

The Luck of the Irish

Nancy Bryans, Brunswick Forest



Every year on St. Patrick's Day when I was a child, my mother served shamrock-shaped biscuits at breakfast and shamrock-shaped green-sprinkled sugar cookies for dinner. Green paper cutout shamrocks decorated our table centerpiece.

Outsiders might have guessed we were of Irish descent. My mother claimed her family was 100 percent English. My father and grandfather did not know of any Irish family members and neither did my grandmother who proudly boasted of her Scottish ancestors. Despite having no known Irish roots, our family continued to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

Time tumbled off the calendar and years later I planned a trip to Scotland and Ireland. With accommodation arrangements secured in advance, my husband and I boarded an airplane to meet my Scottish relatives and to search for his Irish ancestors. Our arrival in Glasgow, Scotland, presented a difficulty; driving on the "wrong" side of the road.



Don't pinch me

I'm wearing Green



...See "Luck of the Irish" P3

The Community Engagement Team

Jan Morgan-Swegle, Editor, Cape Fear Voices



A few weeks ago, I was coming home from work—a distance of about a mile and a half. I pulled onto I-74 and, in less than a minute, there were blue flashing lights behind me.

I pulled off of the highway and rolled down my window, when a young police officer said to me, "Hello there, where are you going in such a hurry?"

"I'm going home," I answered. "And where are you coming from?" was the next question. "I work at a Senior Living facility just a little past from where we are now," I confessed.

He had a kind face—the face of a new father or someone who takes care of people. He smiled as he asked for my drivers license and told me he would be right back. True to his word, he was back in a few minutes, still smiling.

He handed me a piece of paper and I expected him to explain my ticket and ask for my signature—but he didn't. He handed me my license and said, "You need to slow down a little and be safe out here." And then he said. "This is just a warning, not a ticket. Drive carefully and have a nice evening." He gave me a quick salute and he was gone. I looked at my warning from "Trooper R. McDermott," and thought, "What a nice man."

...See "Community Engagement" P3

Mentoring: Bringing the Best out of Others

Mari-Lou Wong-Chong, Wilmington



Mari-Lou Wong-Chong is chair of the Brunswick County Intercultural Festival and a chartered member of the Brunswick County Toastmasters Club now in its 12th year.

Do you know people who have gone further than they thought they could because someone else thought they could?

How can we bring the Best out of ourselves and others? Mentoring!

We can grow by being a Mentee, and can help others grow by being a Mentor.

In order for the mentee/mentor relationship to be successful, they should fit like a jigsaw puzzle. It is a symbiotic relationship.

A mentor offers encouragement and guidance while he or she works to accomplish goals. A mentor has the opportunity to share experience, wisdom, and knowledge while a mentee gains a foundation for building skills and meeting goals. Mentoring can be a rewarding experience for both the mentor and the mentee.

In addition to being prepared and committed, the mentor-mentee relationship must be built upon certain factors including: **Trust and respect**; open and honest communication, flexibility and understanding of other perspectives.

For success in mentoring, there should be a reciprocal relationship with open communication; guidance and support.

Mentees need supportive feedback. They want mentors who are honest but not harsh, always encouraging, approachable and non-judgmental.

Mentor's feedback to mentee could be positive or negative. Mentors need to provide critical constructive feedback, constructive criticism that is proactive and honest, as well as praise and critique. The mentor should be accessible and available for questions and there should be frequent interactions. In return, the mentee should be able to admit that he or she doesn't understand.

Throughout my journey as a community service volunteer, I have had several opportunities as a mentee, a mentor, and both. Let me share one of several circumstances.

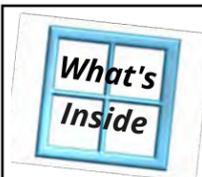
Mentee: I suffer from Panic and Anxiety. One of my greatest fears is public speaking. I started my Toastmaster journey from the bottom of the barrel. My first mentor, Chick Cezar, a new Toastmaster himself, took me by the hands, the rest of the club pulling behind him slowly lifting me out of the barrel. My mentor with all the qualities mentioned, got me out of the barrel,

held my hands, and walked with me one step at a time. Slowly let me loose until I could walk on my own. From there, I started running until I got to where I am today. My mentor allowed me to see Hope inside myself.

As a mentor: One afternoon, my telephone rings. At the other line was this lady with a Spanish accent speaking 200 miles an hour. She told me her name, just moved to Brunswick County, saw my name and telephone number, and wanted to find out about Toastmasters. We had a long productive conversation. Right away, I knew we had connected. She became a Toastmaster and I her mentor. Together, we started her Toastmaster journey.

I held her hand, "walked with her every step." In turn, she grew and assimilated all she could learn like a sponge. We not only had a mentee/mentor relationship but became very good friends. She eventually moved to another state, implemented all she had learned from Toastmasters, chartered a Toastmasters club, became its first president, and moved on to take up leadership positions in the District.

...See "Mentoring" PX



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3rd Annual Writers Award Banquet Selling Out

Teen Scene Inc. is pleased to announce that the Third Annual Writers Award Banquet is close to selling out well ahead of schedule. The event, scheduled for April 15th at **WWAYTV- 3** in Leland, honors the best contributions to the pages of *Cape Fear Voices / Teen Scene* during 2022 across nine categories.

For *Teen Scene*, there are 26 works nominated across five categories: **Non- Fiction Reportage, Fiction/ Creative Writing, Reviews/ Persuasive Essays, Poetry and Art.**

For *Cape Fear Voices*, there are 20 works across four categories: **Non- Fiction/History, Memories/ Personal Essay, Creative Writing/ Poetry and Humor.**

For a full list of nominees, see the

January edition, page 3, on our website www.cfvts.org. (Click the Edition tab, then the link on the left nav.)

"We are grateful to our many sponsors, supporters and volunteers who make this publication possible, said Gerald Decker, President of Teen Scene Inc.

"The Awards Banquet is our only major fundraising event of the year and is crucial to our mission to support creativity and the develop-



Presented by the Brunswick Arts Council, the event includes the awards banquet and ceremony, a silent auction, and guest speaker Kristie VanAuken, Special Advisor, Workforce Engagement, Division of State Superintendent, NC Department of Public Instruction.

ment of a new generation of writers and artists in the Cape Fear region."

See Page 8 for a tribute to our banquet sponsors.

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Cape Fear Voices Submission Requirements

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

- We are looking for contributors to submit their poems, stories, pictures, or art for publication.
- We will not publish any political or religious material and will censor profanity, no matter how good the work might otherwise be.
- All submissions must be single-spaced in Times New Roman 12 and include the title, author's name, picture and community. Please limit your submissions to 500-600 words.
- Any photos intended to accompany a submission must be sent as JPG files and include any required photo credit.
- All written works must be sent to editorcfv@gmail.com and received by the 15th of each month for consideration in the following month's issue.

Ad Rates

	3-Editions	6-Editions	12-Editions
Full Page	\$ 600	\$1,100	\$1,900
Half Page	\$ 350	\$ 630	\$1,070
Quarter Page	\$ 180	\$ 325	\$ 550
Business Card	\$ 90	\$ 160	\$ 280

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

Cape Fear Literacy Council

REGISTER NOW!

Adults, get the help you need to reach your learning & language goals.

Register for classes or be matched with your own tutor. Enrollment and programs are FREE! Call us at (910)251-0911 or visit us online at cfliteracy.org/programs

"Community Engagement" from P1

A few days ago, I met Police Officers Justin Holland (pictured left) and Benjamin Majors (right) at an event in Leland. They are members of the Leland Police Community Engagement Team which is dedicated to offering services and programs that enrich the community and give us an opportunity to meet the men and women behind the badges. These officers have been on the force for 3 years—with Officer Majors being a lifelong North Carolinian and Officer Holland coming from Maryland.

The Community Engagement Team is the liaison with our community and the Leland Police Department. Part of their duties involve going into local schools and giving our children safety information so they know how to react in potentially harmful situations. Their goal is to ensure our children see police officers as friends and people who can keep them and their families safe.

They participate in the "While You're Away" program and will monitor your home for up to 14 days if you are away (see their website for instructions on how to participate in all of the programs offered.)

Also listed on the Leland Police website is a free service offered by the Brunswick County Sheriff's office, called "Project Lifesaver." This is a wonderful service for residents who are taking care of parents or loved ones with Alzheimer's disease, autism or other medical conditions that can affect their judgment or ability to communicate and who often wander away.

Participants in this program receive a bracelet that holds a radio transmitter equipped with a unique radio frequency that identifies the



Leland Police Officers Justin Holland (left) and Benjamin Majors are members of the Community Engagement Team, the liaison between the community and the Police Department.

person and geographical area. If a person enrolled in "Project Lifesaver" goes missing, the caregiver calls 911. The Sheriff's office will respond with a team who start searching for the missing person. For more information on the parameters of the program, go to the Leland Police webpage and look for the "Project Lifesaver" tab.

The Community Engagement Team also coordinates events in the area such as "Coffee With a Cop, Christmas With a Cop, National Night Out," and presents at community meetings regarding safety and other topics requested by members of that community.

I shared my driving story with Officers Holland and Majors and they said that my particular traffic stop was how every stop should be handled--professionally, politely, efficiently and in the best interest of the resident involved. Both officers stressed that our police personnel are here to protect us and our community and while they might wear uniforms, they are people with families, just like us.

We are lucky to have the kind of officers that we do and a program like the Community Engagement Team here in Leland. If you are interested in partnering with the Community Engagement Team on a project or event, or would like additional information, call Officer Benjamin Majors at 910-800-1654 or email him at bmajors@townofleland.com.

To all of the Leland Police and Sheriff's Officers, be careful out there. Stay safe. We need you.

Police light image by [Diego Fabian Parra Pabon](#) from [Pixabay](#)

"Mentoring" from P1

I am so proud of her and, at the same time, am humbled that I, in some very small way, contributed to her phenomenal growth. As mentor/mentee we thrived, grew, and learned from each other.

Be a mentee, a mentor, or BOTH. You will find it very rewarding and priceless! As Phil Collins articulated: "In learning you will teach, and in teaching you will learn." For information call 910 842-6566.

Mari-Lou Wong-Chong

**"Luck of the Irish" from P1**

My husband took the wheel. Within minutes he cringed as a huge "lorry" headed straight toward us. He overcorrected steering and ran up on the sidewalk. Sensing his frustration, I offered to drive. We encountered a two-lane roundabout, the first I had ever seen. I drove around and around the roundabout several times before we could discern which lane, then exit, to take.

We finally arrived in Stirling, toured the historic area and collapsed in bed. Upon leaving Stirling, I terrified my husband by sideswiping a tree or something, knocking the passenger mirror askew, followed by several other bumps and scrapes. At lunchtime, we surveyed our "demolition derby" car.

Undaunted, I headed north to meet my relatives, arriving in time for dinner and a warm welcome, after carefully parking the car to conceal its mishaps. We spent several days, discovering my Scottish roots, meeting cousins and enjoying a private tour of "our" ancient castle, now a tourist attraction, and numerous cultural, historical and ancient ruins. We sent postcards home, but my wary husband checked every post office for my Wanted



Exploring family's roots can take unexpected turns. Among the many sights in this lush country, the Church of Ireland.

Image by [cathal100](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Poster. Armed with a wealth of family history, we flew to Ireland, where we repeated the cultural, historical and ruins experience, finally arriving at the town where my husband's ancestors once resided.

Along the way, we experienced Scotland's glens, moors, crags and ragged coastlines, and in Ireland, lush St. Patrick hued green grass.

We read and heard various stories about St. Patrick and Irish traditions associated with the

saint. Irish Catholics attend Mass on St. Patrick's Day and do not debauch themselves in green beer as in the USA. In County Mayo, each July pilgrims climb 2,507-foot Croagh Patrick nicknamed "the Reek" in honor of St. Patrick who in 441 AD fasted for 40 days on its peak. Locals told us Croagh Patrick's spiritual influence continues as penitents walk or crawl to its summit to atone for their sins.

In County Mayo, we approached the town where my husband's 16-year-old ancestor departed for Canada during the Irish famine, escaping as a stowaway aboard ship. We visited the heritage center and located the names of his ancestors, names repeated over the generations in America.

That afternoon while my husband checked post office Wanted Posters, I stood in the village square, watching young red-haired children exit their school bus. I thought I was seeing my youthful reflection; those Irish children looked exactly like my sister and me.

Then a young American man asked me for directions, thinking I was the mother of one of the school children. Upon returning home, I researched my lineage for an Irish connection, and to my mother's dismay, her family blessed me with the luck of the Irish.

Who Stole the Moore's Chapel Bell?

We reopen a 'cold case' based on the article in the box below by Si Cantwell for the *Wilmington Star News Online* on Jan. 19, 2010.



We are looking for a compelling story that includes investigation, mystery, suspense, and intrigue in a real-world setting. This "who done it" story begins in the late 1990s as reported in the news article below.

The Moore's Chapel is an active church in Brunswick County. They have a congregation. Reverend Annette Clemmons is the church pastor and Mr. Reggie Ballard is one of the Trustees.

Unfortunately, after more than two decades, the church bell is still missing without any leads on its whereabouts. It is important to point out that there is an old slavery-era cemetery about 1,000 feet from the chapel that is not currently listed on the State cemetery registries that were examined. The cemetery is in desperate need of repair. There are headstones there dating back at least 90 years. Ironically, this church is in the path of what would have been the Cape Fear Skyway; the Contractors report states there were no areas of historical value in that report.

We need a compelling story that would make this a national news event.



Marvin Graham (left) and the Rev. Aaron Moore stand in front of the old Moore's Chapel AME Zion Church building off N.C. 133 south of Belville. It was build back in 1874. *WilmingtonStarNews*, January 10, 2010

Want to join us in an effort to locate the bell?

Teen Scene, Inc. and the Gullah Geechee Greenway Blueway Heritage Trail Board of Directors are teaming up to offer a \$500 reward for any actionable, documented information that leads to locating the bell. Some basic research, emails and phone calls may produce valuable information. If we do get a compelling story, the person(s) who provided the most reliable information will be interviewed for the article.

CHURCH CARETAKER SEARCHES FOR MISSING BELL

Si Cantwell, Si.Cantwell@StarNewsOnline.com, Published 10:39 a.m. ET Jan. 19, 2010

As caretaker of Moore's Chapel AME Zion Church, Marvin Graham wants to know where the church bell went. The Rev. Aaron Moore also wonders where it is.

Graham thinks a movie company made off with the bell in the late 1990s.

The church, off N.C. 133 a few miles south of Belville, was founded in 1874 by Moore's grandfather.

Today, the white wooden church stands silent. It hasn't been used since the 1980s. The choir section behind the altar has collapsed. There's a gaping hole in the middle of the floor, with burn marks evident on the supporting timbers underneath.

At one time the church formed the

heart of a black community called Old Town. Moore, 91, remembers when families gathered there on Sundays.

Graham and Moore are descended from slaves. Graham said his ancestors came in 1664 from Barbados. They'd been rice planters in west Africa. Plantation owners valued their knowledge.

Graham said many area residents still identify with the plantations where their ancestors labored: Clarendon, Pleasant Oaks, Old Town.

"We're proud people," he said. "We might be poor, but we're proud people."

He said blacks stayed in the area when many of the white residents left in 1667, driven off by Indians and a

fierce hurricane.

"This was the frontier, and our forefathers were the pioneers," he said, looking up at the old church. "When Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves, we'd been here 200 years."

Graham, 54, operates Sapona Organic Farm. He lives near the old church and looks after it. He said sheriff's deputies are good about chasing off trespassers.

Musette Steck, vice president of the Southport Historical Society, said Graham knows his stuff.

"Marvin knows more about his family than just about anybody in this county," she said.

Graham said a company filming a movie or TV pilot called "Glory Glory" built a new bell tower atop the

church, then took the church's bell when it was finished filming.

Steck said she suspects the historic bell is lying in a warehouse of movie props somewhere.

In 2008, the Historic Wilmington Foundation designated Moore's Chapel AME Zion Church one of this area's most endangered historic sites.

Graham wants to see the church building protected. He suggests it be used as a Gullah/Geechee museum. In 2006, Congress established a Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor from Wilmington to Jacksonville, Fla.

But right now, Graham wants to know where the bell is. If anybody knows, contact me and we'll get it back where it belongs.



Read to a Cowboy

By North Brunswick Kiwanis Club

Lincoln Elementary Goes 'Western' for Head of Kiwanis

Mary Winfree, Governor of the Carolina District of Kiwanis International, announced that the district's annual mid-year conference was held in Wilmington, NC on February 10 and 11th.

As part of the conference, International President, Bert West, of Colorado, visited Lincoln Elementary School, where literacy is one of the three areas of focus for the Carolina District. Lincoln Elementary has a program known as "Read to a Dog," where children gain confidence in their reading ability by reading to a stuffed dog.

The school rebranded the reading program for a day, calling it, "Read to a Cowboy," since Mr. West is known for his western style of apparel, especially hats.

Mr. West read a book to the entire second grade class during his visit. Two students, in turn, read to him and received a book and a cowboy hat.

Photo by [Donald Giannatti](#) on [Unsplash](#)

People I've Met Along the Way:



In over 40 years of journalism, you inevitably run into some of the world's most famous, accomplished and sometimes notorious people. But, like young love, you never forget the first. And this was years before the famous would become routine.... But, like young love, you never forget the first.

Take Imperfect Action... You Can Never Go Wrong

Victor Fernandes, Leland



I slowly made my way out of the car, still feeling the effects of completing my first 10-kilometer race in several years, which prompted my wife, Shelly, to ask...

"Are you ready to run the half-marathon?"

The one that's scheduled for Feb. 25 – exactly two weeks to the day after that 10K race in Wrightsville Beach, and is longer than any race I've run in my life by more than three miles.

The simple answer is...I don't know.

No one truly knows if they can accomplish anything until the day you will succeed or fall short arrives – and in my case, until the finish line comes into view. We can prepare to conquer the challenge in front of us as much or as little as possible, and that feeling of uncertainty remains the same.

It's a level of discomfort that, in order to succeed, we need to embrace. Which is precisely why taking imperfect action comes to the forefront. No matter whether I truly believe I'm ready or not, I'm going to take action.

On race day, I step onto the course in front of me and go for it, and whatever happens along the way, happens. That's how I tackle life, in all aspects of it.

After many years of suffering from paralysis by analysis, there's no more thinking about it until fear sets in and I talk myself out of facing a challenge. I take action, the first step of a race in this case, and figure out the rest as I go along.

My first half-marathon, which by the time you read this will have (hopefully) taken me from Johnny Mercer Pier at sunrise in Wrightsville Beach to Live Oak Pavilion in Wilmington a couple hours or so later, will follow that same pattern.

There is no way to know in advance what will happen along that 13.1-mile stretch, any more than we know what path our lives will take from birth to death.

Some things are simply beyond our control. But we can control how we attack life, how we take advantage of the opportunities in front of us and put ourselves in position to go from where we are to where we want to be.

If you would like to learn more about growing more comfortable with being in uncomfortable positions, or need on your personal health and fitness journey...

Contact me at 814.504.7774 or by email at info@fernandesfit.com, and let's face that journey together. You can also get more information on my website at fernandesfit.com.

First There Was Satchmo

Paul Paolicelli, Grayson Park



Louis Armstrong

I was 15 years old and going to my first ever concert at Pittsburgh's Syria Mosque, a beautifully constructed concert hall now a parking lot. My best friend from high school band, Bobby Serenek, and I took two streetcars over to the Oakland section of the city. We met up with his trumpet teacher, Mr. Pasquarelli, considered the top trumpet teacher in the city. You see, Bobby was a phenom, he was so good that Julliard was after him before we finished high school and would go on, after military service, to the Metropolitan Opera where he became the orchestra manager. I was a happy tag-along as Mr. Pasquarelli had told him he could bring a guest. Just as I was a happy tag-along to Bobby sitting next to him in band.

Louis Armstrong was on the bill. Now you have to put yourself in that place and time and think about a wanna be trumpet player going to his very first concert to hear the greatest idol of his youth. It was like being invited to hear Gabriel play at the pearly gates. There were no pyrotechnics like at today's concerts. No fireworks, no one held up a match or a cell phone or stood during the performance, we all sat mesmerized as the incomparable Mr. Armstrong, along with Billy Kyle - piano; Barney Bigard - clarinet; Trummy Young - trombone; Mort Herbert - bass; Danny Barcelona - drums played dozens of the hits we were all familiar with. I kept reminding myself that the vibrations reaching my ears in that wonderful hall were directly from his lips and golden horn. I

was in the same hall with genius being physically touched by the sound. I knew then and know now that I could never really find the words to adequately describe that sensation.

After the concert, Mr. Pasquarelli said he had a surprise and took us back stage. As Pittsburgh's top trumpet master, he had an in and Satchmo had apparently extended the invitation. We entered the dressing room and I stood there in absolute silence and awe just feet from the man who had sweat through his shirt, his tie askew, his voice low and rumbly, as he

exchanged pleasantries in a very subdued manner with Mr. P who introduced Bobby and me. He nodded in our direction and said "hello boys." The master's voice directed to me. We nodded in return. It wasn't a long visit; he was tired and Mr. P didn't want to intrude so we left quickly. The music still played in mind on the streetcar rides home.

A few years later we moved to Southern California and my dad and I went to Disneyland for its "Dixieland" series in the late fall. Satchmo was the featured attraction (of course) and he first appeared on the Riverboat ride, high atop the structure, playing "When the Saints Go Marching In" as the boat came around a bend. Until his final days my dad talked about that evening as one of the greatest shows he'd ever seen. Louis Armstrong affected people that way. What a treasure that man was for all humanity and I was in the room with him for a few brief moments that have lasted a lifetime.

Why Is My Golf Game Different from the Driving Range to the Course?

Nicole Weller, LPGA / PGA Golf Teaching Professional, Compass Pointe Golf Club



Golfers often wonder why their good shots on the range may not hold up as well on the course. There is a lot of research that tells us about these differences. Dr. Robert Bjork, a prior prestigious UCLA Psychology Department Chair, has led extensive research on how to be a better golfer on the course instead of the practice range. *Vision54* authors Pia Nilsson and Lynn Marriot also share a lot of information on this topic especially in their second book, *The Game before the Game*.

The following points may help provide ideas on how to have more fun and play better on the course (not just at the range), with many of these pointers proven by research and science.

> **Practice like you'll play.** Blocked/grouped practice to the same target from the same lie with the same club in an effort to 'groove' something only allows us to 'cram' for short-term results. Random/variable practice in 15-minute bursts ('interleaving') allows us to create stronger learning neuropathways for long-term use. Various science experiments show this... Those who tossed bean bags repetitively from the same distance tested better right way than those who threw from various places but long-term, the variable throwers held up much better. Same with learning a 40-yard pitch shot... Those who practiced at just 40 yards did better immediately, but in the long-term, those who had to learn and adapt from only 50 or 30 yards did better.

Remember, performance and learning are different things, so if you didn't perform well during a practice, it doesn't mean that you didn't learn anything.

And just because you learned something doesn't mean it can always be performed at the same high level all the time (see research articles by Dr. Robert Bjork and also Dr. Bob Christina/Eric Alpenfels at Pinehurst Resort). So decide if you want to practice to be a better range player or a better course player... It's scientifically proven that grooving too long doesn't work for longer-term course transfer.

> **The range tee is usually a laser-leveled thing of beauty, but most courses aren't flat like that for challenge and drainage.** If you only practice and get good from flat lies, you won't be as good on the course, since most lies have some slope and non-perfect grass lies. I've taken a level out to test fairway shots and not many lies were completely flat. So, if one doesn't practice and learn from these lies, the shots won't match up from what was learned at the range. Vary your lies, targets and clubs. Out of ten 7 irons, warm-up with 3-4 and then hit the last 6-7 from all different lies.

> I love the drill by *Vision54* in which you are allowed 30 balls and have to make them last for 30 minutes at the range. **Think about golf with regard to the time between shots (sometimes 5 minutes!).** Yet golfers tend to practice one shot after another, often times without even leaving the station or taking a fresh grip. Start fresh after each shot, create a new shot and walk into the ball as you would on the course... That walking in rhythm is part of the shot and should be practiced as a package if one wants to get better on the course.

For more golf tips, videos or contact information, visit www.nicoleweller.com.



Image by [bedrck](https://www.pixabay.com/) from [Pixabay](https://www.pixabay.com/)



The indigenous peoples who lived along the banks of North Carolina's Cape Fear River followed nature's rhythm; the growing seasons were long, the winters were mild, and the supply of game, fish and shellfish was abundant. Their daily routine changed with the arrival of the European settlers. Some of the colonists saw the hunter-gatherer societies as noble yet primitive. The Europeans brought with them the legends and tales from their homelands that enriched the culture of all settlers, including a diverse group of involuntary immigrants; the enslaved Africans and indentured servants.

Slaves arrived in the "New World" with few material possessions except for a rich supply of myths and legends passed down from generation to generation in Africa and the Caribbean. Most inhabitants of the tidewater region of southeastern North Carolina explained their history and beliefs through storytelling. Their narratives dealt with the universal concepts of life after death, birth of the universe, and beliefs well marinated with magic, ancestor spirits and celestial beings, including an assortment of unusual legends pertaining to justice, vengeance and retribution—all accompanied by a moral lesson. Throughout the lives of these colonial settlers, life along the Cape Fear River presented challenges and difficult times.

During a wild period of American history known as the "Roaring 20s," some areas of North Carolina became a place where the politically dominant could never be held responsible for the consequences of their actions. Here, many of the powerful were vaccinated at birth with privilege and a sense of

entitlement creating an immunity available only to those of the ruling class and their political allies. Other inhabitants of the post-colonial North Carolina coast believed in supernatural beings that would protect them and their sacred environment.

The Cape Fear Furies: An Urban Legend

David Hume III, Brunswick Forest



Image credit: Dean Moriarty on Pixabay

In Ricetown, the urban legend went viral when people reported seeing black-robed figures in thunderheads...

entitlement creating an immunity available only to those of the ruling class and their political allies. Other inhabitants of the post-colonial North Carolina coast believed in supernatural beings that would protect them and their sacred environment.

These spirits were the equalizers in the eternal battle between good and evil, and marked those for punishment who abused others or enabled the destructive actions of the powerful while hiding behind the shield of impunity. And those brazen barbarians began to attract the unwanted attention of the ancient spirits.

In Ricetown, a small community located on the banks of the Cape Fear River across from Wilmington, North Carolina, the urban legend of the Furies, the three goddesses of justice, vengeance and retribution, went viral when people reported seeing the black-robed figures in thunderheads and electrical storms, foaming at the mouth with sparks shooting from their eyes. Authorities blamed the bizarre sightings on mass hysteria.

However, those families who had lived near the Cape Fear River for generations weren't buying these mass hysteria excuses made by reporters from cities located far away from Cape Fear. They had experienced the Furies' wrath and knew they were monstrous to behold when they worked themselves into fits of rage. They knew the Cape Fear Furies were collectors of lost souls and hunters of evil who gave a new meaning to the oath, "There will be hell to pay." And as the good folks of Ricetown knew, "justice can take years to arrive, but retribution don't punch no time clock."

As proof of the Furies' reach and rage, Rooster Sump, psychopath and bully, whose specialty was hanging the neighborhood dogs from trees, striking them with a plastic bat until their howling stopped, was found after a fierce electrical storm, skewered through the chest by a shattered tree limb 25 feet above the ground. He was shirtless, wearing bib overalls and his Doc Martens boots, with a wide-eyed look of terror permanently etched on his face.

Kafka Lives

Alan Sturrock, Wilmington



Every day at precisely the same time the scientist collected data. The three clocks in his small house were synchronized perfectly. And, at the stroke of nine thirty every morning, he rose from his desk in his small study,

picked up his data collection notebook and pen, descended a small flight of stairs, and left his house. Even though he was only walking a relatively short distance--some thirty three paces or so--he carefully locked the house behind him.

On reaching the small house next door, he wiped his shoes vigorously on the doormat, not wishing to track gratuitous bugs in with him. Much of this house was unfurnished, apart from one large room which had a few pieces of second hand furniture. This room was, daily, the locus of his

collection--capturing, collecting and classifying dead bugs which had strayed into the shell of a house, presumably looking for water.

His mother had, prior to her passing, bought the second house for his wedding. Unfortunately, the wedding never materialized, through variables outside his control [his fiancée had decided, at the last moment, to marry someone else with 'prospects'].

The room was always the same. Carefully temperature controlled, the same amount of light filtering in from the east-facing picture windows, the laboratory was where the scientist did his best to 'control' the many variables in his daily science. A cursory cleaning was held once a month but nothing was done to prevent the bugs from invading the large room. He could not control the weather. But he was beginning to note that drought spells drove more and more bugs into the small house looking [presumably] for water. Every week, he would assemble the collection [by size, by species, by sub specialties], and place them carefully in long, shallow drawers in the one major piece of furniture in the room.

A scientist he had not always been. Most of his young adult life he had

"Everything the scientist touches turns to science..." --John Fowles



Photo credit: Domianick on Pixabay

"On reaching the small house next door, he wiped his shoes vigorously on the doormat, not wishing to track gratuitous bugs with him."

worked as a lowly-paid insurance clerk. Something of a recluse by preference, the sudden [and short] romance had been a brief interregnum between reigns of reclusivity. That romance had taken both he and his mother by surprise, resulting in the purchase of the small house next door... now a consolation prize [and his laboratory]. When his mother had died shortly thereafter leaving him a nice inheritance, he immediately resigned from his job and devoted his time and energy to being and becoming a scientist.

Then, one morning, he woke up feeling quite, quite queer. His upper torso felt like a hard shell. He had no appetite, used as he was to eating hearty breakfasts. His balance was off. And there was a strange ringing noise in his ears. He seemed to move slowly, but it was as if he was outside of himself, looking in. Furthermore his hand eye coordination seemed lacking.

At the appointed time he appeared to gather his notebook and pen and then headed next door to his laboratory. He would never return. He seemed to glide across the path towards the house. And it seemed to take a longer time. He noticed that his eyes were losing focus, only to regain it fitfully in moments of extreme clarity. Everything looked large, larger and largest. Then a blur.

Inside the house next door, his mind--what was left of it--was a riot of confusion. That was when everything else happened at breakneck speed. He grew four more long, spindly legs. His own two legs changed in the process. His increasingly shell-like body sprouted a pair of gossamer wings. His eyes bulged large and it felt that two smaller legs sprouted from the center of where his forehead had been.

The next thing it was flying around the room, searching for food and water. It flew and flew reveling in a newly found freedom. It alighted on a small, carved shelf of a mirror. It stared at the mirror. And stared for the longest time. It had become the many parts of the collection.

The metamorphosis was complete...

Laughing through the Golden Years A Boy and the Birds



Maryann Nunnally, Porters Neck

This time of year, as the weather warms and birds are flying north, I am reminded of a time when I was principal of an Alternative School. We had been assigned a multi-racial fourth-grader whose only transgression was not attending school on a regular basis. Since his mother's apartment was next door to the school, some higher-up decided that K (not his real initial) would come to school if he could walk rather than having to take a bus. Furthermore, that I would probably be the one to pick him up in the mornings if he was not in attendance.

I was told that K was bright and very verbal, but because his mother was an alcoholic, she did not get him out to the bus on time most mornings. According to a Social Service worker, K's single mother always fed K and kept him clean and clothed, but mornings were difficult for her as she was hungover.

Within a few days, I was walking over to K's apartment and collecting him for the school day. He and I would engage in conversation as we cut across a vacant lot, and K would review his life for me. I came to love the mornings that I walked to school with K. Soon he began to come into my office after school and hang around while I finished my work, and he completed his homework.

One day a large flock of Cedar Waxwings landed in the holly trees in the school's backyard.

K was interested and curious about everything, but birds really held his attention. I found several bird books to keep in my office, and he would read them and then inform me of some interesting fact that he found. Once he said, "Do you know that Bald Eagles mate for life? That means, Ms. N., that the baby birds have a real family with a mother and a father."

He seemed to be resilient and strong, and if life was sometimes difficult for him, he never acted sorry for himself.

One afternoon, K burst through the door and began talking in an over-excited manner. "Ms. N.," he yelled, "come quick, those birds out back are drunk."

"Drunk, K?" I questioned him. "The birds are drunk?"

"Ms. N.," he said. "You know birds; I know drunk. Please, come see."



Photo credit: Scottslm on Pixabay

Birds really held his attention.

When I got to the back yard, I saw Cedar Waxwings flying in a frenzy, bumping into the school building walls and even falling to the ground. They were eating the holly berries that had frozen and thawed a number of times during the winter. The berries had fermented, and the birds were having a drunken bash. K and I just stood and watched their antics.

Then K picked up a bird that was lying on the ground. "This guy is sleeping it off," K said as he showed me the bird he had retrieved from the ground.

...See "Boy and the Birds" P16

A Village on the Chesapeake Bay

Karen Phillips Smith, Wilmington

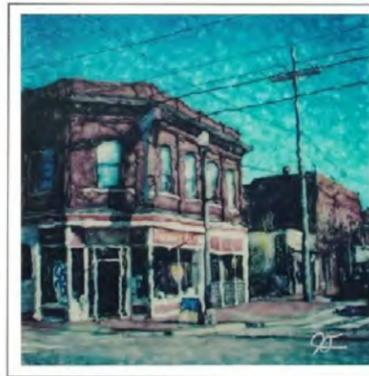


In 1755, the Virginia Assembly recorded the name Hampton Roads as the channel linking the James, Elizabeth and Nansemond Rivers with the Chesapeake Bay. It is a diverse area with remnants of ancient rivers, indigenous nations and small secluded villages of watermen who reside and work in the Guinea marshes. Black, white, men and women work the bay and its tributaries in their skipjacks, skiffs and deadrise vessels.

The Hampton Roads area is our hometown. We raised our family there. It is a multicultural, ethnic divergent area. There is a large military presence, universities, harbors and shipyards. It is certainly a metropolitan area, but its charm lies in the small villages and quaint neighborhoods where you still find a main street lined with small shops and restaurants that operate the way they always have.

Our local village of Phoebus is filled with a diversity of locally owned businesses. The butcher shop/grocery store still has the original wooden floors and the original cash register. Mr. Peach, locally known as "Boss Hog" because he truly believes he is the mayor of the village, ran the service station where attendants still came out to fill your car with gas and wipe your windshield.

Robert owns two of the antique shops along the street. Robert takes great pride in his collection of carved peach pits. The Grey Hare is one of the busiest places. Each day this small hair salon is filled with customers and folks who stop by just to chat. Fridays are known as "Gray Hair Day" because most of the customers on Friday are elderly ladies who come in to have their hair done for the week.



Once a year there is a festival known as Phoebus Days. It is a weekend long event where merchants line the sidewalks with their wares, local musicians perform on a portable stage and children enjoy face painting and other special treats. Saturday morning is the grand parade with a fire truck, antique cars with ladies from the nearby retirement home, a band from the local high school, floats pulled by tractors and other sometimes unusual marching units. We always thought that if you had at least three people you could have a

parade. One example was four men who played golf with each other weekly and marched in the parade with their putters. We loved all the quirky, wonderful people who played an instrumental part in our family's lives. My hope is that we continue to celebrate the small villages that dot our country and others. Yes, it is a simpler life, but one filled with a special richness.

Waller Family Pre-Thanksgiving Scare (Part 2 of 2)

Brendon Connelly, Brunswick Forest



Back on the boat, the kids were still in the same sitting position roped in their seats and mouths taped shut, gasping for air. All they could do was sit, wait, and pray.

By the third day, the kids began to worry, and they were getting weaker. The kids could not eat, could not sleep, and could barely breathe. The night was cold. They had no blankets, or pillows. They were shivering and shaking in their seats trying to keep warm.

Under their breath they were screaming, "Mommy, Daddy we're scared! Please come save us!" They unfortunately knew that no one could hear them. They began to fear that they would never go home again, nor see their parents or friends ever again. As day turned to night, the kids' fears intensified as they heard a storm brewing. The boat began to dip into the water. An even more frightening sight came to them when water began to fill the boat. The waves were rough. The boat was swaying back and forth. The kids were horrified. They knew then they were in trouble. However, once it looked as though all hope was lost, a miracle occurred.

A patrol boat was out checking the waters and saw their boat sinking. A patrolman named Steve called for help immediately after he was able to survey the boat. When he opened up the boat, the sight he saw was shocking and gruesome. He saw two cute young boys who looked very close to death. They looked tired and starved. Steve called for a helicopter and took them to a hospital. Besides being tired and starved they luckily were fine.

Meanwhile, Mario and George had snuck on a plane to Florida with six cases of stolen money. They were about to board a cruise ship to take them to the Bahamas when the security guard asked them to come in for questioning. It just came across the news



that the Twin Waller boys were found trapped in a sailboat off the Delaware River. A dead woman's body that was identified as Sharon Davis, a local teen babysitter, was also found. They said the boat had belonged to two illegal immigrants. Mario and George knew they were screwed. They were arrested and put in jail for 25 years. They had stolen \$5 million and were murderers. They had stolen a boat and broken into the Waller home, killed the babysitter, kidnapped the children, and nearly killed them. The criminals now sit where they belong, in jail. That night when they were rescued, the parents went to bed early and missed the news broadcast. At 1 AM, however, they got a phone call they would never forget.

A policeman called in saying that their two 9-year-old children Tommy and Timmy were found stuck in a sailboat off the Delaware River. They were stuck in there for four days, all roped in with no food and barely any sleep. Luckily, they were found by Patrolman Steve who sent them to a hospital. The parents were relieved. They took a deep breath, and thanked God that all had worked out fine. More good news came when three days later, the boys returned home, just in time for Thanksgiving. Steve came to their Thanksgiving dinner and the Waller's all thanked God they were back together again, safe and sound.

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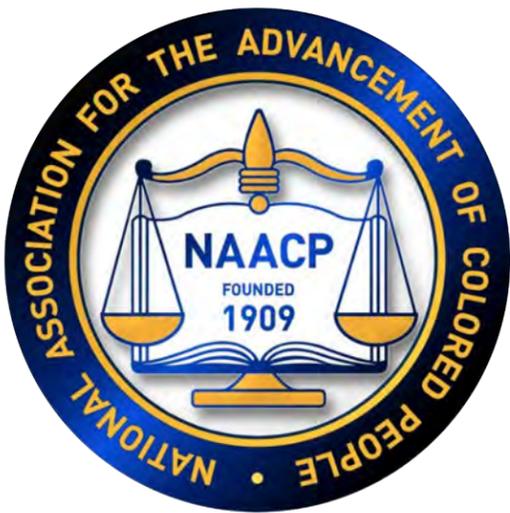
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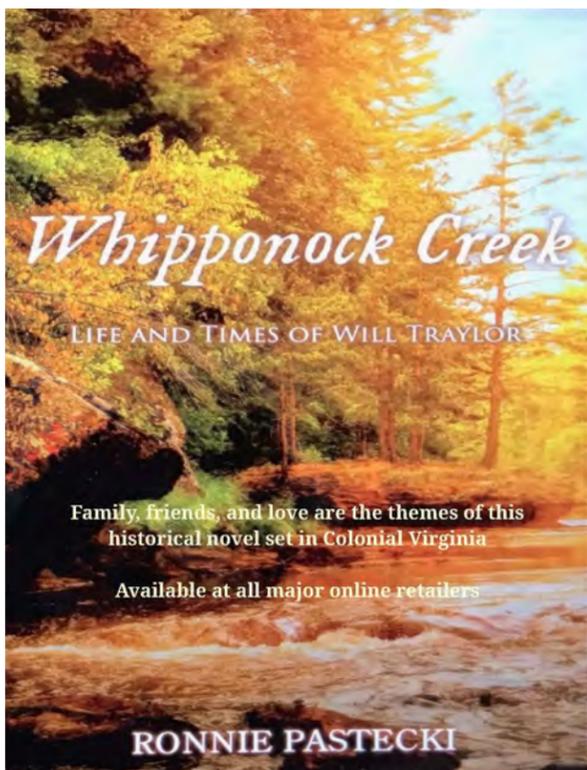
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The Teen Scene



Tomorrow's Voices Today

Brunswick County Early College

State of the School Teacher Perspective



Denise Absher
Principal

Brunswick County Early College High School is back on their feet! Student engagement is getting back to the level it used to be. Teachers are reporting that students are working hard and turning in their work on time. We see

evidence with walkthroughs and observations that students are fully engaged in class again. BCC has extended The Learning Center and is offering to assign tutors and specific times for students to get help in college classes.

Clubs are very active and giving back through service more than ever. We held our first semi-formal Valentine's Dance, it was so refreshing to see students dressed up and having fun! The Students were smiling, laughing and the dance floor was alive again!

We believe that our focus back to the 5 R's has made all the difference. January was about RESPECT, and February RELATIONSHIPS. We are heading into March where we will focus on RESPONSIBILITY, April will be RELEVANCE and we will finish strong with May being about RIGOR. We are poised for every student to grow in their learning again.

We are making progress with our School Improvement goals. We re-emphasized our efforts towards ACT practice skills in both English and Success classes for Sophomores and Juniors.

We are using diagnostic information to inform our teaching. Dr. Rollison from the central office is collaborating with us and has worked hard to develop a tool that helps identify the risk factors for all students. We are using this invaluable data to develop an action plan that will help us best support each and everyone of our Firebirds.

In the next few months the Firebirds are visiting colleges, adding a history honors society, Rho Kappa and a media honors society, Quill and Scroll. We are traveling to participate in a media club conference at Appalachian State University as we look to build our own media program next year. We are holding Career Day, Prom, and Graduation. We are traveling with Firebirds on a study abroad trip to Japan and plan for another trip to Iceland next year at spring break and so much more. As you can see the future is bright for our Firebird Family.

Soar Firebirds, soar!



Athletes in Early College Have Something to Prove

Yamil Hartman, 10th Grade

Look out for a tournament that promises to be no joke on April 1 at the Walter Shaw Court at Brunswick Community College from 9-2.

The Early College High School basketball team was created by three athletic sophomores, Aidan Casey, Brayden Mayberry, and Yamil Hartmann. This journey of creating a team took quite some time but they eventually were able to set up a tournament between local early colleges. This game is to prove to the world that all students deserve a chance at a life of sports. This is all done by the help of the Principal Denise Absher, and Counselor Marijane Jessup.

The team is thrilled to introduce their skills on the court, and hope that this tournament will

convince others of the school to join the team. There are currently ten students on the team of different grade levels. Members of the team are ready for a challenge but also ready to have fun.

"I am excited to show that Early College students can be well rounded in both athletic and academic environments," Aiden Casey says.

Sophomore Aidan Milligan adds, "We have been putting in a lot of preparation and I am excited to see the results."

We are super excited to see how this tournament will turn out between the other schools. We want to remember that this is all about the fundamentals in sports, and the opportunities we have achieved for Early College students. We hope to ball our way into victory for our supporters.

State of the School Student Perspective



Dallas Russ
Graduate

Brunswick County Early College has taken a turn this year to try and rebuild and fortify the school's culture, which is centered around its five R's: relationships, rigor, respect, responsibility, and relevance. This

emphasis being placed on these principles shows that things are headed in a positive direction for incoming students looking for the rigorous education the Early College is known for. With many students leaving who are the last remaining students to enter the school before the pandemic affected our education so negatively, many of the upperclassmen students are attempting to help the school focus on restoring the atmosphere of the school that made it so great when they first entered, and are looking forward to seeing a bright future for prospective Firebirds.

Clubs at the Early College are taking on more than ever, with all of the club leaders getting a presentation on fundraising to take that wisdom with them through their remaining time with the clubs. This year, the Theatre Club, with the help of Craft Club and Art Club, is putting together a production for the first time in many years, and the Dance Club will be participating in a large-scale competition. BCECHS's chapter of Beta Club had a great turnout at the state convention in January, with over 40 club members participating and many of them coming home with awards. It's amazing to see the progress the primarily student led clubs have made.

The Early College is tackling large things this year. So far, there have been many different service projects getting underway from the school's various clubs, including another Benefit Concert coming up from the National Honors Society chapter and an upcoming community wide Easter Egg hunt from the Beta Club. A hopefully annual tradition of a semi-formal Valentine's Day Dance has begun, led by the SGA.

One major thing that has been improving overall in the school is the respect students have for each other, the faculty, and the campus. Though it may seem overemphasized to some, this representation of kindness is laying a foundation for a promising and positive future for all Firebirds, both current and incoming.

Arsonist Samantha Becker

11th Grade



School Valentines Dance

Yazmine Franco-Santana, 10th Grade

Recently SGA and its officials got a huge shoutout for hosting a recent Valentine's Day school dance. Everyone had a great time and looked fantastic, people were on the dance floor all night and had an amazing time spending time with their peers. Even Mrs. Absher got out on the dance floor!

Student Nathaniel Brown, who's also a part of the SGA club said that he was, "Glad the dance came out better than what people expected". He also added how very proud he was of SGA and himself for putting this

event together and creating a great time for our students. Students that went to the event said they also all had an amazing time, dancing, singing to the music, spending time with peers and creating amazing memories.

Couples even had a great time, creating special memories and dancing to slow songs. Pictures were even taken and they turned out great! People were laughing and smiling.

Student Summer Scott even says that "although I was a bit shy,



I still had a good time dancing". Students of all personalities, whether they were shy or outgoing, they all had a great time interacting with their peers and creating great memories.

In conclusion the dance was a great success, administrators even had a great time! These experiences are always a great idea, they help make new memories. It was great to see students get out of their comfort zone and get up and dance!

Almost everyone was dancing at the end of the night!



Student couple, Summer Scott and Hayden Fisher, having an amazing time and enjoying each others company.



Dr. Oates' Farewell
Kyler Terry
10th Grade

Dr. Jerry Oates, the superintendent of Brunswick County Schools, previously announced his resignation from the role, effective February 20, 2023. Before he left, he reflected on his experience as the superintendent over the past five years. He also discussed his future as the North Carolina Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Dr. Oates said that his favorite part of

working as the superintendent was supporting principals as they worked to ensure that student and teacher needs were met. He continued to express the fact that he is very proud of the principals around the county. Dr. Oates also said that one of his proudest accomplishments while being superintendent was hiring "some of the most effective teachers I have seen in my 28 years in public education."

Although Dr. Oates is taking on a new role as the Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, he will remain in Brunswick County. He says that although he is not leaving the county,

he will miss the solid relationships he made with people in the school system. He says that it will be an adjustment as he will have to become accustomed to not seeing these people daily.

So, what are the details of Dr. Oates' new career? He says that he will be leading a "major division of the agency- School and District Support. It includes federal programs, the Office of Safe Schools, and School Operations and Nutrition." This job is a great opportunity for Dr. Oates as he will now be working directly under the State Superintendent, Ms. Catherine

Truitt.

As the new Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Oates is looking forward to "building relationships with more people across the state and working to improve outcomes for the students of the NC Public School System."

Dr. Oates thanks the people of Brunswick County for allowing him to serve as their superintendent, and he says that it has been one of his greatest pleasures of his professional career.

Castle Hayne Elementary- The Future Faces of Journalism



Karleigh Quinn
11th Grade

What do you think of when you hear journalism? Perhaps a political debate or a local

interviewer. Would a classroom filled with fourth and fifth grade students normally come to mind? A local Elementary school is on a mission to change this.

On Friday, January twentieth, I interviewed the student journalism team at Castle Hayne Elementary. Led by school social worker Candy Robbins who originally began the club with no background in journalism. When asked what her favorite part about her club was, she stated that "It's all really exciting because not only are you working with a group of students that are learning from you, you are learning from them."

While I knew that this group of students would be highly driven and intelligent, I was truly surprised by the amount of joy and professionalism these young journalists already



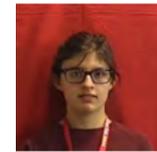
held. Writing, Art and the drive to research and learn are only some of the things needed to create a journalist. The students who participate in this student journalism program are skilled and driven in their writing, with the mission to publish a full paper each semester,

each time with a new group of students. With 9 fourth graders and 6 fifth graders, the paper is heavily student run, with articles coming from common interests of the club members and school events. The club is able to decide everything from who writes what, to the overall look and format of their final paper.

This club's original intention was to allow students to express their interest in the world around them, however, it has turned into so much more. These students have inspired adults in their local community to read and be invested in school events and their writing. This club has not only impacted the students writing abilities and relationship skills, but is also having a positive impact on school attendance. Having something as important as a club to look forward to gives many students a reason to go to school, and even allows them to enjoy it.



While these writers may be young, many of them are already interested in pursuing careers in journalism. By promoting school clubs that help expression and nurture a love for learning, the community is allowing students to reach their full potential through exploring interest, and setting their futures up for success. This club helps create a place of success and pride for students, as Mrs. Robbins expressed, "Seeing their work and their articles reach a whole school, they are very proud of that."



The Vulnerability
L. H. Simmons
10th Grade



I gave you my trust, but you've broken it over the aging years.

I try to understand your ways of teaching, but you've grown ignorant of them.

I tried to give my all to you for your own happiness, but it turned vile and hard.

I provided you with my love, but you tossed it aside when it was inconvenient for you.

I believed in you, giving my life for your once gentle hands to hold and bring me comfort, but cold touch laced your fingers and illness was brought from them.

I've even broken my own guard for you!

But nothing forces you to see this sacrifice.

You've left my tiny form to rot with these creaks and fractures done by your careless hands, causing such damage you've grown to lose sight among your hindering gaze.

But a question is what I've built over these longing years, the longing for your care and praise any person should ask for from your title in life.

Why? Why is it that I must suffer from your misjudgment and carelessness of life and see you walk unpunished?

And why should I call you such a name that brightens any other? Why should I let you have the right to care for a person you've called a *child* in your aging time but toss them to the side when the other woman grows more important to you?

I've watched you from the sidelines, asking these questions and pondering your reaction if my scared lips muttered them out loud.

What would become of you if they lingered along your earless hearing? Would you act out in rage with eyes that are blind, or would you play that victim of sadness and cry your so-called heart?

Women's History Month



Emmy Russ
10th Grade

Ever since 1987,

March has been recognized as Women's History month in the United States. It is a month that is dedicated to acknowledging accomplishments of women, both past and present. Women's History Month began as Women's History Day, which is still celebrated on March 8. It then was expanded to a week, and now is a full month.

During Women's History month, it is important to bring light to the struggles of women throughout time and to recognize the accomplishments of women that have been overlooked. Women like

Marie Curie and Rosalind Franklin are praised for their contributions to science. Activists, such as Malala Yousafzai, Rosa Parks, and Susan B. Anthony, are lauded for their passion and courage. This year's theme, "Celebrating Women who Tell our Stories", was made to honor the women that have made contributions to the media. This includes all women that have given their time to telling a story- from the well known Jane Austen to lesser known voices, such as Louise Meriweather, an author whose work showcased the struggles of the Great Depression.



To celebrate Women's History month, many people also buy from women owned businesses and donate to organizations that are made to help women. Women's marches and conferences are held to celebrate history and bring awareness to current issues that women face. Many people take the time to learn about women that have contributed to society. More than anything, the month is a time to recognize the strength of women all around the world and to listen to their voices so that the world can be a better place for all.

Is the Blocking System in Schools Really Necessary?



Mary Said
10th Grade

agreed with this statement.



Because of these restrictions, teachers struggle to find good videos to show in class and good sources to provide students for assignments. Students also experience challenges finding effective sources for research papers and/or presentations.

However, there are also many positives to this firewall. Since all of these sites are blocked, it limits the distraction in the classroom. Students are less likely to cheat because most cheating sites are blocked. Social media and games are restricted on chromebooks so that limits distractions in class.

In conclusion, the firewall has many ups and downs and is a very controversial topic. However without this firewall students wouldn't have chromebooks at all so maybe some restrictions should be tolerated.

At all schools in Brunswick country, there are chromebooks distributed to all students. These chromebooks are to be used for school purposes only therefore they have blocking systems on them to ensure students stay on task. But are these high precautions entirely necessary?

The wifi provided in these schools possess a firewall that blocks all sites including social media, commonly used websites for cheating, and online games that can cause a distraction for students. Blocking these sites is reasonable, but there are downsides to restricting so many sites.

When interviewed, student Yazmine Franco-Santana says "The firewall is frustrating because it blocks sites we need to get assignments finished." Other students that were interviewed



Leland Middle School



Fantasy
Dixie Russ
8th Grade

When I was little, I used to think fantasy was being a princess in a castle.

When I was older, my fantasy was to be a singer, a worldwide popstar.

When I was even older, fantasy was being an actress and writer.



Now that I'm older, fantasy is an old friend, sticking around unwanted. Fantasy can not be achieved; it is simply that; fantasy.

Fantasy is an ever-existing nuisance, its hand around my neck, daring me not to think about it. Daring me to work hard when I could just float away into dreams.

Now that I'm older, my fantasies have become more and more realistic, I don't give up on my dreams, but I know I have to work harder.

When I was little, I used to think fantasy was being a princess in a castle.

So I sewed that pretty pink dress myself.

Ups and Downs

Hilsyn Hardy, Anisa Henry
Leland Middle

At Leland Middle School, our new principal Mr.Black has taken it upon himself to brighten the year by helping students get their grades up. After interviewing a few teachers and students, we think that Mr.Black is making a big change. Listed below are some ideas and advice about core zero.

Q&A:

What are some tips?

Is it difficult maintaining grades?

No, but balancing academic and social status are a must.

-Mr.Herder, Math teacher

What are the expectations?

Depending on the student(s) the grades will vary, but the teachers want the kids to ask for help, stay focused and strive for success.

-Summarized by numerous teachers

Why did you choose this activity?

Seeing students not putting in effort and wanting to help them.

-Ms.Cleary, assistant principal

Do you think students' grades have improved?

Yes, when there is better administration and the students have a better support system which could lead to the students getting better grades.

1. Work hard

2. Don't give up

3. Achieve personal goals

-Ms. Waddell, music teacher

Do you think this is going to help students improve?

Yes, the students did improve and it did help their grades and attitudes improve as well.

-Ms, Cleary, assistant principal

Similarities

Elizabeth Ford
8th Grade



Love is like trust

It's very breakable

You love people, and you trust people

But turn your back and,

They cheated

They lied

They ran

They hide



To afraid to come back and face it

But to be strong, good times, or bad

You must keep your loved ones close

And an eye on ones you trust

How I Love My Baby Bear

Willow Shoemaker
7th Grade

Dedicated to my 4-year-old sister Ella May

Oh Baby Bear, do you know how I love you so?

How I love you when you're sad, and even when you're mad.

How I love you though you can be bad.

You're my Baby Bear, so I love you no matter where

Sometimes you lie and even try

But no matter what, I love you to the gut

Yes, Baby Baby Bear you're growing tall!

I remember when you used to crawl!

Oh my gosh! You're so big!

I look away, Then there you are!

You always stay I love you, Baby Bear

I hope you know so never go.



Watcher
Malia Flaverney
6th Grade

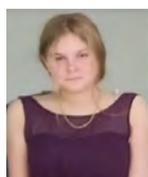


You escape into a dense forest, with blankets of fog.

You turn around the corner, you freeze... a flash of color in the sea of gray.

It **could** have been anything, a deer galloping away from a predator, or maybe just a bird leaving its abode.

It **could** have been anything, but you know exactly what it was... or should I say who it was.



Tattoos
Isabella Billings
8th Grade

Tattoos are something people usually get to keep as memories.

Some are good memories, and some are bad.

Some people get involuntary tattoos.

We call these "scars."

These tattoos aren't always by accident, though.

Some people give themselves these tattoos to forget memories.

Everyone has tattoos.

I have tattoos from things I can't remember.

Some people choose their tattoos, and some people don't.

They're obvious if you look.

But don't look for people's tattoos. Look for the memories that go with them.

in a bad mood now. There's no way to fix your mood anymore.

You can be the one keeping secrets from everybody, but every day, you feel guilty. Or, you can make someone feel bad by talking to someone while looking back and forth at someone else. Just remember you are being watched by someone very secretive.



Secrets

Lindsey Duran Guillen
7th Grade

The worst part (about secrets) is that you never know what's going to happen or what's going to be rumored. Or, you are going to be the one exposing someone. It makes some people act differently from how they usually are.

It sometimes causes anxiety in different ways. Secrets are about crushes, you, our identities/sexuality, and lies. Next thing you know, you are in your room crying, not wanting to go to school. You are always

Something

Michael Hawkins, III
8th Grade



A see a flicker in the night

Drifting beyond my touch

It pulls me so

My soul and mind

Its bright white light

My words cannot describe its beauty

It can not be held down or known by words

I can only say that it is something

That gives me hope

Hope that there are somethings in this universe that are still a mystery

The mystery of something out there that is not categorized or known

Beauty lies in mystery and the unknowing

It stems from people's imaginations

Yearning to seek something

Something else, away from all the others

It sparks their passion, gives them purpose

And something can be more than material it can be a thought

A thought that could change the world

A thought that can give you comfort

Something can also become someone

Someone who could fan the flame that is life

And make something that is new

You see how wonderful this word is, it makes people think of what it could be

Can be

Will be

And maybe someday something will become nothing

But until someday comes try to be someone new

Search for something new

Because everything and everyone will have their someday.



I Want to Leave

Willow Shoemaker
7th Grade

I want to run; I want to hide.

Please just take me, bring me up, tuck me inside.

I watch but can't speak; I know I'm here; I just can't move; get me out.

I cry, but you can't hear; I watch them laugh, but I'm trapped.

I can't escape; I'm stuck in a brain that's not mine

It starts taking over, controlling my body.

I want to leave.



Finding Hope

Lindsey Duran Guillen
7th Grade

Each day passes by

Struggling to find motivation and hope

I can't even see myself anymore

Always settling with the pain

Instead of seeking happiness

There is just one solution

And It's to find it in such a horrible place

Why do I even stay



I've been waiting too long

Maybe I will be stronger

But these scars remind me

I'm too fragile

There is no place for me here anymore

South Brunswick High School



Lilium
Kennedy Stone
12th Grade

Lilium

Lily oh Lily

My love for Lily

Stands tall to the wind

Does not wither away

So brave my lily

Blind to all things evil

Layed on a plinth

So daring to heal wonders

other blooms show

innocence

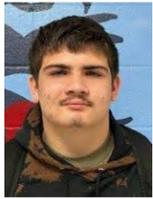
While you

show the

boundless

beauties of

mystery



South Brunswick High
JROTC to Alabama

Dylan Smith
12th Grade



On the 8-12th of February, South Brunswick's very own JROTC rifle team went to Anniston, Alabama, to compete in the Army JROTC Air Rifle Service Nationals for a chance to compete for the national title. The participating cadets were: Riley Paglione, Juan Ramos, Baylee Donato-Wisnewski, and the commander Jayvon Hayles. The first day was a practice round held on the 9th. The second day started the competition. After shooting for competition and the scores were

in, Riley Paglione scored a personal record high with a 491, with the JROTC rifle team commander Jayvon Hayles, a senior in his last year, to leave an impression on the future of the team and the program, leading the team in scoring with a score of 514 out of 600. The team placed 26th out of 3,945 schools, the highest they have placed in the past 5 years. Congratulations to the South Brunswick JROTC Rifle team, and good luck next year.



Art by Karleigh
Karnes
12th Grade



Cedar Grove Middle School



Don't Go Back; Stay Here

Josh McGinty
8th Grade

As a 14 year old kid, I may not be a very good example of this, but I want to try to bring some nostalgia back to my generation. Fallout Boy was a famous band in the early 2000s and they broke up in 2009. The Xbox 360 came out 18 years ago. Doesn't feel that long ago right? Minecraft came out 12 years ago. I know that all the kids have some memories of that game. 2016 was seven years ago with Vine videos, bottle flips, and dabbing trends. These all feel

like forever ago, right?

But you must remember that we have to look toward the future too. The past does not have to be a long time ago. The past is yesterday and the future is tomorrow and from personal experience, don't look forward or back, look where we are now, the present. Take a moment to reflect on what we have accomplished in the world or as individuals. We have gone to the moon; we have gone under our seas. Maybe you finally lost those 20 pounds you've been talking about or finally learned that dance on TikTok. Look at the places we will go, like

Mars and maybe even more.

But ask yourself, what can you do now? Even though you didn't do it in the past doesn't mean you can't do it today. Right now is the time to achieve the goals you have been putting off. Everyone has dreams and goals they want to reach, so let's do it together. If you can't do it on your own, then get someone to hold your hand and help you.

My point in the matter is that you can't live in the past or the future; you need to like the here and now and live for the present. If you don't like the present, it may be time to change the game.



Canines Vs Feline

Cameron Coleman, 8th Grade

It seems like there is an all out brawl between cats and dogs right now. I'm here to talk about which one is the superior animal to own. In my opinion, dogs are better than

cats because dogs have way more energy and play more than cats do. I like animals that are more friendly. As dogs get older, they get calmer, but on the other hand, the older cats get, the wilder they get. If you want a wild and funny animal to be in your home, or one

that is independent and requires less attention, then you should go with a feline. But if you want a friend to be right by your side, love you no matter what you do, and always forgive you the next day; then your best option is the canine. But whichever one you choose is

totally your choice. For me, I chose dogs. So I want you to think about which animal you like better as a companion.

Don't forget to check out your local shelters to adopt animals that need a home!

North Brunswick High School



This Month's Teen Writers

BCECHS

- Denise Absher
- Samantha Becker
- Karleigh Quinn
- Dallas Russ
- Emmy Russ
- Yazmine Franco-Santana

Mary Said

L. H. Simmons

Kyler Terry

LMS

Isabella Billings

Malia Flaverney

Elizabeth Ford

Lindsey Guran Guillen

Hilsyn Hardy

Michael Hawkins, III

Anisa Henry

Dixie Russ

Willow Shoemaker

SBHS

Karleigh Karnes

Dylan Smith

Kennedy Stone

NBHS

Lariyah Dansbury

Addiction and Demise



Lariyah Dansbury
9th Grade

Vile and cold

He acts that he's wise

Holding out a needle

Planning out my demise

He holds out his hand for me to reach

Ridden with cracks from defeat

His words sound Holy

Holy as Mary

But his sins could differ

But the guilt in his eyes

Cold as his lies

But warmth fills

Softness in his eyes

As tears fall from himself

Sobs and Aches

With bottles around us

Bottles filled with lies

As he drops his needle

I drop the wine

I admit it we are both addicted to

Addiction and Demise

March Holidays and Observances

March 1	National Peanut Butter Lover's Day	March 19	National Poultry Day Observance
March 2	Dr. Seuss's Birthday, National Read Across America Day	March 20	Equinox Earth Day, First Day of Spring*, International Day of Happiness Observance
March 3	World Wildlife Day, World Book Day	March 21	National Teenager Day, International Day of Forests, World Down Syndrome Day, World Poetry Day Observance
March 4	National Hug a G.I. Day, National Grammar Day, World Obesity Day,	March 22	World Water Day, first day of Ramadan* Observance
March 5	Namesake Day, Dissociative Identity Disorder Awareness	March 23	World Meteorological Day, National Puppy Day, American Diabetes Alert Day Observance
March 7	National Cereal Day	March 24	World Tuberculosis Day, National Cocktail Day Observance
March 8	International Women's Day,	March 25	Tolkien Reading Day, International Waffle Day Observance
March 9	National Meatball Day Observance	March 26	Make Up Your Own Holiday Day, National Spinach Day Observance
March 10	National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day	March 27	World Theatre Day Observance
March 11	Johnny Appleseed Day	March 28	Respect Your Cat Day Observance
March 12	Plant a Flower Day, Genealogy Day, Daylight Saving Time*	March 29	National Mom and Pop Business Owners Day Observance
March 13	National K-9 Veterans Day	March 30	I Am in Control Day, Take a Walk in the Park Day, National Doctors' Day Observance
March 14	National Pi Day, Learn About Butterflies Day, National Potato Chip Day	March 31	World Backup Day.
March 15	The Ides of March		
March 16	Freedom of Information Day, National Artichoke Day,		
March 17	St. Patrick's Day, National Preschool Teachers Appreciation Day		
March 18	National Supreme Sacrifice Day		



Sometimes a good book lands unexpectedly next to my bed on the pile of must reads. Maybe its arrival was a holiday gift, an impulse buy, a borrow from a friend, a library lend or one of ten I agreed to judge for a state contest. My cup runneth over with debut novels.

There are two contestants remaining as I write this piece. All fiction, mostly adult, and a few middle-grade. The genres are all over the place. One does not get to choose as a judge. As such we are instructed to remain anonymous, to be open minded, objective, receptive, and not feel there must be a first place, a second or a third. Only once have I been in that position.

Most years there has been a winner. In 2022 the last judged book I read, out of ten novels, was considered Steampunk genre. A subgenre of science fiction with a subculture that invites a collision of the future with the past. Who knew? The judge (me) was hooked on the first sentence. The gifted author went on to garner a national win.

Fiction Judge

Linda Merlino, Surf City



Photo by Ed Robertson on Unsplash

February's a dreary month. Perfect for hunkering down with a book, and a steaming cup of hot chocolate. Most of the novels submitted are self-published. The authors are varied. A few have been publishing for a while and the others have just entered the debut world. Every one of them should

Cape Fear Voices

receive an Honorable Mention for perseverance, bravery, and guts without glory. I am humbled by the opportunity to read these submissions. There is talent out there which will never see a best seller list, and never sell enough to buy groceries or a car. No matter. These are writers who deserve to be read and the best I can give them is my time. Submissions range from romance (the spine of the industry) to mystery thrillers, historical fiction, narrative fiction, dark fantasy, and dystopian.

If I pick up a book and put it down without thinking about the protagonist or where the storyline is taking me, I know in real time it will gather dust. Judging has softened my hard and fast edges, forcing me to follow through and observe simple guidelines. Number one: Read the entire book. Number two: Note the arc of the story. First impression. Originality. Pace. Use of language. Voice. Message. Relevance. Flow. Do I care about the protagonist? Once I close the book am I still in conversation with the characters. Do they stay with me? Do I miss them? If I can taste, smell, hear, see, and feel the story, my senses ignite, and I am a goner. Sounds crazy but reading should find openings into the heart and cracks of the soul.

Memorable Family Vacations

Janet Sitegler, Brunswick Forest



Think back to your favorite childhood vacations. Where did you go? What did you do? What was most memorable about them? Now hold those thoughts.

This past Christmas, our son bought my husband and me subscriptions to *Storyworth*, an online program designed to capture your life stories, memories, and photos through weekly prompts. At the end of a year, your stories are preserved in a keepsake book that you can share with your children and grandchildren.

One of our first questions was, "Where did you go on vacations as a child?" Although we each drafted our responses independently, the similarities of our stories were striking. In both cases, our most memorable vacations involved repeated trips to rustic cottages on secluded New England lakes. The cabins had inviting names—Blueberry Knoll and Beaver Lodge—but they were quite primitive by today's standards: no central heating (just a fireplace or potbelly stove) or air conditioning (pine trees and a screened-in porch sufficed); water closets lacking showers or even flushing water; baths taken in the lake with a bar of soap; and simple dinners consisting of grilled hot dogs, hamburgers, and corn on the cob. Entertainment was exploring the woods, fishing off a rowboat, or diving off rafts near a small beach.

Why did we remember these vacations over others we had taken, like to the World's Fair, Disney World, or even Europe? One reason is the repetition—by going several years in a row, the memories were etched more clearly in our minds. Like a path created on grass the more you trample on it, the synaptic connections along our brain's neural pathways were strengthened by repeated visits, allowing us to recall the experiences more clearly. We probably also have more photographs and stories from those vacations that help reinforce those memories.

But what else is at play? Several scientific studies suggest that adults over 30 tend to have more memories from adolescence and early adulthood than from any other time of their lives—a phenomenon known as the "reminiscence bump."

According to this theory, as we form a new self-image, we encode intense, lasting memories relevant to that self. And since adolescence is a key time for developing our competencies and an enduring self-image, it is a period we tend to remember most strongly.

Our parents were likely less stressed and more playful on these vacations. My mother, usually pushing a vacuum or behind the stove at home, would settle down with a good book at Beaver Lodge. My husband remembers his mother returning triumphant from a local produce market with a big basket of fresh tomatoes. He can still see her chomping down on a salt-sprinkled tomato, a bit of juice and a big smile on her face.

Disney World, on the other hand, can be overstimulating and exhausting. Before going, I read a book on how to navigate the different parks to get the best bang for the buck. Yes, we saw a lot, but my relentless drive to hit every exhibit took some of the fun out of it. My son, then four, knows we went because we have a picture of him with Donatello—one of the Ninja Turtles—at MGM studios. But what he remembers more fondly is camping out with his friend in the hotel's walk-in closet.

When it comes to childhood vacations, they don't have to be elaborate or expensive. Being present, laughing together, and sharing fun stories afterward may be all it takes to make a trip memorable. So, what about you? What are your favorite childhood vacations? What makes them so unforgettable? And how might you design a trip that your children or grandchildren will remember fondly years later?



Photo credit: Mollyroselee on Pixabay

What makes childhood vacations unforgettable?

When you were 14 years old, where would you go on Spring Break if you had a choice: The Grand Canyon, Disneyland, the beach? For me and my family, the answer was "West Virginia," not because any of us kids wanted to go there, but because my parents wanted us to go, and my Dad had veto power.

There may be parts of West Virginia that are nice, but this was the early '70s and we were headed on a mission trip to Appalachia, coal country. Ugggh. It was a long day's journey from N.J., and we weren't going to stay at a Holiday Inn but at a Catholic monastery—with real monks. We knew there would be other families there on this adventure. Yet we had no idea what we would be doing, except that we were there to help people. The accommodations were not stellar. The pillows were flat, and the mattresses lumpy like the oatmeal. But at least I did not have to sleep in the barn like some of my siblings.

We kids were curious about the Brothers. They wore brown robes with white ropes holding up potbellies. We all ate together in the basement dining room. From the kid's table, we watched as the Brothers regaled the adults with stories that erupted in laughter. After dinner, the Brothers headed upstairs, promising to share our assignments in the morning. Meanwhile, the rest of the adults chattered in the kitchen and did the dishes without fuss—some drying

with a towel over their shoulder, others putting dishes away. We kids mostly looked on, glad that no one was asking us.

(We learned the next night that the adults were just setting an example.)

In the morning, someone opened a 5-gallon pail of red paint and distributed it with 4-inch brushes so we could paint the barn. This seemed a monumental task, and it didn't look like we were really helping anyone but the monks who were nowhere to be found. We painted for several days and finished Thursday afternoon. When it rained Friday, we heard that March was still the monastery's slow season, so they didn't field many requests for help.

In the evenings, after dishes, our group of kids played Crazy Eights religiously until bedtime. On Thursday night, two jovial Brothers joined us, squeezing in from either end of the booth.

Family Spring Break, Anyone?

Charles Bins, Brunswick Forest



They said if we could play Crazy Eights, we could easily learn their game. They called it "Screw Your Neighbor." It was essentially UNO only with a regular deck of cards. The Brothers relished the play and kept us up late, so we were delighted that they joined us again on Friday. (UNO was not officially "invented" until 1971, but I suspect the game play originated in the basement of this monastery.)

Saturday morning was eerily quiet. The other families had hit the road early, so the monks gave my father the first real field assignment: There was a problem with the shacks on the side of the mountain. No car could climb it, so me, my Dad and one of my brothers hoofed it the last 70 yards to the first shanty. The screen door was open, and my father spoke to an old woman rocking next to a wood-burning stove. At first, she thought we were delivering lunch. But after some prompting, she said the drainage ditch at the bottom of the hill was stopped up. ...So guess what we did that morning?

This was the family vacation that I learned the true meaning of "Screw Your Neighbor."

William Cavanaugh, Brunswick Forest

Back in the early 70's, the Drive-In was the mecca for summertime entertainment.

Where else could one find the comfort of imitation-leather car seats, privacy with your sweetheart, a tinny metal speaker, and the aroma of deep-fried onion rings hanging in the air. The Drive-In was inhabited with date-night couples, family night-out, young alcoholics in training, and the not yet licensed kids just looking to "hang out." It was a carnival community, with the combined purpose this one night, to see a Disney classic film offering with Fred MacMurray.

Jimmy Allen backed into a rear right side parking spot, with his girlfriend Cindy. The ground immediately behind his VW van was a 50 ft., almost vertical embankment. Jimmy liked the privacy this spot provided.

At the same time, 10th graders Greg Montgomery and Stan Stevens, were climbing the steep hillside from the back end of the drive-in, somewhat hidden as it was dusk. They were hauling an old car tire up the hill. At the hilltop, they caught their breath and

admired the view below. Jimmy Allen returned to the van on Cindy's side, and opened her door. He had a carry-out tray holding popcorn, hot dogs, onion rings, French fries, and two Cokes.

The Drive-In was still lit up bright, and the minute countdown was playing on the big screen. The echo from the couple hundred metal speaker's low roar continued to advertise concession foods. Four minutes until showtime. Moms started to yell to their kids to come from the playground and get in the car.

Jimmy fired up his second joint of the night, and after a long drag, handed it over to Cindy. Three minutes to showtime. Friday night had finally arrived. Allen was pumped to watch the "Absent-Minded Professor," stoned.

Greg and Stan stood high on the hilltop



Bill Cavanaugh

Just Another Night at the DRIVE-IN

overlooking the drive-in. The echoing sound from the valley below mirrored the movie screen image. "One minute....one minute to go."

Stan reconfirmed. "Five minutes into the movie, you got it?" Greg nodded in the darkness.

With the roar of a lion, the lights dropped, and the movie began. The younger car-less teenagers socializing near the concession stand, had moved to a parking space, claimed it, and sat on the ground to watch the film. In the opening scene, Professor Ned Barnard was in a high school laboratory. He was mixing chemicals in a beaker, and adding other liquids to it. He moved slowly and with great care. The danger

of his work was apparent.

Stan said to Greg, "Ready? One, two, theerrreeeee." As the tire rolled straight down the steep hill, it picked up speed.

"Run!" said Stan, however Greg was already out of sight.

Professor Barnard carefully mixed the last liquid into a beaker, and there was a large explosion. White light overpowered the black and white film image on screen. Jimmy and Cindy, ensconced in stoner heaven, were shoveling down their food. At the exact moment of the on-screen laboratory explosion, Allen's car violently shook with a loud rear impact. After both being bounced, Jimmy and Cindy slowly turned their heads and looked at each other.

Jimmy finally spoke. "Whoa...Did you feel that?" Cindy nodded in affirmation. "That was so freaky. Is this one of them "sensor-round" movies?" Cindy just stared, and then ate an onion ring she saw on the floor mat.

Jimmy found the vehicle damage the next day in the in the Montgomery Wards parking lot. He told the police officer that a "hit and run" driver must have done it while he was inside the store.



VFW Post 12196 Hosts Another Successful Can Food Drive

On Saturday, February 18, Leland VFW Post 12196 held their annual Canned Food Drive for Brunswick Family Assistance (BFA). A significant amount of food and some money was raised that will benefit BFA's program to provide food for those in need in Brunswick County.



drive was another success.

This is the 3rd year the Post has held a February Canned Food Drive. We also hold an annual November Coat Drive for BFA. Over the last three years we have donated over 700 coats to BFA.



Participation may have been hampered due to a week delay because of bad weather, says Commander Gerald Decker. However, thanks to our local business partners Edward Jones Financial Adviser-Deb Pickett and Leland Fuzzy Peach, the

"Most of our public efforts to date have been to assist local community groups. For example, we recently held a day long event for Manna Ministries to raise food and funds for their mission," says Commander Decker.

Pictured left to right are Post members: Nate Pringle, John Marone, Don Spaulding, Stephen McClures and Chris Mattiace.

A Chance Meeting

Sheryl Keiper, Brunswick Forest

Harrods Department Store opened "Pet Kingdom" in 1917 selling animals including panthers and tigers. The pet area closed in 2014 and was replaced with a womenswear section. (Source: www.mylondon.news)



I was on the sixth floor at the tea room in Harrods Department Store in London.

I was just about to bite into the most delicious strawberry scone putting my spoonful of clotted cream on it and anticipating the incredible taste to follow when out of the corner of my left eye, I saw an elderly gentleman approaching me.

"Excuse me, I'm terribly sorry to bother you but there are no seats left for afternoon tea and I desperately need a "cuppa." Do you mind if I share this table with you?" he asked. Noting to myself that this is a European custom--to readily share tables in restaurants with other patrons--I accepted his request.

As we sipped our respective teas and attacked our scones, he spoke. "Lovely animal print vest you are wearing," he said.

"Thank you." I responded. "Of course, it's fake. I respect animals too much to don a real fur."

"Funny that you should say that," he said.

"Why?" I said. My curiosity was piqued.

"Well, I actually bought something here at Harrods on the top floor with animal prints," he said, "about twenty years ago."

"Really, what was it?" I asked.

"A tiger cub," he responded.

"Get out of town," I said. My obvious American slang just slipped off my tongue. "Tell me more."

He then ventured to readily tell me his story. He and his partner had been childless years ago and they both had a fondness for cats. Except this purchase was a large cat. He explained that it was an emotional shopping decision and one that was not well thought out.

I kept thinking of all the adopt-a-kitten cages at various animal events in my past and how I had to restrain myself from becoming the "crazy cat lady."

"Wow," I said. "What happened?"

He then told me how he and his partner named the cub Rosie and how wonderfully sweet and playful she was. They would walk through the neighborhood Kensington streets with Rosie on a huge leather red leash and people would admire her. Shopkeepers started leaving very large water bowls out for her and restaurant staffers would leave leftover scraps of meat on the sidewalk for her.

Rosie was a wonderful pet--with one exception--she grew exponentially. Eventually,

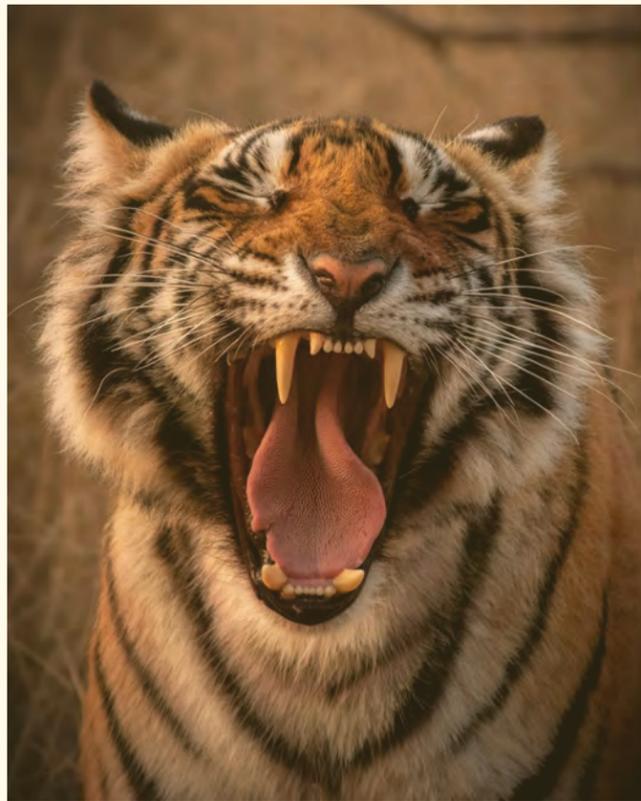


Photo by [Kartik Iyer](#) on [Unsplash](#)

he and his partner had to make the heart-wrenching decision to give her to an African refuge sanctuary.

He continued his fascinating tale as we sipped more tea. He informed me that Harrods no longer had the exotic animal sales floor for obvious humane reasons. He also said that Rosie initially did not do well trying to survive in the wilds of Africa.

Early human interaction is not good for wild animals. I remembered my training--never pick up an abandoned fawn as the mother is usually nearby hunting food for her baby and she will return to her. If she smells human touch, she most likely will abandon her fawn.

"Wow," I continued to mutter through my mouth filled with clotted cream and scones.

As we finished our tea, the stranger then revealed some amazing news. Many years later, despite his fear, he went to the African savannah to inquire about Rosie.

As the guide took him out in his jeep, sunset was approaching. There in the distance about 100 yards to his left, a magnificent tiger was approaching the vehicle. It scented the humans and stood completely still.

My stranger table mate then told me that he approached the wild animal with extreme caution. He spoke loudly but gently. "Come here, Rosie, my girl," he said.

And Rosie ran to him for a giant embrace. The African guide was overwhelmed with emotion as the former owner was reunited with his tiger cub. It appeared that the tiger was smiling as the man wept openly.

And I choked on my last scone as the tears rolled unabashedly down my face reaching my animal print vest.

Vietnam War Veteran Era Commemoration March 29th

The Leland VFW Post 12196 will host National Vietnam War Veterans Day on Mar. 29, 2023, at 5 p.m. at the LELAND CULTURAL ARTS CENTER, 1212 MAGNOLIA VILLAGE WAY, LELAND, NC.

This commemoration will recognize all who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces during the period of Nov. 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975.

As part of the ceremony, as a lasting memento of our nation's gratitude, veterans will receive a Vietnam Veterans Lapel Pin and a proclamation. Surviving spouses of those who served will also be recognized. This event is classified as "Vietnam Era Veterans." Everyone who served during this time played a role, with the saying, "All gave some, some gave all." We will, at the conclusion of the event, provide some refreshments. If your organization wishes to contribute some food or drinks, please let us know so we can prepare a table to serve after the ceremony. Pre-packaged items only, no dishes.



Vietnam Veterans Lapel Pin

Note the change of location (the previous location was Blossoms at Magnolia Greens). We ask that you post this event on your website and request that those wishing to attend provide a list of names so we can order a sufficient number of pins and proclamations. Please RSVP as soon as possible but NLT Mar. 6th to vfwpost12196@gmail.com. Thanks for your service to our country.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip _____

Email: _____ Phone _____

Branch of Service _____

Rank: _____ Dates of Service _____

Main Duty Station: _____

Schedule of Events

All-American and All-State VFW Post 12196

March 17 St. Patrick's Day Parade-Wilmington

March 29 Vietnam War Era Veterans Commemoration

April 11 Meeting to elect new Post Officers

May 9 Annual Awards Meeting

May 27 Memorial Day Weekend Buddy Poppy Drives at Piggly Wiggly, Carolina Shores Car Wash and Tractor Supply

July 4 Celebration TBA

July 27 Post 12196 Annual event to recognize Korean War Veterans

Sept. 11 Post 12196 Annual National Day of Remembrance



VFW AUXILIARY

UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®

Now accepting membership applications for the VFW Post 12196 Auxiliary. For more information contact us at vfwpost12196@gmail.com.

Free Spirit Conservatory of the Arts A Place to Nurture the Artist Within



Jan Morgan-Swegle, Editor, Compass Pointe

If you are not familiar with the Free Spirit Conservatory of the Arts (FSCA,) you should be.

It's literally a place where, when you open the door, you are opening yourself up to a whole new world—it's a place to "nurture the artist within you."

FSCA is a non-profit, 501c3, multi-use performance facility located at 8840 Old Georgetown Rd. SW in Sunset Beach. It has a state-of-the-art recording studio, a broadcast studio, rehearsal and performance space and multiple teaching studios.

This is a place with a mission and a myriad of possibilities. The mission is to teach anyone who wants to learn to play a musical instrument, video production or sound mixing (a full class list is on their website) in a world class facility. While the mission is to teach, the overarching goal is to promote and provide skills for musicians and artists to actually have a career in music, if that's what they want to do.

Mike Rogers, one of the principals of FSCA, said, "I went to school to study piano and I was told what to study, but no one taught me how to take what I was good at and make it a career. I want to educate our students on how to become 'complete' performers." He continued, "Young performers need to know the art of production, how to negotiate a contract, even how to file their taxes."

The 12,500 sq. ft. facility, formerly owned by Virginia Williamson, a Brunswick County philanthropist and real estate developer, was closed for 12 years. It reopened as the FSCA in 2021. The building and some of the musical equipment were donated by the Williamson estate, but the FSCA brought in historical pianos and other instruments as well as rebuilding the sound production studios, upgrading speakers



roads and the Thistle Golf Course community.

The FSCA team and 12 member staff have a very different way of looking at teaching. The space lends itself to exploring and discovering and that's what the FSCA wants their students to do—explore new ways of expressing themselves through music, sound production or whatever appeals to them.

By this summer, FSCA will open a "music museum" but it will not be the kind of place where you look at exhibits that are behind a glass wall. This museum will invite people to step up and try the old players pianos, or the piano that dates back to the Civil War. You can play the drums or strum a guitar; you can make music.

The FSCA has partnered with a number of people and organizations that will assist with expanding the classes that are offered. Among them are, Mary Beth Livers, Executive Director of the Brunswick Art Council, Karon Evans, owner and director of the Brightstar Youth Theatre Company, the Carolina Music Scene and Hope, Healing and Joy. Mike Rogers is already planning on building a black box theatre in the facility that will accommodate small stage productions. A black box theatre is an area that has very basic arrangements; large areas are transformed into smaller spaces by the use of dark paint or curtains and lends itself to a wide variety of productions.

In addition to teaching, the FSCA provides other ways for artists to showcase their talents. Local artists of-

Group classes and individual instruction is available in piano, voice, orchestral and band instruments.

and gradually re-doing most of the interior and exterior. The building now stands as a beautiful place among rural



Photos by Tony Swegle

Connor Mills, Instructor at Free Spirit, giving piano instruction to Donna Czyplinski.

ten display their paintings in the many hallways of the facility; and last year, the FSCA sponsored the Sunset Vision Art Show and Sale. The FSCA finds opportunities for musicians in many different venues. They work with 207 care facilities to provide music therapy options. This is a team who gives back to musicians and their community.

The FSCA also offers "Master Classes" on Monday evenings—a video lesson delivered by the best. Image listening to an author like James Patterson explain the techniques of writing a book and getting published. Or, hearing Yo-Yo Ma discuss how to perform a difficult piece by Bach on the cello.

This story is not just about a facility that was re-invented—it's the story of dreams and goals and endless possibilities. Go to www.freespiritmusicnc.com and check out not only the classes (\$30 for a half hour, \$50 for an hour) but the many activities that you will enjoy there or call 910-667-2112. Hey, if it's not playing an instrument, how about Hip-Hop Yoga? Like Mike Rogers says, do whatever motivates you."



March Birthdays

- Patty Kelley** March 3
- Mary Vogelsong** March 4
- Lew Little** March 11
- Christy Cartledge** March 15
- Jayne Kipke** March 16
- Kennedy Decker** March 17
- Tiffany Pethel** March 18
- Kenneth Bargerhuff** March 21
- Terri Delfino** March 22
- Savannah Klimkowski** March 27



Dan Neizmik, Hearthstone

(He guesses he believes in the circle of life, that a new one is born when another one dies.)

Here's a story a good friend shared with me,

About his recent trip to the Windy City,
He went there for the weekend,
To visit some relatives and a few old friends.

He said that things are bad there,
And it's sad that no one seems to care,
Still, people are close in his old neighborhood,
Although most would leave there, if they could.

But that weekend they partied like the good old days,
Forgetting that their city is no longer the same,
Soon, reality set in as shots rang out,
And somebody yelled "everybody get down."

When it was over, nobody had been harmed,
But, they recalled the days when that city was calm,
It's not the families that are to blame,
It's the riots, politicians, and enabling of gangs.

Sometimes, when bullets go astray,
Innocent people get in the way,
And each week they're just part of the number,
That sadly the world won't remember.

Only Five (The Battle of Chicago)

Later when back home he watched on TV,
Reports on the violence in Chicago that week,
It's the kind of news that's hard to bear,
Twenty-eight people shot so callously there.

But only one had died—and she was "Only Five,"
He thought, how can that be fair,
Anytime, anywhere,
And how can it be that nobody seems to care?

Then later that same day, he saw a News Flash,
And watched in disbelief, the story of a plane crash,
Twenty-eight people were aboard, and nearly all had died,
Only one had survived ~ and she was "Only Five"...

He says he guesses he believes in the circle of life,
That a new one is born when another one dies,
But somehow this was much different than that,
Was it one moment's reckoning of another moment's facts?

And he said it will never be clear to him,
Why someone must lose for another to win,
Why some doors must close for others to open,
And how some moments in time can so quickly be frozen.

Now every night he says a prayer for those moments,
For the ones who survive and the ones who don't,
Then, he says a prayer for the innocence of life,
And especially for the ones who are "Only Five."

"Boy and the Birds" from P7

"No, K," I said. "It looks as if its neck is broken. It's dead."

"Un uh," K disagreed with me. "He is just sleeping it off."

Not wanting to argue with him, I said, "Okay, let's take him into the science classroom and put him in an empty aquarium, and see what happens in the next hour or so."

While I finished up my paperwork, K settled down and watched the bird. Before long the bird began to stir. I immediately put an old towel over it, and

said to K, "We need to take this bird outside and let him go."

Outdoors, I lifted the towel off the bird which did not move for the next few minutes. "Can I touch him?" K asked, as he reached one finger out to stroke the bird. At that moment, the Cedar Waxwing opened his wings and took off.

K, watching the bird fly off the meet his fellow travelers, said to me, "You know that bird has a big headache, Ms. N"

I had to agree with K. After all, he knew a lot more about drunk than I would ever know.

Fuzzy Peach Alice Morgan & Ken Staunches

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