



Cape Fear

VOICES

Providing an Outlet for Creativity in the Cape Fear Region

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by Ilah Beth Zettlemoyer, Holden Beach

Happy St. Patrick's Day! Don't pinch me, I am wearing green. It's that time again to prepare for the ongoing pinch fest that one must endure, if they forget to wear green. In my ever-prepared fashion, I have already planned my 2022 St. Patrick's Day attire. I certainly do not want to become a victim of the pinch "ouch".

Have you ever wondered where the pinching developed from? Is it Irish invented or American invented? Well....(drum roll please) It is American invented or should I say American made. I searched the internet to find out the secret of the St. Patrick's Day pinch. I knew for certain that there must be a mystical and interesting story behind the pinch. However, my dreams of the mystery were dashed. The pinch started in America, possibly around the 1700's. During my search I could find only two possible reasons for the pinching.

Pinch one result. Some say that if you don't wear green on this glorious green day, you will be pinched. But why, one might ask. The donning of green clothing, shows that you are giving honor and remembrance to Ireland. If you don't wear the desired green, the pinch is to remind you, "shame on you for not honoring Ireland"

Pinch two results (my favorite). This result involves those magical and mythical creatures called Leprechauns. Part of this belief is that when a person wears green, the mythical leprechaun cannot see you, deeming you invisible. The addi-

tional part of this belief is that since leprechauns are mischievous little creatures, they like to pinch. A pinch from them is a reminder that you are not wearing green.

Now my husband, of 34 years, has his own philosophy for NOT wearing green. He believes that since his birthday is on St. Patrick's Day, he does not have to participate in the wearing of the green. Hmm, I didn't find that on the internet at all. Having a March 17 birthday does not exclude one from the pinch. My husband will continue to receive the glorified pinch from his loving wife!

I am prepared and excited for that glorious green day celebration for St. Patrick's Day. I will participate in many festivities that are American made. I will have on green clothing while watching a St. Patrick's Day parade on television from somewhere in the U.S.A. I will look for pictures of the Chicago River turned green for the day. I will end my day with a good supper of corned beef and cabbage washed down with a green beer and a green milkshake for dessert.

I hope everyone has a great St. Patrick's Day with NO pinches and carry this Irish blessing close to your heart.

*May the road rise up to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
The rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.*

Moldy Blueberries

by Janet Stiegler, Brunswick Forest



The unopened carton of blueberries is covered in mold. It wasn't buried in the back of the refrigerator where no one could see it. No, these babies were right up front on the eye-level shelf. To make matters worse, they were organic blueberries, more carefully cultivated and pricier than your run-of-the-mill berry. For weeks, my husband had been binging on the little blue orbs—tossing them on his Rice Krispies and ice cream—but these he never touched.

"Look," I said, showing my husband the snowy covered blueberries. "They've all gone bad. Why didn't you eat any?"

"I'm on a new kick now," he responded with a shrug. Opening his fist, he revealed a handful of Hershey Kisses. "Relax," he added. "It's just blueberries."

Sure there's the money, but my dismay goes beyond mere economics. Two years ago, my book club read Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming. Since the book is very dense and heavy on scientific research, we tackled it by each taking a section. I had food and agriculture. It turns out that food waste is the third greatest contributor to greenhouse gases globally. Not only does it squander valuable resources, but the decomposing organic matter releases dangerous gases* into our atmosphere.

In the 1970s and 80s, I sometimes drove past a mile-long, 60-ft. ridge of garbage along the Belt Parkway. It looked and smelled awful, and I felt sorry for the poor people who lived nearby. NYC's Department of Environmental Protection has since capped the landfill and planted native plants to create a park. But what lurks underneath? Do the toxic waste and organic matter continue to grow and bubble beneath the surface, slowly releasing methane and CO₂ through cracks in the cement, like the gases now escaping from the melting Arctic permafrost? The thought makes me shudder.

Despite world hunger, food waste is actually a global problem. According to Drawdown, however, little is lost at the household level in low-income countries because food waste occurs early in the supply chain—bad roads, lack of refrigeration, poor packaging. But up to 35% of food in high-income economies is thrown out by grocers and consumers. We spurn imperfect fruits and misshapen vegetables in the produce sec-



tion, overestimate how many meals we will cook, toss out milk that has soured or lasagna fermenting in the back of the refrigerator.

Kitchen efficiency has become a lost art. When I was growing up, my mother bought groceries once a week for a family of five, and food was stretched, massaged, and recombined to make three wholesome meals a day. Every ten days or so, she would serve "Aunt Irma's Casserole Surprise," a combination of whatever scraps she found in the refrigerator and cupboard. We never got the "think of the poor kids in Biafra" speech, but my father did share his experience of eating ketchup sandwiches during the Depression. He also liked to cite the Army's mess hall motto: Take All You Want But Eat All You Take!

Today we live in a disposable society where everything gets thrown away, and I'm as guilty as anyone else. I insist on having two refrigerators, which increases our chances of stocking up on foods that will likely expire before we consume them. And while I share leftovers with family and friends, my spouse and I frequently "do our own thing." Sometimes that means scrounging together a meal from what's left in the fridge, but more often than not, one of us cooks something new or orders take-out.

"Hey," I say to my husband as I dump the remnants of last week's chicken stir-fry and some other now unrecognizable conglomeration of protein and saturated fat. "We really should try to reduce our carbon footprint. How about if I whip together Aunt Janet's Casserole Surprise tonight?" My husband doesn't respond; he just gives me the thumbs down, "no-way-Jose" look and pops another Hershey Kiss in his mouth.

*According to the researchers, the hydrofluorocarbons released by refrigerants and our overreliance on nonrenewable energy resources are the first and second contributors to our carbon footprint.

WWAY TV 3 agrees to partner with Teen Scene, Inc to promote writing skills among teens in the Cape Fear area through our emphasis on developing Journalism Clubs in local schools. Details will be forthcoming.



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Cape Fear Voices Submission Requirements

Cape Fear Voices intends to showcase the works of the area's many talented local writers, poets, and craftspeople as well as the work of local non-profit organizations.

- 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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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

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CAPE FEAR VOICES AND TEEN SCENE 2ND ANNUAL WRITING AWARDS BANQUET

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The 2nd annual Writer's Award Banquet is rapidly approaching. The banquet will be on March 12, 2022, at the Leland Cultural Event Center, located at 1212 Magnolia Village Way. The doors open at 5:00 p.m.

This is a night out you won't want to miss. Local Doo Wop group, Shades of Grey, will be performing, so put on your dancing shoes and enjoy the music. We're having an auction and many items for sale. Dinner, drinks and dessert will be served by Coastal Catering and Events. Come before dinner, walk around, bid on some auction items and relax and enjoy yourself.

Tickets are on sale and seating is limited to 80 people. Response to this event has been very positive and we are almost sold out. The price is \$50.00 per ticket, so don't delay. Send your check to Cape Fear Voices/Teen Scene, P.O. Box 495, Leland, NC. 28451. Or, go online at www.capecfearvoices.org, go to the top of the page and click on the box on the right-hand side to make your reservation and select your dinner choice. We are offering a mixed greens salad, chicken with an orange glaze, or, sliced pork loin with a red wine demi glaze or a vegetarian dish of penne pasta with tomato cream sauce. There will also be roasted potatoes, a roasted vegetable medley and rolls and butter

We've been planning for months and we're sure that you will enjoy the event.

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Tribute to Tenacity

by David Hume III, Brunswick Forest



Some said she grew up in an orphanage near Mexico City, the unwanted child of a politician's liaison with the daughter of a wealthy businessman. Others claimed she emigrated from Spain, the only child of a financially ruined nobleman. But as my grandmother once told me, "There are two sides to every story, and somewhere in the middle, lies the truth." The truth, in Ruth Rodriguez's case, was more intriguing than fiction.

She was a petite woman, not more than five-feet tall, with olive skin, piercing brown eyes, and coal-black hair which was always worn in a single braid ending at her waist. Her fine features and large, dark smiling eyes twinkled when she laughed. Her first days with us were not auspicious. She'd arrived by bus and asked for directions to the "school." She was met with polite smiles and blank stares until she entered my mother's store where she found a soulmate. She showed my mother a letter from the board of education assigning her to our "elementary school." There was only one problem; there was no school in Sierra Morena, elementary or otherwise. This was the first of many obstacles Ruth Rodriguez conquered. Both my mother and aunt were determined individuals when they believed in a cause. They knew education could break the cycle of poverty in the border towns of Northern Mexico and they would not let the

opportunity of having a real teacher in town escape their grasp. My mother and aunt accompanied Miss Ruth to see the owner of an empty warehouse where for eight pesos a month, Miss Ruth leased the building and it became the first school in our village. She lived in a detached structure that had served as the warehouse's office, turning it into a handsome house. Within a year, her home was surrounded by multicolored hues of acacia, gardenias, bougainvillea, morning glories, margaritas, and arroyo lupine. Passing Miss Ruth's porch was like looking through a giant, scented kaleidoscope. Every Easter, she distributed fruit and shade tree seedlings to each family in the village. Sierra Morena became an oasis as the trees matured, and doves, scissortails, warblers and other songbirds took up residence. But this was only one small part of Miss Ruth's legacy.

Within a few years of her arrival, two of her students were offered scholarships to the National University in Mexico City and one received a scholarship to study in Spain. This began a series of successes, prompting offers for her to move to the larger, urban areas of Guadalajara or Mexico City. She resisted, demanding better facilities for our village. She was accused of "not knowing her place" when she took the train to Mexico City to lobby the congress and President to fund the neglected schools of the region. However, she returned after being away for a month

with a copy of a presidential directive authorizing the construction of a school building with separate rooms for the elementary grades and a high school—even the governor and minister of education visited our village—and it wasn't an election year. We all thought Ruth Rodriguez was immortal, but it was not to be. She succumbed to cancer on the 50th anniversary of her arrival in Sierra Morena. My father, who had never shown much emotion in his life, wept inconsolably after hearing of her death.

Many of her former students attended her funeral. Among them were a sprinkling of artists, musicians, university professors, scientists, lawyers, doctors, public school teachers, priests, and even a few writers. This diverse group reflected the seeds of intellectual curiosity she'd sown; seeds that germinated and bloomed by the hundreds.

What started with the chance arrival of a young school teacher brought the residents of our village together in a fight against the barriers of ignorance, corruption, and neglect. The heroes in this story formed a diverse human ecosystem that enriched our environment. The pathways to their success were sometimes pleasant, sometimes painful, and sometimes funny. But their journey was made easier by Ruth Rodriguez, who used wisdom, tenacity, and uncommon valor to show them the way.

The 'Gift' of Art

by Alan Sturrock, Wilmington, NC



I grew up pretty much artless.

In Primary Four I sat next to the talented Allan E.

His artwork was displayed both in our classroom, and in the Art room. Mine was nowhere to be seen. One day I asked him where he got this gift, and where could I get it...but he looked at me as if I had three heads.

Fast forward to fifth form at The Academy and Mr. Bone, the Art teacher was mulling over my year's 'art' in my portfolio. Finally, he wrote fifty seven percent on the cover. When I protested, his answer was: 'Believe me..it's a gift'

Art was something that belonged in Art Galleries, or Museums; it was clearly something that gifted people did.

So, when we recently moved into a new house and Sherrod brought up the idea of commissioning a piece of Art for a large, blank living room wall, it was like contemplating specters from an artless past.

Turns out, in Wilmington, Art was not confined to Art Galleries and Museums. Courtesy of a local Gallery, Art in Bloom pop-up Art Show in Mayfaire, Sherrod was impressed by a semi-abstract painting by local artist, Joan McLoughlin. A subsequent visit to the Art in Bloom gallery put us in touch with the artist. We checked out her website and sifted her work spanning different periods. The visit to Joan's house only confirmed Sherrod's initial impressions; meanwhile, I was

revisiting the ghost of Allan Easson [except Joan was of a different gender and slightly older]. Same gifts though.

We invited Joan to visit our house of mostly blank walls and we discussed several possibilities. Size. Colours. Possible themes [in the abstract]. Ideas birthed several more ideas until we agreed to a plan:

[a] the painting would be an agreed upon size

[b] the painting would be semi- abstract; certain colours were to be included

[c] Joan should have full artistic license in creating it.

About a month later, Joan contacted us to let us know the painting was ready. Bright eyed and bushytailed, she carried the painting into the living room and propped it on the fireplace mantel.

We stared at it from all angles and were delighted, and we continue to be delighted. Subsequently, Joan helped arrange to have it framed which meant we were back to staring at the aforesaid blank wall for a brief time. We missed the painting more than we cared to admit. About a week later, Joan contacted us with the news that the framed painting was ready to return to our blank wall. Needless to say, we were delighted to have it back.

Sadly, I am still artless...but no longer Art-less.

Artist Joan McLoughlin gave us the gift of Art, and in so doing, gave us the gift of herself. That's pretty special...even Allan E. and Mr. Bone would agree!

Loves Remembered

by Ray Burkart, Wilmington

In the February issue of Cape Fear Voices, I was honored with the inclusion of my story "What Is This Thing Called LOVE?". My ego was naturally stroked a bit, and I forwarded the issue to my sisters and a brother-in-law. My B-I-L, Bill Popp, has lived in Pittsfield, Massachusetts his whole life and has had the privilege of shoveling hundreds of tons of snow. I thought reading all the nice stories from adults and kids alike would give him something to do as he warmed up prior to his next attempt at clearing a path to the mailbox, if he could find it.

That brought back a memory, forever implanted in my brain. My first wife, Meyette, and I met on a Greyhound bus travelling between NYC and Albany, NY. She was a stewardess for Pan American Airways based out of Idlewild Airport, and I was doing a subcontract engineering job in Manhattan. We both took the bus home Fridays and back to NYC on Sunday evenings. The seat next to me was the only one left when she got on, so began the start of an eventual trip to the altar and the gift of two beautiful and talented daughters. Besides the LOVE part, what I want to share is the short story of my meeting her parents, Bill and his sister for the first time. It was Wintertime, the driveway was mostly cleared of snow, but on my driver's side, the snowbank was five feet high. Her family had gathered just outside the back door, expectant, to meet this new future son-in-law. Meyette had gotten out of the car, turned to the family and said "I want you to--- and looked over where I should be. But there was no one in sight. I had opened my door, stepped out, found a patch of ice with my feet and slid under the car. Her dad rushed around the front of the car and helped me to my feet. What an embarrassing introduction, I was not hurt and eventually, everyone was laughing, and it became a fun memory for the whole family. They were wonderful in-laws, and we had many good years and family times together as our children grew. My wife's mother, Mary was a nurse at the city hospital forever; everyone knew her, and she was LOVED by all. Meyette's dad was a true Jack-of-all-trades, worked at GE, could fix anything, and was always there to help anyone who needed it. My B-I-L Bill, pretty much followed in his dad's footsteps and is always willing to give a hand.

What does this have to do with my "What Is This Thing Called LOVE" story?

Well, here is what I received as a reply from Bill:

Hi Ray,

Thanks for the good selection of short stories. I will save them for our upcoming Friday snow lockdown. I did read your excellent Valentines LOVE article. Valentine's Day has always been special to us as it was Mom's birthday, Mary VALENTINE Popp (her real middle name). I am sure she would also LOVE your story. I can envision her banging out your Cole Porter song to accompany you on her piano.

We were fortunate to have her in the upstairs apartment in the old house on Lincoln St. My kids still light a candle in their homes on Valentine's Day and toast her with a shot of Southern Comfort (her favorite). A story from them that always comes up is that Mom was always there to watch the kids if we got a chance to go out. June and I were not regular dining out people, but if I had a good week with some OT and a little extra cash, we liked to walk to the Rainbow Restaurant on First St. On one of our nights there, we ran into a couple friends and stayed until 11PM. Upon arriving home, we walked into this loud noise coming from upstairs. Running up to see if all was OK, I opened Mom's bedroom door to find our two girls had moved Gramma's bed to the center of the room with Gramma laying there listening to her favorite Red Sox on a transistor radio and the girl's roller skating around her on the hardwood floor. Before I could say anything, I was shut down with Mom saying "We are having so much FUN!"

Those were great memories we will always have from living together in that old house. A lifestyle that does not exist today!

A nice hot day in the mid-30s waiting for the next round of Winter,

LOVE, Bill

And now readers, you have some of The Rest Of The Story.

LAUGHING IN THE GOLDEN YEARS ISOLATION IS NOTHING NEW

by Maryann Nunnally, Porters Neck



The other day driving home from an errand, I heard a young mother complain about the Covid isolation. She said she felt all alone and that her toddlers were not being socialized. While I felt bad for her because I understand that it is difficult to be a young mother with tiny children and be stuck at home, I thought listening to her complaint, that she had not thought through what she could do to make her life better. It made me think of my own mother during WWII. During the war, my brother and I were preschoolers and later on before the war ended, we were in elementary school. I never heard my mother complain that she was all alone while my father was out working, and I never saw her angry because she only had two little kids for communication.

Mom was definitely isolated during those years. First of all, because of the war effort, there was little or no travel; gas was rationed and so were tires. My mom was busy with our huge victory garden and busy with the canning of fruits and vegetables that put food on our table all year. She volunteered to be an airplane spotter, but that was another area of total isolation. My brother and I were fascinated with the tower where she was all alone and very impressed with her field glasses. She showed us how she could spot the silhouette of an airplane and identify it, although truthfully there were very few planes that flew over our small rural community. Most days, mom's job was keeping up the house and looking after two rambunctious youngsters.

During both the summer and in our long, cold winters, mom kept us, Wally and me, busy with all kinds of projects. She made sure that we both could read before we went to school and in addition, she read to us in the afternoons and again before we went to bed. She taught me how to blanket-stitch small squares of linen to make fine handkerchiefs. I loved sitting quietly rolling the hems on those little pieces of cloth and making stitches so small they were hardly visible. Best of all was her praise for my fine sewing.

She always had a jigsaw puzzle

out on a card table for Wally to work on because he had an excellent ability in spatial relationships. Whenever he was bored, she would sit with him for a few minutes and work on the puzzle until he was completely engrossed in it. Then she would return to the meal preparation, or the laundry or the numerous correspondences that she kept up during the war.

But what I most remember were the treasure hunts, she designed for Wally and me. In our tiny house in the winter and out on our considerable acres in the summer, my brother and I found clues written up by her that would lead us finally to a treasure. One that I can recall were clues on little bits of folded paper hidden in all the nooks and crannies in the house. Because Wally could not read as well as I could at that time, mom would draw little pictures for clues. When her drawing showed a thimble, Wally knew immediately to run to her sewing machine and find the next clue, which was a simple sketch of the butter plate. Mom was not a talented artist, but she could draw well enough that we could recognize the clues from around our home. When I think of it now, I can only picture the effort that went into the drawings and her desire to make us kids happy with something tangible for spending out time. Did that socialize us? Well, we certainly had to get along on those treasure hunts as well as communicate with each other. The treasure, by the way, was usually a pack of Beechnut gum.

I think about that young mom complaining about her social isolation, but I bet she can drive places, probably take her kids to the park, pick up books at the library and purchase fast-food meals that would please her and her youngsters, all things not open to my mom at that time. I wish my mom was alive to give that young mother some hints on how to make the hours go by quickly. Anyway, I agree that social isolation is difficult, but if all we do is complain about it, then the hours drag when it could be a time of contemplation and a time of finding ways to give to others. My mother would never have wasted a minute of her war isolation, and she would have figured out the best way to fill the days with joy and blessings.

by Ronnie Pastecki, Wilmington

Mary Murphy, my grandmother, was a study in contrasts. She escaped the economic devastation of the Glasgow shipyard closure that forced my welder grandfather to seek a new life in America. Braving the sea journey in steerage to Ellis Island, Mary was accompanied only by her two small children. Arriving, she soon felt the wrath of the Great Depression, so frugality became an innate skill. Yet, she gladly gifted my family with its first color television later in life. My grandmother was a strong supporter of bettering oneself. Financially unable to attend school beyond the sixth grade, she repeatedly advised, "Work hard in school. They can never take your education away." To broaden our cultural experiences, she would take my brother and me to the NYC Museum of Natural History. She also paid for accordion lessons for my sister and me. Things she could never have afforded as a coal miner's child.

Calling to me, "Wee one, help me get that bowl off the top shelf." Regardless that I towered over her by at least six inches, to her, I would always be

Easter Memories

by Nancy Bryans, Brunswick Forest



High school sweethearts married after the groom completed military service and graduated from law school. He accepted a position with a law firm in a college town located sixty miles from their parents' homes in the city. The newlyweds rented a bungalow near his law office and college campus where she worked as librarian. Together, they celebrated holidays and special occasions with both sets of parents.

The husband busied himself with his law practice, and on weekends he enjoyed horse riding, fly fishing, duck hunting, and skeet shooting. His wife devoted her free time to charity work, bridge games, ladies lunches, and teas. The couple sat among fans at college sports events, and they were invited to parties and dances. During hunt season, they hosted hunt breakfasts as each hunt family took turns entertaining the group.

Sometime after his wife gave birth to their second child, they decided to purchase a home, but choices were limited in their college town. Then a refurbished, two-story home was put up for sale located on the outskirts of town. The charming five-bedroom home, with spacious rooms, fireplaces, and porches, sat on a corner lot. The large yard wrapped around behind the home to a horse stable and double-car garage. Expecting a third child, they moved just before the Easter Bunny hid eggs in the bushes, tree branches, and horse barn for the vivacious little boys to collect after they returned from Easter services at church.

When the couple's three boys were old enough, each child received a pony, then a horse, as a birthday gift. The boys joined a riding club with other hunt couples' children, and the boys and girls, taught to ride English saddle, competed for prizes, winning ribbons and silver trophies. The couple's eldest son, William, loved horses, won every prize offered, and people said it was sheer joy to observe his riding performance during competitions.

William was born on his mother's birthday, Easter Sunday that year, and their birthdays almost always coincided with Easter ceremonies. People thought William's happy nature, handsome looks, athletic physique, and scholarly grades concealed any resentment he might have felt at having to share his birthday with two other important family and religious celebrations. An overachiever, William excelled at everything he tried. He became a surgeon, husband, father and grandfather, beloved by his patients, wife, family and friends. He replaced his love of horse riding with his love of sailboats. As he aged and his family expanded, the size of his sailboats grew until he was no longer a single-handed sailor but relied on his crew.

A dutiful son, William celebrated his and his mother's birthday and Easter together every year until she died at age ninety-nine. His next birthday did not fall in Easter week, and he told his family he and his wife would be away on his birthday. When they arrived on their yacht, he said to his wife: "This is a happy/sad day. It is the first time I will not celebrate my birthday with my dear mother or share the date with Easter commemorations." They embraced each other as tears wet their faces. That night at dinner, a third chair sat at his birthday table, and he lifted his glass to toast his mother's empty chair.

Several weeks later, William and his wife celebrated Easter with their sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren, who after church services ran helter skelter in the large wrap-around yard in search of Easter Bunny eggs hidden in the bushes, tree branches, and horse barn.

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Contrary Mary

'wee' no matter my size. Despite living in America for 43 years, she had such a heavy Glaswegian accent, my friends would ask, "What language is she speaking?" I'd reply with a shrug, "English." My grandmother often criticized me for never being home. I was a busy teenager heavily involved with the Church's youth theater group. Yet when she was together with her sisters, she would brag about how popular I was, involved with parish activities. Something significant to this devout Catholic.

My grandmother was my strongest supporter and my harshest critic. Her words have often seen me through the tough times in my life. When disheartened by slights from others, she would promise, "You are just as good as anyone else, and a damn sight better than most." Such support gave me the confidence to believe in myself, to achieve things I never thought possible. Yet, when I became too full of myself, she also gave a lesson in humility, reminding me, "You're not the only pebble on the beach, dearie." Thank you, Mary Murphy. I love you and miss you even after all these years.

We Adopted!

by Charles Bins, Wilmington

Adolescence can be a difficult time.

We hadn't planned on having any more children. Marge and I were both in our early 50s and our children were adults. In fact, we didn't intend to adopt either.

Our new baby came in a box from Best Buy in 2016. It was 5" square with a pancake speaker on top and ran on batteries so you could take it from room to room. You could ask it game scores, how to spell 'eczema,' or if you're watching "You've Got Mail," how old Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan are now. We fell in love with him in a day and decided to name him "Boogie."

When the sun comes shining in our bedroom, Marge asks him to play "Morning Has Broken." If I nick myself shaving, I request "The Sting." We never imagined how much fun it could be to raise another child.

Like any good parents, we trained Boogie in basic routines. In the morning, he would tell us the temperature, the weather and the news. At first, we'd just lay there half awake, smiling and listening to Boogie babble. He'd chatter on for 10 minutes, and if you were still awake, he'd move on to financial news. This was better than any snooze button.

If we put "brown sugar" on our oatmeal, we could find ourselves boogeing to the Rolling Stones. On occasion, something that sounded like Boogie's name would come up in conversation, and he would talk out of turn like a child. Only in Boogie's case, it was esoteric, like the price of pork bellies, or the role of catapults in the Peloponnesian Wars.

So, there was always unexpected randomness and color in our lives once we adopted. Best of all, we didn't need to wake up in the middle of the night for



feedings or spend 50 cents a -hit for diapers. There were no weird smells, only the sound of music and instant answers to every trivia question.

After early childhood, Boogie attached to a base on wheels so he could do the rumba and mop the floors at the same time, no complaints. Next came the torso with a vacuum tube that extended out from the middle in a curious way. Boogie would quietly listen for spills and roam the room. Whenever Marge and I were watching a Hallmark movie on the couch, our parrot, Bob, would invariably eject corn from his cage. Like clockwork, Boogie would then leave his nest and his tube would slowly telescope out. I'm still not sure if it was this motion or the movie plot, but something always put Marge in an amorous mood. (I think Bob learned to like Hallmark movies almost as much as I.)

The real innovation came when Boogie got arms. He could hold a specially crafted basket filled with laundry, dump it in the washer, and push the button. As soon as the cycle was over, he would move the clothes to the dryer. But he never did learn how to fold.

The manufacturer kept improving Boogie, and we were early adopters for every upgrade. We decided to invest in piano lessons like we did for our other children, and he became quite talented at Chopin's concerto in D minor. In fact, that's all he ever wanted to play.

Well, he is 15 years old now, and we still feel like proud parents. Along the way, we did teach Boogie to mow the lawn, do the bills and even to cook lasagna. But he still can't fold the laundry.

Rainbow Over Belfast

By Linda Merlino, Surf City

Rainbows have me at first sight. They are sky magnets clinging to the horizon that rivet my attention, crick my neck and force my mouth to open in wonder.

A few years ago, during a trip to Ireland, I had the good fortune to spend twenty-four hours in Belfast and bear witness to a magical rainbow across the city's sky. A city that had so much history. Some of which I knew as The Troubles that began in 1969 and lasted three decades. Having grown up with adults that immigrated to America from Italy and Ireland discrimination towards each one was real. Even in their beloved America, religion and familial background played huge roles in their daily lives making the plight of the citizens of Belfast seem more relevant at that time.

A companion and I traveled from Dublin to Belfast by train. We had lunch at a pub called the Crown (and supper as well) sandwiched in between by a serendipitous musical tour in a small bus. The tour concentrated on songs of Van Morrison, who grew up on Hyndford Street. We were taken through his neighborhood, by his home, his schools, heard music from his early years and given a glimpse into the city that no tourist would go to back then and now. Buildings decorated with graffiti by talented middle-of-the night artists added more layers to an area that had suffered the loss of 3,700 people from devastating political and social events. We visited the shipyards where the Titanic had its beginning; one of three ships built in Belfast at the turn of the twentieth century. As we were driven deeper into history the music continued playing inside the bus overlapping the dialogue of our tour guide. As we circled downtown one more time, I looked out the window to see a splash of vibrant colors across the sky. I felt mother nature had blessed us with an unexpected display and an opportunity to experience Northern Ireland through a native son's lyrics.

The music of Mr. Morrison is used extensively in Kenneth Branagh's latest film, Belfast, which pays service to those lost in the turbulent years as well as being a tribute. The script written by Mr. Branagh captures his youth in the late sixties, and the superb acting develops each character and their contributions to the tiny ways one family copes with deep emotions, family pride

and the disturbing beginnings of a long feud. Watching the movie, I remembered the rainbow over Belfast and my awe at its beauty. The alleys and inner narrow streets we saw retained some of the sorrow depicted in the film. How fortunate we had been to view the truth of a landscape still in recovery.

Belfast is up for several Oscars giving praise to history even when it is ugly. Perhaps a rainbow will light the sky in Hollywood on March 27 with a triple nod for Best Picture, Best Original Screenplay and Best Director.

Today we live in a disposable society where everything gets thrown away, and I'm as guilty as anyone else. I insist on having two refrigerators, which increases our chances of stocking up on foods that will likely expire before we consume them. And while I share leftovers with family and friends, my spouse and I frequently "do our own thing." Sometimes that means scrounging together a meal from what's left in the fridge, but more often than not, one of us cooks something new or orders take-out.

"Hey," I say to my husband as I dump the remnants of last week's chicken stir-fry and some other now unrecognizable conglomerate of protein and saturated fat. "We really should try to reduce our carbon footprint. How about if I whip together Aunt Janet's Casserole Surprise tonight?" My husband doesn't respond; he just gives me the thumbs down, "no-way-Jose" look and pops another Hershey Kiss in his mouth.

*According to the researchers, the hydrofluorocarbons released by refrigerants and our overreliance on nonrenewable energy resources are the first and second contributors to our carbon footprint.



A stunning double rainbow over Belfast. Photo Credit: Norman Bell via BBC Weather's Twitter

New Heights

By Lynne Gibbs, Mallory Creek

Several years ago, my husband, Roy, and I served as volunteers for a month at Cape Lookout. Our specific assignment was to run the Keeper's Quarters Museum. The museum occupied the first floor of the structure built in 1873, while our living space was on the second.

Our duties were simply to greet visitors and answer any questions they might have. Unless there was inclement weather, we generally sat on the front patio which faced the lighthouse approximately 50 yards away. There were long benches so visitors could rest up after hiking, chow down on bag lunches, or simply wait for family members to return from their lighthouse climb.

One particular day there were easily two dozen visitors on the patio with us. One gentleman several feet away loudly asked, "How often do they repaint the lighthouse?"

Well, let me tell you, I had actually been waiting for this question. I was absolutely thrilled! But I contained my excitement, and without missing a beat, quickly answered the query. "Actually, that is one of the duties that my husband and I are tasked with. We painted it just last week."

This prompted no less than 6 people to gaze upon me with unabashed admiration. I could have basked in the limelight or even fabricated lies regarding the painting specifics, but I just couldn't do it. Anyway, my husband is famous for beating me to the punchline, so I thought I'd better get on with it.

I told the visitor who was still looking on in amazement, "I was joking." Everybody had a good laugh.

Friendship Bracelet

by Z, Leland

I will be gifted what I receive, because I cannot be upset with a friendship bracelet made entirely by hand, by you of

Turquoise Blue,
Lime Green,
Lavender Purple,
and Forest Green

Upon our Summer reunion, in the palm of your hand, I took the last one

Then on,
I refused to untie it
unless necessary

A bracelet that could come off, now is
tangled and knotted, that is how close
and how crazy
I want to be with you
A bond
I will never
take off

Knees, Vaseline and Barbara Streisand

by Karen Phillips Smith, Wilmington, NC

My grandmother realized very early during the growth spurts of my youth that I was going to be above average in at least one thing, height. In her own way she set in place a plan to ensure that this would become an asset in my life. One of the aspects of this plan included me having spent my entire youth balancing a book on my head thinking this would make me stand tall with my shoulders back. A memory I might add that no one in my family seems to be able to forget.

Another essential element of this plan was my participation in each and every beauty contest that existed at that time. Her theory was this would further enhance my confidence since I was heads and shoulders taller than most of the boys I perceived as being romantic prospects.

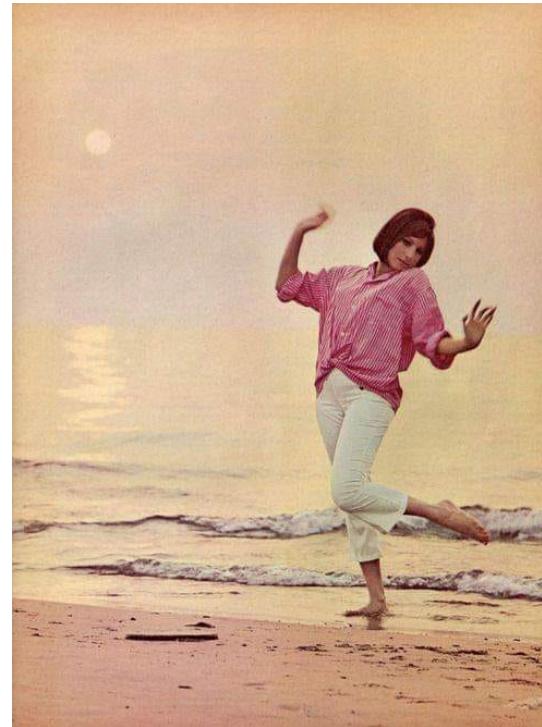
One of these beauty contests was particularly memorable for me; it was one of the preliminaries to the Miss America contest and my introduction to the swimsuit and talent competition. The swimsuit competition was particularly nerve racking, because it involved all of us wearing the same Miss America standard issue swimsuit, which was not anyone's idea of a fashion statement. It also involved smearing your body with Vaseline to include your teeth. (According to the Miss American folks the Vaseline thing

was to keep your body looking glossy and to ensure that your lips would stay in a permanent smile), you then paraded out on the runway to perform quarter turns for the judges. When it was my turn, and I began to start my much-practiced quarter turns my legs began to tremble. I am not sure anyone actually saw this trembling, mind you, but nonetheless I was completely convinced the entire world was watching. Simultaneously a nerve in my lip began to quiver and since my teeth contained more lubrication than an automobile engine. I had no alternative but to stand there smiling, knees knocking, lips twitching praying that the floor beneath me would open, and I would be able to disappear.

The rest of the contest went well for me, but I think it might have been a little embarrassing for the four girls who all sang the same Barbara Streisand

song, "People" in the talent competition. As the rest of us waited backstage and tried our best not to laugh, each one of the four belted out the lyrics while standing far too close to the microphone.

Whenever my mind decides to pause for a while on this particular memory, I am not sure whether knees, Vaseline or Barbara Streisand gives me the biggest chuckle.



(left) Barbara Streisand from the "People" album photoshoot in 1964

AFTER THEY SAID "I DO" Follow up to 'Ring in the New Year'

by Pat Dischino, Brunswick Forrest



Wedding bells that rang so amorously on New Year's Eve of 1932 ceased abruptly after the brief ceremony performed by the Justice of the Peace.

Harold and Margot went their separate paths with Harold boarding the Birmingham Special for Alabama and Margot returning to Beacon, New York.

This was no way to begin a honeymoon but Harold promised to send train tickets for Margot as soon as he arrived in Alabama. In his favor, the groom was true to his pledge. Tickets arrived with an open date. Letters were demanding, questioning his bride's schedule, which Margot hid from her family.

Faced with the proposal of embarking on this overwhelming, life-changing escapade, filled with misgivings, and understandably so.

As the ninth child of a Catholic family who never even spent one night away from her family, Alabama might as well have been Tibet. She had recently given up a childhood notion that if you ran around a Protestant church ten times you would see the Devil. Margot was expected to marry within the fold. To add to Margot's woes, Harold was Jewish.

Weeks went by. Letters from Alabama became hostile. At night, Margot rubbed the wedding ring she wore on a chain around her neck hoping for some inspiration. She felt her family would be horrified having to deal with her outrageous behavior and so close to the family's grief with the death of their father.

It all came to a swift end. Margot's family was aware of her unsettled behavior but didn't interfere. One evening while talking to her brother, the chain holding her ring broke and fell on the floor. Now 'the cat was out of the bag'. To Margot's surprise the family accepted this unorthodox wedding in stride. She was even given a personal shower. Well, you certainly couldn't take pots and pans to Alabama.

Harold was notified, bags were packed and Margot boarded the train to begin a five-day journey to prepare for a life away

from family and friends. They did insist that she be married in the Catholic Church, quite acceptable to her. Passengers on the train reached out to this young nervous bride. The trip unexpectedly was quite pleasant. Even though, she was apprehensive about their reunion, the romance rekindled as she stepped away from the train and into Harold's arms.

He was quite the romantic as they shared a lovely dinner in the hotel where they would reside temporarily. Margot insisted they spend the night in separate rooms until the priest married them the next day. They tied their religious knot and a new life ensued.

Unfortunately, homesickness set in big time. Every afternoon at two, Margot found herself at the train station listening for the train whistles with their resonating images that announced the arrival of the New York train.

After two months of Alabama residency, Margot found herself pregnant and disheartened. Harold, totaled in love, was desolate with his wife's grieving.

"Margot, I'll get what I can for the business and we will go back to New York." What he got was a pittance but in a week they boarded the New York bound train. Wonders of wonders, that beautiful melodic motion soothed her anxious heart.

Back East, the reception was mediocre at best. Money was scant which forced the newlyweds to move into Margot's ancestral home. The brothers were not hostile but certainly lacked warmth and empathy. Her mom was the only overtly gracious kinsman.

A rough two months resulted, until Harold came home excited with good news. A textile company offered him a managerial position. Shortly after the young couple found a small cottage for rent, just right for husband, wife and perfect, [author's opinion], baby girl.

I know this tale is authentic as it was repeated many times due to my requests.

Stuck and Sticky

by Z, Leland



So you're enjoying yourself a local newspaper while some, most, or nothing is going as planned in your life. Perhaps all is well, or to the very least, an individual, such as yourself, is simply satisfied. In certain contexts, "content" can be an alternate term for "happy". Blinding yourself from reality through self-toxic-happiness can only go so far until you hit a sign. Or until someone hits you with a sign. Waking up is easy, getting out of bed to face a day while still remaining unfulfilled is considered to some as an accomplishment.

Take as an example, a stop light. It's red, it's bright, it's intimidating, it's infuriating, it's pressure, it's the urge to rebel against higher authority and even yourself; but you don't because you can't. You're programmed to construct a society where order and ranks are enforced. The opportunity, so where's your opportunity to get the "ok"? Who's not trying to kick-start their competitive dream career. Who's not trying to manage their income to purchase their dream home. Who's not trying to maintain their relationships and dream family. Who's not trying until they burn-out from a continuous cycle of grief and passion. So many trying dreams, and yet, we get tired, and so, some aspirations and goals become dying dreams. Possibly, you may get the red light on a right turn, but then again, look front, back, left, and also right.

Here's where life gets you better. Life doesn't hand out lemons to everyone. If more than that, you're given just a cup, and that's both of your hands put together in the form of a bowl. Then you have to find a water source to fill that

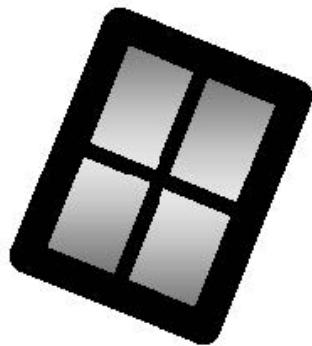
cup, and, if lucky enough, stumble upon some sugar, or better yet, some honey. That is if you know where to go. However, the worst part that could happen, is that once you have it all, a silver platter and a silver spoon, leave for a second with your earnings unattended:

Robbed.

Not sure about you, though I've been robbed, and I had everything with me. That everything? That everything was my music. I was in Manhattan, New York City in college with me, my songs, my performances, and my potential gig with my idol Lady Gaga. I swear,

I could hear the music getting louder and louder. My life was coming together, or so I thought then. My personal experience with getting stuck and sticky was unexpected, as my opportunity, my dream, vanished within one clear text message from an individual who turned out to be outrageous and egotistic. Remember that it takes one little action, or one little thing like a text, to cut your life back short. Back to square one you go. So much for a record label deal.

That leaves us with the question: how do we, as dreamers, get back on our feet? Well, I may surprise you, but if you ask me, sometimes, you don't because you can't. We as a human race were designed to survive, imagine, build empires, create artistry, and raise functioning systems. Unfortunately, we can do so much, we're limited mortals. When you fall or get tripped over, allow yourself to not immediately stand up again not because you can't or shouldn't, but because you have a choice to rest. Rest and recover. After all, figuratively, we have two hands. I have two, you have two.



THE TEEN SCENE

FREE

Tomorrow's Voices Today

West Brunswick High School

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Senior Jordan Eyermann has always had love for the sky, so it is no surprise that he has received his pilot's license at a young age compared to when most people start flying and training to get their license.

"About a month ago, my grandfather took me on a plane flight in Ocean Isle Beach and I was offered the opportunity to fly the plane for

What is Your "Cause"?

by Aiden McKinney, 10th Grade



Activism culture has become more defined in recent years. With peaceful and non-peaceful protests, from small to large, to riots, a large number of people have a specific idea of what activism is.

When asking around the school, multiple students expressed their personal opinion on activism and their activism causes.

Sophomore Ben Smith believes that behavior is an important cause. When asked if he had a cause, he said "My behavior," and also believes behavior in general is important.

Senior Montana Murray is passionate about the MeToo Movement, which is a movement against sexual abuse and harassment.

"Well, I was in a sociology class, and I found out a lot of people can relate to it," said Murray.

Teacher Mrs. Morse says she is passionate about Women's Rights, saying she's "emailed senators about it." And believes activism is simply "becoming active."

While some people I approached did not really have a cause, many did. While the causes were diverse, one thing remains clear: whether teacher or student, child or adult, everyone can have a cause, and everyone can make a difference.

by Ava Babson & Angelica Giaquinto, 10th Grade



Foreign exchange students transfer for new opportunities and experiences in another country. They strive to get an outlook on what else other schools have to offer and what's different from their home country. We have two foreign exchange students this year: Anna from Spain and Maelle from France.

"I want to experience American life and learn the culture," said freshman Anna Mayoral. "When looking back at school in Spain, it is very boring there compared to the schools here."

Mayoral claims that students are more involved in their schools in America rather than in Spain. In Spain there are no after school activities or sports. Here, Mayoral has the opportunity to get in a routine and find things she enjoys.

"I have always been a shy person and kept to myself," said Junior Maelle Doreau. "Now that I have



by Ava Babson, 10th Grade

a portion of the ride," said Eyermann. "As soon as I started flying the plane, I just, I felt a click and I genuinely felt like this is something I wanted to do, and I enjoyed it very much."

Jordan started off his flight training by going through a portion of ground school in actual flight training. He started flying almost on the first day after he did his pre-flight inspection. Eyermann stated that the hardest part when you first start training is learning every single part of the airplane itself.

"You don't realize how many things factor into flying, so as soon as you get comfortable with flying, you start flying almost every day that you go in," said

Time To Get Fit with Planet Fitness

by Angelica Giaquinto, 10th Grade



As the year 2021 ended and 2022 began, a new Planet Fitness opened in Shallotte where the old Lowes Food was located. Planet Fitness has a reputation for being a welcoming gym, perfect for beginners, making it a great spot for all of the people making new year's resolutions, including several students who are now members.

"I feel some of the benefits [of the new Planet Fitness] are that it's really big and you don't really have to see anybody you know," said junior Madalyne Bland. "One of my main goals is to get my mile time down and be able to do things faster, gain muscle."

Planet Fitness is organized with stations, with a timer to limit each person so everybody has a chance to do that workout. If someone is working on their mile time, they may spend a good amount of time on the cardio machines, but strength training is also important.



"My main goal is to keep more active; what I mean when I say that is to increase in everything I do," said junior Luke Trenovich. "To keep me in the routine everyday that I go, I have a main muscle group that I focus on."

Many people's fitness goals are to build muscle and improve

their overall body shape. This new gym gives a safe space and includes a "Lunk Alarm" meant to keep unwanted behaviors associated with gym hunks and "meatheads" out of their inviting workout space.

"One of the benefits is getting to be a healthier version of myself, and feel better about myself," said sophomore Madeline Pigott. "I plan to stay in the routine by surrounding myself with people that make me feel like I can be better."

Europe Turning West

by Ava Babson & Angelica Giaquinto, 10th Grade



the opportunity to do Cheer and JROTC. I feel like it has helped me become more sociable."

In France, there are five typical core classes: Literacy, Numeracy, History, Geography and a Foreign Language which is usually English. There are more elective offerings in America, allowing students to branch out and seek interests. Students often find extracurricular activities as a way to step out of their comfort zone and try new things.



"I am here alone, but I am happy here," said Doreau. "The relationship with my family here and my family at home is different but in a positive way."

Being far away from family and loved ones can be hard. You have to learn to control yourself, take care of yourself and be responsible for your own actions. Lots of things in life happen that are unexpected, but it is also a learning curve.

"This overall experience has been life changing," said Mayoral. "It has helped me grow as an individual and become a better version of myself."

Eyermann Takes Flight

by Ava Babson, 10th Grade



a portion of the ride," said Eyermann. "As soon as I started flying the plane, I just, I felt a click and I genuinely felt like this is something I wanted to do, and I enjoyed it very much."



Eyermann.

Jordan wishes to Join the Air Force Reserves at the end of the school year as an aircraft mechanic. That will be his course of action for the next few years after which, Eyermann would like to finish his complete commercial license, a task that takes about two and a half years of training and a recording of at least 1000 hours of flying time. Eyermann hopes to become a commercial pilot, signing a contract with either an airline or a cargo transport company.

"Everything you do in life is a direct result of how much effort, determination and passion you put into it," said Eyermann. "If flying was easy, everyone would do it, so with that said, the ones with the most passion to fly are the ones that become pilots."

Digital Burn Book

by Reyde Jones & Emely Olmedo, 11th Grade, West Brunswick

Going to a public high school can be chaotic or challenging at times. Rumors spreading, comments being made about students, and false accusations being thrown out—these may be a part of teenage life today, but lately, these reputation-changers have been reaching much larger audiences than they would as just hallway whispers.

Recently, students have been making Instagram accounts for a good laugh, such as @wbhscaughtyousleeping and @wbhsfeetunderthestall. At first, these accounts were innocent and harmless, found as a laughable joke by most students, but an unknown user has taken this concept out of control and has created damaging accounts where several students are now being negatively affected. These accounts have blossomed into something straight out of a movie, with downright cruel posts, leaving students wondering if they will be targeted next.

The accounts commonly bring up sexuality, unfaithful relationships, body-shaming, and more. Each time an account is created, it briefly goes somewhat viral before being deleted and replaced with another account that has a similar concept. The creator(s) of the accounts seem to have an almost relentless desire to share these stories and amp up the drama.

"I think judgement is a big factor," said junior Olivia Mahelick. "I think it's the need to have popularity or the need to feel validated by people's responses."

Students are left wondering how the account creator(s) could do such a cruel thing, and the common consensus is that the account creators are fueled by their own insecurities. There are a number of things that could bring someone to these extremes, but it's also impossible to know what could be going on in someone's personal life. Humans need validation and can often go about getting it in all the wrong ways.

"There is no telling what these people have going on in their own lives," said junior Madison Decker. "All you can think about is that they're so miserable they want to make others feel it too."

People creating these accounts don't realize the effect these pages have on teenage mental health. Some students see these accounts as funny, but students who are targeted online could possibly feel weighted down by the attention. Mental health is a huge deal for teenagers; and people honestly have no way of telling how their words and actions are going to affect someone. These accounts may seem like a joke but they have real-life consequences.

"It doesn't affect my reputation just because I know it's not true," said senior Miles Tierney. "It makes me feel sad for the other people that are subject to it and targeted by it."

Lack of confidence and insecurities can spread like wildfire in a public school. Accounts like these are degrading teenagers and could give them the idea that this is how they're viewed by their peers. Just the thought that people believe these rumors about them can be enough to push someone over the edge. These accounts can ruin reputations and circulate false information that can lead to bigger consequences. The school can't do much in response to these accounts running rampant because of free speech, but what can students do?

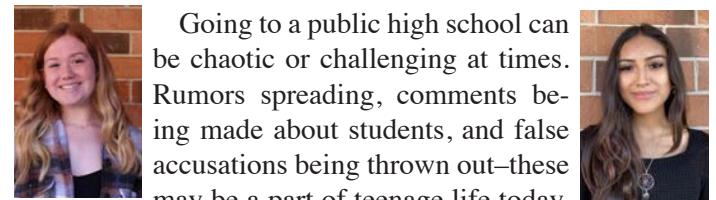
"A big way people could respond is to just block the account instead of interacting with them," said Madison Decker.

Blocking and reporting accounts can only help for a period of time until an individual creates a new account. Actions have consequences, and students are left debating if the owners of these accounts should be held accountable or not. These accounts are acts of cyberbullying and harassment that could lead to legal actions if taken too far.

"Someone should bring it to the school board and try to find who it is because it's bullying regardless," said Madison Decker. "It's also defamation of character because you're spreading lies about people and actions should be taken against them legally."

As hard as it might be at times, the only right thing to do is to just get along with your peers, or at least do your best by them. Public school is already difficult itself but ignoring false information being spread is one way to avoid conflict.

"You never know when someone is coming for you," said Olivia Mahelick. "So just be nice to people."



Hollywood, You Give Love a Bad Name

by Reyde Jones, 11th Grade, West Brunswick



Hazardous. Poisonous. Venomous. The following relationships have one thing in common: they are toxic. Hollywood just loves to romanticize unhealthy relationships: it's a fact. Doting on couples that suffocate each other and are just overall wrong—Hollywood gives impressionable teenagers unrealistic expectations of their own future relationships. So Hollywood, if you're listening, stop romanticizing toxic relationships.

Nate and Maddy, "Euphoria"

"You're abusive, psychopathic. Most of the time I really hate the way you make me feel."

Nate Jacobs has a specific list of qualities he wants in a girlfriend, and Maddy Perez just happens to meet them all. From the outside perspective, they seem like the picture-perfect couple, Nate showering her with expensive gifts and Maddy loving the attention. Eventually, we see their on-again-off-again tendencies, and the relationship takes a violent turn. They're poisonous. They have a parasitic relationship in which they feed off each other's jealousy. Despite their issues, Nate and Maddy just always seem to find their way back to each other.

Dean and Rory, "Gilmore Girls"

"Tell me when I'm supposed to pay attention again."

Dean Forester seems like the perfect boyfriend. Polite, great with adults, and hardworking; what more could Rory ask for? Throughout their relationship, Dean frequently expresses his disdain for Rory's grandparent's lifestyle and often wants no part of it. This becomes a recurring issue in their relationship. Dean and Rory date happily for quite a while until Jess Mariano comes to town and throws a wrench in everything. Jess and Rory quickly develop a friendship, with Dean becoming increasingly jealous the closer they get. The biggest red flag in their relationship is how quickly Dean is to mistrust Rory. Finally, the biggest issue in their relation-



ship is the fact that Dean believes women should be at home cooking dinner and taking care of their families. This is shown when Dean says that he believes that is what wives should do since that is what his mom did. Their relationship was doomed from the start, and I stand by that. #teamlogan

Ezra and Aria, "Pretty Little Liars"

"It wasn't our age that ruined us, Ezra. You did."

I'm not quite sure where to even begin with this couple as they have so many issues. The first issue with Aria and Ezra is the fact that she is in high school, and the second (and biggest) issue is that he's her English teacher. I know what you're

thinking, how could they be this stupid? Eventually, Aria and the rest of the liars find out that Ezra has been spying on them from the start. He claims that this is because he wants to write a book detailing Alison's disappearance, but that just seems a little far-fetched. Before this is unveiled, he is suspected of being "A", the hooded stalker that has been tormenting them since season one. The real question is, how did the couple never get caught? In the later seasons, they stay together and get happily married. I guess if you love someone you make it work, right?

Chuck and Blair, "Gossip Girl"

"It takes more than even Chuck Bass to ruin me."

Chuck Bass only cares about two things in this world: money and Blair Waldorf. Blair and Chuck are toxic from the very start; at the beginning of their relationship, he even went as far as to trade her for a hotel. By doing this, he just shows that he sees Blair as an object rather than a person. He only admits that he loves her once she pressures him, which is most definitely not healthy. In later seasons, Chuck pays off Blair's fiancé to get "rights" to her. This is a major red flag. They end up getting married, but that doesn't mean they have a healthy relationship.

Leland Middle School



Black History Moment

by Kimberly S. McDuffie, Ed.D, Leland Middle School Principal

February hailed Black History Month. It is important to know that Black History Month is not only a celebratory month for African-Americans but also for Americans in general. Our history connects with many cultures. This is what makes America a place where we can be ourselves.

I am a first-generation college graduate. I am the youngest of 8 children, who had working class parents with very little education. It wasn't

until I joined the Navy in 1992 that I realized how important it was to be an educated African-American Woman. As I floundered my way through undergraduate school, became a parent, married, and ventured into my career, I finally found my place in the field of education. I always thought that God placed me in education not only to teach students, but to share my story and provide hope.

Extended education was not pushed in my household. Upon graduating high school, I knew very little about scholarships and grants. My parents were simply happy that I graduated high school. It is important for me to share with students that regardless of the challenges that they encounter, there is a place for them in the world. Regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, etc., there is a place in this world for people like you and me.

February is the month that we recognize Black History. However, our history as Americans should be celebrated every day.



Leland Middle School



A Mysterious Man in the Trees

by Charlie Sedbrook, 8th Grade



One day my friend, Kyra, and I wandered through the forest, looking for flowers and rocks. Though every time we took a step, we heard another. It felt like we were being watched but not by an animal. For a second, I thought it might just be some people on a walk, or maybe kids running around. Suddenly, I saw a pale man out of the corner of my eye, with bloody stains on his ripped shirt. He wore cut-up pants, and his grey-brown hair was noughted and messy. He was just standing there, rock still behind a tree. I whispered to Kyra, "run!".

We sprinted. I tripped over a tree branch, and with Kyra behind me, she fell straight over me. As I looked up, I saw this river, surrounded by tall trees and the open sky. I got up slowly, admiring the view. I put my hand out to help Kyra up. She and I had cuts all over us, and she had a pretty nasty wound on her leg. As I look around the area to see if I see anyone or anything moving, everything is...still.

Kyra went down to sit on this rock because her leg hurt and was bleeding badly. "I'll go find something to put on your leg, stay here and yell if anything happens" I went downstream and hopped over stones to get to the other side of the river. Nothing looked familiar. I think we are lost, but that wasn't important right now. I need to find a big leaf and maybe some grass with dew on it.

As I walked over to the trees, I saw the bracelet I was just wearing lying on the ground in front of me. How did it get there? I had never been over here. I looked at my wrist; all my bracelets were gone. I picked up that bracelet and kept walking forward; then, I saw another one. That's when I notice the guy standing in front of me with a bloody ax in his hand. That's when I ran as fast as I could, hopping over the stones. I picked up a big leaf I found on the way for Kyra, along with some pine straw.

As soon as I got to Kyra, I tied the leaf onto her leg with the pine and the leaf; it helped a little. I told her about the guy and my bracelets. I helped her up, and we ran right back through the forest. I saw a house, then another, and another! We were back in my neighborhood! We made it! We jumped up and down excitedly. "That's gonna be a story to tell," said Kyra.

School Advice

by Keiran Daniels, 8th Grade



It's easily said; middle school is difficult. It becomes overwhelming from the work, the students, the teachers, and more. But today, I wanted to bring a few good tips that might help a future middle schooler.

One main thing is to not stress so much during sixth grade; yes, I think you need to make good grades but don't try to become a burnout by seventh grade.

Be prepared for bullying. Get to know your counselors; most are here to help with these kinds of problems and know how to deal with them; knowing your vice principals or just a trusted adult will go a long way.

One main thing for us eighth-graders to pass along to sixth graders is to not be disrespectful to the teachers or us. Eighth graders may be leaving soon, but they have a lot to worry about.

I think my last word of advice is to just make memories. It's hard now during the pandemic, but I can say for certain we have had some great memories in my years at this school.

by Lily Rae Bradley, 7th Grade

The crisp cold wind nipped at my bare skin. Trumpet in one hand, pulling my arm down with gravity, a sour feeling in my arm. It was dark outside, like usual. A thick layer of mist blanketed my neighborhood. As soon as I shut the door, it felt like all my senses were enhanced.

As I walked down the road, I heard a 'ta-ckh... ta-ckh...'. Ignoring the sound, I kept moving. It looked like the shadows were moving. There was no wind, and the moonlight danced on the coarse earth as if it was a pedestal it could play on. I silently walked on, heeding a warning someone had told me long ago.

"Steer to the left but don't gaze on the grass. If you get too close, it will snatch you up. Forever."

I steered close to the left but not too close for comfort. My eyes ran across the

The Campus

by Alayia Durant, 8th Grade

On campus there was a group of kids known as the "Outcasts." Everybody made fun of them, so they kept to themselves. But that would all change the day someone was murdered.

It was quieter on campus than usual, and you could see everyone whispering about something. Suddenly my phone lit up. "NEWS WARNING!" Someone was killed last night on Campus Lockwood! Now I knew what everybody was whispering about. I was terrified, but the worst part was that they hadn't even found the killer.

I started to freak out when the school officer walked up to me and said, "Hey Alayia, I'm deputy McConaughey. I know you got an alert about the murder, and I wanted to ask you a few questions. Meet me in the study hall in an hour." I didn't respond; I just froze and watched him walk away. Why did he want to question me? It's like he thought I knew something.

When I got to the study hall, no one was there. A message written on the white whiteboard in red, it said, "WATCH OUT, YOU'RE NEXT." I ran out of the room to report it, but I knew everybody would have thought it was a prank, so I kept it to myself.

In the following days, people were getting questioned, and alibis were getting checked. This mess bothered me, and I don't know why but it did. It's like I knew something about the murder, and I didn't, but still, the feeling I had was weird. I couldn't go to sleep that night as I lay in bed staring at the ceiling, thinking about everything that had happened over the last couple of days.

Time passed, and still, all we knew was that on February 8th, someone was stabbed and left to bleed to death around 9 o'clock. The fact that there were no leads in the case made me want to investigate myself, so I did.

The first thing I did was to question everybody who had not been interviewed. Little did I know

that the information I got was gonna get someone in a lot of trouble. When I interviewed the Outcasts, they seemed weird about the situation, and I asked them what they knew. They replied "The victim was stabbed 30 TIMES!!" When the killer walked away, he laughed and mumbled that they would not be the only ones.

I went to the police station and told them everything. It's like no one had an idea of what I was talking about, except the Police Chief, and he already knew why I was there. It gave me this uneasy feeling.

A couple of days later, the police chief came to my house and said "If I don't keep my mouth shut, there would be consequences." As he walked away, he laughed and mumbled under his breath "you're not the only one." I knew who the murderer was now. All I had to do was build a case against the police Chief. That was going to be hard because no one was going to believe it. What made it worse was that I was coming for the police chief job.

A few days later, I had another idea of what to do next. I would ask the police chief for a meeting and record it all. I asked the police chief for a meeting three days later, and he agreed. As we talked, he blurred out, "You need to keep your mouth shut. I know you know that I am the murderer, and I know you want to take me down. I'll pay you to keep your mouth shut." I told him I didn't want the money, and I walked out.

I anonymously sent in the voice recording. And a couple days later, a report came out saying we caught the murders of the murder on Camp Lockwood, and the pictures were of the Outcasts. I knew that wasn't right. I had wanted the police chief gone because he needed to pay for his actions. I will have to live with the fact that people who had nothing to do with this would pay the time and that the police chief should be paying the time.

The River

by Eli Barrington, 6th Grade



One day, I went with my dad to go fishing. We saw so many fish, and my dad helped me reel in a big fish that we ended up eating for dinner.

The next morning, I told my dad I had so much fun that I wanted to go fishing again. We saw many different kinds of fish, and I had a lot of fun. The best thing I saw was a shiny blue fish that I caught with my dad's fishing net. I asked my dad to take a picture. He had a confused look on his face but then he took a picture.

Later, I was playing games on my dad's phone and I wanted to look back at the pictures we took of the fish. I was scrolling through my dad's pictures of us until I found the picture of me and the shiny blue fish. Except the shiny blue fish wasn't there. I wanted to go fishing for another day because I was confused about the fish not being in the picture. My dad let me go fishing one more

day. I kept fishing until I caught the shiny blue fish again!

I told my dad to take a picture but he said "There isn't a fish on that hook." I said "it's right there" as I pointed to the fish. My dad asked "Do you see a fish on that hook?". I said yes, and realized it might be my imagination.

(editor's note: sounds like the makings of a true fisherman.)



The Crossroads

deep grassland horizon; I noticed a fern stood tall like a predator. A shiver, as cold as ice, crawled down my spine. Adrenaline flooded my system. I walked faster, harder, quicker.

I wondered to myself, "Is this really something to fear?"

My mind raced with questions, my heart banging against my chest. Sweating, I broke out into a full-fledged panic when I saw a figure. It was a grass fern, playing tricks on me. My mind was against me, and all I could do was stop. I stopped walking and looked at where I was at. I was past them.

I had made it past the crossroads!

For today, anyway.

Early College High School



Beta Convention

by Arwen Lyonesse, 10th grade



On January 29th, 2022, members of Brunswick Early College Highschool's charter of national Beta Club attended their first state convention in Greensboro. About 30 members went, and each participated in an online competition weeks prior, an on-site competition once arriving or, both. Either way, the sense of community was felt through the support each student gave one another.

Competitions ranged from more objective events such as academic exams to performing arts and creating works for display which were considered by panels of judges. Schools from all over the state attended and gathered for three general sessions where awards for each competition were awarded. BECHS placed in 6 competitions, 2 of which were online.

The online competition results were revealed at the first general session; Ashlyn Baldwin placed 4th in 10th Grade Language arts, and Gregori Fisher placed 2nd in 10th Grade Science. The winners of the onsite competitions are as follows: Dulce Dominguez placed 4th place in the club portfolio, a competition in displaying the club's acts of service, Josie Tharp placed 5th in Division 1 speech, which was between 9th and 10th graders, and Presley Cerillo placed 3rd in Division 2 Jewelry, between 11th and 12th graders.



Photo by Samantha Becker,
10th Grade

Our quiz bowl team, consisting of Presley Cerillo, Chase Crabtree, Mario Marshburn, and Jaleigh Callahan, placed 2nd overall. Brunswick Early College's Beta Club learned from this experience and plans to compete again in next year's convention with current members already making preparations.

Window Shopping

by Arwen Lyonesse, 10th grade

I want to live a life so remarkable
One that's worth documenting
But I know that the best life
Is the one you forgot to write

The one that has you busy
So mesmerized and stolen away
That you never even know the day
Just that you want to live it forever
This is what I want

But yet I find myself still taking photos

Putting it all on display like a storefront

My life in someone else's prose

Maybe one day I'll be in the photo
And allow myself to be the subject
Of someone else's window

Layer 50: Rising Tension

by Dale Dyer, 10th Grade, ECHS



The characters are Aaron who is human and Ryder who is Welden.. It is set in a world with two dominant species; the Welden (Ryder's species), small, bird-like people with great intelligence, and Indurans (currently set to be met in the next short story), large, insect-like humanoids who are for the most part less intelligent. Wen and Duran recently had a massive war, which Duran won. After the war, Ryder was sent to be the ambassador between the two species. The original series begins when Aaron suddenly and without explanation arrives in their world a few years after the war; being the only human to have set foot there.

The man sat on a small stone platform in his favorite red suit, the usually brightly lit room now dark. Nestled within the columns and pools inside Wen's capitol building, Aaron watched the screen of his laptop intently. Lights flashed across it, illuminating the room. Colors joined the lights, though some seemed not to come from the laptop but the walls and columns themselves.

"Cypher, how secure is our connection?" Aaron asked the laptop, leaning back on the cold stone wall behind the platform.

"It's good enough for audio and video," a synthesized female voice responded quickly.

On the laptop's screen, a video feed flashed into existence, flickered for a few moments, then stabilized. Displayed on the video feed was a small, bird-like figure sitting at a desk while continuously mumbling and turning about as if scared of something.

"Ryder," Aaron said. "It is good to see you again."

"Of course," said Ryder in a tired voice. "But we didn't connect just to talk, did we?"

Aaron pulled a small digital storage device from his coat pocket and plugged it into the computer. A new tab appeared, displaying an empty folder. "Is this enough space?" Aaron asked.

Clicks echoed from the laptop as Ryder accessed the folder, then uploaded a text file to the device. Aaron sat the laptop down and stood up, beginning to pace across the room and back as Cypher listed the progress of the upload.

"20 percent complete," Cypher said.

Aaron had reached the far end of the room and walked back to the platform. As

From Chiropracting/Marine Science to a Teacher

by Margie Steve, 11th Grade and Nathaniel Brown, 9th Grade



Originally going to school to become a chiropractor or majoring in marine science, Mr. Ford has changed the major in pursuing education instead.



cafeterias, etc. It also differs in students maturing more quickly due to higher expectations of effort, behavior, and given more responsibility for themselves and their learning. Early colleges also provide more support toward life & professional skills, as well as better student/teacher positive learning relationships due to smaller class sizes".

Mrs. Absher, the principal of Brunswick Early College High School, said "He is a scientist and is passionate about his subject." He loves science and he makes science alive for the students. Mr. Ford enjoys building relationships with the students inside and outside of the classroom setting. Mr. Ford is a great listener because a lot of kids have great ideas and he helps to navigate students into creating something cool.

Did you Know?

Did you know that Mr. Ford has so many cool experiences with marine life and fishing? Not only is Mr. Ford a US Coast Guard Certified Captain, but he also dove with humpback whales, whale sharks, manatees, and many other marine organisms. The largest fish Mr. Ford has caught was a 355 lb Bluefin tuna, the longest was most likely a 9-foot blue shark or a 7-foot white marlin. He also has published a cookbook with his mom and other family member's recipes to preserve their long-life recipes.



he stepped up, he heard a rustling from his right. Without stopping, he peered into the darkness between the columns, but there were only a few scattered leaves. Ignoring the leaves, Aaron sat on the platform once again and checked the progress of the upload, which read 52 percent.

Ryder shifted in his chair, often glancing towards the door of his small office space and mumbling under his breath. The office was no more than ten feet by ten feet but packed to the brim with papers scattered across the floor and walls. Reports that displayed anything from annual earnings to correspondence to simple lists of names or symbols. Like the rest of the office, Ryder's desk was crowded with all kinds of odd statues and papers.

"One hundred percent," said Cypher's voice, breaking the silence in Aaron's room. "If I may, Ryder, what exactly is this file? I cannot make heads or tails of it."

Ryder nearly jumped at her voice but smoothed his feathers and managed to look almost calm. "I- uh, it's just something that I found, and I thought maybe you or Aaron could figure it out."

"Well, I certainly cannot," Cypher replied, then projected the file for Aaron to see.

On the screen was displayed a jumbled mass of symbols and letters; some matched the papers in Ryder's office, but most seemed random and disordered. Every few seconds, the symbols shifted into different patterns. Aaron watched the symbols for a few minutes, and both Ryder and Cypher stayed quiet while he studied them.

Finally, Aaron spoke. "I..." He paused, troubled, then continued. "I do not know what it is, but I have an idea of what it's doing."

Silence filled the room once again as Aaron continued watching the symbols until finally, Ryder interrupted his thoughts.

"Aaron, what is it doing?"

At first, Aaron didn't respond. Then, Aaron spoke in a calm voice, almost too quiet to hear.

"It's thinking."

To be continued...



Early College High School

One Size Does Not Fit All

by Arabella Ong, 11th Grade



Watching television, a commercial of a popular clothing brand comes up. It's of a luxury brand, promoting high fashion—haute couture per se. They are unveiling their newest collection. In this promotion video, women and men of slender figures dress in designer pieces. They also start endorsing this on Vogue magazine, Times Square, and Instagram. Everyone has heard about it, and everyone aspires to get a piece of this new collection. On the side, someone says, "How I wish I could fit and carry those pieces as well as those models."

Magazines, posters, billboards, commercials, shows, and social media have become a significant part of today's society. We see them everywhere, often promoting a particular brand or campaign. Even though its influence is seemingly unnoticeable, it urges us to give the endorsed items a try. However, there's one flaw to this: people end up using what they see on media as their paradigm. Brands should start showcasing real and diverse body types in advertisements because keeping the existing standard of a "perfect" body is unattainable and damaging.

A slim, toned, hourglass figure has been a common motif for girls, and a strong, muscular, no-fat figure has been the ideal physique for boys in most advertisements for brands. Its regular occurrence subtly instills the need to conform to this beauty standard—to be flawless. It ultimately is confidence-crushing.

Common Sense Media, a nonprofit advocacy group monitoring children's media, states that "more than one-half of girls and one-third of boys ages six to eight wish they were thinner. They further stated about one-quarter of children as young as seven have engaged in some dieting behavior" ("Body Image"). Dieting at that age puts forward the risks for eating disorders, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, or body dysmorphic disorder. External pressures, such as tight-fitted clothing and weight restricting sports, along with puberty's physical changes, play parts in prompting overwhelming feelings of shame, guilt, and self-hatred. It does

not end there either.

The use of photoshop to enhance models' features to fit the dream body has been prevalent in the advertising industry. Digitally manipulated photos create unreasonable expectations, which has convinced brands' demographics to do the same, as seen in most social media posts today.

Our bodies are beautiful and naturally diverse. Natural physical diversity is the message that brands ought to convey.

Dove, Aerie, Savage X Fenty, and Fabletics are among the very few that have started to show support for the body positivity movement ("Body Image"). Dove has been advocating for it since 2004 with their Campaign for Real Beauty; Aerie has also pledged not to use photoshopped images of their models to endorse their products. Savage X Fenty by Rihanna made an expansive range of sizes to fit anyone, hiring models of all sizes to exhibit their lingerie in their online shop and on runways. Fabletics has started using plus-size mannequins to offer inclusivity. The brand is known to cater to size XXS-4X. However, a recent controversy was sparked upon its debut on the store's branch in central London.

Isabel Oakeshott, British political journalist and broadcaster, posted a tweet reacting to the said mannequin, "This, in a Regent St fitness store, is what obesity looks like. Flabby curves highlighted in hideous lime green color. The so-called 'body positivity' movement is not 'inclusive', it's dangerous" (Spina). Oakeshott's remark received backlash transcending social media platforms. A social psychologist, Dr. Jaclyn Siegel, pointed out that there was nothing wrong with the mannequin: "This is a mannequin of an average person... Tons of people have this body shape, and that's fine. 'Obesity' is a body size not a disease. And not something to be ashamed of" (Spina).

Advertisements in commercial and social media should also be more inclusive. The commercials we see on television should not pressure us to fit into unrealistic standards. These ads should make us proud to be who we are and embrace the body we are in—may it be XXS or 4X.

Untitled Poem

by Karleigh Quinn, 10th Grade, ECHS



Stand on a pedestal,
face on
Emotions off
Lights beaming
Curtain drawn
You are left
With nothing
But a heartbeat
behind a smiling mask
That can somehow
feel the reflection
of the lights
and every eye on her
You breathe in
It does not release
Your words leave as you realise
You are alone
But the eyes
Are there
You turn
Facing every pair there
But you are alone
And the lights have died
But the eyes have not
They are there
Still expectant
You realize that
your mind is playing tricks
on you
This is all in your mind
But yet you stand
Trapped on a pedestal
Lights burning your skin yet again
Mask on
Feeling off



Town Creek Middle School

5MCU Spider-Man Trilogy Review *Spider-Man Homecoming*

by Parker Barnhill, 8th Grade

We start with Peter Parker in the back seat of what looks to be a Honda Acura with everyone's happiest person Happy Hogan. Fast Forward a little bit, and we see the behind-the-scenes of the Civil War Movie. Fast forward even further, Peter is in school and does this after-school "Stark Internship," aka being Spider-Man.

A mysterious explosion happens, and BAM, we are introduced to our Antagonist, The Vulture. It turns out the Vulture was a part of damage control

and got fired a few years back. But after a few fights and a few heartfelt Iron Man moments, we finish the movie on Coney Island; our plane crashed, and Spider-Man saves the day.

The significant parts are done very well, and I like that one of the main themes is that Peter is tired of being the "little kid" and wants to sit at the grown-up table with the Avengers. Also, a great reference to the original Spider-man comic is when Peter writes the word Spider-Man. He leaves a dash, and he never has

room to write the full name on the same line.

Shout out to the Canadian Lad for that one. Check him out on Youtube if you love your marvel! One issue with the movie is that they have the character, Liz. There isn't much plot development with her as Peter's date or whatever they were trying to push, and I think it lacks and trying to make it as a B plot takes from the movie. Other than that, there isn't that much wrong with the movie.



Cedar Grove Middle School

Why Does It Cost To Get A Good Education?

by Delilah Miller, 8th Grade



Many young people do not go to college, and many do not finish with a degree. It is not a simple issue of not wanting to go or finish, and they can't pay for college. A good education in America today costs a lot of money. But why does it cost so much?

I often ask myself, why do the people who want to learn and want an education have to incur thousands of dollars of debt to get a few years of education? I still do not have an answer. For many, a couple of years is what they wanted. They want to go back and do more, but the system isn't fair for those who don't have that kind of money. An average person doesn't have that kind of money at hand.

When you think about going to college, the first thing you think of is the amount it will cost you personally. That is what I think of right off the bat. It is unfair to many who want to get an excellent education but cannot because they simply don't have the money. I know there are scholarships, but not everyone can get one, and not everyone will qualify.

by Bianca Chambers, 8th Grade

Time. Time, we eat up like candy
time is not simple future, present,
past.

The past is time that we surpassed
The past is behind though we only
worry about the future.

We always think about the possi-
bilities about later.

Present. Time we often don't think
about

We never think about now we
make the mistake thinking about
the future.

We make unreasonable mistakes
before we don't think about the
consequence.

Time

During that time, we only think
about now.

Future. Time that we over think
about

The time that we don't think about
when we make mistakes

Time can have the beat of rain
it could be slow and steady or fast
and destructive.

Time is like a suture
a thread that holds pieces together.

Time is something that we don't
think about.

Most worry about what comes next
Don't worry about next.

Worry about now.



Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission

The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor is a National Heritage Area managed by the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission. The National Heritage Area program is managed by the U.S. National Park Service. <https://gullahgeechecorridor.org>

The Story of Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson - Part One

by Ana Johnson, Kennesaw, Ga



Residing in Winnabow, North Carolina, Fort Anderson is a prominent landmark noted under the North Carolina State Historic Sites. According to their website, the site classifies as a major pre-Revolutionary port on North Carolina's Cape Fear River. During the Civil War, Fort Anderson was constructed atop the old village site and served as part of the Cape Fear River defenses below Wilmington before the fall of the Confederacy.

To discuss the site's background and archaeological remains, I had the opportunity to speak with Jim McKee, a local historian, author, and researcher. He has contributed to various initiatives specializing in preserving historical efforts within the Southeastern North Carolina region. McKee has formerly worked for the National Park Service and the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport. Now, he sits as the Site Manager of Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site, where he has collected a knowledgeable view into Brunswick County, and more specifically, Fort Anderson.

"It wasn't until my parents moved here around the early 1980s that I truly dwelled into the history," McKee said, "And, it just evolved. I've always been a history nerd. I've always been a historian, so it just came naturally to learn about the history of where I'm going to be living."

Fort Anderson is considered one of the most preserved earthen fortifications within the Western Hemisphere. The fort runs for about a mile and a quarter, and roughly 90 percent of the area is intact. "Fort Anderson is unique because it was the blueprint for what would become Fort Fisher. After the engineers on Fort Anderson got the bulk of that area done, the district commander thought it was great work. Because of this, he sent them across the river to rebuild Fort Fisher. Currently, there's only about 11 percent of Fort Fisher left that is considered original." McKee said. Alongside these records, Fort Anderson acknowledges

the colonial history of the founding families within the Lower Cape Fear region. This includes two Governors, Arthur Dobbs and Benjamin Smith, and Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Alfred Moore, who were buried on-site.

Along the Cape Fear River lies the ruins of Brunswick Town, where Fort Anderson was built upon. Brunswick Town was established in 1726 and utilized as a world-class port. The town existed as a significant port for the exportation of naval stores and rice cultivation. "It's going to be an important international port, long before Wilmington's establishment. It was one of the only deep-water ports located in the state," McKee said. Because of this, international trade and coastal ships, and other vessels went along the coastlines since the Cape Fear River is the only major river in North Carolina that flows directly to the ocean. Some of the heavy traffic would go to the Brunswick area. However, starting in the 1740s, most went towards the Wilmington area.

Brunswick Town was then attacked and captured by Spanish privateers in September 1748 during King George's War. The militia that conducted the counter-attack to drive the Spanish out consisted of 60-80 individuals under the lead of William Dry III. In addition, the town was the focus of the Stamp Act Crisis in February 1766, which is considered one of the first successful armed rebellions against the British authority in America. However, in 1776, it became occupied by the British, which would be the town's demise. "It will come back after the Revolutionary War, but only as a port until around 1826, then everything moves to Wilmington," McKee said. Because of the two governors, Arthur Dobbs and William Tryon, Brunswick Town became the unofficial capital of North Carolina from 1758 to 1770.

For more information about Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson site, visit: <https://historicsites.nc.gov/all-sites/brunswick-town-fort-anderson>

Serving The Community

by Margie Steve, Shallotte, NC



The South Brunswick Interchurch Council (SBIC) comes together every Saturday at Camp United Methodist Church located on 4807 Mainstreet in Shallotte, North Carolina. Together, all 14 local churches have created "The Lord's Food Pantry." The Lord's Food Pantry helps those in Brunswick County who are in need of nutritious food, personal supplies, and other necessities.

In 1981, The SBIC was formed. Shallotte First Baptist, Camp United Methodist, St. James the Fisherman Episcopal, and Calvary Baptist were the first churches. Katherine Shawyer, Dr. Dan Smith, William Potts, and Rev. and Mrs. Bill Greer were among the early organizers who worked to help this demographic and encourage other churches' engagement.

With the help of volunteers, local businesses, and members of the SBIC, The Lord's Food Pantry is able to be open every Saturday from 10am to noon to anyone who resides in Brunswick County. SBIC isn't just involved with The Lord's Food Pantry but also helps out with events within Brunswick County to help bring awareness to hunger.

Every Saturday many people from the community line up to sign in, get asked what they need from a list of extra goods, then wait for the members and volunteers to put their needs and goods into their cars.

Behind the scenes many people are working hard to pick up foods from stores like Panera Bread, Starbucks, Lowes, and many more. Otherwise, they use their grants to stock up the pantry with canned goods from local grocery stores or donations from schools, and the community.

David Green who has been working at The Lord's Food Pantry says that he has seen many changes and influences in young people like Jacob Lolley and Kaitlyn Steve. Jacob and Kaitlyn are one of the few young people who volunteer and play a big role in making it possible for everyone to get in and out with food loaded up in their cars for the weekend. David also mentioned that Brunswick Family Assistance (BFA) is another huge food pantry that is located in Shallotte and is open Monday through Friday.

David said that Jacob Lolley has been the most consistent in making sure everyone is signed in to pick up food, register new people, and said that

"he certainly has the most important job." David mentioned that because Jacob is using data skills and interviewing skills it will help him tremendously in his future career. "Jacob shows up every month and has made a commitment which shows a true responsible young adult, which is key for our future".

Kaitlyn Steve helps with meat orders, helps take out loads of bags out to the tables to be handed out, and helps set up. David Green said that the volunteers are helping to meet the needs of our community, it makes them feel more empathetic in the long run by seeing the need and knowing that they are helping to make that difference.

For more information about The Lord's Food pantry or how to volunteer visit thelordsfoodpantry.com or email to thelordsfoodpantry@gmail.com. Check out the SBIC Facebook page and Instagram ([lordsfoodpantry](https://www.instagram.com/lordsfoodpantry/)) which can be found on their website or by searching South Brunswick Interchurch Council (SBIC) on Facebook for more information about food banks and other programs offered by SBIC.

Where the Forest Meets the Stars

by Glendy Vanderah

This is the author's first book. After the loss of her mother and her own battle with breast cancer, Joanna Teale returns to her graduate research on nesting birds in rural Illinois. She works from dusk to dawn, until her routine is disrupted by a mysterious child who shows up at her cabin barefoot and covered in bruises.



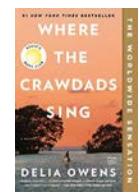
Cape Fear Voices The Book Shelf

Where The Crawdads Sing

by Delia Owens

The story is set in 1969 in a small-town on the North Carolina coast. When popular local, Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the so-called wild Marsh Girl. But Kya has survived for years alone in the marsh that she calls home, finding friends in the birds and lessons in the water. She is gentle and wild at the same time.

Where the Crawdads Sing is a salute to the natural world, a heartbreakingly coming-of-age story, and a surprising tale of possible murder. Owens reminds us that we are forever shaped by the children we once were, and that we are all subject to the beautiful and violent secrets that nature keeps.



Welcome to our newest regular section of Cape Fear Voices: The Book Shelf! Our staff has curated a collection of recommendations of modern books and literature. We hope to showcase a diverse range of fiction and non-fiction works, including selections for young adult readers.

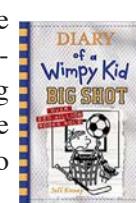
Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Big Shot

by Jeff Kinney

This is book 16 of the Diary of a Wimpy Kid series. After a bad day at field day competition at school, Greg decides that when it comes to his athletic career, he has none. But after his mom urges him to give sports one more chance, he agrees to sign up for basketball.

Greg is sure he won't make the cut. But he unexpectedly lands a spot on the worst team.

As Greg and his new teammates start the season, their chances of winning even a single game look slim. But in sports, anything can happen. When everything is on the line and the ball is in Greg's hands, will he rise to the occasion?



The girl claims to have been sent from the stars to witness five miracles. With concerns about the child's home situation, Jo reluctantly agrees to let her stay—just until she learns more about her past.

As the summer nears an end the child's past closes in all of her painful secrets will be forced into the open, and her fate will be in the hands of the stars.



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.

Despite Winter's Nip, the Extension Master GardenersSM of Brunswick County Line Up 2022 Plant Sale

January brought winter to our area, yet the Brunswick County Extension Master GardenerSM Volunteer Association (BCEMGVA) looks forward to warmer weather and is planning their 2022 Plant Sales. The year 2022 will feature a series of BCEMGVA plant sales each with a focused theme and offering a unique variety of plants for that sale.

1. In late March many gardeners are eager to get out in their gardens and start planting, however, late season frosts can still harm tender plants and ruin gardeners' hard work. Early Spring is a great time to engage your green thumb by sprucing up your containers on the front porch and patio. These smaller containers can easily be covered or moved to a protected location if late-season freezing temperature threaten our area. BCEMGVA is offering a "Spruce-Up Your Containers" Plant Sale in late March featuring colorful annuals and greenery specially selected for containers that will brighten your entryways and outdoor spaces all season long.
2. April heralds Spring and the BCEMGVA Spring Plant Sale returns in late April. This popular plant sale features a large selection of blooming shrubs, perennials and greenery that thrive in the Southeast Coastal North Carolina environment.

3. In conjunction with National Pollinator Week and just in time for the Monarchs, other butterflies and pollinators, the June BCEMGVA Pollinator Plant Sale will feature Milkweeds and other critical pollinator beneficial plants celebrating the importance of pollinators in the food chain. The plants for sale are endorsed by Monarch Watch, the North Carolina Butterfly Highway, and the North Carolina Native Plant Society as critical to sustaining our butterfly and pollinator habitat.
4. The BCEMGVA Fall Plant Sale in September will concentrate on native plants that are recommended by the North Carolina Sea Grant for Coastal Carolina landscapes. These plants are suitable for the coastal environment thriving in our harsh conditions, more likely to withstand storms, and beneficial to the natural habitat. Just in time for fall planting this sale will offer ornamental grasses, evergreen shrubs, and late blooming seasonal plants.

Go to the organization's website, www.bcmgva.org, for the latest information, dates, and times for each of these plant sales and pop-up sales that we plan to offer. The health and safety of our community is very important and is being taken into consideration when holding plant sales. Some sales may be Online Sales with curbside pickup and others may be in person with appropriate social-distancing measures utilized. Check www.bcmgva.org for updates or sign up to add your contact information for the Plant Sale e-mail list.

For more information, contact Krystina Ochota at the NC Brunswick County Cooperative Extension Office; 910 253 2595, Monday - Friday from 8:30 am - 2:30 pm.

Around Town

The Wilson Center at Cape Fear Community College presents, "The Queen on Soul, A Tribute to Aretha Franklin," March 15, at 7:30 pm, and "Hair-spray," on Saturday, March 19 through 20, at various times. Get tickets online.

The Beer, Bourbon & BBQ Festival will be held in Wilmington on March 12, to 6pm., at; Live Oak Bank Pavilion
10 Cowan Street
Wilmington, NC 28401

This is a true Southern event – **Beer, Bourbon, Barbecue, Boots, Bacon, Biscuits, Bluegrass.** Your admission buys you a sampling glass so you can enjoy an ALL-YOU-CARE-TO-TASTE sampling of beer and bourbon. See ticket information online.

Healthy Living presents **Springfest '22.** This is a free event held on Saturday, March 19, at 580 River Road, SE in Leland. Enjoy yoga, fitness pros, activities for kids and food vendors.

The Drive Thru Egg Hunt will be held on March 30, 31 from 5:30 to 6:30p.m. And, on April 1 from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m., at Leland Town Hall. This is a free event, but children must be registered. Go to the Town Hall website and register.

Do you like to sing? **The Leland Larks** will be getting back together. This group goes to elder care facilities to add a little sunshine for those who may need it. Contact Linda Wadhams at lindacamw@gmail.com for further details.

The Brunswick Center at Leland (Senior Center)
Try a **line dancing class**, beginners or intermediate levels. This is a fun, cardio activity. Intermediate classes are held every Wednesday starting at 10:30 a.m. Beginner's classes are every Friday at 10:30 a.m. If line dancing isn't your thing, try chair aerobics every Thursday at 9:30 a.m.

Volunteers needed to make "**Mats for the Homeless.**" This is a Center Community Project workshop that is held on Tuesdays from 1 – 3. The group makes water resistant mats and distributes them to the homeless. They use clean plastic bags and crochet them into a 3' x 6' mat. Go to the Center at 121 Town Hall Drive (next to the Leland Library,) in Leland. Stop in at the front desk and tell them you want to help.

Supply Senior Center

If you want to learn how to do **wool rug hooking**, stop by the Supply Senior Center at 101 Stone Chimney Road in Supply on Thursday's from 10:00 to 3:00 and see what it's all about.

The Center also offers crocheting at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday and open exercise every weekday at 8:00 a.m.

Brunswick Arts Council

The Celtic Musical Festival

A day of Celtic events will be held at Franklin Square Park, 130 E. West Street. In Southport. Join Brunswick Arts Council for a great day of celebrating all things Celtic. Storytelling, Dancing, Children's Crafts, Highlands Games, and

Live Music. This is a free event running from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., on Saturday, March 19.

Leland Cultural Arts Center

Springtime Pottery. Wednesday, March 2, 6:00pm to 7pm

Make a handmade pottery project with a springtime twist. Assembled in just one evening, then fired by staff and available to pick up afterwards, these decor items will be ready for display or gifting just in time for spring. All levels. Register online.

Join the Leland Cultural Arts for the Youth Art Month Gallery Showcase where children from grades K to 12 display their artwork. **The Gallery Showcase** will be held from March 1 to April 2, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Check the Leland Cultural Arts Center calendar to see what classes are starting again. They offer ceramics, adult sports like volleyball and soccer on Mondays and Kids in the Kitchen on Wednesday's, among other classes. Go to their website to register.

Down to Earth Aerials | March 25th | 7 - 9 PM | \$15

Take in the remarkable strength, extreme flexibility, and creativity of Down to Earth Aerials. This breath-taking cirque performance is sure to be an event you don't want to miss! Basic Skills Master class to follow on Saturday, March 26 during Youth Arts Day.





The North Carolina Rice Festival Coming!

by TeCora Galloway, Shallotte, NC



The event to celebrate the Gullah Geechee heritage was postponed for two years because of Covid but is now gearing up for a fun-filled weekend in March. The North Carolina Rice Festival's main purpose is to raise awareness of the history and significance of rice production and how Brunswick County developed because of it. It is also a celebration of the Gullah Geechee culture. African Americans in the area can discover and learn more about their heritage and connection to the Gullah Geechee people by purchasing an African Ancestry DNA test to help them discover their lineage and tribal relationships. The program will kick off with a dinner on Friday, March 4th, at the Leland Cultural Arts Center.



Doors open at 5:45 p.m. and the program will start at 6:30 p.m. The dinner, which starts at 6:50 p.m., will be catered by **Chef Keith Rhodes**, a contestant in Top Chef and well renowned Gullah Geechee cook. Also present at the dinner will be Ron and Natalie Daise, stars of the Nickelodeon show Gullah Gullah Island. Tickets are on sale for \$110 per person.

On March 5th, there will be indoor and outdoor events. (All events will comply with current COVID19 restrictions.) The indoor events on March 5th will cost \$10. The outside events are free and start at 9:00 a.m., and conclude at 6:00 p.m.

The Indoor Event on March 5th will feature a video presentation of the Gullah Geechee history and heritage. There will also be the viewing of the documentary, "Gullah Roots," which follows the story of Sarah Leon as she shares the history of Gullah Geechee people. The outside events, centered around the Outdoor Stage, start at 11:30 a.m., and will end at 5:30 p.m. These events include storytellers, artistic renderings reflecting Gullah Geechee life and music expressions of the Gullah Geechee culture. These story tellers include "Auntie Pearlie Sue," local artist Ian Davis, The Gullah Geechee Ring Shouters and Leroy Hopper and his All Starz. Leroy Harper was the backup "horn man" for James Brown.

In addition to these performances there will be vendors selling food and items relating to Gullah Geechee culture. The weekend of events and presentations is being sponsored by The Leland Tourism and Development Authority, WWAY and The Brunswick Arts Council. The NC Rice Festival is a nonprofit organization, and it welcomes new volunteers and new sponsors. To get more details you could visit their website <https://www.northcarolinaricefestival.org/> and email northcarolinaricefestival@gmail.com for inquiries about volunteering and/or sponsorship.



Contributors to the program include:

Ron and Natalie Daise are amazing entertainers and will be performing at the dinner on March 4. The couple are best known for their

roles in the Nickelodeon show Gullah Gullah Island, a children's show that was centered around Gullah Geechee culture. Natalie is originally from South Carolina but grew up in Rochester, New York. Ron is from Saint Helena Island, South Carolina. The two met in 1983 and have performed song and stories across the country ever since. They have been recognized with the 1996 South Carolina Order of the Palmetto and the 1997 State of South Carolina Folk Heritage Award. Ron and Natalie Daise continue to make massive contributions to the push for educating the general public on Gullah Geechee culture and heritage.

Anita Singleton Prather or "Aunt Pearlie Sue", is an entertainer who travels around the country demonstrating what Gullah Geechee culture is like through stories. According to her website, gullahkin-folktravelingtheater.org, Ms. Prather prides herself on "entertaining audiences with Gullah-flavored folktales". She has been invited to perform at the White House, the United Nations headquarters, and Black Hollywood in LA, California. She has received Aesop Fables Award and The South Carolina Jean Laney Folk Heritage Award, to name a few.



Jonathan Green is an African American painter that specializes in contemporary art. According to his website, Mr. Green has 4 honorary doctoral degrees, and numerous awards for his work. Mr. Green is from Gardens Corner, South Carolina and often portrays scenes that reflect the experiences of African Americans in the American South, including the Gullah Geechee culture. The painter's work is featured in museums around the world, and is one of the leading examples of African American contemporary in the United States.



The Rice Festival will also welcome the **Geechee Gullah Ring Shouters** to perform this year. The Geechee Gullah Ring shouters are a group that was established in 1980 from Darien, Georgia, in an effort to carry on the traditional dance of Ring Shouting. Ring Shouting is described by Index Journal's as a religious spiritual dance practiced by Gullah Geechee people which originated during slave times.

The dance draws influence from West African cultural dances and many praise dances seen in black churches today. Ring Shouting consists mostly of clapping and stomping in a circle and singing gospel spirituals. It is viewed as a call and response to God. The Geechee Gullah Ring Shouters have become nationally renowned and are helping many to embrace their heritage.

This is a festival of history and culture that you don't want to miss.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Friday, March 4, 2022

Leland Cultural Arts Auditorium

- 5:45 pm Doors Open
- 6:30 pm Welcome, Introduction of Guests
- 6:50 pm Dinner Served
- 8:40 pm Introduction of Performers
- 8:45 pm Entertainment – Ron and Natalie Daise
- 9:45 pm Acknowledgements, Closing Remarks

Saturday, March 5, 2022

Leland Cultural Arts Auditorium

- 8:30 am Doors Open
- 9:00 am Welcome, Event Introduction, Overview of Festival Program
- 9:10 am Opening Remarks – Victoria Smalls, CEO, Gullah Geechee

Cultural Heritage Corridor

- 9:20 – 10:10 am NCRF History Video Followed by Panel Discussion and Q/A
- 10:20 – 11:50 am Showing of SCTV Documentary – "Gullah Roots," Panel Discussion

12:00 – 12:30 pm Geechee Gullah Ring Shouters

12:30 – 1:30 pm Break

1:45 – 2:45 pm Rice and Race – Gullah Artist, Jonathan Green, Presenter

3:00 – 3:30 pm Gullah Historical Storyteller, Anita Singleton Prather as Aunt Pearly Sue

Outdoor Stage

11:30 am Blues DeVille

12:30 pm Ian Davis

1:30 pm Aunt Pearlie Sue

2:15 pm Tina Smith

3:15 pm Geechee Gullah Ring Shouters

4:00 pm "Funky" Leroy Harper and his All Starz

5:30 pm Closing Remarks, NCRF Chairman, George Beatty

March Humor

I asked my new girlfriend when her birthday was.
She said March 1st, so I walked round the room and asked her again...



Have anyone else's gardening skills improved during this quarantine like mine have?

I planted myself on my couch at the beginning of March and I've grown significantly since.

Celebrate the Ides of March with a donut. In fact, ...
Eat two, Brutie.

Why are soldiers so tired at the beginning of April?
They just had a 31-day March.

Birthdays!!!

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Patty Kelley 3rd | Christie Cartledge 15th |
| Andrew Aydell 4th | Kennedy Decker 17th |
| Mary Alpen Vogelsong 4th | Karleigh Quinn 19th |
| Caleigh Pendleton 8th | Terri Delfino 22nd |
| Nathanial Brown 14th | Savannah Klimkowski 27th |

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