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I Knew This Kid

Paul Paolicelli, Brunswick Forest



I was in Amsterdam. It was back in the '80s and I'd been visiting a former army colleague who was then a Foreign Service Officer stationed in Bonn. He had an appointment in Amsterdam and I tagged along. When he went to his meeting I went for a long stroll along the canals with no particular direction in mind, I was soaking up the atmosphere and geography of that marvelous city. A placard caught my attention. It was the **Anne Frank House**, not my intended destination but it felt like I was supposed to have found it. I paid the entrance fee and went in and followed the brochure I'd been given at the door. It was a

chilly weekday morning and I was virtually alone as I wandered about studying the photographs and exhibits. Eventually I found my way to the bookcase that had disguised the entrance to the secret annex where the Frank family and four other unfortunates had been hiding for two years before being betrayed and arrested and ultimately sent to Nazi concentration camps.

Ironically, they would be the last group transported from Amsterdam and only one would come home from the horrors of the Holocaust.

See "I Knew This Kid" page 2

THANKS TO ALL OUR LOCAL VETERANS



John Hacker, Americal Div. VN 1968



Jim Zelinsky, Air Force



Althea Mitchell, Army
Electrician on C-14s and C-58s

John Hacker was drafted and served in Vietnam during 1968 TET as Infantry Squad leader with the 198th light infantry of the Americal Division. John spent 28 years in Retail Management with Woolworths and TJ Maxx as a Regional Manager. For the past 28 years in Real Estate in California and now in Leland with Coldwell Banker. He just settled into his new home in Magnolia Greens.

Master Sergeant **Jim Zelenski** was born and raised in Bristol, PA. He joined the Air Force as a Security Policeman in January 1974. Jim retired from active duty in 1994 with more than 20 years of military experience as a Security Forces professional.

...See "Veterans Day" on Page 8 for more then-and-now photos.

Althea Mitchell served for three years on active duty in the Army. She served another five years in the reserves working as an electrician on C-14s and C-58s. After her service she got a degree in Accounting. She worked for Panasonic Battery Division for 20 years before moving to Leland with her husband Mack. She has also worked with Wilmington Housing Authority and Vietnam Veterans of America.



Veterans Affairs to Visit Wilmington November 17-19

About 30 officers from the Department of Veteran Affairs Regional Office in Winston-Salem will be joined by various Veteran Service Officers (VSO) from county and veteran organizations in the area to assist veterans in obtaining the financial benefits they have earned by their service to our country. The event is called Veterans Benefits Live VA In My Town previously known as the Veteran's Experience Action Center (VEAC). This three-day event will be on

November 17 - 19 and is hosted by the American Legion Post 10 in Wilmington located at 702 Pine Grove Drive Wilmington, NC 28409. The assembled group of VSOs will assist veterans in filing claims inclusive of supplemental claims, status claims already in the database and in some cases adjudicate claims that are decision ready. This event expedites claims for compensation which are due to veterans with disabilities. Recent legislation regarding dis-

abilities caused by burn pits, water at Camp Lejeune (this is not the class action legal suit) and others can be initiated at this event. Attendees should bring a copy of their DD Form 214, service records if available and all medical records which support their claim. Historically over 700 veterans attend this three-day event and the consensus from those who have attended this event in the past indicate it is well worth the time spent.



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"I Knew This Kid"

From Page 1

I'd spent three years in Germany as a soldier, was well aware of WW II history, was responsible for the press information of one of our units based in Dachau and had spent more time than I'd wanted to in that first of the Nazi camps. I knew the story but I'd never come face to face with the victims; not until that day in Amsterdam.

I saw the room where Anne would spend two years of her young life. Pictures of movie stars on the wall, reminding me of my sister's room with Beatles posters, the same room every young girl had or has. An innocent kid tucked away in a desperate attempt by friends

and family to protect her, her sister and the others from a world gone mad. I had read her diary but re-read several passages during my visit; the hopeful ruminations of a teenager, her amusing observations, her frustrations with parents, her determination to find a place in the world. I knew this kid, she was my sister, she was all of the girls I'd gone to St. Bernard's Grade School with, she was the girl next door.

It's ironic that her musings became one of the most important books of the twentieth century. They're innocent, occasionally naive, fascinating and ultimately horrific when you put them into context and know of her sad ending.

I knew that kid. And her writing is more profound in its way than anything Tolstoy or Hemingway or Steinbeck or any of my other heroes could ever have written. Because in her own way she told the story of that war and the Nazi atrocities far more accurately than any historian or journalist could ever attempt. We all knew her. And somehow, we all might, in some obscure way, be responsible for her.



The Anne Frank House in 2015

Source: Wikipedia

OPINION

Election Choice: The 1920's or the 2020's

Paul Stutz, Brunswick Forest



November 8th is Election Day. That is the day when we Americans get to decide how we want to live going forward. Do we want to acknowledge that we are living in the 2020s or do we want to turn the clock back to the 1920s?

On August 18, 1920 the 19th Amendment to the Constitution guaranteed that no American citizen could be denied the right to vote based solely on gender. This was a huge step forward for a civilized nation – the fact that it took 144 years to accomplish this notwithstanding. Sadly, it took another 45 years for black people to be guaranteed this right in all 50 states, no matter what their gender. A hundred years after slavery officially ended, they were all free to vote, at last.

A mere 3 years earlier, there were some states that still criminalized same-sex sexual activity. And it has only been since 2015 that all 50 states recognized same-sex marriage.

So, what was life like in America in the early 1920s? Well, if one was fortunate enough to be born a white Christian male and he at least pretended to be heterosexual, that person had a distinct advantage over everybody else. Whether it was higher education, a professional career or housing opportunities, the world (at least this part of the world) was his oyster. He did not have to worry about competition from women, minorities or openly gay or lesbian people. However, events of the last 100 years have eroded this built-in advantage. With more and more people being granted rights that should have been no-brainers from the beginning of our Republic, everybody is now on a more-or-less equal footing. In order to succeed in life, one has to study hard in school and work hard at their chosen profession. Fair and just competition guarantees that the best people will succeed in keeping America great.

This concept of fairness seems to be lost on many millions of people across the country. They would like very much for our nation to revert to the way it was back in the good old days – the early 1900s. They want to make America great again – the way it was before we elected a black President, before girls and women had such prominent roles in our society, and before gay people were finally able to come out of the closet and live their lives like everyone else. And they vote for people who are sympathetic to their frustrations. All across the country, there are candidates running for local and state-wide offices who tap into these fears and frustrations. They may or may not feel the same way, but they know what to say to persuade people to vote for them.

On the other hand, there are millions of people who acknowledge the progress we have made in the last 100 years and are comfortable with it. They realize that this country will prosper and grow stronger only if each of its citizens is granted a fair and equal chance to succeed, no matter what characteristics they were born with. And there are candidates in each state who share those values and will do their best to represent all of their constituents accordingly. Thus, the huge decision all voters have to make on November 8th:

Do we want to live in the 1920s or the 2020s?

The right to vote is one of our most cherished rights and one of our most critical responsibilities. Elections have consequences, as we have seen repeatedly in recent years. There are some very serious issues before us. How we wish to spend the rest of our days is squarely on the ballot in November. However, one feels about these issues, the most important thing anyone can do is to vote. Declining to do so is not an option.



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The Agony and the Ecstasy Part II

Janet Stiegler, Brunswick Forest



Photos above by Chuck Bins

Our tour guide encouraged us to circle the statue and view him from all sides.



Last month I wrote an article about Michelangelo's love of sculpture and the creation of his 17-foot-tall *David*, a symbol of divine victory over evil. Initially, the Wool Guild in Florence commissioned the statue

to stand atop the roofline of the Duomo (cathedral), but during the three years it took to sculpt, they decided to place it guarding the entrance to the Town Hall. After 350 years of weathering and damage to its left arm during a 1527 riot, the statue was finally moved indoors. Today *David* stands majestically on a pedestal in the *Accademia* museum, while a replica stands in the square.

Having just returned from Florence, I can attest to the statue's awe-inspiring impact. Our tour guide encouraged us to circle the statue and view him from all sides. In front, *David* stands confidently, fondling his sling in one hand and a rock in the other. On one side, you can gaze into his vulnerable eyes. The back shows his sling strap, buns of steel, and Renaissance mullet. In his guidebook about Florence, American travel writer Rick Steves suggests that Michelangelo captures *David* as he's sizing up his enemy, saying to himself, "I can take this guy (Goliath)."

David stands in a room containing several of Michelangelo's unfinished figures

called "*The Prisoners*." The raw figures seem to be fighting to free themselves from the stone, and it is unclear exactly why he left them unfinished. However, unlike most artists who believed stone would conform to the artist's vision, Michelangelo believed it was the sculpture's job to reveal the figures God had encased in the marble. "Michelangelo] had the impression that, no



The Sistine Chapel, "Creation of Adam"

matter how honestly a sculptor designed, it would come to nothing if it did not agree with the basic nature of the block."

Finally, although I did not get to Rome on this trip, a few words about Michelangelo's painting of the Sistine Chapel. Pope Julius II first commissioned Michelangelo to paint the Twelve Apostles on the triangular pendentives that supported the Chapel's ceiling and to cover the central part with some ornament.

The artist considered painting a lesser

form of art than sculpture, and initially he resisted the charge by escaping to the countryside outside Rome. In his book, *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, Irving Stone describes Michelangelo waking up on New Year's morning as the sun rose and seeing "the beautiful pinks and browns of the plains and the pastel green of the Tyrrhenian Sea under a brittle blue sky." He suddenly realizes, "God too had been faced with the need to create within a vault...the vault he called the Sky...Michelangelo knew, just as clearly as he had known anything in his life, that nothing would suffice for his vault but Genesis itself, a recreation of the universe."

Michelangelo's final composition took four years to complete, stretches over 500 square meters, and contains over 300 figures! And he painted the frescos lying flat on high scaffolding while the plaster was still wet. Among his most famous frescoes are the Creation of Adam, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and the Deluge. If you do not have time to read Irving Stone's book, watch the 1965 movie of the same title starring Charlton Heston (Michelangelo) and Rex Harrison (Pope Julius II). It will give you a sense of life in the Renaissance era, work in a marble quarry, and how the masterpieces in the Sistine Chapel came to be.

Stories of My Elders

Karen Phillips Smith, Wilmington, NC



In the Native American culture, the oral tradition is important. We learn and we are taught through stories told by our elders. I am blessed because I was given the opportunity to record many of the stories of my people told to me by my great aunt and my grandfather. It is through these stories that I can better understand the great wisdom and humor of these proud, yet humble people. I honestly believe that many of our elders were given the great gift of storytelling.

There was always a twinkle in their eyes and at times a cackling laughter that I still hear decades later.

As the fire roared behind us, my cousins and I lapped up the warm molasses from our corn cakes as we gathered on the floor to hear the vivid stories that have been told from generation to generation of our family. I was always enthralled by the way the light would highlight their faces as their warm voices began to paint brilliant pictures that inspired our imaginations.

As a young boy, my grandfather, crossed the bridge each winter morning making his way to school, he always looked down at the footprints of the other children who had gone before him. He had come to know every detail of each footprint including their owners. The footprints that most interested him were the children fortunate enough to have shoes.

He dreamed of having his own shoes someday. He often watched the older people in the village making shoes, pounding the leather so it would be soft enough and then with small strips of leather or cloth binding the pieces of the shoes together.

On the day of his ninth birthday his parents gave him a package. As young boys will do, he ripped into the package and there they were a pair of shoes just for him. He sat down on the ground and quickly put the shoes on his feet. The bottoms of the shoes were soft leather, and they wrapped around his small feet with sturdy cloth. His father told him this type of shoes was called "walk easy," but he was much too excited to walk and instead rushed over and hugged his parents and started smiling running toward the bridge to school.

He felt as though he was running like the wind. Just as he crossed the bridge he quickly turned around and smiled because there in the early morning frost were two brand new footprints of a boy with shoes.



Photo by Oziel Gomez on Unsplash

My grandfather dreamed of shoes.



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My Audi Has an Aura

Stan Washington, Coastal Carolina Writers Club



Cal Mackay was my auto mechanic for 10 years. He was a master mechanic and had started his own foreign car repair garage. He charged premium prices, but his work was excellent and when a repair didn't work it was on him.

Like I said, Cal WAS a great mechanic. He had an accident with one of his car lifts. Actually, it was my Audi that was on the lift when the lift hydraulics failed just as he was setting up to work.



I wasn't there, but Fred (his assistant manager) told me what happened that day. Cal died before the ambulance arrived and uttered his last words to Fred. Cal declared he would come back as a benevolent ghost. I didn't think any more about the ghost stuff because I knew Cal was always obsessed about the afterlife.

The accident happened 6 months ago. Five months ago my Audi started acting up. The radio would change channels, wipers would start on a sunny day, etc. Then strange happenings got stranger. While going to the dentist, the dashboard started flashing and words appeared on the screen: "Hey Jack, you are going to your dentist? Don't go, you'll be sorry."

Sure enough, when I got to the dentist's office, I was told I wasn't seeing my normal doctor. A fresh graduate would be doing my root canal. I looked at her, and quickly declined. In the car, I started my Audi then asked, "How did you know?"

"It's easy, I can see everything, and I just wanted to warn you."

I am about to put the car in drive when it hit me: Who/what is this thing? I turned the radio down, but it kept going back up, and the station went dead. The voice started singing "My Way" out of tune just like Cal sang it. This is very weird.

"Cal, is that you?"

"You bet your bippy!"

"What happened? Why are you in my Audi?"

"I had it all planned out and was going to 'live as a ghost' forever in my garage, but the accident short circuited something. So here I am! In your car."

Cal had a sense of humor when he was alive. He started playing jokes when I was in the car. Cal hasn't done anything dangerous so far. I never knew when it was going to happen. My wife was in the car once and Cal started singing. She tried to change the station to no avail. She came home telling me my car needed to be taken in because the radio seemed to have a mind of its own.

Cal used my phone to call people at random and texted messages to strangers. You wouldn't believe the people who would call me about all the messages and calls he sent out. I now turn my phone off while driving. Turning the phone off isn't that bad, I don't get interrupted while listening to my favorite music.

Cal doesn't say much but he does listen. I like talking to Cal while driving. He's an interesting companion, and we can discuss any problem or issue. Cal is a counselor without the bills.

He can manipulate all the systems in the Audi. It's like having an onboard mechanic. He's saved me hundreds of dollars since he died and took up residence.

I did learn that my Audi had a faint glow at night thanks to Cal. So I made a bumper sticker saying "My Audi has an Aura. --Back off or my ghost will disable your car!"

Laughing in the Golden Years: Homemade Halloween Costumes

Maryann Nunnally, Porters Neck



Growing up I never knew we were poor. Mom's huge vegetable garden and our numerous fruit trees were the canned source of our meals all year long. The chickens we raised and the meat my father brought in from hunting meant that every meal in our home was delicious and plentiful. I never knew what it was to be hungry or to go without food. I remember Thanksgiving as a fabulous feast that included two roasted chickens, mashed potatoes and golden chicken gravy, my mother's light-as-a-feather biscuits, at least three kinds of hot vegetables, and a choice of pumpkin or apple pie for dessert. We had a kind of food wealth that I simply took for granted. I never realized there were children in our rich nation who went to bed hungry until I met some of them.

When I retired as a public-school educator, I volunteered to tutor students in a small, poor elementary school. One of my students was a skinny, curly-headed third grader, who was having trouble with fractions. For days we worked on his understanding of the word problems that included adding and subtracting fractions. One morning, the light bulb flashed, and he got it. I was so proud of him and said, "You have worked so hard, JD, and you stayed with it until you figured it out. I am delighted with your perseverance. The next time I come to help you, I will bring you something to eat. What would you like?"

Expecting him to say candy, or cookies or something sweet, I was bowled over when he said, "An apple. I would like a big apple."

That afternoon I purchased a bag of six large apples, and the next morning I gave them to JD. "Gosh, Ms. N, these are more apples than I ever saw."

The next week, JD found me in the hall and after hugging me, said, "Ms. N, them apples was the best I ever had. Me and Sophie ate them all up. I hid two of them so we had something to eat on Sunday."

"Is that all you had to eat on Sunday?" I asked him.

"Yeah," he answered. And me and Sophie had them on Saturday, too."

I asked the school social worker to check on JD and his little sister.

The social worker later told me that JD and his sister were not getting meals on the weekends. They depended on free meals at school, and their alcoholic parents left the children to fend for themselves on the weekends. However, she had given their names and address to a local group, Nourish NC, that would provide meals for JD and Sophie on weekends and holidays and all during summer vacation.

I continued to tutor JD that year and then when the school year ended, I lost track of him. A few years later I saw JD in the public library of all places. When he saw me, he gave me a hug and said: "Ms. Nunnally, I still remember the apples you gave me when I was in third grade."

He replied that Nourish NC was still packing boxes for him, his sister and now a little brother. He said, "I make our meals most of the time, and Nourish puts in food that I can fix for Sophie and Charlie. We always have food now. Last year at Thanksgiving, we had chicken that came in a package, applesauce, potato sticks and some kind of little pies. We really had a feast." I loved his description of a Thanksgiving meal that he regarded as a feast.

Nourish NC is a blessing for children who often are hungry and dependent on school meals. Weekends and holidays as well as summer vacations are times when they would be food deprived and Nourish NC fills that gap. As Thanksgiving rolls around this month, I want to give a shout-out to Nourish NC and thank them for looking after kids like JD and his siblings. I encourage anyone reading this to find Nourish NC on the internet, and give a generous donation so that kids like JD, Sophie and Charlie can have a weekend or holiday "feast."

Sitting in Sadness

Jan Morgan-Swegle, Editor



I see a sadness in growing old. The memories of youth, the pain of grief and the realization that life will go on without us is often more than our hearts can accept.

I see the sadness in the shadows of fading generations quickly growing smaller in numbers every day. They sit and they remember different days—better days.

They are not the people they used to be; it went so fast. They were so busy fighting, rebuilding, creating and fixing that life went by in the blink of an eye.

They are quiet now. They played the game well and lived in the best time and for that they are proud. But they are not forever lost yet.

There is still spirit in the bent bodies and bowed heads. There is still strength in the arms that guide walkers and wheel chairs.

There is still laughter amidst the tears of loss and abandonment. For this, the

greatest generation and beyond will show no weakness as the

end draws near. Giants of industry, warriors on the field. Trail blazers for freedoms. Stars in their own right—now sit quietly as they examine their lives. They remember their passion; they hale their victories. The faces in their mirrors are the same ones in their dreams, youthful reflections of days gone by.

They don't get to make decisions anymore. They have changed roles with their children. They are the ones who obey now, but with flashes of rebellion—the similarities of parenthood now reversed.

Their minds are sometimes cloudy, their eyes have grown old. But they were the strong ones once in a world so long ago. All too soon, this will be us and our children after that.

I hope I go with dignity. I hope my body holds. I don't want to sit in sadness because I have grown old.



They don't get to make decisions.

Hummingbirds (Part 3 of 3)

Nancy Bryans, Brunswick Forest



My territorial southern Arizona Costa's hummingbird, named Junior, amused me with his antics and adventures. He designated himself as official greeter of 'nuestra casa' and surprised a few unsuspecting visitors. His sudden appearance and rapid wing fluttering at the front door when people rang the doorbell amused me, but some thought he was a big bug attacking them. One visitor suggested I place a sign by my sidewalk: Beware of Hummingbird.

I enjoyed Junior's companionship, and he liked his nectar, supplied fresh by me each morning. Visitors listened to my stories about his feeding routine, wanting to see Junior drink nectar if they held his feeder. They were disappointed. He only trusted me. Occasionally Junior perched on my finger, looking at me with one eye, then the other. I wondered what he was thinking. I told him he was a handsome boy and he seemed pleased with my soft-spoken words. Sometimes, he hovered in front of me, almost kissing me with his beak as his wings fanned my face. Was he telling me something? Showing affection? No, just curious, a hummers' trait.



Photo: Joseph Vogel

When I checked on him before bedtime, he flew to me, snuggling against my neck.

One early spring day, Junior didn't greet me. I was worried an invader hummer had hurt him, or worse. He reappeared without explanation. Mating season arrived but I missed his elaborate air-show courtship. He vanished again during molting season. Seemingly embarrassed, he kept himself hidden from me until he proudly reappeared in perfect plumage. Junior welcomed rainy days and he liked to splash in water, either on a curled leaf after a rainstorm or in our Mexican fountain. He wiggled around to get all his feathers wet and clean. When I watered flowers with a garden hose, Junior flew into the stream of water for a quick shower, flying forward, backward, upside down.

Bracing Weather Extremes

Junior survived monsoon rains, hundred degree plus temperatures, desert windstorms and rare snowflakes. His feathers protected him as he perched under leaves of his favorite tree or shrub. During cold weather, hummingbirds' heart rates decrease as they enter torpor, their version of hibernation. On chilly nights, I placed frost covers on tender plants, removing them when the sun warmed the air. One morning I pulled the cover off a small plant before the sun spotlighted it, surprised to find Junior asleep under the frost cover for extra warmth. He looked at me with one eye partially open and an annoyed look on his handsome face.

We enjoyed happy times together, watching Gambel's quail hatch in flower pots, bobcats nurse under our orange tree, lizards protrude from roadrunners' mouths, javelina families march single file outside our fence, coyotes howl as deer danced across the golf course, and mountain lions meander up the foothills.

One winter as an arctic front approached, I shrouded plants to prevent frostbite. Junior observed my readying his shelter. When I checked on him before bedtime, he flew to me, snuggling against my neck. I caressed him, then he sipped nectar and flew to his shelter. Before dawn, I looked outside. Junior was asleep on the patio below his frozen feeder. Distraught, I picked him up to warm him. Local news reported thousands of older hummingbirds died across our area due to unusual frigid temperatures. Later that day, while removing frost covers, I spotted Junior perched in his favorite tree. I rubbed my eyes in disbelief. It was not Junior, but perhaps Junior's son or grandson. I named him Homer. When I moved to North Carolina, my former neighbors reported Homer wondered where I went. Luckily, a new homeowner promptly arrived for him to amuse—and pester for nectar.

Shelia's Revival

Part 6: The Conclusion

Brendan Connelly, Brunswick Forest



First, the title, "Reach Out and Touch Somebody's Hand" is a message for us all to remember to simply reach out your hand and help someone in need. Show them that we care. There are several other lyrics in the song that are very important as well:

"Make This World A Better Place If You Can." By helping in our community, we can make this world a much better place.

"Take a little time out of your busy day to give encouragement to someone who's lost the way." There are so many people out there in the world that need our help and we all can take some time every day to assist the needy.

"We Can Change Things If We Start Giving." Let's give to the poor, homeless, sick and the military and we can put a smile on a lot of peoples' faces.

**Like the Diana Ross song says,
"We Can Change Things
If We Start Giving."**

"Try a Little Kindness You'll See, It's Something That Comes Very Naturally." Be Kind, Show Some Love and It Will Go A Long Way!"

Gail and all the students stood up and gave her a standing ovation. Gail told Shelia, "that was absolutely beautiful and motivating! We are so proud of you Shelia!" Billy then raised his hand and suggested, "we can learn this song together so we can sing it and share these positive messages to the people at the group home and hospital." Gail, Shelia and the entire class loved his idea. A few minutes later the class started singing together.

A few days later the class went to the group home and asked them all to join them and they all started singing together. A genuine moment happened next when the people at the group home started smiling at them all and thanked them for their kindness. They especially love doing these visits during the holiday season not only to help all those in need but also to spread some holiday cheer and put a smile on somebody's face.

Shelia and the rest of the class felt very touched by what they accomplished. They put a smile on peoples' faces on those in need.

The next weekend, Gail invited everyone over to her house for dinner. "Class, I am so proud of everybody for everything you have accomplished. What you are doing completely defines what it means to be a great leader. It means so much to me to see all of you doing all these beautiful things and developing into strong people.

You can't imagine the amount of help you are giving this community. You guys are helping so many people by providing food, water, money, clothing and happiness to so many people in need. That was a truly beautiful moment seeing all the people in the group home smiling and singing with you all."

Shelia got up and spoke for the entire class saying, "We are so happy for what we have accomplished and what our future can be."

They all then sang together: "In Good Times and Bad Times, I'll Be On Your Side Forever More. That's What Friends Are For! That's What Friends Are For!"

Editor's Note: This story was scheduled to run in the September issue of Cape Fear Voices to complete the series, but was left out in production. We apologize for the error.

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Something Cool

Sheryl Keiper, Brunswick Forest



"Do you want to see something really cool?," I said to the new owners of my parents' house.



"Sure," they responded. The young couple seemed adorable. They were so energetically genuine and full of hope in purchasing the house that my parents had lived in for 53 years.

I then proceeded to open a 1940's old, black, tattered suitcase with two worn leather-trimmed snaps. It was my deceased mother's original suitcase that she used to travel by train to visit my Dad at his training camp in NC during World War II. I unfolded a treasure trove of bundles of worn letters with red shiny ribbons holding them together tied in the most perfect bows I had ever seen.

I carefully unfolded a Western Union brown telegram envelope. Trimmed in a red bar on the back of the envelope were the words from the Western Union shipping service: "You describe it... we will buy it and see that it is delivered on time. Selected telegram included with each order."

Wow. My eyeballs were popping! This certainly wasn't a two-day Amazon prime promise of delivery. The telegram was dated March 29, 1942. It was addressed to my mother, "Estella."

It was sent from Petersburg, Virginia, and it succinctly read "leaving tomorrow. Destination unknown. Will write as soon as possible..." Love, Victor.

The impact of this newly discovered telegram hit me hard in my heart. I realized, staring at the purple print message, how fearful my father must have felt. He was a mere 23 year old private in the US Army at the height of World War II. How fearless the "greatest generation" must have been! And here was the physical telegram from my

father- - so objective, yet frighteningly so in its simplicity.

I tried to imagine my father's thoughts on this date- - his fears, his dreams, his goals. He had obviously fallen in love with my mother and was appropriately anxious. I read a previous letter he wrote to her from Camp Lee, Virginia on American Red Cross stationery. This letter was dated March 17, 1942 only a week prior to the telegram stating he was going to the war zone.

In that letter he said "most of the boys looked at your picture and said you were beautiful and attractive. And half of them wanted to know how I rated such a good looking girl."

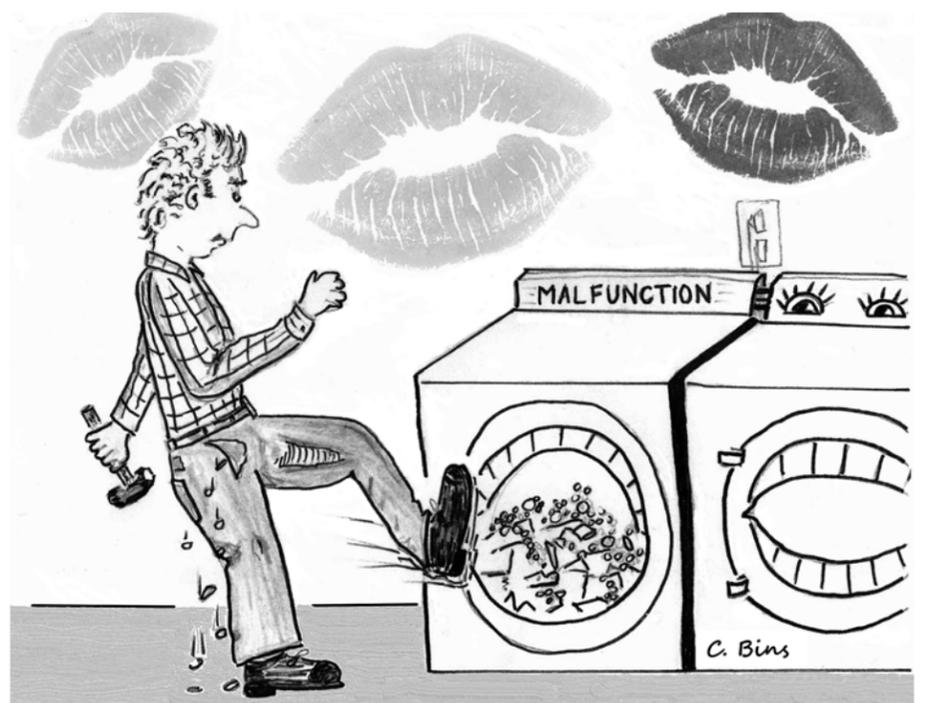
So much for Dad's confidence as he was probably one of the best-looking Italian men that God created. He was tall and slim with a mass of black hair and dazzling white teeth and huge, brown soulful eyes. Only he couldn't personally see his charm.

As I folded the letter and the telegram carefully, I was overcome with mixed emotions. I apologized to the sweet, young couple for my moment of sentimentality in taking up their time as I handed them the keys to my parents' house.

As they thanked me for the keys, we did a group hug and I noticed the young woman had a tear running down her cheek. As I turned and wished them luck, I noticed that the young man's eyes were moist, too. So were mine as I walked away from my childhood home and the memories of courage and love preserved in these missives of the "greatest generation" of all time....

Washer Revenge

Charles Bins, Coastal Carolina Writers Club



2032: Colin lugged a duffel full of laundry home from college one warm November weekend because he knew his parents would be away. Willy, the family washing machine, wasn't happy to see him.

This was the kid who always left stuff in his pockets: Dirty Kleenex, loose change, bubble gum wrappers and paper clips bent into pretzels. Worse, there were the occasional half-eaten cookies, newfangled watches, laser toys and pocket games.

Now Colin was back. He wanted his black chinos and shark shirt for his date with Julie. He'd taken her out over the summer but hadn't connected with her since August. Tonight they were planning to go to the 21 Club. Julie was a fashion maven and a stickler for style who always insisted he look sharp. She said she was fully charged and would drive.

Colin checked the detergent, tossed in his darks and pushed start. After churning a few times, the washer stopped and beeped. Colin tried again, but it stopped at the same spot. Three beeping tries later, he felt desperate. "You can't die on me now, Willy," he whimpered. "I need to see Julie tonight!" Willy responded by flashing blue: **MALFUNCTION**.

"C'mon, Willy, you gotta try. Please, please, please don't give up on me." He tried again. Nothing. He tripped the GFI and the breaker. Still nothing.

The washer and dryer were a set that talked to each other; Dudley the dryer would know when Willy was done. Only his clothes weren't done, so Dudley wouldn't start either. It was a conspiracy, he thought, or worse, a suicide pact.

His clothes would never dry in time, and the whites smelled like B.O. He needed a Plan B. Colin scoured his closet but knew all his good clothes were at school. He did find a green-and-white plaid shirt (only slightly frayed) and a pair of jeans ripped at the thigh (a bit too far). Colin put them on. He then went back and kicked Willy and his sidekick who couldn't dry a paper towel.

Julie pulled in the driveway at 7 p.m. sharp, dressed to the nines. She lowered her window and stared. "What, you been raking leaves?"

He clicked his heels. "Hey, I got my dancing shoes on." He shut the car door and leaned in for a kiss. "I missed you," he said. "Did you?" She stared at him. "Colin, I'm feeling really embarrassed right now. We're not going to a hootenanny. The 21 Club has a strict dress code."

"Don't worry," he smiled. "They'll take one look at you, and we're in."

She studied him from head to toe, her lips souring. Then she flicked his collar. "What's this?"

"What do you mean?" he said.

"It's lipstick. Lipstick!" She screamed. "Two-timing creep. Get out!"

After the kiss off, Colin marched back to the house, went straight to the garage and picked up a sledgehammer. With extreme prejudice, he smashed the smiles off both machines.

Finished, he passed the hallway mirror and stopped to take a look at himself. What he noticed only angered him more: *He didn't have any lipstick on his collar.*

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A Small Town Mystery

Dan Neizmik, Hearthstone



I was sitting on a park bench, in a small country town,
And a very old man, decided to sit down,
He told stories of the town and how that park came to be,
And he talked about its people and that town's strange mystery.

As in many small towns, that park's the gathering place,
specially on the holidays, there are smiles on every face,
They reminisce about old times, old veterans and more,
Like the three hometown heroes, they lost in the first World War.

Three brothers from one family, who grew up in that town,
It's been over one hundred years, since they laid their lives down,
There was Bobby, Floyd and the oldest was Mike,

Bobby and Floyd fought in Germany, where they sacrificed their lives.
No one knows Mike's full story, they say he was never found,
Like some kind of ghost, he was simply gone,
Just like that very old man, who had just sat down,
Looked away for a moment, then looked back and he was simply gone.

Those brothers fought for freedom, like heroes always do,
They made the ultimate sacrifice for the red, white and blue,
o, they built a Veterans Memorial, right there in that park,
To honor all the heroes, they hold dear to their hearts.

To raise money for it, they placed a box in town square,
Everybody donated what they could, even children

gave their share, They once saw a very old man, with a large envelope in his arms,
As they debated who he was, like some kind of ghost he was simply gone.

When they opened up the box, they were still short of their goal,
Then right there at the bottom, was that large envelope,
When they looked inside it, they were amazed at what was there,
Some WWI medals, Purple Hearts and some dog tags... three pairs.

There was a large sum of money, in a check to that town,
Plus, a short note to the people, among the things they found,
So, they built that park to be the very grandest around,

And now they honor their heroes, every day in that town.
The day the Memorial was revealed, the whole town was so proud,
And that was the only time, that short note was read aloud, It simply said:

***"They say you can't go home again,
But home is where we've always been,
We sacrificed our souls,
for freedom to survive,
God bless this little town, who keeps that freedom alive."***

Well, sometimes I go back... that small town to see,
And sometimes, somebody sees me.

Sitting on that park bench, all by myself,
Telling this strange story, to somebody else.

THE END

'The Talk'

Ray Burkhart

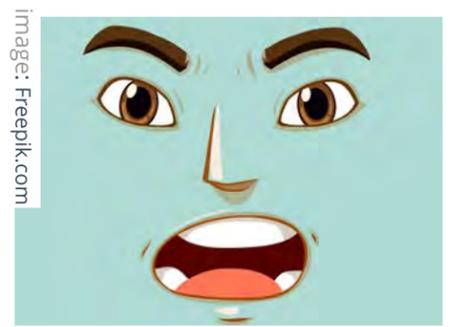
My stepdad, a **Pearl Harbor survivor**, was an imposing figure at 6' 3" and 200 lbs. but was a gentle giant.

He became our dad when I was 6 and my sister was 4 ½. We were a lucky pair. I always said I hoped I would be half the dad to my kids as he was to us. Although we gave him many reasons, he never laid a hand on either of us. Instead, when we would need be reminded of a transgression, we would get "The Talk." We hated "The Talk" and I think just the thought of it kept us from getting into too much trouble.

"The Talk" would consist of a thorough review, with corrective measures, for the latest transgression, but also a re-counting of all the past transgressions he could remember. As you can imagine, as we got older, "The Talk" grew longer. It was the consensus of my sister and I that we would rather just get a whack on the butt so we could get back to playing with our friends.

As I got older and had a family, I realized the value of "The Talk" and imposed the same process on my two girls. But I will admit there were times when I thought maybe a couple of smacks to the backside might have been a little more attention-getting.

My dad did not have a degree or any training in psychology, but he was one of the smartest and loving people I ever met. He was a patriot for our country, the best dad ever and always an inspiration to us on how we should live our lives. My sisters and I miss him a lot.



Brunswick Co. Veterans' Coalition Helps Tap Service Benefits

What is the Brunswick County Veterans' Coalition? Several years ago, the Director of the Department of Veteran Affairs Winston-Salem Regional Office indicated only 35% of the veterans within the boundaries of NC use the benefits they earned while in service. One of the objectives of the Coalition is to remedy this. Many veterans don't know what they have available to them and/or don't know how to apply for the benefits.

The Coalition has representatives from over 40 veteran organizations within Brunswick County and some from New Hanover County who attend meetings every other month on the second Wednesday at 10 AM to listen to guest speakers. This includes VA-accredited service officers and representatives from Congressman Rouzer's office who brief the assembled group on topics of interest, not only to the veteran but to family members.

"This is a forum which provides representatives from these veteran organizations the tools they need to return to their respective organizations to assist the veterans in their outfits. The next meeting will be in Building N of the Brunswick County Government Complex located at 25 Referendum Dr in Bolivia, NC.

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Occasionally, the Coalition is made aware of a veteran who is in need of assistance. Often, the needs of a veteran exceed the resources of a particular veteran post, detachment, etc. The Coalition is an organization where the collective resources of many member organizations pool their resources to take care of the veteran's needs.

In summary, this outfit does not have fees or collects any funds. Its focus is to help veterans through the sharing of vital information and, at times, assisting veterans in need. If your veteran organization does not send a representative to its meetings, it should.

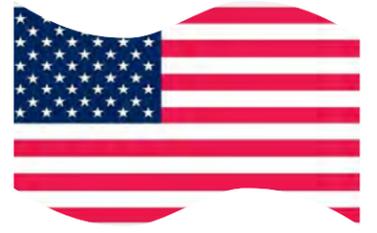
GREEN THE WEEK FOR VETERANS

Brunswick County will join other counties across North Carolina and the country by lighting certain county buildings or infrastructure green the week of Veterans Day (Nov. 7- 13). Residents are encouraged to participate by simply changing one light bulb in their house to a green bulb. This can be an exterior

light that neighbors and passersby see, or an interior light that sparks a conversation with friends. By shining a green light, we are letting our veterans know that they are seen, appreciated, and supported.



Honoring Soldiers this Veterans Day



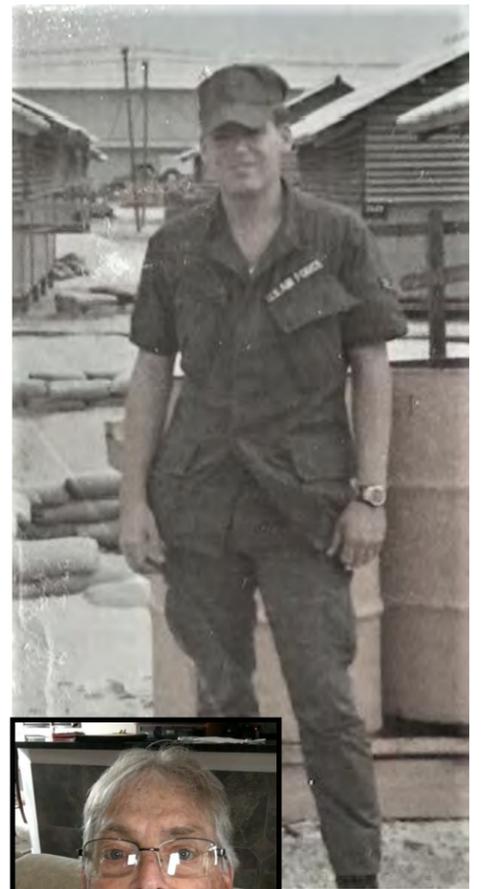
Let us remember all who served, all who sacrificed, those who returned and those who did not, those still with us, and those who have passed...



(Above) Chief Warrant Officer Dan Dodge served on active duty from 1975-1978 and retired from the Army Reserve in 1999 after 20 years. After the military, Dan enjoyed a career in IT with several top-line companies like Lockheed, BAE Unisys, and General Electric. He and his wife, Joeleen, now live in Brunswick Forest.



(Right) Joe Maggiola, joined the Air Force and served in Vietnam II / III Corps with 12th Combat Support Group in 1966-67. He was discharged in 1970, spent the next 30 years with IBM Corporation before retiring to St. James, NC, where he resides happily with his wife Karen since 2003.



(Below) Gary Crowden in 1971 in RVN and as past Commander of American Legion Post 543



Shipmates aboard the U. S. S. Merrick (AKA-97) Westpac Tour, May 1, 1968 to Dec. 12, 1968



(Right and Above) Jeff Decker CWO4 ret.



(Above) Steve Clovis, Quartermaster 3rd Class (deceased Oct. 2021)



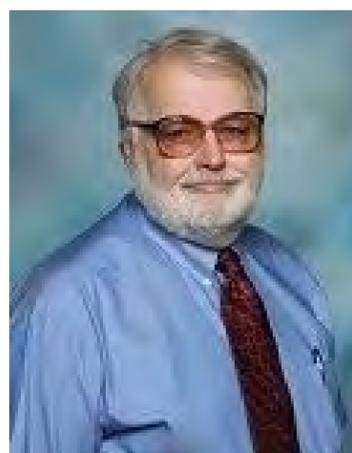
(Above) Gerald Decker, Quartermaster 2nd



(Above and Right) Jim Nys, Radioman 3rd Class, OS1 ret.



(and Teen Scene, Inc Board Member)



(Below) Gary Hurnblad, Electronics Technician 2nd Class



There are, of course, many more local veterans than those here, all with stories of their own, who we include in this Veterans Day salute.



The Teen Scene

Tomorrow's Voices Today



Brunswick County Early College

Ape Infestation



Rumi Bennett and
Jessica Gomez-Espinal

The day was July 1, 2060. The Humans and Apes were at war; 200 Humans to 20 million Apes. In the latest battle, 'Battle of the Beasts,'

almost half the Human population died, leaving 101 Humans behind.

"Latest Human War Leaving Half The Population Dead"

My body shakes as I reread the headline for the 30th time now.

I couldn't believe what was happening. More than half the population died within an hour. What were we gonna do about this? Why isn't anyone doing anything?

I look around at a few other humans. I was the oldest one here at just 23 years old, while the others were 16, 14, 8, and 9. It was my job as the only adult to protect them and with most likely, no other adults...I'm the one who has to defeat them...

I was going to go get food for the kids when shrewdness surrounded me.

I started to shake. Questions flooded my head. Were they going to attack me? Is this how my life ends? If I die, what will happen to the kids?

The apes were just looking me up and down. They weren't attacking me. I could try to get away but how?

I started taking small steps backward. I could try to run away since it doesn't look like they want to attack me.

I started to back away, the beads of sweat slipping down my forehead as I inched backward, watching these animals stare me down with nothing behind their eyes.

Throughout this showdown, I thought maybe, just maybe, I could get away, get home to those children I longed to see again.

Snap

The noise brought my heart to my stomach as my eyes shot wide, I narrowed my gaze to the floor to see bundles of dead and flimsy tree limbs.

The shrewdness of apes seemed alert by some of them standing on their back legs.

My palms felt sweaty as my brows furrowed, my breath shaky with pants and my heart and blood pounding through my ears, the only thought in my mind was those children...

I quickly turned my heel and raced off for where I wished to head home, the road under my feet roaring and shaking from the apes giving chase. I balled my hands into fists, I dare not let these animals make my children fend for themselves.

Suddenly, I felt something heavy on my back... *too* heavy, but it was gone as soon as it left, though it still sent me flying forward. As my body skids across the ground, I catch a glimpse of the apes coming my way, shouting angrily. This can't be the end, can it? I can barely lift my head before one lifts its arms, coming down twice as-



Image created by Adison Milligan

"Alice, sweetie, come down to eat!" I hear my mom yell from downstairs.

I heard the door creak open and I whipped my head around to see who it was.

My mom stepped in and signaled for me to come with her. "Come on Alice, no more diddle-daddling, it's time to eat. I made your favorite!"

I put my ape figurines down and I followed my mom downstairs. The image of my recent adventure burned in my mind with the screams of the innocent.

*Shrewdness - A group of apes

When Should We Start Celebrating Holidays: Student Perspective



Emmy Russ,
10th Grade

Everyone knows the immense feeling of joy that we have around the time of our favorite holiday. We all have felt the giddy anticipation of the day drawing nearer, the glee as we see more decorations being put up, and the excitement of being able to celebrate with family or friends and make new memories.

So, the question I am proposing is: Why can't you feel like that all year? People like to say that you "Can't celebrate Halloween in the middle of July," or that "Christmas was over three months ago, put away the lights." But there's nothing about these activities that is wrong, so why should it matter if someone chooses to celebrate outside of the accepted time frame?

Being able to celebrate whenever you want would reduce the hollow feeling that many

people have the day after a big holiday, because they would know that the joy they felt doesn't have to end. It doesn't have to be Thanksgiving to cook a grand meal with family or friends and get together to eat. It doesn't have to be Halloween to express yourself with a creative costume. It doesn't have to be a birthday or Christmas to give gifts to others.

Of course, holidays will always hold their significance and be celebrated at the times when they usually are, but if someone wants to celebrate a few months in advance, it should be allowed without judgment. So, put up all your decorations for your favorite holiday now if you want to and wait as long as you want to take them down and buy gifts for the people that you love (or yourself) at any time of the year.

We could all use a bit more joy in our lives, so instead of just celebrating on holidays, celebrate living every day no matter what that looks like to you.

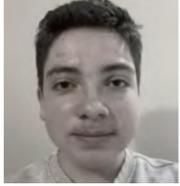
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Thankful Firebirds Reflect on the Season



As Thanksgiving approaches, it is a time of reflection for many. At Brunswick County Early College High School, students and staff are reflecting on what they are thankful for. Firebirds are thankful for a variety of things, such as family, friends, food, and well-being.

Kyler Terry,
10th Grade

Ms. Karen Feaster is thankful for the love God has for her family. She is also thankful to be a part of the Firebird family and she cherishes the relationships she made while at BCECHS. Even though Ms. Feaster is no longer at BCECHS, students like sophomore Mary Said are very happy that she was in their life.

Sophomores Eryn Greeno and Ariana Faya are thankful for their families. Ariana says that after moving away, she misses her family back home in New Jersey. "I do not see them as much as I want to and I now appreciate them being in my life more." Mr. Benjamin Ford is thankful for the way his family would always get together for birthdays, events, and holidays and support each other throughout life.

Ms. Kaitlyn Adams is thankful for her boyfriend and the relationship they have been able to develop and nurture over the past year. Ms. Adams says that "He has really become one of my best friends and a ray of sunshine {in} my life. I am very excited about what the future has in store for us."

Many students are thankful for their teachers. Junior Kitt Cooper is thankful for Ms. Adams because she makes learning interesting and she knows how to connect with her students. Freshman Daniel Smith is thankful for Mr. Elliot because he has a great personality,

and he is good at enforcing rules.

The faculty at BCECHS are also thankful for their students. Ms. Lorry Henry is thankful to have a profession where she works with people she loves, including her coworkers and her students.

Sophomore Kennedy Harmati is thankful for the fact that her friends still hang out with her because she shares every detail of her life with them. Freshman Leah Pompey is thankful for her friends because they are nice and they are always there for her. "And they are pretty!" says Pompey.

Sophomore Allyssa Stepka is thankful that she finally has friends that are loyal to her. Freshman grader Lucian Vonhegenburg says "I am thankful for sophomore Lycus Cordeiro!" Sophomore Mary Said says that whenever she sees her friends, it brightens her day.

Many students and faculty are thankful for the fact that they have food on the table every day, which is a privilege that many people can take for granted. Freshman Gabriel Munoz is thankful for food, but he is specifically thankful for "water and mangos!" Ms. Henry is thankful for cake because "who doesn't like cake?!"

Sophomore Hugo Torres and freshman Daniel Garcia are both thankful for their health. Garcia added that he is simply thankful for being alive right now. They both agreed that health and well-being can often be taken for granted.

It is evident that although every person is different and unique, they all have things in common, including what they are thankful for. Whether it is food or family, Firebirds have a lot to be appreciative of as the Thanksgiving holiday approaches.

A Snippet About School Spirit



The students at Brunswick County Early College High school had a great time during fall spirit week. This year it was Twin Day, Jersey vs. Jersey Shore, On Wednesdays We Wear Pink, Character Day, and Tourist Day.

Grace Cairnie,
10th Grade

Twin day was highly anticipated by students who planned to dress up. Zero Ellen, a junior, said that they, as well as their friends, were talking about what they would wear since the day the themes were revealed. There were some students with elaborate matching outfits while others just wore the same color t-shirt. Either way, students had a great time dressing up with their friends.

Jersey vs. Jersey Shore was less popular, but the students who did participate gave it their all. Due to dress code restrictions there were more jerseys than Jersey Shores, but people seemed to enjoy showing off their preferred team.

On Wednesdays We Wear Pink Day was one of the most popular, partly because of how easy it was to do. Nonetheless, "It was fun

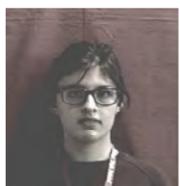


seeing all the different people wearing the same bright color." says sophomore Callie Lowery.

Character Day was when the students got the most creative. For example, a group of 10 students, ranging from grade 9 through 11, dressed as almost the entire cast of the cartoon, Phineas and Ferb.



Meeting Again



I've met you again.

When I last saw you, it felt like forever had passed, yet meeting your gaze anew was always soothing.

Your eyes, sweet and luminous, that sparkled against the sunlight, fell onto my bemused and vivid gaze. I longed for and cherished those days.

But now, here you stand. You draped in that simple but elegant gown with your curly mousy hair blowing against this lifeless breeze.

Yet I stand here, shocked by your presence and beauty.

You held your arms towards me, a sign of embrace waiting for closeness between the two of us.

Embracing you was what set me whole, feeling the soft skin brushing against my own.

It was something that brought those memories back from when your form was still awake in the real world, but now, I only meet them here.

Where is here? A dream is what I've called it for years now, but I was never sure honestly.

You took me out of my thoughts across these cloudy plains, dancing with bliss through the soundless ballroom you've brought me to.

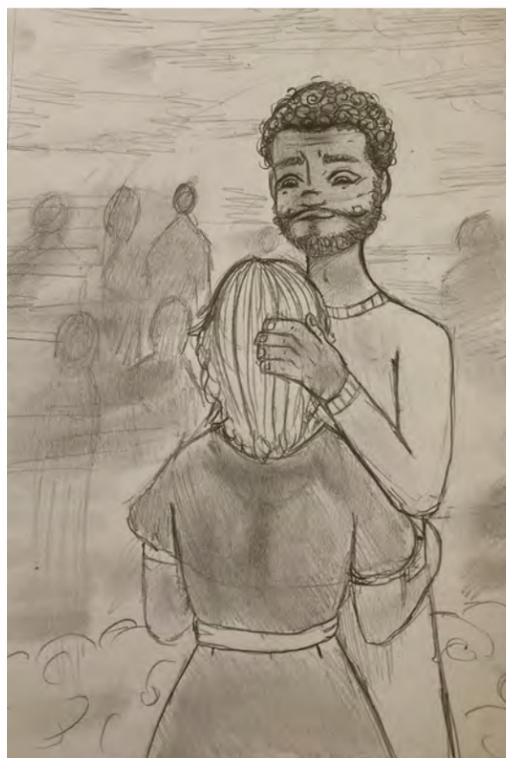


Image created by Adison Milligan

with soft glistens from these clouds.

It felt like before, back in our younger days with those oldie songs we listened to every night before.

The feeling of our hearts beating as one through these clouds felt extraordinary, one of our lives from before being more lively than ever now, this life being one I never care nor wish to leave without.

The lack of meeting you again pains my heart to pins and needles. I hate to lose this feeling you've brought to me again, the feeling of bliss and joy swelled when I awoke.

My dear love, let us keep these final moments of our being together till the sun's light turns into dark light

Finding Your School with SLAM



Ashlyn Baldwin,
11th Grade

Choosing universities is often stressful for high school students, especially when there are so many options and several factors to take into consideration. As the time for applications approaches, I reached out to Mrs. Marijayne Jessup, our school counselor at the Brunswick Early College, for her advice on choosing the right college for students.

Jessup recommended the site College Foundations of North Carolina, a website that allows students to narrow down in-state universities based on a variety of preferences. She also provided an acronym for factors an incoming student may want to consider; SLAM. Using the acronym, people going to college can decide what factors will most impact their school of choice (for example, money may be more important than the size of the school).

SLAM stands for size, location, academics, and money. The acronym breaks down options into the needs and wants a student may have in future colleges. It is also important to consider what type of scholarships and credit transfers a college offers or accepts (e.g. if you took community college classes, make sure the next college accepts those credits).

Not everyone decides to go to a secondary education, but as college application windows approach, the opportunity is something to consider. There are various other sources that students can use to do research on different colleges and universities, including academic counselors at your current school.

Lonely Winter (Truly Summer)



Faith Albert,
11th Grade

My cold fingers grip at my flesh.
Wishing for an embrace to never come.
All of me is cold.
My eyes an empty, sad gaze. How long has it been?
Looking into your eyes only makes my coldness more prominent.
I start to freeze rather than shiver.
That look reminds me of my own loneliness.
Wanting, wanting anything, receiving nothing.
Do humans naturally crave others' affection?
I want everyone to leave me alone.
But do I truly?
I say, "I want everyone to leave me alone."
Meaning, unless someone will gaze upon me and embrace me as I wish,
I will not want them.
Is that even fair to anyone?

Thanksgiving



Arwen Lyonesse,
11th Grade

The fall leaves
And the colors all around
The things that each person perceives
It's truly profound
Were all so lucky
To be together
Even if it's clear or muddy
We'll care for each other no matter the weather

2022 Beta Club Induction Ceremony



Nathaniel Brown,
10th Grade

Recently, Brunswick County Schools and Novant Health partnered to give students in the district access to mental health care in the occurrence of a mental health crisis.



"During the last school year, we at Novant Health, were able to provide crisis support services to students, at no cost to families, in partnership with select Brunswick County Schools through a grant funded by the Duke Endowment Foundation," according to communication sent home to parents of students this fall. This program has now been expanded to all BCS schools.

"This program was created to assist with connection to community resources, reduce mental health stigma, collaborate with other mental health professionals already providing services within your child's school, promote student productivity, engagement in learning, and students' sense of connectedness and well-being."

"This is a crisis service that we hope we never have to use, but we are glad it has become available to BCECHS this year," says School Counselor Marijane Jessup. "As the school counselor, I am the first responder for threats to self or others. We hope that Novant Health can be a supporter for students and families who need these resources."

There are several benefits to this partnership, including allowing students to stay in school while seeking help from a therapist.

According to Novant Health's website, the suicide attempt rate has grown by almost 50% for teen girls and around 4% for teenage boys, since the height of the pandemic.

The following forms must be completed by the parent and submitted to the school counselor so that services can be provided, in case a mental health crisis arises while in school: intake form, consent to treat, and release of information.

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Leland Middle School

Leland Middle School Cheerleaders



Christian White,
7th Grade

I'm interviewing the cheerleaders at LMS. I am a member of the cheer team as well. I decided to interview my "cheer mates" on cheerleading and their opinions about it. These fabulous cheerleaders would LOVE to see their names in a teen scene magazine! We hope you enjoy it! Thank you!

(2021-2022 cheerleaders, not 2022-2023)

What is your favorite cheer to call/do? Why?

Kaylee Hardaway's favorite cheer to do is "Who rocks the house." The cheer is very competitive and ambitious. It goes like this "They can't do it like the tigers do it! Who rocks the house? Hey, hey, we rock the house! That's right! Who rocks the house? They can't do it like the tigers do it!" 2x. I definitely understand why it's her favorite!

What inspires you to cheer? Justice Harrell states, "The people, loving/enjoying what she's doing and learning new dances and cheers." We've finished and done 2 dances and at least 10 cheers to do now!

What do you believe is proof that cheerleading is a Sport?

Jasmine Parker says, "Working out proves that cheerleading is a sport." The cheerleaders practice tumbling, dancing, cheering, socializing, building friendships, and working the vocal cords to get louder.

What are the qualities a cheerleader should have?

Bailey Caudle says, "Respect for other people, being kind, and socializing are all qualities cheerleaders should have." A lot of people would definitely agree with her statement!

What do you think you want to improve and work on as a team?

Cameron Knowles (The assistant coach) wants to improve and work on jumps such as a pike, toe touch, hurkey, etc. She also wants to work on getting the team's timing down for dances and cheers so that the team is in sync. Speaking of timing, ripples

would be great to practice because the team definitely needs to work and improve on the ripples of each dance or cheer.

What made you get into cheering?

Elena Bullock took a lot of tumbling classes when she was younger. She's in 8th Grade and is still sticking with tumbling and



cheerleading. All of the hard work spending most of her life tumbling and cheering made her one of the BEST cheerleaders on the LMS Cheer Squad!

"Creativity is seeing what others see and thinking what no one else ever thought."-Albert Einstein. There are about 20 girls. They're ambitious, considerate, and confident young ladies; they've come a long way and LMS are the Leland Middle School Cheerleaders!

The Presence



Leo Tidwell,
8th Grade

Alex and Antonio liked exploring the woods. On this day, they found a plan they had never before explored. This was weird because they thought they had explored all the places in that town. But today was different. They thought about exploring the area but were unsure because something seemed a little off to them. After discussing it, they became scared, a new feeling over their usual super confidence when searching around their town. But today, they felt an uncertain presence.

The boys finally got enough courage to go in together. Alex and Antonio set off into the woods, hoping to find something worthwhile. As they were going in, they tripped. They stood up, brushed off their shirts and pants, and were confused about what had tripped them. They looked but never found what tripped them. They shrugged it off, thinking they had just tripped each other.

Shelbie and Amy also lived in a small town and had their entire day planned out with their favorite things to do. First, they wanted to go swimming; it was one of their favorite summer activities on a hot summer day. Afterward, they would eat at their favorite restaurant, Olive Garden, followed by a sleep-over at Shelbie's house.

The girls expected to see a lot of kids at the pool, since it was a lovely day outside. However, no one was there. They were glad they had the pool to themselves for a while to relax. But when the girls finally settled, they felt someone staring at them. When they looked around, they never saw anyone.

Meanwhile, as Alex and Antonio were walking, it started to get dark, and they began to hear thunder. They decided to call it a day and head back. They got lost in their conversation

and forgot how dark it was getting. Suddenly they tripped and fell again for no apparent reason. This time was more confusing than before. They did notice it was the same place they tripped last time. They started to get suspicious. The two boys went to look for whatever tripped over even harder. Suddenly they heard a screech, a very stomach-turning screech.

After about an hour or two, Shelbie and Amy were finally ready to go to Olive Garden. They gathered their things, switched their clothes, and left. Arriving at Olive Garden, they were disappointed to see the place was packed. After ordering drinks, they went to the bathroom to put on makeup. The bathroom seemed more run down than they would've thought. Suddenly, the lights began to flicker. They started to freak out. They began to hear noises coming from the stalls. Suddenly, the lights came back on. The girls freaked out and ran out of the bathroom to find no one in the Olive Garden. They started to cry. They tried to look out the windows but it was pitch black. They tried to run out the doors, but they were locked. Then, the lights went out in the whole restaurant. That's when they heard footsteps heading towards them faster and faster. Their heart was beating as they stood right there.

The search for what tripped Alex and Antonio was pointless and they started to get scared. They heard running footsteps that sounded like they were getting very close. They turned around and started running. The footsteps kept getting louder and louder. They kept looking around to see where they were but kept seeing the same things, the same looking tree with the scratch mark and the same footsteps that were theirs when they came in.

Neither the girls nor the boys ever made it home that night. The parents of the children were worried sick. They called the police for help finding the four; however, they were never found. They were gone, gone in the presence.

Blossoms



Malia Flaverny,
8th Grade



The winds gracefully blew mother nature peacefully.

The runt fig sapling struggled to hold on against the winds.

The other saplings started to make fun of the runt sapling and how it bends.

The runt sapling waited and waited for months.

The runt saplings stem started to grow a few bumps.

The bumps transformed into twigs.

The twigs transformed into figs.

The fig tree grew and grew till it was the most beautiful of all.

The fig trees were shocked how great the tree evolved.

The fig tree had the best picnic view.

The tree was so big and new.

The other trees apologized for all those years.

The fig tree understood their grief and tears.

The fig tree soon went on with life.

The fig tree and the others grew old and weren't such a pretty sight.

The fig trees lived there last days together.

And they hoped they'd be together again forever.

The Titanic



Isabella Billings,
8th Grade

I don't know what happened.

Last thing I remember, I was on this big ship...I can't remember the name but mommy and daddy said something that started with a T. The ship was pretty, and now I can't see anything.

It's cold, and my clothes are wet.

My skin feels weird...like the leather on mommy's bike seat.

The air is thick and tastes like salt. Even though I don't think there's any air at all.

I hear mommy and daddy calling for me, but everytime I answer they don't respond. Do they hear me?

It's been 3 days.

Mommy and daddy are with me now, but they're not moving.

I think they're asleep?

I don't know...oh wait! I see a ship maybe they can see me!

Is that grandma? Oh! Grandma Grandma look here, look here! I'm here!

Why is she crying? Grandma what's wrong? Oh wait...Hey it's me! It's- It's me? And mommy and daddy! Wait where are they going? Don't leave me again please!

It's been 50 years.
They'll be back one day.
I just know it!



It's been 110 years.

They aren't coming.

So many ships have passed me since that day.

5,000 to be exact.

I know i'm dead.

I've been dead all along.

So now everytime a ship comes through here, I bring it to the same fate as the "Unsinkable ship."

The Titanic.

Cedar Grove Middle School



Go Back



Elle Triplett,
6th Grade

A man sat on his porch. It was a dark morning. That evening he looked at old photos of when he was a kid. He was born in 1954. He saw a photo of his mom who died in 1966. Suddenly.....

BAM! He was in 1965. He heard the sound of his mom calling. "Isaac!". He saw his mom in his old yard.

"Nice to meet you," said his mom.

He asked, "You can see me?"

"Yes, "she answered

"Wow this is amazing. My name is lu... Luke."

"Hi my name is Susan"

The man's 11-year-old self comes home and interrupts his mom and him. He stares at his older

self weirdly. Thinking about why does this man look like me and do I know him? Susan starts to

talk to both of them.

"Lucas meet Luke." Susan clarifies

"Nice to meet you."

"Nice to meet you. I love your shirt."

"Thank you, this is actually my favorite shirt. I love your shirt too."

The two of them began talking. They discussed the year he was born and how it was the second year of the Vietnam War. Luke said he was in the war and Lucas

should join. Maybe he would like it. Susan said he should not talk about the war and not get ahead of himself. Lucas is only 11 years old.

"But mom I really like war and I am interested in joining the Navy Seals. I would love to ride a

ship. Many kids my age have dads in the Navy." cried Lucas.

"Did you know that I was in the Navy and rode a ship? Oh boy did I love it." said Luke.

"STOP TALKING ABOUT THE NAVY! YOU ARE ONLY 11 YEARS OLD!!!!" said Susan.

Susan later convinced Luke to have dinner with them. Lucas said that he was playing baseball and asked if Luke would attend his baseball game. They went to dinner, but not like Luke.

remembered when he was a kid. He met a girl that night, Mary Lee. He knew she was the one.

They went to Mickey's diner.

Later that night, Luke could not sleep. He went downstairs and turned on the radio and got some

chocolate milk. He saw Lucas praying, "Please let Luke be my new dad. Amen."

"Hey buddy, why are you not sleeping?"

"I was just praying."

"I can't be your dad bud. I am so sorry; you don't know who I really am."

Susan yelled go to bed. "Y'all I am not going

to say that again. I am trying to go to bed!" Luke tucked Lucas in bed and said good night. All night Lucas sat in bed thinking of baseball and the game he had tomorrow.

"I am ready for the game mom, let's go."

"Boy if you don't chill out then you will be in big trouble."

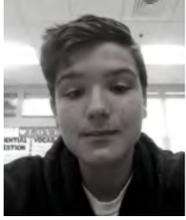
"Now wait for me to get ready for the game."

They left the house and arrived at the game. Luke saw the girl from the diner. This time he talked to Mary Lee. Ten years later, they married and that boy Lucas still is happy.

I wonder what happened to him. Well, that is another story we don't have time for. I bet you're wondering how I know all this..... I am Mary Lee Wood and it's my husband's story.



Why



Joshua McGinty,
8th Grade

I would like to tell you a story. This story is about a kid, a kid that has nothing left to lose.

One of my good friends, when he was 10, walked in on his mother overdosing on the carpet and she died in his arms. Then he started to go into a deep depression and started smoking

marijuana.

He claimed it, "Made me stop thinking about the what if's". All he could think about was if he had been a better kid, if he had said I love you more, then maybe she would still be here.

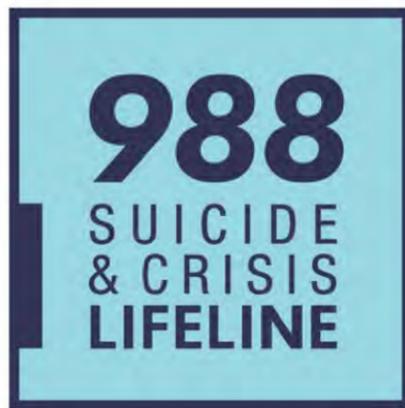
At 13 years old he texted me saying that he was going to kill himself by overdosing. I talked him out of it but that wasn't it I had to talk him out of it again. No kid at 13 should want to end their own life ever. Now here is what I want to talk about, the fact that people never should forget that teen suicides are so high. In the year 2020, over 5,000 kids a year committed suicide.

That means, 12 kids a day commit suicide. That number is so bad, which is why I'm here. I'm here to reach out and say if you think the only way out is to commit suicide, please talk to someone. If you think about it, how would the people that care about you? How would that make them feel? Even if you feel like no one cares. I bet you everything I own that someone

cares, so if you think you are going to commit suicide, talk to someone before you follow through that action. Don't hide it or try to run away from your pain because you can't run forever. Trust me, I have tried and when it catches up

to you it will hurt twice as much. Yes, it will leave a scar that may or may not ever heal, but scars never define who you are.

I'm going to quote Uncle Iroh from Avatar the Last Air Bender, "While it is always good to believe in oneself, a little help from others can be a great blessing." He also said, "Life happens whether you make it or not." But the one I like the best is, "In the darkest time, hope is something you give yourself." Although these are from a fictional person, they still have meaning. All I want to do is to help. The suicide hotline number is 998 for anyone needing assistance. Maybe this article helped you or maybe not, but if this can help one person, I can sleep easy knowing that I helped someone not commit suicide.



Where the Fox Sat



Elle Triplett,
6th Grade

She sat on the road thinking about what she can do for the summer. School just ended. Lashay had one friend and she had gone to summer school. Lashay's mother had just left for work where she was a

lawyer.

Lashay went upstairs and sat at her window. It was nothing more than a small piece of glass just big enough for her face to peek through. She sat and stared at the forest.

She lived in a tall, two-story, white house with a black door. The house had eight rooms and two kitchens. She and her mother had been living in that house for ten years, it had been one year since her dad died. One year since she lost her best friend. While staring out of her window, all of a sudden, she saw a fox staring back at her.

She was surprised to see a fox. Since they built the new interstate, most of the wildlife was scarce, even in the small forest by her house.

She ran downstairs and outside but the fox was gone. The next day she saw a note outside. She unfolded it. The note read, "My sweetheart, I'm not gone, and I love you. I will never forget you."

-Dad



West Brunswick High School

Year Anniversary of Gabby Petito

Jenna Williams

On July 2nd, 2021 Gabrielle Petito and her fiance Brian Laundrie started their four-month long cross-country trip. They had planned to stop at most of the national parks so that they could camp while they were traveling and also vlog it on Gabby's Youtube channel along the way. Gabby was completely oblivious as to what was about to change in not only her life, but everyone else's life around her.

On September 19th, 22-year-old Gabby was reported dead after they found her body near Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming, just a 5-minute walk from where the van that she and Brian were driving was found. Petito's mother, Nicole Schmidt, claimed that she got a text from her on August 25th that she said was out of character for her daughter and wasn't something that she would say. Then on the 27th, she made her last social media post which was taken at Grand Teton National Park. Gabby was then reported missing once her fiance returned home without her.

When Brian Laundrie returned home, where he and Gabby used to live, he then disappeared only two days before Gabby's body was found. They found his body at Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park,

and they ruled the cause of death as a self-inflicted gunshot wound. When they found his body, there was a notebook laying beside him which was taken into evidence processing. In the notebook, they found a confession letter that stated that his fiance's death was a mercy killing because she had a head injury in a fall and he thought that killing her would be merciful because she was in pain. According to an article from WWSB, the local news of [Sarasota, Florida](#), Laundrie stated that he was sorry and didn't want to make life harder for his family.

"Please do not make life harder for my family," Brian Laundrie wrote. "They lost a son and a daughter. The **most** wonderful girl in the world. Gabby, I'm sorry."

Brian Laundrie's parents knew that he killed Gabby before anyone, but they kept it to themselves and helped cover his tracks, and that his return back home without her, was so that he could spend the little time he had left, with his family. Brian revealed in his notebook that he was the one who killed Gabby because he thought that is what she wanted after she supposedly fell and hurt herself. Brian strangled her to "put her out of her misery", and from the results of the autopsy, they claimed that she died 3-4 weeks before her body was found at a national park in Wyoming.

Gabby was reported missing on September 11th, and whether you heard about it on

Tiktok, Facebook, or Instagram we all found out one way or another because it made national news in a matter of days. Some people got more into it than others, many people picking sides and some claiming that Brian was completely innocent and had nothing to do with it, while others were saying that he was guilty, others believed there was someone else involved that we didn't know about.

This case affected women in many ways by allowing them to realize that they may not be in the best relationship. It made us realize that we need to pay closer attention to these warning signs and make ourselves more aware of how events could change. From this case, people can mainly all conclude that Gabby was in an abusive relationship with Brian, and no one knew until it was too late. I think that everyone, men and women, should know that these things can happen so easily to anyone.

On September 25th the family made an organization to help others because no one should have to find their child alone as Petito's parents did. This organization is to help give other parents, who may be or have been in the same situation, some resources, guidance, and support. If you or anyone know someone who may be in an abusive relationship, help them. Let them know there is help and that they can get out of it. Call the National Domestic Abuse Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), if you or anyone else needs help.

Thanksgiving in the Gullah Geechee Community



TeCora Galloway

During the fall season we often focus on the traditions of Thanksgiving in accordance with the colonists and Native Americans, but I think it is important that we also talk about the enslaved people, specifically low country Gullah Geechee enslaved people and their traditions that were also present during this time.

Enslaved people during colonial times celebrated Thanksgiving along with the colonists, but their celebration was centered around the church. Many spent the holiday expressing how thankful they were, and also for eventual liberation. This is similar to our traditions now in the Cape Fear region, where many Gullah Geechee individuals in my area spend their holiday season in prayer. I asked my grandmother what she used to do for Thanksgiving, and most of her traditions translate into the traditions I practice today, including turkey gizzard gravy, and pineapple pudding.

The food that was enjoyed during this time was significant in the context of slavery and Gullah Geechee tradition. Enslaved people that worked in the fields had to forage for food, and made things that were readily available to them like cornbread and rice. Enslaved people that did domestic work were given leftovers from the enslavers' meal. In Gullah Geechee traditions, some of these foods included whole pigs, oysters, okra, and other foods that were raised and cultivated in the low country region. In a lot of Gullah Geechee households today you will commonly see fish, oysters, pig, and rice served during Thanksgiving, though there are many more traditional foods that are present.

The North Carolina Rice Festival for 2023 is temporarily being located in Brunswick Town, since the Founders Park in Leland is being renovated. This will locate the Rice Festival at a historic site! Next month's issue will include more about the event.



Not a 'Thang'

J.F. Gozzi

Moving long distance can be a debacle. For us it was slightly better, but still, a whirlwind including: a month-long vacation in Georgia in March, buying a home in one day in Leland in April, selling a home in two days in Connecticut, liquidating half of our "stuff," hiring a moving company and lastly saying goodbye to places and people. In mid-June and 700 miles later we arrived in North Carolina. Like most transplants we were here for improved weather and lesser tax burdens. The home checked all the boxes--one level, new(ish) and in an established community. That is when the oddities started.

We are senior citizens now with two grown children. The younger of the two, now 25, toils in Japan (Marines) and finds us amusing. Not funny ha-ha but more so of the ilk that we are not "hip." Many times, when we're talking to him, he says "that's not a thing" or "that's a thing."

These are the early results on what is and isn't a thing in North Carolina as opposed to, in general, the northeast. As far as things being a thing or not, some were to be expected and some were not. Take the weather for example--oppressive heat for three solid months A THING. We were quite curious why our neighborhood was a ghost town. Surely, it's a mix of ages, some people were at work but where was everyone else? Came to find out, with the exception of being at the store or at the beach they were hiding indoors!

Another example would be churches. With the exception of Congregational there are houses of worship everywhere, at least in Brunswick County. Needless to say, my wife found a spot right in Leland. Faith is overwhelming, like when I went to Tractor Supply and upon my purchase a young woman

said, "Sir -- remember Jesus loves you!" Good to know.

Although it seems that "Yankees" outnumber native North Carolinians at times, the southern drawl can be a REAL THING. A good example was at the DMV (amazingly efficient in Shallotte by the way) when an agent called to the next in line --"can I hep ya?" She had to repeat it three times before the guy figured out, he was up. I tried not to laugh.

Food can be very regional. Connecticut prides itself in a few things--thin crust, burnt on the bottom pizza being the king. Supposedly it's the all about the water. Top notch pie in North Carolina-- NOT A THING. Speaking of drinking water, the public water in Connecticut was quite good. In Leland, within a

Adapting to a new place can be "A Real Thing."

week we bought a water cooler at Walmart.

Leland's population has boomed over the last few decades and shows no signs of slowing down, but good restaurants, mostly NOT A THING. On the other hand, a short drive away is Wilmington with a spectrum of options at all price ranges.

Brunswick county beaches are the real deal--not too crowded, clean and expansive. What is NOT A THING is lifeguards--go in the water above your waist, you'd better be a good swimmer or have a flotation device.

The quick take is that people are the same here as they were there. Some are gracious and nice and some are not. Some are smart and some not so much. Either way, especially with the turmoil throughout the world, we're all in it together---now THAT'S A THING.

Generational Health Begins with You

Victor Fernandes

You can call it a tagline....A catchphrase...Even a mantra. I call it my turning point in life -- the years when I finally decided to take control of my life so I can be at my best, for myself and those who count on me, and now teach others through my business, Fernandes Fit, to do the same.

There is no one on this planet harder on me than me. If I'm not doing right by myself and those most important in my life, I know it and I do something about it. The old me, though, didn't like who I saw in the mirror and what I thought of myself, and I wasn't willing to do anything to change that. I was all talk and no action, especially when it came to my health and fitness.

Getting healthy and fit sounded good as the thought crossed my mind. "I'm going to work out and get healthy. I'm going to lose weight and get in shape," I often thought to myself. I would vow, "I'm going to stick to it this time." And I would...for a month, maybe two. Then the excuses would creep back in. "I'm too busy at work." "There's a

lot going on at home." "I'll get back to it next month, or when life starts to quiet down." Deep down, I knew the truth. I couldn't fool the man in the mirror.

After nearly two decades of living an unhealthy lifestyle, I took control of my life in my late 30s by first taking control of my health and fitness -- because I finally had no other choice. My third and youngest son, Zach, was born 12 years ago. My wife, Shelly, was diagnosed with cancer less than a year later. Two major slaps across the face that forced me to address a reality I ignored for two decades. Either get healthy on my terms, or life will decide an alternate -- and much less appealing -- fate. And if I allowed life to decide, what would happen to my family if life kept me from being there for them when they need me?

That's reality for so many of us in today's society. Studies show that more than 70% of adults across this nation are considered overweight or obese.

Allow me to provide an alternate reality we

should pursue...Although we're not getting any younger, our best years remain ahead of us. If we're willing to take simple steps to make that possible -- making quality choices, eating healthy foods, getting regular exercise, enjoying proper rest.

We all know this. You don't need me to tell you that. Yet so many people still don't take positive steps forward in life -- because they believe they can't, or simply won't. So, here's what I recommend -- start with one step.

Make one subtle change, then another, and another. Before long, you'll witness positive change across all facets of your life. You'll be healthier, and happier. But that change begins with you.

If you need help with taking that first step, or any challenges you face on your health and fitness journey, I'm here to help. Contact me at 814.504.7774 or info@fernandesfit.com to get started. Or visit my website, fernandesfit.com for more information.

Brunswick Arts Council's Annual Art Show Soars



Stephen Sullivan's painting, "Ibis in Flight" won the "Best of Show Award" at the Brunswick Art Council's annual art show and reception at the Leland Cultural Arts Center in October.

The event was catered by Webo's and jazz music was presented by Lori Spencer. Mary Beth Livers, BAC Director, hosted the event.

As always, there was a diverse selection of entries ranging from oil paintings to photography, ceramics and wood pieces, and many other media. Judging all categories was Sharon Wozniak-Spencer, an art professor at Cape Fear Community College. She is a teaching artist for the Cameron Art Museum, where she also volunteers.



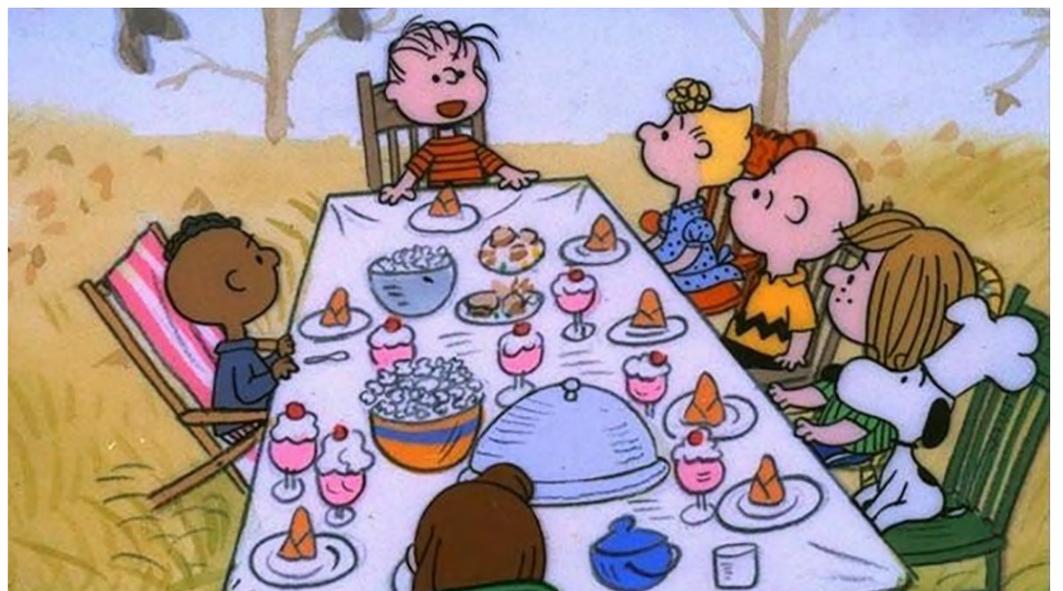
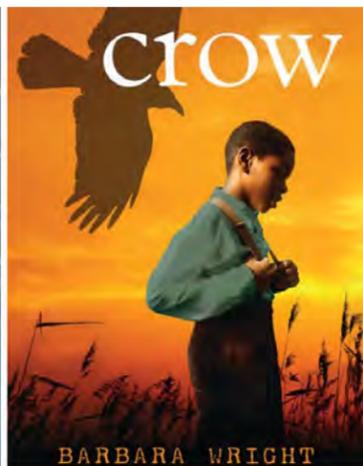
"Ibis in Flight"

Dodge's 'Aquarium' Lands Numerous Awards



"Aquarium"

Joeleen Dodge with her 2nd place winning entry "Aquarium" 3D, hand-built pottery at Franklin Square Gallery spring show last March. This piece was also entered in the Brunswick County Gator Silver Games held at the Leland Cultural Arts Center in July 2022 where Dodge won 1st place, which entitled her to enter the North Carolina State Senior Games in Cary, NC, where she walked away with a Bronze medal in the Pottery - Thrown or Hand-Built category.



NEA Big Read and Cape Fear Literacy Council present
A Conversation with Barbara Wright
 Author of *Crow*, the story of a young boy who lived through the Wilmington Insurrection of 1898.
This event is free and open to the public; RSVP required.
November 2, 2022 at 11:00 a.m.
 Cape Fear Literacy Council
 1012 South 17th St.
 Wilmington, NC 28401
 Event info & RSVP: cfiteracy.org/events

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November Birthdays

- Savana Moor Nov. 1
- Victor Fernandes Nov. 3
- Lisa Mattingly Nov. 4
- Susan Morgan Nov. 5
- Bianca Chambers Nov. 7
- Ellie Triplett Nov. 7
- Maria Winkler Nov. 9
- Jeremy Gunn Nov. 12
- Arwen Lyonese Nov. 14
- Samantha Anderson Nov. 23

