

Features

Wolfe's angels put on film "Bannockburn" comes to UNCA

John Locke
Staff Writer

Although Thomas Wolfe titled his last novel "You Can't Go Home Again," the Asheville native is receiving a warm posthumous welcome on the centennial anniversary of his birth.

A photography exhibit by Helga Wilde Bessent, entitled "Thomas Wolfe's Angels," is currently on display at the Pack Place Exhibit Hall.

Bessent's photos depict 11 statues of angels in Western North Carolina cemeteries that date back to the period of Wolfe's life in Asheville.

The author's father, William Oliver Wolfe, a stonemason who primarily made tombstones, imported many of the statues from Italy. "Look Homeward, Angel," takes its title from Milton's "Paradise Lost," but the inspiration for it was his father's failing in his profession.

While the elder Wolfe's work was known for its technical and aesthetic excellence, he was never able to carve an angel statue to his satisfaction, always failing to capture the precise yet indefinable quality that he felt was essential to the face of an angel.

The search for this quality is expressed in such passages as "Remembering speechlessly we seek the great forgotten language, the lost lane-end into heaven, a stone, a leaf, an unfound door."

His father's futile attempts to realize his vision serves as a recurrent symbol of this unknown longing and its own marble signifiers, standing in various cemeteries in WNC, are a primary source of interest for those interested in Wolfe's life and writing.



COURTESY OF JOHN LOCKE

Bessent's photos depict eleven angel statues from WNC.

Bessent's project, which will be on display until Oct. 3, grew out of her studies in American literature. She collaborated on this four-year project with Bill Wilkerson, a Durham graphic designer who "enhanced and enlarged" Bessent's photos.

The photos are representational and spare in style, depicting monuments that were created between the mid-1890's and 1914, spanning the period of Wolfe's Asheville boyhood.

Many could be called portraits of the statues - they are framed by their surroundings in such a way that they are the clear subjects of the pictures, separate from a vague and shadowy background.

Most of the statues are known to have been imported by W. Oliver Wolfe, although the origins of several are not certain.

The monuments pictured include the "Hendersonville Angel," imported by Wolfe's father in 1905, which is thought to be the model for the angel described in his first book.

This statue, which sat on the porch of W. Oliver Wolfe's shop on Pack Square, was described in "Look Homeward, Angel." It came from Carrara in Italy, and it held a stone lily delicately in one hand. The other hand was lifted in benediction, it was poised clumsily upon the ball of one phthisic foot, and its stupid white face wore the look of some soft stone idiocy."

Also included is the "Lucy Ann Cliff Angel," named after the woman whose grave it marks.

Erected in 1914, the *Asheville Times* mistakenly connected this monument with the one in Wolfe's first novel, although the Hendersonville Angel resembles the above description more closely.

The author expressed his outrage over this misconception in 1936's "The Story of a Novel."

Ten other statues are included in the exhibition, including a monument which now resides in a cemetery in Old Fort which W. Oliver Wolfe lost in a 1901 poker game.

Bessent is a professor of Germanic literature at Duke University. Although Bessent grew up in Germany and attended Goethe University in Frankfurt, she received her master's degree in American literature from Vanderbilt University and said, "although I was born and raised in Germany, in my heart I feel I am a true Southerner."

Wolfe's reputation in Germany has been better than in any other country. As he wrote in a letter, "In Germany I am called the American Homer."

Wolfe has held an uneasy place in local history. "Look Homeward, Angel" is one of the most autobio-

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COURTESY OF THE PLAYERS

The Players bring the life of Robert the Bruce to Lipinsky Auditorium Sept. 8-10 in "Bannockburn."

Seth Horner
Staff Writer

A preview of the play "Bannockburn" will be held at Lipinsky Auditorium at UNCA from Sept. 8-10.

"Bannockburn" is a play presented by The Players, an Asheville theatrical production company. According to Jane Paige, member of The Players and author of "Bannockburn," this is the world premier of the theatre production.

The play was inspired by the history of the interaction between Scotland and England during the 13th century, according to Paige. The Scots were always conflicting with the English because they felt they should be their own country.

King Edward the 1st of England wanted to rule Scotland during a time when their king had died suddenly, according to Paige. The kingdom had six heirs to the throne, leaving the country without a leader.

When King Edward the 1st invaded Scotland, Robert the Bruce led the Scots in their battles to fort him off.

During the invasion, King Edward the 1st assassinated three of Bruce's brothers, leaving him no choice but retaliate against the English.

"What I have done is a world premier of Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland's fight for freedom against the mighty forces of England," said Paige.

Robert the Bruce was faced with overwhelming odds against the English. Bannockburn was the battle where the Scots faced the English

and is the inspiration for Paige's play.

"Robert the Bruce's fight for freedom and the independence of the nation of Scotland culminated in the battle of Bannockburn, where 6,000 Scots defeated 25,000 English," said Paige.

"[Bruce's] brilliance in the arts of war and tactics gave him the advantage for the Scots to be able to defeat the English," says Paige.

Bruce maneuvered the English in such a way that the English were not capable of using their horsemen or their archers.

Bruce's brilliance in the art of battle was shown through his use of Scottish topography. He used the land in a way that made it difficult for the English to use their heavy horses and other instruments of war, according to Paige.

Robert the Bruce went on to reign Scotland for another fifteen years.

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Wildflower a fresh new bloom

Bridgette Odom
Staff Writer

There is a new restaurant in Asheville, Wildflower, which offers something different and is definitely a place you will want to visit.

Wildflower is located at 900 Hendersonville Road next door to the Forest Manor Inn. The restaurant is on the second floor of the complex with parking in the back.

This restaurant is a welcomed change from the usual Applebee's fare, but the prices are much higher. Lunch entrees range from \$7.50 for the chicken pot pie to \$12.95 for Atlantic salmon and the sandwiches are \$5.95 for soup and sandwich to \$7.50 for the classic burger.

If you decide to go to Wildflower for a nice evening out, bring the credit card. Unique appetizers like hearts of palm and medallions of tuna were priced between \$6.95 to \$8.95. The exquisitely prepared dinner entrees like Wildflower crab cakes and grilled Veal chop will cost about \$20 per plate.

The restaurant opened about four months ago and caters mostly to the Biltmore Forest crowd although the classy decor would make anyone feel welcome.

The food choices are varied. They serve mostly traditional foods, like steak and chicken, but they do offer selections unique to Wildflower, such as herb-crusted Yellowfin tuna and maple-grilled pork chops.

This is a great place to go with your parents when they come to Asheville for Founder's Day Weekend. It is also the perfect place to go for a peaceful and classy dining experience.

If you are looking for a nice date restaurant Wildflower will soon be on the top of your list. The mood of the restaurant is very subdued.



PHOTO BY PATRICK BRASWELL

Wildflower serves up savory dishes in a sedate setting.

When you walk in there is a fully stocked bar on the right and two large fluffy couches and four high back chairs to wait in.

Our waiter told us that it is best to make reservations, especially on the weekends. If you forget, the wait is usually less than thirty minutes on a Saturday night.

My lunch experience was so pleasant that I would go back despite the fact that the prices are out of my usual price range.

The exceptional quality of the food and the overall experience was appropriate for the level of prices at Wildflower.

Our waiter, Tim, was very friendly. He never let our drinks get less than half empty, and he was able to explain some of the items on the menu we did not know, such as capers. In case you do not know, a caper is a small green Mediterranean berry.

The service was prompt. When we looked at the menu to order, everything looked so good that we could not make up our minds.

While we decided, we enjoyed fresh French bread with a garlic herb butter sauce. It was so good that we asked for a second basket.

After we made our choices, the

food was served piping hot about ten minutes later. Once we had tasted our selections, our waiter came back to make sure we did not need anything and to find out what we thought of the food.

I ordered creamy chicken pesto pasta, which was good. The sauce was a little bland, but the chicken was some of the best I have had. My lunch companion was also impressed with the food. He ordered the fried chicken with capers, which came with mashed potatoes and sliced carrots.

The meal was very satisfying and the portions were more than enough. I could not finish my large bowl of pasta, but my friend was filled by his selection.

Our waiter said that the dinner entrees are served with about two times more food than the lunch sizes. If you go for dinner, be prepared to get a doggie bag for the leftovers, and make sure to save room for Wildflower's superb dessert menu.

Once we finished the meal, our waiter promptly cleared our plates and asked if we wanted dessert.

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