

View from the C.H.U.

By the Residents, for the World

Volume 6, Issue 4 A publication of the Character Housing Unit at Allendale Correctional Institution/ July and August 2019

Art Edition

Inside this issue:

- *ACI Choir* 9
- *Art Cornell instructs* 10
- *Michele's cow art* 12
- *Doodling/noodling* 13
- *Magic* 14
- *Pastel perspectives* 15
- *Pottery shapes* 18
- *Horticulture blooms* 19
- *Lewis teaches knife skills* 20
- *A splash of watercolor* 21
- *A visit to the right side* 22
- *Art with teeth, claws, & slobber* 23
- *Hobby craft* 24
- *Night music* 26
- *Floral skills* 27
- *Die Jim Crow* 28
- *Showtime* 29

Special Points of Interest

- *Murals pg. 4*
- *Artist bios pg. 6*
- *Cartoons pg. 23, & 30*
- *Sunset instructions 17*

“Transcendence”

Hilton Head gallery displays prison art

From July 30 to August 24, 2019, the artwork of eight Advanced Artists of Allendale (AAA) was featured at Art League of Hilton Head in a first-of-its-kind gallery showing, titled “Transcendence.” Through the collaborative efforts of Volunteer Delane Marynowski, ACI Administrators, and resident Program Leader Terry B., the featured artists received training from nationally renowned professional artists in preparation for this exhibit. The expertise they have shared with the AAA has enabled the resident artists to transcend even their highest expectations. The opening reception was held on August 7th and was attended by over 350 guests, the most ever for any opening in the gallery’s history. Weekly attendance to the gallery is the highest it has ever been. Weekly attendance was the highest it had ever been, resulting in the sale of 56 pieces throughout the course of the showing.

Terry B. shared the effects that furthering his art education has had on him and the others involved in the class. “I’ve seen growth that I never believed possible in such a short time.” He went on to say, “Each week the art these men bring in astounds me through the depth and expertise they display.”

Delane Marynowski has been affected as well. “I am humbled by this experience.”



Artists of Allendale Liasion Delane Marynowski addresses guests at the opening reception.

She said, “I’m reminded that the small things in life are the things that can impact you the most. These are the things that can change your life, and the lives of others forever.”

The future of AAA is assured by the phenomenal success of this showing. “This is the first show, but it will not be the last,” said Mrs. Marynowski. “My goal by the end of this journey is for us to gain national attention.”

The opportunity to share their creativity with the world has given resident artists hope for the future and the unexpected chance to gain recognition in the art world. With the spirit of transcendence in every brushstroke and shaping of clay, these men have transformed a life many thought devoid of meaning and value, into something truly amazing. 

1



Artist Samples

2



3



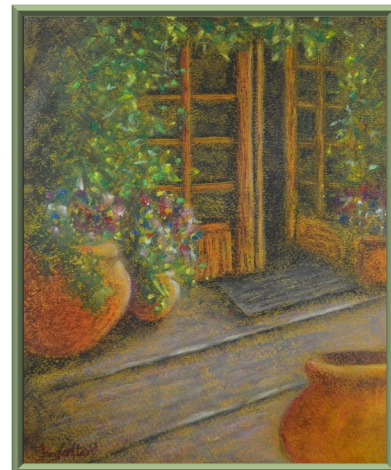
4



5



6



Artists: 1) Talbert F., 2) Bryan B., 3) Ronald W., 4) James W.,
5) Felipe T., 6) Terry B.

Photos from Art League of Hilton Head gallery show



Mural, mural on the wall

By Jalen O.

Barnwell Unit

Natural, real, authentic, curvy, a beautiful masterpiece—these are some adjectives used to describe the mu-



ral in the lobby of Barnwell Unit. The mural was created by Henry F., an artist commonly known amongst residents as “Sandman.” He explained that the mural is meant to represent the unit as a whole. “Focusing on what’s important to you will help encourage you to stay on the right

track,” said Sandman, as he expanded on how you have to lock in on things that motivate you, such as family, friends, or building yourself up mentally. The mural depicts a female bursting through a brick wall, which symbolizes her neighborhood. Pictures surround her, representing that change is possible; they are meant to stimulate positive thoughts and actions. Other images exemplify positive character traits that will strengthen you as a person.



Bamberg Unit

Walking into ACI Bamberg Unit, the first thing you will see is a coat of arms, painted by Talbert F., bearing four character traits: leadership, resilience, integrity, and humility. Underneath that, a banner reads “HOPE.” This represents the ideals that residents strive for as part of the CHU program.

There are two murals on A-Wing that symbolize things residents have all gone through at one time or another. The first is of a cat named Cowboy. Most of the cats who came to ACI’s MeowMate program arrived with a disadvantage—abandoned, abused, and hurt—just like



most of the residents. Upon first glance, you just see a cat in a teacup, but the artist behind the piece, resident Henry F., or “Sandman,” explained that there’s more to it than meets the eye. “The cup represents opportunity—whether it’s half-empty or half-full depends on your perspective and what you put into it,” said Sandman. “This program is succeeding because multiple residents are filling their cups with positive things. The cat in the mural is lounging in the cup, fur overflowing, meant to mirror the residents that seek to change not only themselves for the better, but also their peers.” The second mural, “Catfish,” shows three cats looking at a fish tank. “The mural represents that food for thought can be taken figuratively or literally,” explained Sandman. “We’re all searching for something.” He said that we all want the big fish, but asked, are we willing to change to get it? Acting as a unit brings forth a community. Acting as a community makes us a family.



Restricted Housing Unit (RHU)

The concept behind the murals in the RHU is unity and the importance of brotherhood. “It’s not until you sacrifice and put someone’s needs before your own that you learn something,” said the artist of the mural, Henry F., or “Sandman,” as he is commonly known. “Never look down on a man unless you’re pulling him up.”

One of the two murals is of a man holding the book of life. This symbolizes the age-old adage, “Never judge a book by its cover.” The man (or book) you judge before giving him a chance can be a detriment to your success. “You have to believe that God takes nothing away from you without replacing it with something better,” Sandman reminded. “We’re all reflections of each other. Respecting one another is the key to unity.”

On the opposite wall of the RHU is a mural of bubbles, reflecting a father’s love for his child. It’s titled, “The Bubbles of Life.” Sandman explained, “If it never got dark outside then you would never appreciate the sunshine. The things we go through only strengthen us, and we should search for the good in every bad situation.”



Hampton Unit

Prison is often referred to by many as “the jungle.” Yet, one of the key murals in Hampton Unit paints a different picture. The mural transitions from night to day, as well as from season to season. Many diverse animals are seen relaxing throughout the scene, depicting how we are intended to live amongst each other in harmony, no matter the time of year. In our case, no matter where we are, we have to learn to adjust

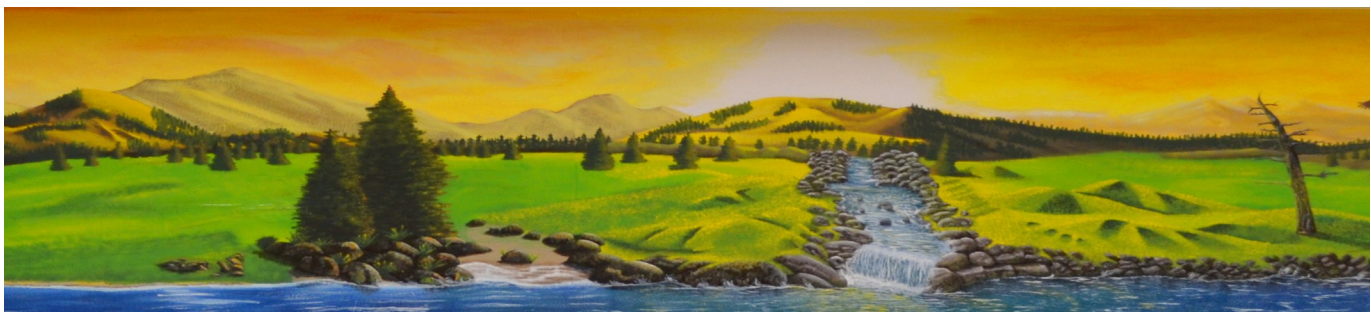


to our surroundings and trust the process.

“We have to live in harmony and trust that things will get better, no matter the circumstance,” said Mandy B., one of the three artists who created the mural, along with Colby C. and Benjamin F. Benjamin F., who added the middle summer section, explained that it represents change and the need to adapt. Mandy also described the

mural in the breezeway as you enter the dorm. “I painted a big bear in a relaxed, peaceful position,” Mandy said. “It is not in a hostile environment, so it doesn’t have to be seen in a violent manner. If wild animals can live in harmony, then so can we.”

There are also character traits and messages throughout the dorm in different languages. It’s meant to send a message that everyone is one, that by blending cultures we only become stronger. The artists explained, “Unloving people are unloved people—people that hurt you, hurt themselves as well.” They encourage everyone to trust in the healing process and take a friend with you.



Colleton Unit

“We learn that change is a process, not an event. Leadership is a responsibility, not your right. Enter with a desire to change how you think and act, and leave a better person,” said Colleton Unit Manager Tasha Cohen, as she described the theme behind the murals of Colleton Unit. She went on to share how the main theme of the dorm is success and how five characteristics—sincerity, unity, education, strength and sacrifice—are all needed in order to succeed.



As you walk into the unit, you will see many murals, such as “House of Success,” an interior painting of

a house, with a tall, spiral staircase. On each step is a character trait, “Because every step that you take forward will bring you closer to success,” Cohen explained. There are several other murals in the unit as well, that are meant



to reiterate what residents should strive for. Cohen went on to say, “It is not only about the artwork, but the messages behind it.”

The painter behind the art is Anthione P., aka Kareem, whose motto is, “No man left behind—so stop turning your back.” Kareem painted multiple murals for Colleton Unit, as well as the exterior entrance slogan “Always Faithful.” “It’s inspiring to see how the inmates and staff can come together for a common cause,” Cohen added. “Because of positive reinforcements through character development we have a wonderful opportunity for us to improve the culture of prisons.”



Advanced Artists of Allendale (AAA)

By Jalen O.

James W.

After discovering his artistic abilities as a child, James W. started his foray into the art world by drawing pictures in grade school with crayons and pencils. Once he came to prison, he joined art programs which helped him improve his skills as he explored different mediums. He now specializes in wildlife and fantasy art.



James related the transformation that he has made as a result of the AAA program. “The quality of my work has greatly transitioned,

and the depth has expanded tremendously!” He also commented on how the program has changed his perspective. “I enjoy learning new stuff. I used to think I was the best artist; I couldn’t be told anything. But being around all these different artists has shown me that there are so many ways you can advance your craft. This experience has humbled me.”



Artist bios continued on next page

Terry B.



Terry B. was introduced to art while incarcerated in a maximum security facility. He would look at art books and paint with tissue and coffee. He sees art as a figurative escape from prison. As the program leader of AAA, he explained how this experience has assisted in his development as an artist.

“AAA has taught me how to be a better instructor. It helps me to break free of my comfort zone and try new things.”

To Terry, art has revealed his purpose—that he has something to live for. He plans to give back to communities that are similar to where he was raised. “Someone gave me an opportunity and I’m appreciative of that,” he said. “We all have a light inside of us that shines brighter than the dark. This program has taught me to present others with opportunities, and to give others the same chance that I’ve been given.”



Kenneth N.



Kenneth N. began creating his own comic books around the age of eight, developing original characters and diving into his personal fantasy land. He continued to work at his craft throughout his life. Once he

came to prison, he used his ample free time to focus on escaping into art. “One of the greatest benefits of this program is the professional teachers,” he said. “To have na-

tionally and internationally renowned artists come in and spend their time critiquing your work is a blessing. This program shows you what you need to work on.”

He enjoys producing work that brings joy to others. “There’s nothing better than seeing the reaction on one’s face from work you created,” he said. “The happiness I see through others drives me to keep on producing artistic masterpieces.”



Mosi



Mosi’s creative career began as a kid doing graffiti street art. During school, he would draw sketches in class, which led to one of his teachers en-

couraging him to get more involved in art. “I had never painted before,” he explained. “It was always just me and my spray can. Being willing to learn new things got me out of my element.” He shared how pottery has now become his favorite medium of art: “Every artist has an option to objectively invite the world to see through their lenses.”

Mosi has been incarcerated for 26 years and gave thanks to the AAA program: “Without programs like these I don’t think I would have maintained my sanity.” He described art as therapeutic, meditative, and calming. “Art for me is a God-given talent. It’s a communion with the most-high,” he offered. “This program has helped me so much and I’m thankful for that.”



Artist bios continued on next page

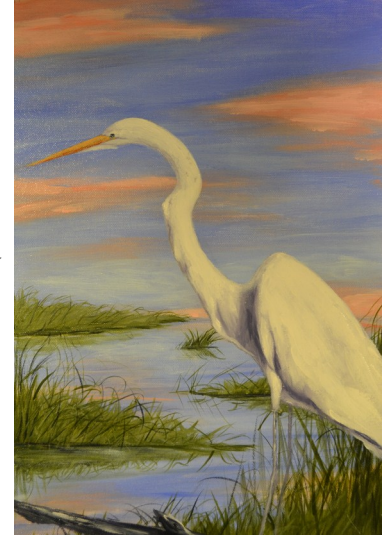
Talbert F.

Talbert F. never knew he had any artistic abilities growing up. He got into art in 2013 while in prison, and began drawing out of a borrowed portrait book. Over time his abilities developed and he progressed from drawing to acrylics—then to oil painting. He compared the process to riding a bike. “You start off with training wheels, but eventually they come off.”

He gave thanks to AAA for his personal growth as an artist, as well as a man.



“Being in this program is a humbling experience. Being able to gain all this knowledge has given me a confidence boost and peace within myself.” He plans to pursue art professionally upon release in five months and gave thanks to the volunteers for helping him to venture into new artistic mediums.



Ronald W.

Ronald W. began drawing in 2001 in the county jail. “I saw guys bringing pictures to life and thought it was beyond beautiful,” he said. At first he could only draw stick-figures, but has progressed over the years due to the help of many people along the way. “I am enlightened,” he said.



“I have deep appreciation for programs like AAA because it reminds me of why I never gave up.”

“This program helps me to overcome depression and fight off stress,” he shared. AAA has helped him to incorporate more colors in his art pieces. Practicing his art keeps him grounded and encourages a meditative state that allows him to continuously grow as an artist.



Bryan B.

Bryan B. has been drawing for as long as he can remember. Yet, he only began painting when he arrived at ACI. “Being here has given me the opportunity to continually practice and improve my craft,” he said. “The

AAA program gives me hands-on experience with professional artists.”



He enjoys seeing the reaction from people in response to his art, which is primarily focused on realism displayed through landscapes. “When I’m in class, it’s relaxing,” he said. “I enjoy being able to express my thoughts on canvas. It gives me a mental break from reality.”



Artist bios continued on next page

Russell H.

Russell H. is an AAA participant whose artistic abilities are displayed through his pottery. He expressed that when he attends AAA class he feels as though he is no longer doing time; when he is in pottery class his mind is free. “This program has helped me focus. It has been a great opportunity for me,” he shared. “Coming out of prison I will now be an experienced



professional artist.”

He went on to explain that some artists in society never get an opportunity to feature their art in a gallery. He said, “I will always be grateful for this chance. This has been my meditation that clears my head of all of the insanity around me.”



Songs from the soul

When words fail, music speaks

By Jalen O.



Terrance explained, “Carlos had too much on his plate. He was part of the band, playing instruments, singing, as well as having the role as director.” He went on to tell how he went from singer to co-director, and how the choir progressed along the way. “As I started helping out things began to pro-

gress, and I stepped in to a leadership portion.” Terrance elaborated, “It wasn’t my goal to be a director; it’s sort of part of being a leader.”

“It’s about making connections. Our main objective of the choir is to connect people to a higher power,” said Terrance C. as he talked about leading the choir, as well as the purpose of it all. Terrance, along with Carlos E., are the directors of the choir here at ACI.



Terrance C. has been involved in choirs his entire life. In 2015, he came to ACI and immediately joined the choir. “When I joined the choir I saw that it needed some assistance.”

With the combination of Terrance and Carlos, the choir has been able to grow leaps and bounds. By having more help, the duo was able to take time and individually teach residents the intricacies of music, singing, harmonizing, as well as being able to hold notes. “I believe we have the quality of men that can do great things vocally.” Said Terrance, “We sing to bless others and touch them through our songs. We are affecting people 24/7, whether it’s on the yard or the dorm. The members of the choir are affecting people wherever they go.”

The choir hopes to one day be able to travel to other institutions, and eventually back to society, to show their talent and bless others.



Exploring the abstract—resident artists expand their minds

By Nathan R.

Art Cornell encourages freedom, through both his art and his carefree personality. It only stands to reason then, that he recently came to ACI to instruct Advanced Artists of Allendale in abstract art, or the portrayal of things in which the physical world plays no part. He seemed not to take himself too seriously, and that air of freedom translated well to an educational experience which isn't filled with dos and don'ts.

"I've told artists to stay away from people who are focused on all the technical terms," he said. "I'm just a plain old artist, and I simplify." While he focused on simplicity and unspoiled creativity, he ensured that the artists who were present realized that while abstract art may be a little outside the box, there are still guidelines that one should recognize, such as composition and the use of focus points to draw the viewer's eyes to where you want it to go.

However, while there is rhyme and reason applied to abstract art, that doesn't mean that everyone who views his art is a supporter. He said with a smile, "If I had a buck for every time I've heard, 'My child could do that,'" he joked, "I'd have a pile of money."

Art wasn't always his chosen vocation, yet after flunking out of college where he majored in Philosophy and Psychology, he entered Rollins College as an Art major. After 20 years as a professional artist he still struggles to rein in his inner critic and know when to say enough is enough. "I've trained myself to be okay with not being perfect, despite the fact that I'm a perfectionist," he clarified, "which most artists are."

For him though, art is more than a career. Art is an oppor-

tunity to empower others to loosen up and enjoy themselves, at least for a few hours. Perhaps the greatest demonstration of this ethic is the volunteer work he does for Memory Matters, a Christian-based organization located in Hilton Head. For the past three years he has served as an art instructor focused on helping those who



**He said with a smile,
"If I had a buck for
every time I've
heard, 'My child
could do that...'"**

~ Art Cornell

suffer from Alzheimer's disease and Dementia. He has studied Cognitive art in an effort to grasp what the brain is thinking by studying the art of his students. He knows that his work is bearing fruit by the results he sees each week. "For those three hours they are truly alive and laughing," he said.

He waxed philosophical toward the end of his interview, perhaps reminiscing on his days as an aspiring philosopher, as he quoted Buddha: "What you think—you become." He reminded the class that if they think they will fail then most likely they will. However, he encouraged them to remember, "It's a painting—it's not going to hurt you. You never know what's going to be intriguing—what's going to work and not work." 🖼️

Music: A vital resource in rehabilitation

Reaffirming music's contribution to stress-reduction and healing

By Terry C.

Many avenues of rehabilitation can be accessed, to some degree, through the creation, replication, or observance of music. While these methods have varying degrees of rehabilitative success, the advantages of this inexhaustible resource have been largely underestimated.

Emotional activators are the catalysts to the reduction of stress. As long as a particular emotion lies dormant, the type of stress with which that specific emotion is associated will continue to build. This, in turn, causes higher levels of tension.

Physics informs us that a great amount of force (stress) has the potential to cause an object (emotion) to diverge from its intended path, causing an undesirable physical reaction. In other words, when our emotions are called upon, high levels of stress can possibly misdirect our reactions into becoming harmful or violent, to either ourselves or others. For this reason, a consistent release of stress is ideal for optimal emotional stability.

Since music possesses the ability to elicit various emotional responses, it thereby has the potential to disperse unhealthy levels of tension. With that understanding, one can see that its value is immeasurable, while its costs are often free.

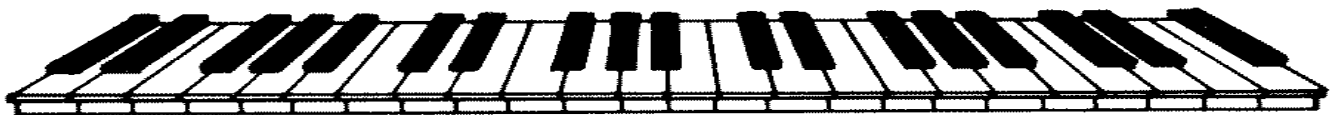
The fact is, music offers a dimension of healing that cannot be reached through any other means

One could say that music brings life to our passions, that it commands some authority over our temporary state of mind. If its message is one of encouragement and hope, it can be used to guide us toward creating healthy thought patterns.

At first glance, music might appear to belong primarily to the musician. However, complex melodies and lyrics are embedded in the minds of everyone. It is through familiarity with music that we understand a person's very mood can be altered as a result of that person hearing, for instance, a favorite song.

Aside from that, anyone can choose to sing any song at any time. This song can activate emotions, which otherwise would remain untapped. Through either the melody, or, more likely, its lyrical content, an avenue for stress diffusion is activated.

The fact is, music offers a dimension of healing that cannot be reached through any other means; its strength lies in its universal familiarity. In a place, like prison, where demand for change is high, and often efforts to assist that change are few, we can still effect change within ourselves, for ourselves, and for others, through the healing power of this thing we call music. 



Diablo's Last Terror

By Robert H., et al.

Once upon a time, in the small town of CHUville, there lived a mean bully of a pup named Diablo. Diablo spent his days roaming the streets, causing as much chaos as he could and dodging the law— Mr. Law, to be exact— the dogcatcher. Also in CHUville, there was another character, a feline friend of all by the name of Milo. Milo spent his time lounging in the sun, preening himself, and climbing neighborhood trees.

Now, most citizens of CHUville knew both Diablo and Milo and had come to form opinions of the two. They gave

Diablo ample space when they saw him to avoid his aggressive attitude, while they welcomed Milo's upstanding nature. Milo's always positive thinking only made Diablo more and more angry. Milo refused to allow Diablo to spoil his mood.

One day, as Diablo was coming from scaring a couple of kids down on Maple Street, he spotted Milo lounging in the shade of a tall, lofty tree. "I'll get that fancy do-gooder now," he thought, as he crouched low to the ground and tried to sneak up on Milo.

Continued on page 12

When the cows came home to ACI

By Nathan R.

Who knew that painting cows could be so much fun? Michele, an oil painter for 20 years, demonstrated that inspiration can be found in any model, no matter how ordinary others may perceive it to be. By the end of the four hour session with Advanced Artists of Allendale, the completed paintings were vibrant and filled with the soul of an artist—anything but ordinary.



Michele instructs AAA students

Her advice for the artists was to open their eyes and truly see what is available as inspiration. "If you walk outside and see the leaves on a bush, most of the time you don't really see them," she said. "When you pay attention, you see the variance of color; it's all about training your eye." Immediately fol-

lowing this advice she pointed to the ceiling of the John R. Pate Program Center, where the workshop was held, and brought attention to the way the light was reflected and absorbed by the various fixtures.

Her mantra to the students was, "Loosen up!" She repeatedly encouraged them to free their hands and their minds, to not become so attached to the finished product that they forget to have fun. In every word and action it was obvious that this was her life's passion. "I'm thankful to be able to sell my art and pay for the cost of materials," she said. She has fun with every brushstroke she takes, painting up to five or six hours a day, and sells her art in the Bluffton area to those who recognize her talent, and appreciate the love she pours into her work.

She always loved art, yet she never expected that she would one day lead others to make their own art come alive. As a child, she created art, mainly out of boredom, and remembers working with craft paint with little to no guidance. As an adult, she fell in love with another kind of art—theatre—and is still to this day appreciative of the level



Warden Newton gets involved

of dedication that it takes to make a theatre production a success.

Peering out from the resident artist's paintings, the soulful eyes of the cows told a story that couldn't be conveyed through words. At the end of the day, no one judged the work, or criticized the use of color. In fact, Michele encouraged a type of abstract expressionism that drew from the artist's creative mind rather than from reality. The students' minds were stimulated and expanded through the demonstration of loving what you do, and doing what you love, no matter how ordinary or imperfect others may perceive it to be.



Diablo continued from page 11

Slowly he crept, step-by-menacing-step, until he was just a few short feet away.

"Look out!" Sapphire the blue jay shouted as a warning to Milo, then flew away.

Milo woke with a start and saw Diablo ready to pounce. With lightning reflexes, Milo jumped and scurried up the tall, tall tree, mere inches away from the jaws of Diablo.

Diablo stood at the base of the tree and shouted every disrespectful word he knew at Milo, trying his best to get under Milo's skin.

"Come down here you flea bitten feline," Diablo shouted. "I need some Fancy Feast in my diet!"

Milo paid Diablo no mind. Instead, he looked around for an escape route. Finding none, he decided to lay down on a sturdy branch, resume his nap, and wait until Diablo's tan-

trum resided.

"Do you hear me, you furball? I'm just getting started. When I get my paws on you, you're going to be nothing but Kibbles and Bits!" Diablo barked up the tree.

While he ranted and raved, he failed to see Mr. Law creeping up behind him, dog catching net at the ready.

"Gotcha!" the dogcatcher said as he tangled Diablo up in his net.

"Oh no! Someone help me," Diablo pleaded, but everyone around pretended not to hear.

"That's it for you, Diablo. You're headed to Allendale, to work on your character and hopefully get a little respect," Mr. Law said as he put Diablo in the cage in the back of the truck.

Written by Robert H. and the students of Adult Ed. I, Daniel C., Brendon D., Rodel V., and Keith S.



Doodling with a purpose

Joan Moreau McKeever shares passion for artistic freedom

By Troy B.

A doodle is a disorganized, free flowing line scribbled on paper, canvas, or even walls in caves. It may come as a surprise that some works now considered to be masterpieces began as mere doodles. A noodle is what you do to the doodle, less random—it is patterns and color applied inside of it.

This is the “Zentangle Method.” It involves “tangles,” doodles, and noodles, in variations that, once framed, become a miniature abstract work of art. The purpose of it all is to discover a state of meditation, free from the structure that can, at times, confine an artist.

Professional artist Joan Moreau

McKeever, and guest enthusiast Amy Wehrman, Academy Manager at Art League of Hilton Head, hosted 15 students of Advanced Artists of Allendale (AAA). After a spirited introduction by Wehrman, McKeever instructed a creative workshop on the use of abstract art forms—doodling, noodling, and zentangle—to disengage from anxieties that stall artists and stifle creativity.

McKeever described her struggle with being “too busy doing important things. I like working real jobs and raising a family.” Although she had a background in music and art, starting at age seven, McKeever said she began to use her busy life as an excuse not to pursue an artistic path. Stagnating as an artist, and residing in New England at the time, she found no inspiration from winters she called, “cold and colorless.”

One vacation she opened a sketch book, and after fighting to overcome apprehension and lack of inspiration, she

revealed, “Doodling opened the door and I came pouring out.”

All of the AAA residents seemed engaged, eyes locked on the instructor as she led the relaxing exercise, unbothered by the noise coming from other events taking place within

the Program Center, and from the roaring of multiple gnat chasing fans.

The atmosphere actually provided the perfect amount of distraction, a microcosm of life. “I’ve taught, but never in a prison,” McKeever noted.

“It’s a different population, but all artists have doubts, all artists have introspective thoughts and reservations; it comes with art. We are all

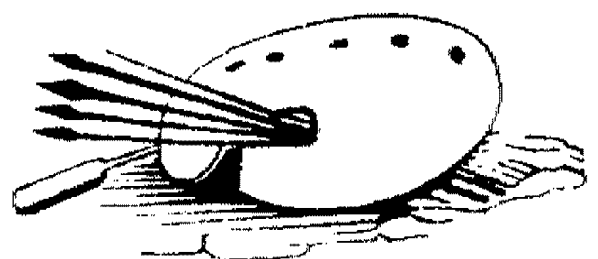
self-critical,” she added. “This exercise is to build self-confidence.

The event concluded with refreshments and conversation. Joan McKeever expressed her pleasure with the entire experience while also exhibiting her character, sharing, “I’m fortunate to have the ability to now do workshops like this. I actually didn’t have any reservations and believe we all have the responsibility to pay it forward.”



Joan Moreau McKeever, Amy Wehrman and Delane Marynowski instruct doodlers

“I’ve taught, but never in a prison,” McKeever noted. “It’s a different population, but all artists have doubts, all artists have introspective thoughts and reservations; it comes with art.”



Magic: *The Gathering* brings residents together

By Brian T.

At one time or another most of ACI's residents occupy their free time by playing games. The games may be *Spades*, *Chess*, *Scrabble*, *Monopoly*, or some other such "mainstream" games. But there is another game that is rapidly gaining popularity here. This "new" game is *Magic: The Gathering*.

Magic, as it is colloquially known, is what is known as a Collectable Card Game (CCG). It is sold in stores like baseball cards in packs of 15, 75, and 150 card packs that are made up of a random distribution of cards. The cards all possess different rarities that introduce a collectable aspect to the game. Currently there are more than 40,000 individual cards, while new cards are released every three months.

The game is played by building decks of no less than 60 cards. Players choose their own cards for their decks, and the high number of available cards make for almost limitless combinations and strategies. The result is a game where everyone knows the rules, yet the game changes each time it is played. It is as if you were playing *Monopoly* and each game had a different board shape, names of properties and prices, Community Chest, and Chance.

A few of ACI residents who are regular players of *Magic* answered a few questions about the game they know

and love.

Q: What is it about *Magic* that draws you to play it, rather than other games?

is no other game like it.

Q: How did you discover *Magic*?

J.R.: I played when I was a kid. However, when I came to ACI resident Terry B. introduced me to the game again, while another resident gave me more in-depth knowledge of the strategies of *Magic*.

J.W.: I played as a kid but only became interested while I was a resident of Lieber C.I.'s character unit, when another resident re-introduced me to the game.

Q: What do you like most about *Magic*?

J.R.: It has an almost perfect balance of strategy and chance.

Q: On a scale of one to 10, how well do you play?

J.R.: 6

R.B.: When I am practiced, a 7.5.

J.W.: 8

By the response of these three residents it appears that *Magic* is, to those familiar with the rules and strategy, a very popular game within our units. Outside in the free world *Magic* is the top CCG game. At virtually any comic book store in America you will discover people who love and play this constantly evolving game. 



John

R.: As a *Dungeons and Dragons* player, *Magic* has all of the challenge, fun, complexity, and strategy of *D&D*, but faster play. There is not a lot of time for us to play games so the fast play makes it ideal.

Robert B.: *Magic* has almost endless possibilities, making each game different.

James W.: *Magic* is unique; there

Pastels from two perspectives

Husband and wife team share their art

By Nathan R.

Don and Joyce Nagel met as art students at Rochester Institute of Technology. Now, after 63 years of marriage, and 18 years as an art instructing team, they came to ACI to share their expertise in pastels with the Advanced Artists of Allendale.



While they both specialize in pastels, a crayon-like medium that allows artists to impart much more texture than they are typically able to when using paint, their individual approach to art is quite different. Joyce explained, “Don’s style is more tight and meticulous, while mine is a looser style.” She hasn’t always been so free with her art though, as she related a memory from kindergarten: “I remember I was painting tulips and my paint was very thin. The tulips began to drip and I broke down into tears—inconsolable.” She then shared with a smile, “It’s funny, because now I like to make my paintings drip.”

“The agony and the ecstasy of our marriage parallels the art we create.”

~ Joyce Nagel

Don spent his life expressing himself artistically by working primarily in photography and printing. He served as a Senior Art Director and Creative Associate of Benton and Boyles in Detroit, MI. The company changed names seven times in the 20 years he worked there, but he sat at the same table; he was a fixture in an ever-changing world. He eventually retired from that position in 1986, and the couple moved to Hilton Head, where he freelanced until retiring for good in 1999.

By this time, Joyce had found her niche in the local art world and was busy teaching at Art League of Hilton Head. She liked to look at things with an artist’s eye, and communicate that vision to others. Her mantra that she found herself repeating in each and every class was, “Take a step back and get perspective, and ‘stop trying to smell your paintings!’” “The secret,” Joyce said, “is to never be completely satisfied. This is the key to art and life.”

Don never loses sight of how fortunate they are to have found success doing something that they love. He spoke of his love for pastels and the opportunity to display so much more texture than you can with a paintbrush, “We always feel so blessed to have this passion.” He shared that Joyce is the perfect partner in this craft because, “You need two people to do a painting—one to do the art—and one to tell them when to stop.” He joked, “Joyce tells me to stop, but I never listen.”



Their story is an idyllic one for those looking to get into art, but they explain that they are just one of many Hilton Head artists. Joyce reminds, “They don’t call them starving artists for nothing.” She cautioned against diving into the art world without first ensuring that basic needs are taken care of, because there are so many cautionary tales that illustrate the intense competition existent in the art world.

Joyce and Don described the journey they have walked together as “perfectly imperfect.” The life they’ve led was summed up by her closing quote, “The agony and ecstasy of our marriage parallels the art that we create.” 

Are we still in prison?

Decorating Committee adds a little color to the room

By: Nathan R.



something he never takes for granted.

Character Restoration Initiative Chairperson Camille Nairn gathers supplies to ensure that the team have what they need to properly celebrate any occasion. Either Ms. Nairn or Associate Warden of Programs, Yvonne Wilkins-Smith, communicates an idea or theme and allows the men to express their creativity. Ms. Nairn fully realizes the value of altering the impressions that guests may have formed prior to visiting the institution. “How guests are greeted, and treated, makes a difference,” she said. “If they see that time and effort has been given to set a tone or theme then they immediately know that someone cares.”

There is a group of artists whose work takes center stage at any event. Their mediums are balloons, paper mache, and streamers. Their canvas isn’t small by any means—in fact, their canvas is often an entire room. These resident artists are tasked with bringing aesthetic value and creativity to any event held at ACI, and they fully realize the importance of their mission.

Self-described Decorative Engineer, Michael V.T., said, “I’m more of the muscle, while these guys (pointing at his co-workers) are the talent. I feel like when we do our job well we show appreciation to those who are being celebrated.” The theme of appreciation remained constant as the members of the decorating team weighed in on how they view their roles in the grand scheme of ACI’s mission.

“I’m gratified to be a part of something bigger than myself,” affirmed Benjamin F. He shared that he had always had an artistic side, but the opportunity to give the gift of his art to others on such a large scale is

The mastermind behind the design, Bryan B., shared that providing a service to the residents, volunteers, and guests brings him purpose. He explained, “It shows the world that we’re not animals in cages—that we have value and something positive to share with the world.”



“The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short, but in setting our aim too low, and achieving it.”

—Michelangelo

“Backgrounds should be nothing more than the word implies: they should stay back.”

—Everett Kinstler

Sunset painting instructions

By Terry B.

Materials needed:

PAINTS

Alizarin crimson
Cadmium yellow light (or lemon yellow)
Dioxazine purple
Ultramarine blue
Titanium white

BRUSHES

2" Flat brush
6 Filbert bristle
4 Filbert bristle
2 Sable round

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Mist bottle with water
Gesso

Step 1: Mist your entire canvas with water. Use a 2" flat brush to apply some gesso to the entire canvas. If needed, use your mist bottle to keep the canvas wet. Dip one corner of the same brush (uncleansed) into ultramarine blue and the other corner into dioxazine purple. Begin at the top of the canvas and, using broad crisscross strokes, go down about two thirds of the canvas.

You should not have to reload the brush as long as you use natural movement and do not retrace your prior strokes. The top portion should be darker than the bottom portion of the two thirds.

Now, quickly clean the brush. Then mix cadmium yellow light with a pepper crumb (small dab) of white and use the same strokes, but this time go from the bottom up. Add a bit of alizarin crimson (pepper crumb) as you get closer into the blue-purple of the upper portion. Allow to dry.

Step 1



Step 2: After all is dry, use a #6 filbert bristle to scrub in some alizarin crimson, mixed with a pepper crumb of cadmium yellow light into the midway point of the canvas. Some of this should be scrubbed into the darker portion and then down into the upper portion of the orange-yellow. Save some of this orange mixture for the next step.

Step 2



Step 3: Using the #4 filbert bristle, mix another pepper crumb of yellow and white with your alizarin/orange mix from the above step, and scrub in at the bottom of the dark clouds and blend into the yellow areas.

Now, mix a touch more white into this mixture and scrub out with tiny concentric circles the area you choose to place the sun. **Do not reload the brush!** Dry brush scrub the color outward so that it blends and fades subtly into the other colors.

Next, pick up some of this same mix with the #2 sable round and place a few small bright touches directly under the cloud shapes, (silver linings). Allow this to dry.

Step 3



Continued on next page

Continued from last page

Step 4: Using pure white, go back to the sun area and repeat the step from step 3. Do the same for the silver linings, and **Presto!**

You have a sunset.



Step 4



Pottery helps shape men

Breaking the mold of incarceration

By Terry C.



Every art form has its peculiarities. But introducing a pottery class to SCDC seemed to place “peculiar” into a category all its own. Yet, this odd choice has been a great success, all thanks to one art enthusiast—Elizabeth Ringus.

Ms. Ringus, better known as “Liz,” began her adventure at ACI in October 2014, after an invitation from Friends for Life President Vikkie Scott. When she toured ACI and came to the present location of the pottery classroom, there was little more than a few stacked tables and boxes. Yet, in Liz’s mind, it was perfect.

Once the area was cleared out under the direction of former Warden John Pate, the next step was to find equipment for the class. Thankfully, Liz’s experience from 40 years as a potter gave her direction. She began her quest by asking a local church, Holy Apostles, for sponsorship. When word got out to the local community of her intentions, the calls to offer her assistance began to flood in.

One woman who was selling two pottery wheels for \$600, after hearing of the forthcoming program, offered them to Liz for \$500. Soon after, by what seemed like divine intervention, a young couple attending an art gallery displaying some of Liz’s work learned she was forming a pottery class in a prison. They graciously donated a kiln to the project. Liz affirms, “It was as if God was telling me, ‘this is what I

want you to do—to share your knowledge with these men.”

Yet, it wasn’t always easy. She said, “I was nervous on the first day—claustrophobic. The doors started closing and I was wondering, how will I get out?” The support of the men, though, quickly dispelled that fear.

Their desire to take this art with them to the streets, in Liz’s opinion, validated her efforts. “I would like to come here as long as I am able,” she said. “When I leave, I don’t want this to end.”



It seems that resident Mosi may be the one to carry the torch. After being in the class for two years, he had this to say: “I’ve learned so much from Ms. Liz, and I would like to teach others what I’ve learned.” He went on to say, “This is a life changer for me. I’ve done 26 years in prison and I’ve never met people like Ms. Liz and Character Restoration Initiative Chairperson Ms. Camille Nairn. They treat me like a human being.”

Liz’s hope is that those in the class will discover a talent that will allow them to supplement their income once they are released. Her words in closing sum up her mission: “This experience has changed my thinking about what prison is all about. Just like the clay, when you mess up, you can reshape it into something new and beautiful.” 

“This experience has changed my thinking about what prison is all about. Just like the clay, when you mess up, you can reshape it into something new and beautiful.”

~Elizabeth Ringus

Horticulture Program blooms

New “grounds” for improvement

By Terry C.

When most people hear the word *horticulture*, their minds are filled with images of hard labor and heat exhaustion. While this assumption may be accurate at times, according to Horticulture Security Corporal Yolanda Aldrich, it is simply not the case here at ACI. In fact, she describes the gardening program as, “providing excitement and inspiration for the workers that beautify the grounds of ACI.”

Since beginning her position, Ms. Aldrich has noticed improved social interaction between herself and residents. “I respect the men,” she said, “and help them work through hard times with family.” Yet, respect is not the only thing earned through this program. Graduates are granted a certificate for on-the-job training based on the number of hours completed. This certification opens doors for jobs involving greenhouses and landscaping, leading to opportunities for a better future.



Corporal Yolanda Aldrich

Still, support is essential to the survival of this program. One unique way that has been found to raise money is the work of Gregory “Curly” Patterson, who selflessly sifts through trash, separating aluminum cans for recycling. Staff may also lend support through the buying of flowers and fresh vegetables from the garden. The money collected from the cans (69¢ per pound) and staff purchases are used to buy seeds and fertilizer, items not provided for in the budget.

The aim of all programs here is the shaping of character and the cultivation

of job skills to be utilized upon release. This result is possible only through the efforts of people like Ms. Aldrich, who plant knowledge in the minds of men that, like a small seed, can grow and produce fruit to be shared with others.



Sunsets

By Tremmil G.

Alone in the upstairs Learning Center I sit looking through the bars. I watch as the last few rays red and orange hues of sunlight wave across the sky, as if they were fingers playing a piano. Breath-taken, I’m drawn back to memories of my youth, living on the side of rocky terrain in the mountains of Maine. The brilliant sun casting an orange glow, tasting the leaves of autumn. **A mountain on fire!**



Palette knife painting by Terry B.

Watching this phenomenon soon became my favorite pastime. I now smile at the paradox—that young boy with a view, juxtaposed with this incarcerated man gazing through the bars of a Medium Security Prison. Locations and times change while the sun remains steadfast. A sunset, so often unappreciated, brings me peace. I guess it’s the

little things in life that mean the most.



Jim Lewis teaches the art of texture

By Nathan R.

On Jim Lewis' visit to ACI to instruct the Advanced Artists of Allendale, he demonstrated to the students a new way of applying texture to their paintings. By using a spatula-like art tool, called a palette knife, he enabled the students to expand their artistic portfolios.



Palette knife painting done by Nathan R.

Lewis has been involved in art for as long as he can remember. As a kindergartener, his teacher noticed his talent, presumably in coloring, and told his mother that he would one day be an artist. Now he sells his art to nine different galleries in the local area, and teaches others how to make the palette knife their friend. Jim was always a good painter, but as he completed high school, his parents pushed him toward a more practical career in Marketing. However, he followed his heart and attended Columbus College of Art and Design instead. He spent many years as a freelance artist, doing children's books and whatever else paid the bills. Eventually he was hired at Dayspring Greeting Cards, where he worked for 18 years, and then spent 10 years with Hallmark.

In 2008 he transitioned to a life as a full-time painter, gaining an independence that offered freedom to pursue his dreams, but also came with a bit of uncertainty. However, he has never regretted that decision, or the

work involved—especially with the ensuing success that has come along with it.

"I believe it's a gift and a calling. It gives evidence to our Creator and His existence."

~ Jim Lewis

During his visit, he informed the class that the original 10" x 12" sunset painting, which he replicated on that day as a demonstration, was priced at \$1,000. He reinforced that art takes work and the development of skill. Some artists are born with natural talent that is off the charts, but other artists without as much innate ability may surpass their peers with work that is more refined, due to their intense work ethic.

This was Mr. Lewis' first visit to a prison, but you never would have known it by his cool, relaxed demeanor. "This wasn't always the case though," he said in reference to his pre-teaching days. "A friend of mine was supposed to teach a class, but admitted that she was too shy to go through with it. She asked me if I wanted to take the class over and I told her, 'I'm shyer than you are.'" He practically memorized a script for his first class, but has become more comfortable as time has passed, eventually becoming the seemingly natural teacher that the men saw during his visit.

He admitted that he doesn't spend his off days painting; instead, he loves to spend time in the outdoors, enjoying activities such as sailing, going to the beach, and walking nature trails. In those moments, when he isn't even thinking about his work, he is inspired without seeking it. All in all, he is happy with the career decisions he has made and is reminded that if you do something you love then you never work. He views his life's work as a testament to his faith, as he closed, "I believe it's a gift and a calling. It gives evidence to our Creator and His existence." 



Art4Hope hats donated to Guatemala

Lori Letts, of the Low Country Community Church (LCCC), a regular supporter of ACI programs, will have some extra baggage to carry with her on the church's annual mission trip to Central American country, Guatemala. Art4Hope crocheted a number of hats to be distributed by Letts and LCCC to children in their upcoming trip.

Watercolor splashes across the paper

Chris Dreyer provides professional instruction

By Nathan R.

Chris Dreyer has spent the past 15 years teaching others the dynamic medium of watercolor, but sharing his passion with the Advanced Artists of Allendale (AAA) took a leap of faith. Most people envision prison as an environment that stifles creativity and steals the soul of a prisoner, but Chris found something much different during his first visit here.



“I didn’t know what to expect,” he admitted. “Yet, you guys are warm-hearted and full of passion to be even better artists than you already are.” He explained that the motivation for his visit came at the prompting of Volunteer Delane Marynowski. “She is such a great person to have in your corner!”

“I didn’t know what to expect,” he admitted. “Yet, you guys are warm-hearted and full of passion.”

~ Chris Dreyer

Forty years after graduating from Southern Illinois with a degree in Advertising Design, he knows he is fortunate to have spent a lifetime pursuing his passion in such diverse ways. He explained that he transitioned to self-employment at 24 years old and feels like he has been retired ever since. He has spent seventy-five percent of his career in graphic design, but the other twenty-five percent has been spent painting watercolor, expressing the beauty he finds in nature through his art. “I like to go fast; watercolor fits my

personality,” he related. “There is a freshness to it that allows for spontaneity.”

“I travel all over the country taking photos and painting what I see,” he said. “I remember the places I’ve been when I look at my work—a lighthouse in Maine or a beach in California.” Most people have to rely on an imperfect memory to recall the moments they treasure, but all he has to do is view the extensive portfolio he has spent his life developing.

He completed three paintings on the day of his visit, relying heavily on thinned watercolor paint which he sprayed on the cotton fiber “paper” and then blended with a large brush. This technique sped the process of applying a wash to the paper. Once the paper dried, he was able to begin



working on the various layers of the painting with an underpainting already complete. The resident artists gathered around him gasped at the ease with which he made what many viewed as an intimidating medium seem so easy.

The AAA residents were eager to jump right in and apply the techniques Mr. Dreyer shared, and hours after his initial instruction many were still painting, having only pulled themselves away to grab a quick bite to eat before returning. At the end of the day, it was difficult to know who enjoyed the experience more. While packing his supplies for departure, Mr. Dreyer imparted, “I really enjoyed sharing what I’ve learned with you today.” Glancing over at Mrs. Marynowski, he expressed, “When you share a faith, it motivates you to serve.” 

Drawing on the right side of the brain

Discovering a creativity you never knew existed

By Nathan R.

Lynn Newsom is the first professional artist that visited Advanced Artists of Allendale, so no one really knew what to expect. Yet, even in their wildest dreams the resident artists never thought they would find themselves drawing with their eyes closed. Or stranger yet, that she would grab a garbage bag of old shoes and instruct them to get to work drawing them.



The method that Ms. Newsom teaches is for artists to gather all they think they know about art and toss it out the window, sort of like what she could have done with those old shoes. Yet, in every crease of old leather there is a story, and that is what her instruction attempts to convey. “What I love most about life is the diversity,” she explained. “Artists have a tendency to think their art should be like someone else’s. That is wrong thinking! Your talent is unique, and so is your art.”

Throughout the four-hour workshop she worked diligently to motivate the resident artists to loosen up and not to get caught up in their mistakes, but rather the lessons that are learned from them. She downplayed her own artistic abilities and admitted that she is a much better instructor than she is an artist, as 35 years of teaching art to K-12 students can attest.

Her message was consistent and encouraging as she

focused on the beauty of the art that is created. She noticed artists glancing at the work of others in the class and wasted no time in speaking up, “The most celebrated artists are those whose work is like no one else’s; so don’t judge your work by what anyone else is doing.”

Her delight in sharing what she loves with the world was evident in every gesture, every word she spoke. “I love teaching art development and the joy that it brings.” She spoke of the transformation that she has witnessed in children experiencing academic and behavioral issues: “I see kids come in frightened and discouraged and they leave with self-confidence and the belief that they can succeed.”

She has spent the first year of her retirement—you guessed it—teaching. She teaches free art classes to kids in collaboration with the Society of Bluffton Artists. When she isn’t teaching art she helps veterans find ways to resolve conflict in a peaceful way. This coincides with the efforts that she made while living in North Carolina to advocate for better mental health treatment for incarcerated veterans.



Resident artist Mosi applies her instruction

She closed her instruction by advising the gathered artists to continue to draw at every opportunity. She claimed that through their art they would begin to see the world differently. “When you draw a tree,” she said. “The next time you see it, you see it more beautifully.” 

Art with teeth, claws, and a little slobber

ACI's Dog Grooming Program guided by a master

By Brian T. and Nathan R.

When you think of art, what comes to mind? Painting, singing, dancing, pottery, dog grooming? Dog grooming!?! Yes, dog grooming! Volunteer Tara Farmer, professional groomer since 1995 and instructor of East Coast Grooming School explains that dogs are a most irregular canvas that lives, breathes, and *moves* at the most inopportune times.



She contended that each dog that returns to its owner after a grooming is a work of art that displays your skill, or lack thereof, to the world. She explained, “Speed is not as important as correctness.” She related that grooming is all about symmetry and balance—using your skill with scissoring and blending to make the animal “look right.” Some dogs are easier than others, as some body types are more symmetrical. However, for those dogs that are a little bit less than perfect, it is up to the groomer to shape the fur to hide the defects in body types.

She has guided ACI's Muttmate/Meowmate grooming program since 2015 and has certified 200 hour groomers and 400 hour groomers, ensuring that the program and volunteer dogs are groomed in a professional setting, while also imparting a viable career choice to residents in preparation for release.

“Happiness is a road to travel,
not a goal to reach.”

—Florence Reindl

After students complete the Introduction to grooming curriculum and pass a safety test they are given the opportunity to begin active grooming. Once they complete that process and are certified with tools Ms. Farmer advised, “The best way to learn is to put your hand on a pair of scissors and try.”

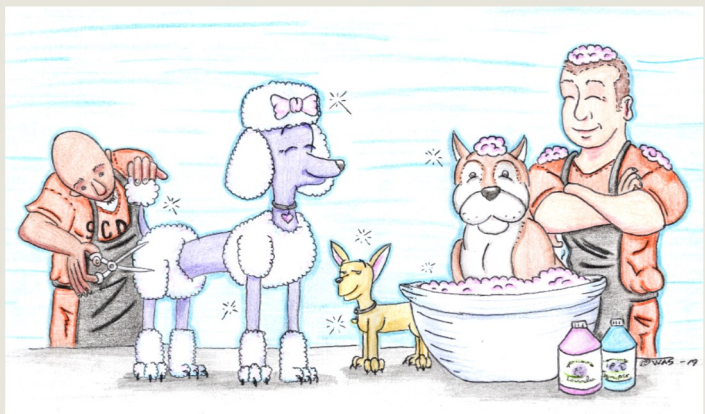
“The best way to learn is to put your hand on a pair of scissors and try.”

~ Tara Farmer

ty to begin active grooming. Once they complete that process and are certified with tools Ms. Farmer advised, “The best way to learn is to put your hand on a pair of scissors and try.”

Ms. Farmer's daughter, Erin, graduate of preeminent grooming school—Nash Academy of Animal Arts—followed her mother into the grooming field, and together they serve the Bamberg community through their mobile grooming service. Erin visits ACI's grooming program on occasion and offers her help to the class, as she shares a different perspective through her expertise in show-cuts for competitions. She worked for a hardware store prior to grooming and declared without hesitation, “I'd rather work with dogs. I've worked with humans before, and dogs are better.”

If you believe that you would like to apply your art skills to a living, breathing, work of art then sign up for the Muttmate/Meowmate program and join the Intro to Grooming class that is offered on Bamberg A-Wing. In the meantime you can learn more about the techniques and application of grooming skills to the business world by reading *Groomer to Groomer* magazines. 



By Adam S.

If you can visualize it

By Troy B.

If you can visualize it, Bamberg-A residents can produce it. Look into the hobby craft room on any given day and you may see a wide variety of creative activities taking place—from painters creating a masterpiece to wood crafters designing jewelry boxes.



Tracy Lee works on leather craft



Jeffery K. works on wood craft

While hobby craft is available to all residents, Bamberg-A side has the distinction of having the only hobby craft room equipped with lockers, saws, air compressors, and other tools required for the various crafts. Liaison Tracy L. is the attendant, a role he described as both an honor and a privilege. “This room was partitioned while the program was in its infancy,” Tracy said. “It was given under the condition of a zero tolerance policy by then-Warden John Pate.” That zero tolerance policy meant not one incident would be tolerated, and Tracy affirmed that residents have honored the trust that has been placed in them by ensuring that there has never been a problem.

Tracy shared that at the present time, quilting and crochet, which fall under the umbrella of hobby craft, are two crafts in which donated materials allow for indigent residents to participate. There is also the Art4hope program, which allows residents to use donated materials to craft gifts for underprivileged and sick children.

Tracy emphasized that there is an ever-present family environment that has been created amongst the artists. He described the knowledge passed, even between different crafts: “Sometimes I look over and notice what another artist is doing; it inspires me to try new things.”

He reminded that like so many programs that are available at this institution, we are blessed to have it. “This is an outlet, another opportunity and privilege to those in the leadership dorm of Bamberg.” 

Editor’s Note: To get into hobby craft, yard wide, send a request to Mr. Dunbar, the Hobby Craft Coordinator. It is required that interested residents have at least \$25 in their account to purchase needed supplies.

“Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine, and at last you create what you will.”

—George Bernard Shaw

“Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.”

—Langston Hughes

“I believe that nothing can be more abstract, more unreal, than what we see.”

—Giorgio Morandi

Resident quilters give displaced pets a little warmth

By Richard B.

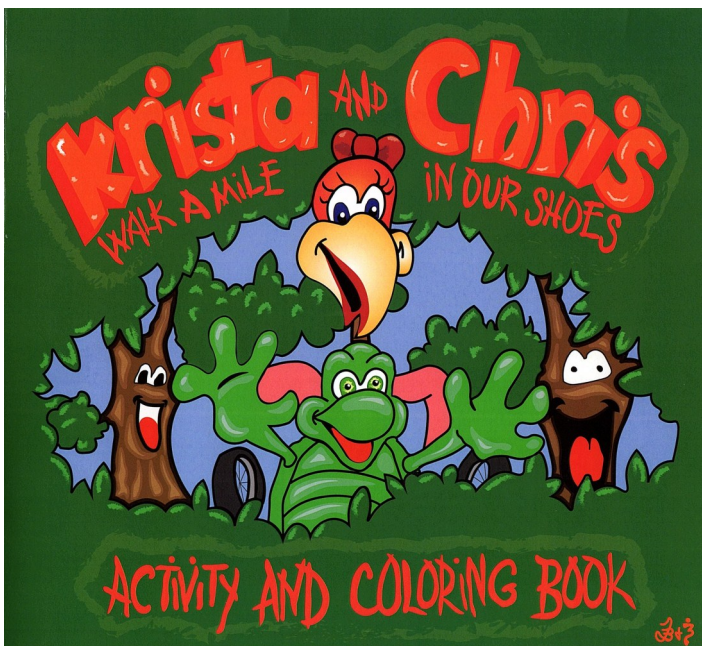
On May 30, 2019, the quilters of ACI donated their time to a national project for the Kennel Quilts Foundation. Led by volunteer Nancy Bommer, the residents set out to make 50 quilted animal pads for pets that have been displaced due to national disasters. That number will be added to the over 480 pads already stored in Columbia that are awaiting shipment to needed areas.

The Kennel Quilts Foundation, located in Jacksonville, Florida, provides quilted pads and blankets for animals temporarily displaced due to disaster-related events across the U.S. With all of the severe weather that has been threatening states lately, the demand for these much-needed quilts is high. With the quilters of ACI working diligently along with more than 6,000 volunteers across the country, many displaced pets will get to feel a little more at home.



Nancy Bommer, who began sewing as a child and has been quilting since 1992, has overseen more than 130 incarcerated men as they've learned the art of quilting. "I love my work here! We have fun every day," she said. Quilting is not the only thing she teaches in her Thursday class—the skills of patience, cooperation, and self-esteem are also developed as each quilt is made.

The quilts that are made by ACI residents are donated to nursing homes, shelters, and to anyone who needs them in the surrounding communities. Mrs. Bommer's quilters, along with her crocheting class, work toward the goal of helping even more charitable organizations in the future. Many of the residents involved never imagined that they would be quilting or crocheting, but with the opportunity to give back to society they have embraced the chance to be providers to those who cannot provide for themselves. 



“Krista & Chris Walk a Mile in Our Shoes” Activity and Coloring Book was inspired by youth with special needs at a local summer camp known as Camp Sunshine. The idea and story was written by a community coach, young emerging leaders transitioning out of systems of care/justice, and illustrated by Terry B., Kenneth N., and Christopher R. of ACI's Art 4 Hope program, a program dedicated to providing sick and underprivileged children with inspiring artwork.

Residents treated to a little night music

By David Y.

Resident songwriters recently enjoyed the rare privilege of performing their works accompanied by a string quartet made up of classically trained musicians. Musicambia, a Brooklyn, New York based organization that brings music education programs into prisons, sponsored a songwriting workshop with a small number of ACI songwriters and the ACI choir and worship band. The workshop was followed a few days later by a concert for ACI residents, at which residents performed their original works backed up by the lilting strings of the Attacca String Quartet.

Nathan Schram, Musicambia founder and executive director, organized the two events, fitting them into the tour schedule of the Attacca quartet. Schram plays viola in the quartet alongside Julliard-trained Amy Schroeder, Keiko

Tokunaga, and Cellist Andrew Yee. The quartet has played together for 16 years and have performed on four continents.



The residents' original works spanned genres from country to hip-hop, but all carried positive messages of hope and redemption. Resident Phillip M. used his song, "Beauty in My Eyes," to tell how God has intervened in his life. Charlie "Scooter" R. performed a song he had originally written and performed for his mother for Mothers' Day 2012, titled "Mama's Battered

Knees." Scooter sang with tears in his eyes about how his mother's prayers helped him survive drug addiction.

Carrying on their mission to bring music education into prisons, Schram and Musicambia plan to return to ACI later this year with their first scheduled event planned for October. 

Warm heads, warm hearts

By David Y.

Resident John S. and volunteer Nancy Bommer's Quilting and Crocheting class are working together to reach beyond the fences to help those less fortunate. Hoping Every Lonely Person Is Never Cold (HELP INC.) is an organization created to provide warm hats that have been made by residents of ACI to the homeless across North and South Carolina.



John S. works studiously

This effort is a family affair for John. His sister, Julia Sears, assists the cause by passing hats out to homeless vets in

North Carolina, while his mother Joyce offers hats to those receiving warm holiday meals in the Charleston area.

John S. and his group have been recognized for their efforts and thanked by the Pastor of Second Chance Victory Church of God in North Charleston. He doesn't do it for the recognition though; for him the motivation comes from a desire to give back. "You gotta make a difference in the world as you pass through it," he said. And he does so one hat at a time. 



Blooming opportunity for residents

By Randy S.

There will be a new class in floriculture and floral design starting soon for the residents of ACI. This class will offer residents a marketable job skill that could translate into a new career for those returning to society. Floriculture is defined as the cultivation and management of ornamental—and especially flowering—plants, while floral design is commonly referred to as designing flowers, ornamental plants, and other elements in an attractive or artistic display.



The class will use the funds from the Monsanto Fund grant, a grant designated to aid community farmers. In

conjunction with the Horticulture and Sustainable Living Programs residents will learn how to grow flowering and ornamental plants, and receive instruction on how to create appealing floral designs—like those from a local florist. While this may not always be thought of a “masculine” career choice, there are lots of men in this lucrative business.

Those with experience growing flowers and working in the floral/florist industry are encouraged to apply, as they will have the opportunity to assist in the course’s instruction. An interview will be held with those who sign up, and residents with relevant experience will be given some priority for the limited number of available spots. For those interested, look for sign-up sheets to be posted in the dorms in the near future. 



“Acts of the Word”

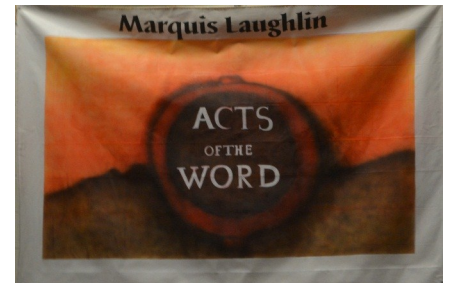
A journey—there and back again

By: Adam S.



events actually took place. “Grace beyond our comprehension,” Laughlin explained. “That’s what it’s all about.”

First, he shared the last moments of Jesus’ life, prior to ascension. Then he carried the audience forward as the Apostles Barnabas and Paul journeyed to Antioch, spreading the Gospel of Christ along the way. Following his act, the Hollywood, CA native told the crowd how God had led him away from show business, and into the fulfilling mission that has changed his life—and the lives of many others along the way.



Whispers of excitement spread through the crowd awaiting Marquis Laughlin’s “Acts of the Word” event. The anticipation was palpable as residents prepared to journey back in time to 1st century Jerusalem where they would witness the establishment of the first Christian church.

Marquis Laughlin, a theatrically trained performer, has spent the past 20 years sharing his message of grace, hope, and the Word of God with audiences around the world. On July 20, 2019 in the John R. Pate Program Center he used his drama skills to present the book of Acts in a way that had residents feeling as if they had been there when the

Laughlin shared his convictions, struggles, and personal experience with the audience, and how all of these factors have affected him along his journey. “Life is a rental—everyone gives it back,” he shared. “I ask myself, ‘Is this the last time I’ll be able to teach, or will this be the last time listeners will have to hear the Word?’” He left those in attendance with that question, emphasizing the importance of his passion, and the decision that each in attendance has to make. 

From Learning Center to recording studio

Die Jim Crow—A prison album seeking to alter the black experience

By John M.

Music producer Fury Young recently found unique talent in an unexpected place—the upstairs learning center of ACI dorm Barnwell A-wing.



From there, resident artists found themselves submerged in a world of rhythm and vibration. For a time, a prison classroom was transformed into a live studio, as residents were surrounded by state-of-the-art audio equipment and sound technicians, who focused on bringing the residents' own tracks to a new level.

Fury Young, the mastermind behind this project, was as enthusiastic as the residents, as he and ACI resident artist Kenneth N. collaborated to record an album. Hailing from New York City, Young originally had a passion to work in movies and following his high school graduation he pursued that dream.

As time passed, he sought to further his education. He attended a community college, where he studied the historical impact of the integration of the Little Rock Nine. Dr. Eckford, the teacher of that class, impacted Mr. Young, and the trajectory his life would take, through the way history was brought to life in the classroom.

Mr. Young recalled other people who have sculpted his beliefs and ideals, such as his parents, grandparents, and close friend, Pridgen Alexander. He choked up as he elaborated, "Mr. Alexander was a familiar face. He was

once Muhammad Ali's bodyguard. Now he is half-paralyzed and sick. Despite it all, he's positive, and in hard times, he laughs." For those who are seeking to break into the music industry, or just to make it through life, he shared, "Sacrifice and be more focused than you have ever been."

Shortly after his experience with Dr. Eckford, Mr. Young traveled to Los Angeles, where his interest transitioned to music. Through his music he intended to serve not just as a producer, but rather as an activist influencing social justice. Music became a platform from where he could deliver his perspective of the black American experience: how many incarcerated black men and women are misunderstood and hit the hardest by the system that governs prisons. This passion has led him to his fourth prison album here in ACI.

Kenneth N. described the energy in the room during the taping as "high-octane." He said, "For the featured artists, it was the first time that they've actually sat in a recording booth. Seeing the equipment all around made the temperature rise, which set the tone for room-shaking performances."

Known at ACI for his perspective, extraordinary speaking ability, and artistic prowess, Kenneth N. jumped at the chance to serve as a collaborator on the album. His life experiences, which included an early exposure to music, birthed within him a desire to disperse a message of hope and mental liberation by illustrating the struggles with which many are all too familiar. He further hoped to spotlight the future that awaits those who seek success, despite all of the chips that may be stacked against them.

Kenneth N. considers this album to be

a passion project—one that shines light on the racial inequality and segregation of our history, yet is still an ongoing story. His goal is to confront and expose these actions and how they are exhibited within the penal system.

Both Young and Kenneth N. gave many thanks and appreciation to Mr. John Pate, who first introduced the idea to Young that he visit ACI. They also thanked Warden McKendley Newton for allowing the project to take place, and by being open and supportive of this opportunity. "He could have simply said NO!" said Kenneth N. "Some people, even those not incarcerated, may never have a chance to let the world hear their voice."



Fury Young provides guidance to resident musicians

Kenneth N. encouraged readers of this publication to "never allow where you are to defeat where you want to go. Never give up on your dream, because with the right hustle and a great opportunity, you never know what doors will open for you." He concluded with a thought: "You may have to put up with being uncomfortable to make your dream happen or to help another individual accomplish theirs."

For more information about the project and the upcoming six-song EP visit diejimcrow@furyyoung.com.



Showtime at Allendale—July

Talent shows up and shows out

By Troy B.

The call went out and residents came in droves! ACI's Talent Show returned July 19, 2019 after an extended hiatus. Residents braved sweltering humidity and fanned away hordes of pesky gnats but remained engaged and supportive—exemplifying the featured character trait of respect.

The monthly event allows residents to compete, displaying their sometimes hidden talents. One resident jested, "I never knew ACI had so many singers—so many singers." The comment addressed the large number of singers that performed after the forum for performances had been so long denied to the population.

Although the crowd decides the winners, organizers Program Coordinator Preston Ellison and resident Kenneth N. sat in the back of the Multipurpose building looking like Simon Cowell and Howie Mandel from America's Got Talent. Erick "E" W. played the role of both emcee and

"Sandman" from Showtime at the Apollo, by referencing the three-minute time restriction, laughingly saying, "Wow the crowd or sit down!"

Highlights from the four categories included a hilarious stand-up comedy routine by Calvin W. that had the crowd rolling, resulting in him taking top honors in the spoken word/poetry category. Art winner Kevin B. won for a painting he titled, "Life," explaining its purpose by saying that its bright colors represent life. A duo named "Realization" won the singing category with a self-titled original song, and the rap category went to Phil and T. with an original rap titled, "We are One."

Kenneth N. expressed pleasure at seeing the room filled with appreciative residents, and he hopes to continue in that fashion for the months to come. 

Showtime at Allendale—August

Talent steps back onto the stage

By Jalen O.

The gnats were back in full effect, but so was the patience of the residents, as the monthly talent show kicked off on August 14, 2019. Many residents and staff alike came out to witness the variety of talents being presented. The fans were blowing, and the stage was set as emcees Erick "E" W. and "P.C." brought the crowd to life.

Lt. Williams, Ms. Richardson, Program Coordinator Preston Ellison and resident Kenneth N. were also in attendance—sitting in the back looking like a judge panel from one of the many TV talent shows.

The winners of the four categories included two time winner Calvin W., who once again brought the funny with a

hilarious stand-up routine which left the crowd gasping for breath. Adam S. won the art category with a pencil sketch of a Batman inspired piece. The Rap category went to Russell H. L. won the singing category with the climax of the event that left the whole crowd on their feet. "That's a real song!" Said Shelton B. of Barnwell unit. "It's relatable; that man has true talent."

Wayne F., whose wife is an inmate advocate, closed the event with a message of encouragement. "Keep striving for greatness; never stop. When you do go home," he said, "let your actions speak for your change, not your words." 

"The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away."

—Pablo Picasso

"All art is at once surface and symbol."

—Oscar Wilde

Editorial Staff

Editor-In-Chief	Nathan R.
Associate Editor	Robert H.
Contributing Editor	Brandon J.
Photographer	Scott A.
Graphic Design	Nathan R.
	Randy S.
Circulation Manager	Treffe B.
Reporters	Richard B.
	Troy B.
	Terry C.
	Robert H.
	John M.
	Jalen O.
	Randy S.
	Adam S.
	Brian T.
	David Y.
Contributors	Terry B.
	Tremmil G.
	Phil L.
Cartoonist	Adam S.

Through His Nail-Scarred Hands

By Phil L.

I was lost and all alone
 In this world so full of sin
 I begged and I pleaded
 No one would let me in
 Until the day I met Jesus
 Then I began to understand
 Just how much He loved me
Through His nail-scarred hands
 <Chorus>
 His nail-scarred hands
 How they bled for you and me
 How He was nailed to the cross
 On a hill at Calvary
 He's the one who truly loves me
 He knows my heart, He understands
 He gave His life for me
 Through his nail-scarred hands
 Those nail-scarred hands upon that cross
 How they bled for you and me
 From my Christ and Savior
 On that hill at Calvary
 How I long to see my Jesus
 Just beyond the Crystal Sea
 And touch the hands of my master
 The one who died for you and me
 <Repeat Chorus>

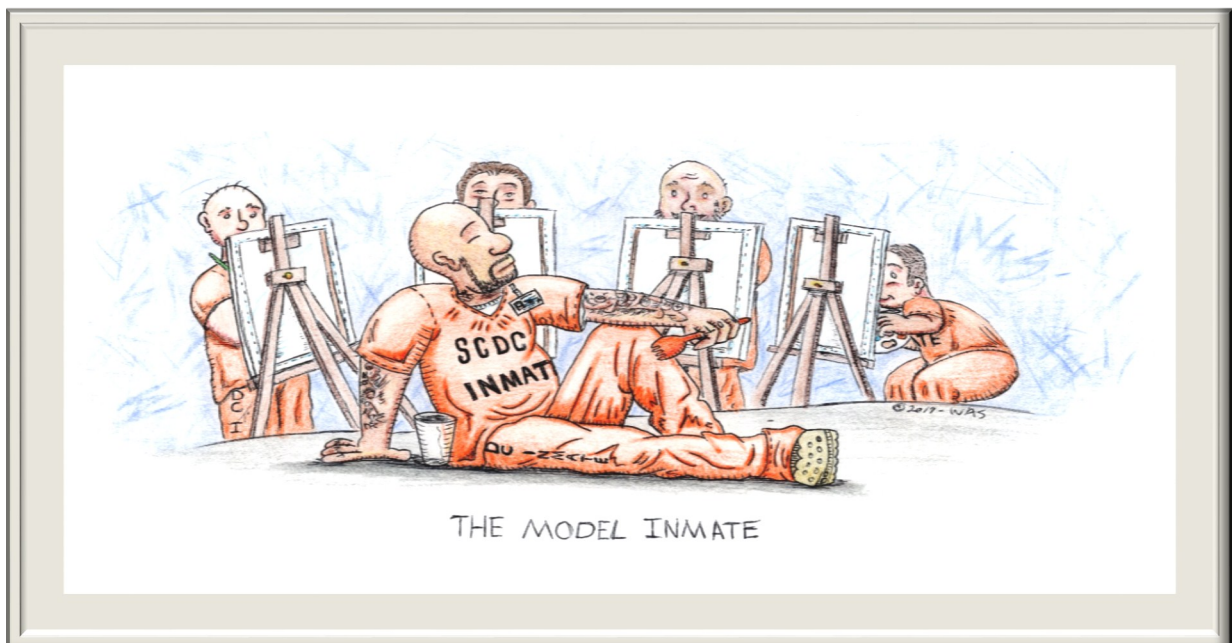


Illustration by Adam S.