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MEDIA & MARKETING

Publisher Ann Parenti, Forgotten Song Music, LLC.
Editor in Chief Joan S. Peck
Managing Editor Carolyn Muse Grant
Fashion & Creative Director David Tupaz
Design & Layout Jake Naylor
Contributing Artist Photographer Jaime Lim

EXPERIENCE

Contributing Writer Stacey Gualandi

BEAUTY & FASHION

Contributing Writers David Tupaz

LIVING

Contributing Writers Beth Ilagan, Joan S. Peck, Janice Marie Wilson, Roxy Jones, Stacey Gualandi

ART

Contributing Writers Brian G. Thornton, Stacey Gualandi, Joan S. Peck, Kendall Hardin

DESIGN

Contributing Writer Joan S. Peck

TRAVEL & DINING

Contributing Writers Racheal Hageness, Janice Marie Wilson, Stacey Gualandi, Carolyn Muse Grant

ENTERTAINMENT

Contributing Writers Judy Tarte, Stacey Gualandi, Joan S. Peck

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES

info@chiccompass.com | 702.736.8229
6600 W Charleston Blvd, Suite 117, Las Vegas, NV 89146

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Kendall Hardin



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Ann Parenti
PUBLISHER

From the Publisher

It feels like it was another lifetime ago since the last edition of our magazine. We were days away from launching the spring edition at the Stirling Club, and sadly we had to postpone the event. Now, here we are in the autumn, still waiting on the world to stabilize in some form or another.

As we gathered new material for this edition, we would have been remiss if we did not have a few stories reflecting the current climate of our world. Yet, we wanted our readers to have the opportunity to escape, if even for a moment, into a world with less stress and fewer complications, and be taken away to a place of wonderment. We hope we have accomplished that goal by offering a collection of exciting and heartfelt stories of some outstanding human beings making a positive difference in the world today.

We chose as our cover the stunning piece of art by the beautiful artist, Katarzyna Kociomyk, because it seemed to reflect what so many of us are experiencing in these surreal times. The painting has a tremendous amount of symbolism in it and carries a story of hope I would like to believe. We had an opportunity to interview the most sought-after Joe Pantozzi of Alpha Omega Wealth to give us a snapshot of the importance of financial planning for times like these and married his article to the cover. Since water represents wealth/money in many cultures and especially in Feng Shui and the subject was sitting on a compass in the middle of the ocean, deciding what direction to go, it offers the idea

that she will make a decision on which path to choose. She will find her way out of the dark waters by following her heart. Besides, how could I not love a story with a compass involved!

In my last letter, I promised that we would travel to Paris next ... we barely made it, but we did! Enjoy a time when life was magical and full of "nice" surprises when we could all still travel abroad. We will again sometime down the road, but until then, we will always have Paris!

I cannot say where this crazy compass will take us next, but wherever it may be, we are so happy you chose to travel with us! As we approach the season of Thanksgiving (my favorite holiday), I would like to thank you all—our valued advertisers, our incredibly gifted writers and contributors who are so giving of their time to showcase the fabulous folks we have interviewed, and most importantly, you, our cherished readers.

May your autumn season be filled with joy and gratefulness. Know that simply by sharing your gratitude to even just one person, this simple act of thankfulness sends light into this world. After all, we all could use a little more light these days.

Ann Parenti



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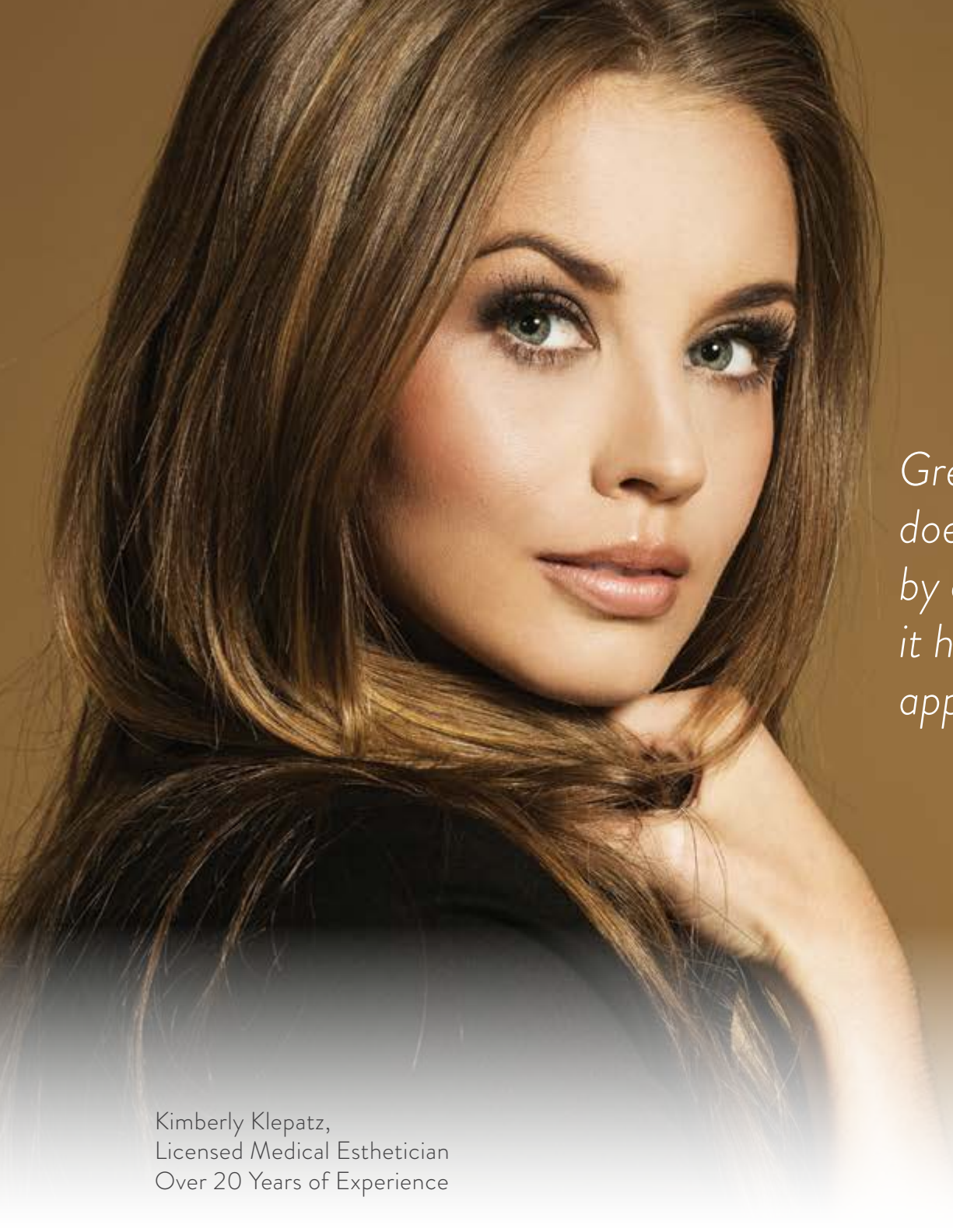
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Joan S. Peck
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

From the Editor

I'm delighted to serve as the new Editor in Chief for Chic Compass Magazine. With the recent transition of Carolyn Muse Grant relocating to beautiful North Carolina and taking on the role of Managing Editor, we all will still be a family of creatives to help bring the best of Las Vegas and beyond to our readers.

As a writer, I'm always curious to see how all of us use words to describe where a person is in life—what they are doing, saying, and thinking. We've reached a time in living where words are often used negatively, so it is a pleasure to bring you a bit of fresh air and offer you stories from the heart without rancor.

In this issue, we have expanded our multi-talented writers' staff, and they have done an outstanding job in portraying all that is going on today in our city and beyond. We continue to include articles about travel, food, fashion, music, design, and artists.

As you read each piece in this issue, I believe you will realize as I do how very blessed we are to live in a world filled with so many inspiring people, events, and opportunities.

In this edition, we travel to Paris, learn the status of the fabulous Smith Center and Performing Arts, discover a new exciting supper club, give you an insightful look at some talented musicians making a difference in the world, and so many more fascinating stories. We also give you a helpful insight into the world of financial planning in these tumultuous times.

We thought the front cover, created by the very talented Katarzyna Kociomyk, was a perfect reflection of what life is

COVER ART

SPECIAL THANKS TO:
Katarzyna Kociomyk

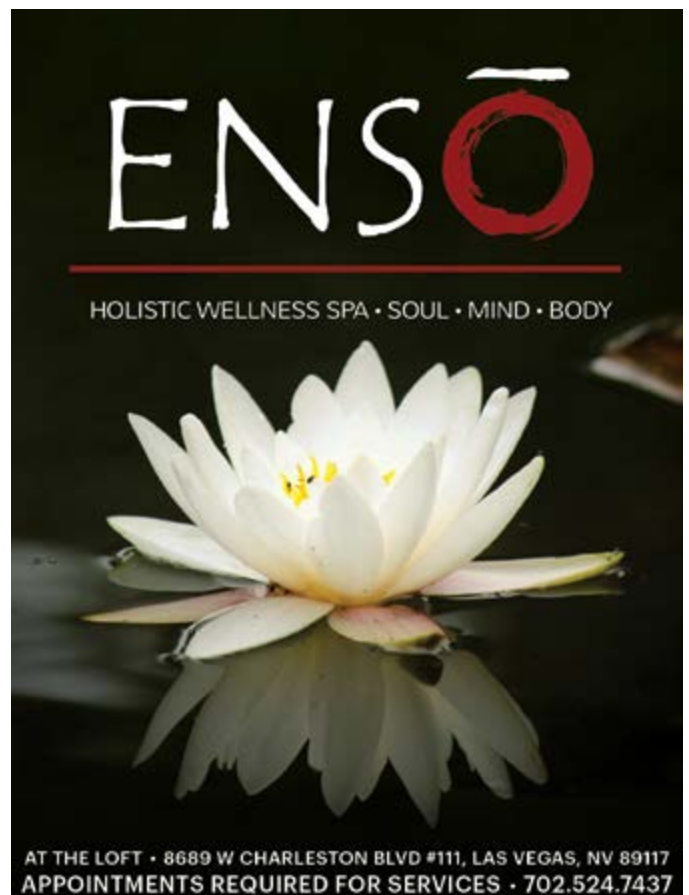
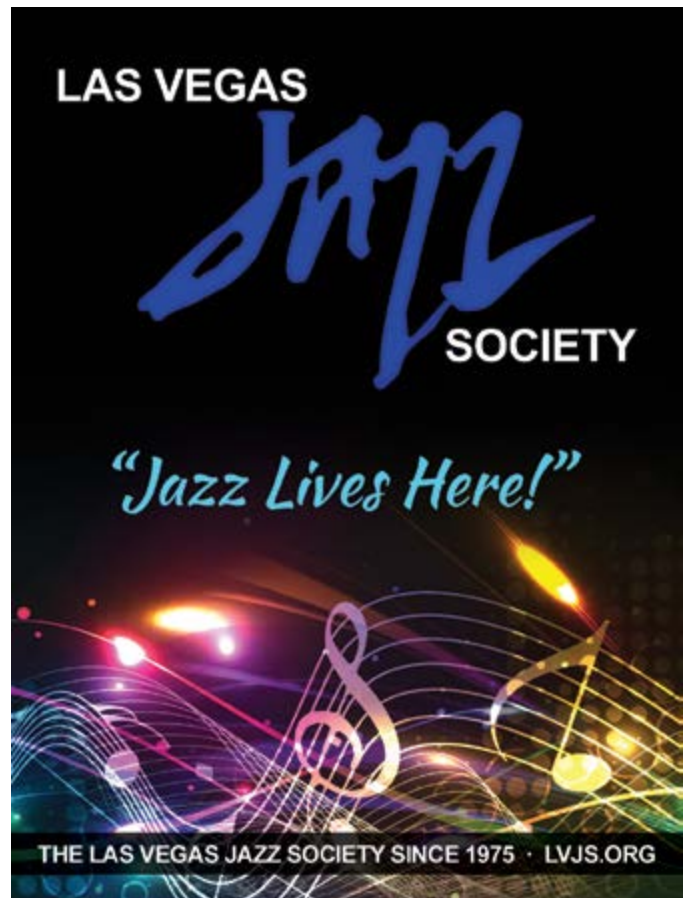
ARTWORK:
"Weathering the Storm"
48" x 60" Oil on Canvas
by Katarzyna Kociomyk

like for so many folks at this time of uncertainty.

Of course, we cannot forget our beautiful fashion spread, featuring the talented Jaime Lim. We will give you some fashion ideas about what to wear before and after COVID. Our goal is to provide you a moment of solitude to sit back and read about some folks who are working diligently to navigate through the storm by helping those in need along the way.

We can't wait for you to see what we have waiting for you inside this current edition. I hope you enjoy it as much as we did to create it for you.

Jean S. Peck





COSMIC FIELD OF LIGHT

By Stacey Gualandi



In Paso Robles, California, the hills are alive with...mounds of illuminated fiber-optic spheres (58,800 to be exact).

Bruce Munro: Field of Light at Sensorio is an impressive outdoor, walkthrough art installation nestled along Route 46 in Central California's wine country. It is a sight to behold.

British artist Bruce Munro, 61, designed the solar-powered orbs to slowly morph from translucent white to a rainbow of colors, lighting up the landscape as the sun sets over the horizon. The 15-acre interactive attraction is a stunning array of originality and must be experienced to be believed.

"[Field of Light at Sensorio] is the biggest I've ever done by quite some margin," Munro says.

The Internationally-acclaimed artist planted his latest scenic sculpture in Paso Robles last year following successful *Field of Light* exhibitions in the UK, Australia, Mexico City, and Houston. The unique location allows visitors to stroll along its half-mile walkway and fully immerse themselves in the artwork.

At Left: *Field of Light* installation at *Sensorio* by Bruce Munro
Photography by Serena Munro



The New York Times listed it #6 on its “52 Places to Go” in 2020, while The Guardian noted, “This is art you feel, rather than art you view.”

Munro says his distinctive light show is a lifelong passion: “It’s something that I’ve dreamt of taking across the world to simply bring a bit of joy and connection to people.”

It’s quite an accomplishment for someone who was criticized in

Above: *Field of Light* installation at *Sensorio* by Bruce Munro
Photography by Serena Munro

his youth for being a daydreamer. But in his 20s, Munro took a trip to Australia, where he began illustrating and soon realized he could make money from his imagination. He noted in his sketchbook at the time moments of “condensed connectedness with nature” that he wanted to recreate through art.

In 1992, while camping at Australia’s Uluru National Park, Munro

envisioned an “illuminated field of stems that, like the dormant seed in a dry desert, would burst into bloom at dusk with gentle rhythms of light under a blazing blanket of stars.”

Twelve years later, he unveiled the first *Field of Light* on his seven-acre property in Long Knoll, England. But his long-held dream wasn’t fully realized until 2016 when he



Above: *Field of Light* installation at *Sensorio* by Bruce Munro
Photography by Serena Munro

opened his solar-powered stems in Uluru, the source of his inspiration. That exhibition now remains indefinitely.

There's also good news for visitors to Paso Robles: the light show was recently extended through January 2021 at *Sensorio*, a Central California "destination for entertainment, exploration, meditation, and nature."

To get the maximum enjoyment, I recommend arriving before sunset so you can witness the orbs changing colors in real-time. While there, you can also listen to live bands, lounge on the hillside VIP area, and lavish your taste buds with a flood of food trucks (beignets, all the way!)

Munro's goal to connect with nature is possible, even in the age of COVID-19. On my recent visit, there was a line to get in because organizers have set up a checkpoint to

monitor temperatures. Masks and social distancing are mandatory, and once inside the exhibit, there is one clockwise flow of traffic. If you prefer smaller crowds, then simply arrive after dark.

But no matter when you go, there are 58,800 reasons not to miss it.

To learn more about Bruce Munro: *Field of Light* at *Sensorio*, visit www.sensoriopaso.com



Above: Internationally-acclaimed artist Bruce Munro has created his largest work to date at *Sensorio* in Paso Robles, CA. Photo Courtesy of David Greer.

Field of Light installation at Sensorio by Bruce Monro
Photography by Serena Munro



Field of Light installation at Sensorio by Bruce Monro
Photography by Serena Munro



“ [An] illuminated field of stems that, like the dormant seed in a dry desert, would burst into bloom at dusk with gentle rhythms of light under a blazing blanket of stars. ”



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DAVID LOEB

*The
Music
Man*

BY JUDY TARTE
PRESIDENT, LAS VEGAS JAZZ SOCIETY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
DEBORAH MYERS WAIT LOEB

David Loeb, director of the Division of Jazz and Commercial Music and a professor of music at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, School of Music, is a multifaceted talent in many genres.

During his 19 years as director of the Division of Jazz and Commercial Music at UNLV, Jazz Studies, students have earned over 24 prestigious DownBeat Magazine Student Music Awards, performed at the acclaimed Monterey Jazz Festival and Midwest Clinic, and garnered outstanding CD reviews from JazzTimes Magazine. His intent is not just to garner these awards but to offer his students opportunities for learning the intricacies of the music business. For example, one of the main reasons he was involved with the *Family Guy* show in L. A. is that he'd arranged

for UNLV students to go to the studio. There they'd see firsthand what those sessions were about, the immediacy, the importance of sight-reading and interpretation no matter what the musical style.

At the Wynn Hotel in Las Vegas, he was musical director and conductor for Twyla Tharp's *Sinatra Dance With Me* and Steve Wynn's *Showstoppers*, a musical extravaganza featuring a cast of 35 dancers and singers, plus an on-stage 31-piece orchestra. In these roles, he was able to bring together veteran players with students to share in the experiences of actual performances. In Las Vegas at The Smith Center, he performed Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with the Las Vegas Philharmonic. He was musical director, conductor, and pianist for Larry Rosen's Jazz Roots series with Clint Holmes, Kirk Whalum, Take

6, and Nnenna Freelon.

His personal philosophy and advice to students are primarily... "love what you do; no matter what the style of music, immerse yourself in it, be open at every level, personally, musically, artistically, spiritually and try to push aside your personal preferences and embrace every kind of music."

His jazz pianist career includes performing with such luminaries as Arturo Sandoval, Nancy Wilson, Freddie Hubbard, Joe Williams, Tom Harrell, Anita O'Day, Bill Watrous, Tom Scott, Bobby Shew, Paul Horn, Natalie Cole, Joe Farrell, Pepper Adams, Ray Brown, Joe Locke and many others.

As a session pianist in Los Angeles recording studios, Loeb has played for more than fifty shows, including



Loeb on piano for Clint Holmes at Myron's Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center

the previously mentioned *Family Guy*, *Hill Street Blues*, *Quantum Leap*, and The Emmy Awards, and movies including *Ted*, *The Birdcage*, and *Pocahontas*.

Loeb also played on recordings, television shows, or movie soundtracks for Bette Midler, Herbie Hancock, Robin Williams, Norah Jones, Jim Carey, Jennifer Holiday, Curtis Mayfield, Alan Menken, Bonnie Raitt, Smokey Robinson, Jerry Lewis, Whitney Houston, Connie Francis, Randy Newman, Dionne Warwick, and many others.

He was the principal keyboardist with The Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, accompanying diverse musical artists including Andrea Bocelli, Audra McDonald, Gil Shaham, Patti LuPone, Placido Domingo, Jewel, James Galway, Kristin Chenoweth, Joshua Bell, Jessye Norman, and Quincy Jones.

Loeb was the pianist with Questlove, Ben Wendel, Angela Brown and other musical artists on the Grammy Award-winning recording, *Ask Your Mama*, composed by Laura Karpman. He has been Ben Vereen's musical director since 1980 as well as conductor and pianist for Vereen's performance with The National Symphony Orchestra and for Dee Dee Bridgewater with The Philadelphia Orchestra.

He has listed one of his most memorable professional experiences as being the conductor and co-musical director for the CBS television special saluting Frank Sinatra's centennial: *Sinatra 100: An All-Star Grammy Concert*, with a line-



David Loeb and the a cappella group, Take 6.

up which included Tony Bennett, Lady Gaga, Garth Brooks, Trisha Yearwood, Usher, Harry Connick Jr., Alicia Keys, Celine Dion, John Legend and many more.

Loeb received the distinguished

Nevada System of Higher Education Regents' Creative Activity Award and holds a master of music degree in jazz and contemporary media from the Eastman School of Music, and a bachelor of science in music education from the West



Chester University of Pennsylvania.

NOW...his passion is teaching: seeing the spark, the “aha” moments when the students “get it.”

“Hearing the beautiful music coming out of them—the absolute artistry they exude that’s completely fresh, spontaneous, and completely genuine—there’s no greater feeling in the world for me than that. At this point in my life, I enjoy that a thousand-fold times more than when I’m performing something. I have so much I need to work on myself to keep inspiring them.”

At Right: Loeb conducts Steve Wynn’s *Showstoppers*

Below: Loeb conducts the CBS television special *Sinatra 100: An All-Star Grammy Concert*.



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NAVIGATING A FINANCIAL HURRICANE

By Stacey Gualandi

Six months have passed since the global pandemic first triggered a tidal wave of economic panic across the country. The ripple effect is affecting people's livelihoods, their life savings, and their homes, and making it almost impossible for many to keep their heads above water.

"We're having a financial Armageddon right now, if you will, that is tied to a medical event—finance and medicine—and it's like the perfect storm," financial consultant Joe Pantozzi says.

Pantozzi is the CEO and founder of Alpha Omega Wealth. The Las Vegas-based financial consulting firm helps clients build prosperity and wealth without Wall Street. Now more than ever, people are admitting they need help with their money—or lack of it—but he admits, navigating these rough waters without fear requires a strong financial compass.

"People are going to have to find a new way to live, to make money, and to find new work," Pantozzi says. "They'll have to start from scratch because you've only got two options: you can go hang out at the rescue mission down-

town and stay there for the rest of your life, or you can do something new."

With 44 years of consulting clients under his money belt, Pantozzi says his goal is to teach people the skills needed to steer in the direction of a secure future.

"My whole career has been about encouraging and coaching people on preparing for the future, so this is really tough medicine. There's nothing I can do to help somebody who has nothing in the bank," Pantozzi admits. "But if someone says to me, 'I'm going to do whatever I have to do...so now teach me what I need to do,' then I'm going to say, 'Okay, we need to protect your income going forward.'"

Rule #1: Pantozzi says, start with a strong foundation, which means saving three to six months' worth of living expenses in the bank.

"You need to save money in an emergency fund," Pantozzi insists. "But for that person who is living paycheck to paycheck, they're going to have to go back and swallow that bitter pill and say, 'Okay, I'm going to start saving. I'll start small...saving 5% of everything I

make. Then, six months from now, I'll graduate to 10 percent, 15 percent, then 20 percent; I'll start to live beneath my means,' because no matter what happens in the future, you're going to need an emergency fund should something like this [pandemic] happen again."

Pantozzi knows this from experience. He says he and his wife were in terrible financial straits when they first met 32 years ago.

"I had just gone through a divorce with kids, and I was paying child support and paying all the debt. I had no extra money. I didn't even have my rent."

So they committed to paying off debt, increasing their means, and putting as much money as they could into safe savings.

"I went through prostate cancer many years later, and, during that time, I wasn't very effective with my clients and was unmotivated. I had interruptions with that medical issue every single day, so I had to rely on my savings to a great extent, and because the system that we had set up [years before] was so effective, we didn't miss a bill."

Rule #2: Pantozzi says financial lit-

eracy is essential in investing wisely for retirement.

“One of my foundational principles is to teach my clients to embark upon a course of education in finance that is going to last them the rest of their lives. Then they transfer [that knowledge] down to their kids, grandkids, great-grandkids, and so on, so that they can create cross-generational wealth.”

And Rule #3: According to Pantozzi, one hundred percent of monetary stability and progress is about the way you think long term.

“On the one hand, you could say money is a force and money does certain things and money is going

to cause certain tides and currents and waves. I don’t agree with any of that. I encourage [my clients] to think about the fact that they are in control. We can decide to be at the mercy [of outside sources], or we can decide not to be and take control.”

In other words, Pantozzi says to stay afloat financially, you need to stop making waves and go against the tide when it comes to your money management.

“For people who have had the rug pulled out from under them, they need to move away from what the majority is doing and make a new game plan. You have to do things radically because you’re never

going to get out from under the debt you have unless you create an aggressive plan. Don’t wait for somebody else to come and bail you out, because it’s not going to happen.”

While the 2020 financial crisis has left us all in uncharted territory, Pantozzi says now is the time to get back on course so you can stop treading water for good.

“The only way you can get out of it is by choosing to get out of it and doing something radical, aggressive, and that engages your passion.”

Learn more at:
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Katarzyna Kociomyk beside her painting, “Weathering the Storm” 48” x 60” Oil on Canvas



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AND THE FLAUTIST

By Joan S. Peck

Once you listen to Wouter Kellerman play his flute, it will take you more than a few minutes to come back to earth. His playing is magical. When I first listened to Wouter play some of his pieces, his notes were light, airy, and full of fun. His music made me smile because the figure that came to my mind was Puck in William Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—that clever, mischievous fairy. Yet, the beauty of his playing in *Return to Nature* from Ricky Keji's album *Shanti Samsara* brought tears to my eyes because it was such an awe-inspiring experience. Making music with his breath, Wouter brings life to the sounds of the flute that often get overlooked.

Wouter Kellerman is an award-winning musician from South Africa. His debut album *Colour*, released in 2007, went straight to the top of South Africa's classical music charts, and was nominated for a 2008 South African Music Award for Best Instrumental Album.



As well as performing on the album, Kellerman co-wrote the music, and co-produced and arranged it, working with legendary South African guitarist, songwriter, arranger and producer Mauritz Lotz. "I was involved in every part of it," he says, "from the technical – I researched and decided which equipment would be best to record the flute – to the creative, writing most of the music with my friends and colleagues, and being

involved in the arranging, mixing, and mastering processes."

Were you surprised at your instant success with your debut CD album, *Colour*? Did you believe you'd be so successful?

WK: "I spent many years making *Colour*. There is always less pressure and more time for one's first album, so I went all out to do the absolute best I could. As a musician

you're always unsure whether the work you put in at home will reach the people, so I was very happy that the music found an audience."

What made you decide to play the flute?

WK: "When I was 10, my parents took me to a symphony concert and asked me which instrument I would like to play. I liked the idea of using my breath to make music. I noticed that most wind instruments pointed to the front, while the flute pointed to the side, so I assumed the flute must be a special instrument."

His parents bought him a flute, but when he got it, his music teacher was sick. "I couldn't have my first lesson," he says. "My parents didn't know how to put the flute together and were worried I would break it, so I wasn't allowed to touch it. So I just opened the case and looked at it every day. I couldn't wait to get started!"

What was it like when you began playing the flute?

WK: Performing live was not easy in the beginning. "I remember when I auditioned for a junior orchestra the first time. I was very nervous and played really badly. The flute is very tricky to play when you're nervous – you need a steady breath and steady hands." His solution? To perform frequently. In time he became the principal flautist for the South African Youth Orchestra.

After school he wanted to study music full time, but couldn't afford



it, so he studied electrical engineering, because he could get a bursary for that. After he qualified, he returned to music.

Did you go on to study music full-time?

WK: "I combined engineering and music by working half day on each. I started my own engineering company, which allowed me the flexible time that I needed to play the flute."

For many years he went to Europe and the United States during the summer for master classes with some of the world's best teachers. As a classical musician, in 1981 Kellerman appeared as a soloist with the Johannesburg Symphony Orchestra. He went on to feature in several South African orchestras, winning awards along the way. Among these was winning the Perrenoud Foundation Prize during the 1997 Vienna International Music Competition.

Who were your greatest influencers?

WK: "Most of my teachers were really good to me," Kellerman says. "I listened to James Galway's records a lot and tried to imitate his playing – he was a huge influence on me."

"I have participated in many master classes by the English flautist William Bennett, and he has been another big influence."

You have worked with many artists around the world. Who are some of your favorites?

WK: "It's really hard to say; I love collaborating, and each collaboration brings its own magic."

What did you feel when you won the Grammy for your collaborative CD album *Winds of Samsara* with Ricky Kej in 2014?

WK: "The Grammy is the biggest award in music, and it seemed an

impossible dream to get a nomination, especially being a South African, hardly the center of the music-making universe! So I was overwhelmed when we got the nomination—it was a dream come true—and to win was the amazing cherry on top!”

What was your favorite concert to perform in?

WK: “I loved being part of South Africa’s big moment during the closing ceremony of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup, which was broadcast to 700 million people across the world!”

What advice do you have for up and coming musicians, especially those in South Africa?

WK: I think musicians these days have to treat their music like a business, and take care of all aspects—the creative part, the marketing and promotion, social media, arranging live performances, etc. Unfortunately, it’s a luxury that very few can afford to focus only on their music. But the music still comes first, and given that, there are so many releases every day, I think it’s really important to be absolutely obsessive about the quality of your music as well as the production quality of your releases. Hard work gets you everywhere.”

I was excited to discover that as part of his mission to work with and uplift children, Kellerman collaborated with the Ndlovu Youth Choir (a rural choir based in

Moutse in the Limpopo province of South Africa) in 2018. Their African version of Ed Sheeran’s *Shape of You* was an internet sensation, going viral with tens of millions of views on social media, and winning awards like the Hollywood Music in Media Award for ‘Best Independent Music Video’ pushing the Ndlovu Youth Choir firmly into the international limelight. That resulted in America’s Got Talent scouting the choir to enter the 2019 competition. Ndlovu went ahead and delivered a sensational first few rounds, going all the way through to the finals of the competition, showcasing South African music and spirit in the process.

How is the virus affecting your country and you?

WK: “These times have been devastating for musicians. Over the last few years, we have already had to switch our focus from earning an income through sales to concentrating on live performances, and now those performances have all been cancelled. And I think these difficulties have very much been felt by the greater community. Many people are suffering, especially in countries where there is not a strong social safety net. While it has been really difficult, it has also been an opportunity to be creative. Personally, I have tried to be positive and make the most of things, focusing on the important things in life like family, community, and health.”

What current projects are you working on?

WK: “Lockdown was the catalyst





that allowed this to happen—I finally finished an album that was years in the making called *We've Known All Times*. For me, these times have been a moment to bring to life a concept and music that I have been wanting to do for a long time—going back to my more classical roots—while keeping the world music influences that I have experienced over my lifetime. In essence, it's a snapshot of my experiences, a kind of nostalgic look into the past, but also an exciting look forward, thinking about the music that still is to come. Most of the songs have been composed or co-composed by myself. More so than any previous album,

this is very much a personal story, an emotive snapshot of the world and the times we've lived through."

What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment to date?

WK: "I think the Grammy win probably scoops everything else :)"

What dreams do you have? What would you like to accomplish next?

WK: "I just want to make beautiful music. That is what gets me out of bed every morning. I would like to carry on and create music that will

give people pleasure and send good energy into the world."

Kellerman doesn't consider himself to be famous. "Being famous is not important to me," he says. "For me it's just about playing beautiful music and connecting to people through the music."

What can I say? That's the kind of guy he is. Aren't we lucky? His stunning musical ability and sound serves to remind us to keep the faith in the everlasting beauty of musical creation. Music is the language of the Gods, after all.

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Katarzyna Kociomyk "I Give You All My Heart" oil on board 48X36

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ARE FOUR WOMEN FATED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

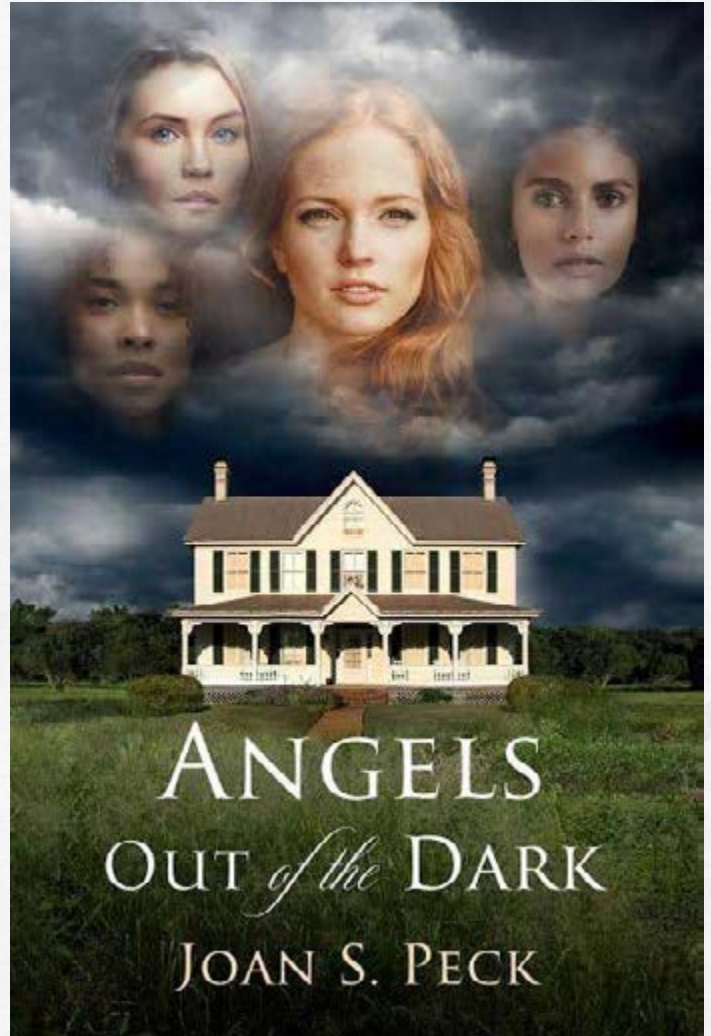
Can fate really change someone's life? Tiffany Darling has her doubts when she's picked up off the street and asked to become one of the Angels out of the Dark. She and the other angels have to bond together to help other women escape their circumstances of working on the streets. Can they do it?

This is an empowering story for every woman who has come to a fork in the road of her life where even a simple choice becomes crucial. You will see yourself in all the angels and rejoice in knowing you are one of them.

Are you aware that four to five people go missing EACH day here in Las Vegas? Do you know that only 60% of murders country-wide ever get solved? Have you thought about the fact that at this time sexual abuse and human trafficking has reached the proportions of another pandemic? Do you know the signs of sexual abuse among children? How can you help?

Angels Out of the Dark is a haunting story about four women who have survived their abusive backgrounds and asked to help others out of their trapped way of living. It is about them pulling together with the aid of their Samaritan benefactors to learn that they have the power to change their lives. It is a story about redemption, hope, and the goodness of healthy love. It is a story everyone should read to become kinder toward others less fortunate.

This book is dedicated to Lena Walther of the Awareness is Prevention (AIP) non-profit and all the other non-profits and people who are doing what they can to make us more aware of human sex trafficking. They demand our attention to insist on better laws to end sex trafficking and to learn the signs of sexual abuse so that we may stop a person from being taken or wooed to become a part of the human sex trafficking schemes so prevalent today. We honor and thank you for your efforts to make a safer, better world for us all ... especially for those who are defenseless.



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Ricky Kej

Bringing Hope for a Better, Kinder World

By Joan S. Peck

If you haven't heard of Ricky Kej, you are in for a treat when you learn all that he's doing through music to bring hope to a world that is desperate for change. Even more so, when you become aware of his beliefs and efforts to bring about a better world by caring for Mother Nature and each other, you will understand why he is so honored across the globe. He is truly "one in a million," a gifted artist with heart. When you listen to his music, I believe you will feel like I do—like the love of the Universe is wrapping its arms around you, leaving you in a safe, beautiful sense of community with all that is. It is for me an uplifting and glorious experience each time I hear his music. And knowing the music was created by a man filled with kindness and love for humankind makes it that much more special.

Who is Ricky Kej?

Ricky Kej is a Grammy Award-Winning composer and U.S. Billboard #1 artist, and an internationally renowned Indian Music Composer and Environmentalist. He has performed at prestigious venues in over 30 countries, including at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and Geneva. Ricky has won more than 100 music awards in over 20 countries. He is the UNESCO "Global Ambassador for Kindness," UNCCD "Land Ambassador," UNICEF "Celebrity Supporter," and Ambassador for "Earth Day Network." He is Adj. Professor NIAS (at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore).

Ricky Kej was born on August 5, 1981, in North Carolina. A half Punjabi and Marwari by birth, he

moved to Bangalore, India, when he was eight years old and has lived there since. He completed his schooling at the Bishop Cotton Boys' School, Bangalore, and subsequently, his Dentistry from the Oxford Dental College in Bangalore.

Kej started his career as the keyboardist of Bengaluru-based progressive rock band Angel Dust. Two years into the band, Kej moved on to become a full-time composer and set up his own studio, Raveolution, in 2003. He eventually went on to create music for over 3,000 ad jingles and Kannada films. Though Kej's work is an amalgamation of multiple genres, he has maintained that the essence of his work retains the aesthetic of his Indian roots, based mainly on Hindustani Classical and a bit of Carnatic also.



Throughout his career, Kej went on to release 13 studio albums, most of which were physically released in the U.S., not in his home country of India. That was due to the poor music-buying culture in India and the dominant presence of the Hindi film music industry in the country.

On November 30, 2015, his album *Shanti Samsara – World Music for Environmental Consciousness* was launched at COP 21, the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Prime Minister personally presented French President Francois Hollande with a copy of the CD. Ricky Kej was invited to perform a song from *Shanti*

Samsara in a unique arrangement featuring flutist, Wouter Kellerman, and over a hundred students from the Bishop Cotton Boys' School in a special performance for India's President Pranab Mukherjee. In 2016 "Samsara" from *Shanti Samsara* received the December 2015 Global Music Awards Gold Medal for World Music – India, and the International Acoustic Music Awards for Best Open/Acoustic Open Genre and on March 1, 2016, was named as a finalist in the 2015 World Music category of the John Lennon Songwriting Contest.

In 2018, Kej released *My Earth Songs – Music for Children on the Environment and Sustainability*.

These are a set of 27 songs each based on a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal aimed to create awareness and inspire the younger generation to make a tangible positive impact in their lives and lives of people around them. Notably, Kej has teamed up with Macmillan publishers to feature these songs in over 1 million English language school textbooks from 2019. Kej has also partnered with UNICEF to spread these songs to children across the world and is working on translating them to several different Indian and global languages. *My Earth Songs* was nominated as one of the top 3 finalists for the UN SDG Action Awards 2019.



When did you first get interested in music?

R.K.: "I have always been a staunch environmentalist along with being a musician. It was through my music that I fell in love with our natural world, and I have always found a deep connection between music and nature. Winning the Grammy Award in 2015 really pushed and inspired me to dedicate my life and my music to the sole cause of Environmental Consciousness. Ever since then, all of my music has been about the environment and raising awareness of climate change."

Do you come from a musical background?

R.K.: "My father is a 3rd generation doctor, so as you can imagine, everyone in my family expected me to become a doctor, and all the decisions that they made for me throughout school and college was with that thought in mind. Throughout my childhood, I was

very serious about music. In India, it is during our 12th grade that we need to make a big decision as to what we would like to do with the rest of our lives professionally. Whether a doctor, an engineer, accountant, manager, businessman, etc. I had made up my mind that I wanted to be a musician for the rest of my life. I wanted music to be my hobby, my passion, my profession, my bread and butter, and my "everything." I went to my father and told him the same, and he thought I was absolutely crazy. "How can music be a profession?" I fought with my parents, and after many days of fighting, my father and I reached a compromise. I would have to finish off a degree in Dental Surgery, and once I finished my degree, I could do whatever I wanted for the rest of my life. So I went to Dental College for five years, and at the end of five years, I got myself a Dental Science degree. The day I got my degree, I gave the certificate to my father, and I became a full-time musician. I did not practice Dentistry for even

a single day. As they say, there was no looking back after that."

Did or do you have a mentor?

R.K.: "My influences are many and from various countries and cultures. Among musicians, I have loved the styles of Pandit Ravi Shankar, Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Peter Gabriel, and AR Rahman because they have never let genre boundaries define them. All that they did was make music that they strongly believed in and collaborated with some of the best musicians and individuals across the globe. The world was/is their musical canvas."

What is the first instrument you played and is it still your favorite?

R.K.: "Although I have always played keyboards and still do, I am a huge fan of ancient traditional instruments such as the Bansuri, Sitar, Koto, Dan Bau, etc."

Where was your first live concert? What was it like? How did you feel about it?

R.K.: "One of my very first large scale live concerts was a special performance for the President of India. It was a huge honor for me to perform my music for him and thousands of others in the audience. It was a thoroughly exhilarating experience. In my role as an ambassador for various global organizations such as UNCCD, UNICEF, Earth Day Network, etc., I use my live concerts to connect emotionally to my audience to inspire mass behavioral change. I have always believed that only

when people start acknowledging an issue and start a dialogue to solve it, a solution will come. I aim to inspire this dialogue through my music. I regularly perform to audiences consisting of World Leaders, decision-makers, and prominent dignitaries to urge them to commit to climate action and to hundreds of thousands of people in the general public to raise awareness about different social and environmental issues."

What enticed you to get involved with environmental concerns?

R.K.: "After I won the Grammy Award, the Honorable prime minister of India, Narendra Modi, invited me for a private meeting to his office. With a population of 1.3 billion in India, I was incredibly honored by this invitation. The meeting turned out to be an hour-long philosophical discussion. Our Honorable Prime Minister Modi knew I was a strong conservationist and inspired me to dedicate my life and my music to the sole cause of Environmental Consciousness. That was the push I needed, and ever since then, all of my music has been about the environment and raising awareness on Climate Change."

What did it feel like to win the Grammy for your collaborative CD with Wouter Kellerman a few years ago?

R.K.: "It was around 2012 when I met South African flute player Wouter Kellerman. I was a huge fan of his music, and he was a fan of my music. We wanted to

work together. We finally met in Los Angeles, and while discussing ideas for a potential collaboration, I mentioned that I had just composed a piece of music based on the ideals of peace by Mahatma Gandhi, my father of the nation. It was a huge coincidence that Wouter was working on a piece of music inspired by Nelson Mandela, his father of the nation. Through our discussions, we realized that there was a whole lot of cross-pollination here - Mahatma Gandhi spent his formative years in South Africa, so he has South "African'ness" in him. Mahatma

Gandhi heavily inspired Nelson Mandela so he has "Indian'ness" in him. Wouter started to add south African'ness to my music, and I began to add Indian'ness to his music. While doing this, both of us became the best of friends, traveled across the globe and in two and a half years we had an album ready 'Winds of Samsara' and that album went to the top of the U.S. Billboard charts, and we eventually won the Grammy Award for it. I consider every award being a recognition and super important, but if awards are used just for vanity, it's pointless. Using awards and

"Wouter started to add south African'ness to my music, and I began to add Indian'ness to his."





my platform for a greater good is what matters to me. Winning the Grammy Award acted as a major catalyst in accelerating the process of taking forward the causes that I strongly believe in."

What gave you the idea to collaborate with musicians from across the world? Did some of them change the way you think today?

R.K.: "I have always collaborated with musicians from around the world, and such collaborative efforts always influence and inspire me. In my album "Shanti Samsara," I collaborated with over 500 musicians from 40 countries. I worked with Native American Flute Players, a Gaelic Choir, Hebrew Choir, South African Choir, Korean, Turkish, Senegalese Singers, Azerbaijani musicians, Koto player from Japan, Maori musicians, etc.

It is such a fulfilling experience to bring all these different cultures, traditions, and people together through the universal language of music for a higher purpose."

What is something you'd like to accomplish that you haven't achieved to date regarding your teaching the importance of protecting the world?

R.K.: "I have always believed that we have to start with children if we are to raise a generation of environmentally conscious citizens, and that is what we are setting out to achieve. I created "My Earth Songs" along with my close musical friends Lonnie Park, Dominic D'Cruz, and these songs already appear in over 5 million schoolbooks and were also recognized and honored by the United Nations in Bonn, Germany, for its innovation, creativity, and outreach. All

of these songs are based on the 17 sustainable development goals of the United Nations. Along with UNICEF, we are hoping that children around the world will sing these songs and learn from their important messages."

What are your dreams for a better world, and how are you and the world leaders you work with are going about to accomplish them?

R.K.: "I work with several National and State Governments, Global bodies, Scientists, and other world leaders to effectively convey their urgent, complex messages related to the environment through the powerful language of music. Instead of waiting to be hired to create music, I now create music from the heart, as an extension of my beliefs and personality. Since I am an environmentalist, all my

music has themes of sustainability. This pandemic has clearly shown us how fragile we are as a species and how interdependent we are. It has shown us beyond any doubt, that if we are faced with an imminent threat, we humans are capable of massive behavioral change, and that our leaders are capable of making firm decisions. We have to utilize this time to reflect on our relationship with our natural environment and put sustainability at the forefront of everything that we do. What we need is a change in consciousness and behavior. We need to consume less of everything. We have to vote for environmentally conscious leaders, and we have to support environmentally responsible businesses. Conscious actions such as these will have a ripple effect and will contribute significantly to the well-being of our planet.”

What current projects are you working on?

R.K.: “I have been continuously working on several projects. An estimated 150 million viewers watched my last three online concerts in April and June 2020 from around the world, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. I also released a remix of the original theme that I composed for India’s first blue-chip natural history film, ‘Wild Karnataka’ featuring Sir David Attenborough. I recently released a music video for the ‘Make A Mark’ project along with decorated Olympians, Niccolo Campriani, and Abhinav Bindra. I am currently working on a project with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

(UNHCR) to help refugee artists from around the world to fulfill their dreams of becoming professional musicians. There are several more projects in the pipeline.”

Ricky’s concern for the more than 30 million refugees in the world connected him to the UNHCR (The U.N. Refugee Agency) and to partner with them and UNESCO MGIEP to create a new project called, “Ricky with Refugees.” Over the next two months, he will be collaborating with 20 refugees artists from around the world to compose some brand new music

to inspire and keep their dreams alive.

Ricky Kej is an outstanding musician and human being who, through his music and actions, brings us so much HOPE for a better world. By emulating his acts of kindness, we all can learn to get along with each other and live in a world-wide community that cares for Mother Nature and all she represents.

Learn more about Ricky Kej at www.RickyKej.com.





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Under Pressure

En Pointe During the Pandemic

By Kendall Hardin

Like so many cultural groups across the country, Nevada Ballet Theatre saw its new season upended and suspended overnight by an invisible, lethal virus.

NBT's scenario presents a parallel universe to the unprecedented challenges facing many Las Vegas professional sports leagues as well. How does a dance company keep its highly trained elite athletes in prime shape - let alone healthy - with barriers to physical interaction in the rehearsal studio? How can the company maintain the chemistry of ensemble works without performing on stage before a live audience? And how far will the company be forced to push back its season, with the uncertain specter of COVID still looming?

Perhaps most important is determining how the company can stay afloat financially without ticket sales, engaged donors, and live audiences to back a company that has established itself for nearly five decades as the Silver State's premiere professional company and a



Nevada Ballet Theatre performance of *Swan Lake*. Photo by Virginia Trudeau

bona fide player on the national dancescape?

Nevada Ballet Theatre has built a national reputation with its three core programs - the Dance Academy, the Professional Performing Company (including the *Choreographers Showcase* in exclusive partnership with Cirque du Soleil), and NBT's Educational Outreach Program in collaboration with local schools and The Smith

Center, including the popular *Future Dance* program.

Pre-pandemic, the Academy provided training for 450 students ranging in age from 18 months to adult level served by two dozen teachers. As one of two founding resident companies at The Smith Center along with the Las Vegas Philharmonic, NBT staged a total of 37 mainstage performances and educational matinees that

reached over 47,000 audience members in its last full season.

The Nutcracker alone provided 13 performances over two weeks - in addition to two performances expressly for 2,514 Clark County students. More than a family holiday tradition, the *Nutcracker* is the company's cash cow, accounting for 65% of ticket sales income to NBT's bottom line. The company is now facing \$2.6 million in lost revenue during this current season.

When COVID-19 shut down NBT's hub in Summerlin, the company was forced to pivot to digital cyberspace overnight. Without a traditional performance schedule, it launched two initiatives under its umbrella campaign "Dance on with NBT" to engage with audiences at home or on digital devices: its new *NBT@Home* platform and bi-weekly *Focal Pointe* newsletter. It pirouetted to behind-the-scenes features, news flashes, archival highlights, and an interactive blog with featured artists.

Management staff zoomed-in from home once NBT's 36,000 square foot facility was officially closed to the public, and NBT's corps de ballet of dancers and apprentices continued to work out from their living rooms and kitchens via virtual classes.

Maintaining peak performance is critical to all professional athletes but receiving real-time feedback at the barre in the studio is an indispensable part of ballet discipline. One can diagram or describe movements, but dancers - like pro football, basketball, and



hockey players - must physically execute the movements and staging through supervised rehearsal until muscle memory takes over. Couples must fine-tune dangerous lifts and throws, just as the entire troupe works to achieve effortless ensemble perfection in tune with both music and choreography.

So how does NBT stay on its toes during this deadly downturn? In

addition to the *Dance On* campaign, the marketing team is hard at work creating a novel membership initiative. Launching this fall with a virtual subscription, the program will connect company and community with an array of creative content, providing rare behind-the-scenes access and personal interactions with exclusive offerings tailored to a variety of ages and tastes. Patrons young

and old can enjoy “insider experiences” about the company while next year’s performances wait in the wings.



With the arrival of COVID-19 this spring, dance companies have been forced to create “transformational opportunities” and “reimagined models” that reach far beyond traditional venues and local markets. In just a matter of months, innovation has been popping up all over the planet.

- The American Ballet Theatre kicked off an eight-week online season this year with a piece specially commissioned for the internet.
- The Paris Opera Ballet hired French film director Cedric Klapisch to edit a video tribute to French healthcare workers with 61 dancers performing in-home surroundings to Prokofiev’s score of *Romeo and Juliet*.
- The New York City Ballet created its own YouTube channel of nightly programs from the company’s extensive archives - adding insightful interviews and commentary from company dancers, choreographers, and creative staff.

Leading-edge technology appears to offer an alluring *pas de deux* beyond traditional venues. Indeed, the ballet world has just begun to flirt with new “immersive” technologies such as *AV/Augmented Technology* (combining physical and digital), *VR/Virtual Reality* (creating alternative realities), and *360 Video*. Will we now see cutting-edge collaborative paradigms explode between choreographers and companies working in sync with videographers, cinematographers, and multi-media editors?

Some companies are already considering site-specific works in controlled settings outside traditional performance spaces. Why not commission a full ballet in the



Nevada Ballet Theatre performance of *Bolero*. Photo by Virginia Trudeau

Academy of Nevada Ballet. Photo by Shannon Cangey



Grand Canyon (just down the road) to the *Grand Canyon Suite* by Ferde Grofe, filmed with drones and enhanced with Augmented Reality, which can then be packaged, promoted, and streamed online for revenue? How many culture-culture Europeans who aspire to visit the Grand Canyon would pay to experience such a monumental creation from NBT?

Thoughts like these probably blow the minds of traditionalists who crave a safe, shared concert hall

experience with impeccably produced programs of iconic story ballets and Balanchine oeuvres. Certainly, when the pandemic is vanquished, ballet will return triumphantly to starved audiences packing the house.

Right now, NBT is exploring virtual opportunities for its stunning *Nutcracker* production. Even in digital form, it surely will continue to astonish the child in all of us. This timeless creation set to Tchaikovsky's immortal score is

part of my emotional DNA and is as powerful today as it was the first I saw it as a wonder-filled young child.

I feel the same way about Alvin Ailey's 60-year-old *Revelations*, which transports the entire audience to a Black church on Sunday. Born out of the civil rights movement, Ailey was only 29 when he choreographed the masterpiece that has become the company's signature piece, now seen by some 25 million fans. It is as

relevant and uplifting today in the face of America's current social justice movement. The dance is virtuosic, iconic, and worthy of undying celebration.

Thankfully, the eternal pantheon of ballet repertoire will always be with us. But NBT's 2020-21 season may prove to be more than just a digital experiment during this shutdown. The company now has time "to slow down to hurry up." Precious time to rethink how this amazing art form may be pushed in new directions that "develop new legs" to reach broader audiences and produce new income streams. Time to engage meaningfully with future audiences and supporters.

“Ballet, like all great art disciplines, remains resilient.”

This may indeed prove to be a positive turning point, an unintended consequence of the virus.

Ballet, like all great art disciplines, remains resilient - having outlived plagues, wars, invasions, economic ruin, and natural calamities ever since it took root in the 15th-century courts of the Italian Renaissance.

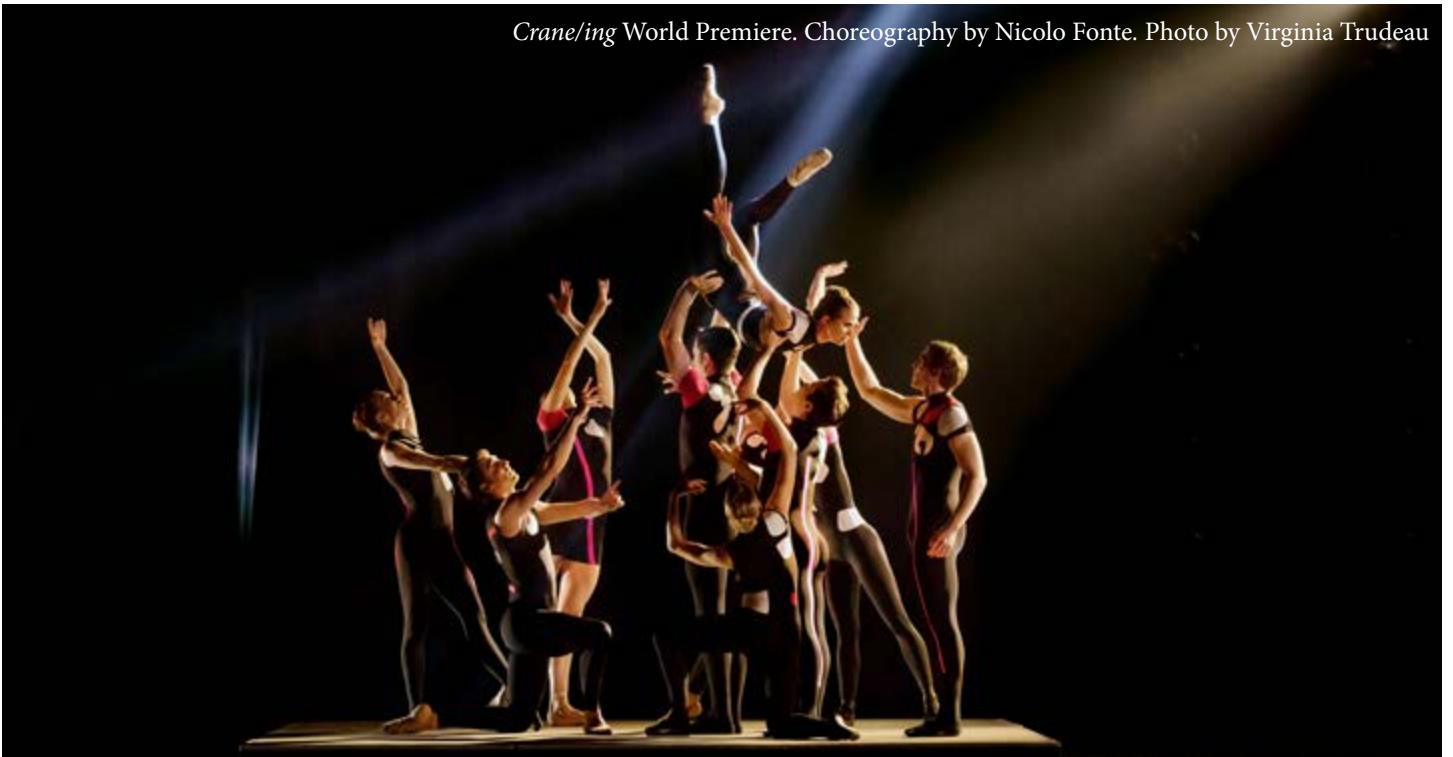
As NBT approaches its landmark 50th season in 2022, the company is not just building but is instead pioneering an innovative bridge to the future for both artists and

audiences. I, for one, welcome the post-pandemic onslaught of next-wave content, ingenious delivery, and outrageously-gifted artists who will wow us beyond imagination. I say, give the future a whirl!

For now, take a bow, Nevada Ballet Theatre. And let us all applaud this home-grown cultural treasure and cheer it on for five more decades. Here's to the ongoing *Dance of Life* both on and off the stage!



Crane/ing World Premiere. Choreography by Nicolo Fonte. Photo by Virginia Trudeau



NBT's Education and Outreach Go Move Dance Program Spring Concert. Photo by Virginia Trudeau



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Tell a Better Story

By Janice Marie Wilson



Once upon a time is how every good story begins. But to have a happy ending to a story, you need to learn how to tell it. Many children in Nevada are learning to tell a better story about their lives because *Spread The Word Nevada* decided to create a children's literacy nonprofit 501(c) (3) corporation. It is dedicated to advancing early childhood literacy by placing books in the hands and homes of children within Nevada's low-income communities. While developing a love of reading, these libraries promote future academic achievement and self-confidence, which impacts lifelong success. Since 2001, *Spread the Word Nevada* has distributed more than 5.8 million gently used and new books to approximately 645,071 low-income youth in Nevada.

By reading, we learn to communicate our feelings and emotions through words and begin to create a world filled with wonder. It is the

gateway to living a life filled with opportunities and not opposition. Doors start to open more freely when a child learns to read and communicate with their friends and families. These children share their “better stories” with their friends and even begin to teach parents and siblings how to read. The “bully” learns to share; the “little girl” finds a friend; colors have a name; letters make sounds. And it is fun to hear those sounds make a word that tells a story out loud.

Our quality of life is enhanced when a child learns to read, and they learn about a world that can only be found in books. Between the brightly covered pages of books, their imagination discovers new thoughts and ideas. For a brief moment, they learn to escape to a place where it is safe and magical, and they can shut out the noise and chaos surrounding them. Anger and frustration evaporate with every page they turn.

Mentoring and reading to one another ignite our souls to each other. You learn that someone cares. And that feels good. Our children also need to feel good about themselves and their world. *Spread the Word Nevada’s* mission answers this call.

“It’s important now more than ever to get books in the hands of children in Nevada,” says Lisa Habighorst, STWN Executive Director. “Our community comes together in giving to make sure these kids are reading and learning to provide a brighter future for themselves and our state.”



But sometimes, a story can take a terrible twist. When you have lost your job, have nowhere to live, and you are sick and anxiety-ridden about this pandemic, there emerges a protagonist in the story to save the day. The hero in this “better story” is *Hope for the City*.

When COVID-19 viciously attacked our lives with sickness, death, fear, and hunger, *Hope for the City* became the superhero that

went toe-to-toe with this formidable opponent.

Chief Development Officer, Kelley Jones, tells us that this non-profit emerged to make sure that “No one in Las Vegas Goes Hungry.” And that is precisely what they are doing daily. “The feelings of hunger are real. We innately believe we are here to help each other,” states Kelly.

And that's what Super Heroes do. *Hope for the City* is exhibiting feats of incredible strength. They are a non-profit organization passionately committed to providing care relief and meeting the critical food needs of people living in the greater Las Vegas area and beyond. The multi-headed monster has tried to destroy thousands of lives. But with organizations like *Hope for the City*, the pain of hunger is not going to be one of them. So far, they have provided 528,784 individuals in 118,749 households with over 200 pop-up food pantries, giving away 6,174,948 million pounds of food.

Also, they are providing food assistance to medical personnel, first responders, and over 1,500 elderly, and immune-compromised each week through food deliveries. They have over 1500 super

heroic volunteers. There was one hero who came every day at 3:00 a.m. to wait for the food distribution, which didn't begin till 7:00 a.m. The stuffed rabbit in the grill of his truck singled him out from the thousands waiting in line. Kelly Jones asked him why he came every day. He replied, "I have a lot of neighbors who can't get out, so I come every day to pick up food and take it to them."

These are the superheroes who choose this kind of fighting prowess and cunning that will decapitate the multi-headed COVID-19 monster.

Hope for the City is also leaping high buildings to talk people out of jumping off bridges. They have the skills to give people hope to turn the next page, to learn to tell a better story, to let them know

people do care about them. They have a 24-hour hotline for those who need encouragement over depression and suicide.

So just when you feel like nothing is working, new superheroes do emerge to save the day. They have magic, passion, and commitment. They know how to kill the COVID monsters.

We have not yet buried the monster. Even though businesses are reopening, kids are in Zoom classes, and our superheroes are working hard to defeat the emotional and physical pain of hunger, a great need still exists. Real economic recovery is months away. Our friends and neighbors are hurting emotionally and financially. Like all good stories, the more difficult the obstacles, the happier the ending. Let's close the chapter of this book with a happy ending. We have the chance to become the superheroes our neighbors and families need us to be. All we all have to do is tell a better story.

Because of the charity of these two non-profits, we can all tell a better story by spreading the word that Las Vegas does have hope for the city; you are the superheroes who will save the world.

You can support the goal of providing reading opportunities to our youth by going to www.spreadthewordnevada.org.

You can support the goal of no one going hungry in Las Vegas by volunteering or donating to their cause. Go to hopeforthecity.tv



A photograph of a modern kitchen. The upper cabinets are white with a simple, recessed-panel design. Below them is a backsplash featuring a repeating geometric pattern of interlocking circles in shades of blue, grey, and white. A black range hood is mounted above a black cooktop. The lower cabinets are also white with long, horizontal silver handles. A ceiling fan with three blades is visible in the upper right. The floor is covered in a dark, polished stone with iridescent, multi-colored veining.

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THE ART OF PHOTOGRAPHY THROUGH THE EYES OF JAIME LIM

Article by David Tupaz
Photography by Jaime Lim

Jaime Lim is a world-renown Fashion Photographer sought by many high-profile fashion publications. His studio, Liquid Star Photography, introduces us to an ethereal world of fantasy and magic when Jaime picks up his camera and begins to capture what only his eye can see and duplicate. He is a highly accomplished artist who has figured out how to create a piece of art with a simple click of his camera.

Like any great artist, Jaime painstakingly captures a moment in time that is unique to him. His mission is to create a love affair with the subject and their surroundings so that the audience connects to the image and falls in love with what he is trying to convey. To say that Jaime's photography can take your breath away is putting it mildly. His stunning imagery and his fascination with his models are in his signature works of art.

Jaime is always stretching the boundaries of creative photography, and he is striving for that perfect shot in every assignment. Chic Compass is honored to have Jaime as part of our magazine, and we posed a few questions for him to answer while we had him in our presence.



LIQUID
STAR
PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAIME LIM
DESIGNER: INOE VARGAS
MODEL: GABRIELLE DIAZ

Chic Compass: What inspires you in photography?

Jaime Lim: "My inspiration comes from various areas of life's experiences and struggles. The creative world of art is what has challenged me the most to develop my skill as a photographer and as an artist."

CC: When did you know that the Art of Photography was the direction you wanted to pursue?

JL: "Creativity and artistic ideology have always been with me since childhood. Identifying photography and the ability to see the language of composite development came naturally to me and is truly a gift that I am very thankful for."

CC: Who are the role models in photography that you admire?

JL: "My role models in this field have never been a single person or an individual. I believe it is the industry itself that has intrigued me the most from combinations of cinematic film, creative plays, and technological inventions. I couldn't name one person in my field and identify him or her as an influence; however, if I must choose someone, it would be George Lucas, the creator of Star Wars & Lucas Films."

CC: What are some of the difficulties you encounter in your career?

JL: "In my career as a photographer, I have experienced difficulties when I first hold my camera and expedite the right shot along with post-production while expecting a greater absolute result of what I wanted to capture behind the lens."

CC: What advice can you give those who want to pursue photography?

JL: "The only advice I can give anyone who wants to be a photographer or a cinematic photographer is to keep shooting for the stars and continue to climb every mountain because each step you take is a lesson forward into greatness."

CC: What are your plans or the ultimate project you want to achieve?

JL: "I plan to open a Gallery / Photography Studio and to continue my passion as an artist and as a creative cinematic photographer. I consider myself a renaissance artist of modern times with a continued passion for preserving and restoring classical art."

Find Jaime Lim online at:
liquidstarphoto.com



LIQUID
STAR
PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAIME LIM
DESIGNER: DAVID TUPAZ
MODEL: DRU MENDEZ



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PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAIME LIM
DESIGNER: ALEXIS MONSANTO
MODEL: ANNA GUPTA
MAKE UP & HAIR: REYNA KHALIL
STYLIST: CECILIA ARAGON
JEWELRY: CHARLIE LAPSON



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Adventures in Travel & Dining

MEMORIES OF
PARIS

By Racheal Hageness



Above From Left: Rachel Andersen, Racheal Hageness, Cally Stanton, & Mary Rose Grippe.

It was the trip I had dreamt of since I was a young designer. For almost two decades, I had listened to the who's who of interior design discuss their experiences of wandering Les Puces (the fleas) and the textiles discovered during the exclusive launch at Deco Off. The time had come - 2020 was my year!

Pinch me! We had only just flipped our calendars to 2020, and I was in Paris. Off the plane, into a taxi, and away we went to our flat in the 6th Arrondissement. Stepping out of the cab, feeling the crisp winter air on my face, I paused to take a deep breath and whispered, "I am here." I had been to the city before, but this time was different. I was in search of a spark—a spark to reignite that passion and creativity that had found itself muddled with

the mediocrity of the daily grind. With these lofty expectations, we needed an itinerary to match. Lucky for me, I was traveling with a few amazingly talented ladies with a similar focus, and our itineraries were packed. Little did I know, this trip would become one I would never forget.

Deco Off brings together design professionals and creatives from all over the world. There must have been about 100 showrooms sprinkling the streets, each with their own tantalizing textiles, passementerie, and furnishings. It was like no other tradeshow I have ever experienced—an opportunity to meet and speak with the creative geniuses behind some of my favorite brands.

We began our Deco Off journey

with Casamance exploring their patterns emphasizing themes of Nature, Light, and Family while sipping champagne.

At the Automobile Club de France, Pierre Frey's inspiration was narrated by the charismatic and creative Patrick Frey. I felt as if his words had been hand-picked for my ears. While admiring the visual stimuli flashing on the screen and the textiles whirling about, his statements of "Do what you believe in," "Beige is boring," and "Do not listen" vibrated my soul.

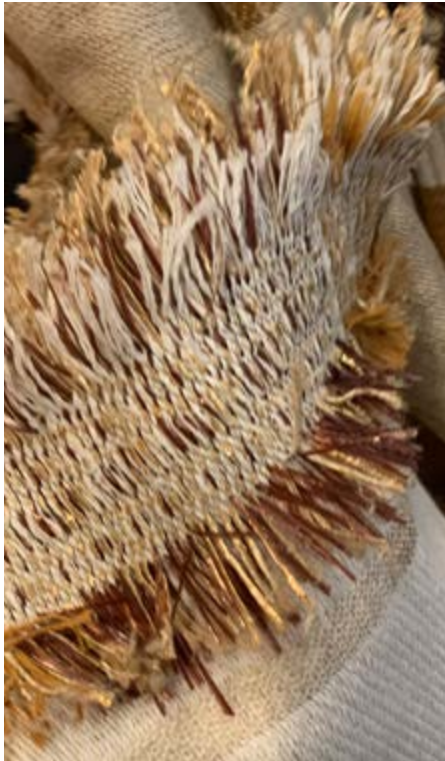


Lori Weitzner welcomed us in for an intimate review of her collaboration with Lisa Hunt, and we celebrated her stunning jewelry line.



Above from Left: Lori Weitzner, Rachel Andersen, Racheal Hageness
We squeezed into the Dedar

reveal where rippling wools and linens draped like rich fondue dripping from a delectable piece of French bread. A celebration of craftsmanship was on display. This was one of my favorite textiles of the trip - look at that selvage!



Next was Hermes. Donning my appropriately curated silk scarf and a headset for translation from French to English - The four horsemen motif galloped throughout the collection, graphic patterns, and the infamous 'H' of course. Colors ranged from subtle to vibrant. The room was packed full of creative minds appreciating the craft before us while honing our own.

Deco Off did not disappoint this first-time attendee. Inspiration was everywhere! Light, Nature, Vision, Family, Touch, and Connectivity - These were the words I was taking with me into 2020.

As you know, no industry event would be complete without a soiree or two... We creative types sure embrace that "work hard, play hard" mantra. Well, this trip was no exception. There were many cocktail receptions and even dancing in the streets.

The American Party in Paris was a hot ticket even before we left the states. It took place at the Theatre National de Chaillot. It was great to reunite with past colleagues

and form new relationships, not to mention - the view was spectacular! The piece de resistance for me was when I was 1 of the 100 honored design professionals to have received an invitation to an undisclosed location. We were only told that formal attire and a masque were required. This was pre-COVID, so no - not the N-95 kind.

Any guesses on where we were heading?





The motorcoach approached the golden gates, and tears filled my eyes. This Midwestern girl of humble beginnings could never have imagined the evening that was about to unfold. We had arrived at the Palace of Versailles.

We were silent, awe-struck. The palace appeared to be lit by candlelight.

The palace entrance was flanked by trumpet wielding guards welcoming each of us as if we were royalty. Once inside, everyone filed up the grand marble staircase for a heartfelt message from the event sponsors. We were filled with gratitude and emotion. My eyes wandered from the hosts into the masked crowd, where each of us had been granted anonymity for an evening. It was evident that this was a powerful moment for so many of us.

Then, we were provided the opportunity to meander the palace halls. I was mesmerized by how different it felt. The palace is one

of the most visited monuments in France, and the halls were quiet. Each chamber revealed secrets too shy for the crowds. Shadows had replaced the daylight, chandeliers sparkled with warm light, and you could hear the squeaking of the parquet floors beneath your feet.

As if this evening had not already created what I imagine an out-of-body experience would feel like, it was time to find my place at the table. The table settings glistened beneath the warm glow of the barrel-vaulted ceiling.





Are you dreaming of a destination or experience? Perhaps you want to learn a new skill or have set a goal to polish off an old one? If this year has taught me anything, it is why not me and why not now? Take the trip. Use the good china. Drink the champagne.

Cheers -
Racheal

A trumpet sounded. It was the first course! Each course from that moment forward was announced with musical accompaniment.

What happened next was unimaginable. Why yes, that was a private firework show over the gardens of Versailles. I have no words to describe the feelings I felt at that very moment, but I am positive that this was the icing on that cake that Marie Antoinette boasted about.

This was an unforgettable evening, and this trip was an experience like no other.



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WAYNESVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

By Carolyn Muse Grant

Sometimes it's hard to think about or really get into places where we grew up. I grew up in this awesome small town, Waynesville, North Carolina, and lived there until I was about 18 years old. From that time forward, I lived in a lot of other places around the country and

would go to visit my family there at least once a year. We don't often know what is going to happen in our lives ... sometimes you make your own plans ... and sometimes you adjust to those close to you.

In February of this year, I went back to Waynesville to take care of my

mother. I wasn't sure how that would work out, but after about five months, the decision was made for me to move there permanently. So, in June of this year, I went back to Las Vegas and closed up my house and moved to Waynesville. It's worked out great, and I love being there with my mother. And I've totally fallen in love with the town. As I said, I grew up here, but it's changed so much, and it has been so good for me. It's a wonderful place and a delight to be there. We don't get out a lot, but it's so fun to take Mother for rides, and in the morning, I have been able to walk at the lake. All

very good, although as a consequence, I'm not as involved in our magazine even though I am still "involved."

When I grew up here, it was a very small town where everybody knew everybody. In the summer we would have tourists come to town, and over the years it has changed so very much. It is the county seat of Haywood County, the largest town in Haywood County, and sits between the Great Smoky Mountains and the Blue Ridge Mountains ... and very close to these parkways. The current population is somewhere around 11,000, and there are tons of people who come here for the summer. There are so many beautiful summer neighborhoods and, of course, beautiful ones throughout the town. There are literally hundreds of people who have second homes here and come every summer.

Some of the highlights include the Blue Ridge Parkway, the beautiful Lake Junaluska, Maggie Valley filled with wonderful stores and restaurants, and Cataloochee, which has awesome ski slopes and multiple fun events. The Parkway in our area has beautiful views of Maggie and Waynesville, and you can see all the way to the Cherokee Indian Reservation. Cherokee is the proud home of Harrah's Hotel and Casino around 20 miles from our downtown. If you're from Las Vegas, you would recognize that one for sure. There are also three beautiful golf courses in or near Waynesville—the Waynesville Country Club, Laurel Ridge, and Maggie Golf Course.



Our main street has totally changed now and consists of wonderful gift, art, and clothing stores, and furniture showrooms. There are great restaurants and unique places to visit, as well.

As I said, when I grew up here, I hadn't paid much attention to "things," but now I am so impressed and excited about all that this part of the state of North Carolina has to offer. If you are ever in the area or would like to visit this amazing

place, check it out online. I-40 is our major highway, which goes across the country actually, and close airports that I have flown into are in Asheville, North Carolina; Knoxville, Tennessee; and Greenville, South Carolina.

Come see us! You will love it!

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maggievalley.org
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AURAL ARTISTRY

THE SMITH CENTER LAS VEGAS, NV

By Brian G Thornton, IIDA

*A*n orchestra tunes itself to a very particular frequency, usually 440 hertz, a note known as A 440. As the Smith Center for the Performing Arts [“The Smith Center”] has passed its eighth anniversary, it is well-tuned for the year 2020. It would also be safe to say The Smith Center has operated at peak performance since opening night.

Long before listening to recorded music was as accessible as donning headsets or earbuds, concert halls became the norm for listening to music in large spaces designed solely for that purpose. Performing Arts Centers or PACS embody not only musical performances but dance, theater, and even the spoken word. The earliest such centers may have been in Greece in the 6th century BC, where Socrates delivered his tragic poetry and plays.

Centuries later, concert halls still deliver the best non-amplified live listening environments and experiences. Today, halls are so architecturally innovative that the buildings themselves can draw patrons. They are designed to weave stories of the people who animate these spaces and serve as important symbols of civic pride.

The Smith Center represents the 21st-century development of this performance genre. Many know and first associate Las Vegas with the nickname *Sin City*. Yet very few realize the moniker “*Entertainment Capital of The World*” is a reputation that began back in the 1940s as stars began to play on “The Strip.” Our town has grown into a world-class city. So, what attributes make a city, in sum, truly civilized? When asked, you will get as many responses as there are cities on the planet, but a survey of mutual thoughts reduces down to a few key elements.

In an article written in September 2009, *Forbes* writer Sarah Han-

sen posed that very question to over a dozen other writers from various parts of the world. The nearly 120 responses all had the anticipated safety, memorable architecture, ethnic mix of residents and cuisine, multiple airports, accessible transportation, water, low taxes, libraries, schools, sporting facilities, the ability to grow, sustainability, etc. Other expected elements were reasonably high up on most lists: A great orchestra and opera company, Broadway and off-Broadway performances, musical concerts of all types, and a great place to experience it all.

From May 2009 until it opened its doors some 34 months later in

March 2012, The Fred and Mary Smith Center for the Performing Arts has become an immediate icon on the Downtown Las Vegas horizon. Through its unique fundraising vehicle, the *Donald W. Reynolds Foundation*, and its inaugural \$150 million donation along with Clark County and the State of Nevada funding initiatives, the project progressed from a wish list to reality.

The civic stature of the building is a bit of an instant landmark. Architecturally, fronting its own civic lawn, the Fred W Smith Symphony Park is part of a 1.7-acre campus to house the campus. With very little to force context, Architect David M Swartz chose a Neo Art Deco period to place the \$470 M building. Inspiration was offered by the nearby Hoover Dam, the Nebraska State Capitol building, and shared elements of the Los Angeles 1929 Bullock Department Store on Wilshire, combined to create our new iconic center.

Moving towards its ninth season and playing out a global pandemic, CHIC Compass thought to visit The Smith Center and see how it’s doing and what’s in the wings. What performances will find its way center stage as the next season comes around? We recently spoke with President and CEO, Myron Martin.



At Left: Myron’s Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center. Photo courtesy of Geri Kodey

A TRULY UNIQUE COMPLEX

CHIC COMPASS: The Smith Center is a powerful cultural amenity in Las Vegas. Will you speak to the unique qualities of The Smith Center? [With regards to other shows, concerts, and theatrical events]

MYRON MARTIN: "I love it when I hear that The Smith Center has transformed our city and changed perceptions about the Entertainment Capital of the World. Yes, The Smith Center was created for people who live here, but the fact that we have one of the most excellent performing arts centers in the world says that we are a leader in both the arts and entertainment.

"The project was twenty years in the making, and we dreamt big, but the fulfillment of our world-class performing arts center is better than any of my dreams. What makes it special? It started with a passionate group of southern Nevada visionaries, a group of caring elected officials, and the support of the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation. We were blessed to engage an extraordinary design team – architects, engineers, designers, acousticians, and theater planners – who worked as a team to create something unique. And of course, we couldn't have done it without a supportive community and a group of extraordinary donors.

"Fortunately, we raised the majority of the funding needed to build the center before the economic downturn, which allowed us to finish on time and within budget. Actually, we were able to do that while also adding elements from



Above: Myron Martin

our wish list in terms of design upgrades, thanks to a competitive bidding process and an excellent contractor.

"We started with a series of trips with our design team, where we explored the best centers around the world. We took books of notes and thousands of photos. We learned a lot and established a vocabulary that helped us immensely during the design phase. Learning from the best, we borrowed design elements that resonated with us. The result was a truly unique complex that is based on a rich palette of architecture and design, including a tip of the hat to the Hoover Dam, which inspired our art deco approach.

"They say that performing arts centers are among the most challenging building types to design and build. Our team did a great job of designing a building that maintained the design intent while handling difficult tasks like vibration mitigation from the nearby railroad tracks and plane and helicopter noise from the sky. The structure is actually a building within a building that includes 36" of concrete in the basement and nearly that much on the roof. And painstakingly detailed attention was paid to site lines, seat sizes, and acoustic concerns.

"When it comes to shows, concerts, and events, it takes an extraordinary place to bring the



Reynold's Hall at The Smith Center. Photo courtesy of Geri Kodey

world's most talented people to Las Vegas. The Smith Center has transformed arts and culture in Southern Nevada by regularly presenting acclaimed performers and Broadway tours that might not otherwise visit Las Vegas. These include smash Broadway hits such as "Hamilton," "The Book of Mormon," and "Wicked," as well as performances by megastars such as John Legend, Jackson Browne, Ringo Starr, Wynonna Judd, and The Beach Boys. The Smith Center also presents leading artists from across the nation and around the world, such as the Royal Philharmonic, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and the taiko drumming group Kodo.

"Additionally, the center has produced all-new works, including collaborating with Teller and the

American Repertory Theater on a reimagined "Tempest," followed by producing its first original musical, "Idaho! The Comedy Musical." The Smith Center has also partnered with PBS on multiple occasions to film concerts for national broadcast, bringing the center into Americans' living rooms.

"These are just a few of the items that went into making The Smith Center, and many others make this a very, very special place. As a nonprofit, The Smith Center further serves as a community hub, where Southern Nevadans from all walks of life gather to create memories and experience the joy of the performing arts side by side. Significantly, its education and outreach initiatives over the last eight years have impacted over 700,000 Southern Nevada students and

teachers at no cost to schools.

"Today The Smith Center is ranked as one of the top 10 theaters in the world by Pollstar Magazine, a respected trade publication for the concert industry. With its three performance spaces — Reynolds Hall, Myron's Cabaret Jazz, and Troesh Studio Theater — The Smith Center offers one of the most acoustically advanced and versatile performing arts campuses in the world."

THE ROAD TO REOPENING

CHIC COMPASS: In the midst of the COVID 19 pandemic, what specific challenges are you finding to continue fundraising, and how can patrons and subscribers get involved?

MYRON MARTIN: "The Smith Center was one of the first places to close and will be one of the very last to reopen. Since our stages and halls went dark by executive order, we have had to cancel every performance scheduled from March this year through December 2020, totaling \$20.5 million lost in anticipated ticket revenue and resulting in a severe financial setback.

"Sadly, as much as 75% of our team has been furloughed, with others receiving pay cuts. Our operating budget has been cut dramatically. Yet, despite the cuts, we still have significant bills to pay

every month to keep the building safe and operational and to keep the people necessary to prepare for reopening. Additionally, as we develop a comprehensive reopening plan to welcome our patrons back safely, we have to explore new and potentially expensive initiatives such as touch-less payment systems, electrostatic cleaners, and a variety of other new safety measures and equipment.

"In a good year, we have to raise 25% of our budget. Now without any ticket sales, we must raise every dollar needed to keep things going until it is safe to return. Yes, this is hard, but it is heartwarming

to know that caring donors are stepping forward. I am touched by the number of people who have donated their tickets to canceled shows this summer to The Smith Center.

"I love our city. To get to what I am calling Act II, we need to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars each month to open successfully. I am hopeful that our congressional delegation will be able to help nurture some legislation that could help us dramatically, including the

**Below: Erin Mackey and Mariand Torres in WICKED.
Photo by Joan Marcus**



SAVE OUR STAGES ACT (You can add moral support by going to Seavourstages.com.)

"In the meantime, I am confident that the good people of Nevada will help us get there. To help ensure that the curtain does rise again, people may donate at Road to Reopening Fund."

THERE IS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

CHIC COMPASS: Please describe the value of having both large and small venues at The Smith Center?

MYRON MARTIN: "We are a full-scale performing arts center with multiple performance venues. This allows us to host multiple performances on any given day and, in fact, allowed us to present 500 events last year alone.

"The list of great performances is too long to list, but each of our venues is known for excellence. From the main stage Reynolds Hall to the Troesh Studio Theater and Myron's Cabaret Jazz, there is something for everyone.

"Reynolds Hall is the largest of the venues at The Smith Center. It seats 2,050, is home to our two resident companies, and is where touring Broadway productions take center stage, in addition to various music and dance performances. Highlights of Reynolds Hall include stunning balconies, a dramatic stage, and a full orchestra pit capable of seating up to 100 musicians.

"The 240-seat, two-story Myron's Cabaret Jazz spotlights some

of the world's most gifted artists and cabaret entertainers across numerous genres, who are best seen and heard in an intimate setting. Myron's Cabaret Jazz was inspired by many great venues around the world, including Jazz at Lincoln Center, Café Carlyle, Bluenote Jazz, Birdland Jazz Club, and Feinstein's in New York. "Additional inspiration came from the Mayflower in Washington, D.C., SFJAZZ in San Francisco and Yoshi's in Oakland, to name just a few.

"The 250-seat Troesh Studio Theater is ideal for up-close performances such as classical ensemble concerts, dramatic plays, and stand-up comedy. It also houses rehearsals, family shows, community events, and private social gatherings.

"All of the theaters at The Smith Center have been meticulous-

ly designed to provide optimal sightlines and refined acoustics. As a result, performers and patrons are able to truly connect with a performance."

RETURN TO THE SMITH CENTER

CHIC COMPASS: What new performances can your patrons be looking forward to in the coming seasons? [types of shows if specifics are unknown]

MYRON MARTIN: "The Smith Center is known for bringing the world's most talented people to Las Vegas. That won't change. Once we know it is safe to reopen, we will open up the booking calendar and redouble our efforts to get the most sought-after tours- all of which can't wait to come back to Las Vegas.



Yanni performs at The Smith Center. Photo courtesy of The Smith Center.



“You can definitely look forward to your favorite Broadway shows such as *Hamilton*, *Wicked*, and *The Book of Mormon*, music concerts, and a full range of arts and entertainment options when The Smith Center reopens. This will include performances by leading artists from across the nation and around the world, as well as by our resident artists, the Las Vegas Philharmonic and Nevada Ballet Theatre.

“My instinct is that tours may start a little slow, but will gain momentum over time. The good news is that everyone who has

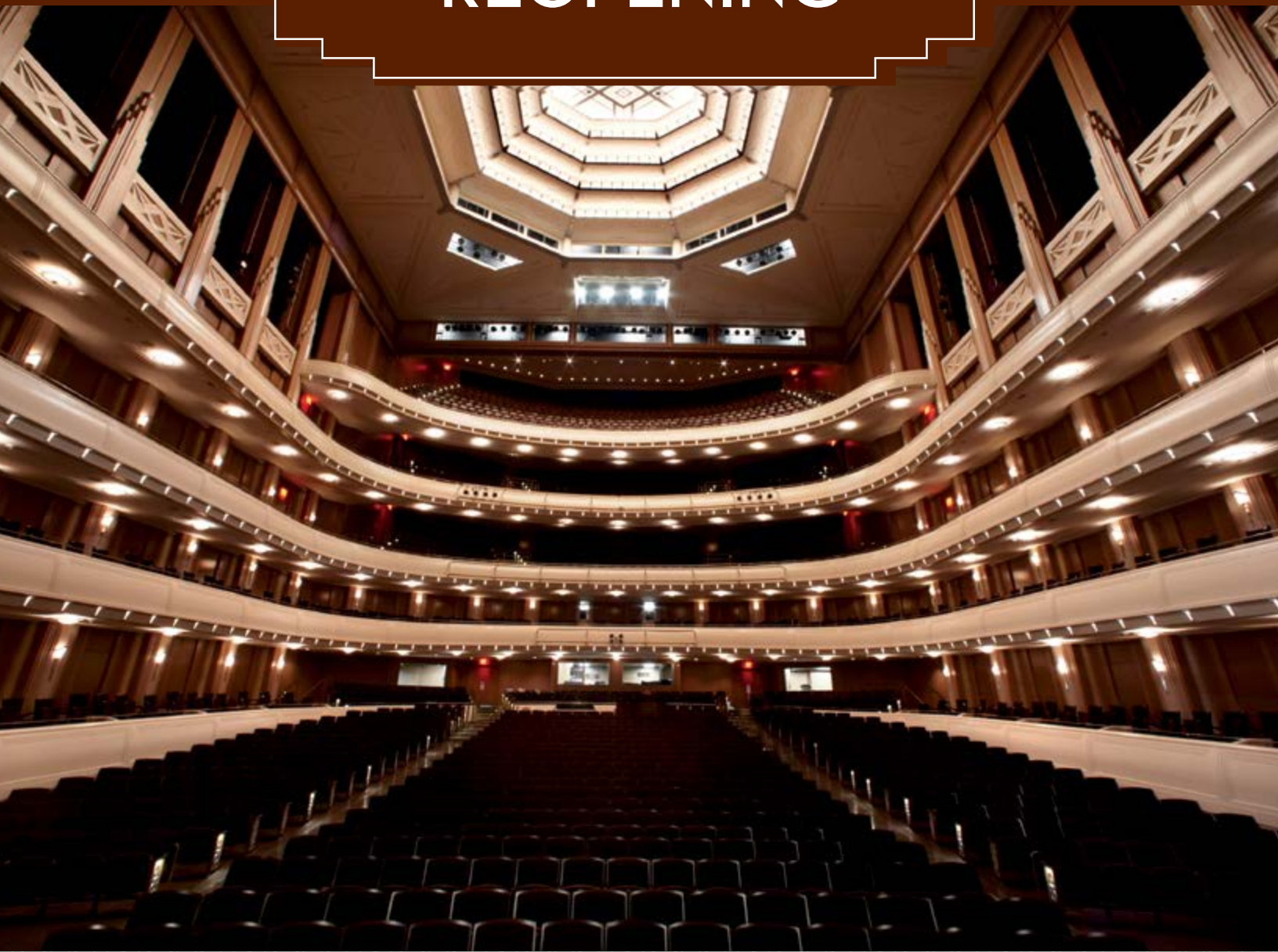
played The Smith Center wants to come back.”

“I am especially looking forward to seeing our friends and neighbors who are part of the extraordinary local entertainment community in Las Vegas to return to The Smith Center. I can certainly tell you now that seeing our wonderful roster of local entertainers and musicians return to Myron’s Cabaret Jazz will no doubt be an emotional time for me.”

In an era of a global pandemic and COVID-19, what is happening to the Smith Center and many

other non-profit organizations is or could be a tragedy unfolding. Yet, as we have witnessed here, leadership, staff, and donors are all poised to give us a hopeful ending. Cliché as it may sound, the show **MUST** go on. The Smith Center promises many more seasons delivering top quality and variety of performances to a community that gives back and supports the arts. Sun columnist, the late UNLV historian Hal Rothman wrote, “Once again, Las Vegas has done what the city does best: It anticipates desire where competitors only reflect it!”

THE ROAD TO REOPENING



At The Smith Center for the Performing Arts, we can't share our stage with you now. When we went dark in March, no one could have imagined the postponement of over 300 performances, totaling more than \$20 million in ticket revenue, a significant setback for The Smith Center. With your help we can return to the stage, please donate to our Road to Reopening Fund.

www.TheSmithCenter.com/R2R





LUCIANO PELLIGRINI'S LITTLE SLICE OF HEAVEN

By Stacey Gualandi

*I*t has been said that 'too many cooks spoil the broth.' But at Heavenly Pies, a new neighborhood pizza joint in Southwest Las Vegas, two chefs are better than one.

James Beard Award-winning Chef Luciano Pelligrini (pictured above), 55, has partnered with his cousin, Texas transplant Chef David Ryan Brister, 35, to show off their artisanal spin on traditional pizza. They hope the family who blaze together stays together.

"Definitely, he's in charge," Brister says of his internationally-acclaimed partner. "I'm his uh, how do I put it? I'm like the ... "

"Chef b***ch," Pelligrini jokes.

Of course, a pair of cookin' cousins wisecracking doesn't come as a surprise; it only adds to their devilish appeal. Despite a 20-year age difference, they seem to enjoy stirring the pot.

Says Pelligrini, "If you knew as much about food as you do music,

I wouldn't be working as hard."

"Or working," Brister retorts.

All joking aside, Pelligrini says the decision to team up behind the line was as natural as "macaroni and cheese." In other words, a recipe for success. Trust me: I've already been twice, and the pizza tasted like I died and went to...well, you know.

I've revered the Bergamo, Italy-born chef's cooking ever since he opened Valentino Las Vegas at the

Venetian. He's earned numerous accolades, including "Best Chef Southwest" by the James Beard Foundation in 2004.

"I think some people thought I was good, which is the right place to be. You don't want to think you're good; you want to know that people think you're good," Pelligrini admits.

When the restaurant closed in 2013, he opened Dolce Vita Gelato, a manufacturing company producing hand-made gelato for wholesale. Brister (pictured at right) relocated to Vegas a year ago and soon joined his older cousin as the pastry chef and production manager.

"I've been cooking professionally for 13 years," Brister says. "Before that, it was like everyone else: stay at home and try to figure it out."

"Microwave," Pelligrini roasts, right on cue.

After years of working in executive kitchens ("42 and counting"), Pelligrini had toyed with the idea of opening his own pizza place well before COVID-19.

"I've had a lot of food; I've been to a lot of restaurants," Pelligrini says. "There are very talented chefs out there, but I still love my food better."

So, when a 15-hundred square foot space in Southern Highlands with manageable overhead became available in 2020, the cousins went all in.

First-time owner Brister says it was



his mom's idea to team up. "She said, 'Oh, why don't you get a piece of the pie too?' literally."

But was it a good idea to open a business while a pandemic is forcing so many to close? Pelligrini says restaurants are scrambling to do take out, but pizza places have always served up dining options.

"It was the only deal that made sense all along."

Their goal was simple: if you're going to make pizza, make it the best pizza. That's how the name

"Heavenly" stuck. Now, working side-by-side, 24/7, they've created several different menus, including "ready to eat or heat" meal packages; Trattoria (which highlights Pelligrini's pedigree, like Philly cheesesteak eggrolls, and "pollo arrosto"); and, of course, a list of signature pies.

"Each topping on a pizza is going to be individually handled and prepped before it is sold, so there's nothing raw on it," Pelligrini says. "We oven roast our zucchini and our onions; we sauté our porcini with garlic and butter, and

we make our own sausage for the breakfast pizza. I'm not making bacon yet, but possibly soon to come...once we get a smoker."

But they sure are bringing home the bacon. With just a week under their aprons, the twosome received two-thumbs-up reviews (and long wait times—especially on Golden Knights game nights!), and they just committed to a reality television show for thevegasfix.tv based on their behind-the-scenes banter. Brister is hoping his cousin's culinary code runs in the family.

"I don't want to let [Luciano] down or be disappointed. You kind of want to live up to expectations."

"Time will tell," Pelligrini teases. "I told [David] when I'm 60—which would be five years from now—he will be an incredible chef, or he will not, and should look for something else to do."

I don't think they have anything to worry about. They're no angels, but I'm willing to bet this team is a match made in pizza heaven.

HEAVENLY PIES



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The *Never-Ending* Creator

By Joan S. Peck



Not everyone who creates is a true artist—an artist who instinctively senses how to combine crystals, stones, and colors to design something uniquely exquisite. Gulten Dye (pictured at left) innately senses and sees inside your soul, which causes her many times to reach for one of her pieces of jewelry you might not have considered. When she places it around you, the feel of it against you makes you sigh with the knowledge that this piece is perfect for you.

Gulten Dye jewelry creations are unique, and it doesn't matter how many pieces of jewelry you already have of hers, it is never enough. We love everything she creates, and we want it all. As a designer, Gulten can see how to improve upon what already exists in the market as far as clasps, and integral pieces that are a part of jewelry making. She has manufactured many such designs that are hers alone that were featured on the cover of *Inventors* magazine.

Gulden was born and raised in a small town in Turkey and moved with her family to Istanbul as a small child. It was there that she earned a bachelor's degree in nursing and worked as a nurse at a local hospital before moving to the Philippines with her future husband, who was serving in the US military.

A short while later, they moved to Shreveport, Louisiana, where she immediately began her studies to work as a Registered Nurse. While studying for her boards, she

was allowed to work as a scrub technician in an operating room at a nearby surgery center. She passed her boards and worked in an operating room at a busy University Medical Trauma Center as a staff nurse for several years until she earned the position of Charge Nurse.

Gulten moved to Las Vegas in 1995, and six years later, she was divorced and living with her two young sons. To spend more time with her boys, she looked for ways to make money by working at home and limiting her 12-hour days as a nurse to no more than three a week.

Making jewelry became an instant success, and before she realized it, creating beautiful jewelry pieces became her sole source of income as her success grew. "It took over my life!"

What was your first piece like?

GD: "It was a simple pearl necklace with three other stones. As I discovered more and more beautiful stones and crystals, my one-of-a-kind pieces became more elaborate.

What are your favorite stones to use?

GD: "Some days certain stones draw my attention and other days it's something else. It's why I'm able to create so many different things because my brain sees something new each time I see them. I love them all. I keep creating, and I'm like a writer who's never finished."



Gulten found her talent and passion in creating one-of-a-kind jewelry pieces and sold them to well-known people, such as Celine Dion, Rachel Ray, and Mary Higgins Clark. She became an international success when her work showed on Entertainment Tonight and Insider and was for sale in the Mirage, Bellagio boutiques for more than eight years in Las

Vegas. For several years, Gulten sold her jewelry on luxury cruise liners, including Crystal Cruises, Regent Seven Seas, and Oceana cruise liners. That allowed Gulten to travel and see the world in style while she gave lectures and met thousands of clients first hand.

It was during the Costco roadshows that she first started to

experiment with creating interchangeable pieces. After designing her first interchangeable jewelry line, she perfected a “LEGO” of bridge line jewelry to give beautiful women from all over the world the possibility and the tools to create their own unique, elegant, quality pieces to express who they were through their jewelry.

What inspired your interchangeable jewelry designs?

GD: “I wanted to give value to a customer to able to wear a piece more than one way as their mood changed—like clothes. I wanted to be able to allow them to be creative in how they wore a piece. I wanted them to experience the same sense of peace I do when I create—that moment of silence while putting pieces together that will give them the same joy that I get when I’m creating.”

For many of us, we attended Gulden’s very successful monthly in-house gatherings, where we partied, and her jewelry was available for sale. We had such fun as we fussed over each jewelry piece and swapped with each other to get the one we wanted. It was always fabulous fun to walk away with another “Gulden Dye” creation. Her work is recognizable enough that it’s easy to tell her pieces from all the others available to us.

All of us laughed when we heard this true story that got back to Gulden. *Two female doctors were at the hospital involved in an emergency, rolling a gurney down*



a long hallway together toward the operating room. One of the doctors noted what the other was wearing. She turned and asked, "Is that a Gulten Dye?"

That is what I call a success story. However...

When did you realize you were a success?

GD: I don't. I consider myself still a work-in-progress. I think that the effort I put into something is what I receive.

I know that you're an author. How many books have you written now?

GD: "Five. I self-published my first book, "Semi-Coma – Evolution of my Intermittent Consciousness" in 2011, a book of self-discovery. My second book, "The Missing Link to Success," follows my personal journey to success. My two poetry books came next and a powerful novel called "Through the Silence of the Darkness." All my books are available on all book sites.

Tell me about the "concept" stores you created.

GD: "In 2013, I opened my new concept store where I sold not only my designs but included many local artists of different mediums, including a local authors section. In turn, for being able to sell their creations in my store, all artists had to agree to teach others their medium for the future generation of free thinkers. It was very cool."

"In 2015, I was two of the seventy



stores that opened on the busiest corners of Las Vegas Blvd, which was short-lived because more than half of the stores closed their doors less than six months later, and I closed my doors a little later.

What would you like to happen with your creations?

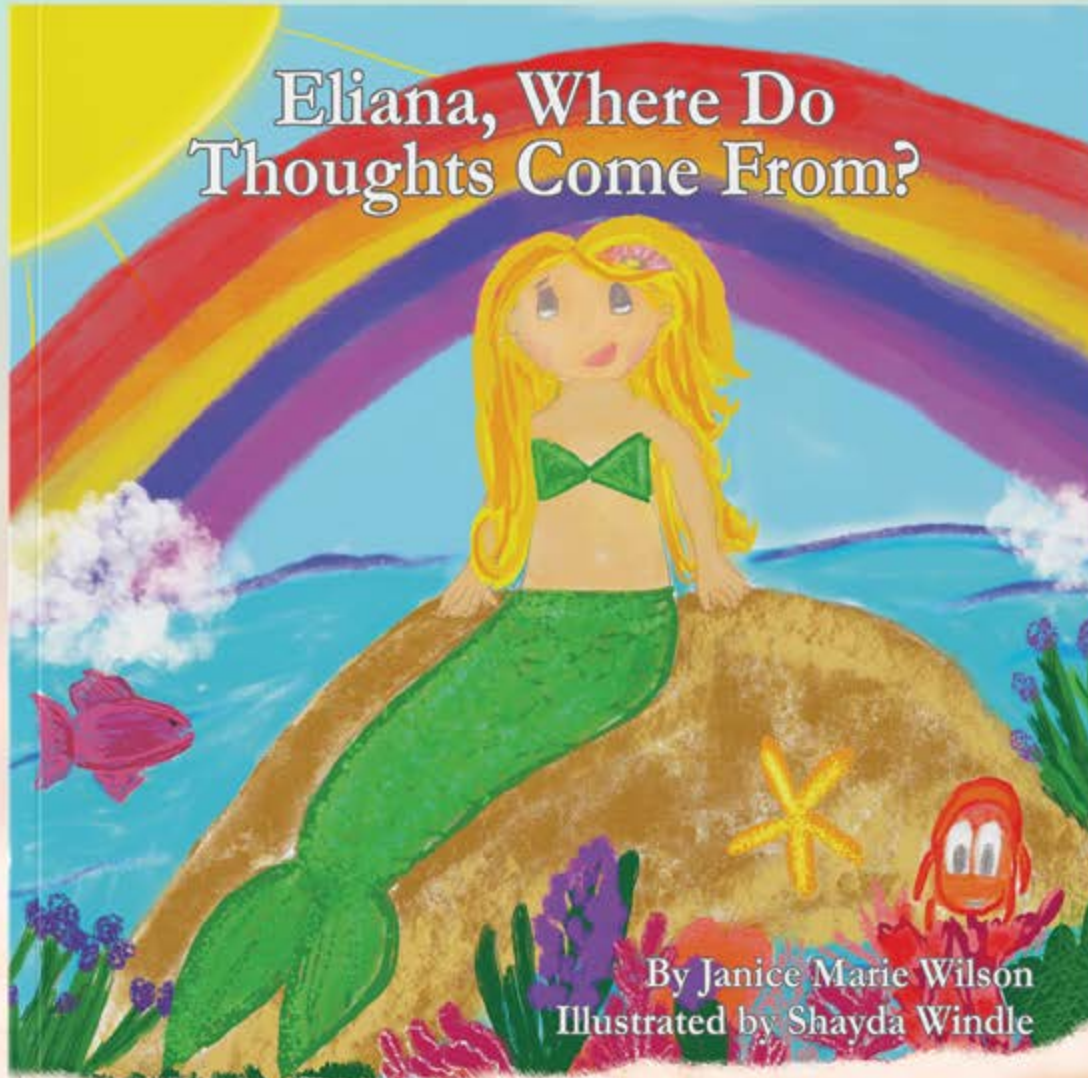
GD: "I would like to see my creations on QVC or the Home Shopping Network."

Take a moment and watch this

short video (bit.ly/2ZKRjzo), and you will understand the unique creativity that is Gulten's.

Every once in a while, a genuinely talented artist emerges, an artist whose creations never remain the same, but continuously change to satisfy the artist's new way of looking at what can be created. Gulten Dye is that rare, unique creator of so much beauty. What joy she brings to the world with her creations!

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THE VEGAS ROOM

WHERE DELICIOUS FOOD & GREAT MUSIC MEET

By Janice Marie Wilson

Music is what feelings sound like, and The Vegas Room is where you can find the sounds of those feelings. You can find this nostalgic jewel in the desert at 953 E. Sahara Avenue, Suite E 18, in the Historic Commercial Center. It is where you will experience the sounds of artistry, harmony, and fun. It is a love affair that culminates in a marriage between live musical entertainment and the culinary cuisine of an old fashion Las Vegas Supper club. Doesn't this sound romantically nostalgic?

Life without music is a mistake, and there are no false notes in

this establishment. You receive the red-carpet celebrity treatment the moment you step through their signature double red doors. You genuinely feel that something auspicious is about to happen for you. Your evening's host warmly greets you in evening attire, a black mask, and award-winning diamond service.

Entertainment Director Brent Barrett states, "The Vegas Room is an intimate supper club featuring amazing local talent. Chef David James Robinson handcrafts the food, and it is outstanding."

"We are a listening room, and there is no table service during the

two musical sets. During the time of COVID-19, we do our utmost to make sure everyone is safe and comfortable." The wait staff wore gloves and a mask, and the tables were expertly spaced at a safe social distance. Feelings of gracious elegance exuded from everyone, including the guests. You could feel their smiling hearts shining through their COVID masks. There was a happy hum in the room as everyone was excited for the musical evening to begin. Music is life. That's why our hearts have beats!

Dinner seating starts at 6:30 p.m. We were graciously seated and warmly greeted by our waitress

Sandy Love. The complimentary entertainment and a set price for a five-course supper are \$79 per person (plus tax and fees). The cabaret-style evenings feature some of the most talented musicians in town. All food is handcrafted and made from scratch. John Katsilometes of the Las Vegas Review-Journal said The Vegas Room is the newest “cool hang” in the city, and I must agree. Friday and Saturday nights are reserved just for you as the “Supper Club Experience.”

You could feel the excitement mounting in the room. It felt like opening night on Broadway. And like the opening line in Shakespeare’s comedy Twelfth Night, “If music be the food of love, play on.” Like lovelorn Orsino’s plea about his courtship woes with Countess Olivia, our stay-at-home frustrations evaporated. Sometimes music is the only medicine the heart, body, and soul need.

The acoustics in the room are quintessential. The room appears to hold that one note half a second longer. Yes, a single note, one piano, one voice, becomes the wine that fills the cup of silence. The sound is sweet. There is “a kind of hush that falls all over the world.” The evening’s music acts like a magic key that opens our most tightly closed heart. The real beauty of music is that it connects people. We are no longer alone.

That night, it was my husband and my 41st wedding anniversary. The Vegas Room connected us to some of the most beautiful people in our world. We listened to exciting entertainment in a first-class venue,



“You could feel the excitement mounting in the room. It felt like opening night on Broadway.”

and the evening felt as special as our wedding night. It was our celebration of being in love. I took my husband's hand in mine, and with my eyes closed, I squeezed it and whispered, "Honey, I'm not ignoring you. It's just that this is a really good song!"

Life is a song, and love is the muse. When words leave off, and

the music begins, The Vegas Room is the place to be.

Remember Plato's words when life feels challenging, "Music gives a soul to the Universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything." The Vegas Room is where you will find the music - and the joy in being alive!



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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A QUARANTINED TEEN

By Roxy Jones



*H*il! I'm Roxy Jones, and I'm a quarantined-teen!

Quarantine has quite possibly been the most interesting yet most boring period in the thirteen years that I've been alive. Staying at home all day sounds quite drab, but it has had many benefits that I've been able to see in the last few months.

Throughout the stay-at-home order, I've been lucky enough to have many great opportunities. I've been able to explore and expand my culinary talent in baking, exponentially improve my piano skills, and learn many new things. Having the once in a lifetime opportunity

to stay at home all day for months on end has allowed me to learn more about so many things.

At the start of the quarantine, I began my study of a new concerto for the piano—Chopin Piano Concerto Number 1. I was invited to play with the Henderson Symphony in their 2020-21 season, and, hopefully, that will still happen! I expected it to take much longer for me to learn the concerto, but I am (thankfully) learning it at a much greater pace than I anticipated. Not having the constant hassle of driving everywhere and going out with friends or doing homework has proven to be extremely beneficial to my work habits.

However, that being said, the transition at the start of the quarantine was quite difficult for me. Not being able to see my friends or go to school was hard, and what started as a "two-week break" eventually morphed into a six-month stay-at-home order.

Being at home for so long every day prompted me to learn something new. Not wanting to waste all my time surfing the internet, I took an online high school economics course. I also wanted to be able to create videos and designs for the different technologies that I learn about, but the software that I needed was quite expensive. Since I had to pay for the software on my own, I began to bake special-



ty cakes for my family and friends' birthdays and celebrations and created a "fund" for my software program. After the first few cakes, I collected enough funds to pay for the software that I've wanted for more than two or three years!

A family friend reached out to me to order a cake for a four-year-old girl named Luna, a big Star Wars fan, who has optic glioma cancer. It was so fun to be able to make a pink Star Wars themed cake with green icing in between the layers for such a cute little girl! Quarantine helped me to further my love for baking and has allowed me to exercise and strengthen my skills to the extent that wouldn't have been possible without this time at home.

I am grateful for the opportunities that I have been able to get from quarantining for the last few months. Without leaving the safety of my home, I've learned so much and have been able to do so many new and exciting things. As I get older, I will always have the unique chance to say that I grew up in one of the strangest periods of modern history. I was quaran-teened!





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GFWC NEVADA ENHANCING THE LIVES OF OTHERS

By Beth Ilagan

GFWC (General Federation of Women's Clubs) is an international women's organization dedicated to community improvement by enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service. It is the world's largest and oldest nonpartisan, nondenominational, women's volunteer service organization. GFWC clubs and clubwomen are the heart of not only the Federation but the communities in which they live and work. By "Living the Volunteer Spirit," GFWC clubwomen transform lives each day, not merely with monetary donations, but with hands-on, tangible projects that provide immediate impact. With a grassroots approach that often thinks locally but impacts globally, GFWC, its clubs, and members remain

committed to serving as a force for global good, as it has done since its formation. With nearly 80,000 members in affiliated clubs in every state, the District of Columbia, and more than a dozen countries, GFWC members work in their own communities to support the arts, preserve natural resources, advance education, promote healthy lifestyles, encourage civic involvement, and work toward world peace and understanding.

Founded in 1890, GFWC's roots can be traced back to 1868 when Jane Cunningham Croly, a professional journalist, attempted to attend a dinner at an all-male press club honoring British novelist Charles Dickens. Croly was denied admittance based upon her

gender, and in response, formed a woman's club called Sorosis. In celebration of Sorosis' 21st anniversary in 1889, Jane Croly invited women's clubs throughout the United States to pursue the cause of federation by attending a convention in New York City. On April 24, 1890, 63 clubs officially formed the General Federation of Women's Clubs by ratifying the GFWC constitution. The 56th United States Congress chartered it in 1901. Headquartered in a National Historic Landmark building in Washington, DC (1734 N St. NW #1), GFWC has a long history of philanthropy, social and political advocacy, and community leadership.

GFWC Nevada



Cherie Lee Williams-DeWitt,
GFWC Nevada President for
2020-2022.

What is your vision for GFWC Nevada as State President?

I plan to support organizations that improve the lives of domestic violence survivors throughout Nevada. Each year, GFWC International awards scholarships to help intimate partner abuse survivors obtain a post-secondary education that offers a chance to reshape their future by securing employment and gaining personal independence. Monies from the fund will allow GFWC to award intimate partner survivors with scholarships annually, giving them hope for a better tomorrow. The GFWC Success for Survivors Scholarship was created through GFWC's commitment to change the lives of survivors as they positively reshape their future through higher

education. The GFWC Signature Program: Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention Fund is fully supported by donations from GFWC members, partners, and friends. GFWC fully supports causes that uplift women. ((Cherie Lee Williams-DeWitt)

Is there a project that GFWC Nevada has achieved that you are most proud of?

This year's celebration of Suffrage and Women Getting the Right to Vote is a testament to the impact that women made in the state of Nevada. In commemoration of Suffrage, the 2020 Nevada Day Parade will re-enact the "Living Flag" entry in the 1915 Nevada Day Parade to celebrate the passage of women's right to vote in Nevada and to support passing the national 19th Amendment in 1920. GFWC Nevada is the organization that helps to make history in Nevada. The theme for my administration is: "We are UNITED: YOU are not alone!" With the sisterhood of women, no Nevadan woman is ever alone! (Cherie Lee Williams-DeWitt)

What are the current challenges of GFWC Nevada and its individual clubs?

The pandemic has altered how many Clubs do their business. We have learned to embrace technology and to use unconventional methods to attract members and donors. I plan to lead the Clubs and members into a brand-new world of technology fundraising. We use Zoom, digital fundraisers, and any method that we can to

engage members and donors. We welcome new members, and we welcome your donations, monetary or in-kind. Feel free to contact me, and I will tell you why YOU should join us or support us. We cannot do this without you! (Cherie Lee Williams-DeWitt)

GFWC Nevada was founded in October 1908 and encompasses four clubs across the State, which include Green Valley Women's Club, Lamoille Women's Club, Mesquite Club, Inc., and the Past President's Club. GFWC Nevada is a member of the Western Region of states, including Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington State, and Wyoming. GFWC Nevada State Officers and Chairmen serve two-year terms.

GFWC Nevada Past-Presidents Club

This Club consists of Past Presidents from all the Clubs within the state of Nevada. Most of these members are current members of their chosen Club. Some have retired their Club membership but remain a member of the Past Presidents Club. We cherish our Past Presidents and appreciate their support and counsel. Projects include Yellow Dot Projects and Veterans Project. Phyliss Noblitt is the current Club President.



GFWC Green Valley Club

GFWC Green Valley (pictured above) was founded in 2000 and meets at various locations in Henderson, Nevada, twice a month. They have a hands-on project at least one meeting a month. Domestic Violence Awareness is their signature project, so they support SAFE House in Henderson, Nevada. They start the club year in August and run until May. In September, SAFE House holds a 5K called "Run for Shelter" in which they set up a booth to hand out GFWC materials. They also partner with the American Massage Therapy Association by donating free chair massages. In October, they collect and donate pumpkins along with carving kits to SAFE House. They participate in "Paint the Town Red" for Make

a Difference Day, wherein they repaint fire hydrants and no parking zones. They also do a day of service to pick up trash. In November, they adopt a lady or a family who is moving out of the SAFE House shelter and help them transition to their new home with food to stock their pantry for a month and provide personal hygiene items. On Veterans Day, they make handmade greeting cards for the veteran residents of the Nevada State Veterans Home in Boulder City. In December, they participate in the Angel Tree program at the Galleria Mall, wherein gift requests from sponsored families are collected and fulfilled. Also, new toys are collected and donated to the USO (United Service Organizations) at McCarran Airport. In February, they make handmade Valentine cards for the veteran residents of the Nevada State Veterans Home.

In March, they participate in Catholic Charities "Empty Bowls" to fight hunger. In April, they participate in Relay for Life with the American Cancer Association, wherein they decorate luminaries. Melissa Dougherty is the current Club President.

GFWC Lamoille Women's Club

The Lamoille Women's Club was founded in 1918 under the name Lamoille Homemaker's Club. Lamoille is a city located in the foothills of the beautiful Ruby Mountains in Elko County in north-eastern Nevada. This very busy club meets at their clubhouse at 795 Clubhouse Lane once a month. To raise funds, the club holds the Annual Lamoille Country Fair on the last Sunday in June each year, a two-day Fall Craft Festival



GFWC Lamoille Women's Club

in mid-November at Spring Creek High School, and a spring "Hot Bowls" event. They also participate in the Lamoille Harvest Festival in October, holding a Bake Sale and Raffle. Projects include the following:

1. Harbor House is the local women's shelter for victims of domestic violence and their children. They adopt a family for the year. They provide Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, Thanksgiving & Birthday gifts, and meals. They put up a wish tree for an adopted family. Members purchase gifts, and additional gifts are bought with budget funds. These gifts are inventoried, wrapped, and delivered with the help of club members and members of the Spring Creek High School Honor Society. They partner with the local Turkey Federation to provide Thanksgiving meals to shelter clients and provide additional food and necessities for shelter clients.

2. Community in Schools – a two-year Community Improvement Project. They provide funds and volunteer hours to help children succeed in school. Club members volunteer to pack bags with food for weekend meals for students that are in need. They participate in the Socks and Underwear Drive. Club members participated in the Shoe Drive and Dr. Seuss Party. Books were donated, and the clubhouse was decorated. Books were dropped off to the Community in Schools' local headquarters.
3. Cookie Trays - members make cookies, wrap, and decorate trays that are delivered to first responders and law enforcement.
4. Yellow Dot Program – It consists of placing emergency medical information packets in vehicles to aid first responders. This committee makes presentations to interested groups, attends the Firemen's Safety Picnic and

the National Night Out sponsored by the Sheriff's and Elko Police Department.

5. Veterans Project – they provide snacks and beverages to veterans traveling on the shuttle from Elko to the Salt Lake City VA Medical Center and back for appointments. They help refurbish the van for Great Basin College Veteran Services. They provide a water station and volunteers for the Warriors of the Canyon (a walk, run, or bike event) put on by the Great Basin College Veteran Services.
6. Seed Collection - they collect sagebrush seeds along with the Friends of the Rubies to help restore their beloved Ruby Mountains and Lamoille Canyon that was severely burned during fires. Members also help serve lunch to volunteers.
7. Harvest Festival Bake Sale - the CADV and Scholarship Committees put on a bake sale at the Harvest Festival, an event put on by a local church. The two committees, most club members, NYTC boys and supervisors, Spring Creek High School student volunteers, and some members of the community bake, decorate, sell, and clean-up to make this event happen. Proceeds are used to support Harbor House and for the Great Basin College re-entry scholarship.
8. Festival of Trees - participates in the Elko Festival of Trees by setting up and decorating a Christmas tree that is bid on by community members. Proceeds are distributed

to a few community service organizations.

9. Wreaths Across America - a wreath is placed in front of the Elko City Hall at the war memorial. Members participate in the placing of the wreath to honor those who have given their lives for our country.
10. HOBY and Scholarships - they donate funds so one Spring Creek High School student could attend the HOBY Leadership Program.
11. Spring Creek High School Scholarship - two scholarships are awarded by the club each year.

12. Great Basin Re-Entry Scholarship - this re-entry scholarship is for a woman, age 25 years or older, who is re-entering the work world or continuing her education. This year we awarded one scholarship, holding back funds so that we could provide a scholarship next year.
13. Quilt Raffle - A quilt was made by Past-President Joyce Kay was raffled off with tickets sold. Donna Potter is the current Club President

GFWC Mesquite Club

The Mesquite Club (pictured below) was founded in 1911 by a group of 20 women of Las Vegas. That was when the Las Vegas population was just over 1,000, and most of the houses were only tents. This club was named after the mesquite tree for its hardiness and usefulness. Also, many of these trees grew where there was underground water. The club meets at 702 E. St. Louis Ave., in Las Vegas with one group meeting in the daytime and the other in the evening. This is to accommodate



the schedules of both working and retired women. Membership affords each woman educational, charitable, artistic, volunteer, leadership, and social opportunities. Each member participates at her own comfort level, and all work together to support local organizations, especially those that impact women and children. Social activities include poker classes, card game events, book clubs, art and craft clubs, and garden tea. This club year and last have helped women recovering from addictions that have led to incarceration and helped with a program that improves food security for seniors. They have supported homeless teens, elders, veterans, those with special needs, and support young women striving for higher education with scholarships. Other projects and partnerships include the Doris French Elementary School, Shade Tree Shelter, USO, Wounded Warriors, Melanoma Research Foundation, and Kids to Kids Reading Program. Cathi Poer is the current Club President.

What attracted you to join this organization?

Club membership is all about improving the lives of those living in communities where GFWC clubs exist, and about life-long friendships made through belonging. GFWC has, for me, meant friends in Las Vegas and friends all over the country and beyond. It has meant sharing the educational and philanthropic successes of my own clubs and those of clubs around the country and the world. GFWC clubs address many different needs and issues and

always try to stay current in their focus. GFWC's Signature Project is Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention, where many projects and programs are housed under that umbrella. Currently, human trafficking, teen dating violence, elder abuse, child abuse, Native American women abuse, abuse of women in the military, and other domestic violence areas are all being addressed by member clubs. (Cathi Poer)



Why join a woman's club?

In our transitory world where people move from place to place, and people change jobs more frequently than before, GFWC is a constant source of friendship and belonging in communities from one place to the next. Membership can be transferred, and a member can feel at home even in a new community. There is a social benefit in addition to the rewards of volunteering, and members always know that just by belonging, they are making their world

a better place to live. The current pandemic has resulted in many people feeling isolated and lonely, but club members have stayed in touch and supported each other with friendship and caring. No GFWC member is ever alone. Even at a distance, the work of the organization continues through our interconnections. Meetings at all levels have gone virtual but have not ceased. Long ago, I found that my friendships tended to be tied to my workmates, and when the job changed, friendships tended to fail. That ended when I joined a GFWC club. Many of my fellow clubwomen have been friends for decades because we all care about helping others, and that bonds us together. (Cathi Poer)

"Unity in diversity" is the motto of GFWC International. Club membership is very fulfilling, and the sisterhood of clubwomen is an experience that cannot be explained, it is felt. No two clubs are exactly alike, and yet they all have a shared vision. If you love being with other women, learning, and working on projects to help your community – come and join GFWC! Your new friends are waiting!

If you wish more information about GFWC and any of its Clubs or how you can support any of their Club projects, please send an email to gfwcnevada@gmail.com. They look forward to you joining or supporting GFWC. Donations are also welcome.

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