



Ultraglas

Night at the opera

By Any Greens Necessary

Ladies make the National Hockey
League Hall of Fame

In the kitchen with "Top Chef"
Carla Hall



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Renaissance woman

Jane Skeeter's hands look too big on her small body to create delicate needlework. But at only 3, she learned embroidery. Since then, her fingers have seemed to master almost anything instinctively: from sewing and designing dresses to fixing sewing machines and making stained glass windows.

More important, however, is the way Skeeter's entrepreneurial mind has made those talents the tools of success. Skeeter was still in school when she traded custom-made dresses to her sister in return for doing Skeeter's chores. While other girls earned 25 cents an hour for babysitting, Skeeter posted a sign at the local laundry for ironing at \$2 an hour. She got so much work she hired her sister.

"I was born an entrepreneur," Skeeter says. "I watched my father come home at night from a job he didn't like, and I wanted to be more independent. I wanted to support myself doing something I loved."

Skeeter's wide-ranging interests and persistent willingness to try something new also have worked in her favor. Starting college, Skeeter hoped to use her artistic and engineering skills to become an architect. Instead, a husband in school and a child intervened. Jobs to help support her family led from selling fabric to teaching dressmaking and repairing sewing machines.

When she was 20, Skeeter saw a book on stained glass and taught herself the craft. Soon she had clients. She hired other glass artisans, and worked out of her garage. In the early years, she had to prove her competence to a male clientele of builders and contractors for "mansion homes." She got used to receiving letters addressed to "Mr. James Skeeter, President," from people who couldn't grasp that a woman led the company.

For a while, Skeeter tried to expand her company by

selling types of architectural glass, but by the 1980s, she realized she had to focus on doing one thing well. Although she loved "the more artistic forms of glass," stained glass was too labor intensive and expensive for a wide market. Research introduced her to heat-molded glass, which was being used primarily to make smaller decorative objects.

Skeeter turned her attention to heat-molding such architectural materials as tiles and countertops that required far less labor than handmade stained glass. And she made a breakthrough. The company developed the first way to permanently color its molded glass after it was formed, by firing it, instead of having to add color to the raw material. The result was UltraGlas.

In addition, large pieces of the tempered glass could be shipped, and the finished product was easier for owners to clean and maintain than abraded/etched glass. With UltraGlas, Skeeter could use her artistic talents to create doors and countertops and water features.

These days, Skeeter frequently talks to classes of young business people and aspiring entrepreneurs. She regularly hires interns. She says, "It's great if we who have learned the ropes can help young people avoid the pitfalls, or if we only inspire and encourage."

Of course, today UltraGlas is facing the same market challenges experienced by all construction-related businesses. But Skeeter says, "This market is harder for people who didn't prepare as well as we did," adding, in her typical fashion, "This is a good time to be innovating."

Her products are proof of more than just good intentions. Skeeter, who is a LEED AP Accredited Professional in green building techniques, has a patent pending on UltraGlas e, which diverts glass from landfills. Now, she is working "on a glass that will generate electricity." With such drive to create something new, who knows what Jane Skeeter will do next?



Oh, Meade, oh my

For the longest time, just about everybody knew Angela Meade was an exceptional singer. Friends and family knew. So did numerous voice teachers, who have long praised the soprano's work ethic and talent. But it seems Angela Meade might not have been as certain as everyone else.

Of course, Meade knew she could carry a tune. She'd been singing at church, in a choir and in a band in her cozy little town of Centralia, halfway between Portland and Seattle. After she graduated from high school, Meade studied pre-med at Centralia Community College until a choir teacher recommended she study with a voice teacher in Olympia. "After she studied with me for a couple of months," Wayne Bloomingdale told *The Oregonian* newspaper last August, "I said to her, 'Angela, you really are an opera singer.' "And her response was, 'I am?!'"

Oh yes, she is. After working with Bloomingdale, Meade began to study music in earnest. She attended Pacific Lutheran University for three years, then earned a master's from the University of Southern California. She started to work on a doctorate at USC, but was accepted to the prestigious Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. Only 30 students at a time are accepted into the four-year program.

Meade has been victorious in 53 vocal competitions, including the serendipitous Metropolitan Opera auditions in 2007. That's when she earned a spot covering the lead



Angela Meade



singer in Verdi's "Ernani." A phone call informing her that the soprano playing Elvira had fallen ill, the night before the show, sealed her operatic fate. Would she, the caller asked, like to go on the next night? By then, the accomplished and poised performer surely understood she really was an opera singer. She said yes, without hesitation.

"You just read stories where people become stars overnight when they fill in for somebody who's sick," Mead told *The Oregonian*, "and I was just like, 'Oh, maybe that will happen for me! And it will be so amazing! And wouldn't it be amazing to make my professional debut at the Met in a leading role!'"



"And that's exactly what happened. Careful what you wish for, right?!"

Singers spend years trying to build careers that bear even the slightest resemblance to Meade's. These days, the opera world and the media can't get enough of her. The *New York Times*, for example, trumpeted Meade's recent performance at the Caramoor International Music Festival, where she sang the title role of "Norma."

"From the first lines of Norma's entrance ... Meade sounded in complete command of the role, delivering the character's charged, defiant dramatic recitative with gleaming sound and incisive attack. ... Norma counsels peace in 'Casta Diva,' and Ms. Meade sang it beautifully, filling the long-spun lines with rich, unforced sound, shaping the phrases with bittersweet poignancy, gracing the melody with tasteful embellishments and lifting her voice to majestic highs."

Although Meade now lives in Philadelphia, she has



not forsaken her home state. Last year, she sang the role of Leonora in Portland SummerFest's Opera in the Park presentation of "Il Trovatore."

After her performance in Portland, Meade was slated to entertain audiences in St. Paul, Minn., Ireland, Pittsburgh and Austria. As for her future, well, *The New York Times* certainly can't wait to see what's next. Her only Met assignment this season is again as a cover: the title role in Rossini's "Armida."

"Will the Met catch up with the opera fans who have embraced Ms. Meade?" *The Times* wrote. Judging from the effusive comments of critics and others who follow her career, sounds like it should.

A woman's touch

Women's History Month began as a weeklong celebration of women's contributions to culture, history and society by a school district in Sonoma, California. In 1981, the U.S. Congress made it official, passing a resolution establishing Women's History Week. Six years later, the event expanded into the entire month of March now celebrated annually. *Unity* continues this annual celebration by featuring three women artist of different ethnicities, yet whose work universally brings together a love and passion for what they do—create art for the human eye's consumption.

Caryn B. Davis

Caryn B. Davis is a commercial, editorial and portrait photographer, just to name a few. Her career began in the visual arts 24 years ago as a producer/writer of television documentaries before changing to photography.

Davis' work exemplifies an eye for detail and color. In "Blue Tablecloth" taken in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico, the elements are meticulous from walls of orange swirls and white specks on the floor to a small white tag on the bright blue tablecloth. Davis says this photograph is the beginning of her "playing with color as a photographer." "Stone Wall with Cactus" magnifies reds, beiges and concrete grays of worn cobblestone walls, peeled paint on the weathered antique door,

"Blue Tablecloth" by Caryn B. Davis



"Stone Wall with Cactus" by Caryn B. Davis

and finite texture of the cactus plant. A splash of tiny yellow flowers in the window shows perfect in the soft morning light. The cover photograph, "Leif's Studio," was shot on a tripod in twilight. Davis describes twilight as "that brief 15 minute period after the sun has set, and before the sky has turned from blue to black." Twilight is Davis' favorite time of day to shoot because "all the colors are so rich" and color once again is captured in "Leif's Studio." Sunflowers red and yellow and a spray of pink and yellow flowers in the window box come forth visually. The ivy, tall stalks and leaves capture the shadowed essence of sunset, yet the windows illuminate as if the sun is shining midday.

Davis plans to include

more photo essays combining words with photographs in her work. She declares, "I am endlessly interested in how people live and work and the sociological and psychological ties that bind us all to our human family. I like telling stories through still images rather than motion and I see myself as a storyteller."

Laura James

Born and bred in Brooklyn, N.Y., Laura James is a self-taught painter of Antigua heritage. She has worked as a professional artist and illustrator for almost 20 years. James' work has been exhibited worldwide, which includes religious and secular themes. In an award-winning edition of the "Book of Gospels," 34 of James' illustrations are rendered in the Ethiopian Christian art style. The book is circulated worldwide by numerous Christian denominations. Her secular works are of women, families and everyday life.

James incorporates blended intricate patterns and lively colors in her work. "Black Girl with Wings" is the first in a series of paintings of women with wings. James notes that the women are not angels, but merely women waiting patiently for something to happen. James' use of light and dark in the girl's



"Black Girl with Wings" and "Women Flying" by Laura James

face and dress work in effective contrast to her hair and wings. James' use of surreal imagery has been influenced by the work of French surrealist Leonor Fini. Her piece, "Women Flying," represents that influence by portraying two women in midair, one reaching for her sister who is still on the ground. The warm-colored

glow in the sky gives a feeling of hope and comfort and as James insinuates, "Women can do anything when they help one another, even fly." James is currently working on another series about "indomitable women who never give up on their dream of a better life."

Mary Louise Lopez

Mary Louise Lopez has a life-like body of work that reflects the "feel and images of indigenous communities" throughout Mexico, the American Southwest, and Central and South America.

Lopez declares, "My work endeavors to reflect the strength, pride and endurance of cultures close to my roots." In "Dia Del Mercado," the woman is on her way to the mercado (market) with hopes to sell or trade her homegrown vegetables, a pot and a rooster in her bag. The woman's look of somber strength and focus, Lopez affirms, "comes from deep within. It is expressed by the look in the eyes." Lopez displays her love for bold primary colors through "Volviendo Del Mercado."

This indigenous woman is returning home from the mercado with supplies for her family. Lopez suggests that her strength is in the whole figure and there is never a downtrodden or meek attitude.

Lopez states that her work focuses on "people in their ethnic environment with emphasis on women and their roles in the indigenous society. There is an inner peace, which says quietly, 'I am of value.' They represent the best that is in all of us."

"Dia Del Mercado" and "Volviendo Del Mercado" by Mary Louise Lopez



Say it loud: Plant-based and proud

Tracye Lynn McQuirter gained much more than an undergraduate degree in African-American studies from Amherst College. While a student at the Massachusetts liberal arts institution, McQuirter attended a 1986 lecture delivered by famed human rights activist — and vegan — Dick Gregory that ultimately changed how McQuirter has chosen to nourish her body for the past 20 years.

Today, the Washington, D.C.-based public health nutritionist and speaker is promoting her book, “By Any Greens Necessary: A Revolutionary Guide for Black Women Who Want to Get Healthy, Lose Weight, Eat Great and Look Phat.”

“My goal in writing this book,” McQuirter explains, “is to help you get healthy for life by liberating the way you think about food. This is not about going on a diet or giving up tasty food. (You don’t have to do either one.) This is about changing your life. It’s about starting a revolution — by any greens necessary.”

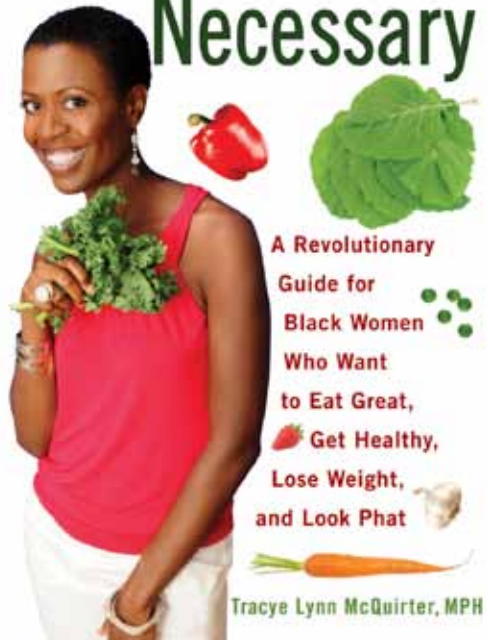
Long before the book’s release in 2010, McQuirter was an advocate of a nutritional movement that can be a tough sell, especially in the African-American community. But McQuirter, who earned a master’s degree in public health nutrition from New York University, considers veganism to be the antidote to the multitude of chronic ailments that plague black women.

She has led more than 100 seminars on vegan nutrition for such organizations as Whole Foods, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and the Vegetarian Society of D.C.

Mediterranean Chickpea Salad



By Any Greens Necessary



She co-founded www.blackvegetarians.org and the Black Vegetarian Society of New York.

McQuirter’s 240-page book shares her journey from omnivore to vegan, advises novice vegans on how to transition to a plant-based diet, and features 40 recipes.

Mediterranean Chickpea Salad

By Tracye Lynn McQuirter. Serves 4.

- 1 cup dried chickpeas, soaked overnight, drained, rinsed
- 3 or 4 cups water
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
- ½ teaspoon curry powder
- 1 tablespoon nutritional yeast
- 1 red bell pepper, cored, seeded and chopped
- 5 leaves fresh basil, chopped
- 1 tablespoon Grapeseed Oil Veganaise (egg- and dairy-free mayonnaise)
- 2 tablespoons Bragg Liquid Aminos
- 1 avocado, peeled, seeded, and chopped

Place the chickpeas and water in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 2 to 3 hours until soft. Drain and transfer the chickpeas to a large bowl. Add the remaining ingredients and stir gently. Cover and let the ingredients marinate for 5 to 10 minutes. Serve warm.

For the love of food

"My food memories are the source of my creative spirit," says Chef Carla Hall. Specifically, her grandmothers were phenomenal cooks and served as the inspiration for Hall, who today is owner and executive chef of Alchemy Caterers in Washington, D.C.

"My maternal grandmother adjusted the way she cooked after my grandfather had a heart attack, so I grew up having a lighter, but still tasty, version of soul food," she adds. "I've continued to recreate an even lighter and refined version of many of those dishes I grew up eating, as well as other comforting foods from around the world."

She's familiar with foods from around the world, having traveled across Europe as a model. She abandoned the runway and her career as a certified public accountant to focus on her love of cooking and food. Today, her holistic approach to food and her commitment to wellness and balance continue in the work she does at Alchemy Caterers, which she founded in 2001.

A native of Nashville, Tenn., and graduate of Howard University, Hall pursued her passion at L'Academie de Cuisine, a culinary institute in the D.C. area. After earning her Culinary Career Training certificate, she gained experience as a chef at several D.C. hotels and social clubs before beginning a lunch delivery service, known as the Lunch Bunch, in predominantly African-American neighborhoods. In addition to sandwiches, she made salads, soups, quick breads and biscuits.

"I decided then to show my clientele that you could enjoy many dishes without beef or pork," Hall explains. "Today I do use beef and pork in my food, but my focus is on fresh, seasonal, local and/or organic. I generally start with the vegetables and work from there. Our portion sizes are small, so our clients can comfortably graze."

She says of all her career experiences, including a stint on the TV show "Top Chef," the most meaningful was the lunch delivery service.

"It was a struggle, but it taught me a lot about tenacity, commitment, quick-thinking, hard work and dedication," she recalls. "I used to think of my little company as being just as reliable as the post office. We always showed up no matter what — rain, snow or shine.

"There was even a period of time when I didn't have a car, and I had to deliver my lunches using the bus," she concludes. "Those were the days."



Carla Hall



Pan-Cooked Turkey with Cranberry Onion Relish

By Carla Hall

1 16 pound turkey, cut into 8 pieces
(2 wings, 2 legs, 2 breasts, 2 thighs)

For brining liquid

4 cups water
½ - ¾ cup kosher salt
½ cup brown sugar
10 each whole allspice, cloves and
black peppercorns
5 each star anise

For relish

1 pound fresh cranberries (substitute
craisins or dried cherries if you can't
find fresh cranberries)
1½ cups granulated sugar
(less, if dried fruit is used)
½ cup red wine
2 cinnamon sticks, toasted
2 orange zest strips
Salt and pepper, to taste

Combine all brining ingredients in a large, resealable plastic bag and shake to dissolve salt and sugar.

Place turkey parts in the bag and place in refrigerator for 6 hours or overnight.

Remove turkey from brine and rinse thoroughly. Pat dry.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Heat a nonstick pan to medium high heat and then sear each piece until golden brown on all sides. Place seared pieces on a sheet pan, and finish cooking them in the oven.

Cook all the pieces to an internal temperature of 170 degrees.

NOTE: The white meat will cook faster than the dark meat, so use a thermometer to test for doneness to ensure each piece is cooked to perfection.

To make the cranberry onion relish, place all ingredients in a medium size pot. Cook for 40 to 45 minutes or until cranberries have popped and onions are soft, translucent and red from the wine and cranberries.

Adjust seasoning, if necessary.

Legends on ice

Ice hockey continues to rise in popularity around the world, including women's ice hockey, and two pioneers of the sport are finally getting the recognition they deserve. The Hockey Hall of Fame, dedicated to the sport's greatest players, recently altered its rules to include a category for females, and subsequently, Cammi Granato and Angela James are the first women to make it into the hall.

Cammi Granato grew up with a love and talent for hockey. She's the sister of a former NHL player and daughter of a former NHL head coach. But she was hindered by the



Angela James - Doug MacLellan/Hockey Hall of Fame

fact that no leagues for girls her age existed. She joined a boys' team in kindergarten and played until her junior year in high school, at which point she accepted a scholarship to Providence College. She became the school's all-team leading goal scorer, a distinction rivaled by the fact that she also led her school to back-to-back conference titles and became the leading scorer for the U.S. National Team.

She went on to become a member of the U.S. women's national team, playing in every world championship for the U.S. from 1990 to 2005. She was named USA Women's Player of the Year in 1996, and a couple years later, as captain, she led the team to win the gold medal in Nagano, Japan, in the 1998 Winter Olympics. These were the first games to include a women's hockey tournament. Granato also won a silver medal in 2002 at the Salt Lake Olympics.

In 1998, Granato and her family founded the Golden Dreams for Children Foundation, which provides support for special-needs children. She gives back in other ways, including through her annual hockey camp for girls. Granato has been a rink-side reporter for NBC's NHL coverage and was a color commentator for NBC's coverage of women's

ice hockey at the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, another distinction for women in a male-dominated profession. She and her husband, former NHL star Ray Ferraro, reside in Vancouver with their children.

Angela James, the other female to be nominated to the hall, grew up in Toronto, playing hockey-type sports alongside the boys. When she began playing ice hockey, she also faced the barrier of being a female. In fact, girls who tried to play were ridiculed. Nonetheless, she persevered and later won numerous ice hockey titles during her college years. She



Cammi Granato - Dave Sandford/Hockey Hall of Fame

also went on to excel in the Central Ontario Women's Hockey League, now the National Women's Hockey League.

She then represented Team Canada, playing in multiple world championships, leading them in scoring and helping them to earn numerous gold championship medals. She was frequently voted most valuable player and was honored by Hockey Canada in 2005 with the Female Breakthrough Award, when it was noted that she'd made significant contributions to the sport and played every position. As the only African-Canadian to serve as captain of a national hockey team, James has also been involved with the sport as a referee and officiator. Today she works as the senior sports coordinator at her alma mater, Seneca College in Toronto, and owns the Breakaway Adult Hockey School.

The 2010 Hockey Hall of Fame induction ceremony was held Nov. 8, 2010 in James' hometown of Toronto, at the Hall of Fame. Given all the accolades and awards shared between these two women, it might seem unremarkable that they are being inducted. Not so. The number of annual inductees is limited to five, and as women, Granato and James are legendary in a sport that is, finally, honoring its female greats.