FROM THE EDITORS

"Do you guys want some pizza because we really want some coke, and we’re hungry?" This was the voice of the editors one late night during crunch time for this issue of Tempo magazine. We spent many nights working closely together to develop this issue into the work of art it has become. What we hope to convey this semester is the message of awareness. It is our vision that our readers will be touched and perhaps discover more about themselves and their peers at Coastal Carolina University. Our years spent in college are not only the happiest times of our lives, but can also be the most difficult. We are perfecting the people we will ultimately become. While compiling this issue of Tempo, we came upon countless stories ranging from spiritual revelation to overcoming adversity. As you read, we ask that you realize the depth of the topics discussed and take them to heart. These are real students projecting real experiences to their student body. It was difficult to produce a magazine that could be visually stimulating without taking away from the authenticity of the contributors; however, with Rob’s unrelenting commitment to help design a superior magazine and our continued dedication and willingness to work together as a team we were able to make it happen. We cannot express enough gratitude to those who contributed to this issue of Tempo. Your stories and experiences breathed life into our souls and reality into the major issues we sometimes face as college students. The many dynamics the magazine encompasses brings the realism of college life from a student’s perspective to its readers. As the spiritual pioneer Gandhi insisted: In an ever-changing world, it is our generation’s responsibility to be that change we wish to see.

-Stephanie and Lauren-
Thank you to the Office of Student Activities, Dr. Holmes, BK, our advisers- Dr. Linda Hollandsworth and Paul Olsen, Sheriar Press (namely Trish and Sam) and our business manager, Marty Keiser. We also send a huge thank you to Carter Studios for their generosity in allowing us to use their studio for photography and to Jonathan Carter for shooting our staff photo. Thank you to our collection of talented writers, photographers, illustrators and other contributors that helped make this issue of Tempo magazine possible.

Thank you to my Heavenly Father—for the abundance of blessings I have in my life. Avery—for being such a remarkable boy... I love you, little man. Mom—for your continued love and support throughout every aspect of my life and for helping shape me into the woman I am today. Daddy—for always telling me I’m a princess and loving me even through the hard times. Laurie—for your soft and soothing voice of reason that always seems to take the heat out of life’s arduous problems. Heather—for always being that big sister I could look up to. Michael—for always saying “I love you” before you hang up the phone and never missing one of my birthdays. Haley—for loving me for me. Erin—for your willing­ness to always help those in need. Rebecca—for being my fun little sis... you are so much like me it’s scary! Ashley—for being my confidant and best friend no matter the struggles I face in this life. Angela—for being the heart of the woman I hope to be. Kristine—for your true sincerity and love. Lauren A.—for our “picture stories” and for loving music as much as I do. Lauren F.—for your creative contribution to Tempo and for letting me eat all of your Cheez-It’s! Rob—for your amazing talent of design and ability to bring all of our vision to life. Tina, Jonathan and Michael—for making my trip to Utah extraordinary. Daniel—for always being there for me. Jonathan and Heather Carter. Krystin and Scott—for being so awesome. Elin—for helping make our long nights more fun and always finding the most hilarious stuff for us to laugh at online. Alpha Delta Pi—for bearing with me this semester. My church, all of my family and friends... and as always, Bon Jovi.

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Steve Bailey surfed Teahupoo, the wave that is Tahiti's most prestigious monster. Waves and his bass guitar are the only two things that could get this world-renowned musician out of bed before the sun.

"The only thing I've been doing longer than playing bass is surfing," said Bailey, currently in residence at Coastal Carolina University. Charging waves, in the footsteps of his older brother, the multi-talented short-boarder quit his soon-to-be professional surfing career for music. But not giving up on his passions, the Myrtle Beach native still finds ways to incorporate his pastime despite his obligations.

"I think one of the best things about my career," expressed Bailey, "is the fact that I've gotten to surf all over the world." Tahiti is only one of many surf spots that Bailey has charged. "When I'm on a gig, and it's near the beach," said the surfer, "I always try to get in the water, if I have time."
As a kid, Bailey admitted, he would get up at 4:30 a.m. for the sport. "The only reason I would get up that early to go surfing," he laughed, "is if I knew it was going to be good right at sun-up." The only other reason why high schooler Bailey would rise in the middle of the night was for his music.

From the ripe young age of 13, Bailey's passion for music assured the young artist that he wanted to make a career of it. At his first gig in a hotel, Bailey filled in for a missing member of a young local band. "I didn't know many songs, but I had a good ear," remembered Bailey. At the end of the show he was paid $35 for his work. "In 1974, that was a lot of money," said Bailey. "I thought, 'WOW! This is so much fun. I was going to do it anyway, and someone is going to pay me to do it?'"

Bailey's earliest inspiration for music came from a former CCU professor, Jack Austin. Austin encouraged Bailey to engage in music. He introduced the young musician to jazz and exposed Bailey to the kinds of music he needed to hear, rather than just what he liked to hear.

"He kind of gave me the inspiration to take it as far as I wanted to," Bailey said of Austin. The former professor helped Bailey gain acceptance into the college of his choice, and he also obtain scholarships. "I find it poetically ironic that 30 years later I'm teaching at Coastal," said Bailey, solemnly. "In essence," he continued, "if it weren't for Coastal, and having this guy on the faculty, way back when, I don't know where I would be today."

Up to this point, Bailey has worked with names like Dizzy Gillespie, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Willie Nelson and the "hilarious" Billy Sheehan; in fact, he is now friends with the musicians he once aspired to be like and has positive things to say about them all.

"Growing up, there were bass players from bands like Jethro Tull who I listened to, never dreaming I would be recording with them," he said. Bailey commented that it is strange to him how everybody he was "into" when he was younger he eventually had the opportunity to work with. "Like Stanley [Clarke], who was the bass god in the 70s and 80s. Now he is a buddy of mine."

Bailey himself is even amazed at his success. "That freaks me out to this day," he continued. "Some days I just wake up and pinch myself, and go like, 'is this for real?'"

Bailey also admires electric bass guitarist, Victor Wooten, with whom, 14 years ago, he created Bass Extremes- an innovative two bass group that has released CDs and DVDs. "He's a role model for me," said Bailey. "He's a unique person. Even though we're about the same age, I think he's lived a few more lifetimes than I have. I'll be reincarnated as a fly, and he'll come back as a king or something." Bailey and Wooten also created "The Bass Vault," a cutting edge educational/entertainment Web site boasting members from all over the world. "We have a video chat room where, one night, we gave a bass clinic to our members simultaneously on five continents." Working with various artists has taken Bailey around the world—several times. In addition to traveling, the bassist has been able to meet all kinds of people. From Tahitian surfers to Japanese
musicians, to princes, the possibilities seem to be endless for the successful bassist.

"I remember one time the prince of Thailand invited us over," said Bailey. "That was amazing. We got treated like royalty in Bangkok for a week." At the time, Bailey was playing with Japanese New Age artist, Kitaro, along with vocalist, Jon Anderson, from the band Yes. "The prince asked his wife what she wanted for her birthday, and she said, 'I want Kitaro.' That was fun."

One of Bailey's most memorable moments in his career occurred in Tokyo during a performance in honor of the Japanese New Year in 1990. Again, Bailey was playing with Kitaro. "We came on right before midnight in Tokyo harbor," described Bailey. "There was an audience of 80,000 people and it was broadcasted live all over Japan. All of a sudden, these laser beams came on, from Tokyo harbor," described Bailey. "There was playing with Kitaro.

"That was fun." As an artist, Kitaro, along with vocalist, Jon Anderson, from the band Yes. "The prince asked his wife what she wanted for her birthday, and she said, 'I want Kitaro.' That was fun."

One of Bailey's most memorable moments in his career occurred in Tokyo during a performance in honor of the Japanese New Year in 1990. Again, Bailey was playing with Kitaro. "We came on right before midnight in Tokyo harbor," described Bailey. "There was an audience of 80,000 people and it was broadcasted live all over Japan. All of a sudden, these laser beams came on, from miles away, on top of these sky scrapers and just shined right down at our feet on the stage. As we started playing, these huge explosions were in sync with the music. Every time there would be this big section in the song the sky would light up with fireworks. It was just something about the magnitude of it."

Bailey later explained that although the concert in Tokyo was spectacular, "great gigs don't always have to be grandiose like that." There have been several occasions where Bailey would play in a club in New York, or just on the beach with friends, and those times were just as great; those places were "as cool a venue as anywhere."

Although the success of the musician is almost unmatchable, Bailey's greatest accomplishment is not some super, musical feat, but rather, a change of heart. "My greatest accomplishment," said Bailey, "is realizing that music is not the most important thing in life." Having a love for music at a very young age and devoting countless hours to practicing his bass, it took some time for Bailey to realize that family and responsibilities come before his passion.

However, Bailey has absolutely no regrets in life. "If I had to do [it] over, I might change a few things, but then again I just might not," said Bailey, thoughtfully. "I like exactly where I am today; I'm perfectly content."

Bailey has been fortunate enough to experience things most people only dream of. However, if given a chance to spend a day in someone else's shoes, Bailey is torn between choices. Bailey first remarks that he would like to spend a day in the shoes of his five-year-old daughter, Ella.

"I would love to see and feel the world from her perspective," said Bailey. Another interesting day, according to the musician, would be to spend a day in the life of Beethoven. "When he was writing the 4th movement from the 9th Symphony...stone cold deaf! I would like to know what it is like to 'hear' all of that music inside my head."

Bailey refers to the sensation of music again when he compared what it's like to 'jam,' with the extreme focus of an athlete. "It's like when athletes talk about finding a zone," described Bailey of the experience. "It's the same way for a musician [...] It's just a moment when you can close your eyes and instead of words coming out, there's just music. It's like Miles Davis said, 'If you have to ask, you'll never know.'"

Bailey's reason for playing bass, other than the fact that he's always done it, is the power of creative expression. It's about oneness with the instrument and finding a moment where there is nothing besides sweet song. "It's trying to find those moments that keeps me playing," he said, "It's the greatest feeling in the world."

Through his music, Bailey's hope is not that he will generate admiration for his skilled bass playing, but rather for his ability to create beautiful music. "What I try to convey is that bass guitar is musically an equal to any other instrument," stated Bailey. According to the expert, the bass guitar has been in the background of songs for too long. "In the last 20 or 30 years," he explained, "musicians like Stanley [Clark], Jaco [Pastorius] and Victor [Wooten] have tried to push it into, 'hey that was great music' not 'that was a heck of a bass player.'"

Despite his love for crowd interaction and a live audience, Bailey comfortably spends much of his time in his recording studio. "I am like a mad scientist, trying to cook up something that doesn't explode," he said.

When not playing music, however, Bailey enjoys playing tennis. Teaching at CCU has also been a great experience for the well-rounded individual and has given him a "creative outlet to do cool things such as the Advent of the International Solo Bass Competition, which kind of put Coastal on the international map, as far as music goes."

This even brought Wooten, Sheehan and many other living legends of the bass world to the CCU campus.

With passions like music, surfing, tennis and traveling that extend far and wide, Bailey is also passionate about...peanut butter!

"I have eaten sushi in Japan many times," said Bailey, "and it is probably my favorite cuisine. But the truth is... peanut butter rules!" The bass player can remember many occasions where he had finished a great meal at a fine restaurant, and gone home to "JIF it up."

Besides his CD, "So Low, Solo," releasing this month, and the development of his signature bass by Fender, the largest guitar company in the world, Bailey is living with a day-to-day mentality of "just take it as it comes." He is unable to predict his future because 30 years ago, he would never have been able to come up with a scenario that resembles his life today.

"I just like taking it one day at a time and seeing what happens," said the musician. "I'm just happy to be alive and breathing, and doing the things I love."
Aug. 22: I made my way to art professor Maura Kenny's office after class to discuss my independent study painting class: Organic Elements with Mixed Media. I was showing her designs and ideas I had planned out for the class and she informed me that Karen Olsen, the Projects Director for the Franklin G. Burroughs-Simeon B. Chapin Art Museum, was trying to find someone to volunteer and design a 3' x 3' Myrtle Beach-oriented community sand painting. It is to be worked on at the Burroughs and Chapin Art Museum during the same time the Mystical Arts of Tibet Monks from the Drepung Loseling Institute will be working on their Sand Mandala. Exciting! So I volunteered for the position without even needing to think twice.

Sept. 5: I've been working on the design a lot and perfecting it, trying to figure out concentric patterns, ideas, concepts, color planning and what not. After my Art Education class, I showed Professor Kenny my sand painting design work-in-progress. She gave me advice in keeping my ideas together and on a straight track. I need to get my colors together!

Sept. 12: Tonight I'll meet with Karen to talk about my design and what she thinks I should do to make it work out best for the community sand painting. She brought up important factors to think about such as: having the community feel confident enough about contributing their creativity to help complete the design. Nobody should feel discouraged while learning about another culture. So, I just need to make some adjustments and simplify some of things that were originally on my intricate rough draft.

Sept. 14: Karen called me today on my way home from classes and told me about a few extra pieces of information. She presented ideas in how I should go about recreating my design onto the 3' x 3' plywood provided by the art museum. I will be using acetate paper to trace my design first, and then will use a projector to trace my design onto the plywood with an industrial Sharpie. I also need to decide and record which colored layers of sand should precede one another.

Sept. 18: I spoke with Professor Kenny today and she helped me find acetate paper and tracing paper for the transference of my design. I need to re-draw my design fresh again from my notes to get ready to trace. Then, trace out that design onto the acetate paper with a fine-tipped Sharpie. I have decided I will paint the plywood to show where the colored sand should be applied.

Sept. 30: I've been tracing and re-tracing my design, perfecting it to my satisfaction. Also, I've come into contact with a couple of the members in charge of the Surfrider Foundation here in Myrtle Beach, Jerry and Meg, and asked them if they would mind if I incorporate the Surfrider Foundation symbol into my Sand Painting. Of course, they couldn't be happier for me to do and I am excited about using it too since it is one of the most important foundations around for coastlines.

Oct. 3: Today I brought in my community sand painting design draft to show everyone that I've been correlating with at the art museum (Karen Olsen: project director, Patricia Goodwin: museum director, and Lori Seckinger: education coordinator). Everyone loved my ideas and I received some great advice to switch around a couple of the symbols and play with a few more ideas.

Oct. 4: I had to go back to the art museum today to pick up the 3' x 3' plywood that my community sand painting design will be traced onto.

Oct. 5: Today after my politics class, I rushed to the art room to see if Professor Kenny was still available for some help; I needed to prepare the plywood and also project my design onto the plywood to be traced with a Sharpie. Professor Kenny was nice enough to stay after today just to
help me get my community sand painting design under control. She provided me with acetate paper, tracing paper, the projector, and also various media for tracing. Thank goodness she hadn’t left yet for the weekend. The opening ceremony is Tuesday!

Oct. 8: I painted the plywood today to match my original design so as to help the community be able to distinguish which colors are to go where. It looks great and I’m getting really energized for everything to start happening.

Oct. 9: Tonight was the Opening Ceremony for the monks to begin the Mandala Sand Painting process by consecrating the site of the Mandala Sand Painting with chants, music, and mantra recitation. I came early at 4 p.m. so that a couple of the monks could teach us working with the museum how to create a sand painting using a chak-pur and metal rod used for helping create vibrations against the grooves on The ceremony was unbelievable and inspiring also because afterwards I was lucky enough to be able to speak with one of the translator monks. His name was Thupten and he showed me how to use the Mandala tools. I wanted to find out his opinion and outlook on particular issues. I have strong roots with yoga and have always been intrigued with the Buddhist and Hindu traditions. Talking to Thupten helped me realize a few things and to look deeper into my life and what I am doing with it.

Oct. 10: Today the monks started laying out their lines for their Mandala. As for me, my design has already been drawn out, colored and is ready to be completed by the community. Once the monks finished laying down their chalk lines and started putting sand onto the surface, it was time for the community to take a shot at it as well! I wrote out an artist statement for my community sand painting design that was placed next to the colored sand jars for the community to collect and understand more of where I was coming from in making my design. Everything has significance, an order and an aesthetic to fulfill just as the monks of the Drepung Loseling Monastery one does, but my design is a completely non traditional sand painting, not at all a sacred Mandala. It’s important to remember that.

Oct. 14: The past few days have been such a spiritual experience for me and I feel so grateful for being able to get involved and volunteer to help create this community sand painting. So many different ages helped and over 100 people had to have come in and out of this exhibit to help fill in my design with the colored craft sand. Even some of the monks came in on their breaks and helped fill in a few symbols. One in particular was the Surfrider Foundation symbol and the outlines of the baby sea turtles.

Today was the closing ceremony for the monks to disperse the sand from the Sacred Mandala into the ocean at the Springmaid Pier. We dispersed the sand to show life’s impermanence and also to spread the healing energies put into the Mandala throughout the world. After the closing ceremony and before the monks left, they gave us at the museum some beautiful Tibetan gifts. It was one of the most incredible feelings I’ve ever experienced. The Chant Master for the entire monastery placed a crisp, white, silk scarf around my neck with the eight auspicious symbols of Buddhism embroidered onto it. He also handed me a Tibetan charm and said “You a Mandala Master!” and all the monks laughed and thanked me for volunteering to create my own Myrtle Beach community sand painting.

My life has changed so much all in just one week and none of this would have been possible without the help of the Tibetan Monks from the Drepung Loseling Monastery and my new family at the Franklin G. Burroughs-Simeon B. Chapin Art Museum.
Mike Smith

Nominated by: Mary Katherine Zedick

"Michael Smith (aka: Mikey Fresh) is someone you can always turn to for anything. He is the one person to make sure all work is done. Although he does not take much credit, there is always something he is doing to help someone else out. Whether it be simple last minute fraternity things, or major things such as getting a Website up and running, Michael Smith is the guy for the job."

Delta Chi, Secretary
IFC Delegate
Member of Association of Computing Machinists
Computer Science tutor

Shirt- Ralph Lauren $30
Slacks- Ralph Lauren $40
Tie- Mainstreet $8
Shoes- Sperry's $50
Rebecca Filler

Nominated by: Caroline P. Smith

"Becca Filler stands out as a CCU student. Her constant enthusiasm and positive attitude sets an example for everyone. She is fully involved on campus in organizations that help make a difference in people's lives. Although she has a busy schedule, Becca always makes time for the people who are close to her and goes above and beyond what is needed to help others."

STAR
Coastal Productions Board
The Chanticleer

Dress- Split $48
Belt- Fossil $38
Jewelry- BKE $38
Michelle McDaniel

Nominated by: Lauren Formalarie

"Michelle is incredibly well-rounded and a genuine southern belle who is immensely involved on campus. She works diligently towards her high academic achievements and to cater to the needs of anyone that comes in her path. With her huge heart, she will befriend anyone and she always knows how to bring a smile to your face."

Alpha Delta Pi, President
Wall Fellow
Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society
Order of Omega

Dress- Banana Republic $100
Shoes- BCBG $70
Jewelry- Urban Outfitters $20
Angela Nordeen  
Nominated by: Stephanie Hutto  

"Angela is one of those people you just have to admire. She truly has a heart of gold and is always willing to extend a helping hand to others. Her life is demanding as a full-time student and mother, but she still manages to receive scholastic honors and cheer from the sidelines of her son's soccer games. Angela is a woman of genuine beauty from the inside out."

Psi Chi  
Phi Beta Kappa  
Psychology Club  
Dean's List  

Shirt- Guess $40  
Slacks- Express $60
I have never witnessed someone raised from the dead and angels have not appeared at my bedside to offer support. Nor have I heard an audible voice directing my life, seen water turned into wine or healed anyone simply by placing my hands upon them. But I have experienced the undeniable presence of God.

I find it in the quiet moments right before the sun sets as I watch waves of every imaginable color spill across the sky resembling the palette of an accomplished artist. And when I stand alone on a mountaintop or at the ocean’s shore reflecting on God’s supreme power, I become intoxicated by the beauty that surrounds me. The scream of a newborn child echoes the miracle of life, and the smell of rain before it falls reminds me of the wonders that exist in nature. But there is a moment greater than any of these, and if I truly want to experience Him, all I have to do is remember what He has done in my life.

Three years ago I was a different person. Sure, I had goals and ambitions, but I was living for myself. I was caught in the rat race of life with little purpose or direction. I became a slave to society and the unhealthy relationships I was continually a part of.

My life changed the day I stumbled into J.C.’s Coffeehouse. It was the second day of classes my freshman year. I was boy crazy and scouting potential victims for my next relationship. Sitting in Wheelwright Auditorium I met Aaron, an upperclassman with good social skills and a sense of humor. Thinking, "He might...
Religion has always been an interesting subject for me. I was raised up north in a very conservative Methodist church. I was taught from an early age that Christianity was the only true religion and that every other religion was wrong. Since then my views have changed drastically. I went from being a devout Methodist to agnostic to atheist to pagan in only a few years.

It wasn't until high school that I started to seriously question my faith. My sophomore year of high school my godmother died. She was an extremely active member of the Lutheran church. When she died I prayed for closure, but it never came. After this happened I began looking into other religions.

I became interested in Buddhism when I realized that my own beliefs seemed to parallel their principle focus. My mother did not approve, however and I never made the conversion.

Once I began attending CCU my beliefs changed dramatically which has brought me to where I am today. I was interested in agnostic, but had a huge self-discovery that proved Christianity in any form was not something I wanted to be a part of anymore.

Last year, I met someone that totally changed my perspective on religion. He just happened to be a pagan. I eventually sat down and told him about my interest in paganism and he agreed to help me become involved in it. The more I learned about it’s teachings the more I realized it was definitely for me.

Since my conversion to paganism I have experienced many magickal moments. Among them my psychic bursts, which are surprisingly accurate. I’ve also spoken to my godmother through my Ouiji board. It was the first time I’ve ever had closure about her, and I almost cried.

Even though my mom is still trying to convert me back to Christianity I’ve stood my ground, and I’ve made my choice. I definitely believe paganism is the religion for me.

In the modern life of one hour photo shops and one minute drive through restaurants, we are so conditioned to be in the process of "going" that we rarely find ourselves stopping to actually contemplate the grandness of life. Do we recognize how singular each moment we live actually is?

I found myself pondering the meaning of life my freshman year of college. I could hardly imagine the complexities of this life were without purpose. Although I found nothing in school to fill the void, when I returned home to Myrtle Beach I happened upon the Book of Mormon in my parent’s home. This book records the dealings of God with prophets that dwelt upon the ancient American continent. It teaches that after his resurrection in Jerusalem, Jesus Christ also visited the American continent.

The Book of Mormon contains a promise. It says "If ye shall ask [God] with a sincere heart and with real intent having faith in Christ" the truth of the record will be made known unto you by the power of the Holy Ghost. As I read this promise an overwhelming sense of peace flowed into my heart, and I knew in my mind that what I had read was true. I prayed and asked God if the Book of Mormon was true and was overcome with feelings of joy, happiness and love, which confirmed the truth of the Book of Mormon to me.

I know the Book of Mormon is true. I also know we are all part of our Father in Heavens plan and Jesus Christ is our Savior. This knowledge of these truths gives me hope and purpose for life.
For Dad
-LIVING WITH DISEASE-
Three years ago my dad was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor. Since then, my family has been dealing with an array of medication, precautions, chemotherapy and endless doctors’ appointments. But we’ve managed to cope and remain united as a family, even from a few states away. It’s been a rough road to here, but I honestly don’t know where I’d be without my dad.

In June 2004, I was living in Myrtle Beach with my grandparents after 17 years of life in my childhood home of New York. My parents were back home and I made it a point to talk to them at least three times a week. But on the night it all happened, I was in a rush. I was at work when I received one of my mother’s daily phone calls and in an attempt to get off the phone quickly, I told her I was going out with some people at work and needed to go. She complied, but insisted I talk to my father for a minute first. I rolled my eyes as she put him on the line. We exchanged our usual small talk for a little while but I hurriedly told my dad I had to go and we hung up, no questions asked. Around 3 a.m. I was awakened by a call on my cell phone. The caller ID said it was my mother and sleepily I answered. I heard her hysterically crying. I asked what was wrong and she told me that my dad was in the hospital. I ran into the other room to wake up my grandmother and tell her what happened. I put my mom on speakerphone as she told us that my dad had had a seizure in the middle of the night and an ambulance had come to take him to the hospital. By the time he arrived there, he had suffered yet another seizure. At that point my mom had to get off the phone, but she said she’d call us back when she knew more. My grandmother and I hung up the phone and went back into our separate bedrooms. I cried for the rest of the night.

The next day our family found out through CAT scans that my dad had a brain tumor that, judging from the size of it, had been there for approximately five years undetected. If it wasn’t for the seizures, we would never have found out about it. At this point, the diagnosis didn’t seem positive, but no doctor is truly certain how long a person can live since every case is different. My whole family was devastated.

When I talked to my dad on the phone later that day I told him I loved him for the first time in years and he said it back. Coming from a family that isn’t very vocal about its emotions, that simple statement really meant a lot to me. Six weeks later we learned that the tumor was inoperable and would have to be treated by doses of chemotherapy. My parents braced themselves for years ahead.

This past June marked the three-year anniversary of my dad’s diagnosis. Although I don’t like to use that word because it implies something that should be celebrated, it seems almost fitting because every day he remains with us is my family’s own celebration. And he’s doing
better than ever. His tumor hasn't exactly shrunk and he is exhibiting some radiation damage, but the good news is it hasn't gotten any bigger, either. He stopped taking the chemotherapy medication back in December 2006, but I'm happy to report he is working again and still remains very active. I often call the house looking for him only to find he is out somewhere golfing or swimming. He is enjoying life now and I think he has a new appreciation and outlook on things since he found out he had cancer. And so do I.

I appreciate all the time we get to spend together, whether it's going up to New York to visit him, him coming down to Myrtle Beach to visit me, or our frequent phone conversations— I savor every minute I am with him. He continues to be there to lend an ear if I ever have a problem and, whether he knows it or not, he has been a constant influence in my life and a reason why I want to do better both scholastically and professionally. He is also partly responsible for all the positive things that have happened in my life. I know he won't live forever—none of us do—but I sincerely hope that he will continue to get better and gain strength so that he can be around for many more years of my life.
BEYOND SKIN STRETCHED OVER MUSCLE AND BONE

"THE ARTWORK AND THOUGHTS OF ROB BYRD"
Art is a language. I think that the artist and teacher Robert Henri described art best when he said that art is an expression too subtle for words. There is no understanding in art, nothing is concrete. Paintings should offer the viewer a million questions but reveal no answers. People perceive art in very different ways; it would be irrational for an artist to anticipate someone else's views of their art. If an artist has put his heart into the painting and depicted the subject with his honest emotion then his job is done. It is up to the viewer to draw inferences from the art. Criticism can kill an artist if they don't know how to judge it. People often feel that a painting should speak to them. Art is not a story, it is a conversation.

I think that what has been important to me as an artist is learning how to see the subject. An artist can't begin to record his emotions on canvas until he has learned to see correctly. When painting a figurative painting, I don't focus on painting the person as they appear but as they are. It only makes sense to me that if a painting is to be viewed as more than oil on canvas then it should be painted as more than skin stretched over muscle and bone. Everything painting on the canvas should be considered as an extension of the person. Proportions, colors and technique should all come second to seeing the person.

I don't believe in copying a subject for the sake of appearance. If an artist wants the painting to breathe and speak about how you feel towards the subject, then it will be evident in the way that they paint it. The gesture of a brushstroke is a very powerful thing. A gesture captures not only a moment but the life of the subject in that moment. A line can limit the artist to the way something appears at that instance, but a gesture expresses the movement and life of the subject.

I think that many artists become caught up in having a preconceived message that they wish to portray through their work. When painting the figure I have found that it works best to let the art speak in and of itself. If an artist paints the figure with their heart and raw feelings, then those emotions will be translated through their brushwork. If the artist works in this manner, the technique and style of the painting will be honest to the subject. I think that a lot of art is hidden behind forced technique that says little about the emotions of the artist toward the subject but more as decoration.

Above all that has already been said, the most important quality of an artist is finding themselves. It isn't until the person has discovered what it is they feel strongest about and pursue it with their fullest extent that they become an artist. I had not honestly considered myself an artist until I discovered my passion for portraying the human. In my very short artistic career I am certainly open to the fact that this fascination may change, but I can't imagine another taking the forefront at this point. The beauty of the gesture of a figure, the still gaze of a model, what is underneath the flesh, these are the things that I feel are too subtle for words.
I will never forget the look on my father's face when I had told him what I had done. With glazed eyes he looked straight toward the ground. I had broken both his trust and his heart. Struggling to anticipate his reaction, I expected him to turn around and walk right out the door without a single glance. Instead, he came closer to me, looked me straight in the eyes and wrapped his arms around me for at least five minutes. I could tell he was disappointed, but he never said so. He only said, "We will get through this together."

It was at a hometown football game where Russell and I first met. I was 15 and he was 19. He was tall with dark hair and had beautiful blue eyes. We spent the entire night talking to each other and flirting back and forth. I fell in love with him and we started dating. My father didn't like him very much, but I didn't care. Everything was wonderful. We got along great for over a year and a half, until his mom decided she wanted to take the family to New York for New Years. That vacation changed our relationship and our lives forever. Things were never same again.

Each night when everyone in the room was asleep, including me, Russell wanted to be intimate. He kissed my neck, rubbed my arms and let his hands roam. Usually he would stop when I told him to, but on this night, he wouldn't. I kept saying "Go to sleep, your family is 10 feet away..." "Russell, stop messing with me. Leave me alone!" And he kept saying, "It's New Years! I want to start this year off right..."

A few weeks later, I made plans to have pizza with my friend Karen. I wanted to talk to her about my relationship with Russell and about how all we have done for almost a month was argue back and forth. During dinner she mentioned how she was concerned because I had been extremely moody lately. Jokingly, she asked if I was pregnant. I laughed and said "No." The more I thought about it the more I wondered. "Could I be pregnant?" We talked about it for almost an hour until she had me so worried that we decided to go back to her house and take a pregnancy test. We left and went to the store. She bought the test and I followed her back to her house.

Those five minutes of waiting for the results were the longest five minutes of my life. "I can't be pregnant! How am I going to afford to raise a baby? I'm not pregnant, there is no way. Russell and I have been so mad at each other we haven't had sex since before the trip to New York. It's impossible, I can't be ..." So many things were going through my head; I felt like I was going to faint. At last, Karen walked over to the test looked at it, then the instructions. She looked at me and said, "It says positive...you're pregnant."

Sixteen years old, in the eleventh grade and I'm pregnant. How am I supposed to feel about this? I am having a baby. My mind was clouded by the many memories of my childhood. All I could think about was how my child was going to have to grow up in the same situation I grew up in. Suddenly I was reminded of my mother beating my brothers and I both verbally and physically during her alcoholic rages. The painful images also filled my head with memories of my brother molesting and raping me for so many years. There is no question about it; I felt he would have no problem doing the same things to my child. What kind of a mother would I be to let this happen?

I went to Russell's apartment that night. I pulled out the test, and sat it in his lap. He knew instantly what it meant. That next day we went to the health clinic to take the test again to confirm that I was really pregnant. The doctor called us back to tell us that based on their calculations our child was conceived on or about New Years. "New Years? Inconceivable! We were in New York, we didn't..." It was then, in that moment that I flashed back to that horrendous night.

As the weeks went on, life got more and more blurry. I really can't remember much of it. All I can remember is getting numerous headaches. Every day it seemed like my mother was calling me, drunk as usual. Every night it seemed Russell and I would be yelling and arguing with one another. I couldn't focus on school, my
job or anything. I was numb. I had no feelings whatsoever.
I wasn’t happy and I wasn’t sad. I was simply numb.

Then I made the worst decision of my life. To this day I do not know exactly why I made this decision, except to say that I was selfish. At the time however, I knew I had to get out of my house and away from my family. I wouldn’t be able to do so with a baby, and there was no way I was going to let my baby grow up the way I did. I felt as though I was being a protective mother, and that I was doing the best thing for my child. With all alternatives considered, an abortion seemed like the best option at the time.

That next Saturday, I went to the clinic. I blocked every bit of that day out of my mind. Even when I was there I felt like I was in a dream. I didn’t even really feel like I was pregnant. I can’t remember any of the doctors or any of the other patients. All I can remember is going into that little room and sitting on a padded table with three nurses and a doctor all talking to me.

The worst memory of all was when the nurse put a mask on my face to force me to fall asleep. As soon as it covered my nose it began affecting me. I lay on the table laughing as though I had been given laughing gas. In this drug-induced haze I laughed until I cried—then fell asleep.

The only thing I remember after that moment was waking up in my own bed. I knew I needed to call Russell and tell him that we were no longer going to have a child, but there was no way I could tell him the truth. So, I called him and said I had lost the baby. He came straight over and tried to comfort me as best as possible. He was heartbroken and crying. He said he was sorry at least a 100 times that night, but I still couldn’t tell him the truth.

For the next month I felt so horrible and so ashamed of what I had done that I broke down and told Russell what really happened. I told him I had aborted our child. He looked me in the eyes and said, “You deserve everything your mom and brother ever did to you.” I didn’t know what to say or how to react. I told him to leave my house. He left and our relationship came to an end.

That night, as I was lying in my bed, I imagined Russell was right. I felt I did deserve everything my family had inflicted upon me, and for the first time since I found out I was pregnant...I cried. I was angry and ashamed of myself. I wished I had never made such an impulsive decision. I wished and prayed to God that I could take it back, but I knew I couldn’t. I had made my decision, and it was one I would have to live with for the rest of my life.

For years after the abortion I felt lost and empty, as though a part of me was missing. I continuously reminded myself it was because I had killed a part of me. It was my fault that I was feeling this way and there wasn’t anything I could do about it. I sulked in my own pity, and gradually I became angry with myself and with the world around me.

My senior year of high school I ultimately realized that I couldn’t continue letting my past mistakes ruin my life. I owed it to myself, and my child, to make something of myself. I decided it was time for me to stop living in the past and look toward the future. With the help of family, friends and a close relationship with God, I finally forgave myself for aborting my child. I was even able to forgive my family for their mistakes, and when I graduated high school, I left my home and moved to Myrtle Beach to begin my new life.

Now, as a junior in college, I am finally happy with my life and who I have become. I no longer want to hide the real me; past, present or future. I feel the weight of my mistake, but I cannot change what happened now. I can, however, make a better person of myself despite my past—and I will.
FOOD FIGHT

- EATING FOR A CAUSE -

words: Amanda Kraft
photography: Rob Byrd

An Early Interest

I have always been a no-nonsense kind of person. Like most young children, I was naturally inquisitive. Unlike most young children, I was sometimes overly skeptical. (Santa Claus and the tooth fairy were not long-lived family traditions.) Instead of growing out of the innocent curiosity of my childhood, this problem slowly developed into an obsession with truth.

Because of this consciousness, my early decision to become a vegetarian was made very much out of necessity. I simply could not go on ignoring the endless scandals and ignominy of the meat industry.

Eliminating meat and reducing dairy and various other animal products in my daily life was my personal resistance to the cruel, established system that continues to destroy our earth, our communities and our bodies.

After years of frustration with my dinner plate, I finally expressed my interests to my family. Unfortunately, I was just 14 years old at the time of my official rejection of meat. My nourishment still depended on my mother’s pantry, and she quickly laid down the law. As liberal as my mom had grown to be with her children, she was still raised in middle-class America on steak and potatoes, and insisted that I was too young to make lifestyle choices, such as a meatless diet.

Although she didn’t understand my plea or my cause, my mom always listened to my concerns and was supportive through it all. I am definitely fortunate to have a parent with an open mind. However, when she sent me away with the suggestion of researching the specifics, I don’t think she actually expected I would return with a detailed proposal.

Less than two years later, I approached my mother again. This time I had Gary Null’s “The Vegetarian Handbook” in hand. I had facts and statistics engraved in my mind and on the tip of my tongue. Although I finally had her approval, it would take years to gain her encouragement. And the first couple months were trying on us both.

What To Eat

That summer I carefully weaned myself off of eating flesh. Once a week for a month, I allowed myself a single meal that included meat, simply because I was unsure how my body would react to an absence of something I had been fed all my life. Although I wasn’t eating red meat at this point, I certainly made an effort to patronize my four favorite establishments that month. I wasn’t completely grossed out by poultry yet and made sure I had my four favorite chicken entrées for the last time.

After some trial and error I realized that not all vegetarians make fruit parfaits with homemade, silken tofu whipped cream for breakfast every morning. Frankly, all of those green, leafy salads weren’t cutting it anymore. I always felt hungry and needed to eat every two or three hours. Finally, abandoning my various recipes, I started looking elsewhere for my meals and decided to let someone else do the cooking.
Once I finally got my eating habits down, I decided it was time to give back. After all, being vegetarian or vegan is not solely about being healthy and happy (although, those are great selling points, I suppose). Fundamentally, being vegetarian is about taking responsibility for animal cruelty and making educated lifestyle decisions that benefit the world as you see fit.

I began Internet networking with several nonprofit organizations. In next to no time, I learned how I could help achieve the goals of these activist associations not only by passing out animal liberation literature, but also by volunteering my time and support to local shelters. I didn’t have a car or a license yet, so I assumed that working at a shelter every weekend would be a good start.

Looking back on the initial opposition of my mother, I am truly grateful that she challenged my motives. Because of her reservations, I was better able to define my values, and I put much more thought into my beliefs. I spent a great deal of time researching my new choice of diet; the knowledge I acquired not only fueled my desire to eat veggie, but also helped me stick to the lifestyle during those times of weakness at the very beginning.

Choosing to follow an alternative way of life takes commitment; and, as I discovered early on, an unconventional lifestyle can sometimes be difficult to fit into your daily routine. I overcame more than a few setbacks. There were many times I could have easily abandoned my cause, but instead I chose to press forward.

Although vegetarianism is a good beginning and the way I launched my interest in activism, I do not look down upon those who consume meat and dairy. My convictions are strong about the economical, political and sympathetic issues concerning animal foods and products, but I have realized that you don’t have to entirely rearrange your life to support a cause. After all, changing your diet certainly is not the only way to make a difference. No matter your beliefs, the irrefutable first step to making a positive impact in your life and community is becoming educated about your cause and acknowledging the truth surrounding the issue.
Most girls are obsessed with their weight; it's in a woman's nature. However, I indulged in my obsession and took it to extreme levels. Like many other self-inflicted diseases, beating it is a struggle. The disease haunts me every day and every day I fight back urges to give in.

Hi. My name is Melissa and I suffer from anorexia.

It all started the summer after seventh grade. I had moved to a new state a year before and it was not a success. We moved to a small town where everyone knew everyone and breaking into classmates cliques was difficult to do. This wasn't the first time I had moved long distance, but it was the hardest. I hardly made any friends that year and the loneliness was unbearable. This was the time I began noticing the opposite sex, and I wanted to feel attractive. I thought I could change my future if I changed my appearance. I soon learned this was not true.

It began so small and harmless. I would eat less at meals, cut out the snacks and drink lots of water. To me, it was nothing more than a simple diet that everyone attempts at least once in his or her lifetime. But soon I began eating less and less and obsessed over my body more and more. In the mirror I saw a 300-pound overweight girl, and in reality I was a healthy 120 pounds.

I mastered the art of "ghost eating"—making food disappear from the plate without actually having to eat anything. There are many ways of achieving this: move food around the plate, pretend to wipe your mouth and spit food in the napkin, bring a bag lunch (it's less noticeable than an open tray), sneak to the bathroom afterwards and vomit what little was ingested. My weight hardly dropped at first so no one really noticed my eating habits. This included my parents. I was always the good kid in the family. I did well in school, was active in the community and never disobeyed my parents. My brother was the troublemaker and occupied most of my parents' attention. He was in a depressed stage and acted out. On top of that, my parents' marriage was slipping through the cracks. I was thin and unnoticed. I felt out of
control. Everything and everyone in my life was falling apart, and I felt the only thing I could control was my eating habits. My social status at school didn't improve much over the years. I hung out with a different group of friends each year. None of my boyfriends lasted more than three months. I never wanted them to know my secret. Before anyone could get close enough to know the real me, I cut them out of my life.

I became tired, weak and crabby. Numbers on my pants and the letters on my shirts meant a great deal, but as the numbers got smaller, I felt fatter. I never felt hungry. I guess my body adjusted to not being fed, and it no longer craved it. I dropped to a scary 89 pounds. I was slowly killing myself and didn't realize it.

Everything changed my junior year of high school. At my school, juniors were required to go to a retreat the first week of the school year. It was the beginning of the end of high school, and the goal was to get the class together and discuss what we, as students, had ahead of us: SATs, ACTs, graduation, college, etc. The entire day was really a blur to me—except the end. A motivational speaker had come to talk to us all about self-image. I was sitting in the front row.

There was a portion in his speech that he talked about his daughter. She became anorexic in high school and died because of it. Our speaker began to cry as he explained how guilty he felt for not noticing earlier and not helping her when she needed him the most. I began to cry, like many others in the room. But I was not crying for him, I was crying for myself. After he finished his speech, he came up to me and whispered in my ear, "You are beautiful, please stop what you are doing to yourself." That was it, nothing more. I had been hiding my disease for three years and a stranger was the only one to ever notice. I don't remember that man's name, but I want to thank him for saving my life.

The day after we got back from the retreat I went to the hospital for help. They had a wing designed to help patients with eating disorders. I finally had to admit I had a problem, which was the hardest and the first step to getting help. The recovery process was anything but easy. My body rejected every form of food so I was fed through IV until I could eat normally. That lasted an agonizing two weeks. I also had to attend group and individual therapy sessions five days a week. I was forced to face my fears and let someone get to know me.

I was later put into outpatient care so I could go back to school. I went to therapy three times a week and had to eat lunch in the counselor's office. I felt very naked during my meals. All of my emotions could be seen on each plate. It was taunting me. For so long I was unnoticed, and now I felt as though I had no privacy at all.

At first school was hard. I was walking gossip. But as I began to feel better about myself I also began allowing others to get to know me. I gained friends and a boyfriend and everything that I had wanted became a reality.

It was a struggle at home, as well. My parents were in denial of my disease and avoided me for weeks. But soon, they went to therapy with me and we talked about how I felt, how they felt and how we needed to help each other. Throughout high school I was begging for their attention. They were finally forced to listen to me and most of what I had to say was negative towards them. No parent wants to be blamed for their child's pain, my parents included. All I ever wanted was their approval. But as we sat in those sessions I realized I had to approve of myself first if I ever wanted to be healthy or happy.

I have been recovering from anorexia for four years now. I no longer go to therapy, and I eat everyday...unchaperoned. My weight has increased over the years to a healthy standard and hiding my body is no longer an option. I still think about what I eat, but now think in a healthy, rational manner. My self-confidence grows everyday along with my happiness. I have learned to let people in my life and have friends again.

As happy as I am, I still struggle with my past. I still see the 300-pound girl in the mirror and I still wish I was thinner, but I have learned to control these feelings.

Writing this article is one more step to recovery. I want to help others who are going through what I am going through. I aspire to become a motivational speaker. One man helped me overcome a fatal disease and he doesn't even know it. One day, I want to be the nameless woman who helped save a life.
"What kind of goats do you have at your school?" The question came unexpectedly as we all just looked at each other with puzzled expressions. The short Kenyan professor awaited a reply: his off-white lab coat almost touching the dry, dusty ground he stood on. The goats restlessly moved about their cage. After a pause, one of my classmates explained to the professor, and the Kenyan students, that at our school, Coastal Carolina University, didn’t inhabit goats on our campus. The rest of us nodded in agreement, but a look of disbelief swept over the weather-worn faces of our hosts so quickly it took us by surprise.
Much of the remaining day proceeded in this manner. No, we crazy American college students don't monitor giant tortoises, or breed albino rabbits, and yes, we buy our milk off of shelves in supermarkets, just like the 'unforgivable British.' It was definitely a culture shock, spending the day at Kenyatta University. And despite the raised eyebrows and shaking of heads, we accepted our differences and learned from one another. The metamorphosis that each CCU student underwent over the course of three weeks shaped us as individuals, and we soon forgot who we were the day we stepped off the plane and onto this unfamiliar soil.

The streets of Nairobi, Kenya were bustling with bumper-to-bumper traffic. The local drivers paid no attention to the warnings on the street signs, but instead drove at their own convenience, leaving us scared for our lives. The thick, black clouds of exhaust puffing from the tailpipes of the cars permeated the air and made breathing near impossible. The streets, too, were muddy, full of potholes and desperately needed to be paved. It seemed the only pleasant thing was the abundance of green, exotic plants, which lined the streets and created canopies over our heads.

The people of Nairobi, if not dodging cars, walked briskly along streets. Despite the absence of shoes, the men wore business attire, like slacks and collared shirts. And the women wore colorful sarongs wrapped around their bodies and on their heads. The people walked as though they were on a mission, and they stared at us in our open-sided safari truck like they had never seen Americans before. After a few days of staying in a comfortable hotel in Kenya's capital, we headed off into the wilderness.

On our way to Lake Nakuru National park we passed through the Rift Valley. We made a pit stop on the side of the road where several wooden shacks were set up displaying souvenirs like carvings and jewelry. The moment we came to a stop, merchants were shouting and reaching up to the open windows with goods to sell. Terrified to step off the truck, my classmates and I slowly made our way down the ladder and into the crowd of swarming bargainers. Most of us walked in groups of two or three, while others braved the desperate Kenyans alone. With the help of our professor's Swahili-speaking abilities, I was able to strike a deal with a young girl trying to sell a necklace to me. She got very happy when I told her I would pay 300 shillings, but as if that wasn't enough, she begged me to buy two! I held my ground, though, unlike some of the other students on our trip. One of my classmates left with bags full of carved soapstone, in shapes of animals and maps and spending near 2,000 shillings, which is about 30 USD. After about a half hour of chaos, the bargainers had either given up or returned to their shacks with their pockets full. The moment we were away from them, we enjoyed peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in our foldout chairs along the side of the road.

Upon arriving at Lake Nakuru we assembled our two-person tents and explored the area. Once night fell and the campfire started to die, we went to bed. The cold ground was hard under my back, and the sounds of the wild around us glued my eyelids wide open. Morning came with the songs of birds and the wetness of dew. Connie, a good friend of our professor, and our Kenyan cook, presented us with fresh black coffee and an African breakfast. I stuck to my Kashi granola bars from home.

Each morning of our three-night stay in Nakuru began this way. Each day consisted of two game runs, where we piled into the safari truck and spent four to six hours at a time, driving around the reserve in search of animals. Some of the time we were unlucky and spotted only birds and Impala. Other times, though, we saw lions, elephants, zebras, giraffes, rhinos, leopards, all of them. To be within feet of these animals to the point where I could see the white of their eyes was the most surreal thing I have ever experienced. To see these creatures—just like the ones I watch on Discovery Channel—with my very own eyes, was absolutely fascinating.

Camping at Lake Nakuru was our initial introduction to the wild. And despite the icy cold showers (if we even had water at all), the campfire food and the raging baboons, it really was not as bad as it could have been.

After three nights in Nakuru, we packed up the truck and made a 9-hour excursion through the desert. The drive to Maralal was ruthless. The sun beat down on us through the open sides of the truck, and the dust from the unpaved, bumpy, dirt.
road suffocated our lungs. Upon arriving in Maralal, which was also known to us as ‘the middle of nowhere,’ my classmates and I were immediately grateful for the lukewarm showers, the semi-comfortable beds, and the small, two-person houses we stayed in. The little luxuries and the strong, Kenyan-brewed beer lifted our spirits. I remember thinking that Africa was not as bad as I had envisioned it to be. I had not yet seen starving children and homeless people, so I almost doubted the possibility of it. For me, the experience so far was just an awesome camping trip. Having little interaction with the natives, I had not seen the poverty of a third-world country. However, over the next few days my eyes were opened tremendously, and the reality of the destitution was made clear to me.

I was assigned a ferocious-looking camel, who I proceeded to refer to as ‘Henry,’ a name given by my classmate, Brittany, who also named her ride, Kelly. The men and boys leading our pack of camels were of the Masai tribe. Their red hair matched the red, vibrant fabrics that wrapped around their torsos. They led us, aboard the camels, on a 30-minute walk, which extended through a small, scattered village. One of the student’s camels was losing its saddle, so the group stopped and waited for the men to re-tie the knots.

While we were stopped, I noticed the large, wide eyes staring at us from the tall grass along the pathway. The small crowd of children who watched us wore no shoes. They wore a mixed array of clothes, and some wore nothing. The oldest appeared to be about six years old, and the youngest, a baby, held tightly to her brother’s back. They just stood there, pointing in wonderment. And I, in return, just stared back. What stood out to me was not the fact that they were completely fearless, but the fact that they were immensely happy. In this moment I had an epiphany. Here were these children, these precious children, out in the middle of nowhere without shoes or matching clothes and living in small huts made of mud and sticks and paper, with a roof no higher than five feet. Their fathers were probably bargainers in some small town hours from home, begging to make ends meet, while their mothers spent the day washing clothes and tending to goats. Why were they smiling? What did they have to be happy about? They had nothing except the mismatched clothes they wore. Their naivety was blatant, their ignorance glaring.

I have more than their most exaggerated fantasy, yet I lack their simplistic pleasure. What mattered to me most a week, a day, an hour before, suddenly meant nothing. My car, my computer, my clothes, my surf board – none of it had value. If I could match their smiles, know the sheer joy of being alive, of merely drawing breath, I’d have grabbed onto their well-kept secret of life.

Feeling lucky to have spent even a few moments in their world, I returned with the group back to our houses in Maralal. That evening the Masai people performed for my classmates and me. They chanted and danced their traditional songs and dances, and even included some of our group. It was beautiful to watch a different culture demonstrate to us their ways of expression. To actually feel like a part of that culture created the most incredible feeling. That night around a campfire we ate a huge dinner of collard greens, goat meat, ugali (a dough-like substance made from maize flour and water) and guacamole. I felt as though the Masai people, along with my classmates, were my family. Spending time in Maralal provided the most remarkable few days of my life because of how my eyes were opened to another world.

It is easy to think that we as Americans would cause the Kenyans to be left awe-stricken, since it is believed by many that they are not as fortunate as we are. However, this misconception that I, too, had at the beginning of the trip subsided after only a few days in Maralal and completely vanished after three weeks in Africa. For what I took away from my adventure is something more substantial than pictures of lions and a certificate proving that I climbed Mount Kenya. What I have now is a new outlook on life that has shaped who I am and who I want to be. It is not something that you can read in textbooks or look up online. It is a life-moving experience, and the memory of it will stay with me forever.
He’s a week old and weighs less than three pounds. His miniature hand grasps my index finger as I marvel at the miracle of life before me. His tiny chest rises and falls with each gasp of breath and I wonder if he will survive. He came yesterday as a refugee, abandoned and left to die, retrieved from the rain and brought here. It’s a miracle he survived the night, naked and soaking in the mud of a desolate field. Gently, the nurse cleans him and removes what is left of his umbilical cord. I name him Isaiah, which means “Salvation of the Lord” because it is undoubtedly God who has rescued and spared this baby boy.
Although heartbreaking, his story is not so different from the others. Each has been left behind, given away or highly mistreated by parents who now rest in a grave, a prison cell or are nowhere to be found. Besides the wounds of their pasts, these children share something else—the longing to be swept up, nestled and lavished with love.

Their brown arms stretch toward the heavens when they see me. Some smile, others cry, but all long to be touched. Sixty of them, ranging from one week to six years old, stand before me. They are the reason I have come to Uganda.

The next five weeks spent in Africa will be full of challenges. At times loneliness will seem to wrap her miserable fingers around my heart, causing tears to fall and prayers to rise. At other times, my happiness will be so great that I’ll squeal by a bloody civil war for nearly 20 years. They have come here from Gulu, a region where many of her people reside. The “factory” stands under a thatched roof on an island of sludge and is nothing more than a concoction of rusted barrels and plastic tubing. The women who work here are Acholi, a northern tribe on the verge of extinction due to the civil war. They have traveled so far but are now held hostage by poverty. I gag on the stench of beer fermentation as it penetrates every pore and weaves itself into my hair and clothing. I watch as the women prepare alcohol and their children run rampant. The exploitation of these beautiful people, combined with the reek of their work, turns my stomach and I swallow my own vomit.

Coming from the United States, I could never picture the disheartening scenes faced here. Along with the Acholis exists children who roam Main Street possessing open hands and empty bellies. They beg for mercy that comes in the form of a coin. Behind them stand crowds of men who attempt to undress me with their eyes.

Amani Baby Cottage is divided into four rooms: preemies, crawlers (B1), walkers and talkers (B2), and finally the toddlers. I divide my time among them but find myself captivated most by the B2s. After a breakfast of porridge and hot cakes, I give the children their baths, change them and attempt to remember the words to worship songs they sing in Lugandan. The rest of the morning is spent eating snacks and enjoying playtime. As I lay them down for their afternoon nap, I am amazed at the manners of these children which far surpass the behavior of most American men.

One little girl in particular captures my heart. They call her Olga and she quickly becomes the one I adore most. Her smile lights up the room, her chocolate eyes seem to read my very soul and her only
desire is to be cherished. From the moment I enter the gate in the morning until I tuck her in at night, her small hand rests in mine. When I sit, she buries herself in my lap, allowing me to stroke her coarse hair and smooth skin. She has taught me how to love a stranger, to see beauty in everything and to embrace innocence. I possess many photos of her, but now find each of them powerless. The pictures are incapable of capturing the sound of her laughter, the warmth of her body and the sensation of her affection as she clutches my skirt.

As I lean to kiss her goodbye for the last time, our tears mingle, staining her smooth, brown skin. I tear myself away as she screams for me with hands held high. Even now, months after I’ve returned to the United States, I find myself dreaming of her, questioning who is holding my baby girl and if she still cries for me. Thankfully, the children I see here offer some solace. I find myself wistfully gazing at someone’s baby as she sits in a shopping cart, her small lips curling as she returns my smile. I’m mesmerized by the thin, blond hair of a boy at church. He props his small head against his father’s shoulder and quickly falls asleep. Do the people here recognize the splendor that exists in their children? Do their tiny toes, carefree giggles and toothy smiles enchant the parents that gave them life? The similarities between these pale-skinned babes and the ones I left behind carries me away and I find myself missing the weight of Olga’s slim body in my arms once again.

It is impossible to articulate all the ways this trip has changed me. Not only have I learned to delight in children, but I now value the blessings of healthcare, schooling and sanitation. The night I returned to Myrtle Beach, I found myself wandering aimlessly through the aisles of Kroger, in awe of its fresh food, spaciousness and seemingly endless varieties. I slowly gathered my groceries as visions of Ugandan street markets flashed in my mind. I see dilapidated carts overflowing with Irish potatoes, bananas and produce of every size and color. There is also the butcher with his wooden table, finely-honed machete and carcass of some long-ago-slaughtered animal. I giggle to myself at the recollection of meat chunks soaring through the air as he hacks a slab of beef for the stew Momma Santa serves to me later.

However, beyond conveniences and a newfound love of children exists the ultimate gift — a closeness to my Creator. As a prisoner in a generation of e-mail users, cell phone addicts and credit card enthusiasts, the desire for an adventure that will change my heart and transform my mind is not easily fulfilled. But through this trip, I have been given the opportunity to delight in the glory of God. As I traveled across the world, lived with strangers, played with HIV+ children and rafted the Nile River, I have continuously been reminded of His faithfulness.

Our society is hypnotized by Hollywood and chained to consumerism, but I will no longer settle for these standards, living as a slave to mediocrity. The faces of Isaiah, Olga and the other children at Amani fill my dreams. The grasp they have on my heart is not easily forgotten and I pray it will never leave. Their spirits and faces capture the glory of God and reflect what I can only assume is heaven.

There is something mystical about Africa. It draws people in from all over the world, capturing the hearts of its visitors. Some who come never leave, and those who must are never the same. I am one of them.
In the high mountains, north of the plains and rivers of Mesopotamia, lies the nation of Armenia. Situated on a high plateau, fissured by deep gorges, the lesser Caucasus Mountains penetrate deep into this country, with the dormant volcano of Mount Aragats being the highest peak at 4090 m. The ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, along with Egypt are considered the main source of civilized life in the modern sense; Armenia too has reason to rank as one of the cradles of human culture.

Noah's Ark as described in the Book of Genesis is said to have landed on the summit of Mount Ararat in the very center of ancient Armenia. Whether or not we can attribute to the Book of Genesis as an historical source, no one can deny the symbolic importance which is cherished by both believers and unbelievers all over the world.
Armenia captures our attention as one of the principle homes of ancient metallurgy, beginning at least 5,000 years ago. Later, Armenia became the first extensive kingdom to adopt Christianity as a state religion in 301 A.D. Pioneering a style of church architecture that anticipates the Western gothic ideal. In these respects, Armenia has enriched the civilized world to an extent which this forgotten and ravaged country is seldom given credit.

Armenia can be described in a cultural sense, as a landlocked island. Armenia's strategic position for trade has exposed it to repeated invasion. Throughout its tormented history enemies have occupied all points on the compass: in the north, the Mongols, tsarist and Soviet Russia; in the south, Medes and Seljuk Turks; in the east, Persia and Mamluks; and in the west: the Turkman Dynasties of the Black and White Sheep, Muslim Turks and the Ottoman Empire.

Even the most austere survey of 20th century pogroms would be deficient without mentioning its first genocide in 1915 inflicted on the Armenians living inside the Ottoman Empire. At that time, posts requiring intelligence and initiative were regularly filled by Armenians, especially in the fields of government administration and banking. Armenian girls were regularly employed as maids and nurses; men worked as porters because of their trustworthy qualities. At one time, it was said in Istanbul: "If you want something built, get an Armenian; if you want something destroyed, call a Turk."

In spite of this, the Ottoman Empire allied with Germany in World War II, leaving 1.5 million Armenians dead in a premeditated series of events designed to annihilate the Armenians. In April of 1915, Armenian intelligentsia and community leaders in Istanbul were rounded up and transported in ships to their doom. Among the victims were a number of priests, poets, doctors and the great composer Komitas. Able-bodied men were already employed in labor battalions and did sterling work building roads and railways. They were now set upon by the Turkish units and shot or bludgeoned down to the last man.

The fate of the Armenian civil population at the hands of the Turks was even more tragic and horrible. Infants were removed from their families and sent to "orphanages," which were pits they were hurled into alive and covered with piles of stones. Women and the elderly were sent on death marches for hundreds of miles toward Aleppo and other concentration camps in Syria. Neither food nor water was provided and the women were at the mercy of their ruffian escorts. Disemboweled corpses and women with their breasts cut off were thrown into the Tigris and Euphrates.

The United States government does not recognize Armenia because of improved relations with Turkey, and the United Kingdom government seemingly abandoned Armenia after World War I. It would be wrong not to mention the assiduous efforts by the American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, who remained steadfast in his attempts to alleviate the sufferings of the Armenians. America did play a foremost role in relief work among Armenians, many of whom found homes in the United States. To this day, there are many flourishing communities in New York, Boston and particularly in Fresno, Calif. Adolf Hitler, is still correct when he rallied his generals on the eve of the invasion of Poland with the words: "Who still talks nowadays of the extermination of the Armenians?"

An verbose history of foreign rule, often concerted with religious persecution, has had a lasting effect on the characteristics of the Armenians. In ancient times, they were proud and warlike; they have often had to retill the fields of diplomacy several times to ensure their physical survival. They are first-rate farmers and exemplary craftsman, excelling in many branches of handicraft, sculpture and fine work in precious stones and textiles. They are a sober and industrious people, able to work long hours without respite. Armenians are extremely sociable, hospitable and faithful to family and community ties. They have Scottish regard for thrift and honesty, though they know how to drive a hard bargain. Armenians are quarrelsome and argumentative; you only need to pose the thought once to an Armenian before you receive a self-evident reply. They are no cowards. Tales of Armenian heroism are described by Sir Robert Windham Graves for their service with the Allied forces in The Great War.

Life for the ordinary Armenian seems far from easy. Many people in rural
areas live an agricultural subsistence, or else have sought to become small scale vendors of some kind. The population has dropped some 20 percent since the 1980’s due to a combination of a low birth rate (The lowest fertility rate of the 35 member states of the Council of Europe.) and emigration in search of work. Family members help each other out and they cope. It can be said there is portion who pine for the work that existed during the Soviet era; they are also too young to remember Stalin’s terror and overlook the Soviet Union’s failure to deal with the civil war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1989. For many, there is the hope that an education will help escape the poverty.

Armenians are deeply attached to their national church and language, which has long been a rallying point for the nation. They certainly have a pronounced religious bent that unifies the large diaspora and can often seem solemn and restrained in manner. Opportunities to witness an Armenian worship service should be taken when possible. Even for one with no knowledge of the Armenian language, the beauty of the singing is deeply impressive. Worship is quite different than that of the west. Being an independent church since 451 A.D., the addition of prayers has extended worship to two hours. People seem not to attend the service; constant ebb and flow is observed of the people. In closing, the priest raises his right hand to bless the congregation in Armenian style — with the thumb and ring finger forming a circle to represent the world and the remaining fingers symbolizing the blessed Trinity.

Few countries are so heavily dependent on help from abroad. It is the Armenian Christians of the Diaspora who pay for most of the necessary civil development. Yet despite all these difficulties, Armenians are generous to a fault. Desperately poor people invite you into their homes and provide a plethora of refreshments. People are genuinely fascinated that someone has heard of a country so small, and even go as far as to go there. Men would give up their seats when a woman stepped on the bus, and women were obliged to hold these men’s parcels. If I arrived to work before my coworkers and was locked out, a kind man across the hall would offer me a seat at his desk while he sat across from me and offer me his only book in English, a scenic book on Florida.

I encountered this cohesive and amicable nature the most in the relationship I shared with my coworkers. This large collective of a dozen or so members with pied backgrounds had the emotional strength of a family. There was a father, Tigran, who offered sagacious advice whenever necessary. There was a mother, Susanna, who helped to oil the wheels, prepare meals and make the very best coffee. The rest of the research group rounds out the extended family. The relationship I have with everyone in that laboratory is one that made my time there more like a second home.

Armenia is an individualistic nation, a leaven for the conformist mass of the human race. To be terse, every Armenian has grit, toughness and endurance to which they owe their continued existence. Many of their neighbors have vanished from the map, relapsed into barbarism or shrunk into obscurity. Their national and cultural unity has stood the test of centuries of alien hegemony and suzerainty, backed by a personal tenacity and audacity, backed by a personal tenacity and audacity. Logically, he should have given up the struggle and lain down to die long ago. But he refused and still refuses to surrender; herein lays the pith to understanding these invincible people whose contribution to human civilization is out of proportion to it’s numerical strength.

- The author visited Yerevan, Armenia working at the Molecular Structure Research Centre (MSRC) from August thru September, by virtue of an international collaboration between Dr. John Goodwin (CCU) and Dr. Tigran S. Kurtikyan (MSRC). -
AWARENESS

- A PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION -

Lauren Formalarie
Stephanie Hutto
Victoria Livinski
Ashley Woodward

"Be the change you wish to see in the world."

- Gandhi
DES FEMMES CONTRE LA CONDITION DE MAISON
A S C H O L A R L Y L A D Y
- HOW BECOMING A JACKSON SCHOLAR CHANGED ONE STUDENT’S LIFE -

words: Caroline P. Smith
photography: Yaw Odame

A single person doesn’t make life-changing decisions every day. Most people don’t just wake up one morning and decide to completely change the way they live their lives. Something usually happens to cause the change.

For me, that something happened while I was waiting for my sophomore English 275 class to begin. One of the students in the class announced the Jackson Center for Ethics and Values was accepting scholarship applications for students interested in becoming Jackson Scholars.

I didn’t know what a Jackson Scholar was, but my mother always told me to apply for any scholarship I was eligible for. I found out where the Jackson Center was and picked up an application. I quickly learned this opportunity was not just a scholarship program; it was a two-year commitment that paid a certain amount of money each semester so long as the students completed a certain amount of philosophy and leadership classes and participated in several community-oriented activities. I had thoroughly enjoyed Philosophy 101, and since I volunteered for organizations in high school, it seemed this program fit me perfectly.

I applied to the program and was accepted. And my life has never been the same since.

Looking back, I can’t pinpoint the exact moment my life changed, but I know it is dramatically different than it had been. The director of the Jackson Center, Claudia McCullough, told me the same thing. 

“You’re not the same Caroline now as you were back then,” she said to me. ”You hardly ever said two words and very much kept to yourself. And now you’ve just surprised us all.”

It is true I am generally a private person. I keep most of my thoughts to myself; I was taught growing up not to speak until spoken to. At some point in high school, I decided most people either did not care about what I had to say or just weren’t listening. The Jackson Center and the experiences I have had as a part of the program completely reversed that aspect of my personality.

The most poignant memory I have pertaining to this personal change is of a community-wide conversation I was invited to participate in titled “Deepening the American Dream.” About 25 members of the community were invited to participate in this conversation that met once a month for three consecutive months. The sessions were facilitated by Sally Z. Hare, who has too many titles to list, so I’ll just call her woman extraordinaire.

At one point during the sessions, we split into smaller groups to talk about what the American Dream meant to each of us. I didn’t say much because I assumed since I was one of the youngest members of the entire group, the others figured I didn’t have enough life experience to contribute to the conversation. This was the first of my many assumptions that was to be corrected by my Jackson Scholar experiences.

As the conversation continued and people shared their thoughts and opinions about the American Dream, someone in my group specifically asked for my opinion, and the others turned and looked at me expectantly, awaiting my answer. For the first time, I felt as though someone truly wanted to hear what I had to say, and that what I said would impact them in some way. That moment stands out in my memory as a turning point in my life.

Since then, I have been less hesitant to voice my opinions and beliefs. I have realized that sharing yourself with someone is a way to bond with them as one human being to another, human beings who are living in the same world and who are dealing with the same issues. I realized that by speaking up, I might actually be able to help people deal with those issues and make a difference in their lives.

The Jackson Scholar program offered me even more opportunities to make a difference in other people’s lives, although the people were not always full-fledged members of the community...yet.

Every summer, the Jackson Center hosts an ethics academy for rising sixth-graders from schools all over Horry County. Students are nominated by their teachers and principals as role models among their peers. They attend the academy to learn about basic moral and ethical values that they then in turn take back to their schools and ideally apply them to their lives to become true role models for the students around them.

I was offered the opportunity to work with the academy for two consecutive summers, and each summer is a memory and an experience that lit up my life and my outlook on younger generations.

I never had much faith in the up-and-coming youth of America; I classified them all as kids too wrapped up in themselves and technology to ever make much of a difference or to care about the world around them or the influence they could have on others. Once again, I was proven wrong.

The ability of these young minds to grasp concepts that confused even the great minds of Aristotle and Plato and apply those concepts to occurrences in their lives astounded me. Some of the kids were even honest enough to admit that they knew they had acted unethically before but weren’t aware of the ensuing consequences. Over the four-day period, I watched each and every one of those children grow into the role models they knew they could be. Their confidence grew, their creativity blossomed and their eyes opened to a new realm that extended beyond their personal bubbles of homes and friends.

That first summer, the group of children taught me that if they could mature and apply these ethical concepts, I, as a young adult, could as well. The second summer only bolstered that fact and encouraged me even more to make right
decisions and be a role model to my peers.

I have had countless other valuable experiences as a Jackson Scholar.

The Tea and Ethics seminars have introduced me to issues I was previously ignorant about and gave me confidence to talk about these issues with others.

The classes I was required to take introduced me to students like myself, who were eager to make a difference and were willing to address issues others tend to avoid.

The community service project I was involved in gave me the opportunity to work with fellow Jackson Scholars while maintaining the connection with Junior Jackson Scholars from the summer academy in an attempt to raise money for a nonprofit organization. That experience helped me recognize that no matter how small the effort or donation, every little bit truly does make a difference in somebody's life.

The people I have met have also been important factors who continually contribute to the personal changes of my life. Claudia McCullough is a mentor, friend and role model for me. Her strength and willingness to listen and offer advice has only further encouraged me to start voicing my opinions and not be afraid to speak out.

My fellow Jackson Scholars helped me through difficult areas in our classes and were an outlet and a sounding board when there were ethical issues that arose in our lives we weren't sure how to handle. They helped me understand that some people my age are capable of helping others and making a difference.

In short, becoming a Jackson Scholar restored my belief in the goodness of humanity, and instilled in me a deep sense of who I am, what I believe in and equipped me with a confident guide to making the ethically right decisions.

I hope my experience teaches you something—keep your eyes open for opportunities that come your way, and have the confidence to take advantage of those opportunities. Don't be afraid of change, even if it makes you uncomfortable at first. There is always something to be learned from new experiences, so long as you see the good in all situations.
Democratic presidential candidate U.S. Sen. Barack Obama rallied a crowd of about 1,800 people at Coastal Carolina University this semester, telling them why he is the person the nation needs as its next president. Obama is the first presidential hopeful to rally at Coastal since George W. Bush addressed the students in 2000.
David A. DeCenzo became the second president of Coastal Carolina University on May 7, 2007. He also established the Strategic Planning Steering Committee in order to examine and refine Coastal's mission, establish priorities and create a process that will link strategic direction to budgeting and continual outcome-based assessment.

CCU received approval from the S.C. Budget and Control Board for two projects. One is for $2,340,480 to expand and renovate the Lib Jackson Student Center. The other is for $2,025,000 for necessary renovations and repairs to improve the functionality of the Science Building.

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Launched "CCU Alert", a new notification system enabling the university to send urgent news to mobile phones.

"Goat: A Memoir" by Brad Land was selected as the 2007 summer reading assignment for incoming freshmen, but was not without controversy from Coastal's Greek community.

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CHANGES ON CAMPUS

BEST OF THE YEAR

-MUSIC-
Soulja Boy souljaboytellem.com
Kid Rock Rock N Roll Jesus
Sean Kingston Sean Kingston
Fergie The Dutchess
Alicia Keys As I Am
Nickelback All the Right Reasons
T-Pain Epiphany
Akon Konvicted
Colbie Calliet Coco
Kanye West Graduation

-BOOKS-
Deceptively Delicious Jessica Seinfeld
Become a Better You Joel Olsteen
The Almost Moon Alice Sebold
Eat, Pray, Love Elizabeth Gilbert
Five Wishes Gay Hendricks
Book of the Dead Patricia Cornwell
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows J. K. Rowling
I Am America (And So Can You!) Stephen Colbert
The Secret Rhonda Byrne
Clapton Eric Clapton

-FILMS-
Across the Universe
Gone Baby Gone
The Bourne Ultimatum
Hairspray
The Simpsons Movie
Harry Potter & the Order of the Phoenix
Ratatouille
300
Knocked Up
Superbad
Dan Albergotti awarded 2007 A. Poulin, Jr. Poetry Prize.

CCU Concert Choir and Symphonic Band performed at Disney World in Fla.

Dr. Eliza Glaze received Andrew A. Mellon Postdoctoral Rome Prize in Medieval Studies.

The Rebecca Randall Bryan Art Gallery Features: Mythical Images of Tibet, Introduction to the visually rich traditions of Tibet and Buddhism

Frank Poor: Shadows and Signs - Contemporary mixed media sculpture

CCU's Ashes2Art Web site project awarded NEH grant.

Theatre Season -
Comedy of Errors
The Uncastables
Tell Me
Frog and Toad

"World Music Concert" featuring music from Africa, Asia, Japan, Trinidad and Tobago is the first of its kind at Coastal.

EDWARDS COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

EDWARDS COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

RELAY FOR LIFE

BUSINESS, EDUCATION, & SCIENCES

Henry Lowenstein, Ph.D. named new dean to Wall College.

Master of Business Administration program established.

M.A.T. Social Studies Program won the 2007 South Carolina Council for the Social Studies Program of Excellence Award.

Coastal Chicken Dance broke Guinness World Record for longest line dance.

First wind monitoring station at Waites Island is built. The station will measure whether coastal winds blow sufficiently to generate electricity.
GOOD

WITH KEN & DONNA CAPPs

words & photography: Lauren Formalarie
in her car and they found someone to do it and covered even the expense. When one student wasn't able to move into her apartment at UNC Wilmington, they lodged her up in their house for three weeks free of charge, helping her move into her apartment when the time came. "She was fun," Ken told me, "we even went bar hopping with her one night."

They end up in Myrtle Beach after Ken was laid off from his printing job in Cleveland, Ohio due to the emergence of new technology. They had been vacationing in Myrtle Beach every year with their two children (now 37 and 41) and absolutely loved the area. "He always said if he was ever laid off we would move here," Donna mentioned. They sold their house one week after he lost his job and now happily reside in Conway.

When they're not working hard at the expense of messy students they enjoy walking on the beach. Over the years they acquired a hobby of collecting shark teeth on their walks. They have a giant bowl filled with them now and were even included in an article for the Sun News for the large number of teeth accumulated.

"Myrtle Beach is a playground," Ken said about the area, "but it is important for students to stay focused." While attending to the needs of students they feel it is very important to always have a positive attitude. "They have enough problems [to deal with] in life. We do whatever we can for them," Donna mentioned about the hardships of college students. They believe all students should follow three principles: have a good attitude, always attend class and participate.

They make sure to attend every football game at Coastal and were happy to mention how we "clobbered" our opponent at the last game. "The good part about winning like that," ken mentioned with a smile, "is that the bench players get fun to play. They need to get their uniforms dirty- to know what its like to be out there on the field."

Ken and Donna Capps care for the Coastal community as if it is their own family. The passion they feel for each other is shared with countless others. They are two remarkable people who can see through the monotony of a demanding society and touch your heart in a special way- even if simply with a pencil, because you forgot yours.
My personal bout with drugs began when I was 17 and participating in the occasional pot party with a few close friends. What I thought was harmless fun became a life altering addiction in a very brief time. The addiction was more than physical; it was a mental hardship that began with that initial inhale and the elation of the first high.

Soon, everything I did was geared towards doing more drugs, getting that nice high and escaping from real life. I never really noticed it because it became such a part of what and who I was. Drugs defined my actions and personal beliefs during my last year of high school. My grades suffered, but I did graduate and was even accepted into a college so I thought it was no big deal. It was actually like icing on the cake to me. During my first year at college I began smoking marijuana every day and was high all the time. I could barely keep up with my classes and although I felt as if I was wading further and further out into deeper water, and I would eventually fall behind, lose strength and drown, it didn’t concern me as much as it should have. I was happy with just being high. I couldn’t focus on anything except more drugs, new drugs and a different or better high.

From the first time smoked marijuana I had a desire to try LSD, but I had not been able to get my hands on it. I wanted to experience the intense mind trip and hallucinations of this seemingly “wonderful” drug. I finally had the opportunity to try it and unfortunately it did feel wonderful. The day after my first ten-hour trip I wanted to do it again; thus began my addiction to more lethal drugs. When I couldn’t get acid, I’d substitute the more readily available mushrooms for...
a similar experience. I also began using other substances I had not previously been exposed to.

Opium is a haunting drug for those who are mental addicts. At first I mixed it in with my pot for a "fun" little combination. Then I started smoking it more often without pot because it made me feel so good even though the high was only for an hour or less. I was also introduced to ecstasy pills. In my humble opinion, this is probably the most dangerous of all the drugs I have taken. From what I’ve seen, ecstasy users were more prone to dying than any other drug users I have known. I also did cocaine a few times and perhaps I had a bit of luck not to become addicted to it.

During my sophomore year of college I became even more heavily addicted to drugs. I lived right off-campus in an overpriced room over a pizza place, but I don’t really remember much else from that semester; only bits and pieces consisting of various memories of bad trips. I lost two promising girlfriends because I could not contain my need to feel high and twisted.

Girls were not the only opportunities I lost either. I barely passed only one subject that semester. I couldn’t believe I was failing out of school because all of my friends were doing drugs and yet they still managed to make decent grades. I thought maybe I was pushing the drugs too hard. I knew the position I was forcing my body and mind to be in all the time, and I knew I had to cut down, but I just couldn’t do it. I was addicted. It took me all the way through the holiday season and then some to realize that I wouldn’t be able to just cut down on the drugs. I have an extremely addictive personality. I decided the only way for me to get my life straightened out was to quit completely.

It was much more difficult to quit than I originally thought it would be. Now that I look back on my situation I can see that I had no willpower left. It was gone with the mind warping substances I’d been having so much fun with for the past two years. I felt helpless, and I was unable to turn to friends because they were still addicted to the drugs I was trying to remove from my life; I was too ashamed to turn to my parents after the expenses they had contributed to my education. I felt trapped and frustrated. I eventually made a decision that inevitably changed my life. I joined the army.

I felt a renewed sense of purpose almost immediately after signing my contract to serve, and I gave up every drug except marijuana and beer for the next three months before basic training.

The day before I left for basic training was the last day I smoked marijuana and the beginning of a new life for me. A life filled with natural highs instead of chemically or biologically induced highs. It has been over five years since I overcame my nightmare of addiction, and when I look back on those two years of my life I wasted in a drug induced stupor I know I will never go back to there. I’ll never go back to that prison... that cell created and locked down by my own foolishness.
Senator Lindsey Graham speaks to the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce
LOBBYING THROUGH THE LENS

A POLITICAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY IN WASHINGTON D.C.

words & photography: Stephanie Hutto
I twist myself out of my car as the bright rays of the sun force my eyes to close. I pull my oversized sunglasses out of my handbag and clumsily slide them onto my face, adjusting them to the right position. I smile as I think of the reason I am at the aviation center. Today, I will fly with the Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce and other local leaders, among them CCU Executive Vice President, Edgar Dyer, to Washington D.C. to help raise awareness about the importance of Interstate-73/74. It is my job to photograph the events that take place over the next two days.

I spin my camera around my neck and attach my flash to its shoe securely, almost without thinking. I have photographed many events, but never one like the one I will begin today.

I check in with Melanie Dorman, the project coordinator, and receive my folder packed with information concerning I-73/74, memos, news articles and maps of D.C. Also inside is the guideline of photos I am expected to capture during my stay in D.C. I study it quickly before embarking on my political and photographic journey.

The first person to introduce himself to me is S.C. Rep. Alan D. Clemmons. I confidently shake his hand and explain my reason for being here. He nods cordially and continues his greetings with the others. I was also obliged to meet S.C. Rep. Doug Jennings, as he considerably assisted me in carrying my bags onto the plane.

Once loaded on the plane I begin to study the documents in my folder concerning I-73/74. To my own disclosure I am ashamed that I have no prior knowledge of this interstate or the work that has already been done to complete it. As I sit in my narrow aisle seat, I learn the interstate will eventually connect six states, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio and Michigan, and will alleviate traffic congestion throughout the states. It will also allow residents along the coast to evacuate more efficiently in the event of a hurricane, and it will drive economic development, creating new jobs and industry.

My "flying companions," I eventually discover, are Jimmy Moore of TV-13 and Adam Parness of the Board of Directors. As luck would have it I will be sitting next to them for the remainder of my trip any time we travel by bus or plane. We have great conversation and they keep me laughing.

Once we arrive in D.C. and make our way to the Hyatt hotel, I begin working immediately. There is a luncheon in Congressional Room A featuring Congressmen Henry Brown and Rahall as the highlighted speakers. I shoot a variety of photos at various angles and times. I want to give them a clear and professional documentation of the trip when we return home. During this luncheon, I am impressed with the support and research that surrounds the completion of I-73/74. A variety of local and national political leaders attend, many of whom I admire in some aspect for their passion and/or success. My job doesn't feel much like a job today. I am constantly learning and engaged in photography, two of my favorite things to do.

My next stop is the Capitol Building to document a meeting with Congressman James E. Clyburn. I am in awe as I roam through the halls of this historic structure. I eventually locate his office and set up for the shoot. Clyburn appears and brings an aura of power with him. I photograph him interacting with the others and prepare to leave.

After this meeting, I have a small break. I decide this is the only time I will be able to see the White House due to our heavily occupied schedule, so I embark on my 16-block trek toward my new destination as a tourist. As I walk, I laugh at the irony of living so close in proximity to Washington, D.C. and never having experienced it, but having traveled so far as to Europe to experience their culture last year.

About halfway there I realize my Etienne Aigner peep hole heels were probably not the best choice in walking shoes, but it's too late to turn back now so I continue my hike.

I finally manage to find the White House using the Washington Monument as a directional guide. I stand there on the outside of a huge black barred fence taking in the view as various foreign conversations ring in my ears as they discuss the beauty of the American presidential house.
in German, Russian and Chinese. I feel a silly whim of pride as I stand there, and I feel grateful as I think— I am an American.

After my patriotic burst subsides a bit, I snap a few photographs of the White House and begin my journey back to the Longworth House Office Building. I am scheduled to photograph a reception for the House members and I don’t want to be late. I feel a growing ache in my left heel and quickly discover a painful blister has developed there, so I kick off my heels and wave for a taxi to pick me up.

"To the Longworth House!" I exclaim before the Ecuador native has a chance to ask. He was a quiet man who I learned visits his family in Ecuador frequently since the flight prices have been reasonable lately. I even think I saw him smile as I waved him goodbye from my stop. I smile in the hope I may have brightened his day.

I make my way into Longworth and locate Amie Lee, the Executive Project coordinator. She and Melanie sympathize with me about my painful blister, and I rest in a representatives’ chair while I wait patiently for the socially elite party to begin.

The hors d’oeuvres are delicious and they keep coming. Everyone is smiling and enjoying the company of the guests. I photograph the entire event and take pleasure in every minute of it, casually eating a crab cake or chicken skewer now and then. I even get to meet S.C. Rep. Henry Brown, who is an extremely engaging and personable man.

That night, Melanie and I meet some others at Fogo De Chao Brazilian Steakhouse for a fascinating and delicious dinner. Apart from the array of delectable cuisine we consume, we also have a clever Irish waiter whose wit and charm earn him a generous tip.

Later, after I am completely exhausted, I return to the Hyatt and sink my lifeless body into my own bed and pray the morning has mercy on me.

I awake surprisingly refreshed and renewed. I organize my things and tune into the news as I shower and dress. A police officer stunned a drunken girl the night before with a stun gun and it makes the headlines along with the controversial “No Anorexia” billboards that have been suddenly plastered around Paris as an attack against the fashion industry. I think casually about how these issues affect me locally versus the rest of the world, but am cut off by a screeching alarm informing me it’s time to go shoot my next event.

Downstairs in Capitol Room A, I photograph the happenings and eat my breakfast in between speakers. Jimmy and I laugh as I tell him I have the only plate in the room robbed of bacon, a blessing in disguise when I think about it.

After the conference, I hitch a taxi with Adam to our next destination, the Hart Office Building. I photograph the events of a meeting with Senator Lindsay Graham and another with Senator Jim DeMint. I especially enjoy the meeting with Graham because of his enthusiasm. Next I attend our final conference where Tyler Duval, assistant secretary of transportation, is the featured speaker. The luncheon is further enhanced by dialogue from Senator’s Graham, DeMint, Elizabeth Dole and Richard Burr, who are also serving as the panel. Questions and concerns regarding I-73/74 are addressed and Brad Dean, the president of the Myrtle Beach area chamber and executive director of I-73/74 Corridor Association, gives a particularly informative dialogue on progress and funding before he brings the conference to a close.

Once home, I lay quietly on my bed, wrapped in my silky, sequined blanket. I reminisce of my experience in D.C. and record the highlights into my lavender journal. This trip was monumental for me. It was not only a fabulous opportunity for me to hone my photography skills, but also a chance for me to learn more about my own community and the concerns it is currently facing. Moreover, I smile as I recall the wonderful friends I made during my trip and the brilliant memories I will not soon forget.

-The author was given the opportunity to travel to D.C. and participate in this photography shoot by Jonathan Carter, an extremely successful photographer who has been shooting for over 15 years.
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