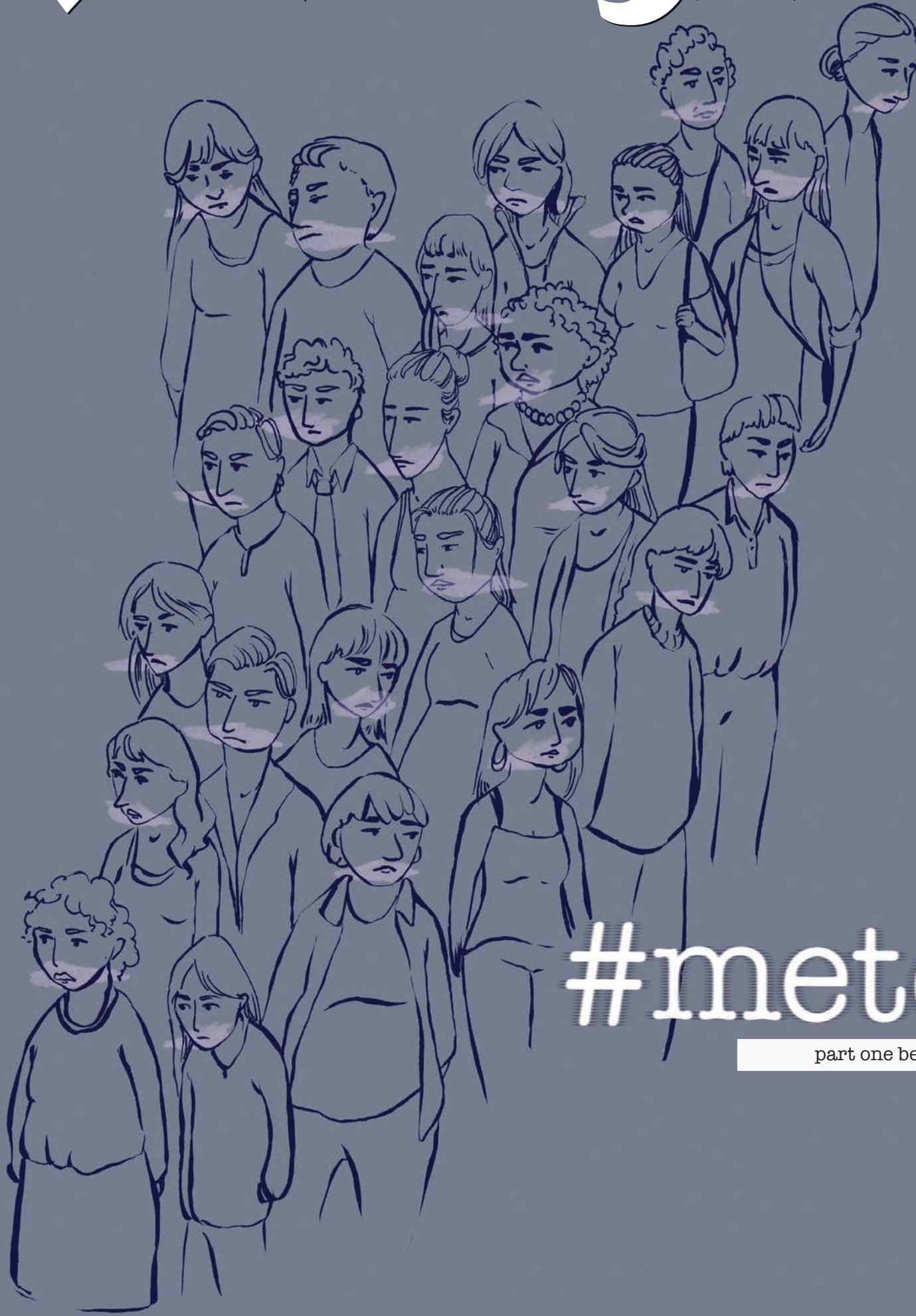


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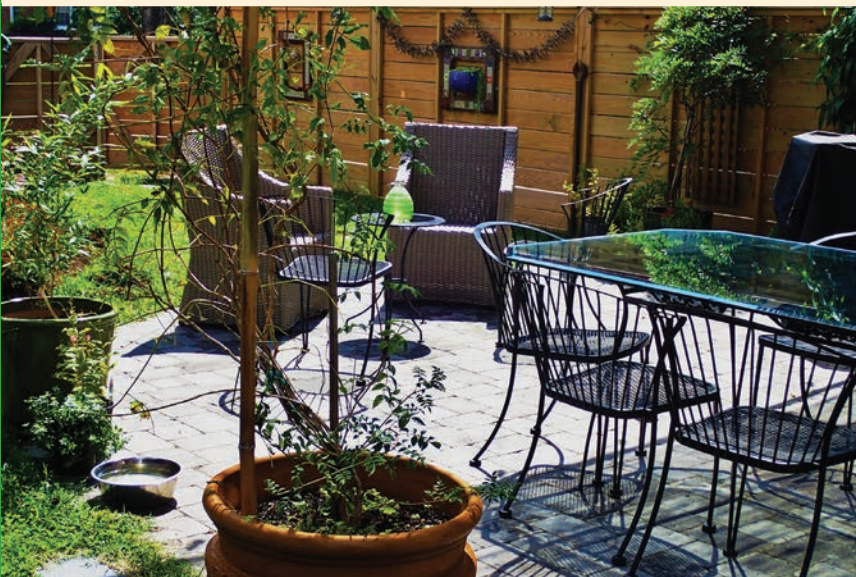


#metoo

part one begins on page 16

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BRIEFS

Christmas on MacArthur on December 9



Get a head start on holiday cheer with Christmas on MacArthur, a day of family fun that benefits Toys for Tots. Christmas on MacArthur has become one of the largest single donors to Toys for Tots—the U.S. Marine Corps annual toy drive. What's more every toy donated locally is given to a local child in need. This year's Christmas on MacArthur runs from 11 till 4 pm on Saturday, December 9 in Bellevue on Richmond's Northside.

Appearing live on the MacArthur Avenue stage directly after the parade will be All Saints Choir from 12:15-12:30; The MelBays from 12:45 to 1:15; Janet Martin from 1:30 to 2:00; and Fat Spirit from 2:15 to 2:45. The massive professional stage the musical artists perform on comes courtesy of Main Stage Productions and Lee Johnson, a close friend of Jimmy Tsamouras of Dot's Back Inn and Demi's Mediterranean Kitchen. Christmas on MacArthur kicks off with the Santa Parade down the center of the 4000 block of MacArthur Avenue.

Bill Bevins and Shelly Perkins will emcee the parade. Among the participants in this year's parade are Jonathan the Juggler, students of Holton Elementary and Franklin Military Academy, Colonel David Hudson,

The New Community School Dedicates New Academic Building

Founders Hall at New Community School was finally dedicated last month, though students have been using it since the new school year began. It's a massive structure—almost 16,000 square feet—and is the first free-standing building constructed in the school's 43 year history. All other academic buildings on campus are renovated, older homes.

The new building was designed to reflect the architectural integrity of the historic Hermitage Road corri-

John Marshall High School marching band, live alpacas, Ring Dog rescue, ACCA Shriners, Richmond police and firefighters, U.S. Marines, Saint Andrew's Legion Pipes & Drums, Holton Safety Patrols, Holton Honor Society, Holton Band, antique cars, hotrods and trucks from Still Runnin' Magazine Car Club, Peter Francisco's Lakeside Trolley, and, of course, a visit from St. Nick. He'll be listening to kids Christmas wishes throughout the day, following the parade.

Christmas on MacArthur also offers great holiday shopping opportunities. Scores of vendors will be on hand with their handmade arts and crafts, all locally made, one-of-a-kind products, which make perfect Christmas gifts.

None of this would be possible without the hard work and commitment of David Hudson, Holton Elementary, Franklin Military Academy, the Bellevue Merchants Association, Jimmy Tsamouras of Dot's Back Inn and Demi's Mediterranean Kitchen, Mike LaBelle, Chris and Cecelia Rich of Rich's Stitches, Bob Kocher of Once Upon A Vine, Teri Phipps and David Schieferstein, Amy Foxworthy and Josh Carlton of the mill on MacArthur, Claire McGowan and Franklin Massie of Stir Crazy, Bobby Shore and Rich Richardson of Decatur's Garage, Joe Stankus of Classic Touch Cleaning, Chris Egghart, John Whiting, Larry Brown, and scores of other volunteers too numerous to name.

This event is sponsored each year by the Bellevue Merchants Association, North of the James magazine and Holton Elementary School.

dor. Like the school's main building, Founders Hall is made of yellow brick.

Founders Hall is named in honor of the four founding families of The New Community School. These families started the school because they saw that there was no place in Richmond that was meeting the needs of bright dyslexic students in middle and upper school. They envisioned a place that would help these students raise their skills while preparing them for college.


Concert Ballet of Virginia's 42st Performance of The Nutcracker

For more than 40 years now Concert Ballet of Virginia has presented Richmond's most beloved rendition of The Nutcracker. Under the guidance of Scott Boyer, this classic has become a Richmond holiday tradition. The Nutcracker Suite, an abbreviated 45-minute version of the ballet perfect for younger audiences, will be performed November 18 at Williamsburg Regional Library. The full Nutcracker Ballet will be performed at Monacan High School in Chesterfield County on December 9 and 10, and at Atlee High School in Hanover County on December 16. For more information please call (804) 798-0945 or visit www.concertballet.com

Ginter Park Library Annual Holiday Gala

Ginter Park Library will hold its annual holiday fundraiser on December 7 from 7-9 pm. The holiday fete features great food from local restaurants, spirits to keep you merry, live music and door prizes. This after-hours event benefits the Ginter Park Library. Tickets are \$20 per person; \$35 a couple.

The Ginter Park Library Advisory Board sponsors the holiday fete, which is a fundraiser for the library. The Ginter Park library branch is unique in Richmond because it has an advisory board composed of neighborhood residents who help support, advocate, and promote the library to better serve the community. During the past year, with assistance from the advisory board, the Ginter Park Library has hosted over 300 programs. And North Side's big little library had more than 68,000 visitors.

Guests must be 21 or older. All advance ticket holders will be entered in a special drawing! Advance tickets are available at the library through December 1. Tickets may also be purchased at the door the evening of the event. For more information call (804)646-1236, or contact the library at emailginterparkbranch@richmondgov.com 

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The Crime of Punishment

Dale Brumfield's "Virginia State Penitentiary: A Notorious History"

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

TWO-YEARS IN THE making, Dale Brumfield's latest book, "Virginia State Penitentiary: A Notorious History," is undoubtedly the most thorough work of its kind on this defunct

Richmond institution that had occupied the same spot on Spring Street for almost 200 years. Dale is thorough in his research, digs deep for data, excavates through layers of ancient papers like an archaeologist. In the bibliography there are more than 300 sources cited.

But this is much more than a work of history.

"I see it, too, as a cautionary tale," Dale tells me. "And notorious just begins to scratch the surface of what the penitentiary was."

That's an understatement.

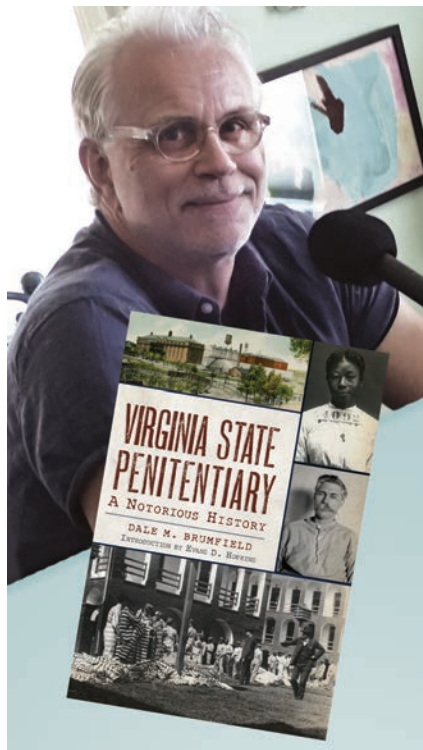
Dale lays a strong, fact-based foundation of the penitentiary's early years. The brainchild of Thomas Jefferson, the Virginia State Penitentiary in its early years was considered an extremely progressive prison. Jefferson saw great need in reforming an antiquated penal system that still relied heavily on the barbaric laws created in Jamestown.

"You know, the stockades, and pinning, nailing ears to posts for business fraud, cutting your ears off, if you steal a farm animal," says Dale. "Or, if you were a woman who had an affair or something, they cut a hole cut through your nose."

Up north in Philly, Quakers had been experimenting with a number of alternatives to these ancient codes of justice. But they weren't having much success.

"The Quakers actually, at one point, put you in solitary confinement and left you there for years with no contact with another living, breathing soul," Dale says. "What happened was after two or three years they found the inmates would go insane or die. So, that didn't work."

Jefferson was impressed with penal reforms he had seen in France, and went to work devising a prison for the Commonwealth of Virginia that was ever more humane than those he'd seen in Europe. "So he came up with



a winning combination of labor and confinement," says Dale.

But not long after the penitentiary first opened its doors to inmates on April Fool's Day 1800, Jefferson's ideas were corrupted. "The penitentiary realized they could actually make money, that this was a money-making proposition, and the heck with rehabilitation," Dale says. "They were all about filling the treasury so that's when they drifted away from rehabilitation and penitence which were Jefferson's original ideas and got into, 'Let's put these inmates to work six days a week.'"

In short order, the penitentiary became a factory of sorts, and the Commonwealth of Virginia was making money hand over fist. After all, the labor was free. Prisoners manufactured shoes, clothing, horse collars, iron nails, even wagons. "They made everything there," Dale says. "It was enriching the Commonwealth." In the late 1800s, private industry complained it could not compete with the goods produced at the penitentiary, and manufacturing came to an end there with the exception of goods made for Virginia or other state governments.

Americans seem repulsed by forced la-

bor camps—Auschwitz, the Gulag Archipelago. But that's pretty much how the Virginia State Penitentiary was run from just after the Civil War until the early years of the twentieth century.

"During Reconstruction, the South started on a railroad building binge and they needed cheap labor for the railroads so they turned to the penitentiaries," says Dale. "And this wasn't just particular to Virginia, this was across the entire South. The penitentiaries would strike a deal with the railroads and they would lease convicts to them."

Much of the railroad construction in Virginia was done in the western part of the state and beyond. "Prisoners worked under the worst conditions imaginable because they were considered expendable," Dale says. "I found a quote by an unnamed southern gentleman at a railroad conference, who said: 'One dies, get another.' They just didn't care, it was an unlimited supply of cheap labor. So these convicts were going en masse into the Shenandoah Valley and points west to the Alleghenies and as far west as West Virginia."

A lot of that railroad building required tunneling through mountains, and as Dale did his research he began noticing a trend—many of the inmates were contracting pneumonia. "And I noticed it wasn't just in the winter that they were dying of pneumonia," he says. "They were dying year round and I said, 'What in the world would cause these inmates to die of pneumonia during August?'"

The answer was silicosis. "They would blow the tunnel with nitroglycerin and then send the inmates in with no respiratory protection at all to bring out the blast debris and they were breathing in sandstone dust and contracting silicosis and dying of pneumonia," he says. As a matter of fact, one of the men who died after laboring in the tunnels was a black man from Prince George County by the name of John Henry, who may have been the Gandy dancer that inspired the time-worn ballad of man against machine.

Some of the inmates were sent to their

deaths building railroad tunnels because of their stature, and this leads Dale to talk about one of the most heinous practices by Virginia's penal justice system.

"Nine, ten, eleven year olds were sent to prison," he says. "Many of these youngsters were sent to work on the railroads in West Virginia under the most squalid and horrific conditions, where sodomy was rampant in these barracks simply because they were the perfect height for working inside the sandstone tunnels," he says.

Dale then mentions Tom Nolan, just a boy, who fell into a giant vat of boiling coffee in the penitentiary's kitchen and was scaled to death. "He was serving four years for burning a tobacco barn at age nine."

After the Civil War, all the way up until the current era, penitentiaries were used to continue the institution of slavery. "Pre-Civil War we had slavery, and then after slavery we had the convict leasing system," says Dale. "We had these black men that were victims of the Black Codes."

Black Codes were hideous laws enacted by the General Assembly just a few years after the surrender at Appomattox. "The Virginia legislature made unemployment a crime, knowing that young black men who were recently freed from slavery had no jobs," Dale explains. "So they made unemployment a crime. They could catch a black man on someone else's property, and arrest and charge them with grand larceny under the assumption that they were about to commit a crime. If you look at the admissions, one year, I believe it was 1869, they admitted 640 black men and 56 white men. So it was completely disproportionate." And these black inmates, much like their forbears, would be used as free laborers—slaves—by the Commonwealth.

Up until 1908 the method of execution at the penitentiary was death by hanging. The electric chair changed all that. "They saw it as an awe-inspiring form of punishment and they thought this was the deterrent that would stop

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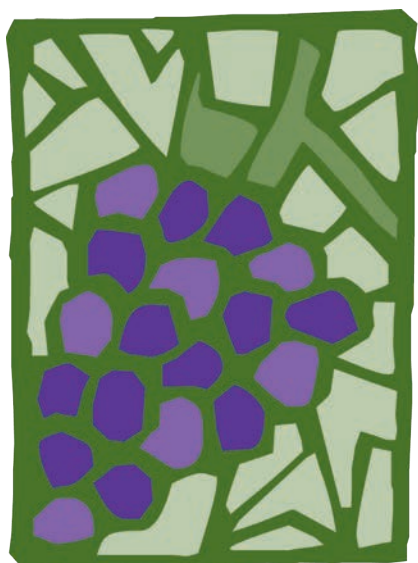


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FEATURE

crime," says Dale. "Well, it didn't. No capital punishment is a deterrent. The electric chair wasn't either. But looking at what some of these black men were executed for was absolutely terrifying."

He mentions Winston Green, a mentally disabled seventeen-year old black man. Smith may, or may not, have flagged down a girl on Midlothian Turnpike. Again, he may have touched her shoulder and screamed at her. The girl's father assembled two 25-man posses and hunted him down. When Winston was caught, the white men beat him senseless and then turned him over to the authorities. He was then tried without the benefit of legal counsel, found guilty and sentenced to death.

Black men were far more likely to receive the death penalty than their white counterparts in crime. Dale describes the Martinsville Seven, only one of whom raped a white woman. All seven died in the electric chair.

"That made me curious," says Dale. He began investigating what kind of sentences white men received for raping black women.

"One case I found was that two white Richmond city policemen raped a black woman in the back of their squad car," he says. "They got seven years a piece in the penitentiary. That was in 1949."

That same year a farmer near Glasgow, Virginia, raped a "mentally enfeebled" black woman. He got off with a fine of just twenty dollars.

This book is truly a cautionary tale, particularly in light of what is going today with the privatization of prisons that need to meet quotas to satisfy shareholders, an attorney general of the United States who wants to mete out maximum prison terms, the execution this past summer of a severely mentally ill man, the largest prison population the world—exceeding that of Russia, China, Iraq and so on.

There are hundreds of stories in this volume that will astound the reader, and they are woven together in a seamless narrative, moving ever closer to the day in 1991 when the penitentiary finally closes. And on that day there is only one inmate left. But he will never leave the pen.

He will die in the electric chair down in the basement.

His name? Roger Justice.

"The next day they had a closing ceremony," says Dale Brumfield. 

Virginia State Penitentiary:
A Notorious History, by Dale M. Brumfield, The History Press, \$24.99
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Kambourian Jewelers Six Generations in the Making

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

THERE'S A GOOD chance that if Manuel Kambourian had not emigrated to New York in the late 1800s, the Kambourian clan of jewelers and rug merchants in Richmond would not exist today. Not long after Manuel left his homeland, Turks began rounding up Armenians and systematically killing them in the most abominable fashions imaginable. Between 1914 and 1923, Turks exterminated 1.5 million Armenians in what became known as Hayots—the Armenian Holocaust—the first genocide of the twentieth century.

But Manuel made it to New York and set up a rug-cleaning plant, then moved to Richmond, and, in the late 1890's, opened an Oriental rug dealership. His ancestors back in Armenia had been rug merchants, as well as jewelers, for several generations.

Though one of his son's would follow in Manuel's professional footsteps, another son, Haig, would choose a different path. "He didn't want to be a rug merchant," says the man's grandson, also named Haig Kambourian. "He wanted to be a jeweler, and so his dad, Manuel Kambourian, sent him off to Paris and New York. My grandpa worked as an apprentice in Tiffany's workshop."

Haig's grandfather, after completing his apprenticeship, went to work for Schwarzchild Jewelers on West Broad Street in downtown Richmond. A few years later he asked for a very small salary increase—five cents more an hour. The owner of Schwarzchild refused the request.

"So he packed up his bench and left the same day," Haig Kambourian tells me.

We are sitting with his sister, Melissa, also a jeweler, in the back room of Kambourian Jewelers on West Cary Street.

"My great grandfather donated land next to his rug store at 15 West Grace Street to my grandfather," Melissa says

That first Kambourian Jewelers was just a few blocks away from Schwarzchild's. "Grandpa was a genius jeweler," says his grandson, Haig. "He had the quality of Cartier. He made a million dol-



Left to right: Haig Kambourian with a client, Joey Kambourian, Melissa Kambourian, and Nathan Kambourian.

lars in that store on Grace Street, which could have gone to Schwarzchild."

In 1980, Haig's father, also named Haig, took over the family jewelry store on Grace Street, but soon moved his shop out to Midlothian Turnpike. It was there, some 25 years ago, that Melissa and Haig Kambourian began learning the art of making fine jewelry. "We were both around sixteen years old," Melissa tells me.

We briefly move out to the showroom, minimal in design and elegantly appointed with Oriental carpets and fruitwood showcases. The stars here are in the illuminated cases, some of the most beautiful jewelry you're ever likely to see.

"Ninety percent of what you're going to find in our cases we've made," says Melissa. "We do have one outside line that is a customizable line."

Haig nods. "We also have a few top-level estate pieces that are handmade by somebody else," he says. "But almost all of our inventory is made by hand by somebody in our store here in Carytown."

Every piece of jewelry here is one-of-a-kind, and the craftsmanship flawless. This is the sort of jewelry you would expect to find at Tiffany's in a bygone era, at Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, or the studios of Faberge.

"Our end product is very, very high end," says Haig. "A real person in America sits there and engraves each line by hand, polishes it with thread in every crack. It's not something that just goes into a tumbler. The labor is intense. You can feel the quality in your hand when you hold one of our pieces."

About ninety percent of all the business at Kambourian Jewelers is custom work. It's all done in the workshops in the rear of the store.

In the back room, Nathan Kambourian is bent over a jeweler's bench, intent on his work. Nathan is Melissa's son, a sixth-generation Kambourian, now an apprentice jeweler. One of her other sons, Joey, also works in the family business as a jewelry appraiser. As does Melissa's cousin, Becky.

"We have four jewelers and one apprentice onsite," Melissa says. "All of us can make jewelry. We're a full-service store, so we can do anything jewelry related. We can handle your appraisal for insurance or estate purposes. We do custom designs, we do restorations and basic repairs. We are one of Richmond's only full-service jewelers. Nothing ever needs to go off our premises. We can create anything. You never have to wait for an appraiser, you walk in and there are four people who can appraise your jewelry."

Haig tells me that chain jewelry stores

tend to offer lower grades of jewelry. "When you buy at one of the chains you're buying mass-produced, manufactured goods, and you are probably paying top dollar," he says. "Even the designer quality stuff is still mass-produced. It is not hand done. You do not get one-of-a-kind."

All too often consumers believe they're getting a great deal at such stores. What they're getting is inferior merchandise pawned off as the genuine item, according to Haig.

He invites me to consider diamond jewelry. "Diamonds aren't any cheaper for chain stores than they are for me," he says. "The only discount they can get is if they buy unwanted inventory from dealers, and then keep them in their store."

Haig says that most consumers don't understand exactly how diamonds are rated. "Clarity is important," he explains. "So, SI-1 is SI-1, but there's a better SI-1, and a worse SI-1. You've got to know where the inclusion is placed. If the inclusion is in the center of the stone that makes a lot cheaper SI-1. If it's off to the side, you've got to pay more."

Some of these corporate jewelry stores will tell the consumer they are getting a great deal, says Haig. "It says right there in the wholesale price list that it's \$3200 a carat," he says. "But really,

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BUSINESS PROFILE

in the market, they should not pay \$3200 because that inclusion's in the center. So the consumer is really paying \$3200 for a \$1200 stone."

Other SI-1 diamonds may have a milky quality called fluorescence. "I would never put a fluorescent stone on a customer of mine," Haig says. "It's a beautiful stone on paper, but because it has fluorescence, in the market, that's a very inexpensive stone. Diamonds are what they are."

And despite some urban legends, diamonds are anything but common, at least not the kind used in fine jewelry. "People have it in their minds that diamonds are just rocks, but they're very rare," says Haig. "Diamond substance is not rare, but gem-quality diamonds are very rare." He mentions some of the rarest of the rare—pink diamonds—from the Argyle mines of Australia. "Some of those are worth millions," he says.

He mentions one of the largest and most costly diamonds he ever set.

"It was 21.87 carat yellow diamond, oval," Haig says. "This one was \$21,000 a carat. We made the setting and everything. It had to be perfect."

Haig and Melissa know more than a little about diamonds. In fact, they may well know more about diamonds than any other jewelers in the region. "In diamonds we're a doctorate," says Haig. "There's nothing about a diamond that anybody knows about more than we do. We know the liquidation value, every value on every part of the market."

"A lot of that comes from being in the industry for years and years and then learning to buy them," Melissa adds. "You learn to sell them, and another level which my brother is an expert in is buying them."

It's not unusual for Haig to travel to New York's Diamond District—that notable block of 47th Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues—to purchase stones for clients. "We're in New York all the time," says Haig. "That's the biggest diamond market in the world for polished goods. There's billions of dollars in people's pockets in that one block. I think the estimate is that at all times there's \$500 million in cash crossing the streets, back and forth."

Haig's reputation as a buyer in New York's Diamond District affords him the opportunity of getting extremely good values for his customers. "I'm known as a cash buyer, and I negotiate a good deal based on the clarity characteristics," he says.

For a number of years Haig also sold

diamonds on New York's 47th Street. "We did 2,000 carats a month," he says. "A large volume of stones we purchased from pawnshops, dealers and from the market. We sorted them, graded them, and sold them in the market in New York."

Melissa talks about other gem stones that carat by carat can command the same prices as diamonds. "Rubies, sapphires, and emeralds can match per carat prices with diamonds," she says. "Even some aquamarines."

When a client comes in to order a custom piece of jewelry they can sit at the counter. "And we'll draw things out for them until we have a very good idea what they want," says Melissa. "We still also do the hand fabrication with raw materials. And we can still do the hand-carving in the wax. We do just about any method."

However, the preferred method these days is CAD (computer-aided design). "Once we have the right design, we can do a 3-D print and produce a plastic model that the customer can try on before it's made," says Haig. "Then we grow it in wax, and then we cast the wax model, so the customer gets exactly what they see."

I go over to the bench where Nathan's been working all the while. I'm impressed by his patience and his perseverance. I ask how he feels about working in the family business.

"I really like that jewelry making is an older craft, and it's cool to be learning it," he says. "And because it's my family's thing, that makes it even cooler, continuing in the tradition. I really like that it is a family thing. It makes it more personal, it makes my work feel more honest and genuine, since I'm working for my family rather than some strangers."

Then I turn to Haig, who's leaning against a wall, arms folded across his chest.

"What do you love about this business?"

Haig Kambourian doesn't pause for an instant. "It's just this," he says. "Having somebody compliment your work. That's equal to the money, more important than the money. Having someone appreciate what you've made for them. Someone going, 'How did you make that?'"

Melissa smiles, pats her brother's shoulder, looks over to her son. **NJ**

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THE DAY AFTER ALYSSA MILANO TWEETED

the hashtag 'me too', my Facebook page lit up like a nuclear Christmas tree. Dozens of Facebook friends responded with their own stories, and each one was more appalling than the last. They didn't stop popping up either, not for a couple of days, at any rate. So I put out a request, and, within a few hours, five women had agreed to be interviewed. I offered anonymity, and told them that I would put their voices through a filter for an audio documentary component to their stories. They wouldn't have any of it. They wanted me to use their real names, and, what's more, photographs of them. In the course of two weeks, we would meet for long and intensive interview sessions in Stir Crazy's conference room, and around the table in my living room, or the peninsula in the kitchen. Some of them were group sessions, others one-on-one. These women are now friends, and I can't think of a better group of friends. For one thing: They tell stories well. This too, though. They are beyond a doubt the bravest five people I have ever met. And I have met cops and soldiers, daredevils and street thugs, extreme athletes and flyboys. I don't know the textbook definition of brave, and I'm not gonna pull that cheesy trick of quoting the dictionary definition as a lede. These women's stories will reveal their courage. When I think of someone who is truly brave, my mind immediately goes to endurance, and the ability to reclaim a life, your own, or someone else's. The truly brave stand their ground, defy their assaulters, embrace life, tell their truths, and challenge even those perceived as powerful. What's more, they have marched into their battles alone, without the support of artillery or cavalry. They do this every day, and pretty much everywhere they go. But what separates these brave souls from others is that they held on to their humanity through it all. They refused to hate, even when it seemed that most of the male world was out to demean them or view them as property. Through it all they just kept standing tall, and they never allowed their hearts to be crushed.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

These stories are not sanitized in any way. They are graphic accounts of hideous acts against women. If you believe you will be offended by the content, please refrain from reading.



melissa

MELISSA GRAY lay flat on the hospital bed, dressed only in her underwear, the white sheets crisp beneath her. The lights above her were bright so she squinted her eyes. Three doctors looked down on her. They sported pale blue scrubs, latex gloves, and one of them wore a stethoscope like a necklace around his neck. She knew these men, had heard their titles—anesthesiologist, cardiologist, cardiac surgeon—but didn't know what those words meant. What Melissa did know is that her heart had been operated on. This was in the days before non-invasive surgery, so after carv-

ing a deep incision, the surgeon and his assistant cracked open her chest then spread the sternum apart to get to the girl's heart surrounded by ribs like a bird in a cage, a small pulsing thing. The girl didn't have any memory of this, of course, but she enjoyed the hospital stay, all the pre-op stuff, and the nurses and the doctors and the hospital gowns, and was very proud of the shiny purple scar, a bolt of lightning under the skin, running down the center of her tiny chest. It was a badge of honor, a mark of distinction. Because her eyes were almost squinted shut she couldn't tell which doctor said

BY CHARLES MCGUIGAN
ILLUSTRATION BY CATHERINE MCGUIGAN
PHOTOS BY REBECCA D'ANGELO

(part one)



this, but one of them, clear as day, said in not quite a whisper, “Oh well, it’s such a shame, she’ll never wear a bikini.” The words perplexed the girl, and settled into her brain to be examined later when she had the knowledge to decipher their meaning.

“That was the first time I distinctly remember a man commenting on my body, and I was just five years old,” says Melissa Gray. She pauses for less than a second, her timing impeccable, and then adds, “And of course I love wearing a bikinis, any chance I can,

and I love my scar.” Laughter erupts around the table.

It’s a Friday, the night before my son’s Halloween party, so there’s a cauldron of chili on the range, a vat of rum-rich planter’s punch in the refrigerator. The women eat and drink and reveal themselves at this table which is clad in a seasonal cloth inscribed with hundreds of Calaveras, those colorful Mexican skulls announcing the Day of the Dead. Rich orange lights bathe every room which play host to illuminated clay skulls, bats, jack-o-lanterns, an animated Gorgon with rippling snakes for hair, activated by the slightest movement. It seems to set the tone for what we are about to hear. The women gracing this table, which is really just a sheet of plywood over a base, announce their full names, one at a time. Melissa Gray, Didi Tremblay, Terry Menefee Gau, Mary Carpenter and Kathi Shiff.

As Kathi begins her story the room grows quiet, all ears trained on the words that spill from this woman’s mouth. You could hear a pin drop, and this is not hyperbole.

Just after Memorial Day in 1970, Kathi got her first job. She was a lifeguard at a community pool, and her parents had coached her on how to be a good employee, how to follow the orders of her supervisor. And that’s what Kathi did.

In late June of that same summer, Kathi and her boyfriend were on the brink of physical intimacy, but they caught themselves, deciding, even in the excitement of the moment, that they would remain virgins until marriage. It was a sweet thing, a loving thing to do. They were sixteen years old, and there was all the time in the world.

Just two weeks later, on July 15, as she blew the whistle at three o’clock sharp to clear the pool for a fifteen-minute rest break, her supervisor called her into his office. In less than a quarter of an hour, this girl’s life would be utterly changed.

Kathi wore a one-piece bathing suit with watermelon stripes, and she was slightly built. Her supervisor was a combat Marine who had served two tours in Vietnam. He was tall and muscular, maybe three or four times Kathi’s size. As she entered the office where he sat behind a desk, she smelled that familiar pool odor that was so thick in the small room because the chlorine tanks were stored there. And then her supervisor approached her.

“The only way I can describe it is the manager put his mouth on my face,” says Kathi. “He started feeling me up and I was trying to squirm away from him, but I couldn’t. He pulled down my bathing suit, and shoved me backwards, and I remember

the edge of the desk digging into my back.” Her parents’ words about work ethic came back to her. “I don’t care what mom and dad say, I don’t care if I get fired,” she thought.

“I started to fight him, but it was too late,” Kathi recalls. “He ripped my bathing suit off, and it ended up down at my ankles.” And then this pedophilic Marine raped a child.

“And so,” says Kathi. “That’s how I lost my virginity. Not to my boyfriend.”

The silence in the room becomes denser as if its swathed in cotton. I am looking through tears at the woman who sits to my immediate right, but I see her as the girl she was.

After the brutal rape, another whistle blew, and Kathi climbed back into her bathing suit, wrapped a towel around her waist, and returned to her post. “I walked out to my station, and I know, now, that I was in shock,” she says. “Obviously the pain was very real. But I know that I was in shock, and it’s a good thing nobody drowned on my watch because I’m not sure I would

have noticed them.” After a brief inhalation and a pause, Kathi mentions that she is a retired mental health clinician. “Shock,” she says. “But it’s actually more like disassociating.”

Kathi would keep this event locked away in her own psyche until she was thirty years old. “I didn’t tell anybody when I was sixteen because this was in a small town and it would have been headline news and it would have been my fault and they would have spelt my name right, which they never did when I won swimming contests,” she says. “Not to mention my dad, my boyfriend, and my brothers. They would have ripped this guy to shreds and I would have ended up visiting them in prison, so I still would have been paying for this event that was not my fault.”

While she was in the old city of Jerusalem, a very young woman, just eighteen, she would be assaulted in public by a man she had never met. She had won a travel study grant and was with an American named Bill. There were hundreds of people because someone



had seen Moshe Dayan, Israel’s defense minister, enter his favorite potter in the old quarter of the city. Quick and agile, Kathi began scaling a fence to get a better look at the famous Israeli leader. Halfway up, she stopped.

“I felt this hand go up my shorts right through my underwear, and the fingers struck the mother lode, so to speak,” she tells us. “I was penetrated. I looked down at him and he was giving me such a crazed look that when I took a kick at him and I missed where I was aiming.”

Kathi takes a breath. “When that happened there was nothing that I could do to feel clean again,” she says. “You could have dunked me in boiling water and scrubbed my skin with sandpaper, and I wouldn’t have felt clean after that.”

Just out of college, Kathi landed her first professional job, teaching employment skills at Goodwill Industries. One day her supervisor called her into his office. “He basically said, ‘If you don’t—he used the term sleep with me—you’re going to get fired,

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terry

and so I had sex with him. You can call it what you want, he was my superior I had sex with him under duress. It was a threat that he made to me. I left as soon as I could after that to another job. I never told my parents ever while they were alive.”

Kathi will tell more stories about further sexual abuse later, and in other settings. But what she says now should bring shame and remorse to all men who do not call sexual predators out in public.

“The micro-aggressions,” she says. “The, ‘Hey baby come and sit on my face,’ or, ‘Show us your t**,’ or whatever. Men do that to women on a daily basis, and it doesn’t matter how old a woman you are. It happens. All. The. Time.”

Terry Menafee Gau glances around her, fixing her gaze for a moment on each woman at the table.

“What I want to say is that I’m sitting in a room of women who have all been raped, and I am lucky to not be

a woman who has been raped,” she says. “I should not have to say I’m grateful to have gotten through my life without being raped, but I am. And I am still very afraid to walk into spaces by myself. How I was raised as a female effects where I go, what I do, the work I choose, the partners I choose, the friends I choose.”

Terry mentions a gym where she used to work out. She stopped going there because a man came on to her, and when she told him she wasn’t interested, he just stared at her. Every time she went back to the gym he would stare at her.

Because of these unacceptable micro-aggressions, women are forced to be constantly on their guard. “It effects how I manage myself at my office, choosing to not be around when a certain person is there because that certain person, who is three times my size, wants to come in and massage my shoulders when no one else is around,” she says. “And this has happened several times. And how do you, when no one else is around, talk

your way out of that, so that nothing else happens.”

It’s as if certain men think it’s their right to do what they want to do with women, which, of course, is assault.

“It’s, ‘I want to touch a female, so I’m gonna come and touch you because you’re nice,’” says Terry. “And what happens when you say, ‘You know that makes me feel uncomfortable. I don’t really want you to massage my shoulders.’ What happens when you say that? Suddenly you’re the one with the problem. ‘I was just being nice. You’re misinterpreting this. I don’t even think you’re pretty.’ I was the one misinterpreting it, he was just massaging my shoulders to be nice. I should be grateful I didn’t get raped.”

“It’s going to an office training and suddenly finding yourself alone in a room with a man, and having him try to put his tongue down your throat,” Terry says, remembering. “And again talking your way out of it somehow, which not everybody got to do, I’m sure.”

Now in her fifties, Terry remem-



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bers that when in her forties she was thankful that she wouldn't have to put up with this kind of behavior any longer. "So I went on a job interview and I'm thinking, 'I'm passed all this,'" she says. "This type of s**t is not going to happen to me again, thank God."

But it did. She went to work for a media group in Tidewater Virginia, where she played an interviewer to a real estate agent. The producer was a massive man--more than 350 pounds, over six feet tall.

"He was huge, a huge guy, and he smelled bad, and he was big," she says. "He was an uncomfortable man." During a taping session he kept glancing furtively at Terry, and, of course, she noticed. All the while the producer was taking notes, and afterwards, he asked Terry to step into his office.

She was dressed in a tailored suit, the epitome of professionalism.

The producer eyed her.

"So, you're an actor?" he asked.

"Yeah," said Terry. "I'm out of Richmond."

"Do you do anything more exotic?"

Terry was angry, and said to him, "Do you mean like dancing?"

"Yeah," he said, looking down, nodding.

"No, I don't," said Terry.

"And I never worked there again," Terry says. "And I never worked for that media outlet again. Never. And other people I know did, but not me. Because I'm the bitch who said, 'No.' I'm the one who called him on it. I humiliated him, which is not always the safe route. Even though he put me on the spot and got into my space. Because I said no to him, suddenly the world is not his oyster, suddenly I'm not something he can have, therefore, I must be the one who's got the problem."

As Terry speaks, every woman at the table nods in agreement. They experience this every day. "It is daily," says Terry. "These are micro-aggressions.



It's the walking to your car and getting catcalled, which may seem so innocent to the person catcalling. But, it's so not, at all. It's a bullying tactic that says, 'You're mine and I claim you.'"

"I really don't know how else to put this," Terry continues. "But the daily teeny tiny things that happen cause women to live in a different space than the men in this world live in. Someone might say, 'Well, no one ever molested you?' What do you do with that? I am grateful for a dad who taught me to fight back. I'm re-

ally grateful for a dad who taught me moves. I'm really grateful for a dad who said, 'If anybody gets in your space, you know where the gun is in the house, and you will use it against them, and I will protect you no matter what.'

Kathi Shiff, a retired mental health professional, understands the need to talk about these constant assaults and degradations, which is why she wants to tell everything she knows.

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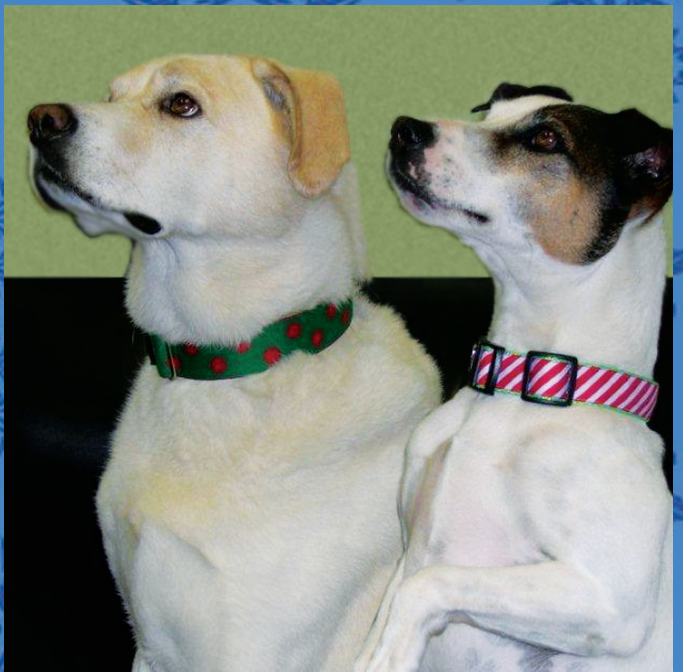
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ple know they're not alone," she says. "The depression, the anger, the anxiety. Those are normal reactions to trauma. As is being suicidal because you feel damaged. And nobody understands that it's worth hanging around, you don't believe it, at the time. And the one thing that I really want to say, and I hope people get, is this, 'Do you want to die, or do you want to stop the pain?'"

"Because those of us who have been through this want to stop the pain," says Kathi. "We still have a curiosity, however cynical we are, about what's around the corner, but we don't want to hurt, we don't want to struggle, we don't want to suffer. I just want people out there to know that it's happened to a lot of us. It's not your fault it happens. The most important thing is to remember you're not alone, and to remember that even though it doesn't feel like it at the time, life can go on and life can be pretty darn good. So it's worth sticking around and not harming yourself, not cutting yourself, not trying to kill your-

self, not doing a lot of things that are self-defeating."

Kathi remembers something she wants to share. "One thing that I didn't say about the first time I was raped is that on July 15 in a lot of years following that episode I smelled chlorine," she says. "I had olfactory hallucinations of chlorine because where the rape happened is where the chlorine tanks were stored. And I distinctly remember, after moving down to Virginia, asking two different people on two separate occasions, if they smelled chlorine and, of course, they looked at me like I was nuts."

In the main those hallucinations have ended, though Kathi did experience one last July. "There is some trauma that sneaks in, given the right circumstances," Kathi says. "Thankfully, they're fewer and farther between. As long as I remember that life is worth living, and I can't say that enough to myself and other people. That I don't have to live this nightmare every waking



minute and every moment that I'm asleep. I just hope this helps somebody out there."

The stories move around the table late into the night, and on the following Sunday at Stir Crazy, and later still in the kitchen of my house. These are remarkable stories and need to be told and read, kept ever in mind. We will hear from Didi Tremblay and Melissa Gray and Mary Carpenter, and even more from Terry Menefee Gau and Kathi Siff. **NS**

Breaking with tradition, NORTH OF THE JAMES will feature "#metoo" on the cover next month, so that all of these very important stories can be told. An audio documentary of these stories will soon be aired on "A Grain of Sand", my program on WRIR-97.3FM. This same documentary will soon be available on PRX.ORG.

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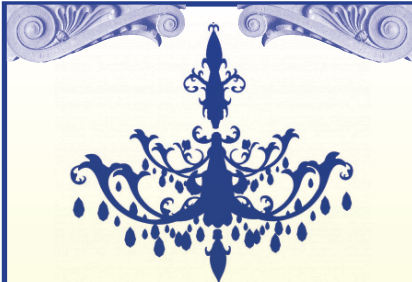
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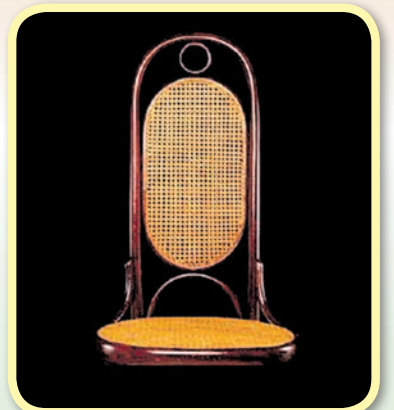
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BOOK REVIEW

Looking for Common
Ground on Guns

by FRAN WITHROW

SEVERAL YEARS AGO,
as I sat on my front stoop
in the early morning
hours, a masked man
came around the corner
of the porch and pointed
a gun at me. I screamed
so loudly I was heard at the other end
of the block, and, fortunately, the man
ran away. I didn't like guns before that
incident, but after that frightening day
my dislike turned to loathing.

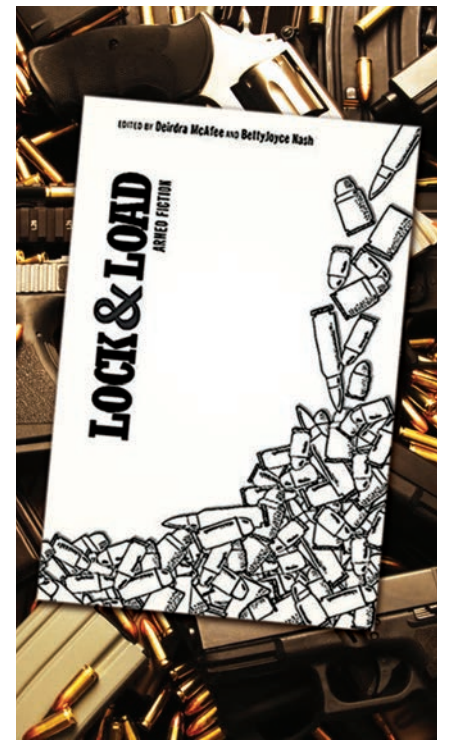
So imagine my chagrin when I
opened "Lock and Load" and dis-
covered that every short story in this
collection of fiction has a common
element: firearms. I shook my head:
what were the editors thinking? One
of them, my dear friend Betty Joyce
Nash, has always awed me with her
critical analyses and astute thinking
on a variety of subjects. This time I
was sure she had missed the mark in
choosing such a polarizing topic for
her anthology.

But one must keep an open mind. So I
started reading.


Right off the bat, editors Nash and
McAfee inform the reader they are
not taking a stance on the gun issue.
Rather, their purpose in collecting
these stories is to spark conversation.
And maybe it is time for a new tactic,
since the divide between gun control
advocates and gun owners seems to
get wider every year.

The horrific Las Vegas shootings had
just occurred when I received this
book, so despite their disclaimer, I
was skeptical. However, as I turned
the pages I found myself thinking
less about my own perspective about
guns, and more about how integral
they were to the tales. I found myself
imagining how I would react if I were
one of the characters. That some of
them tote a rifle makes sense: it could
not be otherwise in the context of
the story. That others carry a gun as
easily as I might carry a toothbrush
shows just how deeply entrenched
guns are in our society.

I quickly became engrossed in the
book, staying up too late, reading
"just one more." Of course not every
story resonated with me. That's the



beauty of an anthology. But many
of them stayed with me long after I
put the book away. I was fascinated
by "Revealed," in which every adult is
issued a gun and one bullet per day,
to be used however they see fit. "The
Weight" had me cheering for women
who finally take a stand against those
who abuse them. And I was gleeful as
I finished "Family Reunion." I won't
tell you how the gun figures in that
superbly written story, but suffice it
to say that it involves a sweet revenge.
I am now eating crow for saying that
guns never have an appropriate use.

So Nash and McAfee have accom-
plished their goal with me. I am
ready for more discourse. Guns
aren't going to go away: they are part
and parcel of our society. How can
we find a common ground: a way to
prevent the misuse of these power-
ful weapons? Let's start talking. And
reading this excellent compilation is
a great way to begin. 

Lock and Load: Armed Fiction
Edited by Deirdra McAfee and Betty
Joyce Nash
University of New Mexico Press
\$24.95
264 pages

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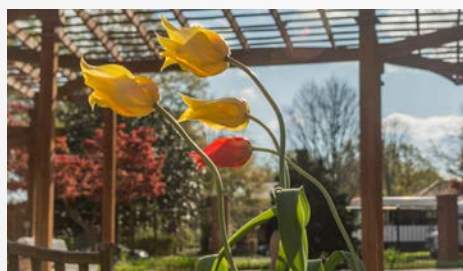
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Coming Out on the Cover

SOME GAYS AND lesbians have come out with a splash on the cover of popular national magazines.

The very first was Lenny Matlovich, a decorated soldier discharged from the Air Force because he was gay. His picture appeared on the cover of the September 8, 1975, issue of Time Magazine, with the headline, "I Am a Homosexual."

Then there was Olympic Medalist, Greg Louganis, who appeared on the cover of the March 6, 1995, issue of People Magazine, with the headline, "My Private Hell."

Entertainer Ellen DeGeneres appeared with a big smile on the April 14, 1997, issue of Time Magazine, with the headline, "Yep, I'm Gay."

Other celebrities followed, including Rosie O'Donnell in 2002, N'Sync's Lance Bass in 2006, and Clay Aiken in 2008.

Honoring American Indians

In the early 1900s, efforts got underway to recognize the contributions of American Indians when Seneca Indian Dr. Arthur C. Parker of Rochester, New York, persuaded the Boy Scouts to set aside a day for the "First Americans."

In 1914, a Blackfoot Indian named Red Fox James rode from state to state on horseback seeking approval for a day to honor Indians. Although he had the backing of twenty-four state governments, the federal gov-

ernment was unmoved.

In 1916, however, New York became the first state to celebrate American Indian Day.

From 1985 to 1989, Congress enacted American Indian Heritage Week.

Finally, on August 3, 1990, President George H. W. Bush designated November as "National American Indian Heritage Month." It's now commonly referred to as "Native American Heritage Month."


Billie Jean King Paves the Way for Women in Sports

Born in Long Beach, California, in 1943, Billie Jean King bought her first tennis racquet at age eleven. The rest is history.

In her stellar career, King won a record twenty Wimbledon titles and thirteen U.S. Open championships.

In 1973, she beat tennis champion Bobby Riggs in a televised showdown billed as "The Battle of the Sexes." It was

a theme that underscored her life off the court as well, since she fought for equal treatment of women in sports.

King was outed in 1981, when ex-lover, Marilyn Barnett, filed a palimony suit. The publicity cost King most of her commercial sponsorships. Regardless, she remains an icon to the tennis greats that followed her – especially the women. If not for her, their careers wouldn't have gotten off the ground. 



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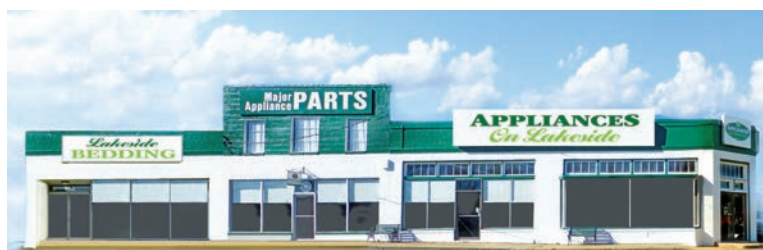


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