A collection of works by Calhoun Community College students, faculty, staff and alumni.
Foreword:

This year’s Muse is an experiment, of sorts. Due to curriculum changes and a wavering economy, Calhoun Community College’s student newspaper The Warhawk Herald was in danger of extinction until a committee of instructors and administrators decided to try combining our literary magazine with our student newspaper articles. While the first part of this year’s Muse still celebrates poetry, essays, short stories, illustrations, and photography by students, faculty, and alumni, readers will also find the newly created Musepaper: a collection of articles by our students about events around our campus during the 2008-2009 school year. We hope you will enjoy our creative efforts and learn something about student life at Calhoun. My hope is that each edition will serve as a memento of the people and circumstances that touch our lives each year. Enjoy and remember!

Jill Chadwick, Editor
SKD sponsor of the Theta Beta Chapter

Editorial Committee
Phyllis Brewer
Dan Byford
Jill Chadwick
Dr. Harry Moore
Dr. Jill Osga
Leigh Ann Rhea
Beth Thames
Vita Schiavone (Student Editor)
Claire Powell (Student Assistant)

Cover Art:
Fish in a Tree by Mary Nelle Black

Layout and Design by
Beth Butler, Graphic Designer
Printing by Lana Powers,
Calhoun Printing Services
Proofreading by Janet Kincherlow-Martin,
Executive Assistant to the President for
Public Affairs, Community Relations and
Special Events

Published by the Department of Language and Literature and Sigma Kappa Delta.
# Table of Contents

## Poetry
- **American Nightmare** by Daniel Byford .......... 2
- **Your Eyes When Full** by Daniel Byford .......... 3
- **Leroy** by Rachel Greathouse .......... 4
- **If We Aren’t** by Desirae Hennington ....... 5
- **Pictures** by Kelsey Thacker .......... 5
- **Life** by Nicholas Nevins .......... 6
- **Oneonta** by Margaret J. Vann .......... 7
- **Fall Wine** by Margaret J. Vann .......... 8
- **Cades Cove Memory** by Margaret J. Vann .... 9
- **Lunch Today** by Michael Williamson .......... 10
- **Post Mortem** by Mim Kellenberger .......... 11

## Essays and Short Stories
- **My Worst Christmas Ever** by Paulette Renee Bergstue .......... 12
- **Infinite** by Desirae Hennington .......... 14
- **Crying Bear** by Christopher Hooie .......... 16
- **I Want a Husband?** by Shea Stripling .......... 20
- **Bob’s Gift** by Sheila Byrd .......... 21
- **The Christmas Tree** by Bailey Lovell .......... 22
- **America the Indebted, Idealistic, and Surgically Enhanced** by Bailey Lovell .......... 24
- **Star Strewn Sky** by Kelsey Thacker .......... 26

## Illustrations
- **Consumption** by Steven Glenn .......... 2
- **Washed by the Water** by Lynn Weatherford .......... 7
- **Autumn Lane** by Mary Nelle Black .......... 8
- **Lazy Spring Morning** by Jackie Segars .......... 9
- **Harmony** by Beth Brady .......... 10
- **Post Mortem** by Mim Kellenberger .......... 11
- **Candy Jar** by Mary Nelle Black .......... 13
- **Birth of War** by Steven Glenn .......... 23
- **Blending Koi** by Beth Brady .......... 23
- **Sipsey (1 of 3)** by Jackie Segars .......... 25
- **Bad Luck Friends** by Beth Brady .......... 25

## Photography
- **Stairwell** by Kenny Nowlan .......... 3
- **Autumn Gloria** by Miri Evans .......... 5
- **Unlocked** by Laura Moran .......... 5
- **Tranquility** by Jennifer Bottomly .......... 6
- **Cascading Water** by Tina Wright .......... 15
- **Cemetery** by Dana Dructor .......... 17
- **Sunset** by Jennifer Bottomly .......... 21
- **Thundering Waters** by Miri Evans .......... 25
- **Sundrops** by Jennifer Bottomly .......... 27

## Muse Paper
- **Welcome to the Musepaper** by Ryan Wood .......... 29
- **Calhoun Welcomes Families Fleeing Hurricane Gustav** by Vita Schiavone .......... 30
- **The Eighth Annual Writers’ Conference Featuring Michael Knight** by Vita Schiavone .......... 31
- **The Great Presidential Debate:**
  - **Barack Obama by Ryan Wood** .......... 32
  - **John McCain by Chris Hooie** .......... 33
- **Meet Coach Mike Burns** by Christina Boczek .......... 35
- **The Ovation** by Heather Anderson and Melinda Simpkins .......... 36
American Nightmare
By Daniel Byford

Hungry for fame and fortune or just respect and a decent living, we become too busy to live. Selfless love fades as the force giving young blood a need to strive, to seek, to run amok among the blossoms. Hope distills only a far-off, light-filled doorway in the aimless drift of night. Religion paraphrases a spirit we no longer divine in the bones. Dope, war, famine are things perceived, if at all, like phantoms gone at second sight. Enlivened by new cars, gadgets, those better houses we might get, the next bling bling blinking on our screens—comforts, treasures, eyecandy, wild sex, thrills, chills—all swirling around a bottomless postmodern sinkhole. Oblivious to the poor, the halt, the desperate stranger, we seek a hex to stave the dead cells of loneliness, greed, the dull rituals of a listless faith practiced like a required part. We lose a bit of heaven each time we dole out our hearts. We doxy. We begin to waste like some restless wraith gone searching by candlelight for an honest soul. We can’t be whole. Not with the abyss wriggling deep in our bellies. Not in the dreaming lands where lost and wandering, we reach for gold while truth flies from our scheming hands.
Your Eyes When Full
By Daniel Byford

Your eyes when full mint poetry no words ever coined.
I often figure my future minus your unspent looks.
We stumbled broken paths, blind with loss, and then the paths joined—
then storied visions spoke what could only be paraphrased in books.
Our blessings and our blights seem unwashed, unpearled.
Yet your country flair, your crooked smile, your spitting will to survive
make me trust upon a star tonight that all will be righted, trimmed, unfurled
like a sail. And I see hope kindle in eyes reflecting my eyes. Alive
with faith, the wind gyres wee off, circling steady and quiet
yet labored, sick and tired of the day-to-day struggle. Still,
we only have ourselves to hawk—our own hearts to gauntlet flight.
Though I don’t quite get it, I hum the tune the piper plays and fill
my restless mind with all the whys and wheres and whens —
and the sun’s last promise, the first star’s wish, the moon as it grins.

Stairwell
Photo by Kenny Nowlan
As I lie here listlessly
I cannot stop the whispering
Which keeps increasing more and more
I tried to stop the sadness
and now am delved in madness
madness I cannot ignore
My loneliness fermented
leaving me demented
turning me to this sad state
I met a man named Leroy
Ended up in his employ
Never second guessing my fate
Through these misty streams
A random thought returns to me
A pocket watch he owned
More important were his eyes
Which always looked to be surprised
And intensely when he thought, his voice
did slow

Old fashioned was his shop
Which sold nothing but clocks
In big yellow loud red and blue
And oh! He loved those clocks
And kept them highly stocked
In Grandfather quiet old and new
For a man nearing fifty
His clothes were always spiffy
And his walk held a confident air
He always kept his secrets
Seemed to live without a regret
As if he had not a moment to spare

And I, I was a young girl
Caught within a love swirl
And admit I lost my head
I saw nothing but his jaw line
Melodic voice and clothes so fine
And wanted him for my bed
But ethics were a trait of his
So though I prayed, teared, and wished
He never looked my way
I cherished his nearness as I toiled

Though my love for him was foiled
Again and again each day
Every time I thought to leave
The ticking clocks appealed to me
Seeming to beg me to stay
Leroy was the master
I, the apprentice to a spell caster
Who would never go away

This notion soon was thwarted
As through nuts and bolts I sorted
I did receive the news
Leroy was shot in the back
As he and a lady napped
Then again, few were the clues
The moment then did stop
On instinct I glanced at a clock
The big hand was on three
The whirring now seemed haunting
their mechanisms daunting
Time stopped to me
And never would he know
Though often clumsy and somewhat slow
I worshipped at his feet
That I lived each day for him
Even when angry on a whim
I loved him from beneath
So as I lie here twitching
I cannot stop the ticking
From the clocks around my room
June, I tried to remember
But now it’s late December
And his memory still looms
if we aren’t
by Desirae Hennington

(if) we are(n’t)
(le
av
es)
(then why are we)
(f
all
ing
youandi;

Autumn Gloria
Photo by Miri Evans

Pictures
By Kelsey Thacker

A picture hanging on the wall
is the darnedest thing.
Frozen happy after all
While reflection is an honest thing.
Mirrors show the sadness and the grey
Pictures only guise.
But of the two, I must say,
I will take the lies

Unlocked
Photo by Laura Moran
Life

By Nicholas Nevins

If I could soar above the clouds,
Past the mountains high,
And see the Earth as would the hawk
In the realm of sky,
Would I see the labors
Of man and beast alike?
Would I feel the warmth of sun
Or searing, scorching light?
Would I see love, or tears, or joy,
Or Life upon its way?
Could I see the light of hope
For a newer, brighter day?
Would I see the war and strife
Brought on by human kind?
And could I, my friends, see the joy of peace
When sense returns to mind?
For ages long, since time began,
Men have raised their eyes,
To wonder, yearn, and strive to find
A place within the skies.
For yes the heavens are beautiful
And hold the rainbow’s birth,
But there is nothing to compare
To life upon this Earth.
Oneonta
By Margaret J. Vann

Oneonta, on the Florida short route, had nothing to slow the Yankees headed to the beach except—
2 right-angle turns
no Dairy Queen, no McDonald’s, no drive in/dine in

A red Christmas star marks the spot where
once puce-blossomed kudzu blanketed
the hillside and building
falling into a rectangular hole

In those days before air conditioning
young people spent their summer days at the pool
Boys strutted their tanned, hard bodies
Girls, basted in baby oil and iodine, lay on towels
cutting their eyes at the bronzed lifeguards

The boys jack-knifed or cannonballed
into the pool splashing the girls on the towels
The bright girls never swam—
sometimes sitting with their feet in the water
and splashing themselves to cool off
in the hot Alabama sun

In the 50s the pool—the pool of summer days
for tanned white girls & boys
would now have to let
black girls & black boys
swim in that self-same pool
The wise men of Oneonta knew how
to protect their little dark white girls
from sharing the pool water with black boys
[never mind no black families
lived in Blount County]

The wise men closed the pool
drained the pool, boarded up the pool house,
chained the gate, and
turned their backs

Kudzu ran down the hillside,
up over the fence, and into the pool
covered the area in green & puce
covered the laughter, splashing, strutting
The star—remember the star?
At Christmas time it shone over the pool—

Now the star lit the kudzu with its puce blossoms.
The kudzu grew & grew
crept over and into the pool house, filled the pool
New life, maybe dangerous, moved into the kudzu jungle.

Again the wise men acted
cleaned up the kudzu, razed the pool house,
filled the pool, smoothed the area,
and left the Star
to brood over an empty parking lot

Washed by the Water
Illustration by Lynn Weatherford
fall wine
by Margaret J. Vann

lusting for the sharp, sweet flavor of muscadine
rolling down sand-paved road edged with browned ferns
moving toward the cove beneath old growth forest
searching canopies for the purple grape of hardwood bottoms

streambed strewn helter-skelter with giant boulders
sun-heated rocks with crisped lichens
shrunken tepid pools glazed with yellow leaves
too soon set loose from drought-stressed trees

yet there among the burned foliage
flame spires of Cardinal flower
flaming without burning
filling the eye & soothing the heart

still lusting for the sharp, sweet flavor of thick-skinned grapes
lusting for the distilled memories flooding the mind
memories acrid as the glass of sweet muscadine wine
become vinegar
Cades Cove Memory
By Margaret J. Vann

Through cool, green paths
two miles back from the road,
Elijah Oliver’s cabin stands
in a clearing of timeless forest.

Foot-smoothed slabs mount
to a porch wound with railings hand worn.
From the musty main room,
narrow, twisted steps lead to sun-dappled loft.
Flies buzz against small paned
windows set in walls of hand-planed logs.

Three steps separate the big cabin
from the smoke darkened
rough-built first cabin.
No windows here lighten the low room;
doors on wooden hinges gape
open to the summer sun.

Visitors attempt to read
the history of Oliver’s cabin
from its newspapered walls
and they find no ghosts:
just chinking with finger-drawn lines
between adz-marked logs.

Where are the hands that wielded the adz?
Whose fingers filled and formed the chinking?
Did she, after collecting water
from the spring a mile away,
mix the clay and straw to make
her home wind-secure?
Did he carve the cradle
as carefully as he had hewn the logs?

Visitors find no ghosts:
just chinking with finger-drawn lines
between adz-marked logs.

Lazy Spring Morning
Illustration by Jackie Segars
Lunch Today
By Michael Williamson

Lunch is blueberry muffins, eaten at my desk.
I wish I had milk.

Harmony
Illustration by Beth Brady
Post Mortem

To whom shall I write
With the same connection
Of the soulangiana in bloom
Now that my Mother has died?

To whom would the dessicated leaf
Hold such charm?
Or the wren on the branch?
Or the sun-splashed colors
Of the oriental rug?

She hasn’t really died.
She lives in my eye and my ear.

Post Mortem
Poetry and Illustration by Mim Kellenberger
“I hope you know what you’re getting!” These were the words my mother-in-law said to me on my wedding day. These words summed up her opinion that I was not quite good enough to merit the prize of marrying her son. On my family’s annual Christmas trip to her house in 1999, my clumsiness seemingly confirmed her opinion of me. During my worst Christmas ever, I learned that my opinion of myself is more important than my mother-in-law’s in spite of ruining her new bedspread, antique tablecloth, and Christmas Eve dinner.

When I arrived at my mother-in-law’s house that year, I had a foggy brain and shaky legs after riding in a van for sixteen hours with three cranky children, one even crankier husband, and one restless dog. After eight trips from the car to the house to move our belongings inside, I headed upstairs to find any horizontal space on which to crash. My mother-in-law insisted that my husband and I stay in her bedroom, so I drug my body and my bags into her room since I was too tired to argue about the sleeping arrangements. I closed the door behind me, threw her bedspread on the floor, and collapsed onto her bed. When I woke up the next morning, I slid out of bed and staggered toward the bedroom door. Thatwas the awful moment at which I realized that not only had I thrown the bedspread on the floor the night before, but I also had thrown my bags on top of the bedspread. Unfortunately, one of these bags was my cosmetic bag, which was lying beside a puddle of beige liquid foundation that oozed from the bag’s zipper. I grabbed a wad of tissues and wiped off as much of the makeup as I could. Since I could see no trash can in the room, I had no choice but to try to get to the bathroom down the hall as stealthily as I could in order to throw the tissues away and get cleaning supplies to sneak back to the bedroom. I was not stealthy enough because my mother-in-law saw me and my tissue wad in the hall. After telling her the tale, I swore I could clean the makeup off the bedspread. As nicely as she could under the circumstances, my mother-in-law replied, “Well, it’s only a bedspread, but it is a new bedspread.” I had been at my mother-in-law’s house less than a day, and I was already a loser.

After the bedspread fiasco, I determined to be a stellar daughter-in-law for the rest of the visit. Being stellar, in this case, meant helping my mother-in-law serve the perfect traditional Swedish Christmas Eve dinner to about fifteen people. Setting up for this dinner entailed bringing down the two extra table leaves from the attic and pulling the ancient dining room table apart to insert them. Somehow, I found a way to do this job single-handedly by alternately pushing and pulling on the ends of the table about a dozen times each. The next part of the setup was the most sacred—the placing of the antique tablecloth on the dining room table. My mother-in-law brought this down herself from an upstairs closet, but I was the one who had to position the cloth on the table so that the portions which hung over each side were equal in length. I finished the perfect placement of the tablecloth, and I noticed three burning candles in a flower arrangement sitting on the buffet. Thinking this would make a nice centerpiece for the table, I blew out the candles, picked up the arrangement, and walked toward the table. When I reached the table’s edge, I stumbled and dropped the arrangement, spilling hot red candle wax onto the antique tablecloth. My mother-in-law, who had been upstairs
most of the morning, chose that moment to come downstairs and into the dining room. I promised her I would be able to scrape the wax off the tablecloth and leave no trace of the spill. She replied through an unconvincing smile, “Well, if you can’t clean it off, maybe I can put a dish over the spot, but there’s no guarantee I’ll be able to do that the next time the tablecloth is used.” With those words, my hopes of being stellar died.

At this point, I optimistically set my sights on cooking the Swedish meal since cooking was something I knew I could do well. In fact, after about two hours of cooking, I had done nothing wrong. Nothing, that was, until I spilled the main ingredient for the crowning glory of the Swedish meal. I spilled the powdered gelatin for the Snow Pudding dessert on the floor right beside my mother-in-law’s foot. This time, she did not even try to veil her dismay. She just said, “Well, that’s it, then. I guess there’ll be no Snow Pudding this year.” As she was speaking, my cheeks and my ears got hot, and I felt a dull pain in my chest. In one day’s time, I reinforced my mother-in-law’s justifiably low opinion of me, and I killed Christmas.

The arrival of my friends and family for the dinner was a welcome and happy event after a horrible day. In spite of all my blunderings, the Christmas Eve meal was a success. During the meal, I made a trip around the table with the Swedish brown beans to see if anyone wanted a second helping. When I walked past my ten-year-old daughter, she told me that I looked pretty and that my earrings were sparkly. Next, I passed my fourteen-year-old son who told me that the food that year was better than the food the year before and that I had done a good job cooking. My twelve-year-old son then grunted, “Yeah,” which was high praise indeed coming from him. All of a sudden, the insecure pang in the pit of my stomach disappeared. I finished that trip around the table and walked into the kitchen just before the hot, teary feeling welled up from my throat and into my eyes. At that moment, my mother-in-law’s opinion of me did not matter at all, and my opinion of myself was at an all-time high.

By the end of the day on Christmas Eve, I had ruined my mother-in-law’s bedspread and tablecloth and dessert. However, I had only ruined them temporarily. Somehow, I had managed to clean the makeup off the bedspread completely with some soap and shampoo, scrape the wax off the tablecloth without a trace after the wax cooled, and find more gelatin in the pantry that my mother-in-law had forgotten. Most importantly, I had managed to raise three children who loved me. I felt pretty good about myself as a result, and I never again let my mother-in-law’s opinion of me matter more than my own.
Infinite
By Desirae Hennington

Infinite...

What could that ever mean? The general definition is that which lacks limits or boundaries or that which extends beyond measure or comprehension and has no beginning or end. There is a book that I have which brings this word to life and gives it meaning. In The Perks of Being a Wallflower, Stephen Chbosky captured this word on a written canvas:

“After the dance, we left in Sam’s pickup. Patrick was driving this time. As we were approaching the Fort Pitt Tunnel, Sam asked Patrick to pull to the side of the road. I didn’t know what was going on. Sam then climbed in the back of the pickup, wearing nothing but her dance dress. She told Patrick to drive, and he got this smile on his face. I guess they had done this before. Anyway, Patrick started driving really fast, and just before we got to the tunnel, Sam stood up, and the wind turned her dress into ocean waves. When we hit the tunnel, all the sound got scooped up into a vacuum and it was replaced by a song on the tape player. A beautiful song called “Landslide.” When we got out of the tunnel, Sam screamed this really fun scream, and there it was. Downtown. Lights on buildings and everything that makes you wonder. Sam sat down and started laughing. Patrick started laughing. I started laughing.

And in that moment, I swear we were infinite.”

This tiny word has changed my life, and I am not sure how it has. I define infinite in the moments that seem to last a lifetime while they are lasting.

The feeling of being infinite occurs when one notices little things that most people would find insignificant. One does not have to live “inside the big picture.” For example, sometimes when people are going places and doing things, they are focused on the moment itself and fail to notice the small parts that paint the moment. On a random afternoon, I was driving home from school at 5 p.m., for I had stayed late so I could edit a video I had filmed. The windows on my car were rolled down and an amazing song was playing, and it spilled out into the air as I crossed the bridge. The city lights glowed like golden stars against a pink and orange sunset that cast a peach colored glare on the Tennessee River, or maybe it was a blue and green sky and an aqua glare, but I felt like I was three beats in the middle of that amazing song. I felt that I was everywhere at once when really I was on a road in Decatur, heading to the bookstore on a Wednesday.

Going to bookstores makes me feel infinite. I remember a time when I was parked outside Books-A-Million after it had rained, and I had just purchased a copy of my favorite book, and I cranked my car to leave and noticed that from where I was, the raindrops on the window became watercolor paints of the places surrounding me.

Infinite is standing in the middle of a bookstore with the possibility of walking down any or every aisle and not knowing what book I am looking for, but knowing that what I find will become the perfect one.

Infinite is lying in a meditative position and clearing my thoughts as I drift elsewhere.

It’s amazing how I could be extremely melancholy and feel completely lost at
everything I am doing in life and drive down a road that leads to nowhere, climb out of my car, lean against a tree, sighing, and then look up and see the first silver star twinkle in a sky that has not yet faded to night and feel extremely happy. That moment was almost like a metaphor that there was hope for me and that I had guidance when I thought I had none. It was a poetic sign that everything in my life had not completely died the way I thought it had.

Many people might say that infinite can only exist in mathematics for nothing can last forever. Infinite, however, is not that which lasts forever, but that which lasts for what seems like it could be forever while it lasts. In order for a moment to be infinite, one must use all of his or her senses and take in all of the moment’s parts. Infinite is when everything that does not happen does. Nothing great that happens, however small it may be, should ever be taken for granted, for without these small moments, the bigger ones could not exist.

An infinite moment occurred when I met a person who was so much like me that I sometimes thought he did not exist. Sometimes I still believe he could very well be a figment of my imagination. Infinite is having a conversation with him about everything and nothing at the same time at 2 a.m. in the morning while playing our favorite songs and singing along and realizing that all the things that matter to me matter to him, even the smallest details.

Mysterious and infinite moments happen when one stops pointing out that everything in his or her life is going wrong and instead finds a small detail that makes everything in his or her life feel right, like having an extremely bad day like I once had, and being able to talk to my best friend and together we find things that make us laugh and the worst day suddenly feels better. I feel infinite when I can talk to him and tell him all my fears and all of my dreams and he can tell me all his wishes and all of his nightmares. I feel infinite when I open a book for the first time and the words transport me to another place and time, but I am brought back by his voice saying “hey” and I would rather be where I am.

I feel infinite after he hugs me and leaves, and I linger behind and smile. I feel infinite when he rests his head on my shoulder and it makes me feel better. Infinite happens when he forgets his jacket and I take it home with me and call him and tell him I have it and that I will bring it to him tomorrow, but he has no idea I am wearing it and pretending he is hugging me again. The most infinite moment I can recall is getting an early morning telephone call and knowing exactly who it was when it was ringing.

Infinite is when one can find joy in the smallest details. Infinite is color box sunsets, watercolor raindrops, and bookstores. Infinite is words, and an even mixture of happy and sad times, and it is Stephen Chbosky’s, The Perks of Being a Wallflower. It is random conversations with a best friend at 2 a.m., and laughing with him when I feel like crying. Infinite is taking pictures with a Canon camera, and writing poems, and listening to The Cure, and reading e.e. Cummings when I should be studying for a math test. Infinite is how I feel when I receive hugs from my best friend and 6 a.m. telephone calls from the only person from which I would accept them. Infinite is that amazing space somewhere between yesterday and tomorrow when everything that does not happen does.

Cascading Water
Photo by Tina Wright
Every four years, the Boy Scouts of America holds a national jamboree. Scouts from all over the country gather together in fellowship and camaraderie. This jamboree is most often held at Fort A.P. Hill, a United States Army base located in northern Virginia. Since the base is close to Washington, D.C., many troops of scouts tour our nation’s capital and other historical sites nearby.

In 1989, I was lucky enough to attend this event; in addition, my father was the scoutmaster of our group from north Alabama. Due to the sheer number of boy scouts in the nation, the troops who attend the jamboree are usually made up of boys from various troops located in their own area. In my case, there were many scouts and leaders from the north Alabama area.

Like many other troops, we toured Washington. Such an experience! The majesty of the city, the monuments, our government, and the historical significance of the capital and surrounding area were not lost on many of us. One evening, after a short driving tour, we visited the Lincoln Memorial. Adjacent to old Abe lies the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, better known as “The Wall.”

The Wall lies off of the left hand of Abe. Standing in front of Abe’s statue and facing the Washington Monument, visitors can glimpse it through a small stand of trees. A small path leads from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to the beginning of The Wall, which first appears as small black granite triangles recessed into a small hillside. The tiles grow as visitors travel along the path, and names begin to appear, listed by the year of the servicemen’s deaths. Soon, the growing tiles reach their full height, and The Wall turns slightly to the right at an angle and continues. Each black granite slab is much taller than a person and holds hundreds of names. The total number of slain servicemen on that wall is 58,195.

I was thirteen years old the year I visited The Wall. I was no longer a boy, but still not quite a man, and this visit had an immeasurable effect on me. I was simply awed by the experience. After a few pictures and a bit of time running my fingers over name after name, I decided to make my way back up to Old Abe and find a seat for the fireworks show we had been told was coming. A friend of mine was standing at the end of the wall, just standing there, looking lost. I gave him the “nod,” the old shake of the head acknowledging his presence. He gave me the other “nod” to acknowledge mine, and one other “nod,” the one that conveys “look over there.”

One of our leaders, Mr. Ausie Clement, was beginning to walk along the wall. Mr. Clement is a Vietnam Veteran. The best description I can give of him is that he looked like a bear: about five feet four, barrel chested and thick limbed. His jet black hair had long since acquired many gray and silver streaks. His large face sprouted a beard that matched his hair as if it were an extension of it. He wore glasses and walked with a cane, the latter apparently due to bad knees that were from an old war injury. At the time, he was dressed as we, his khaki shirt adorned with a few insignia, olive drab shorts, and olive drab knee length socks trimmed red at the top. Mr. Clement sounded a lot like an old bear, as well; many grunts and growls were the reply to the oft asked questions of young men. Mr. Clement had a heart of gold, however, as he was always prepared to teach any young man anything he knew, and he always had time for those many questions.

My friend and I stood watching as he...
walked along that wall, leaning heavily on that cane. We slowly followed, quietly, so that we would not disturb him. He appeared as if the whole of the world rested on his shoulders. Occasionally, he reached out his left hand and ran his fingers across a name, similar to a child running along a chain-link fence with his fingers extended. After several minutes, he came to a particular slab of granite and stopped, staring up at it. When the wall was completed in 1982, there were no computer databases to search for the location of a particular name. Mr. Clement had done so the old fashioned way: he had either looked it up in a book or he had been here before and found it.

Mr. Clement then did an unexpected thing. He leaned the cane he relied on so much against that wall and just stood there, staring, completely unaware of us or the other hundred young scouts milling about. I stood in reverence and awe as I watched him silently reach up to a name a few inches above his head and trace that name with his fingers. With one hand on that name, he moved his other to his face, hiding his eyes as tears began to run down his face. He stood that way for an eternity, or so it seemed then, for time has a way of fooling the mind. The dozens of people passing around me ceased to exist; all else passed from my mind as I watched, solemnly, to see what would happen next.

After a moment or two, he lowered both hands. As tears still streamed down his face, I watched a bent and seemingly broken man rise up, straighten those bad knees, and give a perfect salute as crisp and neat as if he had just completed his military training. He held that salute for a moment, finished it, and collected his cane. My friend and I melted into the crowd as he passed, wanting nothing more than to allow him his personal moment in peace.

I had been able to witness a moment worth a lifetime of education. William Wordsworth said that we have “spots of time, That with distinct pre-eminence retain a renovating virtue…” and that by which “…our minds are nourished and invisibly repaired,” and that they “lift us up when fallen.” I doubt that I can improve upon this statement, but perhaps I have given an additional glimpse of it. I have learned that wisdom is mainly a component of our life experiences. Snippets of time, recalled again and again, from which we learn anew every day.
Go ahead, ask anyone who knows me, I am not a Girly-Girl. I could care less about how I am dressed or how my clothes fit my body. I give no thought to which T-shirt I am putting on. That’s not true, I consider where I’m going and whom I’ll see as I do not want, nor do I try, to offend anyone forced to read my shirts’ poetic justice sayings, brand logos, or sarcastic remarks. Other than that, I do not think about it. I have never had a mismatch crisis as I only wear Levis 501 jeans. Nor have I ever made the faux pas of wearing the same outfit as some other dressed-to-the-nines chick. My hair is straggled and is always long enough to pull back into a ponytail as I am way too lazy to style it; that might require car- ing. I should not say I do not care. I do. I do not want to be the butch-looking straight girl in the corner, but that is the role I end up ful- filling, if I fail to try. I can, when pressed to ap- pear as though it really matters whether or not I am a lady, pull it off. Primping just re- requires so much thought and energy that I can- not bring myself to care enough to do it day after day.

I watch What Not to Wear if I catch it while channel surfing. I try to pick up hints and solutions for my body distortion, but because of my distortion, I cannot realistically see which distortions I have. I am actually quite afraid one of my friends might send Stacy and Clint a video of me and quite dis- appointed they have not. Oh, I would die. The shame of being told I look like crap and I should care more and present a happier me; no thanks, I will pass. I think I would probably be the first person to refuse the five thousand dollar fully loaded credit card with my name on it. Shame myself on a national stage? No, I am not going to let that happen. Given the opportunity, I would spend all that cash on a bunch of new bags.

It is my one Girly vice. Forget the shoes; they never come in my size. Forget the make- up; it’s never the right shade. Forget the fash- ion magazines; I don’t understand the lingo, but bring on the purses, over-night bags, dainty back packs, and carry-on storage facil- ities. I love them. All bags are good bags. Big bags, small bags, bright bags, and mono- grammed-owner-stamped bags, no matter, they all call to me “let me be your bag.” That is except my bag.

My bag is a most embarrassing thing. It much resembles a 1970’s suitcase. The exter- ior is a weird combination of turquoise blue and baby blue pleather. Pleather is a strange imitation leather made from vinyl, and in this case, imitation did not flatter. The color has a faux marble sponge-painted quality to it. It is hard to open as the zipper sticks on one side, and the handle thing is broken off the smooth sliding side. Because I cannot get hold of the thing, it really is of no advantage. The bag does have a convenient strap that holds it closed. It is like a championship wrestling belt. It is wide where it attaches to the back- side, and it slims as it passes under the han- dle. Eventually, it feeds into a huge silver buckle where it awaits the harnessing of the unusually large fork-pronged teeth. I am al- ways scratching my leg on them if I pass it too closely without caution. It does close, but the junk inside is always on an escape mission. Little bits of scrap paper and jotted on re- ceipts flutter in the wind behind me. You would think I could keep the crap in my bag under control.

I cannot remember exactly when I got my bag. I do know, however, it was a surprise present. It was one of those gifts that is forced upon you by a well-intentioned dog- gooder relative. You know you do not want it, like it, or need it. There is no possible way
in hell you want to be seen in public with it, but there is no nice way to refuse it. Therefore, you are stuck with it. Luck never allows the giver to forget what a great gift they have given you. You end up bumping into them constantly. They always ask about the bag; of course, you never have it because you hate the thing. Eventually the fear and guilt break your will. You begin to carry the bag. Then, my friends, it is too late. Once you have picked up the bag and acknowledged its existence, you are screwed. There is no turning back. It is yours forever.

I first began collecting its content in the 70’s as a little kid. I used to save every tiny bit of anything that meant something to me. It did not have to be important. A bookmark, movie stub, empty beer can, shard of glass from a broken lamp, it did not matter what it was. I kept it in my bag. After awhile it got heavy. There is only so much one little girl can carry. Because I could not part with my bag’s fillings, I devised a plan to organize and down size. I removed and inspected them for quality and necessity. If an item was too large or bulky, I kept only a small piece of it. If I could not break off a piece to keep, I added it to the “things to remember” lists I had going. There are several of those in there. I did the best I could to hold on to all my stuff.

As I got older, my bag’s strap wore a deep valley in my shoulder. It was then I noticed the wear. One of the corners had lost its pleather and minute memories broke free in small jolts. I tried to fix the leak with duct tape, my father’s favorite fix-all. It did the job of holding everything in for a week or two, but it was not strong enough to heal the wounds. Soon the remnants of my bandage began to do some collecting of its own. Frito crumbs, loose tobacco, and straying hairs took up residence on the rolled-up exposed sticky backside of the tape. I tried to clean up the mess, but I could not seem to find the proper pleather tools to do the job.

As my bag gained weight, it became too heavy for me carry. I slip knotted a rope to its handle, and pulled it everywhere I went. I decided as long as I was stuck with the thing, it might as well be entertaining. I let family and friends ride on top of my bag. They added to its weight and made it harder to bear than it had ever been.

By the time I graduated from school, my bag was a Goodwill reject. Although its presence was obvious, most of the people I met acted as though they did not see it, as if it were invisible. I thought they were kind. I caught other people staring at my bag while pretending not to. I watched the change in expression as they looked it over top to bottom and back up again. I was ashamed of my bag. All of the other girls had pretty bags. Some had designer bags with nothing more than a calculator and a date book planner inside. Boy, did they travel light. I saw some that were a bit aged, with a few rumpled gift receipts poking out here, and a compact to freshen up with there. A few girls I knew did not even own a bag. No one ever seemed to have as ugly a bag as mine. It was so unfair. It was not my fault I ended up with that particular bag. It was a gift. I tried to fix it up but never had the right tools. I spray painted the outside, stitched up the torn inside lining, and was diligent in its safety. I never left it behind or let anyone else work on it.

In my twenties, I was used to the bag. It was warm and comforting. Most people did not make a big deal of it and neither did I. Really, the only time I thought about it was when my children were born. As we left the hospital, each of them received a bag of their own. Theirs were tiny and new, but I could see the possibility of theirs becoming suitcases.

The bag’s life was stable until I received a call from my sister telling me my Dad had passed away. It exploded. It’s seams could not contain the anger, relief, or loss. The shit that came flying out of there was disgusting. It smelled of beer, cigarette butts, and Stetson cologne. Much of it was unrecognizable, yet some things remained, as they had always been. Pages full of broken promises, needless harsh words, and hundreds of beer cans lay strewn across the floor. It took a long time to sort all of that between the trash and the recycle bins.

The bag was a shell of its former self. It was not so heavy, but it refused to go away. I still have it. It can no longer hold anything. I did some modifications. I cut out the bottom. Now whatever I stick in there falls right back out. I have it tied to my ankle, as there is no proper place to hold onto. I drag it behind me everywhere I go. Someday I know it will disintegrate into nothing, and then I will be free. That is a scary thought. I am not ready for my bag to go yet. I feel as though I need it for something. Well at least until Stacy and Clinton show up.
I have never really been a big fan of musicals. Honestly, whenever I perceive a character is about to break into song I make a mad dash for the restroom; however, I thoroughly enjoy watching *My Fair Lady* with Audrey Hepburn and Rex Harrison because, in my opinion, this is one of the best on-stage representations of how men and women really feel about one another. For instance, in one scene Rex Harrison breaks out into a song called “I’m Just an Ordinary Man”. Through the course of this song, as Harrison struts and strides about the stage, he lists off his many grievances with the fussy nature of women and his wish that they could simply take lessons from men and learn how to be more amiable and calm. Many men today share this same philosophy about women and, in essence, wish their wives could be more like husbands. As a woman, I was a bit offended by these chauvinistic remarks at first, but now I think I have seen the light and must say if I were a man I, too, would want a husband.

As a man, I would most definitely want a husband to cook and clean for me because, as we all know, men are known world-over for their impeccable home-making skills. Yes, I want a husband who blatantly ignores the welcome mat and tracks globs of mud all over the white flooring tiles in the kitchen. I want a husband whose idea of cooking supper is reheating leftovers from three weeks ago and gulping down expired milk straight from the carton. I want a husband who hides his trash underneath the couch and uses his bedroom floor as a closet. And, of course, I want a husband who spends exponentially more time cleaning his car than cleaning the house.

My husband, like most men, would also be a masterful entertainer and party-planner. I want a husband who feels the need to wear his most formal attire (a wife-beater and boxer-briefs) when entertaining guests. I want a husband who classifies cans of Red Bull and packs of Twinkies as hors d’oeuvres. I also want a husband who will plan many invigorating activities for himself and his guests like watching re-runs of twenty-year-old football games they already know the score to, shooting each other with paintball guns inside of our garage and incidentally ruining my car’s paint job, and playing Halo in their underwear until three in the morning. Yes, in short, my husband will embody the essence of a good hostess as he and his friends eat us out of house and home.

My husband will also be a spectacular role-model and father. My husband will show the children the finer points of life by taking them to major academic institutions like monster-truck rallies, rodeos, and Star Wars conventions. I want a husband who will teach the children to express their inner creativity by allowing them to run naked through the house scribbling on the walls with a bright purple crayon. I want a husband who will teach the children valuable lessons like how to fake sick so you can get out of work to watch a baseball game or how to drink an entire gallon of milk without vomiting. My husband will also be a strict disciplinarian who shows the children the fundamental difference between right and wrong by letting them run rampant through the streets while he reads the sports section.

In short, having a husband would be much like staying at a five-star resort (minus the quality service, food, and cleaning). From the massive piles of dirty clothes that tower beside the laundry basket to the Hefty plates laden with pizza scraps that cower beneath the couch, husbands leave their own personal touch on every mundane household task. This repertoire of unique talents and attributes makes men more qualified for the traditional roles of women than women themselves and, of course, makes them more appealing to men as mates. Therefore, maybe women should take their place in the work force and let the more qualified men take their place at the stove.
Bob’s Gift
By Sheila Byrd

My friend Bob passed away after a long illness, and although he lived across the states in California, I still miss him. I miss the comfort of knowing that he is there, for Bob Burton was a fine man. This is the kind of statement a person hears at a funeral, but, in this case, Bob’s fine-ness was distinctive.

I met Bob when I was about 18, and my long-term experience with men had been singular: my father. Now, my father was a good and kind man, but he was a strong, silent man straight out of his generation. He showed few emotions and was proudest of me when I acted like a boy: riding horses and driving tractors. Thus, my experience with men was as the daughter of a real man’s man, the guy who was a bit rowdy and enjoyed a good off-colored joke.

Meeting Bob changed all that. He was a big man reminiscent of Popeye’s rival, Bluto, yet with kind eyes and a heart to match. Here was a man who expressed his feelings aloud, and he was interested in my feelings, too. Bob broadened my idea of men, but it was not until I was much older that I realized his influence because in him it was natural, not contrived, and it was subtle because it was inextricably linked to his being.

About 20 years after I first met Bob; his wife, Barb; and his four-year-old daughter, Kimby, Bob and Barb brought their young grandchildren, Kaylee, Courtney, and Logan, to our farm in Tennessee. We had a marvelous time playing with the horses, goats, and walking in the pastures and splashing around in the creek and small backyard pond. One particular moment is intensely clear in my memory: Bob and I were standing out under the big Pecan tree beside the swing in my backyard; we were alone. He looked at me and said, “Sheila, I’m so glad things turned out alright for you. I can see that you are happy.” I was astonished that he felt this way about me and that he expressed it in such a simple, genuine way. No social function required that sentiment of him, nor did he need to express his feelings to me.

A few days later after they had left, I told my husband that it took me twenty years to come to realize that Bob was the man whose manner influenced my feelings about men.

When Barbara called to tell me of Bob’s passing, one specific passage from Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet came to mind; it expresses my feelings for Bob better than any-

and, when he shall die,/Take him and cut him out in little stars,/And he will make the face of heaven so fine/That all the world will be in love with night/And pay no worship to the garish sun. (III.ii.)

Sometimes at night or in the earliest morning hours, I stand beside the barn, looking through the darkness into the light of the stars to find Bob there. His presence is there, embedded in my universe.
I have often heard that money can’t buy happiness. This is most often said by people who have money, have always had money, and most likely will always have money. I’m not fully disagreeing with this statement; I just think there is more to be said about its important role in our lives. Power often comes along with being financially endowed, and everyone, no matter how much they may already possess, wants more of it. In my experiences with money, I have come to learn that while it can’t buy happiness, it can provide comfort and stability. Happiness tends to follow.

I have never been rich, and although I have technically been considered poor, I have never viewed myself in that way. My mother worked for a hospital, and my father was a self-employed contractor. Growing up, they never made much money, but we always had what we needed. After they divorced, my mother began to struggle to make ends meet. She and I moved into a less expensive home, then into another less expensive home, and, finally, in with her boyfriend. I never particularly liked him because of the way he treated her. He was never abusive, but he reminded me of my father in the way that he looked through her, not at her, and expected her to single-handedly raise his children. She wasn’t happy with him, but she told me that we couldn’t afford to live on our own. This is when I first began to see money’s influence on my life.

Two years and one major fight later, we left. In the car, I asked my mother where we were going, and when she looked at me to respond, I realized that she had no idea. She felt just as helpless as I did. We ended up going to my grandmother’s house. We knocked on her door, several hours past what is considered acceptable. She opened it and simply said, “About time.” A month later, my mom could finally afford somewhere for us to live. This turned out to be a 28” by 7” camper. The bathroom didn’t work, neither did the stove or the heater, but it was ours. We no longer had to be on our best behavior, in fear of being forced to leave a house we couldn’t claim. Having this tiny camper, which so many people criticized, was a symbol of freedom for my mother and me. We were finally on our own, and we were happy.

Several weeks passed, and I was not experiencing my first Christmas in my new home. I was having a hard time coming to terms with the fact that we simply had no space for a tree. I am a Christmas fanatic, I admit. With so much adversity in our world, as was becoming apparent to me during this time, Christmas seems to bring about a sense of joy, even if for only a short time. So, simply put, I was devastated about the lack of a tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A few days went by, and I had completely given up on the tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A few days went by, and I had completely given up on the tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A few days went by, and I had completely given up on the tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A few days went by, and I had completely given up on the tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A few days went by, and I had completely given up on the tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A few days went by, and I had completely given up on the tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A few days went by, and I had completely given up on the tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A few days went by, and I had completely given up on the tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A few days went by, and I had completely given up on the tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A few days went by, and I had completely given up on the tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A few days went by, and I had completely given up on the tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A few days went by, and I had completely given up on the tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A few days went by, and I had completely given up on the tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A few days went by, and I had completely given up on the tree. My mother knew this, and promised to do all she could to provide a beautifully decorated tree for me to sit and stare at for hours on end. A
Play-Doh cartons. It was beautiful. I don’t remember a single gift I was given that Christmas, but the memory of that tree and the joy it gave me will be engraved into my heart and my mind until the day I die.

In my life, I have never come into great amounts of money, but I have seen and felt so much happiness that I could never equate with dollars and cents. I know that money is needed for a comfortable and secure lifestyle, but I have been happy without money, and I will be happy with it. This Christmas, when my family and I decorate a huge tree in our new house, complete with a stove and heat, functioning bathrooms, huge windows, and comfortable beds, I will remember that tiny Christmas tree. And, I will be happy.
America the Indebted, Idealistic, and Surgically Enhanced
By Bailey Lovell

America the Beautiful is a concept that we Americans are predisposed to believe from birth. We hear tales of the wondrous melting pot culture this country possesses and of fulfilling the American dream. The U.S.A. is viewed as a safe haven for those seeking refuge. The Statue of Liberty states, “Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...”; however, perhaps in light of the plastic surgery/living beyond means/keeping up with the Jones’s era, the Statue’s inscription should read, “Give me your beautiful, your rich, and your opportunistic.” I have been an American since the day I was born, and I love this country. It is an integral part of me, but I am now at an age where I am questioning things I never gave much thought to. Therefore, I suddenly wonder, do I want to be an American?

America has recently undergone a facelift, or maybe I should say that a great number of Americans have undergone facelifts. Plastic surgery has become so omnipresent that it has possibly lost its appeal. When it first became well-known, plastic surgery was utilized almost entirely by older women. Now, it is used by men, teenagers, and women of all ages. It seems we are taught from a young age to attack our own image, which leads to self-loathing. Daily, we view ridiculous amounts of media explaining to us how we should look and why we should want to look that way. Then, when we confess insecurities with ourselves, we are said to have low self-esteem. I understand and even appreciate that plastic surgery is a necessary aspect of the medical world (burn victims, for example), but when an eighteen year old girl is receiving breast implants as a graduation present, we have a serious problem.

The second reason I am questioning my American citizenship is our lack of financial knowledge. We have become a “buy now, pay later” society, as evident by the millions of dollars in credit card debt that Americans accumulate yearly. Perhaps this can be traced back to striving to attain that ubiquitous American dream of being successful. Most people equate success with monetary value; therefore, they spend money they do not have in order to appear worthy of envy. When a person is in debt, they are indebted to others, which means, in other words, that their life is not wholly their own. This is the type of lives we Americans are currently living.

Several times, I have referenced the American dream. This is an ideal of freedom, equality, and opportunity that is embedded into nearly all aspects of our lives. From birth, we are taught that everything is attainable. We must work hard, study hard, play hard; all the while with a planning eye toward the future. Until we are happily married with brilliant, bright children, living in a large, beautiful home with numerous luxury cars in the driveway, we have not achieved the American dream. According to the standards we uphold ourselves to, until we reach a level of success equal to attaining this far-fetched dream, we can not truly be happy.

The United States of America is based on a beautiful concept, which is the freedom to be one’s true self, in terms of religion and in other, more personal areas. However, many Americans have forgotten how lucky we all are to have been born here. We overly criticize the country that has provided us with the freedoms we take for granted. I am not pointing fingers at anyone, because I am guilty of everything I have discussed in this essay. I have chosen buying sweaters, movie tickets, CDs, and books over buying gas, so I am completely accountable for my actions as an American. We live in a wonderful country, filled with opportunity, as I stated earlier, but we must change our behavior. It will be a long and arduous process, but it is possible. We are Americans, after all. We are indestructible, and we can do anything.
Sipsey 1 of 3
Illustration by Jackie Segars

Bad Luck Friends
Illustration by Beth Brady

Thundering Waters. Niagara Falls, NY
Photo by Miri Evans
John Dabner settled himself into the low wooden bench he had placed behind his house. He sighed a little as the weight was taken off of his knees. At eighty-one years old, he got tired and achy more often than he once had, but remained the pleasant man he had always been. John was an average man in most ways, a little short, a little plain, but generally good-natured. His hair was thinner now than it had been fifty years ago and was almost entirely white. Little lines feathered out around his eyes and others rested quietly around his mouth. It was in his eyes, a hazy green color that was unexceptional but for the cheerful, infectious gleam in them.

He cast his eyes up to the sky as his wife of fifty-four years, Maria, silently slipped down beside him. A smile split across his face and when he spoke his voice was like the rest of him, pleasantly average. “Remember the first time you saw that sky, Maria? City girl. What was it you said?”

“’That’s a damn big sky’ that was it,” John continued with a little half laugh, “And it is, isn’t it? It’s a damn big sky.” It was. It was also gorgeous, pure black and depthless, scattered with so many sharp white stars it was as if someone had scattered diamonds carelessly across jeweler’s velvet. And the gleaming moon was as flat and cleanly edged as glass.

“I didn’t think I’d like it at first. The country?” she tossed her silver hair back on a lovely, ringing laugh. “I liked the city, all those lights and all the busy,” Maria told her husband, the starlight glimmering in her eye as she followed his gaze up.

John looked down at his hands, spread the gnarled fingers. They were not particularly attractive hands. Thick knuckles, coarse white hair on the backs of his fingers. Workingman’s hands, he thought. “Remember when I built that shed with J.D. and Adam? Adam was… goodness, he had to have been around eleven, right? And J.D., he was only about thirteen. But they had a blast.”

His wife turned faded blue eyes onto the shed, a faint smile making her cheeks plump up prettily. “Still standing strong, too. You did nice, solid work.”

John was still talking, saying, “Adam bashed his hand with the hammer his first time. Did he cry? Of course not. Much too adult to cry, even when it swelled up like a balloon.” He patted the arm of the bench. “You gave him some ice to put on it. And a popsicle because he was so brave.”

“I wasn’t though,” Maria laughed, her pale, delicate hand patting on his as she remembered it. “I was thinking so many scary thoughts. That his thumb was broken, that we’d have to go to the hospital, even had a wild one where I was afraid it was going to have to be amputated or some such ghastly thing. I was bone-terrified.”

“Handled it like champs the two of you. And J.D. he put on the big brother act as best he could. Slapped Adam on the back and sat down with him to watch the thumb turn colors.” John studied his hands again, thought about how many times he’d whacked them with one thing or the other. “If I recall, that thumb turned a fascinating variety of colors.”

Maria settled her cheek back on the soft hump of her husband’s shoulder again. “It surely did, didn’t it? What an introduction to the world of carpentry, a big puffy thumb.
Didn’t put him off any, though. Gave us that beautiful cabinet for Christmas.”

“Adam’s just like his dad. Always fiddling with something in his workshop when he’s got the time. That cabinet is a beauty, you know,” John said proudly, adding, “Taught that boy everything he knows.”

Maria laughed a little. “You gave him a good, solid foundation, John. And he’s used that. Art pieces,” she shook her head and laughed again, “Our boy, making art pieces. In galleries all over the country—even New York!”

“Course, that boy’s got plenty of talent of his own. Couldn’t teach him that. You just about busted buttons when he got a piece in that fancy-pants New York place,” John said with a small smile, his gaze far-off as he remembered the day that Adam had sent them the pamphlet with a picture of his work in it. He blinked, as if breaking himself out of his thoughts. “Lily used to be such a tomboy,” John said at last, his thoughts turning from his son to his daughter. He gave his head a little shake and offered a half-laugh. “She always wanted to be like her brothers.”

Maria laughed as well, waving her hand as if to brush those words away. “Like her brothers? Hah. She wanted to be like you, John, and you know it.” Her face creased into a smile as she wrapped her arms around his shoulders. “It’s not just boys who want to be like their dad.”

“Grew up to be a right girly-girl, though,” John continued, talking over Maria’s interjection. “Never understood why you needed all those tubes and pots and wands to paint yourselves up so. Always were pretty enough without all that fuss.”

His wife batted that aside as well, even as her cheeks pinked a little with pleasure. “Blind as a bat, you are. Must be, to say something like that.”

For a long time, John stayed silent, staring at the lawn without seeing the way the moonlight turned the pretty green to a peculiar silver. “Wonder if she’ll bring his boy. What was his name anyway?”

“Garret.”

“Jared or something like that… Jared, Jared... Jarret, maybe...” John mumbled for a few more seconds before shrugging, “Hasn’t been dating him long. Maybe he’s not bring-him-home material.”

Maria drilled her finger into his side. “You weren’t. My dad wasn’t too sold on the country boy. Had to clean you up and put you into a suit before I thought you’d pass his crazy standards. Guess I worried too much, since you two got on like white on rice.” She paused for a minute, then poked him again, “Don’t you run that boy off if she does bring him home!”

John frowned, making him look something like an admonishing, beardless Santa Claus. “Got to make sure the boy’s all right, you know? Songwriter. Couldn’t she find someone with a real job, like her?”

---

*Sundrops*  
Photo by Jennifer Bottomly
“Oh, phoo. I think it’s nice. Someone artsy, instead of all those humorless lawyer types she’s stuck with all the time. And his songs are sweet.”

John grinned, his craggy face radiating happiness. “It’ll be great to have everybody back in this house—” he broke off as Maria suddenly got to her feet. “Where are you going?”

“I have to go. There’s so much to do,” Maria replied, sounding suddenly distant. She looked down as John caught her hand before she could hurry away, and tugged it out of his grasp. “John,” she pursed her lips as if mildly irritated at his antics, “John, you knew all along I couldn’t dawdle around.”

“No, but—wait…”

“John? John, it’s time to go. Upsy-daisy, there we are. John? John—”

“Are you listening to me? I have to go, John, now you really need to—”

“Let’s go, OK, John? Yep, just hold onto my hand now…”

His hazy green eyes blinked, as he tried to focus on her face, even as the warm features began to melt and blur like wax. "Wait, wait! Maria? Where are you going, Maria?" He snatched for her hand, his thick fingers swiping clumsily and missing.

“I couldn’t stay long. You know I couldn’t stay long. Now just—”

“Calm down, John. You just need too—”

“The kids are coming soon, John, and there’s so much that I have to get ready. Now just sit back—”

“Down. Here, lie back. It’s all nice and comfortable, see?”

The old man blinked again, clutching at the white sleeve of the nurse, his eyes darting around in bewilderment. This was not his home, not his yard with its tidily mowed grass and the lovingly built bench that he had crafted in his own workshop. He spied a window and struggled to move towards it, to look outside and see the stars, but firm hands took him by the shoulders, nudged him back. “I have to go home,” John told the person with the hands, an unfamiliar face young enough to be his child.

The face smiled. It would have been a nice smile, but it was a tired one and obviously false—the sort of smile you gave to a small child. “John, it’s OK,” the face told him, “You are home.”

John stared around, taking in the beige walls and colorless floor, the window without a view at all. “No, but—This is not my home,” he objected.

The face only bobbed up and down in a nod, smiled again. “Sure it is, John. Don’t you remember?”

Did he? Should he? He looked around again. It was still unfamiliar… wasn’t it? Hesitantly, he looked at the face again, “Are you… sure? This doesn’t look like home…” He took another critical glance at the room. This would never do. There needed to be more color, more… stuff. There was so much that had to be fixed before the kids got there… He tried to get up, saying, “I have to get ready. They’ll be here soon. The kids have been planning this for months. I have to—”

He began to trail off as his medicine began to take effect, still mumbling intermittently about his children and the preparations that had to be made.

The orderly sighed heavily. Every night the old man was like this. Never unruly, just always insisting that he needed to get ready, needed to prepare. The first time the old man had been so insistent, the orderly had wondered if the old man’s kids were actually coming to visit, but they hadn’t. They didn’t come then and they never came now. In eight years, they had never come.
Welcome to The MusePaper
by Ryan Wood

For more than twenty-five years, the Muse has been a successful literary magazine for Calhoun Community College. Over the years, it has showcased the talent of Calhoun through essays, poems, photography, and short stories. At the same time, The Warhawk Herald, our Calhoun newspaper, was being released two to four times a year with the latest in Calhoun updates and news, as well as insightful articles about staff and students. This year, the school has decided to merge the Muse and the Warhawk Herald. And what you are looking at now is the brand new MusePaper.

More than twenty-five years ago, the Muse released its first literary magazine to the students, and since then, it has consistently been given to the students, once a year, for free. Every year, the editorial team of the Muse is made up of a mix of students and teachers. Although this group changes every year, Mrs. Jill Chadwick, an English teacher and SKD board member, has been on the editorial team, off and on, for the last twenty-five years. Leigh Ann Rhea, co-sponsor for SKD, usually volunteers her services as a judge. The Muse has been extremely successful at the college and lately, it has been successful nationally. Last year, the Muse was rated number one nationally for SKD.

Until 2003, the Muse was judged with the names of the students or teachers who had written the poems, essays, or short stories on the front of their work. This created somewhat of a bias in the process of selecting the works for the Muse, as the judges might base their ratings on whether or not it was a student or if they knew the person who had written it. Since then, however, the Muse has switched to what Jill Chadwick calls “blind judging”: the names of the writers or photographers are not on the works being judged. Each work is rated from one to three, and the ones with the highest ratings are published in the Muse.

The Warhawk Herald has undergone many changes since its inception more than twenty-five years ago. It started out as a class for journalism majors. Since there were not many students going into journalism, and the class had a high drop out rate, it was then turned into an extra-curricular activity. The Warhawk Herald has changed its name a few times, as well. It was first called the Warhawk Herald but later changed its name to Vox Populi, or “The Voice of the People.” The newspaper has told the stories that were important to Calhoun students and owes a “thank you” to those who have sponsored this effort, including Jack Barham, Steve Calatrello, and Janet Kincherlow-Martin. News hasn’t been its only purpose, though. It has included articles about interesting people and stories from their lives. For example, last year, there was an article detailing guitar teacher Mrs. De Quesada’s escape from communist Cuba, under the rule of Fidel Castro. When I first arrived at Calhoun in March of last year, the newspaper detailing Mrs. De Quesada’s story on the front page was in the paper stands around the school. Copies of that same paper can still be found around the school nearly a year after its original publication. Furthermore, students were reading parts of the paper, then throwing them away, which was quite wasteful. At the beginning of the fall 2008 semester, the future of the Warhawk Herald was uncertain. What was to be done with it? Should it be just an online publication? Should we just completely scrap it?

During a meeting which was to determine the future of the newspaper, Dr. Sheila Byrd of the Language and Literature department suggested that it merge with the Muse and be published once a year. Faced with a choice between not having the newspaper at all and merging it with the Muse, there was virtually no opposition to the merge. After many different names were considered, SKD student Chris Hooie stated the obvious: “Why don’t we just call it the MusePaper?”

Mrs. Chadwick, SKD, the Muse editorial staff, and the writers all seem confident that the transition will be smooth, and the MusePaper will be a success.
Calhoun Welcomes Families Fleeing Hurricane Gustav
by Vita Schiavone

When students returned to school after the Labor Day holiday, they were surprised to find a couple of hundred evacuees from Louisiana had taken up residence in Calhoun’s gym. These people had managed to create a sense of community among themselves, bonding over the fact that they had all been forced to flee their homes by Hurricane Gustav. There were the young and the old, families and single individuals, rich and poor, because hurricanes never discriminate over whom they are going to hit.

At nine o’clock in the morning on Sunday, August 31, buses from New Orleans and surrounding cities left Louisiana loaded with evacuees. Having been alerted late Saturday night that their shelter would in fact be needed, much of the Calhoun staff spent all day Sunday feverishly working to get their hurricane shelter ready for people. The evacuees made it to Calhoun at 8:30 Monday morning after being turned down at several previous shelters that were already filled to capacity. They had ridden on the hot, cramped bus for twenty-four hours, and they were thankful to have more space to spread out and lay down. Everyone was very grateful to Calhoun and the Red Cross for providing them shelter and food.

Many of the evacuees were from the same low-income apartment complex. Some of the families were worried about leaving jobs, family and friends, and their belongings. A few of the people spent their money to pay bills helping get them evacuated, and this caused worries about the days ahead. Most of the citizens had evacuated so quickly that they only had the clothes on their backs.

By Wednesday afternoon, however, the storm had blown over and the evacuees were ready to return to their homes. It was hard for many of them to find out about their homes and whether or not there was power where they were from. Boredom had begun to set in by then, and the people were getting restless. However, many of the citizens were more than willing to sit down with me and tell their stories.

The first family that I talked to had been evacuated from St. John, a town about forty-five minutes from New Orleans. Their youngest child was a curly-headed boy who was two years old. He was a sweet little guy who was quick to smile for a picture, seemingly oblivious to the fact that he was currently living in a college gym. Andrew Talbot, of Lake Charles, Louisiana, had this to say about the entire situation, “You aren’t going to change your situation by griping or complaining. No one was killed. And money and things can be replaced.”

I also talked to a young man the same age as many Calhoun students, an art Major from Tulane University nicknamed, appropriately enough, Art. He was a freshman from Chicago, Illinois, who had only been in Louisiana a week. His story was a little unique in the way that he came to be one of the evacuees bussed out of New Orleans. Tulane University had released its students at the beginning of the weekend, while there was still plenty of time for evacuation. Art, however, decided to stay a little longer in the city in order to go to some parties on Saturday night. Once it got too late for him to evacuate on his own, he made the decision to evacuate with the New Orleans’ natives and got a taste of what they go through on a semi-regular basis.

The only complaint that I ever heard came from Valerie Smith of Lake Charles, Louisiana. She did not like the fact that there was yellow caution tape around the gym designated for the safety of the evacuees and students, in order to keep students out and give the evacuees some privacy. For many of the evacuees, such as Valerie, it made them feel like they were being treated like animals or criminals, although neither was further from the truth. Calhoun did an
amazing job heightening security during this week and making sure that neither evacuees nor students were inconvenienced. Calhoun faculty also did a great job making sure that students were still able to attend a majority of their classes.

During the evacuees’ stay, there was an amazing outpouring of support from everyone in our community. Many churches, restaurants, businesses, and individuals brought food and other things for the evacuees in order to aid Calhoun and the Red Cross with the Hurricane Shelter project. Also, many people around the campus also helped out by providing entertainment, as some of the students from the music department did, playing with games with the children, which the baseball and softball teams did; and bringing books, games, and coloring material such as Sigma Kappa Delta did. We, as students and faculty of Calhoun, should be proud in our work with the evacuation shelter. As a college and community we made an impact in other peoples’ lives. We took in these poor people and showed them neighborly love. This is what being a community is all about.

On a happy note, all of the evacuees were able to leave to return to their homes early Friday morning, September 5.

Eighth Annual Writers’ Conference, featuring Michael Knight

By Vita K. Schiavone

In preparation for Calhoun’s 2009 Writer’s Conference this spring with author, Michael Knight, I recently sat down and read The Holiday Season. This book contains two of his short novellas, the title story, “The Holiday Season” and “Love at the End of the Year.” The first novella spans the time from the Thanksgiving season to Christmas. It follows the sometimes tumultuous relationship of a widower and his two adult sons. “Love at the End of the Year” follows the types of love that surface on New Year’s Eve among several colorful people. Both novellas do an excellent job sharing a realistic mix of emotions and presenting the stories of entertaining, yet broken people.

Michael Knight was raised in Alabama, which explains why he is able to paint such a perfect picture of Alabama. He shows our state exactly as she is, with her intoxicating southern charm, but without neglecting the facts that she and her inhabitants have faults and are far from perfect. Knight first became a published author in 1996 when he won Playboy’s college fiction contest. He now resides in Knoxville, Tennessee, with his wife Jill and their two daughters. He currently is in charge of the University of Tennessee’s creative writing program.

Students Rave about Michael Knight

Several of the faculty of the Language and Literature department incorporated short stories by Michael Knight into their classes in order to familiarize students with his work prior to his April 16th reading. Most chose to use Dogfight and Other Stories or Goodnight, Nobody. Student response has been enthusiastic. Knight was featured in a Bookmark episode hosted by University of Alabama professor Don Noble, so students had an opportunity to hear the author interviewed and gain insight into his path as a writer. One English 102 student said he was amazed and proud that someone from Alabama has been able to be so successful in a writing career. Another voiced the opinion that the Michael Knight stories were more contemporary and easier to relate to than traditional stories taught from the anthology required for the class. Perhaps the most humorous review comes from a young man who said, “You’ve got to love a man who writes about pretty women and dogs!” The Writers’ Conferences provide a unique chance for students to actually meet and converse with an author whose stories they have read and discussed in class. Let’s hope these conferences continue for many years to come.
Barack Obama
by Ryan Wood

“So I say to you, there is no liberal America or conservative America. There is the United States of America,” Barack Obama said at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. It was a speech that was rewarded with a standing ovation from the crowd and critical acclaim from Democrats, Republicans, the mainstream media, and from political talk radio shows across America. It was a speech about hope: “Hope in the face of uncertainty, hope in the face of difficulty… the hope of a skinny kid with a funny name who believes that America has a place for him, too.” That is what Barack Obama has advocated for his entire life. Hope.

Barack Obama, Sr. was born and raised in a small village in Kenya, and eventually received a scholarship to study in America. Ann Dunham was born and raised in Wichita, Kansas. She studied at the University of Hawaii, where she met Barack Obama, Sr. They named their son after his father, Barack, which means “blessed.” When Obama was two years old, his father moved back to Kenya and only saw his son once more before he died in a car accident in 1982. Obama’s mother was married to Lolo Soetoro, who moved the family to Indonesia, where Obama went to school until he was ten years old. In 1971 Obama moved back to Hawaii, where he was raised by his Christian maternal grandparents until his graduation from high school. He moved to New York where he graduated from Columbia University in 1983.

After graduation, he went to Chicago and worked as a community organizer with faith based organizations to help improve the lives of those living in poor communities. He decided that politics would be a better way to help improve people’s lives and went to Harvard. Obama was elected president of the prestigious Harvard Law Review, becoming the first black man to hold the position in the review’s century of existence. After graduating in 1991, Obama moved back to Chicago to practice as a civil rights lawyer and taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago Law School.

In 1996, Obama was elected to the Illinois State Legislature, where he gained bipartisan support for reforming ethics and health care laws. He sponsored a law increasing tax credits for low income workers, negotiated welfare reform, and promoted increased subsidies for child care. He sponsored Republican Governor Ryan’s payday loan regulations and predatory mortgage lending regulations, which was aimed at preventing home foreclosures. In 2004, Obama was elected to the US senate for Illinois with 70% of the vote, the highest victory margin in the history of Illinois. During his time as a US senator, he sponsored a bill with Republican Tom Coburn, called The Coburn-Obama Transparency Act, which created a search engine for government spending called USAspending.gov. In 2008, he worked with Coburn again, with the addition of John McCain and Thomas Carper, on follow-up legislation. He sponsored legislation to make nuclear power safer and to expand children’s health insurance.

On February 10th, 2007, Barack Obama announced his candidacy for president. He plans to continue his work to make life better for Americans here at home by taking away the tax breaks for companies shipping jobs overseas and giving them to companies creating jobs here. He will give small businesses
in America tax cuts, and he will cut taxes for 95 percent of Americans. Obama will invest in clean coal technology, wind power, solar power, natural gas, and increase funds for research in hybrid cars, creating millions of new green jobs for America. He promises health insurance to every American by the end of his first term. He will use diplomacy before aggressive action and withdraw our troops from Iraq within 16 months. He will finish the job in Afghanistan and strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. He will work to reduce the number of abortions by encouraging comprehensive sex education in our schools. He will strengthen domestic violence laws and give more funding to domestic violence prevention organizations. He will fight for women to receive the same pay as men for doing the same job. Obama would never put Social Security in a position where it may be threatened by a stock market collapse. He wants to give more benefits to our veterans and make sure they are never sent into a misguided war again.

Barack Obama is the right choice for women, for veterans, for the middle class, for doctors and patients. Barack Obama is the right choice for America. Together, we can take back this country from the lobbyists and special interests. We can turn the page on the failed economic policies of George W. Bush and we can bring our troops home with dignity. We can bring them home with better veteran’s benefits. We can provide health care for the sick and jobs for the jobless. Yes, we can; and yes, we will elect Barack Obama.

John McCain
by Chris Hooie

I invite you to vote for John McCain. “Well, thank you for the invitation,” you might say to me. Secretly, you may be thinking that you are not going to vote for the old white dude because there is this handsome, articulate, well-spoken, likeable African-American who seems to have lots of ideas and buzzwords proclaiming “CHANGE IS COMING TO WASHINGTON.” I mean, after all, this guy is a rock star! Well, I invite you to vote for the old white guy, anyway.

You are probably wondering why you should do this. Nearly everyone will agree that we must do some things different in government. We face times of uncertainty, difficulty, and adversity. Who will lead us? I believe that neither candidate currently can. Half of the country wants to go one way, the other half want to go in another. I had planned on dazzling you with amazing facts and statistics on why you should vote for John McCain, but alas, time is short, and so is the amount of space I have to speak with you. So I will show you a few reasons I plan to vote for the man, and a few reasons I plan to vote against senator Obama.

My father told me once that wisdom is a compilation of three things: intelligence, education, and life experiences, you can pick any two and be wise as long as one of those two is life experiences. Wisdom can only be found in the experiences you gain and the lessons you learn from them. Wisdom does not keep you from making mistakes; it merely helps you mitigate the damage they may cause. How is this relevant? Well, I submit that while both candidates are intelligent and educated, Senator McCain has a vastly greater amount of life experiences, and therefore is wiser than his opponent. He has a great deal of time spent dealing with members of both parties. He knows how to compromise, and he did spend time in our military; including several years as a POW during the Vietnam War. All three of these things are definitely relevant. No president can curry favor with only his own party; he risks the ire of the entire public if he does so. Senator McCain has authored and co-sponsored legislation with both parties, showing he can work with people he may disagree with fundamentally on other issues. He knows suffering, who in our government has suffered for our country and its people in the way Senator McCain has? His POW experience gives him a unique perspective on military service and the rigors and trials those brave men and women face. Life experiences? John McCain wins, hands down. Life experiences also dictate how we handle situations, the more each of us have, the better a decision each of us will make, as we have a multitude of different experiences from which to draw ideas. I submit that because of his greater wealth of life experience, John McCain is the wiser man, and therefore, a better choice.

continued
Before I go any farther, I must turn to Senator Obama. Now, don’t get me wrong, the senator seems to be a fairly decent man and has several ideas I like. I think it a good idea to talk to our enemies; however, to merely talk to them without doing so from a position of strength is a waste of time. The good old “stick and carrot” approach works best. Lure with the carrot, threaten with the stick. Former president Theodore Roosevelt said it best, “speak softly and carry a BIG stick.” I believe that few people would honestly argue that Senator Obama will spend the necessary tax dollars to ensure that our military continues to be that “BIG” stick.

As far as the current thoughts on taxes, let’s look at some simple numbers. I promise that everyone will be able to follow this math problem. There are currently about 300 million people living in this country and after subtracting the elderly, children, and illegal immigrants, I estimate there are about 200 million taxpayers. The “top one percent” that Senator Obama wishes to have pay “their fair share,” would constitute about 2 million individuals. According to the Wall Street Journal (via the October 26th edition of the Decatur Daily) each of those taxpayers will be taxed an additional twenty thousand dollars per year (approximately). This works out to be about 40 billion dollars in additional revenue. 1000 million = 1 billion, so 20,000 million = 20 billion, so 20,000x2million = 40 billion. Estimates of the cost of Senator Obama’s suggested programs run from anywhere from half a trillion to a trillion dollars, per year. Where will the additional revenue come from? “Wait a minute,” you say, “how much would we save if we pull out of Iraq?” Well, I’m glad you asked. Estimates of the cost of the war in Iraq run at about a trillion dollars total, spread that over the 8 years we have been there equals approximately 120 billion per year. Even if you add this to our “tax total” from the above numbers, that’s still only 160 billion. So where is the rest of that money going to come from? Corporations? We already have one of the highest corporate tax rates in the world. Do we wish to further drive corporations from our shores to more tax friendly countries? In addition, if those companies do pay the taxes, who ultimately pays? Do you believe it will come from corporate profits? The customers of those companies will pay those taxes. Ultimately, that money will be paid by us.

Additionally, why do we think we have to have the government take care of our every problem? Why is it a good idea to turn things over to Congress? Our country is currently 10 trillion dollars in debt. To put this in perspective, if we paid that debt back at the rate of 1000 dollars per second it would take three hundred and twenty years to pay it all back. We want to increase spending? Now, in all fairness, both senators promise additional spending. However, Senator McCain has suggested a more modest amount, in the neighborhood of 250 billion, or less, if I remember correctly.

My biggest problem with Senator Obama is on the second amendment. This amendment guarantees our right to keep and bear arms. The senator has stated he supports it, yet as a state senator, he voted for every measure restricting that right, and he also voted to restrict the right of self defense. This is a matter of record and can be found with minimal research. (For documentation of his gun rights record see: www.obamagunban.com, which is clearly an anti Obama site, but has links to the appropriate records).

In closing, vote for who you will, but I invite you to vote for John McCain.
Interview with Calhoun’s New Baseball Coach, Mike Burns
by Christina Boczek

Christina: Coach Burns, tell us about yourself.

Coach: I was born and raised in Decatur, Alabama. I went to Decatur High School. I was here at Calhoun in 1987-1988. After Calhoun, I went to UNA. After that, I played 3 years for the Astros. I came back to Calhoun as an Assistant Coach in 1994-1995. I coached, then, at Decatur High School from 1996 until this year when I came back to Calhoun as Head Coach.

Christina: What about your family and hobbies?

Coach: I married my high school sweetheart. I’ve got two boys. Link, 13, goes to Oak Park and plays basketball and baseball, and Tanner, who is 9. As for hobbies, I want to golf or something, but right now it’s just following my kids.

Christina: For fun, let’s get a list of Burn’s favorites:
Book/Magazine: Sports Illustrated
Movie: [of all time] The Natural
Toy/game growing up: Atari, most definitely, and now XBOX 360
Color: Used to be red, but now BLUE.

Singer: I have a wide range. I like anything from Kid Rock to Kenny Chesney.
Team: Astros because they gave me a chance
Position: Catcher
Coach: Coach Frickie here at Calhoun. He had the most influence on me. We were both going through difficult times, and he led me through them because we had both had loved ones close to us die, and so we became close. He was very respectful toward his players, and I knew after I had played for him I wanted to be a coach.
Song: any from the Roll and Bounce soundtrack
Best compliment ever received: That I have treated everyone equally. Whether they are a starter or not that they were treated the same.
Three misconceptions people/players have about you: Well I don’t have any yet. =]

Christina: What do you plan to have accomplished in 10, 20, or 50 years?

Coach: Many state championships here at Calhoun. More former players in business world. I also want these kids to become good fathers and husbands.

Christina: What can we expect this year from Calhoun baseball:
Coach: That we’ll play hard, we’ll play the game the way it’s supposed to be, and we’ll have class and character.

Christina: Some people know very little about baseball. Why should they come out to support the Warhawks?

Coach: Great brand of baseball. It is cheap entertainment for the whole family, or anyone. Our conference is one of the top conferences, and so you get a good game, with good competition.

Christina: Do you have any superstitions/rituals?

Coach: Way too many. I have to have a clean dugout. Can’t step on the lines, no crossed bats, and the line up cards have to be perfect like no mistakes in writing or position mistakes.

Christina: What’s the easiest thing about coaching?

Coach: At the junior college level, the motivation is there. Players want to get better, and do what it takes to get there. The hardest thing is that I feel a great responsibility to be that father figure for the guys. I also have to be the psychiatrist, and sometimes just the guy who listens. I love being here at Calhoun. I played here and I’ve got a lot of emotional ties here. So this is definitely the best job I could ever have.

Christina: What one word do you want to describe Calhoun Baseball?
Coach: CLASS
Calhoun Theatre has produced great plays in the past. This year promised to be no different. With double hits from Jonida Beqo, “Passages and Detours” and “Love Struck; or, Poetic Will,” her amazing talent never ceases to astound! Also, Calhoun students took a page from the classics “12 Angry Men” and made it their own in “12 Angry Jurors.”

At the end of October 2008, Ms. Beqo brought her new show, “Passages and Detours,” to the Black Box Theatre. Act one told the story of Ms. Beqo’s great-grandmother Sophia coming to America in the early nineteen hundreds. The play detailed her will and courage to outlive the Dust Bowl, the death of her child, and her husband’s death in World War II. The second act brought audience members a new experience by transforming the Black Box into a “coffee house” environment. Ms. Beqo’s poems were interwoven with the musical talents of the local band The Barnstormers. This was a unique telling of a personal history that held great entertainment for all who came to see!

In March of 2009, Calhoun’s William Provin brought the campus a one-of-a-kind performance of Reginald Rose’s “12 Angry Men.” Mr. Provin used his personal touch and changed some of the roles from male to female giving the play the title “12 Angry Jurors.” This play attempts to break down the barriers of stereotyping and proving the old adage “never judge a book by its cover.” The cast featured some veterans of past Black Box productions as well as presenting a few new faces. This timeless piece paired with an enthusiastic company brought new meaning to light in William Provin’s “12 Angry Jurors.”

At the end of the 2009 spring semester, Ms. Beqo returned to the Black Box to workshop her newest show, “Love Struck; or, Poetic Will.” This gave a great example of her ability to write, direct, and act. This selection of Shakespeare’s poetry has always been viewed as being high quality romance. Ms. Beqo didn’t disappoint. Her one woman show about Shakespeare and love allowed audiences to see Shakespeare in a new fashion. Ms. Beqo’s gift of storytelling is always highly enjoyable. In “Love Struck; or, Poetic Will,” she leaves the audience wanting more.

The 2008-09 theatre year offered a wide variety of entertainment. From the classics to the first time performances, the Black Box theatre showed its capabilities to keep great plays coming through Calhoun’s doors. For patrons of the theatre, this was truly a year to be remembered!
A collection of works by Calhoun Community College students, faculty, staff and alumni.

Your Community. Your College. Your Future.