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Anthony Clary

grew up in the bricks. Buildings linear as Legos, lining block after block of city streets, stretching from Porter to Dinwiddie, from 9th to 18th. It was Blackwell, before the gentrification of Manchester came, the largest public housing project in the city. Drugs, poverty, gunshots in the night, and a lot of death. Crushing blows would bring Anthony to his knees, and one that occurred when he was just seventeen threatened to knock him out altogether. But he did not fall. Instead, he grabbed the ropes and stood erect, ready for the next round. Rage and anger, these baser elements, transmuted into the gold of love, and a life devoted to family, committed to helping the young and the destitute. And an act of forgiveness as vast the projects where he grew up.

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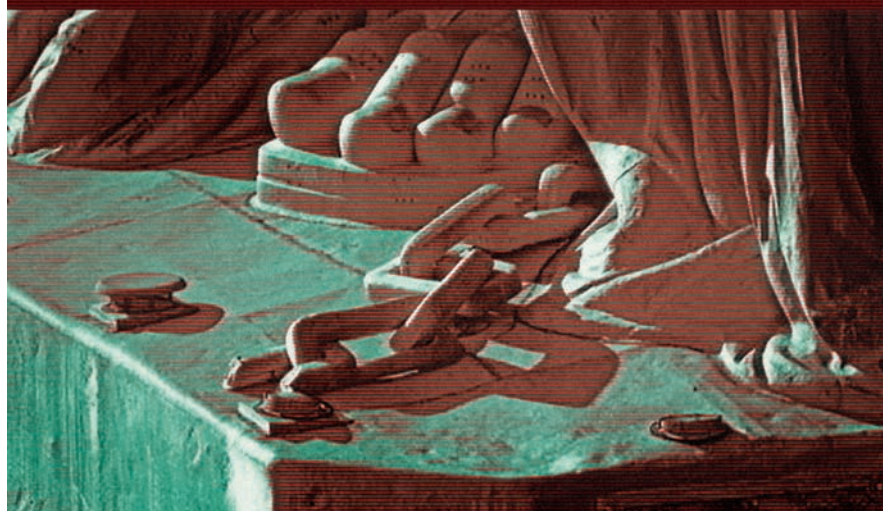
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HIDDEN HISTORIES

The Sanctuary Movement

BY JACK R. JOHNSON

GIVE ME YOUR TIRED, YOUR POOR, YOUR HUDDLED MASSES YEARNING TO BREATHE FREE



HONDURAN-BORN Abbie Arevalo-Herrera recently became the first person to be publicly granted sanctuary by a religious denomination in Virginia this week. On Wednesday, June 20th, she was formally granted sanctuary at the First Unitarian Universalist Church near Byrd Park in Richmond, Virginia.

But what does 'granting sanctuary' actually mean? The history of the sanctuary movement, or the ability to 'take sanctuary' is older than Jerusalem. If you are like Mr. Sessions and enjoy dropping bible quotes, you might start with Leviticus 19:33: "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong... [he] shall be as native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

You can trace a path from there to the sanctuary movement that was effectively established for slaves fleeing that 'curious institution' along the Underground Railroad before the Civil War.

After that, there was sanctuary offered to the Vietnam War conscientious objectors and resisters by the peace churches such as the Quakers, and then finally, the contemporary version of the 'sanctuary movement' starting in the early 1980s.

Then, as today, thousands of Central Americans were fleeing horrific conditions in their homelands and seeking refuge in the United States. Then, as today, many of those conditions were the result of our foreign policy choices and actions.

In 1980, the El Salvadoran civil war was raging and the U.S. was seeking to defeat a collection of leftist militants that wanted land reform for the poverty stricken campesinos. The Reagan administration supported the oligarchs, represented by some of the most ruthless authoritarian governments in the region. In 1980, the Salvadoran government imposed martial law on its citizens. This marked the beginning of mass killings by so called 'death squads.' Many times these death squads were quasi military networks, funded by far right oligarchs in the region or the government itself, often assisted by military supplies from the U.S., or dark money from the CIA. Human rights sources estimate that 18,000 to 20,000 people were killed or "disappeared" in 1980 alone. Thousands of Salvadorans fled the violence, coming north through Mexico to the United States.

In the fall of 1981, the killing expanded to Guatemala, which led to a similar exodus. Thousands of refugees fled for their safety, but in trying to gloss the severity of the conflict, the U.S. government did not recognize them as political refugees. Instead, the Reagan administration said they were 'economic' refugees, denying them legal entry to the United States. Death squads awaited them at the airports on their return home and many were murdered as they stepped off the planes. In response, the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s was born.

According to the Reverend Noel Andersen, National Grassroots Coordinator of the Church World Service, the churches involved in the Sanctuary

Movement reminded the United States government that it was not following its own asylum and refugee laws. Thousands of stories from refugees were highlighted through the media with speaking tours that "raised the consciousness of the unjust nature of these civil wars and questioned the U.S. deportation policies that would have sent asylum seekers back to their death."

Today, although there is no formal civil war, there are still horrific conditions, caused in many cases by the history of our interventions in Central America.

And again, the U.S. Sanctuary Movement is likewise responding.

Nearly three weeks ago the US Attorney General Jeff Sessions ordered immigration judges to tighten asylum restrictions. "Generally, claims by aliens pertaining to domestic violence or gang violence perpetrated by non-governmental actors will not qualify for asylum," he said. That ruling is part of the "zero tolerance" policy that Sessions says was necessary to end the 'lawlessness' that currently exists in the immigration system.

Reverend Pupke of the First Unitarian Universalist church told Arevalo-Herrera and the press on Wednesday that her congregation and the Sanctuary Movement will stand by her family to fight what she called "immoral" and "inhumane" immigration laws.

This is what it means to offer sanctuary. "We will not allow them to destroy families," Reverend Pupke said, defiantly. "We are going to kick up a fuss that Mr. Sessions cannot ignore."

Given the current political climate, Abbie and her family may be there for quite some time. But the church members and local community organizations seem willing to wait. As long as it takes.

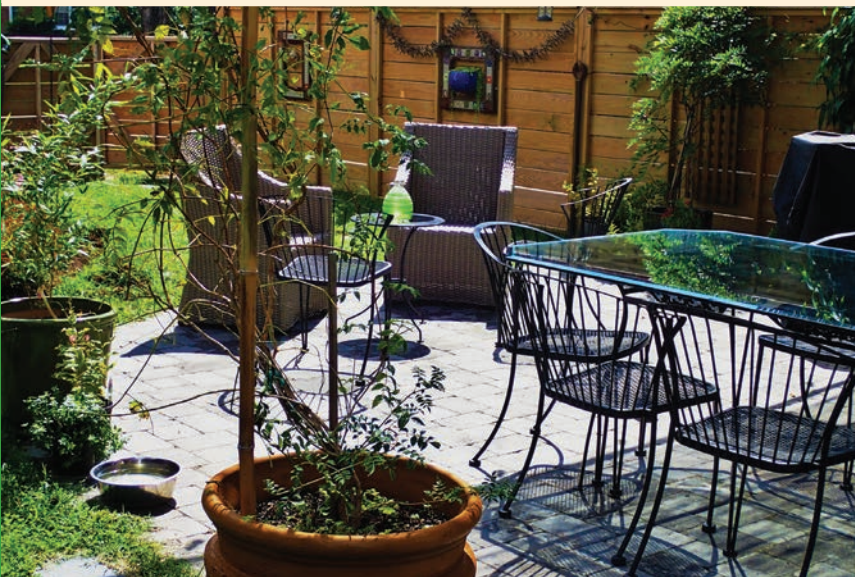
Others refugees are welcome in sanctuary, Reverend Pupke added, "We are privileged as a congregation to open our doors to the stranger. To bear witness. To welcome. To practice radical hospitality, because what it says in Jewish scriptures 'you yourself were once strangers in this land.'"

It was almost as though she were reading the verse off the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..."

It's good that someone still does. **NBJ**

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Northside Grille: An Extended Family

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

SHANAN CHAMBERS was about to take a huge leap, born of faith and tempered with absolute determination. As the landlord turned the key in the lock and the deadbolt slipped free of the strike plate, Shanan felt a surge of excitement. He shouldered the door, which was warped at the base, and shoved it past the threshold. The interior space—which had previously housed a hardware store, and an auction house—were, to put it mildly, in rough shape. Grime thick as paint, dust like a carpet. As Shanan explored the twin storefronts, the ancient linoleum tiles cracked beneath her feet. Overhead, the acoustic ceiling tiles were stained with deep brown tattoos inked by leaking roof. But Shanan could see beyond the deficiencies.

“I knew what I wanted to do,” she tells me now, more than a decade after she first examined the twin storefronts that now house Northside Grille. “I had this big vision. When I walked in I could already see the bar. I knew I wanted all booths. I knew I wanted the patio, but I didn’t know how fast it would all come together.”

As it turned out, renovation would take a total of 13 months, and fortunately for Shanan, her father, Jon Delmendo, an engineer, was able to relocate from Seattle to oversee the entire project. He also built the great horseshoe of a bar. “I couldn’t be luckier,” says Shana. “My father could build you a house from scratch, if you wanted him to. He’s built anything you can imagine.”

Shanan and I are sitting on opposing couches in the living room of her Ginter Park home as she begins talking about the origins of Northside Grille.

“We completely gutted it, and had to go through a change of venue because it wasn’t a restaurant, so we had to get permits for all that,” Shanan says. “It took us thirteen months to get it opened. We paid rent on that place for thirteen months with no income.”

After demolishing the wall that separated the two storefronts, contractors peeled back the old plaster on the exterior walls, revealing brick and mortar, a portion of which would remain exposed. The rest of the walls were paneled with beadboard wainscoting. They preserved the tin ceiling

tiles, and installed all new systems from wiring to plumbing, from heat and air to lighting, along with a fully-equipped, brand-new kitchen that cost a small fortune.

Bellevue resident Craig Nattoon, a master carpenter, lent his expertise to the project. He designed all the booths, and he was assiduous with their creation, visiting restaurants throughout the area in order to get all the dimensions just right—enough leg room and arm room, adequate seating space to accommodate the human torso in its various permutations, every last detail.

And then there was the vacant lot (which would become the patio for Northside Grille) sandwiched between the storefront and the CVS pharmacy. It was packed with wooden boards, plywood sheathing, clothing, suitcases, drug paraphernalia, and assorted trash and junk. “We had to get a big dumpster and we backhoed everything out of it,” Shanan tells me. “That lot had become a little hideaway for people doing bad stuff.”

After a grueling year, complete with city inspections and licensing, the restaurant neared completion. On the day of the opening—June 18, 2007—while the health inspector was there giving his final nod of approval, Shanan and her staff were still busy putting on the finishing touches.

From the moment Northside Grille’s front door opened for business that first day, its success was extraordinary, surpassing Shanan’s wildest expecta-



Shanan Chambers with friend and patron Mark Collier.

tions. This was just what the neighborhood had longed for. Remember: Eleven years back there weren’t many restaurants to choose from on the Northside, and aside from Dot’s Back Inn, there was no other sit-down restaurant in all of Bellevue.

Shanan’s vision for the restaurant was, at least in part, influenced by obstacles she encountered on a nearly daily basis. For one thing, as a single parent of two children, she was juggling more than Jonathan Austin.

“With Dean and Katherine (her son and daughter) and the sports they

played,” says Shanan. “We ate out all the time, and we didn’t have much money. It might have been Ukrop’s deli one night. Trying to balance both their schedules, and they were at different schools. With the menu, I knew I just wanted family, reasonable, affordable food so people could come out two or three times a week.”

Over the years there have been many nights and afternoons when my kids and I have sat in the capacious booths at this restaurant to dine, and each time the staff has always been kind and accommodating. Charles first ate there when he was just five years old, at a time when the only food that would pass his lips were chicken fingers, and he ate a veritable flock of them over the next two years at Northside Grille. A couple years later he advanced to the mini-corn dogs, and ultimately the linguini with marinara sauce, before advancing to the adult menu. And one of his favorite choices are the crab cakes, filled with large chunks of lump crab meat, very little (if any) filler, and served with a horseradish Dijon sauce that does not compete with the delicate flavor of the crab meat. My daughter has always been a fan of their hummus platter, which is listed as an appetizer, but is easily a meal in itself with plenty of marinated vegetables, feta cheese and pita points. One of my favorites is the Cuban, which feature

The familiar blue front of Northside Grille on Bellevue.



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BUSINESS



Left: Dean Chambers, Shanan's son.



Right: Nathan Lang has been manning the bar since the beginning.

a perfect blend of roasted pork, ham, mustard, pickles and Swiss cheese, and I always add the jalapenos.

Regardless what we order as an entrée for either lunch or dinner, we always start off with the lumpia, a sort of Filipino spring roll served with a sweet chili dipping sauce. You crunch through the golden casing to a center of rich, seasoned beef and pork. The recipe comes from Shanan's father, and she has been making them daily since the restaurant first opened. "You've got to roll them really fast because they dry out so quickly," Shanan says. "They're very temperamental."

And extremely popular. "We ran out of them at lunch-time yesterday, and I ran back and started rolling them as fast as I could," says Shanan.

Here's something that has amazed me about Northside Grille: The prices over these past eleven years have only increased ever-so-slightly, and the food turned out from the kitchen has always been sapid and consistent. What's more the basic structure of the menu has remained the same. That menu, incidentally, was created in large part by Debbie Vaughn, who was the backbone of the kitchen for many years.

Shanan's house is tomb-quiet this time of day until a young man comes down the stairs and heads out the front door. He is one of two foreign exchange students who spent this past year in the Chambers's house. One is from Spain, the other is from Germany, and they are scheduled to return to Europe the following morning. During the school year both young men attended Richmond Community High School. "It's been nice having them here," Shanan says. "It's part of a program called American Heritage."

This fall, her own son, Dean, who has

been a fixture at Northside Grille for years, will head off to University of Alabama. Shanan's daughter, Katherine, is already studying marketing at Elon College in North Carolina. "I'm becoming an empty nester," says Shanan.

Before Shanan opened the restaurant, she worked in the field of medical geriatrics at ManorCare Health Services on Hilliard Road. At Virginia Commonwealth University, she earned a bachelor's degree in social work, but throughout her college days she had worked as both a server and a hostess at a number of Richmond restaurants.

Well before that, back in high school, Shanan landed her first job as a hostess at a seafood restaurant called Hogan's Bay Company in downtown Tacoma, which is when her love affair with the restaurant industry began.

Throughout her professional career in social work there was always a gnawing desire to open her own restaurant, and with all her experience working the front of the house at a number of restaurants, she knew more than a little about the business. Shanan also happens to be very social, and has that rare ability to connect with people of diverse backgrounds, and make them feel at home. "It's part of my nature," she tells me. "I'm a giving person."

With Northside's largest bar, seating up to 30 people, and it's frequently full, Shanan managed to blend this with the family-friendly environment. It's genius, really.

"We have this regular group of guys who sit in the corner, they meet up almost nightly," she says. "And a lot of the regulars are parents. They're all pretty mellow, from professional people, to blue collar, hard-working, decent people."

Shanan considers what she's just said,

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and she smiles. "It's such an eclectic crowd, and everyone gets along," she says. "Lawyers, teachers, Sammy the baker, Marcel, Galen and Amy..." Her voice trails off. "We love our regulars," she says. "They all have different backgrounds, different interests, different talents, and they all get along." And in that moment, I truly wish we could replicate what Northside Grille does for our entire nation, where people come from all walks of life, with varying interests and beliefs.

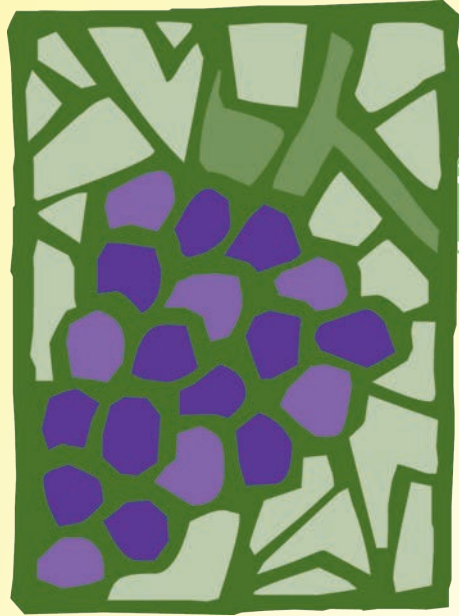
Shanan views her regulars as extended family. About a year ago, a couple who have been not only long-time regulars at Northside Grille, but Shanan's neighbors in Ginter Park, were in a terrible car accident. When Shanan learned of the accident, she sat them down and said, "Call me for anything, I'm not tied to a desk, nine-to-five." Not long after that, she got a call from the woman, who said, "Can you please bring me a cheeseburger from Northside?" Shanan placed the order immediately and delivered it in person.

An integral part of the Northside Grille family is the staff there. All three bartenders—Nathan Lang, Steve Douglas and Dana Beers—have been with Shanan since the beginning. And Carol Ray, or "C" as she's called, has been part of Northside Grille from almost day one.





Northside Grille has also become a sort of incubator of friendships. "You know what's funny?" Shanan says. "So many people say because of Northside Grille we've met our dearest friends. Not only do they hang out at Northside now, they hang out outside of Northside. They go to each other's homes."

Shanan Chambers checks her phone for the time; she's got an appointment in twenty minutes. "And, you know, I've met so many people that same way," she says. "When you see them all the time they become family; you see them more than your own kids. What really gives me joy and makes me proud is when people give me a compliment or a comment. It's nice to know they love our food, but more than that it's when they tell me about the relationships that have been formed between employees and customers, and customers and customers. And me." 🍷

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Anthony Clary

OF LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

DONK, THOUGH HIS REAL NAME WAS JAMES, was hitting him up for money again, and Anthony liked to save it. “Give me some money, Tee,” Donk asked his little brother.



Anthony and Tara.

“YOU CAN’T HAVE MY MONEY, BRO,”

Anthony told him. So Donk left their bedroom, and Anthony heard the front door slam shut. It was freezing outside, just past eleven, a couple nights before Christmas, and Anthony could imagine his brother, a guy cut from the same cosmic cloth he was cut from, make his way through Blackwell down to Hillside Court, where he knew Donk would buy a little weed. Less than an hour later, the phone rang, and James made his way to the living room. As soon as Anthony picked up the receiver and held it to his ear, he recognized the voice. It was the mother of one of Donk’s best friends. “You guys need to come down to the hospital,” she said. “Your brother just got shot, along with my son. Tell your parents to come down.” Anthony and his mother and father piled into the car, and headed over to Commerce Road. James heard his parents reassuring themselves that his older brother would be fine, that it was an accidental shooting. After all, James shot himself in the leg one time. But as they made that left turn onto Commerce, Anthony had a deep, sinking feeling, followed by a wave of nausea. As they crossed the 9th Street Bridge, James looked out the window at the city lights reflected on the black river water. It was like a Christmas tree, or the heavens brought to earth. In the MCV emergency room, the family was ushered into a waiting area. When his mother told a nurse that she was there about her son James Clary, the woman simply nodded and said, “Let me get the chaplain.” And now Anthony knew for certain that his brother was not going to make it. At that point, Donk was brain-dead, kept alive by ventilators and other medical machineries. Anthony entered the room where his brother lay in a hospital bed. His head, swollen to two times its normal size from the trauma, was swaddled in white gauze. Anthony could not see his brother’s face, but he sat on the edge of the bed and he grabbed Donk’s shoulders and shook him. “Why you got to be out there all the time?” Anthony asked of the unresponsive ears. “Why you got to do stuff like that? You said you weren’t going to leave me. You know, it was always supposed to be you and me. I love you Donk. I love you James.”

We are sitting in a dining room on tall chairs around a taller table. Anthony, his wife, Tara, and their four children—Alissa the eldest, Anthony and Caleb,

the identical twins, and Kaylee, the youngest—live in this beautiful home on East 12th Street in what hipsters now call Manchester, but to Anthony will always be Blackwell.

It was just about a mile and half away, almost directly south, in Hillside Court, where his brother was shot eighteen years ago. He left behind a two-month old daughter, who recently graduated from high school and is about to enlist in the service.

“I’m gonna take you back,” says Anthony, and the room we’re sitting in seems to grow smaller, as if we really are retreating from this current time to that past. “I was seventeen and my brother was twenty at the time,” Anthony says. “I was a sophomore in high school, and Donk wasn’t in school or college or anything like that. He was one of the average guys on the block selling drugs. He wasn’t like a heavy drug dealer. He was out there nickel and diming it.”

That long-ago night down in Hillside Court, between two bricks on Southlawn Avenue, in one of those dark crevices where anonymity was assured, Donk bought a bag of marijuana and tucked it away in his jacket pocket, and then he and one of his best friends hurried along the cut to make their way over to a side street and to the comparative safety of Oak Grove. They didn’t get far.

A guy named Terry, who had a reputation in the bricks as being particularly violent, pulled a gun on the pair before they were able to make it to the side street.

As he held the gun, Terry said, “Give me what you’ve got; give it up. You know what time it is.”

Before Donk could hand over what little money he had, his friend was running off across an open field in the center of the ring of projects. Terry raised the gun, and fired a single round that blew away part of the young man’s hand, who kept running, now faster than ever. Donk began running in the opposite direction, and again Terry raised the gun and fired. The round struck Donk in the back, instantly severing his spinal column, and he dropped like a sack of meal to the ground. Lying on the ground, face up, he begged for his life. “Please don’t kill me, please don’t kill me,” he said. “I ain’t gonna tell or nothing.” Terry just shook his head, and stood directly over Donk. “You think you gonna live to tell this one?” he said. “You think you gonna live to tell on me?” Terry low-

BY CHARLES MCGUIGAN
PHOTOS BY REBECCA D’ANGELO



ered the gun and shot Donk in the head, and then he fired a parting shot in the young man's face.

"And we know all of this because at that time a young lady who knew my brother very well was on the second floor of a brick, and she saw and heard everything that happened that night," Anthony tells me.

Though he's told this story, and relived it, hundreds of times over the years, Anthony is still shaken by what happened that night. "My brother was the kind of guy who like if you two got in a fight the day before he was gonna sit out and hang out with you the next day," he tells me. "My brother and I are a lot alike. Just like, 'Let it go.' He wasn't a pushover, but he was a lover of people."

Growing up, Anthony was more fortunate than many of his friends. "You grow up in the bricks in the inner city and you see death, murder, drugs and all that stuff," he says. "My parents weren't drug-addicted or anything like that, and a lot of my friends' parents were. We were like the safe house everyone could come to. My dad is a hard worker and made sure we ate, made sure we got what we needed. And my mom's a hard worker also, and she's still working till this day as a front end manager of the Target on Forest Hill Avenue."

And fortunately for Anthony, the city schools intervened early in his life. In the fourth grade, he received an IEP (Individualized Education Program), which ensured he would be placed in a smaller classroom


setting. "And all the other kids were laughing," Anthony remembers. "LD kids, they learning disabled, they'd say things like that." Anthony shrugged off the ridicule. "It was the best thing that could have ever happened to me," he says. "My teacher, and I'll never forget her, took her time with me. That thing changed my life. I saw someone outside of my home really invested in me and that just rocked me. So I got to see how other kids in the classroom could all come together and help each other, even if it was by just not teasing each other, you know, or motivating each other. We all had something in common."

By high school Anthony was in general education classes. During freshman year he pursued a young woman who was simply not interested in him. Disappointed, forlorn, Anthony looked for something to fill his time. One of his oldest and dearest friends, Bernard Butts, suggested he take up football. "He introduced me to the football coach and it was on," says Anthony. "Football was like a saving grace for me. And my brother was always up in the stands during the games, cheering me on."

After his brother's death, though, football was no longer the answer. "My whole world was turned upside down," he says. "Football couldn't give me the peace I needed."

Two days after his brother was murdered, Anthony attended church at a place called the Richmond Christian Center at the time. The accompanying

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youth church was called Youth Empowerment Station. “There was a youth pastor named Calvin Duncan, a big time basketball player in the day at VCU, and he changed my life,” says Anthony. “Here I had another person that was invested in my life, that didn’t want anything from me but to see me have some joy in my life.” There were other men at the Empowerment Station who also helped him—Jonathan Banks and Sir Walter Scott, III, to name two.

“They didn’t force-feed me no bible,” Anthony recalls. “They just did life with me. They all looked like me, they all talked like me, but they weren’t in the street.” And in the basement of the church there was a sound studio. “They made beats and they recorded music,” Anthony says. “I first thought it was corny, it wasn’t cool, but then I started seeing we all alike, we all escaping something. Those dudes became my family. That church became my second home. And that’s where I met my wife.”

Even before he met her though, Anthony was enthralled with this young woman. On the bus home from Huguenot High School, he would see her walking up the street. She wore a pickle suit, the uniform of a JROTC

(Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps) member. “But I could never see what house she was going into,” says Anthony.

At a youth camp, sponsored by the church he attended, Anthony was enjoying a hip-hop concert with a hundred other kids. “I was like super-excited,” he says. “And I turned around and there’s the girl. I didn’t see her on the bus going up to the camp.” Later that day, the youth pastor presented Anthony and Tara with the same award for righteousness. “We just kind of hit it off,” says Anthony. “One thing led to another, and we started writing a lot of music together.” The pair would eventually marry, build a new house in Blackwell, and begin a family.

Music had become a passion for Anthony, and to this day he still produces beats and sells them. He pauses from the interview and raps out a song he wrote about his brother. It’s called “I Wish,” and it smacks of the harsh reality of his brother’s death, but there’s something redemptive in it, too. “My wife and I rapped for fifteen years,” he says. “It was positive, life-motivating type of music that we did. My wife and I released an album years ago, but once our kids and stuff came a long, we backed off.”



Kaylee, twins Anthony and Caleb, and Alissa.

Anthony earned a bachelor’s in political science from St. Paul’s College (now defunct), and later a master’s in human services with a concentration in marriage and family counselling from Liberty University. Counselling made sense to Anthony. “I really want to be out here in the trenches,” he says. “That’s where I belong. My wife and I were youth pastoring a group of kids at a local church on Bainbridge called the House of Prayer. We saw a lot of ourselves in those kids and knew what they needed, and what they needed wasn’t someone to tell them you’re do-

ing wrong, or you need to do this or that. What they needed was somebody to be there and do life with them. And just doing that changed the trajectory of a lot of those kids’ lives.”

Professionally, Anthony worked in day-treatment counselling, intensive in-home counselling, and then he started doing skill building. While serving on the board at Better Housing Coalition he learned about Virginia Supportive Housing. “And it was like light bulbs were exploding in my head,” he says. “This is my heart beat. I’ve been working with them for



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six years now, and it's what I should be doing."

In a few days, on a Saturday, Anthony will be over at Mosby Court. "I'll be up there with Lieutenant James Killingsworth of the RPD, a really good friend of mine who's practically like family," Anthony says. "I'll be talking about how life isn't always what it seems to be, that you can do something about it. I will tell them there's hope outside of drugs, there's hope outside of pushing the next pack, there's hope outside of being a jackboy. A lot of these kids know that, but they see no route to that. But there is: Education, education, education, education, education."

We move out to the front porch, and Anthony stares intently into the black asphalt that lines 12th Street. "I can look down at that asphalt and it still looks the same as it did when I grew up here," he says. "But when I look up at the houses that replaced the bricks, I think, my God it's all changed. I'm grateful for who I am today. I am grateful for what I experienced. It's made me the person I am today. If I hadn't experienced the things I experienced, I wouldn't have the appreciation for other people, I wouldn't know how to love people."

Anthony mentions the man who thrice shot his brother, and is currently serving a 93-year prison term. For several years now Anthony has been working on something for this man. "I've been penning a letter, which is pretty much done now, and I'm just working up the gall to send it to him, he says. "My heart and my desire and my faith allow me to forgive him for what he did. I am trying to see him as God would see him, and not just seeing him as someone who's taken someone from me, but seeing him as someone who needs to have what I've been given the opportunity to have. I believe he should do the time for his crime."

And then Anthony Clary says this: "He had three or four kids and he doesn't know them. He's already spending an eternity away from the people that love him. He's taken my brother away from us. And though I believe he should have to do the time for the crime, I don't believe he should have to spend an eternity away from the God who loves him deeper than any person could ever. If I operate out of a place of real forgiveness, I can't be angry. He did horrific things, but I hope he can see what true forgiveness and love mean." 

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BRIEFS



Bellevue Theatre And Historic District

Four months ago developer Louis Salomonsky purchased a home on Westminster Avenue in Bellevue, and he's already busy with plans for preservation of the old Bellevue Theatre on MacArthur Avenue. He also envisions a historic district for the neighborhood.

"The most important objective is to do something with the Bellevue Theatre," he told me recently. Seated with us was Bill Thomas, active trustee for Samis Grotto, which owns the Bellevue Theatre.

According to Louis, their joint vision includes creating a plaza-like setting in front of the old theatre. "Potentially it would have umbrellas and seating areas, and would become kind of the town square of Bellevue," Louis said. "It would be a pleasant place to go and sit down and enjoy life."

At this point, neither Louis nor Bill is quite sure exactly what the theatre would be used for. "In a perfect world it would continue to be some place of assembly," Louis suggested. "Perhaps, having weekends with theatre performances, live theatre or film. There's no reason why banquets or wedding parties couldn't be held there."

This project will be financially feasible

only if there are historic tax credits, and both Louis and Bill don't think the old theater will qualify as an historic structure on its own.

"Bill and I have learned it would be virtually impossible to get the theatre to be designated an historic building in its own independent right," Louis said.

Which is why Louis is proposing that Bellevue become an historic district. He is careful to point out he would be looking for either a state or federal historic designation. "If it's a city of Richmond historic district, I consider that a painful process," he said. "If you get into a federal or state historic district the requirements are minimal and reasonable."

Bill Thomas wants to ensure that the Bellevue Theatre is preserved. "With Louis's guidance the whole city of Richmond will be proud of," he said. "And I think it's a key to the redevelopment of the area and it's going to help upgrade and stabilize everything on MacArthur Avenue. We want to share it with the public. The MacArthur merchants have been supportive of us and we've tried to be very supportive of them, and we're going to continue to be there for the neighborhood."

National Night Out On MacArthur Avenue

MacArthur Avenue's National Night Out will be held rain or shine from 6-8 pm on Tuesday, August 7 in the 4000 block of MacArthur Avenue. One of the largest events of its kind in the Richmond metro area, this annual even draws hundreds of people to Bellevue's central commercial strip. Sponsored by the Bellevue Merchants Association and the Richmond Police Department, it is an evening of family-oriented and kid-friendly activities—including the ever-popular misting tents. Northside's native son, Jonathan

the Juggler, will be on hand working his magic

The merchants of MacArthur offer wide a range of taste treats for kids and adults alike—root beer floats compliments of Once Upon a Vine and Rich's Stitches; misting tents and snow cones at Decatur's Garage; iced tea and cookies from Stir Crazy; something sumptuous and special from Demi's Mediterranean Kitchen, the mill on MacArthur and Dot's Back Inn; garlic knots from Zorba's; chips and dip from Mi Jalisco; and much, much more. **NJ**

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BOOK REVIEW

Matron Saints Throughout the Ages

by FRAN WITHROW

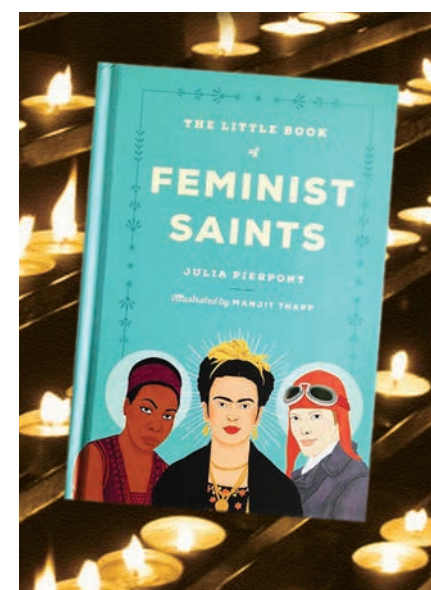
A AT FIRST GLANCE, you might think “The Little Book of Feminist Saints” has a religious bent, but though its idea came from the Catholic saint-of-the-day book, the focus is secular. Author Julia Pierpont presents us with one hundred feminist powerhouses: leaders, innovators, inventors, and artists.

The women featured come from around the world, from ancient times to present day. They are poets, politicians, journalists, and scientists. They are athletes and nuns, teachers and actors. And they all stand out for their fearlessness and courage in striving to make the world a better place.

As a further play on the idea of Catholic saints, each woman is given a title: artist Frida Kahlo is the Matron Saint of Color, and Malala Yousafzai is the Matron Saint of Students. I loved this idea, especially for women with whom I was unfamiliar. It gave me a sense of what is key about their lives, what drove them forward. Some were quite familiar to me: Anne Frank is the Matron Saint of Diarists, while some were not: Margaret Hamilton is the Matron Saint of Engineers. I had never even heard of her.

Manjit Thapp illustrated each woman with exquisite care. I loved her renderings of these heroes: she uses gorgeous colors, and gives each subject's eyes such piercing expressiveness. On the facing page of each illustration is a short vignette about that woman, not a biography so much as a glimpse into the essence of her and her work.

Though the book is short, it took me a while to get through it. I would read an entry, then feel compelled to head to the internet to learn more. Thus I discovered the artwork of Kara Walker (Matron Saint of Confronting History). Her black and white silhouettes are gorgeous, though they might challenge the sensibilities of some viewers. I also spent a long time reading about Anna Politkovas-



kaya (Matron Saint of the Brave, and boy, is that title apt). Politkovaskaya was a Russian journalist who reported on “the life around us for those who cannot see it for themselves.” Her willingness to do so ended up costing her life.

Stellar women abound: Phillis Wheatley was the first black American to publish a volume of poems. Benazir Bhutto is the Matron Saint of Democracy. Wilma Mankiller was the first female chief of the Cherokee Nation. These exemplary women crusaded for a fairer, more equal world for everyone, often against tremendous odds and by bucking societal expectations.

You can dip in and out of this little gem: open the book to any page, read about a remarkable woman, then put it down and come back later to learn about someone else. Or you can stay up all night, like I did, reading and researching, closing the book at last with a sense of gratitude for these gifted women. It is a humbling experience to contemplate just how many of them have paved the way for us, how many have stood up for equality everywhere.

Feminist saints, we salute you. You are role models for us all. **NSJ**

The Little Book of Feminist Saints
By Julia Pierpont
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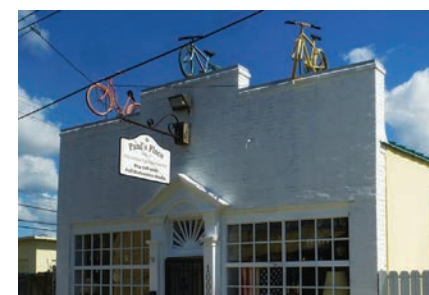
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Paul's Place Revisited

by **CHARLES MCGUIGAN**

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Years ago, Paul Ferramosca purchased the old Solite building on Overbrook Road. Twelve years back he began loading it with everything from vintage lighting to cast-iron bathtubs.

"So back in the spring we did an auction and we got rid of ninety percent of the inventory on the inside and outside of this facility," says Paul's wife and partner, Lisa. "Everything went. Then we renovated, we painted, and started restocking the store from all of our other inventory"

The difference is night and day. "It's not as busy," Lisa says. "It's more antiques, vintage, collectibles. You can see it all."

Working side by side with the Ferramosca's was their shop manager, Farrah Edmonds, of whom Lisa says, "We couldn't have done it without her."

"You can breathe in here now," Lisa says.

"And find what you're looking for," adds Farrah.

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"And we have wrought iron, we have tubs, we have doors, we have windows," Farrah says. "We have everything you want to redo your house

"As long as it was built before 1950," says Paul. "We only have the historical stuff. So much of this stuff is going away, and once it's gone it's no more."

"And we will work with you," Lisa says. "We like our finds to go to a good home."

In front of the building, looking at the new storefront elevation, Lisa says, "We wanted it to pop out, it was so bland. We wanted something that would catch your attention."

Farrah nods. "Bicycles mounted on the roof," she says. "This is RVA."

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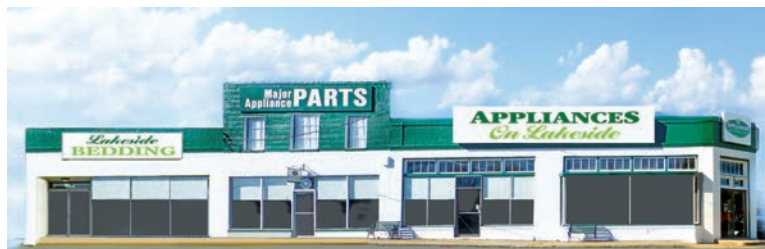


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