy water and blessed each en-  
trance to my home," says Beth. "And  
then he walked through each room,  
said a prayer, and sprinkled each room  
with holy water."

But when he left, Beth could still feel  
an unsettling presence and her dog  
continued to bark. "That's when I just  
knew it was still in here," she says. "He  
didn't get it out. It did not want to leave."

Beth, on the other hand, did want  
to leave. So the next day she called a  
friend of hers who's a realtor. "Would  
you come look at my house and tell me  
how much you could get for it?" she  
asked her. "So my realtor friend came  
over and she told me what I could get  
for the house."

Her realtor friend tried to dissuade  
her. "Beth, you love this house, you  
just moved in, you don't want to sell  
it," she said.

Beth told her about the apparition and  
the constant fear she was feeling. "You  
can't tell anybody I ever told you about  
this," she said. Her realtor nodded and  
then said this, "I've got the girl for you  
that can help you."

"Are you kidding?" Beth said.

"Nope," said the realtor. "She will get  
it out. I have sold homes that actually  
have ghosts in them, and I've called  
this girl and she's gotten them out."

Beth took the woman's number and  
called. This woman, who calls herself a  
psychic, removes spirits with the help of  
angels. And in Beth's case she was able to  
do it over the phone. "She asked for her-  
self and me to be put in a divine sacred  
space and then she was able to talk to  
angels," according to Beth. "She cleared  
my house and she told me it was a gen-  
tleman that had just died somewhere in  
the neighborhood and he was just walk-  
ing around and he didn't believe that he  
could go to heaven."

The same woman would help Beth  
again, with a particularly troubling  
presence. At that time she was clearing  
out a storage unit she had on the Out-  
er Banks. "I unlocked the storage and  
something scared the dickens out of  
me," says Beth. "I was scared to death.  
I felt something beside me, something  
big and creepy." Although she couldn't  
see it with her eyes, she envisioned it  
in her mind.

"Do you remember the Gossamer  
from Bugs Bunny with a big head?"  
she says. "He looked like that."

She called the woman who had re-  
moved the spirit from her home in  
the Museum District. "She blessed the  
space and got rid of it," Beth says. "And  
she described it just as I saw it with my  
minds eyes. She told me it looked like a  
Swamp Monster kind of thing. She said  
it was a ghoulish or something like that.  
Her description hit it right on the mark."

Like Sandy, Beth has encountered  
spirits of one kind or other on numer-  
ous occasions. As a matter, the woman  
who summons angels to rid a home of  
spirits thought Beth had something of  
a gift. "She said I could learn because I  
have some of that ability," Beth says. "I  
said, 'I don't want to learn, I don't want  
to fool with them' I would rather not  
see or know ghosts."

But she does, particularly when she is  
in a certain frame of mind. "I'm always  
in this extreme place of peace, and for  
some reason that's when something  
happens," says Beth. "I have to be in  
this complete calm place, and happy  
and peaceful. That's when I see things.  
It might be when I'm open."


She remembers an incident that oc-  
curred about twenty-five years ago. It  
was the first time she had ever received  
a full body massage, and she had never  
been more relaxed. She was in a state  
of euphoria when she left the massage  
therapist's office, and the sensation  
lasted. That afternoon, as her children  
got off the school bus, both of them  
glowed with a shiny blue light. And  
that evening as the family ate at a local  
Italian restaurant she saw the owner in  
a way she had never seen him before.  
"I could see into him and knew what a



good man he was," Beth says.

But it was late that night that something would change Beth forever. "I had this dream that there was someone looking at me and they were in a cloud and that's when something told me, open your eyes," she says. "I sat up in the bed and I was looking around and the entire room was white. I was still in this perfect place of peace, but when I realized this was not of this world, I totally freaked and I felt it go over my head, it brushed my hair back and I could feel it dissipate all around me. It was all around me. I got down on my knees and turned on the light and said, 'Oh my God what was that.' It was white and it was moving and you could see through it. It was like. It was more like a fog."

From then on, Beth would see things that others could not, feel things that others could not sense. "The door had been opened and I never have been able to shut it again," she says. "When that door's open I still see things. I had an awakening, or an enlightenment."

Beth strokes her dog between his ears. She looks over at me, and beyond me. "I don't like to see them," she says. "And I don't like to feel them. I'd rather just go on with life." 



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# Northside Dental CO

## Changing Perceptions

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

**I**NTERIOR SPACES, when appointed with care and artistic precision, can make a visit memorable and enjoyable. Less is often more, and muted, neutral colors, coupled with inconspicuous lighting, put the spirit at ease. That's certainly true with the space that houses Northside Dental CO and Bates Ortho on Richmond's Northside, an interior created by Taylor Bates, whose husband, Dr. Sheldon Bates, an orthodontist, shares the building with Northside Dental CO.

When you pass through the front door, you're immediately greeted at the reception desk by a delightful woman who offers you a T-shirt along with cup of coffee from one of the city's local roasteries.

"People can have really terrible thoughts or feelings about going to the dentist so I think we really wanted to transform the way people thought about it, even as they walk in," says Katelin Heim, Northside Dental CO's office manager who excels at both marketing and customer experience. "This is not just your standard dental experience. It's changing perceptions, and also bringing something really cool to the Northside." As we walk down the corridor to an office on our right, I gaze into the dental rooms that flank the left wall. Each room is well-lighted and crisp, in a word, welcoming. Not in the least institutional. "Calming, but relaxing," says Katelin. "Kind of a coffee shop sort of a vibe."

After we take our seats in Katelin's office, we're joined by the two dentists who head up Northside Dental's team—Dr. Shelley Yang and Dr. Chelsea Tolbert.

Chelsea tells me that after completing her residency in York, Pennsylvania she decided to come back to Richmond where she had attended VCU's School of Dentistry. This was on about the time that COVID struck with full force. "We had a lot of struggles finding an office," she says. "And then this opportunity presented itself. A really beautiful office in a great part of town, and there's a huge need for dental offices here. It has been great."

Northside Dental opened its doors for the first time on July 25, 2020 about

five months before the first vaccination—outside of a clinical trial—was administered in this country.

Opening dental offices during the pandemic had its share of pitfalls, but there were bright spots as well. "It delayed our opening just a little bit with the pandemic shutting everything down," Katelin tells me. "But when things reopened, a lot of other established dental offices were completely backed up because they couldn't see patients for three to four months. So we were actually able to kind of assist getting people back into the swing of things. We had been able to hit the ground running with COVID protocols in place from day one."

Since their opening about a year and a half ago, Northside Dental has attracted many folks. They have about 2,000 patients today, and that number will continue to grow. "We're newbies, but we're still expanding," Katelin says. "The response from the community was greater than we could have ever imagined. Bellevue, Laburnum Park, Ginter Park. We get a lot of our patients through referral, too, which is the best compliment that we can receive—having our patients suggest us as their dentist to their family members and loved ones."

This is a full-service dental clinic with fourteen employees including two dentists, four hygienists, assistant hygienists, an insurance coordinator, a receptionist, and, of course, an office manager, who oversees the entire operation.

Dr. Chelsea Tolbert describes the services provided at Northside Dental. "We do hygiene checks, and we also do restorative work," she says. "That means fillings, root canals, crowns, dentures and extractions. We're also trying to grow the implant part of this office."

If a patient requires surgery for something like an impacted wisdom tooth she is referred to an oral surgeon. "We don't put patients to sleep," Chelsea says. "We just do local anesthesia."

Both dentists here possess extremely good bedside manners. They put their patients at ease, and educate them as well.

"We try to make patients as comfortable as we possibly can," says Chelsea. "I think laying back is kind of a submis-



*As clean and attractive inside as out, Northside Dental CO and Bates Orthodontics offices offer a calming and welcoming "coffee shop sort of vibe".*



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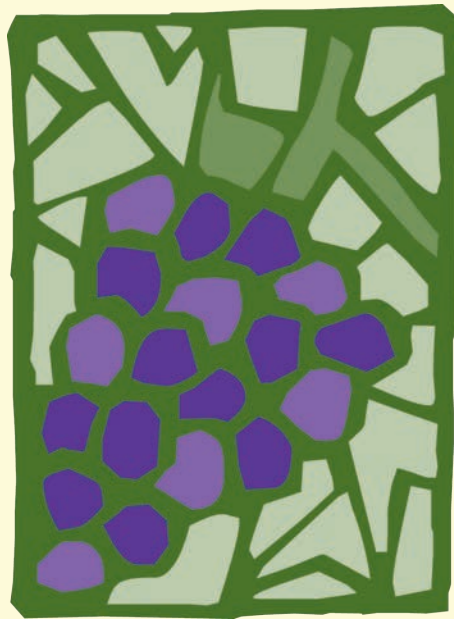
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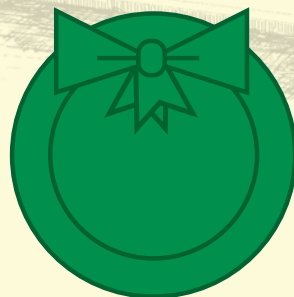
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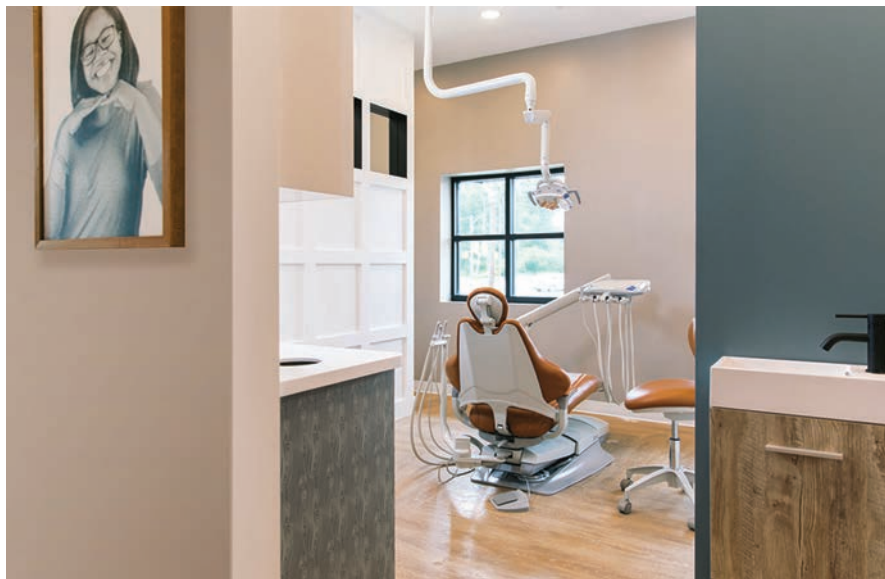
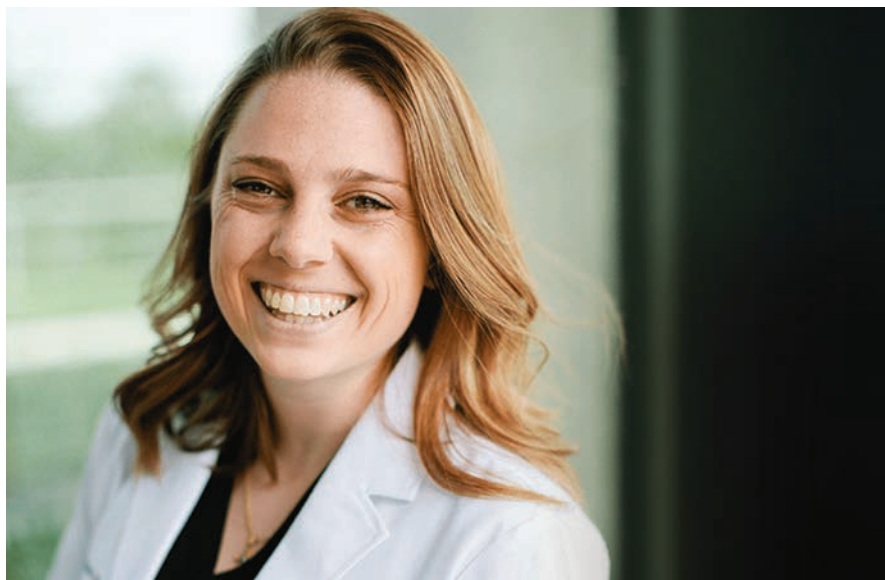
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## BUSINESS PROFILE



Top to bottom:  
Dr. Chelsea Tolbert, Dr. Shelley Yang, and “The Operatory”, one of several open,  
brightly-lit dental rooms.

sive position, and people feel vulnerable. They have a lack of control, and don’t always understand the procedure.”

To alleviate these fears the good doctors here educate their patients. “We really pride ourselves on explaining what we’re doing to the patient and giving them options so that they feel

comfortable to make their own decision,” Chelsea says. “We want them to fully understand everything that we’re presenting so they can make a knowledgeable choice, and I think from there they start to feel much more comfortable and relaxed.”

Just a few hours earlier in the day, a pa-

tient who had previously developed a fairly acute dental anxiety at another dental practice, came back to Northside Dental after an initial consultation. “Last week he came in with a lot of anxiety and I talked to him today,” Chelsea tells me. “I asked him, ‘How are you feeling?’ He said, ‘I don’t have any more dental anxiety. Coming here and being able to express my concerns has totally changed my feelings. I don’t have any more fear.’”

Northside Dental’s other dentist, Dr. Shelley Yang, who studied dentistry at West Virginia University, was attracted to her chosen field since childhood.

“It goes back to when I was about eleven years old,” she says. “My hygienist and my dentist always made me feel good and safe about my teeth, and I’ve always wanted to help people. I’ve always liked helping people, and I’ve always been drawn to teeth. It’s the first thing I notice on somebody I meet.”

And now Shelley is offering to her patients what she received as a girl. “A lot of kids have a fear of being in any sort of medical environment because they probably think, ‘I’m getting a needle,’” says Shelley.

At her first job as a dentist, Shelley had the good fortune of working with a dental assistant who had a background in pediatrics. “And we tried to give the kids a great experience,” says Dr. Yang.

At Northside Dental, Shelley applies what she learned. “Most of the time when we give children local anesthesia and stick them with the needle, they don’t even know it,” she says.

Shelley describes the process. “We place a topical anesthetic for a very long time and we do this trick where we hide the needle,” she explains. “And then we spray high pressured water in that area and say we’re washing off the nasty tasting jelly.”

And that’s when the young patient is jabbed. But with the jet of water and the topical anesthetic, the child doesn’t feel a thing. “They don’t even know what’s going on,” Dr. Shelley Lang says. “So there is no anxiety.”

As I make my way to the waiting area and the reception desk, Katelin Heim, who walks with me, says, “In this office everyone matches really well together, which is great because if everyone likes each other everyone’s willing to offer a helping hand. Serving patients and providing quality care is the most important thing to all of us.”

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# A Short History of Anti-Vaxxers

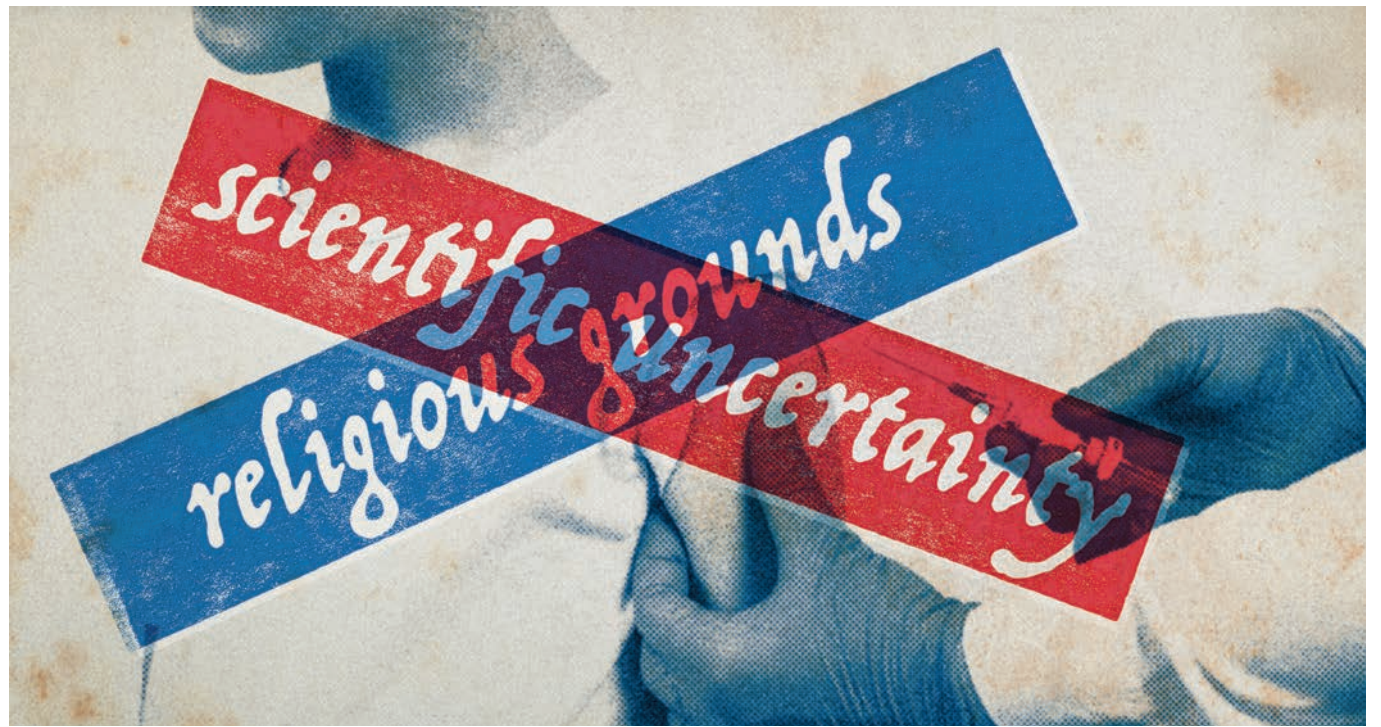
## The Early Years

by JACK R. JOHNSON

**IT'S A SAD TRUISM THAT** anti-vaccination movements have existed for as long as vaccination itself. You can start with the first vaccine in modern history for small pox or even before. In fact, you could start with what we might think of as the UR vaccine, a process called variolation or inoculation. Rather than a medically engineered vaccine, to combat smallpox centuries ago people simply inhaled the dried scabs of smallpox lesions. Or they rubbed or injected pus from smallpox lesions into a healthy person's scratched skin. This process, though primitive, was used to effectively prevent smallpox in Africa, China, India and the Ottoman Empire.

According to Dr. Vincent Iannelli, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu originally introduced variolation to England, having witnessed the practice in Turkey in 1717. On her return to England, she had her four-year-old daughter variolated in the presence of physicians of the Royal Court in 1721. Later on that year an experimental variolation of six prisoners in Newgate Prison in London was conducted. In the experiment, six condemned prisoners were variolated and later exposed to smallpox with the promise of freedom if they survived. The experiment was a success, they survived and were set free. Soon variolation was drawing attention from the royal family, who helped promote the procedure throughout England. However, the process wasn't 100% safe. In fact, it caused adverse reactions and sometimes death in about 2% of the cases. The death of Prince Octavius of Great Britain, eighth son and thirteenth child of King George III in 1783 brought about some of the very first anti-vaxxer sentiments.

While variolation was being debated in Europe, Cotton Mather (yes, that Cotton Mather of the Salem witch trials) was doing a great deal to promote the variolation or inoculation as it was called in the colonies to combat the 1721 small pox epidemic in Boston. Mather is believed to have first learned about inoculation from a different source: his West African slave Onesimus. Mather wrote in his journal: "he



told me that he had undergone the operation which had given something of the smallpox and would forever preserve him from it, adding that was often used in West Africa." After confirming this account with other West African slaves and reading of similar methods being performed in Turkey, Mather became an avid proponent of inoculation. When the 1721 smallpox epidemic struck Boston, Mather took the opportunity to campaign for the systematic application of inoculation. What followed was a fierce public debate, but also one of the first widespread and well-documented uses of inoculation to combat such an epidemic in the West.

Cotton Mather initially reached out to the medical community of Boston, imploring them to use the inoculation method. One physician, Zabdiel Boylston, heeded his call, but most other doctors were hostile to the idea. At the forefront of the anti-inoculation contingency was one of Boston's only physicians who actually held a medical degree, Dr. William Douglass. The arguments against inoculation have a familiar ring, ranging from disagreement on religious grounds to scientific uncertainty. While many argued that inoculation violated divine law, by either inflicting harm on innocent people or by attempting to counter God's specific

will, the main argument that Douglass made was that inoculation was untested and seemingly based on folklore. Douglas feared that unchecked use of inoculation would only quicken the spread of disease throughout the city.

Most Bostonians were understandably skeptical as well. One of them was a teenage boy who would grow up to become one of America's founding fathers: Benjamin Franklin. At the time, Franklin was a lowly apprentice at a newly-launched Boston paper with literary pretensions, the *New England Courant*. His boss was also his older brother, James Franklin. The elder Franklin sibling was dead-set against inoculation for many of the reasons listed above. He was also against Puritan ministers like Cotton Mather—so there was an unspoken political angle to their antipathy.

According to Kiona N. Smith, "Franklin insisted, officially, that the *Courant* didn't take sides, but he happily gave anti-variolation advocates a platform in its pages. And with his younger brother's help, he also printed pamphlets denouncing the idea, and the words published by the Franklin brothers incited violence against Mather, Boylston, and other proponents of inoculation. One reader even tossed a lit firebomb through Mather's sitting room window in the wee hours

of the morning. A breeze put out the fuse just in time, allowing Mather to read the attached note: "I'll inoculate you with this," it read.

As the epidemic began to diminish in early 1722, Mather and Boylston had collected surprisingly thorough data that made a clear argument for the effectiveness of inoculation. Boylston, who had personally inoculated some 287 people, recorded that of those inoculated only 2% had died. In comparison, the mortality rate of the naturally occurring disease during that year was 14.8%.

A scientist at heart, this helped to change Benjamin Franklin's mind. But it was the death of his young son that really cinched the matter. In 1736, he watched his four-year-old boy Francis die of smallpox. That loss changed Franklin's views forever. "I long regretted bitterly and still regret that I had not given it to him by inoculation," he wrote.

In 1796 Dr. Edward Jenner would develop a much safer method for controlling smallpox, a vaccine based on the cowpox that would eventually go on to eradicate smallpox across the world. Yet that amazing goal wouldn't happen until well into 1980, nearly 200 years later—primarily because of the continued resistance from those who refused to be vaccinated. **NB**



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## SET IT OFF AT 1708 GALLERY AND ICA

1708 Gallery and The Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University (ICA) and are excited to announce Set It Off, a multi-site, sound-based exhibition by artist and composer Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste.

Set It Off consists of two variations. At 1708, visitors will encounter a subwoofer suspended above a square black pool made of wood and polyethylene, and at the ICA visitors will be invited to enter two large-scale black cubes built of similar materials. Each structure

uniquely incorporates the circulation of water from the James River, reminding us to consider our bodies as mediums for environmental pollutants.

The show runs through January 23, 2022 at 1708, and continues through June 19, 2022 at ICA.

**1708 Gallery**  
319 West Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23220  
Phone: 804 643 1708  
1708gallery.org

## 43RD STREET GALLERY 36TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

This unique art show begins November 24th and runs until Christmas Eve. The fine selection of work by local artisans offers holiday gift ideas for everyone on your list. Ornaments, pottery, jewelry and accessories are available at RVA's fine craft gallery and pottery studio.

There will also be a Southside Holiday Art Walk in the neighborhood on Saturday, December 11th from 10-4. Come see 40 artists selling their wares to find more gifts and stocking stuffers for the holidays.

**43rd Street Gallery**  
Wednesday-Friday, 10-6;  
Saturday, 10-5; Sunday 12-4.  
1412 W. 43rd Street  
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## ART EXHIBITS AT THE MAIN RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Gellman Room features "Ellis Island Immigrants: Faces of America", 24 portraits painted in oils from black-and-white photos taken on Ellis Island from the late 1800s until about 1925 by North Prince George County artist Sandra Nardone. Ms. Nardone's accompanying book will be available for sale and signing.

In the Dooley Foyer visit "City Street Life: Seen by Three", six street experiences, each illustrated by three Richmond artists, Steve Ferretti, Lisa Lezell Levine and Ed Tepper, are presented in this exhibit through their personal expression, artistic style and preferred medium.

In the Dooley Hall experience "Friends in the Streets: an artist's view on homelessness" Through this four-year project, the artist, Connie de Bordenave, reveals the dignity, diversity and worth of each

of the people she met on the streets.

You can visit "Captured on Canvas", which focuses on the interaction of man-made and nature, and the play of light, both natural and artificial. This exhibit of acrylic on canvas paintings by artist Jordan Flower features detailed views from Richmond and the surrounding area

In the Second Floor Gallery is "Full Circle", collages ranging from natural sciences, the nocturnal sky, and surreal scenarios on printed photography taken from parks and places in Richmond, Virginia, and Chicago, Illinois. Changing the original photos with paint and catalog clippings created these whimsical and fantasy-based pieces by mixed-media artist, Gina Catlin.

Shows run through November 30.

**Richmond Public Library**  
101 East Franklin Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219  
804 646 7223

## THE NORTHSIDE PAINTERS' 4TH ANNUAL ART SHOW AND SALE

Join Northside Painters for a one-day only sale of original fine art from 9:30 till 3:30 on Saturday, November 20 at The Painting Class in Bellevue on Richmond's Northside. Works by Brenda Stankus, Elizabeth Barrett, Darlene Marschak, Charlie King, Stanley Berkowitz, Randi Hill, Susan Fore and others.

This is the fourth year studio artists have gathered to show and sell their work in various media and many styles. Prices, set by the artists, vary. Rain or shine. Cash or check only.

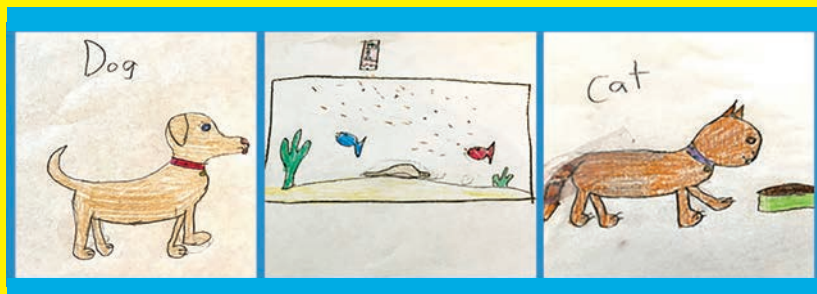
Past shows have been successful, and more importantly "lots of fun", according to Brenda Stankus, owner of The Painting Class. "People from all over Richmond and beyond come to enjoy viewing the artist's works," she says.

Last year, due to COVID, the sale took a gap year. "Many of these works have been made since staying home with COVID began," says Brenda. "It is very interesting to see what has been created by the artists as we have all moved through new barriers." **NJ**

**The Painting Class**  
1229 Bellevue Avenue  
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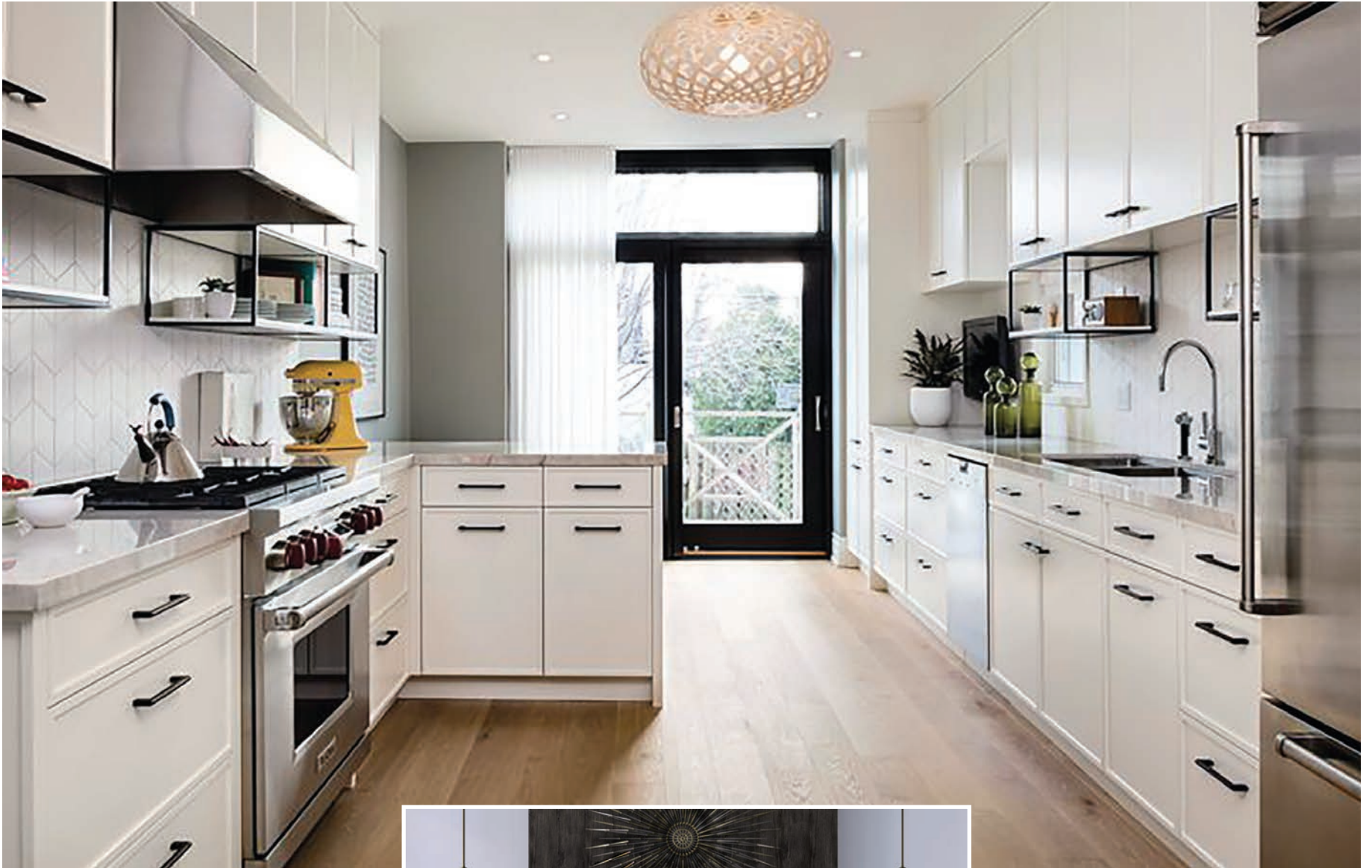


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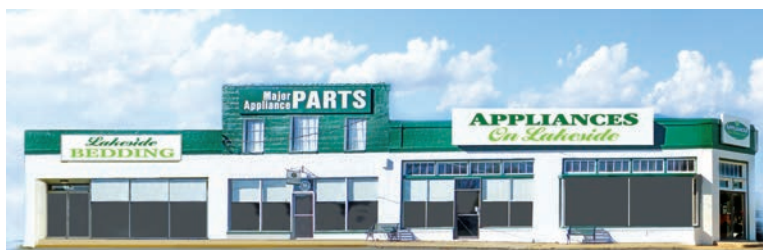


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