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Cover photograph by Rebecca D'Angelo

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## DIVERSIONS

# The Ruby Jewels of Hanover: A Local Legend and a Recipe

by FAYERUZ REGAN

**L**ATE SUMMER MEANS Hanover tomatoes spilling from baskets at the farmers' market. It means tomato sandwiches on white bread with Duke's mayonnaise, or if you're lucky, a BLT. But what's the big deal about Hanover tomatoes?

Store-bought tomatoes lack the tang and the deep red flesh of our own backyard crops, but Hanover tomatoes can even take our backyard varieties up a notch. They contain an extra sweetness that's hard to emulate. What makes Hanover tomatoes taste so special? According to the farmers, it's the soil.

The soil in Hanover is coastal and rich in sand, which creates an ideal pH for growing tomatoes. In a state known for its red clay, much of Virginia's soil has poor drainage. This makes for less-than-ideal growing conditions for tomatoes. Hanover has a little clay mixed in with the sand and rich loamy soil, making the perfect storm of nutrients. And while this type of soil may be found in other parts of the country, or even the state, the juicy crops from Hanover are a sure thing that Virginians look forward to every late summer.

And yet, many naysayers claim that the Hanover tomato phenomenon is a result of clever marketing. The Dodd family had a lot to do with making the Hanover tomato what it is today. They spent 150 years farming on the same 500 acres with an average of 250,000 tomato plants annually. Robert and Jane Dodd were the fifth and final generation to carry on the family tradition. Robert Dodd was the family patriarch, and when he died, they decided to dissolve the family business. One of their employees was Rosa Nuñez. Prior to coming to Dodd's farm, she left Mexico for a new life in California, working as an agricultural laborer. A relative persuaded to give the Richmond region a try, where she found work on the Dodd family farm.

Nuñez and her family were treated well by the Dodds. Within two years, she was running their packing warehouse and greenhouses, while her husband was field supervisor and Dodd's second-in-command. When the Dodd's dissolved their business, the Nuñez



Prepping for fried green tomatoes.

family secured 135 acres of land that had been rented to the Dodd family. Their expertise and deep connection to the community helped them carry on the tradition. Today Rosa's Garden serves as an immigrant success story and a testament to the lure of the Hanover tomato.

There's a strong belief that the best tomatoes in the country come from New Jersey. After all, it is the Garden State and I can personally attest to the quality of farm stand tomatoes en route to the Jersey shore. But do they hold up to a Hanover tomato? Joe Sparatta is the chef and owner of Richmond's Southbound, and told Southern Living, "I'm from New Jersey – born and raised – and people say the best [tomatoes] in the country come from NJ," Sparatta says. "After being here in Virginia for the last ten years, I absolutely believe the best tomatoes do come from Hanover County." **NJ**

On that note, here's my favorite recipe for fried green Hanover tomatoes:

### Ingredients:

- 2 green Hanover tomatoes
- 1 cup white flour
- 3 eggs, beaten
- Vegetable oil for frying
- 1/2 cup breadcrumbs
- 1/2 cup panko

- a pinch of onion powder
- a pinch of garlic powder
- salt and pepper
- 1/2 cup of drained pickled pepperoncini peppers
- 4 oz feta cheese
- a dollop of yogurt
- 1 squeeze of lemon juice

### Instructions:

Slice tomatoes 1/4 inch thick

Drag slices through white flour, then dip into the beaten egg wash

Dip the slices into the final batter. For the batter, mix the breadcrumbs, panko and dry spices.

Lay the slices in a frying pan filled with vegetable oil, and fry for about 2 minutes on each side, until golden brown.

Remove from oil to cool on a paper towel-covered plate.

For the topping, pulse drained pepperoncini peppers with feta, yogurt, a squeeze of lemon juice, and salt and pepper to taste.

Spoon the topping onto the fried green tomatoes and serve while hot.

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# Sit-Down Dining Returns At Stir Crazy and The Mill

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

**T**WO OF NORTHSIDE'S favorite spots are again open for sit-down dining—Stir Crazy Café and The Mill on MacArthur, both located in the heart of Bellevue.

The other restaurants along MacArthur—Dot's Back Inn, Demi's Mediterranean Kitchen, Zorba's Pizza Express, and Mi Jalisco—have been open for seated dining for some time now.

Mid-March of 2020 saw the closure of most restaurants in Richmond. Overnight, many of them shuttered, at least temporarily.

"March 18 was the last day of sit-down service," said Vickie Hall, co-owner of Stir Crazy Café in Bellevue. "We reopened for takeout on May 14, so we were closed for almost two months."

The same was the case just up the street.

"Everybody remembers their last day," according to Amy Foxworthy, co-owner of The Mill on MacArthur. "March 18, 2020 was our last day. We closed down and did a lot of deep-cleaning, and were able to reopen for carry out at the end of April or the beginning of May."

Now, both The Mill and Stir Crazy are seating customers again, and business is booming.

I visited Stir Crazy a couple hours after they reopened. There were a lot of familiar faces waiting in line, hugs exchanged, pandemic stories told; and behind the counter there were even more familiar faces.

The morning hustle was in full swing, but Vickie talked with me near one of the latest features in the coffee shop, a sort of digitized hearth with a blazing fire that in the cooler months will actually emit heat. "We wanted a kind of cozy lounge area in the back away from all the seating up front," Vickie told me. "So, we took one of the walls and installed an electric fireplace and it's got a cool little holographic flame going up and then in the winter it will actually put out heat so it will be nice and cozy back here."

Along with installing the mock fireplace, the staff completely redid the in-



*Stir Crazy on reopening day.*

terior, from repainting to making the menu chalkboard much easier to read.

And there have been a lot of changes in the back of the house as well. "We've put in some new prep stations, added another freezer back there," said Vickie. "And, hopefully soon, we're going to be adding another convection oven." They also installed an automatic dishwasher.

Ian, who has been a mainstay at Stir Crazy longer than anyone else, approached Vickie. He told her they have another downtown delivery order for tomorrow morning. "We've also got thirty-five boxed lunches for tomorrow," Vickie said, and Ian nodded.

Much of the staff remained on throughout the pandemic, and there have been a number of new additions.

"Ian is here, and so is Lewis, Danielle, Beth, Jackson, Dante, Asa and Charles," Vickie said. "Scott's back, too. And we have another Asa, and we've got a new barista, Adriana, and another one, Jordan."

And there are a lot of new customers as well, folks who made Stir Crazy a regular stop for contactless pickup. "We have a whole group of new regular customers we had never seen be-

fore," said Vickie. "But they started doing it through takeout online ordering, and they were became regulars."

Customers, vaccinated or not, must wear masks when they're not seated at their tables, and complementary masks are available at the counter.

"All of our staff is fully vaccinated, but we'll continue to wear masks and gloves just because we think it's a safe practice anyway," Vickie said. "And we're also trying to look out for those who can't be vaccinated, the people with immune suppression issues, and children."

Vickie considered all the hurdles cleared over the past year. "We're just so happy to be back and figuring out a whole different way to survive last year," she said "It's going great, and I'm just tickled pink that we made it."

COVID, in a weird way, even brought her family closer, and tightened the bonds of an extended family.

"There have been plenty of times in this whole past year that back in the kitchen it's all of the Halls, all four of us working—me, Trey, Asa and Jackson," she said. "It was really sweet."

Vickie stood up, and as she did,

looked at Adriane and Ian and Danielle who were working behind the counter. "The staff here has been great," she said. "I know everybody says it and it sounds corny, but we're all family. We really are. We were in our own little Stir Crazy bubble. We had our own bubble. We were all in the same little bubble."

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**ON JULY 20, MY SON CHARLES**

and I did something we hadn't done in almost a year and a half: we sat down at a table in one of our favorite haunts—The Mill on MacArthur—and enjoyed every moment of that restaurant experience we've all been craving.

"You guys were here on our first night," Amy Foxworthy told me a few days later. "That was the first dine-in night since the pandemic hit. It seems the majority of people want to come and dine in. We can't wait until we can open on the weekends for brunch."



*Indoor dining is back at The Mill.*

In order to do that, they'll need additional staff. "In the back of the house we could use more line cooks," Amy said. "And we're looking for servers with experience. We have the expectation that anyone working here would be able to make drinks if they needed to. Servers have to have that kind of skill set."

Like Stir Crazy, The Mill retained its core staff throughout the pandemic. "About seven of us have worked since we came back after shutting down in March of 2020," she said. "It was all just carry out and delivery from that point up until last Tuesday, the night you and your son came in."

The Mill had wanted to reopen for dine-in service for quite some time.

"We've been trying to hire staff to let us reopen since last August." Amy told me. "It's literally been a year of trying to hire to get fully staffed. Over the course of 2020 we had a number of folks that worked with us who moved away, and we actually had somebody who worked for us for quite some time who was really excellent and very skilled, who started in a different line of work. We were trying to hire to replace that person that moved on and we have been trying to hire ever since."

Finding employees has been next to impossible for many business owners. "Anybody who comes in, whether it's a plumber or the guy who replaced the glass in our store front, has been trying to actively hire for quite some time," said Amy. "There are a lot of jobs out there, if people are interested."

One thing has remained constant throughout this very stressful year for many independently owned businesses. "The support from our customers

has always been consistent and good," Amy said. "And I think Richmond has changed a lot in the last year and a half. We've had a lot of transplants move into Richmond from New York and the DC area, and we've seen a lot of new faces ordering online. It will be fun to actually have them come in and dine in."

Downtime during the pandemic was never idle. "Along with deep cleaning, we were able to do some work on the back of the house, the area that people don't get to see," Amy explained.

Now, they'll be doing some work on the front of the house. "We're going to make the walls a little bit more durable by adding bead board, which will be painted blue," Amy said.

The front of the building will also get a color overhaul. "The exterior is going to be the same color as the interior," Amy said, indicating the walls. "I love this color. I think our color will look really great against the Yoga front and our other neighbors."

Then Amy mentioned the updated menu, which includes this new addition: "Serving Northside for ten years."

She smiled.

"March 23, 2021 was our tenth anniversary," said Amy Foxworthy. "It's amazing, and it's very flattering. We love this neighborhood and our customers." **N9**

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## RESTAURANT REVIEW

# Ruby Scoops and the “Essence of Ice Cream”

BY ANNE JONES

**J**ONATHAN GOLD, GILES Coren, Pete Wells - all famous food critics known to those who follow such matters. But when it comes to ice cream, they've got nothin' on me. Embarrassing truth be told, I've devoted a phenomenal number of hours of my life thinking about and savoring ice cream. There is much to consider—nuances of flavors, judgement of consistency, creaminess, spoonability, lickability, twirlability, richness. And rich isn't necessarily better; but sometimes it is, depending on the presentation and occasion. Milkshakes, for instance. I pick peaky chunks over ultra-smooth and creamy. But however you spoon it, lick it, slurp it or slice it, ice cream is simply the perfect food: cheery, comforting, refreshing, sweet, melt-in-your-mouth deliciousness. “Ice cream, you see, is a way of life,” says ice-cream historian and author Marilyn Powell.

Richmond has a pleasingly ice cream-rich history, starting in my lifetime with High's and the Clover Room, on through to Boyers, Gelati Celesti, and Charm School, just to name a random few personal bests. And now I've got a new one: Ruby Scoops. Ruby Kamara opened her Brookland Park ice-cream shop in November, mid-pandemic and under full-strength precautions. None of that put a damper on her fabulous hand-made ice cream and ice cream creations or her old-school ice cream parlor vibe.

With three visits in one week under my investigative journalist ever-expanding belt, I feel more than qualified to give Ruby an A+ for every treat my friends and I consumed. This is the real thing, handmade on-site. The flavors of ice cream and sorbet change every few days and that's part of the fun. There was strawberry and rhubarb sherbet, butter pecan, Big Spoon Coco-nut and five vegan sorbets like Guava Daiquiri, Mango, and Cardamon Blueberry Cobbler. First trip I stuck with the basics - chocolate and vanilla in a cup. Both flavors were pure and strong, with the perfect desired creaminess. My extremely discerning friend had this to say, “the best ice cream I've ever had in Richmond.



Top: Owner Ruby Kamara flanked by her co-workers.

Above: Ruby Scoops storefront on Brookland Park Boulevard.

Reminds me of Brickley's up in Narragansett, Rhode Island. You could actually taste the cocoa in the chocolate.” The milkshake on my second visit, despite its luscious creaminess and lack of chunks, was pure heaven with its lovely chocolate flavor, made slightly milder by the tasty vanilla addition requested by me. And on the third day Ruby created a mango sorbet that was as sweet and tart and refreshing as could be. My new goal is to try Scoop Flights for \$8.50 - a little egg crate container filled with 6 differ-

ent flavored scoops; that is just for one person, right?

Either way, I agree with Marilyn Powell: “Each spoonful settles in the mouth, half solid, half liquid, gently melting away—a reminder of the transitory nature of life and pleasure. This is the essence of ice cream...” **NJ**

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# World in a Zip Code At Library of Virginia



of Virginia's Special Collections this spring. More than 70 of these images will be highlighted in the exhibition, which will also include information about the neighborhood, the residents, and the photographers themselves.

"The Library is grateful to welcome these compelling works to our collection," says Visual Studies Collection coordinator Dale Neighbors. "As the nation seems more divided than ever, this collection shows how one community is making diversity work."

The exhibit will run from August 31 through January 8.

**Library of Virginia**  
800 East Broad Street  
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*Top: Columbia Pike Blues Festival  
photo by Lloyd Wolf*

*Below left: Carnaval de Oruro Parade  
photo by Lloyd Wolf*

*Below: Prio Bangla Festival photo by  
Dewey Tron*

**COLUMBIA PIKE:** Through the Lens of Community, a unique exhibition of photographs at the Library of Virginia, celebrates the extraordinary cultural diversity found within a single community in Northern Virginia. Columbia Pike Documentary Project (CPDP) photographers, whose personal connections to the community allowed them to capture the strength, pride, resilience, elegance, and beauty of so many overlapping cultures, created the works on view.

Columbia Pike was constructed in the 19th century as a toll road, linking rural Northern Virginia with the nation's

capital. Today, it traverses one of the most culturally diverse communities in the country. More than 130 languages are spoken in Arlington County, with the densest concentration along the Pike. The inhabitants who flank this corridor, representing a salsmagundi of international cultures, live and work together in harmony. "This is what peace looks like," CPDP photographer Lloyd Wolf says. "People get along. This is how we should be."

The inspiration for the documentary project came from a conversation in 2007 when Wolf, along with fellow residents Paula and Todd Endo, recognized that Columbia Pike was something special and deserved attention.



They welcomed additional photographers to the project—including Dewey Tron, Xang Mimi Ho, Lara Ajami, Moises Gomez, and Aleksandra Lagkueva—and set about photographing as many aspects of the Pike as they could. Together the team built a remarkable visual archive ranging in style from street photography to landscape photography to portraiture. Learn more about the documentary project at [cpdpcolumbiapike.blogspot.com](http://cpdpcolumbiapike.blogspot.com)

Several thousand photographs from the Columbia Pike Documentary Project were transferred to the Library

## ART RETURNS TO THE MAIN RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Art returns to the Richmond Public Library after a 19-month long hiatus. This September, the galleries at the Main Public Library will unveil the works of a number of Richmond artists.

Among those showing their work will be Stephanie Trimiew Ruffin in an exhibition titled Real Talk that will be housed in the Dooley Foyer. This series of acrylic paintings encourages conversations about important topics such as social injustice—starting with



Painting by Stephanie Trimiew Ruffin featured at Richmond Public Library


the Pullman porter, emerging from slavery; to the hip-hop generation, confronting police brutality.

The Gellman Room Gallery will feature Welcome to the Universe, a collection of watercolor paintings of galaxies and nebulas by Richmond artist Sandy Nye-Moran that were inspired by the photos taken by NASA's Hubble Space Telescope.

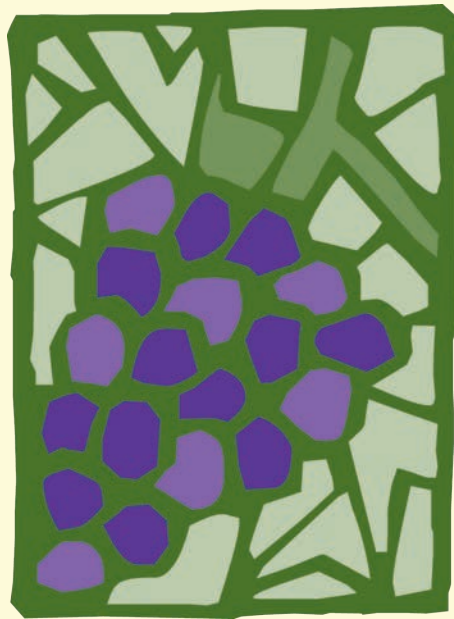
Gifts from the Sea, watercolors and collages by Emma Lou Martin, will appear in Dooley Hall.

The Second Floor Gallery hosts Blanton Seward's "The Things That Kids Do."

The library's permanent collections include works by Helen & Alvin Hattorf and Anne Newbold Perkins.

An opening-night reception for all the artists will be held, in conjunction with First Fridays, on September 3 from 6:30 till 9:00 pm. All exhibits run through 28. 

**Richmond Public Library**  
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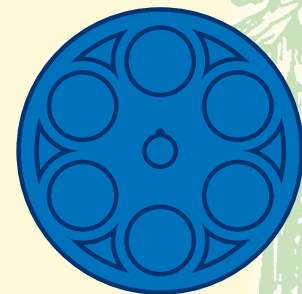
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# Juveniles and the Law

In Virginia juveniles are defined as anyone under the age of eighteen years. In the case of a juvenile, the law applies, but it applies in a very different way than in most adult criminal cases. Many juvenile offenses, which may be otherwise categorized as “crimes”, may be brought through the local Court Services Unit, or equivalent, in an administrative capacity, so that it never reaches a courtroom. Truancy, tobacco, and other minor offenses are often disposed of in this fashion. However, when the charge is serious, or repetitive, it is likely to wind up in Court. Then, many of the same rules apply as in adult cases, such as if the charge carries a possibility of detention (jail for an adult), a lawyer must either be appointed or retained. However, both the procedure and substance of how criminal charges are conducted with regard to a juvenile versus an adult are markedly different. First and most importantly, a juvenile convicted of ANY crime, no matter how serious (as a juvenile) cannot be detained beyond their 21st birthday. That being said, there is a process whereby a juvenile (under the age of 18) can be certified to be tried as an adult under certain circumstances, removing the rule against detention/incarceration beyond the defendant’s 21st birthday. Furthermore, all juvenile crimes (when the offender is under the age of 18 and not otherwise certified as an adult offender) are conducted in Juvenile Court, by a Juvenile Judge, meaning that there is no possibility of a Jury, or the public attention that such an event garners. The standards for punishment in juvenile court are much

more fluid than in adult court, and the Judges are encouraged to craft sentences designed to rehabilitate the offender, rather than punish him or her. Additionally, all juvenile convictions, whether misdemeanor or felony, are sealed, and cannot be discovered or searched by anyone other than the government, or someone otherwise authorized to see such records. In most cases, employers are not allowed to inquire as to any juvenile contacts or convictions on employment applications. During the investigation of juvenile cases, the rules are also different for interrogations, often requiring additional safeguards to be in place to protect a juvenile from self-incrimination during questioning which are not in place for adults. This may include the requirement that a parent or other suitable guardian be present during questioning, depending on the maturity of the suspect being questioned. The juvenile justice system in Virginia is substantially different in its purpose than that of the adult system and the Department of Corrections, primarily in that the juvenile system is designed to rehabilitate and correct behavior, while the adult system is designed only to punish bad behavior. Logically following this premise, it can often be extremely beneficial for a family to retain an experienced criminal lawyer in the event that their family member be so unfortunate as to be charged with a crime, as outcomes are often not pre-determined, and open to creative solutions that benefit everyone involved, with a focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment, and the avoidance of a criminal record going forward.



**Todd DuVal, Esq.**

McDonald, Sutton & Duval

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

# REVEREND PATRICIA GOULD-CHAMP

## LIVING THE WORD

**GURUS AND EVANGELISTS, SWAMIS AND PROSELYTIZERS,** new agers and mystics—they immediately arouse my suspicions and raise my hackles as I prepare for an onslaught of barbed panaceas dipped in slimy snake oil.



### UT EVERY NOW AND AGAIN

I encounter someone who restores my faith in faith itself. These folks are rarer than hen's teeth, and utterly devoid of hubris. One of them is Reverend Patricia Gould-Champ, a woman who lives The Word every day of her life.

It's ten in the morning and already a steam bath as I pull onto the broad parking lot that surrounds Faith Community Baptist Church on Cool Lane. It bakes like a frying pan under an unrelenting July sun, and when I step from the car my shoes seem to sink a fraction of an inch into the marshmallow asphalt.

As I round the corner of this brick church, seeking its entrance, I encounter two women and one young man, all masked, loading food into several plastic containers on wheels. They are sliding trays out of the side door of a truck that bears the legend FeedMore. Among them, supervising the operation, is Reverend Patricia Gould-Champ, a woman affectionately referred to as the Queen Mother, which, in her case, is not a petty, royal appellation. Rather, she is a queen and a mother among women who works to improve lives that are too often overlooked.

A few minutes later I follow Reverend Pat into the building and a welcome river of cool air greets us as the door opens. Before entering her office we visit the sanctuary which has been converted into a school of sorts. Six small cubicles house groups of children from kindergarten through fifth grade. It's all part of a summer program called Stay Connected Stay On Point that focuses on reading. The kids are smiling, and one of the teachers is reading out loud as her charges follow her words in their books. Reverend Pat smiles broadly. "This is our sanctuary which becomes a sanctuary when we need it to be sanctuary," she says. "It can also be a school, a play area. It can be whatever

we want it to be." (And I'm thinking, it's a shame that's not the case with other churches and cathedrals; imagine the uses St. Peter's Basilica could be put to.)

When we settle in her office, Reverend Pat takes us back seventy years to when she was just five years old, shortly after her father moved the family from Danville to Richmond. It was an era of extreme racism in Richmond that would persist for decades and lingers on to this day.

Reverend Pat was raised at 31st and Marshall Streets on Church Hill, attended Chimborazo Elementary School, East End Middle School (now Franklin Military Academy), and Armstrong High School before beginning a long college career. At the time of the Goulds' arrival, Church Hill was going through a transformation. "The whites were vacating but there were still whites living there," Reverend Pat says. "It was a bustling place, and it was mixed, and then of course it eventually became all Black.

Many prominent Blacks called Church Hill home. Both Henry Marsh and Doug Wilder lived over on P Street. "And Doug Wilder's first law office was right there on 31st Street above Ike's Shrimp House," says Reverend Pat.

In that era, there were two daily newspapers in Richmond, one a morning paper, the other an evening rag, The Times-Dispatch and The New Leader, respectively. They had one thing in common. "One was just as racist as the other," Reverend Pat tells me. "You got the same thing in both of them with a different slant. The AFRO (The Richmond Afro-American-Planet) was what you read to find out what was happening in the Black community."

She remembers her father telling her what it was like returning stateside after serving in the Navy after the Japanese surrendered bringing World War II to an end. "When they passed through the Panama Canal everyone was celebrating on the deck," says Reverend Pat. "Everyone except the Black seamen. They were

by **CHARLES MCGUIGAN**



not allowed on deck; they had to stay below. But my father could hear them celebrating on the deck. My father was a brilliant man and was a cook in the Navy, and he worked as a brick mason.”

We talk about the resurgence of racism in this country and how fires were stoked and fanned by a past administration. “It’s really sad,” says Reverend Pat. “A lot of it has to do with deep-seated fear, and you have leaders who are feeding that fear. What he (a former president) did to the mindset of people and the mindset of this country is going to take decades to recover from.” She considers church leaders who said nothing about this politician’s words and actions. “How can you not confront him?” she asks. “I’ve lost all respect for those evangelicals who said nothing.”

Even as a very young child, Reverend Pat was informed about the racial divide in this country. “I went to Fourth Baptist which was known as the Mother Church of the Hill,” she says. “It was also one of the premier churches in the Civil Rights movement here in Richmond.”

The pastor at that time, Dr. Robert L. Taylor, a fairly conservative minister, led the march that boycotted Thalhimers Department Store (now defunct), according to Reverend Pat. She remembers vividly a joke that this staid minister once told from the pulpit.

“It went like this,” she says. “There was a Black man in an arena, and they dug a deep hole and set him down in it so that his whole body was covered except for his head and his neck. And then they loosed this lion, and of course the lion kept coming over and taking a bite from the Black man’s head, and the crowd went wild and cheered. It looked like the Black man would eventually be killed by the lion, but the guy, in a last ditch effort, raised himself up on his toes and when the lion came for him he bit the lion on the nose.”

Reverend Pat pauses for a good two seconds and then delivers the zinger. “And the crowd goes, ‘Fight fair, N###ER. Fight fair.’”

When she was just eight or nine years old, Reverend Pat would sometimes take the bus into downtown Richmond to pay bills for her parents.

“I remember I made such a to do because I got dressed up and would always sit on that very first seat on the bus,” she says. “I would spread my little dress out and sit down. I would make it a habit sitting right on that first seat.”

She remembers the brutal murders of Emmett Till and the World War II veteran, Medgar Evers, at the hands

of cowardly white supremacists in the Deep South. She remembers the numbness she felt as she sat in a high school Spanish class the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, remembers how the teacher “fell out,” bursting into tears and wails of lamentation.

And she also remembers that horrific moment when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was slain by yet another cowardly white supremacist. At the time she heard the announcement, she was attending classes at Virginia Union.

“Someone was walking through the halls yelling, ‘They are killing Toms now,’” says Reverend Pat. “Because by that time King was seen as an Uncle Tom because the movement was now with Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael. And of course my dad came and got me because my mom was so upset because of the riots that were breaking out.”

Virginia Union is where she received her first of many degrees. “At Union I just blossomed and I was a sociology major because I wanted to be a social worker,” Reverend Pat recalls. But a bachelor’s in sociology did not a job guarantee. While visiting her alma mater, a friend from a sorority suggested Reverend Pat check out a program then being offered at Virginia State down in Petersburg. It was a grant that paid tuition along with a yearly stipend, culminating in a master’s of education. It turned out to be the perfect fit for Reverend Pat.

“I fell in love with education,” she says. Shortly after earning her master’s, she, and nine other young Black women, went to work for Goochland County Public Schools. “They had gotten some pushing from the federal government to hire Black teachers,” says Dr. Pat. “They hired me as a teacher at Goochland Elementary, and I’ll never forget my principal who was called Mr. Rueben. He was just a really decent man, and I got along well with him.”

“The white parents—they were fascinated with me because their kids went home crying because I was so hard on them,” she says. “I was teaching fourth grade.” When some parents complained, Reverend Pat made her case plainly: “They’re not doing the work they’re capable of doing. I’m not going to let them do this kind of sloppy work. They can do better.”

“And then they fell in love with me,” she tells me.

The young teacher sometimes used little vignettes to try and get the students to understand how other students might feel. During one of the sessions, a white student

told her that the Bible said Blacks should be enslaved. Somewhat taken aback, the young Reverend Pat said, “Well, the Bible also said that Africa is going to rule the world.”

“The kid must have gone home and told his parents,” Reverend Pat tells me. “So the next day Mr. Reuben called me into his office because he had gotten a call, and one of the things I always admired about him is that the he was a listener.”

Reverend Pat told him exactly what had happened, and he simply nodded, said, “Okay,” and that was the end of it.

In those times it was almost unheard for female teachers to wear pants, so Reverend Pat decided to change all that. She made an appointment with the principal. “Mr. Reuben, I want to talk to you about our dress,” she said. “We’re working with kids, we’re on the floor and doing all kinds of things with kids and I would like to see us to be able to wear pants. Women are wearing pant suits and we’re not going to embarrass you, we’re going to do this in a tasteful way.”

The principal permitted it, and once word got around that female teachers at Goochland Elementary School were wearing pants, other schools in the district followed suit.

After four years teaching in Goochland, Reverend Pat returned to Richmond and taught fourth grade at Highland Park Elementary School. That’s when she began working on a doctorate from Virginia Tech. While working on the degree, she left Richmond again and returned to Goochland, this time as an administrator. “I was principal at Randolph Elementary School named for a black woman,” she says. “It was a beautiful, small little school and I was the youngest principal in all of Virginia.”

Following her stint as a principal in Goochland, Reverend Pat went to work for the Virginia Department of Education where she remained for the next twenty years until the time she received a very important call that would alter the course of her life.

Reverend Pat, with her extensive background in education, received additional training through the Baptist General Convention of Virginia, and began working for the church school and the vacation Bible school at Great Hope Baptist Church.

“While I was doing that at Great Hope I was called to ministry,” she says. “God was actually calling me to ministry. It’s scary and you eventually have to yield to it. I often describe it as the grief cycle. The first thing is denial. And then you move into the fear and then you move into the anger and then you move into the bargaining, you know, I’ll do anything else except for this, anything else but this. And then you finally move into the acceptance.”

The new pastor at this church wasn’t particularly thrilled with the idea of a woman going into the ministry. “First, he wanted a counsel of deacons to counter examine me,” she says.

One of the deacons on that panel also didn’t believe that women were meant for ministry. When he began to speak, Reverend Pat tensed up.

“Everybody in this church knows that I’ve always said that I don’t believe in women in ministry,” he said, and as he paused, Reverend Pat shifted in her seat. “But if Pat says God has called her, I’m going to have to go back to God. I’m going to have to go back to God, because I know that she’s not lying.”

Another deacon then stood up. He was an elderly man with a stern face and a rigid demeanor.

“When he got up there to speak,” Reverend Pat remembers. “He just started laughing. And he said, ‘I’ve been waiting for her to acknowledge her call. I’ve known it all along.’ That’s how God moves, Charles.”

In due course Reverend Pat was to stand before the entire church. “God told me to just be quiet because it’s going to be okay,” Reverend Pat remembers. “God is saying, ‘I’ve called you. These people you’ve been with them, you’ve ministered to them, you’ve got to trust them to have seen what I’ve put in you.’”

The church was packed with people lining the walls. She told her story about her call to the ministry, and then the pastor said, “All of you can ask as many questions as you like. We can be here all night if you want until you all are satisfied.”

There was silence, and then someone in the back of the room yelled out, “What are we going to ask? She said that God’s called her. I move that we license her to the ministry.” Immediately, the room erupted in cheers and applause.

She attended Virginia Union’s School of Theology, where she has also taught for the past 27 years, and was ultimately ordained by Mount Olivet and served as a minister of Christian education at 31st Street Baptist Church. “Within a year and half I had been elevated to associate pastor,” says Reverend Pat. “And then I become executive pastor and I wore the same white communion robe with red bars that the pastor wears.”

On Easter Sunday in 1994 she got another call from God. “God gave me the vision for faith that would start the following year,” she says.

When Reverend Pat travelled across town, instead of using the interstates, she drove through the neighborhoods of the Northside and East End. She noticed something disturbing. Many of the most marginalized people in Richmond were without a faith center. “So when God first gave the vision for faith it was to Fairfield and Whitcomb Court,” she says. “And then of course Creighton.”

One day as she turned off Mechanicsville Turnpike to Cool Lane her eyes fell on the old bowling alley where dance parties were held on the weekends. The bowling lanes had long ago been shut down.

“God said to me, ‘Right there, now go inside,’” Reverend Pat tells me. “There were no cars in the lot. Nothing. But when I approached the door, it opened and inside a guy was cleaning.” She

and her husband ended up renting a small room inside the old bowling alley for fifty dollars a month. The couple would often go to the room and simply pray. This was the birth of Faith Community Baptist Church.

In time, the couple would rent the entire bowling alley and later buy the building, tear it down, and build their church.

“We came into this building with around sixty people,” says Reverend Pat. “But it’s never been about numbers or money for us; it’s been about ministry.”

She remembers the day they broke ground. “It was raining cats and dogs and we had this little tent out there,” she says. “And all the guys that used to hang out in the alley came over and they were under that tent because they considered it their church.”

While construction was underway, the church rented a little barber shop that served as an office. One of the contractors, who was worried about the copper pipes that were laid out on the construction site, entered the office and approached Reverend Pat.

“We gonna probably need to build up a fence around that because they will steal the copper,” he said.

Reverend Pat shook her head. “Nobody’s going to steal copper.”

“I know you’re a holy woman and all, but believe me, trust me,” he insisted. “They will steal the copper.” Reverend Pat was persistent. “They’re not going to steal any copper off this property.”

A few weeks later, the contractor, wearing a broad smile, told her this. “Before we get onto the business of the day, I’ve got to tell you, what you said was true. They didn’t steal any copper from the site, but they came over with some copper for the project that they evidently had stolen from somewhere else.”

As the children gather out in the hall for lunch, Reverend Pat leaves her office to visit the kids. When she returns she talks about the vision of Faith Community.

“One of the parts of the vision was about empowerment—spiritually, economically, educationally and socially,” she says. “We understand that we have to empower people in all of those ways. So that’s why we do the things that we do. It’s not about membership, it’s about meeting the needs. People are looking to be fed, or they’re looking for jobs, or places to live.”

One of the first ministries arose from the dire need of a young woman whose mother was dying of HIV/AIDS. “First we started doing case management and so we worked with families and we’re still doing that work,” Reverend Pat says. “But we found our greatest resource was to do prevention education. And so

we’ve been funded by the Virginia Department of Health and so we also do navigation services. It is not just for the people who are infected, but for everyone who is affected. Do you need a job? Do you need bus fare to get to a job? Do you need some kind of drug rehab? We do that kind of navigation here. It’s part of the vision, and that’s what I always keep us focused on.”

And there’s a lot to keep focused on. For instance, the children who are now eating are part of Stay Connected Stay on Point. “We started this July 12 and it ends on August the 20th,” says Reverend Pat. “Five days a week, k-5. We’re doing reading. We’re using books by Black writers, so they get introduced to a new Black book on their grade level every week, and they get to take that book home.”

Faith Community also nurtures a sort of Eden on the property. “We’ve got the Faith Community Meditative Garden and the community comes over and they get things from the garden,” Reverend Pat says. “We also use the produce in our feeding ministry. And what we want to do is find a way to turn that into a money-making operation for the community. We’re looking at making a specialty salsa.”

It strikes me as we talk, that this woman’s ministry is not unlike the one practiced by the Founder of this faith. These are all corporal works of mercy; they bring comfort without judgment, and bestow on all an unconditional love. Above all else, human dignity is embraced and acknowledged, which is particularly evident in another one of the ministries—All of Our Love Hospitality Ministry, which is different than other food ministries.

“We give out groceries,” says Reverend Pat. “We started out giving bags, and then one day the Lord said: ‘What would you do if you went to the grocery store with your family and somebody gave you a bag pre-packaged with stuff, and half the stuff your family doesn’t eat?’”

An avid listener, she paid heed. “And so we started to lay all the food out just like in a grocery store and they get the things they like.”

**SOMETIME NEXT SPRING,** Faith Community will embark on yet another mission, this one a partnership with Virginia Supportive Housing (VSH). There are plans to build a two-story building—not unlike Clay House—directly across Cool Lane from the church. Reverend Pat is working on the project with Allison Bogdanovic, executive director of VSH.

“I had never met Allison before and she took me all around to see other fa-

cilities they have,” Reverend Pat says. “I always like to start with conversation because you can find out where people’s hearts are. We talked for hours and I walked away knowing that I wanted to be a part of this.”

Reverend Pat held sessions with neighbors explaining the project, and she received a nod of approval. This project will include 86 one-bedroom apartments, along with offices and a resource center that will be open to the community at large.

Reverend Pat also lobbied for a separate wing in the building that would provide housing for pregnant women. “I negotiated five apartments for pregnant women,” she says. “And they will be allowed to have children up to two years old.”

Even before this project gets underway, Reverend Pat is chomping at the bit to create another ministry that will provide housing for some of the most vulnerable, and often discarded, members of society.

“It will be called Care Center and it is a three-story dormitory for aging-out foster care children,” she says. Initially, she thought it might be a good idea for each apartment to house two or three children. Then, God intervened.

“He said, ‘These kids have had to share stuff all their lives, and so they have to have their own apartment with a kitchen and living space,’” Reverend Pat says. “So everybody has their own kitchen and they have their bathroom and one bedroom. And there are two apartments on each floor that have two bedrooms for siblings aging-out.”

When I ask her if she ever plans to retire, Reverend Pat lets out a generous laugh, shaking her head. “There’s no such animal for me,” she says. “I’m just sliding over, but I’m going on to the next thing. I asked God, I want to do something I want to do and he gave it to me. I do what I love. People are not a stress for me, and it hurts my heart whenever I meet ministers where ministry is a burden for them, and the people are burdensome, and they’re always complaining about the people.”

Years ago at Great Hope shortly before the Sunday service started, a woman with disheveled hair and dressed in a formless housecoat and slippers, asked her if she could get some food from the pantry.

“I take her to the pantry and I’m on my knees, all dressed up, and I’m asking her what she wants me to put in the bag for her,” says Reverend Pat. “I’m smiling and I’m pleasant in my mind, but evidently she’s picking up the fact that I’m trying to get into worship.”

That’s when the woman said this: “I used to stop traffic.”



Reverend Pat saw her for the first time, really saw her, and could see how she could have stopped traffic.

"I saw the beautiful hair that was standing everywhere, I saw the beautiful skin," Reverend Pat says. "I really saw her."

She mentions her husband, James Champ, III who passed away almost four years ago. The couple had been married for 31 years.

"My husband was the most important thing in my life," she says. "When he was real sick there were some days I

was on my way to prayer service and he didn't say anything, but I could see it in his face, and I said, 'I'm not going.' And he said, 'You're not going?' I said, 'No we're just gonna hang out tonight.' Sometimes this has to be the priority."

She remembers another time when Bow Wow was performing at Landmark Theatre. "I bought a ticket for me and my daughter," Reverend Pat says. "And it was prayer service night, but I was with my daughter and all these eleven- and thirteen-year-olds who were ecstatic. Those are things you can-

not do again. Prayer services will be there again next weekend."

I ask if she ever feels overwhelmed by the demands of her profession and she slowly shakes her head, then tells me about an encounter she had years ago at State Fair of Virginia, when it really felt like a state fair, when it was still on Laburnum Avenue.

She watched in fascination as a juggler seemed to keep two, three, four balls aloft at the same time. When he finished his routine she asked him this:

"How do you keep it all up there?"

And the juggler said, "I don't try to watch all the balls. I watch one ball until it gets to a certain point and then I go back, and my eye picks up the next ball. Because if you try to watch all of them, they'll all fall."

Dr. Reverend Patricia Gould-Champ tells me one last thing, and they're words worth living by.

"Everything has its place and its priority and its rotation," she says. 



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# Medicare, Medicaid And Jim Crow Health Care

by JACK R JOHNSON

## IN WHAT MAY BE A CAREER

defining faux pas, Elise Stefanik, who recently replaced Liz Cheney as chair of the House Republican Conference, let loose with this odd twitter comment not long ago:

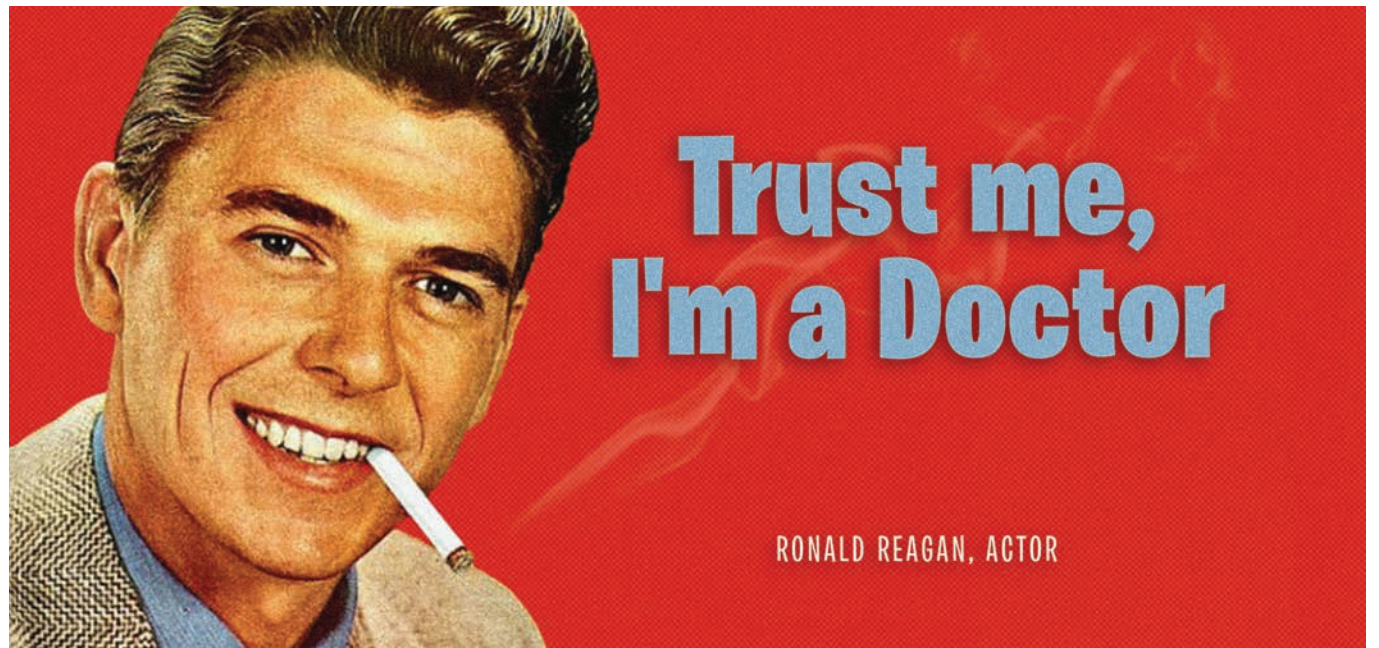
“Today’s Anniversary of Medicare & Medicaid reminds us to reflect on the critical role these programs have played to protect the health care of millions of families. To safeguard our future, we must reject Socialist health care schemes.”

Odd, of course, because many well-known Republicans have argued vociferously that Medicare and Medicaid are exactly that: socialist health care schemes.

In fact, in 1961 as Kennedy was trying to get a Medicare bill passed, Ronald Reagan produced an LP whose title left little doubt where he stood: Ronald Reagan Speaks Out Against Socialized Medicine. In an eleven minute long rant, the father of the modern conservative movement railed against big government and argued that “One of the traditional methods of imposing statism or socialism on a people has been by way of medicine. It’s very easy to disguise a medical program as a humanitarian project, most people are a little reluctant to oppose anything that suggests medical care for people who possibly can’t afford it.” But Reagan warned that if his listeners do not stop the proposed medical program, “behind it will come other government programs that will invade every area of freedom as we have known it in this country until one day [...] we will wake to find that we have socialism. [...] We are going to spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children, what it once was like in America when men were free.”

Of course, we do have Medicare and Medicaid and Reagan’s dire predictions notwithstanding, American men and women are still apparently free.

Reagan didn’t act alone. He was likely hired by the American Medical Association which was spending an inordinate amount of time and energy demonizing the proposed legislation. This demonization didn’t start with



the Kennedy administration, and it wouldn’t end there, either. But the largest barrier to nationalized health care, or even a modest goal like Medicare and Medicaid for the elderly and poverty stricken wasn’t just the AMA. It was also the racist institutions of the South and the powerful hold Southern politicians still had on the Democratic Party.

A case in point was President Harry Truman’s valiant effort to pass a national health care plan prior to Kennedy’s attempt. After FDR’s death, Truman tried to expand the New Deal legacy by advocating for a national health care program, but he soon discovered why FDR had been so hesitant in pursuing that course. According to *The New Yorker*, “The AMA conducted the most expensive lobbying effort to that date in opposition to Truman’s health-care plan, which it branded as ‘un-American’ and ‘socialized medicine.’” Charging that the Truman Administration consisted of “followers of the Moscow party line,” the AMA worked closely with the conservative coalition in Congress to kill the measure in committee.

None of this was true, of course. Truman was hardly following a “Moscow party line,” but there was one other factor mitigating against a national health care program that conservatives left largely unspoken: race. Like other forms of segregation, health-

care segregation was originally a function of Jim Crow laws. In the 1940s, most Southern hospitals, clinics, and doctor’s offices were totally segregated by race, and many more maintained separate wings or staff that could never intermingle under threat of law.

After the 1948 surprise election upset (the one where Truman cheerfully touts the “Dewey Defeats Truman” Tribune headline), Truman thought his prospects for a national health program were largely revived. Not only had he won the election with a mandate from the people for a national health program, setting the AMA back on its heels, but Congress had also swung back to a Democratic majority in both chambers. The problem wasn’t just the AMA, however.

Southern Democrats, so called ‘Dixiecrats’ in key leadership positions blocked Truman’s initiatives, fearing federal involvement in health care might lead to integration of hospital care and the medical field in general. Truman’s proposed bill, The National Health Insurance and Public Health Act, received 15 days of public hearings by the Senate in 1949, but the bill failed to gain support from Southern Democrats necessary for passage. By 1950, the proposal was dead.

Truman later called the failure to pass a national health insurance program one of the most bitter and troubling disappointments in his presidency.

“I put it to you,” he said, “is it un-American to visit the sick, aid the afflicted or comfort the dying? I thought that was simple Christianity.”

It would be another decade before President Johnson managed to push through the expansion to Social Security that we have come to know as Medicare and Medicaid. It would come a year after the momentous Civil Rights Act of 1964, and exactly one week before the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. President Truman was at his side.

However, the Dixiecrats were correct in their surmise that Federal legislation for health care, even narrowly targeted programs like Medicare and Medicaid, would affect the South’s ability to continue segregation. Since Medicare’s universal coverage of elderly people brought federal funds to about every hospital in America, it also bound them by Title VI’s nondiscrimination clauses, which essentially ended segregation in those hospitals—some of the last public arenas in which Jim Crow legally held sway.

So perhaps someone needs to tell Elise Stefanik that we’ve already embraced at least in part “socialist health care” schemes. And in doing so, we also helped to banish Jim Crow laws in the health care field hopefully for all time; an anniversary well worth celebrating. **NJ**

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## EVENTS

# 43rd Street Festival of the Arts Returns Saturday, September 11

**F**ROM STREET ART to fine art, the 30th annual 43rd Street Festival of the Arts has something for everyone. This popular street festival is returning to the Forest Hill neighborhood from 10am till 4pm on Saturday, September 11. Seventy selected regional artists and craftsmen will show and sell their work. There will also be local food and street art and activities for kids.

This RVA festival is intended to put a spotlight on the fine arts and crafts available in the area and to promote sales of local artisans. The show is a true community effort benefiting CARITAS, who works to transform lives and restore dignity to those in need. Artisans donate work for a raffle and proceeds of the artist designed T-shirt help raise money for the event. The show is free to the public. However, donations can be made at each of the four entrances to the show. Over \$100,000 dollars has been raised and gone back to the community supporting CARITAS and those in need.

Many of the artisans have been with the show since the beginning.

However, new artists come on board each year to provide variety and fine craftsmanship in many media. This year's juried outdoor show will include paintings, prints, pottery, sculpture, jewelry, glasswork, and more. Original works of art will be available for purchase and exhibitors will be on hand to discuss and sell their work.

Like all events, last year's festival was cancelled due to the pandemic.

We are making some changes by decreasing the number of artists and not having a musical venue, to make sure social distancing is possible at the show. We hope folks will come out in droves to buy art, support CARITAS, and enjoy being out and about again with friends and neighbors. **NS**

**43rd Street Festival of the Arts**  
1412 West 43rd Street  
Richmond, VA 23225  
(804)233-1758

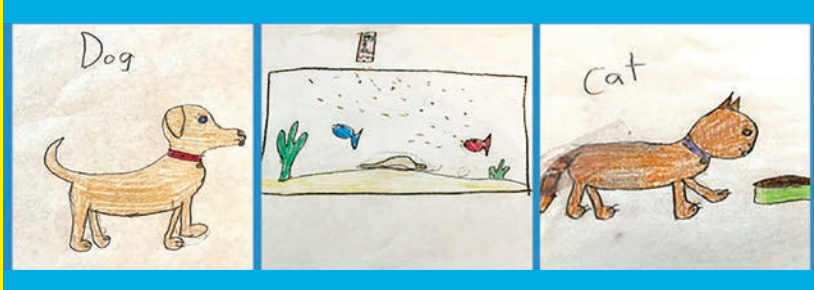


Top: Artwork by Milenko Katic.

Above: Greg Sandage.

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## BOOK REVIEW

# Novel Inspired By Lumpkin's Jail

by **FRAN WITHROW**

**I**N 2016, SADEQA JOHNSON, new to Richmond, walked with her family along the Richmond Slave Trail. She became fascinated by the story of Robert Lumpkin and his infamous jail where enslaved people were bought and sold. Lumpkin was notorious for his cruelty to the people in his holding pen, so Johnson was surprised to discover that Lumpkin's wife, Mary, was formerly enslaved. She wondered what life was like for Mary and for the five children she had with Lumpkin. How did Mary learn to live among such heartache, sorrow and misery? Hearing the cries from the whipping room and being next to the horrific odors emanating from the jail where people were denied basic sanitation and decent food must have been horrendous. How did she cope? Johnson's curiosity led to research, and what she learned led her to write "Yellow Wife."

In Johnson's fictional account, Pheby Delores Brown, born in Charles City to an enslaved mother and her white slave owner, leads an atypical life. The owner treats her well and gives her special privileges, and has always promised that he will send Pheby to school up north at the age of 18. However, tragedy strikes before he can do so, and Pheby ends up sold to Rubin Lapier, who rules the notorious Devil's Half Acre in Richmond, Virginia. Lapier is enchanted with Pheby and forces her to become his mistress. She must also help dress enslaved women so they can fetch the highest prices on the auction block. Pheby cleverly balances placating her erratic, unpredictable owner with protecting herself, the four daughters she has with Lapier, and the son she had with her true love from Charles City, Essex Henry.

Johnson's descriptions of the plight of the enslaved people who end up at Lapier's jail, which is closely modeled on Lumpkin's jail here in our city, are tough to read but important for us to constantly keep at the forefront of our minds. The despair felt by men and women who were tortured, torn apart from their loved ones, and



treated without compassion by Lapier and other white jailers is palpable. But their strength and courage is on display as well, and it is with deep admiration that I acknowledge how sensitively and exquisitely Johnson weaves both heartlessness and hope into her narrative.

Pheby is a resilient woman, and so is her beloved, Essex Henry, whom she meets again when he is captured after escaping from Charles City and making his way north. Johnson's description of how Lapier happily makes Essex Henry's punishment into a festival for the town is almost beyond comprehension. This is just one example of how Lapier exhibits inconceivable brutality to the Blacks he encounters (including Pheby) but remains loving toward his children and the white community.

Despite the subject matter, this book has a satisfying ending; realistic yet brimming with promise. And if you haven't walked Richmond's Slave Trail yet, reading this book will likely motivate you to at least visit the site of Lumpkin's jail, and remember those who suffered so much there. **NJ**

**Yellow Wife**  
By Sadeqa, Johnson  
\$26.00  
Simon & Schuster, Inc.  
288 pages



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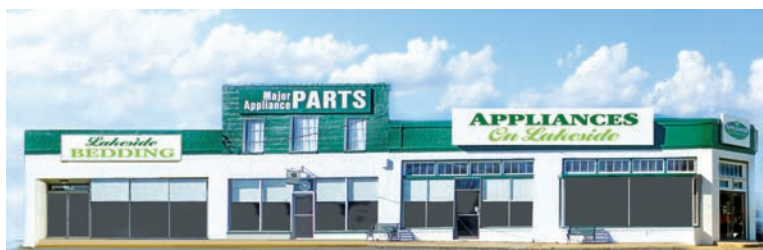


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