



See page 2



# VOICES

Providing an Outlet for Creativity in the Cape Fear Region



See page 7

Volume 4, Issue 1

Happy New Year

January 2023



# Welcome 2023

Welcome to another new beginning. Once again we get a chance to do it better than before. We can start with a new slate. Once the hangover of holiday food, family, friends and celebration ends, we can get busy working on our new New Year's resolutions. And since January is traditionally "eight weeks" long, we will have time to forget them before February arrives.

Photo credit: Marq.com

## 2022: A Whirlwind Year to Remember

### Government

- Supreme Court Overturns Roe v. Wade
- No "Red Wave" in Mid-term Elections
- Interest Rates Rise, Stocks Decline
- Congress Passes PACT Act (finally)
- Ketanji Brown Jackson Becomes First Black Supreme Court Justice
- FBI Searches Mar-A-Lago
- Fauci Retires



J6 Committee finds former President aided and abetted an insurrection; refers findings to DOJ.

### Major Headlines

- Russia Invades Ukraine; Ukrainians Fights Back
- Inflation Skyrockets
- Supply Chains Wreak Havoc
- Critical Race Theory
- Musk: Tesla and Twitter
- Mass Shootings Rival 2021 Total of 690
- COVID-19 Lingers and Fades



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy surprises Russia and the world.

### Entertainment

- 94th Oscars: "Coda" Wins Best Picture, Jessica Chastain, Best Actress, and Best Actor Will Smith smacks presenter Chris Rock in "the slap heard 'round the world."



### Sports

- Rams Win Super Bowl 56
- Golden State Warriors Win NBA Title
- Colorado Avalanche Win Stanley Cup
- Astros Win World Series (without stealing signals)
- Aaron Judge Hits 62 Homers
- Dawgs Go Undefeated for Second Year in a Row



Jim Thorpe

Jim Thorpe, perhaps the greatest athlete of the 20th Century, has Olympic medals reinstated.

### Cape Fear Voices/Teen Scene

- Nunnally Wins 2nd Writing Award
- Margie Steve Recognized as "Rising Star" by NB Chamber of Commerce
- Hacker, Keiper and Stiegler Win Writing Awards.
- First Bank Rewards CFVTS for Work with Teens
- South Brunswick High School Starts Journalism Club to Work with Teen Scene
- Leland Middle, Cedar Grove Middle, BC Early College High Schools Continue to Anchor The Teen Scene program.



### Cape Fear Voices...

About Us .....	2	Around Town .....	7
Laughing in the Golden Years.....	6	Military News.....	14

### Teen Scene... P9

Myrtle Grove MS .....	13
Leland MS .....	12

Cedar Grove MS .....	9
BC Early College HS .....	10
South Brunswick HS .....	12

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## Best of Cape Fear Voices / Teen Scene 2022 Committee Selects Award Nominations

Janet Stiegler, Committee Chair

Recognizing the best stories, poems, essays, and art published in this paper in 2022 will be a highlight of *Teen Scene's* 3rd Annual Writers' Awards Banquet sponsored by the Brunswick Arts Council on April 15 at the WWAY TV3 Event Center in Leland. Event sponsors include Farm Bureau Insurance and author Ronnie Pastecki.

The 2022 Awards Nominating Committee consisted of six volunteers:



Photo by Dylan Gillis on Unsplash

### The Nominating Process

Our team held three virtual meetings: the first in September to establish our process, the second in November to develop a short list of articles, essays, poems, and art that merited consideration, and the third in December to consider pieces from the last issue and make our final selections.

Each team member independently reviewed the 12 issues from 2022 and anonymously sent in their top three-to-five favorites across the categories (four for *Cape Fear Voices* and five for *Teen Scene*). Anonymous submissions ensured we would not influence each other's choices. Also, a team member could not select something he or she had written or something written by a family member.

When we reviewed the results together, those pieces with multiple votes automatically made the final list. Several team members made a compelling case for others they felt warranted consideration, and these were also included among the final nominations.

Picking the top stories in nine categories is no easy task. The number of contributors has increased, and the sophistication of writing has improved each year. We are particularly grateful to Laura Askue and Leigh Ann Greeno for taking time from their busy teaching schedules to help sift through the wealth of student essays, stories, and poetry. One

thing is clear: the creation of *Teen Scene* and the start of journalism clubs in our local schools have done much to hone student writing and highlight the artistic talents of the next generation.

Award finalists will be selected from among the nominees by a separate panel of judges. ...And now (drumroll), see the next page for the final "Super Hero" award nominations for 2022...



### Teen Sponsors







### Award Sponsors



Leland Councilman Bill McHugh



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Fifty years of leadership






Celebrate, Cultivate, Community Outreach





## Teen Scene, Inc. 3rd Annual Writers Award Banquet

Presented by Brunswick Arts Council



### Save the date

## April 15, 2023

WWAY TV-3 Event Center in Magnolia Greens  
Tickets are limited. Reserve your space now.

### Guest Speaker

**Kristie VanAuken, Special Advisor, Workforce Engagement**  
Division of State Superintendent  
NC Department of Public Instruction



**To purchase your tickets, scan the QR code.**

## ★ VOICES ★

Cape Fear  
Providing an Outlet for Creativity in the Cape Fear Region

### Award Nominations

#### Non-Fiction/History

- **Pearl Harbor Series: Japanese Midget Subs & Daring Pilots** by Frank T. Stritter, January pg. 5 and December pg. 1
- **Tribute to Tenacity** by David Hume III, March pg. 3
- **The Passing of an Iconic Place (Willoughby's)** by Sheryl Keiper, September pg. 6
- **Julie Moore: A Military Spouse Extraordinaire** by Frank T. Stritter, October pg. 10
- **Hummingbirds (Part III)** by Nancy Bryans, November pg. 5

#### Memories/Personal Essay

- **The Worth of Water** by David Hume III, January pg. 6
- **BFF in a Beanfield** by Maryann Nunnally, February pg. 3
- **The Woman with the Beautiful Hands** by Rosemary Parker, February pg. 3
- **Folks I Met—My Fair Lady** by Paul Paolicelli, September pg. 3
- **A Reason to Believe** by Linda Merlino, December pg. 1

#### Creative Writing/Poetry

- **The Cheesecake** by Sheryl Keiper, February pg. 5
- **One Continuous Mistake** by Alan Sturrock, February pg. 13
- **Thinking of Ukraine** by Dan G. Neizmik, April pg. 8
- **Friend and Wife** by Stan Washington, July pg. 5
- **A Lotto Hope...** by Dan G. Neizmik, September pg. 9

#### Humor

- **Bringing It Back** by Stan Washington, January pg. 3
- **We Adopted!** by Charles Bins, March pg. 5
- **Best Laid Plans** by Karen Phillips Smith, April pg. 4
- **The Chinese Laundry-Man** by Maryann Nunnally, April pg. 6
- **Sister Mary Judas Roars** by Charles Bins, December pg. 5

## ★ The Teen Scene ★

### Award Nominations

#### Non-Fiction/Reportage

- **Food Pantries: It All Started from a Dream and Serving the Community** by Margie Steve (11/ECHS), Feb. pg. 8 and March pg. 12
- **Finding a Safe Place (LGBT Students)** by Destiny Noblitt (10/WBHS), February pg. 9
- **Digital Burn Book** by Reyde Jones & Emely Olmedo (11/WBHS), March pg. 8
- **The Future of Agriculture** by Addison Justus (10/ECHS), May, pg. 10
- **Inspiration within the Horse** by Charlie Sedbrook (8/Leland MS), July pg. 3

#### Fiction/Creative Writing

- **The Crossroads** by Lily Rae Bradley (7/Leland MS), March, pg. 9
- **Layer 50: Rising Tension & A New Threat** by Dale Dyer (10/ECHS), March pg. 10 & April pg. 11
- **Salsa Verde** by Anna Adams (12/ECHS), April, pg. 10
- **In Our Bedroom After the War** by Kaleigh Aull (11/ECHS), July pg.2
- **Kenopisa** by Rumi Bennett (10/ECHS), December pg. 10

#### Reviews/Persuasive Essays

- **Hollywood: You Give Love a Bad Name**, by Reyde Jones (11/WBHS), March pg. 8
- **One Size Does Not Fit All**, by Arabella Ong (11/ECHS), March pg. 11
- **Why Buy Local?** by Campbell Cheers (10/WBHS), April pg. 13
- **Betrayal is a Matter of Life and Death** by Nathaniel Brown (9/ECHS), May pg. 7
- **"From Below" by Darcy Coates: A Review** by Grace Cairnie (10/ECHS), October pg. 14
- **The Problem with the School System**, by Josh McGinty (8/Cedar Grove MS), December, pg. 13

#### Poetry

- **Missing You** by Kieran Daniels (8/Leland MS), February pg. 10
- **Window Shopping** by Arwen Lyonesse (10/ECHS), March pg.10
- **I Had Friends** by Aurora Bennett (9/ECHS), May pg. 9
- **Nature's Life** by Lisa Mattingly (10/ECHS), June pg. 10
- **The Last Star** by Malia Flaverney (6/Leland MS), December pg. 12

#### Art

- **Moth and Snail sketches** by Samantha Becker (10/ECHS), January, pg. 9 and April, pg. 10
- **Son of a Dragon illustration** by Emeri Deppa (7/Myrtle Grove MS), May, pg. 12
- **Project Sunflower** by Olivia Williams (9/NBHS), July 4
- **My Love of Art (multiple)**, by Rayna M. Chew (11/NBHS), October 15
- **"Ghost Lover" and "Meeting Again" sketches** by Adison Milligan (Grade 10/ECHS) October, pg. 12, November, pg. 10
- **Smaug and Legolas**, by Karleigh Karnes (12/SBHS), December, pg. 9

#### Key:

LMS Leland Middle School  
MGMS Myrtle Grove Middle School  
ECHS Early College High School

NBHS North Brunswick High School  
SBHS South Brunswick High School  
WBHS West Brunswick High School

## The Old Man and His Cane

Nancy Bryans, Brunswick Forest



The old man whistled a happy tune on his daily postprandial strolls up and down the sidewalk in front of his home. The first time anyone remembered his not whistling was the day his beloved wife died. Brokenhearted, he could not whistle, and his family wondered if he would ever whistle again.

In his twilight years, the old man walked with a cane, was overweight – as round as Santa – and lived to eat. He munched and crunched his way through the day, leaving a trail of candy, cookie, and cracker crumbs in his wake. During his wife's lifetime, he and his family never dined in public due to her finicky nature, but now he liked to treat them to dinner. Their restaurant of choice was a seafood place overlooking a meandering river where they enjoyed seasonal fresh fish, oysters, and crab cakes accompanied by shrimp cocktail, tossed salad, hush puppies, and dessert. He always ordered the Captain's Platter piled high with food. Following their delicious meals, his son and wife walked outdoors along the pier to look at boats. The old man and his grandchildren walked into a room full of slot machines. In those days, gambling was legal in their area, drawing huge crowds.

The family arrived early at the restaurant to avoid waiting in line, but by the time they finished eating, customers stood in line at the iconic slot machines. The old man divvied out nickels and dimes to his grandchildren, teaching them the value of money and the consequences of gambling. He directed them to try their luck after losing gamblers walked away, saying the odds might be favorable. His grandchildren wagered the notorious slots would cough up their loot, but oftentimes the thieving machines gobbled up their coins instead. Before the tussles ended, the old man handed each grandchild two quarters, telling them they could keep the quarters or take another chance to win the jackpot. He usually wrestled enough silver from the infamous slot machines to more than pay for dinner. Those one-armed bandits were happy to see the old man and his cane wobble to the car with jiggling coins and giggling grandchildren, who traveled home to feed their piggy banks.

The family's lucky streak occasionally



Photo by [David Sinclair](#) on [Unsplash](#)

**Would the old man ever recover his ability to whistle?**

had unintended consequences. At church one Sunday, it was announced there would be a raffle for one of the priest's puppies. The old man's grandchildren told him how cute the puppies were, knowing he liked dogs. Instead of buying a ticket for himself, he gave his grandchildren money to take chances in their names. The following Sunday, the winner was announced from the pulpit. The old man's youngest granddaughter won, and on Monday the puppy was to be picked up at the rectory. The young girl was excited to have her very own puppy, but instead her father came home with a very large Hershey's chocolate bar. She learned her father and grandfather discussed the girl's prize, deciding the last thing their family needed was another dog, especially a Chesapeake Bay retriever. The disappointed child glared at her father and decided she hated chocolate.

Hoping to restore harmony to his household, the old man thought it was an opportune time to treat his family to dinner at their favorite restaurant. After a pleasurable evening gormandizing and wrestling with the one-armed bandits, the old man and his cane sauntered to the car. His contented, satiated family wore smiles of surprise, listening to him jingle jackpot coins in his pockets and once again whistle a happy tune.

### Buy a Singing Valentine

For Just \$50, a Cape Fear Chordsmen Barbershop Quartet will sing 2 songs and present a rose and a card from you to your Valentine! You tell us where/when

To schedule your Singing Valentine Call

**910-541-1256**

Call soon to ensure your desired time slot.



## To the Very Best of Her Ability

Jan Morgan-Swegle, Compass Pointe



I have often said that our children married wonderful people and I truly mean that. Jon, our son-in-law, is a devoted husband and father. He is talented and has created a safe, strong, family centered environment for his children and his Scottish roots are close to mine.

Marie, one of our daughters-in-law, incorporates her Lebanese heritage into our family with food. She is a successful business woman who was the first female to be promoted to the rank of Vice President in her male dominated company.

And then, there's Brenda. Brenda is small and funny and has the greatest laugh. She is a dedicated wife and mother and on January 5, 2023, she will make history when she is sworn in as a Circuit Court Judge for the 10th judicial circuit for the state of Florida—the first Hispanic woman to have ever achieved this honor.

Over the Thanksgiving holiday, I had a chance to find out more about the twists and turns of fate that influenced Brenda and led her to the judge's chamber.

I asked Brenda if being a judge was a dream come true. She said, "No, not really. I decided I wanted to be a lawyer when I was around fourteen, but I wasn't sure I could do it. When I was

growing up, not a lot of girls looked like me or grew up like me. I didn't have any role models. I grew up in a time when there weren't that many Hispanic people in professional roles."

Brenda continued, "My mother was a nurse, but she came to that role while I was growing up. I watched her work, go to school, take care of the house and my sister and I. I began to understand the importance of school and how staying in high school and going on to college would lead to a better life."

I wanted to know if Brenda's father contributed to her following her dreams and goals. She responded, "My father was supportive of my dream to become an attorney. He knew that meant college and beyond, so he often worked 3 jobs to support our family and our dreams. No only that, he and my mother worked together. If she was at school or working and he was at home, he cooked the family meal. They coordinated their schedules so that one of them was always home with us. He taught my sister and I practical things—like car maintenance, so we wouldn't have to depend on others. He encouraged me to keep going and follow my dreams. He did the same for my sister, she's a doctor now."

Brenda will begin her term in Family Court and stay in that role for at least 2 years. She said, "I'm not afraid of this challenge. I have the skills

to do this. I was a Prosecutor for the State of Florida for over 3 years and then I went into private practice."

I asked Brenda to give some advice to our *Teen Scene* audience and all of the students

in our readership. She said, "Keep focused on school. Try to stay on a good path. Life can take you down many different roads, where you end up is up to you."

Supreme Court Justice, Ruth Bader Ginsberg once said, "I would like to be remembered as someone who used whatever talent she had to do her work to the very best of her ability."

On January 5, I will witness history. I will watch our son, who will be very proud of his wife. I will watch our granddaughters celebrate the achievements of their mother and role model—someone who used her talents, lived her life and did her work to the very best of her ability.



**"Life can take you down many roads, where you end up is up to you."**



Stan Washington, Leland

Brian plays with the new radio-controlled model car he just got. It wasn't a gift from his parents. It was a gift from a very unusual person. This Christmas, he had asked his mom if

there were some jobs around the house to make money for gifts. She had thought for a minute and said yes there is. I need the brass collection in the office cleaned and shined.

## Brian's Wish

Tom is a collector of odd pieces made with metals. He started cleaning by using rubbing alcohol and old rags. The third piece that looked like a cream dish. Brian cleaned the metal "cream" dish and was about to pick the next item. A voice boomed at him asking, "Who are you and why did you summon me?" It was a guy who wore a turban and strange clothes. Brian looked up and was startled,

"Who are you?"

"He finally decided to see if he could ask the genie for a new wish. He took the lamp/"cream" dish out of the office. He used a rag to rub it again. He continued for a couple of minutes. It seemed like it wasn't going to work again. He rubbed once more. The genie appeared and again asked who summoned him. Brian explained about his sister. The genie looked at him with a worried look. He explained there was only one way to do that. Brian had to exchange his first wish for a replacement wish. This would be a one-time only offer.

Brian packaged the car and handed it back to the genie. The car immediately disappeared. "I am the genie in the lamp. I will grant the summoner one wish." Brian was skeptical but played along with the genie. He really wanted a radio-controlled model car. The genie agreed and poof, a brand-new model Dodge muscle car appeared inside a colorful box. The genie warned he only grants one wish then vanished. Brian opened the box and setup the radio car. It worked beautifully. It was just like the one in the toy store.

He left the car in his room. He was trying to figure out how to tell his parents how and where he got it. He was sure the genie was not going to go over very well. He came into the living room. His parents were there



talking with really worried looks. They explain his twin sister has been diagnosed with something he didn't understand what it was but understood it was serious. They explained that Judy would have to stay in a hospital to get treatments for a long time.

Brian retreated into his room and tried to understand what was going on. The radio car no longer interested him. Judy and he got along okay and didn't fight that much. The news shocked him as to how much he would miss her if she were to die. He was trying find a way to help her.

he genie asked what Brian wanted. He wished for Judy to be healed and healthy again. The genie nodded and then left.

His dad came in about an hour later. He told Brian that the doctors called, for some unknown reason, Judy's symptoms stopped and the doctors were starting tests to see what was going on. His dad said we are praying that she will be okay.

Brian turned around and smiled.

## Daniel the Statue

Charles Bins, Brunswick Forest



**Is the man in the hospital gown really a statue? No, people are just too fast, passing blurs speaking munchkin. His silent mantra: Stop disease!**

**Sloth-like, he moves almost im-per-cep-ti-bly. Right hand's poised strangely above his forearm, no, moo-ving, fingers cupping, downward. Why? Nothing there. Until it appears, clinging to the short hairs of his wrist.**

**The mosquito probes once. Sixty-seven minutes later, Daniel's ingested it. The staff see a statue still.**

# Excuses Weigh Heavier



**Victor Fernandes,**  
Leland

I have a story to share with you. And, although this story is geared toward people in their 50s and older (like me), the message within applies to anyone who has ever allowed self-limiting beliefs to hold them back in life.

Now, you're likely saying to yourself, "What are self-limiting beliefs?"

They are self-inflicted doubts – and more often than not, excuses we tell ourselves – that keep us from pursuing goals we believe we can't accomplish.

Or too old to accomplish.

It can be tied to health and fitness, or all aspects of our lives. But as we age, and we view ourselves on the back nine of life instead of embracing the possibilities that lie ahead, we limit the goals we set for ourselves – if we set any at all.

I did that for years. I talked a good game, but rarely followed through on all that talk. Now, I'm a firm believer in how we do one thing is how we do everything.

And when I gained control of my health and fitness, and in turn gained confidence in myself, I realized there was no limit to what I could accomplish.

Which is why, at age 47, I left the sports journalism industry after 26 years to make a complete 180-degree pivot into the health and fitness world, and into the world of entrepreneurship. Now, I'm 51 and excited about what lies ahead, because in my mind the best years are ahead of me.

Need a bit more convincing? There's Colonel Sanders, who reportedly founded the Kentucky Fried Chicken chain at 62...as well as Morgan Freeman and Samuel L. Jackson, who didn't make it big in the film industry until after turning 40.

It's never too late to pursue – and achieve – your goals, no matter how lofty they may seem. And what better time to get started than right now, with 2022 drawing to a close and 2023 approaching fast.

Want to make the new year the best year ever? There's no big secret.

Set your goals. Believe you can achieve them. Make them happen. And if you need help laying out the best plan of action, I'm here to help.

Contact me at 814.504.7774 or by email at [info@fernandesfit.com](mailto:info@fernandesfit.com) to get started. You can also get more information at [fernandesfit.com](http://fernandesfit.com).



**Sheryl Keiper,** Brunswick Forest

# A Frustrating MESS

"Hi. Is this AT and T? Are you a real person? Are you sure you're not a robot?"

"You're not? OK. You have a name? A real name? Are you kidding?"

"Your name is Johnny? How come I can't understand you?"

"Can you hear me now? Are you in India? You're not in India. But isn't AT and T a global network?"

"Yes, you're global. But you're not in India?"

"OK. Johnny. I can tell you how you can help me."

"What did you say? Thank you for choosing AT and T? But there are no other choices."

"What? You're asking me how my day is going?"

"Not so good. I have no Internet or TV. And I'm missing the Voice finale that I watched all season long."

"What? Am I a singer?" Yes, I'm actually a karaoke singer and a gospel choir singer."

"Isn't this call being monitored for quality assurance?"

"What? Am I willing to stay on the line for a few minutes after this conversation for a short survey?"

"I can't answer that right now since I have no TV or Internet."

"So, you want to get started. OK. You're asking me to check my modem to see if two green lights are on?"

"OK. I can do that."

"No, Johnny, one light is yellow."

"You want me to press the re-set button and hold it in for 10 seconds?"

"OK. I'm counting now very slowly to give myself a safety net here in case something happens in the meantime."

"What do you mean that I have no confidence in AT and T?"

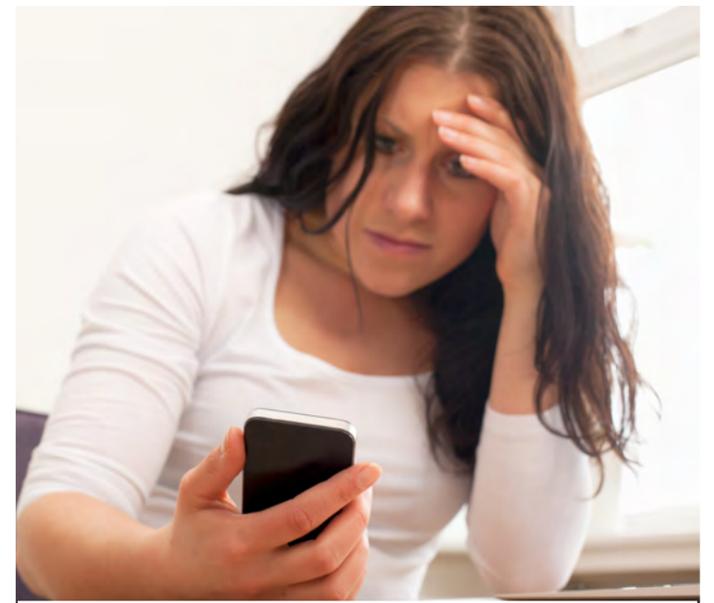
"That's right, Johnny. I pay \$206.00 a month for your service and it's random confidence."

"Of course I checked the batteries in my remote control. That I know how to do, Johnny."

That's old school technology."

"And Johnny, while we are waiting for the system to reboot, how about shaving at least \$25 off this monthly bill for causing me stress?"

"What do you mean that I don't know how to handle stress, Johnny? Yes, I know it's my



**Does this conversation sound at all familiar?**

reaction to stress that causes my elevated blood pressure."

"Yes, Johnny, I have very high blood pressure. Yes, I take my meds for it."

"Oops. System says it's rebooting! The globe had appeared in the corner of the TV."

"Johnny, you're asking me why am I stressed?"

"Well, for starters, I have no Internet or TV, two sick cats -- one with a definite cancer prognosis, a breakup with

my current boyfriend, and some recent bad medical health results, and I hurt constantly from arthritis. I wish I could smoke again but my bad lungs won't let me."

"You said you're very sorry to hear about all my misfortunes?"

"Why, thank you for listening, Johnny."

"Yes, the sound is coming on. Yes, I can switch the channels. Yes, the computer is back on."

"Do I want to participate in the customer service survey?"

"It depends if I get \$25.00 shaved off my current bill. That's not asking for much for my stress."

"You'll transfer me to the billing department?"

"Will I get a real person, Johnny?" From India?"

"Yes, goodbye and thank you. Please hold while we transfer you to the billing department."

Thank you for choosing AT and T."

"Wait, Johnny, wait, wait!"

"Welcome to AT and T. This call may be monitored for quality assurance."

"You're hold time is 25 minutes.... You can leave a call back number in the meantime...."

**You're asking me to check my modem to see if two green lights are on?**

## "PARTS IS PARTS"

**Dan Neizmik,** Leland

(It's amazing what they can do nowadays. You could end-up living forever without any of your original parts!)

**When part of me wears out,** they know just what to do,

And I know from the start, I'll be damn near good as new...

The operation went great and I got a new *left knee* today,

Now it matches the *right knee* they gave me just last May...

**Not long ago,** I got replacement *shoulders,*

New *elbows and wrists* and they pulled my *two back molars*...

Then, they examined my *back* and said: "let's insert some new *discs*",



And while we're at it, let's replace those *hips*...

**And how about** some new *valves* inside of that *old heart*,

And if he has good insurance, maybe some other fancy parts...

Then I told Doctor: "I feel like the Six Million Dollar Man",

He said: "Oh, you've seen the bill, that's just the first exam"

**When I went to the DMV,** at license renewal time,

They told me with my new parts, I'm much too young to drive...

But, I know I'll be appreciated, when I've reached my final day,

They're sure to recycle me, I'm way too good to throw away!

**Just taking** it one *step* at a time... considering *foot* replacements!!!

## How Social Media Platforms Impact College Students' Mental Well Being

Ana Johnson, Kennesaw State University



As Kennesaw State University junior Aaliyah Charles has thought back on her current semester, she believes the most challenging part of her academic year has been balancing schoolwork while maintaining interpersonal relationships.

According to a study by Anja Stevic, "In terms of the quality of close relationships, Valkenburg and Peter (2007) found that online communication has a positive effect on friendship quality through the increased time spent with friends because partners in online communication are mostly close ties."

Charles finds it essential to make meaningful public connections to further her career path but can also feel overly distracted by consuming too much media.

"I have been able to learn from many people and resources that benefit my academic knowledge. However, an overload of information can cause me stress," she said.

Within recent years, social media has skyrocketed in importance in people's lives. Whether they use it to stay in touch with friends and family, share accomplishments, or upload aesthetic photos, social media culture significantly impacts our world. It makes people acquire more knowledge than ever before.

According to Experian Simmons, "98% of college students use social media on a daily basis." This stems from the many internal and external difficulties that are accompanied when entering college. This can include new learning/teaching environments, pressure from studying, networking with other peers, time management, and budgeting.

A primary platform that has increased in wide popularity is **TikTok**. The short form video application presents a fast-paced algorithm that reels in its audience fairly quickly.

"I use **TikTok** as **Google**," said Diana Romero, a sophomore at Kennesaw State University. "If I have a question, I'll search for it on that app. At the

same time, it has negatively impacted me because my attention span has decreased."

Romero believes many other users like herself have expressed concerns that these platforms have been affecting their studies.

Other media platforms, such as **Instagram**, **Snapchat**, **Reddit**, **BeReal**, and **YouTube**, are extremely prominent in our culture, especially in the United States. Almost every part of our livelihoods have been transferred to online platforms, and it can be easy to become addicted and block out your current reality.

Mia Baker, a sophomore at Kennesaw State University, feels the influence in her social media use is most reflected in her academic well-being.

"I often forget to complete assignments based on spending excessive time on these platforms," she said.

One essential aspect to highlight is face-to-face communication versus electronic communication. These tools both display ways to build close-knit support and assistance to keep individuals interconnected.

However, with the pandemic, we all had difficulty socializing. Social media was at the forefront of our lives to get us together and persevere through difficult situations.

"I recognize how social media has also impacted the connection between these elements in my lifestyle," Baker said. "It has truly helped me keep up with my friends as it can give us something to talk about, and I can see if they have done anything new, as well with my family."



**Making meaningful connections is a positive aspect of social media, but it can also be a distraction.**

## Laughing in the Golden Years



### On Being a Caretaker

Maryann Nunnally, Porters Neck



Look up the word caretaker and find all kinds of articles on the duties, difficulties, rewards, and life changes of the caretaker. In 2022, I went from a wife and companion to a constant caretaker for my sweet husband. Early in 2022, we discovered that "Smiling David" had congestive heart failure, stage-four kidney failure, and the beginnings of mild dementia, and I immediately became the person in charge of doctor appointments, 15 different medicines, and three hospitalizations.

I knew when I married David 27 years ago that he would need some encouragement when it came to his career, and some "standing my ground," when it came to how we would spend our finances. But at no time did I consider that the time would come when I would be the administrator of medicines, appointments and the check-book. The man I married was a runner, a fanatical work-out freak (in my mind) and a financial wizard who could determine how much money we needed to save every month, so that we would never have an emergency that we weren't prepared to cover. In short, he was everything a wife and companion could wish for.

Then came 2022. I first noticed that David was coughing more than I had ever heard him do before. Then I began to see that he was short of breath when he finished his workout routine. When we found a great cardiologist team, we discovered that David's extremely low heartbeat and his a-fib had damaged his kidneys.

**Suddenly, our lives began to revolve around medical appointments and the life-saving medicines to follow.**

For weeks he seemed to plateau, and while he didn't get much better, he didn't get worse. He continued to work-out three times a week and to swim 30 laps on the other three days. I began to feel that life was pretty much returning to normal.

On Labor Day, 2022, we were hit by the biggest scare. Hurrying back from a long walk around our retirement campus, David sat down and had a silent but fatal heart attack. Fortunately, he had an implanted defibrillator which shocked him back to life. He did not realize that anything had happened, and when the doctor's office called to tell us that he had suffered a fatal attack, we could not believe it. The first bad news was that David could not drive for six months putting me into the driver's seat, something I do not relish but can do. That was

followed up by numerous appointments and tests, and finally a hospitalization where surgery found eight blockages. Four stents later, and David seems to have more energy and is more mentally alert as he gets better blood flow to his brain.

At one of the doctor's suggestions, we took a short but delightful cruise down the Ohio River. When we returned home, we decided to plan another trip on the Great Lakes when summer comes around. Do I delight in my job as a caretaker? No, at least not so much, but I want my "Smiling Dave" to continue to stay alive. When I told one of the doctors that that was my goal, he smiled at me and said that keeping David alive and able to be a part of our lives was his goal, also. If being David's caretaker means that he will continue to be my companion, I will relish my new role and take care of myself, so that I can continue to care for him in 2023 and as many new years as we are granted.

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## Around Town

## North Carolina Rice Festival Set for March

Jerry May, NC Rice Festival Board Member



The 2023 North Carolina Rice Festival (NCRF) is scheduled for Thursday-Saturday, March 2-4, with events in three locations: **March 2**, a "Reveal" party at the Navassa Community Center for citizens DNA tested to determine their ancestral roots; **March 3**, the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Gala at the

**Leland Cultural Arts Center**; and **March 4**, the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Festival at **Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson**.

The NCRF has become a significant event within the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, a National Heritage area established by the US Congress to recognize the unique culture of the Gullah Geechee people who have traditionally resided in the coastal areas from Jacksonville, FL to Jacksonville, NC.

The Rice Festival event is supported by the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, as well as the Town of Leland and the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

At the **Reveal Party**, participants will learn the details of their ancestry. NCRF arranged for DNA testing of citizens in partnership with African Ancestry, Inc., an organization which helps people of African descent trace their ancestral roots back to a specific present-day African country and tribe/ethnic group. The event will be open to the public.

The third Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage **Gala** will again be catered by renowned **Gullah Chef Keith Rhodes** and his Catch restaurant and feature traditional Gullah cuisine. Entertainment will be provided by Aunt Pearl Sue and her nationally recognized group, The Gullah Kinfolk (pictured). Organizers expect the Gala to sell out again. Tickets are \$115 and go on sale in early January, with more information available then on the NCRF website: [www.northcarolinaricefestival.org](http://www.northcarolinaricefestival.org).

The final event of the weekend will be the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage **Festival** from 10 am to 6 pm March 4 at Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson, a North Carolina Historic site, located off Rt. 133, between Leland and Southport along the Cape Fear River. The free Festival will feature a series of historic and cultural presentations, tours of the historic site, nearly seven hours of entertainment featuring both Gullah related and local performers, and a special area for youth featuring several Gullah storytellers and other activities.

**The selection of the site for the Festival is significant.**

During its 50-year existence in the 1700's, before being destroyed and abandoned in the Revolutionary War, Brunswick Town was surrounded by rice plantations. It was the northernmost port along the Cape Fear River accessible by ocean-going vessels, so all imports and exports to and from the Cape Fear region flowed through the

port. This included nearly 1,000 slaves brought from Africa, whose first step in America came at Brunswick Town.

### Festival Highlights

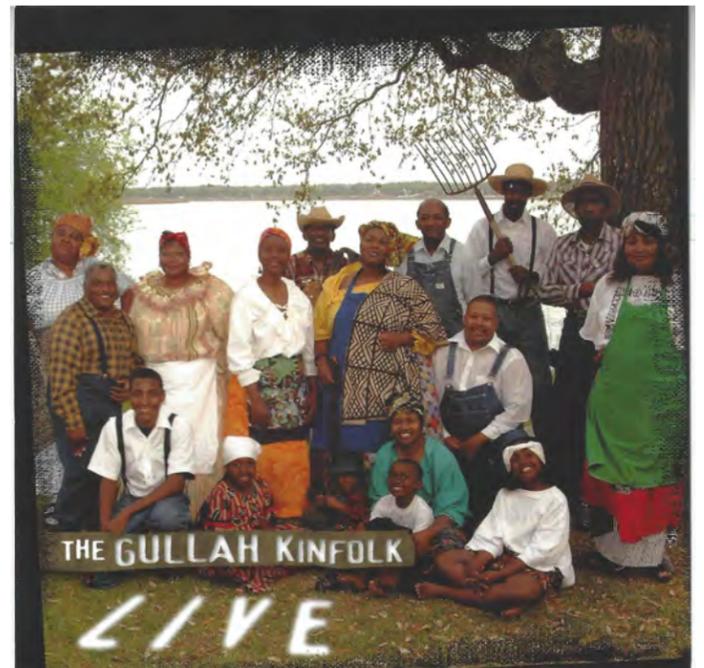
Featured presentations will include Sunn m'Cheaux, AKA **The Gullah Professor**, who teaches Gullah Language in the African Language

Program at Harvard University. His presentation will discuss the history of the Gullah language and some of its phrases and words which have a connection to words and phrases common today.

Another featured speaker will be **Herman (Tyrone) Hill**, an artist, musician and historical storyteller who is a direct descendant of Gullah Geechee people who worked on the rice plantations on Eagles Island. In his presentation, he will discuss the history of Eagles Island and share stories passed down by his ancestors related to working in the rice fields on the island.

The Festival entertainment will be presented on the Come Hear, NC Stage, a special project of the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources designed to promote North Carolina musicians. **The entertainment lineup will include NC-based performers Blues DeVille, Herman Hill, Imperial Eclipse Reggae Band, Ian Daviz, Blackwater R&B Band (headline group) and nationally recognized Gullah group, Aunt Pearl Sue and The Gullah Kinfolk.**

In addition, there will be a number of Gullah and other artisans exhibiting their crafts, art and products. Several food trucks will also be on site. For more information about the NCRF events and directions, visit: [www.northcarolinaricefestival.org](http://www.northcarolinaricefestival.org).



**Aunt Pearl Sue and The Gullah Kinfolk will be among the many entertainers at the Gullah Geechee Cultural Festival in Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson.**

## All Are Welcome

### Art Fun at LCAC

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**Save the Dates!**  
**March 2-4, 2023**

**March 2: "Ancestor Reveal" Event**  
In conjunction with AfricanAncestry.com, local residents will explore the significance of their ancestral origins connecting them to rice-growing regions of West Africa's fabled "Rice Coast"  
**Navassa Community Center**  
338 Main Street, Navassa NC 28451  
(6 mi. north of Leland via Village Road to S. Navassa Rd.)  
6pm – 8pm (Free and Open to the Public)

**March 3: Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Gala Dinner & VIP Reception**  
Featuring live "edutainment" by the renowned folklore group, Gullah Kinfolk, and a mouth-watering Gullah Geechee-inspired menu by award-winning Chef/Festival Culinarian Keith Rhodes, owner of Catch Restaurant in Wilmington  
**Leland Cultural Arts Center**  
1212 Magnolia Village Way, Leland NC 28451  
(5 mi. west of Wilmington, 71 mi. north of Myrtle Beach)  
6pm – 10pm (Tickets available January 2023)

**March 4: Indoor/Outdoor Festival Event**  
History and Cultural Presentations | Family Fun | Tours & Demonstrations | Live Entertainment | Children's Stage | Arts & Crafts | Gullah Food Vendors | Rice Dish Contest |  
**Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson Historic Site**  
8884 St. Philip's Road SE, Winnabow NC 28479  
(off NC-133, north of Southport/Sunny Point)  
10am – 6pm (Free and Open to the Public)

For more information, visit our website:  
[www.northcarolinaricefestival.org](http://www.northcarolinaricefestival.org)

## Let Us Now Praise (Not So) Famous Men

Paul Paolicelli, Grayson Park



I took a call in my Senate office from a New York producer on the Tom Snyder show who asked if my Senator was available for an interview. Any Press Secretary (no longer any such thing, now it's "Director of Communications") who is conscious knows that national exposure for your boss is the holy grail.

What did he want to talk about? I asked. The woman at the Merchant Marine Academy came the response. I told him I'd get back to him.

I immediately went next door to the Senator's office and told our Administrative Assistant (no longer any such thing, now it's "Chief of Staff") about the conversation. Neither of us had the faintest idea of what he was talking about. "Let's see the boss," he said, and we went into the inner sanctum.

The boss, Senator J. Glenn Beall, Jr. of Maryland, had a shocked expression on his face. "How in the world did Tom Snyder hear about this?" Hear about what, we asked in unison? The story came out: the Senator lived in Bethesda and was listed in the phone book. He'd gotten a call one night at home from the parents of a constituent whom he'd appointed to the academy. She'd been kicked out for having had a sexual liaison with a fellow male classmate. The parents believed their daughter was being treated unfairly since the young man involved was allowed to graduate, she'd been the only one punished.

Indignant, the Senator called the Commandant of the Academy that night and demanded an explanation for why his con-

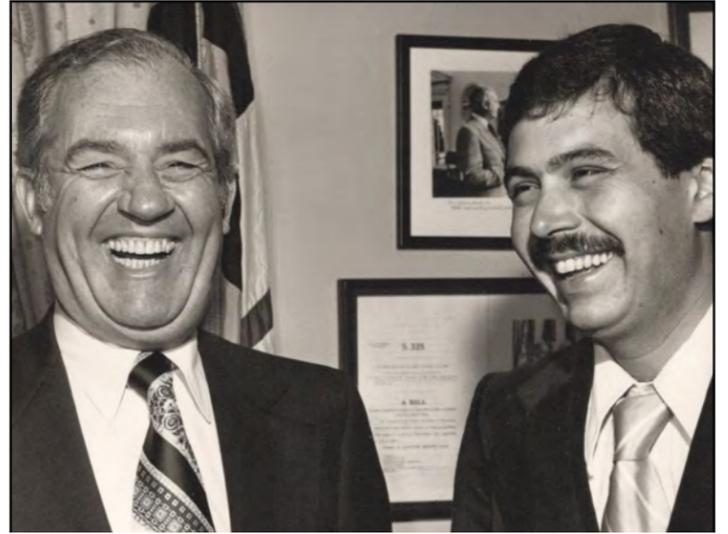
stituent had been unequally punished. The young woman was reinstated with other disciplinary action. Case closed as far as he was concerned.

"That a great story," I said. Snyder was the king of late-night TV at the time and a ratings leader in our biggest markets; Baltimore and the DC metro area. Wonderful publicity for the boss on an issue that he appeared to be the white knight.

"I would never discuss such a personal matter in public," said the Senator. "That was a purely private matter and there's no way I'm going to embarrass this young woman or her family on a national TV show." I tried pointing out that he was on the right side of this issue and that the publicity would be very helpful in our key areas, but he wouldn't hear of it.

My Senator was a patrician; his ancestors had come over in the 17th century and, among other things, had founded Georgetown in 1637. He came from a long line of public servants (his father had been a Congressman and Senator before him) and the idea of exploiting a constituent's sensitive situation was abhorrent to him. I had to turn the invite down.

I've often thought about this in contrast with today's group on Capitol Hill where exploitation can sometimes be the rule. I wonder how many Senators today would turn down national publicity on ethical grounds. For my Senator the personal issues of that family weren't fodder for political gain and he wouldn't even consider the notion, his response was firm and immediate. He knew his values. And I've come to admire him more and more as the years have gone by.....



Former Senator Patrick J. Glenn Beall, Jr. of Maryland (left) laughs it up with his press secretary.

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# The Teen Scene

Tomorrow's Voices Today



## Cedar Grove Middle School



### From the Person Who Knows - A Discussion With a Combat Veteran

Josh McGinty

8th Grade

So, in one of my past articles, I wrote about teen suicide. Since then, I talked with Mr. John Hacker, a Vietnam veteran, about this issue. Mr. Hacker is actively involved in veteran suicide programs as Commander of the John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 in Leland. I just want to talk about some of the things he told me.

The first thing he told me was that not many people know how traumatizing it is to go to war. To do some things that you are not proud of, which we all have similar stories, but I just want to clarify that you don't know what they did or what they saw



John Hacker

overseas. So, to go home with that is a pretty heavy burden to carry. Our veterans act like it isn't a big deal. They are soldiers and

they should be able to process their feelings. However, they don't talk about and then all of it eventually boils over and some commit suicide. It's sad, very sad.

The people that are defending our home are not getting enough love and support and we need to bring more awareness to the problem. When you call the suicide hotline, if you press the one key, it will bring you to a veteran helpline. Yes, that is a thing and not enough people know about it.

Now there is a big difference between teen and veteran suicide, but it all comes down to the fact that they need to feel like they can talk about it. So if you're reading this and you feel like the only way you can get out all of your stress and problems is to kill yourself, talk to someone. Please! There is always someone who will listen. Just remember, the last thing that he told me was. "Keep your feet on the ground, but reach for the stars."



### Canines

Henry Price  
8th Grade

If you don't have a canine, you should read this. You should buy a canine. Dogs provide unconditional love and snuggles. They

are goofy companions that can bring joy to your life. In some cases they can also help with mental and physical disorders as they are known as a service animal.

Some of them are good and some are bad. It really depends on how they are trained.

There are a lot of different kinds of dogs. There are mixed breeds and pure breeds. My favorite breed is a Doberman and German Shepherd.

It doesn't matter how many canines you have; it will cost a lot of money. You can expect to spend \$500 to \$2000 at any vet for their needs. Their needs are the same as a child would need, so it is a lot of responsibility.



You do not have to have more than one dog but here is a list of dogs; Border Collie, German Shepherd, Bulldog, Golden retriever, Labrador retriever, Rottweiler, Great Dane, Shih tzu, Dobermann and so many more. I would recommend you should get your dog microchipped due to the rising number of dog thefts.

Dogs have a good sense of humor and they are also protective. Some dogs are loyal and safe to be around while some are not. You should be careful what dogs you go around. Always be nice to your dog. If you trust your dog, your dog will trust you. If you respect your dog, your dog will respect you.

It is ok to be scared of other dogs. If you love dogs, you should get one. The best company for your child is a loving dog.

Just remember to love your dog as if it was your child.

### Poems by Liam Hardee, 7th Grade

#### Stress Relief

Stress, stress  
It's all a mess.  
Music is the best  
To help you rest.  
Go for a jog  
To help you unclog  
Start to draw, it's never wrong  
While it makes your heart strong  
Get some rest  
To feel your best  
This concludes my answer to stress  
So don't worry about any tests.

#### Run Like the Wind

Run like the wind  
And feel it slapping on your face.  
See that in the end  
You will find your own place.  
Don't give up, you will rock  
No matter how long is the road  
You're Sonic the Hedgehog  
The fastest creature in the world.

### Should Kids Have Cell Phones?

Ellie Triplett  
6th Grade



Most of the kids here at Cedar Grove Middle have phones. There are kids that are abusing the privilege to have one. There are a lot of kids that say that they have a phone. I recently took a survey asking if kids should have smartphones. These are the results: out of 39 people, 30.8% say *maybe*, out of 39 people 66.7% say *yes*, and a whopping 2.6% of people say *no*. Now this is not a lot of people voting, but the fact is, they

are all in sixth grade. I think until they are 13 or older, they should not have a phone. Almost 90% of the kids that were in the survey have a phone and that is a lot!

These are some of the things that the kids I surveyed said, "I feel kids 10 or older should have phones if they know how to work it properly and take care of it and don't take advantage of it."

There are a lot more but that was one that caught my eye. "I think kids might be able to have phones because it is good that they are able to talk to a parent/guardian if they aren't around, but there are also bad things that come with having a phone.

A kid could get addicted to the phone and not pay any attention to family or schoolwork. So I think if the parent/guardian thinks their child is responsible enough to have a phone, then they could have one." They have a solid point. I feel that the second one is more of what I would have said. There are things on the phone that are just not stoppable; like social media.

You may think that your child's phones are safe, but they are not. Many kids have been kidnapped by sharing their home address or telling people to meet them somewhere. These people may not be who they think they are; they may end up getting kidnapped by an older

man or woman. This may or may not be the person that they were talking to online. According to the Child Crime Prevention and Safety Center website, there are almost 840,000 children that are kidnapped each year.

This is a hard problem to fix, but just waiting until your kid is ready to have a phone could be a preventative measure that parents should consider.



## Bullying: A Look into the Abuse

**Kaleigh Bennett**

**7th Grade**

Stay away from the lockers." "Don't go outside for recess." "Don't partner up with them." "Don't stand up for yourself."

This is the thought process of someone bullied...well... It's a rough outline. In some cases, this outline can also be inaccurate. But according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, bullying is defined as the, "abuse or mistreatment by someone vulnerable by someone stronger or more powerful", and it must stop.

Bullying has several negative effects. "Bullying can cause feelings of rejection, exclusion, isolation, low self-esteem, and some individuals can develop depression and anxiety as a result. In some cases it can even develop into Acute Stress Disorder or Post Traumatic Stress

Disorder."(med.uth.edu) Studies have shown that being a victim of bullying can have long term effects such as substance abuse, poor social functioning, and sexual violence. Even seeing someone get bullied can have detrimental effects on an individual's mental health.

Being bullied can also affect your academic performance. Kids who are bullied are more likely to stay home from school and miss assignments. They will likely be unable to focus because they are too worried about being bullied. They may end up Stay Stay away from the lockers." "Don't go outside for recess." "Don't partner up with them." "Don't stand up for yourself."

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too worried about being bullied. They may end up getting in trouble at school for practicing the same behavior that they were taught by the bullies on other kids.

Cyberbullying is also very dangerous. Cyberbullying is the act of bullying someone over the internet. Cyberbullying has the same effects as regular bullying.

It is very important that we look for healthy relationships as well. A healthy relationship requires communication, trust, support, privacy, fairness, and honesty, among others. It is important not to put all your attention on a single person. If you are afraid of someone, the relationship is unhealthy and you should cut them off.

The memories of being bullied will linger for the rest of the victim's life. Quoting Maya Angelou, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." I think everyone should keep her quote in mind when they're interacting with others.

Thank you for reading.



# Brunswick County Early College

## Student Vs. Teacher: The Impact of School Lunch

**Teacher Perspective**

**Kathrine Weeks**



My grandmother was a cafeteria manager in an elementary school for 35 years. This was

back in the day when all the food was made from scratch. There was a crew of seven ladies and they all had different jobs in the kitchen. I don't remember all their names, but I do remember Norah was the baker. Her expertly crafted yeast rolls were soft and fluffy and were brushed with a little salted butter on the top. Norah's rolls were often alongside entrees like homemade chicken and dumplings or real Salisbury steak and mashed potatoes. In the early eighties, I would rush home from my last Friday college class at ECU just to get there in time to have "fish on Fridays" which always included Norah's homemade

cornbread and freshly made coleslaw. To this day, if I am ever in a school that is serving spaghetti, I have to have it! School lunch



spaghetti is still a comfort food for me even if it isn't like my Granny Pearl's.

One of the main reasons I carry such a passionate belief that child nutrition is indeed a powerful instructional strategy is from watching my grandmother go out into the cafeteria during lunch service. She made sure students were eating and had balanced meals. I feel quite certain that she never studied Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, but she knew that students learned better when their bellies were full. I rarely got in trouble with my grandmother: however, one day when I was in third grade I didn't have the thirty-five cents for school lunch, so I packed a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and I put Pepsi in my Thermos. Boy, she was visibly upset about the soda—and I never did that again!

I am so grateful that all of our students have access to free breakfast and lunch. Student brains have a lot of business to handle, so optimizing their nutrition is one less obstacle to learning!

**Student Perspective**

**Nathaniel Brown, 10th Grade**



There's no debate that students learn better when they aren't hungry. Here in Brunswick County, all

students have access to free lunch and breakfast every day. While I might not eat school lunch every day it is nice to know that if I want or need to, I can walk down to the cafeteria and enjoy whatever they may be serving on any given day.

Not only does our cafeteria staff serve many amazing meals to our students, they also prepare options for students with allergies like the Peanut Butter & Jelly Munchie Packs, which contain an Un crustable sandwich, a cheese stick, and some form of bagged item like chips. The cafeteria staff also provides special holiday meals for Thanksgiving and Christmas that usually include turkey, mashed potatoes, and all the fixins.

At Early College, students are also able to get free cafeteria breakfast through the second chance breakfast program in between first and second period. This program is available to students thanks to our Program Coordinator at ECHS, Kathrine Weeks, who wrote the teacher perspective on school

lunch this month.

I am very thankful that all the students of Brunswick County, including myself, have access to free lunch and breakfast everyday! This couldn't be possible without our amazing cafeteria staff!

### The Teen Scene

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**Liam Hardee**

**Josh McGinty**

**Henry Price**

**Ellie Triplett**

**Leland Middle:**

**Isabella Billings**

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**Elizabeth Ford**

**Michael Hawkins III**

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### BCECHS Refocuses on Their "Five R's"

Emmy Russ, 10th Grade



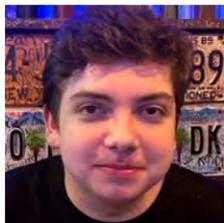
As the staff and students of Brunswick County Early College High School welcome the new year, they are also embracing renewed culture at their school. The

school is putting a bigger emphasis on their "Five Rs," which are respect, responsibility, relationships, relevance and rigor. To do this, they are dedicating every month of the upcoming semester to one of the five Rs.

Depending on the trait that is focused on each month, the school will incorporate activities into classes for students to work on. They are also considering bigger events, such as guest speakers or workshops for students. The goal of these activities is to help the students understand how each of the Five Rs will help them in their schooling and beyond.

### Martin Luther King Jr's Lasting Legacy

Kyler Terry, 10th Grade



Every year, Martin Luther King Jr. Day falls on the third Monday of January. Some people see this day as another day, while others see it as a day off from school or work. A common reason for this is that many people today did not grow up during the Civil Rights Movement, and they do not fully understand MLK's legacy.

For example, somebody from the Baby Boomer Generation will commonly feel more connected to MLK than somebody from Generation Z, due to generational gaps. However, MLK still has a large impact on today's society, and without him, equality in America would not be where it is today. MLK is best known for his adoption of nonviolent protest to achieve equality for all, especially Black Americans.

His most famous speech is the "I Have a Dream" speech that he delivered during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1964. King's main point for the "I Have a Dream" speech was to encourage

In addition to the concentration on the Five Rs, the school is going to go through more changes as 2023 approaches. Brunswick County Early College is a place where students' voices are listened to, and the school has been collecting feedback from students of all grade levels, which their student government goes over. The group then proposes solutions to the current problems in the school and collaborates with faculty and administration to find the best solutions, and will continue doing this throughout the upcoming semester.



people of all races, ethnicities, and genders to peacefully fight for freedom, justice, and equality in the U.S.

Today, although there have been many strides towards equality, many people today still share ideas, and some practices are still today. Although there have been violent protests around the US in recent years, many people have instead protested peacefully to achieve racial equality in the United States, which aligns with MLK's principles.



MLK once said, "I have also decided to stick with love, for I know that love is ultimately the only answer to mankind's problems." Today, there are still many people who resonate with this quote. It is important to not forget who MLK was as his ideas had a major impact on racial inequality in America.



### Where I'm From

Samantha Becker, 11th Grade



I am from cigarette smoke, from box dye and

hand-me-down clothes.

I am from dog wood trees.



(Bright white, glistening flowers, smelling bitter.)

I am from the small family

kitchen,

full of laughter

whose smell I still remember.

I am from the children running in the backyard,

from swingset hinges squeaking.

I am from the I know it best adults and the I know



everything kids.

I'm from family we no longer talk to, the ones I still remember.

I'm from vegan chili and squash, homemade potatoes and sweet tea.

From the chest full of old pictures, spilling with memories.

I am from those moments -

Pictures taken before we grew -

### Jobs Out of Community College with an Associate's Degree in Brunswick County

Kyler Terry, 10th Grade



At Brunswick County Early College High School, students can obtain a high school diploma and an associate's degree within

four to five years. Many students decide to continue their education and attend a university, but some students decide to go straight into the workforce. Students that decide to go straight into the workforce have many opportunities as there are numerous job openings in Brunswick County that require an associate's degree of some sort.

The first job in Brunswick County that requires an associate's degree is a Billing Technician in Bolivia, North Carolina. This job requires an associate's degree in accounting, and it requires one to two years of experience in customer service and billing, which many early college students have by the end of their high school and community college careers. A billing technician performs specialized clerical work including preparing water and sewer utility bills, maintaining customer accounts, and verifying and posting payments and charges to customer accounts for Public Utilities. The salary for this position is \$17.59-\$23.74/hour.

Another job in Brunswick County that requires an associate's degree is a Substitute Teacher for Brunswick County Schools. The job requires an associate's degree or at least 48 hours of college credits, and the completion of an effective teacher training course. This is a good opportunity for anyone who is interested in the education field and may want to become a teacher one day. A substitute teacher's job is to help students learn subject matter that is required for scheduled lessons, in the absence of a regular classroom teacher. The salary for this position is \$161/daily, which is about \$20-\$23/hour.



One more job that requires an associate's degree is a hair stylist at Great

Clips, which has numerous locations in Brunswick County. This job requires a cosmetology and/or barber license, which can be obtained by passing the State Board of Cosmetic Arts examination, which BCC graduates can take shortly after completing their associate's degree. Great Clips provides a good opportunity for workers to advance their careers, and they allow employees flexible scheduling. The salary for this position is approximately \$21/hour.

### Catching Up

Arwen Lyonesse, 11th Grade



We often only push for change

on New Year's day

We find the excuse to better ourselves

In the idea of a different calendar day

"I'm going to do it this year," she says.

But when the end of each year comes near

She's back where she first sat

Watching the ball drop- her eyes to her lap

She failed again, it's clear

"I'm going to do it this year," she says.

And I wait to see if one day she sees

Her growth will never outrun

Society's expanding expectations of what she needs done

### Brenda Hughes Visits BCECHS

Gerald Decker



Author, producer and news reporter Brenda Hughes addressed

the journalism class at BCECHS. Ms. Hughes is the third outside professional to visit ECHS as part of our Writing Academy program. Other speakers include Paul Paolicelli, an author and former NBC news director, and Victor Fernandez, a former sports reporter and podcaster.

We continue to work with interested schools to bring the real world to the classroom to help prepare students for their future.



After the first few weeks, I had gone to the local pet shelters to see if any of them were alive... Most were dead.

I expected that. I expected most, if not all, of them to be dead. So finding a cat just barely clinging to life was a surprise.

But I hadn't cared. I nursed the cat back to health with no experience. It was a miracle to me and the cat, Bonita, that they survived.

Clang

The sound echoed throughout the room as I dropped the stuff I was previously holding.

There... right there was a brunette girl wearing a black and white checkered flannel with light blue bell bottoms I believe. The deep blueish-green color of her eyes only became clearer as she broke down.

I could only watch as she sobbed into her hands and she fell to her knees. It was impossible for me to understand her thoughts as ugly sobs emanated from her mouth.

After what seemed like an hour (like 10 minutes), they started to calm down... somewhat.

"Who... whoareyou?"

### Desiderium

Rumi Bennett, 10th Grade



I have no idea how it happened... it just did.

Five years ago, I was lying on my bed, my dog, Taco, laying

beside me. The curtains covering the window nearby had been separated, allowing a view of the city below.

The streets were just beginning to fill with people and their pets as the sun rose. It seemed everyone was making as much noise as possible.

It would be like this for a few more seconds before suddenly... it all went quiet. Of course, if you didn't factor in the animals' barking and meowing.

A moment later, I noticed that there wasn't any sound. I had gotten up, causing Taco to lift his head upon noticing me do so.

Tiptoeing towards the window, I slowly peeked outside... empty.

I remember walking outside, just... wandering around, looking for someone, anyone.

But I never found anyone.

I had spent 3 years wandering the city.

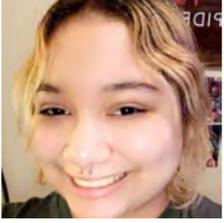


# South Brunswick High School



## Perspective of a Real World Slytherin

Niyah Messer, 12th Grade



What is a Slytherin? Slytherins are known as the villains of the stories. Traits from a Slytherin are ambitious, cunning, and are strong leaders. They are determined to do whatever it takes to get what they want no matter who it hurts. Slytherins are described as vile and misunderstood.

Yes, most Slytherins are villains but others are forced and scared. The four houses of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry all have their traits and characteristics, all are not the same. Slytherin is the house no one wants to be in, even in the real world.

In my opinion most Slytherins and myself are

not evil but they are actually very nice. They can be self-driven and do not require the help of others. The Slytherin house symbol is a snake while the colors are silver and green. All houses are appreciated



**Slytherin House Symbol** except Slytherin because all the villains in the stories are mostly Slytherins or have no house at all.

People stereotype Slytherins as mean, selfish, and stuck up because of how a few in the house act when in reality they are not, the stereotype is very dumb. Being sorted into Slytherin you are automatically assumed as evil and have no chance to prove yourself.

## The Undead

Ashley Subach, 11th Grade



i watched as you stood there exhaustion buried deep in your eyes skin and bones so frail, as if a spoon could puncture i thought to myself "if only i'd been there for her" "if only i listened better" "if only i checked in on her sooner" "if only"

"if only" "if only"... but now, as friends and family congratulate your appearance, i looked at the corpse of this girl in front of me a small smile forming on her lips how could they not see that they were pushing her deep into the ground into a shallow grave

## Knock on Wood

Kennedy Stone, 12th Grade



In a world of lies and dishonest To hear a truth never To speak honest throughout I hear it; I knock Three times to assure it The knocks mean nothing to the truth

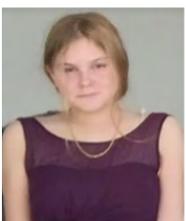
For the truth is set in stone Though faith will trust it For it is easier to avoid than accept it I knock on wood Three more times.



# Leland Middle School

## My Prince Charming

Isabella Billings  
8th Grade



When I was younger, I always dreamed of having a strong, handsome man coming to save me from danger, whom I would call my prince charming. I was naive then.

When I'd get a cut on my knee, my big brother was my prince charming. But not my true love.

When I need a shoulder to cry on, my best friend is there.

But he's not the magical fairy dust that will wisp me away to another world.

When I missed the school bus, my stepdad would drive me to school.

But he wasn't my pumpkin-turned-carriage.

Though, I was still grateful for all of this.

The reason I feel I was "naive" was because I realized: "Prince Charming" isn't always a prince. When I entered college, I was around 24 years old.

I met this girl...Sweetest I've ever met; God bless her soul. We were best friends instantly. But one thing I couldn't get off my mind was how beautiful she was.

Her hair is long and dark. Her eyes are a dark green color. Her skin is soft and dark, flawless.

I don't know if it was the knots she put in my stomach when I saw her.

Or the way I felt my heart in my throat when she spoke.

But I knew one thing was for sure: I loved her.

That was the year I realized that prince charming could be a woman. When we were graduating, I decided it was time to tell her how I felt.

We're both 37 years old today, and I plan to propose tomorrow. She's still as kind and beautiful as she was back then.

And the best part is:

When I get hurt, she's there to help me. She's my true love's kiss.

When I need a shoulder to cry on, she's there to help me. She's the magical fairy dust that'll wisp me away.

When I need a ride, she's there.

I don't need a carriage.

She made my life fit for royalty with nothing but her love.

## My Dove Forever

Malia Flaverney  
6th Grade



You are my love and you will be forever.

I found you when you didn't have any feathers & wings.

So, I helped you, we did everything together.

We were always there for each other when needed.

I was there for you and you were there for me.

You were there for every holiday & birthday.

But something happened to you, my Dove.

You weren't as happy and bubbly as before.

You were always tired and out of energy.

I woke up and went to say hello and give you breakfast.

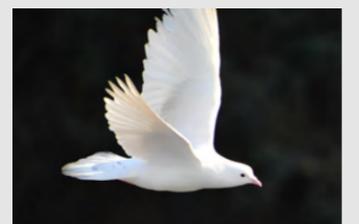
When I found you, I realized... that you.

Had finally grown your wings.

Fly My Dove; you will always be My Dove forever.

See you in another life.

Goodbye, My Dove.



**Monster of Madness**

**Michael Hawkins, III**  
8th Grade



The people who care more about what other people

Maybe it's me; maybe it's just my imagination.

Could it be I have slipped into the hole where people lose their minds

Is it voices I hear in the beyond, a growl, a grunt, a whisper inching me towards madness

or just you whispering behind my back

This stillness in the air, and then a shiver up my spine, an unknown beast staring over me

without making itself known

Perhaps it's the people who look at me differently

look like than themselves

The people who look into the mirror and recognize a person like any other

But when they judge other people that cast shadows on them, a monster

Create by selfish and unruly thoughts and actions

Whispering in your ear fantasies that are false promises

Until it drives you and the person who creates it mad

And this may not be shown but the

corruption is strong and can swarm you if not appeased

But this can be greater still a challenge to face, a monster to fight

One compelling, kind, selfless thought can act as the barrier between you and total madness

May it be yours or others who wish you well

But know this a predator who is quiet and waits is far more deadly

Than one who acts carelessly and makes themselves known

Know this because madness, anger, and corruption can come from anywhere

And can hurt even the best of people



**Your Slowing Heartbeat**

**Christian White**  
6th Grade



I see your face in the sky.

Please just come back one more time.

Love only comes and goes.

My love for you just couldn't show.

We miss you; we miss you and so much more.

You said you would be here forever; you swore.

You kneeled to the floor and prayed to God.

"My time is up; my life is a fraud."

He took your soul peacefully at night.

And without a fright, you said, "Alright."

Your hand turned cold, too cold to hold.

Your funeral will be filled, filled with people you love.

Please come back and return as a dove.

When we look at the stars, we think of you.

We love you; we miss you; I hope you knew.

You didn't fear death; you had no fear at all.

You thought about life with no tears to bawl.

You knew it was time to go, but the colors inside you still showed.

I wish I could've seen you before you died.

It felt like getting stabbed in the gut as I cried.

If God never took you, you would still be here.

I'm glad he did, but my love for you never disappeared.



**Raven**  
**Elizabeth Ford**  
8th Grade



Ravens are beautiful, just like love  
Ravens symbolize evil, and love can be bad  
Ravens are as black as night, and people fall in love under the stars  
Ravens can fly away, like love can disappear  
Ravens can die, just like people you love  
Ravens have wings, like the angel you fell in love with  
Ravens can fall, like people going through hard times  
Ravens can soar, like people going through good times  
Take care of your raven, you never know when it will fly away.

**Monsters**

**Bailey Patrick, 8th Grade Leland Middle School**



I always thought that monsters live under the bed or in a dark closet. But



that is not true, The real monsters that haunt you live in your head. They awaken when you fall in despair; when you look in the mirror and see yourself in a different way.

Monsters are real; they just hide in different places, but always remember that monsters live in your head not under your bed.



**Myrtle Grove Middle School**

These poems were created in an exercise where we looked at a poem written by Todd Alcott called "Television" where the TV is the speaker in the poem. Students were then asked to choose their own inanimate object and write a poem from its perspective.

**Shoe**

**Harrison Lacy, 6th grade**



Take me, take me, take me, take me me!  
Take. Me. Wear me down, travel around, go anywhere you want.  
Don't bring your flip-flops, no! Just take me with you!  
Take me, take me, take me! I may have a hole and I may be old, but please,  
Run me up and down the street. Don't leave me.  
We can play in mud, we can go to school - Just...take me!  
You can go anywhere as long as you're with me!

**Clouds**

**Maggie Maus, 6th grade**



What am I? Am I a dragon?  
high up in the sky, Wait, no I changed.  
what am I? Am I an ice cream cone?  
bright white during the day, Wait, no, I changed again.  
pink and orange at sunset, Am I an angel with beautiful wings?  
what am I? You decide what I am,  
soft as cotton candy, Use your imagination and  
slow and gentle, make me something great.  
what am I? lay on your back and watch me  
change shapes, what am I?

**Prejudging on Looks**

**Jaxon Beckford, 6th grade**



Our story starts off with a dirty little girl sitting on the corner of the road in the pouring rain. Three people walk up to her. Two of them are a jolly-looking couple; the third person is in a black robe. All three offer her a hand and the little girl goes with the jolly couple. But little did the couple and little girl know that the cloaked black figure was following them. When the couple and the girl got home, they dried the girl off and read her a book. Then they put her to bed. As the girl started to fall asleep, the couple started to turn into demons. Right when the girl was about to be gobbled up, the black-cloaked figure snatched her up and ran away with her. This just goes to show you shouldn't always judge on how someone looks.



**Bookbag**

**Anthony Dyer-Brumm, 6th grade**

Put me on. Put me on. Put me on. take me off.  
Don't throw me! I sit in the house.  
Put me on. I sit in your locker all day.  
Keep me on, don't I'm always on the  
move from place to place.  
Put me down and there's so many things inside.  
Books, pencils, erasers, clue sticks, and more.  
Put me on,  
And stop moving!



# What Students Are Saying About *Teen Scene*

Gerald Decker, Magnolia Greens



Every now and then, businesses will do a survey to find out how they are doing. After receiving several really nice comments from our Cape Fear readers and writers recently, we thought we should find out what the teens thought about our efforts.



A scene from last year's Teen Scene Inc. Writers' Award Banquet at the Leland Cultural Arts Center.

Medicine, screenwriting, and journalism are just a few of the career choices these students are considering for the future. But for today, they all say they are writing with more confidence. Writing for *Teen Scene* has made them better listeners, better students and better grades. They are 'Tomorrow's Voices Today.'

This is a synopsis of the responses we got. We also heard from a surprisingly large number that they feel we should do more group writing and interaction with other schools. We are working on that.

The articles from the teens this year have improved significantly. Many of these writers are in their second year of our program with these schools.

Most of the credit goes to the hard work of teachers like Ms. **Askue** (ECHS), Ms. **Zell** (CGMS), Ms. **Pender** (LMS), and Ms. **Greeno** (SBHS).

"Writing for *The Teen Scene*, "...helped me become a more confident writer. I am a new writer with how much they helped me."  
--**Malia Flaverney**, 6th grade, LMS

"I feel like this journalism program has made me more confident in my own writing, better at writing and maybe even a better student."  
--**Eileen Hartman**, 6th grade, LMS

"I am interested in being a screenwriter. This journalism program has done wonders for my confidence in my writing..." "I am seriously considering majoring in journalism ..."  
--**Ashley Subach** 11th grade, SBHS

"I want to use this as some experience for my music career so I can write lyrics."  
--**Josh McGinty**, 8th grade, CGMS

"It's made me a better writer and a better listener."  
--**Baily Patrick**, 8th grade, LMS

"It has given me confidence and I am writing more now than ever. It gives me opportunities to show my work to a larger audience."  
--**Atreyu Simpson**, 7th grade, LMS

"I feel like I am a better writer and person." "I would like to be a writer one day and this program has put me in the right direction."  
--**Elizabeth Ford**, 8th grade, LMS

"This journalism program really has helped me get myself out there, and be more confident with my writing."  
--**Lily Bradley**, 8th grade, LMS

"The journalism program has helped me be more consistent on my writing and I now have multiple opportunities to get published. I do think I have gotten better in writing because of how much I am writing now." -  
--**Ashlynn Claire Morton**, 7th grade, LMS

"This program has done a lot for me! It's made me feel good about my writing and helps me build my confidence. I am a better and more confident student and writer."  
--**Christian White**, 6th grade, LMS

"...I have become a better writer...because I now have a positive way of sharing my imagination and stories with others. I never really like talking out loud in crowds but since I have joined the Teen Scene/Cape Fear Voices, I have written over 10 short stories and 4 actual stories about adventure and action."  
--**Michael Hawkins, III**, 8th grade, LMS

"Journalism has made me a better writer and has made me more confident in how I write. I think being better at writing has made it easier to do assignments as well as helped me to give better answers and describe things better."  
--**Kennedy Stone**, 12th grade, SBHS

"The *Cape Fear Voices/Teen Scene* has granted me the experience of publishing my work, which I treasure very much. I became a much more confident person as I felt heard—that I could use my voice to raise awareness and also give people some sort of entertainment. I think it also allowed me to become introspective, allowing me to explore my own thoughts and organize them into words better."  
--**Arabella Ong**, 12th grade BC ECHS

## Military News

### PACT Act Caution

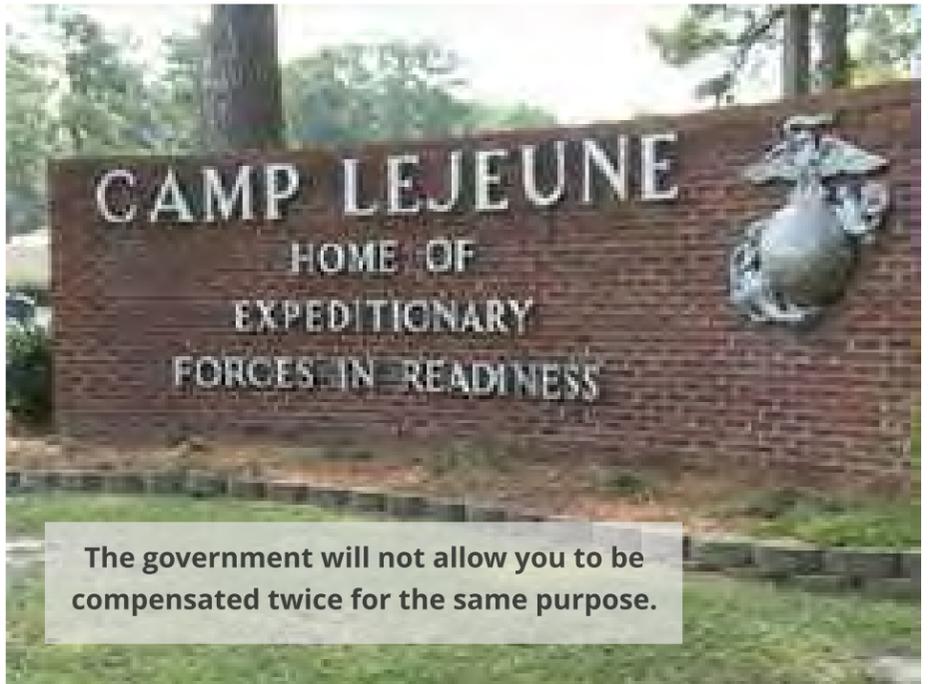
Gary Crowden, Chairman, Brunswick County Veterans' Coalition

"The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics" (PACT) Act is one of the largest pieces of veteran legislation ever. Undoubtedly, you have seen advertisements on TV from legal teams soliciting potential clients to file a lawsuit to collect compensation.

The PACT Act does allow veterans and their dependents to sue the government for Camp Lejeune's toxic exposure. However, if veterans participate in a Camp Lejeune lawsuit and receive compensation, the Justice Department will consult with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to "offset" any lawsuit

compensation a veteran has already received (or is receiving) from the VA for the same disabilities.

The government will not allow you to be compensated twice for the same purpose. So, any lawyer that tells you monies received from the lawsuit will not affect your VA disability compensation, it is just plan wrong. So, be very careful if you wish to pursue the lawsuit.



#### Say "Thank You"

#### CFV/TS Distribution in Grocery Stores

When you go to **Lowes Foods** in Brunswick Forest or in Monkey Junction, please tell the managers there how much you appreciate them for allowing us to distribute our papers at their store. **Piggly Wiggly** is another great location for us, as is Leland **WalMart**.





## “There are Roses”

Dan Neizmik, Leland

(A Rose is a symbol of Love, Promise, Hope and New Beginnings)...

It's easy to get caught up, in the troubles of our time,  
And they only seem to get worse, the hard that we try,  
I think we need to slow down, and look for Roses in our lives,  
You can find them in the children, in an old friend, or a good time.  
Let the Roses make you happy, make you sit-up and take notice,  
That this world isn't really so bad, if we only take the time...  
to smell the Roses.

**Roses aren't just flowers**, they're all the good things in your life,  
They are there for you, to see you through, and help you to get by,

A Rose can be someone you know, or the things you like to do,  
And you'll never be alone, if you keep your Roses close to you.

So, if the Roses make you happy, then, I hope you'll pay it forward,

We can make this world a better place, if we only take the time...  
to smell the Roses.

I wish I had a garden, or a great big flower store,

I'd give everyone a Rose, and I'd then tell them what it's for,

Let the Roses end our problems, end the anger and the hate,

If we could all learn to get along, the world would be a better place.

And everybody would be happy, no more troubles, no more woes,

I believe that we could save this world, if we only take the time...  
to smell the Roses.

Did you see the sunshine?



## An Adventure to New Reality



Karen Phillips Smith, Wilmington

As a young woman I was given the opportunity to live and work in Thailand. Southeast Asia is an alluring land of welcoming people speaking over a thousand languages. The landscape is intermingled with mountain ranges, beaches, islands, bays and inlets. I spent any time that I had away from work exploring this magical and intriguing place.

The rivers are a thriving source for commerce, where the Khlongs and other tributaries serve as a floating market place for vendors selling their wares to the many residents living in small homes built on stilts along the river. These rivers and tributaries in Southeast Asia provide a daily resource to its people for bathing,

transportation as well as a food source. You will also pass the many Buddhist temples with their statues of Buddha standing guard outside.

Southeast Asian cuisine comes from multicultural roots that bare similarities that include the liberal use of spices, herbs and other seasonings. Delicious foods can be found in the many and varied restaurants and street vendors with offerings to include spring rolls, curry, fried spiders, glutinous rice, noodles, skewered meats and coconut ice cream. I lived in a gated compound that came with a maid and a guard. It also came with geckos and over-sized lizards

that were a desired source of food for the guard. I also learned that hanging laundry outside for drying, especially lingerie, was desirable contraband.

Every morning as I waited for a taxi or a bhat bus to travel to work, my senses were bombarded by the sights and sounds of the morning rush hour. Water buffalo on their way to the rice fields, Tuck Tucks motoring along with their customers on board and motor bikes weaving in and out of traffic with families of 3 or 4 holding on tightly to one another.

I have been privileged to have traveled to many countries in my lifetime and experienced a multiplicity of languages, cultures and people. The sights, sounds and welcoming spirit of the people of Southeast Asia will remain with me always.

## Snow on Snow

Alan Sturrock, Wilmington



each other, we inevitably began hitting our targets--splat, splatter and splatted, again and again and again.

As the snowball fight wore on, there was less and less noise, such was the laser focus of the antagonists. Snowball volleys were accompanied by the occasional grunt or thud [as the exertion landed the youngster on his or her arse]. Sometimes, an adult would wander into the street on their way home from work, stop and watch, and smile about bygone days. We were working ourselves up into a real lather, when the unthinkable happened.

**To this day, no one admits to throwing that ice-packed snowball—it's a secret that will accompany the 'culprit' to the grave.**

But throw it, he or she did. Heading straight for our Wilma Sweeney, in the middle of the first row. And, fortunately for her, Nasty Roche was lined up right next to her on her left-hand side. Now, whether he divined that this was a dangerous snow missile or not or whether he was just indulging in a bit of bravado, he leapt across the front of Wilma's face and took the full brunt of that ice-packed snowball in his left hand.

He immediately buckled from the blow and fell to the ground, holding the injured hand.

We all stopped on our side and looked. The Raglan Street side also stopped. And waited. Then he emitted a blood-curdling yell and rolled over several times. We looked at each other, then at Wilma. Somehow, she realized from the blood-stained snow next to Nasty's hand what her face had just been spared.

The next 20 minutes were a blur. The snowball fight ceased to exist. Someone's mother [from the Raglan Street group] was a nurse and she was soon on the scene, tending to Nasty. The combatants--for the most part--just faded away into the dusting snow night, leaving a handful of Sarsfield 'diehards' keeping vigil on our wounded hero.

Turned out the cut was not as nasty as it looked, but in our minds, it took on the dimensions of a 'gash.' But, like that *First & Greatest Sledding Race* of the Century, it had been an epic night, just one of many that no one could have forecasted...

\*\* from Christina Rossetti's poem, in *The Bleak Mid-Winter*

Growing up back then, there were no weather forecasters.

Plenty of weather, mostly blowing in from the capricious Atlantic Ocean, but no nightly forecasters predicting dire weather events for the next day...or the following day. No predictions of a dusting snow, a nuisance snow or...drum roll... a blizzard snow. Snow just happened, much to our surprise and delight.

And on islands washed by the Gulf Stream, snow was a delightful inevitability. So, since the weather gods decided to have some fun with our kailyard, we in turn organized some outdoor fun of our own: making slides, sledding, snow footie, and snowball fights. Snowball fights were mostly of the micro variety--small groups of boys and girls hurling fast-assembled snow missiles at each other. Occasionally, someone would organize a larger event where boys and girls took sides.

Timing was everything. If memory serves, once upon a mid-December, it started snowing. 'Snow was falling, snow on snow'\*\* and it snowed seriously all day until teatime, when it morphed into a light dusting which lasted for hours. That's when Nasty stepped in and using our street 'fiery cross' to spread the news, he decided that there was to be the mother of all snowball fights--Raglan Street versus Lord Sarsfield Street [Nasty's abode]. Seven pm sharpish. Parents were not told about the event at peril of 'excommunication' from the brotherhood.

A soft moonlight night added an ethereal atmosphere to the light, almost imperceptible dusting that was gently streaming from the sky. And, slowly, seven o' clock had not gone to bed long before groups of boys and girls started congregating at either end of one quiet, almost deserted Raglan Street.

The mother of all snowball fights began slowly and gradually.

Advance youngsters from each side began charging at the other and firing the first snowball volleys. Pretty soon --and I should add, spontaneously--that changed into serried ranks of youngsters joining battle. The front row would run and throw, then drop back to make some more snowball missiles. They would be replaced by a second row, firing off their snowballs, always edging closer to the 'enemy.' At one point, there were three serried ranks, and as we edged closer to

# Love Remains

Charles Bins, Brunswick Forest



1.1.2063

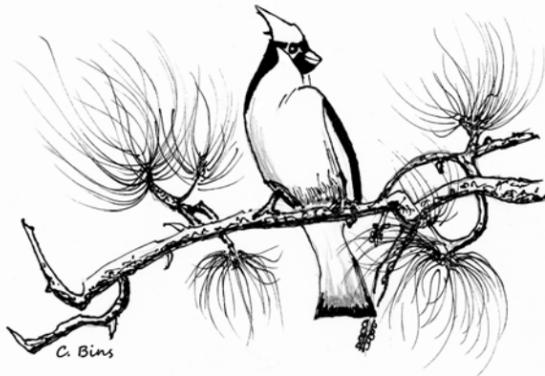
Through a picture window, Ted Beacham focuses on a pine. A cardinal clings to a branch for a moment and flies away. His wife, Freida, sweeps hair from his eyes and holds a spoonful of

applesauce to his lips. What message could he crystallize to capture the essence of what it was to be alive with her?

His thoughts rolled back to Christmas 2023. Family was there for him, but he could not hold himself together and disappeared into the basement. He'd been despondent for over a year, and the memories wracked his dreams. He longed to see Juliet and their son, Jameson, again. In '21, they had been at the mall on Black Friday. He stopped in a store while Juliet took Jameson to Macy's. They were to meet at the food court at noon, but he was too late.

The media kept saying it was lucky a bystander intervened and there were only three killed. That enraged Ted every time. Worse, a few days later, the media raced to the next story. In the following months (and years), similar tragedies, some far worse, flashed across screens and into unconsciousness. Ted writhed in a well of blood and anguish so deep light could not escape.

The sun breaks through the window, and



another male cardinal alights on the branch. Ted recalls a time before Jameson: Juliet caressed his face; salt air filled his nostrils. They raced into the surf and frolicked for hours. Then a wave sweeps it all away, ripped skin and jagged wounds that bleed and won't stop.

Back in the spring of 2024, Ted ventured to a nearby cafe. He looked up from his coffee, and there she was. A glance created a pinpoint of light. Freida strolled over in a sunbeam, and he invited her to sit down. Over the next year, she taught him to feel again, to see and touch in new dimensions. They had spent 39 years together, the happiest of his life. Her love humbled him.

It would have been impossible to imagine so long ago, engulfed in that maelstrom of despair, that he could ever break free. He met Freida's eyes now and swallowed, feeling a tear roll down his cheek. The stroke had taken his ability to speak and write, yet he desperately wanted to share what he now knew with certainty. Perhaps, he thought, she already did.



- Larry Walbourne, Jan. 2
- David Sink, Jr., Jan. 4
- Dimitry Lis, Jan. 5
- Liz Hammond, Jan. 12
- Jeanne Ward, Jan. 15
- Martha Hamilton, Jan. 17
- Allen Starr, Jan. 17
- Roc Decker, Jan. 18
- Maura Walbourne, Jan. 21
- Gary Hurnblad, Jan. 22
- Gina D. Good, Jan. 30
- Tammy Lanier, Jan. 30

## Media Professionals Lend a Helping Hand

Teen Scene, Inc would like to thank Brenda Hughes, Victor Fernandez, and Paul Paolicelli for participating with Teen Scene's Writing Academy programs in 2022. Each of these media professionals joined us in the classrooms to give students a first hand account of journalism in the real world.



Brenda Hughes



Victor Fernandes



Paul Paolicelli

### THANK YOU TO EVERYONE

We are very thankful for our donors and grantors. We especially want to thank Brunswick Arts Council and First Bank. There were several donors who supported us at unexpected levels but I believe they would want to remain anonymous. We are grateful for their generosity. And very importantly, thanks to Jan Morgan-Swegle and Chuck Bins for all they do to make this monthly publication appear in the stores each month.



**BRUNSWICK**  
ARTS COUNCIL

*Celebrate, Cultivate, Community Outreach*

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

We are a community nonprofit working in partnership with NC Arts Council, Brunswick County, Park & Recreation and other businesses and artists to help provide funding for programming, plays, concerts, shows, workshops, festivals, school events and other art activities. Operating "without walls", we hold our own activities in different spaces through the county.



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Meetings at Blossoms Restaurant  
2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm. Dinner (optional ) at 5:30