



VOICES

Providing an Outlet for Creativity in the Cape Fear Region

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FREE

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Cape Fear Voices

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Appreciating the Intangibles this Valentine's Day



by Claire Boon, Board Member Teen Scene, Inc.

Like it was for me, I can imagine that 2020 was a surreal year for most of you. Now that we are in 2021, I know that I will be more appreciative of the love, people, and kindness surrounding me this Valentine's Day. For the majority of people, Valentine's Day is a day to show the people you are close to how much you love them and how much you care about them. This is typically done with cards, gifts, and spending a lot of money. Whenever I think about that, I always try to remember the following quote:

"The best things in life aren't things." – Art Buchwald

That quote is short but so powerful! It is extremely important to remember what really matters in life. Being unable to see everyone that I love due to the pandemic and distance, in general, has made me realize that just telling someone how much you love them and care about them can make a world of difference for someone, which I have experienced firsthand.

When my mom turned 70 at the end of December, I would have loved to organize a big party for her, but due to the pandemic, this was, of course, not an option. Knowing my mom and the kind soul she has, I knew that there would be many people who are close to her who would want to make this birthday memorable for her. A couple family members and I asked the people closest to her to record a short video to send her love and birthday wishes.

After just a week, we ended up with 44 clips from people all over the world. The night of my mom's birthday, we showed this to her, and from the start, she was very emotional and had tears of joy rolling down her face. I can imagine that it felt like being covered in a warm blanket of love in these difficult and strange times. A small kind gesture such as that can mean so much! She was so touched and could not believe that this was all for her. The moment she said that I realized something and told her the following straightaway: When you show so much kindness and care to people as you have for so long without any second thoughts or hesitation, you will receive back that kindness and care from people as you did now.

I often express to the people in my life how much I appreciate and love them, not just on Valentine's Day, but since it is coming up, I would love for everyone to remind themselves on February 14th what really matters and how much of those are intangible. Use this holiday to tell the people in your life what they mean to you and how grateful you are to have them in your life. Kindness, love, and care can help brighten someone's day, week, month, or year. No money can ever buy that!



Art Buchwald



My First Love



by Veronica Pastecki,
Brunswick Forest

There is a cool breeze here in the shade. I am away from the relentless sun as it beats down unmercifully on the rest of the lawn.

Here, under the canopy of dark green maples, I sit and wait. The hostas and astilbes are in bloom, their tall flowers providing a splash of color that brightens my day. The heady fragrance of the heliotrope on the edge of the garden comes in waves as the wind changes directions. A restlessness that I can't control causes me to rise and wander about. I cannot seem to settle for more than a few moments. The last few months have been filled with various doctor's visits. So, I sit in my garden that has always made me feel serene and at peace and think.

Memories from long ago arise. Was it really fifty years ago that my husband and I met? I had only arrived as a freshman two weeks earlier, enjoying the freedom that college life provided. Who knew that drinking beer in the middle of the afternoon was socially acceptable? My dormitory friends decided to attend a fraternity mixer open to all students at the two local colleges. I was with a friend who was trying to locate the guy she met the night before. After a few drinks, she called Brad's name repeatedly. Sounding like a bleating sheep, she wandered about saying, "Braad, Braad, where are you?" I was becoming very uncomfortable and embarrassed when Brad and his friends appeared.

Among Brad's friends was a stunningly beautiful young man. Delightfully offsetting his green eyes was a head full of wavy dark hair. He was tall and muscular from playing football in high school - a delightful vision. He approached me, and we began a conversation that has lasted through 47 years of

marriage. His sensuality and wit made it easy for me to love. His intellect and common-sense appealed to my bookish self. His confidence and relaxed attitude inspired me to have faith in my abilities.

We married while still in college because I could not bear to be apart from him. I had already taken a pass on a semester in Germany for the same reason. Friends criticized me for giving up this opportunity to utilize my six years of German language studies. "If he truly cares for you, he'll still be there when you get back," they said. I refused to listen; I wasn't taking a chance on losing him. Germany would always be there. He might not.

After graduation, his first professional job required that we move four hours away in opposite directions from family. It was tricky setting roots, and frequent trips were taken back home. We became adults together living in a new city. We built a life together, raised two children, and grew to depend on each other in ways that forged a long marriage. It was not always smooth sailing, but we still found a way back to each other. After all these years together, we carry on fragmented conversations as we usually know what the other will say. Sometimes we finish the sentences of the other. We are very much two parts of a whole.

Laughter is still sweet as he shares his puns and corny jokes, often at the most inappropriate times. Small kindnesses are cherished - a kiss, a caress, or a smile. The sun is setting, and it is time to go in to start dinner. I finally feel relaxed and at peace.

Recalling the long-haired beauty that was my love at age 18 has brought a feeling of warmth to my heart. He pops his head out the door to call me to come in, and I see the short gray hair and the white mustache—so many changes in both of us over the years. I arise and eagerly head towards him.

WELCOME 2021

by Suzy Tenenbaum, Brunswick Forest

To celebrate the New Year
I shall eat some collard greens and
black eyed peas.

And, in keeping with burning
what you don't want to bring into the
new year

I shall grab a red hat
and spit on it, and stomp on it, and
cut it into pieces,

light those pieces on fire and fan
the flames.

The night before, I shall have the
sweetest kiss with the sweetest man
and I shall make a toast with mulled
cider and bourbon.

We'll sing Auld Lang Syne at the top
of our lungs

With emphasis on the "and never
brought to mind" part.

So long 2020. Welcome 2021.
Look! Hope is peeking over the
horizon.

Here's to you, all of my friends in
search of peace and justice.

Keep wearing the mask. Keep
keeping on.

I shall wrap my arms around you and
hold you tight in this new year.



About Teen Scene and Cape Fear Voices

Contact Information

For *Cape Fear Voices*
editorcfv@gmail.com

For *Teen Scene*
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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.

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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.

How to Subscribe

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

The Great Lockdown of 2020: How I Survived

We are hard at work doing the editing for our book. Thanks to everyone who submitted articles. It is coming together. We will have more info next month on exactly when it should be available.

Remember February 2020:

- Delay in Iowa Caucus.
- President Trump Acquitted.
- First American Dies of Coronavirus.



Be My Valentine!

Good For One Free Walk on the beach with donor of this coupon.



Mask not required but a smile is.

Mark Your Calendars

Upcoming events:

Feb. 20 - VFW Can Drive-Founders Park Leland 10 am until 3 pm

Mar. 29 - Vietnam Veterans Commemoration (see page 13 for details)

April 10 - Cape Fear Voices Writers Award Dinner-Blossom's Restaurant, Magnolia Greens

(You can nominate best CFV writers and stories by emailing us)

Cape Fear Voices Ad Rates

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

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Our Minds Were Made

by Janet Meuwissen, Brunswick Forest



Our minds were made. We had secretly taken advantage of a Valentine weekend getaway package at Atlantic City's Tropicana. And we had become engaged. No one was any the wiser as to what this widower and widow would really be doing.

Upon our return, the business of making our plan work would, in fact, begin. First, our four children must be told what was in the future for the six of us. We had all been through one of the worst things that could happen to a person — the loss of a spouse for Geoff and me, the loss of a mother for 7-year-old Keith and 2 year old Kari, and the loss of a father for Jake and Lenette. Geoff's wife died in a car accident. My husband drowned in a fishing accident—Jake, 11, was with him and survived. Lenette was 10.

A year later, I took a new job, and we moved three hundred miles away. I went to the mountains to heal with my kids' to a little village where I - Mrs. Wagner - became the high school principal and where I also met Geoff.

More years passed, and our kids were now 5, 10, 14, and 15 years old when, after dinner, we gathered them in my living room to discuss our new family's future together. I began the conversation, "This past weekend, while we were in Atlantic City, we became engaged to be married!"

"This means we'll be planning a wedding, and we want you to be a part of it. In the meantime, we'll sell each of our houses and buy a new house big enough for the six of us. We want each of you to have your own room, and we want you to help us pick our new home here in this same school district. Then we'll have to move—all before the new school year in September."

The first comment came from my 14-year-old, Lenette, "Why do you have to marry him; why can't you just live with him?" She had always been an independent kid who usually said what was on her mind.

Stunned by her comment, "Because I love him," I replied. "We also live in a small town where I'm the high school principal and a role model. As such, I can't just live with someone. Geoff's wife was a 4th-grade teacher before she died; everyone adored her and her family. He can't just live with someone either. Most of all, we both want a whole family again for all of us."

This seemed to reassure Lenette; having said her thoughts, she would soon settle into our new life. Jake and Keith didn't have much to say. Jake, the observer, told me his thoughts later. School, sports, and two part-time jobs kept him focused on going to college in two years. Geoff's kids, Keith and Kari, had two grandmothers living in our village, so they would have the additional support needed to help them through this transition.

Wide-eyed, curly blond-haired, and 5 years old, Kari asked, "Can your dog Pepper be my dog, too?" She knelt down and threw her arms around Pepper's neck. Pepper looked back at her in mutual admiration.

"Of course, she can," I responded. "You can even brush her long, wavy cocker spaniel fur." Kari readily accepted Pepper as her pet and me as her new mother.

Telling the rest of the community about our upcoming plans turned out to be relatively easy; Kari did it for us. The next day at Show-n-Tell in Kari's kindergarten class, she anxiously waved her hand and exploded with, "My Daddy and Mrs. Wagner are getting married!"

The other kids didn't really understand what had just been said. After calming her visible shock, the teacher started clapping. The class joined in the joyous celebration. "We're so happy for you and your new family, Kari!" her teacher said.

Soon, I received a call in my office to confirm my soon-to-be daughter's announcement. There would be no turning back now. Thirty-three years later, our minds are still made.

A Higher Calling

by Jan Morgan-Swegle,

Compass Pointe



I remember everything about Ben's birth--and he's not even my son. He is my first grandchild.

I was in grandmother heaven when I found out our daughter was pregnant. I shopped for months buying cute little baby clothes and outfits. Our baby was going to be the best-dressed baby there ever was.

I felt like a child waiting for Christmas. The weeks went slowly by, but finally, it was time. And then, past time. Our daughter had to be induced. My husband and I arrived at the hospital on the appointed day and were surprised by our daughter's appearance. She was terribly pale, and her blue eyes looked twice their size on top of the dark circles under them. She looked tired, and suddenly, my excitement over the baby took a back seat to my concern for her.

We were ushered back to a waiting area while the induction process continued. Hours went by, and I had a growing sense of urgency. Something kept telling me I needed to get to our daughter. I slipped out of the waiting area and went to the big, cold closed double doors that kept me from my child and hers. I put my hand on it, hoping it would magically open.

A nurse was walking by and told me that I couldn't be there, so she walked me back to the waiting area. It wasn't long after that when the double doors slammed open. We saw a medical team quickly propelling an isolette toward a different hospital area. I didn't know what I was seeing, but I knew it wasn't good.

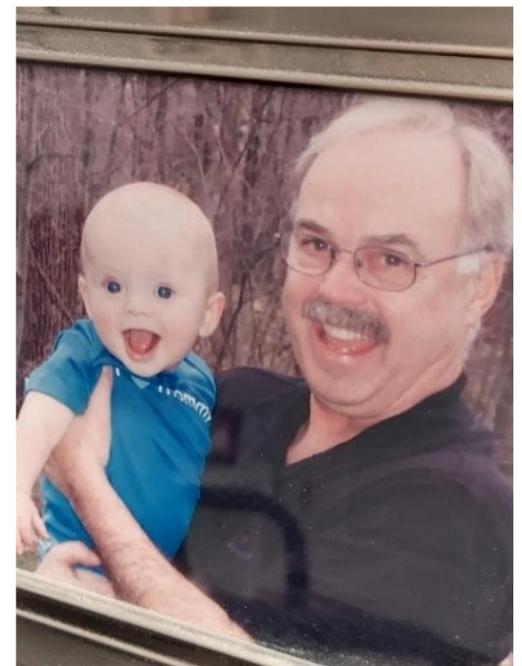
More time passed. No one was telling us anything. I thought about all of the clothes I bought and wondered why I didn't spend more time worrying about health issues than fashion. I felt helpless. Whatever was going on, I couldn't fix with a band-aid.

Finally, a nurse came to take us to our daughter's room. The big double doors were open now. I found our daughter and son-in-law in her room. It was obvious that she had been crying, and I think he had too. All of a sudden, I was afraid of words. I didn't want to hear what any medical person was going to say. All I wanted was for my daughter to sit up in bed, smile, and tell us about her wonderful, healthy baby. But she didn't.

A doctor came in to tell us that the baby was born with some breathing issues. I didn't understand half of what he said. Still, I understood the part about our new baby boy being transported to

a different hospital with a more sophisticated Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Medical personnel were bringing the baby to our daughter's room so we could see him before he left. We waited on edge until he arrived. Ben was encased in this little isolette, his head turned away from us, hiding the tubes in his nose and arms. The nurse who brought him in said, "We have time for one picture. Who's going to take it?"



My husband, who has always been my hero, and definitely was that day, stepped up with camera in hand and said that he would take it. As if our Ben heard him, he turned and looked directly at my husband and the camera. It was like he was saying, "Hi Papa, I'm Ben." The picture was perfect, with Ben's big blue eyes mirroring his mother's.

As soon as the flash went off, Ben was on his way. "Go with him," my daughter said to her husband. And then, she was all alone. Her baby and her husband were finishing the journey that she started that morning, and she cried because her heart was breaking.

The next day we found out she was checking out of the hospital against medical advice to be with her baby. Ben was in another hospital dealing with health issues, and she was going to be there with him. I was so proud of her. She was a good mother from the minute he was born.

Ben is 14 now, and our daughter has always put Ben and his subsequent siblings ahead of her own wants and needs. She wanted to be a nurse, but I think she realized she had a higher calling. She is a mom.

Gym Safety and Etiquette

by Bob Wieland, Magnolia Greens

We are all aware of the dangerous virus impacting our universe, and gyms are no exception. Even in normal times, it is imperative to practice safe habits. While I have observed the vast majority of folks practicing safety and courtesy, it doesn't hurt to review. So, let's go...

Please wipe down weights, benches, grips, mats, and exercise balls before and after use for your well-being and that of others. Better yet, consider wearing gloves.

According to the British Journal of Sports Medicine, the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) can be spread by sweat, which can live on gym equipment for a long time. Rhinovirus, according to the Clinical Journal of Sports, is transferable on un-wiped equipment. Even the common cold can be spread by contact.

With all of these dangers and COVID-19 added to the mix, you can see why it's necessary to wipe down with antiseptic material liberally. We hope that this cautionary step suffices. Don't forget to maintain your distance! If you feel the sneeze coming on, cover your mouth.



On the courtesy side, please consider wearing gym clothes, including proper footwear. Wearing street clothes in the gym may lead to taking germs home with you. Flip flops and street shoes can be dangerous to YOU, especially on bikes and treadmills.

Almost everyone replaces their equipment where it belongs, so need to belabor that.

PLEASE curtail cell phone use or at least tone it down.

Nothing is foolproof in the current environment, but by following these common-sense procedures, we can at least reduce the risk.



Rats!



by Eric Mens, Brunswick Forest

For a full day and two nights, we hunkered down. Rain, accompanied by heavy winds, fell incessantly. Venturing out was impossible. We were surrounded by a sea of viscous mud and water.

Boris (my bunker mate) and I had dug our bunker three-foot deep into the hard, red dirt atop a barren knoll that overlooked a deep ravine. [1] We fortified the roof with Perforated Steel Planking (PSP) from the airstrip in Bong Son (LZ English) and three layers of sandbags. Two firing slits gave a clear line of sight into the ravine. Our bunker overlooked the triage tent and medevac helicopter landing pad.

In February, North Vietnamese Army regulars and Viet Cong launched the Tet Offensive. Along with several comrades, I barely escaped from Quang Tri in the early morning as the enemy overran the city (that, by itself, is another story). After reclaiming Quang Tri, our Division redeployed north to the DMZ. [2] A reduced force guarded Jane.

Operation Pegasus and LZ Stud provided memorable experiences - enemy rocket and artillery attacks launched from beyond the DMZ; hair-raising flights in and out of Stud as short take-off planes avoided enemy fire; dense jungle, fog, and overcast conditions; jungle defoliation; bathing in the river with naked soldiers happy to wash; helicopters loaded with casualties thrown hastily aboard; among others.

During Operation Pegasus, we had heard the stories of Marines so desperate to evacuate from Khe Sahn that they spread peanut butter on their toes to attract a rat bite. A bite virtually guaranteed the Marine a relatively peaceful 14-day regimen of rabies shots at a hospital in the rear.

In April, we returned to Jane. Before we returned, sappers had breached the perimeter, and a small Viet Cong force had been stopped at the base of the ravine. Our bunker remained intact and unoccupied. Boris and I reclaimed our bunker. The summer months passed relatively uneventfully.

The rats returned. At night, they roamed freely, scurrying in the dark, chattering excitedly to each other. Over time, they grew more plentiful and bolder. We dropped mosquito netting over our cots to battle the mosquitoes and deter the rats from scrambling over us as we slept.

One night, we waited for them. Armed with flashlights and weapons, we sat in the dark, anticipating their emergence from between the sandbags. I managed to squeeze off a shot from my 45-caliber pistol. Bad idea - the sound reverberated horribly in the small enclosed space! We gave up. Then, the rains came.

In September, Typhoon Bess hit Northern I Corps with high winds and torrential rains - nearly 18 inches of rain in 72 hours. Normal air operations stopped. Significant erosion and high water caused dangerous conditions. Route One south and north of Quang Tri washed out in places.

At a break in the weather, several of us began to convoy for supplies from the 18th Surgical Hospital in Quang Tri. Slogging through the mud, we finally reached Route 1 just as the rain started falling again. An M-113 personnel carrier lay overturned in a rice paddy, no occupants in sight. Quick-flowing water over-topped the highway, making it impossible to see where the road lay between the rice paddies. We returned to base.

Reaching my bunker, I put on a dry set of fatigues and socks, donned my poncho, and sat atop the bunker roof for a smoke. As evening approached, I watched a string of GIs struggle to the perimeter bunkers on the hillside below. Occasionally, one slipped and fell gracelessly in the mud, letting loose a series of loud expletives. After a cold meal of canned ham and lima beans, I retired. Exhausted, I quickly fell asleep. My boots and socks soaked from the rain, I slept barefooted.

Sharp pain in my foot awoke me. Cursing, I switched on my flashlight to see a rat scramble into the adjacent bunker wall. The next morning, I began a 14 day series of rabies shots. Boris and I tore the sandbagged roof apart, determined to find the rats. We discovered and destroyed a litter of ten babies. I never slept barefooted during my tour again again.

[1] Third Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, had redeployed from Landing Zone (LZ) English in the Central Highlands II Corps area to LZ Jane in I Corps in late December 1967. Jane lay three miles southwest of Hai Lang near Quang Tri.

[2] Operation Pegasus to relieve the Marines besieged at Khe Sahn began in March 1968.

So Easy to Love



by Dr. Sabrina T. Cherry, Assistant Professor, UNC-Wilmington*

Before the candy canes were all gone, they were shuffled into a corner suffocated by small, medium, and large-shaped red hearts. Stuffed animals occupy the shelves. Roses are in the floral cases. And greeting cards are oozing with tender words of affection and adoration. Love is surely in the air.

I don't know about you, but there are some people I find easy to love. My mother is at the top of the list. With our prolonged season of COVID-19, physical distancing, and limited travel, I treasure every day she is alive and well. The remainder of my family follows closely behind.

I grew up in a close-knit community surrounded by immediate and extended family. Many of my cousins still live within a "stone's throw" of my childhood home. I love seeing them and reminiscing about the experiences we shared while growing up. Next up would likely be my friendship network. Within it are friends I've known since kindergarten, as well as those I've met throughout various educational pursuits, work placements, and community organizations. I could go on, but these are just a few people I find easy to love. These are the people I think of when I see jumbo chocolate hearts or cute, stuffed animals, or hear singing cards.

But I have another list as well - a list of those who aren't as easy to love. Included on this list are people who lie and are deceitful; those who don't honor their word, and those I find manipulative. I am challenged to love those who spew hate and refuse to see every person as a living being deserving of basic human rights. I find it hard to love those who thrive on greed and discontent, alongside others who refuse to sit silently for one ounce of a second to hear the viewpoints of another.

This month as many of us are overwhelmed with the reminder to love, I consider not only those who I love but those I find most challenging to love. And this month, I stretch myself to love 'in spite of.' This is not a passive love that dismisses the wrongdoing of those with ill-intent, but a love that seeks to model compassion, forgiveness, and hope. This is a love that surpasses my human inclination and leanings. This is a love I can stand on. A love that affirms and invites. A love that embraces and welcomes. A love that says I still believe. A love that allows my heart to continuously be softened and renewed versus callous and battered.

One of my favorite songs includes the following lyrics:

*And it was all so simple
You're so easy to love
And no space between us
You're so easy to trust*

*Cause You are closer, closer than my skin
And You are in the air I'm breathing in
And here's where the dead things come back to living
I feel my heart beating again
It feels so good to know You are my friend*

(Communion by Maverick City Music featuring Steffany Gretzinger and Brandon Lake)

While this song is not about the love we experience with one another, it is a model for how I can love others. Simple love. Trusting love. A love that is close. A love that reinvigorates. I hope we create space this month and beyond to not only love those who are easy to love but the ones who challenge us to believe in hope, compassion, and forgiveness.

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

Jack and Bonnie (Part 6)



by Paul Stutz, Brunswick Forest

She didn't get much sleep Tuesday night. Jack was probably not having such problems, she thought. Do men take these things more lightly? She tossed and turned, then finally fell asleep.

Wednesday dawned, and she did her usual morning things, kissed Richard goodbye, wished him luck with his golf match, and got ready to meet Jack. They decided to meet at the same place as before. She went with an open mind and told herself that her instincts would tell her what to do. She arrived first and got a table.

Jack walked in a few minutes later. Her heart was racing. She smiled and gave him a warm kiss, hello. They ordered drinks. Then they began to talk. Jack was also conflicted. He had been married to Sara for 44 years - back in those days, everyone got married when they were in their early-to-mid-twenties. They, too, had experienced mostly good times. He and Bonnie were in the exact same place in their lives - too old to start over, yet too young to just give up on their sexuality.

He reached over and took her hand. "I couldn't sleep last night - all I could think about was you." (Interesting, he didn't sleep either, although it was for a different reason.)

Bonnie nodded. "I know - I didn't sleep much either. Jack.... what are we going to do?" The drinks came. They clinked glasses. No need to make any grand decisions just yet - just two friends having a drink together in the middle of the afternoon.

It's the age-old story - two people enjoying each other's company, wondering where it will lead. Do they both want the same thing? Do they dare tempt fate? They finished their drinks and went outside to the spot where they previously had their first passionate kiss. It was daylight now, so they had to be more careful. They kissed anyway. They embraced each other.

And then, her instincts told her what to do next. "Jack..... I love you - I really do.....But I can't do this." She started to cry. "I just can't. I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to lead you on." The tears were streaming down her cheeks.

Jack was crying too. "I understand. And I love you, too. It's been so long since I felt this way about anybody, even Sara. But I know how impossible this would be. The lying, the sneaking around, hurting so many people."

At that moment, Bonnie loved him more than ever. He understood! "We'll always be friends," she said. "Of course!" he agreed.

And so, it ends where it began - a rendezvous by the river that ran through the city. Two good people destined to just be friends - nothing more. Unrequited love. But a friendship that would last until eternity. Not so terrible.

The End

What is the story with Eagles Island?

A vision: Eagles Island as a regional Central Park*



by Evan Folds, Supervisor, New Hanover Soil & Water Conservation District

Probably best known as the land you drive over after crossing the Memorial Bridge, or as the home of the World War II battleship USS North Carolina, Eagles Island holds a far more significant place in our regions history than most people are aware. And now, with the formation of a newly formed local group, there are plans for the entirety of the island to be preserved as a “Central Park” for our region.

Eagles Island gets its name from Richard Eagles, an English native, merchant, and planter who came to the area from Charleston, South Carolina, in 1734. It spans approximately 3,110 acres, with the majority of the land in Brunswick County except for a portion of the eastern shore that is located in New Hanover County, and is bounded by the Brunswick River to the west and the Cape Fear River to the north, east, and south.

One of the most interesting features of Eagles Island is that it has been formed by both natural and human influences over time. The southern tip of the island has been shaped almost exclusively by dredging deposits from the US Army Corps of Engineers, creating important migratory bird habitats. In addition to the unique plants and animals found there, Mother Nature has shaped the island over millions of years of weather events, which now includes the challenge of climate change and rising sea levels.

Eagles Island has long been a fixture for the inhabitants of the lower Cape Fear region. The stories begin with the hunting and gathering of the regions Native American tribes, and include the history of the naval stores and ship building industries that were located there centuries ago, the shipwrecks and archaeological treasures littering the eastern shore, and culminate with the rice and indigo cultivation of the Gullah people who fled the island after the insurrection of 1898.

Conservation efforts for Eagles Island began in 2002 with an unsolicited donation of 53 acres to the New Hanover Soil & Water Conservation District, which triggered further acquisitions by the District and the Cape Fear Resource Conservation who proceeded to purchase over 500 acres of land on the island. In response of this effort, the Eagles Island Coalition was formed in late 2010 to move beyond the task of acquiring individual properties and towards an integrated approach of working with private and public stakeholders for the holistic conservation of Eagles Island.

On the back of the massive work that has already been accomplished, recently a group of us have formed the Eagles Island Central Park Task Force in an effort to bring the vision of maximizing the public benefits of the islands resources towards the possibilities of recreation, education, and preservation to reality. The consortium of individual, corporate, and governmental stakeholders in Eagles Island make for a challenging collaboration of interests, but also a fitting exercise in the regional cooperation that is required to do great things.

Given the unique and important history of Southeastern North Carolina, the need for more recreation for our growing population, and the inevitable development of much of our regions natural lands, now is the time to recognize the extraordinary opportunity at hand. But this vision will not happen for us, it will happen because of us.

Turns out that the story of Eagles Island has yet to be written, and we are the ones we have been waiting on. Join the effort by following our Facebook page at:

<http://fb.com/eaglesislandcentralpark>.

Evan Folds is an elected Supervisor of the New Hanover Soil & Water Conservation District serving as co-chair for Eagles Island Central Park Task Force with Lloyd Singleton, director of the N.C. Cooperative Extension, New Hanover County center at the Arboretum. Reach him at lsingleton@nhcgov.com or 910-798-7660. The Arboretum, located at 6206 Oleander Drive is free and open every day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

* Permission to reprint this article granted by Lloyd Singleton, Director, Cooperative Extension, New Hanover County.

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At Peace with Nature (Part 2)

by Eric Mens, Brunswick Forest



Note: “At Peace with Nature” won First Place in the 2020 North Carolina Silver Arts Senior Competition in Literary Arts, Short Story category. Part 1 was published in the January 2021 issue of Cape Fear Voices.

An eternity passed as his arms flailed at the underbrush that lined the slope, trying to get a hold on something - anything - to slow his precipitous slide towards the river. Gasping for breath, he finally grasped and clung onto an exposed tree root. His feet hanging mere inches above the rushing river, he listened to the roiling current.

How long he lay there, he did not know. When he regained his senses, he slowly clawed his way up the bank to lay exhausted at the foot of his truck. His clothes soaked to the bone and covered in mud, he laughed softly and maniacally at his predicament. How would he explain his condition to those who surely would have noted his absence from the house that he called home? Something had snapped in his mind, and he knew with certainty that he was not yet ready to die. Not now, not this way, not this day.

Once behind the wheel, he drove slowly - careful not to attract the attention of anyone who might be on the road at this time of night. Not surprisingly, the house was silent and dark when he finally arrived. Quickly entering through a side door, he stripped off his clothes and left them on the floor where they would lay until the next day. Tomorrow was a workday.

* * *

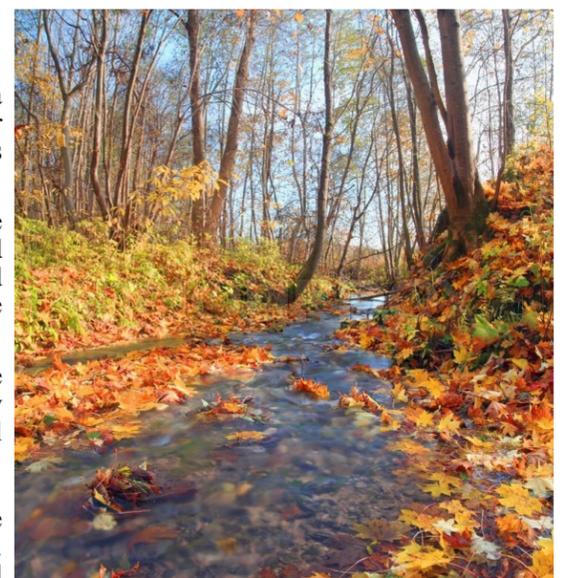
Several months later, he found himself hiking through a secluded, wooded park not far from his home. She had moved out that summer, taking her sons, the dog, and most of their mutual material possessions with her. He and his son were left alone in the eerie calm and quiet of the cavernous house that they had once called home.

Much to his doctor’s chagrin, he had abruptly stopped taking the antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs previously prescribed to help him cope. He had felt particularly alive on the day that she left, as he wandered through the quiet sunlit garden that he could now call his own. With what he could only describe as a “rush,” he felt the heavy curtain of darkness that had persistently plagued him lifted from his shoulders, and he broke into a smile.

Now, looking over the edge of the narrow bridge that crossed a stream in this part of the park, he spotted a large, washed-out tree root overhanging the brook. Slowly making his way down the bank, he seated himself on the tree’s outstretched roots, his feet only inches above the water that streamed quietly beneath his boots. Looking up, he marveled at the brilliantly blue sky, barely discernible through the trees. Sunlight played through the colorful red, yellow, and orangish fall foliage, reflecting off the gently babbling brook at his feet.

He let the sunlight bathe and warm his upward lifted face, as he listened to the whispering leaves rustling in the soft breeze. He felt at peace. His only regret was that no one was here to share this solitude with him. No matter - life was good. Nature had given him a renewed lease on life.

The End



Veganuary: More Than Just January!

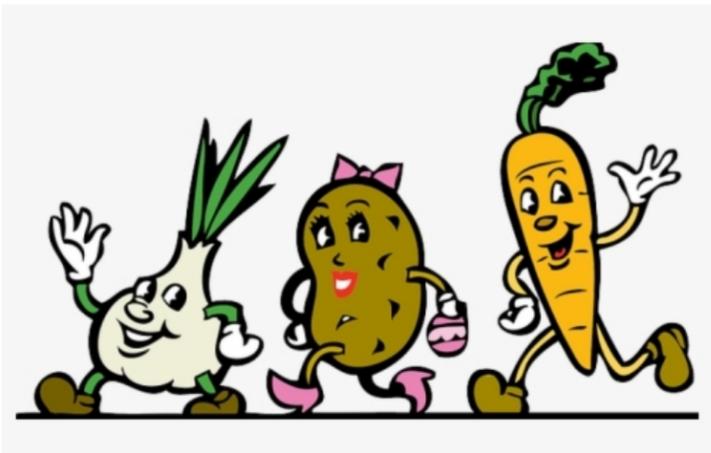
by Taylor Hardison, Leland



Curious about incorporating more plant-based foods into your life? With animal agriculture wreaking havoc on forests, waterways, and communities, consuming less meat and dairy is a great way to combat environmental damage. Numerous studies have also shown that vegan diets can help lower your risk of heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. So, whether you're looking to reduce your carbon footprint or your blood pressure, you're looking in the right place!

An online campaign called Veganuary, founded in 2014, focuses on giving vegan eating a try for the month of January. Since its inception, participation has more than doubled each year, with a record 500,000 sign-ups this January! If this low-commitment way to dip your toe into eating more plant-based meals sounds appealing, the Veganuary website features popular recipes, nutrition information, and easy ways to get started. While January is behind us, I say we give the other months an equal chance! Veg-ruary? Fe-bean-ruary? Okay, let's leave the naming to the professionals!

Perhaps you're feeling interested but not quite ready to jump in? Design your own plan! Pick just one week instead of a month. Or dedicate some time to learning about vegan eating and be ready to go next month! As with all of the environmentally-conscious choices we make, every little bit adds up. Each day following a plant-based diet saves 1,100 gallons of water, 40 pounds of grain, 30 square feet of forest, 20 pounds of CO₂, and the life of one animal. Not to mention it could save your life too! What a difference you have the power to make in just one day. Let's get started!



New Year's Resolutions

by Veronica Pastecki, Brunswick Forest



Each year we take some time to reflect on the past. Then our thoughts hone in on what the future will bring. We make promises to ourselves, such as "I am going exercise for thirty minutes every day, and I will lose thirty pounds this year." I weigh myself and take my measurement as a baseline to demonstrate just how much I lose.

We start off with a bang, walking every day, doing those crunches and weight lifts. Things look promising. "I've exercised for almost thirty minutes every day, well, to be honest, it was probably closer to twenty minutes of real exercise. I spent the other ten selecting just the right YouTube music for my workout."

Then about the third week, I read an article about body shaming. I say to myself, "Let's be realistic. I'm not really that overweight, maybe I can lose twenty pounds," as I throw away another pair of pants that shrunk in the wash. *That seems to be happening a lot this year. I think our water might be too hot. Maybe it is the dryer that is destroying my wardrobe.*

Well, now it month two, time to weigh-in and take my measurements. What, this can't be. I haven't lost an ounce. I still am doing my exercises each day, and for the full thirty minutes. Hubby comments that maybe it was the ice cream reward I had each night that might be doing it. I give him a frosty stare.

Mid-February, it has gotten colder, so my walks tend to be to the mailbox and back. *I want to lose weight and get in shape, not give myself pneumonia!* I say to myself as I take another bowl of rice pudding. Comfort food really hits the spot when it is freezing outside.

March looms, and it will be time to weigh myself again. I am really depressed. The walks are shorter, and the exercises have gone from every day to once a week if I am lucky. I just don't have the time; I have a life too. Who knew that exercise would eat into my social life. Besides, I should learn to accept myself as I am.

It's a sad day. The scales hate me. Not only have I not lost weight, but I've also gained two pounds. That's it; I give up. Maybe there is some Halloween candy left in the cupboard. If not, I think Easter is early this year. There are sure to be chocolate bunnies available somewhere.

LAUGHING IN THE GOLDEN YEARS: LOVE IN OLD VALENTINES

by Maryann Nunnally, Porters Neck



Cleaning out my room in my parent's home just before I was married for the first time, I came across an old shoebox filled with cards from my elementary and high school days. When I dumped the box on the bed, a long white envelope fell among all the cards. Opening it up, I saw about twenty-five penny valentines. When I examined a couple of them, I realized that they were valentines from the First Grade. As I inspected them, I saw that they were not signed but contained cryptic messages such as "Guess Who?" or "I Like You, Do You Like Me?" Two of them had little boxes under the "Do You Like Me?" , "Yes" or "No." Both had checks in the Yes boxes.

As soon as I saw those penny valentines, I remembered Valentine's day in the First Grade. About a week before February 14, Miss Walsh, my First-Grade teacher, brought a cardboard box into the classroom with some red crepe paper and instructed the class to ruffle the crepe paper and cover the box. Some kids were given the assignment of cutting out white hearts, which were glued over the crepe paper. When we were finished, Miss Walsh cut a slit in the top of the box and informed us that we were to put our valentines for our friends in the box.

When I ran home for lunch and told my mother about the box, she said she would buy a box of valentines for me, but I had to write one out for every kid in the class. I wasn't too excited about that because I didn't exactly like everyone in my classroom. Still, Mom's word was law, so I resigned myself to giving everybody in my class a valentine.

On Valentine's Day, we had a party with cookies donated by two moms and some red Kool-Aid brought in by my very own mother. Then Miss Walsh named two kids to pass out the valentines, which were dumped out of the box onto her desk.

I was thrilled to get two valentines from Paul, my unofficial boyfriend. But I also got a pile of penny valentines with the "Guess Who?" and other mysterious messages on them. I looked all over the classroom, trying to guess which boy had given me a pile of penny valentines and was too shy to sign them. Since Paul had already signed two-card valentines, I didn't think it was he. In the end, I scooped up all the penny valentines and took them home, where I saved them in a white envelope.

Over the next few years, on Valentine's day, I would try to figure out which boy might have sent me more than twenty penny valentines, but it always remained a mystery. Now sorting them out on my bed, I showed them to my mother, who immediately began laughing.

"Maryann," she said, "That was your first Valentine's Day, and I was afraid you would not get as many valentines as all those little Shirley Temple girls with their fluffy dresses and ringlets in their hair. So, I slipped into your classroom the day before the party and put those penny valentines in the box. You were such a serious little girl with your hair in pig-tails and your long skinny legs; I didn't want you to think that you weren't as cute or popular as the other girls in your class."

What could I say to that? My mother loved me enough to walk two miles to the school building on a miserably cold winter day, and just as soon as I left for my piano lesson, slide into my classroom and put more than twenty penny valentines for me in our valentine box. All I could do was put my arms around her and say, "Mom, I really love you." When I think back to that day, I realize that the real valentine in my life was my mother.



Life

by Ken Formalarie, Magnolia Greens

This time is mine, this place is mine.

I shall watch and wait until the moment is right,

I shall not care that wind and rain may ruffle my feathers,

I shall be consumed by the chore of survival but not know why.

I will take rest at will but always be vigilant that another is waiting to take my place.

I will be guided by the rhythms of life and delight in a belly fill when it comes.

I will forget each time I take flight why I am here but always hone my skills that lead to ever greater rewards not only for me but also my loved kin.

I can feel my presence here through my senses and a powerful impulse to continue on until I am no longer fully able...

I can feel shrinking strength from my body I once knew as my shield. I care less now for all of the hardness of life as my thoughts travel inward to an ever diminishing world.

I am ready for life to be complete.

Tribute to Andy

by Janet Stiegler, Brunswick Forest



"Fly high, precious wingman, as you touch the face of God..."

These poetic words appeared on my cousin's Facebook page the day her youngest son Andy died a month before his 37th birthday. We had been following his painful journey—multiple surgeries, tracheostomies, gastrostomies, and lymphedema—since early last year, when the cancer first took hold in his jaw and esophagus. This wasn't Andy's first fight with cancer—as a child, he battled leukemia, enduring years of grueling treatments and a bone marrow transplant. Despite a frail physique (due to years of cancer treatment), he radiated tremendous inner strength and courage—and always wore a smile.

Perhaps recognizing how precious life is, Andy made the most of the time he had—getting a Private Pilot's license at 16 and becoming Instrument Rated at 18. He was everyone's favorite wingman, soaring not only into the sky but also into many hearts. Besides aviation, Andy's other love was music and composing. Gifted as a child, he played his first piano composition at the age of eight, later earning bachelor's and master's degrees in music theory, composition, and performance. Many of us traveled through several states to witness his college graduation recital and pay tribute to the arduous journey he took to get there. His last decade of life was spent in service—to his church and those less fortunate.

His single mother was also an inspiration, not only for providing years of encouragement and positive support but for the grace she showed at the end in letting him go. While I cannot begin to grasp the grief that comes with losing a child or seeing a loved one suffer a debilitating illness, her words made me wonder how human beings nourish such hope when their hearts are aching. Obviously, my cousin had faith in a higher power and a supportive community to whom she could turn. Studies have shown that these things are vital for general well-being, if not a long life. *But is there something more, something in her DNA, that has helped her persevere?*

I don't really have the answer to that. While I like to think that I would display such strength and grace under similar circumstances, another part of me hopes I never have to undergo such a test. I also hope that I have successfully passed some of that "wellspring of hope" and resilience on to my offspring.

In the meantime, the days ahead will be filled with any number of little irritants. The dog will get sick on the newly cleaned carpet. A pimple will erupt before my presentation. The store will close just minutes before I arrive. A tire will go flat, or my favorite earring will go missing. They say life is short, that we shouldn't "sweat the small stuff." So, I've chosen a new mantra from a life well lived to help put things in perspective: "Fly high, precious wingman..."

Love and Serve. Yourself, and Others.

by Chuck Schwartz, Guest Columnist, Hilton Head, SC



This coming February 14th is Valentine's Day. It is a day to remember those and remind those who are special in our lives just how much we love them. This love is often shown through the purchase of cards, flowers, and gifts. Doing this often will put a smile on someone's face, and perhaps even your own.

So why not live Valentine's Day every day - Chuck's Lemonade style.

The "S" in H A B I T S, the ingredients in Chuck's Lemonade, is for Service. As in love and serve - yourself, and others. True love. True service. From pure joy. No anxiety. No guilt.

Practice Service (Chuck's Lemonade style) and live better.

Read the definition of Service above and notice that the word "yourself" is placed before the word "others." That is not a mistake. The reason for this is because if you want to truly love others from a place of pure joy, you have to love and serve yourself too. First even. Because you cannot pour from an empty cup.

All too often, I see people I know "loving" and "serving" out of obligation. This is often driven by negative energy, such as anxiety, guilt, stress, or worry. This kind of love and service is okay for a while - and maybe even for years, but like all things in life, we need balance. That's where "yourself" comes in.

A life in balance is when you love and serve yourself too. You have needs. You have wants. If you deny or ignore your needs, they don't and won't go away, and the longer this goes on, the farther you fall out of balance. This is why making a practice of loving and serving yourself and your needs are so important. When you do this, you have much more to love and serve others, and from a place of pure joy.

For many years my own life was out of balance. I worked at jobs I hated to support a lifestyle that didn't really work or make sense. I accumulated mountains of debt to "keep up with the Joneses." All the while, I heard (and believed) things like "that's what a real man does," "that's just the way it is," "everyone does it," and "why can't you just be happy." I swept these things under the rug for as long as I could. Then one day, I couldn't any longer. I was way out of balance. It didn't end well for me or others that I cared for deeply. I learned this the hard way. It doesn't have to be this way.

Today I practice Service, Chuck's Lemonade style. I love and serve myself. This includes how I live, where I live, what I do for work (and from where I do it), and much more. Because of this, I have so much more for loving and serving others. Honest love. Pure love. Pure joy. I truly believe that by living this way and doing it this way, I and others around me are better off for it.

Think about it.

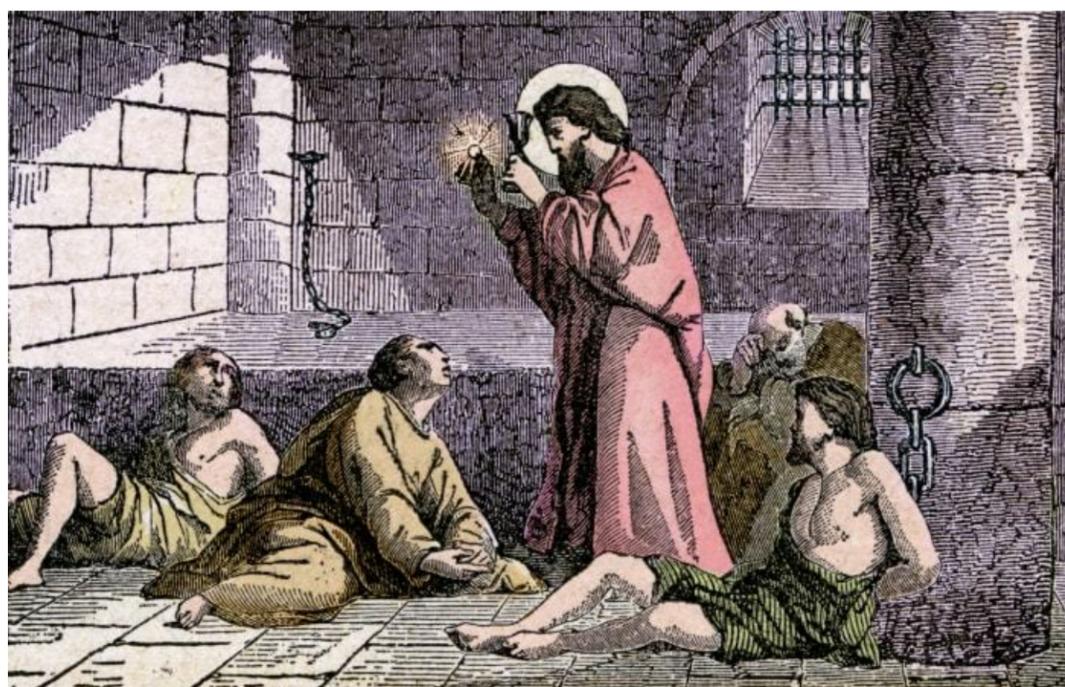
Chuck Schwartz is the author of "Chuck's Lemonade, A Recipe for: Inspired Thinking and Living, Finding Gifts When Life Gives You Lemons, and Turning Your Lemons into Lemonade!" and **The Chuck's Lemonade Collection** of inspirational books, journals, presentations, and more, all designed to help you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



The Legend of St. Valentine

by Ian Gavan/Getty Images for ASDA, source: history.com/topics/valentines-day

The history of Valentine's Day, and the story of its patron saint, is shrouded in mystery. We do know that February has long been celebrated as a month of romance, and that St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. The Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. Still others insist that it was Saint Valentine of Terni, a bishop, who was the true namesake of the holiday. He, too, was beheaded by Claudius II outside Rome. Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons, where they were often beaten and tortured. According to one legend, an imprisoned Valentine actually sent the first "valentine" greeting himself after he fell in love with a young girl—possibly his jailor's daughter—who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter signed "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories all emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and most importantly, romantic figure.



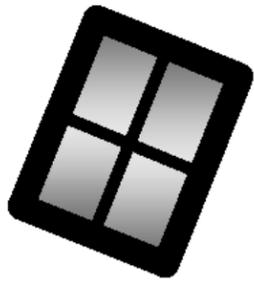
Saint Valentine, who according to some sources is actually two distinct historical characters who were said to have healed a child while imprisoned and executed by decapitation.

Fototeca Gilardi/Getty Images

While some believe that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death or burial—which probably occurred around A.D. 270—others claim that the Christian church may have decided to place St. Valentine's feast day in the middle of February in an effort to "Christianize" the pagan celebration of Lupercalia. Celebrated at the ides of February, or February 15, Lupercalia was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus. To begin the festival, members of the Luperci, an order of Roman priests, would gather at a sacred cave where the infants Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were believed to have been cared for by a she-wolf or lupa. The priests would sacrifice a goat, for fertility, and a dog, for purification.

Lupercalia survived the initial rise of Christianity, but was outlawed, as it was deemed "un-Christian". At the end of the 5th century, when Pope Gelasius declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day. It was not until much later, however, that the day became definitively associated with love. During the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that February 14 was the beginning of birds' mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of Valentine's Day should be a day for romance. The English poet Geoffrey Chaucer was the first to record St. Valentine's Day as a day of romantic celebration in his 1375 poem "Parliament of Fowles," writing;

"For this was sent on Seynt Valentyne's day / Whan every foul cometh ther to choose his mate."



THE TEEN SCENE

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Tomorrow's Voices Today

February 2021

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Leland Middle School



Welcome Back, LMS Tigers!



by Dr. Kimberly S. McDuffie, Principal

I am happy to welcome our students back into the building after a long break. The building is not the same without having students in the building. I look forward to a very good and positive rest of the school year. Although we have not been together since December, I have received several emails from students checking in to say 'hello.' We have also had a few Monday Breakfast with the Principal meetings. I enjoy hearing about their week and weekend plans.

I am happy to hear that many students are remaining active by playing basketball at home or going for a walk. I am proud of how resilient they are and how much support parents provide for their children during this time. We are going through a very stressful and challenging time. However, parents, students, and this great community has provided such great support. We have had to be flexible, but we made it!

Now we are in 2021! Our 8th-grade students are preparing for high school and the Early College High School. There are many positive things to look forward to this year. Our students have so much to offer to the school and community. They are 'overcomers' and real troopers! Knowing that they will be back in the building on Tuesday makes my heart smile.

Welcome back, Tigers! We missed you!

Greetings to Leland Middle School!

Hi – I am **Judy Thompson**, and I will be the school nurse here at Leland Middle School. I have been a nurse for longer than I can believe and have so much gratitude for the experiences the nursing profession has given me. I am excited to be in this position to assist the students and staff with their health needs.

My family and I have been in the area for almost two years, and we love it. I have two boys - one attends NC State and studies engineering; the other will be attending and running for Western Colorado University this fall. So proud of them! My husband, Tim, is retired from the military and is finally letting us settle down in one spot for a while! I can't forget Charlie – the cutest golden retriever ever. I enjoy spending time with my family, exercising, watching sports, and hopefully getting to travel again soon. I look forward to working with all of you.



Pause

by Edwin Boso, 8th Grade at Leland Middle School

The world is in a uproar
Nothing changes with the silent fire
Mass change with the break of fire
Fighting fire with fire is nothing I desire
But the fire never was invited
By the people to the right side
News slash its opposite day and the world is divided
and I definitely have something to say.
The gears turning in my head are vast and made for
something that will never go away.
The chance to lead and the chance to speak out will not be
something I drown out.
It is my chance to jump on the target.
Because I'm the last one
and it's my job to complete the mission.
Back to the world.
Not my brain.
The world was in better shape.
Day by day,
the rules will change
and that stupid thing on your face will never help you with
your cope.
The device used is not questioned,
but is certainly not destined to save us all from a great fall.
The China plague is not destined.
Pause.
Now the line is being split.
The right side and the radical leftist.
And people will run to their home
and hop on their phones and shout,
while looking for clout.
And by the way those people will be drowned out.
By the great fire that is roaming about.
I'm sorry
I'm sorry for going on a rant,
but please understand that this is what the almighty planned.
For me to speak out,
for me to chase the objective.
I stare at the roof during the night wondering who would do
this.
For some reason I knew this.
At the time I was clueless.
That the call is saying don't do this.
The profession has changed.
And I think it will be great.
For I will make a great change.
And someday
it will be great.

Super Student Award

Each week at Leland Middle School (LMS), we give out the Super Student Award. Mrs. **Ruth Thompson**, Success Coach with Communities in Schools of Brunswick County, works at the school full-time. At the beginning of the year, she noticed that some students were attending classes, doing their work, and doing it correctly. Mrs. Thompson felt that these students needed some accolades, especially since this year has been so "interesting" and at times stressful. She asked the teachers to send in names of students who were doing a fabulous job in school.

Each week Mrs. Thompson randomly picks a name from the list of names submitted by the teachers. The student picked wins a prize. Most of the prizes were donated by the North Brunswick Kiwanis Club. Some of the prizes are granola bars, crackers, pop tarts, stress balls, school supplies, fun water bottles, and many other things. Mrs. Thompson also has sketchbooks, journals, calculators, fancy pens, candy, etc., that she gives out.

So far this year, LMS has had 15 Super Students chosen. They are **Marchello Benavides, Donaven Bozeman, Jamari Brown, Maggie Carrasco, Acacia Clamore, Lariyah Dansbury, Arianna David, Carla Gomez, Khalil King, Kaylee McArdell, Liliana Mora-Tavera, Kiley Oberdick, John Reid, Zander Stephens, and Will West.**

Congratulations to these Super Students for doing their best at Leland Middle this year!



West Brunswick High School

Preparing Today's Learner for Tomorrow's Future

West Brunswick High School - Sweets for Our Seniors

Trojan seniors, this is your final lap, and it is leading to our graduation stage! We want to take this opportunity to celebrate you.

Drive through for countless sweets and a cheering section to show our love for the Class of 2021!

You are moving as ONE graduating class and we all are moving as one!

#OneWest! #TrojanPride #classof2021strong

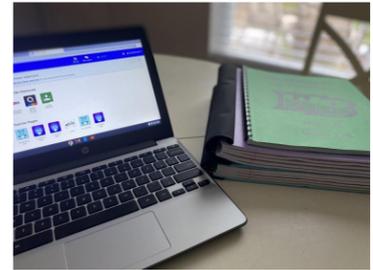


5 Ways To Be Successful During Remote Learning

by Zoey Boswell, 10th Grade



With so many students choosing remote learning, it's important to plan for success.



1. Organization
2. Schedule
3. Participation
4. Communication
5. Methods

Stay organized!

To learn best, keep your workspace and materials organized and neat. Always keep notes for all your classes. They could be assigned from your teacher or your notes. Keep writing utensils nearby, sometimes having bright and colorful pens can inspire you to write more. Have a method to keep all of your class work and notes separated by class.

Schedule

There are multiple ways to keep an organized schedule such as an agenda, your phone calendar or notes app, or Google Calendar. A running list will allow you to keep track of assignments, due dates, and upcoming events. This method can help you plan more effectively, leading to less stress.

Participation

Being involved shows your teachers you're engaging in your assignments. Some teachers even take participation grades which is an easy way to improve your grade. You can easily do this by frequently asking questions during class, answering questions voluntarily, and even using your reaction buttons on Zoom meetings! Personally, I was always too nervous to un-mute and talk, but now that everyone is required to have their cameras on, it takes some of the pressure off.

Communication

Don't be afraid to ask questions! You'll never know until you ask. Teachers are always willing to help and there are many ways to ask like Zoom, office hours, email, Remind text, and private comments. You can also reach out to other people in your class for questions, guidance, or ideas; almost everyone has social media these days.

Methods

Consider methods a combination of everything listed above as well as creating a "learning environment" at home. Create a workspace that makes you comfortable, such as the room lighting, keeping the door shut if that's your preference, and arranging a comfortable sitting area. Scheduling, participation, communicating, and staying organized are all good practices to succeed in school, especially now that school is mostly online, and social interaction is limited.

Major Events that Happened in the Month of February

1879 1st Woolworth 5 Cents Store Opened

1925 Sears, Roebuck Opens Its First Store

1938 Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs Released

1945 US Marines Land on Iwo Jima and Take Control

1949 First 45 RPM vinyl record released

1954 DNA Double Helix Discovered

1954 Polio Vaccines Start in United States

1959 Barbie Doll Invented by Ruth Handler

1959 Rock 'n' Roll singers Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J.P. Richardson (The Big Bopper) died in a plane crash

1964 GI Joe Launched

1964 The Beatles arrive on their first visit to the United States

1971 Alan Shepard became the first man to hit a golf ball on the Moon

2004 Facebook, a mainstream online social network is founded by Mark Zuckerberg.



Who said:

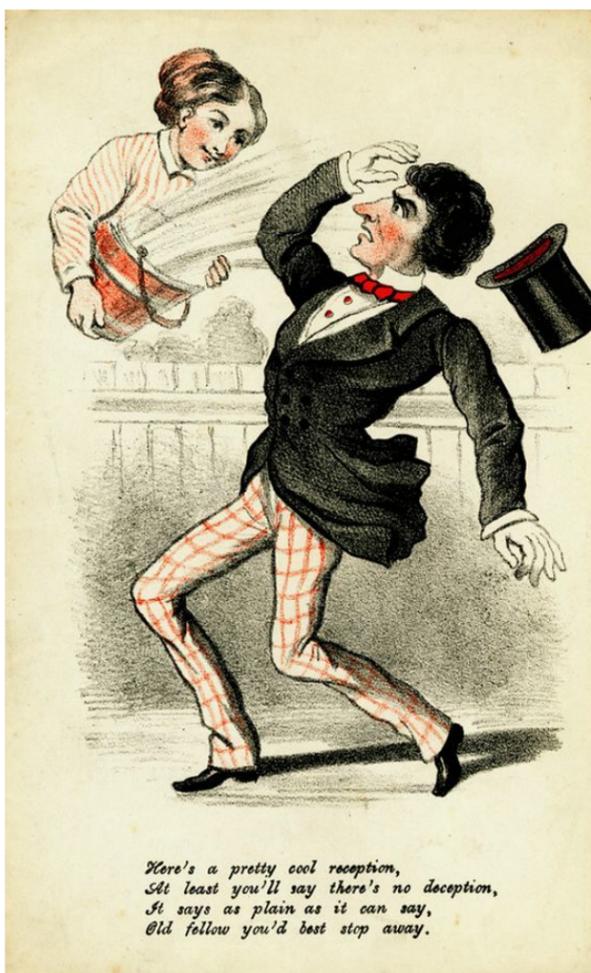
- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Give me liberty or give me death! | 11. Walt Disney |
| 2. Four score and seven years ago. | 10. Nelson Mandela |
| 3. I have a dream. | 9. Joyce Kilmer |
| 4. Speak softly and carry a big stick | 8. William Shakespeare |
| 5. The only thing we have to fear is fear itself. | 7. Robert Frost |
| 6. Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country. | 6. John Kennedy |
| 7. Two roads diverged in a yellow wood. | 5. Franklin Roosevelt |
| 8. "To be, or not to be: that is the question. | 4. Theodore Roosevelt |
| 9. I think that I shall never see/A poem lovely as a tree. | 3. Martin Luther King, Jr. |
| 10. "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." | 2. Abraham Lincoln |
| 11. "The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing." | 1. Patrick Henry |

In the late 19th century, a valentine in the post might not necessarily mean a romantic message from a lover or admirer, it could be a downright acidic insult.

Vinegar Valentine, c 1875

"Here's a pretty cool reception/ At least you'll say there's no deception/ It says as plain as it can say/ Old fellow you'd best stop away."

(source: Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove)



Here's a pretty cool reception,
At least you'll say there's no deception,
It says as plain as it can say,
Old fellow you'd best stop away.



The Impact of Coronavirus through the Eyes of Essential Workers (Part 1)



by **Ana Johnson**, Cape Fear Community College

In the face of unanswered questions, opinions, and thoughts about what lies ahead on the dangerous path of Coronavirus, millions of essential workers have been the backbone of the U.S. economy. During this worldwide emergency, they have responded diligently to the crisis despite physical, mental, and financial burdens. While the pandemic has put many personal aspirations on 'pause,' essential workers have worked continuously to deliver care to people across the country.

Many put health, safety, and livelihood at risk to provide for themselves, their family, and their job. Over the past year, with social distancing, masks, state/national guidelines, and increased amounts of work, there's no doubt that mental strain levels have been widely discussed. Whether employees work online, on-site, or hybrid, they must still fulfill substantial duties. Teachers, farmers, grocery store clerks, health care providers – all have had to assume significant leadership roles to face the difficulty of an uncertain time. We must acknowledge the many essential workers who work tirelessly to keep businesses, schools, and organizations running. Recently, I had the opportunity to speak with two individuals about their experience and observations on dealing with the pandemic first-hand. This is the first of those interviews.

High School Teacher:

At the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, numerous assumptions arose of how students would react to the developing academic experience - whether it would work for or against them. Although students' input is important, teachers' voices have to be heard since they are the school system's foundation for success. With education as a fundamental need for students, schools across the country struggled with the clashing debate over re-opening, staying online, or a combination of both. Teachers, educators, and school staff have been personally affected by this conversation. The process has been an emotional roller-coaster. Many teachers have to adapt to different formats, teaching styles, and learning curves - just like students.

I asked Kaitlyn Gaster, an 11th grade English teacher in Onslow County, several questions about how she handled this situation.

Have you been teaching online and/or doing in-person learning? Are you satisfied with the current experience, or have more concerns arose?

I teach exclusively online at Onslow Virtual School. Teaching virtually has been and still is a work in progress. I would say that I am satisfied with how much we've overcome and learned as educators. Still, there are always new concerns with virtual teaching and how best to reach and support our students.

How has teaching students been different from the past to the current day scenario?

The biggest issue I have seen is that it is hard for teachers and students to develop a strong classroom culture. Without that relationship, it is hard for students to reach out if they need help, and it's hard for teachers to tell when a student needs help. The lack of face-to-face experience is a significant loss, even in high school. I would also say that the workload has increased significantly. I have had to re-do so many of my lessons to make sure they can be used virtually and keep a normal amount of school rigor to help students learn. I'm on my computer from 7:30 am to 6 or 7 pm prepping, teaching, grading, tutoring, and reaching out to parents and students.

Do you believe there is proper funding to support schools during this time?

That is a hard thing to judge. I think a lot of schools have received the needed safety and cleaning supplies. I think there have been so many in our community that have helped teachers and schools the best they can, and for that, I say, "Thank you, thank you." However, I have seen such a huge issue in students having equitable access to the needed technology or support to succeed in this unique time. It's such a sad and hard situation because it does often render both the teacher and student to feel hopeless if they don't have the proper equipment.

How have your students adjusted to this new way of teaching/learning?

Kids are so resilient. My students amaze me every day at what they are able to adjust to and do during this time. I have, of course, seen instances of students not completing work and failing classes. That's a large issue in the education community right now. But I have also had so many unsung heroes in my class. What doesn't get reported are the students who are taking a full high school class load, preparing for college, and helping younger siblings learn and/or helping to support their family financially.

I had one student who was working two different jobs and still managed to maintain an A/B average in her classes. She told me she was using this opportunity to build up her college fund. So, yeah, I think the students are struggling with this "new normal" - we all are. I think the main difference is that so many young people also have been able to take this situation and turn it into something positive for themselves and those around them. Kids have always been good about making lemonade out of lemons.

America's Most Decorated Military Woman*

by **Frank T. Stritter**, Holden Beach



Ruby Bradley, who became America's most decorated military woman, joined the Army Nurse Corps in 1934 and was assigned to a military hospital in the Philippine Islands. She was there when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 and hours later when the Japanese bombed the Philippines.

On 8 December, Bradley was preparing for surgery when a soldier suddenly appeared at the operating room door and shouted, "The Japs have attacked Pearl Harbor! All surgeries have been canceled. Report to Headquarters immediately!" As she ran, she heard explosions and saw planes flying in low to drop bombs. Japanese troops soon arrived and took prisoners. Bradley and another nurse escaped by walking 18 miles to a logging camp in the mountains, where they cared for many other escaping refugees. Five days later, they were captured when people hiding them betrayed them to the Japanese.

Bradley was taken back to Manila and imprisoned at Santo Tomas Internment Camp. She immediately began helping in surgeries, joined other military captive nurses delivering what care they could, and earned the title "Angels in Fatigues" from fellow captives. There was little access to supplies of any nature, so Bradley sterilized surgical instruments on cooking stoves and tore cloth she collected into bandages. Bradley's greatest concern was for the children. She produced many toys from odds-and-ends and often gave her rations to hungry children.

Bradley lost a great deal of weight due to the prison's starvation diet. The extra room in her uniform helped her smuggle surgical equipment and bits of food that she scrounged around the camp and from others who were able to move outside the camp. When US troops liberated Bradley and her fellow prisoners in 1945 after three years of captivity, she weighed only 86 pounds.

After World War II, Bradley worked in several base hospitals. She took advantage of an Army college program through which she earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of California.

In 1950, Bradley, now a major, was serving in the Korean Conflict. She was the Chief Nurse of the 171st Evacuation Hospital on the front-line. She again illustrated her devotion to caring for the wounded, putting her own life at risk many times. When Chinese forces swept across the 38th Parallel, the 171st was directly in their path and ordered to evacuate. Bradley stayed to supervise and was on the last plane out, refusing to leave until all the wounded were evacuated. She was loading the plane with the last of the wounded even though Chinese troops surrounded the airfield.

"Get aboard, Major!" a medic yelled. "The Chinese are right behind you." Bradley ignored the warning and ran back to an ambulance for the last litter case. Bradley grabbed her end of the litter and yelled, "Let's go." Voices from the plane shouted, "Run, Major, run!" They could see enemy soldiers emerging from the trees at the edge of the runway.

Strong hands reached down to grab the end of the litter and quickly lifted it aboard. Other strong hands reached for Bradley and pulled her into the plane. The plane taxied down the runway in a hail of bullets. Bradley picked herself up and looked back through a side window. The ambulance she left moments earlier exploded in flame. She later proclaimed, "I was the last one out. You got to get out in a hurry when you have somebody behind you with a gun."

Bradley was named Chief Nurse for the Eighth Army in 1951, where she supervised over 500 Army nurses in hospitals and aid stations all over Korea.

She received 34 medals and citations of bravery during her long military career, including the Florence Nightingale Medal, the highest international honor of the International Red Cross. When interviewed later about her service time and the awards she had received, she shrugged her shoulders and stated, "It was all in a day's work."

Colonel Bradley died at age 94 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.



*Based on Polette, N., An Angel in Fatigues, St. Charles, MO: Blessinks Publishing, 2013.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS:

THE MAKING OF THE BRUNSWICK COUNTY GULLAH GEECHEE CULTURAL HERITAGE GREENWAY / BLUEWAY CORRIDOR (Part 1)



by Brayton Willis, Magnolia Greens

Stretching 1,200 miles along the coast of Florida to North Carolina, the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor footprint was established in 2006 by Congress as a National Historic Area. Members of the public would be encouraged to explore its culturally historic sites and celebrate the Gullah Geechee people's story. While not designated as a greenway or blueway itself, this corridor allows local communities to preserve, protect, and celebrate the Gullah Geechee heritage in a wide variety of ways.

The story of the NAACP Brunswick County Branch's work to establish a Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Greenway/Blueway Corridor along the west side of the Cape Fear River is one such celebration. Beginning in February 2020, this effort has been gaining support from local governments, private foundations, and local citizens. The new greenway/blueway footprint is roughly 30 miles long and reaches from Navassa to Southport.

In this first of several-part series, we will discuss the origin of the National Heritage Areas and the efforts to preserve and celebrate the Gullah Geechee Culture in Brunswick County. We will also explore why greenways and blueways are essential, critical elements of the project, progress to date, and community projects that offer a glimpse of the future.

History of National Heritage Areas

In 1984, the first National Heritage Area - Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Area - was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan. In his dedication speech, Reagan referred to National Heritage Areas "as a new kind of national park" that married heritage conservation, recreation, and economic development. Today, the program includes 55 National Heritage Areas across the country, one of which passes through Brunswick County - The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.

By its very definition, National Heritage Areas - like the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor - are places where historical, cultural, and natural resources combine to form cohesive, nationally significant landscapes. However, unlike national parks, National Heritage Areas are large lived-in

landscapes. Consequently, National Heritage Areas entities collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.

The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor was designated by the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Act, passed by Congress on October 12, 2006 (Public Law 109-338). Gullah Geechee people are direct descendants of Africans brought to the United States and enslaved for generations. Their diverse roots in particular parts of Africa, primarily West Africa, and the nature of their enslavement on isolated islands created a unique culture that survives to the present day. Evidence of the culture is clearly visible in the distinctive arts, crafts, cuisine, music, and Gullah Geechee language.

Preserving the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage in Brunswick County

The social and economic history of the Cape Fear River and its tributaries have been very well documented over the years. In the early 1700s, millions of pounds of rice, once referred to by a writer as "Cape Fear Gold," were extracted from nearly 40 plantations located within the Brunswick County reach of the Cape Fear watershed. Slaves toiled in tremendous heat, fighting off snakes and alligators to carve paths, trails, corridors, and channels through swamps and marshlands so they could harvest this rice for the profit of plantation owners. Now, the graves of those slaves remain hidden in the backwaters of time as silent, ghostly reminders of their risk and sacrifice.

It was the remarkable history of enslaved Africans along the banks of the Cape Fear River, coupled with my NAACP environmental justice and volunteer experiences on the Wilmington Metropolitan Planning Commission's Citizens Advisory Committee, that I realized that the story of the sacrifices and contributions made by the Gullah Geechee people has, for whatever reason, seemingly been relegated to the backburner of our county's rapidly urbanizing challenges. Almost . . .

(To be continued next issue)



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Your Community

The Cultural Art Elements That Make the Gullah/Geechee Heritage Unique

by Ana Johnson, Cape Fear Community College



Among the affluent lifestyle, cuisine, and beliefs that thrive within the Gullah/Geechee culture, many art forms have been passed along for generations. Whether it be net making for fishing, wood carving for canes and furniture, basket weaving, quilting for preserving historical stories, performing arts for vocal expression, and many more. These were important requirements used during the enslavement of many Africans in the transatlantic slave trade.

Many of these artistic elements were influenced by their ancestors in Western Africa and made to be traditions that would impact the descendants. Even if you don't necessarily live the Gullah/Geechee lifestyle, you can still be a part of the special bloodline that has been kept alive. Specifically, within the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, running from North Carolina to Florida, an estimated 500-mile stretch of land.

Strip quilting became an art that had more of a cultural backstory for many Gullah/Geechee people, mainly with the women. They would create the quilts on plantations that were to be distributed by slave owners. Usually, the quilts were vibrant and colorful, reconnecting with their West African core traditions. Mosaic designs made from cloth began to create a popular item called 'story quilts.' These were connected textile pieces representing the influence the Gullah/Geechee people had on cultures worldwide. Many education presenters, collectors, and museums find interest in using these quilts as a teaching tool. Today, there are still quilting groups across the coast dedicated to keeping this heritage moving forward in inspiring those who are willing to learn.

Music and performing arts played a specific role in the Gullah lifestyle, a way of expressing their celebration, pain, and perseverance during uncertain times. The Gullah/Geechee people created many rhythms, dances, poetry, singing, and interactive performing. It started forming in their praise houses by incorporating their language to formulate beautiful artistic expression. It would take their thoughts off their hardships during and after the slave trade. In a way, these musical endeavors gave the Gullah/Geechee people hope, for a better way of living, not just for themselves but for their friends and family. Their lively, soulful musicality paved the way for many music genres in today's world (Rock n Roll, Blues, Pop) and isn't as represented in the media as it could be. The Charleston-based quintet, *Ranky Tanky*, is one of the many groups working to produce timeless music born from the rich Gullah/Geechee culture along the Sea Islands. More people are starting to recognize its importance to the entertainment industry and give Gullah/Geechee artists and writers a space to create something sentimental to their hearts.

Even with those significant art forms, basket weaving can be seen as one of the most well-known art traditions within the Gullah/Geechee culture. It is also considered one of the oldest African craft forms in America, dating back to the 17th century. When the Gullah/Geechee people had years of cultivating a new way of living along the coast, these baskets became household implements or practical use tools rather than a requirement for survival. Events like the annual *Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival* have made in their mission to "promote Gullah culture, heritage, and traditions by celebrating the creativity of Sweetgrass basket makers and other Gullah artists. Also, by showcasing performances of Gullah/Geechee skits, gospel music, folklore, and dance, along with Sweetgrass basket-making demonstrations and videos on the history of this cherished Low country art." Sweetgrass basket sales started to increase around 1931 when Highway 17 was paved. (Mainly near Mount Pleasant, South Carolina) It is now a hot spot for intricate Gullah/Geechee art and even considered the 'Sweetgrass Basket Makers Highway.' Places like the *Charleston City Market*, vendor stations, or locally-owned stores will display the history that the Gullah/Geechee people turned into pure art.

Rice cultivation was a significant industry during the slave trade, leading to coiled baskets being the primary transportation carriers. These baskets could store crops like vegetables, grains, and fruits. Early baskets were made out of Bulrush material and a mix of Sweetgrass, Split oak, Palmetto leaves, and Pine needles. After enslaved Africans began adjusting to living in the Coastal Carolinas, they learned how the climate was slightly damper, creating better moisture for crops. And instead, Sweetgrass became the main ingredient that was needed to make these detailed pieces. Thinner strands of Sweetgrass grew near-native saltwater while thicker strands grew right in the marsh. You could also find it alongside roadside ditches and fields. Although it can be a hassle to collect for use, it was a softer, sturdier product that made the woven creations a more functional tool.



I spoke with Corey Alston, a fifth-generation Sweetgrass basket weaving artist from Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. For over 20 years, he has been working to bring awareness to his art form and become a historian that passes the Gullah/Geechee story and moral understanding to others. Growing up in Mount Pleasant, he had been introduced to these creative traditions from the people he grew up with; this eventually led him to pick up a collective art for himself. As a younger basket weaver, he hopes to encourage his demographic to get more involved with their customs. His Sweetgrass baskets come in many different varieties, styles, and patterns. "Fanning baskets would be our most traditional and popular based off history." He stated. Fanning baskets are coiled, large, shallow items that were used for rice separation. However, designs like bread, harvest, storage, and sewing baskets can be available to purchase.

Depending on the artist, it can take anywhere from 3-4 days to finish a single basket. That doesn't count collecting the materials, cleaning, drying, and preparing to create the structure, which can take up to a month. Once the grass is harvested and cut, then laid to dry for a couple of weeks, is when basket weavers can start incorporating it into their art pieces. Recently, economic development has increased, taking land, agricultural resources, and people away. The Sweetgrass that once grew in the marsh is starting to diminish, making it harder to conduct the harvesting process. "Due to beach and property remodeling, it becomes more difficult to access Sweetgrass," Alston stated. "Usually, you have to go find a place, get permission from the land to harvest, then you pretty much keep it as a secret because it is very hard to access the correct materials."

Alston wants to make it a statement throughout his career to bring the basket weaving culture together rather than divide it. "There are enough issues that cut in between based off-price point, personal beliefs, or thought processes. We have a tight community that should be preserved." Alston mentioned how he feels the basket weaving artists he's worked with in Charleston have somewhat created a family, allowing him to hand this tradition down with care and compassion. "The weavers are connected in a way that has not been spoken." He stated. "We don't have to say we are spoken family; the things we do are in a collective manner."

All of these customs are so personalized and take patience, skill, but most of all, passion. Artists all across the South, just like Corey, can use their natural gifts and abilities to keep the fundamentals of their Gullah/Geechee values alive. This leaves them the opportunity to teach, educate, and preserve for the upcoming generations. Their stories gain more traction from people outside of the Gullah/Geechee culture to become in tune with the heritage, values, and a glimpse of what the ancestors accomplished. "In order to educate generations, you need to provide them with new thoughts, new ideas to help polish these ideas," Alston stated. These Gullah/Geechee artists have been considered the vessel that will bridge the gap to keep the culture in tack all across America. With their contributions from the past and the present, that aspect of their heritage can and will be saved.



Your Community

MILITARY NEWS

Legion Post 68 Presents Donation to WARM

by Richard Fry, Post 68 Public Relations Officer

On Thursday, December 17, 2020, officers of John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 Leland presented a \$500.00 donation to the Wilmington Area Rebuilding Ministry, Inc. (WARM). Between March and September 2020, Post 68's Service Officer, Lane Adrian, assisted three Leland area veterans' widows with applying to WARM for home repairs and mobility improvements. Over the Spring and Summer, WARM volunteers built wheelchair ramps for them and, for one widow, also installed new roof shingles.

WARM began in 1996 in response to Hurricanes Bertha and Fran. Its mission is to repair, rebuild, make homes accessible, and inspire service, generosity, and hope. From its headquarters on Wrightsville Avenue in Wilmington, WARM provides homeowner services to eligible residents of Brunswick, New Hanover, Onslow, and Pender Counties. Volunteers from local churches, businesses, and civic clubs fill the WARM calendar week after week. Every summer, hundreds of youth and adults who come to our region on their church mission trips, fill the ranks of WARM volunteers. WARM has improved the living conditions of more than 1,500 families in our community.



WARM Executive Director Ms. JC Lyle accepted the donation from Mr. Adrian. Additional WARM staff in attendance included Andy Jones, MDiv Deputy Director; Beth Ann Scisco, Grants & Contracts Coordinator; Sarah Dodgens, Accounting Assistant; and Kim Gore, Homeowner Services Coordinator. In addition to Mr. Adrian, Post 68 officers in attendance included Post Commander John Hacker, Chaplain Lou Tranzillo, and Public Relations Officer Richard Fry.

The John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68, Leland is proud to support WARM and its programs to assist local veterans and their families in need. For additional information, to volunteer, or donate, go to www.warmnc.org. Information about the John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 is available at www.ncpost68.org and on Facebook.



VFW Canned Food Drive

Leland VFW Post 12196 will host a Can Drive on February 20, 2021, at Leland's Founders Park (113 Town Hall Drive). Post Members will be on hand from 10 am until 3 pm to accept 'drive-by' donations of canned goods and other nonperishable food items. Members will also distribute Buddy Poppies to donors and the public. All food items will be donated to Brunswick Family Assistance (BFA) for local distribution. Charles Jackson, BFA's Director of Operations and Outreach, commented that the well-known charitable organization is overwhelmed with community requests for assistance. The Post will also donate the proceeds from Buddy Poppy contributions to BFA to provide veterans' relief.

Post Commander Gerald Decker invites individuals and families to stop by and say 'hello' to our vets, enjoy some patriotic music, and make a donation to help the neediest of families in our area.

An Invitation a National Vietnam War Veterans Day Ceremony

Leland VFW Post 12196 will host a National Vietnam War Veterans Day on March 29, 2021, at 5 pm. The event will be held at the Belville Memorial Park on Hwy. 133 (US 17) in Belville, NC. The commemoration recognizes all who served on active duty in the U. S. Armed Forces at any time from November 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975.

As part of that ceremony, veterans will receive the Vietnam Veterans Lapel Pin shown (below) as a lasting memento of the nation's gratitude. Surviving spouses of those who served will also be recognized. This commemoration includes veterans classified as "Vietnam Era Veterans." Everyone who served during that time played a role, thus the saying;

"All gave some, some gave all."

Veterans and their family members MUST pre-register to receive the pin. If you would like to be a part of this event, please complete the registration form below.

North Brunswick High School Sophomore Places First in American Legion Post 68 Speech Contest

by Richard Fry, Post 68 Public Relations Officer



Madilyn Smith (left), a sophomore at North Brunswick High School (NBHS), placed first in the John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68, Leland's Oratorical Contest - "A Constitutional Speech Contest." The event was held Saturday, January 9, at the Magnolia Greens Club Room. Post 68 Commander John Hacker presented Madilyn with the first-place medal, certificate of distinction, and a check for \$500.00.

Smith now advances to the American Legion District 9 Oratorical Contest on January 23rd at the St. James Community Center, St. James Plantation, NC. She will compete against the winners of American Legion Post contests from Brunswick, Bladen, Columbus, Pender, and New Hanover counties. The District 9 contest winner qualifies to compete in the Division Contest on February 29 with that winner advancing to the North Carolina Department (state) finals, which will be held March 7 at the Sandhills Community College in Pinehurst. Division winners advance to the National Finals in April. The overall national contest winner will receive a \$25,000.00 college scholarship.

Kaitlyn Shields (right), also a NBHS sophomore and a JROTC Cadet, placed second in the competition. Commander Hacker presented Kaitlyn with the second-place medal, certificate of distinction, and a check for \$300.00.

Both contestants delivered an original eight to ten-minute prepared oration on aspects of the U.S. Constitution, with emphasis on the duties and obligations of American citizens. Ms. Smith focused on the Bill of Rights and Ms. Shields focused on the First Amendment's Free Speech clause. Each also delivered a 3-to-5-minute extemporaneous discourse on the assigned topic of Article III, Section 1 regarding the establishment of the Supreme Court.

"Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, we were determined to give NBHS students this opportunity," remarked Post 68 Commander John Hacker. "We were very pleased with the results and greatly appreciate the support we received from the school staff and Magnolia Greens management. Our contestants spent many hours preparing for the contest and did a great job. We will soon begin planning for the 2022 contest and hope Madilyn and Kaitlyn's experience will encourage more students to participate."



Commemorative Vietnam Veterans Lapel Pin Design

Leland VFW Post 12196 Pin Registration
National Vietnam War
Veterans Day Commemoration
March 29, 2021, 5 pm @ Belville Memorial Park
Please fill out this registration form and return to us via email to Nate Pringle at vfwpost12196@gmail.com or mail to P.O. Box 488, Leland, NC 28451

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Branch of Service: _____

Rank: _____ Dates of Service: _____

Main Duty Station: _____

Your Community

The North Brunswick Kiwanis Club recently sponsored an 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." The Overall Winner, Seventh-grade student Carlin Baer's story, was published in January's issue of Cape Fear Voices. Additional winners included Ayla Austermilller, the First Place Winner at the 7th Grade level and Z'Kyra Johnson, the First Place Winner at the 8th Grade level. Their essays are published below.

My Life in The Pandemic

by Ayla Austermilller, 7th Grade, Town Creek Middle School

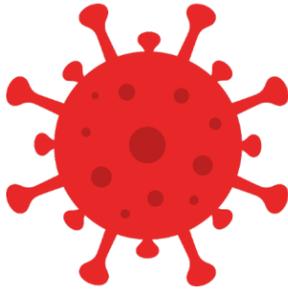
Before Covid came and took the world by storm, my life was pretty busy. You see, I have three younger siblings (two sisters and one brother,) so we were always running around to get to extracurricular activities. I take dance, and so does one of my sisters. My other sister did gymnastics, and my brother did t-ball. So, when the pandemic came, it was nice to settle down and spend time together.

One of the best things during the pandemic was having movie nights. Most nights, before Covid, we had our activities. We couldn't usually watch a movie together. So, we decided to do the Marvel movie marathon. We stayed up and waited till everyone was ready, got blankets, and snuggled up. We all grew very close to the movies and came to love them. I can't believe I waited this long to watch them. They were so good! After we did the marathon, we sometimes did trivia nights. It was a lot of fun because we got to bond with each other.

One thing that did change was spending time with friends. Obviously, because of Covid, we couldn't hang out with each other and had to keep our distance. We all understood it, though it was hard. Before Covid, one of my friends used to come home with me every day, and we would hang out, do homework, and eat snacks. We had so much fun! It took some time to get used to not seeing them. I know everyone enjoyed spending time together.

One of the hardest things was that the rest of my family had their own group. Our family and a family on our cul de sac made a "Covid agreement," which was basically saying we would hang out during the pandemic, and if we got Covid, we wouldn't blame each other. The other family had three boys, the same ages as my brother and sisters. They always had fun together, and sometimes the oldest two would let me hang out with them. But, it wasn't just the kids who had groups; the moms were together, and the dads were together. That made me feel kind of left out and lonely. My parents did their best to try to include me with the adults or let me hang out with the other kids, but it wasn't the same as my friends. I really missed them and couldn't wait till I could see them again. This really made the times I got to see them and spend time with them really special.

I now value my friends and family and realize how important they are to me. I'm glad we got to spend time together and bond with each other. The times I get to see my friends on Zoom are amazing. I will never forget this crazy pandemic and will always appreciate the special moments in it. I am grateful for everyone in my life and love them so much.



Covid-19, Where Do I Start?

by Z'Kyra Johnson, 8th Grade, Town Creek Middle School

2020 in general is like a book with way too many chapters that each had their own plot elements. There's the Exposition (Covid spread), the rising action (all the cases), the Climax (lockdown), the Falling action (schools opening back up), and the Resolution. Currently, there is **no** resolution. We are still almost 7-8 months in, going through all of this.

When I first heard about Covid-19, it was in my second core, watching CNN10, Friday, March 13. Carl Azuz said, "Since the start of the coronavirus outbreak, South Korea has aggressively tested for the disease with the help of drive-thru testing facilities that speed up the process. South Korea has already tested more than 220,000 people." Now hearing the words 'disease' and 220,000 people in the same sentence sounds terrifying and, honestly, it was. Little did I know we were just getting started.

When they let students out that Friday, I didn't expect to not see my friends for another four months. Most students were concerned, worried, and scared of whatever was to be. I stayed on task with most of my assignments; I worked hard because I knew if Covid-19 wasn't a thing, I would soon be working at a desk in a classroom full of students. My class first tested Zoom around two weeks into quarantine, and it honestly wasn't that bad. I loved seeing people again; even though it wasn't anything like normal, I was still grateful.

My friends and I kept in touch as much as we could through Facetime. Since I knew I was moving schools, we got ourselves prepared to be separate. During the summer, the Facetimes, texts, and daily check-ins were nonstop, and everything was going great until my best friend's brother contracted Covid. She stayed in touch as much as she could, but it was hard for her to have to change her whole life around for an exposure of a deadly disease within her household. She would text me every time she got tested, and I always prayed they came back negative so that I knew at least one of them was safe. My family stayed extremely prepared, and we made sure if we had to go out anywhere, we had masks and hand sanitizer to stay safe.

As quarantine progressed, I lost one of my close friends. This took a big toll on my life because this person helped me through a lot. They were always there, and they would check in on me even when others didn't. Nothing was right anymore. I never slept, I was always anxious, and I felt so lonely. I had to teach myself how to love myself again, and I had to gain the self-confidence I knew I had deep within me. I learned that with failure comes success, and there's always a rainbow after a storm.



Rivenbark Donates Flag

Many thanks to Jeff Rivenbark, of WWAY for donating a flag marking the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War to VFW Post 12196. Accepting on behalf of the Post is Commander Gerald Decker. The flag will be used as part of the Post's Commemoration of Vietnam War Veterans to be held on Mar. 29.



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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.



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Saturday February 19th 11 am to 4:30 pm

OR

Sunday, February 20th 9 am to 3 pm

* Due to Covid-19 each session will have 9 people, masks will be available & social distancing will be incorporated into activities.



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91 W Boiling Spring Rd,
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Reserve your space in advance:

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Execdir.brunswickartscouncil@gmail.com
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\$25 per person
Includes all
materials
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free.



CELEBRATIONS!!!!

Congratulations to Gary Neil Gupton!



Gary Neil Gupton, a contributing writer to *Cape Fear Voices*, author of a children's chapter book called *Time to Meet Max* (2017), has published a Young Adult novel called *Natural Causes*. His new book was released on August 22, 2020 and is available through <https://www.indiebound.org/> or from the author himself at g.guppy63@gmail.com.

Congratulations, Gary!

<https://www.indiebound.org/book/9781087886558>

Congratulations to *Christopher Compton*, age 4, on a very successful liver transplant surgery in Atlanta. He is doing great and hopes to have a very happy 5th birthday this month!



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