

McMillan

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together since college; her love for her daughters, Estelle and Frankie, and their love for their mother; her love for her mother. All are just as important as the love she has shared with the men in her life.

Her relationship with Wanda and Violet is a mature girlfriend relationship, where foibles and faults are overlooked and cherished. Violet is introduced when she tags along with Wanda to meet Georgia for a walk.

“Violet is my other college friend whom I love like a stepsister, but I’m not crazy about her standards. For being so smart, she’s dumb as hell and gets on my nerves, but I just can’t bring

myself to divorce her. She won’t let me. We’ve gone months without speaking, but eventually she always calls back. Or I break down and call her.”

McMillan claimed her place in the literary world in 1992 with “Waiting to Exhale.” That book spoke to 20- and 30-something women, particularly African-American women, as they fumbled through adulthood, relationships and marriage in the 1990s. Nearly 25 years later, “I Almost Forgot About You” captures the restlessness that seems to mark middle age, the “what ifs” and “should haves.”

McMillan’s storyline reflects the seismic changes that have altered society since her early books. She touches on everything from same-sex marriage to the

election of President Barack Obama and the increased acceptance of interracial relationships. She shows the shifts in social norms through authentic dialogue and character encounters.

McMillan suggests that readers consider how they view the world versus how the world views them.

For example, it comes as a surprise to Georgia that her daughters have strong relationships with their respective fathers. Knowing how much their mother loathes her ex-husbands, neither has the heart to be upfront with Georgia.

Throughout the book Georgia is angsty over her career choice as if it’s a revelation that optometry isn’t her passion. However, whenever she voices her dissatisfaction, whether to her mother, a friend or even an

employee, the response is something along the lines of, “Yeah, I never understood why you went that route in the first place.”

The cast of characters enriches the narrative, bringing nuance and clarity to scenes and moving the plot along. The moments with the men from Georgia’s past are particularly poignant as her emotions bounce from those of a young woman with a broken heart to those of a mature woman still smarting and determined to protect her heart.

Georgia’s story reminds readers who have clocked a lot of living that it’s never too late to reconnect and reflect on the past as they craft the future they want.

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Band

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and arts programs is more than just an activity to pass time; it creates a lifelong dedication to the beautiful things in life — the things that make it worth living. It fosters imaginative minds and soulful hearts. It builds creative people and excellent problem solvers.

Participation in music and arts programs is more than what it seems on the surface, so it makes me happy to know that despite the cutting of programs all over the state, the band at Southern Arrostook Community High School is still going strong — and I’m convinced that it’s because of the tenacity and dedication of Kermit McGary.

That was how I came to seek out and find another musical organization to support in my new home of Bangor. I learned about the Bangor Band awhile ago, and finally had the opportunity to attend their first outdoor concert of the summer on Tuesday at the Bangor Waterfront.

By talking to Lori Wingo, president of the Bangor Band, I was reminded of the power and enduring qualities of community bands.

The Bangor Band has performed at various venues throughout the Bangor area every summer since its very first season in 1959.

“We are a community band. We range in age from 14 years old all the way up to folks in their 80s. We come from all walks of life. We have physicians, chiropractors, music educators, regular educators, retirees, college students, high school students,” Lori told me. “I think the band feels that it’s very important to continue the tradition that was left for us. We’re going into our 157th season and arguably we are one of the oldest community bands in the United States.”

From war to the Great Depression to fire to even something as complex as changing musical tastes, the Bangor Band has survived and continues to entertain today, which is exactly what they did on Tuesday night.

The band of french horns, trumpets, saxophones, flutes, percussion and more played songs ranging from selections from “Annie” to marches from John Philip Sousa and even pieces to honor big band man Glenn Miller.

An emcee announced each selection before the band started to play, and the lawn area beside the waterfront was filled with people who had

brought down their lawn chairs to enjoy the music. Many of them tapped their toes, hummed along and clapped with the beat. Children ran around and played, men and women with their dogs walked by and stopped to listen and a great time seemed to be had by all.

I grabbed some ice cream from the Wild Cow Creamery food truck, which is usually not open on Tuesdays, but serves up ice cream specifically for the Bangor Band’s summer waterfront concerts, and brought my own lawn chair so I could sit and enjoy some tunes that reminded me how much I loved to play.

As for future concerts, there are plenty in store for Bangor this summer.

“We have prepared upwards of about 60 to 65 pieces,” Lori said. Their next show is for the 36th annual R.B. Hall Day at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, June 25, at Peakes Auditorium in Bangor High School and another summer concert on the waterfront is coming up at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 28. The outdoor concerts on the waterfront will take place at 7 p.m. every Tuesday until the last performance on Aug. 9. The band also plays other concerts throughout the year, including a Harvest Concert in November and a Christmas Concert in December, among others.

I told Lori about my previous involvement in my high school band, and just like any good president should do, she asked me why I wasn’t participating in the Bangor Band. My reason was simple: I don’t have my own baritone saxophone. I used one that belonged to my high school, and due to the expense, never purchased one myself. While in college my parents helped me rent an alto saxophone (which I switched to so I could play in the pep band) from a local music store. But Lori offered to keep an eye out for a used instrument for me, so who knows, maybe I’ll be part of the Bangor Band in the future.

Regardless, I’ll keep holding on to the love of music that began in my high school classroom with a wonderful teacher. That’s really all it takes — one person dedicated to keeping the music alive.

As for the Bangor Band, residents of the Queen City can expect it to be around for a long time yet.

“It’s not going to go down on our watch,” Lori said.

Shelby Hartin writes about arts, culture and food. Read more in her blog Hartin Soul, which can be found at hartin.bangordailynews.com.

Cinema

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Over the years, River City Cinema’s outdoor film series has grown in popularity.

“We had seen [outdoor films] done successfully in other places, and we had the idea to do it in downtown Bangor during the summer as a free event for the com-

munity,” Graham said. It worked, and the community responded.

“Some of our more popular films we’ve seen three or four hundred people set up chairs in Pickering Square for the films,” Graham said.

Graham said he already has seen a big initial response to the movies planned for this year.

“When the drive-in opened up last year we won-

dered if it would be too much, but we still had a very strong audience. There’s always room for more stuff like that to happen,” Graham said.

River City Cinema has hosted various events in the Bangor area since 2001, including screenings of foreign films, documentaries and independent films at venues such as the Bangor Opera House and the Union Street

Brick Church. A new initiative started by the organization is a first Friday night film series held at COESPACE, which takes place during the fall, winter and spring months.

Though the movies will take the big screen, the event overall is really about bringing people together for a great night out, Graham said. “It’s about a sense of community. People congregate and have fun.”



JORGE A. GONZALEZ

Doubt

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and the film version of “Doubt” have each chosen to emphasize one of Shanley’s topics — race, sexual abuse, power, faith — over

another. But Poole give each topic equal emphasis, which allows the audience to see the rich tapestry Shanley has woven.

New Surry Theatre over the years has challenged itself and its audience with Arthur Miller’s “All My Sons,” Bertolt

Brecht’s “The Threepenny Opera,” Brian Friel’s “Dancing at Lughnasa” and many others. With this production of “Doubt,” the company once again has shown it is a community-based arts organization willing to take risks and skilled

enough to make it look effortless.

New Surry Theatre’s production of “Doubt: A Parable” will be performed through July 9 at the Blue Hill Town Hall Theater, 18 Union Street. For ticket information, call 200-4720, or visit the company’s Facebook page.

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