



Altruistic excursions

Travelers turn their vacations into getaways with a purpose



T.R.I.P. volunteers present a donation check to Roots in the City in fall 2012, where they helped build community gardens that will provide food and jobs to the homeless community in Miami's Overtown community. Photos courtesy of T.R.I.P.

Picture New Orleans and Mardi Gras, Cajun cuisine and the rhythm of jazz music come to mind. For Corliss Hill, New Orleans represented something more serious: It provided an opportunity to take her passion for community service – specifically for addressing disparities in African-American communities – and apply it to post-Hurricane Katrina cleanup and recovery efforts. Along with her childhood friend, Tabeier Hamilton, Hill launched T.R.I.P., a nonprofit aimed at rebuilding communities in need, in 2006. The organization takes teams of people to low-income, predominantly African-American cities in the U.S. in an effort to rebuild communities and help improve the quality of life for the families within them.

“We know that people tend to thrive when they feel a sense of pride about where they live, so as long as there are African-American communities in need, we are willing to take a ‘trip’ and lend a helping hand,” says Hill, who is T.R.I.P.’s executive director.

The organization’s first trip took place over Thanksgiving weekend 2006, when a group traveled to New Orleans to help rebuild houses and feed the hungry. Since then, T.R.I.P., which stands for travel, rebuild, inspire and progress, has facilitated at least one “volunteer-vacation” per year, and

has hosted or participated in multiple smaller local projects in volunteers’ respective cities.

T.R.I.P. has evolved from having 30 volunteers participating in the first excursion to today’s network of more than 600. “These volunteers are amazing in that they take personal time from work, pay for their own travel and accommodations, and meet us in a designated city to help participate in a rebuilding project,” says Hill.

Destination cities are selected after conducting an in-depth needs-assessment with community leaders. T.R.I.P. hosts a complimentary volunteer orientation with food and beverages, and provides lunch, ground transportation, supplies, knapsacks and giveaway items for each volunteer. Once volunteers reach their respective cities, they are tasked with everything from planting community gardens to repurposing abandoned lots to building new homes.



A T.R.I.P. volunteer helps out at the Miami Rescue Mission’s thrift store.

The most recent volunteer vacation took place in the Little Haiti neighborhood of Miami in May 2012, when volunteers participated in a beautification project in conjunction with the Little Haiti Neighborhood Enhancement Team and the MLK Mural Project.

“Research shows that community-led mural projects have significant benefits, including raising community awareness, education, skills development, job creation and cultural expression,” explains Hill. “Our volunteers were able to use their creative juices and paint murals on the

walls of the Little Soccer Park.”

Following this effort, volunteers went to Miami Garden and transformed an abandoned lot into a community park. Residents, including children, participated alongside T.R.I.P. in the effort, laying sod, planting flowers and landscaping the park.

T.R.I.P. returned to Miami Gardens in fall 2012, working on a beautification project at an elementary school and building a new park nearby. “We prefer to stay in a city at least two years in an effort to build momentum and long-lasting relationships so the city or partnering organizations can continue to host volunteer projects after we move on to a new city,” says Hill.

Long-term goals include a national volunteer movement within communities of color and continued revitalization efforts in neighborhoods that have been neglected. Additionally, the group is considering expanding beyond the United States. “I went on a volunteer mission to Haiti this past June to scope out a new area where our volunteers can make a significant difference in a rural area of Haiti that was impacted by the devastating earthquake in 2010,” Hill concludes, “so we may host an international T.R.I.P. in the near future.”



Celebrating Food, Art & Culture

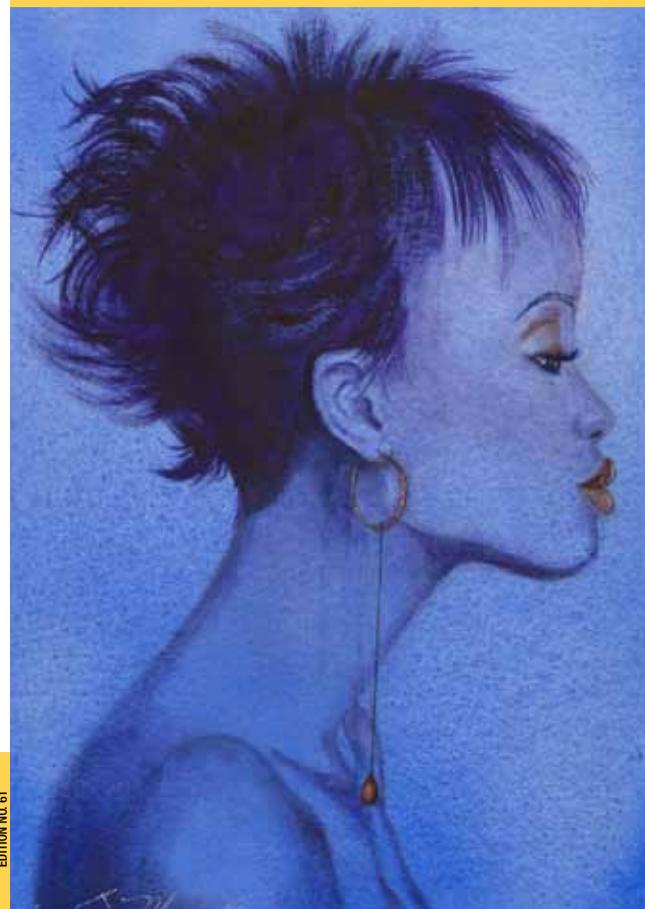


Freshman director’s work exposes a young woman’s despair

Unity Magazine goes digital!

Enduring imagery, cloaked in reverence

An eye for beauty and business



Aiming for the truth

Freshman director's work promises to expose depth of a young woman's despair



Victoria Mahoney at work on the set of her directorial debut, "Yelling to the Sky."
Photos courtesy of Victoria Mahoney

"I lived in the movie theater (while I was growing up)," says Victoria Mahoney of her teenage years in Brooklyn. "I could go to the local theater and would spend hour after hour hiding there. It was a very elegant but decrepit old theater; it was dreamy. There was some moment when I decided I wanted to extend this experience to other people in the way I was receiving it."

Two years ago, that drive to create a story on the screen became reality. Mahoney directed her first film, "Yelling to the Sky." Mahoney's semiautobiographical story portrays a young African-American/white woman trying to find her way to adulthood, in spite of her abusive Irish-American father and life in a crime-ridden neighborhood. In 2013 "Yelling to the Sky" – starring Zoe Kravitz, Gabourey Sidibe and Tim Blake Nelson – is slated to open in theaters in major U.S. cities.

From the movie's premiere at the 2011 Berlin Film Festival (where it was nominated for a Golden Bear award), it got noticed. More acclaim came from festivals that ranged from Italy to New York. By December 2011, The New York Times featured Mahoney in its article, "New Directors Flesh Out Black America, All of It."

To many, the success may seem sudden and simple, but for Mahoney, the road has been neither straight nor smooth. As a child, she had the innate desire to create art, but lacked opportunities to gain the necessary knowledge and skills. Educated in a school system she now decries as boring and unimaginative, she is still indignant that only two or three teachers inspired and challenged her over the years; and she lavishly praises those who encouraged the girl who needed a creative outlet.

Because she did not have an option to learn filmmaking in school, Mahoney participated in mock trials and



Victoria Mahoney tends to Gabourey Sidibe, right, one of the stars of "Yelling to the Sky."

in the audiovisual department. She went on to study acting under Shelley Winters in New York and work in off-Broadway productions. She moved to Los Angeles to appear in films and television (as Gladys Mayo in "Seinfeld"). Her desire to tell stories, however, left her feeling unsatisfied until she studied writing under USC film teacher Hubert Selby Jr., and took her script to the Sundance Lab to be critiqued.

Mahoney describes the resulting movie as "a statement of imperfection



Victoria Mahoney, right, works with Zoe Kravitz, one of the stars of "Yelling to the Sky."

in my hunt to speak for people who are invisible in mainstream narrative."

Through filmmaking, Mahoney says she has become the artist she has always wanted to be. "I'm interested in how experience and story are funneled through the perception of the person creating. Through literature, art and movies, I could access empathy and curiosity in a way I couldn't otherwise. It opened me. I became a filmmaker so I could give something."

At the same time, Mahoney understands "Yelling to the Sky" is not a movie for everyone. Its biggest fans are in their teens and twenties. She describes the impressionistic style of "Yelling to the Sky" as being "honest to the character's life. ...

"I knew who I was making the movie for," Mahoney explains. "Other people wouldn't get it, but they aren't the audience. Mass audiences may not want to play with this on their own. This film is demanding. To be an audience for this genre of film, you have to be hungry for that kind of challenge."



"Yelling to the Sky" stars Zoe Kravitz, daughter of singer Lenny Kravitz.

An eye for beauty and business



Ursula Dudley Oglesby
Photos courtesy of Ursula Dudley Oglesby

At age 7, Ursula Dudley Oglesby was selling Dudley hair-care products door to door in her Greensboro, N.C., neighborhood. Today, as president and chief recruiting officer of Dudley Beauty Corp., Oglesby is still selling.

"In fact, I answer calls from customers and take orders so that I can keep up to date on the customers' needs and wants, as well as to remind myself that the customer allows the company to thrive," says Oglesby, owner of one of the most well-known black-owned beauty products companies.

Oglesby, eldest daughter of founders Joe and Eunice Dudley, has always been part of the company in High Point, N.C. While she took the reins in 2008, she notes that her parents didn't just hand over the business, but rather sold her portions.

"As a result, I had to generate my own funding and create my own structure, which was very difficult during 2008 when the recession was just beginning," she says. Her parents and siblings remain an active part of the company, frequently speaking at trade shows and other company events and serving as a sounding board for new ideas.

Oglesby's parents founded the Dudley brand in 1967. She recalls that her family would make products at the kitchen stove and package them at night. Today, the company offers more

than 400 products and is distributed throughout the United States and abroad. Dudley also operates four beauty schools.

Oglesby frequently speaks about African-American entrepreneurship; among the requests is one from a fellow '91 alumnus of Harvard Law School, President Obama. "I have been invited to the White House to discuss my ideas and thoughts on job creation and key areas for spurring economic competitiveness," she notes.



Ursula Dudley Oglesby and her father, Joe Dudley, greet attendees at the 2012 Educational and Motivational Symposium sponsored by Dudley Beauty Corp.

Reflecting on her business philosophy, Oglesby cites her favorite Bible scripture: "Where much is given, much is required." In that spirit, she works not only to invest in new leaders in the company, but in the community as well. As adjunct professor at N.C. A&T State University, she teaches business law to juniors and seniors. "I really enjoy being able to provide them with real-world examples instead of solely the information in the book."

In 2009, Dudley was featured in the documentary "Good Hair," produced and written by comedian Chris Rock. The film, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, focused on the \$9 billion African-American beauty industry.

"Good Hair" was a tremendous boost for our business," Oglesby says. "'Good Hair' reminded viewers that we are a thriving business with quality products for them and their families. Additionally, 'Good Hair' touched on the aspect that we are one of the few African-American owned companies left who are experts on their hair care and skin care needs."

Diversity goes digital!

Unity Magazine, published six times a year in print, is now available via smartphone. Just scan the QR code on this below for fast access to the latest features on art, culture and food.





Enduring imagery, cloaked in reverence

Unity's celebration of African-American History Month features the work of three artists with a resounding commitment to present images that illustrate the successful, progressive and productive aspects of their heritage. These artists' rich imagery will endure for years to come.



"Autumn Leaves" by Glenn Tunstull

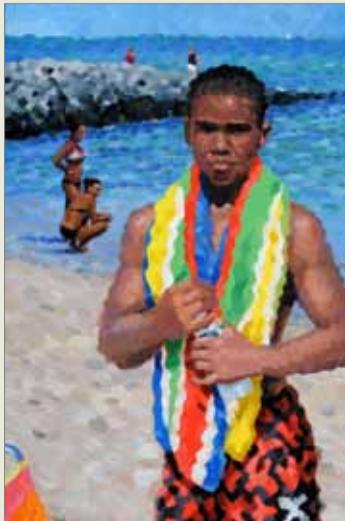
GLENN TUNSTULL

Born in New York City, Glenn Tunstull says he always knew he was going to be an artist. His interest in art led him to study at Parsons School of Design in New York. He attributes his serious pursuit as an artist to teachers at Parsons who were professional artists as well.

Tunstull began his career as a fashion illustrator for major women's magazines in New York and fashion houses in Europe. He states that his work veered toward fine art as he began to travel globally. Of particular interest were locations with a beautiful combination of water, sky and color. As he began painting in oil, he developed a sense of abstract

while continuing to represent reality in his work. He states that his use of broad brushstrokes captures "juxtaposing color pixels similar to pointillism."

Tunstull's "Boy With Towel" successfully evokes those very elements with the bright colors of the boy's towel and trunks and cooling blues of water and sky.



"Boy With Towel" by Glenn Tunstull

"Boy With Towel is of a young black male who represents the hope of our future," Tunstull explains.

"Autumn Leaves" depicts the colorful change of fall that occurs in Tunstull's present hometown of Hudson Valley. Tunstull's interplay of light and color adds to the autumn scene in this piece. The pointillism style (practice of applying small strokes or dots of color to a surface so they appear to blend together) in "Ocean Breeze" allows us to imagine gentle winds on the beach with "a woman who enjoys a moment of self-satisfaction as she breathes in her accomplishments."

The changing look of the sky and water remains a constant subject matter for Tunstull. His work has appeared in numerous solo exhibitions including Picture That Gallery in Stamford, Conn., and Cousin Rose Gallery in Martha's Vineyard. His work is also a part of numerous private collections

MANUELITA BROWN



"Boxed In" by Manuelita Brown

Brown also took ballet to study the body's movement and anatomy. It was not until much later in life, however, that she invested some time into what she refers to as the hobby of sculpting. Brown showed a few sculptures in a small group exhibit with no intentions of selling them, but that changed after she received several requests from prospective buyers.

Brown's work focuses on figurative and portrait sculptures and often centers on women. She says bronze is her chosen medium because she wants to "finish something that will last for centuries." In her piece, "Boxed In," the viewer is free to interpret whether the woman is trapped or, in Brown's poetic words, "... caressing walls that protect her."

Manuelita Brown is unable to remember a time that she did not want to make art and to create personal representations of her world. She remembers opening up a doll, taking out the "crier" (a device that emits a cry or the word "mama" when the doll is pressed) and reshaping the

Brown explains, "Selection of patinas (an oxidized covering that forms on copper and bronze) can either assist or hinder my intention for a particular sculpture." Her piece, "Verity 1," shows a woman whom she describes in poetry form as "Coy, innocent, cautiously investigating, and the truth of youth." Brown notes that the partially white patina symbolizes youth and innocence. The dark patina on "Verity 2" suggests maturity and acceptance.

"I feel that my artwork connects me with the past, the present and the future," conveys Brown. "Through the medium of bronze, I create sculptures that I hope will communicate to people in the future who we are today and who we were yesterday."



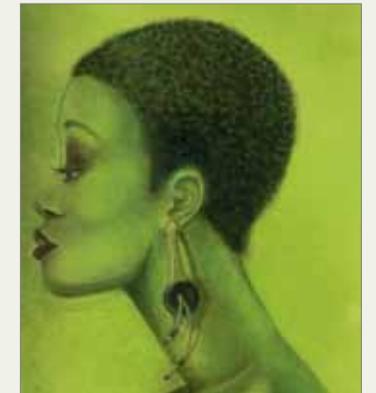
"Verity 1" by Manuelita Brown



"Verity 2" by Manuelita Brown



"Safe in Her Arms" by Barbara Mason



"Emerald" by Barbara Mason

BARBARA MASON

Although Barbara Mason makes a living in a profession unrelated to art, she still indulges in her love of and passion for life as an artist. She prefers watercolor and pastels, and enjoys painting in a photo-realistic style and adding numerous layers of color. Mason has also developed what she calls "a carved watercolor technique that allows portions of her painted images to project outward." It is a technique that she says creates depth and interest in her work.

Mason routinely takes a familiar subject and infuses it with a complex perspective. Of "Misty Blue," the featured artwork on the cover of this edition of *Unity*, Mason says, "She is a young lady coming of age. The color blue reflects sincerity, spirituality and calm as she faces the challenges of making her way in today's society." A mature, strong woman is portrayed in "Emerald," Mason reveals. "She is charismatic and exudes confidence. The color green denotes the balance between heart and emotions and restores depleted energy."

Mason relates to artist Georgia O'Keefe, who once said, "I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way – things I had no words for," and she embraces that philosophy in her own work. "The bold colors of yellow, orange and red" in "Safe in Her Arms," says Mason, "reflect my heritage and says the things that cannot be put into words" about the strength and nurturing qualities indicative in the mother's caress of her son.

Insatiable appetite for excellence



Chef Brian Hill
Photo by: NBCUniversal Photo Bank

Chef Brian Hill, 43, has fused his cooking talents developed from the responsibility of feeding his struggling family and a personality sculpted from the hard streets of Washington, D.C., into a prosperous career.

A product of a single-parent home for the majority of his adolescence, Hill found out early that he couldn't depend on his mother for a good meal.

"My mother would burn hard-boiled eggs," Hill says. "She wasn't a domesticated woman. It led me to go into the kitchen to see what I could do. It turned out that it was a gift."

The second youngest of five children, Hill decided to take on the cooking duties for the household.

The only training he received during his early years came from the school of trial and error coupled with watching PBS chefs Julia Child and the "Gallop Gourmet," Graham Kerr.

At age 15, Hill realized cooking was his life's calling. He got his start cooking at sandwich shops on weekends during the school year and summer vacations. He has worked in cafes, prestigious restaurants and luxe hotels in

D.C., Miami Beach and Beverly Hills. His specialties include classic American, Euro-Asian and nouveau soul food with a Caribbean twist.

It wasn't long before people started taking notice of his talents.

"The compliments started coming from there because I was doing it with passion," he says.

That passion eventually led to an opportunity to audition for a personal chef position for rapper Sean Combs. While Combs loved the food, Hill says the salary was too low for him to afford to relocate to New York and cook on call. Combs' agent, however, helped open the door for Hill, who amassed a celebrity clientele that included actors Eddie Murphy and Mekhai Phifer, singers Mary J. Blige and Mariah Carey, and boxer Lenox Lewis.

As the buzz on Hill and his celebrity clients grew, television executives came knocking.

The first season of the Bravo network's "Top Chef," the Food Network's "The Private Chefs of Beverly Hills" and TV One's "My Momma Throws Down" are a few of Hill's television credits. He also has his own television show slated to air in 2013.

Hill credits his professionalism and staunch work ethic as the keys to his success.

"I knew that if I just kept working, then something would happen. No matter what you're doing, it's the work that gets you there."

Chef Brian's Classic Burgers

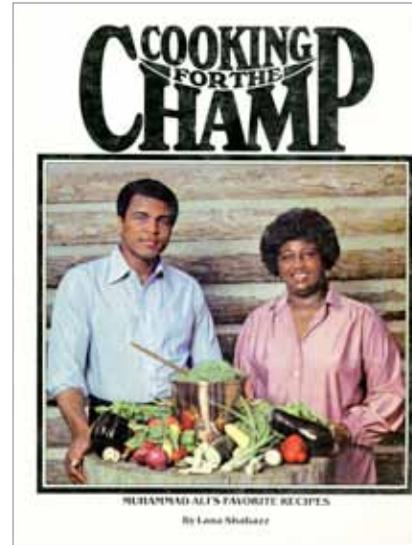
4-5 pounds ground turkey
 ½ teaspoon Adobo seasoning
 3 tablespoons barbecue sauce
 ½ teaspoon seasoned sauce
 Pinch of black pepper
 Pinch of white pepper
 2 cloves of garlic minced
 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
 2 slightly beaten eggs

Combine ingredients in bowl;
 massage meat into individual
 burgers for the grill.

Grill until cooked to preference.



History preserved in the pages of cookbooks



"Cooking for the Champ: Muhammad Ali's Favorite Recipes," says curator Jessica Lacher-Feldman, "gives great insight into what he enjoyed eating."

The David Walker Lupton African-American Cookbook Collection is a fitting testament to anyone who's ever prepared a fine soul-food meal and a special treat for the people lucky enough to consume such a repast.

The collection (www.lib.ua.edu/libraries/hoole/collections/luptoncollection.htm) – made up of 450 cookbooks spanning the years 1827 to 2000 – not only chronicles cooking techniques and secrets but sheds light on generations of the rich culture and traditions within the African-American community.

Lupton, a distant cousin of former University of Alabama President Nathaniel Thomas Lupton, donated his collection to the university that is currently housed in the W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library. In a press release published by the university, Lupton's widow, Dorothy, spoke about his passion for the collection.

"David had a deep conviction that cookbooks compiled by individuals of America of-African heritage needed to be identified and preserved," Dorothy Lupton stated.

Preservation of the cookbooks is a

high priority of the Hoole Library in Tuscaloosa. All of the books and other materials are kept in a secure, climate-controlled area. The collections at the Hoole Library are housed in closed stacks, and are non-circulating items. Users are welcome to use the cookbooks, but only in the reading room.

Jessica Lacher-Feldman, curator of Rare Books and Special Collections at Hoole Library, believes the collection is a valuable addition to the library.

"To be able to come to one place and spend time with such a large collection, and to be able to compare cookbooks, is really helpful for scholars and researchers," Lacher-Feldman says. "The idea that one person

saw the significance of collecting in this area is important as well."

Many of the cookbooks in the collection were written in the first person.

This personal and intimate literature allows readers to not only understand the recipes better, but also injects humor, the personality of the author and commentary from the period the cookbook was written.

The cookbooks from the mid- to late 1800s are popular amongst students and researchers, but Lacher-Feldman notes that some of the newer texts have started to garner interest.

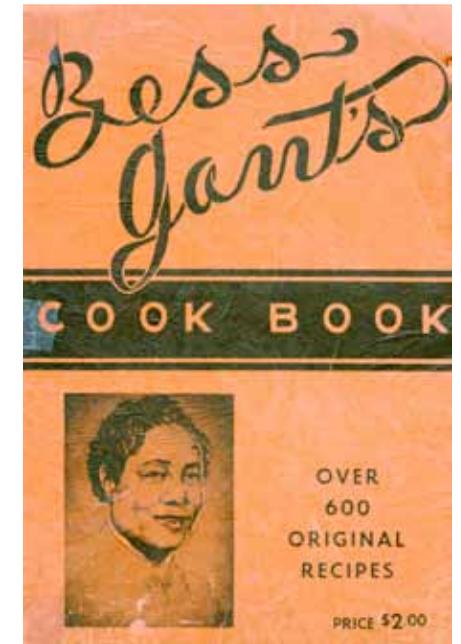
"I recently talked to a class about Islam in America and we used some of the Nation of Islam cookbooks to explore dietary laws and recipes," says Lacher-Feldman. "There is a wonderful cookbook done by the cook for Muhammed Ali, which gives great insight into what he enjoyed eating, while keeping strict about Islamic

dietary laws."

Professor Amilear Shabaaz, former director of the University of Alabama African-American Studies Program, noted in the press release that the collection will allow students to broaden their cultural horizons.

"This collection will make possible the kind of creative research in food and ethnic identity that has lately become the focus of numerous university press publications," Shabaaz says.

Lacher-Feldman has assisted on many projects students have used the collection for. "We did have a class a few years ago that did group projects on food and culture: One class looked at the peanut, sweet potato and okra as foods that migrated from Africa to the New World," Lacher-Feldman recalls. "They prepared dishes from the cookbooks that reflected their findings and presented a talk at the library on their research. Another group did a project on defining soul food and also cooked from the collection as part of the class project."



"Bess Gant's Cookbook: Over 600 Original Recipes" by Bessie M. Gant, was published in 1947.