

E LIVING & ARTS

LEISURE GUIDE
CLASSIC PUPPETS,
NEW SONGS,
PAPERBACKS, E2

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INSPIRE ATLANTA GIVING BACK

Where she beat cancer as child, nurse helps kids

Experience helps her understand their journey, build connections.

By Helena Oliviero
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Amelia Ballard was working at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta as a nurse in the emergency room department when an opportunity opened up at the hospital's Aflac Cancer and Blood Disorders Center. She knew that's where she belonged. She's known that since she was a little girl.

"It's been my dream my entire life," said Ballard, who works at Children's Egleston campus and is now 27. "Since I was probably 3 years old when I was surrounded by a wonderful medical team, I knew I wanted to be a nurse."

As a young child, Ballard was hospitalized most of the time over a two-year-long period at Children's. By the time she was 5 years old, the girl from Macon had beat leukemia twice. Little Amelia underwent several rounds of chemotherapy and then received a bone marrow transplant.

It was a grueling recovery journey. But it wasn't all bad. The petite woman with hazel eyes remembers good days and being surrounded by lots of love while being a young

Nurse continued on E6



Amelia Ballard, then a pediatric nurse at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta's Egleston location, engages her 8-month-old patient, Olen, in the emergency room in 2016. AJC FILE

ADVENTURES IN FOOD

Girl Scouts past, present celebrate cookie tradition

Relatives team up to bake versions of classic Trefoil shortbreads.

By C.W. Cameron
For the AJC

There are those who swear they get through the winter only because it brings the arrival of Girl Scout Cookies.

Was it just last year that glossy boxes of Tagalongs and Thin Mints beckoned from tables outside grocery stores, and you were tempted to order from the lists your colleagues circulated at the office? How are Girl Scout Cookies fans getting their fill now that COVID-19 has changed the way we live? Should we celebrate Girl Scout Sunday today by baking our own?

In Woodstock, Michele Samuel and her daughters, Leigha, 11, and Lundy, 10, baked a 1922 recipe for the equivalent of the Trefoil, the classic shortbread cookie that's been around since 1917. They chatted about the experience via Zoom after they finished.

They had gathered at their kitchen island

Cookies continued on E6

ONLY IN THE AJC VISUAL ARTS



COURTESY OF FOLK POTTERY MUSEUM OF NORTHEAST GEORGIA

Above: The legendary Arie Meaders started in the art of pottery in the 1960s. Top left: Having married into the Meaders dynasty, Jessie Meaders did not start throwing pots until later in life. Left: Mildred Meaders took up pottery when she was 40.

North Georgia women seize the spotlight

Matriarchs of the region's pottery dynasties get their due.

ARTE EVENT

"The Men Won't Tell Us Anything: Women of Georgia Folk Pottery." Free. Runs through July. Folk Pottery Museum of Northeast Georgia, 283 GA 255, Sautee Nacoochee. 706-878-3300, snca.org

By Candice Dyer
For the AJC

Jeanie Daves was preparing to teach a beginners' pottery class in Clarkesville when she glanced at a list of her students.

Two women on it had an eye-popping surname: Meaders. Could this be the pottery royalty recognized by the Smithsonian Institution, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Library of Congress? "I thought the Art-Full Barn was playing a joke on me, but in they walked," Daves says with a laugh. "Ruby and Jessie Meaders turned out to be from that famous family widely known for their signature face jugs. I asked them why they would sign up for this class when they've been around clay all of their lives, and they said, 'The men won't tell us anything.'"

In the last century, folk pottery was very much a patriarchal domain. Men turned and burned utilitarian stoneware while their wives tended to children and the farm. Fathers passed the tradition to their sons, eventually forming what are known as multigenerational "clay clans" or "clay dynasties"

Potters continued on E8



Mildred Meaders' "Devil Politician" face jug. COURTESY OF WILLIAM M. HOUSE

A rustic piece by Arie Meaders, the matriarch of the Meaders clay dynasty. COURTESY OF WILLIAM M. HOUSE

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RESTAURANT STEPS IN
OWNER OF BABS MIDTOWN CREATES TZEDAKAH
PROJECT TO HELP THOSE HURT BY PANDEMIC



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VIVID ACCOUNT OF
HISTORIC TRAGEDY

'SURVIVING SAVANNAH' BOOK REVIEW

AJC SPRING TRAVEL GUIDE SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE

5 road trips for 5 states

The Southeast welcomes springtime weather earlier than other regions and that's an advantage for Atlantans who want to venture away from home. Ready for a road trip? We have ideas from Georgia's five neighboring states. Check out coastal cuisine in Alabama, water sports in Florida, couples getaways in South Carolina, great golfing in North Carolina and music destinations in Tennessee. Let's hit the road. PAGES E15-20



LIVING & ARTS

Female potters have a flair for the details

Potters

continued from E1

throughout Southern Appalachia. Once the kids were grown, the women often tentatively sat down at the wheel to have some fun. They were usually in their 40s, or older, when they embarked on this new hobby, and some of them went on to establish a following in their own right.

"You just wanted to start trying some new stuff," says Mildred Meaders, who began turning at 40 when her husband died.

The Folk Pottery Museum of Northeast Georgia in Sautee Nacoochee celebrates these late-blooming artisans with an exhibit called "The Men Won't Tell Us Anything" that runs through July. It features the handiwork of Daves, along with 11 female potters born between 1890 and the 1940s.

"These are the older generation," says museum director Anna-Louise Calliham, noting that about half of them are deceased, and the others are octogenarians. "Next January we plan to feature women potters born from 1950 on."

Among the potters featured in the current show are Arie Meaders, Grace Nell Hewell, Lin Craven, Flossie Meaders, Ruby Meaders, Jessie Meaders, Mildred Meaders, Mary Ferguson and Marie Rogers. With the exception of Rogers, who was married to a fourth-generation potter in the mid-state, they all hail from North Georgia.

"Just as textbooks in the 1970s and earlier left out a lot of people, we wanted to tell an untold story that ties directly to our community," says Patrick Brennan, executive director of the Sautee Nacoochee Center, which oversees the pottery museum. "We're showing a very traditional art form in a fresh way."

North Georgia is legendary for its rich clay deposits, particularly in the Mossy Creek area of White County. Folk pottery began as a labor-intensive farm chore with sinewy, mud-spattered arms coaxing churns, jars, jugs and other utilitarian vessels from the earth. The industry almost slumped into obsolescence with the rise of glass, but then the collectors and gallerists swooped in and proclaimed it art. So the wheels kept turning, but those stolid, conservative Appalachian values did not change — much.

"Good clay deposits are critical, but there is more to the story than that," says folklorist John Burrison, curator of the museum. "It's the power of these pioneer potters, their



The Folk Pottery Museum of Northeast Georgia in Sautee Nacoochee will host the work of women who took up pottery as "late bloomers" in an exhibit that will run through July, featuring the art of potters born from 1890 and through the 1940s. The museum will then feature another exhibit next January for artisans born in 1950 and later. COURTESY OF FOLK POTTERY MUSEUM OF NORTHEAST GEORGIA



One of Mary Ferguson's most playful endeavors are her poultry figurines, including hens and roosters. COURTESY OF FOLK POTTERY MUSEUM OF NORTHEAST GEORGIA

passion and commitment." Burrison wrote the definitive book on the subject, "Brothers in Clay: The Story of Georgia Folk Pottery" — the title another nod to the male domination of the field. He noticed one particular woman's work early on, though.

The late Arie Meaders was the grand dame of this world, and when she unleashed her muse at the age of 60, sparks flew from the kiln.

"In the late 1960s, this extremely creative woman was

doing extraordinary things," Burrison says. "Roosters, quails, other birds using colored glazes, not just the old alkaline glazes."

One of her peacocks, with etched feathers, anchors the current exhibit. A placard next to it reads: "Though her pottery career only lasted 12 years, Arie and her creatively colorful pieces left a mark on the folk pottery community that continues to this day."

Women's wares often differ from men's in their decora-

tive excess, Calliham notes. If you see a bunch of grapes or bas-relief dogwood blossoms adorning a vase, it likely came from feminine hands. "Women add tons of detail," says Calliham, "what Grace Nell Hewell calls 'finishings.'"

They also embrace whimsy. Jessie Meaders is known for her flying pigs, ducks and Christmas angels. Mary Ferguson is called the "chicken woman" for her poultry figurines dubbed "Hoochee Mamas." ("I just like chickens," she says flatly.) And Mildred Meaders enjoys the challenges of delicate teapots and candle holders.

Then there are those eerie face jugs with the knowing leer. Some people say they were used to store moonshine and rendered ugly to scare away children.

"Some women won't make them because they associate them with spirits or the devil," Calliham says. "Marie Rogers writes 'Jesus Saves' on the bottom of her work in case it's ever used for nefarious purposes."

Mildred Meaders is willing to court a little danger. One of the pieces in the exhibit is her horned face jug called "Devil Politician."

"When I see something plain, I just want to get in there and start decorating," she says.

Like their male counterparts, female potters tend to be perfectionists. Jessie Meaders enjoys the tricky bisque technique. "You dip 'em and hope to the Lord they come out good. Some are pitiful. I reckon

you can't be good all the time."

They all say there is camaraderie in clay. The clans have intermarried, and they often share their materials with each other.

"We're all kin," says Mary Ferguson. "Now we might not speak to each other or claim each other sometimes, but we're all kin on our mama's side or our daddy's side."

Sometimes, they turn clay together. "It's so relaxing to do," Jessie Meaders says. "When you're finished, you feel like you've accomplished something."

Those swooning collectors opening their wallets add to the empowerment. "Isn't it something that we can make money off of something like this?" Jessie Meaders says. "You get so excited because everybody seems to think this is the greatest thing in the world!"

Daves calls these women "groundbreakers" — in every sense of the word.

"You have to consider their lifestyle," she says. "We think we're busy today, but we can run to Ingles. These women may have had seven or eight kids and were responsible for feeding chickens, doing laundry and running a farm. Yet they persevered without the support of husbands. I think it's important to see what people are capable of when they are determined. They are inspirational figures to me."

In that spirit, several of these earthy innovators have been teaching their granddaughters how to throw a pot.

SHOPPING

New delights to buy online

Florence Fabricant

c. 2021 The New York Times

Lady M sets its sights on bonbons

Lady M, the chain of sleek bakeries known for its multilayered cakes made of crepes, has added candies to its inventory. They're tiny bites of gummies and chocolates nestled in oblong boxes. Among the 16 varieties created by Olivia Niddam, a French confectioner, and the company's chief executive, Ken Romaniszyn, are mixed wild berry, banana-marshmallow, chocolate cookie puffs and strawberry shortcake.

Lady M Bon Bon, \$24 to \$64 for multibox sets, ladym.com/collections/bonbon.

A new pint worth sampling

A new ice cream from McConnell's in Santa Barbara, California, is especially cravable. It's creamy, thickly veined with molten praline, lightly accented with mellow Garrison Brothers Texas bourbon and studded with salt-roasted caramelized pecans. Give it the affogato treatment with a splash of the bourbon.

McConnell's Fine Ice Creams Garrison Brothers Whiskey and Pecan Pralines, \$12 per pint shipped (\$11.50 in shops), four pint minimum, plus shipping, mconnells.com.

An ancient grain powers these chips

Crisp, rectangular fonio chips, made from a West African heir-



Yolélé, a Brooklyn, New York, company that makes and sells African foods, has four iterations of fonio chips made from an heirloom grain. TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

loom grain, are the latest from Yolélé, a Brooklyn, New York, company that makes and sells African foods. There are four iterations: Afro-Funk, made with dawadawa (fermented locust beans) and ginger, are moderately spicy; Greens!, made with moringa and baobab, are tart; ruddy Yassa!, flavored with chile, onion and lime, are at once hot, sour and sweet; and plain sea salt, the lightest, are somewhat fragile. The company was founded by Pierre Thiam, a chef and fonio ambassador, and Philip Teverow, a specialty food expert.

Yolélé Fonio Chips, four bags, one flavor or variety pack, \$20, yolele.com.

Chicken Parm, form of a sausage

Seemore Meats and Veggies, a

company run by Cara Nicoletti, a fourth-generation butcher, fills its casings with a high proportion of vegetables to meat. It has just introduced a clever variety, chicken Parm. Each link delivers a flavor-packed mosaic of ground chicken, roasted tomatoes, cheese, breadcrumbs and basil. Sear or grill them whole and serve alongside pasta, or in a sandwich, or slice into coins and sauté to toss into a pasta sauce.

Four-pack (16 sausages), \$57; eight-pack (32), \$78, eatseemore.com.

An Irish whiskey returns to its roots

Starting in the late 18th century, there were whiskey distilleries clustered in Dublin. By the 1960s, they were gone. It's a complicated story, but now Dublin distilling is in revival mode. Teeling Whiskey, opened in 1782 by Walter Teeling, was reestablished near its original location in 2012 by brothers Jack and Stephen Teeling, descendants of the founder. In 2015 they began producing a range of whiskeys. Their latest, called Blackpitts, has historic and uncommon character. Smoky peat was once used to dry the malted barley, and now a whiff of smokiness from that revived method overlays the subtly honeyed palate of this graceful new whiskey. It's also on the light side, thanks to triple distillation, typical in Ireland.

Teeling Blackpitts Whiskey, \$86 for 750 milliliters, reservebar.com.

Buyer's Edge Where can I find it?

By Sabine Morrow
For the AJC

Q: I'm looking for a shop to repair a Tiffany-style lampshade that has been damaged. Thank you for your time. — Carrie Jennings, email

A: Carrie, please call Stephanie Farrow at Daylight Stained Glass and Repair, 5085 Peachtree Road, Atlanta, 404-786-5457. To see examples of her work, go to her website at daylightglass.com. An expert in stained and leaded glass, she has more than 25 years of experience restoring and creating beautiful windows, and she also repairs Tiffany-style lampshades.

Q: I read your column every Sunday. Now I need some help. I have been trying to find EZ foil pans that measure 9 inches by 6.25 inches by .75 inches. They are small. I would be glad to have another product the same size, but I can't find that either. I used to be able to get them at our local Publix until two years ago. They are great for grilling and in toaster ovens. Thanks. — C. Smith, email

A: Chris, thank you so much for reading. I found DOBI brand disposable aluminum pans made to use in toaster ovens, and they look like they should work for your needs. These are slightly taller than

the ones you describe — by about a half-inch. They measure 6 inches wide and 8½ inches in length. They are available in a pack of 20 pans for \$11.99 through Amazon.com.

Q: Could you tell me where I can find Laundress bleach alternative? I have some items that I would rather not use chlorine bleach on because they are somewhat delicate. Thank you. — Jan Brown, email

A: The Laundress all-purpose bleach alternative is both an eco-and-user-friendly product that cleans and disinfects laundry and other items around the house. You can pour the stain remover directly into the washing machine, and it won't harm your fabrics. Ingredients include chlorine-free oxygen bleach (sodium percarbonate). This non-toxic bleach alternative is free from VOCs, and it is allergen-free and biodegradable. A 33.3-ounce bottle sells for \$15.99 at The Container Store, 120 Perimeter Center West, Atlanta, 770-351-0065.



Having trouble finding a particular item? Sabine Morrow will try to help you locate it. Because of the volume of mail, we cannot track down every request. Email sabinem.morrow@gmail.com (include your name, the city you live in and a daytime phone number) or call 404-526-5931 and leave a voicemail with that information.