Coming in 2022
We list some of the most anticipated book releases for this year. BOOKS, B5

Indoor gardens
Mossy Mojo Terrariums create sustainable environments in glass.
LIFE, B10

Redistricting
Is justice blind in North Carolina?
OPINION, B3

Suggestions to add?
Do you have nominations of your own for monuments in Greensboro? Tell us who and why in 150 words to edpage@greensboro.com. Deadline: 5 p.m. Jan. 24.

ROB BROWN, NEWS & RECORD

Jan and Misty Paladino walk with their daughter Isabella by the Gen. Nathanael Greene statue at Guilford Courthouse National Military Park in Greensboro, after a winter storm dropped close to 6 inches of snow on the Triad on Feb. 26, 2015.

MINDING OUR MONUMENTS

Here's what Greensboro should add to its storied roster of historic tributes

JOANNA WINSTON FOLEY
Guest columnist

Joanna Winston Foley, a former journalist with North Carolina roots, lives in Berkeley, Calif., but maintains an interest in Greensboro's history. She has kept an eye on local monuments since writing in August 2020 about the Greensboro-based statue of her ancestor, Maj. Joseph Winston. As the daughter of an artist, Joanna cultivated her love of history and public art after retiring as a social worker.

Greensboro is a monument-loving city. As early as 1857 a plan emerged to spotlight "history in the round" by creating a statue of Gen. Nathanael Greene, the city's namesake. That plan did not get off the ground until much later. But the bold idea took hold. Public art could enhance Greensboro's sense of community connections and pride.

Given that history, monuments are very much on local minds these days. Recently a News & Record editorial called for "Balancing our monuments." Soon after a letter to the editor suggested "A solution to monumental madness." Citizens in Greensboro are joining other Americans across the land to question which statues deserve to stand in public spaces.

Greensboro has great stories to tell about historic struggles for freedom and its monuments tell them beautifully. Two major events for which the city is nationally known — the 1960 sit-ins and the 1781 Battle of Guilford Courthouse — are memorialized with large, handsome monuments.

The effort to end racial segregation in public accommodations began on Feb. 1, 1960. Four N.C. A&T freshmen sat down at the "whites only" F.W. Woolworth lunch counter. Attracting widespread support, their courageous leadership achieved its goal after 174 intense days. The impact of that victory rippled out widely, opening up other lunch counters across the South as it went. Exactly 42 years later, the February One monument was unveiled to honor the Greensboro Four — Ezell Blair, Jr. (now Jibreel Khazan), Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil and David Richmond. (The site of

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H. SCOTT HOFFMANN, NEWS & RECORD

The Rev. Nelson Johnson (second from right) gives a prayer as the two surviving members of the Greensboro Four, Joseph McNeil Jr. (third from left) and Jibreel Khazan, formerly Ezell Blair Jr. (fourth from left), took part in a Jan. 30, 2015, ceremony in front of the February One Monument at N.C. A&T in Greensboro. A&T Chancellor Harold Martin (left) also attended.

Remembering is vital

RABBI FRED GUTTMAN
Guest columnist

Fred Guttman is rabbi emeritus at Temple Emanuel in Greensboro. This article originally appeared in goodfaith media.org.

Some incredible people and events were on my mind on the one-year anniversary of Jan. 6, 2021.

I started by remembering my father, who was in the Pacific with the Navy in World War II.

My wife's dad was in the Atlantic in the Navy during World War II as part of an escort unit bringing supplies to Great Britain.

RABBI FRED GUTTMAN, PROVIDED

Guy Troy (left) and Hank Brodt (right) with Hank's daughter, Deb Donnelly, and her husband Danny.

Some of the ships within his convoy were torpedoed.

I also remembered my good friend Hank Brodt, a survivor of five Nazi concentration camps. On May 6, 1945, he was liberated from Ebensee concentration camp.

One of his liberators was Col. Guy Troy from Liberty, N.C. Some 15 years ago, the two of them met and maintained a relationship until Hank passed.

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Drug overdose laws aren't applied equally

MELBA NEWSOME
North Carolina Health News

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When Sen. Stan Bingham (R-Denton) pushed for Senate Bill 20 in 2013, he said the bill meant more to him than other legislation he'd worked on. He believed the bill, now known as North Carolina's Good Samaritan Law, was a way to address the spiraling overdose deaths that had tripled in the previous decade, claiming more lives than auto accidents.

The Good Samaritan Law permitted people who are "acting in good faith" to seek medical help for someone who is overdosing without fear of being prosecuted. In addition, the law ensured that people would not get in trouble with their parole or probation officers for possessing small amounts of drugs or drug paraphernalia. It also made it possible to distribute and administer naloxone, a drug used to reverse an opioid overdose.

Almost immediately, however, legislators began chipping away at a law many already felt was insufficient. Two years later, the law was amended to appease law enforcement who worried that it

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Guttman

From B1

Guy is 98 and still lives in Liberty.

After liberation, Hank worked in the kitchen for the United States Army, eventually coming to the United States and being made a citizen. After receiving citizenship, Hank fought in the United States Army during the Korean War.

I also found myself thinking of a recent picture I saw of two African American soldiers during World War II loading bombs onto a bomber whose destination was Nazi Germany. On the bombs, the soldiers had written the words, "Easter eggs for Hitler." I feel so grateful to them as well!

These men were part of what we know as the greatest generation.

Although I feel that they were incredible men, most of them would have simply looked upon themselves as average people who had been called upon to defend democracy.

I write these words not only with a sense of gratitude, but also with an understanding that a significant branch of my grandmother's family in Europe was murdered in the Nazi Holocaust.

Today, all that remains of these people are markers on the street outside the homes in which they used to live.

In the immediate aftermath of the Jan. 6 insurrection, I spoke with two North Carolina female members of Congress — both friends of mine, one white and one African American.

The white member told me that she was concerned, but not all that afraid. She later would admit that she should have been much more afraid than she had been.

The African American member told me that she was very afraid and was positive that had the insurrectionists broken through to the House chamber, the African American members would have been the first to have been murdered.

I found myself remembering that in mid-March following the insurrection at one of the guard stations in the Capitol a copy of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion'' was found. It was dog eared and belonged to one of the Capitol Police officers.

For those who do not know, the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," written in 1903 in Russia, is a fabricated antisemitic text which claims that there is a global cadre of Jews who are seeking world domination.

In Russia, the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" would be one of the causes of brutal antisemitic attacks against Jews.

I also remember the picture from Jan. 6 of one of the insurrectionists wearing a "Camp Auschwitz" T-shirt.

At the bottom of the T-shirt were the words, "Work Brings Freedom," a loose translation of the words, "Arbeit Macht Frei," which was found over the gates of many Nazi concentration and death camps.

At Auschwitz, 1.1 million people people were murdered. More than 1 million were Jews.

All these things were running through my mind on the first anniversary of the insurrection.

I remembered my friendship as well with a prominent now-deceased Republican congressman from our area. Although we frequently disagreed, I could not help but think what he would have thought about those events.

I also remember with gratitude a former Republican congressman appearing at our Sabbath services on the morning of the massacre at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh in 2018.

I mention this because I like to think of myself as nonpartisan and hope that he too believes in American democracy.

And then I thought of God.

In 1954, the words "under God" were added to the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance.

Historians say that the reason they were added was to distinguish our country from the "godless" Soviet Union. I found myself wondering, "Are we really a nation 'under God' anymore?"

Jewish tradition teaches that we all are created in the image of God and that we all have a spark of the divine within us. From a Jewish perspective, recognizing the divine in others would be the meaning of living "under God."

Judaism also believes in the "oneness" of all humankind. This would fit nicely with the fact that the word that appears in the Pledge of Allegiance immediately after "under God" is the word "indivisible."

Similarly, the word shalom means not only "peace," but also "wholeness" and "completeness."

Today at Auschwitz, there is a sign which says, "Remember, it didn't start with gas chambers. It started with politicians dividing the people with 'us vs. them.' It started with intolerance and hate speech, and when people stopped caring, became desensitized, and turned a blind eye, it became a slippery slope to genocide."

As our country seeks to defend its democracy and freedom, may the lessons in these words be our challenge and our task!

Foley

From B1

the sit-ins, meanwhile, has been turned into the International Civil Rights Center & Museum).

Greensboro's first history-making event was the famous Battle of Guilford Courthouse on March 15, 1781. As one of the fiercest battles of the Revolutionary War, it decimated British forces. Their heavy losses contributed to the war-ending American victory seven months later at Yorktown. Gen. Nathanael Greene, the commander, is honored with on horseback in statue at the battle site plus a 2008 centennial statue of Greene on foot in downtown Greensboro, appropriately enough, on Greene Street.

These monuments to the Greensboro Four and Greene pay well-deserved tributes to those who led political struggles which resonate to this day. Carrying forward the city's early vision to celebrate history in public spaces, 150 works now grace the city's greenway and its parks and streets. Forward-thinking leaders from the Guilford Battleground Company, Action Greensboro, the Public Art Endowment and other groups deserve credit for their creativity and commitment.

What could possibly be missing from this commemorative landscape? In Greensboro, there is no visual representation of the many African American soldiers who fought at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. It's a striking omission in a city whose earliest claim to fame rests on that historic battle — a battle in which African Americans played a significant role.

KHADEJEH NIKOUYEH, NEWS & RECORD

The General Greene statue looks out at the Lincoln Financial Building from its perch at the intersection of McGee and Greene streets in downtown Greensboro on Aug. 9, 2018.

JERRY WOLFORD, NEWS & RECORD

The original lunch counter at the grand opening of the International Civil Rights Center and Museum is seen Feb. 1, 2010, in Greensboro. The date also marks the 50th anniversary of the sit-in protest started at the F.W. Woolworth store lunch counter.

JOSEPH RODRIGUEZ, NEWS & RECORD

Sitting at the table (left to right) are Joyce Johnson, Vincent Harding and Dolores Huerta, as civil rights leaders made the announcement for the founding of the National Council of Elders at the Greensboro Four statue at N.C. A&T on July 31, 2012, in Greensboro.

The Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, at 2332 New Garden Road, is a treasure trove of 28 statues, monuments and plaques. Some represent actual battle participants; others honor individuals who served then or later in political roles. However, adults and school children visiting the park cannot see any evidence that Black soldiers from the First Virginia Regiment and the First and Second Maryland Regiments were actively engaged in the battle.

This is how history used to be commemorated — or not — in public art. But the times they are a-changing. In 2016, Kings Mountain National Military Park in South Carolina erected a marker to the African American patriots who fought in that battle. Representation matters! Today the National Park Service at both national and local levels recognizes that a much fuller story is waiting to be told about the participation of Black people in the Revolutionary War.

In Greensboro, for example, Thomas Carney, Ishmael Titus and Ned Griffin are recognized as veterans of this battle. There are many other unrecognized African American military heroes. All of them deserve visual representation both at the national military park and elsewhere in the city — through monuments or murals or modern interactive media displays.

These Black soldiers fought here for America's independence — with fervent hope but no guarantee that political victory would lead to their own freedom. They are the ancestors of the Greensboro Four — men who courageously faced personal danger to serve the greater good. A commemoration of them will supply the missing link between the city's two major historical events. This is Greensboro's next and greatest story to tell!

Overdoses

From B1

gave a "get out of jail free" card to users. Law enforcement officials also wanted protection from prosecution if they mistakenly arrested someone protected by the law.

Weak and confusing

Many in the harm reduction community view the law as weak and problematic, particularly for some communities.

"We don't have protection from arrests like some states do; we only have protection from prosecution," said Loftin Wilson, program manager for the NC Harm Reduction Coalition in Durham. "We don't have protection across the board for possession, only for certain drugs and amounts. What drugs are covered or not covered is based on how drugs are classified and how drugs are classified is underpinned by racism. It has to do with perceptions about who uses what drugs and how they're used."

Wilson has been involved in harm reduction for more than a decade. Because most of the people with whom he works are Black, he has a unique window into the disparities of their care and a keen understanding of their wariness about drug laws, including those intended to help.

"Black people have more negative interactions not only with law enforcement but both EMS, the hospital and people in emergency rooms," he said. "There's less compassion, less patience and more blame for them. There's more of a tendency to see certain people as problems or as criminals, rather than people who are suffering."

Shuchin Shukla, a faculty physician and opioid educator at the Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) in Asheville, said much of the reluctance to seek care under the Good Samaritan Law stems from the long-standing contributors to health care disparities.

"I think it has to do with normal issues Black and brown communities always face — not having trust in the medical system, having lots of reasons not to trust the medical system, the approach those providers have, the color of the skin of your providers and your mental health provider," Shukla said.

One law vs. another

North Carolina's "death by distribution" law went into effect Jan. 1, 2020. The law allows prosecutors to charge an individual with second-degree murder if they sold a product to someone who then overdosed and died from it.

The law was inspired by the 2017 accidental overdose death of a young woman in Haywood County. In that case, the person who supplied the opioids was charged with second-degree murder and sentenced to more than 30 years in prison, three times longer than the maximum allowable prison sentence for selling drugs in North Carolina.

"The timing could not have been worse because that law went into effect so soon after the pandemic hit. With the pandemic came all of these disruptions in the global supply trade that have had this huge impact on overdose rates across the board," Wilson said. "It's like a perfect storm situation."

The gap between the rates at which Black people and white people use and die from opioid overdoses has narrowed steadily in recent years. According to preliminary data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, during the pandemic, the rate of Black overdose death exceeded whites for the first time in more than 20 years.

During the first year the law was enacted, 10 death by distribution cases were filed statewide and three-and-a-half times that in the 2020-21 fiscal year, according to felony data published by the N.C. Judicial Branch.

Drug-induced homicide (DIH) laws, as they are collectively called, are becoming increasingly common across the country. There is a great deal of debate about their impact and whether they are appropriate moral or legal responses to an accidental overdose death. Do these laws drive people who use substances further underground and increase the likelihood of fatal overdoses? Do they reduce willingness to call 911 in an emergency?

Wilson said this is particularly true for people of color who are more likely to distrust law enforcement. They know from personal experience that the impact and enforcement of drug laws are not distributed equally and greatly impacted by their identities and the communities in which they live.

"When I'm talking with people about past overdose situations or preparing for a future one, they will say, 'I want to help them but I don't want to go to jail for murder,'" says Wilson, who also notes this makes some more hesitant to administer naloxone to prevent an overdose. "They're like, 'Well, if this person doesn't survive, and then I'm the person who's there, there's the possibility that I could be charged with this.'"

A faulty premise

Rep. Dean Arp (R-Monroe) authored the law under the premise that it was needed to put high-level drug dealers behind bars. However, when the law was first being considered, many warned that the people most likely to be prosecuted would be friends and family members of the overdose victim, not drug kingpins.

In one well-publicized Dare County case, 32-year-old Jessica Leigh Musick died of an overdose in December 2020 and her relative, Tahnee Raquel Musick, 32, was one of the two people charged with conspiracy to sell and/or deliver heroin. Tahnee Musick remained a wanted person until Dec. 26 when she was arrested by Southern Shores Police after several residents reported seeing her in town. She was in possession of drug paraphernalia.

"There isn't this hard distinction between people who use drugs and people who sell drugs," Wilson says. "A lot of people who sell drugs also use drugs. We know that people who are prosecuted under death by distribution laws across the board everywhere in the U.S. tend to be friends and family members of the person who died."

It is well-documented that despite using drugs at roughly the same rate, Blacks are arrested and incarcerated at much higher rates than whites. National research also suggests that drug-induced homicide laws are racially inequitable and charges are disproportionately brought in cases where the person who fatally overdosed is white and the person who distributed the drugs is a person of color. And as people of color are incarcerated at higher rates, racial disparities also show up in the overdose data.

A study co-authored by five researchers from the UNC-Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health published in the American Journal of Public Health found that, in the first two weeks after being released from prison, former inmates were as much as 40 times more likely to die of an opioid overdose than someone in the general population.

First, two-thirds of the formerly incarcerated already have a substance use disorder and being incarcerated meant they underwent forced withdrawal. As a result, many leave prison with a lowered tolerance for drugs that previously they were able to handle. And during the time these people were incarcerated, the potency of substances available on the street has likely increased, leading to accidental overdose.

In addition to physiological changes, many former inmates struggle to find mental health and substance use treatment services once released, leaving them more vulnerable.

"Two key strategies to prevent deaths are widespread adoption of medication-assisted treatment and overdose education with naloxone distribution," the researchers noted. But only a small fraction of carceral facilities in the U.S. employ these methods of harm reduction.

"The loss of dignity, being judged even after release, discrimination, and lack of health care may worsen mental health outcomes and serve as an impetus for substance use," the authors wrote in their conclusion "Overall, imprisonment for individuals with substance use disorder may be more harmful than helpful."