

# THE TEEN SCENE

FREE

Tomorrow's Voices Today

## Early College High School



### I Am Here Today Because of Them

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



Alise White graduated from Webster University in Myrtle Beach, SC in 2001 with a Master's Degree in Business and Administration. During that time, she was also a customer service manager (CSM) at Walmart, located in Shallotte, NC. Working overnight at Walmart allowed her to volunteer at South Brunswick Middle School, where she got her inspiration from the assistant principal there.

Alise White didn't start out as a teacher. It all started when she was volunteering at SBMS, where her kids attended. After volunteering at the school for a while, the assistant principal informed Ms. White that there was a job opening at North Brunswick High School. Ms. White went for it, got the job, and her teaching career began in March of 2005.

While teaching, Ms. White was able to work closely with teenagers and said "it was a great experience, which was the polar opposite of what some people predicted my experience would be like." Ms. White's classrooms were packed with students who wanted to be appreciated, loved, and respected while learning skills that would help them succeed in life. In 2006, two new schools were be-



ing built, Brunswick Academy and Brunswick Early College. Ms. White applied for a job at Brunswick Early College High School as an AVID (Advancement via Individual Development) teacher, got offered the position, and was "a part of the founding team of eight dedicated individuals who worked to create the BCHS."

Ms. White strives to help all of her students become successful through teaching things such as The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, metacognitive strategies, and vocabulary building. Most importantly she teaches them the 21st century skills that they need to be amazing and effective members of society.

Unlike the other teachers at ECHS, all Freshman have Ms. White as a teacher and some say that is why the majority of the students become so successful in life. Ms. White's goal as a teacher is "to give students something of value that they could use throughout their lives. In my classroom I teach a variety of skill sets that include soft skills."

Ms. White teaches students about having a positive attitude, being able to communicate effectively, time management and planner

use, and organization to help students become successful in their time here at ECHS and in their future career.

Ms. White's goal for her students is "for them to become functional adults: I want them to know how to seek out and utilize resources, use technology effectively and know how to overcome challenges while being able to think critically and to solve problems judiciously."

Ms. White's dream is "to be a woman of integrity who exhibits sound character, the ability to laugh at herself while maintaining the humility needed to apologize and say "I was wrong" when needed." Ms. White works to be honest, faithful, and fair to those she meets. "I have found that being kind and respectful is always the best course even when the situation provokes highly negative feelings. If I can measure up to the strict standards I have for myself (mostly, hey, no one is perfect) then I will feel that I am living my dream life."

*Did You Know?*

*Did you know Ms. White had a Spanish class with Santita Jackson, the daughter of Jesse Jackson? While attending Howard University in Washington, D.C. she met Patrick Ewing as well. His sister was Ms. White's roommate in her sophomore year at Howard. Later, Patrick Ewing was drafted into the NBA.*

### Betrayal is a Matter of Life or Death

by Nathaniel Brown, 9th Grade



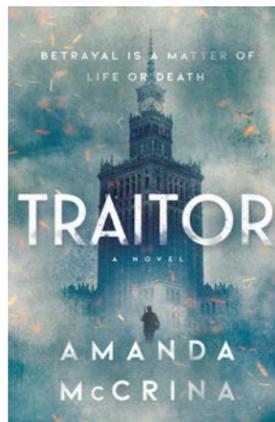
*Traitor: A Novel of World War II*, by Amanda McCrina is a World War II, historical fiction novel. The book is currently being sold in the US for around \$19 and each copy contains 368 pages. The "tightly woven" story follows seventeen-year-old Tolya Korolensko, who is half Polish and half Ukrainian. He joins the Red Army in order "to keep himself alive and fed." Tolya ends up deciding to shoot the political officer for his unit (not accidental). After shooting his political officer he is rescued by a group of the Ukrainian Army.

The novel's second main character is Aleksey Kobryn, the older son of a Ukrainian Nationalist. From the first page of the novel readers are hooked on the amazing story behind Tolya. This book is an amazing read for any age group as there is no inappropriate language, however the reader does need a strong grasp of what was going on at the time (World War II).

One important detail about the two characters' stories is that Aleksey's story takes place three years after Tolya's story. Like most characters, Tolya is in love with a sharpshooter, Nataliya Koval. This novel is truly different from any other piece of literature I have ever read. In order to completely understand why the author chose "Traitor" as the title of the novel you must read until the very end.

Toward the end of the novel, we see the internal conflict that Tolya is struggling with about trying to center his ethnic heritage, as he sees both sides of his family commit several atrocities. What made his decision of loyalty so hard was that he was a traitor to his father's

people because of his mother, and he was a traitor to his mother's people because of his father. There really is no winning for Tolya. This book touches on several questions about philosophy and integrity when relating to war. This book is absolutely amazing and it will keep you on the edge of your seat throughout its entirety.



**Lee Morris as The Flash Spirit Week at ECHS**  
photo by Samantha Becker



### The Moon

by Arwen Lyonesse, 10th Grade



And just like the tide  
Sometimes happiness will recede  
Yet the sea rarely blames the moon  
Because fault shouldn't take lead

Even if she can't control it  
She knows neither can he  
So maybe we could learn from the sea  
And find another place for focus to be.



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## Persuasive Speech

by Addison Justus, 10th Grade, ECHS

What comes to mind when you think about dairy? Is it a big glass of cold milk? Or is it an image of cows grazing in a field? I'm going to tell you about the dairy industry in America. I have looked into this topic for a long time, and each time I learn something new and I hope to teach others something new as well. Specifically, we will be examining the history of dairy in the United States, focusing on the role the FDA has played in shaping Americans' perceptions of dairy products.

Looking at the USDA's five decades of cheese data illustrates that Americans have consistently increased the amount of cheese each person eats on average per year. On average, Americans eat 33lbs of cheese per year, as stated in "The Cheese Trap" by Neal D. Barnard, MD. Looking at these facts we get to a point where we are likely to question our actions. Is this much cheese good for us? Upon asking myself this question, I stopped eating dairy products, but reducing or ceasing dairy consumption is more complex than that.

The FDA has gone through many different forms of dietary guidelines. The one that is most familiar to us is likely the Food Pyramid. Sweden was the first country to make a dietary guideline for its public, and officials in the United States were being pushed to release something similar. As mentioned before, the Food Pyramid has undergone many changes over the years, and in the original Food Pyramid dairy products were grouped with proteins, however looking at the fat content and protein content of most dairy products, this was extremely misleading to the public. The FDA was telling the public that they should have 2-3 servings of dairy in a day and that dairy products were an adequate substitute to proteins like beans, legumes, meat, and seafood. The misconception that dairy products, usually full fat, are a necessity in every meal has a significant influence on our views as Americans and we, for the most part, feel that we have to eat dairy products because they are healthy, when they really aren't that good for us.

So, let me back up for a moment. You're probably asking yourself: is dairy bad for you? The answer is yes and no, so let me explain. A study pub-

lished by the National Library of Medicine found that dairy consumption of under a certain amount a day will not harm you long term, but that excessive consumption of dairy products is linked to a higher risk of cardiovascular diseases and death. According to this study, dairy consumption is healthy, as long as it is monitored and kept within reasonable limits. But the American public rarely listens to science. The people who conducted this research probably went home and ate a grilled cheese sandwich for dinner after concluding their studies. People who consume dairy products in unhealthy quantities say they know it is unhealthy, just like smokers who say they know smoking is unhealthy, but they choose to smoke anyway.

One might ask how we ended up with this viewpoint on dairy in the first place. There is a simple explanation: dairy subsidies. Every year the American Government pays dairy producers with taxpayer money to keep the dairy industry afloat. When the FDA tried moving dairy products to a higher level on the food pyramid (meaning dairy would no longer be a primary part of a "healthy" diet) the main dairy producers in the USA threw a hissy fit. As a result of the dairy industry in America having the FDA under a chokehold, the FDA's dietary recommendations are somewhat biased, rather than based on accurate nutritional information.

Overall, we can see that the FDA's food pyramid is not something that we should follow for every meal, especially with varying diets including those with allergies, those with celiac disease, and those who have plant-based diets like vegans and vegetarians. The effect of the dairy industry on the American public is largely unknown, and to a certain extent, it is alarming that America does not question the influence of corporations on the suggested dietary guidelines offered by the Government. Even if I didn't inspire you to stop eating dairy or to reduce your dairy consumption, I hope everyone listening learned a little more about a topic that isn't talked about much. After today, I hope everyone here will invest a little more thought into their health. After all, you only get one body, so taking good care of it is vital.

## The Wood King

by Jay Jones, 10th Grade, ECHS

In all the seventeen years of my life something has always remained the same. Do not leave the moving city; it's dangerous outside. Ah, my moving city with metal and towering walls wheels that turn and grind against the ground. Oh, my moving city whom I've grown to despise for its safety. This incredible boredom was driving me mad, so I devised a plan for the night.

As soon as the clock struck twelve, I rose from my bed and into the belly of the moving city, the great machine that has kept me safe ever since I was a child. Reckless as it may be, I snuck through the moving city which I have now come to despise, through the streets and the unnaturally bright lights, past guards and down the elevator that leads to the bottom of my beloved city and out the front gate. Then I felt something beneath my feet that I'd never felt before.

It was cold and spikey and wet from the night air. It was something I'd only seen in books. Grass, oh, how lovely it was! I had never seen anything like it before. Truly it was wonderful, but simple grass wasn't all there was. As I wandered deeper, I found a cluster of trees and bushes that towered like walls in the moving city. I couldn't help myself! I ventured further inside, admiring the natural trees that smelled so nice, certainly more than the metal ones that I love alongside.

But as I ventured deeper, I realized something was wrong. The trees bent in ways they shouldn't. Grass died with every step. Of course, I was nervous but quite curious. I moved quickly into the forest's heart, where I was met with a ghastly sight.

A creature stood there with skin made of wood. Moss covered its shoulders and vines wrapped around its waist and hung from the crown of wooden antlers on its head. This beautiful creature was metal which was stabbed into its lower belly and chest, and oil poured from the creature's wounds. Whatever it touched withered and decayed. The creature itself letting out a low whine as it twitched in pain.

Anger flared in my heart as I approached the wounded creature, who quite looked like a king. It hissed and tensed as I touched the metal. I'd have to remove it to save this creature. So tug I did, ripping the metal freeze from its wounded body. The wooden king let out a shriek and a whine; sap now ran from its wounds. I quickly stopped this with the wrapping of my shirt. The wooden king watched me with a tilt of its head as I finished dressing his wounds. It took a step toward me so quickly that I nearly fell. It placed strong hands on my shoulders as vines grew around us. The freshly dead nature bloomed bright once again as it stepped back, looking at me with eyes I could only describe as thankful.

The wooden king walked with me for a great distance out of the forest and to the edge of my moving city, which now looked far more bland than it once had. I told it goodbye as I returned now with a clear purpose...

I need to bring knowledge of the world outside to my people of the moving city, share what I learned, and stop whatever hurt the wood king.

## Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of [Joy]

by Sarina Gardner, 13th Grade, ECHS

I used to say that I wanted to grow up  
To turn 18, to lose these shackles off my feet  
So I could run free  
T'was the fantasy  
Today, I need to rephrase this saying  
When life passes you by  
You will still have the shackles clinging to  
your ankles  
Holding the bag and more survival duties  
Are worse than playing with toys all day

But it is time to grow up!  
Learn to make life choices for yourself  
To pursue the joyful life you want  
It is time to get on your feet!  
Rise to your own standards  
To own authority of your own expectations  
Gain more knowledge of your dream virtue!  
For stability and guaranteed wealth

Don't be scared to grow up!  
Because you have to get there  
It is okay to cry but you have to jump  
And say you did it with no despair  
You have to prepare now  
If not, the shackles will get heavier  
"But how will you get out?"  
"Out of those shackles.", said the carrier  
Those will never come off  
They will only get lighter  
Only with life, liberty, then the pursuit of joy!

## Don't Run Away

by Aurora Bennett, 9th Grade, ECHS

*Thump*

"Where do you think you're going?"

The sound of footsteps echoed around the room. I saw the black shoes of the man that took me... The man that beat me and broke both my ankles to 'prevent me from running.'

"Are you trying to run?"

I desperately clawed at the ground, trying to get away.

"Not like you could even run, with your legs and all."

"G-get away from me!" I stammered out.

I'm slowly getting closer to the door. Closer to *Freedom*.

*Crack*

An ear-piercing shriek could be heard throughout the room.

I looked at my arm, my face paling. The arm was bent *way too far* back. Pain soon searing through my arm.

"I don't think it should be bent that way," I thought to myself.

"Maybe that would teach you not to run."

I stare up at him, eyes wide. He wore a malicious grin, looking down at me.

"Maybe I should do more? That'll really teach you," he said with an unflattering grin.

My screams could be heard for hours. Not like anyone was around to hear it.



## Flying Witch

by Grace Cairnie, 9th Grade, ECHS



Don't look back now flying witch  
The fault in our stars speak  
Three wishes

Lies

Gone

Hunger

Gone

FEAR

Gone

Don't look back now flying witch  
The fault in our stars speak

## Drug Additcion Speech

by Sarah Long, 10th Grade, ECHS

In 2017 there were 192 deaths per day due to drug overdoses. In 2018, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention attributed 47,761 deaths to opioid overdoses, and there may have been as many as 632,000 overdose deaths between 1999 and 2016. Drugs aren't necessarily a bad thing in fact they are vital to many people. However, these drugs can be abused which can lead to dependence on the drug and possibly even drug overdose. Drugs can creep into your life and take over before you even realize it. Drug addiction in America is an epidemic and we need to do something about it. I've had firsthand experience with drug addiction. I've personally known people who struggle with drug addiction. It's a very scary and painful thing to have to witness someone you know and love who is truly a great person lose themselves to drugs. It can completely change who they are and has negative effects on everyone involved. To combat drug addiction, we should provide mental health help for those who may be more prone to later develop drug addiction, decriminalize drug possession, spread awareness, and educate others on the topic.

We need to implement better treatment and prevention for drug addiction. Better mental health resources should be available to everyone, especially those more prone to developing substance abuse. People who struggle with mental illness such as depression or anxiety are much more susceptible to depend on drugs to cope. As someone who struggles with mental health, I know it can feel increasingly discouraging with feeling like there's nothing you can do to feel relief. This can give you a sense of hopelessness and makes depending on drugs much more likely. According to the Public Library of Science, drug addiction and major depression are mental health problems associated with stressful events in life with high relapse and reoccurrence even after treatment.

Despite drugs being a serious problem, drug possession should still be decriminalized. When someone is arrested for a drug possession charge it only makes the problem worse. Like I previously stated, rather than arresting people struggling with drug addiction we should make mental health resources available to them and implement them for those with a serious problem. According to the Pew Research Center, four in ten arrests are for marijuana charges. As a share of all marijuana arrests an incredibly intense 92% are just for the possession of marijuana and only 8% are for the sale or manufacture of marijuana.

Lastly, we need to spread awareness on this topic and better educate ourselves. Many are misinformed on the unfortunate process of drug addiction and how it should be responded to. When someone is struggling with addiction many are quick to judge and shun them rather than feeling empathy for what they are going through. According to Aspen Ridge, knowing how drugs impact the body, the long and short-term effects of substance abuse, and the possible risk factors involved are all key in the prevention strategy.

This brings me to the conclusion of my speech. To summarize my primary points, we must effectively execute the prevention and treatment of drug addiction by the means of prioritizing mental health, decriminalize drug possession charges, spread awareness, and better educate ourselves and others on this issue. If we don't do something to stop this problem it will only continue to get worse and the effects will be destructive. We can and must put a halt to the drug addiction problem in America as it is damaging and even killing our people. What if it was someone you love struggling with addiction? What if it was someone you love incarcerated for something rather than getting the help they need? What if it was someone you love dying from this detrimental issue?

## I Had Friends...

by Aurora Bennett, 9th Grade, ECHS

I had friends...

I had friends who never engaged contact unless I was the one who started it  
 I had friends who talked badly about someone so nice yet I couldn't stand up because I was too scared  
 I had friends who left me for someone else  
 I had friends who I thought were kind but acted so different  
 I had friends who made me feel like I didn't belong because I did something someone else did as well

But the past is the past

And now I have friends who let me rant and listen  
 And now I have friends who help bring up my confidence to finally stand up for myself  
 And now I have friends who share their lunch when I forget to bring mine  
 And now I have friends who have the same interests  
 And now I have friends who help me when I don't understand  
 And now I have friends who understand  
 Now I have friends...



### "Heart"

by Samantha Becker

## Crab Rave

by Aurora Bennett, 9th Grade, ECHS

"What are you doing?"

They looked up from where they were sitting on the grass.

"Nothing...?" They draw out.

"Mhm, yeah, and is 'nothing' just you sitting in the middle of our backyard with crabs surrounding you?" I ask, raising a brow.

They sigh, "Well, yeah, but look!"

They grab one of the crabs, quickly standing, and start pushing it closer to my face, "It's Sir Crabsalot!"

"Sir Crabsalot? There better be a Crabsadina," I say deadpan, looking at the army of Crabs around us.

"There is!" They yell, putting the previous crab down to show me another crab, "I'm creating a Crab army! I'm the general! You want to join as my right-hand man?"

"Yeah, sure, why not?"

And that folks is how two idiots created a Crab army and took over Russia.



## How Video Games Are Positive On Our Society

by Noah Baker, 10th Grade, ECHS

We have all at one point heard that video games are a poor way to spend our free time, and that it is better for us to go outside. But are video games really that horrible for us and, if not, do they have positive effects? The consequences of video games have been viewed as a bad influence by numerous numbers since video games first were created. As someone who has researched this topic to great extents and also has experienced the effects of video games, I will be discussing with everyone here how they influence our society in an ethical way. Like any other topic, video games have a yin and yang, but which side outweighs the other?

How many people here enjoy playing video games in their free time, whether it be on your phone, a console, a computer, or some form of gaming device? These games we play come in many different forms, such as exploration, puzzles, MMOs, simulations, and the list continues to go on. Depending on the genre these games can affect our emotions. Games act as a gateway for us, a way to take a break from our stressful lives and relax. They allow us to connect

to other people and interact, to play a game together with a friend, have some competition, work together to solve a problem and challenge our skills. Succeeding in a challenging fight or puzzle gives us a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction, as if you got a perfect score on a challenging test. During an interview with different gamers, 84% of them said that video games have improved their mental health. Snodgrass, a scientist that has done various experiments on this subject said this, "It's deeply relaxing, what some gamers describe as akin to meditation"

However, as I mentioned before everything has a bad side, and video games are no different. The most common and well heard argument is that video games cause violence. There has been research on the idea of video games increasing violence, but in contrast they seem to lower the amount of violence in gamers. As Ferguson says in his report, "It is also noteworthy that the explosion in popularity and availability of video games has coincided with a precipitous decline in youth violence, not a rise"

This shows how video games have a positive effect

on your life while having miniscule drawbacks. However, video games can still have a negative impact on our society if they are used frequently, or replace time that should be spent doing chores, or homework, or sleeping. A researcher on the subject said this, "Many teens chronically fail to get the 8-9 hours of sleep they need to function optimally, and for some kids gaming time makes the difference." We can find ourselves getting enticed into a game and not wanting to quit, or skimming through our work so that we can get back to the game. Because of this video games should be a way to spend our free time, not to neglect work or other important activities.

From the points I have made today I hope that you and others will realize how video games have a positive impact on our society. In the right circumstances video games can improve our mental health and contrary to popular claims do not cause violence. They give us a way to interact with friends and can strengthen our skills. I hope that from this speech you have learned the importance of video games and their true effects.

## Signature of Life

by Dale Dyer, 10th grade, ECHS



What in the world is the signature of life?  
Does it show most while we're in the midst of strife?  
Does it appear in the image of a caring wife?  
Does it run all about in the land as if rife?  
Or while we roam free, as like birds in flight?

Why don't we look for the signature of life?  
Do we say to ourselves it isn't worth the sacrifice?  
Do we convince ourselves what it is isn't right?  
Or do we miss it, and leave it watching in disguise?  
Can we ever truly find out the meaning of this life?

When should we see the true signature of life?  
Is it shown to us after the dawn's first light?  
Do we notice it after the moon herald's night?  
Or do we chase it, like we chase the strings of a kite?  
Perhaps, should we never find the signs, it's alright;  
Because maybe, just maybe, we're the signature of life.



## The Future of Agriculture

by Addison Justus, 10th Grade, ECHS

You probably have seen news articles circulating online about a new form of factory farming. Architecture student André Ford has designed an interesting, to say the least, structure that farms chickens more efficiently. Many have described the contraption as something that looks like it is straight out of "The Matrix" movies. As someone who is invested in ethical practices and environmental issues, I was amazed by this new idea for farming. My curiosity took me further than I thought it would, and I pondered the question, what does this mean for the future of agriculture?

Scientists and philosophers have proposed blinding or even removing the cerebral cortex of chickens so that the strain put on them by factory farming can be reduced. On a regular basis chickens who are factory farmed are put under extreme stress, which can cause many issues for the chickens and the farmers who slaughter them. Removing the cerebral cortex from a chicken would keep the chickens from experiencing trauma or stress, but this still poses a moral dilemma. News outlet Wired explains the process of the farming process stating, "After this "desensitization," the chickens could then be stacked into huge urban farms with around 1,000 chickens hooked up to large vertical frames... The feet of the chickens would also be removed in order to pack more in... Food, water and air would be delivered via a network of tubes and excrement would be removed in the same way. This technique could achieve a density of around 11.7 chickens per cubic meter instead of the current 3.2 chickens achieved in broiler houses". While this method would be more efficient when it comes to the amount of land that is required to support these animals, there remains the question of whether it is moral to handicap the animals. It is important that we think about the future of agriculture regardless of whether it is positive or negative.

So what is the future of agriculture? Over the past few years, many of the practices associated with the agricultural industry have come under scrutiny. Whether it was ethical or environmentally harmful problems, farmers and other workers in agriculture have moved forward and developed innovative solutions to make farming as sustainable and ethical as possible. In the United States farmers are trying to move towards a more sustainable form of farming. Some of the advances described by news outlet OliverWyman include, "sophisticated technologies such as robots, temperature and moisture sensors, aerial images, and GPS technology. These advanced devices and precision agriculture and robotic systems will allow farms to be more profitable, efficient, safe, and environmentally friendly". For the most part, farmers are moving towards a better form of farming that will cause less food insecurity, less environmental impact, and less unethical practices. It seems like the United States is moving towards an improved agricultural industry in the future.

Many of the practices that have been brought up to improve farming have caused some controversy, for example, the "Matrix" style chicken farming. Even with the controversial practices, many good practices like urban farming and technology being integrated into agriculture have been brought up and prototyped. Agriculture is a vital part of every single person's life, so it is extremely important that our agricultural practices are sustainable. To conclude, the future of agriculture in America is a sustainable and ethical one that will hopefully solve many of the issues we have today.

## Midnight Drive

by Danny Mahr, 13th Grade, ECHS

They were taking a midnight drive, not of their own free will, but because they had gotten off work later than desired. They had volunteered to cover for the night shift; they needed the extra money, and they had a hard time saying no to people. They regretted this decision as their car rolled down the dark, vacant highway, their mind already somewhere else, somewhere different.

This stretch of road leading from work to home was hardly populated during daylight hours. At night, they believed they were no longer part of the land of the living. The scenery changed outside of the car's windows, but just barely, and after ten, twenty, maybe one hundred years, they started to think they were driving in an endless loop without an exit.

The moon's light, gone from the sky, offered no guidance or comfort. Its absence cast them into the void, a world of shadows lit only by the car's headlights where the shadows danced and the creatures of the mind conjured into existence just far enough out of reach to impose unease instead of dread. They kept driving.

They forgot how long they had spent on this stretch of road, their time of departure slipping from memory as they glanced at the time. They were not sure whether any time had actually passed, or if too much time had passed and they remained dazed and unaware. Sleep tugged at the corners of their vision, blurring their eyes. Its song coaxed them into slumber while their consciousness fought for control of the wheel.

Shadows danced around the car, inviting them to join the unseen revel on the side of the road. They ignored them. They had to get home. Jellyfish more luminescent than

the stars bobbed next to the windows, keeping pace with a mindless indifference. They would have felt comradery with them, if their thoughts were awake and their own.

The radio existed, even if they had forgotten it. When their consciousness bothered to remember it, they suspected that the same song had been looping for the past hour, maybe the past eternity. They kept driving. They had to get home.

Did they, though?

What would stop them from accepting the shadows' invitation to dance, or from following the jellyfish on their undisclosed journey? Who said they had to go home just because it was late when time ceased to matter in the first place? Could this midnight road take them somewhere else, somewhere different? They could go on an adventure, and return home the next day. Or maybe they would go somewhere else and return when they were ready. The road stretched before them, endless in its possibility. The jellyfish continued to bob in and out of view. The shadows extended wispy hands, offering, always offering.

A midnight adventure, they decided. They would go on a midnight adventure, and nothing in the universe could stop them. Nothing, that is, except for the end of the road, and the harsh approach of their driveway. They had returned home, wherever that may be, whatever that may mean. Getting out of their car, they entered their empty house and climbed into bed, wondering where the midnight road could have taken them if only, they had kept driving. The opportunity, like a candle in the wind, was there and gone in an instant. They may never know.

## Teenage Mental Health Issues

by Jasiel Baker, 10th Grade, ECHS



How many of you suffer from some sort of mental illness? Whether that is anxiety, depression, ADHD, or something else entirely. I, myself, have had multiple different experiences with poor mental health and struggle to deal with these problems. So, in this speech, I wish to speak of the poor mental health of teenagers in America by going over what mental illnesses are, the issues that may cause these feelings, and suggest going to therapy in order to deal with these mental obstacles. Teenage mental health is declining and can start to heal by getting therapy and receiving care or information on other ways to combat the dilemma.

First of all, what are mental illnesses? Mental illnesses are health conditions that are represented by alterations in emotion, thinking and/or behavior. Mental illnesses can stem from many different things, such as grief, heartbreak, anguish, abandonment, etc. Now you may be thinking, "Why are these issues so important?" Well, these poor mental health conditions are usually associated with problems functioning in society and as such take many different forms. These cages placed upon us by our psyche usually stem from adverse childhood environments, genetic issues, trauma, or other factors. According to the book Journal of Adolescent Health Article 265, teenagers, specifically alternative teens, that have had an adverse childhood environment report that these experiences contribute to their own poor mental health and are one of the causes of their atrocious coping mechanisms.

The Journal of Adolescent Health states, "After investigation for maltreatment, 42.7% of teens reported at least one MH problem.... Nine percent reported depression, 13.9% reported suicidality, 23% had substance use/abuse, 13.5% reported anxiety, and 18.6% had ADHD." This

information demonstrates the results of research that was conducted about the mental health of teenagers who were investigated by Child Welfare Agencies by showing the effects of growing up in adverse childhood environments and the detrimental issues caused by how these teens were raised. The percentages allow people to see the toll taken on teens through numbers and statistical data for more obvious representation of how the situations these teens are placed in affect their mental state.

This brings us to explore healthy methods to combat these issues within the teenage mental state. Speaking with others is basically the end of the world. But some suggestions that could be made for the benefit of our mentality do include seeking a therapist or talking to peers with the same issues. Personally, I have started seeking help with my own problems and have seen some positive effects from talking about what I'm feeling. According to Trials Volume 10, "teenagers rarely seek professional help for their emotional problems...The Internet, however, offers the possibility to access this large group of untreated adolescents for adequate care." Seeking help can allow you to gain a better understanding of your mentality and recognize negative feelings and ideas so that you can make positive changes, take greater control of your life and improve your confidence.

In conclusion, after suffering through these problems for any amount of time, I would suggest considering another route because no one can do this all alone. As I have previously stated, the mental health of American teens today is in a state of decline. So, I ask you to take that next step for your health and seek out a therapist or someone you trust to talk to make your life better.



# Cedar Grove Middle School

## Improvement

by Delilah Miller, 8th Grade



Writing is a difficult task. You can rewrite a story an infinite number of times. You can write an endless number of stories, and every story you rewrite or write is an improvement on your writing. You might not think you're improving until you look at previous writing, and there will be a difference. Many people may not realize their writing is improving until they look back at it.

An example for me is that I wrote my first ever story last summer. Since then, I've written all sorts of things, and I wasn't one to write stories that talk about feelings. When I eventually wrote my second story, I compared it to my first. There was such a drastic difference in the way I wrote, how I expressed things, my transition words, and just every little thing you would barely pay mind to while writing. So this is a reminder if you don't think you're improving and you're a writer, just look back at some old writing; you'll see a difference could be the smallest of things.

The difference may not even be the writing; it may be the way you write it, the way you remember your idea, the way you think, or the way you see it. You can improve in so many things, and you are constantly improving. You will forever improve because there is no limit to improvement. You can be considered the greatest writer in the world and still need to work on improving. THERE IS NO LIMIT TO IMPROVEMENT, like I said and will always say.

by Keira Hulse, 8th Grade

A Wendigo (or Windigo) is a mythological man-eating creature or evil spirit from folklore by the Native American Algonquian tribes based in the northern forests of Nova Scotia, the East Coast of Canada, and the Great Lakes Region of Canada. "The Wendigo is described as a monster with some characteristics of a human or as a spirit who has possessed a human being and made them become monstrous. Its influence is said to invoke acts of murder, insatiable greed, cannibalism, and the cultural taboos against such behaviors."

The creature lends its name to the controversial modern medical term Wendigo psychosis, described by psychiatrists as a culture-bound system with symptoms such as an intense craving for human flesh and fear of becoming a cannibal. In some indigenous communities, environmental destruction and insatiable greed are also seen as a manifestation of Wendigo Psychosis.

The wendigo is part of the traditional belief system of a number of Algonquin-speaking people, including the Ojibwe(Ow-jeeb-way), the Saulteaux, the Cree, the Nasakipi, and the Innu. Although the descriptions may vary, known to all cultures is that

## The Wendigo

the Wendigo is a malevolent, cannibalistic, supernatural being. The Wendigo was strongly associated with the winter, the north, coldness, famine, and starvation.

The Wendigo was described as skinny to the point of emaciation. Its dried-up skin is firmly pulled over its skin. It was described to have its lips peeled back or completely chewed away by pointed teeth. It's almost completely bald and 6-7 feet tall, despite the person's original height. Despite popular belief, Wendigos have no ties to stags, though most depict them as a half stag, half-human.



If you come in contact with a Wendigo, there are ways to get rid of the Wendigo. The most commonly known way is to melt its frozen heart, mostly done by ripping it out of its chest or jabbing an open flame into it. You should kill the wendigo because if you don't kill it, it will kill you. The public should be aware of this because we don't want people wandering around willy-nilly and ending up facing a Wendigo and not knowing what to do, so their fate is sealed, and they are dead.

# Leland Middle School



## Clear Seas

by Charlie Sedbrook, 8th Grade



I was a young girl when I noticed something was wrong with me. I have the ability to do things others cannot. Sometimes I wonder, why? I'm turning 14 in 3 days, and my parents are sending me off to go "volunteer" on a cargo ship. They say it's because they are going on a vacation and they don't want me to be at home alone, but really, it's because of my anger management. I overheard them on the phone.

I'm not a bad kid; I just have had a bad temper ever since my dad passed away. He was a marine biologist, and from what my mom told me, he drowned right on the equator in the Pacific Ocean. I have a hard time with his death as any normal person would, but I have such a problem because he was the only one who knew. The only one who knew about my..well, problems. Should I tell my mom about the GBM? Yes, but do I want to? No. I would rather keep my problems inside; my mom would totally freak out if she knew.

I leave to go on the ship in two days. In my opinion, I cannot believe my parents are sending me off right before my birthday. How rude! The smart thing to do would be to start packing, but what I want to do is go swimming. My house is a five-minute walk to the beach, so really, I can go anytime. It helps me calm down.

About 10 minutes later, I walked down the steps coming off the little bridge built to go onto the beach over the doons. I walked past the crowds, didn't stop to put a towel down, didn't stop at all. I just walked straight to the water. I put my hands right above the water. No one was near me. No one was really in the water because it was supposedly "freezing." The water around my hands started circling. I saw a bright blue shining light underwater. The water rose and rushed into my hands. The water flew back, and an opening in the ocean opened up. The sand started moving and formed stairs, going down to a door made out of shells that gathered up together.

I walked down slowly, making sure no one saw. I was pretty far out, so no one noticed. I open the shell door and swim inside. This brings me to the Ningaloo Coast reef when I do this. My favorite place. My dad brought me here a few weeks before he died. We went scuba diving in this exact spot. We made a "spot" out of shells, coral, and sticks we found around the bay. I like to swim over there and sit.

I don't need to go up for air, and I don't need to worry at all. This is my problem, and I can control the water.

## Mental Health Month

by Keiran Daniels, 8th Grade



As we enter May, we enter Mental Health Awareness month; a month for people to speak up about others living with mental or behavioral health issues and help reduce the stigma so many experiences.

This could be veterans struggling with PTSD from past wars, a traumatized teen struggling with bipolar and suicidal tendencies, or even someone struggling with D.I.D or OSDD.

No matter the case, all of them are valid, and this month is to let them tell their story about how they became who they are now; to me, this month helps everyone express themselves.

People are often seen as 'weak' or 'unmanly' for having a mental illness when on the contrary, it proves they deal with more than they could've handled before. When you see people wear a green ribbon this month, just know that's their reasoning.



## Sixth Grade

by Eli Barrington, 6th Grade



In the beginning of the school year the school system was weird. My schedule got changed twice. There was much confusion and frustration. Two teachers left during the school year. One of the teachers left to get a job at a different school, and I don't know why the other teacher left. One day I went to class, and a teacher standing in front of the classroom said I couldn't go to that class. They told me to go to band class, and I didn't understand why. They didn't tell me the teacher wasn't there. The beginning of the 6th grade for me was rough, but it got better.

I got to meet a few new friends. Once I was sitting next to a boy I didn't know this year. I introduced myself, and it turns out he used to go to the same elementary school as me. I also got to meet his friend as well. Then I met a boy with the same birthday as me. I made a ton of friends this year.

One day I was sent to the office. I was questioning what I did wrong in my head. All of the kids were looking at me weirdly because I never get sent to the office. Once I got there my principal told me she was nominating me for something. She still hasn't told me what it is yet. The year was crazy and great at the same time.

## Drifting

by Lariyah Dansbury, 8th Grade

The rush of realization hit almost instantaneously; water floods my senses. I struggle under the pressure but soon got tired of moving and struggling against the water and the pressure from the water got even more intense on my lungs. The light of the world soon leaves my field of vision. Then I close my eyes exhausted from trying to fight against it. I hear screaming and the splash of water near me but soon I can no longer hear anything but the whispers of the ocean and the faint sound of my heartbeat.

The darkness lingers for a while then soon leaves when I feel a tug on my arm lifting me up into the light and then air instantly rushes back into my lungs. I cough up the rest of the remaining water and sit up looking up at the figure with blurry eyes.

# North Brunswick High School



## Born To Serve

by Rachel Kemp, 12th Grade

(This is a summary of Ms. Kemp's speech in the Brunswick County High School Oratory Contest on Monday April 10, 2022. Reprinted with permission.)

Is your soul set on fire for anything in particular? The art of literature, the development of science, a specific sport, or even the love for your religion? Do you gain your identity or purpose in life from something? I ask this because I know many people that are still "finding themselves" or wondering who they are. I'm blessed to say that even though I may not have everything figured out, I have found my purpose and even better... my identity in someone. My name is Rachel Kemp and I am a child of God and a runner. The first of course being the most important but the second with its own unique impact on the person I am today.

As a Christian I strive to serve a loving God and live the way Jesus did: with respect, compassion, gratitude, and a heart for others. I want my life to glorify God in every way possible and a way to do this is by putting others before myself. Ways I have exemplified this are through my church, clubs at school, and in daily tasks. I volunteer at Port City Community Church and it is special to me because I am surrounded by a community, I cherish which makes serving feel less like a task and more like an opportunity. This has influenced who I am today because I have learned how to glorify Jesus through

works of service. He was a man who constantly was at the feet of others in need and being able to live that life myself is an honor.

On the other hand, at school I participate in the Rotary Club, the National Honor Society, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the Student Government Association. These clubs show me what it looks like to work together and the importance of doing something without receiving a reward in return. These opportunities allow me to give back to a Heavenly Father who has done the unimaginable for me. Giving back to His children is the least I can do.

I mention my life as a Christian because it is what makes me strive to be a better person in everything I do, including running. Running is a sport that is known as every other sport's punishment, but for me, it has become my passion. Beginning with cross country, I was unsure of what I valued and what kind of person I was. Starting a sport, I knew I had potential in - but really knew nothing about - was probably one of the most daunting, yet best decisions I've ever made. As I eventually have found my full identity in God, running has become so much more enjoyable for me. It is His breath that fills my lungs and if I am given the opportunity to run when many are unable to, I will use this talent to the best of my ability and glorify Him through every accomplishment and task.

Running is a difficult sport mentally and will break you down if you don't build a mindset that perceives painful trials as lessons in growth. For me, this was built by my image in God: He is strong, so I am strong, he is protective, so I am protected, and he built this body I am in and because of this I am much stronger than I think. He has allowed running to mean more to me than just who can get to the finish line first. I've also connected with my teammates in a more intimate way rather than having a relationship solely based on running. This is a bond that isn't common on high school athletic teams and I believe is a reason as to why I hold this sport so close to my heart.

This is who I am and how I have found my purpose. So again I ask: what is it that you find your identity and purpose in? Whether or not you know, I leave you with this. Opening yourself up to new opportunities will help you grow in ways you may never have imagined. They have helped me understand and I'm certain will show you too that we all have gifts that are beneficial to serving others and I believe that is our greatest purpose no matter how you achieve it. Find those people who enjoy the same things you do and who love you and I can assure you that your significance in this world will fall right into your lap.



## Myrtle Grove Middle School

### Son of the Dragon - A Review

by Noah Frusha, 7th Grade

My book, Son of the Dragon, is about Liam Sha'alsan, a 13-year-old 7th grader whose father died when he was young, and his mother moved him from Hawaii to Seattle, Washington. Recently, Liam has been experiencing odd things happening around him, and one day something happens that is too absurd not to tell someone.

He tells his mother about the event, and well, his life just got a whole lot more complicated. In just a day, his life goes from normal, to being the descendant of the God of Dragons, Eternus, who created the Lost Isle of Dragons, the only place on Earth where dragons still live.

Unfortunately, the Demon Titan, Olluchah, has risen, and he will not rest until Liam, the only living heir to the Dragonian throne, is dead at his feet. To defeat Olluchah, Liam must journey to the Isle and awaken the Eight Elemental Titans, but the clock is ticking, as Olluchah is gaining power and reassembling his massive army.

With time running out, can Liam and his allies stop Olluchah from plunging the world into a new age of darkness? Only time will tell.



art by Emeri Deppa,  
7th Grade

## Town Creek Middle School



### What Fine Line?\*

by Parker Barnhill, 8th Grade

\*Note this isn't supposed to offend anyone.

Let's set the Scene. Oscar's night, March 27, 2022. Actors are all dressed up, ready to receive an award and have a good laugh or two. Chris Rock was presenting the Best Documented Feature award, when he looked over to Jada Picknett, who has a shaved head, and her husband, Will Smith. Chris then made a G.I. Jane 2 joke. Will Smith had chuckled then looked over at Jada and she seemed offended by this. So as any caring husband would do, he gets up and slaps Chris Rock.

Now here is the question we should all be asking, was Will Smith, right? On one hand there is taking a joke and on the other, there is getting offended by it. The problem is, comedy is getting harder and harder to do every day because of how some people get offended so easily. Some comedians have been asked why they don't talk about certain subjects and they have simply responded

with, "This would offend too many people" or "Is it worth hurting my career over a little joke?"

There is no fine line of joking to offensiveness. With the younger community of Gen Z, Gen Alpha, and the topic of cancel culture, more people get hurt everyday by this. Granted there is taking it too far but there is also taking a joke. Like if you don't say I'm joking or for online "LOL", you will get yelled at or harassed for something you meant to be harmless or funny. The fact of the matter is jokes are jokes. Can they touch sensitive subjects? Yes. Can the joke offend people? Yes. Are they meant to hurt people? No. Just like my Mom had said when this all happened, "When people used to go to see a standup comedian, it is a way to get away from reality and get a good laugh from it."

So, at the end of all of this we come back to the question from earlier, "Was Will Smith Right?" Well, that's for you to decide.



## Cape Fear Voices' The Book Shelf

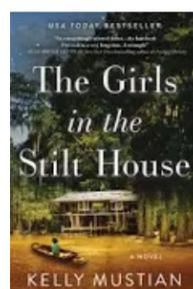
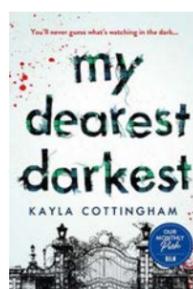
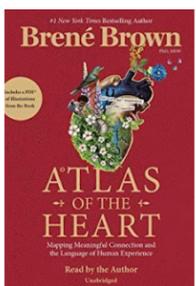
Welcome to our newest regular section of Cape Fear Voices: The Book Shelf! Our staff has curated a collection of recommendations of modern books and literature. We hope to showcase a diverse range of fiction and non-fiction works, including selections for young adult readers.

### Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience

by Brene Brown

Published in 2021 by Random House

In Atlas of the Heart, the author Brown takes us on a journey through 87 of the emotions and experiences that define what it means to be human.



### The Girls in the Stilt House

by Kelly Mustian

Published in 2021 by Sourcebooks Landmark

Set in 1920s Mississippi, these Southern novel weaves a beautiful story of two teenage girls cast in an unlikely partnership through murder—perfect for readers of Where the Crawdads Sing and If the Creek Don't Rise.

Ada promised herself she would never go back to the Trace, to her hard life on the swamp and her harsh father. But now, after running away to Baton Rouge and briefly knowing a different kind of life, she finds herself with nowhere to go but back home. And she knows there will be a price to pay with her father.

### My Dearest Darkest

by Kayla Cottingham

Published in 2022 by Sourcebooks Fire

Set against the backdrop of an elite New England boarding school this hauntingly atmospheric tale follows a group of teenage girls as they learn just how far they will go to get what they want — and at what cost.



# West Brunswick High School

These articles are reprinted, with permission, from *The West Wind* which is the school paper of West Brunswick High School

## The Adam Project Review

by Angelica Giaquinto, 10th Grade



On March 11, 2022 the new sci-fi hit “The Adam Project” was released on Netflix.

The time-travel Netflix movie “The Adam Project” has two main characters: Future Adam, portrayed by Ryan Reynolds and Current Adam, portrayed by Walker Scobell. The first part of the movie shows how Current Adam is bullied for being smaller than everyone else in 2022. Then when Future Adam arrives, everything starts to change.

Time travel paradoxes and mistakes ensue. The two Adams go on an adventure to find Future Adam’s wife, Laura, and a lot of unexpected events happen on their journey, such as battle-ship dogfights, finding lost loved ones, and much more. One question still remains to this film though: Do Adam and Laura remember any of their past or future afterwards?

Viewers are trying to comprehend the answer to this question, but nothing is for certain. Will they end up remembering, or does everything that happened that day just disappear from their minds?

After watching the movie, I can tell you it is totally worth your time. It has everything: action, sci-fi, and love. The acting is endearing and the movie leaves you smiling.



## American Red Cross Blood Drive

by Emily Olmedo, 11th Grade



On April 13th, the American Red Cross held their annual blood drive for West Brunswick students. Students the age of 16 (with parent consent) or older, while weighing over 110 pounds were allowed to donate. Mrs. Wilson’s Health Science 2 class was providing assistance with the blood drive. Students were in charge of different roles such as checking people in and providing snacks for blood donors to maintain health.



## Looking Back On Quarantine

Students look back and reflect on how they’ve changed since the lock down...

by Destiny Noblitt, 10th Grade



Brunswick County’s two-year anniversary from when kids left school arrived, and it has a lot of us still asking, ‘what changed?’ As individuals and as a society we’ve all changed tremendously the last two years, but how did it affect us?

“We haven’t had that connection,” said sophomore Elyse Mulvaney. “We haven’t been social and interacting with other people; we’ve been more focused on social media rather than in person. Social media has made a big impact on that.”

The quarantine gave a lot of people the chance to grow on their own and not have to worry about what other people think. Girls explored their sense of style, and some came out a completely different person. It allowed some girls to find the confidence in themselves to wear the makeup they want to or wear those really cool clothes to school that they hide in the back of their closet because they’re scared to be judged.

“I learned more about myself with the time that I’ve had to figure out who I am,” said Mulvaney. “I like to express myself in my style, in a way I like to show people who I am. I feel like how you dress shows the type of personality you have.”

Girls weren’t the only ones who had time to explore who they really are; we all saw guys who updated their same haircuts that they’ve been getting since fifth grade to something completely different. They, too, created their own sense of

## Pre-Prom Playlist

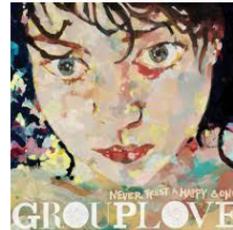
by Sam Anderson, 11th Grade



With prom approaching, we are all preparing to have a great night with our friends. As well as prom itself, most of us are just as excited for the pre and post prom plans. Everybody knows that music is key to setting the mood to any scenario, so why not set a specialized playlist to set the mood while getting ready for prom night with your friends?

As well as current hits, I’ve included many songs that spark nostalgia for the early 2000s and up. This “Pre-prom Playlist” has many trending songs pulled from TikTok as well as Gen-Z staples. This playlist will allow you and your friends to connect through music while preparing for a night a lot of us have been looking forward to since a young age.

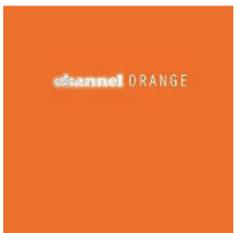
### “Tongue Tied”- Grouplove



How could I make a pre-prom playlist and not include this hit? Not only does this song hit a soft spot for a lot of memories for many, but it gives you a feeling of excitement for what the upcoming night has to come. This is truly the anthem of teenage shenanigans.

### “Super Rich Kids”- Frank Ocean (ft. Earl Sweatshirt)

This song simply feels like getting into harmless trouble with your friends—it’s also just overall a good “getting ready” song. Although being a bit on the calmer side, I think it gives the same feeling of joy.



### “20 Min”- Lil Uzi Vert



Everybody knows this song: it’s an Uzi classic. Because the beat is almost impossible to not dance to and the lyrics are catchy and a little sassy, this is a perfect song for a confidence boost while getting ready.

### “Best I’ve Ever Had”- Drake

Old Drake is nostalgic for many, especially this song. This hit will definitely get you into the party mood with your friends.

### “Pursuit of Happiness”- Kid Cudi (ft. MGMT and Ratatat)

Known as the universal party song, this playlist wouldn’t be complete without “Pursuit of Happiness.” The beat is hype and has an amazing build up to the chorus. Just like many other songs on this playlist, Pursuit of Happiness has close ties with fond memories for many.



style, whether it be dressing with a more alternative style, bringing out the hat and cowboy boots, or just changing up their hair color. Guys picked up different hobbies that genuinely made them happy and active, like lifting, skateboarding or even surfing.

“I got swole; I glowed up a little bit,” said senior Skyler Glasner. “Everything about my personality changed. I’m not even close to the same person, simply because I was at home more, and I had a lot more time to think about my future and things I don’t like about myself that I wanted to change.”

Summer of 2020 was definitely a summer none of us will ever forget, and our generation will have story after story to tell in the future. Granted, being in the middle of a pandemic is one of the worst things to happen, but not everything that came from the lock down was bad.

“Over quarantine, I was able to commit to my college’s lacrosse team!” said senior Isaac Parsons.

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