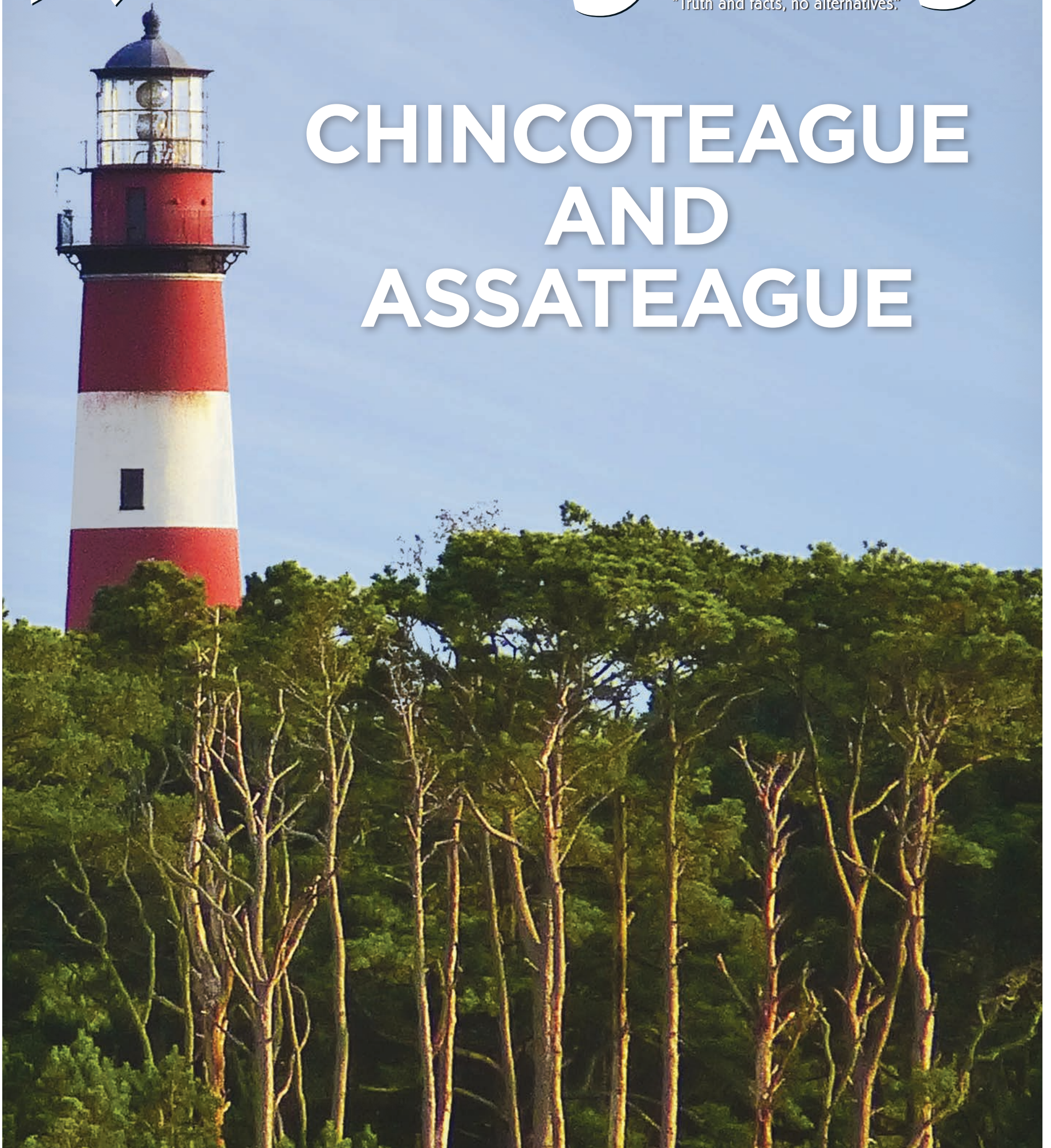


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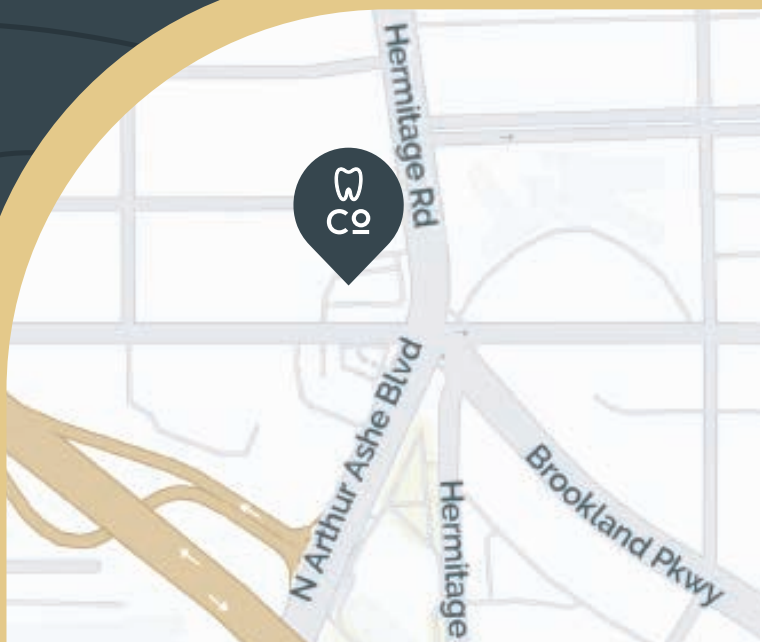
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Ed Trask's Northside Narrative Mural Coming to Bellevue Before Thanksgiving

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

MOTORISTS, cyclists and pedestrians, as they travel north or south on Brook Road, will soon lay eyes on a panoramic visual narrative describing the diverse and progressive communities that make up Richmond's Northside.

Thanks to the Bellevue Civic Association (BCA), which has already allocated \$1500 for the project, a mural will soon grace the entire east wall of the former laundry on the southwest corner of Brook Road and Bellevue Avenue. A wall, incidentally, that one of Richmond's premier mural artists has had his eye on for a long time. So it seems fitting that the BCA committee overseeing the mural project selected that man for this public art project. Fellow mural artist Nico Cathcart once called him "the godfather of all muralists around here," a fitting description of Ed Trask.

"We want the mural to be what expresses the thoughts and feelings of our Northside neighborhoods," says Joyce Foster, with the BCA's Engagement and Outreach Committee. "That's why it's called the Northside Neighborhood Mural."

Once the BCA decided to sponsor the Northside Mural, Joyce helped organize the entire project.

A number of area artists expressed interest in creating the mural. "We had upwards of fifteen artists that were originally interested," says Joyce. "The semi-finalists were S. Ross Browne, Kevin Orlosky, Noah Scalin, and Ed Trask."

A request for proposal (RFP) was sent out to every artist who was interested. "The RFP explained our purpose, and concept development, location, size, procedure, and what they would be expected to provide within their quote," Joyce says. "I gave them my proposed schedule timewise, and every proposal had to fit within a 10,000 budget."

Under the concept development portion of the RFP artists were informed about what the committee was looking for in the mural. "We said that the mural concept is intended to welcome passersby to the Northside of Rich-



One of Ed Trask's recent murals.

mond," says Joyce. "It can include a verbal message, be simple in design, but inclusive of images representing the area."

To get an idea what Northsiders most love about their community, the BCA conducted a survey, and the response was formidable.

"We received some fantastic feedback," Joyce says. "Families walking dogs, parents pushing strollers, the Bellevue Theatre, the Bellevue Arch, gardens, and other images outside of Bellevue."

Folks also got a chance to offer words that best describe the myriad neighborhoods that comprise the Northside.

"Accepting, love, community, diverse, friendly, artsy, eclectic, unique, inclusivity, justice, BLM, LGBTQ, environmentalism, unity, art, music, preservation, restoration, local economy, anti-corporate," says Joyce without taking a breath. "That's just one of the shorter columns. We got some great feedback."

The proposals from the four semi-finalists were all superb. "All four artists that we met with are great," Joyce tells me. "So it was going to be a difficult decision." Something Joyce had heard from Jennifer Glave caught her attention. "She said Ed has talked for years

about wanting to paint a mural on this wall," Joyce says.

Each artist would have a Zoom meeting with an eight-member panel from the BCA committee in charge of the project. Following those meetings, the panel would make its final decision.

"We met with Ed last and we'd been sitting there all afternoon, meeting with people, then having breaks and discussions, and then finally we got him on the screen," Joyce remembers.

What pushed them over the edge to select Ed was what he said. "Charles, he spoke our language," says Joyce. "He just painted a picture with his words. It was just such a revelation. He actually said everything that we would have wished, and when we got off of the call all eight of us said, 'Yes, he's the one, he's the fit.'"

What words had Ed spoken that were so compelling?

"Let me tell you some of the words he used," Joyce says. "He hit the ball out of the park." She pauses, and I can hear her leafing through a stack of papers. "Here are his exact work," she continues. "Vivid, colorful storyline. It should be for everybody, it's a split second to capture your attention as you're zooming past so it would be nice if it

was something that would make you want to turn around and come back, and study it.' He mentioned the trolley, but 'vivid colorful story line' just grabbed me and everyone else because that's exactly what we want."

Along with the \$1500 for the mural project earmarked by the BCA, more than an additional \$2500 has also been raised for the effort. "We have a GoFundMe site," Joyce says. "We are also doing fund-raising with organizations and businesses in the Northside such as the Northside Y and the Lewis Ginter Recreation Association."

And on September 11, from 11 till 2, there will be an official kickoff for the project to be held on the parking lot off the alleyway behind the CVS on Bellevue. "We'll have an information tent where we can tell people about the mural and we'll also collect donations there," says Joyce. There will also be vendors selling grab-and-go food items. Among them, according to Joyce, will be Stir Crazy Café and Dot's Back Inn. Joe and Brenda Stankus, and Battery Park Christian Church will be giving out free bottled water.

Live music is also scheduled for the event. "We've got three bands that will provide music for thirty minutes each," Joyce says.



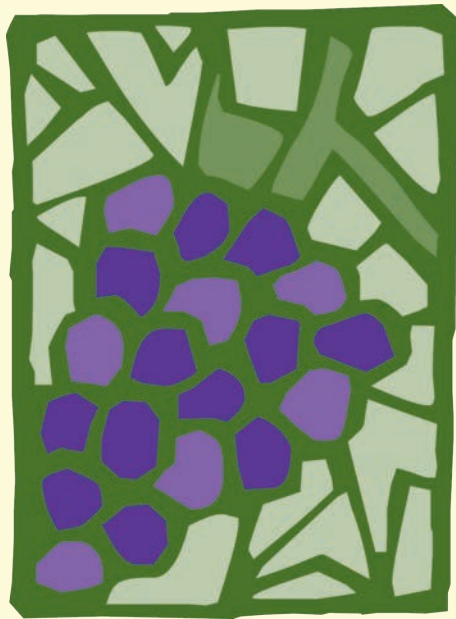
Artist Ed Trask

There will be some fun and games as well. “The most fun activity is we’ll have chalk laid out on the sidewalk in front of the wall and children and adults can come and draw images of what they think the mural should be,” says Joyce. There will also be an official ribbon-cutting ceremony, and artist Ed Trask will apply the first brush stroke to the wall.

If all goes well, the mural should be completed before Thanksgiving. “We’ll have two meetings with Ed following our kickoff event on the eleventh,” Joyce tells me. “The artist will then provide three optional concept sketches for review and final selection by the committee. And then Ed says, according to his schedule, he should be able to start in mid-October and he’ll probably work into November.”

Ed Trask who has left his indelible mark on the city he loves tells me he is interested in telling the entire story of the Northside. “I believe that there’s so much rich history in the Northside that’s valid for all of Richmond’s story,” he tells me. “And I think it’s worthy of visual storytelling, a mural that can be painted for everybody.”

Ed invites me to consider driving by the finished mural. “Usually, if you’re seeing a mural via an automobile or a bike you have a couple-second trajectory to really look at it,” he says. “So the hope is that through composition and color you’ll want to come back and look. Then, when you actually look at the thematic of what the mural is about, you really want to come back and delve into the story line and see exactly what it is you missed the first time you went past it. And then, my hope is that the story line that I’m portraying on the wall somehow intertwines with the person’s own personal story line.” **N9**



Once Upon a Vine



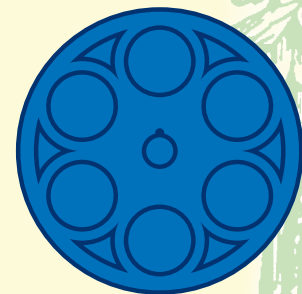
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Lewis Ginter's Cigarettes

by BRIAN BURNS

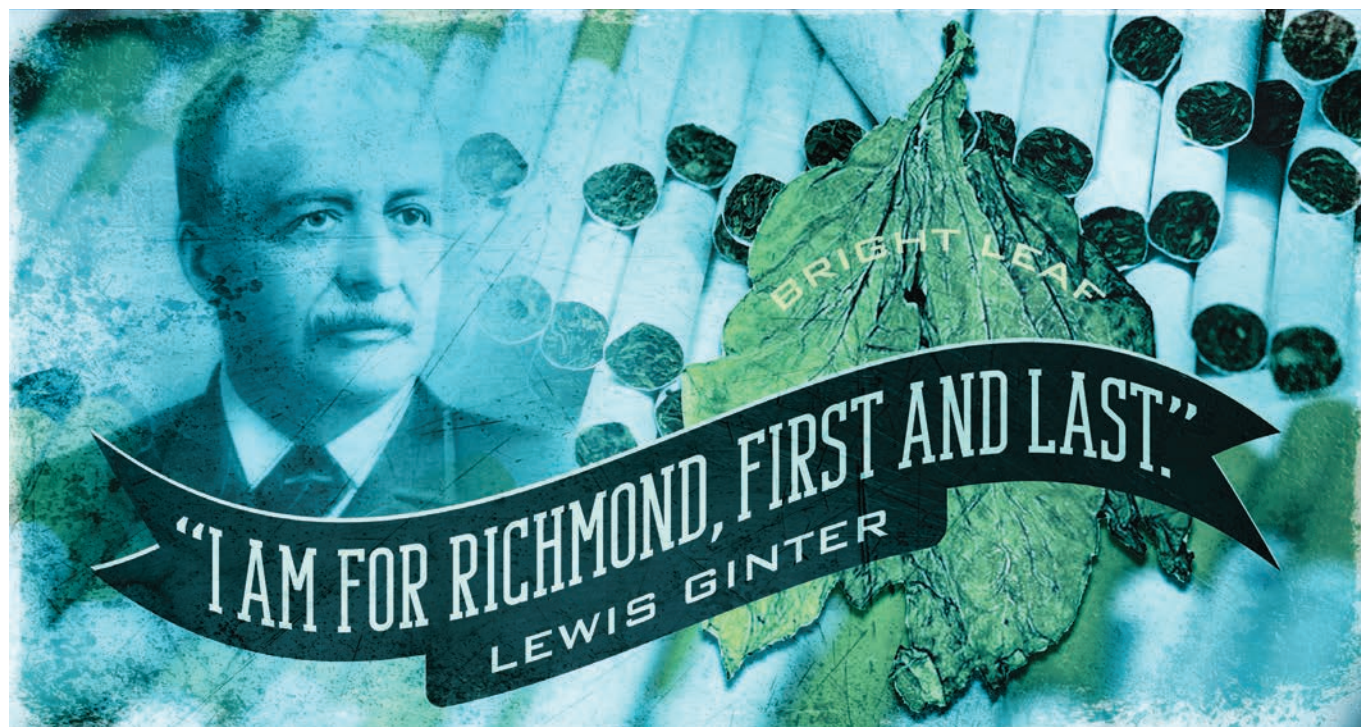
IN THE NINETEENTH century, Lewis Ginter was celebrated in Richmond, Virginia. But if he were alive today, he'd probably get a much colder reception. He clung to the ideals of his time.

In the 1850s, early in his career, he amassed a fortune as a dry goods wholesaler. He also co-owned a bank and a life insurance company. He served as a commissary during the Civil War, but Southern defeat evaporated the vast majority of his wealth. Quickly rebounding as a banker-broker in New York City, he lost a second fortune in 1869 when the gold bubble burst.

He was desperate for a comeback. For one thing, female relatives relied on him for financial support—a duty men of his time took seriously. After assessing market conditions, he in 1872 turned to the manufacturing sector back in affordable Richmond. Partnering with longtime tobacconist John F. Allen, they manufactured chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco and a small line of cigars.

In 1875, Ginter added Turkish tobacco cigarettes to his product line. Amid the devastation of war and a gloomy, national depression, he provided desperately-needed jobs for white women and girls, who hand-rolled the “dainty” smokes. Cigarette-making provided economic hope and boosted civic pride. In 1876, under the headline “Beautiful Tobacco,” the editor of the *Richmond Dispatch* crowed, “No city in this country is ahead of Richmond and her enterprising tobacco manufacturers in the style of goods they turn out.”

About this same time, Ginter pioneered cigarettes made entirely with mild bright leaf, grown only in the Virginia and North Carolina piedmont. He received encouragement from all sides. He was answering the call to revitalize the South's postwar economy and reestablish his city's prewar dominance of the tobacco trade. “The people of Richmond should...encourage everything, every turn of trade,” preached the editor of the *Richmond Dispatch*. “The future wealth and populousness of Richmond will give increase of wealth and general improvement to the whole State.” In similar tones, Governor Kemper insisted that “the awakening hands of capital and labor” were vital – not just to improving Virginia's economy, but to



paying down its pre-war debt. The state's “unblemished honor” was at stake, he said. In this highly-charged environment, Ginter's cigarette enterprise made him a paragon of civic virtue.

The industrial revolution promised unimaginable wealth for hard-charging entrepreneurs. So, putting on his marketing hat, Ginter tastefully displayed the Allen & Company product line at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. His quality cigarettes won top prizes and accolades. He relished any opportunity to make his beloved city shine.

Following the Centennial, Richmond entrepreneurs followed Ginter into cigarette manufacturing, providing more economic hope.

Around 1880, Ginter changed his firm name to Allen & Ginter. Over the next few years, as rolling machines came on the scene and cigarettes grew in fashion, the *Dispatch* called cigarette-making a “great and growing industry.”

Still, it wasn't easy to convince Southern men to part with their chewing tobacco. So, without wasting a second, Ginter marketed his bright leaf cigarettes, “Richmond Gems,” in London as a foreign novelty. There, by the early 1880s, they won popular favor. Elite gentlemen smoked them by the thousands in the palatial men's clubs. On the heels of this success, Ginter entered markets all over the world, including France, Belgium, Germany and Australia. While Richmond's Chamber of

Commerce had bragging rights, Ginter was well on his way to a third fortune.

In 1890, he and four other major cigarette manufacturers merged to form the American Tobacco Company. The deal personally netted him about \$3.5 million in American Tobacco stock (approximately \$100 million in 2020 currency). He gradually sold off much of it to boost Richmond's prosperity and image. The eye-popping Jefferson Hotel would never have been built without Ginter's cigarettes. The same goes for the Mechanics Institute, a technical school on Broad Street that for decades addressed Richmond's severe lack of skilled labor. And, at a time when the city's muddy roads were a national embarrassment, Ginter built some of the smoothest paved roads anywhere. They spurred upscale streetcar suburbs and welcomed Northern tourists to the former Confederate capital.

Dollars and cents aside, Ginter's foray into cigarettes bespoke his elite sensibilities. As a world traveler, connoisseur and former fancy goods importer, he had long been attuned to luxury, fashion and refinement. Newspapers romanced the chic cigarette. In 1883, the *St. Paul Daily Globe* proclaimed, “Society has accepted the cigarette as the most genteel medium by which the delightful blue smoke can be conveyed between the lips.” Cigarettes were considered far more civilized than chewing tobacco, which was sloppily splattered everywhere.

The cigarette did have its detractors—beyond Richmond, at least. But at that early date, they were long on opinion and short on science. In 1884, for example, the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union asserted tobacco caused disease, “especially the loss of sight, paralysis, prostration, and scores of ailments hitherto credited to other sources,” and that it “lower[ed] the standard of morality.” Some newspaper editors claimed cigarettes caused all sorts of ills, from anemia to ear inflammation to “brain fever.” Others accused cigarette manufacturers of using drug additives like opium or arsenic-laced cigarette paper.

Adding to consumer confusion were doctors who touted tobacco's therapeutic qualities. They claimed it aided digestion, cured gout, provided “solace” amid life's daily challenges, and even helped one think.

Buried deep in a late-1870s marketing brochure, Ginter's firm extolled the virtues of “high grade bright Virginia leaf,” asserting that “in its relations to health and as a luxury it should have no competition.”

If we fast forward two decades to 1897, shortly before Ginter's death, we get a rare glimpse of his personal views on the subject. According to a blurb in the *New York Press*, he advised a friend's pre-teen nephew “never to smoke.” Had Ginter's thinking evolved? Or was there more to the story? **NJ**

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.

Marijuana and the Law in Virginia: 2021

The changes in the law do not affect how DUI is prosecuted in Virginia. It is now, and has always been, illegal to drive or operate a motor vehicle under the influence of any “intoxicants” which impair your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. Virginia Code 18.2-266 governs these violations. Marijuana is considered by most experts (and all experts who testify on behalf of the Commonwealth) to be such an intoxicant. When alcohol is the intoxicant, the Code sets out a “rebuttable inference” that if the subject is over .08, he is guilty of the charge. However, unlike alcohol, which is measured by Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) and obtained by the police by having the subject blow into a machine, or by a blood draw, marijuana requires a blood draw. In the case of marijuana (and other intoxicants under the statute), the measurement is in Parts Per Million. Additionally, the Commonwealth will have to have an expert testify as to the effect of the amount of THC in the bloodstream on the subject offender, and an opinion as to whether the level of THC in the blood stream would impair the subject’s ability to drive.

As you can see from the many nuances which still exist with regard to marijuana and its prosecution in the Commonwealth, a visit to your lawyer would be where to start if you find yourself the subject of any of these prosecutions. Please give me a call for a free consultation, which is available for any criminal charge which you may have pending against you.

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DIVERSIONS

On Being a Palestinian: A Revelation and a Recipe

by FAYERUZ REGAN

MY FIRST NAME gives me away. Telling others that I'm a Palestinian feels like a political statement, as if I'm asserting my right to exist.

Strangely, the latest tragedy in Gaza has made it easier. I give credit to the Black Lives Matter groundswell from last summer. This passion for justice carried over into other corners of society, from the LGBTQ+ community to the Palestinians.

People are beginning to take a second look, questioning the history that they were told was "too complicated." Say what you will about Millennials and Gens Y and Z, but they were bold enough to stand up to systemic racism, sexism and all the horrors in between. They took to social media. They took to the streets. They pushed back against norms that my generation (X, to be precise) was too sleepy to do anything about.

Being a Palestinian in America meant growing up with assumptions that were tacked onto you. It was assumed we were Muslim (we were not), that we hated Jewish people (we did not) and that we could be terrorists (we were not). We quietly nodded along when people said it was "too complicated" to understand, though we knew it wasn't. We only knew that they weren't interested enough to learn.

We were taught to disarm Jewish people if they seemed uncomfortable with our ethnicity. For although we were surrounded by Jewish people growing up, we were likely their first Palestinian. I used humor to break the ice and switch the subject as quickly as possible.

For generations, if a Palestinian wanted to open a restaurant, they had to call it a Lebanese restaurant, for fear of being ostracized. It continues to this day. When was the last time you saw a Palestinian restaurant? Though 9/11 had nothing to do with Palestine, it got worse for all Arabs. That is, until the Black Lives Matter movement.

Palestinians understand the unprovoked police violence towards the



Black community in America. They painted a George Floyd mural on the walls that Israel built around them. When American protesters were getting tear-gassed by police, Palestinians taught them how to cover the bombs with orange traffic cones. There's a kinship there.

Now when Israel breaks International law, the news outlets have to admit it, if only to avoid backlash. Jewish kids on their "birthright" trips to Israel are asking hard questions. Taxpayers are wondering why billions of dollars are given to Israel annually. They now realize that Jewish people cannot all be lumped in with the extremist, right-wing government in Israel, just as Palestinians cannot be represented by Hamas. Most of us want to coexist in peace as we had been for thousands of years, before the creation of Israel in 1948.

The youth of today push us to be better, and not shrug history off as "too complicated." Though the initial wave of support on social media has died down among non-Palestinians, there is an undeniable awakening taking place. Our daily feed has been peppered with compassionate and educational posts from the Palestinian perspective. Even if our friends aren't sharing these posts, they're seeing them. Never underestimate the power of planting a seed.

On that note, I'd love to share a family recipe in celebration of this cultural shift. It's a crowd-pleaser that requires zero cooking: Hummus.

PALESTINEAN HUMMUS

Ingredients:

- 1 can of chick peas
- A little chick pea can juice
- Juice from 1/2 a lemon
- 1 tablespoon of tahina sauce
- 2 garlic cloves
- Salt to taste
- Olive oil (optional)
- Paprika (optional)

Instructions:

- Drain the can of chick peas but save a little of the water in a bowl
- Place all ingredients (except chick pea juice, olive oil and paprika) in a food processor and blend
- If the mixture seems dry, add a little bit of chick pea juice
- Taste, and if the mix needs a little zest, add extra lemon, salt or garlic
- If you want to add more tahina to taste, feel free
- If you'd like to make a better presentation, place the hummus in a beautiful bowl, take the back of a spoon and smooth it out
- Make a small dip in the top of the hummus, and pour in a shallow puddle of olive oil
- Dust with paprika for color

Bon appetit, or as they say in Arabic: Sahtein! 🇵🇸

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Richmond Folk Festival Returns October 8-10



Left: Texas bluesman Sugaray Rayford, one of the many performers announced for this year's Folk Festival.

Bottom: April Verch brings her distinctive Ottawa Valley fiddle style to Shady Grove next month.

November 6, David Mallet and George Turman. In order to safeguard the health of audience and performers, the October and November concerts will be held outdoors, and masks will be required to enter the church building.

Children 12 and under admitted to all concerts free of charge; teens 13-18 admitted at half price. Net proceeds benefit UUC. Advance tickets and additional information are available by calling 804 323 4288, through Shady Grove web site at shadygrovecoffeehouse.com, or by sending an e-mail to tickets@shadygrovecoffeehouse.com.

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THE RICHMOND Folk Festival celebrates its 17th anniversary this October, inviting fans to downtown Richmond's riverfront to celebrate the roots, richness, and variety of American culture through music, dance, traditional crafts, storytelling, and food.

This free, three-day, outdoor event is presented by Venture Richmond Events in partnership with the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA), the Center for Cultural Vibrancy, the Children's Museum, and the City of Richmond.

Featuring six stages and showcasing music and dance from more than 30 artists from across the nation and around the world, the Richmond Folk Festival will again be culturally diverse and artistically excellent, with some of the world's finest traditional artists performing throughout the weekend.

"We are proud to be back this year on Richmond's beautiful downtown riverfront," said Blaine Waide, associate director of the National Council for the Traditional Arts. "From returning favorites to up-and-coming artists making their Richmond debut to tra-

ditions like Sicilian traditional music that we have never presented before, this year's program lives up to the festival's reputation for offering a dizzying variety of artistic expressions and experiences—all for free!"

Venture Richmond Events continues to closely monitor CDC and Virginia guidelines for COVID-19 protocols for large outdoor events. A commitment to safety and adherence to local, state, and federal ordinances and recommendations will guide all decisions regarding the festival. (see COVID-19 guidelines)

Among those performing at this year's event are The Brotherhood Singers from Covington, Kentucky; Donny Broussard & the Louisiana Stars from Kaplan, Louisiana; Jasmine Bell & North Bear from Riverton, Wyoming; The Pedro Giraudo Tango Ensemble from New York, New York; Rosa Tatuata with Michela Musolino from Clifton, New Jersey; Sugaray Rayford from Los Angeles, California; Taj Weekes from St. Lucia by way of New York, New York; Tres en Punto from Mission, Texas; The Western Flyers from Burleson, Texas; Joanie Madden & Cherish the Ladies from Yonkers, New York; Michael Cleveland & Flamekeeper from Charlestown, Indiana; Nava Persian Trio from Albuquerque,


New Mexico; Plena Es from Sunrise, Florida; Rare Essence from Washington, D.C; and Sean Jones "Dizzy Spellz".

For more information about the festival and additional artists performing this year visit richmondfolkfestival.org

LIVE MUSIC RETURNS TO SHADY GROVE

Live music returns to Shady Grove Coffeehouse for its twentieth season. On October 16 they welcome back Canadian fiddle April Verch, and on

BELLEVUE PORCHELLA RETURNS SEPTEMBER 25

Music in the streets returns to Bellevue from 1 till 7 pm September 25. Masking and social distancing, please. Twenty-two bands perform music from a broad array of genres, everything from Japanese Drums to Irish Punks, Hip-hop, Cajun, Dirty rock, Bluegrass, and more. Perfect precursor to the Richmond Folk Festival scheduled two weeks later. For updates visit arcg.is/01PfLn 



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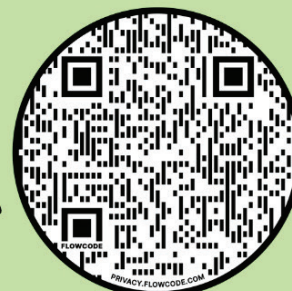
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CHINCOTEAGUE AND ASSATEAGUE

A DELICATE BALANCE

ISLANDERS ARE A RARE BREED, FROM THOSE WHO INHABIT PLACES

like Vinalhaven off the coast of Maine, to Ocracokers, to the denizens of the more remote Florida Keys, still unspoiled by excessive development. All these folks seem to possess a strong sense of individualism, but at the same time, perhaps because of the closeness that islands by their very geography dictate, are also inextricably united, and work together toward a common good. This, too: due to the palpable limits of natural resources, these island people adamantly protect the very nature that permits them to live and work within these fragile ecosystems, and they manage their fisheries like doting parents. This is all true of those who call Chincoteague and Assateague home.



W E HAD TRIED TO GET OUT OF TOWN for three days, but just as we were on the verge of departing another obstacle prevented us from doing so. Finally, on a clear Wednesday morning, with our CRV loaded to the hilt, my son Charles and I made our way down 64, and then, to skirt a traffic standstill, dropped over to old Route 60, reconnected to the interstate just below Williamsburg, crossed Hampton Roads, rocketed over and under Chesapeake Bay, travelled at a comfortable speed up the Eastern Shore of Virginia along Lankford Highway (Route 13), and took a sharp right on Chincoteague Road at T's Corner, and at last the rush seemed over as we drove through dense stands of pines and hardwoods, across vast fields of corn and soybean, past farmhouses and a few scattered villages, flanked by NASA's giant satellite dishes on Wallops Island, and just after the road took a sharp curve to the right, the world opened up to a vast expanse of salt marshes and inlets and creeks that spread as far to the east as the horizon and to the north and south as far as our eyes could see.

And then we crossed Mosquito Creek, breaking away from the mainland of the Eastern Shore, but it wasn't until we reached the next creek that I pulled off to the shoulder so that Charles and I could stretch and view the watery world that would be our home for the next five days, so that we could inhale the salty iodine air laced with the sweet bitterness of sea decay and marsh grasses. We climbed over the guardrail and made our way up the bank until we could look directly into a wide creek where the tide was streaming out at a furious rate, and where we could see fish lines on the surface running counter to the tide.

This was Cackle Creek, and there was an extremely important, and unusual, battle fought here during the war that tested the resolve of the great American Experiment. Though by the standards of a war that would eventually claim the lives of 600,000 men, it might have seemed like a minor skirmish, the Battle of Cackle Creek destroyed the enemy's attempt to control Delaware Bay, and strengthened our country's dominance over the entire Delmarva Peninsula.

In 1861, not long after Virginia seceded from the Union, Chincoteague Islanders refused to do so, choosing instead to remain loyal to the United States. Islanders, in a 138 to 2 vote, refused to secede, the sole section of the Commonwealth to do so.

On July 4 of the same year, 418 men from the barrier islands of Maryland and Virginia met on Chincoteague to celebrate the 85th anniversary of American independence. Those present signed a document pledging support for the United States against its enemies. One of them, a War of 1812 veteran, shouted, "I will defend the old flag to my last drop of blood,

by **CHARLES MCGUIGAN**



Creeks and channels carve deep swaths through spartina on both islands.

against the lazy, slave-holding aristocrats and their lackeys in Richmond.” Oh noble islanders!

As that summer came to a close, General Winfield Scott, the sort of de facto commander of Union forces, recommended several thousand troops be sent to protect the Chincoteague Islanders.

In the early fall, three ships anchored along Cockle Creek. One of them, which had earlier flown the Union Jack, suddenly raised the Confederate ensign. An oyster sloop piloted by an Islander sailed down to Hampton Roads to notify the Union Navy. A couple days later, the USS Louisiana, a propeller-driven, iron-hull steamer, arrived.

On October 5, two boats launched from the Louisiana attacked one of the three ships. When about 300 Confederates tried to cut off the two boats launched by the Louisiana, the Union response was fierce. Within hours the Confederate defenses were crushed. One of the Confederate vessels was scuttled, the other two captured. When Winfield Scott received the news, he ordered a large plate of Chincoteague oysters at The Willard Hotel in Washington. By early December, 4,000 Federal troops secured the entire Eastern Shore of Virginia.

As we return to the car, Charles spots a group of American oystercatchers, standing on stilted legs atop a sandbar, their bright orange bills like signal lights. “Just like the ones we saw that winter down in Key West,” Charles says. “Remember, all lined up on the beach at that old fort.”

“Zachary Taylor?”

“That’s the one.”

“I remember.”

We cross the remainder of the four-mile long John B. Whealton Memorial Causeway, its small bridges

spanning channels of Chincoteague Bay, its roadway carving a narrow swath through marsh islands of spartina, fiddler crabs, birds and mud.

Our house, which is owned by a neighbor in Ginter Park, is a lovely two-story Eastern Shore farmhouse with ample room, and a cozy feel. It’s located off Chicken City Road in the section of the island known as Deep Hole.

After settling in, we explore the southern tip of the island, check out a small fishing pier there and then make our way over to Assateague, and are immediately drawn in by the abundant wildlife. We hike the beach all the way down to the southern tip of this barrier island, well beyond the Coast Guard Station, to the Assateague Hook, which is shaped exactly like the barbed head of a whaling harpoon. The surf is turbulent and choppy, the aftermath of a hurricane, and a warm and constant wind blows directly out of the east urging along chunks of spume that cover the beach in an uninterrupted line just above the wrack zone. We spy several ghost crabs, and in the retreating waves scoop out handfuls of immature mole crabs (though we always called them sand fleas) that wriggle through the sand in your clenched palm and you can feel their tiny appendages flick at your skin.

That night we drop by Captain Zack’s Seafood, a locally owned and operated seafood shack for pickup only that serves up some of the best salt oysters I’ve ever eaten. Over the next few days it will become our go-to place for dinner, and we’ll sample their offerings in one form or another, whether steamed, or fried in a lightly breaded cornmeal and flour mix.

There is no finer oyster in all the world than those that come out of the seaside of Chincoteague Island. When you bite into one, as your molars crush the tender meat, there is an explosion of flavor unlike anything else you will ever eat.

Jenny Sommers, who owned the Bayside Retreat on Main Street, told me more than a little about the island and its oysters a couple years ago as we sat on her front porch on a lazy afternoon in late August.

“I’ve told people on the mainland that I can tell if that oyster comes from the seaside or the bayside of Chincoteague,” she told me, and then considered the seaside oysters. “It’s like biting the ocean,” she said. “I’m an oyster baby and always have been. I can eat my weight in oysters.”

Jenny could trace her familial roots all the way back to that time that the English stole the lands from the native peoples. “My people have been here since 1665,” she told me. A lot of settlers that came to our country were transported people. Most people aren’t going to claim it; I have no problem with it. They may have been transported because they were political prisoners. They may have been transported because their family was starving and they stole a loaf of bread or they poached some animal in the forest.”

Her ancestors were indentured to a ruthless landowner Colonel Daniel Jennifer who worked his charges like slaves. “He transported about twenty-five indentured men, but no women,” Jenny said. “The native people in this area were Gingoteague and Akessateague and they were part of the Nantikoque people, members of the Algonquin nation. The men who were transported to these islands frequently married native people, so I have the blood of native people in my veins, and I’m proud of that fact.”

Chincoteague, incidentally, means “beautiful land across the water”; while Assateague means “swiftly moving water”.

The next morning after a late breakfast, Charles and I drive over to Assateague and park the car in the first lot and unload our bikes then pedal along the Wildlife Loop with a detour on the Marsh Trail, and then out Swan Cove Trail to a narrow beach access through the dunes.

On the Marsh Trail we see a number of white tail deer and red foxes. In the pool at its center we see a five-foot cottonmouth, its thick body slithering rapidly on the surface of the water, effortless in its buoyancy like the modelling balloon a magician might twist into a dachshund. We also spot two diamondback terrapins, and one river otter, which is a real treat to watch.

Oysters and clams are on the menu that second night, and after a late dinner Charles goes to sleep and I venture onto the back porch and am quickly sheathed in a second skin of jet black mosquitos that immediately turn blood red when I wipe them away with a flattened palm, as I make my way back inside. Then I douse all the outside lights, pull on a pair of jeans and a long-sleeved shirt and return to the porch where I am immediately bathed in the soothing harmonics of a thousand tree frogs frantic for mates, while overhead, framed by the limbs of the three maples in the backyard, the Milky Way seems to pulse with a silent timbre that is detected not by my ears but by every cell within me. It is a good thing to go to sleep with.

My daughter, Catherine, and her boyfriend, Matt, are to join us late the next afternoon, so Charles and I spend a good part of the day fishing from the mu-



A mare and her foal forage among the saltmarsh grasses.

Catherine and Matt don't arrive until much later in the evening. We spend most of the next day over on Assateague, and Catherine, an artist and environmental scientist says this, as we are looking across a vast expanse of spartina with occasional hammocks supporting small stands of loblollies: "It looks like the Serengeti."

And she's right. You half expect to see a lion slinking through the grasses, or wildebeest stampeding across the marshlands. Instead we see the wild horses, the ponies with their salt-bloated bellies, grazing contentedly on cordgrass and black needle rush and saltwort. We even spot, among the herd, a mare and her foal.

The islands and surrounding salt marshes and bays are home to hundreds of different species of animals—amphibians, reptiles, mammals and birds galore. In the next couple hours we will see whimbrels, common terns, great blue herons, willets, along with a single green heron, and one great white egret, standing amid the spartina stabbing at the water for its dinner.

These bays and the surrounding salt

nicipal pier at the city square on Main Street and then out to Veteran's Memorial Park near Tom's Cove Aquafarms. Charles catches a two-pound croaker, and a bait-sized black sea bass, both of which we lovingly release and throw back. After a brief lunch we head back over to Assateague and hike the trail

out to the Assateague Lighthouse.

Assateague Island is a vast seaside island (about 50,000 acres) that runs alongside the eastern shores of both Maryland and Virginia. Like all the barrier islands in Virginia's chain, Assateague is restless, forever on the move, nomadic.

As a matter of fact, up until about 1800, Chincoteague was a barrier island unto itself. But then Assateague began a southward migration, as Chincoteague moved westward. Assateague seemed to wrap her protective arm around Chincoteague to shield her smaller sister from the ravages of the wild Atlantic.

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Submerged work boat near the southern end of Main Street on Chincoteague.

marshes are a breeding ground for all the bounty of the sea, from blue crabs to summer flounder. Oysters, which have made a terrific comeback here, filter the nutrient rich waters that are created by the saltmarsh grasses.

Aquaculture has been practiced on

Chincoteague for generations out of mind. That's what Jenny had told me a couple years back. She had told me about Tom's Cove Aquafarms near Black Point Landing which specializes in oysters and cherrystone clams.

"You harvest the oysters off oyster

rocks and deepwater beds," she said. "My family had a deepwater bed at Mosquito Creek and we had oyster rocks up the creek beyond the new bridge behind the island."

They also had clam beds just across the marsh from her girlhood home.

"My daddy would go out to Wallops Island in the early summer," Jenny remembered. "We'd go out with the big scow and we'd pick up baby clams." The clams were plentiful as coquinas in the surf. "They would roll in with the waves, little teeny clams," she said. "And we would bring them up and dump them in the clam bed, and they would bury in and grow. That's how we did it. We had it from the bridge to the end of the island."

The next morning we have Sandy Point Donuts, still hot, and reminiscent in texture to those that were served at Duck Donuts, until they went belly up at Willow Lawn. We spend a good part of the day strolling along the older section of Main Street in downtown Chincoteague. It's lined with restaurants and coffee shops and galleries and shops that sell cheap souvenirs. There's also a beautiful municipal park flanked by the town library.

And all along this street, and many of the other major thoroughfares on the island, banners hang from street light poles honoring those who served in various branches of the armed forces. It's no surprise that the overwhelming

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A great white egret sets up along one of the many creeks on the islands.



number of islanders who served their country were in either the Navy or the Coast Guard.

After a final seafood dinner, as we prepare for our departure in the morning, Catherine, Charles, Matt and I sit around the table and talk well into the night. Of course, we talk about the things we have seen and the people we've met. What we all seem to understand is that the people here—most of

them, at any rate—know how delicate the balance is between human beings and the environment they inhabit. Had greed ruled on either of these islands, they would have suffered the same ghastly fate as some of the overdeveloped barrier islands along the East Coast. And what none of us can quite get is how or why anyone in his or her right mind would not comprehend this, and do everything within

their power to do whatever it takes to remove plastics from every shelf in the world, and eliminate fossil fuels altogether, in favor of green energy. To do otherwise is to condemn life on Earth to certain death. And guess what? Despite the childish musings of the grotesquely well-to-do there is no other planet nearly as hospitable as the one we inhabit. It is a gift beyond reasoning that we are even here. **NJ**



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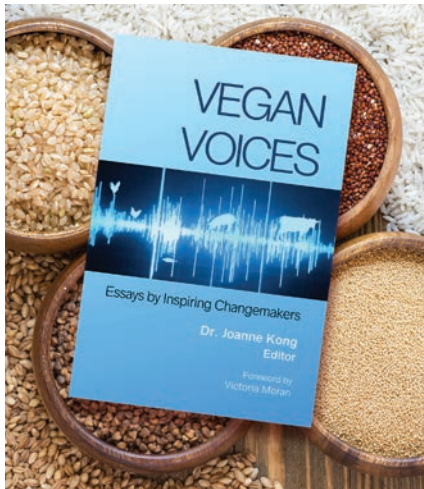
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BOOKS

Vegan Voices

Edited by
Joanne Kong



NORTHSIDER JOANNE KONG, a longtime voice of the vegan movement, just edited a new work scheduled for release in early October.

Titled “Vegan Voices: Essays by Inspiring Changemakers” this is a comprehensive collection of compelling testimonials of how our food choices are deeply connected to the pressing challenges and issues of our time.

Areas covered include: personal and global health; the devastation of animal agriculture to the environment; society’s collective loss of compassion and connection to our kindred animals; and the desire for a world of greater peace, harmony, and inclusivity.

The book points to the need for a cultural and spiritual transformation in which we embrace the commonalities between all living beings as a source of positive change and healing. “Vegan Voices” fills the needs of a wide range of readers, from those new to exploring the plant-based lifestyle to long-time vegans and advocates.

Many essays are deeply personal reflections that attest to how veganism has the power to touch our lives on many levels. The book can be a source of continuing inspiration and motivation for those desiring to create a world of greater compassion and equality. **NJ**

Vegan Voices: Essays by Inspiring Changemakers

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The Famous Duo Back At Black Iris Gallery



Above left: *Political Landscape* by Wolfgang Jasper. Above right: *Starr Wisdom 2020* by Darryl Starr.

A N O T H E R Resurrection of the Famous Duo—Darryl Starr and Wolfgang Jasper—will be on display through September 28 at Black Iris Gallery.

Two of Richmond's long-standing artists, Darryl Starr and Wolfgang Jasper are having another dual show. As is their custom, Starr and Jasper relish showing their art in unusual venues. This show is no exception. The Black Iris Gallery is the perfect space to showcase the art they have each been working on during the pandemic. Don't forget to wear your mask.

The show can be seen by appointment only. To set up an appointment contact Black Iris Gallery, or message Wolfgang on Instagram @Paseolobo; or Darryl @starr.darryl

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INTERIOR WEATHER AT 1708 GALLERY

1708 Gallery features Interior Weathers, an immersive sound and sculptural exhibition by Haseeb Ahmed. Central to Interior Weathers is the flow, temperature, and humidity of air within 1708.

Ahmed's installation will initiate a cascade of chaotic but subtle atmospheric events. This weather system is produced by air quality control sensors that manipulate climate control appliances and 1708's air conditioning system.

A polyrhythmic spoken and sound composition, produced in collaboration with musicians Heavy Color, will accompany the installation as a sensorial guide. Interior Weathers draws the link between the body and building as breathing systems and to the cultural significance of breath itself.

The exhibit runs through October 16.

1708 Gallery
319 West Broad Street
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804 643 1708
1708gallery.org



Sandy Nye-Moran featured at Richmond Public Library.

ART RETURNS TO THE MAIN RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Through September 28, the galleries at the Main Richmond Public Library will feature 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 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 The Things That Kids Do by artist Blanton Seward.

The Main Richmond Public Library's permanent collections include works by Helen and Alvin Hattorf, and Anne Newbold Perkins. **NI**

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Recent Works by Matt Lively And Ed Trask Coming to VisArts

THE VISUAL ARTS Center of Richmond and Glave Kocen Consulting present an exhibition of work by Matt Lively and Ed Trask titled "Blip of the Moment". This joint show will open on September 17, with a public reception from 5 till 8 pm in the outdoor Cabell Courtyard at VisArts. Artist talks begin at 6 pm. The exhibition will be on view at the Visual Arts Center of Richmond's True F. Luck Gallery until October 24. Masks are required inside the building.

Blip of the Moment is the culmination of Matt Lively and Ed Trask's connections to the metaphysical world, during a period of deep introspection, reflecting on their beloved home of Richmond, Virginia. This show considers how we can stop what we are doing and experience what the natural world holds for us.

Matt Lively earned a BFA in Sculpture from Virginia Commonwealth University and has exhibited nationally and internationally in numerous solo, juried and group exhibitions. He has taught at VCU and the Virginia Museum Studio School, and currently operates his own classes, "Painting Outside with Matt Lively". Lively serves on the board of 1708 Gallery, is a co-founder of the award-winning collaborative environmental sculpture duo, Lively/Harper, and is a contributing founding member of Ink Tank Lab. He serves as art director for various short independent films and is the producer of the documentary titled "Death". He continues to be involved with several Richmond community projects, including Mending Walls, Artists of Hope and All In Together. Matt Lively is a recipient of the Theresa Pollak Prize for Excellence in the Arts and his work can be viewed in collections throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe, Australia, and China.

Ed Trask is a musician, painter, and muralist whose work has been collected into many permanent collections. Trask earned a BFA in Painting & Printmaking from VCU and while in school, he transformed many of the dilapidated buildings around



Top: Matt Lively's *Beecycles over the James*, mixed media on panel, 60x84


Below: Ed Trask's *Image Last Cast*, acrylic on canvas, 24x24

Richmond City into his very own art gallery through painted murals. After graduating in 1992, he continued painting illegal murals around the world while on tour with his own bands and friends. Trask has since become involved with bringing creative changes to Richmond through public art. He co-founded the RVA Street Art Festival and served as a commissioner for Richmond's Public Art Commission. He is a past board member of the Visual Arts Center of Richmond and has lectured and facilitated creative consulting programs for numerous corporations while working with community nonprofits to bring creative, inclusive public art throughout the city. Ed Trask's paintings and murals appear in many permanent collections, including the Modern & Contempo-

rary Art Collection at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Ed Trask will be working on a few large paintings for the upcoming exhibition from his studio in downtown Richmond. Additionally, you can expect to see paintings and sculptural art from Matt Lively at the exhibit. During this period of universal struggle in experiencing a global pandemic, these two artists found solace in creating works connected to their city.

"This exhibition, is a beautiful expression of those moments in time, and of our city, as seen through two highly regarded local artists," says Stefanie Fedor, executive director of VisArts.

The Visual Arts Center of Richmond hosts at least four contemporary art exhibitions each year in the True F. Luck Gallery. The gallery is open between the hours of 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. every day. Admission to the gallery is free. 

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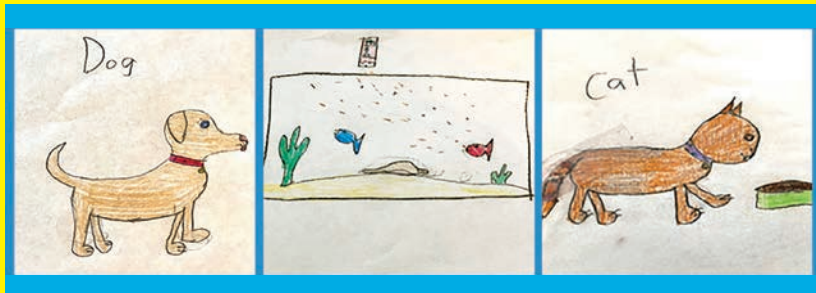
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BOOK REVIEW

The Overground Railroad

by FRAN WITHROW

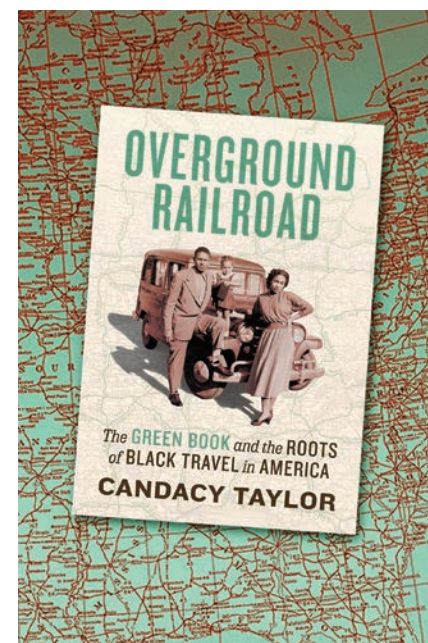
WHEN I WAS small, my family would drive from West Virginia to New England to visit our cousins. Sitting in the back seat of the station wagon with my squirmy siblings, I never worried that gas station owners might refuse us service, that we might be unable to find a restroom we would be allowed to use, or that we would not be welcome in any restaurant we wanted to patronize.

This example of my white privilege was brought home to me repeatedly as I read "Overground Railroad," Candacy Taylor's revealing account of Black travel from the 1930's through the 1960's.

From the 1930's on, many Black families could finally afford a car. This freedom, however, presented them with new challenges as they continued to face racism throughout the country. These new auto owners toured the country anyway, planning for contingencies by packing their own food as well as emergency toileting supplies. They brought blankets with them in case they were denied hotel entry and forced to sleep in their cars. And they hit upon ingenious methods for protecting themselves if they encountered an antagonistic police officer.

For many Black families, another essential travel item while on the road was the "Green Book," a travel guide for Black tourists published originally by Victor Hugo Green in Harlem. Green had only a seventh grade education, but he went on to print the "Green Book" from its inception in 1936 until his death in 1960. The travel guide continued to be distributed under the tutelage of his widow and others until 1967.

The "Green Book" was a lifeline for Black sight-seers, listing a variety of safe places to visit while on the road. Black-owned restaurants, hotels, garages, beauty parlors, and night clubs were among the amenities listed for each state. With this guide, Black drivers could rest assured that, as long as they could get to the places found in the "Green Book," they and



their money would be welcomed with open arms.

The chapters in Taylor's book are divided by year, and she blends discussion of what was in the travel guide for that year with what was going on in the country during that time. Taylor traveled the country as part of her research, documenting as many of the remaining Green Book listings as she could. (Many sites are gone or have fallen into disrepair.) Her book brims with photos of some of these places, including a snapshot of each "Green Book" cover.

Taylor talked with many people, including her own stepfather, who reminisced about travel during those turbulent years. It is obvious that it took ingenuity, courage, and a lot of planning for Black travelers to take to the road. The "Green Book," which eventually expanded to include international travel, was a valuable tool for these intrepid drivers.

Taylor's insightful, informative book shows how far we have come in the fight for justice and equality for Black people.

And also just how far we still have to go. **NR**

Overground Railroad: The Green Book and the Roots of Black Travel in America
By Candacy Taylor
Abrams Press
360 pages
\$35.00



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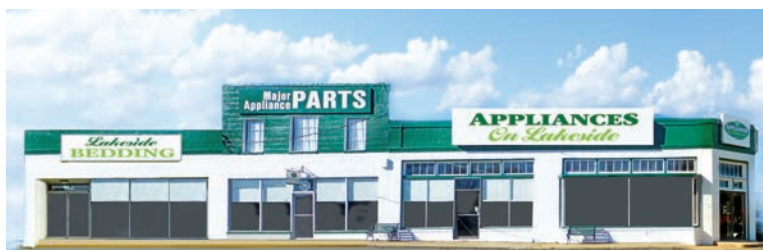


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