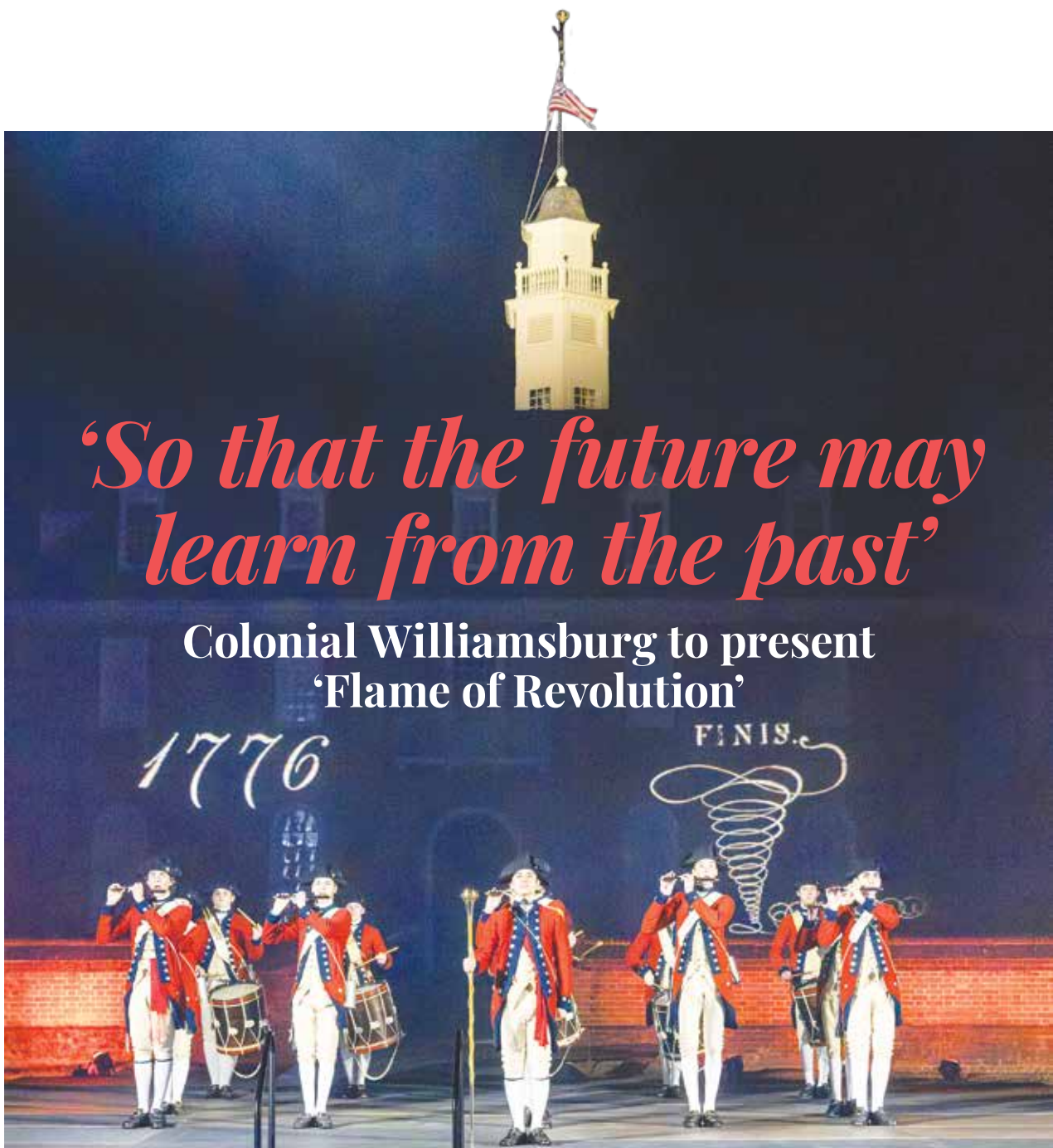


The Chautauquan Daily



‘So that the future may learn from the past’

Colonial Williamsburg to present
‘Flame of Revolution’

JULIA WEBER
ASSISTANT EDITOR

At 8 p.m. tonight in the Amphitheater, the weeklong programming between Chautauqua Institution and Colonial Williamsburg will culminate in a retelling of U.S. history through a multimedia performance. Tonight’s performance wraps a week of programming, including Masters Series Masterclass appearances by “nation builders” portrayed by historical reenactors, his-

toric trade demonstrations in Bestor Plaza and recurring fife and drum performances outside Norton Hall. “‘Flame of Revolution’ was a program that we designed to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Fifth Virginia Convention, where Virginia declares its independence, ultimately leading to the Declaration of Independence,” Associate Vice President of Performing Arts and Signature Events Robert Currie explained.

See **WILLIAMSBURG**, Page 4

George to reflect on context of Declaration of Independence

ARIANNA NEVAREZ
STAFF WRITER

Though the Declaration of Independence was written in 1776, it remains the basis for the U.S. government. Yet Robert P. George said on this 250th anniversary, the country must analyze the document for what it meant then versus how it has been translated into 2026. “From the very beginning, we know that our nation contradicted its founding principles because we had slavery and while proclaiming that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights and among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. So there was a contradiction right at the founding,” George said. “Now that doesn’t mean that the principles are wrong or bad, but it does show that stating the principles is one thing — living up to them is another thing.” On his third visit to Chautauqua, George will close out the Week Six Chautauqua Lecture Series theme of “America at 250: In Partnership with The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation” with a lecture focused on the Declaration of Independence and its historical significance at 10:45 a.m. Friday in the Amphitheater. George is currently the McCormick professor of Jurisprudence and director of the James Madison program in American Ideals and Institutions at Prince-



GEORGE

ton University. As a scholar of philosophy of law and of American civic institutions, the 250th anniversary of the U.S. and of the Declaration of Independence is “a big deal” to George. He has been teaching about the Declaration and the Constitution for 41 years in academia. “Despite the faults of the founders, I celebrate the American founding because they did it. They pulled it off,” George said. “They created a republic that works. They eventually, a few years after the Declaration, were able to come up with a constitution, a charter of government that built in protections against the things that had caused previous republics to collapse, and again, often into the worst forms of tyranny. So we have a lot to celebrate, but then we should also use the occasion to rededicate ourselves to the principles.”

See **GEORGE**, Page 4

Matejka, Anderson to discuss writing through history for CLSC



MATEJKA



ANDERSON

NORA SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Today, no living person can recount what it was like to live during the American Revolution and the smallpox epidemic, and a century from now, few will be able to recount the experience of disinfecting groceries, keeping a distance of six feet and the fear that a sneeze brought to a crowd during the COVID-19 pandemic. Luckily, there are written works that tell the stories of these times past, whether

through firsthand experiences or through meticulous historical research. Award-winning author Adrian Matejka, poet and current editor-in-chief of *Poetry Magazine*, unknowingly buried a time capsule by spending the entirety of the COVID-19 pandemic writing poems. Laurie Halse Anderson, a *New York Times* best-selling author, went back in time to tell the story of the American Revolution through the eyes of a young girl in

Boston during the smallpox epidemic after navigating her own experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Matejka and Anderson will be in conversation via similar threads of history in their work during their respective presentations on their Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle selections at 2 p.m. today in the Hall of Philosophy. With Matejka’s newest collection of poetry, *Be Easy: New and Selected Poems*, on the shelves since May,

both the proof of when the world froze in time during the COVID-19 pandemic and the experiences and feelings of Matejka himself at the time are now immortalized through literature. *Be Easy* houses six poetry books in one, with Matejka having written the oldest poem in 1993 before 9/11 and having written the newest poem right before the collection was published around 2023 and 2024.

See **CLSC**, Page 4

IN TODAY’S DAILY



CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY

Allen brings EMT knowledge to Children’s School programs, plans to pursue medical career.

Page 2



MAKING A ‘DURABLE DEMOCRACY’

Barnes dissects checks and balances, tension between US political factions.

Page 3

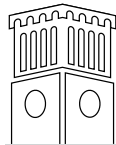


‘CHANNELING THE GUY I KNEW’

Designers honor Wilson through creative contributions to ‘How I Learned What I Learned.’

Page 7

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TODAY’S
WEATHER



H 77° L 67°
Rain: 87%
Sunset: 8:30 p.m.

SATURDAY



H 81° L 65°
Rain: 88%
Sunrise: 6:18 a.m. Sunset: 8:29 p.m.

SUNDAY



H 80° L 66°
Rain: 8%
Sunrise: 6:19 a.m. Sunset: 8:28 p.m.

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COMMUNITY



BRIEFLY

NEWS FROM THE GROUNDS

The **Briefly** column appears on page 2 daily and is intended to provide space for announcements from Institution-related organizations. If a meeting or activity is featured that day in a story, it should not be repeated in the **Briefly** column. Submit information to Gracie Szablewski in the Daily's editorial office. Please provide the name of the organization, time and place of meeting and one contact person's name with a phone number. Deadline is 5 p.m. four days before publication.

Tennis Center news

The Tennis Center will host a team pickleball event from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday at the Tennis Center. Reserve your spot by signing up at the Pro Shop or by calling 716-357-6276.

Women's Club news

The Flea Boutique will be open from noon to 2 p.m. behind the Colonnade. Dr. Vino's "The Case for Austrian Wines" will take place at 5 p.m. at the CWC House. Tickets available at chautauquawomensclub.org.

Popcorn on the porch

Time for Friday popcorn on the porch! After the evening concert in the Amp, pop on over to the UM House Porch for some lemonade and popcorn! The perfect closer to a wonderful week at Chautauqua!

United Methodist House news

Join us for the presentation, "Do Palestinians Exist?" by speaker Dr. Houssam Abdul Al at 3:30 p.m. today at the UM House Chapel.

Smith Memorial Library news

At 12:30 p.m. today in Smith Memorial Library, John DeDakis, mystery author and former CNN editor, will share his life journey: "From Journalist to Novelist (or How I Learned to Make it Up)." At 3:30, join author Gary Sirak in conversation with Jane Kerschner about his book, *How to Retire and Not Die*. Signings to follow book talks. All library programs are free and in-person only; limited seating is first come, first served.

Correction

In the Aug. 6 edition of *The Chautauquan Daily*, an advertisement for 2026 Science Presentations, sponsored by the CLSC Science Circle, incorrectly stated that Meghan Collins will deliver a lecture on Friday, Aug. 7; she will speak at 9:15 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 11 in the Hurlbut Church Sanctuary.

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Friday at the CINEMA

Friday, August 7

MINIONS & MONSTERS - 6:00 The Minions bring their penchant for mayhem to Hollywood history in this affectionate and charming sendup of moviemaking magic. "Very funny and often insightful as it zooms through what amounts to a crash course in the early days of Hollywood moviemaking." -*Soren Andersen, Seattle Times* "A pure throwback to the early days of cinema." -*Kristen Lopez, The Film Maven (PG, 90m)*

CAROLINA CAROLINE - 8:30 Desperate to escape her small West Texas town, Caroline Daniels runs away with a charismatic con man who takes her on a romantic crime spree through the American South in Director **Adam Carter Rehmeier's** gothic thriller. "**Samara Weaving** and **Kyle Gallner**, two fine actors rarely granted the glow that comes with a proper star vehicle, positively bask in it here." -*Guy Lodge, Variety* "The movie is good from its first shot." -*Mick LaSalle, San Francisco Chronicle* "It's a rip-roaring, tragic, joyride." -*Zachary Lee, RogerEbert.com (R, 105m)*



thank you to our readers for 150 years!



SKYLAR SEAVEY / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Ben Allen, head lifeguard of Chautauqua's beaches and health director at Children's School, stands by his post Wednesday at Children's Beach.

Chautauqua inspires student to make a difference

JENELL TAYLOR
STAFF WRITER

For more than 150 years, Chautauqua Institution has acted as a hub for artistic expression, intellectualism, free thinking and belonging. Today, the grounds' unique heritage continues to inspire residents to pour back into the community in their own meaningful ways.

20-year-old biology student Ben Allen is dedicated to making change that reflects the heart of the Institution. He recently completed his EMT certification and plans to pursue a career in the medical field. This fall, he'll head into his senior year at Davidson College in North Carolina.

"There was a large textbook with different skills to cover, and once you're done with that, you do an oral [exam]," he said. "You walk through the steps of taking care of patients, then you do your clinical hours."

Allen said his clinical hours working with the EMT department helped him gain much of his experience. He ran first response drills and practiced maintaining his situational awareness skills, which came in handy for his first emergency call — a heart attack event.

"There's really severe calls you go to," he said. "You go to a cardiac event for one call, and then the next call you're on a basic transport for someone who has a hospital appointment."

Allen said it's crucial for a community to have the proper access to medical care. Otherwise, "they can't make it." He said the program's interactive qualities were a productive introduction to healthcare. "It's a great way to ride along and understand your community better, because I went into all parts of my town," he explained.

Allen's knowledge in the program continues to serve him in his new role as health director at Children's School. He's charged with keeping track of important documents, including student immunization records, allergies, dietary restrictions and medications. He also assists in fire and safety drills.

"We did a missing child drill this week, you know — just in case anything severe happens," he said. "We always want to be prepared — like making sure the teachers understand the process, and engaging with the administration and security."

As part of his EMT training, Allen was taught the proper steps to take when assisting patients who might be feeling overwhelmed or apprehensive. "A lot of our training is

learning to adjust to those situations," he said. "Dealing with geriatric patients, pediatric patients, babies and anyone who is in an altered mental status — having that training in talking to people is really important."

He spoke about handling children with care and ensuring they understand the situation in order to "connect with them in a way that makes them feel safe."

"When they come to you, they're really scared — they just got hurt. Needing someone that's going to talk to them and calm them down is a big part of it," he said.

Allen said he has noticed positive reactions when the children are spoken to with care and respect.

"You can see them get better — and by the end, they're ready to go back to class and have a good day."

When he was a child, Allen attended both Children's School and Boys' and Girls' Club, and later chose to return to work with the new students.

"For the Fourth of July, I'd paint my face with the American flag and we'd march down the aisle of the Amphitheater — I still remember everything about it," he recalled.

Allen said his father was also a Clubber and would spend his days playing dodgeball and performing in Airband. His sister was involved in community programs as well, and would use her time to practice ballet in the School of Dance.

In fact, Allen's family has been visiting Chautauqua consistently for more than 40 years.

"My family first came up here in the '80s with my grandparents — and my dad — he went through Club up here," he said.

Allen said some of his fondest memories were made in Chautauqua, and named an Old First Night Run/Walk as one of his most memorable. However, he said the most notable were the days spent playing golf with his late grandfather.

"My grandpa — he recently passed away — [me and my sister] would go play golf over at the Golf Club here," he said. "There's a great course over there and I always remember being with my grandpa."

Allen said his experience this summer is one example of a popular trend among young people in Chautauqua. Many high schoolers, he explained, attend Children's School and Club as children and later return as counselors.

"It's kind of like you can get your first job right out of school," he said.

When he's not on call at Children's School, Allen is also the head lifeguard at



SKYLAR SEAVEY / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Allen, a former Children's School student and Clubber who grew up coming to Chautauqua, has plans to pursue a career in the medical field.

Chautauqua's beaches. "I'm there to respond to any emergencies — usually involving first aid or anything another lifeguard might need help with," he explained.

"The people down there are just great to work with," he said. "I work with Anna and Derek — the waterfront directors — and Alyssa, who oversees everything. They make it so easy to work up here, and it's really enjoyable."

Allen said thanks to Club faculty, the job has a relaxed atmosphere that makes it easy to bond with his fellow lifeguards and staff.

"They do a great job of connecting everyone up here, and it's a great group of kids," he said. "You go through Club with them and you make really good friends up here. I love that about it."

When he isn't on the clock, Allen likes to spend his time cycling and experimenting in the kitchen.

"I've been cooking since high school," he said. "I cooked for my grandparents a lot at home — it's always been fun." "They're from Louisiana, so we'd make jambalaya and stuff like that."

At the start of his summer, Allen said he would bike about 220 miles per week and amassed more than 700 miles. Now that his schedule is fuller, he aims for a few 60-mile rides each week.

"I joined a group down in Jamestown that does a lot of cycling," he said. "We

ride out from Jamestown to Lake Erie and then out in all directions." In the group of about 30 cyclists, he said the excursions are "a good way to explore the area around Chautauqua."

Allen said he enjoys exploring the Chautauqua Institution Archives and was impressed by the Institution's preservation of Chautauqua's history.

"It's cool looking through the archives — you can see the Children's Beach and Pier Beach so many years ago and [they're] still here," he said. "The history of this place is just so cool."

For the remainder of the summer, Allen said he can be found on the bike trails, filing documents at Children's School or keeping a watchful eye over Chautauqua's beaches.

"It's always fun because the swimmers are always really appreciative of the lifeguards and they always say thank you after they're done swimming," Allen said.

Without that access to the beaches, he said, "Chautauqua wouldn't be the same."

Reflecting on his summer thus far, Allen said being close to Chautauqua's beaches is the part he loves the most. After the intensity of his EMT program, he's been enjoying taking in the calm nature of the Institution before he heads back to school.

"I love being outside each day," he said. "It's nice to just look out over the water."

LECTURE

Barnes dissects checks and balances, tension between US factions

ARIANNA NEVAREZ
STAFF WRITER

Melody Barnes was born at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, a few months after Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act. She said she remembers the bicentennial moments and “Schoolhouse Rock!” videos that came with it. She worked on Capitol Hill on Sept. 11, and also worked to shape the nation’s response in the days, weeks and months after.

After experiencing some of the most pivotal moments in U.S. history during her lifetime, Barnes asked the question: “What enables a constitutional democracy not simply to survive, but to endure from disagreement, through crisis and through profound social change?”

“I believe the answer lies in one of the central insights of the American founding: that self-government requires both popular sovereignty and the rule of law,” Barnes said. “The founders believed that legitimate political power flows from the people, but they also understood that popular power left unconstrained could become as arbitrary as any case. Their great innovation was not simply to establish a government of the people, but to create institutions capable of channeling power through the law.”

At 10:45 a.m. Thursday in the Amphitheater, Barnes discussed self-government, the challenge of faction and citizens’ role in democracy. Barnes is the founding executive director of the University of Virginia’s Karsh Institute of Democracy. In 2024, she was an inaugural recipient of the Chautauqua Perry Fellowship.

To ground the idea of self-government, Barnes cited the Declaration of Independence and said it framed the nation’s “case for self-government in declaring that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

As the founding fathers built the declaration, Barnes said they were skeptical about democracy because they equated the idea with “unchecked majority rule” and “being impulsive, unsta-

ble and vulnerable to the passions of the moment,” which shaped how they created “a new constitutional order.”

The founding fathers avoided building a simple majority rule. Instead, they designed a system where citizens have the power, but it is exercised through branches of government and their processes.

“In the American model, democracy is judged not merely by who wins power... but whether power is constrained once it is won,” Barnes said. “Liberal authority rests ultimately with the people, but those entrusted with exercising authority remain accountable both to the people and to the Constitution.”

Barnes said power is grounded in popular sovereignty through the system by which citizens vote for representatives. Representatives are entrusted with political power and should only be used within the boundaries of the Constitution, according to Barnes. To carry her point, she cited James Madison in Federalist No. 51, where he said government must be grounded in popular sovereignty, and political power must also be constrained to prevent “a form of domination.”

In an analysis of what the founding fathers built, Barnes said their idea of popular government was “incomplete.” She said participation was exclusionary at the government’s founding, and recently, people have raised concerns about the Electoral College being “flawed.” Yet, Barnes said separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism and representation have all helped make “democracy durable.”

In recent years, there has been increased concern with executive power and the balance among the branches of government, according to Barnes. She said Madison believed representatives would not “simply mirror every passing public passion, but would exercise judgment in pursuit of the public good.” Simultaneously, Madison said no design could guarantee “virtuous leaders,” so



University of Virginia Karsh Institute of Democracy Founding Executive Director Melody Barnes speaks about how the founding fathers designed democracy in the U.S. Thursday in the Amphitheater.

Barnes said the founders created safeguards.

“That insight led Madison to one of the Constitution’s central purposes: addressing the challenge of faction,” Barnes said. “More than two centuries later, this challenge is very much with us today. ... Political polarization is consistently identified as one of the nation’s most pressing concerns, yet recent research from an organization called More in Common suggests that our divisions may be, in part, a trait of perception.”

The research said Americans estimate that “roughly twice as many of their political opponents hold extreme views as actually do,” Barnes said. She argued that divisiveness isn’t the only problem; misjudgment of one another is the larger issue.

Barnes said Madison wasn’t attempting to eliminate division and people’s differences, which are “natural consequences of liberty itself.” Instead, he was trying to prevent the division from becoming destructive. Barnes said the “constitutional system” was designed to require negotiation and coalition building, which would “discipline ambition” and move dis-

agreements through “institutions” rather than allowing a majority to make decisions without checks.

“The Constitution does not eliminate factions; it channels and controls their effects,” Barnes said. “That emphasis on constitutional institutional design, on how power is exercised — not simply where it originates — remains one of the defining strengths of the American constitutional tradition. This does bring us to a critical clarification. In the American political tradition, popular sovereignty does not mean unbounded power.”

The U.S.’s limited government uses its authority to direct toward a shared end of broader civic meaning, which is “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” according to Barnes. She said this referred to creating conditions where people can “build families, pursue meaningful work, practice their faith, participate in civic life and shape their own futures.”

Though people think of freedom as the ability to have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives, Barnes said the “republican tradition adds another di-

mension.” She said freedom can be undermined, and one can still not be truly free if it depends on someone else’s discretion. Barnes cited slavery as an example of this because even though some enslaved people lived separately or were given passes to travel, they were still “at the will of another.”

“This illustrates the central insight of the Republican tradition: freedom depends not only on how power is exercised, but on who wields it,” Barnes said. “Liberty that exists only by permission is fundamentally insecure. It is contingent rather than durable. The rule of law, not benevolence, is what transforms temporary remission into lasting freedom.”

Barnes argued democracy depends on the people of the U.S., from legislators upholding constitutional responsibilities to citizens who do more than vote every few years. Barnes said democracy asks people to “respect institutions” and “reject the temptation to abandon constitutional principles simply because they have become inconvenient.”

“We are living through a period of extreme democratic strain, deep polarization,

institutional stress, erosion of shared norms and declining trust—not only in public institutions but in one another,” Barnes said. “But this is not the first such moment in American history. Periods of democratic stress are not anomalies; they are woven into the American story.”

The system has been tested, according to Barnes, but she said it has held because individuals within “chose fidelity to law over loyalty to faction.” She said the government has stayed alive because people have shouldered the responsibilities of disagreement, holding people in power accountable and defending the rule of law.

“As we mark 250 years of the American experiment, we are reminded that self-government is not a destination; it is an ongoing project for every generation,” Barnes said. “Our history bears the sound. Progress toward a more perfect union has never come from abandoning the rule of law, but from insisting that it live up to its highest commitments. They are conditions that allow people to plan their lives and live freely, imagine a better future for themselves and generations to come.”

Waldstreicher explores Wheatley’s impact on the American Revolution

LILY RESLINK
STAFF WRITER

During his Interfaith Lecture, David Waldstreicher, distinguished professor of history at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and author of *The Odyssey of Phillis Wheatley: A Poet’s Journeys Through American Slavery and Independence*, sought to answer the question of how Phillis Wheatley contributed to anti-slavery efforts through her poetry.

He delivered a lecture at 2 p.m. Thursday in the Hall of Philosophy to “talk some history, read some poems and try to explain how a young female African born in 1753 became famous, a one-woman anti-slavery argument and [a] political actor.”

In his lecture, Waldstreicher explored the topic through the lens of religion and the American Revolution.

“[Wheatley’s fame] isn’t supposed to have happened, and yet it did,” he said. Understanding this anomaly guided Waldstreicher’s explanation of the religious and historical implications of Wheatley’s poetic impact.

To inform both his lecture and biography about Wheatley, Waldstreicher said a key consideration was the limited number of sources about Wheatley’s life.

Waldstreicher’s process of presenting a more comprehensive narrative of

Wheatley’s life involved a cross-analysis of about 53 poems and 18 letters, literature she read, news she digested, people she interacted with and historical moments she experienced.

Waldstreicher said, during the research process, he realized that with so few documents, an alternative avenue to learning more about Wheatley was to read everything he could be sure she also read. He said he began with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Acknowledging the gaps in knowledge and the degree of speculation in piecing together Wheatley’s story, his lecture concentrated on religion’s influence in both Wheatley’s personal life and slavery in the U.S.

In both Wheatley’s secular and religious impacts, Waldstreicher used the context of the historical movements and tensions surrounding her work and decisions. He explained the contextual importance of “popular poetry” at the time of Wheatley’s gradual emergence as a famous poet, comparing it to the culture of popular music today.

“Everybody was experimenting with rhyme. People were copying out poems that were philosophical and spiritual and political in their diaries, in their almanacs, in their ‘commonplace books,’ as they called them,” he said.

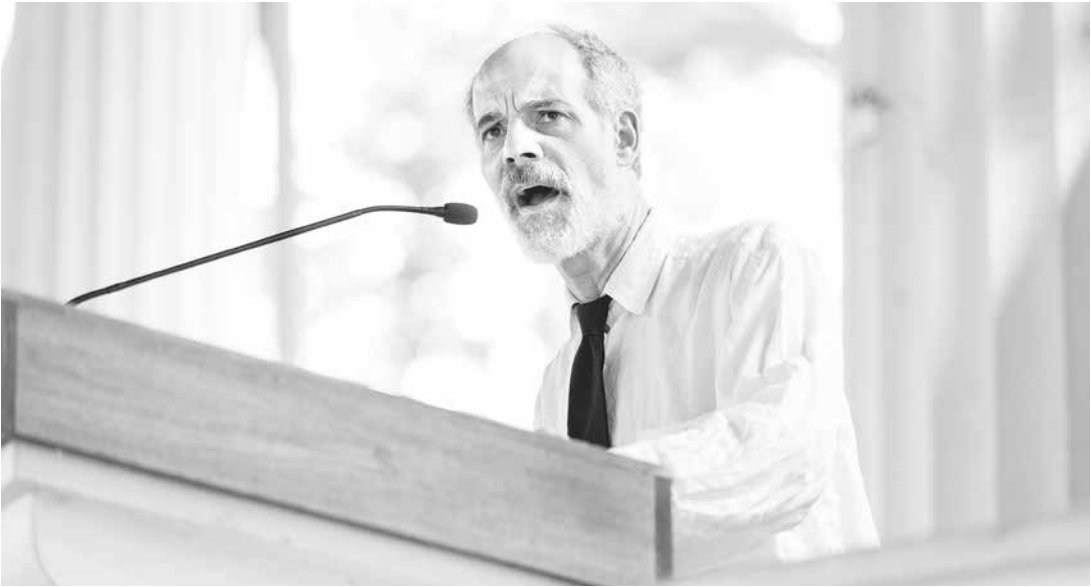
When Waldstreicher began reflecting on the American Revolution as an “interfaith story” to prepare this lecture, he said he thought of Wheatley’s 1772 published book of poetry: *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*.

He said this book captures the variety of what she was doing at just 19 years old: “It puts religion at the center, but it also insists on variety. It does not assume that all that is religious is moral, but it still insists on moral discourse.”

Waldstreicher explained the religious influence of John and Susanna Wheatley, the family who bought Wheatley as a slave. Susanna’s connections to the network of Evangelical reformers interested in converting Africans to Christianity became integral to the creation and distribution of Wheatley’s writings.

Waldstreicher also explained the questions some religious communities began to ask, for example, “Can slavery be Christian?” He said Wheatley leaned into these questions with her poetry and took on “the role of a lay clergyperson.” He tied her literary influence to her religious influence, which then propelled her path to greater public recognition.

“What might seem like a very secular literature, the *Odyssey*, and this very pious



Distinguished Professor of History at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York David Waldstreicher talks about poet Phillis Wheatley’s impact during the American Revolution Thursday in the Hall of Philosophy.

literature that she’s been doing, they come together,” he said.

Waldstreicher said he sees themes explored in Homer’s writings, such as divinity and salvation, incorporated into Wheatley’s works. As proof of Homer’s influence, he said he found that her poetry even paraphrased some of the *Odyssey*’s most popular translations.

To conclude, Waldstreicher said, “Wheatley’s story is a story about the possibilities and limits of the American Revolution, and it’s also a story about how the American Revolution is both a sacred and

“

Wheatley’s story is a story about the possibilities and limits of the American Revolution, and it’s also a story about how the American Revolution is both a sacred and secular, religious and not religious event.”

He made a closing call to action that referenced a line from *America*, Wheatley’s unfinished epic, which he read earlier in the lecture. He said, “And that

openness to multiple traditions and to dialogue and the possibilities that ‘sometimes by simile, a victor might be won’ is a lesson that Wheatley leaves for us, if we are willing to listen.”

—DAVID WALDSTREICHER

Distinguished Professor of History, Graduate Center of the City University of New York

FROM PAGE ONE

CLSC

FROM PAGE 1

Spanning more than 30 years, Matejka said the world is “just completely different” since the first book was written.

“So, to go back and look at them, there’s a little bit of naivete, both because I was very young writing them, but also because we were a very different country in 1993 than we are now,” Matejka said.

A section of poems in *Be Easy*, “Somebody Else Sold the World,” was composed entirely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I look back at it, and I was like, ‘Oh, it was so stressful, it was so terrible,’ and there were also these really bright moments, which I think is always true,” Matejka said. “Maybe that’s what poetry does, is poetry tries to find the bright moments even in the middle of the rest of it...”

Matejka said he often writes toward the past and on how he feels about his experiences in the present, but having written these poems during the pandemic, Matejka said they are living proof of the past and he is glad they exist so authentically.

“...I left all of it in the poems, even though we’d figured it out by the time the book was coming out, I was like ‘No, I want to remember how scary this was,’” Matejka said. “Because that also helps to try to frame the fact that we survived despite being kind of abandoned by the government, abandoned by some of our institutions, we did it anyway. We’re still here.”

In conversation with Anderson about her novel *Rebellion 1776*, Matejka said he thinks he’ll read some more historical work of his to produce “a more robustly American conversation.”

“...I’m always sort of mostly writing in the past anyway, but I’m so fascinated with the ways in which we can tell a truer version of the history we’ve been given, and I think that’s going to be a part of the conversation the two of us are going to have,” Matejka said.

According to a Q-and-A in *Publishers Weekly*, Anderson had been originally inclined to write a middle-grade adventure novel, *Rebellion 1776*, in 2020 when she herself had COVID-19 and noticed a similarity between then and the smallpox epidemic during the Revolutionary War.

“It’s good to read about

intense events at a historical remove, especially when we’re going through intense events ourselves,” Anderson said in the interview with *Publishers Weekly*. “And really, we read history to help us understand our lives today. Once I started researching the smallpox epidemic of the 1770s, boy, did it feel familiar to where we were in 2020.”

In that same interview, Anderson said these historical events have a much larger impact on children than adults, and because children today are growing up in a time of uncertainty, it’s important to “spark their curiosity about our history” to help prepare them to navigate the future.

“It’s important to tell the history accurately, though,” Anderson said in the *Publishers Weekly* interview. “Generations before us didn’t tell the whole story; they mostly told the stories of rich, white men. Now, though, we have digital tools that allow us to access a variety of primary sources in a way we never could before.”

In an interview with PEN America, Anderson offered advice to young people: “When life is hard, books help.”

Later in the interview, focusing on book banning

and the threat to children’s literature today, Anderson said, “It’s incredibly disheartening. It’s especially disheartening for me because in children’s publishing, we were just beginning to open the door to all kinds of authors, to all kinds of creators.”

When Anderson had COVID-19 herself, she began looking into Abigail Adams, who during the summer of 1776 underwent smallpox inoculation with her children. This event, 250 years ago, led to Anderson’s *Rebellion 1776*.

“I had to learn more about Boston in 1776 and I saw kind of a shadowy mirror that seemed very familiar, because it was a time of tremendous political divide, where families were being separated because of who they wanted to support, the king or new America,” Anderson said in the interview with PEN America. “And then there was this controversy about, do we get our children vaccinated, inoculated against smallpox, which also sounds very familiar.”

In that same interview, Anderson said as a writer in today’s political climate, it is crucial to “let the art bubble out of your soul,” and referenced As-



“

It’s good to read about intense events at a historical remove, especially when we’re going through intense events ourselves. And really, we read history to help us understand our lives today.”

—LAURIE HALSE ANDERSON

Author of *Rebellion 1776*

trid Lindgren’s children’s novel *Pippi Longstocking*, written during World War II, that had inspired Anderson to become a “strong girl” herself.

“Now, Sweden wasn’t occupied by Germany,” Anderson said in the PEN America

“

Folks can see the breadth and the scope of the performing arts department at Colonial Williamsburg and how it takes these historic primary sources and builds them into a story that people can really relate to and understand.”

—ROBERT CURRIE

Associate Vice President of Performing Arts and Signature Events, Colonial Williamsburg

ing history museum, Colonial Williamsburg is tasked with interpreting history, which Currie explained happens in numerous ways: preserving historic trades and skills and using storytelling and performing arts, including first- and third-

person interpretation.

The goal of Colonial Williamsburg’s work and tonight’s event, Currie said, is “to bring people into the past and tell the stories — both stories that are very familiar and those stories that were never told.”

“

From the very beginning, we know that our nation contradicted its founding principles because we had slavery and while proclaiming that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights.”

—ROBERT P. GEORGE

McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence, Princeton University

men are created equal that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.”

“Now, what about going forward? What are the other issues that challenge our commitment to the principle of the profound inherent and equal dignity of each and every member of the human family, which is what that principle of the Declaration really is,” George said. “... On this 250th anniversary, the public is tuning in to them. I’m trying to do my part to promote what I think will be a very healthy, and already is a very healthy, public conversation and set of reflections on these issues.”

WILLIAMSBURG

FROM PAGE 1

Currie said the weeklong partnership between Colonial Williamsburg and the Institution is a “natural fit” because both organizations are dedicated to “lifelong learning.”

“While these stories are 250 years old, we’re still finding new ways to

reach people and to inspire them,” Currie said.

The first iteration of the “Flame of Revolution” took place at the historic Capitol as a site-specific performance complete with large-scale projections, lights, sound and an outdoor stage; the first iteration was concluded by a fife and drum performance similar to that of this week’s previous out-

door performances. Currie said the performances saw 8,000 visitors in their two-night span, and the event was intended to replicate the celebration and fanfare of the historical events it portrays.

“... We see in the historical record that people really did celebrate. We brought that to life for modern audiences and really let them see both why Williamsburg is so important to the lead up to the American Revolution — and obviously the lead into the Declaration of Independence — but also its relevancy to today,” Currie said.

Tonight’s restaging is specifically adapted to the Amp stage, with variations to ac-

commodate the open-air venue while keeping the “heart of the story” center stage.

“Folks can see the breadth and the scope of the performing arts department at Colonial Williamsburg and how it takes these historic primary sources and builds them into a story that people can really relate to and understand,” Currie said.

With a focus on civics education and telling the story of how the U.S. was founded, Colonial Williamsburg strives to educate “so that the future may learn from the past,” according to Currie. Colonial Williamsburg will celebrate its centennial anniversary this fall.

As the world’s largest liv-

GEORGE

FROM PAGE 1

George also serves on the New Jersey Committee of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. In the 1990s, he served as a presidential appointee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, where he led the commission’s inquiry, a set of hearings into issues of religious freedom in American public schools.

Now on the New Jersey Committee, George said he is helping conduct hearings focused on the rise of antisemitism in the U.S. and will make recommendations based on their find-

ings to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

“Having served on the commission itself back in the 90s, I had a pretty good idea what I was getting into here,” George said.

George said he brings a unique perspective to Week Six because of his focus on the Declaration of Independence and its core foundations. He said this is a moment of high pressure and said there are lots of eyes on the President, the U.S. Supreme Court and Congress, as well as their interpretations of the words the founders wrote in 1776: “We hold these truths to be self-evident that all



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Published by Chautauqua Institution, P.O. Box 1095, Chautauqua, N.Y. 14722, daily, Monday through Saturday, for a period of nine weeks, June 27 through August 29, 2026. The Institution is a not-for-profit organization, incorporated and chartered under the laws of the state of New York.

Entered at periodical rate, July 11, 1907, at the post office at Chautauqua, N.Y., under the act of 1870: ISSN 0746-0414.

55 issues; home delivery by carrier, \$143.75; mail, \$193.25.
Postal regulations require that mail subscriptions be paid in advance.

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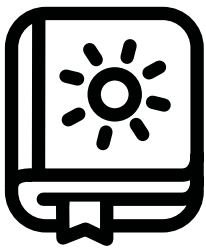
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THE MIX

Florence shares her hope she can help all achieve life abundant



MORNING WORSHIP

COLUMN BY MARY LEE TALBOT

The Rev. Anna Carter Florence, chaplain for Week Six, engaged in a conversation with the Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton at the 9:15 a.m. Thursday morning worship service in the Hall of Philosophy.

“I was taught that there is a lot of room to understand God and many beautiful ways to God,” Florence said. Her father was a Presbyterian from Missouri who went east to “stand in the light.” Her mother was from an Episcopalian and Unitarian family from Massachusetts. Her mother was a poet and her father a professor of dermatology. She grew up in Rochester, New York, Philadelphia and Guilford, Connecticut.

When Sutton asked if her family was religious, Florence replied, “We were the first in the church and the last out.” She remembered doing a lot of singing in vacation Bible school. She did confirmation, as was expected, but when she expressed some doubts about it, her father told her to figure out what was bothering her about it, but “this is what you are doing.” She and her family took this rite of passage very seriously.

Her form of teenage rebellion was to be part of a rock band with friends from church, and they gave their concerts in the church. The band played a lot of Earth, Wind & Fire, and the bass player in the group went on to work with Ray Charles and Earth, Wind & Fire.

Florence went to college at Yale University, and she decided to check out the campus Christian group. “I lived a very sheltered life, because this group was still debating whether women could be leaders. So I did theater instead. Theater is like church in that there is a place for you and they have got to take you in. In the theater, you also pay close attention to the texts,” she said.

She took some courses at Yale Divinity School while in college, and after she graduated, she had a “moment of clarity. I had no idea what I wanted to do after college, but the next moment I knew I was going to seminary. I felt settled and grounded, and I knew it was God [speaking],” she added.

Sutton asked her if God calls everybody. She said yes, but in many different ways. “The universe offers beauty and pain, and we can take them and it will feel like a call. A call can come many times. I am still discerning; it is a constant act of paying attention, as Mary Oliver said.”

Sutton asked if her faith had ever been rocked. She said, “If you told someone that their faith would be rocked, it would be unbearable to hear. There are things that break our hearts and how we mend them together



SAM HUFFMAN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Rev. Anna Carter Florence, Ph.D. speaks with Senior Pastor the Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton about her religious upbringing, her love of theater in college which built the foundation of her seminary work and her interpretation of how God calls to people during a discussion about her faith journey Thursday in the Hall of Philosophy.



The universe offers beauty and pain, and we can take them and it will feel like a call. A call can come many times. I am still discerning; it is a constant act of paying attention, as Mary Oliver said.”

— THE REV. ANNA CARTER FLORENCE
Week Six Chaplain-in-Residence

is the way to a new call. If we don’t see logic, as we are getting older, we can see connections.”

Asked why she selected the Scripture for the day, she said Genesis is the first book of the Bible, and John’s opening verses are a sermon on Genesis 1. “There is beautiful poetry in these Scriptures and Scripture keeps interpreting itself. The Bible hands me the texts and tells me to say something from my time. These texts are alive, and they talk with and through each other.”

Sutton put forward the question, “If God is in control, why is the world the way it is?” Florence answered that was a question worthy of Chautauqua. “We have to focus

on where we are now in our responsibility to the world. The creature does not just go; we are here to live among and with all creation,” she said.

Her hope, she said in answer to Sutton’s final question, is “for life and life abundant, for our families and for those whose families are threatened. I hope I have the strength to act, to work for the well-being of others, including the trees and the water. We have to dig deep to find the resources.”

The Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, senior pastor of Chautauqua, presided. The Rev. David Carter Florence, pastor of the Black Mountain Presbyterian Church in Black Mountain, North Carolina, led the morning prayers. The Rev. Robert Franklin, former senior pastor of Chautauqua and director of the Department of Religion, read the Scripture. The Scripture readings were Genesis 1:1–8, 31 and John 1:1–3, 14. Saxophonist and flutist George Wolfe, accompanied by guitarist Rami Vamos, played Sonata in A minor, Movement 1 by Jean Baptiste Loeillet, arranged for guitar and soprano saxophone by Wolfe. The musical meditation mid-service was an improvisation by Wolfe on the Native American flute. The postlude was “Gymnopédie No. 1,” by Erik Satie, arranged for guitar and soprano saxophone by Paul Reilly and George Wolfe. Sonya Subbayya Sutton, interim director of Sacred Music, provided incidental music for the service. Support for this week’s services is provided by The Mr. and Mrs. William Uhler Follansbee Memorial Chaplaincy and The Alison and Craig Marthinsen Endowment for the Department of Religion.

Kamminga to present blend of chamber music, spoken word examining climate change

JENNA OUTCALT
STAFF WRITER

When Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra bassist Caitlyn Kamminga was designing her capstone project for her executive certificate in global leadership, she had to consider what the greatest issue of her time is.

“For me, there’s only one answer, and it’s climate change because it intersects with everything,” she said. “It intersects with education, with gender, with race, with poverty, with health.”

Kamminga will premiere “The Age of the Imaginals,” a chamber music performance that mixes in spoken word poetry by Kamminga at 12:45 p.m. today in Smith Wilkes Hall in partnership with the Chautauqua Climate Change Initiative. Her colleague, Adam Walters, composed the music and will attend the performance.

The piece uses the metamorphosis of caterpillars to represent the way humans will have to unite to change the course of the planet, Kamminga explained. Including a cast of metaphorical characters like “the fat cat” and “Mama Mariposa” and referencing Trinidadian lore, the metaphor centers on the tiny cells called imaginals that start to reverberate when a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly.

“They’re all humming separately, and it’s not until they figure out that they have to hum together that something happens,” Kamminga said.

Kamminga compared this to the idea of one person using one vote versus 10,000 people using 10,000 votes to make a difference. She said the piece can help people “think imaginatively about how to adapt” to a changing world.



KAMMINGA

Kamminga teaches at the University of Trinidad and Tobago, where she has designed a course called “Creative Climate Communication.” The course explores climate literacy, climate colonialism and cultural agency and finds ways to address these issues through art.

“I think that artists have access to audiences in a way that scientists do not,” Kamminga said. “Scientists



I think that artists have access to audiences in a way that scientists do not. Scientists are really focused on the facts, which are really dire and really shocking and horrifying. But if that’s all we have, then you just want to go back to bed and pull the covers over your head and call it a day.”

— CAITLYN KAMMINGA
Bassist,
Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra

are really focused on the facts, which are really dire and really shocking and horrifying. But if that’s all we have, then you just want to go back to bed and pull the covers over your head and call it a day.”

She used photography as an example of art that inspired change.

“If you think about those first images of the polar bear on the piece of ice

that everybody saw, ... it’s a piece of art,” she said. “It’s something that opens up your imagination and places you there, that makes you feel empathetic and then you’re willing to do something about it.”

With “The Age of the Imaginals,” Kamminga said she wants people to understand that although the situation is urgent, hope is not lost.

“In between the dire facts and the hope, I think the arts have a place,” she said.

Kamminga said she wants unity to be a major theme in the piece, and the “sense of community” in Chautauqua is a good example.

“If my neighbor’s house is burning down, I’m going to show up, not because we have the same politics but because you are my neighbor,” Kamminga said. She emphasized that everyone is on the same Earth, and if the problem has no borders, neither should solutions.

“The only thing we can do is talk about each other as human beings, and that’s the

only way we can tackle this,” Kamminga said.

Because the workshop is a soft premiere, Kamminga said she is looking forward to receiving feedback from the audience.

“When you make a piece of art, you do have to let go of it, and it goes out into the world and people have their own natural reactions to it,” she said. “I’m just hoping that people will give honest feedback, both positive and constructive.”

Kamminga also said she wants the audience to “walk away with an awakened imagination.”

“We have hopes and dreams that at the end, you feel empowered, that you feel excited, that you don’t feel overwhelmed and disheartened,” Kamminga said.

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CELEBRATING OLD FIRST NIGHT



At top, Boys' and Girls' Club celebrates Chautauqua's birthday at Old First Night Tuesday in the Amphitheater. Above left, usher Charlie Gudeman scans Chautauquans into the Amp wearing a celebratory birthday hat. Above right, incoming Chautauqua Institution President Mark Coolidge Johnson holds up a handkerchief during the Drooping of the Lilies.

Benson CLSC Endowment supports Anderson, Matejka

The Stephen and Edith Benson CLSC Endowment generously supports the author presentation featuring Laurie Halse Anderson and Adrian Matejka at 2 p.m. today in the Hall of Philosophy.

The Stephen and Edith Benson CLSC Endowment was created by Edith Benson in 2022 to benefit the

CLSC. The Benson family's connection to Chautauqua began in 1975 and has continued through generations of engagement with the Institution.

Stephen and Edith Benson built a life defined by curiosity, entrepreneurship and a commitment to learning. After beginning his career with Interna-

tional Harvester Company, Stephen went on to become a Wendy's franchisee and later co-founded Morningstar Storage with his family. Throughout their journey, Chautauqua remained a place of connection, discovery and inspiration. Stephen passed away in 2020, and Edith and the Benson family continue to cherish

their time at Chautauqua. Chautauqua is deeply grateful to the Benson family for their generosity and for the lasting impact of their commitment to the CLSC, ensuring that generations of readers and lifelong learners can continue to engage with meaningful ideas and transformative works.

Gorelick, Zeigler Lecture Endowment supports George

The Dr. Cheryl O. Gorelick and Jacob H. Zeigler, III American History Lecture Endowment generously supports the 10:45 a.m. lecture today in the Amphitheater featuring Robert P. George.

Cheryl Gorelick's connection to Chautauqua began in her childhood in Dunkirk, New York, where

she visited with her mother, and deepened later in life with her husband, Ken. After his passing in 2009, she continued to nurture that connection, becoming a devoted Chautauquan and purchasing property in 2005. At Chautauqua, she has generously given her time and energy through

active involvement in the Chautauqua Women's Club, Friends of Chautauqua Theater and the Chautauqua Opera Guild, helping to strengthen the community's cultural life.

Jacob H. "Jake" Zeigler is a devoted Chautauquan whose passion for American history and education

inspired his support of this lectureship. As president of Zeigler Builders, he brings both professional leadership and a deep appreciation for the value of lifelong learning. His commitment to fostering thoughtful exploration of the nation's history aligns closely with Chautauqua's mission.

Chautauqua Theater, Rittman, Norton Funds support mainstage play

The Chautauqua Theater Fund, The Rittman Family Fund for Performing Arts and The Florence and Cynthia Norton Fund for Theater graciously support today's performance of *How I Learned What I Learned* by August Wilson and directed by Jade King Carroll in Bratton Theater.

The Norton endowment was established by Florence Norton in 2002 through outright gifts to the Chautauqua Foundation for the purpose of providing general support of the theater program at the Institution.

Also providing support is The Rittman Family Fund. Patricia B. Rittman estab-

lished the Fund in 2000 for family and friends to honor her husband, William Rittman. Bill Rittman first came to Chautauqua in 1930 with his parents and was an active member of the Chautauqua community until his death. He served as a trustee of the Institution from 1974 to 1982. Both of Bill's

parents served as directors of the Chautauqua Foundation. Bill graduated from Harvard in 1939 and, after World War II, from Harvard Law School. The majority of his career was with the pharmaceutical industry, primarily with Richardson-Vicks.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 RPM measurers
- 6 Caravan creature
- 11 To date
- 12 Like tumblers
- 13 Small-scale
- 14 Israel's Meir
- 15 Bud
- 16 Poem of praise
- 18 "— Misérables"
- 19 Sense of self
- 20 Argon or ethane
- 21 Hot blood
- 22 Farm beast
- 24 Office leader
- 25 Kodak founder
- 27 Suggestive
- 29 Kidnap price
- 32 Vein contents
- 33 Stashed
- 34 Pitcher's stat
- 35 Drill target
- 36 Clumsy one
- 37 Pot part
- 38 Kuala Lumpur native

RE	M	U	S		A	V	A	I	L
A	R	I	S	E		L	O	I	R
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T	A	I		O	R	E		S	K
A	D	H	E	R	E		S	T	O
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O	N	I	C	E		E	M	A	I
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Yesterday's answer

- DOWN**
- 1 Packed down
- 2 Crumbly Italian cheese
- 3 Refuge from a twister
- 4 That woman
- 5 Patsies
- 6 Pet store buys
- 7 Previously
- 8 Platinum record
- 9 Church leaders
- 10 Rent agreements
- 17 Brief vacation
- 23 Arthur's step-brother
- 24 Outlaw
- 26 Ticked off
- 27 Dorm partner
- 28 Singer Grande
- 30 Set straight
- 31 Coarse-spun cotton
- 33 19th president
- 39 Cobbler's tool
- 41 S&L offering

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10
							12			
13							14			
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35				36				37		
38			39			40	41			
42						43				
44						45				

8-7

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.

8-7 CRYPTOQUOTE

XSLCRARG EOIDZ BFO HRLC FT

BFOG QGOE CSRGR DI

IFERHFQB XSF ZLT QLTZR CF

DC. — ZSDTOL LZSRHR

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IF YOU WANT A PLACE IN THE SUN, YOU'VE GOT TO PUT UP WITH A FEW BLISTERS. — ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

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.

						9	5	
	5					3	2	
	6			5	2		1	
2					8		6	
8	1			4				
							9	1
	3	1	7		4			
4	2				6			3
	9	6	3			2		

Difficulty: ★★★★★ 8/7

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7	4	1	5	9	6	3	2	8
6	8	3	4	7	2	1	5	9
2	9	5	8	1	3	6	4	7
9	1	2	6	4	7	5	8	3
5	3	8	9	2	1	4	7	6
4	6	7	3	5	8	9	1	2
3	2	4	7	6	5	8	9	1
8	7	9	1	3	4	2	6	5
1	5	6	2	8	9	7	3	4

Difficulty: ★★★ 8/6

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**Chautauqua Institution
Annual Corporation Meeting
August 8, 2026**

The annual meeting of the members of the Chautauqua Corporation will be held at noon on Saturday, August 8, in the Hall of Philosophy at Chautauqua Institution in Chautauqua, New York. At that time, the Corporation will review the Institution's financial statements and elect an individual to serve as a Class B Trustee on the Board of Trustees pursuant to the Institution's bylaws. Chautauqua Institution's audited financial statements may be found at chq.org/about/board-of-trustees/.

2026 Class B Trustee Nominee(s): Sara Ponkow
Nominee Statements may be found at chq.org/about/board-of-trustees/.

Published in *The Chautauquan Daily*, August 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 2026.
Posted on the Board of Trustees webpage August 1, 2026 – August 8, 2026, at noon.

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THE ARTS

Opera Company concludes season with ‘Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead’ workshop

LAYLA VINSON
STAFF WRITER

Closing the curtain on the 2026 Summer Season with an iconic piece of American theater, Chautauqua Opera Company will showcase its final presentation of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* workshop at 3:15 p.m. today in Norton Hall. Brought to Chautauqua by two-time Grammy Award winner Herschel Garfein, the work marks the first-ever operatic adaptation of the story in an especially poignant milestone months after Stoppard's passing.

"The main thing [Stoppard] said to me was, 'It has to be funny.' And I've taken those words to heart, and through all the years that I've worked on this, that has been my main goal," Garfein said. "... I do think that Stoppard is like the Oscar Wilde of our times, and only he could put together ideas like that in such a witty, epigrammatic form. I love that about him. Hopefully, audiences will find a lot to love and a lot to laugh at in what they hear."

Centered on two of the

smallest characters from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* — Rosencrantz and Guildenstern — Stoppard's story focuses on the reluctant pair of philosophers struggling to make sense of a world where rules seem increasingly irrational, fostering conversations which blend questions of free will, mortality and identity.

Guildenstern, portrayed by Studio Artist and baritone Joel Clemens, is the more contemplative of the two. While Rosencrantz often looks for reassurance, Guildenstern wrestles with darker ontological questions, attempting to impose logic on circumstances that refuse to be explained. For Clemens, this prompts internal reflection in order to better understand his role.

"It's so existential. You could pick it apart for weeks if you wanted to. I wish we had that long to do it," Clemens said. "But it's a good reminder for myself that I need to be better about putting my thoughts to words and getting across what I need to get across, because these characters do that

without any hesitation."

The orchestral workshop will showcase about 45 minutes of excerpts from the score alongside the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, accompanied by introductions explaining the project and a post-performance conversation with Garfein and Company faculty, including General and Artistic Director of Chautauqua Opera Company and Conservatory Steven Osgood.

"Chautauqua Opera Company attracts some of the best young singers in the country, just remarkable young singers. And the whole staff is incredible; they do great work," Garfein said. "But special kudos have to go to Steve Osgood, who runs it. And I'm telling you, he does the work of three people, and all three of them are geniuses."

Osgood expanded on the distinctive opportunities he has facilitated in his role. He explained that the Company's ability to offer orchestral workshop opportunities is unique to Chautauqua because of the Institution's structure.

"The orchestral workshop is something that we are able to offer as a company because of our relationship with Chautauqua Symphony (Orchestra), because of our Young Artist program, and that stands out among what companies can offer to commissioners or collaborators in a very, very unique way," Osgood explained.

With a multifaceted background as a librettist, composer, stage director and professor, Garfein is best known for his libretto of the award-winning production *Elmer Gantry*, but his creative knowledge lends itself to integrating numerous genres in his work.

"I draw on all kinds of American vernacular music. I draw on blues and pop music and jazz and literally anything you could name that's part of everyday musical culture in our country," Garfein said. He credited this to his upbringing as an actor in a family of theater-makers. He added, "But always with the aim of trying to get to the heart of these characters' experience and giving them music that re-



GABRIEL MILBY /STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Chautauqua Opera Company Apprentice Artist Joel Clemens, baritone, and Guest Artist Keith Phares, baritone, rehearse for *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* Monday in Norton Hall.

ally corresponds to what they're saying."

This blend of singing, symphony and dialogue will provide Chautauquans with a chance to digest the pertinent themes underlining an otherwise comedic story.

"All of us are trying to make sense of our place in the world, and that struggle is highly concentrated in the story of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. And I think one of the touching things in the story is that

they do have each other, even though they have quite a contentious relationship," Garfein said. "But they do rely on each other through thick and thin to help them try to make sense of these crazy and imponderable events that are developing all around them. And so maybe in these sometimes very, very bleak times, there's an important lesson there about the importance of friendship or love to help you get through."

Designers honor Wilson through creative contributions to ‘How I Learned What I Learned’

SOPHIA ROOKSBERRY
STAFF WRITER

Two years before his death in 2005, American playwright August Wilson wrote and performed an autobiographical one-man play titled *How I Learned What I Learned*. In less than two hours, the play recounts Wilson's upbringing in Pittsburgh, where he fought systemic racism and oppression on every step of his journey to becoming a Pulitzer-winning playwright.

The play has been reprised around the world countless times in the two decades since. At 6 p.m. today, a rendition directed by Chautauqua Theater Company Producing Artistic Director Jade King Carroll will open and run until Aug. 16.

The version premiering at Chautauqua is three years in the making, having completed runs at Portland Stage Company in Maine and Le Petit Theatre in Louisiana. Portland Stage Company's Artistic Director, Anita Stewart, met Wilson while she was a graduate student at the Yale School of Drama, the institution where many of his Broadway-bound plays found their starts. Several years later, Stewart met King Carroll when Wilson recommended she direct one of his plays, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, at Portland Stage Company.

This was the first of many Wilson-centered collaborations between Stewart and King Carroll. Early in 2023, King Carroll directed *How I Learned What I Learned* as her seventh August Wilson play at Portland Stage Company, for which Stewart designed the set she is now reimagining for Bratton Theater.

Stage Company and has delivered an uncanny portrayal from the beginning.

"There are moments when I feel like he is totally channeling the guy I knew," Stewart said. "When he puts on the broad-brimmed, fedora-type hat, he looks exactly the way August looked."

The likeness is due equally to Nichols' ability to embody a character and the detail-oriented costume design of Loyce Arthur. The aforementioned fedora is just one of the pieces Arthur used to encapsulate Wilson's essence onstage.

"Since it is autobiographical in nature, I gathered as many images and photographs of August Wilson that I could at different stages of his life," Arthur said. "... There's a change of jackets and hats that really specify the shifts for him. When he was younger, he was much sportier with the blue cap, and then as he got older, he adopted that black fedora ... I always think that he looks like the famous jazz men of the time, he looks like Dizzy Gillespie. His instrument is the pen and his words, but the way he weaves language is very much like a jazzman."

The influence of jazz on Wilson's life extends beyond the play's costume design. Germán Martínez has served as the production's sound designer and composer since 2023, and he also included nods to the musical genre in his design.

"When we are talking about John Coltrane, we hear a little bit of music swelling in and swelling out," Martínez said. "The vision when we started at Portland Stage was, 'How is the music engulfing the space when it needs to?' ... I'm really interested in movement when it comes to sound in a space, how we are experiencing it as an audience. There's that John Coltrane moment where he talks about how jazz moves so rapidly ... and so it starts from

one motion and then it grows out into the house."

In addition to a personal affection for Wilson and his aim to design as many of his plays as possible, Martínez's design was motivated, much like Arthur's, by the minute details that comprise a person's energy.

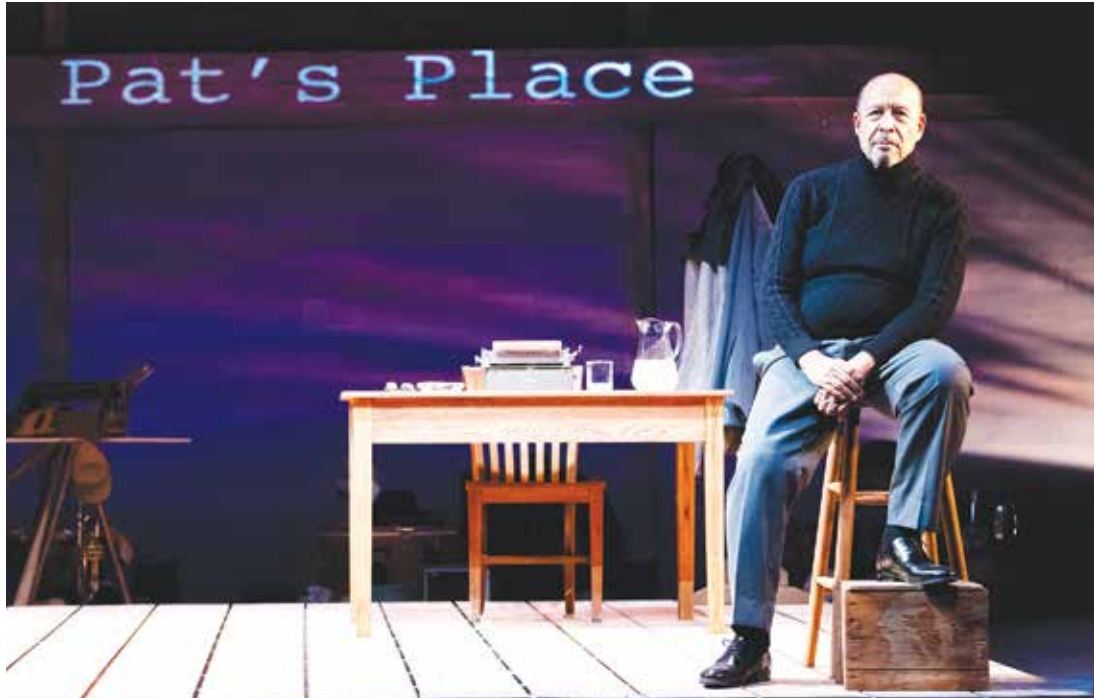
"All the elements really are working together to make sure ... we are living this moment here," Martínez said. "How are we taking away our disbelief? ... I think the devil is in the details when it comes to that ... These subtle sound effects help us transition one to the other ... to guide us as an audience."

Unlike Martínez and the other designers, Lighting Associate Stacey Boggs is brand new to the *How I Learned What I Learned* team. The production's original lighting designer, Betsy Chester, was unable to work on Chautauqua's production of the play, so Boggs stepped up and implemented parts of her vision to the existing design.

"I came at it from the heat required to make art and the pressure that has to happen, the catalytic conversion, basically, to make change," Boggs said. "What does heat and pressure and all of these things ... mean in lighting, and how do you create that tension and really embrace the beautiful space that we have here, and then make it feel extremely intimate?"

Intimacy is almost inherent in the play, as a one-man show puts the audience's relationship with the character blatantly in front of them. While this creates unique challenges for Nichols, it also affects how the designers materialize their vision for the sake of the audience.

"You're just looking at that



GABRIEL MILBY /STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Chautauqua Theater Company Guest Actor Lance E. Nichols performs the role of August Wilson during a tech rehearsal of *How I Learned What I Learned* Thursday in Bratton Theater.

one person for the whole show, so that's another good reason why that ability to shift into different looks for [Nichols] is good, because costumes allow [the audience] to establish where we are, who we're talking to, and then get accustomed to that," Arthur said. "You want to be able to shift them into a different mood or a different phase, and something very simple in a costume change, like the change of a hat, can do it."

In addition to helping the audience keep track of the narrative, the design also helps Nichols track his own position in the script.

"It's a really dense monologue, essentially, and so to help give [Nichols] a mnemonic device to go, 'Oh, great! This song helps me jump into this story,' so how are we helping our performer to make sure that they have all the elements that

they need?" Martínez said. "I think especially a one-man show is so vulnerable, and to take on this role of somebody else, to do it authentically and truthfully and very genuinely, is a big ask and a heavy lift, and so ... we found that these were our markers to help give him that push."

Although these design elements are useful for Nichols as he navigates a difficult role, the designers believe his performance is so effortless that audiences would never guess he incorporates those tools into his acting.

"It all feels seamless, and [Nichols] is so amazing with the text that you're going to feel like you know the man ... and his stories are hard," Stewart said. "We see a side of America that many of us who are white don't ever

see, and it's from an era that's in the past, but it also plays into the present."

This connection between eras of time was a major topic of conversation between the director and the designers as they prepared to premiere the play.

"What's so important about August Wilson now that we still keep him in the canon, that we still are making his work come alive?" Martínez said. "That 'why' is where our prologue starts ... In the sequence, we hear this version of Kendrick [Lamar's 'Alright'] that then morphs into 'Old Jeremiah,' a hymn that then takes us into [Nichols'] opening sequence, and so it's really trying to tie now to then, and more of the ancestral portion of what is at the heart of August Wilson."

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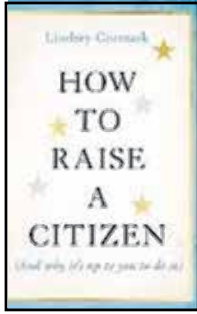
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PROGRAM

BRINGING THE PAST TO LIFE



SAM HUFFMAN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Members of the Colonial Williamsburg Fife & Drums perform for Chautauquans following the “Becoming History” Master Series Masterclass Wednesday outside Norton Hall.



SKYLAR SEAVEY / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Bill Pavlack, a Colonial Williamsburg master cabinet maker, shows Chautauquans an array of wood pieces Tuesday at the Trades and Skills Demonstration on Bestor Plaza.



SKYLAR SEAVEY / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Above left, Ken Schwarz, a Colonial Williamsburg blacksmith, heats a piece of metal to forge into a military tool at his stand at the Trades and Skills Demonstration. Above right, Schwarz hammers a piece of metal.



SAM HUFFMAN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

From left, members of the Colonial Williamsburg Fife & Drums John Zickel, Noah Alden and Collin Frey perform for Chautauquans.

F

FRIDAY
AUGUST 7

6:00

(6–7) **Sunrise Paddle - Kayak/ SUP.** Sign up in advance at 716-357-6281. Sports Club Waterfront

7:00

(7–11) Chautauqua Farmers Market. Massey and Miller

7:00

(7–9) **“Dawn Patrol” Round Robin Doubles.** Chautauqua Tennis Center

7:45

Chautauqua Mystic Heart Meditation Program. Dhara Kowal, Zen Buddhism Meditation Practice. Presbyterian House

7:45

Episcopal Holy Eucharist. Chapel of the Good Shepherd

- 8:00 **Daily Word Meditation.** (Programmed by Unity of Chautauqua). Hall of Missions
- 8:15 Catholic Mass. Hurlbut Church Sanctuary
- 8:30 **Movement and Meditation with Monte Thompson.** Hall of Philosophy Grove
- 8:55 **Chautauqua Prays for Peace through Compassion.** Hall of Philosophy Grove
- 9:00 Jack’s Nature Walk. (Programmed by the Bird, Tree & Garden Club). Jack Gulvin. Back patio of Smith Wilkes Hall
- 9:15 **ECUMENICAL COMMUNION SERVICE.** Hall of Philosophy
- 9:15 (9:15–10:15) Jewish Discussions. “Jewish Mysticism & Philosophy.” Rabbi Zalman Vilenkin. Zigdon Chabad Jewish House. 23 Vincent
- 10:00 Coffee on the Porch. Presbyterian House
- 10:15 Coffee/Tea on the UM House Porch
- 10:15 **Service of Blessing and Healing.** UCC Randell Chapel

- 10:45 **CHAUTAUQUA LECTURE SERIES.** Robert P. George. Princeton Univ. Amphitheater and online
- 11:00 **(11–5) Exhibitions open.** Fowler Kellogg Art Center & Strohl Art Center
- 11:30 (11:30–1:30) Chabad Kosher Tent. Bestor Plaza
- 12:00 (12–4) **Colonial Williamsburg Historic Trades & Skills Demonstrations.** Oliver Archives Center
- 12:00 (12–2) Flea Boutique. Behind the Colonnade
- 12:15 **Dance Workshop with Alonzo King LINES Ballet.** Odland Plaza
- 12:15 **Community Reading.** Alumni Hall Porch
- 12:15 Twelve Step Meeting. Hurlbut Church Marion Lawrance Room
- 12:15 Community Reading. Selected readers from Writers’ Center workshops or staff, plus the Community Poem. Porch of the Literary Arts Center at Alumni Hall (Ballroom in case of rain)
- 12:15 (12:15–1) “Challah Baking – Miriam Gurary Challah Baking Series.” Zigdon Chabad Jewish House. 23 Vincent
- 12:30 **Authors @ The Smith: John DeDakis, Lark Chadwick mystery series.** Smith Memorial Library Classroom
- 12:30 **Chautauqua Dialogues.** Lutheran House
- 12:30 **Introduction to Jumu’ah Muslim Prayer.** Visitor introduction at 12:30 p.m.; service at 1:05 p.m. Hall of Christ Sanctuary

- 12:30 Garden Talk. (Programmed by the Bird, Tree & Garden Club). Carol Markham. 22 Lowell
- 12:45 **The Age of the Imaginals: A Musical Performance.** (Sponsored by the Chautauqua Climate Change Initiative). Smith Wilkes Hall
- 12:45 Catholic Seminar. Sr. Louise Alf, OSF, Mother Marianne Cope’s Legacy of Mercy in Hawaii. United Methodist House Chapel. 14 Pratt
- 1:00 **Archives Tent Talk** **CANCELED** Oliver Archives Center
- 1:00 **English Lawn Bowling.** Free instruction. 1–1:30. Stay and play for \$12. Bowling Green
- 1:15 Docent Tours of Alumni and Pioneer Halls. 50 Wythe
- 2:00 **CHAUTAUQUA LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC CIRCLE PRESENTATION.** Laurie Halse Anderson (*Rebellion 1776*) and Adrian Matejka (*Be Easy*). Hall of Philosophy
- 3:15 **OPERA.** Chautauqua Opera Company Orchestral Workshop: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Fee. Panel discussion to follow. Norton Hall
- 3:30 **Authors @ The Smith: Gary Sirak, How to Retire and Not Die, in conversation with Jane Kerschner.** Smith Memorial Library Classroom
- 3:30 **Chautauqua Dialogues.** (Programmed by the Department of Religion and IDEA Office). Christian Science House
- 3:30 **Chautauqua Dialogues.** (Programmed by the Department of Religion and IDEA Office). Episcopal Cottage
- 3:30 **Chautauqua Dialogues.** (Programmed by the Department of Religion and IDEA Office). Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
- 3:30 Do Palestinians Exist? Dr. Houssam Abdul Al. UM House. 14 Pratt
- 4:00 **School of Music: Percussion Ensemble Concert.** Elizabeth S. Lenna Hall
- 5:00 (5–7) Kabbalat Shabbat Service. Miller Park
- 5:00 The Case for Austrian Wines (Ticketed Event). CWC House. 30 South Lake

- 5:00 (5–6) Hebrew Congregation Kabbalat Shabbat: “Welcoming the Shabbat” service. Led by Rabbi Cookie Lea Olshen, Interim Rabbi of Congregation Kol Tikvah in Parkland, Florida. Miller Park (rain location: Smith Wilkes Hall). If the weather is questionable, call 716-742-2228 for the service location
- 6:00 **THEATER. How I Learned What I Learned.** Fee. Bratton Theater
- 6:00 **Cinema Film Screening.** “Minions & Monsters.” Fee. Chautauqua Cinema
- 6:00 Potluck Cookout. Advance sign-up required. \$10. Meat, baked beans, chips, beverage and ice cream provided. Please bring a side dish to share. Disciples of Christ House. Deck of 28 Janes
- 6:00 (6–7:15) Hebrew Congregation Shabbat’za. Post-service pizza picnic. Miller Park (rain location: Smith Wilkes Hall). We supply the pizza! Bring your own beverage and a side dish or dessert to share
- 6:15 Chautauqua Choir rehearsal. Fletcher Music Hall
- 6:30 “Community Shabbat Dinner.” Zigdon Chabad Jewish House, 23 Vincent. RSVP required; FREE; suggested donation \$36
- 8:00 **AMPHITHEATER SPECIAL.** Flame of Revolution: A Colonial Williamsburg 250th Commemoration
- 8:30 **Cinema Film Screening.** “Carolina Caroline.” Fee. Chautauqua Cinema
- 9:15 Popcorn on the Porch (post-Amp program). UM House Porch

- 9:00 (9–11) **Food Rescue.** Donate your non-perishable items to help us reduce waste and feed communities in need. Turner Community Center
- 9:00 Team Pickleball Event. Reserve your spot by signing up at the Tennis Pro Shop or by calling 716-357-6276. Tennis Center
- 9:30 (9:30–11:45) Hebrew Congregation Interfaith Outreach Shabbat. Rabbi Cookie Lea Olshen and Susan Goldberg Schwartz. Kiddush luncheon to follow. Note: No Torah study. Hurlbut Church sanctuary. Please enter on Scott Avenue
- 9:30 United Methodist Worship Service, “Trust and Obey.” The Rev. Mark Hurst. UM House. 14 Pratt
- 10:00 (10–12) “Shabbat Service, Torah reading and Blessing of the New Month – Elul” Rabbi Zalman Vilenkin. Zigdon Chabad Jewish House. 23 Vincent
- 10:15 Coffee/Tea on the UM House Porch before the Amp service. 14 Pratt
- 11:00 **CPOA Business Meeting.** Hall of Philosophy
- 12:00 Election for Class B Trustee. Hall of Philosophy
- 12:15 “Lunch ‘n’ Learn – Ethics of Our Fathers.” Rabbi Zalman Vilenkin. Zigdon Chabad Jewish House. 23 Vincent
- 1:00 (1–5) **Exhibitions open.** Fowler Kellogg Art Center & Strohl Art Center
- 3:00 Contemporary Issues Forum: Jim Rasenberger. (Programmed by Chautauqua Women’s Club). Hall of Philosophy.
- 4:00 **THEATER. How I Learned What I Learned.** Pick-Your-Price. Bratton Theater
- 5:00 **Catholic Mass.** Hall of Philosophy
- 6:00 **Cinema Film Screening.** “Minions & Monsters.” Fee. Chautauqua Cinema
- 6:15 Chautauqua Choir rehearsal. Fletcher Music Hall
- 7:30 **AMPHITHEATER SPECIAL.** Alonzo King LINES Ballet with the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra. Rossen Milanov, conductor
- 8:30 **Cinema Film Screening.** “Carolina Caroline.” Fee. Chautauqua Cinema



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1 Timothy 6:6-8



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SATURDAY
AUGUST 8

7:15 (7:15–7:45) **Chautauqua Mystic Heart Meditation Program.** Centering Prayer with Carol McKiernan. Hall of Philosophy

8:30 (8:30–2) Chabad Kosher Tent. Bestor Plaza

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