

unity



Celebrating Food, Art & Culture

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Constant gardener  
nourishes thousands

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# 24/7 barbershop goes to great lengths for customers



For the guys who work hard all day, the ones about to party all night or the ones who get into town at hours inconvenient for traditional barbershops, Atlanta's Anytime Cutz works. The barbershop's chairs are continuously filled. Its clientele eclectic. And, most important, it's open 24/7.

All the time.

"This is the only time I have time (for a haircut)," says Carlos Diaz, a 23-year-old auto body shop employee. "This is the only place like this anywhere. For someone like me, it is what I need. I can come here when I get off my job. There are a lot of people in here like me. It's a great idea."

It's the niche cultivated by owner Carol Lamar. Lamar, and her ex-husband, Ernesto Williams, started this business in 2005 when they were working in another location adjacent to a 24-hour gas station. When folks would stop in for gas or make purchases, they'd come over for a haircut, too.

Following their divorce, Lamar became sole owner of the business and moved it to its current location in Atlanta's Buckhead section. Ernesto's Cuts became Anytime Cutz.

A haircut costs \$20, but a \$10 tip is added after 9:30 p.m. Clearly, by the volume of business being done on a recent night, a lot of heads are willing to pay for the convenience.

"That's exactly what it is. Convenient," Terrance Moore, an auto salesman, says. "There aren't places open when I get off work. And they do a great job..."

Oh, the word is out. But as long as the focus is on the barbers, Lamar is happy.

"It's not about me," she says. "You really want to promote the guys. They are like my sons. I don't cut hair. They do. They are the ones with the celebrity clientele. They make it happen." The barbers can name rappers like Kevin Gates, NBA players like Devin Harris and NFL players among their clients.

"It's funny because there are still a lot of people in this city that don't know that this is a 24-hour barbershop," Kentris Copperwood, an eight-year employee of Anytime Cutz, says. "We are doing a service to people. Around here, we keep the flow coming in. All the time. My shift is from 2 p.m. to 5 a.m., and it doesn't stop."

"This is like the best thing that's ever happened to a barbershop," says Chuck "Picasso" Scott. "You can make as much money as you can because people are always going to come in and get their hair cut. And we are open all the time."

"We're here for people who come off a plane at 11 or midnight and they can come straight here. Athletes. Stars. Workers. You name it. From Floyd Mayweather to Shaq (Shaquille O'Neal) – those type people. They like this spot because it's laid-back. People aren't starstruck. They can come in here and chill, and actually have a decent conversation with people."

Chances are if anyone wants to talk, Scott will be there. He's been a barber for 22 years – the last 10 at Anytime Cutz. He's going to be there as much as humanly possible.

"It's not that easy to do," Scott says. "But for me, I really don't have a shift. I work 24 hours. It works for me because I am a morning and nighttime person. It doesn't matter what time it is because I like people. I'm a people person."

# The passing of 'Madiba'

Nelson Mandela, whose successful struggle against South Africa's apartheid system of racial segregation and discrimination made him a global symbol for the cause of human rights and earned him the Nobel Prize, died on Dec. 5, 2013. The great leader known as "Madiba" was 95.

*"I hate race discrimination most intensely and in all its manifestations. I have fought it all during my life; I fight it now, and will do so until the end of my days."* – Nelson Mandela

Photo by Tom Stoddart



## Proliferation of prominent poetry



Joanne Gabbin, standing left, and Virginia Tech Professor Nikki Giovanni with author/Wake Forest Professor Maya Angelou, seated, at the "Sheer Good Fortune" event. Photo by Michael Kiernan

When full-time English Professor Joanne Gabbin arrived at James Madison University in 1985, she brought with her a deep and steady river of intense determination, and a passion for African American history and poetry that has resulted in the creation of the widely respected Furious Flower Poetry Center.

"When I started teaching in 1971, I made it my habit to invite Gwendolyn Brooks to every school at which I was a faculty member. When I came to JMU, I continued to ask her to visit. Finally, in March of 1993, she came to Charlottesville to speak. I took my students over to see her. After she spoke, she spent perhaps an hour and a half signing autographs and speaking to my students.

"The next morning," Gabbin continues, "I called to thank her, and I asked if she would please visit JMU. She said she would come to our campus in September 1994, and so we started planning immediately." Word quickly spread, and what was initially going to be a simple reading quickly turned into something much bigger.

"Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez and Amiri Baraka all said they would be there as well," Gabbin explains. "So, we decided to turn the event into an actual conference honoring Gwendolyn Brooks, and the era of poetry she dominated."

Gabbin crafted the conference's name, Furious Flower, from words among the lines of a Gwendolyn Brooks poem:

*The time  
cracks into furious flower. Lifts its face  
all unashamed. And sways in wicked grace.*  
– Gwendolyn Brooks

"Everyone I invited to that first conference said they would be there," Gabbin says. "It turned into a major conference. I invited over 35 of the most important voices in African American poetry to come here and to read and to talk about their work. In addition to the poets, we had the critics come and talk about African American poetry. We had audiences, at every reading, of over a thousand people. When you saw the event unfold, you knew it was historic. You knew it would be a one-shot deal. That's what I thought, so we threw everything into that conference so it was landmark, historic. Even on the first day people started saying this was historic."

"By 1999 I knew that Furious Flower had to go on even though we had not yet established a physical place other than my office for the center," Gabbin says. "When Gwendolyn Brooks came for the third time to James Madison University, I dedicated the center to her honor. She died in 2000, and so by 2004, right after we held the second Furious Flower conference, the president of JMU commended Furious Flower Poetry Center for bringing the university recognition, and so the university decided to dedicate office space to Furious Flower. In 2005 we moved to the building we're in now."

Gabbin says although she's nearing her retirement, she felt it critically important to have a 2014 conference. It's set for Sept. 24-27.

"This is as much about educating faculty as it is about educating students about African American poets and poetry," Gabbin says, "and Furious Flower conferences are as much for students from other colleges and universities as they are for students at JMU."

# From the very beginning



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Early influences have a way of spawning signature legacies. The works of the three artists featured in this edition of *Unity* are indicative of the people and places whose impact has shaped their acclaimed talent and skills.

## JOHN LAWSON

John Lawson remembers creating art at an early age. The third of six children, he says he knew then that he would create art for the rest of his life.

Lawson describes his work as a celebration of and enthusiasm for the world around him. "My true objective," he says, "is to represent the external form so the internal nature and spirit of the individual can be revealed." His piece, "Simone," seems to capture that internal spirit caught in a moment in time. The subtle strokes of lavender and yellow in the subject's face enhance her contemplative essence.

The elder's hands and arms in Lawson's "Diligence" speak to the nobility of labor and strength. "The figure is universal, representing focus, commitment and grace, which are all attributes for success of any



"Simone"  
by John Lawson

task," says Lawson. He remarks that the subject of his piece, titled "Eric," is his nephew, and he hopes Eric's "wonderful" personality emanates from the piece.

Lawson takes his viewer on a journey that provides a visual commentary of his passion for portraiture and the human figure in his community. "My goal is to represent them in a traditional and positive manner that mirrors who I am," he says. Lawson earned his BFA from Syracuse University and has exhibited his work throughout the Connecticut tri-state area. He also serves as a mentor for other artists in his community.

## TYMM HOLLOWAY

Growing up with a father who worked in the film industry was an inspiration for Tymm Holloway, which spurred his interest in visual arts. His first trip abroad as a teenager was also instrumental in his growth as an artist. Seeing other parts of the world inspired Holloway to travel more. This turning point piqued Holloway's desire to present his imagination through photography and share his experiences.

The juxtaposition of lines and colors provide the creative element in Holloway's photographs. "It is my desire to capture a moment that can be revealed and last for generations to come," says Holloway. "Lost in Trees," shot in a park in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, reveals that moment of a little girl running throughout massive trees.

Holloway's photograph, "Golden Path," was taken in Ipanema, Brazil. The trees seem to beckon to the



"Eric" by John Lawson



"Diligence" by John Lawson



"Golden Path" by Tyymm Holloway



"Lost in Trees" by Tyymm Holloway

allure of the iridescent concrete. At sunset, Holloway's precise eye captures the lighting that changes the sidewalk from black and white to a shimmering pavement of gold. "I waited for the perfect balance of light from the beach sidewalk and busy streets using the trees and mountains for the ideal moment," says Holloway.

"There are many stories waiting to be told," adds Holloway. "Through a lens, we can be informed within our communities and connect to each other."

## HARRY LEE DAVIS

Harry Lee Davis says his mother was his inspiration for becoming a professional artist. Although he showed exceptional talent for drawing as a child, he rediscovered his love for painting when his mother bought him a paint-by-number set after an injury in the military. It was after this debilitating injury that Davis earned a bachelor of arts in sociology from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and returned to his love of making art.



"Return of the Moran" by Harry Lee Davis



"Blues Cafe" by Harry Lee Davis

Davis' love for bright colors is magnified in "Yellow Girl," featuring a young Papua, New Guinea girl wearing ceremonial paint as part of a coming-of-age ceremony. Davis was captivated by the young girl's eyes that are innocent, yet wise.

"Return of the Moran" is part of a series that resulted from Davis' research on the Maasai culture. The strength of the three Maasai warriors is shown on their backs as they gaze upon their village after returning from a long journey.

Davis' inspiration for "Blues Café" came from a small black-and-white photograph of a blues guitarist jamming outside a bar on Beale Street in Memphis.

Davis has appeared in numerous exhibitions and is the recipient of many awards and honors. His work is also owned by such celebrities as Halle Berry, Bill Cosby and Denzel Washington.



"Yellow Girl" by Harry Lee Davis

# The fruits of a constant gardener's labor

Robin Emmons' personal "crisis of values" has yielded a valuable resource for thousands in North Carolina's largest city.

Emmons' award-winning nonprofit, Sow Much Good, unveiled its community farm stand to the public in August 2013. It's open three times a week during the summer and once a week in the winter and fall. The urban farm offers organic produce, flowers, nuts, eggs and honey, plus free cooking demonstrations, canning, composting, wellness, fitness and cooking classes.

The farm site is the latest initiative on which Sow Much Good and Emmons, its founder, have embarked. It's the result of a partnership between Sow Much Good and Martin Marietta Materials, which operates quarries in the Charlotte area.

"We have been extremely fortunate," says Emmons. "They basically gave us the land (in the form of a long-term, tenured lease). ..."

The farm site is near two predominantly African American neighborhoods. It is the latest manifestation of Sow Much Good's mission to "provide equal access to organic food sources; to inspire individuals to take charge of their health; and to promote healthy lifestyles through food and nutrition." For its efforts, Sow Much Good was named a 2013 CNN Top Hero and was awarded \$50,000.

Since its inception, Sow Much Good has served people in so-called "urban food deserts" (where healthy, affordable food is scarce) through its "farm stand model" at various churches.



Photos by Michael Hernandez of Capture Happy Photography

Emmons is immersed in the nonprofit's operations. Yet, she still works in the quarter-acre garden at her home where she resides with her husband, Willie Emmons. During the growing season, her garden produces 3,000 pounds of produce. Not bad for a Boston native raised in a Roxbury house with little room to grow anything. She's also been a vegetarian for 20-plus years.

It's been more than five years since Emmons' resignation from a banking job (spurred by "a crisis of values," she says). Since then, Sow Much Good has amassed a team of 120 volunteers who weed, harvest, plant, package and deliver food to community events. Among the nonprofit's most prominent achievements are the tons of organic fruits and vegetables it has donated to food assistance programs. Just as significant is the organization's ability to change people's behaviors through education and direct interaction.

"We really believe in connection and cultivating relationships with people to give them strategies," says Emmons.



# Say it loud: Vegans and vegetarians are proud

Veganism is becoming a more diverse movement, changing in the face of its reputation as a stronghold of hippies in Birkenstocks eating bean sprouts, granola and birdseed. In particular, veganism has been seen as a diet for whites. But African-Americans are beginning to make the shift to a plant-based diet.

A wave of vegan and vegetarian cookbooks aimed at African Americans illustrates the shift. The Toledo Blade mentions "By Any Greens Necessary" by Tracie Lynn McQuirter; "Vegan Soul Kitchen: Fresh, Healthy and Creative African American Cuisine"; by Bryant Terry and "The Ethnic Vegetarian" by Angela Shelf Medearis. Blogs like Vegans of Color and Sistah Vegan tackle issues of interest to this growing population.

The Grio identifies another sign that African Americans are growing more interested in dropping meat from the menu: "Traci Thomas, founder of the Black Vegetarian Society of Georgia, which organizes the annual Meat Out-Vegetarian Food and Wholistic Health Fair in Atlanta, says attendance has trebled in just five years, with more vegetarians and vegans coming through the doors."

The Philadelphia Inquirer has also noticed the trend. Its website quotes Stephanie Daniel, who attends a weekly vegan brunch. "More and more black people, and everyone else, want to turn their diet around."

The growing number of black vegans counters not only a stereotype of vegans, but a stereotype of African Americans. Black vegan Evelyn Redcross says she has been told that "black vegans don't exist."

According to Redcross, the rise in veganism correlates with a growing interest in health in the African American community. There are also many role models for black vegans, including "athletes Hank Aaron and Carl Lewis; Hollywood's Cicely Tyson, Angela Bassett and Vanessa Williams; entrepreneur Russell Simmons; and musician Lenny Kravitz."

The Grio observes that "surprisingly," veganism is becoming more popular even among black men. In 2012, the site reports, pro football player "Arian Foster joined the likes of rap artist Andre 3000, former NFL running back Ricky Williams and boxer Mike Tyson by changing his diet to a vegan one." The Grio quotes Constance Brown-Riggs, national spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetic, who says, "Years ago vegetarian diets were synonymous with tofu and bean sprouts. But, proponents of plant based diets have now made it more 'sexy' and socially acceptable."

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## Winter Wilted Spinach Salad

- 6 cups spinach
- 1/2 small red onion, sliced
- 4 ounces feta cheese, crumbled
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1 tablespoon mint leaves, chopped
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons cider or red wine vinegar
- Pinch of salt
- Black pepper, freshly ground
- 1/2 cup toasted pecans, chopped

Combine the spinach, onions, cheese, cranberries and mint. Set aside.

Heat the oil, vinegar salt and pepper until just boiling.

Drizzle the dressing over the salad and toss well.

Sprinkle with pecans and serve.

**Yield:** 4 servings



# Shifting gears in NASCAR



Photo courtesy of Joe Gibbs Racing

"It looked like a lot of fun (even) at the age of 9," says Darrell Wallace Jr., referring to his first experience with racing. "There were kids younger than me at the time that were out there racing and winning and having fun."

What began as a hobby soon led to a career on the track. The 20-year-old racer competes in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series, driving the No. 54 Toyota for Kyle Busch Motorsports and a partial schedule in the Nationwide Series with Joe Gibbs Racing.

In October 2013, Wallace became the second African American to win a NASCAR national series with his victory during the Kroger 200 Camping World Truck Series race at Martinsville Speedway in Martinsville, Va.

And to think it all began with go-karts. "My dad had the urge to buy a Harley-Davidson," explains Wallace. "He wanted to get it fixed up and trick it out." Later the man Wallace's father hired to fix the motorcycle, Chris Rogers, invited young Wallace and his father to watch a few friends race go-karts. "We just got hooked."

Despite now having countless NASCAR accomplishments under his belt, Wallace once knew very little about the sport. "At that time I never watched a race personally, but my parents were big Dale Earnhardt Sr. fans. He's now been one of my favorites ever since," Wallace says. His other favorite NASCAR driver happens to be the owner of the team Wallace drives for. "Currently my favorite driver would have to be Kyle Busch."

The son of a white father and African American mother, Wallace started racing in the Bandolero racing series and quickly moved to the faster Legends series. Unfortunately, it was at the early events that Wallace first encountered racism among his fellow drivers.

"For me it wasn't that hard because I guess I really didn't understand it at the time," Wallace recounts. "When I would hear things it wouldn't really bother me like it did my parents. I just went out the next weekend and beat them on the track – again. That was the only way to gain their respect."

Today, Wallace is a talented and accomplished race car driver, completing many racing milestones. In 2005, he won 35 of the Bandolero Series' 48 races held that year, and in 2008 he became the youngest driver to win at Franklin County Speedway in Virginia. Wallace didn't know he was breaking records after winning. "I didn't realize I was the youngest driver to win at the GPS (Greenville Pickens Speedway in South Carolina)," explains the driver. "It means a lot, as it's helping change the face of NASCAR."

Wallace began driving for Revolution Racing, which operated as part of NASCAR's Drive for Diversity program. NASCAR initiated this program in 2004 in order to attract minorities and women to the sport in positions such as ownership, driving and crew members.



Photo courtesy of Joe Gibbs Racing

In addition to his other accomplishments, Wallace was also the first African American to win the Rookie of the Year award in a NASCAR series. Despite all of his racing accomplishments, Wallace still wants to reach new goals and "hopefully land something long-term in the years to come!"

Asked what advice he has for other young, ambitious drivers once they start racing, Wallace quickly replies, "It's not easy; you have to want to do it to stay in this sport. Keep your mind on right and do the right things so you can go out there and do your thing!"