

THE INK QUILL

LITERARY AND ART MAGAZINE

Bladen Community College

2015



SAMANTHA STITZ—BCC ALUMNUS

THE INK QUILL
LITERARY AND ART MAGAZINE

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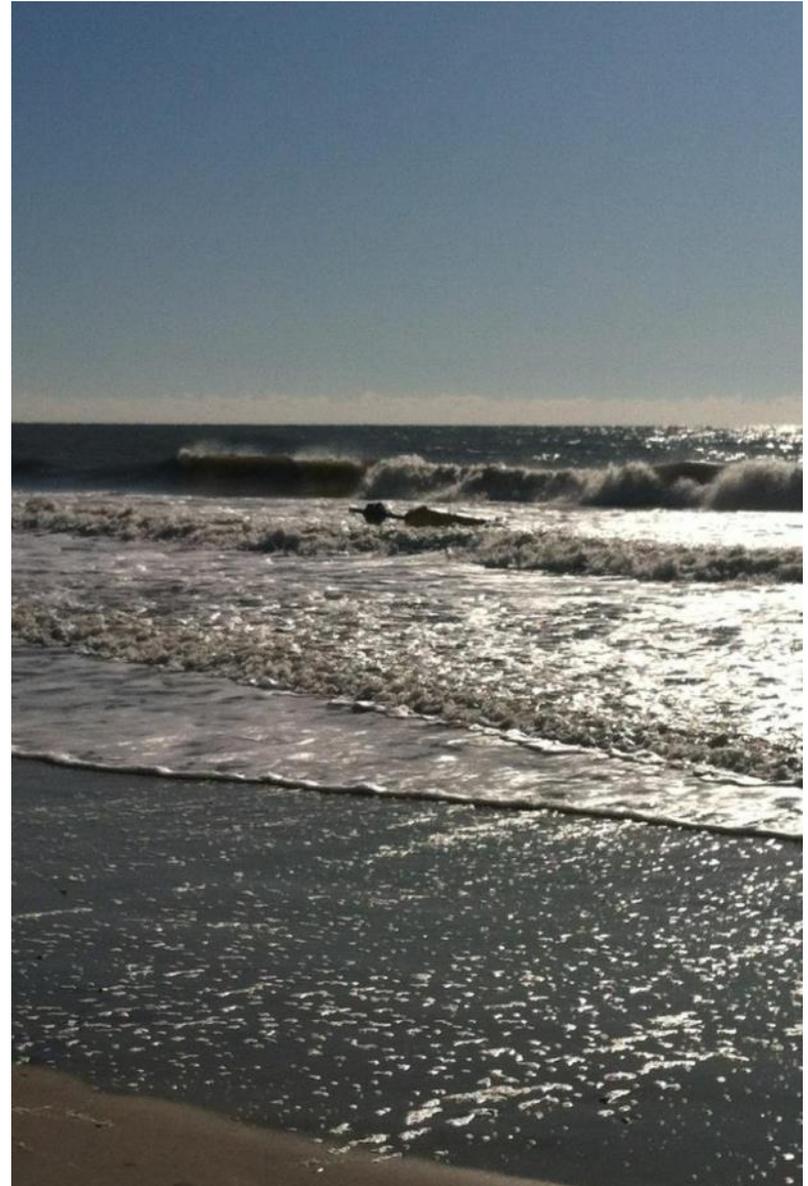
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OCEAN PHOTO

Savannah Kinlaw—BCC Student

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THE BOOK THAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE OF A LIFETIME

Mary Locklear—BCC Student

The first day of my 9th grade class, there he sat: the guy in the dark colored jeans, white T-shirt, and Converse tennis shoes. I was certain that he was the guy that all the girls had talked about last year. I slowly walked to my seat and sat down a row over from him. Sure enough, it was he. I thought to myself, *I see what all the girls are talking about: big blue eyes, bright skin color, silky black hair, and a smile that would light up a room.* For the next couple of weeks, each day was like the first day all over again. I would walk by him to my seat and never look him in the eyes. One day after class, I was walking down the hallway, heading to my next class. Mr. Blue Eyes walked up to me, handed me a book, and said, “Here’s your book you left in class.”

The next day was very different in class. No more staring from the side-lines, I walked in class and made eye contact without feeling uneasy. I did not have to sneak a peek at him anymore. As months passed, we began to talk often after school, on the phone, or at the skating rink. We were spending so much time together that other friends at school started asking if we were dating. The fact was that he felt like a brother to me. After getting to know him, I realized he was a special friend, and I did not want to jeopardize that. We really enjoyed doing things together and did not care what other people thought.

On January 16, 1989, at 10:30 p.m., I was listening to the radio in my room when I received a phone call, telling me that Brent “Blue Eyes” Lawson had been killed in an automobile accident. My heart sank. It was difficult to come to grips

with such a loss. Class wasn't the same the next day. The desk I once feared to walk by was empty. As the day carried on, I anxiously watched Brent's desk in hopes he would walk in and sit down. As I glanced down on my desk, I saw the book he returned to me, and the harsh reality of his death finally hit me. What wouldn't I do to see his smiling face again?! From that moment on, I have looked at life differently. I will never again be afraid to get to know someone and waste precious time that could be spent with him.



COLLAGE

Kathy McGurgan—BCC Staff

STREET RACER

Andrew Norris —BCC Student

I look up from the road, and in my rear view mirror, I can see the flashing blue lights. Looking back, I knew I was doing something terrible before the light ever turned green. I won't start from the time I left my home until the race began. If I were to do that, you would be nodding off and probably even drooling. Instead, I'll start right in the meat of things to tell you what street racing can cost you.

It's a beautiful day when I pull up to the red light at the intersection in my green 1996 Honda Civic hatchback. My midnight black, tinted windows are down as far as they can possibly go when I hear what sounds like thunder pull up beside me. It is a teal-colored Mustang, with soulless, black window tint and tires that look they can use a diet— they are so fat.

I am relaxing there in my car, staring at the red light and daydreaming about what I might do when I get to my destination. All of a sudden, I hear the revving of an engine and the vibration of an exhaust. It sounds like a jet is taking off beside me; it is the Mustang. I look over, but all I can make out is a dark silhouette through the tinted glass, and the driver seems to be looking my way.

VROO! I nearly jump out of my seat! This person is trying to get my attention, I think to myself. Let me explain something to you in case you don't know. When the driver beside you keeps revving his engine, trying to get your attention, it only means one thing: LET'S RACE!!! With that in mind, let's get back to the story.

The driver hits the gas again, revving the engine up so violently that the car begins to shake. At this time, I'm thinking that this guy has no clue what he is getting himself into because in my little 4-cylinder hatchback, under the hood sleeps a hungry, vehicle-devouring beast!

I hit my throttle, sending popping sounds like fireworks out of my exhaust. The light turns green, and we both bolt off the line like horses at a race track. I am going through the gears, and by the time I hit second or third, I no longer see the Mustang. I assume I have blown the tires off the Mustang and left it at the light. With a huge smile on my face, I finally look back and see the teal-colored bumper coming around the bend—and with it, a police officer.

I was young, dumb, and did not care about what I was doing. I ended up getting a ticket with three violations on it: speeding, street competition, and reckless driving. I walked away with less than I deserved; the police officer could have arrested me and taken my license right there on the side of the highway.

The best thing that happened to me that day wasn't winning a stupid "race" or what I did when I got to my destination. The most important thing was that I learned a valuable lesson. My ignorance could have cost me greatly; I could have injured not only myself but countless others. Driving is a privilege, not a right, and it should not be wasted on showing others how big my ego or my engine is!



FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD DREAM CREATOR

Skylar Farrow—BCC Student

As a kid, I was always fascinated with bold, bright colors. My grandmother and great-aunt were both artists and craft-makers. My grandmother's art, some of which hung in our house, intrigued me. At a young age, I was strongly encouraged to read, write, and express my creativity in any way possible. My earliest memories included reading Dr. Seuss books along with the Dick and Jane readers. I also spent much of my time with a crayon in my hand, placing color on anything I could find. This included coloring books, the walls, the coffee table, etc. Although I read plenty, I was hesitant to develop a lasting interest in the books I was reading.

Fast forward—the scene is Christmas morning 2002. My father, mother, sister, and I are sitting in a circle-like formation in the middle of the living room floor. We each have our own respective pile of presents. My turn to open a present is approaching, and the anticipation is building. What could it be? What wonderful gift will I be receiving next? My sister discards the excess wrapping paper, and the duty of opening a present falls on me. Eagerly, I choose the nearest present I can get my hands on. I tear through the wrapping paper with my eyes glued to the objects in my hand, a collection of comic books, with a Spiderman issue right on top. The bold color, crisp outlines, and details all appeal to me in the best way possible.

That comic book was all it took to broaden my intrigue and further my fascination of comic books and the heroes

portrayed in them. I was a very visual child, and the thought of a book full of margin-to-margin pictures with minimal words excited me. Each picture depicted such vivid actions, such as Spiderman swinging from a web to clash with a bad guy, or Peter Parker rushing into the Daily Bugle to deliver pictures to J. Jonah Jameson. At that age, the pictures were what mattered the most and told me enough of the story by themselves. Getting old, I began to actually read the dialogue and settings descriptions and plot development placed within the comic books and thus gained a whole new understanding of the story.

Growing up with this newfound interest in reading, I began to read book series such as *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, *Cirque du Freak*, and my personal favorite, *Harry Potter*. What intrigued me about reading was how a writer could concoct this immense story with such intricate details and fully developed characters. The thought of that type of storytelling went way over my head and sparked my interest in writing. Alongside reading, producing art also played a huge part in my life. Being able to convey an emotion or idea with absolutely no words appealed to me. My grandmother especially encouraged me to be artistic and creative, which allowed ideas to flow from my brain to a medium.

When considering potential careers, I settled on two possibilities: artist or writer. My goal even in my early life was to become a successful artist. I was always creating art from coloring with crayons in coloring books to drawing cartoon characters in my sketchbook. However, in recent years, I have also found my interests in telling stories through words. My main inner struggle is determining

which path to choose. However, I discovered I could choose both by entering a Sequential Art path that combines the skills of an artist and the storytelling skills of a writer. This path would prepare me to tell stories visually in the form of comic books, graphic novels, cartoons, comic strips, Manga, children's books, and storyboards. My dream scenario would include completing this path, being recruited by Marvel, and writing/illustrating the very comic book superhero who influenced me as a child, Spiderman.

All it took was a comic book that my parents bought for 25 cents at a yard sale. That Spiderman comic book struck an irreversible interest inside of me. The artist inside me awoke and began to work. Entering Savannah College of Art and Design is the first step followed by taking part in the Sequential Art program in order to develop and perfect my skills. From there, I can start my career as a comic book writer/illustrator for Marvel, DC, Darkhorse, or some other comic book company. Now, who said comic book superheroes cannot change lives?





BEACH PHOTO

Savannah Kinlaw—BCC Student

MAMA SAID

Ann Russell—BCC Faculty

As a child, I was blessed with a family that lived by sage sayings passed along from generation to generation. My mama, a quiet, perceptive, dry-witted little woman, often imparted her wisdom in the form of these sayings... sometimes resulting in hilarity and sometimes “fear.”

These anecdotes are in no order, nor are they themed. Rather, they are snapshots remembered by their impact on my self-image, esteem, attitude, philosophy, and character. We learn who we are, not through material possessions, but through how we see ourselves reflected in the eyes of people we respect.....and those reflections build us.

When I lamented that my youngest child was a handful and might drive me more insane, Mama said:

It isn't her; it's you. You have to see things from a different perspective. You were a handful and always determined to have the last say and to do things your way. She is you. When you were younger, I realized I could either have a child who minded me all the time or none of the time. The choice was mine. I learned to tell you to do whatever it was one more time and then stop. That way, you could have the last *do*, and I could have you mind me. And so I had perfect children.

When I discovered how poor we were and how I did not have the cool clothes or toys some other kids did and how some folks looked down their noses at us, Mama said:

Don't mind them. They are only ten cent millionaires. If

we could buy them for what they are really worth and then sell them for what they think they are worth, we would be real millionaires. Spend no time thinking of what they have or what you don't have. All of us put our britches on the same way every day--one leg at a time. Their britches just cost them more.

Her philosophy that character was more important than possessions stuck with me.

In second grade, we had a health assessment day. I rushed home excited because I weighed 41 pounds and was 39 inches tall. The problem was that I was convinced that I was 39 feet tall. I was adamant and could not be convinced I was not a giant. My aunt, who was visiting, laughed and laughed and told my mother, "Small as I was I would probably always be a runt." I asked Mama what a "runt" was. And Mama said, "A runt, baby girl, is a tiny package filled with so much energy and imagination and fun that it simply spills out everywhere. Runts always achieve more. Be proud to be a runt." And so I was, even as the smallest person in our school all the way through the start of fifth grade.

Mama was a high school dropout...quit in eleventh grade because she refused to speak in front of a class. Regardless, she was highly educated, read voraciously, even our school books, and had a doctorate in survival. She believed in education and worked three jobs to support us. The rule was that when she got home at night, 9-10 o'clock usually, our homework had to be on the kitchen table so she could check it. Never were we allowed the excuse that we had no homework. One day, I had, once again, talked too much in school, and had to write 500 times "I will not talk too much

in class." For reasons I cannot explain, I thought leaving those pages on the table as my homework was a good idea. Mama said, "Old sister, get out here. (She called me "old sister" when I was in ditch the deepest.) Sit down at this table. You have work to do." She made me write 100 times--at ten o'clock at night—"I am sorry for being rude and disrespectful to my teacher." Then she explained very patiently to me, "I don't care if you are dumb as a post and slow as molasses in January; you will not act the fool in school. I send you there to learn, and that is what you will do even if it kills us both." It wasn't hard for me to figure which of us would go first, so I really did try to tone it down.

Another incident along these same lines occurred when I was in fifth grade. Back then, teachers hand wrote report cards and included a personal comment every six weeks. My comment never varied; it was always something along the lines of "Ann is a very good student, but she talks too much in class." When yet another report card with this kind of comment was on the table for Mama to sign, the school got a reply. Mama said, "She talks too much at home, too, but we have to keep her anyway." We did not get that comment again.

In eleventh grade, I won a public speaking contest at the district DECA (a business club) meeting. As the winner, I could go to Raleigh for an overnight stay and compete at the state level. I was so excited; I cannot describe it. The cost of this adventure was \$57 for bus, hotel and meals. I could not wait to tell Mama. She was so happy and proud for me, and then she sat me down and calmly explained the facts of life. Mama said:

We don't have \$57. That is as much or more than I make

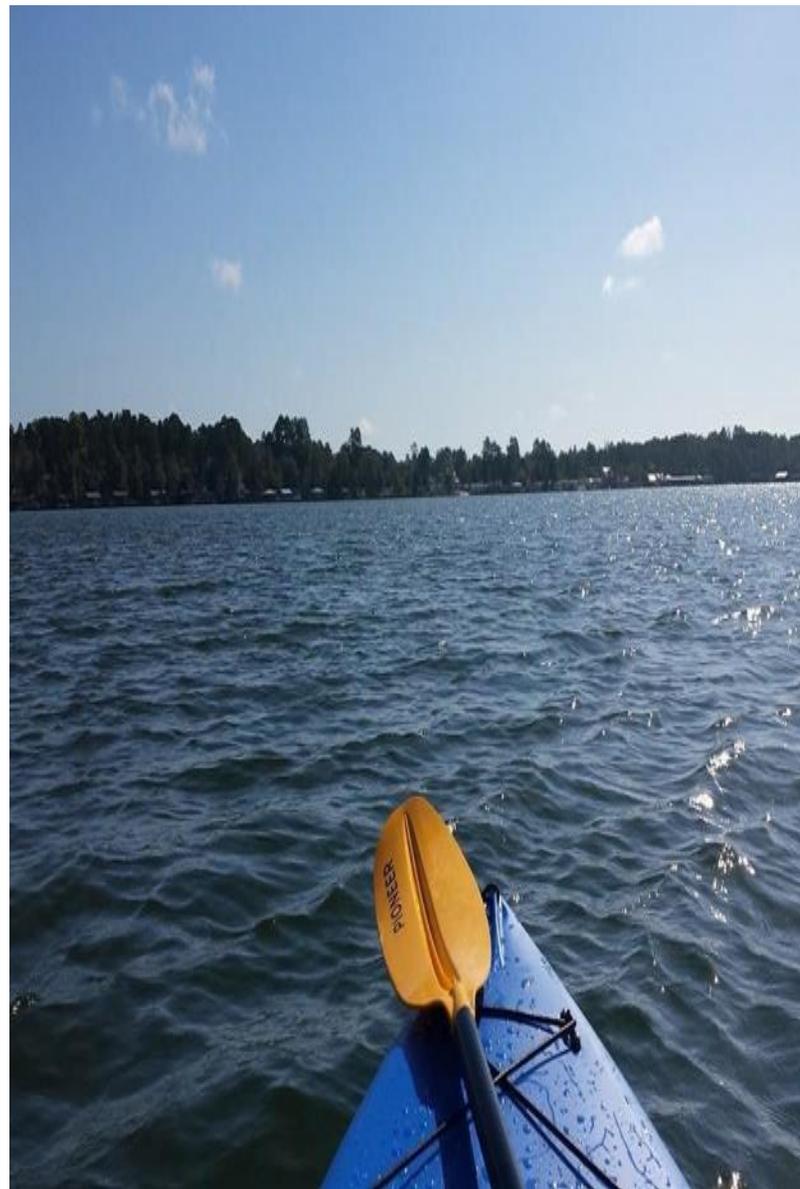
in a week. I want you to go and have this chance, but you will have to decide what it is worth to you. You have strong hands, good legs, a sharp mind, a bicycle, a wagon, a rake, a broom, and time. Bottles pay two cents deposit each at the store, and scrap metal brings so much a pound. If you want this, figure out how to get it with these things you have. We all have to make hard choices in life, and deciding what is worth the effort is one of them.

At first I was stunned, never thinking that this would be part of her response. Then, I made up my mind. And I went to work. Five weeks later, my \$57 paid in full, I went to Raleigh with the club, stayed at the Sir Walter Raleigh Hotel, ate at the Angus Barn, met Governor Bob Scott, and won at the state level.

One final lesson in this short list is also about perspective. When I was nine years old, my baby brother, age five, was hit by a car and killed. My parents split up after that. A year and a half later, my grandma died, and then six months after that, my granddaddy died. Mama lost her son, her mama, her daddy, and her husband in a 2.5 year span. I listened to her cry at night after we were all in bed-- for years. Then one day, I asked her if she was mad at God for losing so many people we loved. I confessed knowing she was sad and that she cried. And Mama said:

Mad at God? No, Baby Girl, I am grateful. Randy (my brother) was sent here for a specific number of days, as all of us are. I got to be his mama every one of those days. I feel as special as Mary. I am sad. I miss all of them. But no, never mad at God. I was chosen for this, and I will bear it because I must. You be glad, too. You got to be his big sister every day, too.

Perspective...can change everything. Mama said so.



KAYAK

Kathy McGurgan—BCC Staff

PREDATORS OF MEN

Joshua Gonderman—BCC Student

Fire crackled in the middle of the starry night. The desert wind had not enough howl to cover the huffing of the beasts that lurked nearby. A circle of savage and ravenous animals slowly moved around in the wide open bowl of dust. In the center of this circle, just beside the hot, dim flame, a figure of four men stood staring into the night with their backs against each other in an attempt to keep these creatures at bay. Meanwhile, the beasts gnashed their teeth together. The men knew their claws would be sharp and hard like cold steel blades waiting to bathe in blood. The darkness of night shrouded all in a cloak of pitch black, for there was no moon to illuminate the ground. The creatures' hair concealed their bodies, for it was as dark as a raven's feathers. Fear gripped the men as they heard their stalkers' empty stomachs rumble while their mouths anticipated the meal to come. With each man's back covered by his neighbor, the men stood together, gripping some form of weapon in their hands tightly, scanning the dark and expecting the first attack.

Frank was a ranch hand who was heading for Dallas to gather more supplies. His weapon of choice was the Winchester repeater, "The gun that's winning the west," as Frank would claim. Six bullets rested in the magazine with one more loaded into the chamber. Frank's sight was fantastic and his aim flawless in the morning sun, but in this dark, dry, dusty blackness, it failed him.

To his left was Pete, an elder prospector traveling to look for gold in some place called California. This place was a

myth to most people, but Pete believed it to be west of the world. To see his hands tremble while holding a small six-shooter, however, would make everyone think he would not survive to see this "California" that he spoke of before.

To the right of Frank stood a ranger named Daniel. Frank had known Dan since he was a squirt no taller than the knee. Daniel was always polishing his star ever since he got it, but he paid no attention to his .45 rifle. The barrel was rusted, and chips of wood were missing from the butt. It showed how little he thought of danger.

The last man was more a mystery to everyone, some bounty hunter that popped up from nowhere while the previous three were setting up camp. His twin Dragoons, unlike Dan's rifle, glistened in the light of the pyre. A bandana draped across his face the whole time. A big brimmed, grey Stetson hat sat on his head. A charcoal colored leather trench coat hid his body and belt full of long cones of lead, and his boots clanged from spurs as he walked. What was he here for? Why had he arrived in this place? Was he hunting one of the other three men? Was he chasing someone, or something? The only other words he had spoken earlier in his deep, hardy voice, aside from his occupation was the sentence, "I have been sent to find the Drake the Mean Beast. He has killed well over 100 men, women, and children."

Four men held together that night and kept close eyes on the borders that were set. However, the next morning, the four men were nothing more than skeletons being picked clean of the remaining flesh that was left behind by their predators. And who were these predators? They were other men known as cannibals, savage men and women who had long since abandoned the civilized world and become creatures of hunger

living in caves in the desert. These cannibals appeared to be human, but they possessed the souls of wolves and coyotes. They could easily hide among gentlefolk again if they so chose. Thus, there could very well be a cannibal inside any man, and no one else would be the wiser.



LANDSCAPE PHOTO

Jordan Hayes—BCC Student

MY SELF-PROPOSAL

Angel Leon-Bautista—BCC Student

I want to propose to myself how I will make and live a more fun, free, happy, and productive life than before. First, I want to increase my chances of living a healthier and longer life, learn how not to take everything so seriously, enjoy life and try to take everything it will throw at me, meet the other better half of me, and become a man of value instead of a man of success.

The way that I want to start this is by taking my medications for my diabetes on time and starting to watch out for what I eat, drink, and introduce into my system. I will start going to the gym and get healthier by eating well and exercising more often. I want to live a long time and not die like my father did, in a hospital bed with my family crying, when I know that I can do better. I feel like I have come too far in my new life to die now.

Moreover, although I always like to be left alone, I need to start to be friendlier, to be less paranoid, and seem more adult like than a teenager. I need to smile more often so people can see that I'm a good person and not some thug or aggressive person. I want people to understand that before coming to BCC, my life was like a battlefield where I feared anyone could turn into my worst enemy and kill me. Therefore, if I always seem bottled up or paranoid, it's because my mentality is still in that mode, and it is hard for me to transcend into a more relaxed and happy life.

I need to start enjoying life more because life is just a one-way trip. There is no return, rewind, or pause on life. I want to enjoy life by traveling the world, hanging with my role models

and with the love of my life, and experience real freedom. I want to meet my better half, the person that I will most likely marry and do anything for; the queen of my castle, the most beautiful person in the world; I mean inside and out. That girl will make me go weak in the legs by just smiling at me and saying, "Hi, Love!!" That girl will accept me the way I am, not for what I can provide. She and I can meet on a different level than anybody else and create a better world around us.

When I say, "become a man of value instead of success," I mean that I want to be a resourceful person. If people want to talk or learn something, I can teach them or help them understand things that they can't. Money to me isn't everything in this world. I prefer to have friends, loved ones, and my pets than to have money. Money only leads to power, obsession, problems, and struggle with oneself. I want knowledge, peace, love, understanding, and respect. This is the proposal I want to complete before my sunset comes into view. I hope that I can achieve most of these things before my number is called.



HIGH SCHOOL: WHAT AN EXPERIENCE!

Ansel Grissett —BCC Student

I don't have too many stories worth telling; I live a pretty slow life. Yet, I dig deep and remember this one. Actually, that entire day is pretty vivid in my head. It plays out like this. . .

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BE. . . Out of pique, I unplug the alarm clock without thinking that I don't know how to set it. "Oh, well! Dad can probably fix it," I think sheepishly. Slowly, I trudge to the bathroom despite being barely able to see. It's never been this hard to get up in the morning before; however, now I have to wake up at six in the morning to catch the bus to high school.

Everything goes as usual in getting ready for school; however, there is almost an hour until the bus finally comes. I decide to watch television to put my nerves at ease, so I relax on the couch in the living room. "It's just school; all of my friends are going to be there." What wishful thinking on my part!

The hour passes, and I'm standing outside in my driveway, rubbing my shoes in the grass to get some mud off. "I must look incredibly stupid to people driving by." Waiting there, I check my phone for the time. "On the first day, already ten minutes late." Ten more minutes pass. Nothing. Pacing around in the dew graced grass, I think to myself about how the movies compare to the actual high school. "Kids don't actually get thrown in trash, do they?" At the thirty minute mark, the bus has to come now or never. Curiously, I look down the long road to see if anything at all

is coming. Still nothing!

Fortunately, my dad is still home. While tracing my steps back up to the house, I hear a large vehicle stopping and starting again. I quickly walk farther out in the yard to see what it is. Without composure, a yellow deathtrap puffs into my view. "Is it my bus?" I walk closer to the driveway just in case. It speeds right by me. "I'm sure that's a no," I rhetorically think to myself. "Forget this! I don't care if it does come." I walk back into the house and try to find my dad, wherever he is.

I find him still sleeping, yet a couple of repeated phrases change that. "THE HOUSE IS ON FIRE!" He jumps up to see me on the other side of the room. "What are you doing?" he asks as if he is amazed by something. "I need a ride to school; the bus is late." He gets up slowly, slips his shoes on, and we head out. I know I have about twenty minutes until my high school life starts. I am so nervous; I feel as if I am going to explode.

Arriving at the main entrance, I admire how big the school is; two floors are new to me. I nervously think, "The work is going to be hard." I tell my dad bye and walk through the double doors at the entrance, then through . . . metal detectors! "It's going to be a while until I get used to that," I think. Past a second set of double doors, I look up to see what I think is going to be a bigger place. "Wow! The atrium is this big; I bet everything else is huge!" That assumption only applies to the cafeteria. Everything else is the same as the other schools. Following a small sense of disappointment, I look around to a huge room full of other high school goers. Walking around, staff members say either to go to the cafeteria or stay in the atrium. "Well, I already ate," so I pick a

spot in the middle of the atrium and sit along the benches (That's what I think they are.). Eager to get out of this loud setting, I check my phone only to see class starts in twenty minutes. "This is going to be a nightmare!" So to pass the time as usual, I browse the Web on my phone. People are awfully curious about what I'm doing. Students walk up to me, only to say "What phone is that?" "People here must have nothing better to do," I think in disgust. Ten minutes go by, and I don't see a single friend (not that I had many in the first place).

The bell rings, and I go up to first period to what looks like a class full of idiots. Desks are crooked, and the classroom is freezing. Students are throwing paper, already swearing at the teacher and walking out to skip class. The English teacher isn't having it; he threatens a write-up if students don't behave. "I hope that works," I wish to myself. It would have been a good period if it had worked. Five students leave the classroom either by escort to detention or just walk out. "Good riddance!" The lesson he teaches is great, but I don't remember having one similar to it ever again. At the end of the period, the bell rings for second period, which is down the hall.

Math, my worst enemy! After being bumped into for the thousandth time, I make it. I walk in to see familiar faces. We greet each other, but as I move further over the threshold, I notice the desks are placed together in fours. "This teacher must have it out for me," I think as I sit down. The class proceeds, but it almost seems like the teacher doesn't want us to learn. She contradicts herself and changes the formula. Some bloke in the back has enough; he gathers his things and walks out. Thinking back on it now, I say he probably didn't

understand anything that was going on. One contradiction later, a girl gets up this time. She points out the teacher's contradictions and asks some question close to home. "Do you even know what you're doing? You're leading us in circles. You need to quit if this is the best you can do." The teacher retorts, "GET OUT! I will not be disrespected in my own classroom. GET OUT!" The girl, whose name evades me at the time of this writing, marches off without taking anything. "She must be planning something," I think to myself. A few minutes later, she comes back with an assistant principal. (We have two.) The three of them bicker about what I assume to be a misunderstanding until the bell rings. Hardly anyone learns a thing, so a buddy I am sitting with asks if I understand what the lesson is about. I have a loose idea, but I don't want to steer him the wrong way. "I know less than you do," I jokingly respond.

The trip to third period is down the stairs, through a herd of people. It can be described as an inter-city traffic jam. People walk slowly or not at all. Two groups of girls are blocking the doorway to the stairway, arguing about not walking fast enough. Foreigners speak better English than those two ever could. One of the staff members finally takes them off to detention. (It's a really popular place these days.) Thus, I proceed to my computer class.

However, when I get there, the teacher says, "This class has first lunch; go on now!" It is only after hearing that that I remember there are four lunch periods (three, as of now). Out in front of the lunch room, there's a line that goes to the bottom of the stairs. I get to back of line and peer around to see the front. I cannot see the front, but I do see that the other lunch line isn't open. "This school only gets worse," I

think as I scan the cafeteria. As the line inevitably gets shorter, I notice people behind me go to the front to skip and get away with it. "Unbelievable!" Another thought flies out. Assuming any school in this county is any good is a tragic mistake on my part, I come to realize. Five minutes pass until my turn to get lunch, and it is something I wish I could name. Then, a moment I will always remember: I turn around to see the tables. I freeze for a second, thinking I don't see anyone I know. Instinctively, I pick a direction and walk, hoping to see someone. The outcome is unfortunate. As a result, I pick a table that is half empty and sit on the empty half. It isn't like I need friends; it's that since I don't have a group to sit with, my seat placement will change day to day. I eat and entertain myself on my phone. Then déjà-vu comes around. "Aye boa, what phone is dat?" someone that I could have sworn I saw in detention earlier says to me. "It seems like everyone here is obsessed with stealing things," I think to myself. "Don't worry about it," I say as if I am mocking him. "Forgetch youf do den." He then walks off and the bell rings.

On my way back to class is where I am dumbstruck; I have to pass the bathroom with what looks like smoke from something burning inside. I stop out of interest; however, no one else does. It seems normal to everyone else until a passing comment makes me realize how simple the situation really is. "Rico an hih boys smokin' in dere again." Of course, the answer was easy. I leave it alone, and walk back to class.

Everything seemed pretty standard, except for one half of the class where there is a bunch of mouth-breathers. Constant yammering comes from one side, and the teacher is never in the room. "What am I supposed to learn at this

school anyway?" I think. "Well, at least I have a computer in front of me." Flustered, I try to block out all the arguing and what sounds like stuff being thrown around until the worst bell sound ever, chimes in. Hurriedly, I pick my bag up and walk out. "A semester of that is impossible," I think to myself.

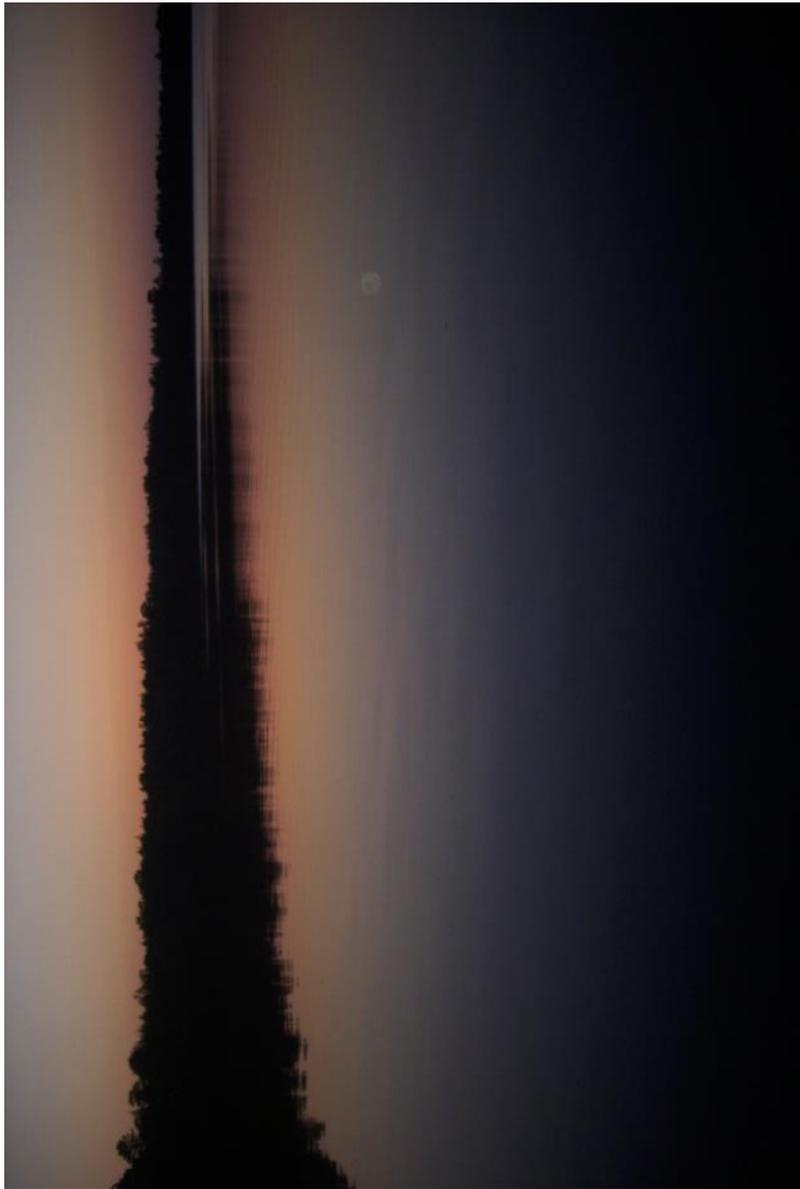
Having to go back up the stairs is almost as bad as trying to get down. People in front are moving slowly, stopping, or even going the completely opposite way. "What a chore this is," I think to myself as I round the corner to what seems to be the third fight I've witnessed today. Instructors are tripping over each other to break it up. The hall is filled with what seems like the entire school crowded around to see ants crawling. The situation is finally resolved and the guilty students are sent to a magical place.

I reach the end of the hall to my last period of the day, world history, my favorite subject. Nothing could go wrong here; I would not mind just hearing the teacher's voice for once. (I never thought I was always such an optimist.) As I should have expected, the class is full of idiots who cannot comprehend the word silence. The teacher waddles into the bleak classroom after the bell rings; she looks as if she has not slept in days. The lighting of the class could be the reason; she never turns the lights on. She puts a PowerPoint up and gives a lecture. It would be nice if she could get a clear word in. Half of the class is sent out because of their behavior over the dumbest things. Sure, you see erasers thrown, but handfuls of hand sanitizer? The absurdity is far beyond anything I have ever seen. "How is this school even open at this point?" confusingly I ponder.

At the end of the period, the principal comes on the overhead speaker to give his goodbyes. "He's leaving on the

first day?" a girl shouts for no reason across the class. I think of how much torment it's going to be to get out of the school. Overly crowded and endless shoving may get the better of me before I graduate. After the principal finishes his closing announcements, the dismissal bell rings. A flurry of students instantly crowds the halls. But this time they are actually moving fast to get out. I'm glad I already know my bus number; I'd certainly be lost here.

As I walk out of the front doors, the sunshine hits my face as if I have been a shut-in for the past year. It feels great to be out at the time, but the feeling goes away soon. All the way at the end of the long line of busses in the parking lot is my bus. "Whoever set the order of the buses must have it out for me, too." Luckily when I get on, I'm one of the first. "I'm taking the front seat; the back is where all of the idiots are going to be." That turns out to be the best idea I have had all day. All the rowdiness is in the back, and I'm up here. While it is insanely loud back there, it is still moderately loud, but it isn't on the level as if someone would flip a table over. Occasionally, someone would be thrown to the front, "How did that person even get to high school?" I wonder. Then the bus slows down. I look outside the window to see familiar surroundings. Then, my house appears past the trees and the driver comes to a halt at my driveway. I get off with a great sense of relief that the day is finally over. Getting back into my house, I walk to my room, throw my stuff down, change clothes, and lie down in my bed. I think to myself a bit, "I already hate this school. It's almost as if the good kids are surrounded by an army of idiots," before drifting off to the feeling of gliding over all.



WATERSCAPE

Jordan Hayes—BCC Student

THE PASSING OF AMERICA'S CINCINNATUS

Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty

On the evening of December 14, 1799, America's Cincinnatus, George Washington, lay on his deathbed at his beloved Mount Vernon plantation in Virginia. For several hours, he had been suffering from a terrible condition known as bacterial epiglottitis. This painful affliction occurs when the epiglottis, cartilage at the base of the tongue that covers the windpipe when swallowing, becomes inflamed due to injury, virus, or respiratory infection. The result of this inflammation can be death due to a person's airway becoming blocked. While we cannot know for sure what caused Washington's condition, Dr. David Morens, of the National Institute of Health, suggests that Washington may have had a difficult time swallowing in the latter years of his life due to "his poorly fitting dentures" and that "it is conceivable that he occasionally aspirated the hot teas he was fond of drinking" (Morens, 2000, p. 1222). Others have looked for clues in the many illnesses that Washington suffered throughout life. Whatever the exact cause of death, his final hours were spent in great discomfort.

It all started the day before, December 13, 1799, when Washington rode his horse around his plantation at Mount Vernon. The day was cloudy, snowy, and windy. After being out in the wet cold all day, Washington "complained about a cough, a runny nose and a distinct hoarseness of voice" (Henriques, 2000, p. 1). It does not appear that he was overly concerned with his condition since he continued his business around the plantation and arrived late for dinner. This tardiness may explain why Washington, a man who

believed in punctuality, refused to change out of his wet clothes before dinner. The day ended with Washington recording what would be his last written words in his private journal, “Mercury at 28 at night.”

Around 2:00 A.M. on the morning of December 14, Washington awoke with a severe sore throat and shortness of breath. Washington’s wife, Martha, immediately called on Colonel Tobias Lear, his chief aide. After seeing Washington’s serious condition, Lear called upon Washington’s personal doctor, Dr. James Craik. Despite the presence of his doctor, Washington’s condition continued to deteriorate. By daybreak, he had developed a fever, and his breathing became even more difficult.

The treatments used by Washington’s doctor sound bizarre in our world of advanced medicine. For example, on multiple occasions throughout the day of December 14, Washington was bled. Bleeding or bloodletting was a common medical treatment used in the late 18th century to treat inflammation. While it is difficult to know exactly how much blood was removed from Washington, Dr. Howard Markel, director of the Center for the History of Medicine, and the George E. Wantz, distinguished professor of History of Medicine at the University of Michigan, used Colonel Tobias Lear’s account of Washington’s death to estimate that over “80 ounces” or about “40 percent of his total blood volume” was removed (Markel, 2014). While no one believes that the bloodletting was the cause of Washington’s death, it certainly did not help his situation. According to Lear’s account, another treatment did almost kill Washington when he was given “a mixture of molasses, vinegar, and butter...but could not swallow a drop. Whenever he attempted it, he

appeared to be distressed, convulsed, and almost suffocated” (Henriques, 2000, p.1).

By late afternoon, Washington’s condition worsened. He struggled to catch his breath and constantly changed his position in the bed trying to get comfortable. Despite his discomfort, Washington did attend to several matters of business during the day. For example, he and Martha worked on the final version of his last will and testament. He was also very aware of the people around him. On several occasions, he thanked his doctors for their work, showed concern for his wife’s well-being, and once made sure a slave named Christopher was able to sit down after standing for an extended period of time.

While some people consider Washington to have been a deeply religious man; and indeed, there is plenty of evidence that he had a personal faith, historians often find it interesting that he never called for a pastor during his final day and hours of life. Many historians have used this as evidence of Washington being a deist and not an orthodox Christian. However, Washington’s step-granddaughter defended her grandfather’s faith saying, “I should have thought it the greatest heresy to doubt his firm belief in Christianity. His life, his writings, prove that he was a Christian. He was not one of those who act or pray, ‘that they may be seen of men’ [Matthew 6:5]. He communed with his God in secret [Matthew 6:6]” (Lewis, 1883).

Washington’s final moments came in the evening of December 14. According to Lear’s account,

About ten he made several attempts to speak to me before he could effect it, at length he said, -- "I am just going. Have

me decently buried; and do not let my body be put into the Vault in less than three days after I am dead." I bowed assent, for I could not speak. He then looked at me again and said, "Do you understand me? I replied "Yes." "Tis well" said he.

About ten minutes before he expired (which was between ten & eleven o'clock) his breathing became easier; he lay quietly; -- he withdrew his hand from mine, and felt his own pulse. I saw his countenance change. I spoke to Dr. Craik who sat by the fire; -- he came to the bedside. The General's hand fell from his wrist -- I took it in mine and put it into my bosom. Dr. Craik put his hands over his eyes and he expired without a struggle or a sigh! (Arnold, n.d.)

A private funeral service for George Washington was held on December 18, 1799 at his Mount Vernon estate. However, the nation, shocked to hear of the passing of its hero, mourned in a national ceremony on December 26, 1799 in Philadelphia. The events of that day included a procession, tolling church bells, military honors, and a memorial service at the New Lutheran Church on Fourth Street. Around the nation, "mock" funerals were held in various communities as the nation said goodbye to its founding father, its own Cincinnatus.

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HIS MASTERPIECE

Andrea Carter Fisher—BCC Staff

LIVERPOOL BOUND

Patrick Sinclair—BCC Student

I jumped in the car after telling my mother goodbye and started off towards Rocky Mount. I was raring to go: music blaring to keep me awake for the long drive ahead, most likely Red Hot Chili Peppers, coming through the speakers; air conditioning pumped up to the max to keep the car nice and cool; and Bible lying in the passenger's seat, opened to Psalm 91, as always. All I could think about was the amazing experience ahead and the time I was going to spend with my father. Liverpool bound, I roared straight through Tar Heel and Gray's Creek, trying to get to I95 North as fast as possible.

"Won't be long now," I said to myself as I took the I95 exit. After another hour of driving, I chose to take exit 95 to the Smithfield Shopping Outlets, always a usual part of the trip to my dad's. However, unlike other times, I browsed very little and left the shops empty handed, knowing that I would need all my money for the following day's adventure. I had only about 50 miles left to the exit that would take me off the interstate and to my dad's. Cars whizzed past me left and right. I just thought, "I hope you get where you're going." Finally, I reached exit 145 safe and sound. Seeing the usual hotels and gas stations, I was really getting excited to see my dad.

When I leapt out of my car in Dad's driveway, I already heard Aubie barking in anticipation. Pushing the front door open, I shouted, "Hey, Dad, I'm home! Just can't wait for tomorrow!"

"I know, Buddy, me neither," Dad exclaimed as he grabbed me in a big hug and thumped me on the back.

Beside myself with anticipation, I took my shower and headed to bed earlier than ever. I didn't have any idea that I could sleep, but I fell asleep soundly on the couch with Aubie lying next to me. At daybreak I bolted awake, brushed my teeth, pulled on my Liverpool jersey and hopped in the car before I had time to think. Dad lagged behind with bags in his hands. As he threw them in the car, he joked, "Thanks for the help!" Climbing in behind the wheel, he turned up the radio. We were off on the three-hour trip to Charlotte.

Not soon enough for me, I started seeing the skyscrapers that indicated we were close to the big city. In our hotel room, I turned on the TV to watch soccer while Dad showered. I saw that most of the games were just getting started. Soon Dad had showered, and we piled back in the car and were on our way to Bank of America Stadium. At the stadium were thousands of Liverpool fans, just waiting to see their favorite soccer club play. Inside we found a Liverpool fan shop where I bought a jersey and a hat. We got to our seats, and I smelled the unique odor of seventy-five thousand sweaty soccer fans, mixed with the aroma of beer, hot dogs, and pizza. Nothing ever smelled better to me!

We arrived in time to see the teams warming up. I could hardly believe I was about to see my favorite soccer club play here in America, in North Carolina of all places, in front of tens of thousands of screaming fans. After about thirty minutes of practice, the teams headed back to the locker rooms to prepare for the games. I eagerly waited for them to walk back out, and as they did, I was on my feet yelling. I saw some of my favorite players right there in person. I shrieked

out their names and just went crazy! That’s when I heard the song, “You’ll Never Walk Alone,” sung before all Liverpool games, come over the loudspeaker system. I shouted at the top of my lungs, singing for my club. The whistle blew, the game started, and the fans were on their feet. In the 25th minute of the game, Liverpool scored, and the stadium erupted! My team was winning!

Liverpool went on to win 2-0 against AC Milan. I still couldn’t believe that I had just witnessed my favorite soccer club, all the way from England, play here in North Carolina. It had been the most amazing experience of my life. I thought about how much this day had cost my dad; I remembered his telling me this was my present for all the holidays this year. I asked my dad, “Why did you spend so much money for those tickets, Dad? You don’t even like soccer as much as I do.”

Dad just smiled, “Because, Scout, I wanted to get to spend some time with you before the start of your senior year, and I wanted to do something with you that you will remember for years to come.”

“Thanks, Dad. The game really meant more to me because you put all the effort and went with me. I’m glad we had the time together. Love you.”

“I love you, too, Scout. I really enjoyed the game as well,” he replied.



MR. MAYO

Ryan Baxley—BCC Student

This week, you told us to find a burger topping that we thought described us. At first, I thought this was a very difficult task. I asked around, I listened to others, and I tried Googling all the toppings I could find. I searched for inspiration in high and low places. I changed my topic once or twice or maybe even seven times. I probably made the assignment ten times more complicated than it really even needed to be. That’s just the kind of topping I am.

This past summer, I actually got the honor of working very closely to the different condiments for a burger first hand. I worked with everything the Sandwich Shop had to offer and learned the qualities of each condiment. The one I decided was most like me was Mr. Mayo. Mayonnaise is as white as it gets. He is a delicate substance. There are many people who enjoy him, and then there are those few mayonnaise freaks that just love the creamy goodness. Mayonnaise doesn’t like being put on a burger with every other freaking topping because it feels like it is put on the bottom due to its makeup. It can shine in a favored group. The group it is most commonly seen with is lettuce and tomato. Mr. Mayo should not be steamed, toasted, or heated because he is best served at chilled temperatures. He’s not hard to keep chilled; just put him in a favorable situation to be chilled (like a refrigerator). Heat him up, and he can make you sick.

There you have the Mayo makeup. Now, let’s get the Ryan makeup. I am one of the whitest guys you know. I am the definition of white and nerdy. Delicate? Yeah, that is a good

word to describe me. I'm the kind of guy who doesn't want to mess up. I strive for perfection and nothing less. I want to be the best at everything I do, and that proves many times to be a recipe for disappointment. I feel like I can please almost anyone. There are those few out there who crave a different taste, and I'm okay with that. Then, there are those who just love the taste and can't get enough. Shout out to these people for being my biggest fans.

When I go to make a burger, the mayo always goes on first. Each condiment after that is added on top until the mayo is no longer seen. Yes, it is tasted, but not seen. I know Mr. Mayo wants to be seen because that is exactly who I am. I'd like to be seen, but I hardly ever want to be the star. The most common combo is the Mayo, Lettuce, Tomato team. It has a certain ring to it. I think of my most common combo as my soccer team. When I'm with them, I feel like life is at its best. I can fly solo but feel the most comfortable with the common group. Some people may like me without my group, but I like myself with them.

Mr. Mayo is chill almost all of the time. That's how I am. I don't like being mad or sad, so I try to avoid these feelings at all costs. Keep me in a situation like you keep mayonnaise in a fridge, and all will be okay. Get me heated, and I can be a pretty sickly creature. I will grow bacteria and infest you in a second. Not literally, but you get the idea!

I feel like Mr. Mayo is the best way to describe me. I am a delicate white guy who wants to be seen but doesn't have to be the star. Keep me chilled at the right temperatures, and I can be your best friend. I operate best in my own social group and rarely venture out. I am Mr. Mayo.

MAN'S BEST FRIEND, MAN'S WORST

HEARTBREAK

Skylar Farrow—BCC Student

June 22nd, 2013

“Get back here, Sampson!” Mom shouts with no effect. Sampson continues to race across the yard to chase a blue '84 Toyota Corolla, which, in fact, resembles my sister's car. However, Amanda's car is in much worse shape than the car Sampson is pursuing.

“I'll get him, Mom,” I offer.

“Thank you. Dinner will be done soon.”

“Yes! I'll be back in a minute.” I get up from the couch, which sighs with relief, not having to hold my weight any longer. I go outside barefoot against my parents' wishes. They have promised me that one day I will end up with a nail in my foot. “Whatever,” I think to myself. “The sooner I catch the dog, the sooner I get to eat Mom's famous sausage, potatoes, and peppers. Maybe not so famous, but it's still delicious.” Stepping out into the yard, I take a deep breath of fresh air. “I need to get outside more,” I decide aloud to myself. Then I notice that Sampson has disappeared. I guess he has followed the car around the curve. “I'll go ask Mrs. Huggins,” I declare to myself.

“Hello, Mrs. Huggins, have you seen my dog? He's a blue nose pit bull. He's really cute; his name is Sampson,” I explain.

“Yes, I did, Skylar. He came across here just a little bit ago. He cut across into the woods back there though,” she responds.

“Thank you, ma’am.” I decided to go back home. He will show up eventually.

Several hours later, I hear the familiar sounds of nails scrapping against the glass door. I approach to let him in and notice something is off. Sampson looks terrible. He trudges on over to the corner of the living room and plops down. I hurry to examine him and discover something I overlooked when I let him in: he is foaming at the mouth.

“Mom!” I exclaim. “We need to get Sampson to the vet right now! He is foaming at the mouth!”

June 25th, 2013

“So, what did the vet say?” My dad has just gotten home from picking Sampson up at the vet.

“The vet says Sampson is having seizures.” Dad quietly says. “He put him on pills that should help him a ton.”

“Any idea what caused it to just suddenly happen?”

“Could’ve gotten into poison, but I honestly doubt it. There isn’t anywhere at the house that he could’ve gotten into poison.”

A month or so passes, and Sampson seems to be recovering quite well. Sampson is almost seizure-free on the medication, or so it seems.

August 31st, 2013

“Hey, Skylar, where’s Sampson?” Dad questions. He has just gotten home from a long day of work. Hanging out

with my girlfriend, Arianna, and my cousin, Johanna, I have completely forgotten all about Sampson.

“Um, I think I let him out earlier. Hey, Mom, did you let him back in?”

Mom pops her head from behind my Dad’s laptop. “No, he didn’t come back.”

“Shit!”

Dad looks at me, furious. “Skylar! You know not to let him outside alone! What the hell were you thinking?”

“I...” I can’t get another word out. My dad has already bolted out the door to his car.

“I am going to ride up and down the road to see if he got out of the yard. Y’all check the yard.” He yells, sounding more terrified than infuriated.

Wielding flashlights, we shine around all of his favorite spots: under the porch, in the storage building, and at the edge of the woods at the back yard. But there is no sign of Sampson. We have one last place to look.

“Look, Skylar, we still have to check downhill, okay? We will find him.” Arianna comforts, not sounding certain.

“What if we don’t find him? I won’t be able to look Dad in the eyes again. He loves Sampson; we all do,” I answer, holding back tears. “He never comes out this way; I don’t see why...” I hit the ground with a heavy thud. I have tripped over something huge, but I have been talking too much to notice the object. I look around, but I can’t tell what I stumbled upon. It sure is large, though; how could I have missed it?

“Wow, that hurt. What is that?” I ask.

Arianna is the one who speaks up first. “I have no idea, let me shine my...” Her expression changes from questioning to horrified. “It’s Sampson! You tripped over Sampson! Is he alive?”

Jumping up and rushing over, I grab my flashlight and shine it on him. He looks as if he has been lying there for hours. However, his midsection is moving up and down slightly, indicating that he is still alive. “He’s okay! Come on; let’s get him back to the house!”

When Dad returns to the house, the only thing that he can conclude is that Sampson might have walked downhill, then had a seizure, and was unable to come back to the house.

“The vet is closed for Labor Day, so I will make an appointment for the 3rd, while you are in school.” Dad says.

September 3rd, 2013

Leaving school that day, I am so excited. “Gosh, I can’t wait to see him!”

“I know, honey; where’s your dad?” Arianna asks.

“Um. Is that him? Yea, it is! Awesome!”

We walk over to Dad’s grey ’05 Dodge Stratus, bearing a new dent from another deer that he ran into. We climb into the backseat, readjusting ourselves.

“So Dad, how’s Sampson? What did the vet say?” I question. I am so ready for some kind of update.

Dad hesitates and then speaks, “We had to have him put to sleep.”

“Do... wait, what?”

“I took him to the vet in Wilmington instead of Lumberton. I wanted to see if they could find out more.” He begins to sob but continues, “They did some tests and x-rays. He had a massive brain tumor, which could explain the seizures, and he was completely blind before... well. But um, they said they couldn’t do anything, but told me that we could go to Tar Heel. But even then he might not have lived throughout the procedure. So... we had to put him down.”

Nothing can cheer me up. I have lost my best pal. And he had to suffer for the last bit of his life. At least, he doesn’t have to feel the pain anymore.

December 26th, 2013

I am lying on the couch, scrolling through Facebook, with an old Christmas movie playing. Then, the front door opens. My dad walks in, holding something in his arms.

“Hey man, hold this for me; I left something in the car.” He gives me the unknown object and then heads out to his car. I look to see what it is and just about jump out of my skin. In my arms, sleeping, is a baby pit bull.

Dad comes back in with dog food and asks, “So, do you like him? I thought he was pretty cute.”

“He is.” I reply. “He’s really cute.”



CHAOS OF A GRADUATION DAY

Kathy LaMaster—BCC Student

The nosebleed should have been my first clue. Waking at 5:30 a.m. with a massive nosebleed is never a good start to a day, let alone the most exciting and important day in the life of my son. Ethan was to graduate from N.C. State in a few short hours. I was alone in a hotel room and forced myself to remain upright in the bed until the bleeding subsided. I have fainted from nosebleeds in the past, and I did not want my final moments to be spent on a cold bathroom floor and my last thought to be that I was missing my son's graduation.

I awoke a while later and quickly showered and dressed for the big day. I was about to go downstairs for breakfast when I realized that my car keys were not beside my purse, where they would normally be. I went to the reception desk and asked if there had been any keys turned in, and there had not.

I walked to my car, looking in vain for dropped keys from the prior afternoon. I dumped my new purse, cursing to myself that it was too large and cumbersome. What was I thinking bringing it instead of something smaller and easier to manage? Lost is a strong word, but I have "misplaced" many keys along the way and was down to my final car key. It was an hour until graduation and serious panic was about to set in when I dipped into one of the many side pockets of my purse and pulled out my car key.

I exhaled and settled in for a quick breakfast. I was almost finished when I noticed that my room card was missing. I perused that damn purse again and came up empty. I returned to the front desk and humbly told the same worker

that I lost my room card. She looked at me blankly and then said that she had checked me out because I had put it on the desk when asking about my car key. She had to check me back in to check me out. By this time, I just wanted to exit the hotel and never look back.

It was almost time for the big event, the occasion that I had dreamed of for so long. Ethan would be graduating from North Carolina State University, the first college graduate on either side of his family. Not only was he graduating from one of the leading engineering programs in the world, but his degree was dual, in both computer and electrical engineering. I met my mom and her much younger companion at the auditorium; they had driven in from Ohio and arrived just in time. We had only a few minutes to visit before the commencement began.

With no warning, "Pomp and Circumstance," that grandest of marches, began to play. Faculty members streamed in, dressed in full academic regalia. There was a lump in my throat, that lump that majestic music produces, the lump that grows and grows until tears flow, and I lose control. My mind was whirling. It was happening too fast! No one had reminded me about the music. Ethan's dad wasn't there and should have been, and my makeup was going to be a mess! I didn't want to miss Ethan marching in, and I wanted it all to stop. I wanted everything to begin again. I wanted it so much that I all but stomped my foot and demanded it. Seeing Mom out of the corner of my eye brought me back to reality. I dove into my pit of a purse and miraculously found tissues. I pulled myself together in time to see Ethan stride down the aisle as casually as if he were walking from his bedroom to the kitchen.

The ceremony itself was predictable. It was the first time I

heard a graduation speaker use a certain expletive, which I didn't feel was necessary, and judging from the audience's reaction, I was not alone. When Ethan's name was called, I shouted, "ETHAN!" and "WOO HOO!" He says he didn't hear me, but I don't know how he couldn't have. I did it for his dad, who had passed away the year before.

After the ceremony and the obligatory photos, we were more than ready for lunch. We all piled in Ethan's Mustang, and almost immediately, I misplaced my car key. I was momentarily frantic, all the while listening to Ethan rant, "I don't understand you women! You all carry purses and you can never find anything! Logic tells you to put your keys IN your purse!" About that time, I found the key in my lap, among the folds of my skirt. I wisely thought it best not to relay what I had already experienced with the loss of keys that morning.

Ethan chose to eat at the Carolina Ale House, a place I am certain he had frequented for more than the food. We had a lovely young waitress who promptly took our drink orders. The drinks were in huge glasses and her tray was small, which spelled disaster. One of the drinks fell off the tray and spilled onto the table, the floor, my mother's friend, my purse, and Ethan's lap. There was soda everywhere. Mom's companion jumped up and disappeared, and I attempted to assist the waitress while exhorting Ethan to "Get out of the booth and don't get any soda on your interview shirt!"

Chaos ensued and there seemed to be no end to the soda inching onto every corner of the table and beyond. Mom and I visited the restroom, both of us remarkably unscathed. As there had been quite a scene, I asked to see the manager. I explained that I did not want the waitress disciplined or fired

because of the incident as it had been an accident. He came to our table later, bent down, and said, "I understand there has been an, uh, accident, here." Ethan thought he looked and sounded like a member of the Corleone family. Despite the rocky start, it was a delicious celebratory lunch, worthy of the newly minted graduate.

We spent the remainder of the afternoon walking the campus, visiting the bell tower, and taking many commemorative photos. My heart was overflowing with happiness at the thought of having raised an engineer. I thought of Ethan's father and how proud he would have been. Joy filled my heart and contentment flooded my being. Mother's Day was two days away, and I had gotten the best gift. As the afternoon flowed into a balmy May evening, I realized that my son had achieved something that could never be taken from him. From this day forward, he would be an alumnus of N.C. State. From this day forward, he would be an engineer. As his mother, I felt proud that I had contributed to his accomplishment. I would forever bear the pride of this day. I also had something that could not be taken from me.





GOLDEN SUNRISE

Kathy McGurgan—BCC Staff

SUSIE AND SHEENA

Betty Williamson—BCC Student

Susie was a chimpanzee in Lowry Park Zoo in Tampa, Florida. Sheena was a baby elephant. My father was in charge of the birdhouse there. He found himself running a show with these two.

Susie was quite a character for a three-year-old. At the end of the show, pictures with Sheena and Susie were offered. Sheena was cooperative, but Susie was unpredictable. One day, a middle-aged lady with a large floppy-brimmed hat decorated with all kinds of wax fruit refused to leave it with a friend or with me as she got up on Sheena although we tried to talk her out of wearing her hat. Susie got up behind her. Susie plucked a fruit off the hat and tasted it. Didn't taste good, so she threw it down and got another. Everyone was laughing except my father who wasn't sure why people were laughing. I could see what Susie was doing, but he could not. By the time the pictures were done, nearly half the fruit was missing. At first, the lady was angry, but she calmed down and realized it was just Susie being Susie.

Sheena was a homebody. She did not like traveling. If she found herself in a truck, especially alone, she would rock from side-to-side until the entire truck began to tilt or somebody she knew climbed in to calm her.

One summer Sunday, quite a crowd came to see the show. The small metal bleachers only held about one third of them. I pleaded and threatened to get my mother a seat in the bleachers. I was seven, so I suggested that we kids sit on the grass well back from the show ring and apron. I tried to keep

the kids well back. When Father came, he said we were still too close. He managed to get everyone to move back another couple of feet. I sat Indian fashion in the front row of the kids facing the show ring. I could see my mother in the bleachers and my father could signal me if he wanted. We were to the left side of the show ring from the bleachers. There were kids on the right side, too. Kids were young enough to be in school.

My father had a new assistant for the daily show, Bob. Bob was supposed to keep an eye on Sheena, while Susie was in the ring performing. While Father was working with Sheena, Bob was to keep an eye on Susie. Sheena was performing and came to her finale where she “danced” (swayed) to the music of “The Baby Elephant Walk”. Susie had found out how to unhook her leash from anything else so she could explore. Then, she found out how to unhook it yet let it seem to be hooked until she vanished. Bob had put Susie on her metal scooter—the kind propelled by your foot—to ride around the show ring on the concrete apron. She had waved at me earlier. I had waved back. As she came around to my side of the ring, she stopped and picked up the scooter. She wanted to play with me. She held it over her head and grinned at me. Then she threw it!

I was terrified. Susie did not know her own strength. I remember thinking: “I can’t catch it. I could duck...but it would decapitate the kids behind me”. The next thing I knew, I was standing there with the scooter burning my hands. I will never know how I caught it. Father was white-faced and standing frozen—less than 20 feet away! Mother looked like she was about to pass out. If she did, she would fall out of the bleachers!

My shock died in the anger as the audience began clapping and calling out like it was part of the show! Father recognized my temper (his inheritance) and called me to the ring. By the time I returned to my space on the grass, I was no longer feeling violent. Some of the kids apologized to me for thinking it was part of the show because they had seen my anger rising. I was quickly feeling drained. I waited for Mother to come to me. I do not remember the rest of the afternoon.

The next Sunday, the crowd was not as bad. The show went off without a hitch. I walked Father and Susie to the primate house because I wanted to check on a monkey that I had to give to the zoo when we moved and had no place to keep her. After I checked on her, I decided to go check on Sheena.

Sheena was at war with all squirrels because she loved peanuts. She would try to bait squirrels into her house so she could step on them. They were as flat as Wiley E. Coyote after the anvil landed and usually embedded in the ground. A shovel was necessary to get them up. Other than that, she was a big baby.

I had not gone far when I heard Sheena trumpet loudly. I came around a turn in the path and saw Sheena running toward me. I stepped in her path and called her. She trumpeted again and I saw no recognition in her eyes. I jumped and turned around. I got ahead of her by running all out. I was blocked by a young family of three after a few turns in the path. “Sir, better move off the path,” I panted.

The man replied, “My family isn’t moving on your say-so. Do you think you own this place?”

“No, sir. I’ve an elephant behind me. I’m going for a keeper,” I panted. Just as I thought I would run into them, the man dove over the rail and under the concrete lip to the tiger’s cage. The woman screamed and ran into a large grassy area. I nearly ran into the baby stroller. I thought, “These are parents?” The man was now concerned with the tiger who had his paw between the bars, feeling under the concrete lip where he was hiding. I heard “My baby!” and looked at the woman, who had started back. I picked up the stroller and slung it as hard as I could toward the mother. Luckily, it landed upright. The baby giggled as I started running again.

The next obstacle was a joke. It was a chain about a foot off the ground with a sign “Authorized Personnel Only”. There was a woman there with two boys in their early teens. She made a snide remark about people that do not follow rules. I replied, “Keep the boys back, ma’am. I’ll be back with a man in a hurry.”

As I reached for the door to zoo headquarters, it opened. The man was startled to see me, but he moved out of the way. The next man pointed to the rear of the building as did the others. Father was still getting up from his desk when I reached it. “Sheena...trouble...scared,” I gasped. Father grabbed the elephant hook from the corner of his desk. Father walked fast while I filled him in. He broke into a run after he stepped over the chain. I could not resist smiling at the lady, and then I cut across the zoo to reach Sheena. I had followed the path on the way there to clear it ahead of her. I reached them in time to see Father try to get her attention. She was in full panic mode and did not recognize him. He had to jump out of her way. He braced himself and used the elephant hook to jerk her head around. Once she saw him,

she began to calm down. Father was stroking her and apologizing for using the hook and hugging her.

Bob came up panting. He told Father he was sorry, but she just bolted when he took her over the Noah’s Ark. I exploded because that meant he had taken a baby elephant over a concrete ramp with alligators underneath and onto a platform where it was known ducks were nesting. What had caused her to panic was a duck using the “broken wing defense” of her nest. “How does it feel to be a moron?! You took Sheena where the duck could scare her? Sheena’s a baby!” Father did not say a word. I took Sheena to her home the long way. I gave her some peanuts and stayed with her until Father came.

I never saw Bob again. Considering his negligence nearly got me killed twice in two weeks, I was happy with that.



REFLECTING

Diane Vitale—BCC Staff



OWL

Aaron Cox—BCC Student

THE OWL MAN

Jonathon Daniel Davis—BCC Student

Nobody in this town ever used the town's library anymore. The Hickory Saints Library has got to be the oldest building in a town of 2,000 citizens. The size of it is surprisingly huge. It could be used as an industrial three-story parking lot. However, the building always appeared to have been run down though the only real damage was its collapsed roof. The library is about four miles outside the town. Some of the items that are brought into the library are sometimes relics from the dark ages or old furniture. What also made the library unique was its fireplace that lit the front entrance and the lanterns at each of the bookshelves. There was never any electricity running through the library. Even though not many people came to the building, it had an unlimited number of books of every genre. The library itself has been abandoned for years.

The owner of the library, Peter Gallons, was never married and had no children or siblings. He lived on the second floor of the library with his horned-owl. The owl was very well known by the citizens of the town. It had its own spot at the checkout desk, but you were always able to see it on the end of the aisles either watching you with its bright yellow eyes or catching mice that would sneak in for warmth by the fireplace.

The town folks never really knew anything about Mr. Gallons. he never came into town but some say at night you would see him wonder the streets just sitting at the park bench with his pet owl. Some of the kids say they have seen

him talking to his owl as if it were a real person, but a lot of them weren't afraid of him like the other adults were. He was six feet tall and could see with only one dark brown colored eye. He could not speak, and when he did, he sounded like an owl. He would only talk in a low whisper and never made eye contact with anyone.

Even though he was considered an outcast, he was also considered to be very knowledgeable. At the time when the library was open to the public, he would be writing in a small leather journal with a strange insignia on the front of the cover he kept at the front desk. He wrote short stories in different languages, philosophical notes, and strange mathematical equations with strange symbols. Every time visitors got a glimpse of his notes, Mr. Gallons would give them a long and unsettling stare and walk very slowly towards them, which would make them leave the library.

Some of the teenagers used to sneak out of their homes on a school night to go outside the town and into the woods where they often drank and partied. One cold, windy night, some teenagers decided to explore and vandalize the inside of the library. The gang leader and the mastermind of this operation was a football quarterback by the name of Frances Bishop who always got his way because his father was the chief police. He was considered the king of bullies at the local high school. He knew how to torture others in order to get them to do whatever he wanted.

That night, the teenagers walked through the woods carrying flashlights. The cold wind made some of the teens want to head back home and crawl back into their warm beds, but Frances threatened to hurt them with his knife.

Almost 15 minutes later, they reached the library. One of the teens noticed that the lamps on the edges of every shelf were still lit. Another teen scanned the area to be sure no one was following them, while the rest watched as Frances dug his knife between the doors and unlocked it. Slowly walking past the doors, each of the teens went through a different aisle and began to slide the books off the shelves and rip off the pages.

Frances went towards the staircase and grabbed the wooden side rail. Making his way up, he pulled his knife from his jacket. All of a sudden, a large shadow appeared down the hall. He paused as the shadow walked into another room down a long hallway. Still keeping quiet, he continued his journey into the living room.

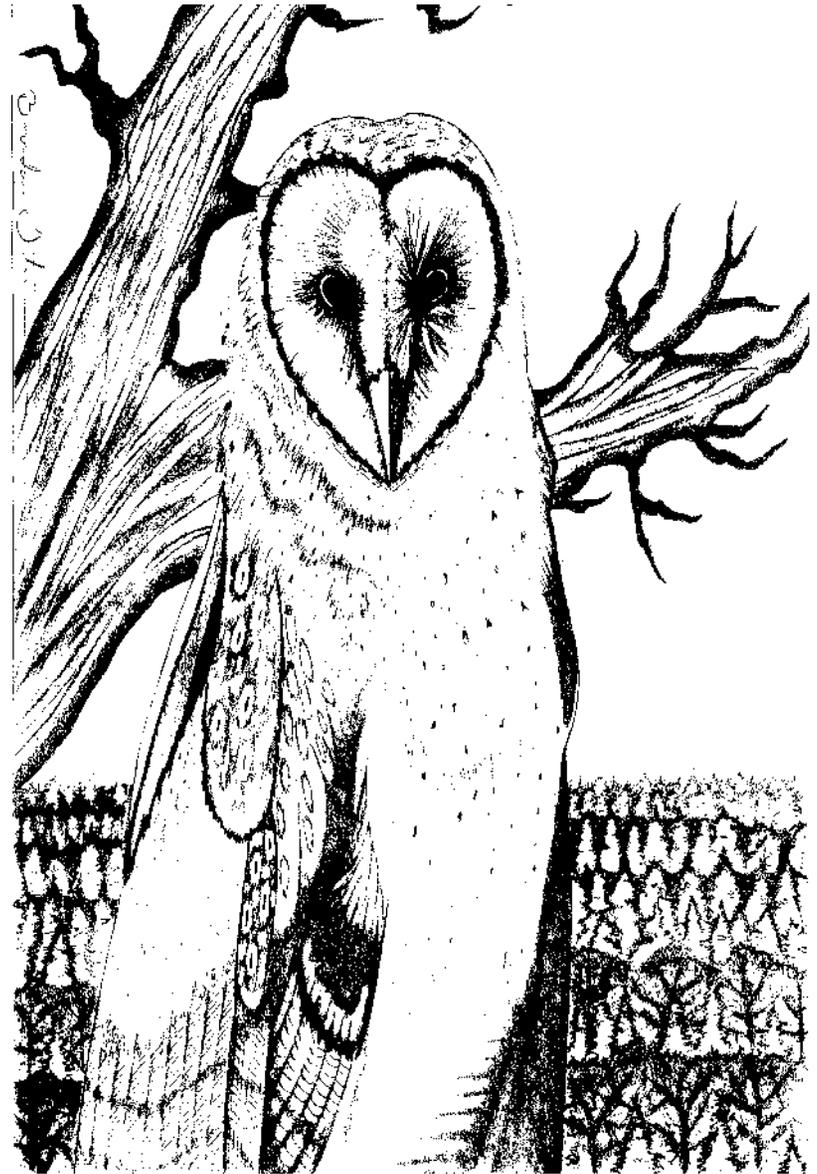
Meanwhile, one of the other teens, Billy Holcomb, stumbled upon the front desk and began to search the drawers. Suddenly, he came across a hidden compartment and pulled out a journal with a strange symbol on the leather front cover. Billy gazed in amazement as he studied the journal, rubbing his fingertips against the strange symbol. As he opened the first page, he cut his finger, leaving a slight blood stain on that page. The cut from his finger began to burn, but he continued to go through the pages. Gradually, his whole hand began to burn and itch. Billy dropped the journal. His eyes were wide open. Then all of a sudden, something flew behind one of the teenagers and the lamps were turned off one after the other. Billy was attacked by a creature with yellow eyes over and over again until he was lying in a pool of blood.

Another teenager looked around and ran towards the steps to get Frances to inform him of what was happening to Billy.

As the teen climbed halfway up, something flew by him, and left him bleeding from head to toe.

Meanwhile, Frances looked through a keyhole to one of the rooms on the second floor and saw Mr. Gallon surrounded by over a hundred lit candles and large feathers in a glass jar in his hands. Suddenly, claws dug their way through Frances's jacket and reached his skin. He heard flapping noise coming from above him and began to swing his knife furiously, killing the owl. The light from the keyhole disappeared, the door swung open and out came Mr. Gallons. He looked down to see his only friend lying on the floor dead. He fell to his knees while making a loud heaving sound as he breathed harder and harder. As Frances stood behind him, Mr. Gallons turned his head and saw Frances looking at him with a sinister grin. Frances quickly stabbed Mr. Gallon in the stomach multiple times and laughed uncontrollably. As Mr. Gallons bled to death, Frances was attacked by a creature with yellow eyes and he, too, bled to death. The teens fled into the woods, where they continued to hear screams and see a creature with yellow eyes. They kept running until they reached the town.

A few hours later, the police arrived at the library. Detective Ramiro examined the bodies, went through the journal, looked out the window and saw a creature with yellow eyes ...



OWL

Brandon Tatum—BCC Student

INTRODUCTION TO *LA GRANGE*

Chris McCallister—BCC Faculty/Author

La Grange began just a few miles from its current city limits as a small farming area known as Bear Creek. The settlement later grew into what would be known as Moseley Hall, which was begun in the early to mid-1700s by the Joshua Herring and Matthew Moseley families. Both of the families were farmers. The Moseley plantation, referred to as Moseley Hall, served as the main stagecoach station for Bear Creek, Jason, Moseley Hall, and Falling Creek townships. Soon, John Wooten, a hatter by trade, and his family came to the area from Pitt County, North Carolina, and Virginia. John Wooten and his son Council grew their land into a well-run and prosperous plantation. These three families became very successful at tobacco and cotton farming. By 1869, these families and others grew the surrounding settlements into La Grange.

Eventually, other families began to move in and settle the area, including the Rouse, Dawson, Fields, Mewborn, Sutton, Best, and Whitfield clans. In June 1858, the Atlantic & North Carolina Railroad opened 95 miles of track from Goldsboro to New Bern on to Morehead City. The railroad began construction in Moseley Hall (La Grange) in 1855. That year, there were three homes in Moseley Hall, owned by William Dunn Moseley, Drew Murphy, and George Franklin Whitfield. The railroad was completed in 1858. With the opening of the railroad, more and more people moved into the town. Later, La Grange became one of North Carolina's major warehousing depots for tobacco.

During the Civil War, First Missionary Baptist Church was used as a hospital. On April 10, 1869, Moseley Hall changed its name to La Grange. Dr. Hadley and Colonel Whitfield convinced the town to adopt the new name, chosen to honor the French general the Marquis de Lafayette. During Reconstruction (1865–1877), La Grange residents rebuilt the town. Union soldiers had eaten most of the town's food and burned down homes, such as Council Wooten's home, which was shot up. The residents turned to the task of reestablishing farms, and the town bounced back quickly. Also during Reconstruction, the town established its first police department, which was made up solely of African Americans. About five years later, Winfield Murchison became the sheriff. The first mayor of La Grange was a Mr. McIntyre.

In 1869, the La Grange Academy was established by local physician Preston Wilson Wooley. The academy was purchased in early 1881 by Joseph E. Kinsey and renamed Kinsey Seminary. The seminary today is Barton College. In 1880, the Davis Military Academy was founded. At one point, it had nearly 300 students. The school moved to Winston Salem in 1890.

By the turn of the century, La Grange had established itself. It now had a post office, whose first postmaster was Bill Best. The area's farming had once again rebounded and flourished. La Grange became the fourth-largest tobacco warehousing town in North Carolina. For convenience, the tobacco warehouses were located by the railroad. Supply trains could pull up and load their product with ease. The town established its first official volunteer fire department around 1905. During World Wars I and II, La Grange's Hardy

-Newsome foundry, established in 1905, made camouflage and other items for the war effort. The foundry had great success with its soybean harvester. It would turn out 75–100 bushels a day, and this output was sold worldwide. The machine’s popularity soared by 1918. The original bean harvester sold for \$150.

Also in the early 1900s, La Grange became a part of the train route known as the “Shoofly.” The Shoofly ran between Goldsboro and Morehead City, North Carolina. The train’s porter was Eugene “Jim” Shaw, a La Grange citizen. He became the first African American porter on the Shoofly. It was Shaw who gave the town its nickname, “the Garden Spot.”

Through the major events and eras of US history, La Grange adapted. The Great Depression was met with farmers feeding people; although money was short, food was not. La Grange citizens signed up to defend their country in World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and the War on Terrorism. La Grange had some great people, and a few caught and catalogued those historical events, like Nannie Braxton Herring’s history written document of 1917 and James L. Rouse’s impressive photography collection.

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DEFEATING THE DEVIL

Chloe Hester—BCC Student

As I sat alone on my front porch, trying to enjoy the April showers, my mind ultimately drifted to the recent death of my fiancé. With tears of pride streaming down my face, I recalled how dignified my fiancé looked in his uniform before he was buried over a month ago. We were to be married in June when he returned from his deployment to Afghanistan. Remembering that this event would no longer take place sent another wave of tears, which eventually turned into sobs. The tears didn't hurt, but my heart did, and with every blink of tears, my heart seemed to hurt more and more. The April rain seemed to match my melancholic mood, but I knew the storm would eventually pass. After a while, the rain began to lighten, and the clouds moved away carrying with them its comforting sorrowful rain.

I was wiping away my tears when a figure caught my attention. It was walking toward me, and I wondered who this approaching figure was. As the figure drew nearer, I recognized who was about to grace me with his presence. It was no other than the Devil himself. I knew right away this wolf in sheep’s clothing, so I gathered myself and waited for him to arrive. When the Devil finally made his way to me, he inquired in the best of manners if he might have a word with me to discuss the matter of my sorrow.

In his most sincere and silky voice, he proceeded to tell me that he could soften the burden of my sorrow, but there would be a catch. I had to pick one of two options. The first option, he explained, would reunite me with my fiancé and

we would be happy again for the rest of our lives. For this gift of generosity, however, I would have to give the Devil my soul. The second option, the Devil explained, would allow me to keep my soul, but I would not be able to be with my fiancé ever again. The words seemed to roll off the Devil's tongue like a rapid river flowing downhill. His tempting persuasion was almost like a drug I was craving. I so longed to be with my fiancé, and each day made my longing for him worse. If not for the grace of God, I might have taken the Devil up on his offer to bring back my fiancé. Thankfully, this was not the case.

At that moment of my deepest sorrow and weakness, I prayed to my patron saint to guide me and protect me from selfishness and evil. With the protection of St. Camillus guarding me, I gracefully smiled at the Devil, and with the best of manners, I told him his offers were mighty kind. I would, however, have to decline the offers. I knew that even though I may have lost my fiancé on this earth, I had not lost him in spirit. The catechism taught me that the Lord God himself knows true love signifies an unbreakable bond between the union of two lives, so I knew that God would one day, maybe years from now, reunite me with my fiancé again.

With every mention of God, you could see the Devil cringe. His face turned from one of understanding and comfort to one of rage and contempt. The angrier he got, the more peace and happiness I felt. After hearing me reject his generous offers, the Devil stood up, and just like before, with the best of manners, asked me if I would not reconsider. He asked this twice more, and each time I replied with the loudest and clearest voice I could produce and told him “NO!” After the third and final rejection, the Devil gathered himself, bade me

a humble goodbye, and vanished before my eyes.

At that very instant, the rain began to pour, falling even heavier than it had before. My sorrow again swelled in me like a dam about to burst, and the tears began to roll slowly down my face. As I sat alone on my porch, I recalled what I had told the Devil. God would one day let this storm pass over me forever, and the tears, which I was pouring out in sorrow, seemed to soften. Remembering this reassured me that God was most certainly a better offer than any offer the Devil could produce.



FARM PHOTO

Jordan Hayes—BCC Student

EYES OF NATURE

Jonathon Daniel Davis—BCC Student

The cool, crisp winter fog casts an ocean breeze of mist in the woods near sunrise. The fog is so thick, not even the feathered beasts of the wild dare to fly through. The mid-morning breeze blows silently and calmly against all of the bark and carries off the scent of the sweet smell of the aging wood.

The lake, clear and calm as a mirror, remains untouched — except for the living of the undersea life, gliding ever so peacefully while catching its meals — and then continues to breed and accept the bounds of nature itself. The sound of moving water is all that is heard on dry land as it reaches the shore.

The sound of leaves pushes into the earth and flies into the air. The trail of imprints lives by those who love to talk about their past and figure out what the future holds for them.



STRESSMARE

Mary Butler (Age 17)—BCC Family Member
Daughter of Jeanne Butler

NYCTOPHOBIA

Jonathon Daniel Davis—BCC Student

DING DONG.....DING DONG. The front door's doorbell rang throughout the entire house of Mr. and Mrs. Dawson's. I stood at the front porch waiting for one of the parents of the child I was preparing to babysit while the Dawsons were out on their date for the night. I was told to watch their eight-year old son, Dylan, from 8:30 p.m. and to expect them home from their date around 11:30 p.m. I never really babysat for anyone's kid before other than my brother and sister. I was nervous and wanted them to trust me since the father is my therapist in town.

Heavy foot-steps were heard coming towards the wooden door and out came Mrs. Dawson greeting me with a big and comforting smile on her face. She wore a long green scarf around her neck and a navy blue dress. "C'mon in James. We have been expecting you." I followed Mrs. Dawson from the front door to the long hallway, then into the kitchen.

Mr. Dawson walked towards me, placed his hand on my shoulder, looked me in the eyes, and said. "Listen, James. I still don't think you're ready for this. Dylan is my only son and I love him to death. Can you make sure he stays happy and inside this house while Denise and I are out for the night?" His blank stare made me cringe a bit, but I nodded. "Y...yes, Mr. Dawson. You have nothing to worry about."

Mrs. Dawson looked at Mr. Dawson, pointing at the clock on the wall in the living room. Mr. Dawson let go of my shoulder and walked towards the end of the kitchen leading into the hall. Mrs. Dawson looked at me and said, "James,

don't mind him. He's just always like that when he's away from our son. Dylan is very.... special to us and we just want him to be happy." "It's no problem, Mrs. Dawson. I understand. You have nothing to worry about. Go out and have a good time," I replied.

SLAM... As the door shut and the deadbolt was locked, I turned towards the window and saw the car drive off into the dark and windy road. I walked slowly towards the playroom, reached my hand to the doorknob and slowly opened the door. A small boy in pajamas stacking up blocks turned his head and saw me. "Hi, my name is Dylan." "What's your name, mister?" "My name is James Dickerson," I said. He continued to play with his toys as if I wasn't there. Mrs. Dawson did say when he is in here he is in his own world.

"Dylan, if you need me, I'll be in the living room watching T.V. Okay?" No response.

I walked out and closed the door. It was dark, so I reached out for my cell phone for some light, went to the living room, tried to turn on the television, but none of the channels worked. I started going up again towards Dylan's playroom. Suddenly, I heard a slam coming from downstairs. I ran down the steps, looked up, and saw that the playroom lights were off and the hallway was dark. My chest began to pound. Everything was quiet. I went to Dylan's room, but he was gone. I looked for him in the bathrooms, under the beds, behind the couches, but there was no Dylan.

"DYLLAANN," I yelled. Suddenly, I saw a big smile and eyes staring at me from the edge of the bed as I heard, "OH, SHHH!" I realized it was Dylan.

Dylan just stared at me without any change in his

expression. My chest was pounding harder. “Where were you Dylan?” No response, just total silence. “Dylan, are you okay?”

“I’m bored!” was his only response. I looked at the time. It was already 9:43 p.m. “Oh dang, Dylan it’s past your bedtime!” “I’m not tired!” he exclaimed. “I want to play a game and you’re going to play!”

SSQQUUEEAACK. I heard the whole house begin to creak. “Dylan, it’s time for bed, buddy.” Dylan ran out the room, slamming the guestroom door shut. I got up and went to the door. “DYLAN, WHERE DID YOU GO?” Silence. I pulled my phone out and called Mr. and Mrs. Dawson. Unfortunately, I heard the ringing sound of a phone coming from the kitchen. They had forgotten their phone.

I turned around and saw Dylan standing in the living room, still with a blank expression. He walked towards me then stopped about a foot away from me. No response. “Dylan, what was going on upstairs?” No response still. “Dylan, you’re starting to scare me!” “I’m tired now. Can you come tuck me in bed?” Dylan replied. “Uh su...sure, Dylan, no problem.” Dylan turned around and walked into the living room then turned towards the stairs. As I began to tuck Dylan in, I felt something wet in his bed, thinking he must have wet the bed. “James, are you scared right now, because you should be?” I looked at Dylan very confused, “What did you say?” No response. “Dylan, why did you ask me that?” Still no response.

I rushed out of the room into utter darkness. I felt a table in the corridor, pushed it against the door to block Dylan’s room, but the vase on it fell and broke. I felt someone

following me, saw eyes glaring at me and heard hissing.

Rushing down the stairs, I missed a step and fell. I hurt my foot badly with a shard from the vase. My foot was bleeding, and I couldn’t pull out the shard. I felt a creature following me. I tried to call a friend, but my phone battery was dead. Then out of nowhere, the lights were turned on, and a small boy was staring at me in fright. The creature was gone. I released a blood inducing cough and a final breath.

Mr. and Mrs. Dawson returned from their dinner only to find a dead body in their house. The police arrived. Mr. Dawson explained that James was being treated for phobia of the dark. He would hallucinate if he found himself in the dark for a long time.

Dylan watched in silence as the police removed the body and as they investigated the death...not a single word...



PRAYING FOR GREENERY

Catherine McLaney—BCC Staff

LIP STAND

Sara Neeley—BCC Faculty

For many years I was a free-lance writer. Believe it or not, the stories most sought after turned out to be couples' stories of their romances, from how they met to their wedding day. Looking back, I really enjoyed the stories of Sunny Chapman and Christian Dyer. This is the story of how they met.

Sara Neeley

“I was so embarrassed! I can't believe we ever went on a date,” said Sunny Chapman of the day she met Christian Dyer.

Sunny is part owner of a three-woman legal courier service in Des Moines, Iowa. Desperate after college graduation and no job offers, Sunny and two of her friends came up with the idea for a courier service over pizza and beer one evening. All three girls had just purchased cars for which they had to pay, so they decided to do something that would both help them make the monthly payments and provide them with a legitimate tax deduction. When this still seemed like a good idea the next morning, the girls printed up flyers on Sunny's computer and began making rounds. She explained that they were fine until one legal firm asked to see a copy of their bond, which the girls did not even realize they had to have. However, soon stumbling block number one was past, and the girls were in business.

After lunch on August 20, 2003, Sunny was contacted to deliver a document with funds to the law firm of Eagleton and Dyer in nearby Cumming, Iowa. Since money was

involved, the sender wanted Mr. Dyer's signature personally on the courier's receipt. Just as she arrived at the offices of Eagleton and Dyer, Sunny received a cell phone call from her partner in Des Moines, telling her that she needed to make a quick run to another attorney's office in Cumming just as soon as she left Eagleton and Dyer. There she was to pick up several boxes of documents and bring them back to a law firm in Des Moines before the firm closed at 5:00 p.m. It was already after 3:00 p.m., and traffic going back into the city was sure to be heavy.

“All I could think about was running into Christian's office, dropping off the document and money, getting his signature, and rushing over to the other law office,” she explained. So, quite literally, she ran up the stairs to the office instead of taking the elevator, bolted through the door, and announced to the secretary who she was and what she needed. In an effort to expedite things, the secretary quickly informed Mr. Dyer that Miss Chapman, the courier, was here to deliver a document requiring his signature. Christian was busy reviewing a brief and asked his secretary just to send her in, which she did!

Sunny walked rapidly across the hardwood floors, opened Mr. Dyer's door, and entered. When he looked up from his desk, Sunny's mind went blank except for one thought: “My God, that's the most gorgeous man I've ever seen!” Mentally, she stood up straighter, wondered if her hair was in place, had she put on make-up before she left Des Moines, and even glanced down to remember what she was wearing. Smiling captivatingly, she started toward his desk, her arm extended, and then it happened!

Dyer’s office was elegantly furnished with a plush Oriental rug on the already beautiful hardwood floors. As Sunny reached the carpet’s edge, her eyes still glued to a now-standing Dyer, the toe of her right foot caught the edge of the rug and she fell. However, it wasn’t just a stumbling fall; it was a full-faced, belly-flop fall! She was so concerned about the document in her hands that she did not even extend them to catch herself. Oh, no she just fell face down! “Yep,” said Christian, still shaking his head in disbelief, “she did a complete lip-stand! Never seen a prettier one!” Of course he was concerned and chivalrous and immediately came out from behind his desk to help her up. “But,” he grinned, “once I realized she really was okay, I have never wanted to laugh so hard in my life!”

Sunny said she just kept wishing she was unconscious so she would not have to look up into his eyes. “Christian was really sweet about the whole thing, but I could hear him laughing when I left.” Two days later, Christian called Sunny’s office and requested her specifically for a delivery pick-up. When she arrived, he was waiting at the curb with the envelope. “He explained that he was trying to prevent me from falling, that I didn’t even have to get out of the car,” Sunny reminisced. “I was just mortified! But, after he gave me the envelope, he asked me for a date.”

That was nine months ago, and now Christian and Sunny are getting married. “I’m just wondering if she can make it all the way down the aisle,” Christian laughed. When Sunny looked indignant, he held up his hands in surrender. “I’m just teasing, Hon, really. Wel-l-l-l, sort of!”



HELPLESS

Andrea Carter-Fisher—BCC Staff

MIRROR! MIRROR!

Tristian Stitz (age 13)—BCC Family Member
Granddaughter of Jeanne Butler

This is an excerpt from a story I am working on. The story is about a teenage girl named Eve, who after visiting a mysterious shop, gets maliciously thrown into a world of fantasy through a magical mirror. She meets several characters, both friends and enemy, and is faced with many challenges as she fights to find her way back home.

Tristian Stitz

On my way home, I passed by our town's shopping center. There are a few shops owned by the locals: a nail salon, a hairdresser, and a few clothing stores that mostly carry really expensive things. The clothes are too much for me to afford and they really don't have my style. Normally, I don't pay much attention as I walk past the shops and cafes. I usually just stare at the cobblestones on the sidewalk, in a semi-hypnotic trance. I do this every time I walk this way alone. I know every crack and bump. I always try to count them, but something always distracts me, and I forget my place. Today wasn't any different. This time it was a purple light that caught me out of the corner of my eye. It was coming from a shop that I had never noticed before. When I took a closer look, it appeared really fancy but in a gothic way. By the position of the "open" sign, it was still opened. I decided to satisfy my curiosity and get a closer look.

I peeked inside the windows, but the lighting was dark, and I couldn't really see inside. The weird thing was I had never seen this store before, and this was my usual route back home. I shrugged it off. "Am I that oblivious?" I wondered. I quickly

walked over and opened the door, forcing a small bell to ring. I walked to the center of the room in awe. This place was beautiful. Full of ornate furniture and gaudy pieces. I thought they surely came from some rich old lady's estate. It truly didn't matter because they were cool.

In the very center of the room stood a tall mirror, a little taller than I. I noticed all the strange markings on the frame. I was mesmerized at how intricate the design was. It was definitely old. I went to touch the mirror. I expected my hand to be stopped by the glass, but instead, it phased through. Startled, I snatched my hand back towards me and held it to my chest. I looked around, and it didn't seem like anyone saw me, so I sighed heavily in relief.

"Ma'am?" I heard a small voice. I turned quickly on my heel. A small petite girl stood in front of me. She was barely up to my waist. Her fiery red hair cascading down her back in waves; her eyes were an unusual color of teal. I thought maybe they were contacts. For a moment, I was taken aback by her fairy like beauty.

"Ma'am, did your hand just.....pass through the mirror?" The girl asked, looking confused.

I looked at the strange mirror then back at the girl. Her confused frown faded into a smile, showing her teeth. I shuddered. It was much more deadly than the normal 'Hi, how are you,' kind of smile. I was a little confused and scared as the girl walked toward me. I backed up until I felt the frame of the mirror against my back. There was nowhere for me to go. What a creepy child.

"N...No, it didn't. It was just a trick of light!" I said, unsure

of myself. My statement sounded more like a question.

Her smile grew dimmer as it took on a bit of a sneer. I glanced down at the bags I had in my hand and back at the girl.

“Look, I don’t have any money, but, I have THESE,” I said, sticking the clothes out in front of me. I thought how stupid that was to say. I highly doubted she was going to rob me.

She looked up at me and chuckled. I could see an endless set of sharp teeth going down her throat. Uneasiness came over me, the kind that one gets when knowing something bad is about to happen, but without knowing what it is. I felt helpless, and had no idea what to do next.

Suddenly, she threw her arms out in front of her and grabbed me. Before I had a chance to react, she shoved me into the mirror. Colors swirled around me and made me nauseous. Through the colors, I could see I was surrounded by people.....no... more like creatures. They were not human. I tried to study them, but it didn't take long before I made impact with the ground. Darkness took over my vision, and I felt myself slipping into unconsciousness.

I dreamed of a world that was so different than mine: evil things lurking, death — so much of it — and darkness. At least, I hoped it was a dream. Corpses lay at my feet. Slashes streaked their bodies; blood was pouring from the wounds. Some looked like they had been dead for years. Skulls, yellow, at the last stages of decomposition, grinned at me. I cringed. I tried to move away, run maybe, but my hands and feet were bound.

What was happening to me?

A dark luminous creature slithered over to me; its mouth smiled wickedly revealing rows of sharp teeth. It was a familiar smile. Suddenly, I felt sick to my stomach. Its red eyes bore into mine as if it were trying to get to my soul, a place where I was easily controlled. Each time I moved, its mouth grew wider. I was sure that if it grinned any wider, its jaw would break. I shivered. Then, as fast as this nightmare appeared to me, the whole scene changed.

The creature was no longer staring at me, and there were no corpses. Instead, there was a crystal clear lake. An older woman sat at the bank of the water. With her was a boy who appeared to be about six years-old. A girl, who looked to be about four, chased a weird colored butterfly as she hummed softly. The mother and son were deep in conversation with each other while the girl strayed a little too far from them. I ran over to her, but she didn't acknowledge me. She only looked out at the lake as the butterfly flew out of her reach. Her eyes dazed and fixed on the water in front of her.

“Victoria?” The mother yelled out.

The girl shook her head and laughed at the water. It was as if she was caught in conversation with someone only *she* could see and hear. Her mother called for her again, breaking whatever spell had hold of her. She then skipped back to her mother. I looked at the lake and that is when I saw the creature again. It was staring at me, frowning. I looked back at the mother and she looked at me with a smile, seeming unaware to what captivated her child. Not knowing what to do, I smiled back nervously. I closed my eyes hoping the creature would just go away. That is when I felt it again.

The nausea was worse this time as I spun into what felt like endless darkness. Suddenly, I felt hot. When I opened my

eyes, I was surrounded by flames, I moved my arm, and a searing pain went through it. I pulled my arm back with a jerk and let out a cry.

“Geez, where am I?” I thought in a panic.

I heard a faint cry and saw a silhouette. I ran to it, and found the woman from the lake. Her once flawless face was covered in blood, tears and boils. I kneeled down and tried to help her up, but she was caught under a burning piece of wood. She cried for help, writhing. I felt hot tears roll down my face, such an innocent woman who had family, but no one was here to help her in her dying moments. I wanted to reach out and help her, but I couldn't, and by the time I tried to get the debris off of her, she took a deep breath, breathing in smoke into her fragile lungs and then exhaled, never taking another breath again. The light from her eyes faded and she went limp. I put my hand over my mouth to muffle a sob. Suddenly, I heard that slithering sound again, and the sound of bones being broken and crushed. That sound and stench... the stench was awful. As the smell of rotting flesh reached my nostrils, I knew the creature was close by. I cringed. I felt something wrap all around my body, and I tried to move away from it but couldn't.

“We don't realize how important someone is until they are gone,” it said in a raspy voice, and I felt its hot breath on my neck. I wanted to wake up so bad right then or just die so it would end. I looked back down at the woman lying dead at my feet, and my heart sank. Oh God, I could've saved her. I could've...

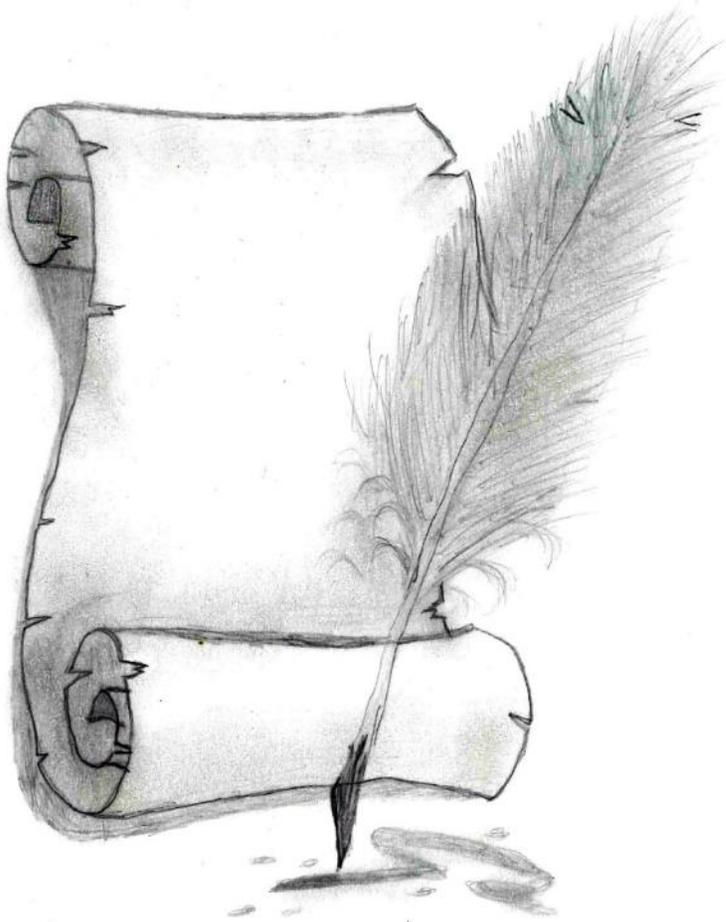
I cried even harder and didn't try to hide it this time. The fire was hot and burning parts of my skin, but I didn't care. I

mostly cared about this woman who had died by accident, leaving two children and possibly a husband to fend off the grief of her passing. Then, that now familiar feeling of nausea and blackness took over.

I opened my eyes and jolted up, my hair falling around me in waves. I put my face in my hands and breathed deeply, inhaling the air. The dream was terrible, and I was shaking from it. Tears were streaming from my eyes, and I was overcome by despair. I took my hands from my face and looked at my surroundings. Nothing felt familiar. Blue and clear glass bottles, needles, and bandages filled the white cabinets that adorned the room. While it didn't look like a place in my lifetime, I took a guess and thought I was in the hospital. I felt my arm and a bandage was wrapped around where I was burned. Touching it made me wince with intense pain. The bed was warm, but the crisp air made me shiver even though I was covered in a blanket.

While I could no longer smell the evil aura of the creature, or believed I was in any danger, everything felt wrong. I needed to get out of there. I shifted my body and jumped off the bed. The cold tiles stung my bare feet. “Wait, where are my shoes?” I thought. It was at this point I knew it wasn't a dream... none of it was.

I walked quietly out of the room and down the hall. In front of me was a set of double doors. Its panels were carved like a serpent, very much like the creature that taunted and stalked me. I paused and then was overcome with a sense of determination. I placed my hand on the handles and pushed my way through. I knew nothing was going to be the same....ever.



QUILL AND SCROLL

Jessica Croom—BCC Student

THE DAY I LOST MY JOB

Renee Benton—BCC Student

This day is forever etched in my mind. When I reflect back on the events the day I lost my job, the emotions erupt from my inner being as if I am reliving it again.

I was summoned to human resources. Kathy Stimes, the human resources director from Spring Grove, Illinois, our newly relocated home office, had asked me to go with her. Well, I guessed it was my turn. Was I getting the axe today? I could feel the stares of everyone that I walked past. They felt like daggers. I knew what everyone was thinking, “I’m glad it’s not me! Are they going to fire Renee today?”

The hallway to HR was getting longer and longer. My heart was beating faster and my breath was getting shorter. My legs were a little shaky, and my stomach was in knots. I was thinking, “Stop trying to be nice to me by making small talk. I know you’re getting ready to cut me.” I thought I was safe temporarily, at least until the computer systems were completely integrated. The integration was not final, so why does she want to talk with me?

How I hated to see Spring Grove people come – especially Kathy. She was the axe lady, a wolf in sheep’s clothing. We all knew after the first couple of firings that that was her sole purpose for coming to Lumberton. The two managers that I had been working under the past few years had been fired and escorted out of the building. They had not even been allowed to clean out their offices. Surely, they wouldn’t do that to me! How humiliating! They only did that to people who could commit company sabotage, and I was not privy to

that kind of information!

I went into her office and sat down. She got my current manager, Brian, on the speaker phone. Within fifteen seconds, he told me my job was being relocated and I wouldn't be working in Lumberton much longer. What? He was so matter of fact. He could have been talking to a stranger, not someone that he had worked with for a year. I despised him for what he was. Kathy told him she would handle it from there.

I was the first non-management office personnel to lose her job. I really don't remember much of what Kathy said that day. I remember her telling me about my severance package. Sever, cut off, separate, whatever! Oh, when did she just say was my last day? Okay, at least it's not today. My mind was racing so: I will be gone in about ten weeks. Oh my God! What am I going to do? What is my husband going to say? This is my livelihood you're taking from me! We depend on my salary and insurance!

I felt myself sinking into the depths of despair. I had worked for this company for almost half of my life. Twenty-three years, eight or more hours every day. This company was where I was going to work until I retired. These were always my plans. Who did they think they were to come in and change them? They had just rocked my world, and I was having a hard time wrapping my mind around this. I just shut down my emotions until I had some privacy. I was numb.

This company had always had an extremely low turnover. For most of us, it was about the only job we had ever had. I spent more waking hours here than in the presence of my

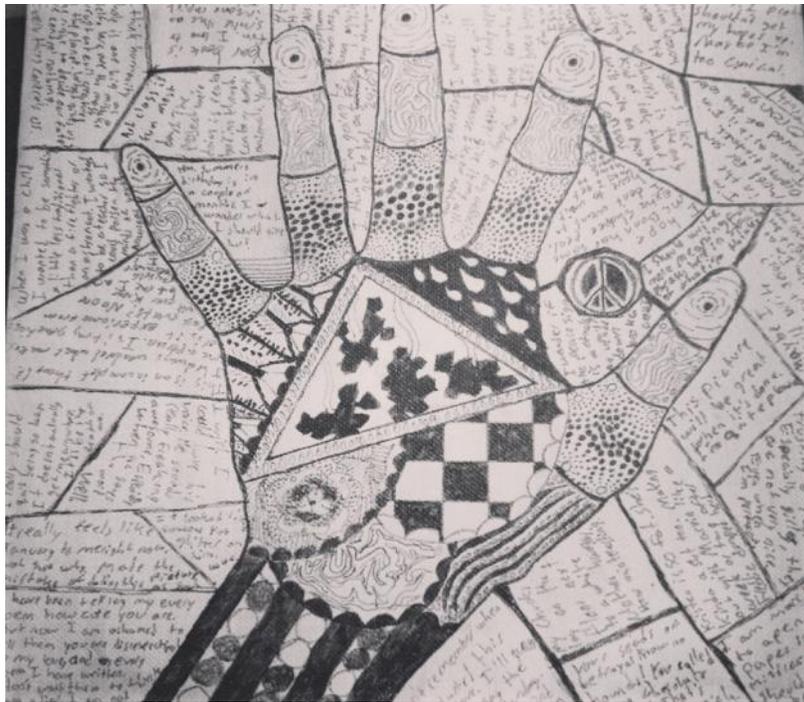
family. I had become so very close to a few and loved a lot of these people I worked with. They were my work family. Some of them I knew better than even my own extended family. How was I going to make it not seeing them or talking to them every day?

Kathy said she could see a tear in my eye. I didn't think so, not by talking to her. I had some pride. She really didn't. That was just an excuse for me to leave her office. She suggested that I could go back to my desk, gather up my purse and coat and leave for the rest of the day. Well, wasn't she so kind, just the most thoughtful person? These people thought they could buy a company, come in and then just dismantle it, piece by piece, person by person. They made me sick. I was so hurt and I didn't want to look anyone in the eye. If they looked me in the eye, they would know what just happened to me. I decided not to look up, just get my things and leave. I would tell everyone here tomorrow.

I don't know if it was pride or shock, but it was certainly one heck of a shock! I felt like my world was coming to an end. My Acme world was. I had never been separated from my husband before, but I felt like I was experiencing a marriage separation. I didn't feel wanted anymore. If they didn't want me anymore, probably no one else would either. Of what value was I?

My job was relocating to Spring Grove, Illinois. Of course, they made the offer that I could move with my job. This made no sense. They could forget that! They were going to replace me with someone new in Spring Grove. Let's see if they would be as dedicated as I had been. I worked when I was sick. I valued my job just about as much as my marriage.

This happened to me in October of 2008, and my last day was December 31, 2008. If I learned anything from this life changing event, it was that no job was guaranteed in this life. I had just about put my job before anything else, but not anymore. When I feel that I am getting too attached, too dedicated, I back myself up. No matter how you might feel about your job or employer, you are just a number to them. Easily replaced! Never again will I do that to myself. I will work and give my employer a full eight hours, but not any free time or overtime, not unless the overtime is mandatory.



ART HANDS

Dalton Foster—BCC Student

IN WHAT LANGUAGE DO YOU THINK?

Joyce Bahhouth—BCC Faculty

I have often been asked in what language I thought, and every time I was asked that question, I stopped and ... thought about it.

I had never been asked that question when I was in Lebanon where most people are either bilingual or trilingual. We switch from language to language and use three languages sometimes in one sentence. The more I thought about this question, the clearer became the answer. I think in the language I use in a particular context. If I am thinking of family matters, I think in my native language, and if I am thinking of work-related issues, I think in English. However, if I am doing quick mental computations or am trying to look up a word in a dictionary, I switch to German, the first language I learned to use when doing math and reciting the alphabet despite the fact that I have not used this language in forty years.

Two incidences come to mind in which choosing the right language to think in presented a challenge. I was once presenting at a conference in Jordan. Following the conference, reporters came up to me and asked me questions in Arabic about the topic of my presentation. I stuttered and stumbled over my words. I had never thought of discussing educational concepts in Arabic, and as such, the right words would not come to my mind. They were simple, common words, but I had never thought of using them in that context.

A few years later, I was asked to give a presentation about the need for children to learn foreign languages, with a focus

on pre-school, elementary, and middle school students. My audience consisted of 300 parents at a preK-12 school in Lebanon. This was a big school with over 2000 students whose parents came from different socio-economic and educational backgrounds. My biggest challenge was choosing the language I was going to present in because of the diversity of my audience. Parents may be British, American, French, Armenian, or Lebanese. I had not forgotten my experience in Jordan and did not want it to happen again. After much thought, I knew how I could reach everyone in my audience. I prepared the slides in English and presented in Arabic. I rehearsed that presentation so that I could glance at the slides and switch to Arabic right away. The presentation was a great success, but I knew I could not have done it without practicing to think in Arabic while discussing academics.

This active attempt to think in a certain language is easier said than done. It involves understanding how people who speak that particular language think, what their culture permits, and how they interact with each other. To a great extent, the languages I speak have shaped not only my thoughts but also my identity!



MY GET-AWAY

Chassidy Jacobs—BCC Student

Libraries used to be my favorite place to go to as a kid in school. My most favorite time was the book fairs. They had so many books to choose from to read. We would go to the library once a week and get different books. We also had a reading log that would require us to read at least 100 books a year. We would have different contests to see who would read the most books and would get prizes if we won.



Every day at Bladen Community College, I go to the library after class because I have an hour break in

REACHING

between classes. A few weeks ago when I entered the library, there was a line of little children standing at the door. It was so surprising to see them and brought back so many memories as a kid. It would have been nice if my elementary school had taken us to a college library because it is so much bigger than elementary school libraries.

Ginger King—BCC Staff

As an adult, libraries are still my favorite place to get away. There, I can study and do my work with no interruptions.

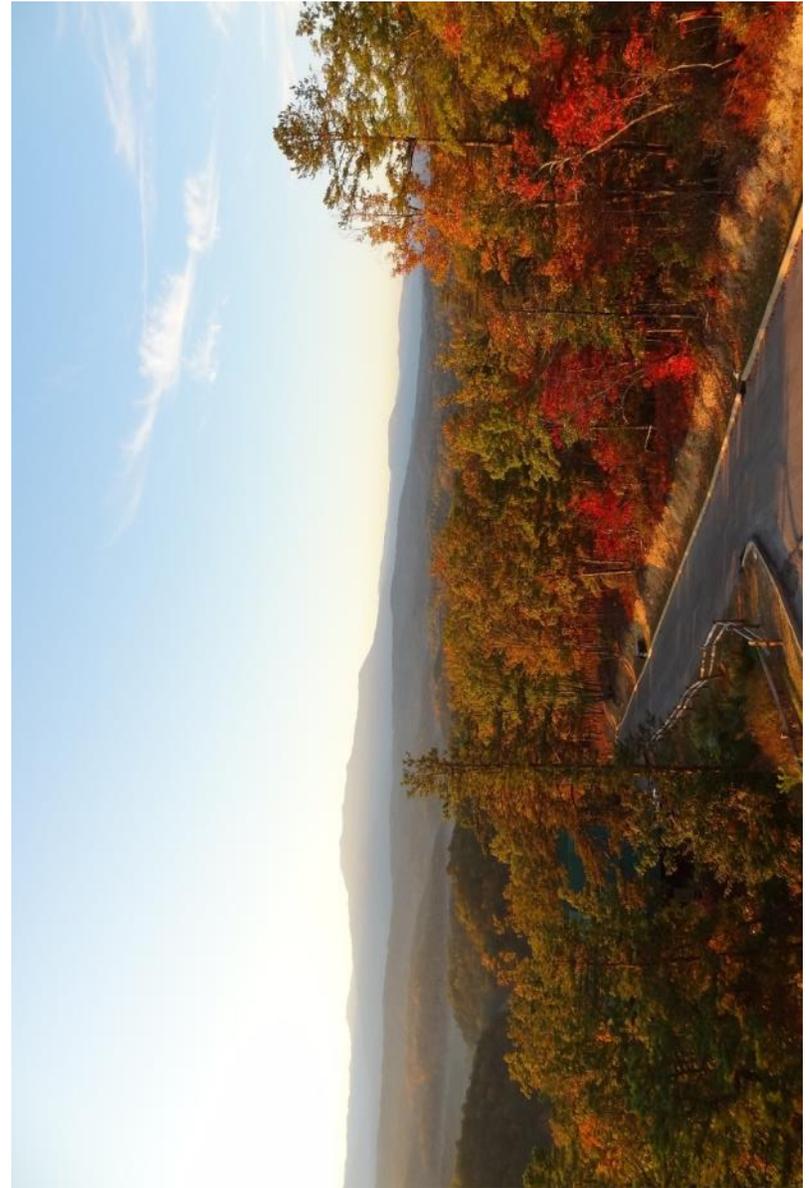
THE LIBRARY'S INFLUENCE ON ME

Tiffany Ammons—BCC Student

I remember starting kindergarten and starting to go to after school care at a Baptist church. Every Tuesday at the afterschool care was my absolute favorite. My class and I would always take a field trip to the local library where one of the librarians would be in the kids section waiting for us to come in. We would all sit on the colorful carpet and listen to a librarian read us stories. I enjoyed it a lot. This is one of my first memories of going to the library.

I remember the first book I checked out at the library was *The Secret Garden*. I loved that book so much and still do today. I can reread it and still have so much passion for it. It made me want to have my own secret garden like Mary in the story. For a long time as a child, I was so in love with this story I wouldn't go to sleep at night unless my VHS version of *The Secret Garden* was on my TV in my room. I would go to sleep looking at all the beautiful roses and dream of them all night. I'd wish I was there. I always loved nature and its beauty. I have always found nature to be interesting and everything within it worked in harmony. For instance, a plant gives off nutrients needed for another one to survive. Animals, such as sea turtles, eat a certain aquatic plant so it doesn't overpopulate then make other fish go extinct when they have nowhere to go and reproduce.

Nature itself is marvelous; the beauty of it is just icing on the cake.



SKYSCAPE

Jordan Hayes—BCC Student

THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE

Morgan Smith—BCC Student

The best day of my life happened unexpectedly. It may seem like an odd best day to some people, but to me, it was amazing.

When I was little, my family always had either a dog or a cat. I wanted a horse. I even dreamed of being a large animal veterinarian and had the land picked where I would one day open up my own business. One day, my father told my family we were going to look at a lawnmower he was going to buy, which was believable because he would buy older lawnmowers, rebuild them and then sell them. We all piled up in the car and went towards Elizabethtown where we then pulled up to a little old house surrounded by horses. I was so excited; all I could think about was being able to ride one of them. My dad then introduced us to a lady that he was going to be buying the "lawnmower" from. We went to the old barn behind her house. She let us pet the horses and asked if we would like to ride one. Of course, I said yes! We then went to get the horses saddled up and ready to ride.

Once we started riding, my dad looked up to me and asked if I liked the horse I was riding. Of course, I said yes! He then looked up to me and told me she was mine! I think I was the happiest girl in the world that day! I was so excited I was about to cry. All what was going through my head was that my dream came true, and I was so excited to take my horse home and be able to ride her whenever I wanted.



RABBIT NUMBER 8

Sabra Ludlum—BCC Student

FROM STEPHEN KING: ON WRITING, PAGES 105-106

"I sent you a table with a red cloth on it, a cage, a rabbit, and the number eight in blue ink. You got them all, especially that blue eight. We've engaged in an act of telepathy. No myth-mountain shit; real telepathy."

When you first see the rabbit on the table with the numeral eight on its back, you may study it. You probably question, "Why does this rabbit have an 8 on its back?" Of all rabbits, this one particular rabbit is engraved with that particular number on it. Is it not weird to see an 8 in blue on a rabbit? Depending on the time in your century, it might not be; in fact, it might be the weirdest, yet coolest thing you have ever seen on a rabbit. However, for me, it is a very scary sign, for it is far more than just an 8 in blue ink. Here in the 25th century, my people have feared this day longer than we can remember. We are brought up from an early age fearing this day. Once we are old enough to walk, we are told the story of our people.

For our people, the rabbit is a symbol of new life; this is both a good and a bad thing. In the 25th century, we very seldom see a physical rabbit. Most kids here have never seen a rabbit. Our people are part of a time when a rabbit means a chance, the opportunity to better ourselves as a community and as individuals. As individuals, we are taught to do good and pass that good forward to others in our community. Spreading the goodness helps keep life going for our people.

Any time we begin to lose focus on the true meaning of life, we are sent a rabbit with a number on it.

The whole rabbit-with-the-number thing started when the founder of our people was granted great powers as a young child. He received 10 rabbits and was told that every time he committed a wrong, a rabbit would be taken away. When he had no rabbits left, he would be stripped of his powers. Thus, when he lost his 8th rabbit, he got his act together and steered away from wrong and vowed to keep others on the right path. At the age of 18, he founded his own community and passed the concept of the rabbits on to his new people. Every time the people ventured down the wrong path, a rabbit with a number would be sent to the center room of the town. The people realized that once they received the 10th rabbit, they would be destroyed and no longer have the power of life.

After many, many generations, over hundreds of years, we have managed to get only seven rabbits—until today. Today, we received the 8th rabbit, meaning that we have only two more to go before we will be destroyed because of our evil ways. Will this be the wake-up call we need, as it was for our leader before us? Or are we doomed to destruction?



DREAMY PIES

Karen Brown—BCC Student

Children all around the world enjoy inventing or experimenting at some point. Creativity is a part of growing up. Children often imitate the actions of their parents, such as baking. They watch their parents intensely hoping to grasp the concept of their actions. Children remember what is learned and apply it in their recreational play time. Since children are not allowed to use the oven, they often improvise with the materials that are available to them. There is not a better childhood version of an apple pie like the mud pie. Although the mud pie is not edible, and the apple pie is, both pies represent the perfect childhood memory.

According to historians, apple pies have shown up in one form or fashion since the Middle Ages. The first on record was around 1390 A.D. The recipe was compiled by master cooks during the era of King Richard II. During the thirteen and fourteenth centuries, apple pies were vastly different than pies of today. They did not contain sugar or crust as essential ingredients. Sugar was not readily available until the fourteenth century. However, sugar was scarce and extremely expensive. Only the wealthy or extremely fortunate were able to enjoy such a treat. The dirt pie has no significant origin. However, it has been around since the beginning of time according to children. In previous centuries, children were not equipped with modern day toys. They often improvised by whatever means available or simply imagined. Toys were often homemade. Mud pies were created as a source of entertainment. Both pies are considered classic and are still prepared to this day.

The apple pie is a classic recipe that has been perfected throughout history; the mud pie has also been perfected by children through the years. While both are pies, they have very different ingredients. The main ingredient for the apple pie is apples. The main ingredient for mud pie is dirt. While both are organic, they are from different elements of the earth. The perfect apple pie recipe, according to Pillsbury, consists of eight ingredients. The traditional mud pie recipe consists of only two. A standard apple pie requires six medium apples per pie. There is no required amount of dirt suggested per mud pie.

Next, after the main ingredients are selected, the person must gather the rest of the ingredients. A crust is needed to hold the ingredients of an apple pie. Any container is acceptable for mud pies. Cinnamon and nutmeg are needed for the apple pie, whereas water is needed for the mud pie. Flour, salt, sugar, and lemon juice are the final ingredients required to make the perfect apple pie. The child may add additional ingredients or garnishments such as worms, pebbles, or acorns.

After all ingredients are gathered, the baker must prepare the pies. A large bowl for both pies is needed to mix all the ingredients together. Once all suggested ingredients are combined, the mixture is spooned in the desired pan. The baker must ensure that all ingredients for the apple pie are firmly positioned in the pan to avoid spilling over. The ingredients for the mud pie should also be packed in the container to avoid any mess. Preheating the oven to 425°F is suggested for the apple pie. The sun is the only element required for the mud pie to be perfected. A top layer of crust is needed to complete the apple pie process. No top is needed

for the mud pie. The baker can add a decorative touch to the top crust of the apple pie by cutting slits or shapes in several places in the top crust. The child can also be creative by cutting designs or shapes on the top of the mud pie.

Both pies are ready to be put into their heating elements. The apple pie needs to stay in the oven for approximately forty to forty-five minutes. Then the baker should cover the edges of the crust with aluminum foil and bake an additional fifteen to twenty minutes to avoid excessive browning. No extra measures are needed in baking the mud pie. The child has a keen sense of the desired time for the mud pie to bake in the sun. After the apple pie has completed baking, it is suggested to let cool on a cooling rack for two hours before serving. There is no suggested time for the mud pie to cool before serving. However, it is not recommended to eat the mud pie.

Above all, every person can enjoy simple pleasures, such as making an apple pie or a mud pie. Both recipes are simple to make and have been modified or perfected over the generations to meet taste requirements. No special skills or training are needed in preparing such pies. Only desire or imagination is needed. The baker can be young or elderly, wise in nature or inquisitive at heart. The ingredients for the apple pie are readily available at your local market. The nutmeg and cinnamon may be somewhat expensive, but they have no shelf life and can be used more than once. The ingredients for making mud pies are nature made and readily available any time. The trickiest part of the mud pie is using a container that won't be missed.

Although pie preference is a personal choice, the perfect apple pie and the creative mud pie will always be American

classics. No one should ever pass up the opportunity to engage in the process of preparing either pie. However, a piece of perfect apple pie would complete any meal.

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DEER

Jessica Croom—BCC Student

THAT STUPID CAT

Melissa Taylor —BCC Student

I was sixteen years old. One typical Saturday afternoon, I finished detailing my '76 Ford Thunderbird to a spotless shine. My parents were in the den watching T.V. and discussing whether they should let me go riding in town or not. My sister, Teresa, who was only twelve at the time, was in her room hoping and praying they would say yes and that I would have to take her with me. My brother Benji, ten, was sitting in the kitchen floor with He-Man and all his friends and enemies gathered around Castle Grayskull. My baby brother, David, who was biologically nine years, but functioned more like a four or five-year-old, was sitting on the porch playing with our cat, Patches.

As I was going in the house, I told David to stay on the porch as he would usually do. I told my parents that I was going to take a shower and that David was on the porch. They said that was fine and that I could go riding, but I had to take Teresa with me. That was no big surprise to me. I very seldom got to go anywhere alone. It took me an hour or so to get ready to head out the door. I was so happy that I was going to spend time with my friends in town that I almost forgot to tell my parents that we were leaving. As I yelled from the kitchen that we were gone, my mom said to tell David to come in the house for a while. I opened the door, stepped onto the porch, but David was not there, nor was Patches. I went back in to check his bedroom, thinking he must have gone in while I was getting ready to leave. I opened his door, fully expecting him to be playing with his trucks on the floor, but there was no David.

I went to tell my parents that I couldn't find him, and the family went on a manhunt. We looked in every room, closet, cabinet and under every bed. There was no sign of him anywhere. The tension started to mount, and all of us started moving a little faster. Everyone headed outside. We searched the entire yard; there was still no David. This is when the panic started to set in. My mom and sister began crying. My dad's face was twisted with worry and confusion and I...I was overwhelmed with guilt. I shouldn't have left him outside. I was supposed to look out for my brothers and sister and take care of them. After all, I was the oldest. That's what my parents had always told me. Now one of them was missing. I was screaming inside of my head, "God, please let me find him! I have to find him!" My heart was pounding so hard that I was sure everyone could hear it, and I couldn't breathe. It felt as if there was a giant hand squeezing my throat and squeezing the life out of me. I couldn't move. I was frozen. It was like time stood still around me. I thought I was going to pass out or get sick or maybe both. Nothing moved. Nothing made a sound. Then, I heard it—a small voice that sounded so far away.

I told everyone to get quiet because I thought I heard something. I started calling, "David, David, call my name so I can find you! Where are you?" He kept calling my name and saying something I couldn't understand. I was straining so hard to hear him that my ears were aching. As I walked toward his voice, I looked around, and the only thing there was our mailbox. I was very confused. He couldn't fit in the mailbox. That didn't make sense, but I went to the mailbox and called him again. Then, I heard him clearly say, "I'm stuck." I couldn't wrap my head around that "I'm stuck."

Stuck, I wondered, but where?

Suddenly my attention was drawn to the cement tile that ran under our driveway. My heart sank. I squatted down to look in, and there was my baby brother stuck in this drainpipe. I yelled for Benji to bring me a flashlight so I could get a better look. As I shined the light in, I saw that David was twisted in a weird position, like he was crawling in, but ran out of space, then tried to turn around and got folded in half. My parents were distraught. I felt totally helpless. I had a million thoughts running through my head. I knew I had to do something, so I lay down in the dry and dirty ditch and reached as far into the tile as I could, but I came up short. David started to move, and I was afraid he was going to break his leg or something, so I just started talking to him. We talked about everything and nothing. I could hear people talking in the background and a lot of moving around, but I had to remain focused on David. I just knew I had to keep him calm and keep him still. My dad would figure out the rest.

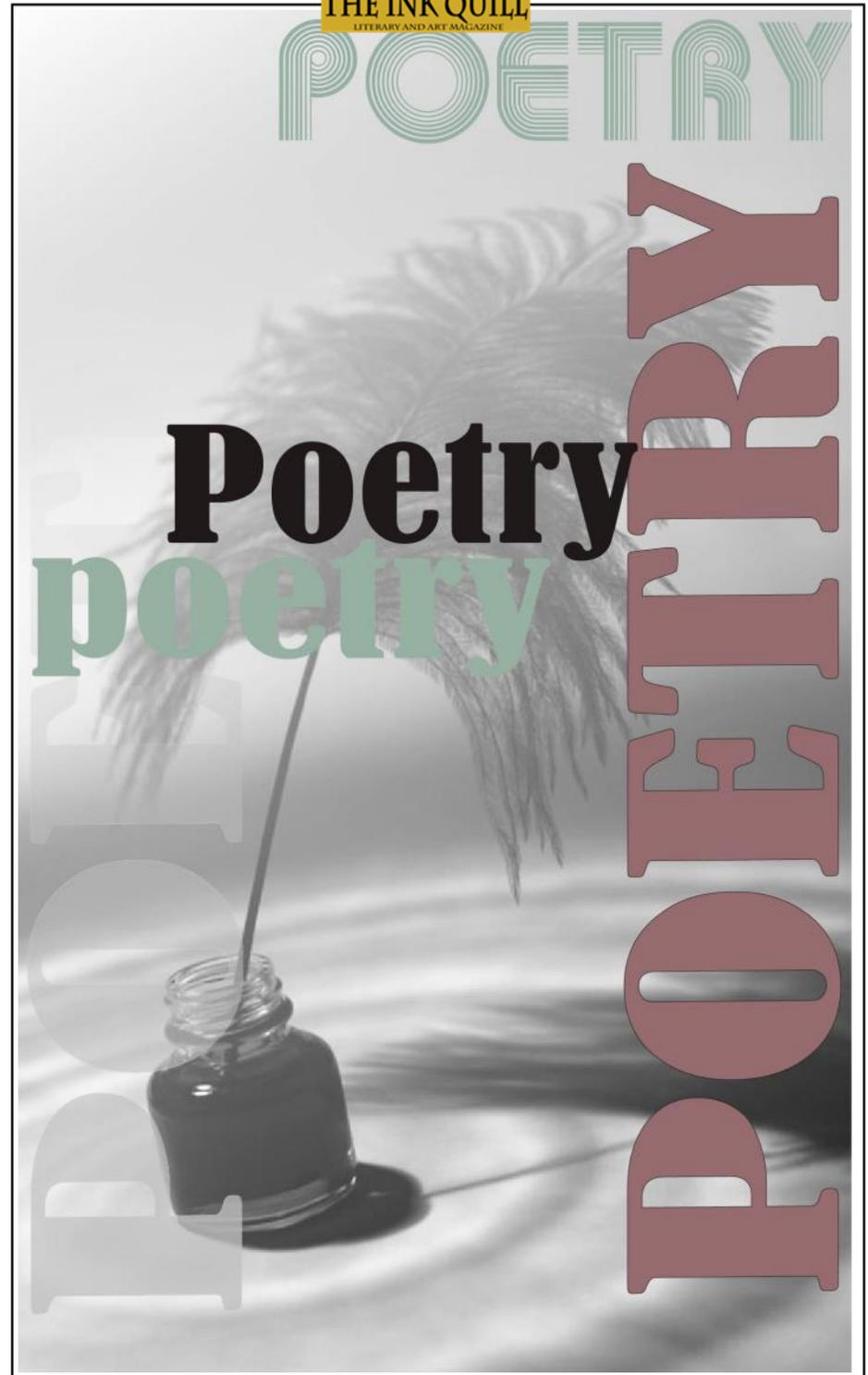
After what seemed like hours of the sun baking my back, I glanced up to the other end of the tile where my dad was working hard to dig it up, and I was shocked to see so many of our neighbors there. Four or five of the men had shovels and were helping my dad dig up that end of the tile. One of our neighbors went in our house and called the rescue unit. When they arrived, they grabbed the shovels my dad and the neighbors were using and started digging. As they worked so diligently, I kept talking to David. We sang songs, made jokes, and I promised gummy bears, his favorite candy still today, thirty two years later.

After what felt like an eternity, all the men together got

the tile dug up. The rescue unit had to use a winch to separate the sections. The rescue guys finally freed him and were taking him to the ambulance. I felt like I had been melted into the ground beneath me after staying in one position for so long in the blazing sun. As I struggled to get up in a hurry, he was telling my mom that I had to go with him because I was buying gummy bears. That made everyone laugh, but when I asked him why he went into the drainpipe, and he answered, "I was chasing that stupid cat," everyone completely lost it. I realize now that was probably a reaction to the release of all the stress of that afternoon, but no one ever really knows what my little brother may say at any given time. He has always said whatever comes to his mind.

He was taken to the ER and checked. He was fine despite the few bruises and scratches. When he came home, there were plenty of gummy bears waiting for him. I had always looked out for my siblings because I was the oldest. However, the events that day made me realize just how important they are to me. They are my family. They are my siblings. They are my friends. For years before this incident, my siblings sometimes felt like a burden to me. Everywhere I went, one or more was always there. This event changed my way of thinking. It helped to cement the bond that we already had.

To this day, David says that he and I are peanut butter and jelly. He will always need someone to look out for him, so we are together every day these days, and I wouldn't have it any other way.



THE OLD MAN AND THE LEAF

Willie Allen—BCC Friend

Old and withered, stooped by age
Sitting by the fire, his favorite place
In memory going back to the days of youth,
Days filled with sunshine, skies always blue.

Childhood had been a time one could dream,
Barefoot days, filled with laughter, always spring.
The trees armed themselves with tender young leaves,
As free as childhood they dance; they sway in the breeze.

Youth is fleeting, quietly surrendering to years,
Each day teaches new lessons, all too often with tears,
But the leaves are now stronger; they must learn to prevail.
For the summers bring fierce winds and rain storms that
assail.

The years chase each other, completing their course.
The happiness, the joy, the tears, and the scars of remorse
The leaves release their grip, battered by cold wind and age,
The leaves float softly to rest; the old man's life turned
another page.



THE OL' OAK TREE

Willie Allen—BCC Friend

Old and majestic, it graced the front lawn.
Its branches reach up, in a heavenward yawn.
It's been there forever; no one recalls its years,
Nor counts the joy it's seen or the multitude of tears.

The laugh of family on a hot Sunday eve,
Sitting under its shade, hoping for a cool breeze.
Folks sit on the roots, no easy chairs were for them.
Sipping iced tea, as they relax under leafy green limbs.

Children enjoy hop-scotch, or baseball is played,
Adults watch quietly, "it's as it should be" they appraise.
But the years go by quietly, "it's as it should be" soon fades.
As do the footprints of children, who once laughed and
played.

Much older and dejected, it now stands all alone,
Limbs once majestic, lie scattered, no longer gracing the
lawn,
Gone forever are green leaves; passing years have claimed
them all,
And children's footprints press other ground; life issued each
a new call.



I AM MOTHER NATURE

Simone R. Williams—BCC Student

They're beautiful for sight,
 Inside,
 They gave you shadowy parts of light
 The sensations so right
 Lightning bugs fly by at night
 Love when the petals lie
 Between the meadows dye
 Never the water in my eye
 Joyfully makes you want to cry
 Can't you see?
 They're beautiful to me
 Like chubby laughing babies
 This is where I want to be
 Caught now in their roots
 They bless me with fruit
 I blend with them as tree and newt
 I feel their stems sprinkled with suet
 Look
 How the winds bind me captive
 And the clouds move so rapid
 The pollen my skin captured
 I don't know what just happened
 I feel the energy
 From what just came to me
 High and free
 Blissfully
 They hold me, never hurt me, friendly.
 Say nice things to her
 Speak life giving words
 You're relaxed when I lure
 I am Mother Nature.

A SOOTHING MELODY

Mary Butler (Age 17)—BCC Staff Family
 Daughter of Jeanne Butler

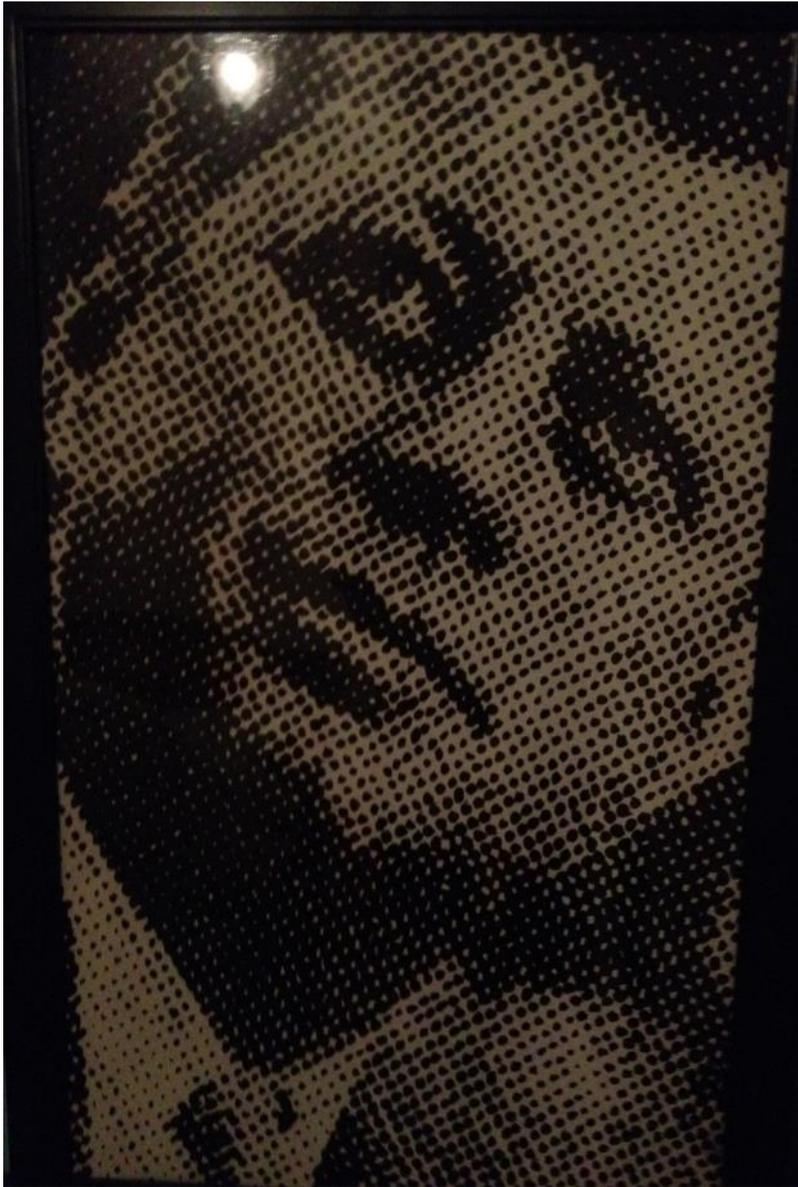
Inspired by Shiney, sung by the Decemberists

A song as sweet as honey seeps into my mind.
 Soothing ever aching nook and cranny of my internal
 being.
 Gentle with my damaged thoughts.
 Lulling them away from their haze of anger and unrest.



LOVE

Jessica Croom—BCC Student



PRESIDENTIAL PIXELS

Dalton Foster—BCC Student

CALLED HOME: PART ONE

Tyquan McMillian —BCC Student

My Story

Can you look me in my eyes and try to feel my pain?
Do you know how it feels to be left out in the rain?
We all knew it was gonna happen one day, but we never knew
when.

I wished it would have happened later; why did it have to
happen then?

No one is perfect in this world full of sin.
Death is part of life; this statement I wish I could amend.
When no one else was there, on her I could always depend.
Never left my side, she stuck to the end.

Be patient, my readers; I'm about to begin.
This story I'm about to tell is joyful at first but sad in the end.
I'm about to tell you about the day I lost my best friend.
Just a wonderful person, amazing I would say.
She went through so much, screaming in pain every day.
Listen closely, my readers. I'm talking about the day my mom
passed away.

God called her name once; it was time for her to go.
He called her name twice, could keep Him waiting no more.
No heart rate, no pulse, there was nothing left.
Tried so hard but she couldn't outrun death.
Heart frozen and body covered in snow,
My mama's death was painful and slow.
I broke down in tears, couldn't handle it, oh.
It was just too hard to see my mama go.



CALLED HOME: PART TWO

Tyquan McMillian —BCC Student

In Memory of Our Mother

You were a precious gift from God above, so much beauty,
grace, and love.

You touched our hearts in so many ways,
Your smile so bright even on the bad days.

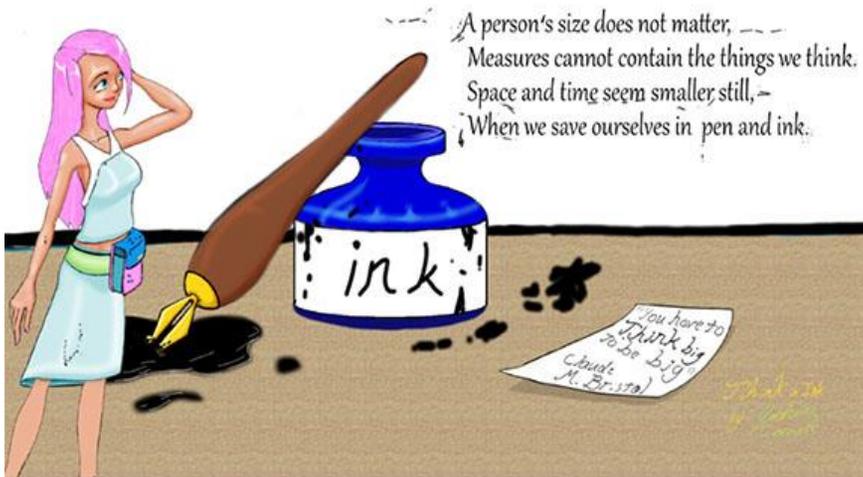
You heard God's whisper calling you home,
You loved us so much, you held on so tight,

'Til all the strength was gone and you could no longer fight.

He had called your name twice before,

You knew you couldn't make Him wait any more.

So, you gave your hand to God and slowly drifted away,
Knowing that with your love, we will be together again some
day.



THINK IN INK

Josh Council—BCC Student

FRAIL FIRE

Erick Hernandez—BCC Student

The glow portrays intense pretension
And yet hydration kills!
Suffice a king with false foretelling
Though death is not by will.

Remind Vulcan, Neptune awaits!!
The London Bridge observed
The flaming tongues that tried to cross
Consumed its own platform.

Do not propound yourself as crowned-head
Your only reigns are hells!
On Earth you're destined to be chaos
When always peace prevails.



FEEDING TIME

Jeanne Butler—BCC Staff

A WONDROUS LIFE

Andrew Bahhouth (age 12)—Faculty Family
Son of Joyce Bahhouth

Life has been wonderful to me.
It is beautiful as you can see.
Even I have not seen all it can be
At my old age of 103.
Oh, life has been great to me!
I have had my happiness and my sadness
And all of these things express
The greatness that life can be!
I have climbed mountains
And sailed the Red Sea!
I have seen many of the wondrous things that life can be!
And to you I leave this last request,
My loved ones,
To do your best;
Enjoy every moment of these amazing lives that you have left
As I will do with my own life.
Zip! Zap!
And life flies by,
Please be sure to say hi
To all of my family that can't be
Here with me
In this very quiet hospital
Sitting beside me as I lie
On the edge of life itself.
Goodbye wondrous life.
Goodbye amazing family.
Goodbye all of the amazing things that life can be!



THE WONDER OF A RIDE

Andrew Bahhouth (age 12)—Faculty Family
Son of Joyce Bahhouth

The boat's horn had sounded.
People hurried onto the boat instead of standing around it.
Oh what a wondrous sight it was.
The dock was stocked with all items of wear.
There couldn't possibly be any despair.
Bam! Boom! And we were gone on our mystical journey.
Up upon the ship I stood as happy as can be.
For all I could see was sea and sea was good enough for me.
The wind picked up and so did our speed.
We visited Madagascar
And saw one too many a bird.
Surprisingly, all could be heard!
As we neared the end of the journey,
I felt extremely happy.
It was the best that any journey could ever be.



MOON OVER MARINA

Kathy McGurgan—BCC Staff

THE BEAST

Andrew Bahhouth (age 12)—Faculty Family
Son of Joyce Bahhouth

No one dared to poach
The beast I now approach.
Its fangs spat venom on all,
No matter short or tall.
My eyes widened with terror
At the sight rarer
Than gold,
Or so I was told.
I saw my time arrive
As the beast lunged to deprive
Me of my head.
A blink of the eye later, I was dead.



THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE

Haley Gooden—BCC Student

The best day of my life was when my niece Kylie was born.
It seems just like yesterday she entered my life like a storm.

That was the day I became an aunt,
A wonderful feeling I will never forget.

She brought such sunshine and joy into my life,
I don't think I will feel it again until I am a mother and wife.

Her bright blond curls, her large blue eyes,
Her tiny smiles were a wonderful surprise.

The feelings inside were strong and real,
Joy, happiness, excitement, and fear.

She became my best friend for life,
I will always protect her and shield her from strife.

On this day of joy, my mind wandered away,
I thought of all of the words I wanted to say.

But holding her tightly, so fragile and dear,
The words would not come, all that came was a tear.

I thought of all that was to come. Tiny footsteps creeping
into my room. Ten tiny fingers grabbing my perfume.

Squeals of laughter, squeals of joy,
Taking her to town to buy a toy.

Trips to the ice cream shop, trips to the zoo,
Every Disney princess will make me think of you.

As I kissed her tiny forehead,
I realized that nothing had to be said.

She will know by my actions, by my kisses and hugs,
By my attentive listening, and by showing my love.

This best day of my life, I will never forget.
I will hold on to it even when she is throwing a fit.

I will remember the great joy she brought,
I will remember all of the overwhelming thoughts,

Fear, love, anticipation, and joy,
Oh my goodness, the next one's a boy!!



THE BOOT

Anissa Smith—BCC Student

The way you lie, face to face
The way you tie up your lies is hard to embrace.
The three words with the most meaning
Are the three words your heart is not screaming.

You say it would be forever.
You tried to play it clever.
Silly boy, you thought I was going to cave.
Too bad! That is the one thing I'm going to save.

You promised me love and devotion,
But all you gave me was heartache and emotion.
You thought you were going to win this game,
But soon enough I am going to put you to shame

You think that it's the hands,
But in heads you have a little dang-a-lang.
You're always in heat,
So that is why you cheat.

You think I'm stupid
Boy stop you ain't cupid!
Yeah, you are pretty cute,
But you just got the boot.



RAIN

Jeanne Butler—BCC Staff

I cannot imagine life without the rain
Its soothing beat comforts me
Tap tapping rhythmically
On the roof above my head
Orchestrated nature
Claiming everything in its midst
As its own finely tuned instruments
It lulls my restlessness
As it rocks me into sleep



RAINY DAY CAPTIVE

Jeanne Butler—BCC Staff

IN RESPONSE TO GANDALF

Kathryn Cole—BCC Student

"Some believe that it is only great power that can hold evil in check. But that is not what I've found. I found it is the small things, everyday deeds by ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay." Gandalf the Wizard in "The Hobbit"

A random act of kindness
upon a terrible day
in all the chaotic madness
an angel was sent my way.

A kind word to clear my head
a held door to ease my stress
for all the calming words he said
I hope he will be blessed.

That day was full of sadness
on that day my toes were curled
but that random act of kindness
has made all the difference in the world.



PIERS

Kathy McGurgan—BCC Staff

A FIRE

Haley Gooden—BCC Student

A fire burning brings unencumbered flames—
Reaching for the sky.
My inner flames are silent—
Waiting as the days go by.
Crackling, smoking, embers,
Sending signals through the night.
My heart internally blazes,
Waiting for the one who will ignite.

DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

Sandra Locklear—BCC Student

For years, I have been alone with no sense of direction.
But the day our eyes met, there was love at first sight.
The first time I held your hand was the first time I felt my
heart fill that empty space.
The kiss that we shared for the first time, I knew I had found
my diamond in the rough.
Now I'm on one knee asking my love and my best friend if
she will marry me.

DECEIVED

Simone R. Williams—BCC Student

The Pretty is rough. The eyes. My eyes.
Those familiar eyes bring soul back to me.
Taught me everything that now I'm knowing.
Races my heart as if it was weed blowing.
I get high off his eyes.
Watching me... looking inside of *us*.
Us?
Me and him.
Whose eyes are dim?
Who makes me happy when I'm with him?
One night those eyes came to me.
I invited them. Could my soul be lost to him?
Those eyes penetrated me. So softly.
Took away many things that belonged to me.
Now forever locked away in a cold place where I can never
have them again.
Why? My eyes? Eyes took my heart.
Can't express in poetry because my soul fell apart.
Excuse me as I must part!
Will I ever come back?
He gives no soul to me... will we last?
I always give him the benefit of the doubt...
Maybe.



THAT IS JOY

Levy Pait—BCC Student

Walking through the falling snow, with a white crust covering all in sight, feeling fluffy whiteness crunching under your feet: that is joy.

Sitting around with friends, sharing a laugh, playing a game, hearing their familiar and friendly voices: that is joy.

Gathered around the Christmas tree with the night outside and the only light coming from the tree, with soft holiday music playing in the background as you stare up at the tree with its deep green branches and countless lights of every color and seeing all the ornaments, each with their own story: that is joy.

Hearing your mother's soft voice comforting you: that is joy.
Feeling your father's strong arms lift you up and hug you: that is joy.

Beautiful music filling your ears and warming your soul: that is joy.

Closing your eyes and imagining another time, another place, a story where you are the hero, the last hope saving everyone against impossible odds, just letting your imagination run: that is joy.



THE BIRTH OF SINDERELLA

Simone R. Williams—BCC Student

Read...

I knew this monster well
The first time I visited hell.
Through the furnace of revenge I grinned.
Made a deal with the devil.
My heart I traded him
In my soul, I felt this vibe.
Hurt, so bad... I nearly cried
Through my veins I felt this fire.
A new sense of sin brought me higher.
...This desire. For a feast,
A MAN feast,
To unleash this beast,
Devour him whole.
My body, a hollow grave,
Now perish his soul.
Cold is the night.
Heard the screams of barbaric men
Brought sweet angels to fright.
Long lives the devils admire
So overwhelmed the monster had to retire.
So many hearts, minds, and lusts
I stumbled, turned to cement, and crumbled to dust
The trip back to hell was rough.
Begged the king of imps for a chance to love...once more.

He pointed his finger to the last door.
But before I could disperse,
He reminded me that if I left
I'd be cursed... with the monster inside my human form till
death.
---Resting peacefully,
There's a monster inside of me.
Not to be woken, but someday broken.
Will Love be the Omen?



READY FOR A GIRLS DAY OUT

Diane Vitale—BCC Staff

WHY WE FLY

Levy Pait—BCC Student

There is no one reason why
One wishes the ability to fly
The ability to escape this mortal soil
To leave behind all painful toil
For millennia it has been man's dreams
To fly amongst the sunlight's beams
To escape gravity's constraining fetter
Now what could possibly be better
Looking down upon the world below
And floating with the drifting snow
Far above the clouds to soar
Just that much closer to Heaven's door
To breathe in that heavenly air
Nothing for man could be as fair
This ability reserved only for the fortunate birds
That joy indescribable in human words
That is why one must try
 To fly



JUST ME AND YOU

Ginger King—BCC Staff

Inside of me I know
Everything I need
Is found in you...
If I look ...
You've promised
To see me through
Anything
Just me and you.

I DON'T KNOW. WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Ginger King—BCC Staff

What do you want to eat?
I don't know you say,
So sweet.
Again I say
It doesn't matter to me
Before long it's been
An hour and a half
And we've yet to leave.

NOISE FADES

Dominique L. Brown—BCC Student

All hopes and dreams are slightly cut off.
Snip, snip, snip, bit by bit dreams are cut from her life.
Everything got so insane; there is no use for anything.
Teardrops and rain are no longer the same during night.
Nothing will ever compare to this sweet despair.
She runs as moonlight touches her hair.
She is running from the dream snatcher.
Running is all she can do to escape from her fate.
Her hair blows in the wind from the vortex sucking her in.
Her hair is a mess, all tangled like a bird's nest.
The pearls and the wind are her only friends.
Her feet touch the ground without the slightest sound.
All of the noise fades, ending the reckless days.

SHE MOON

Simone R. Williams—BCC Student

It's warm and content but not one candle lit. She sits. On
concrete, skips, her pen to heart beats, never from the chest,
from the rhythm in my head.

She Moon's an embryo yet born yet dead, yet conscious to
the prophecy, her introductory leads to create tunes in your
mind when you see, She. You'd be, ignorant to ignore or
overlook her. It'll become something like your life's lesson.

She Moon's a blessing, lending you her hand which you feel as though it's your invitation. She's an angel carved directly from the hands of God's creation. Why does she feel as though religion is something she's wrestling? Maybe, a part of her has died tonight... She reminisces about the wrongs she's done, yet feels so right. Her perspective on the situation is an everlasting fruit that never rots.

Tears into your soul, dwell then form knots. Visualize her hard knot. Life....that brings pain that's pleasure, too great to measure. She Moon's whisper gives chills like December. She cried to always remember the naked tree in her dream, titled it "Summers Winter".

It felt so real to She. Some stuff that brought fear to her nights son Halloween, made scary. But made her wonder, what type of dark spell she was under. Sketchy Gray in the sky, mesmerized her eyes, held her spirit captive, and made her lips dry. She remembered the color of the demon's eyes. Familiar color. Familiar guy. Should this be a lie? He comforted her and caught her tears before she cried? A demon in love with an angel...that couldn't be right... and now, she lies ever in an abyss that lacks light. And for eternity she will remain in night. She sometimes feels him come out at night. However he's not of her dimension invisible to sight.

She's cursed to love someone she will never reach and blinded by nonsense. She can only reflect, reminisce and accept the gift painted from his ocean waves and the glittering sandy beach. It would be the only gift that made her shine to see a fill in from him despite his absence.

[Dedicated to Cinderella's powered spirit by the name of 'She Moon']

HALF MOON BAY

Ginger King—BCC Staff

In half moon bay
I watched the sun rise
From the same bench
I'd also watched the moon
Neither as lovely
As when you are home



SUNRISE

Kathy McGurgan—BCC Staff



MOON AND FRIEND

Ginger King—BCC Staff

INTO THE DARKNESS

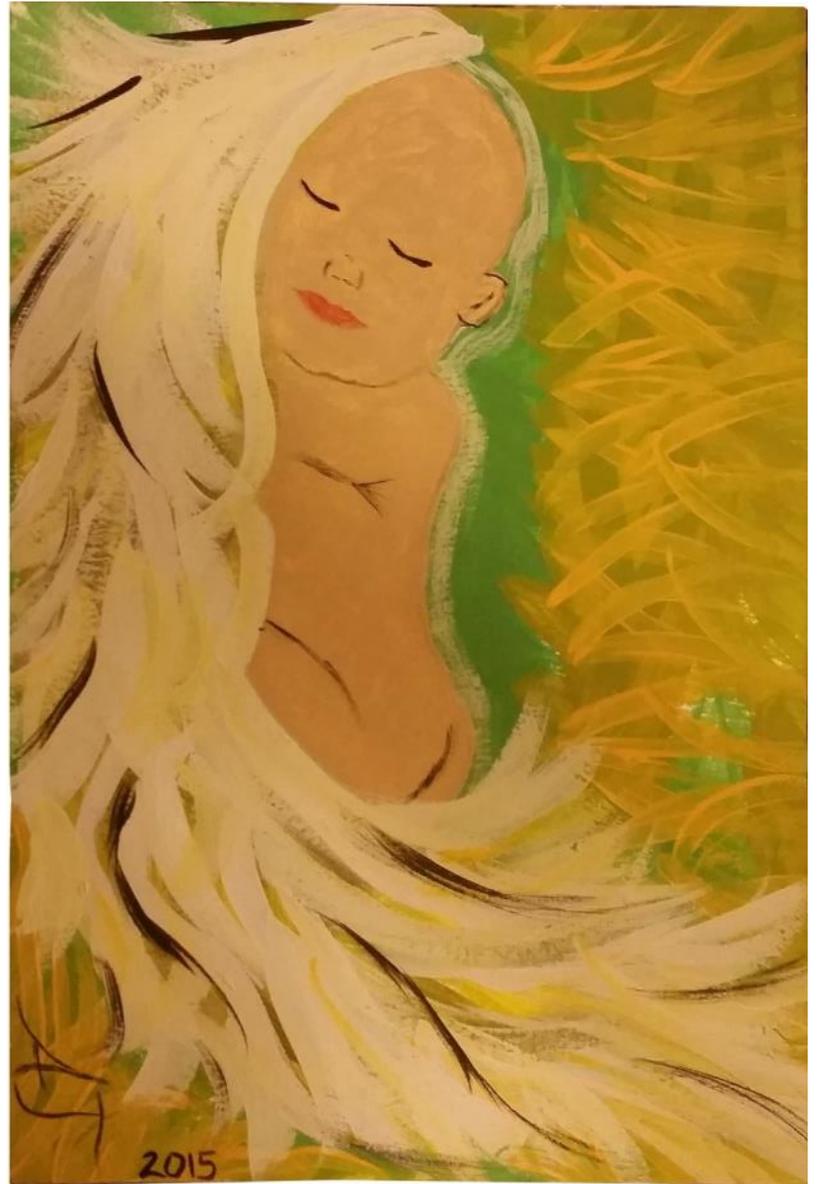
Jeanne Butler—BCC Staff

Silent
Few words come to mind
A reflection of where I am not
Days like this, I am absent
I fear the darkness
As the shadows pursue me
Instinctively I flee, causing me to lose my way
 somehow
It's fear
Ridicule
No longer feeling free to share
No longer trusting what I say
What is read of me
Part of me feels scolded
Punished by an imminent force —
 one I've experienced before
It conditions me
through disregard
Leaving me confused
I remain voiceless
Silent



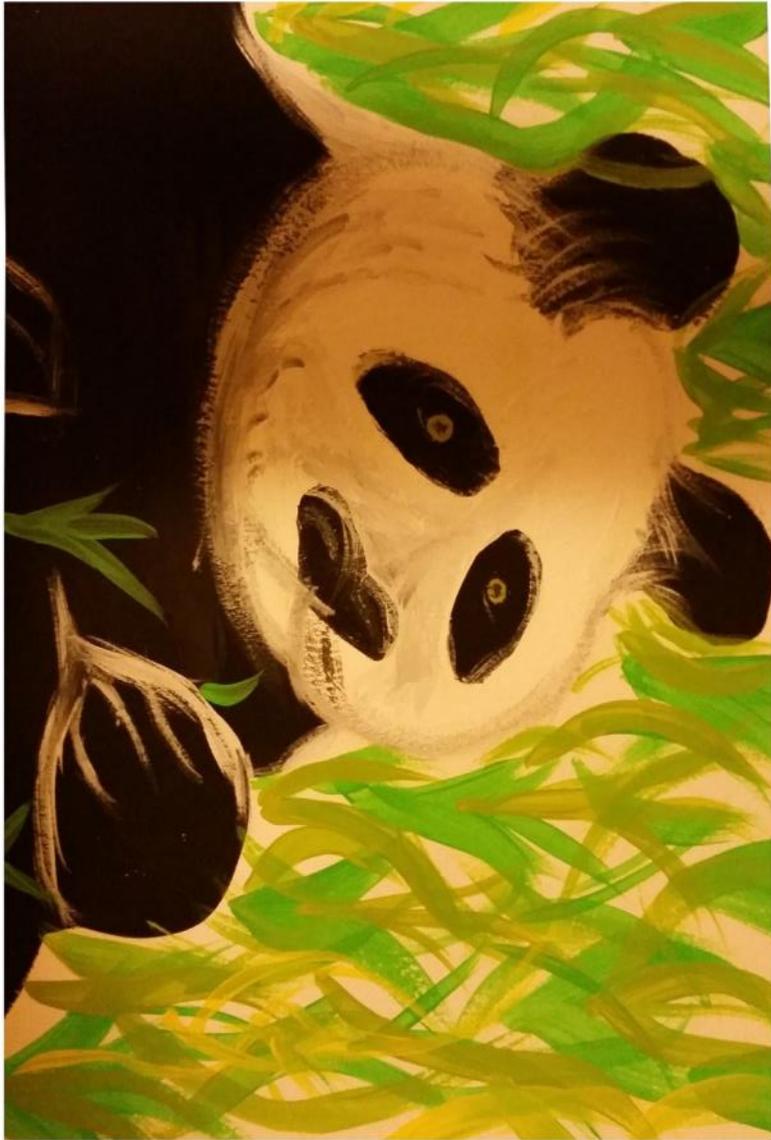
ART

Art
Art
ART



ABSTRACT BABY

Amber Johnson—BCC Student



ALA PRIMA PANDA

Amber Johnson—BCC Student



CUM PEGALI

Cate DeVane (age 10)—BCC Family Member
Niece of Lisa DeVane



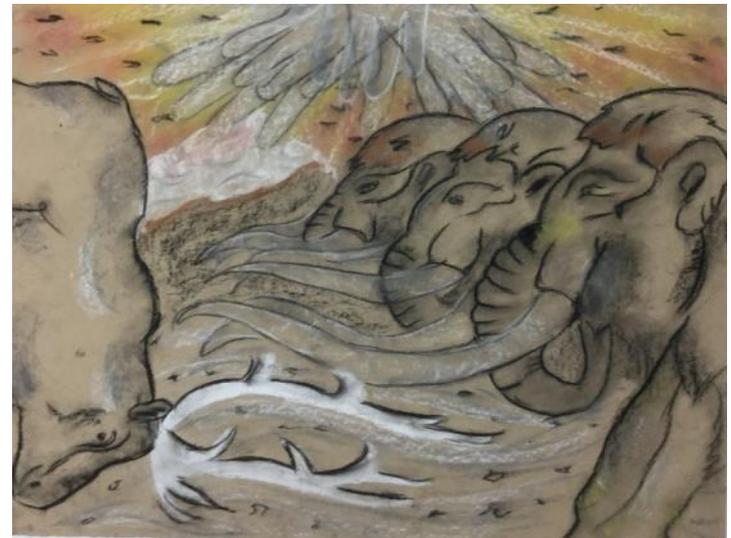
Iliana Sarmiento—BCC Student



Aaron Cox—BCC Student



Amanda Baxley—BCC Student



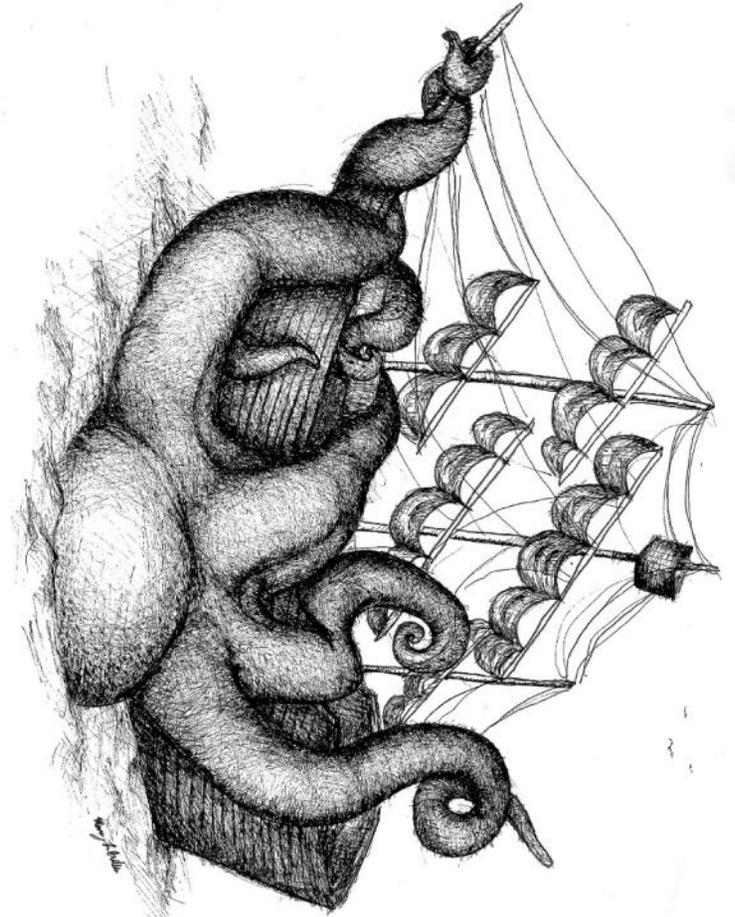
Carolina Sarmiento—BCC Student



Savannah Kinlaw—BCC Student



Savannah Kinlaw—BCC Student



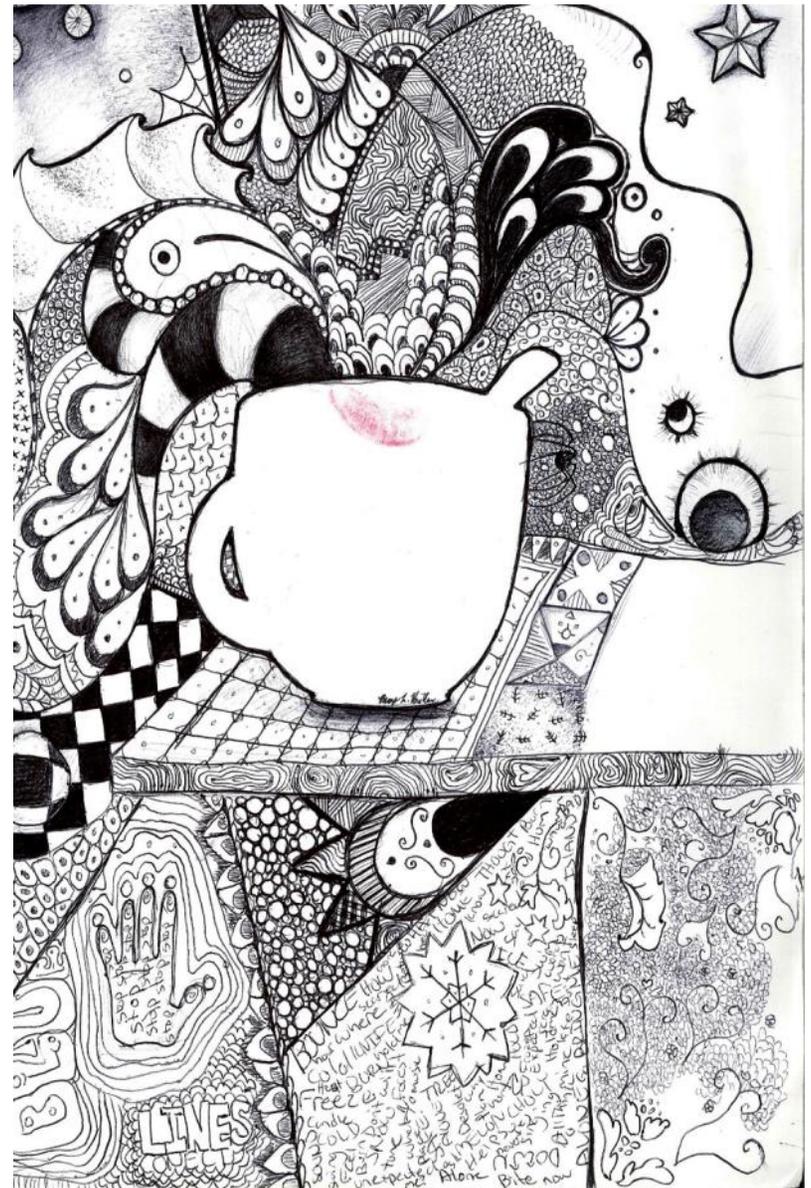
LEVIATHAN

Mary Butler (Age 17)—BCC Family
Daughter of Jeanne Butler



GYPSY SHAMROCK

Sheana Stitz—BCC Alumnus



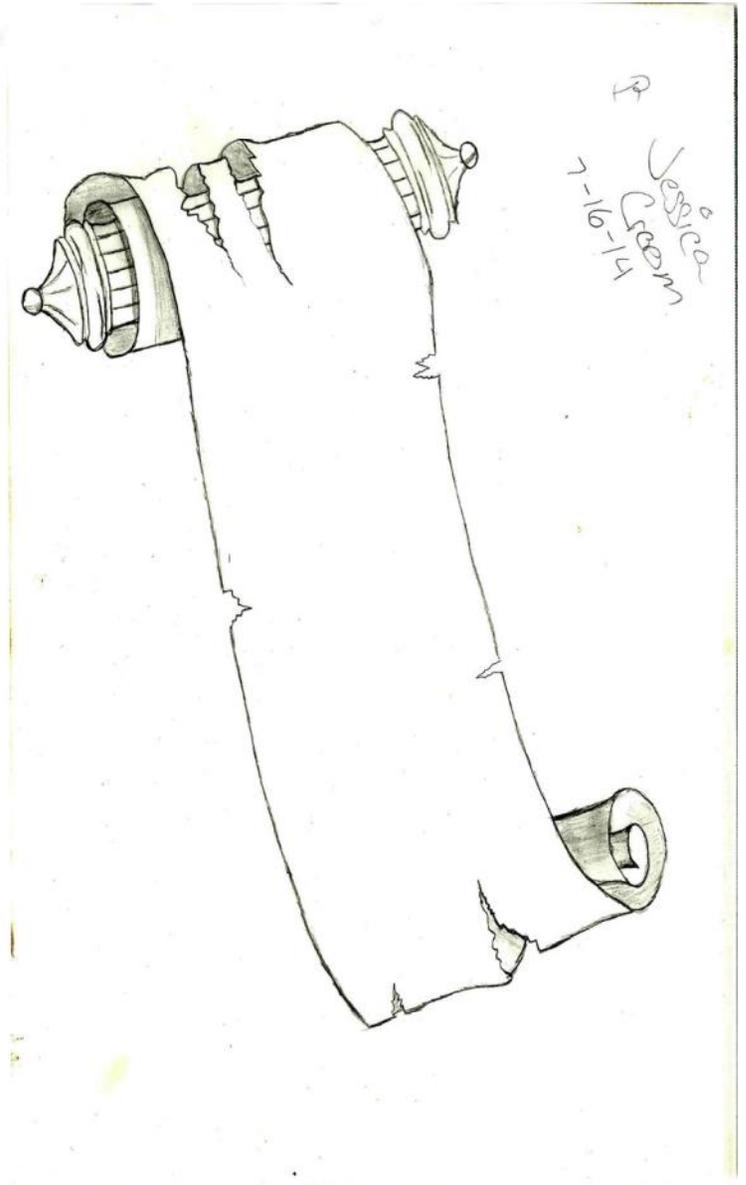
MORNING COFFEE

Mary Butler (Age 17)—BCC Family
Daughter of Jeanne Butler



IN THE MIND OF LEWIS CARROLL

Mary Butler (Age 17)—BCC Family
Daughter of Jeanne Butler



SCROLL

Jessica Croom—BCC Student



Xavier Rhone-Lewis

PRAYING HANDS

Xavier Rhone-Lewis—BCC Student



Xavier Rhone-Lewis

TIME IS FIRE

Xavier Rhone-Lewis—BCC Student



SCULPTURE SIDE ONE

Carolina Sarmiento—BCC Student



SCULPTURE SIDE TWO

Carolina Sarmiento—BCC Student



SCULPTURE

Amanda Baxkey—BCC Student



SCULPTURE

Aaron Cox—BCC Student



SCULPTURE

Iliana Sarmiento—BCC Student



SCULPTURE

Becky Kendall—BCC Faculty



SCULPTURE

Becky Kendall—BCC Faculty



THE TRACTOR

Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty



QUEEN ELIZABETH I

Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty



MY BIRDIE

Ginger King—BCC Staff



Ginger King 2015

ROSE IN WAITING

Ginger King—BCC Staff



Ginger King 2015

DAPPLED RED LEAF

Ginger King—BCC Staff



Ginger King 2015

FROSTY BUDS

Ginger King—BCC Staff



Ginger King 2015

OF PINE AND LACE

Ginger King—BCC Staff



SWAMP FREEZE

Ginger King—BCC Staff



BOWING GIANTS

Ginger King—BCC Staff



Ginger King 2015

FOGGY ICE CHAINS

Ginger King—BCC Staff



Ginger King 2015

ICE SPIDERS

Ginger King—BCC Staff



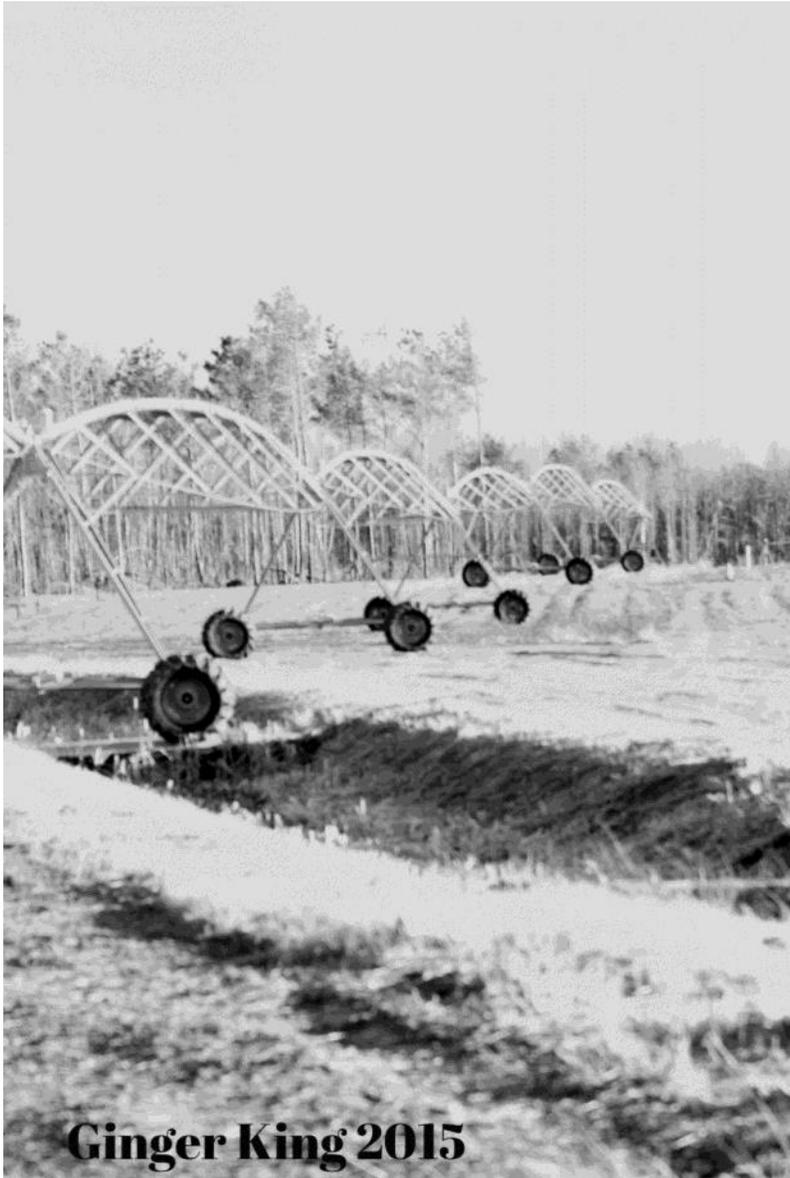
RAIN SLEET OR SNOW

Ginger King—BCC Staff



WILLIAMS BLDG OFFICE SIGN

Ginger King—BCC Staff



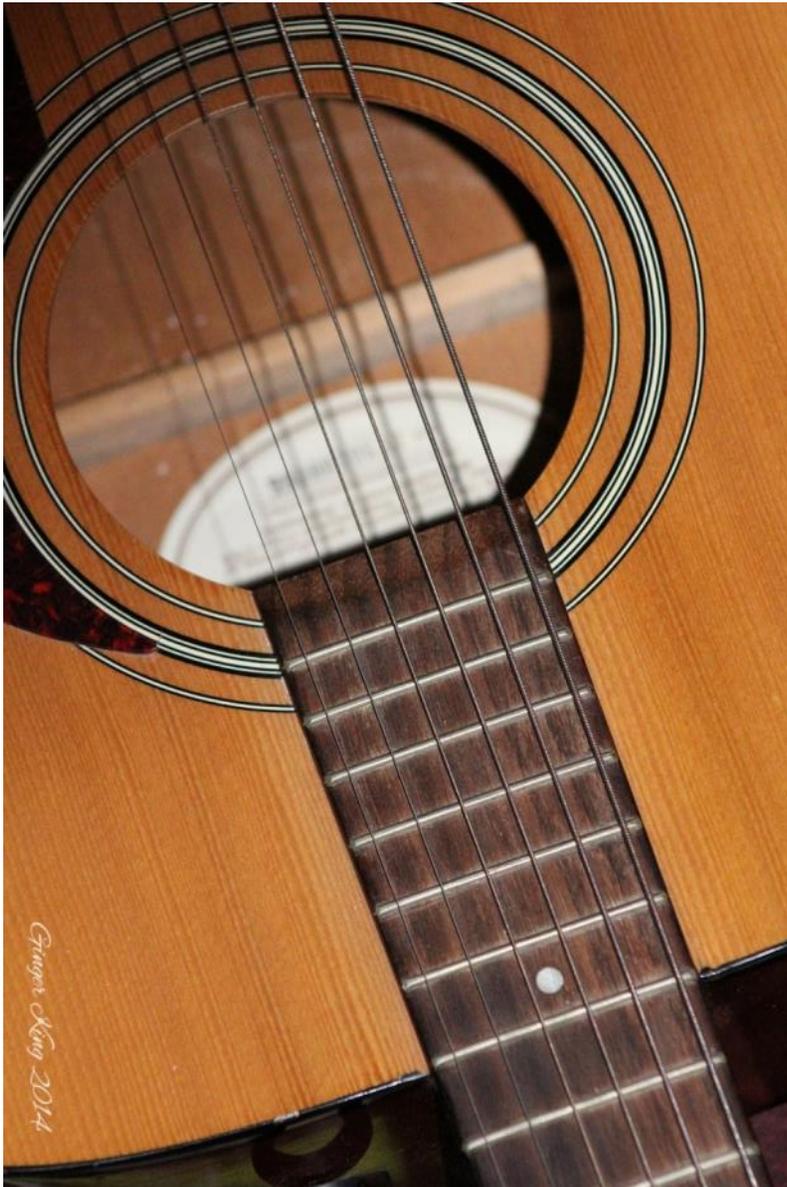
AG SPRAYER

Ginger King—BCC Staff



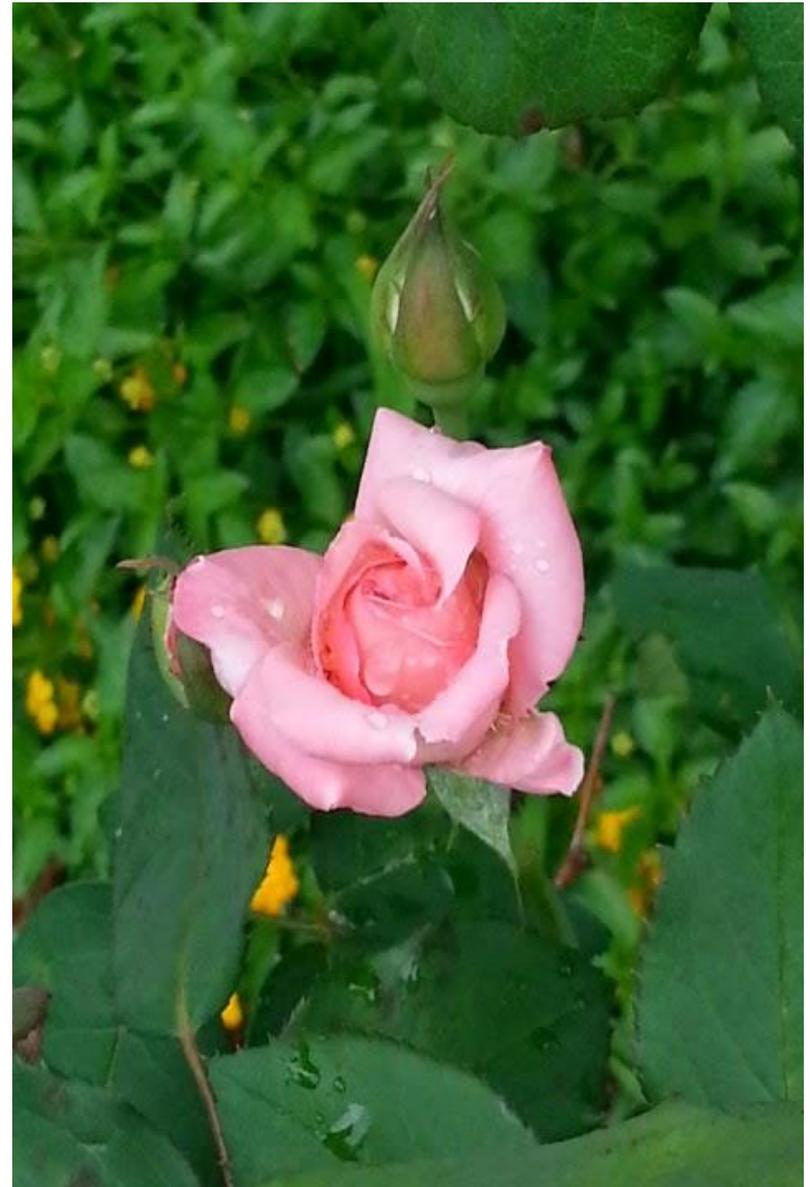
OLD TRUSTY

Ginger King—BCC Staff



OLD STRINGS

Ginger King—BCC Staff



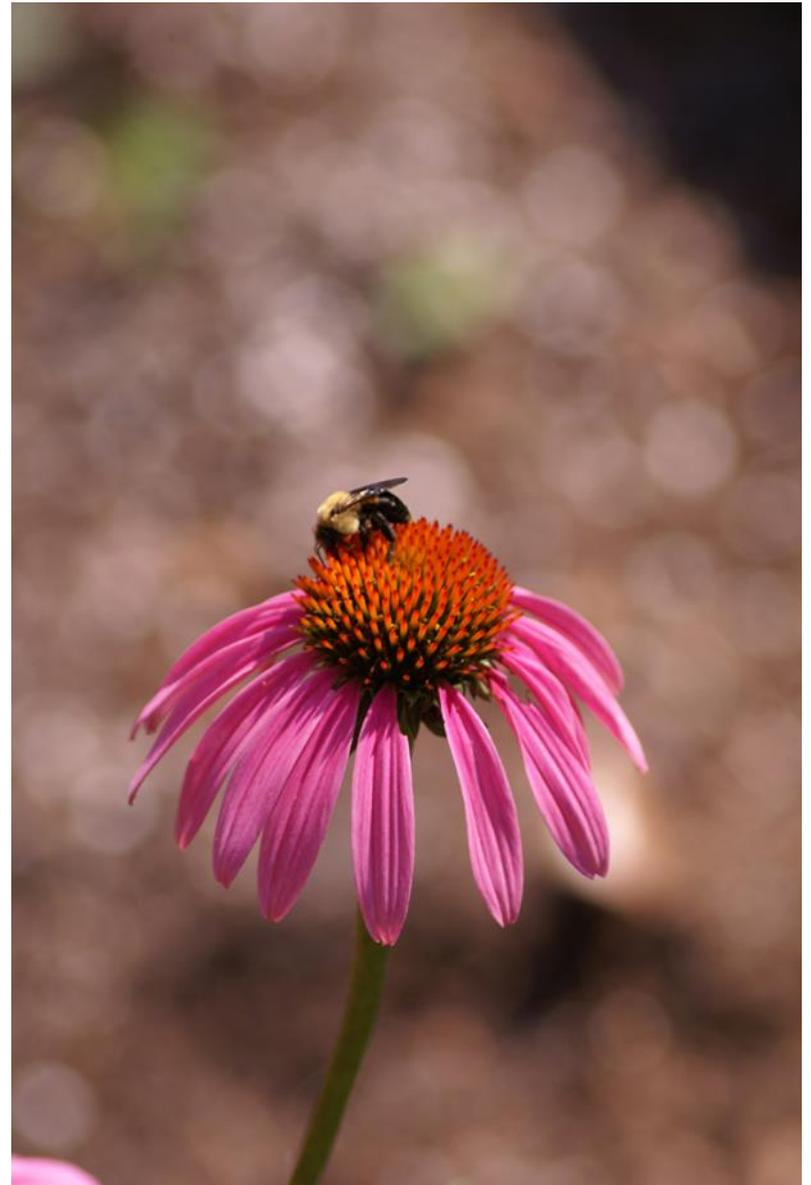
HOME GROWN BEAUTY

Lisa Neal—BCC Staff



STUDY IN MINIATURE

Jeanne Butler—BCC Staff



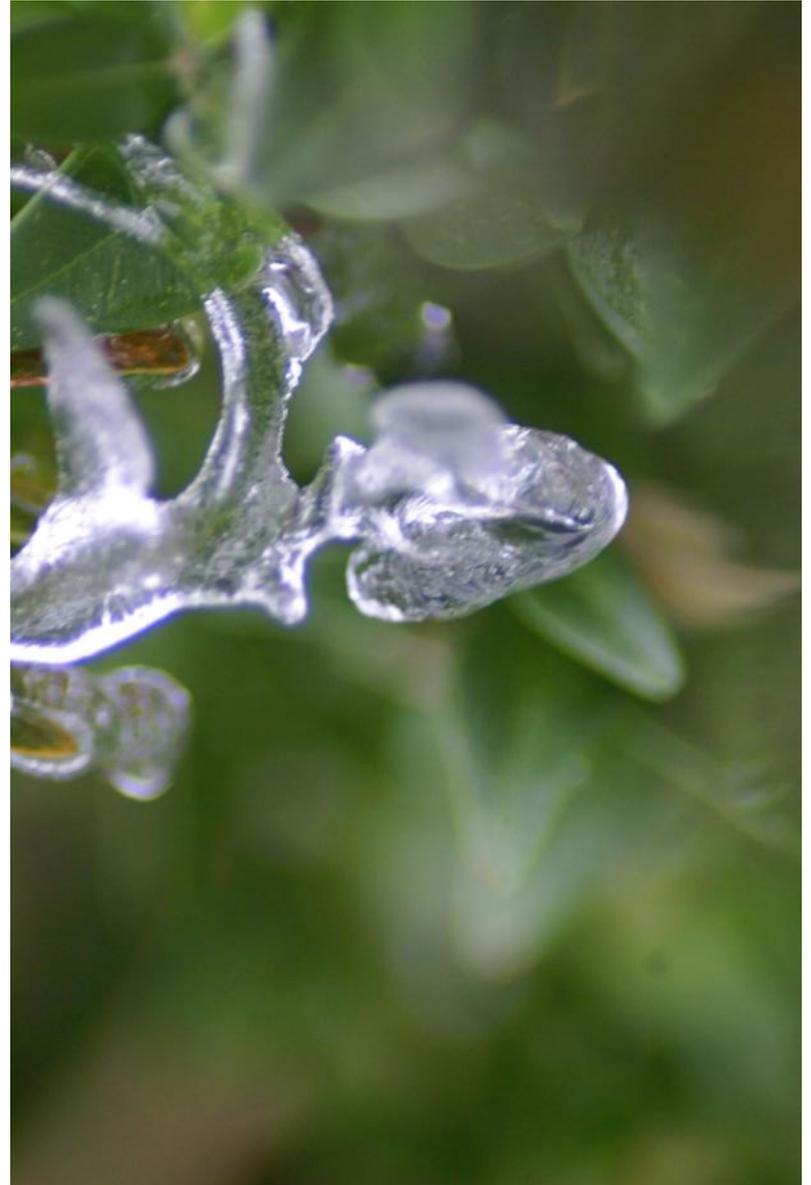
CONEFLOWER BUFFET

Jeanne Butler—BCC Staff



FROSTED BERRIES

Jeanne Butler—BCC Staff



FROZEN TEARS

Jeanne Butler—BCC Staff



SERENITY

Andrea Carter Fisher—BCC Staff



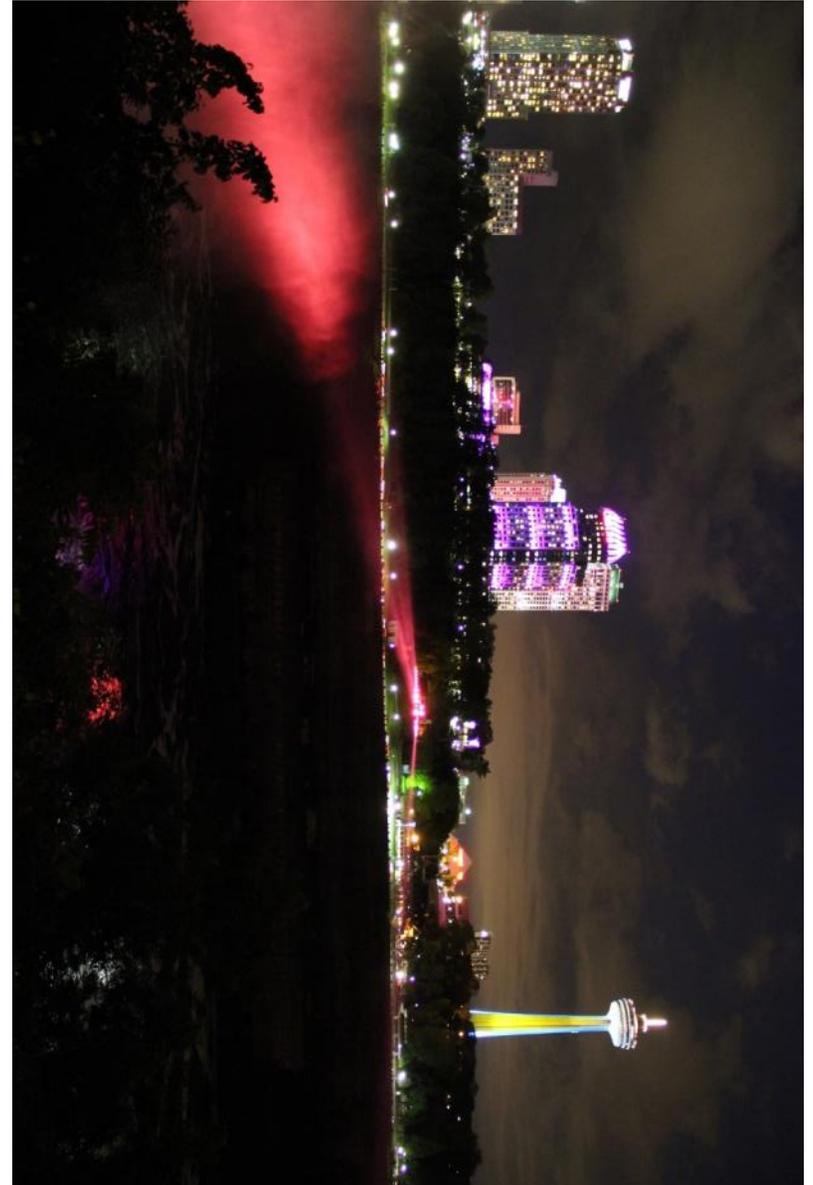
FROZEN IN TIME

Andrea Carter Fisher—BCC Staff



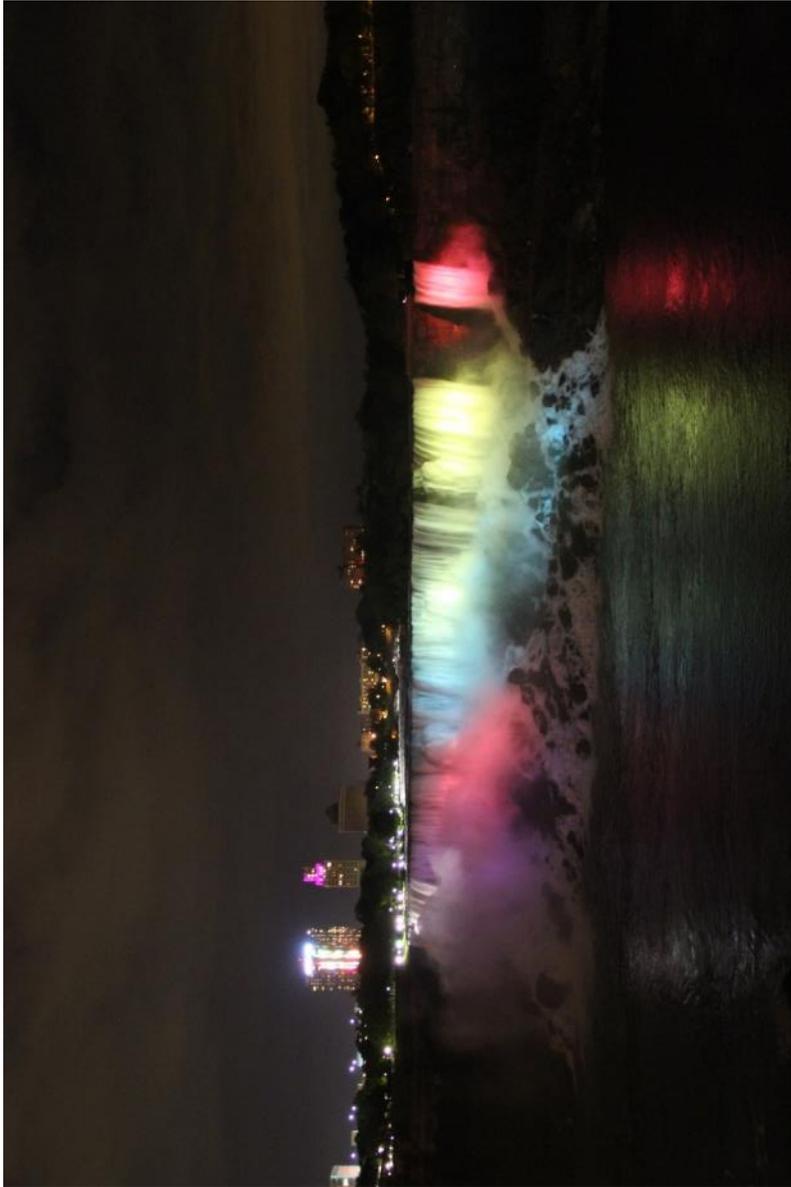
WINTER WONDERLAND

Karen Cecil-Kresmery—BCC Alumnus



CANADIAN NIGHTSCAPE

Karen Cecil-Kresmery—BCC Alumnus



TRANQUILITY

Karen Cecil-Kresmery—BCC Alumna



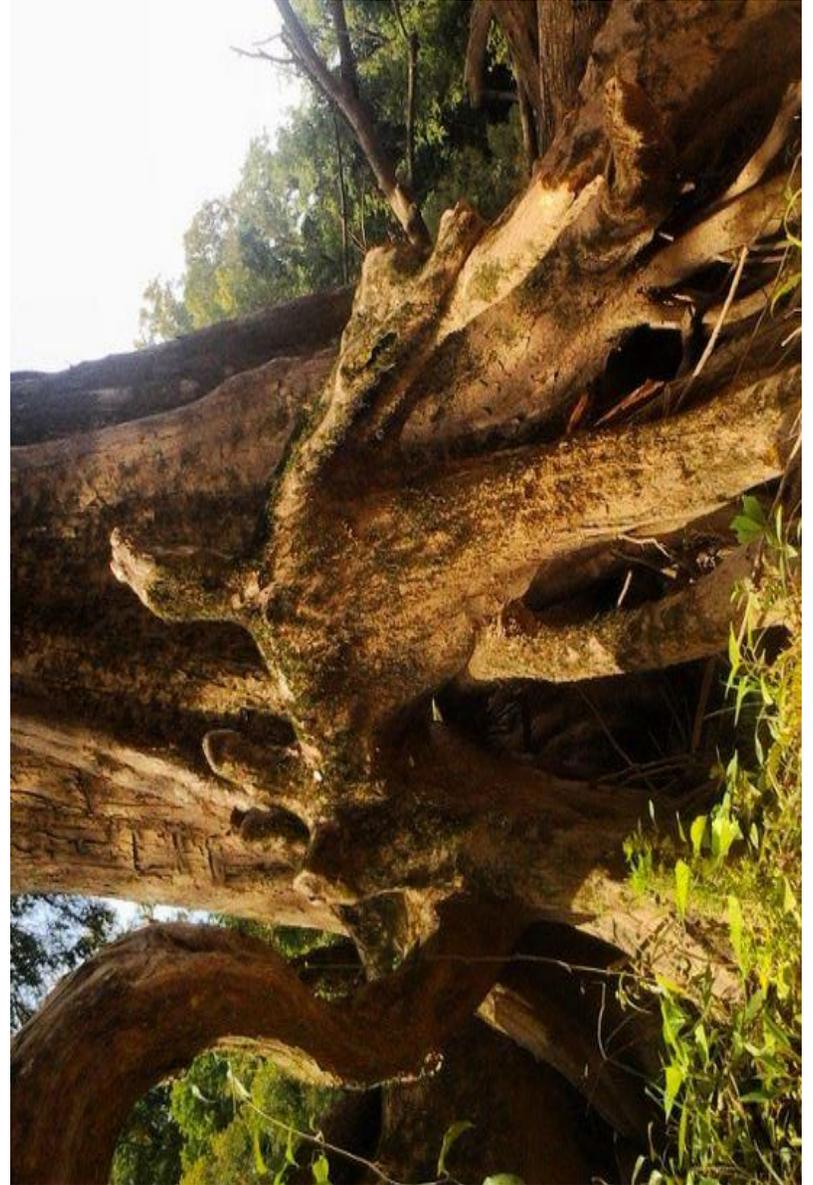
LIFE IN THE VINE

Karen Cecil-Kresmery—BCC Alumna



DOUBLE DELIGHT

Karen Cecil-Kresmery—BCC Alumnus



MAN ROOT

Joshua James—BCC Family Member
Husband of Rebecca James



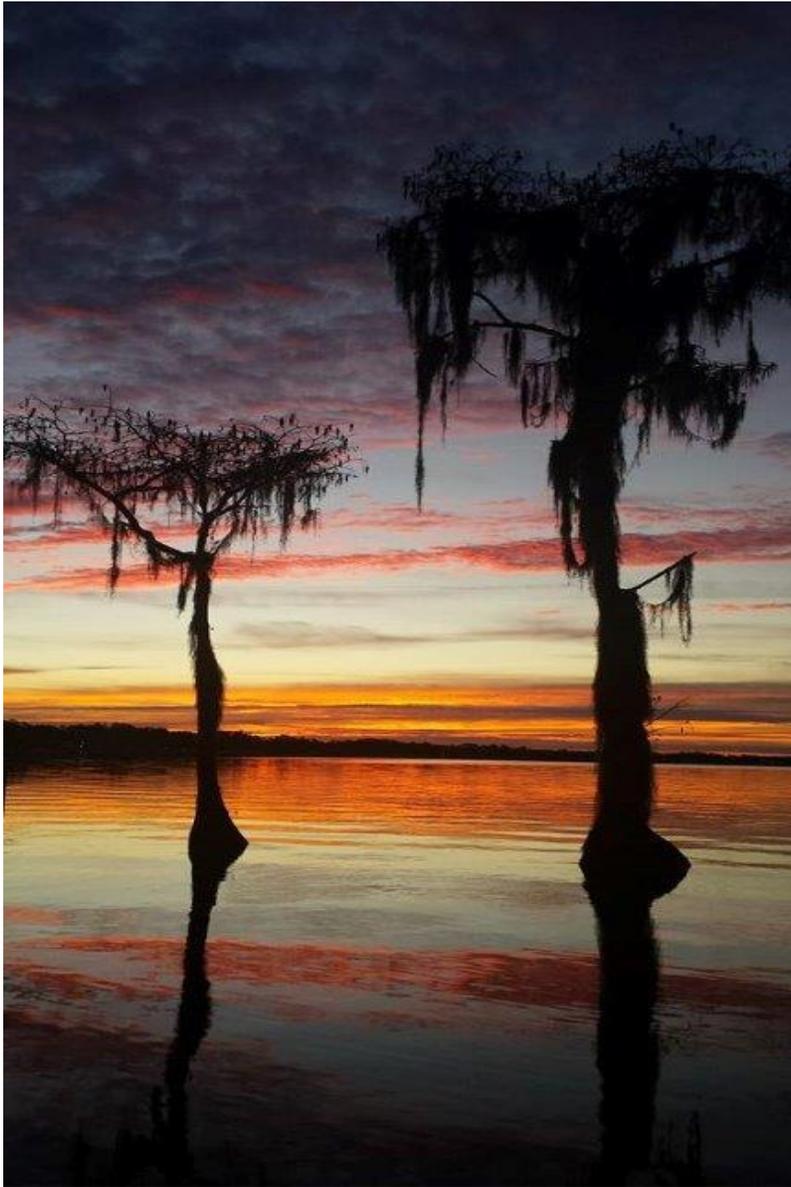
PIER

Joshua James—BCC Family Member
Husband of Rebecca James



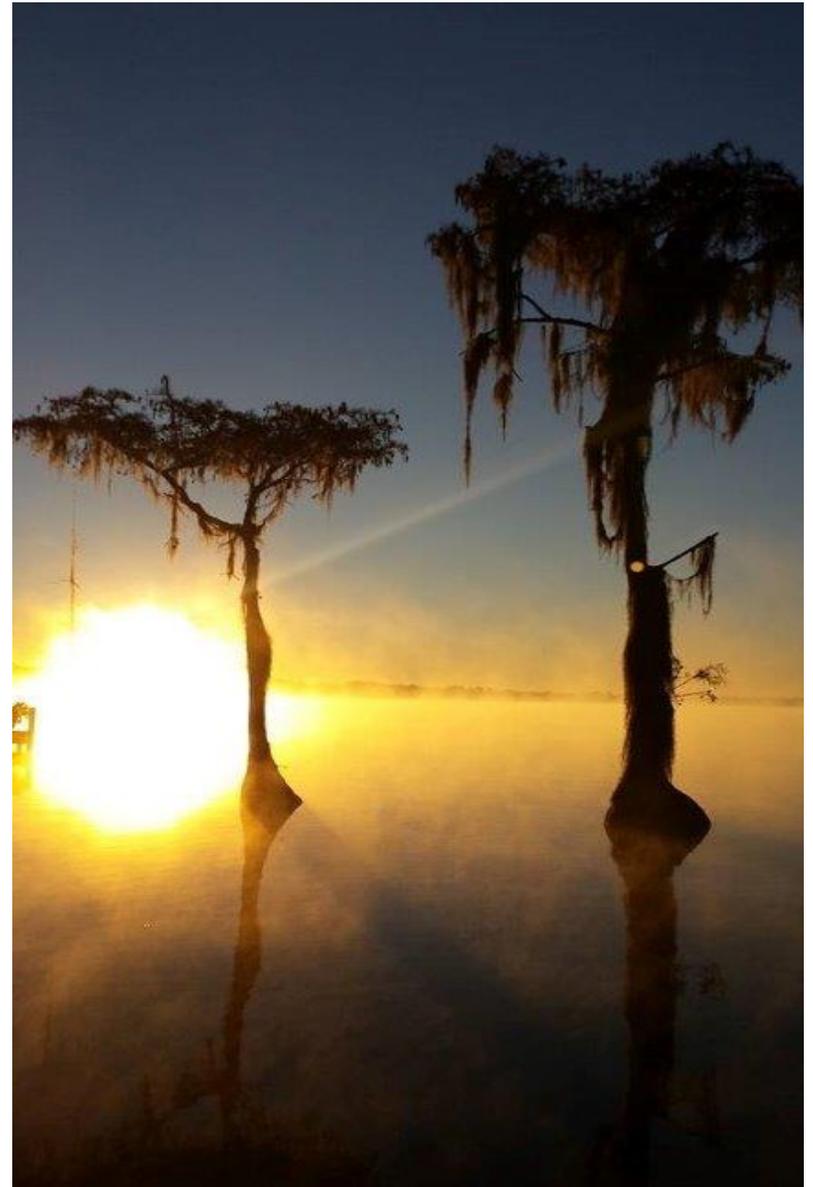
MOSS

Kathy McGurgan—BCC Staff



PINK SKIES

Kathy McGurgan—BCC Staff



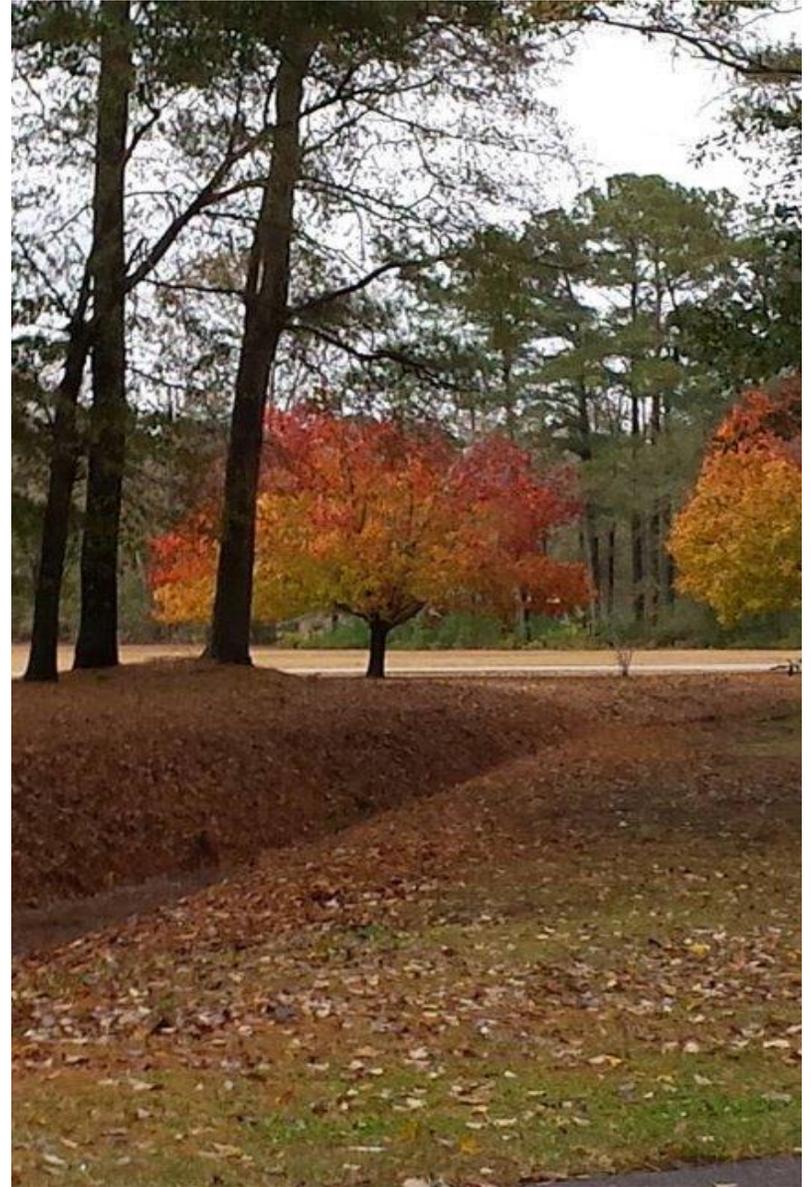
SUNRISE IN TRANSITION-ONE

Kathy McGurgan—BCC Staff



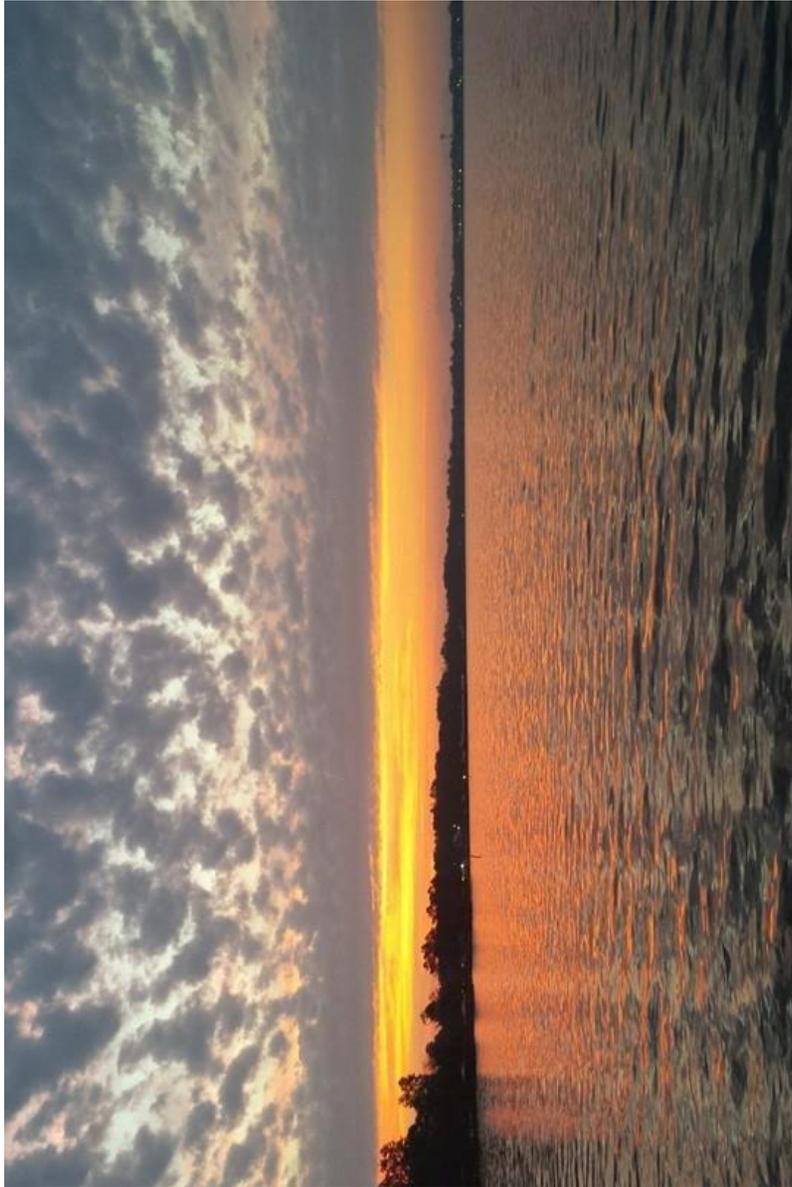
SUNRISE IN TRANSITION-TWO

Kathy McGurgan—BCC Staff



BCC LEAVES

Kathy McGurgan—BCC Staff



CLOUDY

Kathy McGurgan—BCC Staff



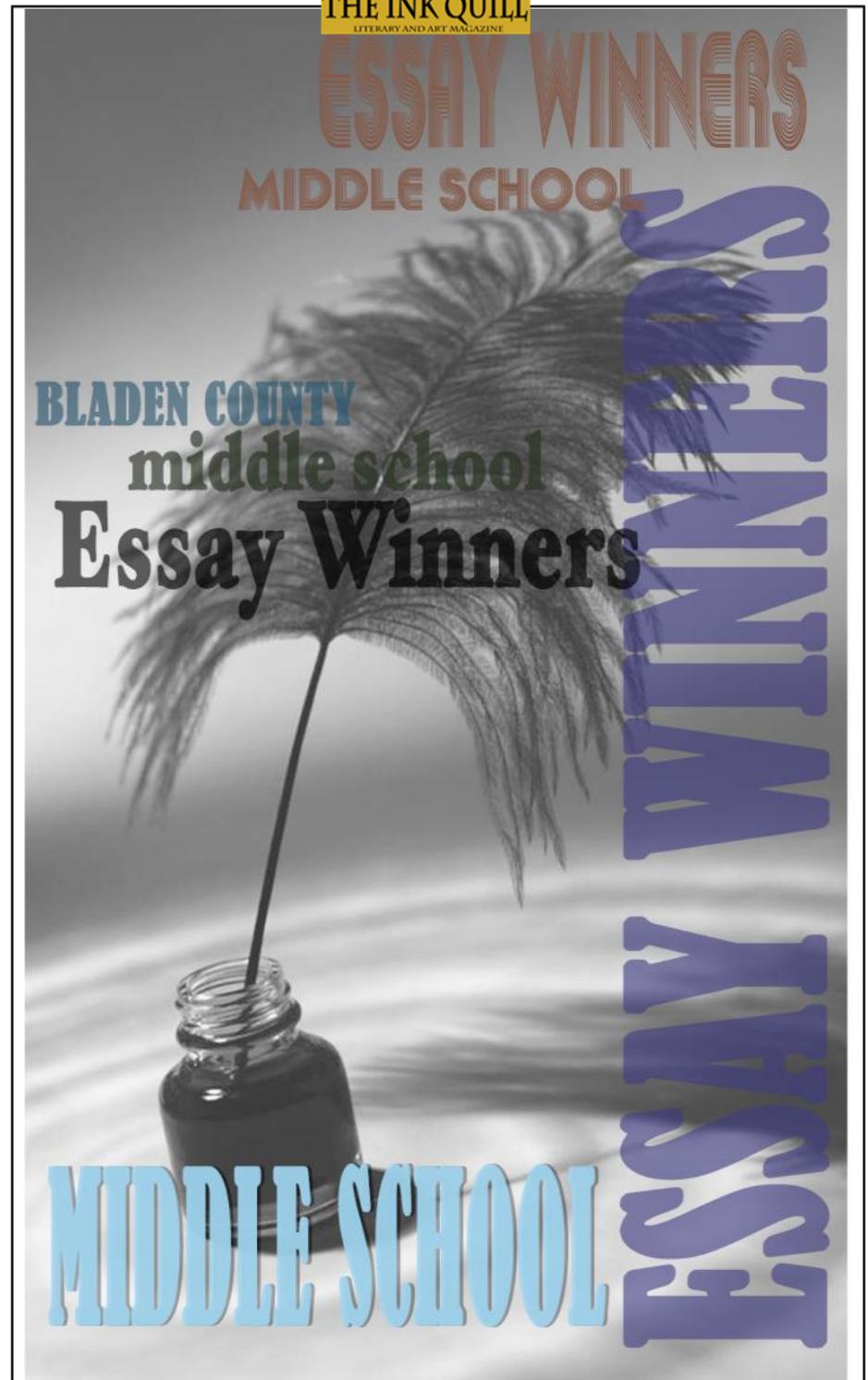
READY FOR MARKET

Catherine McLaney—BCC Staff



CARMIN WAITS

Diane Vitale—BCC Staff



AMAZING GRACE

Amy Reeves
Grade 8 Tar Heel Middle School

In the little town of Treevillie, there was a baby born with secretly powerful hair on July 8, 1984. She had long, thick, beautiful blonde hair that gave her power of a goddess. It gave her strength, ability to run incredibly fast, and knowledge that no one else had. She could read minds just by looking at others, and she made things happen by snapping her fingers. All this power was in a little girl named Grace who discovered her power at the age of seven. Grace grew up in an orphanage and went on to being the smartest, strongest, fastest, girl, in her school. When she graduated, she decided to become a doctor. In fact, Grace became the world's greatest doctor.

Grace started to use more of her power at the age of 30. She entered marathons and won them all. She would use her strength to help build shelters for both the animals and the homeless. One day, as she looked deeply into someone's eyes, she discovered that she could read minds. She started using this power to save people from committing suicide. Soon she discovered that she had the power to get what she desired. One night, she was thinking very hard of what else she could do. She was tired and hungry and wanted some ice cream. BOOM! A bowl of ice cream just popped up out of nowhere.

Amazing Grace's foster mom, whom Grace cared about very deeply, passed away on March 8, 2014. She died of a very common cancer called leukemia. When she died, a piece of Grace's heart broke. Grace was determined to find a cure to all cancers so that no one else had to suffer like Grace and her family did, and so she did. With her power of knowledge,

she had to do things you wouldn't even imagine. Grace went to the end of the earth and back just to find five ingredients to her special cure. The first ingredient was very simple; it was just almond butter. The second ingredient was a little bit trickier; it was jellyfish extract, fresh from a wild jellyfish. The third ingredient was very important; it was a tooth from a megalodon shark. The fourth ingredient was a leaf from a cocoa tree, and the last ingredient was a purple poison dart. Grace mixed these ingredients together and got this whipped cream mix, which she put in the oven set at 200 degrees for thirty minutes. Grace gave the gummy with the ingredients in it to a cancer patient. It cured him in twenty days. He just walked out of the hospital perfectly healthy.

Grace had seen another big problem in the third world: hunger. As a result, she went to the sub-Saharan Africa where lots of children were going hungry every day and ate once every other day. She saw how they ate very little at times; consequently, she gathered the people of the little village of Antietam in the town hall and used her power to make food in seconds. She started to travel around the world feeding people. Amazing Grace stopped world hunger. She became the world's hero. However, she never stopped there. She kept feeding all the hungry people in the world and now no one is starving.

One day, Grace turned on the TV and the news was showing the ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) group terrorizing a large swath of Syria and Iraq. She didn't like how they were killing people in cold blood. Therefore, she went to Washington D.C., met with Mrs. Michelle Obama, explained to the first lady how her powers worked, and volunteered to help defeat the ISIS. Grace got to meet the president and his family. She got to lead the USA in victory

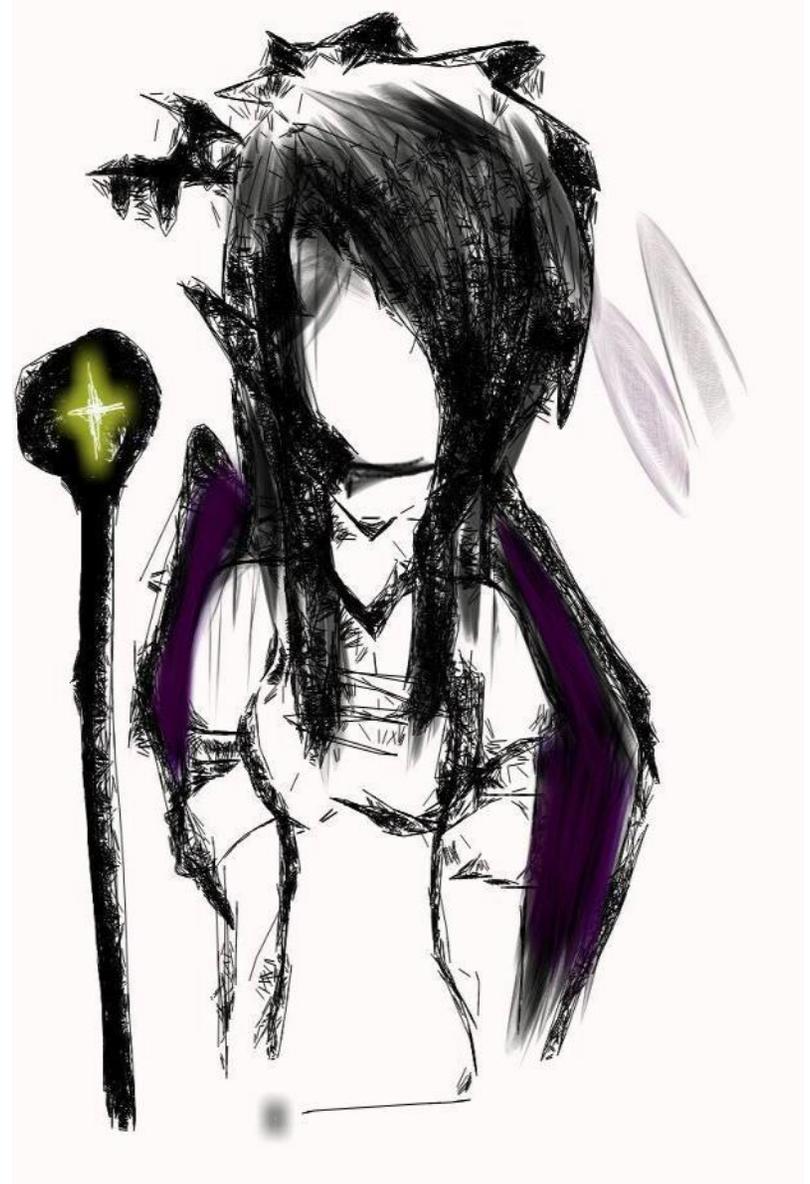
to beat the ISIS group. However, this wasn't easy since she traveled to Iraq, used her super speed to circle around the ISIS leader and shoot him down dead. Without a leader, ISIS fell apart within two days. The world celebrated and Grace became the world's greatest superhero.

Amazing Grace settled down and found herself a husband and they had two wonderful beautiful twin girls named May and Autumn. They were lovely girls who cared for the world a lot. Grace and her family grew old together. Grace had to go live in a nursing home at the age of 89 because she outlived her entire family. She died on April 12, 2086 at the age of 102. Her funeral was so beautiful and wonderfully touching. Rest in peace, Grace Amelia Foster.



READY FOR LOVE

Amber Johnson—BCC Student



MYSTIC MAGIC

Tristian Stitz (Age 13)—BCC Family
Granddaughter of Jeanne Butler

IF I WERE A SUPERHERO

Reina Cruz
Grade 8 Bladenboro Middle School

If I were a superhero, my name would be Super 26 Girl, and I would put many police officers on the streets. I would also have undercover cops to stop all crime. I would have robots with cameras as their eyes. Their eyes would allow them to detect any suspicious act of crime. They would also be able to spot almost instantly when a crime is about to be committed. Having these robots would help out a lot. It would help reduce the crime rate. A wonderful lady I admire, Wanda Sykes, said “I think there should be more public display of affection.” Not for the wrong reasons! For example, if two men are about to rob a store or a bank, and they see other people – children, adults, or elderly – having a good time, they may get emotional and ashamed of themselves, and as a result, decide not to carry out the robbery. Moreover, we need more love to spread around so people won't feel unloved or unwanted and do all these outrageous acts that harm other people since many innocent people may get hurt even if only one person is targeted.

To help all the hungry and homeless of the world, my superhero friends and I would start many shelters and charity organizations. At school, we would have canned food drives and many fun fundraisers. We would donate the food and money to charity organizations and the shelters. For the people who may have children and can't go to school, we would help them go to school. We would help the children of all ages to read, write, and do anything they may need help with. The homeless who need jobs would be helped by me and my friends: Conservative S Boy, Helping Selena, and

Super Nature Loving K-Girl. We would start by doing something simple, like starting a lemonade stand or by helping anywhere we could. We would give the adults good jobs that they would enjoy.

To start the charity organizations, we would make people aware of world hunger. For instance, we would ask them if they knew that one out of every five people is hungry. We would make them aware that at least one person dies each day because of the cold or heat or lack of the right amount of nutrients. A total of 841 million people don't get the food they need. Of those, 153 million are children five years of age and under. Another six million children die each year, and 40,000 children die each day. That's 24 kids who die per minute (National Student Campaign, n.d.). Some people think that these charity organizations lie or that it's just another way to get money from them. It's not that people don't want to help out with this big problem, but that some people pretend to be homeless to get money from hard working people trying to help others.

I would like to stop all of the littering of the world because if we want this world to be clean and beautiful for a longer period of time, we have to keep our planet clean! I am starting by recycling everything that is recyclable, reusing everything that is reusable, and trying to reduce the usage of things that we really don't need. Super Nature Loving K-Girl is helping with this effort. We would take Gru's minions. Dave and Kevin would be in charge of helping to pick up the litter. Carl, Phil, Jerry, Stuart, Tom, and Tim and all the other minions would be the litter patrol officers. They would fine everyone who litters. Gru and the professor would be in charge of making a new gadget to strike trash that is

recyclable and make it something new, nice, and helpful. Bob would eat anything that is not recyclable, getting rid of it with his acidic powers.

Another issue is the school lunches. The first lady, Michelle Obama, said that all schools should provide their students with healthy school lunches. What happens when they give students food that is just reheated? Sometimes, students start to feel bad, and sometimes, there are bugs and hair in the food. The food should be inspected, so my friends and I are going to help with that because some schools have a variety of foods that are good and healthy, while other schools have the same menu every single week. This makes the students not want to eat. When that happens, students are hungry throughout the whole school day, and they don't have energy to do much, which causes reduced class participation. Also, they get behind on what they are learning in class, which causes poor grades.

In summary, as Super 26 Girl, I would use my powers to make the world a better place. My superhero friends and I would end crime, hunger, and poverty. We'd also stop littering and encourage recycling to save our planet. We'd also make school lunches both nutritious and appetizing. We'd accomplish all of this through education, service projects, and by using our super powers!

Work Cited

National Student Campaign against Hunger and Homelessness
<http://www.studentsagainsthunger.org/page/hhp/over>

THE DREAM SPEAKER

Greyson Heustess
Grade 8 Clarkton School of Discovery

Middle school sucks, especially for Charles Weaver. Charles is a seventh grader. He is four feet six inches tall and weighs only 81 pounds. He loves science and math and hates his glasses. They are the focal point of ridicule.

Seventh grader, Eric Jones, constantly knocks Charles' glasses off of his face. Eric never acknowledges his real name. He always calls Charles "Four Eyes" or "Erkel." The mental abuse is bad enough, but Eric loves to twist Charles' arm behind his back so high that he has to stand on his tiptoes to relieve the pain. Most of his underwear are torn from the wedgies he endures.

Lisa Garner is an eighth grader. She is tall and lanky with long, plain hair. She has to wear hand-me-down clothes. She doesn't have an iPhone; instead, she has her mother's old flip phone.

Sheila and Teri, two "popular" girls, never fail to point out that Lisa's clothes were in style years ago. Their favorite insult is "Of all the girls in the eighth grade, you should definitely be the one to use makeup." The worst time of her day is when Lisa rushes home from the bus to check Facebook. Every day, they post something about her clothes or goody-two-shoes lifestyle. She often starts her chores with tears in her eyes. Her mother works two jobs because her dad is disabled from a work accident.

Jordan Smith is an eighth grader. He is slightly overweight and loves playing sports. He is a good lineman in football,

second team in basketball, and the right fielder in baseball. His teachers and friends love him because he is kind, respectful and works hard. The only person he hasn't impressed is James Smith, his father. James' dream is for Jordan to be the starting quarterback in football, a high-scoring shooting guard and a rifle-armed catcher.

I am The Dream Speaker. I don't know exactly when or why it happened, but I have developed the power to control dreams. I had nightmares, so my mother would sit on the edge of my bed and help me meditate on good things before I went to sleep. I began to have fantastic dreams. My baby sister was having scary dreams about bad people breaking into our house. I would focus on her as she went to bed and wish for her to have pleasant dreams. Her dreams changed as well.

Eric always made me mad, but one day he went too far. He forced Charles' head first into a trash can. Many students laughed; others sat stunned at what they had witnessed. I wondered if I could use my new power to make Eric, Sheila, Teri, and Jordan's father realize how they were hurting others. That night, I sat on my bed and meditated about the hurtful things I had done to Charles, Lisa and Jordan. I tossed and turned all night and woke up early the next morning with a strange sense that something was different. Little did I know that I was not the only one that tossed and turned all night.

Soon after Eric Jones went to sleep, he began to dream about kids ridiculing him relentlessly. He felt the pain of his arm being twisted behind his back and the helplessness of barely being able to stay high enough on his toes to keep his arm from breaking. He felt flush with embarrassment as he shook pencil shavings out of his hair and Coke off of his shirt.

As he pulled himself out of a trash can, he was haunted by the laughter of his classmates.

Sheila and Terry were texting each other as soon as they woke up. Strangely, both had dreamed that designer jeans and UGG boots were a thing of the past. They were the girl they drove mad with their evil insults and constant cyber bullying.

James Smith had the worst night of all. He couldn't believe the shame he felt. He woke up countless times during the night trying to shake off the horrible dream. He would go back to sleep, and it would start over again. His father was never proud of him; he only pushed him to do better and fussed at him about his mistakes. When his friends praised him, his father pointed out someone more successful. He couldn't believe how he treated his son.

Seven peoples' lives changed for the better that day. This is when I discovered the power of being The Dream Speaker.



KNIGHT

Jessica Croom—
BCC Student



ANIME GIRL WITH HEART

Joseph Willis—BCC Student

MORE THAN A CAPE AND A CATCH PHRASE

Alyssa Strickland
Grade 8 Clarkton School of Discovery

Growing up, children always heard the stories of Batman, Superman, Spider-Man, and of course, Wonder-Woman because where would our superheroes be without their superheroines? Admit it, watching Spider-Man shoot sticky webs from his wrists and Wonder-Woman flying high in the sky made everyone want to be a superhero. Whether it was for the fame and glory or for the super cool costume, saving the world was something we all wanted to do. We all dreamt of soaring with the birds, beating up the bad guys, and foiling all of the evil villains' plans.

Unfortunately, as we grew out of our Spider-Man footie pajamas and our Wonder-Woman Underoos, reality got in the way of those big dreams. We realized that no matter how many times we tried to summon Batman with the Bat-signal, he wasn't going to come flying in to save the day. So now, when you say "I'm going to save the world" or "I'm going to make a change," people look at you like you're crazy, or they reply with "What can you do? You're just a kid," but that's not true! There's no such thing as "just a kid." Look at Taylor Swift. She had been performing almost her entire life, and at the age of fourteen, she signed with an independent label in Tennessee. Now, Taylor is an inspiration and a hero to many.

A cape and a catch-phrase isn't what makes a super hero! A super hero is someone who puts others' needs before his or her own. Our military is a great example. Service men and women go to other countries, risking their lives for people that they don't even know. They face extreme temperatures,

diseases, battle wounds, losing loved ones, and sometimes, losing their own lives so that we can be free.

Mothers are another example. They cleansed our cuts and scratches when we jumped off the bed to see if we could fly like Superman. They made us chicken soup after a long day of fighting crime. They watched reruns of our favorite cartoons no matter how many times they had seen them, and most importantly, they loved us unconditionally.

You, also, have the ability to be a hero by opening the door for someone, picking up a piece of trash, or helping someone in your neighborhood with the groceries. It may seem like little things to you, but the simplest things can make people smile, and what is more heroic than making someone happy? There is a beautiful quote by Batman in *The Dark Knight Rises*: “A hero can be anyone. Even a man doing something as simple and reassuring as putting a coat around a little boy's shoulder to let him know that the world hasn't ended.” This quote is so true. You never know when someone is going to need a hero. You never know when you yourself might need one!

Sitting around, wishing those stories on the news about poverty, homelessness, and murder would just disappear isn't going to make them disappear. Why imagine a better world when you can get up and make this world better? Everyone always has excuses, but fear is an excuse we hear all the time. You can't let fear control you. “*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them. For The Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you*” (Deuteronomy 31:6).

Take part in extracurricular activities at your school, go on

mission trips and lead people to Christ, participate in Operation Christmas Child and give kids a nice Christmas. There are so many things you can do, so why not do them?

There is a hero within us all. Compassion, kindness, and strength are your superpowers. Fear is your only weakness. Therefore, what are you waiting for? You never know what you're capable of until you break your boundaries, step out of your comfort zone, and find the hero within you!



ANIME GIRL WITH SWORD

Joseph Willis—BCC Student

SUPERHEROES DEFEATING ILLITERACY

Constance Smith
Grade 8 Clarkton School of Discovery

BOOM! POW! BAM! ZAP! Growing up, I didn't know anyone who did not dream of becoming a superhero. Superheroes had superhuman powers that could let them read your mind, shoot lasers out of their eyes, or even fly! They weren't just awesome, amazing, spectacular, mind-blasting super beings; superheroes were the defenders of all good, fighting against forces of evil. Now, however, evil doesn't just come from a joker, a penguin, or even Lex Luthor from the X Men. Evil forces face our world today. Now they can come in many forms such as hunger, homelessness, or illiteracy.

One of the biggest problems our country faces today is illiteracy. One in four children in America grow up without learning how to read. Our country needs superheroes, and even though we have some that help out everyday, we don't have enough. The superheroes that I'm referring to are the ones who take out their time to help others even if they don't have powers to fly or shoot lasers out of their eyes. The reason they are superheroes is because they volunteer. Only 25.3% of the people volunteered in the U.S. last year. We can all be superheroes; we can all help those in need, and we can all get rid of illiteracy. We can help reduce the fact that two-thirds of the students can't read by the end of 4th grade, or that the rate of illiteracy costs us over \$70 million a year.

If I had superpowers, I'd deliver books around the country to children. I'd read to children in their minds so they could better understand. I'd sit on top of the Empire State Building and scream at the top of my lungs the words from *Tom Sawyer*

or *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and they would listen to me. Wait, you know what, if I were a superhero, my power would be to make them listen. Maybe if they listened, they would learn how illiteracy is not just affecting them, but us.

We are the future. The decisions we make today make us who we will be tomorrow, and if we choose not to read now, when will we? When will we see that we're not only hurting ourselves. As Americans, it's our duty to help serve our country for the better. When our country loses \$225 billion in production every year because employees lack basic literacy skills, we are making it worse for the future. We do need more superheroes.

Be that superhero! Be the person that makes our country proud! So today, not tomorrow, or the next day, pick up a book and open it. Once you open a book, you unleash a new world of adventure, romance, discoveries, and, well, anything! Inside a book you can be that superhero! Everyday people are fighting against illiteracy by reading. I can be that person who helps our country even without any superpowers. "Reading and writing, like everything else, improve with practice. And, of course, if there are no young readers and writers, there will shortly be no older ones. Literacy will be dead, and democracy - which many believe goes hand in hand with it - will be dead as well." -Margaret Atwood





ANIME GIRL WITH LOLLIPOP

Joseph Willis—BCC Student

THE ADVENTURES OF ADAM PARKER

Nathan Reid Taylor
Grade 8 Clarkton School of Discovery

Hot dogs again? How many times a week can they feed us hot dogs. I can't stand hot dogs. Look over there. Jackson Tatum, quarterback of the football team, and his friends Austin Taylor and Justin Madden are sitting at the table next to the vending machine. I'd really like to go get a drink out of the vending machine, but I know what will probably happen. "Hey, Metal Mouth, did it hurt when they put those train tracks down in your mouth?" asked Jackson Tatum. Everybody in the cafeteria died laughing. I turned around, shrugged my shoulders, put my head down, and went straight to my seat without even getting a drink.

How did I, Adam Parker, become the school nerd? I was cool when I was in third grade. I didn't have glasses. I didn't have braces. It isn't fair! Why am I the nerd? Feeling sorry for myself, looking around, I wonder what makes the others so not nerdy. Wilbur Hudson, with his soccer player haircut, Nike shoes and purple pocketbook. Wait, what? Why does Wilbur have a purple pocketbook? That belongs to Lauren. He's taking her twenty dollars. Wilbur saw me catch him taking the money. I didn't know what to do. Wilbur started to run away. I followed him. I pulled out my ear buds and threw them at Wilbur's feet. He tripped and fell in a tangled mess. The assistant principal caught Wilbur with the money and suspended him for five days. I was Lauren's superhero.

That night at home, all I could talk about was catching Wilbur. I felt like I could do anything. I finally felt like I

wasn't a total nerd. Gosh, I wish I could do that again. Maybe I can do it again. Maybe, just maybe, I could be the school super hero. When I got to school the next day, Lauren came up to me and gave me a big hug. I could not believe it! Lauren is the hottest girl in school, and she just gave me a hug. The day went great. Then in fourth period, they called me to the office. The principal praised my outstanding job and told me that I would be awarded for my act of kindness.

Two months later, I am the leader of the National Association of Nerd Crime Fighters, also known as NANCF. I would have never thought that I would be where I am today. I have created the NANCF for all of the nerds who want to be super heroes. There are 219,600 members of the NANCF, and at least one at almost every school worldwide. We stop over 4,000 crimes a day. I have created many gadgets for all of my fellow nerds. We have the dart pencil, braces wire, rubber band popper, and my personal favorite, the trip buds. I am very proud of all my followers. We may not be super heroes to the world, but to us, we are the best super heroes that ever existed.



ANIME GIRL

Joseph Willis—BCC Student

THE WATERBOY

Marshall Tatum

Grade 8 Clarkton School of Discovery

SHHHHH! SHHHHH! Hear that? That's the sound of my job. Around here I'm known as the Waterboy. I was born with the ability to magically produce water. Everyone knows me as a small town farmer, but I'm actually a superhero who gives water to two types of people: farmers who desperately need it, and the people who are thirsting to death.

It all started when I saw the TV commercials of the poor little children of Africa who are dying as we speak because they don't have water. It instantly made me feel that I needed to help in some way. Helping these children turned out to be extremely easy because of my unique water-producing ability. I began practicing how to produce mass amounts of water at a time. It wasn't easy, but I eventually caught on to it. I achieved the ability to produce 250 gallons of water in five minutes! I was beyond excited at how easy it was to help the innocent children.

The next step of my idea was to actually travel to Africa. Although I'm a superhero who produces mass amounts of water, I still can't fly or run at a high speed. Luckily, one of my fellow superheroes, Flash, was willing to help. He helped me get from North Carolina to Nairobi, Kenya in less than half an hour. I'm pretty sure that's a new record!

Once we arrived in Nairobi, we immediately got to work. We went to the United Nations office in Nairobi to find out where the greatest need for water was. We learned that 75% of the world's poorest countries are located in Africa. The

Democratic Republic of Congo is ranked the poorest in the world, so we decided that we should start our mission there. One of our first stops was with an old farmer who relied on his crops for his livelihood. He told us that there hadn't been any rain in four months. I immediately knew how to help him. Flash and I told him our story and how we came to help the people of Africa. He stood in awe as I effortlessly dropped 500 gallons of water onto his fields and crops.

Over the next week, we helped hundreds of thousands of men, women and children in Africa. For some, we watered their fields and crops; for others, we supplied them with enough water to last them until we could return. The love and gratitude we received was very heartwarming. I realized that helping another human being, without wanting anything in return, was the best feeling of all!

Since this journey began five years ago, Flash and I have been traveling all over the world, saving lives by providing an adequate water supply to those in need. We have reduced the number of deaths caused by drought from nearly 100,000 per year, to fewer than 50,000. Our current goal is that not one life will be lost due to lack of adequate water supply. We have realized that being superheroes isn't the ultimate reward in life: it's the feeling we get when we help others, seeing the gratitude on their faces and the love they give in return.



VISITING AUTHORS



HAND-CRAFTED SERMONIZING

Ben Casey—Visiting Author

I wish I had photographed every home-made sign I have encountered. Many could have been subjects of essays. Miss Connie's sign advertising her COLLARDS would open the book.

She was known all about the county as the place to go for a mess of collards. From the description above, it should be easy to visualize the sign she had on the edge of NC Intrastate 55.

Mama raised me on collards, good ones raised in Granddaddy's sandy garden, sandy because Arapahoe rests on the ridge of the Suffolk Scarp, the dune line of a few million years ago on the Southwestern corner of the Pamlico Sound.

Miss Connie raised collards better than she predicted how soon she would run out of space spelling collards on a piece of plywood. But her collards were good and she was good. She would sort through the lush green leaves of every mess of collards she sold. One did not pay for nor take home stalks and stems that would be discarded.

If I had judged Miss Connie or her collards based on her sign, it would have been a tragic loss for me, in both nutritional and humanitarian values.

But, what is the most common homemade sign along blue highways? (Most road maps have big roads in red;

the back roads are blue.) For decades, my camera lens has surveyed the landscape as I have traveled the backroads. If called to testify, that lens would say the most common handmade signs are the ones in the yards of small churches.

I am ashamed I once chuckled at rudimentary sermonizing. Such is not usually employed by mainstream denominations to bait wandering flocks. Even in the smallest of communities, signs by Baptist, Methodist, and certainly Episcopal churches are usually light on evangelizing.

Independent denominations often have changeable copy signs with plastic letters. For originality, they are rarely in a league with hand-painted devotions. A goodly number of these signs are more likely to offer holier than thou admonishments about sin – “the end is near, get right with God.”

Gentle messages espousing the power of love and forgiveness are more likely to be hand-painted. The lettering is usually not crafted by the steadiest of hands or by the best brush. The spelling and grammar often should have been edited before the paint dried.

Think about it. What will more likely comfort a wandering soul, a huge brick edifice adorned by a manufactured sign with ornate lettering, a changeable copy sign calling out sins, or a hand painted sign softly shouting a welcoming message of love and humility?

Hand-written church signs constitute artistic literature. May not be Shakespeare, maybe Faulkner, but not Thoreau. Bottom line, I have come to appreciate them for artfully communicating a message of hope - and I hope they never disappear.

Some of their messages could be better articulated, but at least their roots are nourished by creativity that germinates from some form of critical thinking.

Assuming many have passed these churches with quaint signage, how many have visualized attending a service or being a fly on the wall Sunday morning. I



have begun to imagine that. Don't yet have the strength or courage to walk in unannounced. I imagine questions and whispers would abundantly float throughout the congregation ... “What's he dong here?”

I would attend services at anticipating that I would experience a joyful message designed to instill peace in the hearts of the flock present. I won't know until I pull up one Sunday morning.



GRADUATION SPEECH

Ben Casey—Visiting Author

Has he finished?

Though Mama's little cranium was packed with wisdom, she had a hard time understanding that crazy people could be intelligent and that educated people were not necessarily intelligent. Conversely, it was hard for her to grasp the notion that many uneducated people were quite intelligent.

Another phenomenon that is the impetus for driving people toward wrong conclusions is that many smart people are not necessarily intelligent, educated or not.

Mama grew up during World War I and the Roaring 20's when education was assumed to be synonymous with intelligence. Is it not generally understood in the 21st century that such a correlation is not valid?

It should be common knowledge ... that knowledge and wisdom are not interchangeable.

I entertain the fantasy that some reputable, highfalutin institution of higher learning - Harvard, Yale, or Bladen Community College - will invite me to speak at Commencement. After my introduction by the president, provost, chancellor, or chief of security, I will stroll to the podium through the dread in the land of pomp and circumstance that a long and boring speech is coming.

In the most likely event that no such invitation will be forthcoming from any institution, high or low falutin, I can share my speech here and now.

Graduates, go forth remembering these facts of life.

Education and intelligence are not one and the same.

Knowledge and wisdom are not one and the same.

Legal and ethical are not one and the same.

Of these six, the greatest are wisdom and ethical.

Don't forget, the truly educated never graduate.

Act accordingly.

Thank you.

I sit down. There is a moment of silence while people figure things out; then there is thunderous applause. Sadly, the applause is for the brevity, not the depth of my remarks.

Once out of the auditorium, I rush to cash the check for the honorarium before the college's finance office stops payment.



BEN CASEY BIOGRAPHY

Photojournalist, Ben Casey, grew up in New Bern & Pamlico County. With degrees in math education from Atlantic Christian College & Duke University, Casey enjoyed a brief career in education before pursuing photography and journalism.

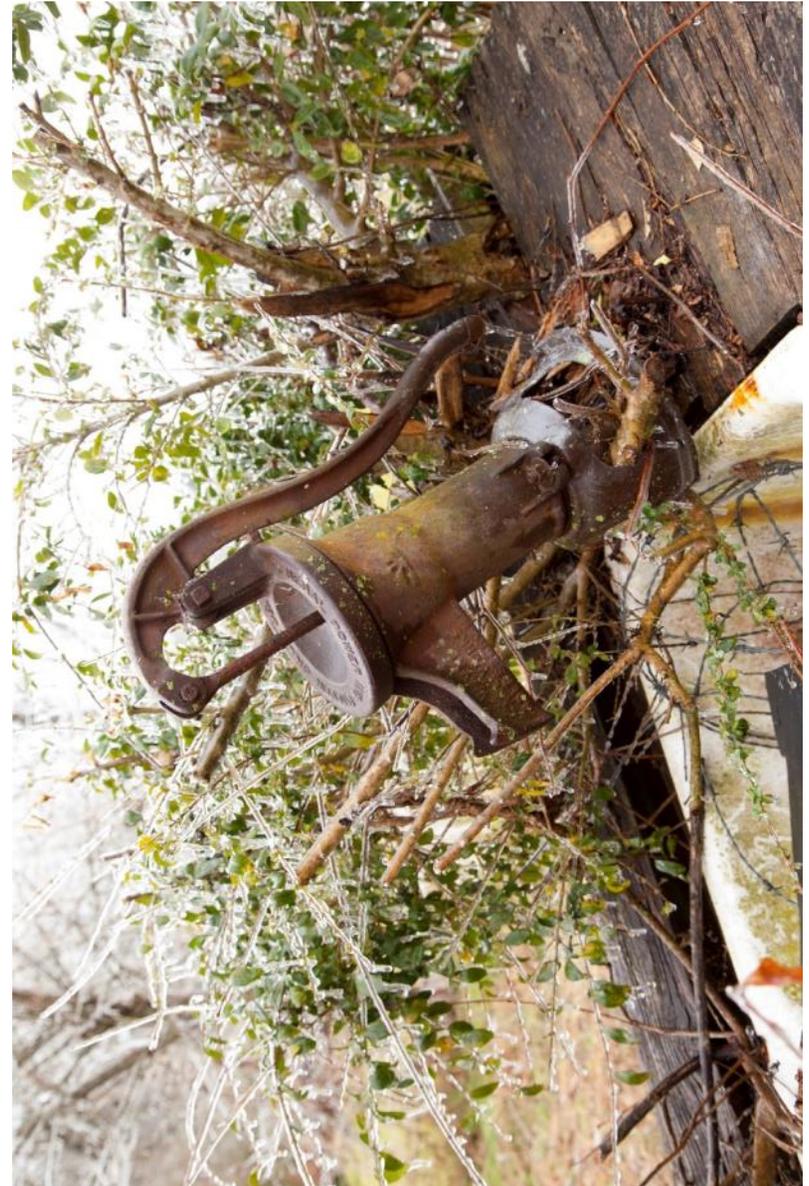
In 2002, Ben Casey became well acquainted with the Neuse River and its dynamic ecosystem in a photographic journey that began in a canoe at the headwaters at Falls Dam and was culminated 240 miles later in his book *All in One River: Falls Dam to Pamlico Sound, Interviewing the Neuse River*.

In 2003-04 Casey documented in photos and essays the restoration of the historic American Tobacco District in Durham for Capitol Broadcasting in Raleigh. In 2005, Casey created slideshow photo-essays for Capitol Broadcasting's WRAL.com, website for WRAL TV 5 in Raleigh.

In 2004, Casey went on a shorter, but no less amazing and beautiful journey down the Trent River. The result of this spiritual journey is his book, *Living Waters: The Trent River, Wellspring for Jones County, NC*.

Casey's most recent book is *Dismal? The Great Dismal Swamp Canal*, which was completed in 2008. Casey currently serves as Director of Public Affairs and Public Information Officer for Pamlico Community College. He and his wife, Carolyn, live in Minnesott Beach in walking distance to Casey's beloved Neuse River.

Casey has won several photo awards, including two first place awards in photojournalism in state competition. He writes a weekly column, Casey at Bat, for the *Pamlico News*.



DAYS GONE BY

Diane Vitale—BCC Staff

NAILS

Barbara Presnell—Visiting Author

Diphtheria epidemic, 1898

Tonight in the shop by lantern light
and fire, Josiah saws and measures
pine boards for a box. Twenty-one inches,
head to heel, plus one hand width on either end.

Eighteen at the shoulders,
narrowed to nine at her feet.
Get the body in the ground today,
says Doc Burton. *Children are dying*

all over town. Josiah knows
what he means, his boy at home
with fever hot as the furnace
he works in. His brother Dan says,

Dovetail it. Take your time and do it well.
Perfect joinery for perfect child.
But on this anvil he himself forged the iron lengths
now cooling in his palm, one fist around the tongs,

one clutching the hammer, strength of his arm
pounding the fiery rods to draw them out
true and sharp enough to penetrate
the toughest wood, right enough

for the red and yellow quilt
Hannah stitched in her seventh month
that will line the box and fold around
the toes, face, small shock of steel black hair.

BARBARA PRESNELL
BIOGRAPHY

A native North Carolinian, born, raised, and educated in North Carolina, Presnell now lives in Lexington, NC. She teaches in the Writing Program and the Honors Program at UNC-Charlotte.

Presnell has published five collections of poetry. Her book, *Piece Work*, won the Cleveland State University Poetry Center's First Book Prize and was published by Cleveland State University in 2007. In 2009-11, the Touring Theatre of North Carolina performed an adaptation of *Piece Work* in community colleges and other venues throughout NC. One of its poems, "Pauline Learns to Sew," was included in the April 2014 *Our State* magazine's list of 10 poems every North Carolinian should read. Other recent work appears in the journals, *story South*, *Connotation Press*, *Innis free Poetry Journal*, and the anthologies, *Women's Realities*, *Women's Choices* and *Listen Here: Women Writing in Appalachia*.

As a documentary poet, she writes often of social and cultural change, particularly in the South. Her newest collection, titled *Blue Star*, traces her family's involvement in war from the Civil War to the present, and is based on military records, census reports, letters, journals, and photographs. To complete that collection, this spring, she retraced her father's World War II journey from Omaha Beach to the Elbe River in Germany, following his map and journal entries.



THE SONG OF THE FOXHUNTER

Shelby Stephenson—Visiting Author

“When I had to wear my hearing aid,
I said I should be knocked in the head,
Because I could not hear my hounds bay,
And I could hardly get out of bed.

“Then – I could not follow the dogs.
I’d wobble around, stumble, and fall.
I’d bow my head to pray to logs
I barely could cross to call.

“My voice would quaver like a goat’s.
My strength was nearly gone.
My hunting pants felt like worn-out coats,
My shoes lumpy and torn.”

He could not clench his cigar in his teeth;
His Stetson looked like a cow-pie,
A runny one, there, on Mary Vance’s heath,
Where Old and Shaggy Tony came to die.

His foxhorn made from a steer’s rack
Seemed no less silent than a star
Some unknown god had turned into a rock –
No light, even a candle’s worth, near or far.

His dogs seemed to know also
That their hunter’s dream was dead.
Sing and Butler, Slobber Mouth, and Bo,
Silent as the guns in racks above his bed.

“Shub, blow the horn again
And make the land say something.”
His youngest son blew the tone
Which sounded the race was run.

The hunters around the old man
Raised the bottle to their lips
And saluted the game
Ever playing no more hunting trips.

The one blind hound was ready to go,
Where doggies go, if good dogs have a heaven,
And they do, the hunter would vow,
For *there* no trouble’s ever brewing.

The foxhunter’s stance, a stand –
Tall without a final curtain;
The talkers, listeners, shuffle their boots in sand.
The old man’s hounds, still, uncertain.



OPOSSUM

Shelby Stephenson—Visiting Author

November falls when local boys and men
Go to Beaver Dam to rout the possum.
They don't know or care that marsupial's
A label board-face turns colloquial,
A fixation for boys whose corny jokes
About the possum shape ages and dates
Eldridge (Urge) and Graham (Grime) and the rest
Of us, too, especially Shub, who lets
Playing Dead live – our Little Feet knows –
As piths of exigencies within our souls.
We rise to fall, sometimes to crawl on our hands
And knees to play music in Possum's Bands.
I can't digest the hunting part of Youth.
The possum, barbecued, was my Sweet Tooth.

And on our table set in winter's thrall
The venerable possum lay quiet as hell.
His eyes were seared and roasted to a crisp,
Though he did not vary his prowl one bit.
When my father cut out what were his eyes
And plopped them in his mouth and crushed the dyes
Running down his chin, immortal possum

Kept his prolificacy, for flotsam
In seas of wreckage floated on the plate,
As if to say, "Later, we've got a date –
We'll go hunting – Atlas, Tony, Butler –
Shall lead me to your house and guttural
Sounds I'll toot and blow full throttle my horn
Until the Hill's sharp spines in roses gone."

I'll tell you this he learned, our Prospero,
Magician, changing from his sombrero
Into cushy pillows for boys and girls
To give South of the Border sleepy thrills.

The story I tell now of revival:

*I got run over, crossroads, survival
A question; I enrolled, Road Kill U, learned
How to fake my expiration and spurn
Experts – rescued by a woman – Molly –
She placed me in the trunk of her Volvo.
She raised the lid; I shook a cloud of fleas,
Ascending in her face – poof, I was free.*



BUTLER

Shelby Stephenson—Visiting Author

A short-haired, red-bone hound, he was the king
Of my father's big kennel; he would moan
The blues and lead the pack, then woof the spring
Chickens off their roost into fields at dawn.
The fox-race on, he'd run Big Red and sing
As if his voice were a body, its own,
At last coming round to set him apart
From those dogs that moiled and howled to go back
Where the fox was jumped, or, better still, dart
And shake and whimper to smell the strung-sack
We filled with fox-hide; Butler was that smart
Dog that would chase the fox all morn and track
The "devilish possum" to a tree at night.
I marked his grave with a stalk when he died.



SHELBY STEPHENSON BIOGRAPHY

Shelby Stephenson grew up on a small farm near Benson, NC. His life on the farm was his source of inspiration.

Stephenson has a B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, an M.A. from the University of Pittsburgh and a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

He worked as a radio and television announcer, salesman, right-of-way agent, farmer and professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke where he was also the editor of *Pembroke Magazine* until he retired in 2010.

He became NC Poet Laureate in 2014 and has received several awards, such as the North Carolina Award in Literature in 2001, the Bellday Poetry Prize, the Oscar Arnold Young Award, the Zoe Kincaid-Brockman Award, the Brockman-Campbell Award, the Bright Hill Press Chapbook Prize, and the Playwright's Fund of North Carolina Chapbook Prize.

He has published *Middle Creek Poems*, *Carolina Shout!*, *Finch's Mash*, *The Persimmon Tree Carol*, *Poor People*, *Greatest Hits*, *Fiddledeedee*, *Possum*, *Playing Dead*, *Play My Music Anyhow*, and *Family Matters: Homage to July, the Slave Girl*.



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