

Union Street Brick Church stages ‘Wit’

BY CHARLENE KENT
SPECIAL TO THE BDN

It’s hard to imagine why a playwright would set her skills on a subject as bleak as ovarian cancer – or why a local church would want to tell the story. The play, titled Wit, was written by Margaret Edson, a graduate from Smith College with a degree in Renaissance history. After that, she moved to Iowa and sold hot dogs and tended bar. So how did she come to write such a play?

According to the play’s website, “In 1985 she took a job as a clerk on an oncology/AIDS unit at a research hospital in Washington. The unit was doing clinical trials of the drug AZT for AIDS patients and developing new protocols for the treatment of ovarian cancer. In her unobtrusive clerical position, Edson was able to watch the interactions of very sick patients with their caregivers, and to observe how patients coped with their illnesses and the often dehumanizing environment of a bustling hospital. She left the hospital after a year, but the experience stayed with her. She went on to intern at a philanthropic organization and do fundraising for a mental health agency, where she published her first piece of writing, a training manual on the psychosocial aspects of AIDS, Living with AIDS: Perspectives for Caregivers.” (from <http://faculty.smu.edu/tmayo/witguide.htm>.)

After spending time in a Roman convent learning plain song and doing manual labor, she began writing a play. While working as a sales clerk in a bicycle shop, she revisited her haunting experience in health care, particularly of women with ovarian cancer who approached the almost certain death sentence with so much dignity.

That play is Wit, the story of the final hours of Vivian Bearing. In the play, Vivian is an academic superstar in the world

of John Donne studies, considered the most difficult metaphysical poet to read. Her life is consumed by the structures of poetry, the fine points of the placement of a comma or the pronunciation of a diphthong.

But then Vivian is diagnosed with stage four metastatic ovarian cancer; there is no stage five. She is placed in an experimental chemotherapy protocol that is killing her, but she prides herself on her toughness in the pursuit of knowledge. As the end of her life nears, the skills and intellectual strengths she had relied on are confronted by the new emotional realities of loss, weakness, and fear. She “discovers that her expertise in literary interpretation has little to do with the real-life trauma of cancer, which cannot be addressed through scholarly research or intellectual argument.” (faculty.smu.)

Vivian reassesses her life and her work with a profundity and humor that are transformative – both for her and the audience. The cultures of academia, modern medicine, and Beatrix Potter meet in Edson’s Pulitzer Prize-winning play.

As Vivian says, “Now is not the time for verbal swordplay, for unlikely flights of imagination and wildly shifting perspectives, for metaphysical conceit, for wit. And nothing would be worse than a detailed scholarly analysis. Erudition. Interpretation. Complication. Now is the time for simplicity. Now is the time for, dare I say it, kindness.”

Wit is being performed at the Union Street Brick Church Friday and Saturday, September 23 and 24 at 7pm, and Sunday, September 25 at 3:30 pm. The church is on the corner of Main and Union Streets in downtown Bangor. There is no admission charge and refreshments are served. Please contact Charlene at 945-9798, 991-4477, or at charlenejkent@gmail.com.

Out and about with your dog in the fall



Critters
Debra Bell

Fall is the time that many folks consider their holiday gift giving. In addition to embracing the colors of the season and the cooling air, fall is when people are soaking in the outdoors and being active with their pups.

So if you’re one of those folks who are going out and about with your dog this fall, here are some ideas of ways to capture your fall escapades through the lens. But safety first: Always make sure that your dog is on leash, especially when hiking or out in public. Always set your pup up for success and remember to treat constantly!

Go leaf peeping. Take your pup for a ride and head out to a park or trail with lots of leaves. University campuses are also great places to find color. Once you get to a colorful spot, settle pup in with the foliage behind her or nestled into a pile of leaves. If your pup knows “stay” or “sit” these are great behaviors to work on while pulling in colorful backdrops.

Bring the color or symbols of the season home. Who says you have to leave home to capture fall images with your pup? Bring home a pumpkin, put together a pile of leaves, or purchase a couple of mums and set up a mini studio in your front yard. Plus, when you’re done using the pumpkin in your photos, you can carve it, cook it and feed it to your pup!

Go for a walk and take some friends. Sometimes you need a second hand to create great pictures. Have a family friend or family member to assist you by keeping your pup engaged (and treated).

Attend a fall dog event — but only if your pup does well with dog events. Not all dogs like being around other dogs but if your pup is social and well mannered, consider attending a fall dog-centered event. Or schedule a holiday pet portrait session where your pup can shine (and create some darn cute images

for holiday gift giving). Here are some events that are coming up soon:

- Barks in the Parks, Gardiner, Sept. 10, to benefit the Gardiner Dog Park.
- Whisker Walk, Sept. 17, 9am-2pm, Harbor Park, Rockland to benefit the Pope Humane Society.
- Soldiers Pace Canicross Race, Sept. 18, 8 a.m.-1 p.m., Smiling Hill Farm in Westbrook; Admission: \$25. Register online at www.running4free.com or call 207-885-1290 for information.
- Paws on Parade, Saturday, Sept. 24 on the Bangor Waterfront, 8 a.m.-Noon. Benefits the Bangor Humane Society.
- Bark For Life of York County, Wells Harbor Community Park, Oct. 2, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Admission: \$15 for the first dog, \$25 for two dogs. Proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society.

Debra Bell is a freelance writer, graphic designer and the owner of Bell’s Furry Friends Photography (a division of Bell Imaging & Design LLC). Bell’s



COURTESY OF DEBRA BELL

Fall is a good time for walks with an enthusiastic companion.

Furry Friends Photography has been named Bangor’s Best Pet Photography Studio in 2014–16. Debra and her husband Bill, are owned by a Maine coon cat

named Olivia and two greyhounds, Laura and Buddy. See her work and learn more about Bell’s Furry Friends Photography at bffpetphotos.com.

Acadia's Oktoberfest

Beer, Food, Arts & Crafts Festival

For more Southwest Harbor Activities, visit acadiachamber.com

7th Annual Wine Tasting
Friday, October 7
4 to 6 p.m.
Smuggler's Den Campground

21st Annual Brewfest
Saturday, October 8
Noon to 5 p.m.
Smuggler's Den Campground

Hosted by the
Southwest Harbor & Tremont Chamber of Commerce

**329 Main St. ♡ Southwest Harbor
244-9264**

FROZEN FRIDAY FUN

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90 Acme Rd. Brewer Fridays, 7:30-9pm

\$5.00 to skate
\$5.00 to rent skates

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⁴ Offer includes a CASH BONUS of \$1,000 when purchasing a current model 100 Series Loaders (110T, 140T, and 200 Series Loaders (220T, 250T, 280T)) from New Holland. See your New Holland dealer in the United States for details and eligibility requirements. Offer is nontransferable. For commercial use only. Offer ends September 30, 2016. Offer subject to change or cancellation without notice (PIN 8446).

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September 22-25, 2016
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AcadiaNightSkyFestival.org