



Cape Fear

VOICES

Providing an Outlet for Creativity in the Cape Fear Region

Volume 2, Issue 1

FREE

January 2021

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Stories & Articles
Classifieds
Help Wanted

<http://capefear-voices.allforyou.biz/wp/>

Cape Fear Voices

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Eric Mens

This Month's Writers

Cape Fear Voices

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Howard Cohen
Brendan Connelly
Gerald Decker
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Janet Meuwissen
Jan Morgan-Swegle
Maryann Nunnally
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Frank Stritter
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The Teen Scene Inc. is not affiliated with any other newspaper or organization. We are registered in the State of North Carolina dba Cape Fear Voices. We are a nonprofit 501(c)(3), funded by advertisements, contributions, and grants. Your support is needed to allow Teen Scene and Cape Fear Voices to achieve our mission and help promote and publish the work of creative minds in the Cape Fear area. We can be contacted at editor-teenscene@gmail.com or editorcfv@gmail.com.

All rights to the contents of this paper are reserved to Teen Scene, Inc., Cape Fear Voices, and the writers of each piece.

Happy New Year!

2021 is finally here!

Close the door and
turn out the lights.
That party is over.



From Gerald Decker and Eric Mens

The year 2020 was not a year for celebration for sure, but it was the beginning of *Cape Fear Voices* and the rebirth of *Teen Scene*. For that we celebrate! We made it through seven months of a pandemic when small businesses were hurting, people were losing jobs, and the politics were ...well, enough said about that. Gerald's mantra to people all year has been, "It's not easy to start a new business in the middle of a pandemic, in a dying industry, and with no name recognition." It has made for an interesting year business-wise.

However, the flip side of the coin was the enormous support we received from the community. Word traveled pretty quickly out of two local writing groups and the amazing people who live in Brunswick Forest and, particularly, the Shelmore neighborhood. Our writers now number in the 20's.

We went from an 8-page paper of 200 copies in June to 16-pages and 800 copies by the end of the year. Our online distribution has grown to nearly 2,500 by year-end. We are proud to say we now have newsstands at Leland Walmart, Leland Lowe's Foods, Leland Piggly Wiggly, Whole Foods on Oleander in Wilmington, the Pine Valley Library at 17th & College in Wilmington and in the library at Brunswick Community College.

We can't thank Dan Dodge enough for developing our website. It is now up and running. We are even starting to get some hits on the site. We are developing several programs for the website that we hope will also be of interest to our readers and the community at large. Check it out at <http://capefearvoices.allforyou.biz/wp/>

If you need a website for your club or organization, we strongly suggest you contact Dan Dodge.

Advertising and donations have kept us going. We extend our heartfelt thanks to **Deb Pickett**, Financial Advisor at Edward Jones located in Brunswick Forest, **Josh London** at State Farm, in Brunswick Forest, Draw Fire LLC, New Hanover Printing, and **Nolan Formalarie** at Discover NC Homes, for being our primary sponsors to date. When you get the opportunity, we urge you to let all of our sponsors know how much you

appreciate their support. Give them some business, if you can, and when you do, be sure to thank them for supporting us.

Debbie Channell of Athens, Georgia, has done our layout work from the beginning. However, she has had to resign from this position. We will miss her as the Chief Designer of our paper! Debbie will remain as one of our Board Members.

We also want to say thanks to our Board of Directors for their support this year and to our Advisory Board. Their input and support have been invaluable. Recently, we brought onboard **Giancarlo D'Alessandro**, a young man to help us with layout work, who also has his own self-published magazine about small press cartoonists and artists called Milk & Honey Comics. We also recently brought on our first intern - Cathryn Adams, a graduating senior at Early College High School, Brunswick Community College - to learn and apply layout and business skills for *The Teen Scene*.

One of our resolutions for 2021 is to make our paper more interactive with our followers. In addition to your stories and articles, we want to be more interactive with our community. We want pictures, art, poetry, and local news of interest. We want feedback on articles you like. We want to know about the events in your life that mark personal milestones and are worthy of print, such as a new child is born, someone is serving overseas in our military, someone is home recovering from surgery, etc. Be sure to check out our new "Celebrations" feature.

We also want you to buy our book, "**The Great Lockdown of 2020: How I Survived.**" All proceeds from that book will help pay our bills. Which is a good thing. "Thank you" for your pre-orders. See a related article and update on the book elsewhere in this issue of *Cape Fear Voices*.

And finally, we are working on our 1st Annual Writers Awards to be held in March 2021. We invite you to send us up to three nominations of articles that stood out to you. Whatever resolutions you make for 2021, make sure that writing for and reading *Cape Fear Voices* is among them! Most of all - have a safe, healthy, and prosperous New Year!

Cape Fear Voices Feature Photograph

Crabbing at Sunrise

Tangier Island, Chesapeake Bay
Photography by Lon Anderson Waterford



Prayer for the New Year



As we are about to enter a new year, it is time to spread joy, hope, love, and happiness. We also need to be grateful that we are safe, healthy, and happy.

We must pray for all who have fallen on hard times, have lost loved ones, lost their job, or are in financial trouble due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We must pray for the poor, hungry, and homeless who are unable to enjoy a nice hot meal. We must pray for our soldiers who are fighting for our country and are away from their families.

I pray that all those who have lost jobs during the pandemic can find work soon, for all the small businesses who are struggling to survive to find relief soon, for schools to be able to open safely soon, to stop all the rioting and violence in our country, and for peace and love to be restored to the world.

We should all consider donating our free time, money, food, water, and unwanted clothing to give to the poor and needy.

We need to put love and good thoughts in our hearts and minds and spread goodness and kindness around the world. That is how we are going to fix all the problems that are happening in the world today.

How do we fix these problems? It starts within the home, and there is no better time to have these conversations within our families than now as we are about to start a new year. Sadly, many people have abusive family relationships and are being taught bad things, such as using violence and hate to express their message.

We need to teach children to spread love, not hate - to treat all people with proper respect no matter what color skin they are, what religion they practice, their ethnicity, or what political party they support.

We are all human beings, and we should all look at ourselves, open our eyes and ears, and open our hearts. That is how we will fix a lot of the problems that are going on in America these days. We need to stop using violence and stop spreading evil messages. Instead, we all need to put love and good thoughts in our hearts and minds.

After such a challenging year, it would be nice to give people something to smile about and provide them with hope for next year. Best Wishes for a Happy New Year!

Help Us build our new "Celebrations" section! Upload your 3-line message and jpeg photo by going to the "Celebrations" tab on the *Cape Fear Voices* website at: www.capefearvoices.allforyou.biz/wp

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About Teen Scene and Cape Fear Voices

Contact Information

For *Cape Fear Voices*
editorcfv@gmail.com

For *Teen Scene*
editorteenscene@gmail.com

Who Are We?

The Teen Scene Inc. is not affiliated with any other newspaper or organization. We are registered in the State of North Carolina dba (doing business as) Cape Fear Voices. The Teen Scene, Inc. is a non-profit organization that produces a monthly literary publication written by and for teenagers. Teen Scene's mission is to promote writing skills among area teens. Teen Scene also strives to develop the business skills of teens who take an active role in running the publication and managing its activities. As a nonprofit organization, we plan to offer scholarships to teens who wish to pursue a career in journalism.

Teen Scene Relationship to Cape Fear Voices

Teen Scene is a monthly, free to the public, publication created by and dedicated to teenagers in the Cape Fear Region. *Cape Fear Voices* (CFV) is also a monthly free publication that showcases the creative works of adults living in the region. CFV will provide an outlet to publicize other regional non-profit organizations that work to improve the lives of children and families in the area. In each instance, we intend to provide a quality outlet to publicize the region's literary and other creative talents.

Our Philosophy

We will work to publish the highest quality product. For *Teen Scene*, we will accomplish this by recruiting dedicated teens who are willing to put in the time and effort to develop their skills. Our role in either *Teen Scene* or *Cape Fear Voices* is solely to promote and showcase individuals' creative talents in the Cape Fear Region. As such, we will not publish any religious or political work that may otherwise be submitted for publication.

Our Status as a Tax-Exempt Organization

The Teen Scene, Inc. is a tax-exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Code 501(c)(3). Our Employer Identification Number (EIN) is 45-0539098. Donors can deduct contributions they make under IRS Code Section 170. Teen Scene is qualified to receive tax-deductible bequests, devises, transfers, or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522. We will acknowledge all donations in our monthly publications unless otherwise requested by any donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

Our Funding Sources

We need public support to allow both *Teen Scene* and *Cape Fear Voices* to achieve our stated missions and, especially, to make a difference in the lives of students.

Donations may be sent to:

The Teen Scene, Inc.
Post Office Box 495
Leland, NC 28451

Governance

An appointed Board of Directors governs Teen Scene and Cape Fear Voices. The Board serves in an advisory capacity to ensure that both publications are operated and published in an ethical and accountable manner.

Board members will represent a broad spectrum of current and retired professionals with extensive experience in working with teens, publications, marketing, and leadership. Directors volunteer their time in an advisory role to ensure that our programs most adequately address the proper standards and ethics for fulfilling our mission.

Gerald Decker, President
Eric Mens, Vice President
Debra Pickett, Secretary

Board of Directors

Claire Boon
Debbie Channell
Shelley Haga
Jenny Stedham

Advisory Board

Howard Cohen
Beverly Haedrich
Jan Morgan-Swegle
Elizabeth Wassum

Cape Fear Voices Submission Requirements

Cape Fear Voices intends to showcase the works of the area's many talented local writers, poets, and craftspeople as well as the work of local non-profit organizations (e.g., American Legion, Brunswick Family Assistance, Kiwanis Club, etc.).

- We are looking for contributors to submit their poems, stories, pictures, or articles for publication.
- We will not publish any political or religious material and will censor profanity, no matter how good the work submitted might otherwise be.
- All submissions must be in Times New Roman 12, single spaced, and include the title and author's name. Please limit your submissions to 500-700 words.
- We will print excessively larger works in serial form, but it is the author's responsibility to determine proper cutoff for each piece, keeping in mind the 500-700 word limitation per each submission.
- Any photos intended to accompany a submission must be sent as JPG files.
- All written works must be sent to editorcfv@gmail.com and received by the 15th of each month for publication in the following month's issue.

Notice on Subscriptions and Mailing



To centralize responsibility for *Cape Fear Voices* subscriptions, we have established a separate email account for our readers and subscribers to use. As a practice, we send papers to our subscribers during the first week of each month. Recently, as reflected in several emails we have received, mail delivery is experiencing delays. These delays may be due, in part, to the fact that Leland-area deliveries are first sent to the central USPS sorting facility in Charlotte, NC, before being returned to the Leland Post Office for delivery to area customers. Our local postal facility is prohibited by policy from "holding" mail for Leland deliveries at the local facility as was previous practice. We ask for your patience as we encounter and work through these delays. All subscription-related emails should be sent to cfvsubscriptions@gmail.com

Individual subscriptions to Cape Fear Voices are available on an annual basis at a cost of only \$24, including the cost of postage. If you want to make sure that you never miss a copy of Cape Fear Voices, please send a check payable to:

Cape Fear Voices
P.O. Box 495, Leland, NC 28451

How to Subscribe

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Special Ad Rates to Support Local Businesses

If you have a favorite local small business that you would like to sponsor for a 3-month business card ad (\$90), please send the card and check made payable to Teen Scene/Cape Fear Voices to P.O. Box 495, Leland, NC 28451.

We will make sure that we notify the small business of your particular support. You will be promoting the small business to the community and helping to defray the cost of publication of *Cape Fear Voices*. We appreciate all of our supporters!

The Great Lockdown of 2021

Important Notice from the Editors

We are currently compiling the stories that we have received to date and are working with several published authors to plan and polish the publication format. So far, we have received stories from foreign countries, from states, and locally. Even in its early stages, "The Great Lockdown of 2021" is beginning to shape up to be the resource that we intended to document the challenging times of 2021.

As we approach the time to move forward with publishing (hopefully, by early January), we must try to gauge what level of receptivity/response we should expect from the publication's release. We need to estimate a first-run print quantity to have enough copies available. This includes copies that we will donate to our local and area libraries.

To help us with that task, we are taking pre-orders for "The Great Lockdown" beginning with the January edition of *Cape Fear Voices*. We don't know the exact price for printing yet, so we have not yet settled on a book price. However, we anticipate that the sales price will range from \$20 to \$25 per copy.

To help defray publication costs, we are looking for a limited number of corporate advertisers. Our advertising rate for the book is:

\$250 quarter page
\$500 half page
\$1000 full page

Donors in any amount will be listed on the back of the book.

Keep in mind that "The Great Lockdown" is a fundraiser for a non-profit (Teen Scene, Inc.) to facilitate our continued publication of *Cape Fear Voices* and *Teen Scene*. Individuals and businesses are permitted to donate in much larger amounts if they prefer.

For now, interested buyers should contact us at 2021thegreatlockdown@gmail.com. We will arrange for payment when the book returns from the publisher.

Thank you to all of you who have participated and are contributing to our effort! We cannot do this without your support!

Eric Mens, Editor and Gerald Decker, Editor
Cape Fear Voices/Teen Scene

Cape Fear Voices Ad Rates

	1-Edition	3-Editions
Full Page	\$225	\$600
Half Page	\$130	\$350
Quarter Page	\$70	\$180
Business Card	\$35	\$90
Classified (3 lines)	\$15	\$45

To place an ad contact us at:
editorcfv@gmail.com

What's Next?



By **Chuck Schwartz**,
Guest Columnist.
Hilton Head, SC

For people of all ages and backgrounds, 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic have been perhaps one of the most challenging, stressful, and unique years and experiences in their lifetime. Many are finding it hard to find inspiration, live inspired, and be inspiring. For themselves and for others.

If 2021 is anything like other years before it, it will begin with a resolution for many. You may have already started thinking about your own new year's resolution. Perhaps it's learning something new, exercising more, losing weight, quitting smoking, or some other meaningful yet difficult personal challenge.

Many of you will get off to a good start. Some will even make it past the first few days. A few will make it longer. For most, getting started is not the problem. Continuing and keeping at it is the challenge. When I talk to people about this, I find that the reason for this is not a lack of desire but rather a lack of positive habits. Habits that strengthen the mind. Habits that inspire better thinking, thus better living. Because where the mind goes, the body follows.

After many years of struggling with this in my own life, and with a desire of wanting things to change (in a good way), I decided that if things were going to change, I had to change. So I began to incorporate new habits into my life. Because first, we make our habits, then our habits make us. I continue this practice today. Every day. Even on days when you would think I could feel otherwise.

Do you want to find more inspiration, live more inspired, and be more inspiring, even on days when you may feel otherwise? If you answered yes, start learning and living new positive habits: habits that will benefit you and others around you.

Are you ready for a challenge?

Challenge # 1: Every day for thirty days, spend time answering the question, "What am I grateful for today?" Spend thoughtful time considering all that is good in your life, and be grateful for all you have. Spend less time anxious, stressed, or worried about what you don't have, what you wished you had, and things that are going on around you that are outside of your control. Be grateful. Practice gratitude. Find inspiration.

Challenge # 2: Every day for the next thirty days, spend time answering the question, "What would make today great?" No guilt. No stress, No worries. Nothing is too big or too small. Perhaps it's a project you've been meaning to work on, or cooking a dish you've always wanted to prepare, calling someone that you haven't talked with in a while, or checking something off your bucket list. Answer this question, and then get busy working on your answers. Remember: You don't have a great day - you make it a great day. Make your days great. Live inspired.

Challenge # 3: Every day for the next thirty days, think of an inspiring affirmation statement that can change your life (in a good way). Examples of affirmation statements are "This too shall pass," "Life is what you make it," "Expect less, accept more." Read the affirmation statement. Absorb it. Breathe it in. Swirl it around your mind. Consider things you can take from the statement that will improve your life, as well as the lives of others around you. Change your life. Change other's lives. Be inspiring.

Try my challenge. Ninety days of thinking better. Ninety days of inspiration. Finding inspiration, living inspired, and being inspiring.

You, and others around you, will be better off for it.

Chuck Schwartz is the author of "Chuck's Lemonade, A Recipe for: Inspired Thinking and Living, Finding Gifts When Life Gives You Lemons, and Turning Your Lemons into Lemonade!" and the *Chuck's Lemonade Collection* of inspirational books, journal challenges, presentations, and more to help you think better so you can live better. Visit www.chuckslemonade.com to and subscribe to receive your daily dose of Chuck's Lemonade.

New Year's Trivia

(from the Internet)

The first New Year's celebration dates back 4,000 years. Julius Caesar, the emperor of Rome, was the first to declare January 1 a national holiday. He named the month after Janus, the Roman god of doors and gates. Janus had two faces, one looking forward and one looking back. Caesar felt that a month named after this god would be fitting.

-According to statistics from the National Insurance Crime Bureau, more vehicles are stolen on New Year's Day than on any other holiday throughout the year. Don't think your old car is safe, either. In 2011, the 1994 Honda Accord was the most stolen car.

-Why should you ring in the New Year with family and friends? It is thought that the first visitors you see after ringing in the New Year would bring you good or bad luck, depending on who you keep as friends and enemies. Keep your friends close and your enemies far, far away!

-The Time Square New Year's Eve Ball came about as a result of a ban on fireworks. The first ball, in 1907, was an illuminated 700-pound iron and wood ball adorned with one hundred 25-watt light bulbs. Today, the round ball designed by Waterford Crystal weighs 11,875-pounds, is 12 feet in diameter, and is bedazzled with 2,668 Waterford crystals.

-Due to wartime restrictions, the New Year's Eve ball was not lowered in 1942 and 1943.

-Throughout the year, visitors to Times Square in New York City write their New Year's wishes on official Times Square New Year's Eve confetti pieces. At the end of the year, the wishes are collected and added to the one ton of confetti that showers the crowd gathered in Times Square to celebrate the New Year.

-The top three destinations in the United States to ring in the New Year are Las Vegas, Disney World, and New York City.

-Food plays a significant role in New Year's traditions. Eating black-eyed peas, ham, or cabbage are thought to bring prosperity. However, stay away from bad luck foods like lobsters, because they move backward, and chicken, because they scratch in reverse. It is believed that eating these on New Year's Day might cause a reversal of fortune.

-In Colombia, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, families stuff a life-size male doll called 'Mr. Old Year' with memories of the outgoing year and dress him in old clothes from each family member. At midnight he is set on fire - thus burning away the bad memories of the year.

-According to one survey, 40 to 45 percent of American adults make one or more resolutions each year. The top New Year's resolutions include weight loss, exercise, quitting smoking, and better money management. By the second week of January, 25 percent of people have abandoned their resolutions.

-In Italy, people wear red underwear on New Year's Day as a symbol of good luck for the upcoming year.

New Year is Celebrated Worldwide!!!



Here are a few ways to say it in their language. Can you find more? But this year, the world will not just close the door on 2020; they will slam it shut and put bolts on the door.

Feliz Ano Nuevo - **Spanish**
Frohes Neues Jahr - **German**
Akemashite omedetô - **Japanese**
Bonne Année! - **French**
Felice Anno Nuovo - **Italian**
Xin nian kuai le - **Mandarin Chinese**
Hyvää uutta vuotta - **Finland**
Gelukkig nieuwjaar - **Dutch**

Life During the Pandemic

By **Chuck Schwartz**, Guest Columnist, Hilton Head, SC



Pictured above are Chuck Schwartz and Renee Adamowicz Schwartz. April 17, 2020 - one of the days we would have been at the Heritage Golf Tournament. Here on Hilton Head Island, golfers play for the plaid jacket. It is a big event on the Island that brings in a lot of money to many businesses and charities. This year it was delayed and canceled to the public, but we celebrated in style on our own!



Front L-R: Teresa McCarty, Joan Piccione, Kathy Bull Keller, (Sam Piccione not shown). Rear L-R: Chuck Schwartz, Renee Adamowicz Schwartz, Joel Adamowicz.

The picture above was taken in a friend's back yard (Joan and Sam Piccione) on May 24, 2020, in their home in Hilton Head Plantation. We have all been staying home and no one had been out in months. It was our dear friend's birthday (Joan - with the hat). Her husband wanted to surprise her and have a *SAFE, SOCIAL DISTANCING* celebration for her. So, we celebrated the day after her birthday. It was a great surprise and a joy for all since none of us had been out in so long. It was great to finally be able to see and spend time with great friends and celebrate - a happy moment for all. Here we are depicted at the party doing our part to social distance -

All were safe!

Grocery Stores: the Barometer of Covid-19

By Stan K. Washington, Brunswick Forest
2020 has been a drag and heart wrenching for many families.

We have floated into the Maskers versus non-Maskers. The regional divisions were highly diverse. Northeast states were severely Covid-19 afflicted while many Midwest, Sun Belt, and Western states fared a much lighter load for the first half of 2020. The basic truth has willed out - we are all affected in one way or another. For those who tried to ignore the pandemic effects, they have failed. For those severely hit with Covid-19 pneumonia, many refuse to believe they ever had Covid-19, which was a hoax.

I believe the effects of Covid-19 could be seen in one segment of our community, our Grocery Stores. The Grocery Stores are considered a front-line workforce delivering food, life-supporting drugs, paper goods, and, not least of all, alcohol. We can map the pandemic through multiple stages of their customers. These stages represent, I believe, the populace's mental acceptance or not of the pandemic reality.

The initial phase is exactly what the Trump Administration feared. Yes, a major panic run on toilet paper, napkins, tissues, and paper towels. Trump was right not to worry us with this until absolutely necessary. Outside Costcos, Harris Teeters, Lowe's, etc., we saw the parade of trailer loads of paper goods heading home in pickup trucks, station wagons, and SUVs. Shoppers were taking home enough paper goods for a long pandemic, at least three-plus years. Many were hoping to cash in on a crushing shortage, thus selling their supply to neighbors and strangers at triple the price or as high as the market would bear. They endear themselves to those shoppers who missed the pandemic announcement and finding empty shelves of paper goods. No masks were seen, let alone finding them online.

The next phase became a creative effort in finding new toilet paper supplies as they were delivered to a Grocery Store far, far away. Social media finally worked for us versus convincing us anti-fact stories about Clorox killing Covid-19 when injected or shining UV lamps down our throats. We learned to scan FaceBook, Nextdoor, Twitter, etc., to find the rare stockpile of toilet paper. We know what those once mailbox choking catalogs were being used for. I remember scouring a CVS store and finding single-ply toilet paper so transparent it could be used as a windowpane replacement, a glorious feeling of relief. Masks break through during this phase. Fauci's suggestions for social distancing, washing our hands, and finally, use a MASK!

The final phase is normalcy when supply finally surpassed pandemic hysteria. If not generously supplied, the paper aisle did have all types of paper goods, even napkins. The waterless hand washes started to make an appearance in the middle of the aisles. Amazon even advertised up to three suppliers. There was a recall of waterless hand wash with methanol included; methanol is good for burning but should not be used on skin. Grocery store workers are fully masked, and we could not identify the person who told us the Spam was in aisle 14. The oxymoron of six-foot distancing was created. Have you seen a grocery store aisle? Try and pass anyone who is parked in the middle of the aisle looking for the lime Jell-O.

I know I am looking forward to shopping and actually being able to see what I am buying through my normally fogged glasses. Just imagine the joy you will experience getting home and see you bought that bottle of Vienna sausages instead of a jar of pickled pig's feet!

What NOT to Leave in 2020



By Dr. Sabrina T. Cherry
 Assistant Professor of Public Health,
 UNCW*

Happy New Year! Many of us were over 2020 around July and eager to usher in a new year. But as our resolutions are refreshed and we forge ahead with plans for 2021, there are a few things I think we should hold on to.

1. Slowing down. Regardless of where we find ourselves along the spectrum – employed or seeking; married, single or somewhere in between; surrounded by family or far from loved ones – 2020 forced us to slow down. The initial slowing down seemed to be welcomed by most. However, as the weeks and months of the pandemic continued, many became anxious and were ready to re-engage or *go back* to their previous lives. But I think there were some lessons in reevaluating our pace. Some of us live with abandon resulting in long work hours, little sleep, poor diets, and no exercise. The pandemic invited us to consider what it means to retain some of the slower pace, the ease of a lazy day, and quality time with friends, as well as family.

2. Quality over quantity. Prior to the pandemic, I would interact with close to 100 people directly and indirectly on a given day. While most often these interactions were invigorating, they could also be exhausting. A countless number of meetings, conference calls, text messages, and social gatherings left me longing for solitude. The pandemic welcomed an opportunity to evaluate not only how we spend our days, but who we spend them with. Perhaps we recklessly agreed to social gatherings or scheduled a meeting without thinking twice. The pandemic gave us a chance – albeit unwelcomed – to carefully consider how we regard quality time. Even as I was distanced from loved ones, it helped me appreciate my time with them so much more and be less likely to take these occurrences for granted.

3. Evaluating our dollars. How many times do we put an extra item in the shopping cart because it caught our eye? Or ordered take-out two nights in a row? Or splurged on some other indulgence without a second thought. During the pandemic, many of us had to re-evaluate our expenses in preparation for a range of “what ifs.” What if I lose my job? What if I don't receive a raise this year or in the next few years to come? What if I am unable to earn residual income? The pandemic invited us to be more conscious consumers and monitor our spending habits more diligently.

I don't know if anyone will say this pandemic was pleasant. But I have learned to seek new opportunities even in the midst of an extremely challenging and prolonged season. These are but a few things I'd like to take into and throughout 2021 with me. Do you have others?

*Dr. Sabrina T. Cherry is an Assistant Professor of Public Health, UNC Wilmington. You can read more about her work at sabrinacherry.com.



Fun Fact: Vaccines save lives!

200 million cases of contagious diseases were prevented in the U.S. alone between 1963 and 2015 by vaccination, researchers estimate.

Pictured R: Iron lungs help polio patients breathe during an outbreak of the disease in the US in the 1950s. Photograph: Science History /Alamy.



2020 Defined As...



I read that one of the most “Googled” words in 2020 was “pandemic.” The World Health Organization defines the word pandemic as:

‘A **pandemic** is defined as “an **epidemic** occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people. The classical **definition** includes nothing about population immunity, virology, or disease severity.’

By Jan Morgan-Swegle,
 Compass Pointe

I decided to see what the “official” definition of the word “home” is, so I checked Webster's dictionary.

Home is defined as:

‘A place (such as a **house** or apartment) where a person lives; a family living together in one building, **house**, etc.: a place where something normally or naturally lives or is located.’

When you put these two words together, I don't think that what we did in our homes in 2020 was living “normally” or “naturally.”

I, for one, was not prepared for how the year 2020 changed our perception of “home.” Our homes became our children's school, our favorite new restaurant, our remote offices, the place where we went on our “stay-cations,” and the safest place we could be.

We were suddenly disconnected from being in the outside world. We could only watch it go by in the news or on social media.

It wasn't just the virus. 2020 was like a sleeping volcano—with hate and destruction bubbling up under the surface until it finally exploded into “Say his name,” “BLM,” political tension, a dramatic election, and bells ringing around the world to herald in a new administration. I didn't think things could be any

more strange, but then we started to speak a new language.

Suddenly, we were “self-isolating and “sheltering-in-place.” Cities across the world were in “lockdown.” We couldn't just go to the grocery store and shop; we had to “social distance” until we could “flatten the curve.” We became a “touchless” world and relied on “remote contact” to stay connected to people, and we did it with “Zoom.” Our children said they were “WFH,” which I didn't understand, but immediately mixed up the initials and thought they were talking about the “other,” letters that have an adult definition.

As the boundless pandemic dragged on, I admit to being stir-crazy at times. I had no idea my hair was as white as it was without my every-six-week color treatment, but I began to feel better about being at home. There was a sense of calm inside me—I couldn't be at Covid risk as long as I was at home.

I was home, my husband was home, and so was our dog. It felt safe. Our shelter-in-place became our lanai. Every evening for an hour or so, we would sit out there, have a glass of wine, and talk about what was going on in this crazy world. Our dog would curl up in her bed, at our feet, and listen to us talk. She felt safe too. We turned on our vintage lava lamp, sat under our blue and white twinkle lights, listened to music, shared “growing up” stories, and laughed at some of the things that scared us as children. We knew there was much sadness in the world and felt very lucky that we were not touched by the virus to the extent that many have been. We counted our blessings, the number of rolls of toilet paper we had on hand, and the number of days since we had our last haircut. We did it together, and that, too, felt safe.

I know that 2020 will be defined as many things—some good, most bad. But I will remember it as the year my husband and I grew closer amid far-reaching fear and sadness. I will remember feeling safe.

Galactic



By Daniel Segovia, Guest Poet, Boone, NC

Listen, be still, and converse
With all of the universe.
Hear Jupiter moan
In voices unknown,
And free your mind from the perverse.

Hear Venus, with golden hum, sing
Of what the near future could bring.
In high cosmic tones
Your spirit it is shown
A gift too exalted for kings.

From Neptune there comes a pale light,
Amidst countless starborns in flight,
That speaks to the core
As none have before
And brings you the blessing of sight.
But not of eyes or ears, but of soul,
Which many may try to control
In their own narrow grip,
But the real ownership
Is to you, all brilliant life; whole.

As it was, as it is in this place,
It is now and forever in space.
Lift your eyes to creation
And in their formation
Feel your heart in its womb, embraced.

A Funny Life Event



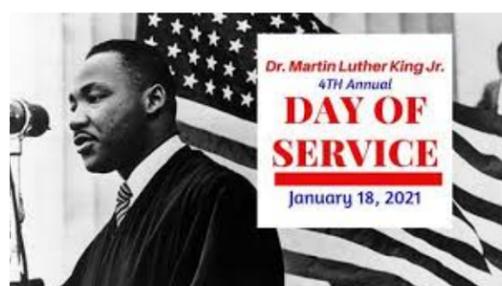
By Gerald Decker, Magnolia Greens

It was one of those frigid (10-15 degree) winter days in Maryland. I was a half-hour into my often two-hour, 30-mile drive to my job on Capitol Hill. I pulled into my coffee place, got my large coffee, and back into the cold air. Within moments, a sudden slamming on the brakes and the full cup of hot coffee went on my dark suit and my lap. I was dying.

Traffic on the Baltimore-Washington Parkway was so bumper to bumper that all I could do was bite my lip and wait it out. After about an hour, the pain subsided, and I was so focused on traffic and getting to my parking spot that I forgot momentarily the near-tragedy I had experienced.

As I pulled into the staff parking lot a car, a car with four women pulled in beside me. When I slowly got out of my car, I noticed that all four were staring at me in wild-eyed disbelief. The dark suit apparently had hidden the water lines of the coffee, but it failed to hide the rolling steam that was coming out of my pants in the affected area.

At first, I was embarrassed, then taking advantage of the moment, I looked at them, smiled and said, "When you're hot, you're hot," and walked off like nothing was wrong.



At Peace with Nature (Part 1)



Note: "At Peace with Nature" won First Place in the 2020 North Carolina Silver Arts Senior Competition in Literary Arts, Short Story category.

By Eric Mens, Brunswick Forest

He parked his truck along the river's edge just as the sun had begun to sink below the horizon. Miles beyond and to the south and east, he knew lay the bay's broad and familiar expanse. Seemingly endless days of persistently heavy rains in the mountains to the west had brought additional snowmelt and quickly rising waters to communities upstream from where he now sat. Several small riverfront communities had already suffered from the onslaught of water that had flooded their streets and washed out roads.

Fields of fertile farmland now lay covered in two or more feet of water and layers of mud. Crops ready for harvest had been lost to the seemingly never-ending rain. Farmers struggled to keep their livestock safe in the face of the onslaught. In some places, small bridges had been destroyed, and houses and other structures swept away by the unrelenting waters. Grey clouds previously heavily laden with rain had given way to lighter, wispy clouds scurrying eastward after each other.

The rain had finally stopped. Viewing the scene unfolding in front of him, he watched the roiling muddy water carrying its flotsam towards the bay. In the dwindling light, he watched angry whitecaps dotting the river's surface as far as he could see. Occasionally, mature trees rushed past, their limbs stripped of foliage and reaching skyward, seemingly beseeching an end to their chaotic journey. Large pieces of Styrofoam, plastic bottles, galvanized

roofing, tree debris, broken lumber, and the occasional remnants of unidentifiable wooden structures caught in the river's current swept swiftly through his field of vision. The scene mirrored the turmoil cascading through his brain.

How did he get here? What had brought him to this point of despair? Why had he come here? The drive to this vantage point along the river, although only a short journey from his home, had been agonizingly long and arduous. All the while, he had plied himself with the beer that he had brought along for the trip. He was well aware of his drunken state. An unrelenting paranoia that the local police would stop him for driving too slowly and thus confound his plan accompanied him. Whatever that plan was, he was unsure.

He reached for another beer, draining it quickly as if to squelch the pain that seemed to emanate from some unknown region deep within his body. Or, maybe it was his soul that cried for him to smother the endless despairing pain that had nearly overwhelmed him these past few days. Despite the empty cans that littered the floor behind his seat, the darkness and the pain that accompanied him had not abated.

Opening the door, he stepped from the truck to relieve himself, the mud softly squishing beneath his boots as he struggled to keep his balance and remain upright. Leaving the safety and the warmth of the vehicle, he slowly made his way down the steep, muddy path towards the sound of rushing water.

Suddenly, his feet give way beneath him. A loud, gasping grunt escaped his lungs as he fell hard on his backside, sliding swiftly and uncontrollably down the steep bank towards the arms of the waiting river. *So, this is how I'm going to die*, he thought.

(To be continued)

Jack and Bonnie (Part 5)



By Paul Stutz, Brunswick Forest

The day went on – the clouds disappeared, as if on command. A good time was had by all. And then, it was time to leave. Jack whispered to Bonnie, "Can I call you later?" She smiled and nodded.

When he and Sara got home, Jack took the dog out for a walk and texted Bonnie, asking if this was a good time to call.

It was. "Hi, Bonnie."

"Hi. Nice picnic today."

"Yes, it was. So, when can I see you again?"

She laughed nervously. "Jack – should we be doing this?"

"No, of course not. We're married to other people. But I can't help how I feel about you. It's driving me crazy."

"I know. Me, too. What are we going to do?"

"Let's just meet sometime and talk about it. How about next Wednesday?"

"Great – Richard's playing golf in the afternoon. Good thing - Monica has made a full recovery."

They both chuckled. And the waiting game was on.

It was Tuesday. For most people in the community, it was a day like any other day. They went about their business in a robotic fashion, participating in the usual Tuesday activities or not doing anything special at all. It was different for Bonnie. She was faced with one of the biggest decisions of her life. She had been married to the same man for 42 years. He was the only man she had ever been intimate with. They had a long history together, mostly good – children, grandchildren, many happy holidays, and vacations.

True, the physical part of their relationship had deteriorated, although she told herself that it was not her doing. He had simply lost interest. So, she wasn't as thin as she was earlier on – neither was he. But now there was someone who was attracted to her, extra pounds be damned. And she was equally attracted to him. Where could this possibly lead? How wrong would it be? Bonnie was never all that religious, but she and her family observed all the holidays. She was careful to follow all the Commandments. All of them. Now, there was one particular commandment that was in danger of falling by the wayside. Could she live with herself? Would it be the end of her marriage? So many questions.....

To be continued

Laughing in the Golden Years: New Year's Eve 1949



By Maryann Nunnally, Porter's Neck

This piece is not so much about New Year's Eve as it is about my mother. My mom was an avid reader, and although we could not afford to purchase books, she always managed to get the latest editions of books reviewed in our local newspaper. I suspect that she had a deal with

the public-school librarian who ordered books for my mom in exchange for my sorting and shelving books after school and all summer. Thus, it was that mom got a brand-new copy of *Cheaper-by-the-Dozen*, written by Frank Gilbreth and Ernestine Carey two of twelve children growing up with a father who was an early efficiency expert. My mom, despite her job in the U.S. Post Office, read that book in two evenings, and told us that she had never read anything in her life that was so funny.

The day before New Year's Eve mom sent my brother to our little country store to purchase a quart bottle of ginger-ale, an unheard-of luxury in our family. While she made molasses cookies, she announced that we, my father, my brother Wally, she and I were going to have a New Year's Eve party. We had never had a celebration of New Year's. There was no alcohol in our house, and my mom even frowned on soft-drinks. But here we were going to have an actual party with ginger-ale, and as we found out later, molasses cookies.

On New Year's Eve, Mom instructed Wally and me to change our clothes into our warmest flannel paja-

mas, wool robes and socks and join her and my dad in their bedroom. Wally and I, young teenagers, could not figure out what was going on until mom pulled out the *Cheaper-by-the-Dozen* book. My mother believed that all children no matter how young or old should be read to every night before bed. So, every night until we started reading adult books on our own, mom read to us. (When I reached high school, I found that mother had read every book on the required reading list to Wally and me, long before we were old enough to read those books on our own.)

We were not surprised then that mom was going to read *Cheaper-by-the-Dozen* aloud to us that New Year's Eve. What we didn't realize was that we were going to stay up all night passing that book around to each one of us, and in that round-robin complete the whole book before the night was over. At midnight we broke out the ginger-ale and cookies and my dad proposed a toast, "Here's to efficiency," he said. "We should all try it sometime." Wally and I giggled while mom guffawed. We all knew that Dad was constantly late to everything, and efficiency did not exist in his life in any way, or for any cause.

Around five in the morning we finished the book which had kept us laughing all night long. Wandering into our bedrooms, Wally and I both understood that this had been a New Year's Eve that we would never forget. Truly, while I have enjoyed numerous New Year's Eve parties over my 80 some years, in my mind, none would ever compete with my mom's *Cheaper-by-the-Dozen* New Year's Eve entertainment.

A Boy from North Carolina



By Gary Neil Gupton,
Magnolia Greens

My Daddy was a tobacco, cotton, corn, sugar cane, mule-plowing farmer from the Post-Depression era, born in 1937. My Mama's family worked fields of cotton, tobacco, and whatever would pay the rent on the little wood-framed house in Nash county that Grandpa didn't own. I'm the educated, Ivy league wanna-be seminary-turned-college of Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC. I was the second in my family to go to college.

Here I am, among people from all over these United States of America, writing about what used to be in North Carolina.

I wasn't a farmer, but my Daddy bought cows, chickens, pigs, and beagles so that I would know where I came from. He plowed a mule, which I had trouble keeping up with in the garden that he planted every year of my adolescence so that I could learn where butterbeans, corn, squash, snap beans, tomatoes, and okra came from. I knew more about these roots than most, if not all, of my classmates in the small town where I went to elementary and high school. I wish everybody knew where I, and they, came from.

Here I am, in the suburbs of Wilmington, Leland, North Carolina, trying to get back to my roots. I've transplanted a scuppernong vine that came from a cutting that Daddy got from his Daddy, which I named after Uncle Carl and Lessie Mae. Daddy always said to name plants after your people so that they would live on. Uncle Carl, Lessie Mae, Grand-Daddy, and Grand-Mama – and all their children - were people of the earth. Uncle Carl worked the tobacco market and traveled all over, while Lessie Mae stayed home tending the children and the garden. My Grandmama, Glennie, took care of the little piece of land that Granddaddy, my Daddy's Daddy, got a job at the Westinghouse Plant in Raleigh so that little piece of land could stay in the family. Oh, and I got pieces of the peony that Grand-Mama had grown, and Daddy had preserved, and they bloomed last year, the prettiest blossoms I've ever seen. Thanks,

Grand-Mama.

I think of my Daddy whenever I am digging in the Leland dirt, trying to make centipede and crown zoysia take hold in this hard-pan ground where big farmers had grown and prospered off loblolly pine for timber and pulpwood. It's hard dirt. I buy bags of cow manure and peat to amend the soil, knowing that something is missing. After a bit, tomatoes still grow. Turnip greens and okra, too. I can hear gumbo calling.

I think of my Daddy, just turned 83, living alone since Mama passed two years ago. Only seen him once this year but talked on the phone with him twice a week; we've talked more this year than we ever talked before. This pandemic has isolated and restricted a lot of communication, but in some ways, we have been more in touch than ever. I cherish these phone conversations with my Daddy. He is not alone. He has my brothers and their families close by. He has a wonderful lady, Maxine, who helps keep up the house, and most of all, keeps up his spirits. This same lady took care of my Mama until the day she went to Hospice.

My memories and my culture are unique, my own, my family's.

Remember to cherish the time, the memories, the old times that will not be forgotten.

Look home.



Courting Synchronicity



By Janet Stiegler,
Brunswick Forest

"Accomplishing your daily goals has a place, but the heart has a valid agenda of its own. When you can look back on a day and find within it even one warm memory or a single touching story, you've paid attention to your heart."

-Victoria Moran, *Creating a Charmed Life*, (1999)

The other day I discovered a journal I had started in 2009 to increase my spiritual practice. The idea was to get my thoughts and emotions down on paper—through meaningful pictures, quotes, or writing—and clear any blockages to my creativity and emotional growth. The goal also was to have more faith in and gratitude for the opportunities in my life.



Like many resolutions, my spiritual practice appeared to have petered out after only two months. However, one entry caught my attention. I had referenced a book by Victoria Moran: **Creating a Charmed Life: Sensible, Spiritual Secrets Every Busy Woman Should Know**. The book, which I still own, contains 75 short essays that pass on simple wisdom to leading a happy, "charmed" life. Like many self-help books, it encourages you to focus on things that matter most—nurtured relationships, meaningful experiences, and lofty aspirations.

In one of her last essays, Moran talks about "courting synchronicity." You do this by noticing coincidences--two people recommending the same book, a friend calling the moment you thought of her, or coming across the information you needed in an unlikely place. Once you get into the habit of noticing the synchronicity in your life, Moran says that it will appear more often in your life.

My journal entry even noted several times in my life when I was privy to such inexplicable wonders:

- ▶ As our children got older, I started daydreaming about having a newer and larger home. I had even purchased a book of floor plans to stoke my imagination while on vacation. Upon our return, I discovered that a developer was building ten new homes less than a mile from our current rambler. We eventually purchased one and raised our family there for ten years. Because the new home was located in the same neighborhood, the move did not require the children to change schools, activities, or friends.
- ▶ One morning I dropped my house key while on a three-mile run. While retracing my steps, I ran into a neighbor I had met days earlier at a friend's dinner party. When I told him what I was searching for, it turned out he found it and, thinking a parent had lost it while walking their child to school, had left it at the elementary school office. What if I had not gone to that dinner party and met this man? What if I had been too embarrassed and not told him about losing the key? Or what if he had not been vigilant and thoughtful enough to bring it to the school?

On the surface, these may seem like insignificant events or mere coincidences. But what if some higher power is at play? So, this year, I resolve to dust off that journal, write more intentionally, and open my heart to those unexpected "brushes with the divine." This will require my slowing down, being fully present to the people and experiences around me and drawing positive lessons from life's inevitable hiccups. For someone used to filling each day with getting "stuff" done, this won't be easy. But when I open that journal a year from now, I hope to have captured more of the little miracles that grace my life each day.

West Pac 1968 Pt. 8



By Gerald Decker,
Magnolia Greens

Our last month started with a high line exercise with me at the helm. Manning the helm during an underway replenishment exercise is one of the most intense and satisfying moments at sea for a Quartermaster. The adrenaline rush would last for hours.

Except for a brief layover in Pearl, for the next 12 days we chipped paint and painted. By golly, that ship was going to look brand new when it arrived in Long Beach. The penultimate night of the tour was palpable with excitement and anticipation. We were able to pick up radio stations from the California coast. Even the commercials sounded good to us. Guys were playing card games, packing, and a lot of people were saying good bye to friends we would never see again, but would remember for the rest of our life.

Early morning Dec. 12, 1968 we set sea detail and by 0830 we entered the Long Beach breakwater. After offloading all 24 of our landing craft and we draped the starboard side of the ship with flags and a sign saying MERRICK CHRISTMAS AND HELLVA NEW YEAR. On the landing craft we flew the flags of each country we had visited. By 1000 we were tied pier side. We were home.

The U. S. S. Merrick (LKA-97), the playground where I grew up. What an amazing year. On this boat, we lived and experienced one of the most iconic years in American history: Capture of the Pueblo in January by North Korea, Tet Offensive in January, Johnson's announcement not to seek re-election in March, Martin Luther King, Jr. assassination in April, My Lai in May (although we didn't hear about it for another year). Robert Kennedy assassination in June, The Democratic Convention in August, 2001 A Space Odyssey, Planet of the Apes, Rosemary's Baby, War and Peace, and Romeo and Juliet, The Heidi Game. Endless protests and demonstrations in the streets and on college campuses across America, All the burning issues of the year involving war, race, women's rights, and civil rights. An onboard drug investigation, and three months of drills and 8 months on the line.

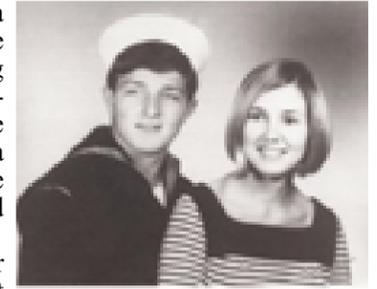
Our tour had included visits to Honolulu, Okinawa, Sasebo, Nagasaki, Yokosuka, Subic Bay, Da Nang, Chu Lai, Cam Rahn Bay, Hue, Vung Tau, Hong Kong, and Taipei. (Join the Navy and see the world.) History records that US troop numbers peaked in Vietnam in 1968 at 549,500. It was also the deadliest of the Vietnam War with 16,592 killed. The deadliest week of the Vietnam War for the USA was February 11-17, 1968, during which period 543 Americans were killed in action, and 2,547 were wounded."

I arrived in Birmingham, Alabama about 7 pm on Dec. 22, 1968. My soon to be bride was so beautiful she took my breath away. I couldn't believe that she had actually waited for me. (Trust me, the girl had options.)

After the wedding on December 28, we hit the road for Long Beach and the beginning of the life we had dreamed of together. Everything we owned was packed into our 1964 Dodge Dart GT convertible. That same girl is in the next room now as I write this.

In December Bob Hope made another of his famous trips to the war zone to entertain the troops. One of the funniest lines was, "I had planned on spending Christmas in the U. S. but I can't stand violence."

I was to make three more trips to Vietnam before getting out in 1971. Each tour was different with new friends, new ports, going back to familiar places, and a lot of time in the heat and humidity that was Vietnam. As any veteran knows, we never forget those times—the good or the bad. For many of us, it was the most defining time of our lives.



'Silent Night' During World War One



By Frank T. Stritter, Holden Beach, NC

Some called it the Great War, others the War to End All Wars, and others simply World War One. The war started in 1914 and ended in 1918, changing Europe forever and making the United States a global power. During the war, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire fought against Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Romania, Japan, and the United States. The US main-

tained neutrality in the war's early years, but friendship with Great Britain and repeated acts of aggression by Germany gave the US no choice but to declare war on April 6, 1917.

The principal theatre of battle during World War, and the place where the war was ultimately decided, was the Western Front. Deadly trench warfare there continued from 1914 until the end of the war in late 1918.

In December 1914, only five months into the war, and some two-and-one-half years before the US entered the war, an unplanned and spontaneous Christmas Truce occurred on the Western Front. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day of December 1914, German and British soldiers crossed trenches for a few hours to exchange seasonal greetings, carols, food, souvenirs, and comradeship. There were joint burial ceremonies of comrades killed in battle in some sectors, while several meetings ended in carol-singing.

German Emperor William II contributed to the holiday atmosphere and unwittingly to the start of the unofficial truce when he sent small Christmas trees to the Front to lift his soldiers' spirits. German soldiers began placing the trees outside their trenches and sang Christmas carols.

On Christmas Eve, the first signs that something strange was afoot were reported. At 8:30 pm, an officer of the Royal Irish Rifles reported to headquarters: "Germans have illuminated their trenches, are singing songs and wishing us a Happy Christmas.

Compliments are being exchanged but am nevertheless taking all military precautions." Further along the line, the two sides serenaded each other with carols - the Germans sang "Silent Night," and the British responded with "The First Noel." Scouts met, cautiously, in "No Man's Land" - the shell-blasted wasteland between the trenches.

The Scots Guards' war diary recorded that a Private Murker "met a German Patrol and was given a glass of whisky and some cigars, and a message was sent back saying that if we didn't fire at them, they would not fire at us."

Similar acts of rapprochement happened spontaneously at other spots along the front. For example, another British soldier, a Private Heath, reported that the truce began when "all down our line of trenches there came to our ears a greeting unique in war: 'English soldier, English soldier, a merry Christmas, a merry Christmas!'" After some moments of caution, several British soldiers began responding with hymns and conversations that lasted through the night.

There were reports that one or more soccer matches were played in "No-Man's Land," although some historians have disputed the truth of those accounts. One German lieutenant supposedly said that the British "brought a football (soccer ball) from their trenches, and pretty soon a lively game ensued. How marvelously wonderful, yet how strange it was." Another historian concluded that "there is evidence that football (soccer) was played that Christmas Day - mostly by men of the same nationality but in at least three or four places between troops from the opposing armies." So, it appears that some friendly competition occurred



The Illustrated London News's illustration of the Christmas Truce

along the lines somewhere.

An estimated 100,000 German and British troops were involved in the brief cessation of fighting that Christmas. While hostilities continued in some sectors, the soldiers' truce - the famous Christmas Truce - was unofficial and unsanctioned. Many officers disapproved, and headquarters on both sides took steps to ensure that it would never happen again. Soldiers were under strict orders not to go to the opposite side's trenches since doing so would have meant discovering private information, such as the number of guns or supplies they had. While it lasted, however, the Christmas Truce was magical.

As suddenly as the Truce had begun, the war resumed again. No further truce would occur until the armistice ended the War on November 11, 1918. Many men who participated in the Truce and celebrated Christmas 1914 together would not live to see the War's end. Those who survived would never forget the Christmas Truce of 1914.

Based on Dash, M, "World War 1: 100 Years Later, WWI Christmas Truce," Smithsonian Magazine, December 23, 2011.

Such Is A Gift?



By Janet Meuwissen, Brunswick Forest

Jake ripped open a brightly colored box to find a 12-inch shiny black round mechanism with the word "GOOVI" emblazoned across the middle. The floor cleaner also had a square power button along one side. Jake surmised the



Then Jake announced, "I've discovered I can set GOOVI to come on and return to his charger at certain times. I think I'll do that."

"That's nice, Dear," I replied absentmindedly. Little did I know what would happen next in the world of GOOVI. Jake had now made GOOVI his new Best Friend Forever. I thought I'd appreciate having someone else do

the housework right now since I was recuperating from a knee replacement and spending time in a recliner with an elevated leg.

At 10 AM the next morning, after Jake had left to play golf, I was again in a recliner, icing my knee. Unexpectedly, GOOVI came to life and started whirring along the living room floor and then across the rug. This time he headed straight for my recliner.

After he had whirled around the chair and bumped into it a few times, he must have decided he needed to vacuum under the chair--where he promptly became wedged. He cried for help by making a ringing sound - like the one when your dryer is finished - over and over again.

I couldn't get out of my recliner to free him because he was directly under me, and I would crush him should I try to put the footrest down. If I could have gotten my hands around his obnoxious little neck, and if he had a neck, I would have cheerfully choked him. Mercifully, after about 10 minutes, his crying stopped. I still couldn't get out of the chair; I was trapped. And then Jake came home.

"Jake! Get him out of here!" I yelled. I was so irritated because I couldn't even get up to go to the bathroom! Jake rushed over, chuckling as he rescued GOOVI from his confinement.

"What have you done to my new BFF?" he joked.

"Nothing!" I exclaimed. "But from now on, I want you to be here when GOOVI is at work so you can rescue either him or me should there be another mishap. He may be a gift. However, already I'm getting a bit tired of taking what he's giving! Looks like this joy of Christmas didn't end on December 25th."

Art by Hilary Lloyd Toronto, Canada



Visit Hilary's Bog to see more of her art. <https://redbootsartwork.blogspot.com>





THE TEEN SCENE

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Tomorrow's Voices Today

January 2021

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Stories & Articles

Teen Scene Editor

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This Month's Writers

Julie Decker

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Leland Middle School



Leland Middle School Students Sound Off

Covid had affected the students of Leland Middle School. Nathaniel, a 7th grader, says he spent most of the summer inside because of the virus. Just recently he had the virus and commented on how difficult it was for him to stay in his room for two weeks. He was not able to go to school and was "stuck in the virtual learning program." He was concerned that his brother might get the virus and have a more difficult time with the virus. He was also sad that his brother's trip to Disneyland had to be cancelled.

Robert Brannon, another 6th grader, echoed Nathaniel's feelings. "Life is very hard" dealing with this pandemic. Having to stay home a lot and wear masks all the time has been tough. Zacchaeus agreed saying, "...don't even get me started about the masks. They really get on my nerves and some of my family members have breathing problems so it's hard for them."

Judith Hartman commented that we are learning ways to make us safer, like washing our hands and social distancing. But staying 6 feet away from everyone is not fun. Similar feelings were expressed by Jahqueala Ballard, Kiley Oberdick, Melody Grissom, and Kelsey Zwinggi. No one likes not seeing family and friends and having to wear a mask. Virtual learning has been a learning experience in itself.

STAY STRONG!

By Deja Chambers, 223,570 cases as of Leland Middle School Dec.10 2020; 2,923 deaths.

The world is at its lowest - climate change, overpopulation, human rights, wildlife conservation, etc. Life is not easy and never will be. Hold on to the people you can and let others go. This global pandemic has been tough for everyone. But for me, I'm not able to see my family. Many in my family have Covid and live in Pennsylvania. I pray for them from a distance. During the pandemic, all we hear is the bad side of things. Why not be thankful for the things you have that many others might not?

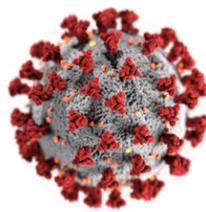
If you are experiencing fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, muscle aches, headaches, loss of taste, loss of smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea, please consider other people's health. There are many testing centers to visit since COVID-19 isn't something to take lightly. I'm not saying to buy all the toilet paper because I would kind of like some, but do take extra precautions.

Since people are all going through their own thing, take time out of your day to write letters or say "thank you" in person. Some of them are risking their life/health for your benefit. I can't stress enough that during these tough times, the importance of checking in on your loved ones.

On the 3rd of October, my mom got a call from my aunt saying she had put hot sauce on her tongue and couldn't feel a thing, so she got a Covid test. She told her dad to get tested as well, even though he had no signs. Not 48 hours later, they had both tested positive for Covid. Even though her dad didn't have any symptoms, she still did the responsible thing and told him to get tested. She is doing well and taking care of her two kids. I couldn't be happier to know that someone I loved so much is doing so much better than before.

My story isn't tragic, but it's still a story of a fight. Even though it wasn't my fight, I would stay up worried, and I wouldn't wish how I felt on anyone. All of my family members are classified as essential workers. I have to go with my mom and put my health at risk helping, but if it makes others' lives easier, then so be it.

Everyone's story is different. Forty-five million people have recovered so far. They may not be fully recovered, but they are still alive, and that's an accomplishment. I just want to say whatever you're doing, please take care of yourself and don't take things for granted. Whether or not you have a crazy story, you're still here. And, that means everything, so do something for yourself.



The Great Lockdown of 2020

By Shanley Hunt, Leland Middle School

Lockdown

We originally had a partial lockdown on March 14th of 2020. We were all excited to not have to come to school anymore in 7th grade. Little did we know that it was about to ruin our entire 8th-grade year. When I got the call about the shutdown, I was staying at my friend's house. We jumped for joy at the fact that there wouldn't be any more of the school drama or boy drama. We had no idea that it would be the most complicated and frustrating thing when we got back to school.

Summer 2020

The summer was horrible. I hate to say that, but it was. We couldn't go anywhere or do anything without a mask on. In the summer, a mask is the last thing you want to be wearing. Summer is supposed to be fun and exciting and a time to see your friends. Lucky for me, I had a birthday in August. It was my 13th birthday too. I couldn't do what I wanted for my first teenage birthday party. Instead, I had to go shopping with two of my friends with masks on while we were shopping. My best friend's birthday was in July. I didn't even get to see her on her birthday. Birthdays during a pandemic are impossible to plan. The summer was almost over, so we were all looking forward to getting back to school.

Returning To School

When we returned to school, it was really hard. From what I know, everyone was struggling with getting motivated for online schoolwork. Yes, it was easier having the zoom meetings, but we couldn't do anything if we had internet issues. The thing about teenagers is we need to have social interactions to feel better. We get the feeling we are alone, and that takes a toll on our mental health. Many of my friends have lost all motivation to do anything. When you feel like you have no one to talk to, it gets difficult. You kind of just have to find the people who feel the same way as you and talk to them, and that makes you feel better. Something I have figured out is that talking to someone on the phone and seeing them in person is not the same anymore, and to get motivated, you have to wake up in a good mood, or your brain just doesn't work as well.

Leland Middle School Custodians Recognized

Crosswinds Church in Leland celebrated Leland Middle School custodians and cafeteria staff in December. They presented each with a poinsettia, gift cards, and a gift basket. Our custodians and cafeteria personnel are hardworking, dedicated, and reliable. They deserve to be honored.



The custodians spend most of their day ensuring that the building is properly sanitized, from wiping down doors, doorknobs, desks, windows, you name it! They have done a great job ensuring the safety of students and staff.

The cafeteria staff ensures that our students receive healthy meals in a safe manner. They are well organized each day. We can depend on them to serve our students and staff with a smile each day. We have a great group of cafeteria staff!

My Thoughts on the Pandemic

By Bryce Thorpe, Leland Middle School *How did the pandemic affect you?* Well, it didn't affect me that much, but I love staying home with my family, and I like doing online school better because I love to concentrate at home 'cause it's just my dad and me.

Here is a true fact about the pandemic affecting us: A poll conducted in late April by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that a majority of adults, 56%, report that worry or stress due to the pandemic has affected their mental health and

Leland Middle School - Continued Page 10 - See **Thoughts**



West Brunswick High School

Preparing Today's Learner for Tomorrow's Future

Put On a Happy Face: Why You Should Like Masks



By Emely Olmedo, Staff Writer

After almost nine months of wearing a mask every single day, many might start to dread wearing them. Some may even start to become lenient with wearing a mask. Masks have become one of those things you can't leave your house without, like your house key or your wallet. Other than protecting yourself and others around you, here are reasons as to why you should continue to wear a mask and why they are convenient and fun.

1. Fashion. I think masks can be fashionable. If you're tired of wearing those basic blue disposable masks, go buy a cloth mask with your favorite design on it, not only are they reusable with a wash every time it is used, you can also buy certain masks to match with your clothing and outfits!

2. Having a bad face day? Need a pimple to cover up under your t-zone area? Put on your mask. With your mask, you're able to cover up anything you don't want to be seen and no one would have an idea it's there.

3. Let's say you're running late and don't have time to do your makeup: who cares? Half of your face isn't even seen. Not only do you save some extra time, but at the end of the day, you have less makeup to take off.

4. With the winter coming up and the cold weather coming in, your mask is able to keep your face warm. Double up with masks to keep you even more cozy if you're really sensitive to the cold. No more red, numb noses after being outside for a long period of time. Bye Rudolph!



5. One of the most effortless ways to brighten a person's day is smiling at strangers in public areas. Although it may be hard to let a stranger know that you are smiling at them with a mask, it can still be done: slightly squint your eyes to let others know that under the mask, you are lending them a friendly gesture.

Overall, I believe masks are very useful for various reasons. Although masks are worn every time we step out and may begin to be annoying, we should get the best use out of them for our safety. Continue to wear masks for your protection and others around you, so we're able to enjoy our peers and activities like we used to. Protect our town and let's make the Covid-19 cases go down.

Beck on Deck



By Cole Hamilton, Staff Writer

Freshman Camdyn Beck gives insight on her experience as a female angler. Camdyn Beck is a freshman and local female angler for a fishing boat here in Ocean Isle. She has been fishing for as long as she can remember but started competing in tournaments at the age of nine. She enjoys every moment on the water and the environment that fishing creates.

"My favorite part about a tournament is just being out in the water and seeing nothing but other boats and the blue ocean," said Beck.

Camdyn has won Jolly Mon 2 times and placed first Junior in the Fall Brawl. She has caught a 42.75 pound fish for her



personal best. There are some things that she finds more difficult than others, but she does not let that stop her.

"The most difficult thing I do is drive the boat because being short and trying to drive a 30 foot boat is sort of challenging when you can't see over the bow," said Beck.

Being a female in the fishing world automatically creates a different perspective, since fishing is often seen as a male sport. However, that is not the case for Beck, considering she has grown up on the water and has the talents of a skilled fisher.

"Being a female angler, you definitely get underestimated," said Beck. "Whereas it would be natural for a male to tournament fish."

Beck is walking proof that a girl can be successful on the water just as much as a boy can be. She is an inspiration for young female fishers and is an impressive young angler in our area.

2020 No More: New year, New Me!



By Jennifer Argo, Staff Writer

With all the tragedies of 2020, there is always the possibility of a better year. Although we are not guaranteed a great start to 2021, it may get better. There seems to be a lot of "ifs" and "maybes" lately, but that's all we have going for us right now.

With the help of New York Post's list, here is a recap of 2020 so far from a high schooler's perspective: Australian wildfires, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle quit the royal family, Kobe and Gigi Bryant's death, the impeachment of President Donald Trump, George Floyd's death, stock market crash, Black Lives Matter protests, Biden became the 46th president of the United States, "Murder Hornets," Chadwick Boseman's death, West Coast wildfires, Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death, Alex Trebek's death, and last but not least, a global pandemic formally known as COVID-19.

When looking at the bigger picture, the negatives of this year definitely seem to outweigh the positives. According to Business Insider, "Generation Z, is the youngest, most ethnically-diverse, and largest generation in American history, comprising 27% of the US population." With this fact in mind, a recent study from the World Economic Forum shows that "16 million more people from Generation Z are eligible to vote in the 2020

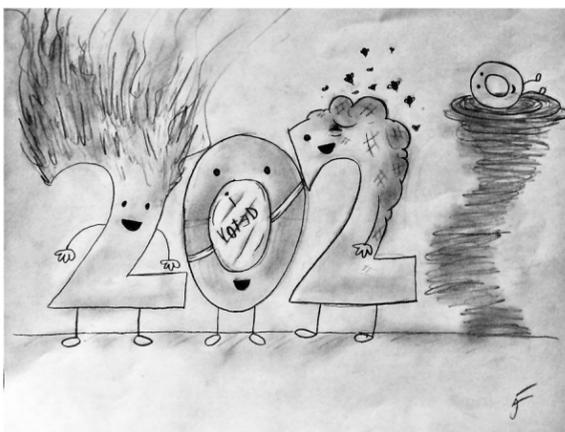


Illustration by Anthony Fallone, Senior

election, reaching a total of 23 million." Gen Z had a lot of political influence this year with voting and protests and is slowly changing the way our world works.

A good New Year's Resolution might be just what everyone needs to start off 2021 the right way. Although cheesy, a resolution can help motivate you to pursue your goals. Maybe it's time to take the saying "new year, new me" seriously, especially after this mess of a year.

(This article reprinted from the school's *The West Wind*)

New Year, New Start



By Samuel Cahenzli, West Brunswick High School

With 2020 now behind us, we can look forward to a new year and a fresh start for many. While the effects of the previous year still linger, we can start to move towards hope.

To start off, I hope everyone had a happy holiday and stayed safe.

Now to talk about the main topic of focus for this year - the Covid-19 vaccine. The vaccine will start to roll out and be affordable enough for most, if not all, Americans; the key is whether people will take it. The release of a vaccine does not mean that we should stop following the safety guidelines that were put in place by the CDC. Those in the healthcare industry will be receiving the vaccines first. It may take some time before it gets to everyone.

I'm sure many of us want things to go back to normal - no more masks, no more social distancing, and no more online school. While that's a familiar feeling for all of us, it's important not to rush things. We can all attest that COVID-19 spikes took place during the holiday season, similar to the spiking after the first wave of re-openings. We need to come to the same understanding - that as a community, it is up to us whether things start to change for the better.

Lastly, no matter what happens with the recent election results and lawsuits, we need to see past party lines and race. We need to see each other as people who are just trying to get by and live our lives to their fullest. I hope everyone stays safe out there, and Happy New Year! Let us make 2021 a great comeback year for all of us.



Reflecting and Resetting for the New Year



By Ana Johnson,
Cape Fear
Community College

As the New Year has slowly made its way into our lives, I often encounter the question of "How do we move on from the year that was 2020?" A year of grief, surprises and most of all,

confusion. Most of us had big plans, aspirations and goals all in mind heading with enlightenment, only to be slowed down or forgotten about over time. (Due to events that we simply couldn't control) Normally, every year, new bucket lists are made, resolutions are written down, certain attributes are established, but how do we stick to those promises? It may feel like there isn't as much motivational drive for pushing towards a progressive year, however there are still changes you can make that can set yourself on track.

First off, you can start with the positive experiences that you experienced last year. Often times, we tend to focus our thoughts on what we didn't do rather than what we can do in the moment. These could be accomplishments that you are proud to have finalized, like graduating high school, mastering a new hobby or finally starting that book club with your close friends. It reminds us that even though difficult challenges were thrown our way; we had a couple of inspiring projects that we wilily set out to do. This produces internal gratitude, showing appreciation towards yourself in continuing to evolve, grow and be proud of what you have worked through.

When looking back at those special moments, ponder on the thoughts of awareness you went through as well. Last year, people became more educated on the world, their city or even themselves, active learning is a part of our journey as a human being. What life lessons did you learn last year that changed your perspective in a positive manner? Was it patience? Learning to slow down and appreciate the little things? Keeping your family safe and healthy? All of these are just some of the many examples of values we faced.

This brings me to my first point on how to mentally reset for a new chapter. We've all heard the term "Go big or go home." which can be true for experiencing something to its fullest or putting all your energy into a single idea. However, with



quarantine, many major, grand ideas came to a halt. Now, when it comes to brainstorming goals, it can seem impossible to set drastic expectations when you don't even know where to start. Whenever I sit down to journal or plan out my dreams for a new season, I always like to break them down, making small, maintainable, realistic goals in order to eventually accomplish the bigger picture in the near future.

You could start with a single uncompleted milestone, for example, "I want to invest my time and energy into improving my home." Now, you have a determined goal to accomplish. From there, you can create a task list of different categories and solutions for that goal - like do I want to start by organizing the pantry? Re-painting the front door? Moving the furniture to visualize a new set-up? Once you make that plan, that goal doesn't seem as difficult to obtain as you thought since you are taking smaller steps.

The next step is to clean your slate - physically, mentally and socially. Check in on yourself, are you feeling more stressed, anxious or on edge about something always nagging at your brain? There are techniques you can incorporate to your routine to help cleanse your mind. Consider finally going through your emails and taking yourself off those automatic mailing lists you said you would do months ago. Or letting go of a toxic relationship or friendship where you feel like you're not flourishing in. Even investing in a calendar to work on your poor time management skills are all forms of "mental cleansing" that you need to learn from one season to the next.

Keeping this information in mind, now you have an idea of how to take small actions to make your 2021 a little less stressful. We are still in a period of rest and recuperation due to quarantine, where things like your physical health, family and safety are major priorities. Take it month by month, moment by moment, that's where you truly see the beauty of the progression you can fulfill.

Thoughts continued from Page 8

well being. Increased social isolation can be dangerous for people experiencing suicidal ideas.

What was school like for you? SUPER fun! I love how we get to stay home on Wednesdays and the rest of the week. And I can concentrate on my schoolwork more than playing video games all day. And this is true. If I had a PS4 right now, I would be playing it. But since my dad took it away, I can focus more on my schoolwork and my goal for this year, which is having A's and B's all school year.

How difficult was it for you to adjust to school schedules, online learning, staying home all day, etc.? It wasn't that difficult, I am used to it, and at my old school, we just went there all week with no home-school. But at the beginning of the school year, you can choose whether you want to go to school the whole year or you can do remote learning all year but have the same class.

What have you learned about yourself? I have learned that I can focus and concentrate better than in the old days.

How did you stay in touch with friends and family? Well, I always stay in touch with my family. In fact, I stay with my family. But I don't have a phone, so I can text while I'm at school.

What has been a positive impact? I always have a positive impact. I am always positive, and I learn what I need to learn during these couple of years left in school.

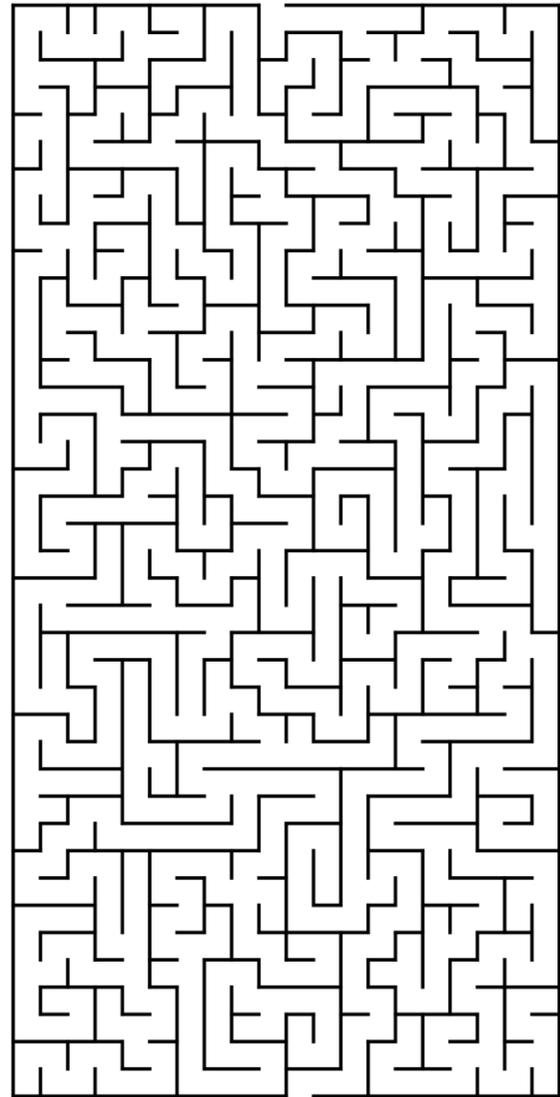
"The night is far spent; the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."

The Holy Bible, Romans 13:12



Scene Maze Time!Teen

Can you navigate through 2020?



Goodbye

(In memory of a 13-year-old who died from injuries from a car wreck.)



By Julie M. Decker,
12 years old

The hardest goodbye that I've ever had to say was on March 8, 1988. That was the day a good friend of everyone passed away. His name was Michael Skaggs, and he was only 13 years old. His whole life was ahead of him. He lay in a hospital bed for four days with tubes in him, fighting his last battle that he would ultimately lose.

It was Second Period. The teachers were all gathered in the halls with a look of panic on their faces. Everyone knew what they were going to say. Some girls had already heard and were in the halls screaming. It was a sad day. The pouring rain made it no better. It rained for days, and the fog lingered forever. The teachers all went back into their rooms and told us the news. We didn't do work for the rest of the day. We all shared our memories of him.

Michael had a truly contagious laugh. He loved to gross people out. He was the kind of person that you wanted to slap, but then again, you hated it when he was not around. He was always the one playing jokes on people. One time though, I managed to throw him out of Mrs. Bennett's window and lock him out in the snow. It scared him because he thought he was going to get into trouble with the Principal because she was heading his way. But of course, he

didn't. You see, Michael could get away with a lot of things too. That is why he was everyone's friend. He was also very understanding and sensitive to other people's problems. He tried to cover up this quality in front of the "guys," but it was undoubtedly there. It was little things like this that will always bring good feelings to me whenever I think about him.

The day was soon over, and everyone went home. I did not sleep at all for two nights. My mom sat up with me and rocked me, telling me how I'll be okay. She was my greatest supporter through all of this. It took me days for things to get back to some kind of routine.

My mom drove Kellie Curlee, Jamie Brooks, Jennifer Printup, and myself to the funeral. It was the saddest thing I've ever been through. Paul Clark just hugged me for the longest time and was very supportive that day. It was also a beautiful day. The rain had stopped, the sun was out, and it felt very refreshing.

That day everyone forgot about who they disliked and who they were mad at. We all came together and were there for each other. This experience made us all (I hope all of us) realize how important we are and how short a time we are here. I know it made me think about things like that.

Hopefully, this will never happen again to anyone I know. It was an experience I will never forget.

COVID-19 and the Holiday Season



By Ana Johnson, Cape Fear Community College

The few months of the winter season bring waves of joy, festivities, love, and family. Whether it be baking homemade cookies, putting Christmas music on the radio, buying presents for your loved ones, or simply lighting your favorite pumpkin spice candle. Although the coast of North Carolina normally does not receive

inches of snow like other parts of the country, the colder weather usually makes up for it. For generations, most families could travel, with options like flying or driving, to visit relatives, throw holiday dinner parties or go out to the malls to shop for decorations. However, this season, these traditions were executed differently due to one contributing factor.

COVID-19 has been difficult for everyone - essential workers, doctors, everyday civilians - we are all on the edge of our seat for what is to come. Whether another mandatory lockdown will be present in the near future, if an effective vaccine will be ready for use, all these unanswered thoughts can be extremely stressful. Currently, what we are witnessing now is a rise in cases all across the US. In New Hanover County, there are about 2,500-3,000 new cases per day (on average), as well as an increase in COVID-related deaths. This increased health professionals' concerns about how the virus would take a toll on people's physical health during

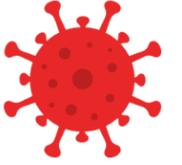
the holidays.

Let's start with Thanksgiving. As of November 24, 2020, 88,000 people in the United States were hospitalized with COVID-19, an all-time high in the period of this virus's course. Medical institutions were reaching full capacity as health care workers had more infected patients to give treatment. Although it wasn't banned to travel in the states, it was highly encouraged to stay within your own quarters for safety reasons.

Many airlines were required to have all hardware equipment disinfected, and all employees, passengers, and bystanders were required to wear some type of face mask. According to The Associated Press, almost 1.2 million people passed through US airport checkpoints within the Sunday of Thanksgiving week - a significant drop of about 50% in airline travel from the previous year.

With virtual platforms being so prominent during this time, some individuals had online dinner gatherings with their friends and family. It was an intriguing idea to have loads of fellowship while still staying as cautious as possible. The NC Department of Health and Human Services recommended that any gatherings be held outdoors with limited physical contact like serving food around the table, greeting each other, etc. Having to adjust to a different way of life can be difficult, especially if it prevents you from being with the people you love the most. However, making an exception for the holidays could have possibly made matters worse.

One activity that some people looked forward to is holiday shopping. Leading up to the last days of Christmas, thousands of people typically gather at stores to seek out presents for their family or themselves. Most stores still require masks and social distancing, so fewer people are able to enter this year. However, there is still a steady flow in holiday sales for bigger retail stores despite having a jump start on their plan for the holiday season. Their promotional marketing strategies and advertisements were used earlier in the year due to COVID-19 to reel in potential consumers who were increasingly compelled to buy and save money by shopping online.



At the end of the day, what does all of this chaos boil down to? This year has been different and is seen by many as a negative experience. However, positive long-term benefits can come out of group participation if citizens take the effort to do their part, rather than working against each other, which only brings conflict to slow progress down. In this new year of uncertainty, we will have to continue to make small sacrifices and have new perspectives when it comes to socializing. Whether that be with school, work, or daily activities, remember that we are going through this tedious process to keep ourselves and others safe. So, have perseverance in all of this, know that in the end, we can make huge strides to make an impact on controlling this virus

Essay Competition Winners

Seventh-grade student Carlin Baers is the Overall Winner of the recent North Brunswick Kiwanis Club sponsored essay competition at Town Creek Middle School in Leland. Students were asked to write on "How Covid-19 has affected my home and school life." Three additional First Place awards went to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels:

- 6th Grade Winner - **Jacob Tholen**
- 7th Grade Winner - **Ayla Austermiller'**
- 8th Grade Winner - **Z'Kyra Johnson**

My Life is Not A Book



By Carlin Baer, Grade 7, Town Creek Middle School

Although I have gone through many changes in the pinprick of history that is my life, I have always found that one thing remains the same: I live in words. I practically breathe them. Words were part of what got me through one of the biggest events in history: the coronavirus. As this world is practically overflowing with billions of people, it is doubtless that some of what I say will apply to others. But the voice, the story, the words, are my own.

The beginning was the worst. It started as a stray wind of confusion, a nod to what might happen if history took a turn. A virus in a distant country science knew nothing about, lurking like a cloud just gray enough to threaten rain but not dark enough to hint to an inevitable thunderstorm. This was no ordinary storm- this was a hurricane, and we were in the eye. One week, I was in school, talking with friends as we boarded busses to take us home. It would be months before we got on those yellow busses again. It came out of the blue, a hawk on wide wings diving with split-second timing to sink its claws into the brain of an unsuspecting mouse. It was a matter of days that lasted an eternity until we got the news that my great-grandmother was ill: deathly so. My father set out to say goodbye. Three hours into his trip, we got a call. He was coming back. It was over. There was no funeral.

In preparation for lockdown, my family had taken several trips to the

Public Library. On our visits, my mother would stride over to a shelf and take out a few books, announcing that these would be the next ones I was to read. Soon, I had a pile of over fifteen books stacked at my bedside. Every day, every night, I would wrap myself in their words, losing my mind in images only I could see and voices only I could hear. One of those days, I picked up a notebook and a pencil and tried to write. I became an addict of sorts. First, it was one notebook, then five, then 23 notebooks sitting on a shelf.

As the pandemic continued, I began to pay more attention to what was happening in the world around me. The easiest way to do that was to listen to the radio, which my mother diligently turned on in the car whether we were traveling a block or twenty hours away. As I began to listen, I was shocked- the riots, the disagreement, the fighting- and began to wonder how I had never noticed this. As I fell deeper into the world that I lived in, it seemed incredible that people lived the way they do, in a place so full of turmoil and hatred. Here we were, faced with a problem that affected *everybody*, and yet it seemed that still, no one got along. Small as it may seem, this awareness of conflict slowly began and continues to change how I think about this world.

So here I am, crowded around bowls of over-salted popcorn, watching presidential debates as if it's the Superbowl; listening to the horrible truth of a white man's knee on a black man's neck; the riots and hatred scattering everywhere live leaves in a storm; looking over my shoulder and meeting wide eyes that practically scream, "Why can't we all just get along?" But we can't get along, or so clipped, even tones speaking to audiences they can't see about the present and a loud but intelligent Social Studies teacher's hour-long conversations on the past and documents written by esteemed individuals I'm analyzing for persuasive and figurative language make it seem.

But there is that light at the end of a long tunnel: Opportunity. And while it flickers occasionally, it is always there, a steady glow that illuminates our path. If you touch a flame you may get burned. Nevertheless, we continue, one step at a time, on an impossible journey to a destination we can never reach. But at least we'll get closer, and if we stumble, we'll start again. We will never reach perfection because this life is not a book, not words on a page, strokes of a pencil that form a masterpiece. This life is so full of holes, so worn and ripped and torn it is barely intact. This life is not a book; there are no perfected worlds, no fantasies that come true by a little bit of action here, drama there, and *bam*. My life is not a book, but I'll take it.

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Your Community

How the NC Rice Festival Has Highlighted the Importance of Rice Production in the Carolinas



By Ana Johnson,
Cape Fear Community College

Within the next couple of years, the State of North Carolina, Town of Leland, Leland Chamber of Commerce, Leland Tourism Development Authority (LTDA), and many others will work to produce the annual North Carolina Rice Festival. The Festival is a nonprofit organization hoping to attract interest in teaching and learning the rich history of and culture associated with rice farming, especially in North Carolina. A two-day event located in Leland, North Carolina, will consist of music, vendors, and of course, rice!

This event was founded in 2014 by W.C. Lanier, a local festival and business owner who established the Festival with a mission to make it prosper. Following his passing in 2018, the event was passed down to the Leland Tourism Development Authority, where it continues to reach those from near and far to celebrate rice production in America. Today, it is an event intended to draw tourists from around the state to share the historic rice information along the Sea Islands. With COVID-19 protocols still being relevant, the Festival hopes to take place in 2022.

The rice history in the Carolinas runs back to the 18th century, when rice plantations along the coast of South Carolina became one of the country's most prosperous economies. By 1726, Charleston, South Carolina, was exporting approximately 4,500 metric tons of rice, making it a significant production source. This came as no surprise as the Gullah/Geechee people, and Sierra Leoneans who were substantial contributing factors to the industry's success. Brought from Africa to America, they would leave a cultural impact over the time they worked in the Carolinas.

Many rice varieties grew within New Hanover, Pender, and Brunswick Counties like Carolina Gold rice and *Oryza glaberrima* (African rice). These types of rice were harvested or influenced by African culture in the Carolinas. European settlers often called the rice-producing countries in Africa the "Rice Coast," as the individuals in these areas had extensive knowledge of their craft. The main reasons why the Carolinas were ideal for rice production was due to the climate conditions, moist soil properties, and water levels. With the increase in rice, many companies produced more product than the ships could carry to other countries.

I spoke to George Beatty, the current Chairman of the NC Rice Festival, about how he visualizes this event. Mr. Beatty has worked for years to bring awareness about the rice culture and the Gullah/Geechee heritage in the Carolinas. He believes that this will become a great learning experience that can reach a broad number of individuals. "People tend to have more pride in themselves if they understand their culture," he said, "Learning to reconnect with your roots can be beneficial."

Mr. Beatty has also worked with the Cedar Hill/West Bank Heritage Foundation to preserve Reaves Chapel Church, a worship center (also known as a 'praise house') first built along the Cape Fear River. With many African Americans still being enslaved in the mid to late 1800s, the chapel was one of the few places along the North Carolina coast built to actively accommodate their spiritual traditions. In 1911, the chapel was moved inland to Cedar Hill Road. It happens to be located near a rice plantation - one of the many within the Brunswick County area. "I wanted to relate all the history here to this festival," Mr. Beatty stated.

In later years, even though rice was still being packaged and produced in America, the conditions had drastically changed due to rapid development and climate change. After the 1850s, the industry decided that they could grow rice much cheaper in places like California and Texas. Water levels in the Carolinas started to build-up, creating the fear that coastal saltwater would interfere with the process of rice harvesting.

Another factor that changed the way rice was produced in the Carolinas was the lack of employees due to slaves being freed. When the Civil War ended, a lot of destruction had been done to the rice industry, and the workers' shortage continued. This caused plantations like Orton (located in Winnabow, North Carolina) to be disputed back and forth between their owners and the Union military command in Wilmington until around 1865. When this took place, President Andrew Jackson issued an order

to return the plantations to the owners. Both of these conditions cause a disappointing decline for rice planters in a once booming rice economy.

To prepare for the event, the NC Rice Festival Board had an opening reception/dinner in March of 2020 called the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Dinner Gala. It was a fundraiser to promote and thank the event sponsors. The Gala took place at the Leland Cultural Arts Center with over 100 people in attendance - all to celebrate the Festival's educational and cultural goals.

Dinner featured Gullah/Geechee inspired dishes by Keith Rhodes, owner of Catch Restaurant in Wilmington, North Carolina. Chef Rhodes worked to deliver a fantastic dinner that was enjoyed by many. Entertainment by Ron and Natalie Daise, known for their roles in 'Gullah Gullah Island,' a Nickelodeon children's show that ran during the 1990s, followed dinner. The event showed the audience an authentic side of many Gullah/Geechee traditions still being passed on throughout the years. Then, later in March, the COVID-19 pandemic brought with it significant restrictions on public gatherings and the planned festivities were forced into postponement. As we patiently wait for the Festival, we look forward to what the NC Rice Festival Board has in store in 2022 to deliver an unforgettable experience!



Ron and Natalie Daise



Brayton and Debbie Willis

Small World Story from Charlotte



By Howard M. Cohen,
Brunswick Forest

Most people have some type of a "small world story," but what about a Charlotte - Leland - Venice story? For those new to the area, yes, Charlotte is in North Carolina. As someone who moved to Charlotte in 1989, we Charlotteans (not charlatans) got very upset when the media felt they had to add NC after Charlotte. Who feels the need to add IL after Chicago or MA after Boston? There is, of course, only one Charlotte. We Charlotteans really became upset when the media would confuse us with other "Ch" cities like Charleston, Charlottesville, or even worse, those 'deplorables' in Charles Town, West Virginia.

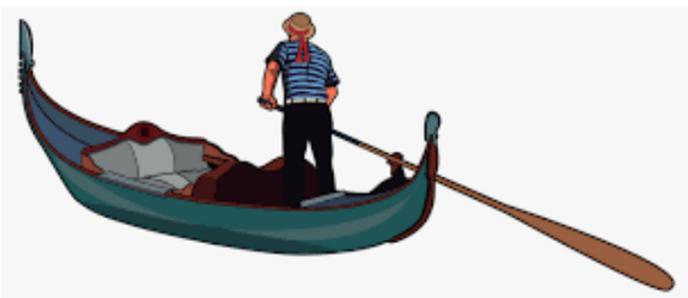
In 1994, the Road to the Final Four ended in Charlotte, but most of the media and the public were not sure if the road ended in NC, SC, VA, or WV. Some got lost along the way or ended up in SC. Because Charlotte makes up most of Mecklenburg County, some jealous people refer to Charlotte as the Great State of Mecklenburg.

I am not sure if Charlotte has gotten past the need for the media to add North Carolina after the city, but some claim that after Michael Jordan acquired the former Hornets - Bobcats and born again Hornets that the media dropped the NC after Charlotte. My wife, who was an original Carolina Panthers PSL owner (private seat license), claims that the Panthers helped the media and the public understand where Charlotte is located.

Others think the 2012 Democratic Convention put Charlotte on the map. The more recent Republican Convention that was scheduled for Charlotte and then in part was moved to Florida didn't help. Was the convention in Charlotte, NC, or Port Charlotte, FL? Personally, I think when the Charlotte mayor got caught on camera with a briefcase full of cash in an FBI bribery sting that really elevated the city to the likes of Chicago, and the NC became superfluous.

After many years in Charlotte, I moved to Leland, a small town, over the

bridge and through what used to be woods just outside of Wilmington. Yes, that Wilmington is also in North Carolina though the other Wilmington has been getting all the news. Can our Wilmington still at least claim to be the only Hollywood of the East?



When I was still living in Charlotte, I was the precinct chair for a political party. I would religiously stand in front of the local polling place in the rain and cold and hand out the "preferred" voting selections. A woman lived down the street who was always there handing out selections for the other party. Back in the good old days, we could stand there together being civil to each other, as hard as that was at times, and argue about the issues and candidates.

Shortly after I moved to Leland and before the Covid travel restrictions, I took a trip to Venice, yes, Italy's city, not the one in Florida or California. After cruising the canals, I signed up for a walking food tour. There were about 20 people on the tour, and surprise surprise, who did I find in the group but the lady from Charlotte who lived down the street who gave out all the bad recommendations at the local polling place. We laughed at the odds of meeting again in of all places Venice, Italy. We both had enough sense to avoid any more political discussions and simply enjoyed the tour and went back to NC with a great small world story.

Your Community

MILITARY NEWS

Grimes Nominated Public Safety Officer of the Year



VFW Post 12196 Nominated Chief John Grimes (Ret.) for Public Safety Officer of the Year. Chief Grimes has a distinguished record of 30 years of service in the Leland Fire Department - 26 of them as Chief. He is admired by everyone in his department for his dedication and leadership.

Additionally, the Town of Leland saw fit to capitalize on his unique qualifications, and dedication to service, to appoint him to head the new Department of Emergency Management. This position was established to "...better prepare the town for natural disasters and other situations that impact the community."

He is a past President of the N.C. State Firefighters' Association and has also found time to coach local youth sports.

Leland VFW Post Awarded 'Citizen of the Year'

On December 17, 2020, Leland Mayor Brenda Bozeman bestowed VFW Post 12196 Leland with the 2020 Citizen of the Year award. Councilwoman Veronica Carter assisted with the award presentation to Post Commander, Gerald Decker, at the Leland Town Council Meeting. Members of the Post believe strongly that their "service to country and community did not end when we hung up our uniforms." In the words of Commander Decker, "We will continue to do our best to make sure that Post 12196 lives up to this amazing recognition and continues to serve the community by promoting patriotism and helping veterans in need."



Wreaths Across America Honors Our Veterans



December 19, 2020, marked the 13th anniversary of Wreaths Across America (WAA). This annual wreath-laying ceremony at the graves of our veterans strives to fulfill WAA's values: **Remember** the fallen, **Honor** those who serve and have served and their families, and **Teach** future generations about the sacrifices made to preserve our freedoms – values shared by the American Legion and other veterans organizations.

Morrill Worcester, owner of Worcester Wreath Company in Harrington, Maine, was a 12-year-old paperboy for the Bangor Daily News when he won a trip to Washington D.C.

His first trip to our nation's capital was one he would never forget. Arlington National Cemetery made an especially indelible impression. Throughout his life and career, the ex-

By Richard N. Fry, Public Relations Officer, John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68, Leland, NC

perience reminded him that his good fortune was due, in large part, to this nation's values and the veterans who had sacrificed their lives.

At the end of the 1992 holiday season, Worcester Wreath had a wreath surplus. Recalling his experience at Arlington, Worcester recognized an opportunity to honor our country's veterans. With the aid of Maine Senator Olympia Snowe, volunteers placed wreaths at one of the older sections of Arlington cemetery that received fewer visitors with each passing year.

In 2007, the Worcester family, along with veterans, and other groups and individuals who had helped with the annual ceremony in Arlington, formed Wreaths Across America (WAA), a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. On December 13, 2008, Congress unanimously designated December 19 as "Wreaths Across America Day." Each December 19, thousands of volunteers perform a solemn wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery and more than 1,600 additional locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea and abroad, including Wilmington National Cemetery.

This year, the John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68, Leland, NC, partnered with Wreaths Across America to support the procurement/sponsorship of wreaths for delivery to Wilmington National Cemetery for a wreath-laying ceremony on December 19, 2020. Post 68's promotion efforts resulted in over 400 wreaths being sponsored for the ceremony. A portion of the wreath sponsorships will benefit John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68's programs to aid local veterans and their families in need.

Nearly 3,900 sponsored wreaths were delivered to the cemetery – well short of the 5,172 wreaths needed to honor all the interred veterans. On December 19, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, volunteers solemnly placed wreaths at the graves. Each person recited the veteran's name and information inscribed on the headstone before laying their wreath. Due to COVID-19 restrictions on outdoor gatherings, only 50 volunteers were allowed into the cemetery at predetermined time slots. Post 68 was well represented at the 10:30 am wreath-laying with 22 members and spouses attending. Several members of Leland Boy Scout Troop 747 and Post 68's American Legion Riders Chapter also participated.

Wreaths Across America would not succeed without the help of volunteers, active organizations, and the trucking industry's generosity, which offer invaluable support to WAA's mission. There are many ways you can help. To learn more, go to www.wreathscrossamerica.org.



Round 2 - VFW Members Help Leland Families

By Eric Mens, Jr. Vice Commander, VFW Post 12196 Leland



In a follow-up to a previous donation of holiday meals to needy local families at Thanksgiving, members of Leland VFW Post 12196 donated an additional five meals to families at Christmas.

Ruth Thompson, the Communities in Schools (CIS) Success Coach at Leland Middle School, identified the families most in need. Each Premium Turkey dinner, purchased from Lowes Food in Leland, feeds a family of 6-8 with a 10-12 pound Butterball turkey, gravy, fresh mashed potatoes, green bean casserole, and a side of mac and cheese.

A heartfelt "Thank You!" to Post Commander Gerald Decker and members Dan Allyn, Dominic Calderone III, Veronica Carter, John Marone, and Eric Mens, for their donations to help families at Christmas during a pandemic that has brought challenges and hardships to many Americans. Our members' contributions exemplify our belief that 'service to country' did not end when we hung up our uniforms. We continue to actively volunteer and work in our communities for the betterment of children, families, and veterans alike.

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Your Community

MILITARY NEWS CONT

By Gerald Decker & Pat Batleman

VFW Post 12196 Hosts "Remember Pearl Harbor" Event

Members of Leland VFW Post 12196 marked a remembrance of Pearl Harbor Day on Sunday, December 6, 2020, by hosting a "Coffee with the Commander." Covid-19 has put a damper on the Post's ability to meet in person, so the meeting was held via Zoom. The discussion started promptly at 7:55 am on Sunday, December 6. Frank Stritter, a veteran and former History professor at UNC-Chapel Hill, joined us to lead the discussion.

Mr. Stritter has a series of Podcasts on YouTube relating to heroes of WWII. Here is the link to his presentation on the events at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfzQbbDoq58>

Attention Vietnam Era Veterans

The Leland VFW Post 12196 will be hosting a National Vietnam War Veterans Day on Mar. 28, 2021. The commemoration recognizes all who served on active duty in the U. S. Armed Forces at any time during the period of November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975.

As part of that ceremony, as a lasting memento of the nation's gratitude, veterans will receive the Vietnam Veterans Lapel Pin shown below. Surviving spouses of those who served will also be recognized.

If you would like to register for this event please contact Nate Pringle at vfwpost12196@gmail.com.



Teen Scene: End of a Successful Coat Drive

Teen Scene, Inc. entrepreneurs Gerald Decker and Eric Mens, publishers of the monthly free publications *Cape Fear Voices* and *Teen Scene* recently orchestrated a coat drive that drew community donations of nearly 150 coats for children and adults as well as new items of clothing.

The coat drive was held on Saturday December 5 at several Leland locations. On December 8, the coats were delivered to the Leland Food Pantry of Brunswick

Family Assistance (BFA) for distribution to needy children and families.

On hand to accept the delivery of donations at BFA's Leland Food Pantry were Christopher Rivenbark, Beth Lewis, and Jennifer Ipatzi. Leland Fire Chief Chris Langlois, Pat Batleman of the Leland Area Rotary Club, and North Brunswick Kiwanis Club members Judy Bath, Rick de Moya, and Deb Pickett volunteered their facilities, time, and efforts to contribute to the event's success.



Gerald Decker, Pres. Teen Scene, Inc.; Pat Batleman, Leland Area Rotary Club; BFA Leland Pantry - Christopher Rivenbark and Beth Lewis; Eric Mens, VP Teen Scene, Inc.. Not pictured is Chief Chris Langlois of the Leland Fire Department.



Gerald Decker, Pres. Teen Scene, Inc.; and Pat Batleman, Leland Area Rotary Club



North Brunswick Club members Judy Bath, Immediate Past President, and Rick de Moya, President

CELEBRATIONS!

Have a special event coming up? Cape Fear Voices would like to celebrate with you!

Help us build our NEW "Celebrations" page!

Birthdays, Anniversaries, Graduation, Promotion, Appointments, Births, Retirement, Engagement, Marriage, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandparent's Day, Any Holiday

It's So Easy!

Upload your 3-line message and jpeg photo by going to the "Celebrations" tab on the *Cape Fear Voices* website at: www.capefearvoices.allforyou.biz/wp. Messages and photos must be uploaded no later than the 15th of the month for publication the following month. The size of your black and white message with photo will be 2" x 2."

You can make your \$6.00 payment via PayPal or with a credit card.



Your Community



BRUNSWICK
ARTS COUNCIL

Celebrate, Cultivate, Community Outreach

The Mission of the Brunswick Arts Council is to support, sustain, enhance and cultivate the arts in Brunswick County making cultural events, arts education and appreciation the arts available to the diverse range of county residents.

We are a community nonprofit working in partnership with NC Arts Council, Brunswick County, Parks & Recreation and other businesses and artists to help provide funding for programming, plays, concerts, shows, workshops, festivals, school events and other art activities. Operating "without walls" we hold our own activities in different spaces through the county.

BRUNSWICK ARTS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES GRASSROOTS GRANT AWARDS

By **Mary Beth Livers**,
Executive Director

The Brunswick Arts Council is pleased to announce \$31,401.00 in grant awards to Brunswick County arts organizations and businesses through the North Carolina Arts Council's (NCAC) Grassroots Arts Program (GAP). NCAC awarded Brunswick Arts Council \$36,440.00 for the FY 2020-21 Grassroots Grants Program. Brunswick Arts Council (BAC) received 12 applications for BAC Grassroots Grants across Brunswick County, which totaled over \$41,382.00. A total of 12 arts and cultural organizations and arts groups are receiving grant awards from this program in partnership with NCAC.

Many of our arts groups and activities have been dealing creatively with providing arts activities within the COVID-19 pandemic environment - whether they live stream or work outside - they are finding other ways to keep the arts moving forward. BAC is distributing the \$31,401.00 among the following recipients and their arts activities:

- **Associated Artists of Southport:** Kids Day in the Park 2021 & Spring Art Show at Franklin Square
- **Brunswick Bands, Inc.:** Ongoing musical outreach and performances in 2021
- **Brunswick Little Theatre:** Support of theatrical youth production in 2021
- **Countywide Community Development Corp:** Creative Arts projects in six communities across Brunswick County
- **NC Rice Festival:** 2021 film support in the creation of Gullah Geechee lifeways and food series
- **Oak Island Parks & Recreation Department:** 2021 arts youth camp and performances
- **Teen Scene/Cape Fear Voices:** For ongoing production of this monthly literary publication featuring original works of print and art by local residents, including a Teen Scene insert
- **Town of Leland- Leland Cultural Arts Center:** Spring 2021 Scrap Assemblage Art Workshop & Exhibit Program
- **Turning the Wheel:** 2021 Caravan and Movement Programs in Brunswick County
- **Up Your Arts:** Gullah Geechee Heritage Performance during the Plein Art Festival 2021
- **Waterway Arts Association:** 2021 Spring Visual Art Show at Sunset River Marketplace Calabash

We are grateful for the support of our legislators and governing representatives who assisted in helping these funds become available. We are especially thankful to all our Brunswick residents and visitors who, despite this pandemic, have found ways to support their local arts communities. Feed an Artist this Christmas Season - we encourage you to buy a product, gift, or service from the creative arts community within Brunswick County.

For questions or more information, contact Mary Beth at Brunswick Arts Council at 910.899.8407 or 910.448.1016 or email execdir.brunswickartscouncil@gmail.com.

About the Brunswick Arts Council

Brunswick Arts Council (BAC) 's mission is to support, sustain, enhance, and cultivate the arts in Brunswick County, making cultural events, arts education, and appreciation of the arts available to the diverse range of county residents. Formed in 1981, BAC is the designated community partner with NC Arts Council, helping to subgrant more than \$800,000 in Grassroots grants into Brunswick arts organization and programs across the county. Additionally, we partner with other agencies, including Brunswick County, to provide other programs, events, awards, grants, project development, and additional support to organizations and artists living and working in the county. www.brunswickartscouncil.org

About the North Carolina Arts Council

The North Carolina Arts Council builds on our state's longstanding love of the arts, leading the way to a more vibrant future. The Arts Council is an economic catalyst, fueling a thriving nonprofit creative sector that generates \$2.12 billion in annual direct economic activity. The Arts Council also sustains diverse arts expression and traditions while investing in innovative approaches to art-making. The North Carolina Arts Council has proven to be a champion for youth by cultivating tomorrow's creative citizens through arts education. www.NCArts.org.

Winterfest 2021 goes Digital!

Each year in January, we organize community performances for the Winterfest Festival in Southport. This year, our acts will be showcased online, available as part of the event available on web and YouTube on January 19.

We also hope to showcase the 2019 Performance of The Nutcracker at Odell featuring Wilmington International Ballet & local Brunswick County dancers.



Teen Scene, Inc. Receives Grant

On November 27, 2020, **Mary Beth Livers**, Executive Director, Brunswick Arts Council (BAC), notified Teen Scene, Inc. principals Gerald Decker and Eric Mens that Teen Scene was the recipient of an NC CARES Award as well as a Grassroots Grant Award. Teen Scene, Inc. publishes the monthly creative- focused, community-oriented free papers *Cape Fear Voices* and *The Teen Scene*.

The first award - a \$3,000.00 BAC matching grant award is in support of *Cape Fear Voices/Teen Scene* publication this year. The grant is made possible by the North Carolina Arts Council's Grassroots Arts Grant Program. BAC also approved an award of \$5,419.25 as a Reimbursement Award to support Teen Scene, Inc. expenditures claimed during the Covid-19 Pandemic from March 1- December 30, 2020. This award is made possible by the North Carolina Arts Council's

NC Cares for Arts Program.

BAC's awards notification, commented that the *Cape Fear Voices/Teen Scene* publications target community artists, residents, and visitors and are "a good, strong 'out of the box' project that attempted to address the arts implementation and public challenges we are working with in the current Covid 19 Pandemic."

We are honored and humbled to have received these awards. The funds will enable us to continue to showcase the many creative talents of the Cape Fear Region, provide seed money for other ambitious programs that we look forward to rolling out in the new year, and to help teens build their writing and business skills associated with publishing a local paper. Last but not least, we are extraordinarily grateful for and appreciative of the outpouring of support from our local community. "Thank you" for allowing us to serve you!



L-R: Mary Beth Livers, BAC Executive Director; Eric Mens, VP Teen Scene, Inc.; Larry Johnson, President BAC Board; Gerald Decker, Pres. Teen Scene, Inc.; Deb Pickett, Secretary Teen Scene, Inc.

CELEBRATIONS!!!!

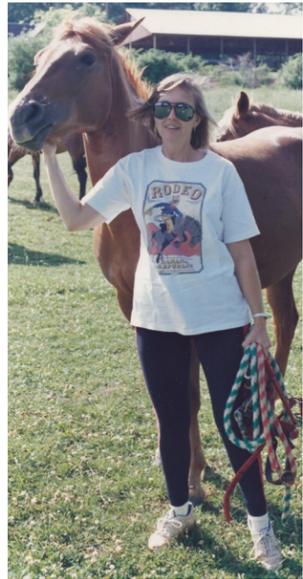
We want to wish a very Happy and Merry Christmas to all!
From Dan & Joeleen

Happy Birthday to two awesome friends:
Fran and Gerald! December 15 and 26.

This space could be yours!

Happy 2nd Birthday Victoria!
Love, Grandma

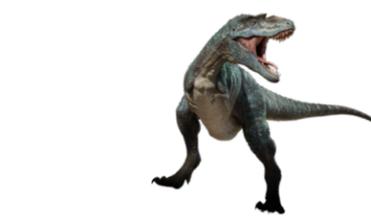
Congratulations Gerald Decker LeLand Citizen of the Year!
Debbie



Happy Birthday Patty Decker on January 10th. I forget what year that was. Have a fun day and be good to your husband.

Congratulations Adrian! One more semester and you earn your RN degree!
Savannah

Thank you Kayla for the goody bag!
Lynn



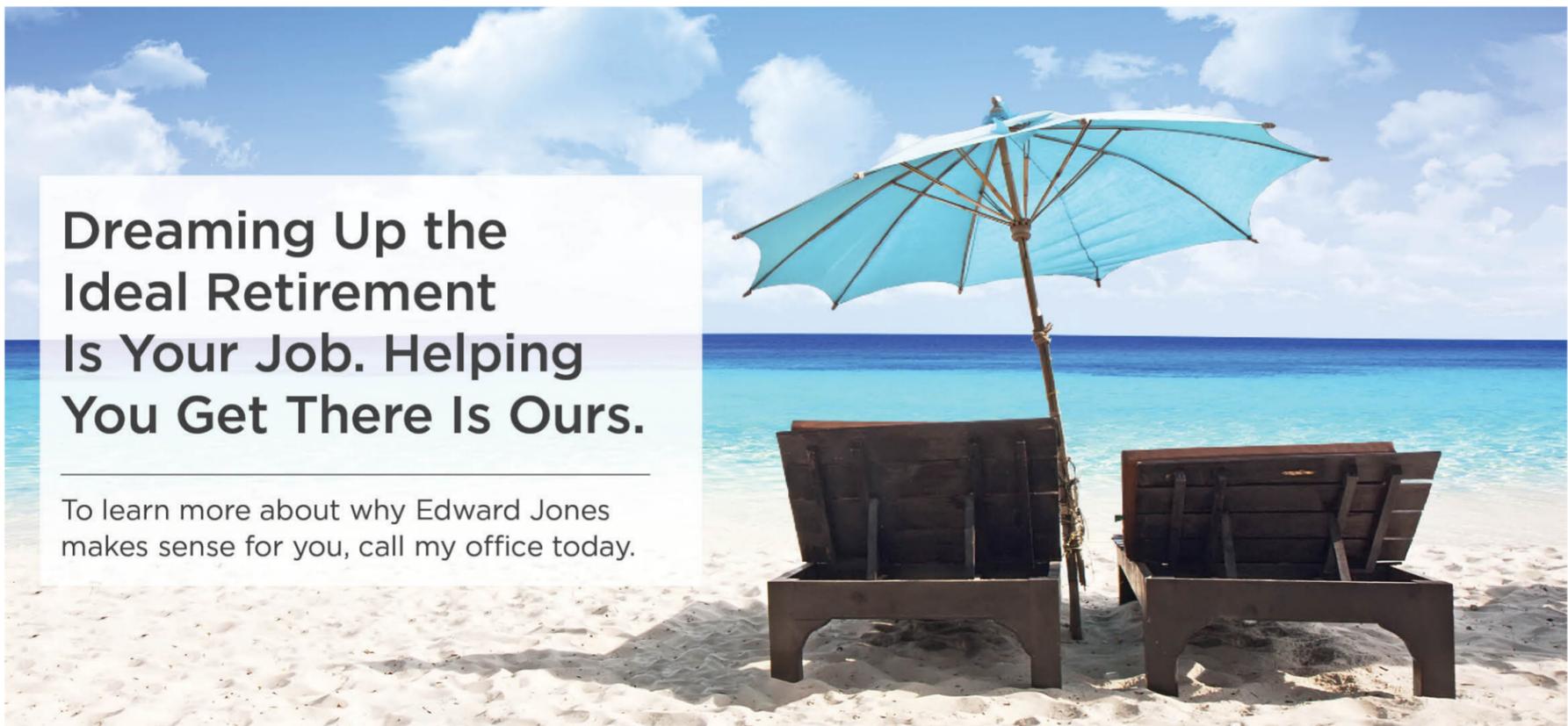
Happy 3rd Birthday Roc Decker on January 18th. From all the Dinosaurs in Castle Hayne. Papa G loves you.



Cape Fear and Teen Scene Thanks Our January Advertisers

Does your wardrobe need some sprucing up?

Cape Fear Voices and Teen Scene shirts are now available to order. Shirts are available in short sleeve (\$20), long-sleeve (\$22), and short sleeve polo (\$25). Please log-on to www.thepaisleyumbrella.com to see colors, sizes, and designs available. All proceeds benefit Cape Fear Voices/Teen Scene.



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