

## THE ARTS LANDSCAPE

### Celebrating 'Women's Equality Day' with 'RBG'

You know you've secured a place in history when the moniker "Notorious" is linked with your name, a plastic action figure has been created in your honor and you're celebrated as a multigenerational, pop culture icon.

Those tributes are just a smattering of accolades, awards, national commendations and precedent-setting "firsts" earned by the 85-years-young, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, or "RBG" as she is lovingly referred to.

On Sunday, Aug. 26, the Napa Center for Thought & Culture screened the 2018 documentary "RBG," directed by filmmakers Julie Cohen and Betsy West, to a sold-out house at CIA at Copia. It was



EVY WARSHAWSKI

serendipitous that on the same day in 1920, the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote was adopted.

Following the film, a panel of five distinguished women judges and attorneys discussed the film and Ginsburg's singular impact: a trailblazing pioneer for women's justice and equal rights; achievements that broke the legal field's glass ceiling; bravery and morality in tackling gender discrimination; plus an uncompromising commitment to scholarship and family.

Moderated by Mary Luros, a partner at Hudson & Luros, panel members included: the Hon. Judge Cynthia Smith, Napa County Superior Court; the Hon. Judge Beverly Greenberg, California Superior Court and Alameda County bench (now retired); the Hon. Commissioner Monique Langhorne, Napa County Superior Court; Allison Haley, Napa County District Attorney; and Valerie Clemen, Court Counsel, Napa County Superior Court.

A week prior to the showing, I asked two panel members to share their thoughts on Ginsburg's life and boundary-pushing accomplishments and her singular influence on their lives, personally and professionally.

"How different it was for women not that long ago," said Clemen. "Justice Ginsburg graduated from Columbia Law School at the top of her class and could barely find a job because law firms would not hire women. A woman in the same situation today would have a multitude of options that simply did not exist 60 years ago."

"She dealt with so much adversity and still persevered all the way to the pinnacle of the profession. I believe my experience as a working mother was made easier as a result of her work fighting for women's rights before she became a judge. When I had my own experience with pay discrimination, I thought of Justice Ginsburg's battles with her employers over pay discrimination and was inspired to stand up for myself and tackle the situation. Her courage gave me courage."

After watching the film, Haley wrote Ginsburg "lives a life worthy of her. She went to schools worthy of her intellect. She married a man worthy of her integrity. She took on cases worthy of her immense talent. She maintains a work ethic worthy of her commitment."

"Her work product is exquisite. Her example encourages me to be disciplined, detail oriented and focused on the bigger picture. Personally, she lives a life without apology. She doesn't apologize for her intellect nor her outside interests or commitment to family. She doesn't apologize for late nights or work obligations. She doesn't apologize for her fierce commitment to her husband



Melissa Chandon, Green Woody at the Beach | 60 x 72 inches, Acrylic on Canvas, 2017

## 'California Dreamin' on canvas and surfboards

Two new shows open at the Napa Valley Museum

"California Dreamin'" — surfboards, sun, sky and sand — is the subject of a new show of works by Melissa Chandon and Matt Rogers at the Napa Valley Museum.

It runs Aug. 30 through Oct. 28 in the museum's Main Gallery.

The opening celebration, 5 to 7:30 p.m., on Saturday, Sept. 1, is free to members, and \$20 for non-members.

The exhibit embodies the "California Dream" that inspired musicians from the Beach Boys to the Mamas and Papas, who invoked idyllic life of freedom, vitality, peace, love and connections.

Melissa Chandon's and Matt Rogers' paintings of palm trees, lifeguard stations, and woody-style station wagons carrying surfboards set against expansive blue skies also invoke the collective memory of the relaxed, care-free beach lifestyle that took hold of imaginations around the world in the 1960s.

With their vivid dream-like palettes and sense of light and air, Chandon and Rogers have each earned reputations for depicting the essential character of the Golden Coast. This exhibition also includes a 1939 Packard

and a 1948 Buick, both woodies, surfboards and other elements of surf culture.

With animated, pop-inspired colors and pared-down compositions, Chandon's paintings push everyday scenes toward the brink of imaginative, dynamic abstraction. In her vibrant, graphic world infused with California light, landscape breaks down into basic elements — what she calls "core essence" — while shadows and reflections take on a life of their own.

Chandon's lifelong fascination with the American vernacular continues. "I am still captivated by the ideal of the holiday or vacation," she said. "Or perhaps it's just simple pleasures that I relish. The simple row boat, the backyard pool, the tailfin of a highly designed car from my parents' generation."

Rogers' landscapes are fantastical confections whose cotton candy trees and vertiginous depths travel far from realism. Having lived in California his entire life, he is aware of its precariousness: the California dream of sunsets and palm trees brings with it devastation. The California landscape is subject to earthquakes, fires, and mudslides, which Rogers has experienced firsthand.

Utopia coexists with dystopia, and beach culture rubs shoulders



Matt Rogers, Festival Palms, Oil on Canvas, 72 x 96 inches 2018



RUSSELL HOOVER

Tim Bessell's surfboard art is part of the "California Dreamin'" exhibit that opens Aug. 30 at the Napa Valley Museum, Yountville.

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## NAPA ALUMNI CHOIR TRIP, PART 2

# Singing in Wales, onto England

*Editor's note: This is the second part of a three-part story by Gerald Hasser about the Napa High and St. Mary's choirs alumni tour of Great Britain, led by choirmaster Travis Rogers this summer.*

GERALD HASSER

"The wheels on the bus go round & round..."

Sunday morning, the fifth day of the tour, started early with a 7:15 a.m. departure on our two "coaches," dubbed Bus 1 and Bus 2, headed from Scotland to Wales.

My wife Jean and I were on rockin' Bus 1, with ace Welsh driver Glenn "Happy Days!" Collins. Choirmaster Travis Rogers was sitting up front next to his wife Sharon and tour director Molly Wenske working her phone to make sure all was set at the next stop and beyond. Local guide Almar "Bing Bong!" Otjes,



GERALD HASSER PHOTO

Napa Alumni Choir at St. Asaph's Cathedral in Wales.

and tenor/guest conductor Caleb Smith were (NHS class of 2016) herding cats. Local guide Sonia Beck kept Bus 2 ably led and entertained with Welsh melodies.

The beautiful blue sky morning displayed the lush Scottish

countryside to full effect, with rolling hills, green pastures and neat farms sprinkled with sheep and cows along the mostly two-lane roads in excellent condition.

About five hours later, we rolled into the northwestern tip

of Wales and the historic small town of St. Asaph's for an afternoon concert at St. Asaph's Cathedral, the oldest and smallest cathedral in Wales.

Built in the 13th century on the site of a sixth-century church, it was expanded in the 14th century by King Henry VII and restored in the 19th century. It is now home to the annual North Wales Men's Festival and known for excellent acoustics and a famous organ originally installed in 1824.

Men's choirs are an important part of Welsh culture and are plentiful, with roots in the mines, and some established for many decades. We were fortunate to follow a concert by the award-winning Cor Meibion Caemarfon Male Voice Choir,

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Please see WARSHAWSKI, Page C2



Artist Melissa Chandon in her studio. SUBMITTED PHOTO

**Museum**

From CI

with counterculture, a paradox that infuses many of Rogers' paintings. His work's convey California's complicated, dark, bright, beauty.

Rogers and Chandon are represented by Caldwell Snyder Gallery.

**Surfboard art**

Continuing the "Dreamin'" theme is surfboard artist Tim Bessell, whose work is in the Spotlight Gallery.

Bessell, a La Jolla-based contemporary California

artist, is known for having created more than 46,000 distinctive handmade surfboards throughout his career.

Bessell's Artist Series surfboards pay homage to famous artists who have inspired him, including iconic pop artist Andy Warhol. Released in very limited editions, these works, created in collaboration with the Warhol Foundation, take Warhol's graphics and combine them with Bessell's most popular surfboard shapes.

Surfboards for sale during the exhibit will benefit the museum's arts and education programs.

Tickets to the Sept. 1

opening celebrations are available through the museum's website. For more information, call 707-944-0500, email info@napavalleymuseum.org, or visit the website at napavalleymuseum.org.

The Napa Valley Museum, at 55 Presidents Circle in Yountville, is open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., on Wednesdays through Sundays.

Museum admission is \$10 for adults; \$5 for seniors (65 and older) and children younger than 16; admission is free for Museum members, residents of the California Veterans Home and active duty military.



GERALD HASSER PHOTOS

The Great Orme Tramway climbs from Llandudno in Wales for great views



The view from atop Mt. Snowdon stretches over the Welsh countryside to the Irish Sea.

**Warszewski**

From CI

and children.

"Who you are matters. The best lawyers, in my opinion, are those who are deeply moral. They recognize that their commitment to the law—to justice—transcends their work day and enters into every decision they make. The way they conduct their personal lives, the way they raise their children, the decisions they make with money, how they act when they make a mistake. Being a lawyer is a commitment to the way you live your life—not just what you do when you are in your office."

After the screening, the last question to panel members came from



JANNA WALDINGER, ART & CLARITY

Valerie Clemen and daughter Alana Collins attended the screening of "RBG" in Napa.

9-year-old Alana Collins, a fourth grade student at Pueblo Vista Elementary School: "How do you find the courage to do your jobs?"

Greenberg responded to loud applause: "Because we're badass!"

Catch a free viewing of "RBG" on CNN, Monday, Sept. 3 (check local listings for times).

Evvy Warszewski is a board member of Napa Center for Thought & Culture and co-director of E & M Presents.

**Choir**

From CI

gentlemen of at least two generations in formal wear, fine voice and perfect pitch, singing classics and Welsh hymns, and led by a woman in a break from tradition.

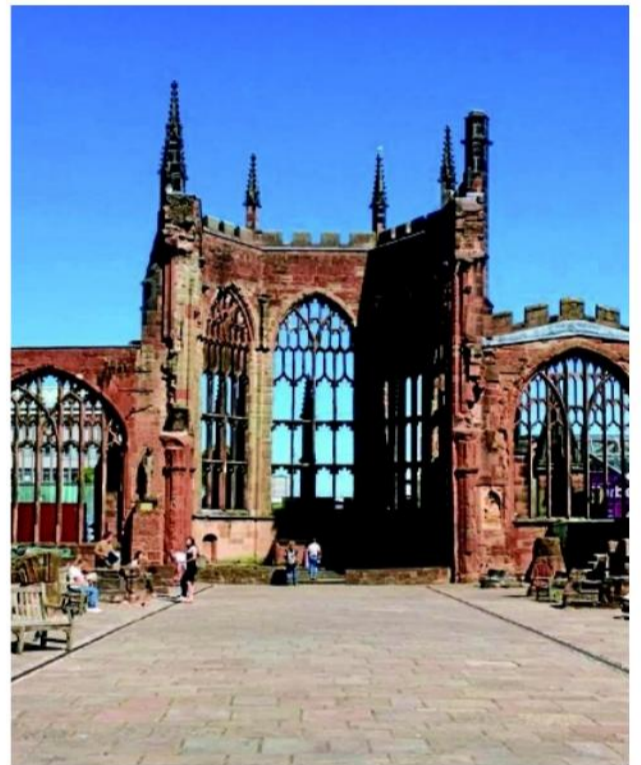
Tom Flesher of Napa's First Presbyterian Church played the renowned cathedral organ to great effect accompanying the choir on "Let All the People Praise Thee O God," by composer William Mathias, who by coincidence is buried in the cathedral cemetery, and on "Sing Unto God," by George Friedrich Handel. These songs added a classic spiritual feel to the middle of the Napa performance, bracketed by the rousing opening and closing tunes.

After the concert, it was back on the bus to the lovely town of Llandudno, with its beach, boardwalk and pier looking out over the Irish Sea. The town grew as a resort during the reign of Queen Victoria, with low-rise hotels lining the waterfront boulevard and shops and restaurants with wrought-iron awnings one block behind.

Due to its mild weather and comparatively low cost, Llandudno is a favorite with British pensioners. The surrounding area is quite scenic, with trams and gondolas providing access to the top of the Great Orme, a hilly peninsula jutting into the sea and laced with trails and the site of the sixth century St. Tudno's Church still in use.

The size of our group necessitated the use of four hotels, and Jean and I were lucky to be in one with a good restaurant and patio overlooking the sea to enjoy dinner and drinks with fellow singers and spouses well into balmy evenings.

During the performance-free day in Wales, group members pursued their own choices of exploring castles, walking the town and seaside or taking the antique train in Snowdonia National Park to the rocky peak of Mount Snowdon, the highest point in Wales,



Skeletal ruins of the old Coventry Cathedral, bombed in 1940.

with wild views of mountains and the Irish Sea in two directions.

The native Welsh language is still spoken regularly in this more remote part of the country and is once again taught in schools, strengthening people's hold to their culture.

We had a not-too-early start on Day 7 for the ride to the next concert, in England's West Midlands at the majestic "new" Coventry Cathedral. It was dedicated in 1956 by Queen Elizabeth II and consecrated in 1962, and connected to the skeletal ruins of the original 14th century cathedral of the same name that was bombed out in 1940.

Reminding the world of the horrors of war and mankind's capacity for destruction, it serves also as testament to Britain's resolve and recovery. The soaring ceiling of the new cathedral and enormous stained glass windows complement the world's biggest tapestry of Christ behind the altar.

Napa's Coventry performance particularly resonated with a small group of older ladies, former residents of Zimbabwe who were happy to hear African rhythms.

After wandering the site absorbing the history, there was just enough time for a pleasant outdoor lunch before the ride to the fabled university city of Oxford, home of its namesake university and some of Britain's best-known institutions of higher learning.

The city was bustling even in summer along its pedestrian-oriented main street. Jean and I joined John and Cyndi Kasten to stroll through quiet parts of campuses until finding ourselves at a busy pub for pints while the World Cup played on a large flat-screen TV.

The buses deposited us for the final segment of the tour in a modern hotel in a modest north London neighborhood. The room for Jean and I was on a front corner overlooking busy Cricklewood Broadway, with McDonald's out one window and Burger King out the other.

Mystery entertainment came around 11 the first night, with multiple sirens announcing the arrival of police cars in front of McDonald's. They remained with blue lights flashing for at least an hour, leaving us to wonder what it was about. We slept well anyway, ready for more of London.

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Because she's the **cat's meow**

**Pic of the Litter**  
Every Saturday in the  
Napa Valley Register