

# Colonial



# COURIER

June 2023



Construction of the new fine arts wing continues. This portion of construction and renovation is expected to be ready for occupancy sometime in the fall. Renovations of the front hallway will continue well into the 2023-24 school year. During the summer, the main offices and counseling offices will share space in the senior side of the cafeteria, and summer school classes will be housed in the tech center. The gym will remain open for sports during the summer months except for when the gym floor is being refinished.

# Colonial



# COURIER

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# Seniors appreciate creativity, freedom in art classes

by Ava Kwiek

Art is a subject of creativity, freedom and an escape from reality.

"I decided to take art because it is something I

really enjoy, and I am able to do during school as an actual class," said Alexis "Lexi" Adkins, 12.

Adkins has taken high school art for three years and

wishes to continue her path in learning more about the arts, more specifically in the digital area. She plans to go to an art school to become a graphic designer.

"My favorite part of being in art is the people," said Adkins. "It's like one big art family."

There are some challenges to being in an art class, but as the years go on, Adkins overcomes these challenges.

"The easiest part [of art] is the idea," said Adkins. "You get the idea and make it in your own way."

"The hardest part is the time and effort one has to put into what they make, especially when there is no motivation for that day," said Adkins.

Along with the motivation needed, art takes time and patience. With patience comes art styles, too. Trying to perfect one's art style can take years, yet each and every artist manages to work their way around it in the end.

"When it comes to art styles,

Artwork by Alaina Cao



Alaina Cao, 12, plans to transfer the art skills that she has learned into her study of architectural design, which she considers "art adjacent."

I prefer a more artsy/cartoonish style,” said Adkins. “I prefer that art style because, in that way, it looks more bubbly and not as realistic.”

As she goes from CHHS to college, Adkins leaves behind wise words for students.

“One thing I would like to say is that I love all of the people I have met in art, and they have made inspirational art, even if it is simply a duck,” said Adkins.

Another senior who has been taking art for her past years in school, Alaina Cao, 12, plans to keep her art close to her as she goes to college; however, if she had to choose another class instead of art, she picked something digital.

“Look, computer science; it’s interesting,” said Cao. “Well, I would take web design because web design is very creative and it requires artistic abilities. Also, tech draw; I like tech draw a lot. It’s just like drawing, but you’re not being as creative.”

Cao believes that studying art helps her practice drawing because if she didn’t have any other reason, she probably wouldn’t do it; however, motivation pushes her along the way.

“I’d say mostly just the accomplishment of making something with your own hands,” said Cao about the aspect of art that she enjoys the most. “That’s why I also like computer science. I like making things and following rules, so when the rules are very broad, it’s even more fun.”

Instead of going to an art school, Cao has another plan in mind: architectural design.

“I’m going to school for architectural design, so I guess that’s art adjacent,” said Cao. “I didn’t want to just go to art school because it requires more than just talent. You have to talk to people, and deadlines, yeah, and I’m not that confident in myself for me to do that. I was like, well, this requires

creativity, and also I have already learned some of the programs I’d need because I’ve taken tech draw and stuff, and I was like, ‘Alright, let me just do this.’ And it seems interesting. Like, my art, mostly, is just me copying things off of a photo. So, copying something that I’m actually supposed to copy, like a house plan, is actually fun.”

For her, the hardest part of art is when she gets prompts she doesn’t want or like since it can be really restrictive and you can only make a specific thing for that prompt. As for art styles, though, Cao prefers to stay on the realism side of things.

“I lean more into realistic, but I like cartoony,” said Cao. “I try to draw realistic, but I can’t do it all the way because I’m not that talented, so I just do it cartoony.”

Both artists have set plans in their lives, and they’re ready to take on the world one sketchbook at a time.

# Staff members celebrate special events

by Kiyah Wilson

As the school year comes to an end, the CHHS faculty and staff have many reasons to celebrate. Getting engaged, being married, and expecting a child are all special events that should get a congratulatory acknowledgment.

One teacher who recently got engaged was Ms. Teresa Fenn, Environmental Science teacher.

“One thing I was most looking forward to about getting married was being with the person I love,” said Ms. Fenn.

She got proposed to at Pamplin Park. Her fiancé is a historian, so he showed her around the whole park and then happily proposed at the end.

“Be patient and wait for the right person to come along,” said Fenn.

Another teacher who was recently proposed to is Ms. Skylar Ward, World History 2 and VA/US History teacher.

Photo courtesy of Skylar Ward



**Ms. Skylar Ward's boyfriend proposed to her during a trip to Ariz., where they went to attend a Taylor Swift concert. The two have been together since 2018.**

She got proposed to in Sedona, Ariz., where she and her soon-to-be husband visited to attend a Taylor Swift concert.

“I was hoping it was going to happen because we went on a trip to Arizona,” said Ms. Ward. “It was like a big trip, but in the end it was really shocking and was a surprise.”

Ms. Ward met her soon-to-be husband in late 2018.

Another staff member who experienced a wonderful celebration was Mr. Terry Lufsey, paraprofessional.

“We both went to CHHS and couldn't stand each other,” said Mr. Lufsey about his wife. “She thought I was a jerk, but I was really just very antisocial.”

Mr. Lufsey and his wife have been together a little over two years. They met in early summer of 2021.

"I don't know if I was expecting to get married at this age," said Mr. Lufsey. "I couldn't catch feelings or emotional attachment."

"My wife and I have already been making plans to handle our schedules with a new baby in the house," said Coach Watkins.

March. The baby weighed about 10 pounds. He is Bryce's second child.

"There is a very big change in having more than one child," said Mr. Bryce. "We had another child right as we got into the routine with our first, so it throws in a bit of a wrench."

Someone else who welcomed a blessing into this world was Mr. Christian Dimaio, Honors Geometry and Advanced Trigonometry/Algebra teacher. He welcomed his third bundle of joy into this world in late January.

"My children had mixed emotions about it being another child in the house," said Mr. Dimaio.

Mr. Dimaio and his wife's first reaction to finding out they were pregnant again was extremely joyful and excited. His two sons are now hoping for one more younger sibling.

"Now that there is another boy, they want more boys to make it even," said Mr. Dimaio. "They were very happy it wasn't a girl."

Photo by Sara Davis



Mr. Terry Lufsey and his wife were married in March after dating for almost two years.

That all turned around when he went on his first date with his now wife.

An additional staff member who's celebrating is currently expecting a bundle of joy. Coach Correy Watkins, English 9 co-teacher and elementary school physical education teacher, is expecting a baby girl in late August.

"I'm excited to see her because I've never met her before," said Coach Watkins about the new baby. "I kind of just hope that she finds things she likes and grows into them."

Another staff member, Mr. Andrew Bryce, drama teacher, just recently welcomed a baby boy in late

# Gunder shows versatility in coaching

by Allyson Cobb

"I'm a walking story for athletes," said Mrs. Misty Gunder, Health/PE 10 teacher and girls' varsity soccer coach.

Mrs. Gunder is a versatile person in many different ways. She is able to go from teaching students to being taught like one; not only that, but she is able to go from

sport to sport and coach each of them with dedication and hard work.

Mrs. Gunder has coached many different sports: varsity girls' soccer, JV girls' soccer, varsity football mentor, middle school boys' basketball, cross country, girls' basketball and JV girls' basketball.

"I coached a boys' basketball

team, and we won the championship, which meant the most because you do not typically see female coaches in male sports," said Mrs. Gunder.

On and off the field, Mrs. Gunder puts her all into everything. Not only is she managing being a coach and a teacher, but also she is earning a degree in school administration. Balancing soccer with work and personal life can be challenging, but Mrs. Gunder does what she needs to do.

"I guess when you don't have a choice, you just do what you have to do," said Mrs. Gunder.

Soccer player Makenzie Gilgannon, 10, appreciates Mrs. Gunder's opinions and perspective and wouldn't change a thing about her.

"I wouldn't change anything because she gives you a different perspective on life," said Gilgannon. "She makes sure to support you throughout any decision."

Mrs. Gunder impacts

Photo courtesy of Misty Gunder



Za'marion Mason, 10; Mrs. Gunder; Pierre Spencer, 10; and Qmar McLeod, 11; have gotten to know each other through the football mentorship program.

students' lives in many ways.

"Mrs. Gunder has not only improved skills within the sports but showed me how to make an impact on someone's life," said Gilgannon.

Mrs. Gunder's greatest strengths are the biggest assets to her teaching.

"The biggest thing to me is staying relevant with the times and knowing what's going on," said Mrs. Gunder.

Mrs. Gunder has helped not only her students and athletes but also her fellow coaches.

"She brings a level of discipline and experience to the table," said Ms. Sarah Crinkley, Biology 1 and Environmental Science teacher. "She is a huge asset because she is so intuitive."

Of course, with Mrs. Gunder, Ms. Crinkley and Ms. Kaylie Melanson working so closely together as soccer coaches, there is the potential for disagreement; however, Ms. Crinkley believes that there isn't any conflict amongst them.

"I don't think we've ever disagreed," said Ms. Crinkley. "We discuss but always come to an agreement."

With the small free time Mrs. Gunder has after working and coaching, she does some of her favorite activities.

"With that little bit of free time I have, I like to hunt and fish. I also like going to the beach," said Mrs. Gunder. "My favorite place to be is Mexico, but my second favorite place

to be is New York City. It's the city that never sleeps, but the busyness doesn't bother me because I'm so used to it."

Mrs. Gunder believes she is an open book.

"I hope people know that I'm transparent: what you see is what you get," said Mrs. Gunder. "I'm very open and will tell you what's on my mind."

Photo courtesy of Misty Gunder



Mrs. Gunder enjoys traveling with her family. Her favorite place to visit is Mexico, and New York City is her second favorite.



# Bauer to continue her teaching career in South Carolina

by Allyson Cobb

Thirty-three years of teaching hasn't been enough for Ms. Deneen Bauer, Algebra 1 and Data Analysis teacher. Although she is retiring from CHHS, she plans to continue her teaching journey in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

The kids she teaches and her love of teaching has kept her going all of these years.

"I enjoy being around the students, and I enjoy seeing them mature and grow during their four years at CHHS," said Ms. Bauer.

Ms. Bauer has many friends at CHHS, including Mrs. Beth McBryde, Algebra 1 co-teacher. They've been teaching on the same hall, side by side, for 11 years.

"I love her, and I'm going to miss her so much," said Mrs. McBryde. "I hope she keeps doing what she's doing because she is great."

Mrs. McBryde also considers Ms. Bauer one of her closest friends at CHHS.

"She's just a lot of fun," said Mrs. McBryde. "The times

we've been able to spend talking about our friends and kids are the best."

Ms. Bauer decided to be a teacher for many different reasons. Not only does she love teaching, but also she loves the kids she teaches.

"I love kids," said Ms. Bauer. "I just love being around them."

Not only does Ms. Bauer have co-worker friends, but also some students consider

but she is so excited for her to start this new chapter of her life.

"I mean, I don't like the fact she's retiring," said Sizemore. "She needs her time to herself now, and I respect that and wish nothing but the best for her."

Ms. Bauer has experienced many meaningful moments within her years of teaching.

"I enjoy being around the students, and I enjoy seeing

Photo courtesy of Deneen Bauer



At the CHHS retirement dinner on May 31, Ms. Crystal Traylor and Mrs. Beth McBryde spoke about Ms. Bauer's teaching legacy and their friendships.

her a friend. Jada Sizemore, 12, considers Ms. Bauer "to be a kind-hearted person who always puts people before herself."

Sizemore is going to miss Mrs. Bauer when she's gone,

them mature and grow during their four years at CHHS," said Ms. Bauer. "It was fun going to work and being able to see my own kids throughout the day."

# Breckenridge retires after 28 years of teaching

by Avery Pack

In every school there are many teachers who work toward the well being of every student. Mrs. Cynthia Breckenridge, the choral director, is no different. Mrs. Breckenridge is retiring after 28 years of teaching, with 15 years of that being at CHHS.

A successful school day for Mrs. Breckenridge consists of teaching students to love

what they are doing.

“You know it’s a successful school day when you leave knowing that you and your kids had a positive learning experience and you smiled a little along the way,” said Mrs. Breckenridge.

Mrs. Breckenridge has impacted so many students’ lives, specifically, Arriyah Carson, 12.

“Mrs. B. has helped me

through some really rough times, and she is just amazing person,” said Carson.

A reason Mrs. Breckenridge works so hard to help the students is because of the the hard work they put in.

“I’m really going to miss the young students we have here,” said Mrs. Breckenridge. “They keep me young.”

Her students are saddened to see her leave and start a

Photo by Terri Moody



Back row (L-R): Elissa Sorensen, 11; Makayla Beagle, 11; Brianna Parrish, 8; Adien Royers, 9; Trace Sage, 8; Riley Ford, 9; Isabella Inniss, 9

Front Row (L-R): Sofia Barrett, 8; Arriyah Carson, 12; Mrs. Breckenridge, Gabryela Wolfe, 12; Cheyenne Polimine, 8; Mikayla Tiller, 9; Tailor Russell, 8

In choir but not pictured: Samiyah Cherry, 8, and Angel Jones, 8



Mrs. Breckenridge's sister attended the CHHS retirement dinner with her at Meadowbrook Country Club on May 31.

new chapter, but they are thankful for the memories they have made.

"She motivates not just me but everyone to push to be the best they can be and to showcase their talent," said Carson. "My best memory with her is when we play the

boomawhackers."

Mrs. Breckenridge found her way to CHHS because her husband accepted a job in Hopewell.

"I just applied everywhere, and I got the job two weeks before the first day of school,"

said Mrs. Breckenridge.

Mrs. Breckenridge has made many memories with students and other faculty members.

"My favorite memory has been the concerts, seeing the kids feel good about what they are doing," said Mrs. Breckenridge.

Mrs. Breckenridge has inspired so many students to be better and have a good work ethic.

"I'm going to miss her positive energy that she always brings no matter what," said Carson.

Mrs. Breckenridge is retiring to have more time to spend with her family. She spends a lot of time at church and volunteering for her community.

"I'm very involved at church," said Mrs. Breckenridge. "I provide items to homeless shelters, and I go on walks with my husband. You know, normal things."

Mrs. Breckenridge does not have any set retirement plans yet.

# Rush leaves CHHS with love in her heart

by Jenna Mason

"I love math, and it was really hard when I was growing up, and when I went to college and got a secondary degree, I saw how everything fit together, and it all started to make sense," said Mrs. Rene' Rush, Algebra 1 teacher. "Then, I was like 'man, this is so cool. I want everyone else to see how cool it is.'"

Starting off her teaching career at L. L. Beazley Elementary School in Prince George, Mrs. Rush has taught a total of 34 years.

"I taught fifth grade elementary school for 10 years, and then I taught at the middle school for 15 years," said Mrs. Rush. "I taught math, and I really liked it, but I really liked algebra, so I liked focusing on that subject instead of seventh grade, which covers so many subjects, and it was too much. Plus, I liked the age group at the high school."

Mrs. Rush started at CHHS during the school year

Photo courtesy of Rene' Rush



Family is something that is very important to Mrs. Rush. One event that Mrs. Rush was happy to be a part of and that she will cherish forever is her daughter's wedding.

2015-16. Since then, she has held a multitude of positions, including cheerleading coach, Beta club sponsor, summer school teacher, BLAST coordinator and SOL remediator.

Throughout her years of teaching, one person that Mrs. Rush made a connection with was Mrs. Danielle Kochuba, SPED teacher.

"I have known Mrs. Rush since, gosh, I guess, middle school because her son and my husband have been best friends since, like, birth, and I've co-taught with her for three years," said Mrs. Kochuba.

Out of the years of teaching with Mrs. Rush, Mrs. Kochuba has made many memories. One of her favorite memories

is a time in class that Mrs. Kochuba would never forget.

"I was up at the Promethean board, going over the warm up, and a student said something that was funny, so I turned around and gave my quick, sassy remark," said Mrs. Kochuba. "Then, Mrs. Rush grabbed my hand and said, 'Did you ever think that you'd be best friends with your husband's best friend's mom?'"

Not only has Mrs. Kochuba made many memories with Mrs. Rush, but she's also learned so many valuable lessons from her.

"I've learned to incorporate songs no matter what you're teaching," said Mrs. Kochuba. "Songs make everything a lot more fun, and I will never be able to forget slope because I'll have that engraved into my head because it's her favorite thing, as it should be."

As Mrs. Rush moves on from CHHS, Mrs. Kochuba will continue to stay in the position of SPED collaborator for the next Algebra 1 teacher who comes.

"I will still be the SPED

collaborator with whoever gets hired," said Mrs. Kochuba. "I'm going to be sad, and it'll be hard to replace Mrs. Rush because there is no replacing her: it's impossible, and she's irreplaceable. Mrs. Rush is just an amazing person, and I will be incredibly sad for her not to be here with me, but I am excited for her new beginning."

After teaching for 34 years, Mrs. Rush has made impacts on many of the students and staff of CHHS. One student that stands out to Mrs. Rush is Catherine Alderson, 11.

"I have known Mrs. Rush for about three years," said Alderson. "She helped tutor me in math in eighth grade, and then I had her again my freshman year for Algebra 1."

Alderson's hardest subject is math, and when she met with Mrs. Rush, she was able to understand the concepts more because of the time Mrs. Rush put in to help her. Even outside of being a student of Mrs. Rush's, Alderson would receive help whenever she needed it.

"When I had Mrs. Rush, she always made sure I had a good understanding of the material before I would leave her class, and if I didn't, she would take time out of her day to give me extra help, whether it was during lunch or after school," said Alderson. "She even helped me when I wasn't in her class anymore. I felt like I could go to her for anything, and I'm very grateful to have had a connection like that with a teacher."

Not only was Mrs. Rush there for Alderson academically, but also she was there for her athletics and even attended some of Alderson's cross country meets.

"One of my favorite memories with Mrs. Rush was when she came to my cross country meet," said Alderson. "She made a poster for me and held it up every time I ran by. It was so special having her there, and it meant a lot to me. She would also wish me luck before a lot of my meets."

As Mrs. Rush's time at CHHS comes to an end, she is

Photo courtesy of Rene' Rush



**Pictured from left to right: Brett Rush, Tom Rush and Jack Manon. Mrs. Rush enjoys spending time with her family during her free time. Mrs. Rush is excited to have more time spend with her family during her retirement.**

reminiscing on some of what she'll miss most about the Colonial Heights community.

"The love, oh my gosh, there's so many students that you mentor, that you love, that you bring home, and, then, the people that I work with have been amazing," said Mrs. Rush. "Those are the two hardest things to leave, like, the relationships that exist right now. I'm like

'gosh, I need to stay for three more years until these kids get out of high school.' So, those relationships are very special, and I don't want to lose that."

Mrs. Rush is very excited about her plans for retirement, which will be to work at a private school where there is little use of technology. She's also excited to spend more time with her

dogs and family.

The final piece of advice that Mrs. Rush has to offer students is that hard work leads to success.

"If you believe you can do it and you work to achieve your goals, and work is the key thing there," said Mrs. Rush. "You work hard to achieve your goals; then, you can do anything."

All in all, Mrs. Rush is proud to have worked for CHPS for so long. She's loved her time at CHHS and she's sad to be leaving, but she's excited for where this new chapter of her life will take her.

"I love Colonial Heights because I went to school here," said Mrs. Rush. "I went to school at Tussing the year it was built, and I was a senior when the [tech center] was built. I love the small community, and I love that everyone knows everybody. Some people don't like that, but I think it's awesome. I love seeing students out in public, and I'm going to miss all of that and the connections."

# Vince trades in technology, robotics for retirement

by Ava Kwiek

Sometimes life doesn't always go as planned; that's how some teachers ended up at CHHS, but do any of them regret it? Mr. Victor Vince, Technology and Robotics teacher, doesn't.

After teaching for about 11 years in the CTE department, Mr. Vince is putting down the torch as a teacher and making his way into retirement.

"In reality, I was running a construction company and could not find people to work," said Mr. Vince. "I really do not believe I chose to teach; it is more of a calling. I teach because of my students."

Mr. Vince has spent 30 years of his life teaching many people of different ages; most of this time was when he was in the U.S. Navy teaching the sailors the skills they needed to save not just their lives, but the ship, as well. Over these years, he's gained many happy and meaningful memories, many being of his students.

Between his students learning new skills and figuring out problems on their own with his guidance, Mr. Vince loves whenever his former students come to visit and check in or stop him in a store to just thank him for believing in them.

While he was close to his students, he was also close to a couple of fellow teachers, one of whom was Mrs. Tammy Young, former childcare teacher, who now teaches at North Elementary School.

"Mrs. Tammy Young has been my friend, my confidante and my mentor," said Mr. Vince. "She is an amazing educator."

Mr. Vince and Mrs. Young

have known each other ever since the latter of the two started teaching Early Childhood Education in 2016.

"Our classrooms were in the same hallway of the CTE building," said Mrs. Young. "Plus, we would eat lunch together with some other teachers every day in the teacher's lounge and then in my room when COVID hit. What made us friends, though, was Mr. Vince's big heart and the way he cared and made me feel welcome at the Tech Center. I came to the Tech Center as an elementary teacher where I taught first grade and kindergarten for over 10 years at Tussing Elementary. High school was much

Photo by Ava Kwiek



Mr. Vince believes that his students learn more from their failures than they do from their successes.

different, and he took me under his wing and helped me when I had questions, listened when I needed to vent or cry, gave advice when I asked, and shared stories about just life in general."

Mrs. Young believes that Mr. Vince has many positive traits that make him an effective teacher.

"Many people are a little 'scared' of Mr. Vince: his size, his big voice and his straightforwardness," said Mrs. Young, "but, if you take the time to get to know him, you will see an individual who cares big, who is loyal, who promotes a hard work ethic and who wants the best for everyone around him."

Mrs. Young has multiple great memories of Mr. Vince from when the two used to work together, such as dressing up together on spirit days, decorating their Christmas doors, their afternoon talks and her preschoolers thinking that Mr. Vince was "Santa Claus."

She believes that she has received much valuable advice from Mr. Vince;

however, there is one time that still holds a grand place in her heart today.

"When I first came to the Tech Center, I was really missing my kindergarten team of co-workers at Tussing, and he gave me a children's book called 'I Am Small,'" said Mrs. Young. "The story was about a small penguin, which was my kindergarten mascot for years at Tussing, trying to make it in a big world. But, in that big world, the penguin could do anything if he/she had that 'one person' in his/her corner (a friend, a teacher, a family member, a co-worker) that believed in them! I was that small penguin coming to a 'big' and much different world (the high school), and Mr. Vince believed in me that I could be successful in my new position as the ECE teacher where I worked with high school students and preschool children."

Despite the challenges he came across while teaching, Mr. Vince always figured out a way to overcome and solve them.

"Technology is changing at a very rapid rate, and teaching it is extremely challenging," said Mr. Vince.

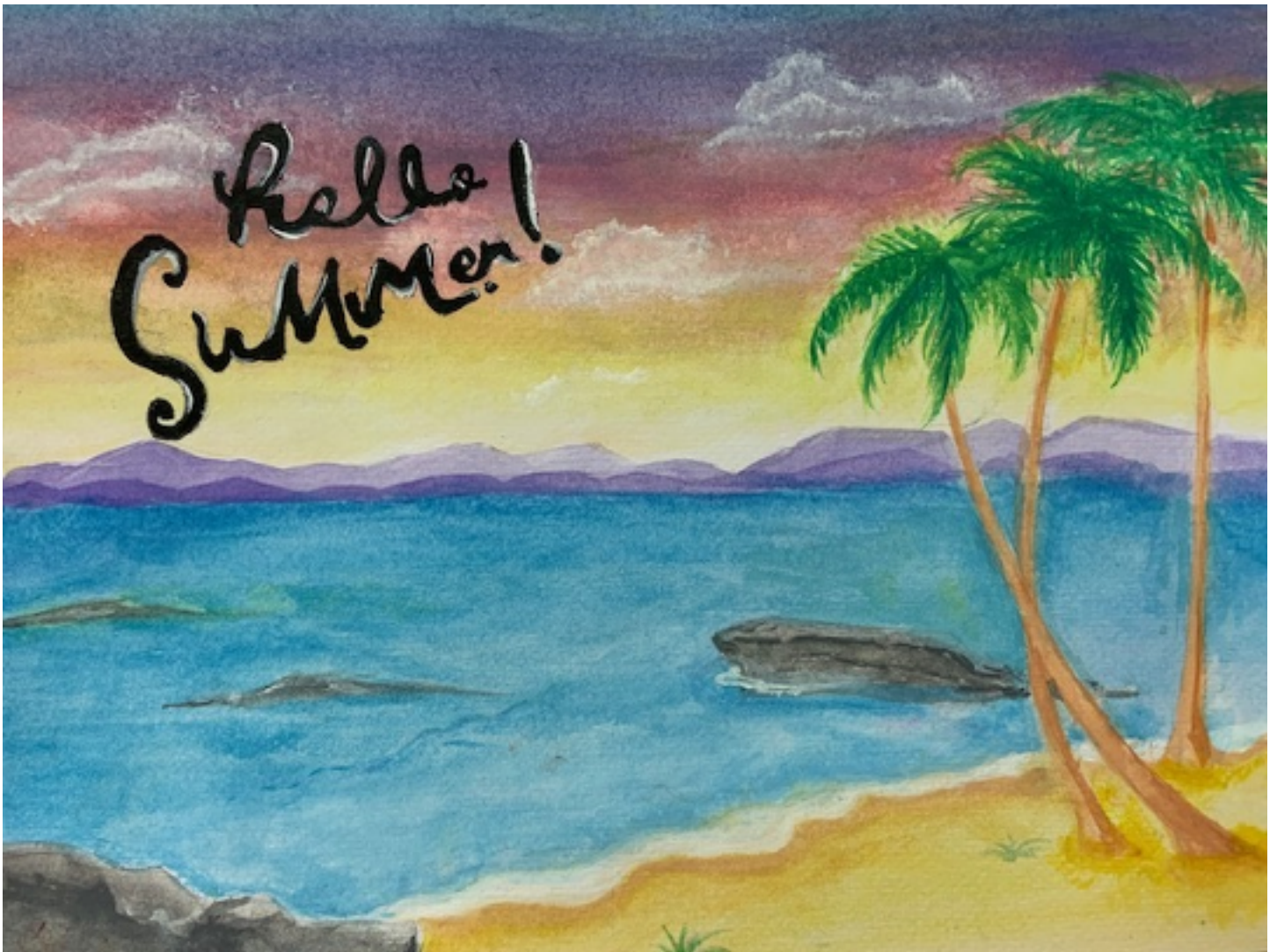
He didn't let technology, constantly growing and never stopping, hold him back from making sure his students succeeded.

He believes that he doesn't actually teach; instead, all he does is guide discovery. He never provides the answers, but he assists his students in solving problems through their own efforts.

Mr. Vince has been there for his students, his "kids," for many years, helping each and every one of them along their way to success, and he believes that he only succeeds when his students themselves succeed. However, to him, failing provides more insight, more knowledge and provides students the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

"We learn more through failing than we ever do from succeeding," said Mr. Vince. "You learn more using a pencil than you ever will using a computer."





The staff of *Colonial Courier* wishes you a relaxing, fun & safe summer!