A REGIONAL MAGAZINE SERVING GREATER RICHMOND NORTH OF THE JAMES

VOLUME 22 Nº 6 JUNE 2016

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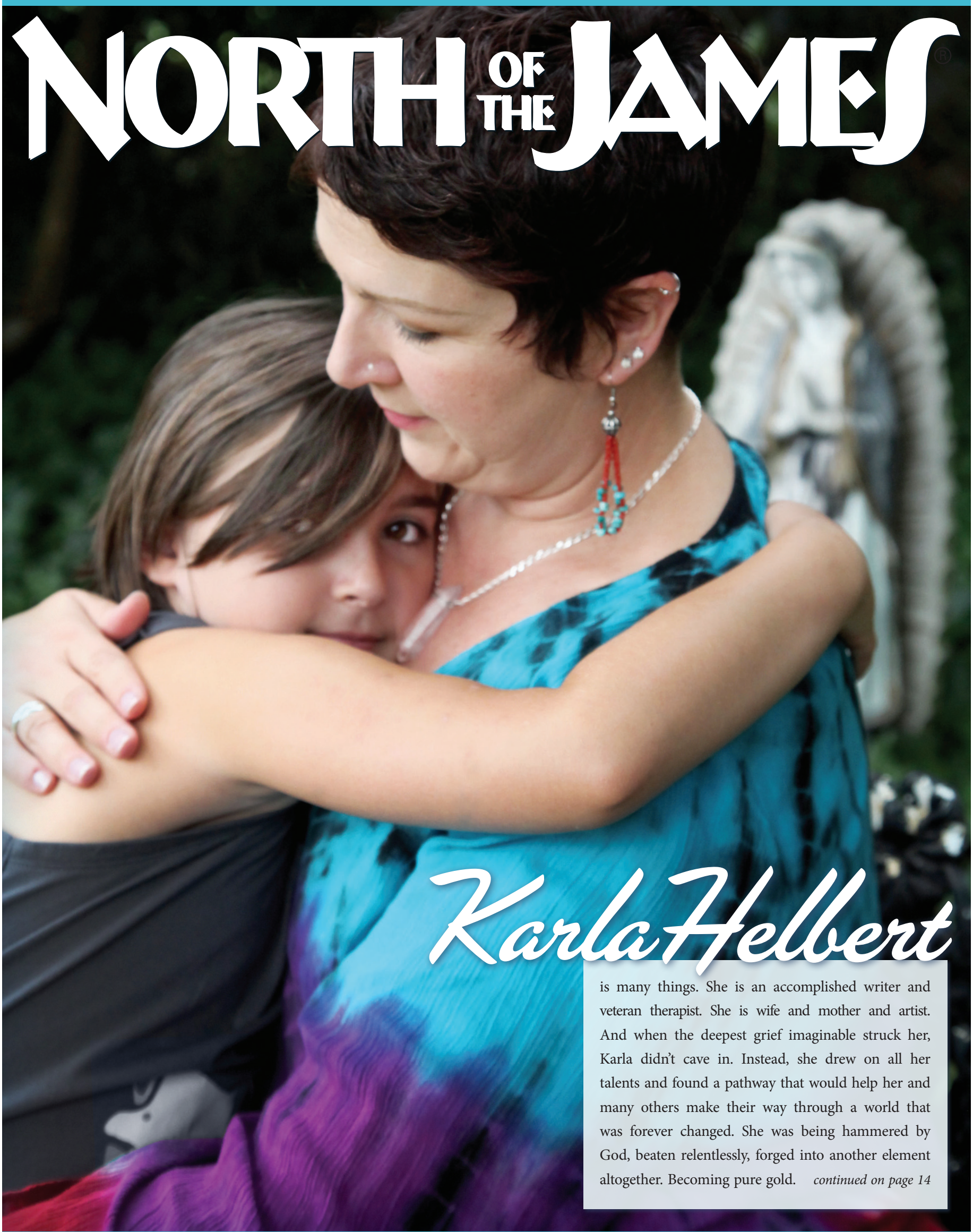

Karla Helbert

is many things. She is an accomplished writer and veteran therapist. She is wife and mother and artist. And when the deepest grief imaginable struck her, Karla didn't cave in. Instead, she drew on all her talents and found a pathway that would help her and many others make their way through a world that was forever changed. She was being hammered by God, beaten relentlessly, forged into another element altogether. Becoming pure gold. *continued on page 14*

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TABLE of CONTENTS

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The Gallows Ball: Propriety Be Hanged

by **DALE M BRUMFIELD**

HANGING HAD BEEN the preferred method of execution in Virginia since 1622, when a man named Frank Daniell was executed for theft near Jamestown. And for 150 years afterward Virginia hangings were public, and sometimes attended by hundreds or even thousands of people. It was believed that public executions of mostly black men, carried out in the communities where the crimes occurred had virtue; that they were a beneficial influence and a deterrent to crime.

It dawned on the Commonwealth's white ruling classes, however, that those public and predominantly black executions were becoming infused with an evangelical fervor until they more resembled carnivals or tent revivals than executions. Facing imminent death, the prisoner, sometimes for the first time in his life, held a commanding moment in a previously uneventful life. He was seen almost as a prophet; his words spoken at the gallows sometimes for an hour or more – had an authority never carried before. People brought picnic lunches and sang and prayed aloud with the prisoner. Food stands and patent medicine sellers began popping up.

Frustrated by what public executions were becoming, the Virginia General Assembly on March 29, 1879 abruptly passed a law banning them immediately following a strange and very bizarre spectacle that occurred only four days earlier at New Kent Courthouse.

On March 25, two young black men, Julius Christian (age 21) and Patrick Smith (20) were hanged for robbery and murder and their executions in the courthouse yard were witnessed by about a thousand people, mostly blacks. Then, it was announced that after the hangings a "Grand Gallows Ball" would commence at midnight inside a nearby tobacco barn. As the clock struck 12:00 about 500 people gathered inside the barn, waiting the signal to begin.

An unnamed reporter who covered the hangings also attended the ball. "It was a weird scene," he wrote in a dispatch to the Cincinnati Enquirer, "the building was lighted by pine torches held by negro boys stationed in the corners." He also reported the odd ethnic mix of the attendees, including not just "young black men and maidens," but also "a dozen beautiful quadroons (people ¼ black) from Richmond, and in the center of the building stood seven or eight Indians, belonging to the tribe from Indian Town nearby." A band consisted of three banjo players and a fiddler.

At midnight, Isaiah Peterson, "the boss negro," stood on a salt barrel and announced "The hour for rejoicing is at hand! Let the musicians take notice, and all others!" The band struck up a tune called "The Mississippi Lawyer" and everyone began dancing with wild abandon. "The Indians danced with quadroons, negro men danced with colored girls, and all went merry as a marriage-bell," wrote the astonished reporter.

The festivities continued until two in the morning, when Polly Johnson, a local woman considered a "Voudou Negress", made an appearance in the center of the ball-room. She waved her hand and the music stopped. Then, she took out small slivers of hemp rope from a red bag, claiming it was the rope cut from the Smith and Christian gallows. She announced in a loud voice that if the dancers purchased a piece of the rope for 50 cents, they would live 90 years and be safe from all evil.

There was such a rush to purchase the rope pieces that a fight broke out, and those who could not get a piece "acted like fiends" and begged others for even a thread. The woman then announced that for those who did not get a piece of rope, that only a piece of clothing of the recently deceased would save them.

A hundred people then reportedly rushed to the graves of Smith and Christian, only to hastily return to the barn in horror, claiming the ghosts of the two men were seen up and walking around their burial sites. Several women fainted at the news. Later, it was determined that the dancers had in fact interrupted two resurrectionists (grave robbers), most likely Chris Baker and his partner, Ceaser Roane, who stole freshly-buried corpses for student dissection at the Medical College of Virginia (now VCU School of Medicine) in Richmond.

Most of the agitated crowd hurried home, but a few stayed till five in the morning when a doxology was sung, and the Gallows Ball ended.

When the General Assembly passed their bill prohibiting public executions, the April 2 Petersburg Progress-Index newspaper smugly reported "this shall put an end to all such gallows picnics and jollifications as was witnessed at New Kent Court-house."

Maybe not. "The Gallows Ball in New Kent was such a success that the darkies are talking about getting one up in Chesterfield [April 25]," stated the April 3, 1879 Alexandria Gazette. "The passage of the bill by the Legislature prohibiting public executions, while [keeping] the crowds from watching the dying of the poor wretches, will not prevent the gallows ball – the new departure in colored circles." The article added that Henry Lewis, "a comely looking negro youth," would be hung because he was convicted of killing his grandmother with an axe when she refused to give him a piece of ginger cake. It was also announced that Lucinda, another "old Virginia negro Voudou doctress" would be in attendance.

Governor Claude Swanson, however, commuted Henry Lewis's conviction to life in the penitentiary, so there was no Chesterfield Gallows Ball.

The law had little to no effect on limiting crowds at hangings. It wasn't until 1908 when the General Assembly voted to switch from hanging to the electric chair in the basement of the State Penitentiary in Richmond that they effectively ended public executions for good. NJ

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Kehinde Wiley: A New Republic

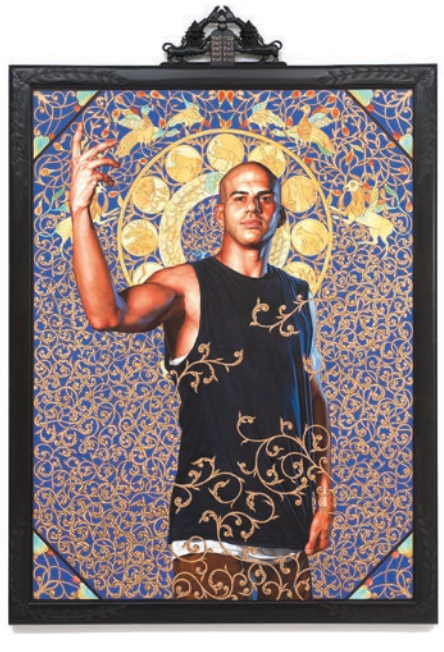
"WHAT I wanted to do was to look at the powerlessness that I felt as and continue to feel at times — as a black man in the American streets," Kehinde Wiley once said in interview with NPR's Audie Cornish. "I know what it feels like to walk through the streets, knowing what it is to be in this body, and how certain people respond to that body. This dissonance between the world that you know, and then what you mean as a symbol in public, that strange, uncanny feeling of having to adjust for . . . this double consciousness."

There's something fitting that an exhibit of Wiley's work will be on display at the Virginia Museum Fine Arts through September 5—for it was on the grounds of the VMFA that more than 3,000 Confederate veterans, over a span of some fifty years, were housed in the what was called R.E. Lee Camp, No. 1. The Confederate Chapel still stands today on the southwest corner of the VMFA campus.

Composed of more than 50 monumental paintings and sculptures by one of the country's leading contemporary artists, "Kehinde Wiley: A New Republic", a midlife retrospective, raises intriguing questions about race, identity, and the politics of representation.

Recognized for his portrayal of contemporary African American men using conventions of traditional European portraiture, Wiley has expanded his vision to include women, and people of other cultures from around the globe. In addition to lesser-known early works, this exhibition also explores new developments, which include bronze busts, "paintings" in stained glass, and works from his World Stage series.

"Kehinde Wiley is one of the most popular artists in America today," says Alex Nyerges, museum director. "The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts was one of the first comprehensive art museums to acquire his portraits, and we are thrilled to present a larger selection of his work to the public. These paintings and sculptures challenge centuries of stereotypes, and we hope



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Tim McCaffrey's garden was featured during the 26th Annual Bellevue Garden Walk held May 31. Hardscape and landscape by The Cottage Gardener.

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ART

our visitors will feel engaged and make the connection between Wiley's works and those in our galleries."

Wiley selects the subjects for his portraits through the process of "street casting" by enlisting young men and women to pose for his paintings. These people, wearing hoodies, jeans, and baseball caps, are contrasted against ornate backgrounds that evoke an aristocratic style of portraiture. By replacing European aristocrats with black subjects, Wiley points out the absence of African Americans from such historical narratives.

The works on view will include selections from his ongoing World Stage series, where Wiley's work has taken on a global perspective. In addition to establishing a studio in Beijing, China, Wiley has spent time in Africa, France, Israel, Jamaica, Haiti, and other countries. Portraits of women from the An Economy of Grace series include The Two Sisters, which was lent to the exhibition by VMFA Board of Trustees President William A. Royall, Jr., and his wife, Pamela.

To help visitors make their own connections between the works in the exhibition and works in the collection, VMFA has prepared a space, The Art

Lounge: Connect Kehinde Wiley to VMFA, where visitors can access art history books, touch screens, and free cards to look deeper into Wiley's artistic process. A map also will be available to help locate all 12 corresponding works in VMFA's galleries.

The exhibition was organized by the Brooklyn Museum and curated by Eugenie Tsai, John and Barbara Vogelstein Curator of Contemporary Art at the Brooklyn Museum. VMFA's Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Sarah Eckhardt, PhD., is the organizing curator for VMFA. NJ

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Patrick Henry's Pub & Grille

by **ANNE JONES**

IF I'M VENTURING OUTSIDE OF Bellevue's exceptional culinary bounty for a nice dinner, Church Hill is the perfect destination. It equals the Fan for history and charm, sans any parking issues and VCU dominance. And Patrick Henry's Pub and Grille, at the corner of Broad and 23rd, has been a favorite draw into that neighborhood for a while now.

Just in the last year I've enjoyed several lunches and a couple of dinners, and last week I met my friend M there for a mid-week supper. We met at the same time, entered the building together, and sat at the same table. But somehow, we had two very different experiences.

First, we walked up the steps and into the pretty antebellum house behind a group of 4-5 people and two dogs, who were directed to the patio out back. This was a huge bonus to me – dinner with dogs! How European! M – notsamuch. Even though he's definitely a kindred dog spirit, he doesn't want one snorfling around the dinner table, even outside.

But not to worry, anyway. We sat in the dog-less grille on the first floor – a cozy room with exposed brick, wood beams, an old bar, and a big flat-screened tv, another asset to me but considered a blemish on the historical integrity of the building to M.

On every other visit within the last year, I've had a server so efficient, friendly, and genuine that I wanted to hang out with her after the meal was done. Last week's server got off on the wrong foot from the start, and it took us all meal to warm back up to her, and her to us. Eric, the owner, is always a friendly and conscientious presence, checking in with tables and chatting a little if the diners are inclined.

None of this mattered a whit once the food arrived. My Salmon Florentine was listed on the menu as pan-seared, but I requested that it be cooked through (probably the chef's worst nightmare, and completely unsophisticated of me). The request was received cheerfully and the resulting dish was perfect. My fears of a punitively dried-out fish were groundless; this was succulent, moist and delicately flavored with a light spinach cream sauce with tomatoes. Very successful. The side of asparagus was also just right for me – fresh, skinny, grilled asparagus, tender and crispy with a whisper of olive oil. M found them to be too skinny. The onion rings were perfect in their own right – thickly battered and crunchy, deliciously unhealthy (though not in the slightest bit greasy).

M's salad of plain greens was to him, "too Spartan," but just as I was about to expound on the benefits of pristine, solo greens, I noticed it was described on the menu as a mixture of greens, cucumbers, tomatoes and carrots. His New York strip was cooked perfectly and with a nice flavor, but had cooled off a little too much by the time it was served.

Dessert was the peace-maker; both of our choices were flawless. M's key-lime pie was authentically yellow and non-pudding-like, slightly tart. I had a heavenly chocolate brownie-muffin topped with homemade vanilla ice cream that was somehow sweet, creamy and light all at once.

I'll go back soon for more of the same. But next time I'll take a different friend. NJ

Patrick Henry's Pub & Grille *open at 11:30 am 7 days a week. 2300 East Broad St, 644-4242.*

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Muhammad Ali, Conscientious Objector

by JACK R. JOHNSON

"FLOAT LIKE A butterfly, sting like a bee." Few quips are as recognizable Muhammad Ali's versifying on his boxing prowess, but on June 20, 1967, a Houston jury took just 21 minutes to strip Ali of his title and convict him of draft evasion—despite the fact that he resolutely maintained his status as a religious conscientious objector and follower of Islam.

"No one but Allah can command me to go to war."

Ali declared that he would not serve in Vietnam, proclaiming, "I ain't got no quarrel with them Viet Cong."

Sports Illustrator described him as a genuine, if misguided, conscientious objector. Despite this, the American jury in Houston, suspicious of the Islamic faith and doubly suspicious of a pacifist, convicted him of draft evasion, gave him a five-year prison sentence and a $10,000 fine. He was also stripped of his passport and his heavyweight title, and was banned from fighting in the United States.

According to sportswriter and promoter Harold Conrad, "Overnight he became a 'no name'. He threw his life away on one toss of the dice for something he believed in. Not many folks do that."

Ali spent the next three years free while his conviction was on appeal lecturing at universities and Muslim gatherings around the United States and gaining support as anti-war sentiment increased.

Finally, in 1971, the US Supreme Court ruled 8-0 that Ali met the three standards for conscientious objector status: that he opposed war in any form, that his beliefs were based on religious teaching and that his objection was sincere. His conviction was reversed.

In 1974, Ali would go on to beat champion George Foreman to reclaim the heavyweight championship for the first time since it was stripped away from him in 1967.

He died last Friday, June 3rd, 2016 at a Phoenix-area hospital, where he had spent the past few days being treated for respiratory complications. He was 74 years old. NJ

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION by DOUG DOBEY

Karla Helbert

BECOMING PURE GOLD

ALWAYS, THERE WAS A GENTLE TUG BETWEEN THE MOUNTAINS AND THE SEA.

From her backyard, outside of Coeburn, in the coalfields of Southwest Virginia, Karla Helbert could see the Appalachian Mountains rise protectively above Clinch Valley. She would hike those mountains, and in the bare outcroppings of rock could read in the strata every geologic chapter of our world inscribed on pages of sandstone and shale, granite and dolomitic limestone—ten thousand years of sediment to create less than one inch of a mountain that rose two thousand feet into the sky. Among the oldest in the world, the Appalachians existed before North America snapped away from Panagea and migrated westward. On nine acres, with her parents, Luther and Dyanne, Karla grew up nestled among these ancient mountains.

When she wasn't in the mountains with her parents, Karla was on the coast with her maternal grandfather, a retired merchant seaman, who instilled in her a love for the ocean and higher education. Every summer he would whisk her away to the Atlantic coast and they would travel as far afield as St. Augustine. Up and down the coast they roamed where they would live out of a camper. And he would buy her books, and in port towns and cities would point out the ensigns on the freighters and tankers and tell her which countries they hailed from. Karla marveled at the line where earth and sky meet and how at certain times of the day there is no way to know where one begins and the other ends. And in her hand she held sand that might have once been part of the mountains she called home.

"I would spend entire summers with him and my grandmother, but I was most often with him," says Karla. We're sitting around her living room table with her daughter, Lula, and husband Jamie . Artwork, much of it created by Karla, covers the walls. There are two pieces that depict dragonflies—one a print, the other a large jeweled medallion. Lula moves from her mother's lap to her father's and back again. Lula is a brown-eyed girl who loves to sing, which she does every so often, particularly when she's within reach of the microphone.

As Karla's arms reach around her daughter in a hug, she remembers that place in the mountains where she grew up, before horror had ever crept into her world. "We lived three miles from Little Stony Falls," she says. "And one of my favorite places was the toolshed in the yard. The door was built into the wall, so you couldn't really tell the door was there. It was like a secret. And you opened it, and there was this covered porch. That was my favorite place to go and sit and just be. And you could see, from the porch, all the fields and the forest beyond that. It was a great place to grow up."

On the threshold of adulthood, two things would happen in rapid succession that would shake Karla's world to the bedrock. In August of her eighteenth year Karla's beloved grandfather died. Two years later, her parents would divorce.

"The divorce was really difficult for me," she says. "I know they didn't get along, but it's still hard because no matter how old you get it would be nice if there was one place you could go to that would be home. It just tears apart your family and nothing's ever the same and it's a huge loss."

After spending two years at Clinch

BY CHARLES MCGUIGAN
PHOTOS BY REBECCA D'ANGELO

Valley College (now the University of Virginia's College at Wise), where she studied English and political science, Karla moved to Richmond and attended Virginia Commonwealth University where she majored in fashion merchandising. Not really her first choice, but she saw it as a way of getting into the art school.

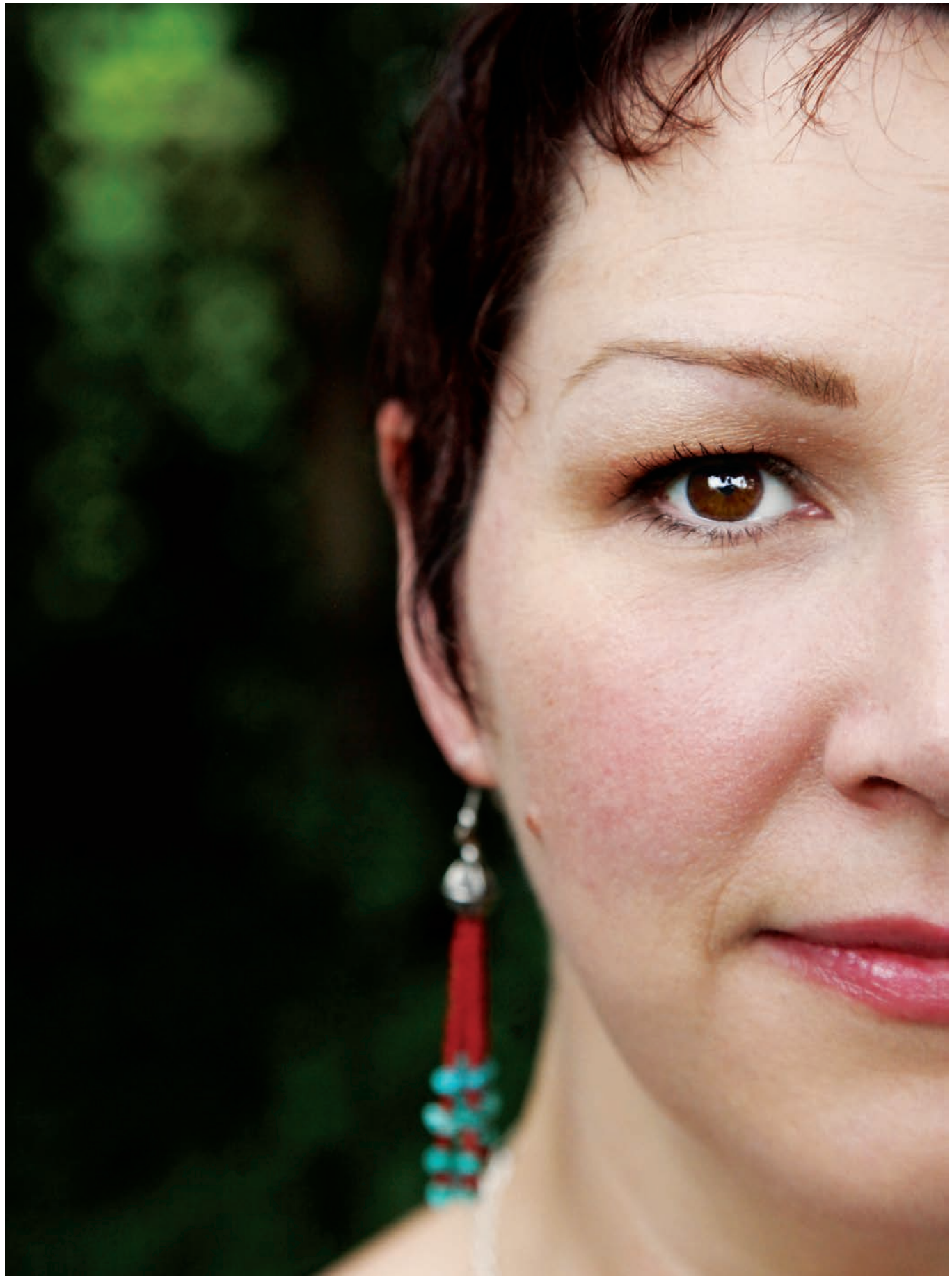
"I almost graduated with a degree in fashion merchandising and I was sitting in class one day and I was like, 'This is not what I want to do,'" says Karla. "And I stopped going to school that semester and failed all those classes that semester and then came back the next year and did an English major again."

During that time, she worked for a company that sold skin care products and makeup, and when they closed their Richmond store, they offered Karla a positon in their Winchester store.

In Winchester, Karla had a roommate who worked for Grafton School, which provides a host of services to people with emotional, developmental and developmental challenges. "I thought if my roommate can work for them I can work for them," Karla says. "And I went through the training and it was fascinating and it was extensive. I started off as a substitute at their Berryville campus and found out they had a Richmond campus and I just ended up transferring my job here. I was working in a group home on Southside and one girl had Down Syndrome and the rest of them were on the autistic spectrum. I loved it and it was a great job for finishing college. And I was good at it."

After receiving her bachelor's from VCU, Karla then got her master's in rehabilitation counselling from VCU's School of Allied Health. "I was doing the LCP tract so it led to a license and professional counselling, which is what I do now," she says. "It allows me to be an individual therapist and practice on my own."

While studying English as an undergraduate she met the man who would become her husband—Jamie Fueglein. "We met in a Shakespeare class taught by Bill Griffin," Karla remembers. "That class was Midsummer Night's Dream: Page, Stage and Screen. I sat behind him and he didn't even notice me." The following day when Karla entered the classroom for Fiction into Film, she saw Jamie again. "I took that to be fate," she says. "During that Fiction Into Film class we skipped class and went to Coppola's. That was our first date."



Karla knew Jamie loved her, but he had a hard time making that announcement himself. They saw one another on again and off again for the next three years.

In 1998, when Karla returned to Richmond from Winchester, she gave Jamie something of an ultimatum. "If you're not going to be with me, I can't see you anymore," she told him. "Because I can't be in a relationship with anybody else with you around. Then we got engaged, but never got married." Not for a while, at any rate.

When Karla was 34, Jamie's mother had a stroke and when the pair were returning to Richmond, Jamie popped a question. "Do you want to have a baby?" he asked and Karla nodded. "We got started immediately," she says. "And then I was pregnant the next month, which was really scary."

Where the pregnancy had been trouble-free, the delivery was another story.

Their son's due date was June 1, and May 24 was Karla's last day of work before her twelve-week maternity leave began. As she was preparing to leave Grafton School that day, just before the bell rang, her water broke. Earlier in the day, Jamie had been notified by his brother that their mother had had

another stroke. Karla's labor would end up lasting for twenty-four hours and her husband, whose mother was at death's door, as he watched his wife suffer through labor, later confided this to her. "It was one of the most traumatic things I ever witnessed."

Their son, Thelonious Luther Helbert Fueglein, was born on May 26, two minutes after midnight. "That's why we named him Thelonious," Karla explains. "You know, Thelonious Monk's signature song 'Round Midnight'."

And as Theo was entering the world, Jamie's mom was leaving it. "She died as Theo was being born," says Karla. "It was really bad, it was sad."

Months passed, and all was well with Theo. Karla and Jamie had adjusted to their new roles as parents. Then in late August, over a weekend, Jamie went to his mother's house in Roanoke to sort through her things with his sister.

The city wheezed heat and humidity. When you opened the front door, it was like a blast furnace. That Saturday, as Karla vacuumed the floors of the house on Sheppard Street in preparation for lunch with her father, Theo began to cry. And that was odd, because in the past the whirr of the vacuum cleaner calmed him.

As she tells me this part of the story, Karla looks to her husband who sits behind me so I can't see his face. But Karla's eyes fill with tears and her voice quavers with a deep sadness. "And then the room got really quiet and Theo immediately stopped crying," she says. "I looked over in his crib and he wasn't moving. So I picked him up and he wasn't breathing." A wave of panic washed over her. She had no idea what was going on. And then, as she picked him up, ready to perform CPR, Theo projectile vomited.

"I was like, 'What is wrong?' and I'm trying to get him dressed and cleaned up and he threw up again and I set him down," she says. And as she looked down on him she noticed that one eye was closed and the other open, and one hand moved while the other remained still. "I knew in that instant something was wrong with his brain," she says through a veil of tears. "I knew it." She picked him up again and could feel the unnatural heat of fever radiating from her son's skin. She called his pediatrician and told her what was happening. "If he throws up again give him some Pedialyte," she told Karla. "If he throws up again go to the ER."

After hanging up the phone, Karla called her father and asked him to

pick up some Pedialyte on his way over for lunch. "When he knocked on the door I picked Theo up and he threw up on me again and I told my father we've got to go to the hospital."

At St. Mary's Hospital, Karla told the ER doctors about Theo's eyes and hands. They immediately did a CT scan and one doctor told Karla that her son had blood on his brain.

"What do you mean there's blood on his brain," she said. "How does that happen?"

"Oh, it happens from dropping the baby, abusing the baby," this man, who identified himself as a doctor, said.

"I don't even ****ing remember his name, but I'd know him if I saw him and I've seen him twice since," says Karla.

Immediately, mother and son were rushed to PICU at MCV where they did an MRI.

That's when she had a chance to call her husband. She told him to come, but not to speed. By the time he arrived at MCV, the doctors told them they had discovered a tumor in the middle of Theo's brain. "And of course it's Saturday at the end of August and there are no doctors," says Karla. "The place is being run by the residents. This doctor, a brand new doctor, and he was so nervous, gave us the news. He's like, 'The baby has a tumor, okay.' And I said, 'That's not okay.' He did not know what he was doing, he had no clue how to deliver news like that to a family."

On Monday, Karla was scheduled to return to work, the same day her son was to have surgery.

"That was Saturday, I was supposed to go back to work on Monday it was right at the end of maternity leave and he was having brain surgery on that Monday. So Dr. John Ward and all of our doctors there were amazing," says Karla.

As it turned out, Theo had one of the rarest forms of cancer in the world. Called a choroid plexus carcinoma, only one in 275 million people have them. One of the doctors said, not meaning any disrespect: "It's like winning the lottery, in reverse."

The surgical team, after the procedure, felt fairly confident. "They said it was like 98 percent removed," Karla says. But things went from bad to worse. They had to perform a ventriculostomy, a neurosurgical procedure that involves creating a hole within a cerebral ventricle for drainage. They then ordered a seventy-week chemo protocol.

"But after the first chemo treatment his brain was essentially destroyed," says Karl, weeping. "The whole brain, the whole cerebral cortex was just destroyed. " She remembers viewing CT images on Saturday which showed a lot of white, healthy tissue. The day after the chemo treatment, there was no white left. "It was all gone," Karla says. "Necrotic, dying tissue is grey, and Theo's whole brain was grey. There was no healthy tissue at all. It was gone."

Karla and Jamie would eventually take their son home. They were with him, around the clock, for the next five months. They had support from Noah's Children Hospice. "I have no idea what it would have been like without that kind of help," says Karla.

Karla remembers that New Year's Day vividly. It was 2006. "I do know in Theo's short life time he had so much love," she says. "And I was holding him when I heard about the Harvey's and I just lost my ****. And I thought, oh my God, if my kid has to die at least he gets to be here with me and safe and surrounded by peace and love and not in fear. That day was really terrible."

On February 20, 2006 Thelonious Luther Helbert Fueglein died.

When she looks back on that time, Karla is almost astonished by what she and her husband went through, and then she says, "You don't know what you can do until you have to do it."

Karla was brought up in a fundamentalist tradition—Assembly of God, Pentecostal. "On my mother's side it was normal for the Lord to speak to you over coffee and do miracles on a regular basis," she says. "The power of God was a real thing."

But Karla was always different. "I'm spiritually promiscuous," she says. "When I moved to Richmond I started learning so much more about so many different religions."

She practiced Wicca for a time and was deeply drawn to Hinduism. "Much of my training is in integral yoga and Swami Satchidananda, who

brought the training from India," says Karla. "His whole goal in life was to unite people of all faiths and our motto is, 'Truth is one, and paths are many.' And it really resonated with me because there are so many things and so many religions that have certain things in common and what he taught and what I agree with is that when you find those commonalities that resonate that's the real Divine."

While she was in graduate school, Karla took a semester-long course in counselling for death and grief and dying. "I was also a hospice volunteer for Hospice of Virginia for a little while," she says. "Before any of this happened to me. So death and dying have always been areas of interest. You can't see it while you're in it, and you can't see the future, but when you look back you can see how it's all connected."

Karla stares intently at me with dark, dark brown eyes. "There's this quote that goes something like this," she says. "'Go ahead and ring your bells, and light your candles, and light your incense, and call upon God, but watch out because he'll come, and he'll beat you and beat you and beat you, until you turn into pure gold. I'm not pure gold yet, but I've been hammered and the hammering is still going on."

Not long after Theo's death, he was buried in the Collier Cemetery, where much of Karla's family is interred. "It's on the top of a hill in Wise County," she says. "William Collier was my great-great grandfather. Even if I never live in Wise County again it's always home and I know I'll always go back forever."

They held a memorial service for their son on what would have been his first birthday. And they hosted a dinner for family and friends, who knew nothing about an additional surprise the couple had in store. "We were got married at that dinner," Karla says. "So it was marriage and memorial to my son. I had said, 'If I was ever going to get married I would have wanted to have my child be part of the ceremony.' And this way he was part of the ceremony."

The couple spent their honeymoon in Pine Knoll Shores in Downeast North Carolina. "It was the saddest honeymoon on the planet ever, but it was good," she says.

She looks over at her husband, just behind me. "I remember the whole time when Theo was sick feeling really sorry for Jamie because he was so angry," says Karla. "I wasn't angry then, but after he died I got real pissed off."

On the first anniversary of Theo's death, Jamie and Karla returned to Pine Knoll Shores. "It was February, but it was a nice February day," Karla recalls. "It was warm enough that I was on the beach reading." But within her a fire raged. She jumped to her feet. "I got so furious," she says. "And there was nobody around and I just started screaming and yelling and I was throwing sand and throwing sticks." She was finally angry with God. "It was exhausting," says Karla. "And I realized it just doesn't matter if I'm angry. It doesn't affect God, whatever God is. And I really knew, it wasn't about God, it was about me. And it's fine. God doesn't cause these things or make these things happen, but when we need the strength to get through them then that's when God is there. The laws of the universe are set in motion and some things don't work out the way human beings would like them to and God does not necessarily intervene, but God does not cause these things."

Yoga helped Karla understand grief, and through one of her books, "Yoga for Grief and Loss", which was released last October, she has taught may others the lessons she learned.

"Really," she says. "It is the book I wish I had had when Theo died. If I could go back in time, this is what I would need to read."

Karla also published a book for people on the autistic spectrum called "Finding Your Own Way to Grieve: A Creative Activity Workbook for Kids and Teens on the Autistic Spectrum". And she wants to publish another book about her son Theo.

It wasn't too long after Theo's death that the couple decided to have another child. It was no easy decision. "I didn't know if I wanted to have another child," says Karla. "I was horrified the whole time." She gestures toward her husband. "He said, he'd rather put a fork in his eye."

Karla had a miscarriage that first attempt on the Thursday before Mother's Day, two weeks before Theo's birthday. "It was awful," Karla says. "And I was like, 'This is proof, I'm never going to have a living child."

By August she was pregnant again and her daughter Lula Francys Helbert Fueglein was born the following May. "And it's still hard," says Karla. "On Memorial Day weekend, on Theo's birthday, all of us drove to Smith Mountain Lake and stayed the night with Jamie's sister and we left Lula there and went to Christiansburg and stayed at this awesome bed and breakfast. That's the first time we've been away together, leaving her without one of us, in eight years."

When I ask about the various depictions of dragonflies throughout the house, Karla smiles. "Dragonflies represent Theo," she says. "The day after his surgery I started seeing them."

Their son was sedated and intubated and would be out for hours, so Jamie and Karla drove back to the Sheppard Street house. They didn't really sleep, but they freshened up and just as the sun was rising they headed through the hushed streets back to MCV. "At every stop light that we would stop at there were three dragonflies around the car," Karla says. "It was weird. That same day there was a huge dragonfly outside his window on the seventh floor. Our nurse had dragonflies on her shirt. My mom showed up later and had dragonflies on her shirt. A friend of mine came to the hospital and she had dragonflies on her shoes. And then I started seeing them everywhere. They had not always been there and I 'm the kind of person who notices things like that."

Karla looked up the symbolism of dragonflies. "They symbolize swift transformation and also strength," she says. "They are shamanic creatures that can travel between the physical and the spiritual world. They can bring messages from the dead."

"And they escort spirits," Jamie says.

"They would land and my finger and his too," says Karla. "And they would let us pet them. Almost everybody who has people who die who are close to them have something like that. And often it is some animal or insect. Butterflies a lot, cardinals, sometimes deer, and sometimes ladybugs. So that's where the dragonflies come from."

Lula, who has been chomping at the bit to talk into the microphone, takes a seat next to her mother as I reposition the mic. And this is exactly what she says of the two people who sit in front of me and behind me, "They are the awesomest people in the world to me. They care about me and they look out for me wherever I am, even if they're not there. They're with me like a spirit or something." NJ

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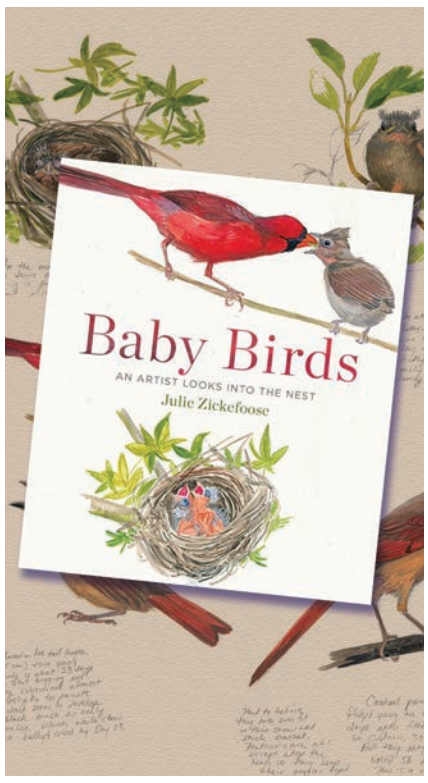
BOOK REVIEW

Bird in Hand

by FRAN WITHROW

I FIRST STUMBLED ONTO author Julie Zickefoose at the library. I was deep in the stacks, perusing books about nature, when I found "The Bluebird Effect." I was utterly enchanted by this book of gorgeous watercolor portraits and stories about birds, so when I learned "Baby Birds" was coming out, I hurriedly bought my own copy. I've been poring over it repeatedly ever since.



Zickefoose is a multi-talented woman. An exquisite painter, wildlife rehabilitator, writer and naturalist, she spent years slowly collecting watercolor portraits of 17 types of birds as they morphed from hatchlings into miniature adults. The paintings are accompanied by her detailed notes, along with engrossing stories of how she obtained her subjects. "Baby Birds" is jam packed with a lot of rich information, making this a large, heavy book.

Zickefoose worked largely from actual baby birds she gently teased from nests found on her property, carefully painting them before returning them to their parents. In doing so, she has created a priceless series of portraits showing just how amazing the transformation is from a newly hatched chick to the day it fledges the nest. The love and respect she has for these creatures is everywhere evident.

Zickefoose portrays a wide variety of birds, all lovingly painted with a sure and steady hand, from impossibly tiny baby hummingbirds to the sturdier looking mourning doves. Life is fraught with danger for these fragile babies: predators, mites, and bad weather can easily tip the balance against them. It's a wonder any of them fledge at all. Not surprisingly, some of the subjects of Zickefoose's paintings do not live to grow up. Those who do so have to grow up fast. I kept paging back and forth in the book, staring in astonishment at how a newly hatched blob of pink becomes a tiny, feathered charmer in the span of just a few days.

Each chapter focuses on a different bird and describes how Zickefoose came to paint this nestling, what happened as she watched, her struggles to save the ones who were facing extra challenges, the joy of watching those babies who survived make their way into the world. I learned a lot about which birds are cavity nesters, which make open nests, why some birds develop more rapidly than others, even which birds prefer what type of food. Bird parents work non-stop from dawn to dusk trying to keep their babies' crops full. It's a full-time job. Some orphan birds Zickefoose nurtured needed such frequent feedings she had to take them to the grocery store with her. That's dedication.

In the end, this brilliant book is a labor of love, and it shows. I turned the last page reluctantly, but Zickefoose hints at another volume to come. Just as she finished this book, someone brought her three baby brown thrashers in a shoebox. More subjects to paint! It may be a few years before she collects enough of her painstakingly rendered birds for a second book, but I for one will be waiting eagerly to read more from this amazing author. NJ

Baby Birds:
An Artist Looks Into the Nest
By Julie Zickefoose.
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
$28.00.
352 pages.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION by DOUG DOBEY

by **BRIAN BURNS** and **JUDD PROCTOR**

The Designer In Oz

IN THE 1939 FILM, "THE WIZARD Of Oz," as Dorothy, the Scarecrow and the Tin Man wind their way down the yellow brick road, they're confronted by a seemingly ferocious lion. But the character laments his true lack of courage, and with a limp wrist admits he's, "just a 'dandy-lion.'" It was a swipe at homosexuals.

Yet that very costume was designed by Adrian, Hollywood's premier costumer and an openly-gay man. In fact, Adrian was head designer for all the extravaganza's costumes, including the Wicked Witch and the Munchkins. And who could forget Glinda, the good witch of the North, in her enchanting gown.

Dorothy's Ruby Slippers were quite elaborate, and Adrian had four pairs made for filming. One pair was sold in the year 2000 for $666,000.

The Rhodes Scholarship

British colonial statesman and financier Cecil Rhodes formed a financial empire during the 19th century, by virtue of his diamond and gold mines in Africa.

During his life, Rhodes kept the company of young men and involved them in government, business and as servants in his home. In 1881, Rhodes hired a male secretary for his mining company named Neville Pickering, who became the love of his life. But in 1886, Pickering became gravely ill. Rhodes nursed Pickering faithfully for six weeks, but it was hopeless. At Pickering's funeral, Rhodes sobbed hysterically.

Often in ill health, Rhodes died in 1902 at age 49. He left nearly all his fortune to public service, with a major portion for Rhodes Scholarships to Oxford. He wanted the executors of his will to seek out qualities of excellence in young men. His will even stipulated standards for prospective Rhodes Scholars, including kindness, literary and scholastic attainment, fondness for and success in sports, and an instinct to lead.

It was not until 1976 that women were first allowed to apply for Rhodes Scholarships.

Edison's Bright Idea

In 1891, Thomas Edison's invention of the moving picture camera certainly got things rolling. One of his first experimental films, directed by William Dickson in 1895, visually recorded two men dancing a waltz together. It was titled, "The Gay Brothers." While probably not intending to depict a gay identity, it signaled the influence of gays in Hollywood from the start.

Few early 20th century moviegoers knew of the huge contributions made by gay talent, even during the silent film era.

Early box office stars like William Haines and Ramon Novarro and directors like George Cukor and Dorothy Arzner were able to keep their sexual orientation out of the headlines.

After all, what mattered most to studio executives was how well they sold at the box office. NJ

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION by DOUG DOBEY

18th Annual Richmond Shakespeare Festival at Agecroft Hall

by ANDREW LINDSAY

QUILL THEATRE presents its annual summer Richmond Shakespeare Festival at Agecroft Hall, the perfect backdrop for the Elizabethan bard's plays.

The company performs Twelfth Night through June 26. In this captivating comedy, love is an overwhelming force of nature that sweeps us away in a flood of longing. Shipwrecked on the shores of Illyria, Viola grieves for her lost twin brother, and disguises herself as a boy to serve the Count Orsino, with whom she falls hopelessly in love. The passionate Countess Olivia also falls in love—with what she thinks is Orsino's handsome young page. With some of Shakespeare's most beloved comic characters—including the imperious Malvolio, idiotic Andrew Aguecheek and drunken Sir Toby Belch—life in Illyria is a sublime whirligig of hopes and blunders, disguises and ruses, songs and silliness.

The Merchant of Venice, directed by Dr. Jan Powell, will be performed July 7 through July 31. A controversial tragicomedy set in the divided world of Renaissance Italy: the glittering golden privilege of the Christian aristocracy

and the powerful underworld of the Jewish ghetto. To court the wealthy heiress Portia, Bassanio asks for a large sum from his devoted friend, Antonio, who must borrow the funds. Shylock, the lender, strikes a deadly deal. If Antonio does not repay the loan, he must forfeit a pound of his own flesh. The insidious venom of prejudice poisons all, and mercy's love is held hostage to the mighty sway of justice.

Make sure to catch a special performance called "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare" (abridged) by Adam Long, Daniel Singer, and Jess Winfield. One performance only at 7:30 pm Saturday, July 2.

All performances held at Agecroft Hall, 4305 Sulgrave Road, Richmond, VA 23221. For tickets please visit Quill Theatre.org or call (804) 340-0115. NJ

Above: Thomas Cunningham as Malvolio, Liz Blake White as Olivia, Laura Rocklyn as Viola

Below: Liz Blake White as Olivia

PHOTOGRAPHY by CHRIS SMITH

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