



Cape Fear

VOICES

Providing an Outlet for Creativity in the Cape Fear Region

Volume 2, Issue 12

FREE

December 2021

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Who Got the Gift?

by Lynne Spencer, Wilmington



There is nothing more sad than visiting a children's group home at Christmas time. Many years ago, I participated in a holiday initiative through my employer where we collected toys and other gifts and took them to a group home that served children from ages 8 to 16. The children were there for a variety of reasons. Some were behavioral issues; others were there because their own family couldn't take care of them, and some started out as medical problems.

The "home" spaces were separated by age, gender and disorder and although it was decorated well, it didn't feel like a home. The locked and alarmed doors made it scream, "institution."

When we arrived, we were taken to a large multi-purpose room where the children were seated and squirming. We did crafts, sang songs and decorated a tree, but you could tell, the only thing the children wanted to do was open presents.

Overall, everyone was well behaved. It was noisy and messy with wrapping paper thrown everywhere, but everyone had a good time. There were two children there that really touched me. One was a fourteen-year-old girl with wavy brown hair. She was waiting to hear if she was going to be able to go home to her family for Christmas. Apparently, there were some issues that made the home unsafe for her, but she really wanted to be with her mother. She asked for pajamas for Christmas and was thrilled when she opened a pair of pink pajamas and slippers. She jumped up and hugged me and showed me what she got. She said, "you smell good, you

smell like my mom." She went on to tell the other children around her how pretty her mother was going to think she was when she modeled her pajamas.

The other child was an eight-year-old boy. He was small for eight years old and I noticed a bruise under his left eye. It was his first day at the facility and when he saw the presents, he made sure he told us that Santa Claus didn't know he was coming here today so there probably wasn't anything there for him. I knew he was trying to convince himself that it was OK to not get a present, but it was heartbreaking.

We stayed for hours interacting with the children before it was time to leave. I wanted to check on "my kids" before we left. I found the little girl sitting in a corner, crying. She was told that she wasn't going home for Christmas; it just wasn't safe for her. She hung on to me and dissolved in tears. She inhaled my perfume and said, "my mom won't get to see my new pajamas." I had no words for her, just hugs.

My little man found me cleaning up and told me, with a big smile in his voice, "Santa Claus did know I was going to be here. He brought me two toys and a tee shirt." He was busy pulling the shirt over his head to show me. He was beaming and I knew the toys and the shirt took away a little bit of the fear he must be feeling. I was glad.

It takes special people to work in homes like these every day. I was glad that I visited and glad that for a very short time, these children were the focus of joy and goodwill. I took away many more gifts than I gave. It was a Christmas I will always remember.



My Favorite Christmas Memory: Our Homespun Country Christmas

by Nancy Bryans, Wilmington



My childhood memory of Christmas preparations with my family at our Victorian country home remains my favorite. The wondrous season began with the Advent calendar countdown, followed by retrieving holiday supplies from our attic and fashioning handmade decorations with mother.

A few days before Christmas, my older sister and I assisted our father by gathering greenery from our woodlands. Dressed in warm coats, hats, mittens and boots, we walked outside in blustery weather and jumped on a trailer attached to a Ford tractor. Our adventure began as father drove along our gravel farm road and exclaimed: "Girls, we are entering the forest primeval!" We laughed and hopped off the trailer. A northwest breeze tickled our noses and hardwood trees seemed to whisper "careful" when we trudged on their fallen leaves. We spotted crow's feet, gently pulling some into bundles, while father collected mistletoe. Walking a bit deeper into the forest, father cut shiny but prickly holly boughs laden with red berries and harvested spruce boughs. We knew a perfect tree hid somewhere in our woods; like a scavenger hunt, it was up to us to find it. Once selected, father sawed it down, shouting "timber!" With rosy cheeks and happy smiles, we hurried home.

We helped mother assemble garlands of crow's feet to drape along our entry

hall staircase railing, tying red bows at the top of each loop and a big red bow on the newel post. She placed holly on mantelpieces in our formal parlor, living room, and dining room. Smaller holly arrangements are set on the dining room table, buffet, and China cabinet. Red candles nestled inside each holly cluster, remaining unlit until Christmas Eve. Spruce boughs became door wreaths fastened with more red bows.

I remember helping mother prepare and sample aromatic and delicious holiday cookies, cakes, pies, fudge, eggnog, roasts, country ham, fried chicken, vegetable casseroles, and biscuits in anticipation of celebrating Christmas holidays with visiting relatives and guests.

On Christmas Eve we reverently arranged the nativity scene on a table, minus baby Jesus who magically appeared Christmas morning along with Santa Claus presents. Christmas trimming began by watching father set our tree in its stand, sawing bits here and there until it fit snugly and stood almost twelve feet upright. Standing on a ladder, father placed a glistening star atop our tree. Our parents hung colorful lights over tree limbs. At the same time, my sister and I kept the lights from tangling when pulled from their storage box, followed by a repeat performance stringing shiny silver garland. Little fingers decorated the bottom tree branches with our favorite handmade ornaments.

Meanwhile, our parents decorated

those out of our reach with fragile, assorted glass and heirloom ornaments. Tinsel was the final adornment all of us draped on tree limb tips. We assembled a winter Christmas village under our tree on the snow-like fabric where each house and its village church held a small yellow light. We replaced burned-out bulbs and shouted "Hooray!" as our sparkling Christmas tree, and snow-covered village glowed. We set family wrapped presents beside our tree and treats for Santa on a table by the fireplace. At the same time, father fastened mistletoe above the parlor door. We hung our Christmas stockings, father started a crackling fire, and mother recited Clement Clarke Moore's Christmas story. At age four, roaring fireplace logs on Christmas Eve caused floods of tears as I sobbed, wondering how Santa could visit us. Mother calmly explained, instead of his climbing down the hot parlor chimney, Santa would use the front door since it was always unlocked.

After each of us received kisses under the mistletoe, we settled into bed, anticipating the festive "Twelve Days of Christmas" at church and home with family and friends. The next decades, harbingers of artificial commercialism and technological inventions, would alter our simple lives but not my happy memory of preparations with my family for our homespun country Christmas.

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 The *Teen Scene* and *Cape
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 site at capefearvoices.org

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.

- 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 **500-600 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 500-600 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.

How to Subscribe

Individual subscriptions to Cape Fear Voices are available on an annual basis at a cost of \$25, 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:

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New Ad Rates Effective**Oct. 1, 2021**

	3-Editions	6-Editions	12-Editions
Full Page	\$300	\$550	\$1,000
Half Page	\$175	\$225	\$530
Quarter Page	\$ 90	\$165	\$275
Business Card	\$45	\$ 80	\$145

To place an ad contact us at editorteenscene@gmail.com

Teen Scene and Cape Fear Voices started publication in North Carolina in June 2020. Readership has grown from 600 in June 2020 to 5,600 in Sept. 2021. That does not include our email list of nearly 3,000 per month or readership from our website. Although we have subscribers and followers in other states, our readers are predominantly in the greater Cape Fear region. Visit us at cfvts.org.

Teen Scene Appoints New Advisory Board Members

by Gerald Decker

Teen Scene, Inc. has been working with several area schools this year to develop Journalism Clubs in the schools. To help us develop the best strategies for achieving our mutual goals, we have asked the lead educators, who have been working with us, to join our Advisory Board.

We are happy to announce the following additions to our Advisory Board effective December 1, 2021. They are:

- **Laura Askue**, English Teacher and Yearbook Advisor-BC Early College High School,
- **Anna Barefoot Saunders**, English Teacher/West Wind Advisor-West Brunswick High School, and
- **Ruth Thompson**, Communities in Schools Success Coach, Leland Middle School.

Also joining our Advisory Board is **Allison Duran**. Allison is new to the area and is the mother of a Teen Scene writer. Allison is also a local artist and Chef.

Thanks to all of you for all you do to help our youth of today and for your support of Teen Scene, Inc.

Cape Fear Voices Donates Books

Mayor Bozeman accepting a copy of "The Great Lockdown of 2020: An Anthology" on behalf of the Town of Leland. Gerald Decker, Publisher of Cape Fear Voices, along with Eric Mens, recently published the book to document life during the initial stages of Covid-19. A copy was donated to the Town because of the nearly 100 stories from around the world, approximately 60 of those stories are local stories. It documents for future generations of Leland citizens what happened during that once in a century event.



(left) Brunswick Community College Librarian, Liza Palmer, accepts a copy of the book on behalf of the College.

Donation of Art to Support 2nd Annual Writers Banquet

Local artist Evonne Phillips donated one of her award-winning pieces of art for auction at our 2nd Annual Writers Award Banquet on March 12, 2022. The piece, pictured here, is an original acrylic titled "Habitat." Ms. Phillips painted this as part of a juried show hosted by the Cameron Arts Museum. It received five awards. She put the value of the work, based on the awards received and the unique framing, to be \$400.

Evonne and her family are especially interested in supporting veterans and veteran-owned businesses with her artwork. Her husband Paul, who passed earlier this year, was a WWII veteran and crewmember of the U. S. S. North Carolina. She is very thankful to the Leland VFW Post 12196 and Cape Fear Voices for recognizing Paul's service to America in the last year of his life. Evonne is especially grateful to Gerald Decker and Eric Terashima for their support for the Phillips family during this past year.



At Cameron Art Museum after winning her award

**CALLING ARTISTS OF ALL AGES
CAPE FEAR VOICES AND TEEN
SCENE, INC NEED YOU!**

Cape Fear Voices/Teen Scene, Inc., is a local, non-profit newspaper serving the Cape Fear Area. It's a place for adults and teens to share their stories, poetry and artwork. For teens, this is an excellent way to learn better writing skills. Our work with local area schools blends our mission with their goals.

We are having a Writer's Award Banquet fundraising event on March 12, 2022 at the Leland Cultural Arts Center to recognize our writers. As part of our fundraiser, we would like to have your work displayed and offered for sale.

If you would like to donate your work to us or have any questions, please email Jan at www.janmorsw@aol.com, with the subject line "Art for Fundraising Event." We need the type of art you are interested in displaying (painting, ceramic pieces, etc.) Your name, age, phone number, a short bio and a small jpeg headshot. Entries need to be submitted by January 7, 2022. Artists under the age of 18 must have parental consent.

**Teen Scene 2nd Annual
Writing Awards Banquet**

Sponsored by Deb Pickett, Financial Advisor

Leland Doo-Wop group Shades of Grey to Headline

Plans are underway for our 2nd Annual Writers Award Banquet to be held at the Leland Cultural Arts Center on March 12, 2022. Please save the date.

We are very happy to announce that our corporate sponsor for the event is **Debra Pickett, Financial Advisor** with Edward Jones. Event Sponsors for the program will include ATMC and the Brunswick Forest Farm Bureau Insurance (**Mark Ellenburg, Adam Clark, Ryan Huffman, Jared Speight, and Blake Hundley**). **Josh London**, State Farm Agent located in Brunswick Forest is also a sponsor.

Award winning local artist **Evonne Phillips** have donated one of her original acrylic paintings for the auction part of our program. **Terri and Jim Delfino**, owners of Delfino Vineyards in Roseburg, Oregon have also donated a case of their award-winning wines for the auction. (<https://www.delfinovineyards.com/>)

Tickets will go on sale in January 2022. Seating is limited to 80 people, so all of you Doo Wop fans should plan to get your tickets early.

We would like to thank our early sponsors of this program whose support will make for a great evening and fundraiser to support continued publication of The Teen Scene/Cape Fear Voices.

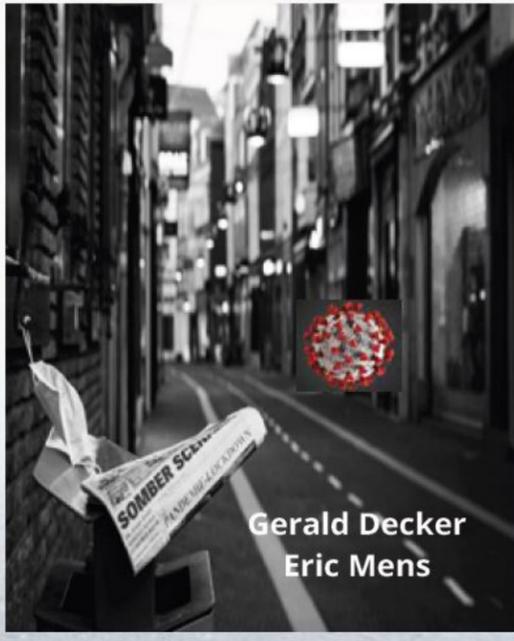
The Brunswick County Branch of the NAACP and the Brunswick Arts Council have also offered to fund a scholarship to be awarded to select writers. Details still to be determined.

Just In Time For The Holidays...

SPECIAL AUTHOR COPY DISCOUNT ON OUR BOOK

THE GREAT LOCKDOWN OF 2020: An Anthology

The Great Lockdown of 2020 An Anthology



Local Writers and Business included in the book:

Lon Anderson
Amy Atwell - The Painted Mermaid, Southport
William Beecher
Brenda Bozeman
Faye Burkhalter
Sabrina Cherry
Howard Cohen
Brendan Connelly
Sharon Copland
Pam DeGeorge
Sally Dabovich
Patricia Dischino
Suzanne Foster - La Polena Bed and Breakfast
Ken Formalarie
Lorraine Gilmore
Rev. Jim Hanisian
Sarah Harrell
Dewayne and Brittany Hedrick - Southport Tap and Cellar
Ana Johnson
Sheryl Keiper
Jane Lang
Leland Cultural Arts Center
Leland Parks and Recreation
Giovani Leone - (Hickman Pharmacy)
Lee Norman Mehler
Katy Menne -The Maritime Museum at Southport

Eric Mens
Janet Meuwissen
Teena Miller
Pam Sexton - The Cattail Cottage, Southport
Jan Morgan - Swegle
Maryann Nunnally
Missy Ronquilo - Artist, Southport
John Stickney
Jeffrey Stites
Suzy Tenenbaum
Ruth Thompson
Matt Thorne - The Saucy Southerner
Brian Tully - Better Togetherness Fitness
Southport Musicians - Ronnie Weinstein and Randy Sadewater
Liz Scanlon - Wilmington Symphony Orchestra
Stan Washington
Jane Webster
Doug and Susan Zucker - Bridgewater Wines

Students Contributors:

Jennifer Argo - West Brunswick High School
Samuel Cahenzli - West Brunswick High School
Anthony Fallone - West Brunswick High School
Ayla Austermilller - Town Creek Middle School
Z'Kyra Johnson - Town Creek Middle School
Carlin Baer - Town Creek Middle School
Deja Chambers - Leland Middle School
Shanley Hunt - Leland Middle School
Bryce Thorpe - Leland Middle School

We are so grateful for each of you and the carefully chosen words of gratitude, hope and, yes, even celebration during this horrific and challenging time in our world's history. It is our sincere hope that you and others will cherish this collection of heartfelt stories for generations to come. Below is a list of all the people in the Cape Fear Area who are in the book.

Because this anthology would not have been possible without your contributions, Cape Fear Voices is offering a 40% discount to those who contributed to this worldwide anthology. Thank you!

\$15 (plus postage)* until December 25th
(Available on Amazon at \$24.95)

Please make checks payable to *Teen Scene, Inc.*

* U.S. Media Mail postage: 1-5 books \$6.00; 6-10 books \$10.00; 10+ books for group events or large orders, please contact us through some of the information below.

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All net proceeds will benefit the efforts of
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6-Week Writing Sessions via Zoom

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No Matter Blood or Blended

by Jan Morgan-Swegle, Compass Pointe



As Christmas approaches, I think we all start to think about our blessings and the joy that our family brings to us. We remember the holidays as warm and precious because we had those we loved around us. From the gifts under the tree to the star on top, there was love.

My husband always tells me that I am the love of his life. I value that sentiment and appreciate that he feels that way because I feel the same way about him. But, after reliving those distant Christmas memories, I don't think we are the love of each other's lives--we are the gift of each other's lives. It is our children who are the loves of our life together.

I remember decorating our tree while we played Christmas carols. Our daughter was the oldest and tallest, so she took care of the top of the tree. The boys, several years younger, worked on the bottom. Where she was sparse in her decorating, they were enthusiastic, putting several ornaments on the same branch. And then, on Christmas morning, there was laughter, piles of wrapping paper squeezed into funny colored balls that missed the garbage bag and then, the inevitable Christmas "kids" photo.

Ours was not a blood family, but a blended one. We had our own traditions and family ways when we all got together. I often said that the definition of Christmas with a blended family was one wishbone and three children. But we made it work. It took years of hard work, but it was worth it.

Dan Fogelberg recorded a song called, "The Leader of the Band," in that song, a son sings about his aging father and says, "his gentle means of sculpting souls

took me years to understand." And that's how it was with us. We had different parenting styles, different religions, different immediate family dynamics and vastly different levels of anger management skills. I was a volcano of anger; he was a mountain of calm.

I often criticized my husband's method of discipline as too soft. "The world won't love them like we do," I would say. "When they do something wrong, there has to be consequences."

What I was missing was that to the children there were consequences. He would explain what was wrong and what they needed to learn from their mistakes. They listened to him talk, explain and encourage. And that, more than harsh words, stuck with all of the children for the rest of their lives.

Together, we raised three wonderful people. They are caring and giving, loving and warm. They all married equally wonderful people and gave us the gift of the next generation. There are times when their volcano of anger flared up, but it was mostly like an infrequent guizer; there and then gone. I see my husband's parenting style in the way they deal with their own children. I see them sculpting souls in the same manner that he did—and I see their children responding.

Christmas is a time for family, no matter blood or blended. It is a time of remembering the past with the person God gifted to you and looking forward to the future through the eyes of the next generation. It is a time of peace and goodwill. It is a time of love for those who dwell in our hearts no matter how close or how far away they might be.

Safest, Smartest Home on the Block

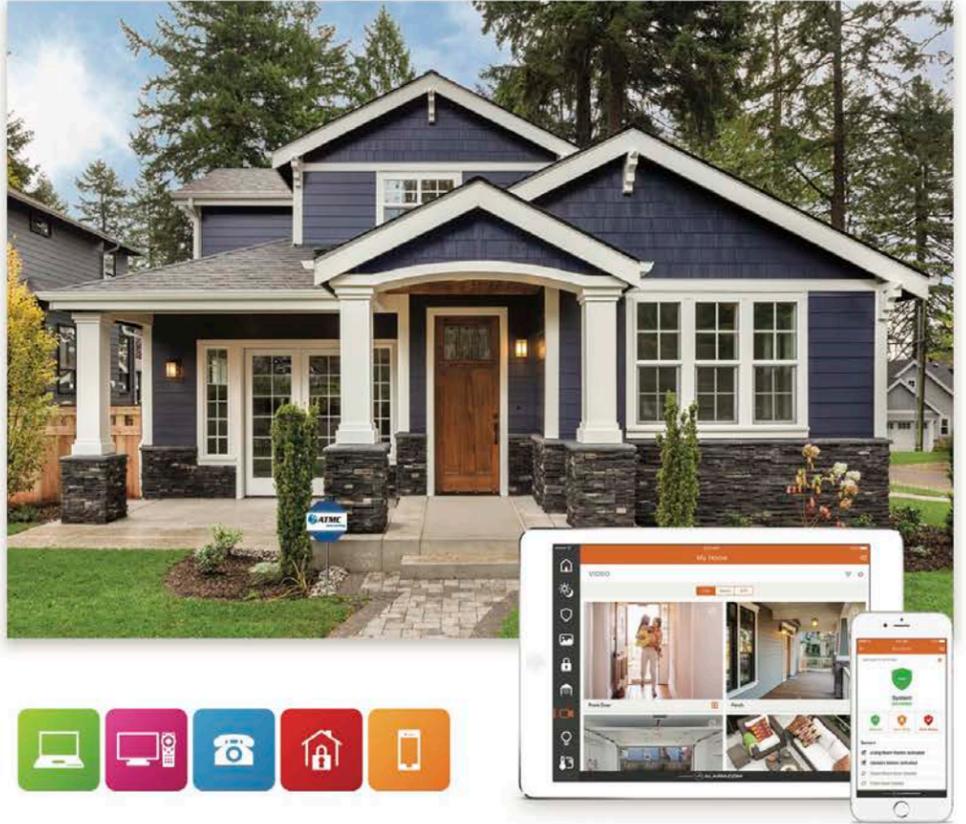
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My COVID Story - Catherine Grinnell, RN (Part 1 of 2)*

by Ken Formalarie, Magnolia Greens



*As narrated by Ken's niece Catherine Grinnell

"I graduated from Boston University School of Nursing with my BSN in May 1985. In September, I began working at Boston City Hospital on an adult medical floor. In 1987, I transferred to the Pediatric Unit. A year later, I transferred to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). Since then, I worked between the PICU and the Pediatric Unit. In 1996, Boston City Hospital merged with University Hospital, where I served for 35 years - 33 years only with children.

In January 2020, after the SARS-COV-19 virus from China had made its way to the US, doctors and nurses in my unit began reading any literature from countries that had already been dealing with it - mainly China, Italy, and France. By March, it was clear that primarily adults were being hospitalized with COVID-19 and that when the surge hit, we would need more beds than we had.

Hospital administrators decided to transfer all pediatric patients to Boston Children's Hospital. University Hospital's pediatric unit was converted into an adult COVID unit. Statewide it was the same. Our 24-bed Pediatric Unit began caring for COVID patients 40 years old and younger. Later, we would be caring for patients up to 90 years old.

PICU nurses were reassigned three times in two weeks. Initially, half went to the Pediatric Emergency Room (which stayed open but saw a smaller volume) and half to the mother/baby unit. Then, we were reassigned to the converted Pediatric Unit to care for adult COVID patients. After the adult ICUs were overwhelmed with critically ill patients, we were divided between the SICU (Surgical Intensive Care Unit) and the MICUs (Medical Intensive Care Units). All ICUs were filled with COVID patients.

The SICU where I worked had the occasional trauma patient. Some COVID patients required two ICU nurses. When you needed to 'prone' a patient, it took five people in the room at once. 'Prone' was done as a last resort when we could not get a patient's oxygenation to an acceptable level using all other measures.

PICU nurses assisted other nurses as medications were needed in addition to suctioning or other jobs

that a Certified Nursing Assistant could not perform. When a nurse was in a room in full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), it was more cost-effective for them to ask others to bring things in rather than changing in and out of PPE, which was at a premium.

I was lucky that my hospital never ran out of PPE. Although I was nervous about catching the virus, I believed my PPE provided sufficient protection against the virus. Service time spent this way was emotionally draining. After working as a highly skilled pediatric nurse for decades, I felt only adequate as an adult nurse. Adults and children have much different underlying conditions using different medications. I felt out of my element.

I was out of my comfort zone in other ways also. As a stranger in a unit working with people who didn't know my skills and being unfamiliar with the location of needed items made service awkward. I was not alone. Others dealt with this same awkwardness while trying to cope with a virus in which treatments were constantly changing. We would explain things to patients that we often learned from reading only an hour before.

I had a patient who was a traveling nurse say, "Please don't let me die." I brought another COVID patient, who had just undergone an emergency C-section, pictures of her baby so that she could see her child before we sedated her. I saw families say their final "I love you" on an iPad. I said prayers for more people than I care to remember as I wrapped them for the morgue. Going home, I listened to politicians in Washington and others claim we were exaggerating the numbers - that it was all a political ploy. It was hurtful and dismissive of the heartache we all suffered.

When the second surge hit, the Pediatrics Unit was cut to 12 from 24 beds. The other half still housed COVID adults; the PICU continued with four beds. We treated many 20-year-olds with COVID, a 6-year-old, and a 3-year-old. The Pediatric Unit treated infants with COVID. In addition to my 36 hours per week in the PICU, I picked up 10-12 hours a week in the vaccine clinic, inoculating people with the COVID vaccine."

(To be continued)

A Christmas Koan

by Alan Sturrock, Wilmington, NC



Once upon a cold December day, Kinch entered the inner sanctum of his second favorite Starbucks Fine Coffee House [and miscellaneous treats] sometime at the beginning of last week. He stood in the assembly line and ordered the 'usual' half-caf Americano [in the generic, red cup]. He started to retrieve the cash to pay for the same, when, to his surprise, the attendant Barista said: 'Your coffee is free, sir. It was paid forward by one of the customers ahead of you...'

Kinch shot a quick glance over to the pick-up counter. There were four or five people in various stages of waiting-ness, so he thanked the Barista and moved to join the queue.

While waiting, he wondered which kind soul had been randomly kind in his favor.

Showed a little unsolicited Christmas spirit. Later that week, the memory of paying forward was still fresh in his mind as he dropped into his very favorite Starbucks. Different town, same Starbucks. There were two Baristas taking orders for the assembly line of coffee drinkers; waiting in line, and in front of Kinch, was a young man; behind him stood an older man and a middle aged woman. Kinch placed his usual order and asked the Barista [on the right] if he could pay forward. She readily agreed, Kinch ordered and paid, and proceeded along the 'assembly line' to the pick up counter.

Meanwhile, the older man stepped up to order from the Barista on the left and the middle aged woman did likewise with the Barista on the right [the same Barista who had served Kinch]. The next thing Kinch knew was that the middle aged woman grabbed the older man beside her and gave him the biggest hug, all the while saying 'thank you....thank you...thank you...'

The Barista looked over to Kinch and smiled in part confusion and part astonishment.

Kinch smiled back, picked up his order and left.

All day long he recounted the story.

Everyone smiled.

Everyone, including Kinch.

A Visit to Reality

by Karen Phillips Smith, Wilmington, NC



Hitler, Communism, and World War II were certainly interesting subjects for copious study and speculation throughout my school years, but the dark reality of their meaning became eerily apparent on a business trip to Berlin, Germany in 1988. My German business partner and I decided that a break from our arduous business schedule was in order. He suggested a visit to the other side of Berlin. The weather that day was typical for Germany in late October, dark overcast skies, off and on rain, and piercing wet cold. The kind of cold that bites into you and makes you long for a blazing fire and something warm to drink.

My partner dropped me off at Check Point Charlie and then drove off to the gate he was required to use to enter East Berlin from the West. This was the beginning of the knots that began to grow deep inside my stomach. I entered the beginning of the checkpoint and felt as though I was a character in one of those old black and white spy movies. The two guards leered at me from their tall counter and then they spit commands to me in their regional, guttural accents requesting my passport and the reason for my visit. I carefully slid the passport across to them and, as I nervously stood there, each one of them looked at the passport and then back at me multiple times. This particular aspect of my entry seemed, at the time, to go on forever, but reality tells me it was only a few moments. I feel sure that this intimidation tactic was used on many American tourists and I am confident these men derived great pleasure from the entire exercise. Just when I thought

my heart might beat through my chest wall, they finally returned my passport and sent me down the hall to be briefed by the military on the rules and regulations that would dictate everything I did and said during my visit to the East. One of the guards then opened the door and as I stood outside, every one of my senses was impacted by the starkness of my new surroundings.

Although my partner and I were only in East Berlin for a few hours, my mind and my soul will never let me forget the sights, the sounds, and the emotions I felt that day. The glaring differences between each side of the same city were shocking. One side old and gloomy and the other modern and vibrant. A bustling, colorful metropolis. Here there were no fancy shops filled with brightly colored wares or laughter filled beer gardens. The buildings all around us seemed gray and all were in need of repair. The changing of the Russian guards at the Brandenburg Gate brought a chill to my very core. They wore bright crimson uniforms with mink-trimmed hats. Each one marched with straight legs and expressionless faces.

I breathed a sigh of relief when I returned to the West at the end of our visit that day and paused to whisper a prayer of thankfulness for our safe return, for the opportunity to understand the sacrifices that are continually made in the name of freedom, for equality and acceptance for all God's people and for the world to live in safety and peace.

Favorite Christmas Memory

by David Hume III, Wilmington



The smells of spruce and bayberry, the sounds of logs crackling in the fireplace, the sight of an antique nativity set filled with well-worn figurines and the taste of decorated sugar cookies trigger my memory of Christmas 1947 when our family gathered together for the first time since the United States entered World War II. The reunion took place at my grandparents' farm, described by my grandfather, a veteran of World War I, as "an oasis of sanity in a world gone mad."

Festivities began officially with the quest to find and retrieve the perfect tannenbaum. My grandfather, father and I drove through the woods in my father's war surplus Willys Jeep to a clearing where my grandparents had planted Fraser fir seedlings now over eight-feet tall. The tree was selected, cut and tied down on the Jeep's roof. We returned to the house, where teams of relatives were draping garlands of Virginia creeper and sprigs of sumac heavy with clusters of red berries around stair railings and above the fireplace mantle. The tree was carried inside where its fragrance permeated the house, mixing with the aromas of molasses and cinnamon wafting from the kitchen. It was mounted firmly in an 85-pound wrought iron tree stand manufactured in an 1820 Atlanta foundry. Christmas lights were unfurled from rolls of last year's newspapers and tested, ornaments were unboxed and the white silk angel tree topper that belonged to my great grandparents was readied. Now the tree trimming could commence.

Christmas Eve arrived and we spent the morning helping my grandmother "test" various cookie recipes. The traditional afternoon football game was decided by a last minute touchdown catch made by my Uncle Harry who'd lost his left leg in Sicily. That evening, the adults drove to Midnight Mass and my Aunt Gladys, who'd served overseas in the Army Nurse Corps, read *The Night Before Christmas* to

the younger children who remained at the house. After a restless night, I was awakened by Nat King Cole's *The Christmas Song* on the radio and my cousins' shouts. The magic day of December 25th finally arrived.

The usually tidy living room floor was converted to a construction site for Lincoln Log neighborhoods and Erector set bridges scattered among piles of discarded ribbon and wrapping paper; ugly sweaters and terrible ties were stuffed under the tree's lower branches out of sight. The radio stations played Christmas music without interruption. Later in the day, the kitchen was declared off-limits to "unauthorized personnel" by my grandmother after my Chesapeake Bay retrievers made off with the carcass of our Christmas goose and one of Aunt Ellen's famous walnut-encrusted cheese balls. The cooking ended in the early afternoon and folks changed into their Christmas dinner finery. Then the punch bowl was filled with a 3:1 ratio of thick, yellow eggnog and bourbon with a dusting of nutmeg, and the crystal cups were charged. Many of those present released the emotions they'd locked away during the terrible times of World War II, and now they celebrated life and toasted the future. My grandmother sat at the piano surrounded by family members, my grandfather grabbed his fiddle and the caroling commenced. The concert ended when the punch bowl ran dry and the platters of roasted turkey, baked ham and suckling pig arrived on the dining table. Side dishes and desserts were the next arrivals, and gallons of coffee finished the day.

A few years later, during the last extended family gathering, my grandfather surprised us with a private showing of Frank Capra's Christmas classic, "*It's a Wonderful Life*". Today, it may be time for Clarence and the better angels of our nature to visit us again and reinforce those values Capra laid out for us; empathy, honor and truth. Merry Christmas to all!

Thanksmas

by Linda Merlino, Surf City



In the land of Christmas customs resides a lesser-known festivity called Thanksmas. Born in the late nineties after a phone call from my first born confessing he wanted to spend Christmas in North Carolina with his girlfriend's family. Eyes wide open I could see the future, two more children almost grown making the request to spend Christmas with a special someone's family. I understood and began by breaking the calendar's traditions. I pulled a page from "going-by-the-seat-of-my-pants" and merged two holidays into one.

Out came the Christmas dishes in November. The tree stand appeared a month early. We bought a Douglas fir two days before Thanksgiving, wrapped her in lights and ornaments, stepped back and grinned. We mailed invitations to family and friends explaining that our annual Christmas Eve party had been tweaked and fast-forwarded. The usual guests responded with glee and those that once declined because of Christmas commitments said they would be there for Thanksmas Eve. A menu evolved. The pick of the pick topped the list. Rule one was a no hassle holiday. Skip the crowded stores and markets. No standing in line or stressing over gifts. The stockings would be hung but Santa would not be coming down the chimney. Improvising at every turn we would make our celebration a perfect blend of two favorites. Magic may have played a role and believing that the date did not matter as long as we were with people we loved. The kitchen hummed. Leftover turkey found a spot in the back of the fridge. The dining room table, where we served our sit-down Christmas Eve dinners, had a fresh tablecloth and was transformed into a buffet. Serve yourself was the only rule. Hot loaves of Italian sausage bread were paired with platters of antipasto and baked clams. Shrimp scampi, eggplant, chicken cutlets and pasta shells stuffed with ricotta teamed together for a feast. All of these selections once reserved for the night before Christmas morphed into a free-range kaleidoscope of crowd-pleasers. We added a table of just desserts, chocolate mousse, tiramisu, mocha chocolate chip cheesecake, apple pie, and platters of homemade cookies and fudge to name just a few.

There were candles in the windows, and along the path to the freshly hung wreath on the front door. The atmosphere grew thick with Christmas music played throughout the house. Snow fell on our first Thanksmas Eve, and on several that followed, the powdered crystals frosted the landscape as white as any holiday greeting card.

Our unique celebration has become a family favorite. For many years we alternated with the real Christmas, but now since I live in North Carolina we circle a date on the calendar every year, sometimes in November and more often in December. The family has grown with more faces at the table to love and more gingerbread hands to carve and bake. Our recipes are much the same as our first Thanksmas, truth be told, we may modify the date, and monkey with the name, but prefer not to change the menu. Blessings to all and to all a good night.

Mary's Story

by Nan York, Magnolia Greens



We took our children to Midnight Mass each Christmas Season. On one particular night, a new parish priest was officiating. During the Homily portion of the service, he called all the young children [ages 2-5] to the altar steps. He sat down on the altar steps with them and proceeded to tell the tale of Joseph's Lamp; Mary's journey into Bethlehem. Toward the end of the story, he asked the children, "What did Mary have?"

One little red-headed girl [think of Margaret in the Charlie Brown comic



strip] could hardly contain herself as she shouted, "I know, I know!" The priest recognized her and asked, "Well, then, what did Mary have?" The little girl stood up and positioned herself in a perfect ballet #2 position and said: "Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was white as snow...!"

Musings of a Retired Hobby Farmer

by Nan York, Magnolia Greens



Part II ... Manure Occureth and Other Things

Butch, the local farrier came out to the farm about every 6 weeks to trim hooves and was very pleased that Luke, Lillie, and later, Sophie, were very docile and friendly. Character traits that most donkeys do not have. Butch also provided much-needed and appreciated animal husbandry advice.

Shortly after acquiring Luke and Lillie, we hired Ted, a local well-digger, to come out to the farm and install a yard hydrant close to the barn. It was during Spring Break and Ted's two sons did a great job trenching in the piping and installing the hydrant. The next morning, when I went to the barn for the morning feeding, I noticed a rather large wet spot on the ground right above the spot where the water piping made a 90 degree turn to the hydrant. Ted returned later that day with his sons and as they were

digging down to the piping, the aroma of sulphur permeated the air around us. The piping was intact and it seemed that the donkeys decided to relieve themselves over the freshly overturned earth! Who knew they would do this?

Although the donkeys grazed on the grass in the two pastures we had, it was necessary for mowing to take place. Of course, the donkeys helped! Chasing the mower, licking it when it was idling. They also helped with some of our chores in the pasture like fence mending. Ah, the water hydrant. I came out to the barn one day and the water hydrant was on and had been for some time. Seems one of the donkeys learned how to lift the handle and watch the water flow! From then on, we used a bolt and wing-nut to secure the handle.

Unlike rhinoceroses found in zoos or in their native habitats, equines do not deposit their manure in one place all the time. Each donkey produces about one

ton of manure each year. These droppings are collected on a regular basis for the safety and well-being of the animals, especially if their pastures or holding areas are small in size. We had 2 one-acre pastures and they used one stall in our barn. And so we developed a manure retrieval system. Using a special long-tined rake the droppings were gathered and deposited them into a 'manure spreader.' The manure spreader was purchased as a Christmas Gift, much to the delight of the owner of the local farm supply store who sold us the spreader at a fair price [the price that was offered at the county fair] and the only piece of farm equipment that the manufacturer would not stand behind [the spreader flicks the manure to the rear]. It is good to note that we had the greenest grass on the two acres behind our home that anyone ever saw! With a 540 John Deere mower, we could mow and spread at the same time!

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Clara the Cat

by Alan Sturrock, Wilmington, NC



When Micheal was an above knee-high, scrap of nuisance [still scaling the Cliffs of Concrete Operations*], his very favorite person in the world wasn't a person. It was Clara, his Russian blue cat.

Feeding Clara on an as-needed [cat] basis, was no chore for Micheal, as was cleaning out her litter box. Pretty much everything else was. Over time, Clara trained Micheal to be her cat-flap; Micheal let her in, let her out, let her in once more. Clara rewarded him by electing to sleep with him on his bed every single night, a point not lost on his scurvy brothers.

Life for Micheal and Clara was good, until one summer the circus came to town.

Now it just so happened that Micheal had a birthday, and it so happened that Micheal's uncle not only managed to get him tickets to the matinee but also to have tea with the clowns at the end of the performance.

The circus! It was as if Micheal had suddenly been given access to a different, exotic planet. And the clowns...they walked on circus water. Thus the circus world became the stuff of his dreams--waking and sleeping. And his unbridled affection for his pet cat was somewhat diminished.

Each summer, for the next two years, Micheal was besotted by the circus. Nightly, he would find himself hanging around the Carnival in close proximity to the circus tent. So much so that Jocko the Clown befriended him. One night Jocko told him the story of Giovanni the Juggler, a town urchin who ran away from home and joined a troupe of travelling players [an early Italian version of the circus]. Micheal was enthralled by the idea. Sure beat his boring home life.

Meanwhile, summer was waning, and the circus was leaving in two days. That night his mother insisted that he eat all of his peas [which he didn't], so he was sent to bed early without supper. It seemed, on these days, that only Clara, his cat, understood him. That was the tipping point. He hatched a

plan to leave home and join the circus the following night. To that end, he packed a small bag--five punts from his piggy bank, a lucky rabbit's foot, two granola bars and an apple-- and hid it in his bedroom closet. As he was packing he was aware that something else was in his room--he happened to turn around. Clara the cat was watching him, intently. She watched him as he oiled the hinges on his bedroom door.

The following night he went to bed early and 'slept' with his clothes on. He was so excited that he hardly noticed Clara's absence from the foot of his bed. He waited and waited until both his parents were snoring asleep. He got up, tied his shoes around his neck, and reached in the closet for his small bag. Quietly, he opened his bedroom door and tiptoed along the hallway to the top of the stairs. There was a full moon outside, at once quite brilliant and then alternately vanishing behind clouds racing in an indigo sky.

He continued tiptoeing down the stairs. All was going to plan until he reached the turn into the front door foyer. That was when he tripped over something--something that let out a strained mewing sound.

From his supine position on the foyer carpet he looked up into the face of Clara, his cat.

In the moonlight, she stared at him, through him, with indifferent feline eyes, as if to exclaim: 'Where the hell do you think you are going?'

Micheal smiled a smile of recognition, dusted his small ego off, rubbed Clara's head, and took himself tiptoeing back upstairs. Clara followed him into his bedroom.

'So much for the circus,' Micheal thought to himself as he tucked himself back in bed. 'Oh well, there's always next year....'

But there wasn't a next year.

Or the following year.

There was no more summer circus.

But there was always Clara, his cat...

**borrowed from the worlds of Jean Piaget*

Laughing In The Golden Years: To Do Good Is A Gift To Yourself

by Maryann Nunnally, Porter's Neck



Driving down Market Street about two weeks before Christmas and in a hurry to finish shopping for gifts, I noticed a woman sitting on the curb in front of an old motel. It was a cold day for December in North Carolina with a sharp eastern wind and temperatures in the forties. The woman on the curb had no coat and no shoes, and I realized that she was crying. For whatever reason, I pulled over into the parking lot of the adjoining restaurant, parked and walked over to the woman. "Is there something that I can do to help you?" I asked her. She was crying so hard that her nose was running so, I handed her some tissues. When at last she got some control, she said the motel had locked her out of her room without her coat or shoes because she had no money to pay the bill.

She explained that she had come from Nebraska with a long-haul truck driver. They had had lots of fun traveling across the country, but before day-light this morning he left and obviously wasn't coming back. When the motel clerk realized that the driver had gone, he demanded a credit card or money from the woman and she did not have either one. She was told to get out. She was on the curb crying because she didn't know where to go for help. To this day, I don't know why I made the decision to help her. I was a widow, still grieving over the death of my husband and vacillating between sadness and grump-

iness. Still, I thought, "I should do something for this woman. After all isn't Christmas the season to give and show love."

I hesitated for a minute, and then said, "Let's go talk to the clerk." The place was a dump, so the room was quite cheap. I paid the bill and we retrieved her clothes. I learned her name was Jean and that she had very little possessions. The restaurant next door wasn't much better than the seedy motel. Jean ate like there was no tomorrow and perhaps for her there wasn't any future.

On the way to a shelter seeking help, she said that she had three kids in Nebraska, but protective services had taken them away a year ago. "I was drinking a bunch," was her explanation. She also said she had missed the last two visitations with them, so she guessed now she would never get them back. "I bet your kids missed you," I said, and she said no because they were in a good home and liked it there. "They get a whole lot more there than I could ever give them, so they probably don't miss me at all."

I disagreed with her and said so. "You are their mother, no matter what they get. I know they miss you. You need to go home and try to find out how you can see them. Christmas is coming, and you would be the best present they could get."

Before I dropped her off at the shelter, I said again, "Go home. Someone here will help you. And when you get to Nebraska, find a church that will help you

A Tribute To A Fallen Hero

By Evonne Phillips, Leland, NC



(written October 13, 2001)

What happened in New York on September 11, 2001 brought sorrow and deep-felt heartaches to all Americans in a tragedy that cannot be explained nor excused. It has touched and brought together all of us by a common thread of grief and in unexpected ways.

Associated Artists of Southport, one of the art groups I belong to, organized a fundraiser to help support those who have been affected. Artists donate their artwork to be sold with half or more of the proceeds going to this fund. I decided to donate my painting, "New York, New York," done well before that September event. I felt it was fitting, since it is a scene of New York Harbor with the Statue of Liberty in the background.

During the Seafood and Jazz Festival Art Show, a young girl was standing quietly in front of the painting. As I spoke to her, she turned, and in tears, said her brother, a fireman, had died in the New York catastrophe.



Her wish was for us to pick up our lives and go on, because she knew her brother would wish it. She thanked everyone for all their support for all the people of New York.

This painting took on new meaning to me in that moment and I dedicate it to her brother, Mike Musengo.

Oh, That Dreaded Christmas Letter

by Peg Strenkowski, Wilmington, NC



I, for one, have never said that as I have been a Christmas letter writer for 60 years.

What I dread is the card that someone thought enough to put a stamp on, send, and just sign their names. Yes, they still think of us during the holiday. Still, I am always interested in how their past year has been and what

is new in their lives, especially since these are people we have not seen in years.

Some say the letters are just bragging epistles. I don't agree. I like to follow the life changes going on in their families, just as I enjoy sharing our antics and events with them. Several relatives and friends tell us they always look forward to my letters and feel a special attachment to our family. That makes me feel so happy.

My personal favorite yearly letter comes from someone we met when our husbands were stationed at Minot AFB, North Dakota, in 1961. She has six kids and a sense of humor unmatched by anyone else I know. Two years ago, when we did not get a letter, I just knew something had happened. Her husband had a stroke, and it was January before we heard from her. Despite the seriousness of his illness, she managed to highlight the funny times. I'm happy to say he has recovered nicely and we look forward to this year's letter.

In this new era of email and text messaging, it is so easy to stay in touch, but there is nothing like receiving or sending the annual Christmas letter to maintain a tradition so dear to my heart.

Merry Christmas one and all.

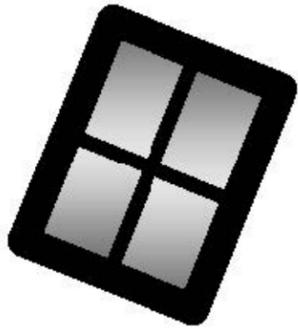
make good decisions." Without thinking I handed her my card that had my phone number and address on it. "Let me know how you make out," I said, which I understood was a risky thing to do, but I seemed compelled to find out what the future would hold for Jean.

That seemed to be the end of it until I received a letter in March, postmarked from Nebraska, but there was no return address. Inside was a brief note and a picture of Jean with three children. The note said,

"Dear Ms. Maryann, this is a picture of me and my kids. The family where they live invited me to live with them also. They are the second people that I found that are really good. You are the first. I have done what you said and found a church to help me. Someone in Wilmington got me a ride to Nebraska. It was a long trip, but I am glad I came home. March is not the time to say Merry Christmas, but I think it every day for you. Love, Jean"

The next year in March, I got another note from Jean. It said simply, "We, me and the kids, are doing good. We still live with the family who took me in. I know now that Christmas is everyday. Love, Jean"

That was over twenty years ago, and I never heard from her again. I think of her often and wish that Christmas went on for her every day thereafter. As for me, I married again, and found the year-round Christmas joy that comes with doing something good for others.



THE TEEN SCENE

FREE

Tomorrow's Voices Today

Early College High School



Volume 2, Issue 12
December 2021
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A Site of Civil War History

by Nathanial Brown, 9th Grade



The Civil War was a time of division and inequality. The War contained over 65 registered battle sites, one of which is located just 35 minutes from Brunswick Community College's campus. Fort Anderson, as it is known (known as Brunswick Town in revolutionary times), was a significant part of the Confederate States of America's battle against the Union.

In 1776 the first permanent settlement in the Cape Fear region was established; they called this Brunswick Town. Less than 150 years later, the remains of the town were being flipped upside down to transform this area into Fort Anderson, an important battle site in the Civil War.

In 1863 the Battle of Fort Anderson, also known as the Battle of Deep Gully, took place on these grounds. Led by Rear Admiral Alexander Murray of the Union and General Daniel Harvey Hill of the Confederacy, the battle was one of the shortest of the War, only lasting two days. The battle resulted in 2 Union and 2 Confederate soldiers' deaths, with 25 soldiers injured altogether.

Fall Festival

by Margie Steve, 11th Grade



On Tuesday October 26, 2021 the Brunswick County Early College High School sponsored a Trunk A Treat and Fall Festival at The Coast. The Fall Festival was sponsored by many clubs including: Culinary Club, Beta Clubs, Art Club, National Honors Society, and Keys Club.

Faculties of BCECHS came out to support this event and had fun along with many students and family. Those fun things included: the fresh smell of popped and buttery popcorn, cotton candy, pumpkin painting, games with prizes, temporary tattoos, and of course lots of decorated cars and people passing out candy.

There were lots of great costumes like an inflatable shark, lady bug, superheroes, Jack Skeleton, Halloween classics, and Aang from the show Avatar: The Last Airbender. Many clubs were able to raise money for their clubs as well as clubs just having fun and supporting the school.



Josie's Story: A Mother's Inspiring Crusade to Make Medical Care Safe

by Jasmine Garcia, 11th Grade



"Josie's Story: A Mother's Inspiring Crusade to Make Medical Care Safe" by Sorrel King tells the tragic real-life story of Josie King, an eighteen-month-old baby girl, whose avoidable death inspired her mother to create the change hospitals all around the world needed.

This story is real, heart wrenching and moving. A perfect option for those looking for a real story of grief, family, and change. King allows the audience to follow her in her grief and into her new life as a national patient safety advocate. King does an excellent job of taking us along with her. Being able to read and understand her feelings as she lives through these monumental events in her life is quite an opportunity. She also provides a deeper understanding of medical systems and hospital hierarchies,

Dreams Do Come True

by Margie Steve and Nathanial Brown



She came from East Columbus High School up to Brunswick County Early College High School to teach at her dream school. Ms. Angela Mabry is a new teacher here at BCECHS, replacing Ms. Angela Jordan. Her first day with the students was on October 11, 2021, and has already made a large impact on the math III students that she teaches.

While Ms. Mabry was being interviewed, she revealed why this school has been her dream school to teach along with many other things about her from her, students, and the faculty here at Brunswick County Early College High School.

Ms. Mabry's response to her background is, "Teaching is my second career. I graduated from UNC," she says. "I graduated in business and accounting, and my first job was in banking. After having kids, I've always talked about wanting to be a teacher so I went back to get all the credits to become one. I have been teaching for 13 years in math."

For Ms. Mabry, teaching at an early college "has been a dream job. "My kids had been a part of Brunswick County and were dual enrollment students and I wanted to be with higher caliber students. I have been wanting to teach here for about 3 years and have seen advertisements for the school in those years."

Ms. Mabry's goal for her students is "to help prepare you guys for the next step: college, career, etc."

As a new Firebird, Ms. Mabry's goal is "to be a teacher who can encourage students who can grow not only their math skills but in life skills and help prepare them for the future."

Students and staff were interviewed as well and here are their responses to why Ms. Mabry has been chosen to be the teacher of the month for December.

Sophomore Mia Cicallo says, "I'm just glad she came in because she helped make logarithms easy and put us back on track."

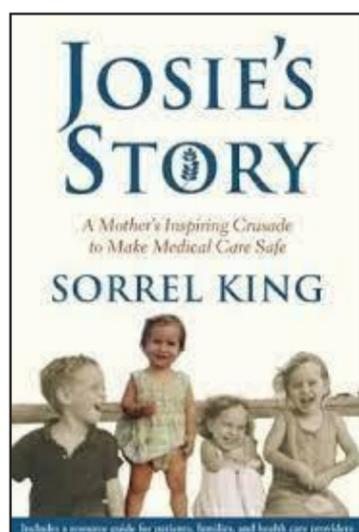
Principal Denise Absher says "It is impressive to see how she was able to come in and work with the students. She seemed to fit right in from the beginning. Her enthusiasm about collaborating with our staff is another sign that she fits in perfectly."

Assistant principal Chris Orrock agrees. "Ms. Mabry is a new teacher at ECHS but has not missed a beat. Her dedication to the success of our students is already per parent. Ms. Mabry has already made a difference in the students here at ECHS."

English Teacher Megan Smith said "She is a well-experienced teacher and very open-minded to early college. I'm very excited to have her a part of our team."

Did You Know?

Did you know that Ms. Mabry went to school with *Michael Jordan*? Ms. Mabry went to UNC the same time Michael Jordan was there and they had a U.S. History class together in the second semester in 1984. Ms. Mabry described Michael Jordan as he wasn't just a great athlete, but also just a down-to-earth guy who was very friendly, funny, and showed up to class almost every day.



Includes a resource guide for patients, families, and health care providers

Standardized Testing

by Arwen Collins

For years, standardized testing has been a debate had by many educators and students, but how do those at the Brunswick County Early College really feel about it?

Of course, as a teacher, there are some things that cannot be avoided, standardized testing being one of those, especially in high school classes. When asked if this method of testing was an accurate portrayal of a student's abilities, a math teacher here at the early college said, "I feel like it gives us a good idea of what they have learned and it gives us a lot of data and feedback to know what we need to teach better... but I also know a lot of students have testing anxiety so I know a lot of them don't perform as well as what they do in class and what they can do." This seems to be the general thoughts of teachers that were interviewed. Many teachers believe that while the testing provides good information for the state and helps make some choices moving forward, it is not accurate or fair to each individual student.

Our students, though, have far stronger

opinions on the topic. One student, Angel Deras says, "I feel that it [standardized testing] is unfair... what have we done to forsake this world- we should have more projects to enjoy life because stressing about things is not good." Many other students feel the same way. They don't like sitting in the same room for hours at a time, completing a repetitive test that was made to trick them. Many students stress about the exams for days or even weeks before. One student says they, "get too overwhelmed, so the amount of time spent studying

So, how do we make testing fair to all students? Another one of our English teachers says that "we should value equity over equality." Catering to each individual student, giving them what they need to be successful as opposed to giving everyone the same exact treatment regardless of circumstance. An example they used to show how we already do this was giving one student who has a learning disability 90 minutes to take their exam, and a student without, 60 minutes.

Pre-Exam Week Stress

by Isabella Wood, 9th Grade

As we enter the month of December, students begin to prepare for the upcoming exams that follow Math 1, Biology, Math 3, English 2, and many more. Before the forthcoming exams, teachers start to review what will be on the test and assign more work than usual to prepare the students for academic success. As exams are around the corner, students become anxious due to holidays, pre-test anxiety, worrying about the end of the semester, and upcoming college classes for the spring. As a freshman at Early College, I am especially worried about taking my first college class next spring and getting through the holidays safely while traveling so I can return in January.



Before writing this article, I asked Josie Tharp what stressed her out the most when about to take the PreACT, and she said, "The exam being such a long test is the most stressful part and the expectation from the teachers; that you should get a perfect score." After hearing this, I related to the stress she was feeling due to having teachers who expect a lot of me, as well as parents. One of the most common things students are stressed about before taking exams is submitting assignments during the review weeks. The teachers are moving so fast, and students don't want to get behind in their classes, especially at the end of the semester.

Hands

by Grace Cairnie

I'm writing this for fear I won't survive the night. Well, really more for fear that without an outlet for these feelings I'm going to have a panic attack and that the noise will give me away.

Let me explain. I am currently laying on the thin, fabric floor of a small tent in the middle of the woods. I estimate the time to be around eleven. The dark surrounds my tiny cocoon of safety along with a relentless chill.

The more pressing matter is that there are little clawed hands pawing at the outside of the tent. The moon's glow makes them appear as exaggerated shadows, cast along the cloth walls. The thin, fragile, cloth walls which act as the sole barrier between me and those clawed, probing limbs.

I know that logically, it's probably just raccoons. Small raccoons that can easily be punted into the river that runs in front of the campsite.

However, the less logical, more anxiety fueled part of my brain won't stop whispering incessantly about dolls, witches, wendigos, zombies, ghosts, escaped prisoners, and all manner of faceless monsters with horrifying hands that wait impatiently to grab you by the ankle and drag you away to a gruesome fate.

No. Stop it. You're scaring yourself.

They're just raccoons. Just raccoons grabbing bugs off the tent with their hands. Their hands could easily reach up and unzip the tent's door.

Stop it. Even if they do unzip the door, it doesn't matter because they are small and small things can be punted across the river. Unless, when I kick them, they grab my leg and hang on by sinking their claws into the flesh of my calf and then they start biting-no.

I'm not going to finish that sen-

tence or even that thought.

Why are they still here? Why won't they stop grabbing at the tent walls? Why aren't I brave enough to kick the side or yell and scare them away? Why did I let my own pride drag me into this situation?

I should have just let my brother win. Admitted I didn't want to go camping by myself. Sure, he would've made fun of me, but what does that matter as long as I got to sleep in my own bed. My own bed that's soft and warm, and has strong, thick walls that would've kept me safe from the dark's clawed hands.

Is that what I was supposed to learn from this? Just give into fear and don't try anything new. That can't be it.

Or maybe it can?

All the books tell you to go out and try new things. But how am I to know that the people who wrote those stories know what they're talking about. Maybe they just wrote those lessons because they sounded good. They probably don't even believe in the morals they're teaching.

And if they do believe, they probably have never been sitting in a cold tent, on uncomfortable ground, in the pitch black, scribbling in a journal to fight off a panic attack, while little claws scrape at the only thing protecting them from the things in the night.

If I get out of here alive, I'm going to write a story that has a real lesson. That trying new things and facing your fears doesn't always lead to a happy ending.

Sometimes you face your fears and, big surprise, you find out exactly why you were afraid. Sometimes when you face your fears you end up cold, and alone in the dark, surrounded by raccoons.

The Winter Frost

by Kaitlyn Steve, ECHS

The Winter Frost as the snow falls you can feel the cold crisp wind whisperer in your ear

Saying life is too short to be afraid to chase your dreams

The Winter Frost holds you tight as a prisoner of your past

The bitter Winter Frost will die soon enough leaving you empty inside

God only knows how the winter Frost has made you stronger and how difficult it has been for you

The Winter Frost can teach you to be patient and appreciate the season you are in

Looking around you in this Winter Frost It can knock you off your feet if you're not paying attention

The Winter Frost spring time is slowly upon us with the trees springing back to life

The Winter Frost weakens as it turns back to water.

The sun comes back bringing new life into your soul

The Winter Frost

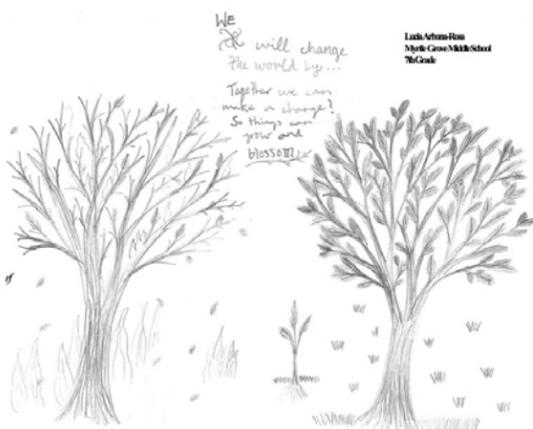
Myrtle Grove Middle School



Pumpkin Art Projects - Students Imitated Artist Yayoi Kusama



(below) Artwork by Lucia Arbona-Rosa, 7th Grade



Gator Pride

by Kennedy Lufholm, 7th Grade

Myrtle Grove Middle School

I think it's kind of cool

When I first came here, I was filled with dread

But now I'd rather be here instead

The people are nice here

And now I have no fear and I can be who I am instead

Not getting made fun of my clothes

Or the style of hair that I chose

Everyone is free to be them

The teachers are fun

Even when work has begun

And you'll be done

The custodians work to keep things clean

Even though it's sometimes unseen

And the cafeteria workers make our meals

Let's make them their own so they know how good we feel

Just know that you are appreciated.

And the principals keep up with everything

I still don't know how they do those things

But if you came here to Myrtle Grove Middle School I think you too would come to think it's cool.



West Brunswick High School

Why Teens Argue With Their Parents

by Campbell Cheers, 10th Grade



Kids tend to argue with their parents for various reasons, like wanting to go out with their friends, wanting to stay out until a certain time, or hanging out with who they want. The reasons cause tension between the kid and the parent leading up to the argument. Teenagers are more likely to cause conflict with their parents than any other age child.

Teens talk back because they often think what they are saying is right. They feel as if their parents are not paying attention and hearing them out. Believing that if they keep arguing, they can get their way by changing their minds.

"Kids in high school argue with their parents because two things are still developing in the human body during the adolescent period," said psychology teacher Kourtney Saavedra. "The limbic system regulates a lot of emotions, and the frontal lobe which helps with our decision making."

With not everything fully developed in teenage bodies, it messes with how they react to discipline and the word "no." Teenagers want to be able to do what they want and be with who they want because they want to have freedom, fun, and the choice to do what they want.

"Adolescence is very stressful," said Saavedra. "There's a lot of trying to decide who you are based on the family and friend context. There are a lot of things going on in a

teen's life all at once and our bodies are not quite ready to handle everything that's happening. We are still in the process of growing and making all these life decisions."

With teens having little free time it could be hard to hear "no" coming from a parent. If you do a lot of activities and finally get free time, you would most likely want to go do something fun with your friends at a place that interests you or just simply hang out without worrying about a curfew, trusting yourself to be responsible. Some teens do not understand why they are told not they can or can't do something.

Without reasoning behind the "no," there is often a spark of disagreement leading into an argument. If parents gave a valid reason for their decision, it could end many arguments and keep a healthy relationship. Even if they disagree, understanding why their parents are making the decisions they made, helps teenagers understand the decision-making process, but when reasons are made transparent, teenagers are less likely to respond in a negative way.

Parents should not always intervene with their kids' choices. It is a part of growing up and making decisions and suffering the consequences is an important lesson to learn. Some kids may abuse their privileges and make wrong decisions, but most are responsible when given the chance and open communication.



The History of ASMR

by Aiden McKenny, 10th Grade, WBHS



Autonomous sensory meridian response: the tingling sensation. Heard of it? If you haven't, you might want to sit down.

Autonomous sensory meridian response, or ASMR, is a sensation that some people experience. It is described to start in the head and be a tingly sensation that goes down your back, caused by triggers such as whispering, crackling sounds, hand movements, amongst others. However, it is not the same for everyone.

West Brunswick student Emma Yando enjoys watching ASMR. When asked how long she has known about it and since when she started watching it she responded, "Since 2018, on Instagram." She also said she enjoys "visual triggers" in ASMR more than other triggers which she also watches on Instagram.

In a 2007 forum from a user "okaywhatever" had posted a discussion board called Weird sensation feels good on SteadyHelathy.com which sparked a conversation amongst many other people who had experienced the same feeling.

The first intentional ASMR video

was released on YouTube in 2009 and has risen in popularity, becoming widespread.

"I thought I'd make a video of me whispering because I love hearing people whisper," said Whispering-Life in the first intentional ASMR video on YouTube.

While many popular ASMRtists include people such as JoJo's ASMR, Gibi ASMR, Fredsvoice, etc. However, many ASMR videos are unintentional, the most successful of which being Bob Ross' Joy of Painting series. The series, which many people watched to sleep or to enjoy ASMR, was one of the first mainstream ASMR programs ever.

People enjoy ASMR for several reasons, but the main ones being sleep, relaxation, and the pleasant tingling sensation, which many view as a specific feeling only ASMR brings.

ASMR is a unique topic that has influenced the media substantially in recent years and will only continue to do so.

"YouTube searches for ASMR grew over 200% YoY in 2015 and are consistently growing," said "thinkwithgoogle.com" On its own, a top ASMR video can garner over 16 million views."



Lunch In a Crunch

The Controversy of the New Lunch Schedule
by Destiny Noblitt and Angelica Giaquinto, 10th Grade



The new bell schedule revolves around a recently updated lunch schedule, bringing back a fifth lunch in an effort to prevent overcrowding in the cafeteria and to help speed up lunch lines.



Some students don't have a problem with the new schedule and believe it genuinely benefited the students including junior Marissa Gainey.

"I personally think lunch at least is still crowded, it didn't affect me directly because I'm still with my buddies and I think it's pretty chill," said Gainey.

While Gainey appreciates the county-wide decision to change lunches and address overcrowding, many students say that they can't stand the new lunches and want to change it back.

"I felt like lunch got shorter and not for the good of it," said senior Jose Cabrera. "It kind of affected my chance to socialize at lunch but not too horrible. I still think the cafeteria is crowded, and I don't think it would hurt to go back to the old lunch."

Cabrera is not alone in his frustration; multiple students feel the same way and believe that this new lunch schedule did no change to help overcrowded lunches.

"I feel like lunch got shorter, and there is still not enough time for people who eat lunch from school to sit down and eat without rushing," said freshman Jacob Rumsey. "My socialization was changed for the worse during lunch, I was separated from a good bit of my friends, not all though. I feel like the cafeteria is still crowded and that they should just go back to the old schedule."

There are many pros and cons to this new lunch schedule. Including less crowded areas for some of the lunches and faster lines through the lunch line would be considered pros by students. Although, taking away some students' social time during their lunch is something students would consider a con.

Many students want it changed back and have even provided ideas for solutions. Perhaps, a possible solution would be to add more time to the original lunch schedule so students can get through the line faster and still have enough time to eat during their original lunch.

"I think it had an equal reaction; there were both positive and negative effects of the change," said freshman Trinity Johnson.

Teen Vaping Still Rampant

by Braxton Howard, 10th Grade, WBHS

Despite legislation limiting flavors and targeting e-cigarette companies, teen vaping is still popular and happening in bathroom stalls all around.

Many people are getting away with vaping, whether in the bathrooms or by exhaling discreetly in their hoodies. School policy states, "The use of any tobacco products by any person in any school building, school vehicle, or on the school grounds at any time is strictly prohibited [...] This includes but is not limited to the use of electronic cigarettes of any type (i.e. Juul)."

"Do you know how many times the fire alarm went off because of kids smoking in the bathrooms?" said senior Kylie Olley, "If kids want to smoke, they need to do it off campus".

Teens are finding ways to vape by going to tobacco shops that they know don't card. Flavors that attract teens are still available and making it harder for them to quit. It has gotten way more popular over the years, and the JUUL started it all.

"There's so many flavors, and they are addicting," said junior Hannah Fowler. "They just want to fit in and be cool."

Vaping is very hard to avoid socially because many people are using vapes as a stress reliever or just because others are doing it around them. Most teens are not caring what adults or friends say, even if their life may be at risk with the unknown side effects.

Peer pressure plays a big role in this issue because some "friends" aren't the best friends if they are pressuring people to partake in vaping.

"It's very disrespectful--you didn't come to school to smoke, you came to school to learn," said junior Carlos Morgan. "It's a waste of time, waste of time."

Another reason teens vape is because they think it's a safer choice than cigarettes, but in reality, it's really not. One JUUL pod contains 20 cigarettes worth of nicotine. Is it really worth the risk, especially with long term consequences that may be unknown?

Ultimately, teens are vaping, perhaps more than ever, regardless of what health or school consequences are in play.

"I don't think there's gonna be anything to prevent kids from vaping," said Olley.

Leland Middle School



A Nightmare

by Andrew Aydell, 7th Grade



"BANG! What did you do? "OH my," John, "why did you shoot him?"

"Why, because he was a bad person. He killed everyone I loved. He DESERVED it."

"You're crazy just SHUT UP,"

said Jack.

"As I said, he deserved to die."

"That doesn't change anything," said Jack.

"I don't care now. Help me carry him. This is crazy! I don't care, just help me," said John.

"Okay," said Jack. They put him in a tarp, put him in the trunk, and drove off to an unknown place.

"This place looks familiar," says Jack.

"Yes," said John, "this is where we used to hang out. Get the shovel."

Jack gets the shovel and digs a big hole. It took a couple of hours, but when they finished, they kicked him into the hole. "You won't be killing anymore," John chuckled. As they walked back to the car, Jack suggested that they not speak of this ever. They drove back to their house, a log cabin far in the woods, where they fell asleep.

Awaking in fear, they both grabbed a gun and walked to the kitchen. Boom! The thunder roared, as the strong wind from the storm broke the door. Then John sees mud prints on the ground. He walks over to the pantry and, with a shaking hand, opens the door. There's nothing there. He looks around the house.

"Look upstairs," said John. They both go in different directions. Jack walks around; he sees the tv turned on, but there's no one there.

"AHH!" John screams. "Help, HELP!"

Jack runs up the stairs in a rush. John is in pain. His arm hurts really bad. John tells Jack to get his phone and turn on the flashlight. They look at his arm to see it slowly turning black and rotting, with blood dripping out. Let's wrap your arms up. NO, I want to see who is in here.

They move everything out of the way and see nothing but a puddle of blood and dirt. "Dang it, where is he?" says John. Suddenly, he sees a man standing in the hall.

"Remember me," says the man.

"NO NOOO, it can't be!!! I killed you!"

"Ha, you wish!" The man walks closer and grabs Jack's arm. See what I can do? AHH-HH, Jack screams in pain. Then he walks to John and says, "now you will die." BANG! Jack hit the man in the head with a baseball bat. John and Jack quickly ran downstairs.

"HAHAHAHA, you think you can kill me?" "I'm already dead," says the man. The boys start thinking of what they can do to kill him. They turn on the flashlight to see if he is there. AHH, he doesn't like the light. "We found your weakness!" Jack told John

to get the matches while he kept hitting the man's head with the baseball bat. John comes up the stairs with gasoline and matches. He pours the gasoline on the dead man and runs a trail to the outside. As they light the gas on fire, they hear a scream from inside. They smile, then walk to the car.

As the car door opened, they heard a strange noise in the woods. Wonder what that is, asked John.

COD: Vanguard A Review

by De'andre Jones, 6th Grade, LMS



What a merry time of the year! A time of peace and love and happiness. Yes, yes, I'm talking about Christmas! Let's see if Vanguard would work for someone in your family. So, so so so. First of all, let's talk multiplayer, okay? So first, the weapons do feel quite nice to handle, and they work very well. However, Sledgehammer has added an MVP ending screen, where you vote for the team's MVP. Also, the maps are... okay. They look very very well done, but the map layout just doesn't work. In super cramped areas with many areas, these maps feel too confined for my liking. However, there are open maps that are a lot better, so it balances out at 0.

Zombies-wise, the map Der Anfang was met with lots of hate from the community, as it is objectively based, like Cold War's "Outbreak" mode. The new covenant system feels pretty good to me, but there are so many reused assets from Cold War. For example, every icon and nearly every mechanic, like armor, was reused; nothing was made new.



The last thing I have on the subject is that the PAP price was raised to 7,500 points, and the point system was downgraded to 20, 25, or 30 points per zombie. Compare this to 90, 115 points per zombie, and the numbers come out to be -70, -95, and -90 points per zombie. So really, PAP should have been downgraded.

Inequality

by Keiran Daniels, 8th Grade, LMS



One Hundred fifty-six years ago on December 18th, the Thirteenth Amendment was adopted into the United States Constitution, truly ending the battle and suffering of Slavery; sadly, even if Slavery had ended, Racism had not. Even after years of others trying to bring everyone together and give equality to people of color, there has been little progress. From the website pewsearch.org, I researched the contrast between the people of other races and Caucasian people. While I read, I could say I was honestly not shocked by the outcomes; even if you did not appreciate or prefer a particular party, politics are seemingly brought into everything.

People I have met have made assumptions about other races, even if they did not know the person. Other people say slurs that should never be said but do because they are allowed. People are harassed, harmed, or even killed for their race, gender, or sexual orientation. I know people who would assume I, a thirteen-year-old eighth grader, am a Democrat just from my standpoints of the world. And, to say the least, I am truly worried for the future if all of this is to continue. I made this article as a remembrance of the end of Slavery but it was not the end of Racism and everything that came with it.

Holiday Fun

by Keiran Daniels, 8th Grade, LMS

The chilly air.
Soft white sleet covering the ground outside house.
Inside, warm house.
The family sits around the Christmas Tree; fireplace *burning fiercely and brightly*.
Presents, glossy wraps, and the net bows on top.
Children giggling and cheering ripping open soft, colorful wrappers seeing the gifts.
Makes them believe Saint Nick had arrived in town this year.
The cookies on the table eaten and the filled milk half-drunk is letting the children's imagination run wild.
The joy of Christmas as rejoiced once more.



Our Awesome Leland Middle School Soccer Team!



Thanks for reading another issue of Teen Scene!!!
Help us grow in 2022!



As 2021 comes to a close, Teen Scene is steadily working with some area schools to develop Journalism Clubs and promote basic writing skills. If you agree that our programs and efforts benefit your children and our local businesses, who will soon be hiring them, I am asking for your support. **We rely solely upon donations and grants to cover the costs of this effort. Please make your tax-deductible contribution today to write it off on your 2021 taxes. Thank you.**



The Christmas Pickle

by Janet Stiegler, Brunswick Forest



Some of you are probably familiar with a Christmas tradition in which a glass pickle is hidden on a Christmas tree, camouflaged among the evergreen branches. The first child to find the pickle Christmas morning gets a special gift or is the first to open a present. It is said to be a German holiday tradition, but even though I lived in Germany for three years and have visited several times afterward, I never saw it on a Christmas tree there. In fact, in 2016, the New York Times published the findings of a survey of more than 2,000 German natives that asked their experience with the Christmas pickle (Weihnachsgurke), and 91 percent said they had never heard of it.

We started the quirky tradition with our children, but it was because my sister-in-law in Massachusetts sent us the glass pickle, claiming it was an Old German tradition. For several years, my competitive daughter found the gherkin first, but we suspect it was because she snuck down early to do a little

sleuthing. She didn't even have the guile to pretend to look; she would just point right at it. Her older brother claims that she broke it one year during her early morning search, and when we all came downstairs, only half a glass pickle was left hanging.

There are various theories about where the Christmas pickle originated, including one in which three Spanish boys are kidnapped by a crazed innkeeper and locked in a pickle barrel. When Saint Nicholas rescues them later that night, they hang a pickle-shaped ornament on their tree every year in gratitude. Another story claims a captured and wounded Civil War soldier requested a pickle as his last dying wish. When the pickle miraculously heals his wounds, he hangs a pickle on his Christmas tree to remember the kindness of the guards and the pickle that saved his life. What's weird about both these theories is that they have no connection to Germany.

The most likely explanation is commercial. Around the late 19th century, Woolworths started importing glass Christmas decorations from Germany

and France, many shaped like fruits and vegetables. Unlike the glass apples and grapes, the glass pickles tended to sit on the shelves. To unload the inventory, a clever sales clerk began telling customers it was an Old German holiday tradition. The marketing gimmick must have worked because everyone wanted one. And ironically, Germany now apparently imports glass pickles from the United States.

In honor of our German ancestry, we continue to hang our green Christmas pickle on the tree every year, often forgetting to even look for it on Christmas morning. (One year, after the festivities were over and everything was packed away, my husband almost threw out the tree with the poor pickle still tangled in its boughs!) Of course, we also have large painted wooden nutcrackers guarding the fireplace, a wooden pyramid carousel powered by candles, and annual Advent calendars filled with chocolates. These truly are of German origin but are nevertheless forced to share the stage with an imposter marinated cucumber.

Ground Breaking for the Restoration of the Reaves Chapel Church



(right) Al Beatty, President, Cedar Hill/West Bank Heritage Foundation speaks

(below) Al Beatty, Amanda Mason, President, Historic Wilmington Foundation, Travis Gilbert, Exec. Dir. Historic Wilmington Foundation, Jessica Blake, NC Coastal Land Trust



Christmas Memories From Up North

by Kathy Grant, Wilmington



It happened every year, from the first lighting the day after Thanksgiving until mid-January when the lights were turned off. The date we went was never the same, sometimes we would wait patiently for the first fluffy snows of December, other times if it looked like time would run out before Christmas, we would rush to get there before the 24th, because it wasn't Christmas if we had not had our La Salette Village pilgrimage.



La Salette Village is a religious retreat and Shrine in Attleboro, MA., it has been in existence for 175 years. It boasts over 300,000 multi-colored lights that gracefully cover every branch of spiraling pines of the retreat/village nestled in the woods of New England covering 10 celestial acres. People come from all over to

see the lights, walk amongst the statues and international manger scenes, and sip the best hot chocolate around. And as a kid I was yet to appreciate all of this and it was free.

It was always the symbol to our family of the Christmas season, not just because it was a tribute to the real reason for the season, but because it was a melting pot of people gathered for one simple reason, to enjoy the lights and the atmosphere. People of all colors were there and many languages were being spoken but often no matter what the words were that were uttered, you could see and feel the same awe and thankfulness for that moment. All politics were put aside all that mattered was the peace of the moment.

Nothing will ever hold the same meaning or fascination for me as I search for something similar in my new adopted home in Leland, NC. My guess is because I have seen it through the eyes of a child nothing will be as special to be as La Salette Village.

A Friends and Family Christmas Tree

by Bev Moss Haedrich, Wilmington



It was our first Christmas back in the South. I sat cross-legged on the sofa leafing through a large cache of holiday cards. Loose photos, slipped inside the folds of greeting cards, were vivid reminders of pleasant day trips to the beach, Navy tailgate parties, and romantic anniversaries. The preprinted messages of Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays From our House to Yours left me feeling nostalgic. Before this year's collection of photos arrived and became mere garland draped above a doorway, I vowed to find a more meaningful home for these treasures. What I discovered was so much more.

My resolve took me on a pictorial journey through time with old friends, distant relatives, beloved pets, those still with us, and some who are not. A photo of my mom and her two sisters, all sadly gone now, gave me three reasons to smile. My fingers slid gently across the faded picture of a dear friend. Then, I laughed aloud at one of myself at eleven or twelve with a zit on my nose, space between my front teeth, and wondered why my bangs were cut on an angle. I wished at that moment we could all gather at a reunion of sorts. But how? The old photo boxes seemed a likely place to start.

In not much more than the blink of an eye, our dining table was transformed into Grand Photo Central as shoe boxes and albums were stacked like towers barricading me from the mundane chores of my daily routine. For weeks, I perused snapshots of longtime friends and forever family. There were photos of cousins on their first day of school. Sleeping newborn babies and grinning toddlers galore. 'Their high school and college graduation pics should be nearby,' I thought as I rummaged through the next collection. In another, my brother pushes, refusing to mount, a bicycle with lopsided training wheels. I chuckled aloud. These recollections were a jarring reminder of how quickly time passes. Babies don't stay babies forever, my grandmother often said. The older I get, the truer her words become.

I always felt a twinge of sadness after the holidays when we stored those photos in a bin and headed for the attic. I wanted to cherish those moments longer with each passing year. So many memories, so many wonderful souls. But how best could I stitch this diverse patchwork of pics into

a holiday keepsake for all to enjoy?

I held a photo of my infant son taken months before he could walk, some forty-five years ago now. We were waist high in a pool for a Mom and Tots swim class. I can still hear the instructor's encouraging words, 'It's okay. He'll be fine. Just let him see the joy in your face when he comes up.' I took a deep breath, remembering his tiny hands between my thumbs and forefingers, and wondered where the years have gone.

Opening a tattered box, I found a simple gold frame from my early cross-stitch days. Maybe with a dash of color...and a spatter of sparkle...? With the ornament-sized nugget safely in hand, my hunt for something similar began. In no time, I found a palm-size mirror at a local shop. Could this unlikely gem be what I had imagined? There were dozens of them with multicolored beads in glistening greens, blues, reds, and some with white pearls. 'The delicate pearls could be for newlyweds or newborns,' I thought. By jolly, ornaments of all our friends and families could sway from the branches of a friends and family Christmas tree! And so, it was.

Something magical happens when the eyes of a little one widens as they lean in for a closer look at a photo of themselves. They giggle, and the reflection of the tree lights surround them like a cherub's halo. Raucous teens point in disbelief as they spot an ornament of a famously bald-headed uncle with hair! A grandmother's front porch snapshot from the early 1900s becomes an emotional connection between generations.

Today, over one-hundred faces adorn the branches of our holiday tree.

Gifts of lasting memories, as unique as the individuals themselves, are framed and hung on the tree. You see, the treasured moments spent with loved ones around a Christmas tree begs to be remembered and shared for all to see. I delight in adding new ornaments each year and witnessing the priceless expressions when friends see their faces on a branch of our decorated tree. My husband reminds them of something I often say, If you've made an appearance on our friends and family tree, you're in our hearts forever.

Previously published in Salt Magazine. For a free guide to writing stories, visit BevsStoryGuide.com

Hal Moore - "We Were Soldiers Once..."

by Frank T. Stritter, Holden Beach, NC

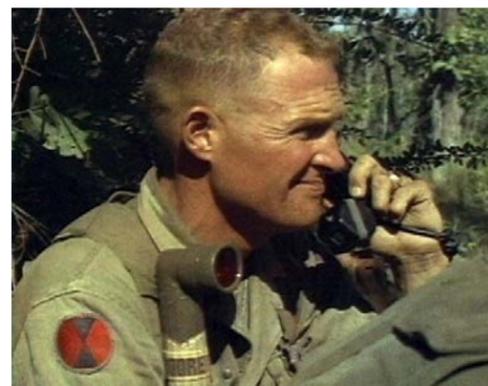


Hal Moore was commissioned in the US Army in 1945 when his entire class graduated early from West Point due to the need for officers in World War II. He then had a variety of assignments until he took command of the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry, 11th Air Assault Division to develop a method of using helicopters to quickly transport troops in and out of combat.

In 1965, his battalion was redesignated as the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, and deployed to Vietnam as part of the 1st Cavalry Division to try out the new method. The same 7th Cavalry was commanded by General George Armstrong Custer at the Battle of the Little Bighorn just under a century before.

Moore became best known for his leadership of the 1st of the 7th and heroism in the first major battle of the Vietnam Conflict at the Ia Drang Valley. That battle is notable for being the first large scale helicopter air assault and the first strategic use of bombers in a tactical support role. It took place from November 14-16, 1965 at Landing Zone X-Ray. Within 20 minutes of its helicopter landing at the LZ, Moore's unit, vastly outnumbered, was assaulted by hundreds of the enemy determined to over-run the LZ.

Surrounded and under heavy fire from a numerically superior force, the American forces held off and drove the enemy back from the LZ after a three-day blood-



bath. This was helped in large part by the support of both the air power and heavy artillery, which the North Vietnamese lacked. Blond haired Moore became known as "Yellow Hair" to his troops as a tongue-in-cheek reference to the legendary General Custer.

Both sides exaggerated the number of casualties inflicted on the other, but current estimates stand at 237 US killed, 258 wounded and four missing while 1500 to 1700 North

Vietnamese are now listed as having been casualties. LZ X-Ray was considered a tactical victory for the American forces by the American command, but Moore was more circumspect about the battle and what it meant for the larger conflict. In his 1992 book with correspondent Joseph Galloway, "We Were Soldiers Once... and Young," Moore observed, "The peasant soldiers had withstood the terrible high-tech fire storm delivered against them by a superpower and had at least fought the Americans to a draw. By their yardstick, a draw against such a powerful opponent was the equivalent of a victory."



Promoted to Colonel in 1966, Moore assumed command of the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division and led it through several campaigns. Moore loved his soldiers deeply and when his hometown announced it would celebrate his return with an elaborate "Hal Moore Day," he refused to participate unless the event was changed to "Vietnam Veteran's Day."

In 1968, Moore was awarded his first star and led the planning for the Army's withdrawal from Vietnam. He was then awarded his second star and given command of the 7th Infantry Division to rebuild it after it had been fractured with insubordination and race riots. Over the next year, Moore did rebuild the 7th into a capable fighting force.

Moore's final assignment would have been to become the Commanding General, U.S. Army Japan, but he elected to retire in 1977 after 32 years of service. Following retirement, he turned his attention to research for his 1992 book on the Ia Drang battle. In 2002, the book was the basis for the movie, We Were Soldiers, in which Mel Gibson portrayed Moore.

In 1993 Moore made a return visit to the Valley. There he met and developed a friendship with General Huu An, who had tried to kill him in the Valley years before. He wrote: "General An and I came face to face. Instead of charging one another with bayonets, we mutually offered open arms. Although we did not understand each other's language, we quickly learned that the soul requires no interpreter. Ever so gently, General An placed his arm in mine. Unity was sealed through the reverent affection of one arm in the other."

Moore died in 2017, three days before his 95th birthday, and was buried at Fort Benning.

An Invitation to Cape Fear Readers

by Sherrod Sturrock, Wilmington



I am involved in a writing workshop based in Maryland (from whence we came) that takes its inspiration from Ross Gay's *The Book of Delights*. Using Gay's book as a writing prompt, we have been sharing our delights and finding it delightful. For example, here is one about a recent concert at the Cameron Art Museum...

Delight 3: Jazz

Latin jazz. Live. After months of isolation, a tonic for the soul. The room fills with like-minded, masked fellow travelers longing for that moment of transportation to another realm. The horns, a tenor sax and trombone, begin a sexy duet, twining the melody together before wrenching it apart – a lover's quarrel. The piano flits above like some otherworldly sprite sprinkling magic over the horns. Rumbling a running commentary, the stand-up bass provides a counterpoint to this floating conversation, while the drummer beats out the rhythm, holding the meandering music together. We nod and bob and tap our toes in collective response.

Or this one:

Delight 9: Habits

I have started my day in the same way for years. Before coffee, before paper (back when I got a paper paper), before anything else, I put away the dishes in the drainboard. There is something so satisfying about taking clean pots, pans, and utensils from the cluttered rack and putting each in its appointed place. It gives me a tiny sense of peace and control over an increasingly chaotic world. In my small corner, in my little kitchen, all is in order, just as it should be. I have done this simple task through dozens of moves, from college apartments with closet kitchens to third floor walk-ups; from log cabins to inner cities, to suburban single-family dwellings. I don't even think about it. I walk into the darkened kitchen, lit by the stove light, and my hands reach for whatever rests on

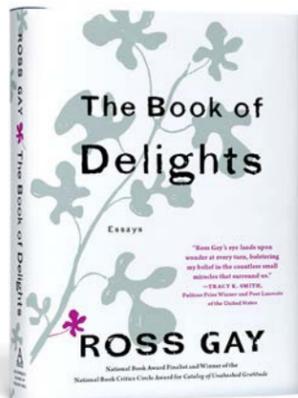
top of the pile. It is meditation. It is my greeting to the day. Although I had never thought of it as delightful, that is, in fact, exactly what it is.

We have created an online community sharing our delights, and it opens a window into seeing the world in a new and gratifying way. Cape Fear Voices has expressed support for publishing delights shared by its readers. If you are interested in recording and sharing your delights, please send them to me at sturrosa51@gmail.com. Perhaps we will create our own community of delight, and we will certainly share with the readers of The Cape Fear Voices. Delights should be around 100 – 200 words. I look forward to reading and sharing them!

Delight 11: A New Day

I am a morning person; always have been. My mother used to say that as a toddler, I would pad into their bedroom before sunrise and announce, "I wake up!" Now, in my retirement, I still wake up in the dark. My husband and I (he of the magnificent morning coffee) sit in our sunroom staring at the blackened windows, as one might watch expectantly for the curtain to rise on a stage. We chat about our upcoming day, the news, how we slept, and we watch. The proscenium curtain shifts a little, as if the actors are taking their places. The musicians of the morning tune their calls across the darkened set – I hear cardinal, wood thrush, the chirp of a chickadee, the harsh cry of squirrels. Back lit, we can see the grey outlines begin to emerge. We get up and go for a second cup of coffee, returning to see that without fanfare, the day has arrived. The curtain is lifted. And we bestir ourselves to take our places in the scene.

Delights are all around us and can be found in the smallest moments. It's not the grand gesture or the peak experience, it's the small joys that make us smile. Recording them will make you appreciate them even more.



The True Reason for the Season

by Brenden Connelly, Brunswick Forest



The Christmas season is a time for joy and happiness. Many families will receive the best present this holiday season. That is, to be able to gather and be together with their loved ones. Because of the pandemic, many families have gone over a year without being able to see their loved ones. They will finally be able to hug and embrace their loved ones once again.

This holiday season we all need to be grateful to be able to gather with our loved ones and to be healthy and happy.

This holiday season, let us pray for and think about all those who have lost loved ones so that they find peace and comfort this holiday season.

Let us pray for and think about all those who are sick and fighting with illness that they find healing and get healthy soon.

Let us pray for and think about all those who are fighting for our country and pray that they return home to their families soon.

Let us pray for the poor, needy and homeless, that they find food, water, clothing and shelter this holiday season.

Let us thank and be grateful for all our doctors, nurses and front-line workers who are working round the clock, caring for the sick and needy.

During this holiday season, we should all consider doing a random act of kindness every day.

Donate nonperishable food, unwanted clothing, and toys to people in need. Go visit the sick and let them know you care.

That is what the holidays are all about. Spreading love and putting a smile on people's faces. That is much more important than any present we receive.

The greatest gift we all can wish for is for all the sick to get healthy, the poor to be able to get food and shelter and for every child to get what they want and be happy.

And most importantly, we wish for health, happiness and joy for each and everyone.

The Eagles Island Central Park Task Force and Its Vision for Conservation, Education, and Recreation (Part Two)

by Ana Johnson, Staff Writer, Kennesaw State University



For over a year, the Eagles Island Central Park Task Force has planted its vision of connecting its communities and our region through conservation, education, and recreation. Now, the group is looking to elevate awareness for all of Eagles Island by carrying out longtime efforts to protect, preserve, and restore the area. One of those exciting opportunities is the Eagles Island Nature Park. "I like to say it is the coolest project nobody's ever heard of." Folds said

The educational center and riverfront park would be set on developable land south of the Battleship North Carolina by pursuing partnerships with landowners. There would be a variety of potential programs within this project, including an educational complex, an open-air pavilion, a theater space, and more. These initiatives would involve environmental, historical, and recreational features, such as walking trails, a riverfront boardwalk, an off-road bike and pedestrian route, picnic shelters, etc.

"In the end, it is not a single point; it is multiple points. It is also about the stories that we need to be telling to ourselves that can be done through a new amenity that is built between two of the fastest-growing places in the United States." Folds said. These timely possibilities would allow oncoming visitors to see the Island and its surrounding areas from all angles. By pursuing this project, the Eagles Island Central Park Task Force hopes to work efficiently while protecting the Island's present state.

According to Folds, this idea was formed ten years ago with a vision for a cultural center with interactive elements such as interpretive signing, kayaking, bike trails, an amphitheater, and an IMAX theater. The plan was originally shown in a document that lives on the New Hanover County Soil & Water Conservation District's website. Since coming from that secure background, the task force does not plan to change the overall vision the Eagles Island Coalition

enforced. But instead, carry the image forward in a way that reinvents the act of development in our area.

"Development is a tricky word; because if we are going to build a park or any form of infrastructure, we would be developing it as well. I think the difference would be we would be doing it to send an educational signal on how to live with water," Folds said. "I think that is an opportunity here. This is how we need to build to justify development in this type of ecosystem. There are a lot of really cool ideas that we want to bring to the table and see what sticks and what does not stick. This is more about stretching our imagination of what we can do and telling ourselves more truth about where we are coming from."

The Eagles Island Central Park Task Force plans to tackle the essential aspects by picking up this project from its roots. From a conservation standpoint, the park would preserve the ecosystem and explain its functionality for our region. At the same time, the educational and recreational standpoint presents the cultural center and formalizes multimodal activities and programs.

To further discuss this interest and other matters, the Eagles Island Central Park Task Force released its vision plan in October. With heavy engagement from the NC State University Coastal Dynamics Design Lab, who produced the report, it hopes to stimulate an engaging conversation about what will be happening on Eagles Island through a natural and cultural avenue that excites the public. Its crucial mission is to care for the well-being of all at Eagles Island Nature Park. The park amenities, nature trails, and programs will amplify the region's value, livability, and appeal at a crucial moment in our history.

"They do a really high-level job, and their prompt is to try and create value on paper that can be used by us, but also other organizations." Folds said. The report focuses on research presented in both Brunswick and New Hanover counties and was completed during an intensive engagement that spanned from

January 2021 to August 2021. It covers five broad sections: the vision, the local and regional alignment, the context, the ecology, and the history and culture.

The newly-developed report has gained immense support from local and regional partners. Local areas such as Belville, Leland, Navassa, and Wilmington are on board and active with the spirit of the project. By initiating community engagement from collective organizations, the task force wants to expand those beneficial relationships to a greater extent. "A lot of our efforts have been cross-pollination, connecting with other projects, and developing a broader vision than just our own project. I think that is a totally underserved idea in our region." Folds said.

Within the volunteer-oriented assistance, a challenge has arose for the group. "Something of this scale and this nature with the many stakeholders and interests involved, it warrants some paid project management. So, we have been a bit restrictive to have the public-facing moment, which we are facing with the report whether we like it or not." Folds said. Because of this, the question among leadership becomes, "How do we formalize the kind of advocacy that would be needed to carry this into fruition?"

Answering this question all boils down to proper organization and interpreting the group in innovative ways. This has been carried out by the Eagles Island Central Park Task Force through forming alliances, planning public-facing events, and building dedicated committees. "Our original task was to organize the landscape and produce a piece of collateral that can tell a story beyond us. Now that we have done that, we are in the moment of reimagining ourselves." Folds said.

For more information about the Eagles Island Central Park Task Force, visit: www.eaglesislandnaturepark.org or www.facebook.com/eaglesislandnaturepark

Home To High Point

by Donna Lemery, Compass Pointe



The months leading up to Christmas 1968 were filled with joyful, weightless, dreamlike wonder to this little girl. Unless I thought of my dad (or my grandma). Dad had to go to a mysterious place called Vietnam. I didn't know why. It didn't really matter because he was gone all the time anyway. The only thing was...it upset my mom. I didn't really know him. What I knew was...we were leaving Fort

Leavenworth, Kansas for North Carolina to live with my grandparents. My Grandma and Granddaddy Hedgecock lived outside of High Point on the highway to Winston Salem. Their house was built on a bluff overlooking the highway. Or, more likely, the road had been cut right through the farm. Mom didn't want to go home, but she had three kids. She needed help. She didn't care for country life. She said that she was done flagging down the Greyhound bus to catch a ride into town.

Granddad had prepared for our arrival by completely renovating the attic. He transformed it into a bedroom and a bathroom with a claw-foot tub. It was said that Granddaddy could fix anything. He was a mechanic for a mill in Kernersville. Granddad made us a go-cart out of a lawnmower engine and an ironing board. It would fly! He also made a wagon to hitch to the back for my sister, Lynn, and I. He owned one of the first airplanes in High Point. It was a two-seater biplane. My granddad's real name was Roy Robertson Hedgecock, but they called him Hedgehopper at the Winston Salem airport. This was because he didn't need much runway to land. He was accustomed to landing just on the other side of the hedgerows into a farmer's field.

Janis Boles Hedgecock (Grandma) was one of the first female realtors in the area and had always worked. It was unusual for a woman to have a career in those days. Grandma had a knack for gardening and had beautiful flowers encircling the house. She would tend to them before she went to work each day. I loved my grandma. I didn't like her to kiss me though. Her smile was drawn to the side and she had scars on that side of her neck. The result of a surgery for lymphoma. When Grandma was feeling good, she would take us to the Borden Dairy on Main Street for ice cream. I loved when we drove by the "World's Tallest Chest of Drawers".

Once autumn arrived, it was time for school. I went to second grade in High

Point. Grandma drove us into town every morning on her way to work. We lived with my dad's parents on the weekends (Herbert and Ethel Farmer). This enabled us to go to the better school in town. Before school, I sat with Granddad in the tiny galley kitchen for breakfast. He didn't like to talk, which was fine with me. We just sat there enjoying each other's company and listened to the radio.

One day, close to Christmas, we received a package. It came all the way from Vietnam! We were so excited! Mom pensively opened the package and there... was a reel-to-reel tape. Mom had the tape player to go with it. Mom attached the cartridge to the tape player until it snapped into place. She threaded the tape



and hit "play". We waited in anticipation and there, all the way from Vietnam, was my dad's voice! His voice sounded strained, unnatural and a bit sad. He addressed each child by name and assured us that he was fine. He said that he would be home soon and wished us all a Merry Christmas. I remember that Christmas. We were showered with gifts from both sets of grandparents to the point that we were certainly spoiled. I'm sure, looking back, that they were compensating for the absence of my father. But...I had heard my daddy's voice, and that was the greatest gift ever! When the school year came to an end, we got news that Dad was coming home.

He flew on a big carrier, Piedmont Airlines, into Greensboro on his last leg home. I didn't recognize him. He was gaunt and thin. He tanned easily, but his skin was a dark mahogany...almost black. We got orders to go to Omaha, Nebraska of all places. The Army "Bootstrapped" my dad from Vietnam all the way to Omaha to go to college.

When it was time to say good-bye to my grandparents, my granddaddy cried. Big, quiet tears escaped down his cheek. The man who rarely spoke, wept for his grandkids. My mom packed and unpacked us another six times thereafter. We soldiered on, and rarely saw my grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins again.

Now that I am old, I think back on that year. I think about the love and sacrifice my entire extended family had to make, for one soldier to go to Vietnam. I was blessed...my dad made it home. Grandma lived a few more years. I found my "place" and my "people". Now when I am asked, "Where are you from?" I say, "My parents were both from High Point, North Carolina, so North Carolina Is my home."



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

We are a community nonprofit working in partnership with NC Arts Council, Brunswick County, Park & 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.



Welcome to a new resident and artist.

Allison Duran recently moved to the Leland area from her home town of Kansas City, Missouri. She is married with two kids 14 and 10. While in Kansas City, Allison was a chef who ran her own catering business. She explained, “awhile back I decided to try painting and loved it. I let go of the pressure to make my art fit into a mold and let myself go. It's the most fulfilling thing I've ever done.” Welcome to Leland and the ever-growing Brunswick County community of artists. Her work is currently on display at the Port City Java in Brunswick Forest. Email her for art inquiries at allieria7@gmail.com

The NEA Big Read Cape Fear



Brunswick Arts Council is pleased to be the partner in this brand-new project with 3 counties working together under an NEA Grant. Each year we will select a new book for the BIG READ.

<https://www.arts.gov/initiatives/nea-big-read>
<https://uncw.edu/arts/neagrants.html>

We are pleased to have as many Brunswick County residents who would like to participate. The project takes place from October 2021 to April 2022.

The House on Mango Street is the selected as the book. FYI we are distributing 20 copies to each of the 5 Brunswick County Libraries. In addition, other copies are being given to Senior Centers and for homeschool participants. A total of 200 books will be given across Brunswick County by BAC.

BAC will give:

- 5 books to each BCSD Middle School Library
- 4 tickets to each BCSD Middle School for the Meet the Author zoom Event on November 4 at Kenan Auditorium UNCW
- April 9 activity in Wilmington TBA



Med Instead of Meds Starting January 2022

Brunswick County, N.C. – This winter, NC Cooperative Extension in Brunswick County will be offering another session of our Med Instead of Meds program. This program is a free virtual event open to Brunswick and New Hanover County residents. Are you interested in learning more about eating the Mediterranean way but not sure where to start? Join us for Med Instead of Meds on Thursdays at 11:00 am starting January 13th, 2022.

Med Instead of Meds was created by a group of nutrition and health professionals from NC State University and the NC Division of Public Health. Eating a Mediterranean-style diet has been proven to protect against chronic illness. In some cases, eating the Med Way may even result in decreasing medications taken for blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes. *Be sure to ask your healthcare professional before changing any prescribed medications.



We are passionate about providing people with the information and tools needed to make delicious meals for themselves and their families. We too are on this journey with you to transform our eating to the Med Way. For more information and Med Way recipes, visit the Med Instead of Meds site: medinsteadofmeds.com.

The Med Instead of Meds program is free and will take place virtually. The program is six weeks long starting on January 13th, 2022, and lasting until February 16th, 2022. The program will take place on Zoom and be held every Thursday at 11:00 am and last until 12:00 pm. The one-hour session will include a PowerPoint presentation and a cooking demonstration. To register, visit go.ncsu.edu/mim2022. For any questions please email our Brunswick County FCS Agent, Meghan Lassiter (meghan_lassiter@ncsu.edu).

Action To Do:

After reading the book and if any teachers wish to incorporate this book into their curriculum...

- 1) Your school library can host a book discussion
- 2) We ask that your students create an original work of art that “Interprets their community”

They may choose any desired Art form (visual, 3D, performance, writing/poetry, textile, dance, music).

These works can be showcased by Brunswick Arts Council in the spring 2022.

Deadline:

For art project completion submission to your library -March 31,2022

BAC will work with you to collect works & display into the community.

Please track the number of students who read & participate and provide to BAC.

Here Are Some Resources:

- https://www.nps.k12.nj.us/jfk/wp-content/uploads/sites/53/2014/12/UnitPlan_document_house-on-mango.pdf
- <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mangostreet/symbols/>
- <https://study.com/academy/lesson/the-house-on-mango-street-project-ideas.html>
- <https://www.leonschools.net/cms/lib7/FL01903265/Centricity/Domain/2835/THOMS%20Project%20and%20plot%20pyramdi.pdf>
- <http://nationalmuseumofmexicanart.org/exhibits/house-mango-street-artists-interpret-community>

Thank you for participating with Brunswick Arts Council and the first annual The Big READ: Cape Fear. If there is a related activity you wish to suggest- by all means... we'd love to hear about it! This is a fluid, community project.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

"Whatever life may send or through our way...make the best of it. Don't waste our time and energy worrying about it. Instead, find a way to do something about it. Learn from it, adjust our course to it, be strong, be flexible and be our best in every situation."

Hope everyone has a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Military News



Commemorative Vietnam Veterans Lapel Pin Design

An Invitation to a National Vietnam War Veterans Day Ceremony

Leland VFW Post 12196 will host a National Vietnam War Veterans Day on March 29, 2022, at Founders Park in Leland at 5 pm. 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. Details of time and location will be announced soon.



(left) Leland VFW Post 12196 Commander Jason Gaver presents Mrs. Anita Hartsell with a post mug. Mrs. Hartsell is with the Brunswick County Veterans Service Office and discussed the services her office provides.



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Leland VFW Post 12196 meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Blossom's in Magnolia Greens. Dinner at 5:30, Meeting starts at 7pm. For more information, contact us at vfwpost12196@gmail.com or call at 910-408-1934

Leland VFW Post 12196 Pin Registration National Vietnam War Veterans Day Commemoration

An event on March 29, 2022

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: _____

Thanks to Our Sponsors in the Issue

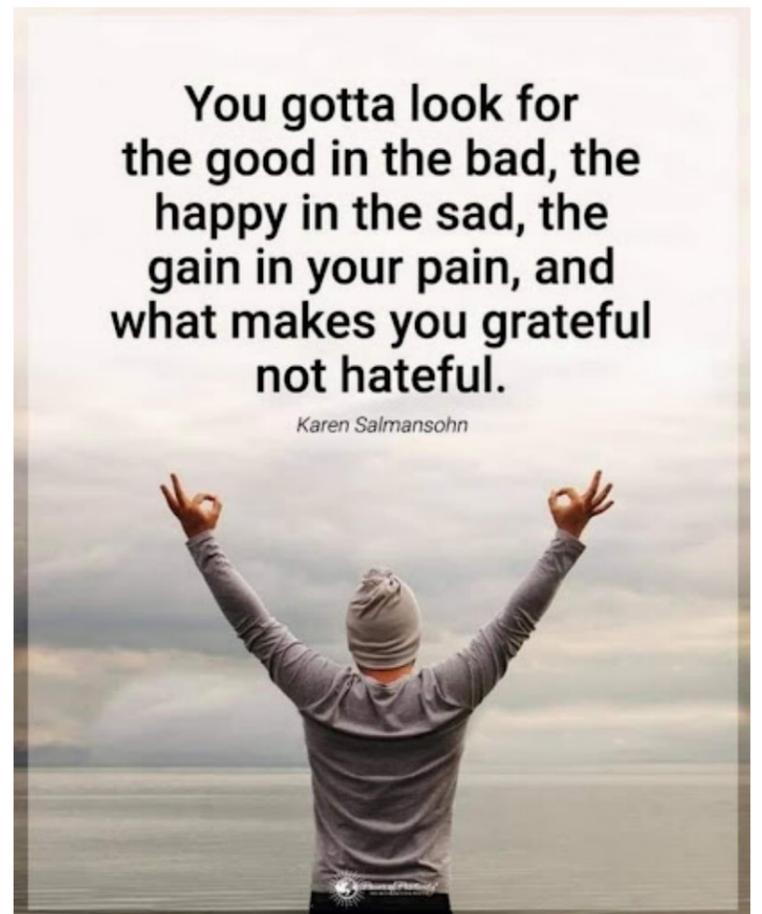
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You gotta look for the good in the bad, the happy in the sad, the gain in your pain, and what makes you grateful not hateful.

Karen Salmansohn



Season's Greetings

During this holiday season, we wish you all the best.



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910-383-3797

edwardjones.com
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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Birthdays!!!

- Carolyn Moskowitz Dec. 11
- Guadalupe Orosco Dec. 13
- Fran G. Perrault-Strong Dec. 15
- Tina Turner Dec. 23
- Patrick Cooper Dec. 25
- Olivia Elkins Dec. 26
- Gerald and Elaine Decker Dec. 26