

CATS



BRIEFLY

NEWS FROM THE GROUNDS

Bird, Tree & Garden Club news

Jack Gulvin leads the Nature Walk at 9 a.m. today starting at the lakeside patio of Smith Wilkes Hall. Gulvin guides participants in examining seasonal changes and the interconnected relationships of Chautauqua's ecosystems.

Betsy Burgeson leads the Garden Talk at 12:30 p.m. today starting at Children's School. Burgeson presents "Seed Collecting and Saving," teaching participants essential techniques for harvesting and preserving seeds for future growing seasons.

Friends of Chautauqua Theater news

There is a play discussion about *The Witnesses* at 12:30 p.m. today at the Jessica Trapasso Memorial Pavilion at Children's School. Join Friends of Chautauqua Theater and the Bob McClure CHQ Play Readers for "Highlights from Our 2024-25 Season" at 10 a.m. Saturday in Smith Wilkes Hall.

Chautauqua Women's Club news

Member Coffee Hour is from 9 to 10 a.m. today in the CWC House. Mah Jongg is at 1 p.m. today in the CWC House.

Twelve Step Meeting

There is a Twelve Step Meeting at 12:15 p.m. today in the Marion Lawrance Room in Hurlbut Church.

Friends of the Chautauqua Writers' Center events

An informal critique is at 1:15 p.m. today in the Literary Arts Center at Alumni Hall Garden Room. Bring 10 copies of one page of work for feedback, guided by a published author.

Memorial services held this weekend

A service honoring the life of the Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, longtime director of the Department of Religion, will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday in the Hall of Philosophy with music and remembrances from colleagues and family. A reception will follow.

A Celebration of Life for Chautauquan Bob McClure is at 4 p.m. Sunday in Hurlbut Church. A reception will follow.

PAWS OF PHILOSOPHY



JOSEPH CIEMBRONIEWICZ / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

At top, feline Chautauquan Clyde — an avid attendee of the Interfaith Lecture Series — tries his paws at speaking from the dais on July 22 in the Hall of Philosophy. Above left, Program Production Crew Audio Apprentice Yseuldt Balcom, left, usher Wayne Nelson and Clyde compare notes on the day's lecture. Above right, Clyde lounges in the grove.

In CTC's 'The Witnesses,' feline guest actor makes theatrical debut

JULIA WEBER
STAFF WRITER

At just 6 pounds, Marlene Lola Dietrich is an unrivaled force in the world of feline theater, and now she's making her Chautauqua debut in the world-premiere production of *The Witnesses*.

Audiences have just three chances left to see Marlene's talents first-hand as Chautauqua Theater Company wraps its run of C.A. Johnson's *The Witnesses*, with performances at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. today, and at 2 p.m. Saturday, in Bratton Theater (a talkback and book signing will follow today's 2 p.m. performance). First staged in Bratton as a New Play Workshop in 2024 titled *Tell Me You're Dying*, *The Witnesses* was commissioned two years ago by CTC Producing Artistic Director Jade King Carroll. When it came time for building the cast for this summer's fully produced premiere, Carroll had just the actor in mind for a very special role.

"I just didn't realize she was going to take to the stage so much," said Carroll, Marlene's human. "She



DAVE MUNCH / PHOTO EDITOR

Chautauqua Theater Company Feline Guest Actor Marlene Lola Dietrich performs with fellow Guest Actor Fig Chilcott in *The Witnesses*. Marlene, the adopted companion of CTC Producing Artistic Director Jade King Carroll, is making her theater debut in the world-premiere run of *The Witnesses*.

seems to like it."

The Witnesses centers on a peer support group of survivors in the midst of an apocalyptic pandemic; Marlene portrays one of these survivors.

Carroll adopted Marlene in 2019, during her time at the Philadelphia-based theater organization PlayPenn. Knowing Carroll was looking to adopt a cat, her sister rescued Marlene — who she found under a porch — at just a few weeks old. Marlene was introduced to the world of theater shortly thereafter.

"My sister didn't have a container or a carrier or anything for her, and I had a reading, so I took the cat, I put her in my purse and she was in the theater with me and was just completely quiet," Carroll said.

et," Carroll said.

During the COVID-19 pandemic when theaters and live venues were shuttered to audiences, Carroll said she worked on plays that were produced on film or live on Zoom, often spending multiple hours per day in rehearsals with Marlene by her side.

"I don't know if that's how she has the patience for (acting), but she's just been great," Carroll said.

Marlene has adapted to traveling with Carroll, who is based in New York City and directs approximately three to five regional shows a year; as such, Marlene has become quite accustomed to the life of a creative. Carroll said her social personality and willingness to be in

the spotlight made Marlene a good fit for the role.

To prepare Marlene for the role, Carroll hosted a dinner at her house for the cast and stage management so Marlene "could meet everybody on her turf."

"We immediately knew it was going to work because she was excited to have company and very much felt the party was for her," she said.

Following the wrap on *The Witnesses* and CTC's theater season at large after this weekend, both Carroll and Marlene plan to take a break and catch up on some much needed rest and relaxation.

"She's probably going to miss the hubbub, being around people," Carroll said. "She seems to really like people."

For both Carroll and Marlene, the partnership has been a new experience of collaboration.

"I've had many interviews and talked about many angles and perspectives into a show; this is a first for me and it'll probably be a unique experience for Marlene," Carroll said. "This might be her debut and swan song all in one."

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Friday at the
CINEMA

Friday, August 22

PERFECT DAYS - 5:45 Hi-
rayama (Kôji Yakusho) seems
utterly content with his simple
life as a cleaner of Tokyo public
toilets in director Wim Wenders'
deeply moving and poetic re-
flection on finding beauty in
the everyday world around us.
"It's all about finding the simple
joys in your daily existence."
-Christy Lemire, *Breakfast All Day*
"Jonathan Livingston Lavatory
Cleaner. Zen and the Art of Lavo-
ratory Maintenance. But better than
that. Sharper, less sentimental,
less aphoristic. A film to live your
life by." -Donald Clarke, *Irish Times*
(PG, Japanese w/subtitles. 124m)

EVERYTHING'S GOING
TO BE GREAT - 8:45 Buddy
Smart (Bryan Cranston) wrestles
with his over-sized showbiz
dreams. His wife Macy (Allison
Janney) struggles to keep their
family afloat as they share a hu-
morous and heartfelt journey of
self-discovery. Director "Jon S.
Baird's kind and cutting drama
about a family trying, failing, and
trying all over again to make it in
the theater is a heartening drama
and a great big smile of a com-
edy." -William Bibbiani, *TheWrap*
(R, 95m)

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NEWS

SCHMITZ

FROM PAGE 1

The archives center, which in its original geographic configuration was located off-grounds, had lived many lives — much like Schmitz himself who, among his many accomplishments, has worked as a caretaker, groundskeeper, parking attendant, bartender, housepainter, private tutor, teaching assistant and medical inspector.

The modest structure has operated as a carriage house, bindery, carpentry shop, violin and piano studios and even a rehearsal space for Chautauqua Opera before being transformed into the climate-controlled safe haven that it is today.

Schmitz first liked the building for its brick structure. It was on the edge of grounds for easy access to the gates, ideal for those coming and going for research. The building also has ground-level access on both its floors, including a reading room on the lower level.

“And it’s a good size,” Schmitz said. “You don’t want it too big because it’ll start being used for other things, but you want it to be big enough to house what you have. ... Also, by not being too big, we could establish a better environmental control.”

It’s somewhat of an archivist’s dream. Schmitz has had visiting researchers from across the globe, including from the Library of Congress, comment on the “excellent” set-up, a result of the relatively small size of storage areas.

“In corporate archives, ... most of your effort is usually dedicated toward survival,” Schmitz said. “And here, I didn’t find that was the case. I found the administration was committed to having its history preserved and presented. So I’ve never had to really fight that fight the way that it would be typical in most corporate settings. I always appreciated that.”

Another aspect of his job he’s enjoyed is its versatility. In his role, he works on acquisition, appraisal, arrangement, description, copy-righting, maintenance and so much more, not to mention education — through writing, lecturing and teaching or mentoring — the joys of which came up often in conversations with Schmitz and those who worked with him. His mentees have gone on to work in archives across the country, serving institutions like the Smithsonian, university libraries and even the White House.

“At the end (of their time at Chautauqua) I just tell them, the only advice I can give them is put God first, keep Him first and treat every single person you meet with respect and charity,” Schmitz said. “And don’t take them half so seriously as they take themselves.”

Schmitz is a lover of factoids — which is rather a sneaky term, as he will tell you, colloquially thought to

mean something like a fun fact but really meaning an untruth or uncertain truth; a lie or saying so often repeated it becomes a story in of itself. And anyway, as he’ll discuss in his talk, what really is, and who decides, a fact? And what’s its relationship to truth?

“Facts in the end are not unquestionable kernels of truth,” Schmitz said. “What they are, are sort of prescriptions for how an experience can be represented or how an event can be presented.”

Still, there are many factoids — or perhaps facts is more truthful here — that Schmitz can rattle about the Archives: how the building has twice as many fake windows as real ones; how the records span nearly 600 years, with the oldest specimen being the Koberger Bible from 1501; or how many of the books in the Reading Room were actually bound in the very same building, years before during its spell as a bindery.

In his commitment to facts — not factoids — he dispelled and corrected many of our favorite go-to Chautauqua sayings, noted Sherra Babcock, former vice president and Emily and Richard Smucker Chair for Education, who worked with Schmitz from 2007 until her retirement in 2017.

“I know that Chautauqua’s history would not be the same without him,” Babcock said. “He delighted in researching, expanding, and disputing some of the ‘legends’ about Chautauqua.”

For example, Babcock said, Schmitz discovered a book club based in Peoria, Illinois, that was founded the same year as the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle — but three weeks earlier, making it the nation’s oldest book club, prompting the CLSC to change its slogan to the nation’s oldest “continuous” book circle.

“The important thing is to try to take Chautauqua and make it connect into American history,” Schmitz said. “You can only do that if you are very honest about it.”

Among other favorite mythbusters (though he doesn’t like that phrase, and anyway, by his account, he’s busted as many myths as he’s uncovered), Schmitz gathered scientific evidence against the common adage that we can thank Chautauqua’s bat population for our few mosquitos. He also contradicted the common boast that nine American presidents have spoken at Chautauqua, for there is no proof that Ulysses S. Grant uttered a single word. And lastly, getting at the heart of what Chautauqua means, Schmitz complicated the belief that the word “Chautauqua” came from a Seneca term for “two bags tied in the middle,” or even “two moccasins tied together,” but instead, perhaps, the Cherokee terminology for “place from



GEORGE KOLOSKI / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Institution Archivist Jon Schmitz, pictured here in the Oliver Archives Center, will lecture at 3:30 p.m. today in the Hall of Philosophy.

which fish are taken.”

Beyond that, Schmitz embodies and champions what archives mean and do.

“Jon taught me that the Archives is not a building that stores things,” Babcock said. “The Archives are people who research history, who accept and describe historical artifacts, who present programs and documents that preserve history and who maintain the equipment and conditions to make those items available to other historians and interested people.”

Matt Ewalt, the former *Daily* editor who served as vice president and Emily and Richard Smucker Chair for Education from 2018 to 2023, echoed the sentiments of his predecessor.

“As staff, board and community wrestle with what Chautauqua is and what it should be in a rapidly changing world, Jon has been a steady, indispensable guide, drawing on deep institutional memory,” Ewalt said. “Every conversation with him not only challenged my assumptions but also strengthened my love for Chautauqua and deepened my appreciation of its place in the world. Chautauqua is stronger, more resilient, and more impactful because of Jon’s wisdom and work.”

Ewalt and Schmitz share a birthday; for many years, so the lore goes, they kept a tradition of raising a glass together in celebration.

“(Working with Schmitz was) always fun, and (you were) always enjoying his sense of humor,” Babcock said. “Also he knows good bourbon — after work, of course.”

“He appreciates nourishment,” said George Cooper, former archives reporter and “The Daily Record” columnist for the *Daily*, “and he appreciates taste in something that is well done, something that is prepared with love.”

According to Cooper, Schmitz is known for making great spaghetti, complete with homemade sauce, a heartfelt meal he’d even stir up for visiting researchers,

served right in the comforts of his own home.

“It makes me cry — when I got cancer, it was his prayers I was thankful for,” Cooper said of his longtime friend. “When, you know, people say, ‘I’ll pray for you,’ I’d go, ‘I don’t care.’ When Jon said it, I knew it was OK. He’s so devoted. If there was anyone who I wanted to pray for me, it’s him.”

He brings the same devotion, Cooper said, to the Archives.

“He’s so devoted to the artifacts themselves,” Cooper said, “not necessarily what they say. He has his own view, but he’s there so that someone can come in the door and look at them and appreciate them.”

Schmitz embraces the human reality of differing opinions in a time when fruitful debate can seem like a lost art.

“He brings to life the Archives for people who may not have ever thought that archives were anything important,” Cooper said. “He matches that humility of the artifact with his own.”

One of the important missions over his decades with Chautauqua has been to increase its awareness in the national memory. He also oversaw a massive organization, preservation and digitization campaign. In his tenure, the bulk of the Archive’s photographs have been made accessible online, as well as the newspapers from 1876 to 2006 and the CLSC’s magazine, all within a limited budget. His Heritage Lecture Series, too, went digital during the pandemic, becoming some of the most streamed videos on CHQ Assembly.

In addition to curating and accumulating, a large part of Schmitz’s job is editing; the art, or trade, of knowing what not to keep — for if you keep too much, and certainly if you keep everything, you risk making the records inaccessible.

“Sometimes people just think history is about old,” Schmitz said, “and if it’s old, you’ve got to keep it. Archives do find it necessary to get rid of things. You

can’t keep everything.”

Such was the case with the rebuilding of the Amphitheater, which Schmitz said was one of the most “interesting” projects he worked on while serving Chautauqua. He describes the endeavor as a “historical rebuild,” preserving historical accuracy as much as possible while enshrining the metaphysical aspects that make the Amp, the Amp. In other words, keeping true to its look, feel and function.

“Many people have the idea that preservation is always what we call ‘fabric preservation,’ where it’s the stuff itself,” Schmitz said. For example, he said, in preserving the Colosseum, it’s the very stones that matter, the very fabric. In the case of the Amp, as Schmitz explained, very little of the original fabric was still in place. Much of the structure had been redone in the last 50 years, and the existing structure wasn’t even the “original” Amp. What’s important is the gathering place, the point of assembly.

“I think the Amphitheater is the most important building on the grounds,” Schmitz said. “You lose the Amphitheater, I think you lose Chautauqua.”

With such high stakes, rebuilding the Amp with historical accuracy and communicating the project’s necessity to opposing Chautauquans proved a challenge, but a rewarding one.

“We were particularly thankful to Jon for recognizing what the Amp actually is, which is a canvas upon which art and words appear rather than the main character itself,” said Jordan Steves, another former *Daily* editor and the current Emily and Richard Smucker Chair for Education. “He helped frame for us a way to think about the Amp as a platform upon which things happen, versus the thing itself.”

It’s Schmitz’s ability to take the objects for what they are, handled with care but not a blinding preciousness or oversentimentality. Indeed, one of the large

est tasks Chautauqua has trusted Schmitz with all these years is knowing what to throw away, to prune so that the buds may shine.

“Jon helped us realize that what happens in the venues is more important than the venues themselves,” Steves said. “I still take that lesson and apply it to my work today.”

While this will be the last installment of the Heritage Lecture Series — at least for the short-term, as the season concludes and Chautauqua strives for financial sustainability — Schmitz will continue to safeguard and serve the Archives as a wealth of knowledge and passion. He also plans to continue work on a book based on the Chautauqua pamphlet series he’s published over the years.

“The truth of it is, I have no desire to retire, I have no desire to grow old,” he said. “It’s probably a good thing I do, ... but that’s how one feels.”

When asked why archives are important to a community like Chautauqua, Schmitz said that history is its identity: “You can’t understand Chautauqua without looking at its history, even if you try to match it with other existing institutions.”

“The thing that I love most about the way Jon talks about Chautauqua is when I’m with groups where he is presenting, and they don’t know Chautauqua,” Steves said, “he tells them the most miraculous thing about Chautauqua is that it’s still here.”

The theme of resilient communion is crucial to understanding Schmitz’s impact as a historian and Chautauqua’s role in history — present day included.

“One of the features of Chautauqua that I hope is never lost,” Schmitz said, “is the common experience. People come to one place, sit next to each other, have the same experience. That is more important than presenting all sides. You’ll never present all sides. Even the way one defines the different sides, we’ll never agree on. What matters is not a balanced platform, but a big tent.”

CHQ Literary Arts holds open mic tribute to celebrate late poet Giovanni

SUSIE ANDERSON

STAFF WRITER

While the late writer, poet, activist, commentator and educator Nikki Giovanni never visited Chautauqua, her words and legacy will be celebrated in an open mic tribute to conclude the summer at the Literary Arts Center at Alumni Hall.

“I wanted to bring her energy and spirit, even when I couldn’t bring her to Chautauqua,” said Kwame Alexander, Michael I. Rudell Artistic Director of Literary Arts and Inaugural Writer-in-Residence at Chautauqua.

For the final Summer on the Steps program of the summer, Chautauqua Literary Arts will host its tribute to Giovanni at 12:15 p.m. today on the porch of Alumni Hall.

All are welcome to bring the words of the late poet that resonate with them and share with the community.

Giovanni was an integral piece of the Civil Rights Movement, an iconoclast and poet who used her words to champion change. She was the recipient of myriad accolades, including the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, the Rosa L. Parks Woman of Courage Award, and honorary doctorates from over 30 universities. She is an author of numerous poetry books, children’s books and essays. In the 35 years that she taught at Virginia Tech, she established the Giovanni-Steger Poetry Prize and became a mentor to a young Kwame Alexander. Since taking her class as a sophomore undergraduate,

Alexander and Giovanni developed a 37-year friendship.

“The plan had been for Nikki to be one of the guests for (Week Seven’s Chautauqua Lecture Series theme) ‘Kwame Alexander and Friends,’” Alexander said. “It would’ve been her first time in Chautauqua. I was excited for her to be able to walk the grounds, and this is her demographic. She was like a mother to me and so I wanted her to experience this place.”

When Giovanni passed on Dec. 9, 2024, Alexander felt it as a loss of a second mother.

“It sort of sent my life into a tailspin of just emotional chaos — just not being able to figure out how to move forward in the immediate future with my birth mother, having passed away in 2017, and now

Nikki having passed away,” Alexander said. “So it’s this idea that you are so fortunate and you feel like you’re so lucky to have two mothers and then, of course, you never realize that could also mean you have to bury two mothers.”

While Giovanni had not visited Chautauqua, her words reached audiences far and wide, including Chautauquans of all ages.

“She was also a big proponent of never talking down to kids and inspiring and entertaining young people,” Alexander said.

Extending the celebration of Giovanni’s legacy beyond her poetry, the Summer on the Steps event will include a reading from young writers who participated in the Book-in-a-Day workshop

during Week Six Young Writers’ Institute. Their work was compiled and published into a book this past week. *Where’s the Lollipop? Creating a Community Through Poems* is available for purchase at the Chautauqua Bookstore.

In a culmination of a summer of literary arts programming, the event invites

community members to celebrate the legacy of the late poet and the power of the written word.

“Our tribute to her will be through some of the most powerful things that we can remember her with — the words that she shared with us all,” said Stephine Hunt, managing director of literary arts.

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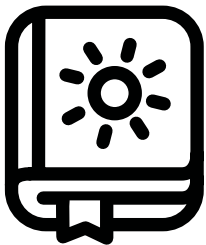
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FROM PAGE ONE

‘We need political, moral, values-based revolution,’ McLaren preaches Tuesday



MORNING WORSHIP

COLUMN BY NIA-HYATT ELDOSOUGI & MARY LEE TALBOT

The air was full of anticipation at the 9:15 a.m. Tuesday morning worship service in the Amphitheater. The pews were fuller than normal as people arrived early for the Morgan Freeman lecture, just as they had come early to hear Doris Kearns Goodwin on Monday.

The Rev. Brian McLaren seized the moment to preach on “The Biblical Prophets as Visionaries of a Renewed Tradition.” The scripture reading was Hosea 6:1-6. The combination of preaching and the hymns and anthems for the day brought the congregation to their feet.

René Girard was a literary critic and anthropologist, and he was obsessed with a question: How did the bizarre, ugly tradition of human sacrifice pop up in diverse places around the world? It wouldn’t have spread from one place to the other. It seemed to just keep popping up in cultures around the world.

“Girard found that human sacrifice then was kind of downgraded to animal sacrifice,” McLaren said. “As he traveled around, speaking about his theories, someone came up to him and said, ‘Dude, you ought to read the Bible.’ He had never been that interested in the Bible, but he began to read the Bible. When he got to the passage in Hosea, his mind was blown. When Girard read these words, ‘For I desire mercy or compassion or love and not sacrifice,’ he said it was a breakthrough moment in human ethical, moral and spiritual development.” In the past, religion was every bit intertwined with culture and not a distinct category. This embedded quality allowed priests to maintain norms and keep them highly — or holy — regarded. “Priests are the ones who carry on the traditions and the rituals and the ceremonies that provide continuity. They do a kind of quality control for the moral lives of the people. They try to keep the values going that are necessary for people to not tear each other apart.”

To be seen as a priest during this period of history was no casual thing. The entrance into priesthood was tightly controlled in most cultures. McLaren noted that it was a very exclusive group. “You had to pass a lot of qualifications to be seen as a priest. You often had to grow up in a family where your father was a priest, because that way you would be instructed in this from your childhood.” McLaren then contrasted the priesthood with prophets — those who sprung up on occasion, not out of training, but eloquence and fury. These prophets often came to redirect people, including priests, back to God’s will. They would show the gap between how religious communities thought they were and how they actually were. McLaren said, “It took tough language. It sometimes took incisive poetry or powerful storytelling. It took what we might call art to get people to face the truths about themselves. Prophets had an artistic dimension to them. In fact,

many of them, when we have their writings today, they’re in the form of poetry. ... Priests help maintain, keep you from backsliding. Prophets try to keep you evolving, to try to keep you growing, and both were very, very important.”

Hosea — who showed up 750 years before Christ — had the signature line “God has some news for you all.” Hosea asked the people to return to God’s love that was based in justice, empathy and mercy. “At the heart of God is no desire for vengeance and bloodshed and violence. The whole idea of sacrifice isn’t really what’s at the heart of God,” McLaren said. “What’s at the heart of God is infinite, unending, radical, revolutionary love, compassion, empathy. We should be pretty nervous when empathy is being called a toxic trait.”

He also said: “And when Hosea speaks up for the word love or kindness or empathy or mercy, it kind of reminds me of (Episcopal Bishop Mariann Budde) earlier this year who had the courage to confront our nation’s leaders, not with an insult, but simply with a plea to not forget to be merciful.”

Richard Rohr, in his book *The Tears of Things: Prophetic Wisdom for an Age of Outrage*, wrote that a lot of times the prophet’s message begins with anger — anger about the arrogance and ignorance of people who think they’re exceptional, when really they’re poor and pathetic and pitiful and blind. Rohr found “anger is an essential first stage, and people who don’t feel it haven’t begun to awaken morally. But if anger is not just your first step, but also your last step, you haven’t gone on the journey of the prophet. Anger often leads to deep sadness and the sadness brings tears.”

“This pattern of anger leads to sadness, and when the sadness does its work in us, something happens, Richard realized. He realized that the anger is transformed into sadness, and sadness is transformed into love. And that seems to be what happens in this passage in Hosea.” McLaren gave a nod to modern prophets like Martin Luther King Jr and Desmond Tutu, but also musicians like Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell, and historian Doris Kearns Goodwin. “Did you hear her revolutionary words? She held up the high standard of some of our past leaders, and she didn’t have to say much to show us the tragic gap between our past and our present, and what’s needed going forward. She said we need a political and moral and values-based revolution.” The congregation applauded. He concluded, “So brothers and sisters, Hosea said listen, what’s at the heart of things, what matters most is compassion.” The congregation applauded again. And they applauded after the singing of the final hymn, “My Soul Cries out with a Joyful Shout,” text by Rory Cooney. The text of the refrain ends with the words, “And the world is about to turn.”

The Rev. Mary Lee Talbot, Doctor of Philosophy, presided. William “Bill” Bates, umpire for the Chautauqua Softball League, read the scripture. The prelude, performed by organ scholar Owen Reyda on the Massey Memorial Organ, was Prelude, Op. 105, No. 3 by C.V. Stanford. The Motet Choir sang “See I Make all Things New” by Alfred V. Fedak under the direction of Joshua Stafford, director of sacred music and the Jared Jacobsen Chair for the Organist, and accompanied by Reyda. Stafford played “The People Respond – Amen!” by Dan Locklair for the postlude. Support for this week’s chaplaincy and preaching is provided by the Robert D. Campbell Memorial Chaplaincy and the Daneý-Holden Chaplaincy Fund. Thank you to the 2025 Abrahamic Program for Young Adults Coordinators — Ori Edgar, Nia-Hyatt Eldosoui, Evans Nyamadzavo and Lizzy Schoen — for serving as guest columnists this summer, and to Mary Lee Talbot for coordinating the opportunity.

AL-SHAMAH

FROM PAGE 1

Al-Shamahi became a paleo-anthropologist in a roundabout way; when she applied to study evolutionary biology at Imperial College London, Al-Shamahi — at the time, a creationist missionary — was looking to disprove the theory. Due to her rigorous studies, Al-Shamahi finds that we are fundamentally a tribalist species who take on the opinions of our own tribe.

“That means that we will happily forgo nuance, if it doesn’t necessarily serve our purpose,” Al-Shamahi said. “On the flip side of that, if you’ve been through an experience like the experience I went through, which was effectively leaving my tribe because there wasn’t any nuance, it makes you incredibly desperate to encourage people to see the nuance. I think there are some things around us which encourage a lack of nuance — social media and the kind of the more partisan nature of news.”

With social media, the people closest to us geographically don’t necessarily have to be a part of our tribe, as would have been the case historically. Though this could denote freedom of choice, it’s led to a loneliness epidemic, Al-Shamahi said.

“We are capable of a lot when we cooperate; the problem comes when our cooperation is exceeded by tribalism. In this day and age, tribalism is particularly complicated. Previously, your tribe was the people who lived closest to you, and, even if you had to experience the negative sides of tribalism, the people close to you were keeping you alive. ... If we could do one thing, for me, it would be to reduce tribalism, but encourage the people closest to us geographically to be our tribe.”

The history of human evolution, written by humans, skews toward the idea of humanity’s greatness. While our ancestors contended with life-threatening events every

day, our lives have been consumed with comparatively trivial decisions that cement our apparent superiority over other species.

“In written memory, we have always been the most dominant form of life on Earth. I think when that happens, it’s really, really easy to portray us as the pinnacle of human evolution, to portray us as having always been destined for this as if it was written in the stars from the moment we were put onto the scene. Actually, that’s just not the case, but you don’t know that unless you really study human evolution,” Al-Shamahi said. “Twenty years of discovery within paleoanthropology made it difficult to deny the nature of our origin as being actually humble in origin; we didn’t erupt onto the scene.”

As part of Chautauqua’s 2025 Masters Series, at 5 p.m. today in the Hall of Christ Al-Shamahi will give an advance screening of her new PBS/BBC show “HUMAN.” The show traces the surprising story of human origins using fossil evidence, DNA sequencing and other cutting-edge scientific tools.

“I think people have been deeply moved by our story and also fascinated and shocked by it. For whatever reason, we just haven’t been telling our story right,” Al-Shamahi said. “I’ve never received a response to one of my shows like this before. It’s just incredibly different,”

Al-Shamahi believes audiences won’t have seen a show like it. She finds that telling the story of humanity beyond reducing humans to data points has influenced the response to the show — it’s seeing good ratings in the United Kingdom where it has already been released.

“When we tell science stories, we often take the emotion out of them, which to some extent is understandable,” she said. “But when it comes to human evolution, you can’t take the human out of human evolution — by definition, you need the human part.”

MOORE

FROM PAGE 1

The rhetoric of Christian nationalists presents a challenge to the entire country, Moore said. It’s symptomatic of something seen across the world, such as with Islamic nationalism and Hindu nationalism.

“It has a number of implications,” he said. “One of them being there are a lot of people who associate Christian nationalism with Christianity itself. And so, they move away from Christianity because of what they have seen. The other is that you have increased sorting in American church life, very few purple congregations anymore. People tend to be, with a few exceptions, mostly in congregations that think politically and vote the same way they do.”

Moore said he hopes the audience gains “a little deeper insight” into what’s happening in American religion and how it affects even those who are nonreligious, or of different faiths in American life.

“You can see trends happening in religious bodies that later pick up in the broader culture,” he said. “Religion has with it an in-

O.A.R.

FROM PAGE 1

Founded nearly 30 years ago, the original bandmates — Roberge, On, Culos and Gershman — all attended Thomas S. Wootton High School in Rockville, Maryland, and later met DePizzo at Ohio State University.

The sheer size of Ohio State, and the fact that Columbus is home to more than a dozen colleges, aided in building the bedrock for O.A.R. pursue their music-making passion. DePizzo met Roberge at freshman year orientation and became fast friends; it turned out that DePizzo offered a missing piece of the puzzle. Starting off with house parties, bars and anything else they could book, DePizzo said, their jam sessions would take on a free-form structure with improvisation.

“That kind of jamming helps solidify our relationship onstage together, because you really know the folks around you. It also allowed us to create and cultivate a live environment that you hopefully feel better when you leave than when you got there,” DePizzo said. “We take a lot of pride in the fact that, if you want to go there and hang out with your friends, there’s an experience for you. If you want to bring the family there, there’s an experience for you. If you want to make it date night, we work really hard to make it an elevated, premium experience so that it’s worthy of a date night with a babysitter and everything else that goes along with that.”

The longevity of the group is a feat in itself. External or internal factors, stagnation and inconsistent direction can lead to groups debanding — but not for O.A.R. DePizzo attributes their endurance to a mutual respect and appreciation of one another.

“First and foremost, being in a band, there are a lot of parallels between long-term partnerships, like a marriage or any other familial relationship. We don’t take that for granted,” he said. “This is a ‘get to,’ not a ‘have to’ type of job. Not everybody that goes out there and tries to do this job, gets to do this — we get to do it at a pretty high level, and I’ve done it for three decades now. If we tried to replicate it, we couldn’t do that, so there’s something kind of unique and special about that we appreciate.”

The musical themes

herent power either for good or for evil — we’ve seen it used in both ways. When you have a loss of genuine authority, often the traction to that is authoritarianism.”

For a long time, Moore said there was a hope among nonreligious Americans that religion would “wither away” and complete secularization would evolve.

“I think we’re at a place right now where we can see that that’s not how things are going to play out, even for those who hoped it would be,” he said. “I would argue that’s not what we should be hoping for in any case.”

There’s a difficulty around defining what people mean by being religious, Moore said. There’s different metrics — such as church attendance and engagement, self-identification and theological commitment — which are hard to measure.

“Let’s say my kind of person would have wanted a revival of genuinely vibrant, theologically oriented evangelical Christianity,” Moore said. “That’s not happening either. So, it’s a completely different present that we find ourselves in than that most people prepared for.”

O.A.R. tends to gravitate toward have to do with friends and family. They have found that an authentic perspective resonates with the audience and has made O.A.R.’s distinctive sound what it is.

“O.A.R. is inherently O.A.R. — if we tried to play anything, it would sound like O.A.R.,” DePizzo said. “The guys especially have a really strong sense of home and where they came from, with a great deal of pride and admiration from that. That was really the primordial soup of what O.A.R. turned into. I think what we really write about is friends and family, our experiences through life — and providing an honest perspective really resonates with folks. We cherish that, and we don’t take it for granted.”

DePizzo first wanted to play guitar after watching his uncle, who was about 11 years older than him, play in a band. When DePizzo wanted to play the drums in the sixth grade band — where there were 19 drummers out of 35 kids — he changed his mind, as his uncle already had a saxophone.

“I had great teachers and band directors throughout my youth,” DePizzo said. “I was fortunate that they fed my passion for music, so they would let me play saxophone. They’d let me play drums in the marching band and play trumpet in the concert band. They let me play bass, guitar and jazz band to do all the Southern top sets, so I kitted the passion, and they fed it; it just so happened to work out.”

O.A.R. sees creating similar opportunities as a moral obligation. Through their creation of the Heard The World Fund, they support youth and education in the United States; O.A.R. has also provided a yearly full scholarship to students attending Ohio State, done volunteering work in Flint, Michigan, and offered resources to public schools.

“We’re very much a ‘find a need, fill a need’ type of philosophy with our philanthropic efforts,” DePizzo said. “We focus on helping kids and family because some folks gave us helping hands throughout our lives, and you never know where it’s going to come from or what it’s going to lead to. ... We create opportunity where opportunity needs to be created. For me, that’s one of the more rewarding elements of this job.”



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LECTURE

Motley, Rosen discuss who tells story of history, why it matters

GABRIEL WEBER
STAFF WRITER

During the 2026 season, the Chautauqua Lecture Series will devote a full week to “The Importance of Gathering” in collaboration with the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and another week devoted to the National Constitution Center and The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation to celebrate the United States’ semiquincentennial. At 10:45 a.m. Thursday in the Amphitheater, Chautauqua got a preview of these weeks and a taste of why storytelling matters and how lifelong learning keeps democracy alive.

On Thursday morning in the Amphitheater, director of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival Sabrina Lynn Motley and president and chief executive officer of the National Constitution Center Jeffrey Rosen discussed putting history into context, keeping in theme with Week Nine’s Chautauqua Lecture Series “Past Informs Present: How to Harness History.”

Motley dove into what the Smithsonian is doing to prepare for America’s semiquincentennial in 2026, the 250th year since the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

“We understand in a clearer light now why the work of the Smithsonian is so important to the fabric of this country, to its future and how we think about this moment together,” Motley said. “I also want to quickly — as I do with any moment that I am fortunate enough to speak with a large group of people — take a moment to acknowledge the ancestors that brought us here and to recognize that we do this work for generations of people that we will never meet but whose lives we will impact.”

Secretary of the Smithsonian Lonnie G. Bunch III oversees 21 museums, 21 libraries, the National Zoo, numerous research centers and several education units and centers. In reflecting on the nation’s history, Motley referenced his breaking it down into three separate parts: commemorating 250 years as a historic event, celebrating the nation’s successes along with contemplating the consequences of our history, and recognizing the sacrifices of those who have worked to uphold the country’s ideals while committing to advancing democracy.

This coming year, the Smithsonian will have an exhibition on state fairs and the National Mall will host the Folklife Festival; alongside many of their 200 affiliate museums across the country, they’ll join various institutions and host activities.

“So there’s a lot going on. But again, it is grounded in this moment of reflection and hope. Under Secretary Bunch’s guidance — he is a historian — and he has reminded us of the importance of unpacking history with a critical eye in all the work we do, so that will be the Smithsonian next year,” Motley said. “I do invite you to join us whenever and wherever you can to be part of this moment in our shared history.”

In celebration of America’s semiquincentennial, the National Constitution Center is releasing a free civic tool kit on Constitution Day, Sept. 17, and Rosen — named earlier this summer as the 2025-26 Chautauqua Perry Fellow in Democracy — has written extensively about the founders’ vision, the pursuit of happiness, and the idea of one nation.

“It’s the idea that Jefferson embraced at the beginning of the Declaration, declaring independence in the name of one nation and one people, then sparking a debate about which people were sovereign. Was that the people of the

United States as a whole, as Alexander Hamilton would come to say, or the people of each state as Jefferson would come to say — leading ultimately to the Civil War?” Rosen said. “Agreement about the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution were never part of the original plan. Debate and disagreement is not a bug; it’s a feature of the American experiment.”

Considering the role that cultural institutions play in fostering healthy civic dialogue, Rosen believes that the National Constitution Center should feature only constitutional debate, rather than political debate.

“History is about storytelling. That is what that great Ken Burns teaches, and I’ve learned from him as we all have, the riveting power of storytelling and its complexity — there are no simple answers in history. By honestly following the story and letting the narrative unfold, you both rivet and engage, and also can spread truth,” Rosen said. “We are inviting all Americans to be lifelong learners, to engage in this rigorous project of self-education, to hear the arguments on both sides of liberals and conservatives, historians and scholars, and make up their own mind. With that basic principle in mind, we feel like there’s nothing we can’t talk about, and there is so much light we can spread.”

In opening up dialogue, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival balances the difficult aspects of history with the celebration of what America has accomplished. Motley finds that, while it may sound “soft” to some, the arts are what keep us going, and the embracing of difficult moments is what ultimately allows for triumph.

“It’s yin and yang — they belong together. These moments, our most difficult moments in our history, are also the ones we really need to unpack, so we do see the things that move us, that make us better and call us to our truer and higher selves,” Motley said. “There has not been a time when this festival has not been created, curated and presented that’s not fraught — that’s part of the work. We lose our way when we don’t take every opportunity to demonstrate the best of us; that comes through the work of weavers, potters or a song.”

Having brought a bound copy of the program from the 1976 Festival of American Folklife, Motley referenced an article by Margaret Mead from a time when the commemoration of America’s bicentennial aroused criticisms amidst an economic recession, a presidential resignation and the tragedy of the Vietnam War.



Jeffrey Rosen, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center, joins in conversation with Sabrina Lynn Motley, director of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and Chautauqua Chief Program Officer Deborah Sunya Moore Thursday in the Amphitheater.

“(Mead) goes on to say that life does not stop for difficult times. The celebration of our 100th anniversary as a nation also took place in times of trouble. It’s a good reminder that we come to this moment again carrying weight but also paving the way for opportunity through the work that we do,” Motley said. “It’s certainly the thing that gets me out of bed every day and makes me remember why this work is important. Not only now but for the future.”

Rosen aims for a solid equilibrium in looking back at history while moving through everyday life. When he visited Chautauqua last year, Rosen discussed his book *The Pursuit of Happiness: How Classical Writers on Virtue Inspired the Lives of the Founders and Defined America* and how it changed the way he thought about happiness as being good over feeling good.

“When I wake up, before I can make a hash out of the day and bungle everything up, I deep read or listen for half an hour or an hour. That is something we can all do on our own and we have the duty, a responsibility to use our day as well as we can for lifelong learning. At the same time, artifacts and encounters with history in physical places are crucial,” Rosen said. “It is such a privilege to lead the Constitution Center in Philadelphia because every street you walk down there is a plaque or place where Benjamin Franklin founded the fire department or the Junto or the University of Pennsylvania; he founded something on almost every block and you can see it.”

As Rosen discusses the importance of sources like

texts and artifacts, Motley finds that human encounters to be particularly enriching. At its conception, the Folklife Festival was all about discovery; now, they’re settling into the age of encounter.

“Our primary texts are actually people at the Folklife Festival,” Motley said. “With that encounter, you have said so beautifully, comes a responsibility to be present and to do the deep thinking and the listening to be present and in community with one another. Those are our primary sources — our people, our stories — they allow us to do that deep work that comes with encounter and carry the responsibility of being with one another in that deep exchange. Those primary sources anchor us but they also lift us and allow us to go deeper, both into our own worlds and communities, and into each other’s.”

Deciding which stories to tell can seem inherently political, noted Deborah Sunya Moore, Chautauqua’s chief program officer who served as moderator for the discussion. Neutrality is a stance that more often than not benefits those in power — does that mean it’s something to strive for?

“You said the ‘n’ word which I dread — that ‘neutral’ word. I look at the Smithsonian as a whole and it’s a word that I struggle with. I am not sure honestly if our role is to be neutral or to be expensive, and we get perhaps to something more meaningful when we are expansive. Now again, the hard part about being expensive is it requires nuance,” Motley said. “Those histories bump up against each other and make people uncomfortable as we know, but it is critical that we tell them.”

Rosen thinks about expansiveness in terms of knowledge and devouring all the sources one can. He references Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s idea of an embracing Constitution with open arms to show there is always more history to learn.

“The more history you learn, the more you know how little you learn. It is so urgently important to keep digging in deep to the primary sources and learning the stories that you haven’t yet heard before,” Rosen said. “It’s a great time to study history, many voices are being resurrected but it’s so important to let them speak in their own voices and for all of us to actually read them. When you read the text, you see the same questions we’re having now: did the Declaration extend to all human beings or not?”

Studying history is not only a duty of citizenship, it is a pleasure and privilege.

“The founders think that the whole experiment will collapse if we go the way of Rome and Greece and surrender our liberties in exchange for cheap entertainments and cheap luxuries, unless you have the virtuous self-mastery to learn about history,” Rosen said. “It’s impossible to learn too much history but you have to take the time to do it, recognize that it’s complicated and recognize that almost every question has been a matter for debate then make up your own mind.”


Considering the complications of remaining in service to something bigger than the institution, Smithsonian Folklife Festival has evolved since their conception in 1967.

Defining the themes for next year’s Folklife Festival, Motley said they will be centered around “remembering together, harmonizing together, moving together and growing together,” and will be opening around Juneteenth.

“Who gets to shape the American promise? Who is it for and why does it matter? How does culture play a role in our understanding of what it means to be an American? Those questions have shifted a bit,” Motley said. “We would have a much more global approach into how we do our work. We are making links between source countries and diaspora communities. We are asking what is going to become of us. And again, how does cultural production both inform what that would be and reflect our values — the things that bring us together. So the mission of the center that produces the festival really is to think about issues of belonging, connection and the importance of gathering, of face-to-face interaction.”

The Smithsonian was created to be a part of developing American national identity, so Motley had a question about Rosen’s book that detailed how classic writers on virtue inspired the lives of the founders and defined America.


“It is crucial also to realize that the debate itself — that defined America. We cannot say what the future will hold, that’s in the hands of fortune and fate and providence,” Rosen said. “But we can do our part, which is to learn about history and participate in the debate; by participating in the debate, we can define America.”



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Innes, Neubauer, Foorman funds provide for Al-Shamahi

The Sue Hammond Innes Lectureship in Science, the Joseph A. Neubauer Lectureship in Science and The Barbara R. Foorman Science Literacy Endowment are providing support for Ella Al-Shamahi's lecture at 10:45 a.m. today in the Amphitheater.

Sue Hammond Innes was born in Willits, California. She attended Stanford University. Following college, she spent two years at the Harvard School of Public Health earning a Master of Public Health with a focus on microbiology, later receiving her Doctor of Medicine from University of California, Davis, where she met her future husband, Jeff.

After medical school, they relocated to Ohio, where Sue spent 25 years as a pediatric

pathologist at the Children's Hospital in Columbus, devoting her career to furthering knowledge of pathology. Sue was soft-spoken, diplomatic and humble, and she was a champion of science and its importance in the world today. She was constantly reading books about science and often emphasized the importance of having science represented in Chautauqua lectures. This lectureship is a small way to celebrate Sue's life and her lifelong dedication to a career in science.

Additional support is through the Neubauer Lectureship. Joseph Neubauer served as both a director of the Chautauqua Foundation and a trustee of Chautauqua Institution. He chaired the trustees' Chautauqua Fund

Committee and served on the nominating and development committees. He was vice president of the Chautauqua Foundation. Neubauer, born in 1911, was a graduate of Case Institute of Technology and of Harvard Business School. He was married in 1935 and resided in Pittsburgh with his wife Marian. She established the lectureship in 1991 in her husband's memory. She continued her active participation in Chautauqua until her death in 2004. The Neubauer children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are in residence each summer.

Also providing funding for today's lecture is the Foorman Endowment. Lifelong Chautauquan Barbara Foorman established the endowment in 2018 to build science

literacy through lecture programming, including morning and Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle lectures, science education and mentoring programs and related support to science education for all ages. Dr. Foorman is the Emerita Kraft Professor of Education, director emeritus of the Florida Center for Reading Research and director of the Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast at Florida State University. Dr. Foorman is an internationally known expert in reading and was commissioner of NCER at IES during 2005. Dr. Foorman has her Bachelor of Arts from Stanford, her Master of Arts in Teaching from Harvard and her Doctor of Philosophy from University of California, Berkeley.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

40 Bat

1 Swindles

6 Ship poles

11 Verboten

12 Lama's land

13 Director Welles

14 Beast of Borden

15 Zodiac sign

16 Series start

18 Long swimmer

19 Virtual person in a computer game

20 Went ahead

21 Rebuff

23 Happen again

25 Gentle pull

27 Morse bit

28 Lot choice

30 Ties the knot

33 Shocking sound

34 Unruly group

36 Horse healer

37 Optimistic exclamation

39 Copying

41 Little hooter

43 Peace goddess

44 Fry lightly

45 Bakery buys

46 Cornered

DOWN

1 Fancy wraps

2 Barrel along

3 Corrupting force

4 Cattle call

5 Ditties

6 Checked

7 Carpet feature

8 8, for -8

9 "Stand by Me" director

10 Spirited horse

17 Ventilate

22 Future flower

24 Farm grazer

26 Ova, e.g.

28 African expanse

29 Simple denials

31 Take out

32 Put into words

33 "Be quiet!"

35 Increase

38 Breathe loudly

42 Simple card game

Yesterdays answer

8-22



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Follansbee Fund supports Moore

The George and Julie Follansbee Family Fund is providing support for the Interfaith Lecture by Russell Moore at 2 p.m. today in the Hall of Philosophy. The fund was established in 2008 by the Follansbees and added to in succeeding years, including at her death, by Julie Follansbee. The fund was established to honor the Institution's central role in the life of their family.

Shorty Follansbee came to Chautauqua for 94 of his 96 years. Julie came often during her youth and each summer subsequent to 1941. During the summer of 1944, Shorty asked Julie Barnum to attend the movies with him in Mayville, and she accepted. Eleven

months later, they married in Minneapolis, Julie's hometown. At the time, he represented the third generation of his family to come to Chautauqua and Julie represented the fifth, with her great-great-grandmother, Sophia Sanborn, having come to Chautauqua in the 1870s. Today, their great-grandchildren represent the sixth generation of Follansbees and the eighth generation of the Sanborn family to participate in the life of the Institution. Shorty, a teacher for 40 years, served Chautauqua in numerous capacities, including as director of Boys' and Girls' Club, president of the Property Owners Association, trustee, chief development officer and acting president. He was Chautauqua Golf Club Champion in 1932 and again in 1937, but was best known for his passion for baseball as expressed at the ball field on the south end of the grounds. Shorty had been captain of the Princeton University baseball team in 1934. Julie served as a volunteer for the Chautauqua Fund and an engaged volunteer for the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, particularly her Class of 1963's sponsorship of Pioneer Hall. Between them, they served as coordinator of the Sunday ushers for nearly 50 years.

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AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

8-22 CRYPTOQUOTE

Z P M K G M R A G C L P J C V Z G

I G K H V J R P I J - C P G I Y X G A Y V M

G R Z F K W G R A W P U K G M J C V Z

G I G K H V J T C P G N .

— CYKWGCN E C Y Q W A

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: ROSES ARE RED, MUD IS BROWN, THE WOODS ARE BETTER THAN ANY NIGHT ON THE TOWN. — EARL DIBBLES JR.

SUDOKU

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

4 5 1 7 2 6 3 8 9

Difficulty: ★★★★★ 8/22

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4 2 1 9 7 8 3 6 5

5 3 9 6 1 2 7 8 4

7 9 5 1 6 3 2 4 8

6 4 2 7 8 5 9 3 1

1 8 3 2 4 9 5 7 6

2 5 8 4 3 1 6 9 7

3 1 7 8 9 6 4 5 2

9 6 4 5 2 7 8 1 3

Difficulty: ★★★ 8/21

RELIGION

Present darkness could bring forth new birth, new traditions, preaches McLaren

The Rev. Brian McLaren attended his 50th high school reunion in 2024. In high school, in his hippie days, he had long hair, a big beard and wore bell bottoms and a T-shirt.

“My friends would look at me and wonder who this old, bald guy was, but suddenly there was recognition in their eyes and we picked up where we had left off.”

He continued, “I remembered afterward feeling that we were sincerely interested in each other. Not like people you meet at a party and you find out everything there is to know about them but they learned nothing about you. Or, I was the person who never found out anything about you. I think religion is like that — so concerned with self, status and survival — that we forget that if we try to save our life we will lose it, but if we let go of our life, we will find something grand.”

McLaren preached at the 9:15 a.m. Thursday morning worship service in the Amphitheater. His sermon title was “Paul’s Tradition in Travail,” and the scripture reading was Romans 8:18-27.

He told the congregation that he knew the Apostle Paul got mixed reviews. “Paul was certainly concerned about the fledgling movement that would later become Christianity, but I think Paul knew that this movement did not and could not exist for itself. It had a bigger vision, a larger vision for the common good; a vision for the whole world, a vision not just for human beings, but for all of creation.”

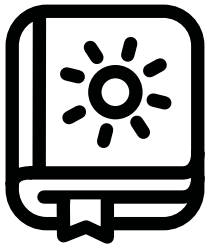
McLaren said all faiths face this challenge, to move from concern about the well-being of the tradition to the survival of all. In the letter to the Romans, Paul’s concern is for all creation, not just the little Christian movement. Paul mentions creation a number of times: Creation awaits to be set free from decay, creation looks to obtain the glory of the children of God, it suffers the pains of labor and humans feel that groaning all around them.

Quoting Father Richard Rohr, McLaren said, “He taught us that the great lesson of life is that life is not about us. We are about life.”

Paul suggested that the same Spirit that hovered over creation is still alive in every breath of creation. “It is groaning in labor pains, looking for liberation from decay,” McLaren said.

He noted that the traditional interpretation for the decay of creation was to punish Adam and Eve. “I think that is bonkers. (There was applause from the congregation.) It doesn’t make sense at all. I think what is a much more obvious and more legitimate way to read the text, and others who think that, there are two of us — you and me, I hope.”

McLaren continued, “I believe that creation has been subject to human beings and human beings have walked on the earth with such arrogance and carelessness wanting to ‘till, baby, till,’ and ‘drill, baby, drill’ and never care for this precious earth that is our home. Worse than a teenager who lives in his room for six months without ever picking up a dirty sock, dirty underwear or ever cleaning under the bed, we’ve soiled our home. We subjected the earth to imbalance and decay. What needs to happen, Paul says in Romans, is that the human species be to finally grow up and start actually acting like human beings are supposed to act — responsible, not



MORNING WORSHIP

COLUMN BY MARY LEE TALBOT

arrogant; caring about everyone, not just ourselves.”

Paul was not the uptight, religious fundamentalist, McLaren said. He used a female metaphor to describe the pain the world was in — labor pains. “It is one of the most powerful metaphors in all of human experience — that creation is suffering labor pains, trying to give birth to something new.”

McLaren continued, “Just imagine for a few moments, especially if you have a bad opinion of Paul — which I can’t blame you for having, not so much because of Paul, but because of the colonizer men who have used Paul for their purposes. I would like you to imagine that Paul was a deep, visionary, spiritual mystic to whom something happened that shook up his arrogant colonizer mindset.”

Things are not as they should be in the nation, our civilization, our species, even within ourselves. McLaren said even the trees, the fish, the birds can feel it. “They all experience the same malady — that humans have a knee on the neck of the living earth, they won’t let it breathe.”

If humans don’t feel the death pains, if we don’t feel the doom, we are not paying attention, he told the congregation. Paul, though, suggests that these could be labor pains, that something new is trying to be born. The new life cannot come to fruition lightly, there has to be pain, contractions and transitions.

In 2025, McLaren said, we hear the groaning of the ice sheets in the Arctic and Antarctic as they crack and split and melt into tears. He told the congregation that we hear the ground tonight in the beautiful call of the crickets, and also hear the lament for the great die-off reducing the biomass of insects that play such an important part in the beautiful balance of the whole.

He said, “You feel it in yourself as you look around at what humans are doing to each other, what we’re doing to hallowed traditions, values that have sustained our ancestors. You even feel it in yourself and you ask yourself, who subjected the earth to this oppression, this exploitation, this harm? It was our species, our species in a lustful orgy of arrogant domination and decadent profit-taking “

Something is trying to be born — a new humanity, not up in heaven with a harp but embodied on earth. “Jesus saw the need for all our species to be born again and Paul saw a new way of being human on earth,” McLaren said.

He shared a story from Sikh activist Valarie Kaur about giving birth. In birthing labor, Kaur said, there is a stage that



DAVE MUNCH / PHOTO EDITOR
The Rev. Brian D. McLaren preaches Sunday in the Amphitheater.

is the most painful stage, the final stage in labor, where the body expands to 10 centimeters. The contractions come so fast that there’s barely time to breathe. It feels like dying, and is called transition.

“I would not have called it that,” Kaur said. “During my transition I remember the first time the midwife said she could see the baby’s head, but all I could feel was a ring of fire. And I turned to my mother and I said, ‘I can’t.’ And my mother, her hand on my forehead was whispering in my ear, ‘You are brave, you are brave.’ Just then I saw my grandmother stand behind my mother and her mother behind her, and her mother behind her, a long line of women who had pushed through the fire before me. I took a breath. I pushed. And my son was born.”

McLaren said, “What if the darkness in our country and in our world is not the darkness of the tomb, but the darkness of the womb? What if all of our ancestors who pushed through the fire before us, who survived genocide, and colonization, slavery, and sexual assault, what if they are standing behind us now whispering in our ears, ‘You are brave, you are brave’? What if this is our great time of transition?”

He continued, “Will we give birth to new traditions from old traditions? There is a world waiting to be born with an identity in the divine community. We can rediscover our identity as children of God. May something new be born from our traditions. May something new be born.” The congregation applauded.

Melissa Spas, vice president for religion at Chautauqua, presided. Alicen Robert, student minister in the Department of Religion for 2025, read the scripture. For the prelude, Barbara Hois, flute, and Willie LaFavor, piano, both members of the Motet Consort, performed “Nocturne - Pièce courte,” by Lili Boulanger. The Motet Choir sang “O Thou who Camest from Above,” music by Philip W.J. Stopford and text by Charles Wesley as the prelude. The choir was under the direction of Joshua Stafford, director of sacred music and Jared Jacobsen Chair for the Organ, and accompanied by Owen Reyda on the Massey Memorial Organ. Reyda played “Allegro con Spirito,” by Frank Bridge on the Massey Organ for the postlude. Support for this week’s preaching and chaplaincy is provided by the Robert D. Campbell Memorial Chaplaincy and the Daney-Holden Chaplaincy Fund.


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PROGRAM

<div><div>F</div><div>FRIDAY AUGUST 22</div></div>		8:45 Catholic Mass. Episcopal Chapel of the Good Shepherd	12:30 Chautauqua Dialogues. (Programmed by the Department of Religion and IDEA Office.) Lutheran House	2:00 INTERFAITH LECTURE SERIES. Russell Moore , editor in chief, <i>Christianity Today</i> . Hall of Philosophy and CHQ Assembly	5:00 Masters Series. Meet the Filmmaker: Ella Al-Shamahi presents "Human." Fee. Hall of Christ	7:15 Chautauqua Mystic Heart Meditation Program. Leader: Carol McKiernan (Silent Meditation/Centering Prayer.) Hall of Philosophy
6:15 Sunrise Kayak & Paddleboard. Sign up with payment one to two days before event at 716-357-6281 or sportsclub@chq.org. Sports Club	7:00 (7–11) Chautauqua Farmers Market. Massey and Miller	8:55 (8:55–9) Chautauqua Prays For Peace Through Compassion. Hall of Missions Grove	12:30 Betsy's Garden Walk. (Programmed by the Bird, Tree & Garden Club.) Betsy Burgeson, supervisor of garden and landscapes, Chautauqua Institution. Children's School North Side	2:00 THEATER Chautauqua Theater Company presents the world premiere and CTC commission of <i>The Witnesses</i> (formerly <i>Tell Me You're Dying</i>). (Reserved seating; purchase tickets at Main Gate Welcome Center or Visitors Center ticket offices and one hour before curtain at Bratton kiosk.) Talkback and book signing to follow. Bratton Theater	5:45 Cinema Film Screening. "Perfect Days." Fee. Chautauqua Cinema	9:00 (9-3) Art Exhibit. "The West Branch of the Neversink Under Threat Under Stress." Hovey Brock. Smith Memorial Library
7:00 (7–9) "Dawn Patrol" Round Robin Doubles. (Programmed by the Chautauqua Tennis Center.) Chautauqua Tennis Center	7:45 Chautauqua Mystic Heart Meditation Program. Leader: Sharon Wesoky (Mahanaya Buddhist Meditation.) Presbyterian House Chapel	9:00 Jack's Nature Walk. (Programmed by the Bird, Tree & Garden Club.) Jack Gulvin, naturalist. Smith Wilkes Hall Lakeside Patio	12:30 Play Discussion. <i>The Witnesses</i> (Programmed by Friends of Chautauqua Theater) Jessica Trapasso Memorial Pavilion at Children's School	3:30 Heritage Lecture Series. (Programmed by the Oliver Archives Center.) "Clio in the Stacks: Archives Between Progress, Praxis <i>et alia</i> ." Jonathan D. Schmitz , archivist and historian, Chautauqua Institution. Hall of Philosophy	6:15 Chautauqua Choir Rehearsal. Anyone interested in singing for Sunday worship must attend one rehearsal; two or more recommended. Fletcher Music Hall	9:30 Chabad Jewish House Community Shabbat Service. Rabbi Zalman Vilenkin. Zigdon Chabad Jewish House
7:45 Episcopal Holy Eucharist. Episcopal Chapel of the Good Shepherd	8:00 Daily Word Meditation. (Programmed by Unity of Chautauqua.) Hall of Missions left side door	9:00 (9-10) Member Coffee Hour. (Programmed by the Chautauqua Women's Club.) CWC House	12:45 Catholic Seminar Speaker Series. "Top Ten Spiritual Classics." Jeff Wood, retired attorney, River Forest, Illinois. Methodist House Chapel	3:30 Chautauqua Dialogues. (Programmed by the Department of Religion and IDEA Office.) U.U. House	7:30 Sung Compline. (Programmed by the Episcopal Cottage.) Episcopal Chapel of the Good Shepherd.	10:00 Season Highlights. (Programmed by Friends of Chautauqua Theater and the Bob McClure CHQ Play Readers.) "Highlights from Our 2024-25 Season." Donations accepted to benefit Roe Green Theater Center programming endowment. Smith Wilkes Hall
8:00 (8:30–8:45) Chautauqua Mystic Heart Meditation Program. Leader: Monte Thompson (Movement and Meditation.) Hall of Philosophy Grove	8:30 (8:30–8:45) Chautauqua Mystic Heart Meditation Program. Leader: Monte Thompson (Movement and Meditation.) Hall of Philosophy Grove	9:15 ECUMENICAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP AND SERMON. Brian D. McLaren , Dean of Faculty, Center for Action and Contemplation. Amphitheater and CHQ Assembly	1:00 English Lawn Bowling. 20-minute free instruction, then opt to play for fee. Bowling Green	3:30 Chautauqua Dialogues. (Programmed by the Department of Religion and IDEA Office.) Episcopal Cottage	8:15 AMPHITHEATER SPECIAL. O.A.R.: Lost Weekend Tour. Amphitheater	1:00 Memorial Service Honoring the Life of the Rev. Joan Brown Campbell. Hall of Philosophy
		10:00 (10-3) Archives Exhibitions Open. "True and False Artifacts." Oliver Archives Center	1:00 Open House. (Programmed by the African American Heritage House.) African American Heritage House, 40 Scott	3:30 Chautauqua Dialogues. (Programmed by the Department of Religion and IDEA Office.) Episcopal Cottage	8:45 Cinema Film Screening. "Everything's Going To Be Great." Fee. Chautauqua Cinema	2:00 THEATER. Chautauqua Theater Company presents the world premiere and CTC commission of <i>The Witnesses</i> (formerly <i>Tell Me You're Dying</i>). (Reserved seating; purchase tickets at Main Gate Welcome Center or Visitors Center ticket offices and one hour before curtain at Bratton kiosk.) Closing Performance. Bratton Theater
		10:15 Service of Blessing and Healing. UCC Randell Chapel	1:00 Mah Jongg. (Programmed by the Chautauqua Women's Club.) Memberships available at the door. CWC House	3:30 Chautauqua Dialogues. (Programmed by the Department of Religion and IDEA Office.) Literary Arts Center at Alumni Hall		2:00 Public Shuttle Tour of Grounds. Fee. (Purchase tickets at Main Gate Welcome Center.) Leave from Main Gate Welcome Center
		10:45 CHAUTAUQUA LECTURE SERIES. Ella Al-Shamahi, National Geographic Explorer, palaeoanthropologist, evolutionary biologist. Amphitheater and CHQ Assembly	1:15 Informal Critique Session. (Programmed by the Friends of the Chautauqua Writers' Center.) Bring 10 copies of one page of poetry or prose. Literary Arts Center at Alumni Hall Garden Room	5:00 Hebrew Congregation Evening Service. "Kabbalat Shabbat: Welcoming the Sabbath." Rabbi Rob Morais, rabbi, Temple Anshe Hese'd, Erie, Pennsylvania. Jessica Thorpe Rhoades, cantorial soloist. Shabbat'zza – Post-Service Pizza Picnic in the Park. Bring your own		5:00 Catholic Mass. Hall of Philosophy
		12:15 Twelve Step Meeting. Marion Lawrance Room, Hurlbut Church	1:30 Public Shuttle Tour of Grounds. Fee. (Purchase tickets at Main			6:00 Cinema Film Screening. "Everything's Going To Be Great."
		12:15 Summer on the Steps. (Programmed by Chautauqua Literary Arts.) An Open Mic Tribute to Nikki Giovanni. Literary Arts Center at Alumni Hall Porch				



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Jesus, give the weary calm and sweet repose; With Thy tenderest blessing may our eyelids close.

When the morning wakens, then may I arise Pure, and fresh, and sinless in Thy holy eyes.

Glory to the Father, Glory to the Son, And to Thee, blest Spirit, while all ages run.

Tune: Merrial Joseph Barnby Sabine Baring-Gould (altered)]

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