

# South of the Garden

The Newsletter for the Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South

Volume 28, Number 2

June, 2007

## MM Wade

*It is with great sadness and full hearts that we share the news that Mary Margaret Wade, RCWMS Trustee, died recently. The following obituary appeared in local newspapers.*

Mary Margaret Wade, artist, humanitarian, and friend to scores, died in Durham NC on June 10, 2007. Her lifelong devotion to alleviating suffering through art culminated in her most recent work at Duke University Hospital where she was Program Director with Arts for Life-Duke. Serving children with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses, Ms. Wade helped to restore a sense of normalcy to her young patients and their families by inspiring them to create art during long periods of treatment.

Ms. Wade was involved in many social causes: cleaning up the New River in Ashe County, NC, environmental issues in the Arctic, women's rights, civil rights, choice, and ending capital punishment. She served on many boards, including the Cape Lookout Environmental Camp in coastal North Carolina and the Resource Center for Women & Ministry in the South.

Ms. Wade was born in Winston-Salem NC, on December 30, 1948. She graduated from RJ Reynolds High School, attended Queens College in Charlotte NC, and graduated from the University of Georgia with a degree in journalism. She received her master's degree in special education from Howard University. She worked in graphic design and cartooning in Washington DC, Greensboro NC, St. Petersburg FL, and Atlanta GA, where she also taught art at The Atlanta School. Her drawings were published in books edited by Gordon Lish and her cartoons appeared weekly in *Southline* in Atlanta. Her artwork was featured in a special issue of *Art Papers* magazine devoted to the 1996 Olympic Games. Ms. Wade was director of the Olympics Project at Nexus Press in Atlanta, in which one artist from each continent was selected to be in residence and produce an artists' book at the press.

Ms. Wade was the center of a devoted circle of family and friends, which grew ever wider throughout her life. She is survived by her mother, Margaret Wade of Winston-Salem NC; her sister, Ruth Wade Ross of Chapel Hill NC; her nephews, John Ross and wife Carolyn of New Preston CT and Lyle Ross and wife Lizzie of San Francisco CA; and an aunt, Ruth Henry McLelland of Davidson NC. Her father Charles B. Wade, Jr. and her brother Byrd Wade predeceased her.

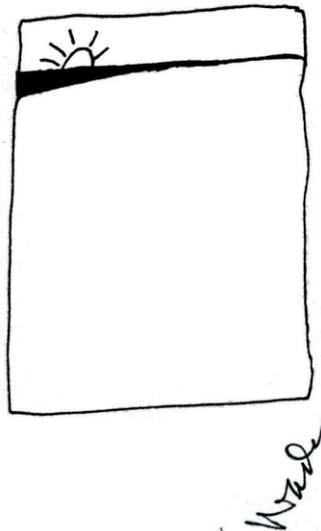
A memorial service will be held at 10:00 a.m. on June 23, 2007 at the Angle Amphitheater behind the Doris Duke Center, Sarah P. Duke Gardens, Duke University, Durham NC.

In lieu of flowers, Ms. Wade requested that donations be made to:

GYN-Oncology Research Fund  
ATTN: Dr. Andrew Berchuck  
Duke Medical Center, Box 3079, Durham, NC 27710

Resource Center for Women & Ministry in the South,  
1202 Watts Street, Durham, NC 27701

Arts for Life-Duke  
301 Monticello Rd., Weaverville NC 28787



## Dads

by Jeanette Stokes

The Saturday before Easter, I sat on Ruth's screened-in porch visiting with her mother, Margaret Wade. Meanwhile, Margaret's other daughter, my friend Mary Margaret, lay in a hospital bed at Duke University Medical Center, having called the doctor and arranged to be admitted when the tumor in her lung caused such shortness of breath that she needed help breathing. I've liked Mary Margaret's mother ever since she and Mary Margaret's grandmother came to visit the Greensboro office Mary Margaret and I shared in the early 1980. I remember being struck by the two older women with smiling faces. They seemed sturdy and kind. And their story was so interesting.

The grandmother had grown up in Alaska as the daughter of a missionary. And not just any missionary. John Killbuck was a Native American from Ohio and a Moravian missionary. When Mary Margaret and her mother went to Alaska in 1999, the people in the remote village where the missionary had preached knew all about him. The Killbuck mountain range is even named for him.

I went to see Mrs. Wade that Saturday afternoon because I like her, but also because she was facing a mother's worst nightmare. Her daughter had terminal cancer and the end was palpably near. I had nothing to offer Mrs. Wade except myself, and an ear if she wanted to talk. We are fond of one another. She likes that I helped look after Mary Margaret when she had surgery for uterine cancer four and a half years ago and she brings me tokens from time to time: wild rice at Christmas, bubbles in an egg-shaped bottle at Easter, a small white cotton quilt that I put on my bed at the beach when I go there to write.

It was all breaking my heart. It broke my heart that I was losing my friend, and it broke my heart that Margaret was losing her daughter. Every mother should at least be able to hope that at her own death she will look up into the loving faces of her children. Margaret lost her husband Charles a dozen years ago and her only son a few years later, leaving two daughters, Ruth and Mary Margaret, and one of them was slipping away.

We talked about Easter and whether Margaret, who gets around with the aid of a walker, would go to the sunrise service in the Sarah P. Duke gardens. I finally realized she was pulling my leg. We spoke of the beach. Mary Margaret's father, Charles, had grown up in Morehead City, just across the sound from where I go to write. Margaret still has a condo there, near the shipyard. Mary Margaret spent many summer weeks in the last ten years helping to build an environmental camp nearby at Cape Lookout. The camp closed at the end of last year and the director moved away.

Mary Margaret had been going to that part of the North Carolina coast all her life. I expect that was the first beach sand to touch her tiny feet. Born in late December 1948, she was probably just learning to sit up when the grownups placed her on a blanket facing the Atlantic Ocean or baptized her toes in the restless water. I doubt she ever thought about whether or not she loved the ocean, she just did. For the decade that she supported the camp at Cape Lookout, she was caring for the part of the earth that had fallen into the care of her ancestors,

(Continued on back.)

# Calendar

Programs sponsored by RCMWS are marked with \*.

July 7, 2007, 8:00 pm  
LISE UYANIK & THE MOBILE CITY BAND with  
STELLA: In Concert  
ArtsCenter, Carrboro, NC

July 21, 2007, 9:00 am-1:00 pm  
CELEBRATING FRIDA: An Inspiration to Transformation  
Church of Reconciliation, 110 N. Elliott Rd., Chapel Hill, NC  
Celebrate the month of Frida Kahlo's 100th birthday. Her  
life encourages turning pain into beauty—a creative  
process that brings us joy, even healing. Meditate on her  
art and writing, journal, and make a Frida-inspired doll.  
Leaders: Allison Davidson & Nancy Corson Carter  
Cost: Suggested donation \$25, lunch provided  
Contact: glasspen.bellsouth.net or nccarter@nc.rr.com

July 23-29, 2007  
BUILDING INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY AT WORK:  
Four Dialogues of Heart  
Ghost Ranch, Abiquiu, NM  
Explore heart-centered leadership to see how personal  
values and self-awareness can be used for organizational  
and personal development.  
Leaders: Rebecca Reyes and Polly Weiss of Durham, NC  
Cost: \$240 plus housing & meals  
Contact: www.ghostranch.org

July 26-29, 2007  
INTERPLAY SUMMER UNINTENSIVE IN NC  
Trinity Center, near Morehead City, NC  
Leaders: Phil Porter, Tom Henderson, & Ginny Going  
Contact: www.interplaync.org, 919-821-3723

August 16-17, 2007  
CREATING JUSTICE WITH JOY IN CHURCH &  
SOCIETY: Young Feminist Network Leadership,  
Diversity and Inclusion Retreat  
Chicago, IL  
Contact: Nidza Vazquez, 703-352-1006,  
nvazquez@womensordination.org

August 17-19, 2007  
CELEBRATING CATHOLIC FEMINIST MINISTRIES:  
A Women-Church Forum  
Hyatt Regency O'Hare, Chicago, IL  
25th anniversary gathering of Women-Church celebrating  
feminist ministries. People of all faith traditions welcome.  
Contact: 415-381-7144, wccconference2007@yahoo.com,  
www.women-churchconvergence.org

August 17-19, 2007  
THE PAINTING EXPERIENCE  
Asheville Arts Museum, Asheville, NC  
Leader: Annie Danberg, master teacher trained by  
Stewart Cubley  
Cost: \$345 plus \$25 studio fee  
Contact: www.processarts.com, 888-639-8569

\*August 30, 2007 (5:00-7:00 pm)  
MEINRAD CRAIGHEAD DOCUMENTARY PROJECT:  
Preview & Fundraising Party  
Anita McLeod's, Durham, NC  
Learn more about the project and enjoy a 10-minute  
preview of the documentary.  
Contact: Amy Kellum, ak@meinradproject.org,  
www.meinradproject.org

August 31-September 2, 2007  
SO I MAY GO ON: A Weekend Intensive with Holly Near  
Leaven Center, near Lansing, MI  
Work on your communication skills. Improve critical  
thinking, writing, and presentation skills.  
Leader: Holly Near, singer, songwriter, and performer  
Cost: \$300  
Contact: Leaven, www.leaven.org, leavencenter@leaven.org

\*September 6, 2007 (12:00 noon-2:00 pm)  
CELEBRATE TWO ANNIVERSARIES for RCWMS  
Duke University Library, Durham, NC  
RCWMS turns 30 this year and our papers have been  
archived for 15 years at the Sallie Bingham Center for  
Women's History and Culture at Duke. Join us for a  
lunchtime celebration.  
Sponsor/Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, www.rcwms.org

\*September 9, 2007 (4:00 pm)  
READING & RECEPTION FOR *Enough Room*  
Celebrate the publication of Sue Versényi's book of poetry.  
Market Street Books, Southern Village, Chapel Hill, NC  
Sponsor/Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, www.rcwms.org

September 11-22, 2007  
WOMEN'S PILGRIMAGE TO MALTA  
Visit some of the world's oldest temples dedicated to the  
Mother of all things.  
Leaders: Jennifer Berezan and Joan Marler  
Contact: www.edgeofwonder.com/tours\_malta.html

\*September 13-16, 2007  
GENERATING TRUE PRESENCE: A Meditation Retreat  
with Therese Fitzgerald  
Trinity Center, near Morehead City, NC  
Leader: Therese Fitzgerald, teacher in the tradition of  
Thich Nhat Hanh  
Cost: \$400 single room, \$375 double, with meals  
Sponsor/Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, www.rcwms.org

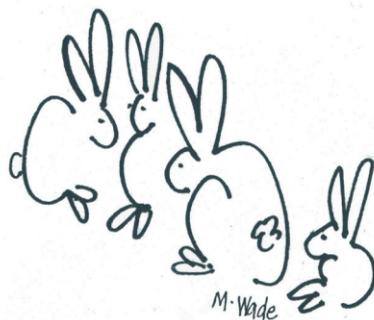
September 14-15, 2007  
SHARON SALZBERG LECTURE & WORKSHOP  
Durham, NC  
Contact: http://FlyingMonkey.ws

September 14-15, 2007 (Friday evening & Saturday day)  
WICK OF DESIRE: A Weekend Circle of Singing for  
Women with Carolyn McDade  
Jubilee! Community, Wall Street, Asheville, NC  
Songwriter Carolyn McDade will lead songs that help us  
connect with ourselves and creation.  
Cost: \$85 (includes Saturday lunch). Limited to 50 women.  
Contact: Holy Ground, 828-236-0222, for more information.

\*September 16-21, 2007  
A SHORT WEEK OF QUIET AND WRITING  
Trinity Center, near Morehead City, NC  
Because our writing week (listed below) filled up so  
quickly, RCWMS has added an additional 5-day writing  
retreat. This quiet, unstructured retreat will be at Pelican  
House, the retreat house on the beach at Trinity Center.  
Please come for all five days.  
Cost: \$500, includes room and meals  
Sponsor/Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, www.rcwms.org

\*September 23-30, 2007  
A WEEK OF QUIET AND WRITING FOR WOMEN  
Trinity Center, near Morehead City, NC  
RCWMS has reserved Pelican House, the retreat house  
on the beach at Trinity Center, for an unstructured week  
of writing for women. Please come for the whole week.  
Cost: \$625, with room and meals (waiting list only)  
Sponsor/Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, www.rcwms.org

\*October 4-7, 2007  
WISE CHOICES: A Retreat for Women Over 50  
Trinity Center, near Morehead City, NC  
We'll explore how to respond to our soul's calling in  
midlife and through our elder years. Journaling, sacred  
conversation, art, and the healing presence of nature will  
help us find what nourishes us as we create our own  
vision of growing older.  
Leaders: Anita McLeod & Margie Hattori  
Cost: about \$400 single room, \$375 double, with meals  
Sponsor/Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, www.rcwms.org



# Red Couch

by Claudia Horwitz

*Claudia Horwitz won second place in the 2006 RCWMS Essay Contest for her essay, The Red Couch, printed below. Our annual Essay Contest is made possible by a grant from the Clifford A. and Lillian C. Peeler Family Foundation. The deadline for this year's contest will be November 15, 2007.*

How did this narrow, red velvet couch wind up in my living room? I meant to buy a big chair, the kind you collapse into after a long day so you can stare out the window for a long while. But instead this crazy, beautiful and quite uncomfortable couch taunts me each morning, smiling slyly like some weird Victorian aunt who doesn't really live here but can't seem to find anywhere else to stay.

I stare back at the regal thing—which is really too thin for a good afternoon nap but still manages to take up half my living room—and I hurl questions in its direction. Some I can answer. Where did you come from? How can I gracefully get rid of you? And some I can't. What possessed me to buy this piece of furniture in the first place? Why is it that I so effortlessly gravitate to forms that are just too small for me?

When I began planning a celebration for my 40th birthday last summer, I insisted that I was merely "turning towards 40." I wasn't searching frantically for new lines on my face or getting teary at the sight of someone else's newborn kid. I wasn't plagued by a lot of specific fears or concerns; I simply wasn't ready to face this milestone. My 8-year-old niece found the whole thing particularly amusing. "You better turn fast, girl," she said one day, a bright grin flashing on her wise face, "or you're gonna crash." This became a family joke and eventually a few lines to a song.

But now it's December and no one is laughing any more. In late August, exhaustion begins to wrap around my body like a cloak of wool and coiled wire. My muscles grow cranky and no amount of sleep is enough. My brain is foggy and I'm easily confused, hitting blank walls mid-sentence. To make matters worse, I have bouts of insomnia, awake in the early hours of the morning fretting over matters small and large. I don't do any of my sitting or yoga practice but I do cry a little almost every day.

Being a resourceful person I start by addressing the physical reality. My acupuncturist, who has been treating me for over ten years, tells me to get as much rest as I possibly can so I start sleeping nine hours a night and taking naps every day. I change my diet and faithfully ingest the supplements and herbs she gives me. I cut back my work hours and the amount of time I spend at the office. I reach out to friends and family and they reach back with love and patience. At the video store I only rent comedies; if it looks like something bad is going to happen, I fast-forward. I offer short prayers like "Healing is possible," and "Let me see that all good things are possible, that all good things already are." I look into my dog's face and I remember what goodness really is. I head to the doctor for tests and rule out nasty things like Lyme's disease, anemia, mono, and on and on. I begin to learn more about the adrenal glands and how chronic stress from worry or anger or anxiety depletes them. The whole process is humbling, scary and confusing.

One day I wake with a question on my heart, "Exactly what am I tired of?" A lot of things aren't fitting quite right and I'm intrigued by the paradoxes. I feel the pull towards community life but cherish the sacredness and freedom of living alone. I long for intimate partnership but have none, and am making very little attempt to find it. I value the path to liberation above all else but



consistently prioritize the needs of work and the larger world, and effortlessly get lost in distractions. I want a comfortable chair but instead the red couch still lingers. The truth is that I am tired of my privileged life that feels too much like a self-made prison. I am tired of feeling like a mishmash of small and windowless spaces that aren't getting enough air or light to manifest happiness or love or wisdom or truth. And I am tired of knowing that even though I hold the key to my own freedom, I cannot accept the tight places or unlock the doors.

Earlier this year, a good friend told me to pay attention to turtles. I hadn't felt much connection with these creatures (though I later remembered that as a two-year-old my first pet was a turtle named Herbert) but suddenly turtles are everywhere. A dead turtle appears on the beach, its beautiful shell completely in tact. Live turtles cross my path in the woods. I muse about the meaning of this and another friend reminds me that turtles can move slowly on land but are more comfortable in the water. I begin to wonder, am I living in the wrong landscape? How will I know? And will I have enough courage to make whatever changes are necessary?

Sadly, there is no fast-forwarding through this muck. I begin to consider how we make choices with such limited information about where things are headed. I am haunted by the recent story of a young family from San Francisco that found itself stuck in the snowy Oregon wilderness. The mother and two young daughters were eventually rescued but the husband died of frostbite after walking sixteen miles over two days to find help. The story is told in a litany of "bad" choices that took them too many miles down the wrong road, "good" choices that enabled them to survive for many days in their car, and then more "bad" choices that ultimately led to the husband's death. Around the same time I hear historian David McCullough on the radio, imploring people to judge those in earlier times by the context of those times, that "no one in times other than our own ever knew how it was going to turn out any more than we do." People make the best decisions they can with the information they have available to them.

Much of the time I am comfortable with my own unanswerable questions. I have faith in a larger process of purification and all the twists and turns that make that possible. I feel like I'm dancing on the rim of it all, those deeper places we can only reach through metaphor, the mystical, the stories, the silence. But honestly, I am desperate to know how this ends. I begin to see that some of what people say about mid-life (whatever that is, exactly) is true. I'm not going to live for an endless string of days. It is absurd to act otherwise. I want to jump ahead to the last page of the chapter and see who it is I am becoming. I want to learn that the heroine survives, that she sheds the too-tight skin and is born anew, saving her own life and many others. I want a sign.

On one of the darker days I am lying down in a state of deep sadness and weary confusion. There are no healers, no helpers, no wisdom from the turtles. There is only me and the bed and my dog sleeping next to me. I begin to observe the whole wretched moment more closely—the knots in my head, the quality of bewilderment, the buzzing in my chest, the anxious sensations, the racing thoughts. Bit by bit, I pick the madness apart. And then in the midst of it all, a voice from deep within begins to speak. It relays the simple message that I am okay, things are okay, and there is a fundamental "okayness" in the universe. It is brief and not very fancy, but for today it is enough.

*Claudia Horwitz lives in Durham, NC and spends much of her days making deep links between the gifts of spiritual practice and the work for social justice.*

# Dads

lighthouse keepers and fishermen who had navigated those waters. She did what she could to help educate younger generations about the delicate balance of life on the slender thread of islands that form the outer edge of our state.

While sitting on the screened porch asking questions so Mrs. Wade would tell stories, it occurred to me to ask when Charles had attended Duke. I knew he was a Duke graduate and had eventually served as a trustee. I had even attended a memorial service in Duke Chapel when he died. But I did not know how old he was or exactly when he was there. Mrs. Wade said he was born in 1915 and was in the class of 1938. I was wondering whether he might have been at Duke with my dad.

Though I have known Mary Margaret for almost thirty years, it had never occurred to me to ask about this before. We shared an office, served on the NARAL-NC board together, worked on RCWMS, taken trips to the beach, made art together, talked for hours about religion, politics, and lost marriages, but we rarely talked about our dads. When I first knew her in Greensboro, I was mad at my father for divorcing my mother when I was twelve and then dying when I was twenty-five. I didn't give a shit about the exact date he was in college or anything else he did. I wouldn't get interested in that sort of detail about him until my own divorce sent me searching for the father I had pitched out in a blind rage.

By the Easter Saturday I sat with Mrs. Wade, I had let my sweet father back into my heart, forgiven him for breaking it so often, and had become intensely curious about who he really was. I wondered if he and Charles Wade might have been in school together. Daddy only spent two years at Duke before his mother got mad at him over some indiscretion and made him come back to Georgia to finish at Mercer.

Class of 1938. Hmmm. I started counting backwards on my fingers. Mother and Daddy were married in 1944 in Dallas after he finished his medical residency. Was it two years of internship and residency and four years of medical school? Forty-four minus six is...what? It was too complicated. I can never do the math. The man was born 90 years ago in 1917 and who can add or subtract when there's a seven involved. I gave it up and promised myself to look up my father's class year at some point. Margaret's daughter was dying. I could figure out graduation years some other time.

In early May, I went to the beach for a week of quiet and writing. One morning while walking on the beach, I was thinking of Mary Margaret. Her feet would more than likely never touch the sand again. She was back home from the hospital by then but could hardly get from the bed to the bathroom without help. Maybe heaven would be like the beach, I mused—warm sand, gentle waves, bright sun, and a slight breeze. Yes, surely if heaven existed it would be just like that. And that distant blue line, where the sea meets the sky, that must be where



Mary Margaret was going. Out there where we couldn't quite see, out there where it looked straight and flat and sure.

Back inside after my walk, I remembered the question about college dates and looked in my computer. Sure enough, my father was in the class of 1938. He arrived at Duke University in the fall of 1934 from Savannah, Georgia, another city by the sea, the same time Charles Wade traveled inland from Morehead City. What are the chances they knew one another? Better than even, but we will never know. My father left after his sophomore year, returned to Georgia, and eventually headed west. Charles Wade spent his working life in Winston-Salem, where he raised a family with Margaret and worked for R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. Whether the two men ever met or not, they walked the same ground for a couple of years. What we do know is that years later their daughters became friends, and that we, like our fathers, love the sea.

Sometime in her last weeks, I told Mary Margaret that I like to think that after we die we go back to where we were before we were born and that the damp unknown from which I emerged has never seemed like a bad place. She said she was not afraid of that, just about the "ramp up" to it.

As I turned from my computer to look out a window to the sea, a dolphin broke the surface not far off shore and I thought to myself, "There's the very creature that can take Mary Margaret away. When the end comes, may God's sleek messenger carry my friend out beyond the horizon."

*Mary Margaret Wade slipped away in the early hours of a Sunday morning in June.*

## RCWMS

The Board greatly appreciates contributions of time, energy, and money to RCWMS. We are especially grateful for a recent gift from the *Clifford A. and Lillian C. Peeler Family Foundation*. To make a financial contribution or to volunteer to help with office tasks, mailings, or program planning, contact the RCWMS office or see us on the web at [www.rcwms.org](http://www.rcwms.org).

### 2007 RCWMS Board of Trustees:

Debra Brazzel	Courtney Reid-Eaton
Amy Kellum	Mary Margaret Wade*
Marya McNeish	Sarah Walls
Danyelle O'Hara	Betty Wolfe
	Rachael Wooten

### Staff:

Jeanette Stokes, Executive Director  
Jennifer McGovern, Administrative Director  
Amanda Earp, Intern

\*deceased



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YOUR MAILING LABEL shows the year and month your subscription will expire. 0903 = 2009 March.

ISSN 0890-7976  
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