

# Back to school with Buster Brown

Virginia's tax-free weekend has passed. For thousands of students, school is back in session. And it's still August.

My children are grown, so shopping for packs of colored pencils isn't on my agenda, but I find myself reflecting on my back-to-school days.

Yes, I know it's a cliché, but things were simpler then. And, for me, the ritual of heading back to those small wooden desks with a hole in the upper right corner to hold a bottle of blue Sheaffer ink was sweet.

By third or fourth grade we were expected to master the use of a fountain pen. I don't even think ballpoints were invented. If they were, we didn't use them. For us, it was pencils, always to be kept razor sharp, and fountain pens.

We had to fine tune the art of filling a fountain pen by gently mastering that tiny, slim silver lever on the side. Pull a little and not enough ink went in. Pull too much and your fingers bore the permanent mark of your mistake.

And then, of course, there was Stephen. I'll never forget the image of him occasionally drinking the ink because it gave him a blue smile. Stephen was quirky.

Rulers were your basic plastic variety with the tiny white numbers that eventually wore off and crayons were gradually getting packaged in bigger and bigger sets. For most of us, the varieties of crayons stopped at 24.

Scissors were small, rounded and metal and didn't cut very well.

Marbled composition books were very much in vogue as they are today but mine were all black. There were no colors to choose from.

All my folders looked the same. I knew them only as PG folders and they were cream colored, illustrated with sports figures in a cinnamon-colored ink. Lisa Frank (the designer of those cool psychedelic folders) wasn't even born then and Tweety Bird and company were just beginning to make appearances on cereal boxes.

Zippered pouches for holding all the precious pencils and pens were around but many of my classmates used old cigar boxes. These actually worked better because there was no zipper to break or plastic to get smeared with broken lead.

Backpacks were around but they were used for hiking and canoeing trips. We had book bags and, if they had a strap, it was slung on one shoulder. They had lots of buckles

and pockets but the best part was the large plastic handle centered on top. Strutting down the street (most of us walked to school then), your book bag would gaily swing from side to side suspended by that handle that rarely, if ever, broke.

Taking your lunch to school was always risky in those days. Brown paper bags were acceptable but having a metal lunch box was much better. The tricky part was the thermos. Rarely did liquids make it through the morning without leaking into the rest of your lunch.

My mother preferred the red plaid variety, but I was insistent one year and arrived on the scene with a brand-new metal lunch box featuring Superman. For weeks, this served as lunchtime entertainment as everyone took turns reading the cartoon bubbles and turning the box to see newspaperman Clark Kent throw off his glasses and fly into the air in resplendent caped attire.

As today, books had to be covered, but book socks were unheard of.

My father was a designing engineer and he always offered, and I always expected, that he would be the designated book coverer. I would leave my books on the dining room table with the plain brown paper or sometimes clear plastic. In the morning when I got up, the books would be neatly covered and piled ready for me to take to school. He did a beauti-

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ful job, measuring and folding each corner just so.

While my father handled anything "technical," under which school supplies and covering books fell, my mother took care of new shoes.

My mother and I would walk down Wisteria Avenue and into the Hollywood District where the movie theater and several department stores were located.

My mother's favorite was Miller's. I remember its creaky wooden floors and fussy sales clerks but, in one corner of the store, was the shoe department. It was there that we would look at Buster Brown shoes.

For my mother, these were the shoes that she knew and trusted. They were made of leather and you could polish them over and over and always get a shine. The suited shoeman would have me stand on this thing that resembled a scale, but I think it was an X-ray machine as he would always say, "they fit perfectly and she has room to grow."

Year after year, I would start the new school year with black and white saddle shoes or cream and brown sad-

See **BUSTER BROWN**, page 23



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**Fauquier Times**

"We have enjoyed 65 wonderful years together."



Sixty five years ago high school sweethearts **Mary Angeline Compton** and **Albert Conway Thorp**, natives of Warrenton and Fauquier were married August, 14, 1934 in the Warrenton Baptist Church by the pastor Rev. Guy C. Heyl. Although raised in the church together, years later, Rev. Heyl revealed his doubts about the longevity of the marriage.

The couple was brought together through their respective best friends that resulted in a daily courtship for three years. Mrs. Thorp put her husband through college after which he taught music and became principal of C.M. Bradley Elementary and H. M. Pearson Elementary for a total of 26 years. Mrs. Thorp was employed as a secretary/aid with a CPA bookkeeping firm for 31 years that mutated into Surles and Associates. The Thorps have since made their home in Warrenton and spend their winters in South Florida.



## Middleburg Humane Foundation names new director

### Staff Reports

The Middleburg Humane Foundation has named Rose Rogers executive director of the nonprofit, which is “devoted to the rescue and rehabilitation of abused animals and conquering the cycle of abuse through humane education.”

Rogers was one of the original incorporators of the foundation and has been a member of its board of directors and a volunteer since its inception in 1993. She succeeds board member Polly Gault, who held the post for the last three years.

The foundation’s new facility in the western part of Marshall is scheduled to be completed this month. It will be one of the region’s most diverse animal shelters, capable of housing cats, dogs, equine, livestock and small mammals.

“All of us at the Middleburg

Humane Foundation see an opportunity to have a big influence on the surrounding communities through education and programmatic support and are thrilled to have Rose lead us in this exciting stage of growth,” Polly Gault said. “I’m excited about her next steps for the foundation, and I can’t wait to see where we can go.

A spokesman for the Middleburg Humane Foundation said Rogers’ hiring comes as the foundation implements a plan of strategic growth in grant-funded programs, development and outreach. It has held successful fundraising events, expanding into Loudoun, Prince William and Fauquier counties, in addition to the annual gala. It has also arranged a new partnership with the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech to expand the foundation’s spay neuter and

shelter management programs.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to be a part of the Middleburg Humane Foundation team, which has done so much for the animals in need. The foundation is poised to develop its vision and build on the tremendous momentum of the past 25 years. I look forward to working with the team to bring the foundation to the next level, making a positive difference for even more animals and people living in our area,” Rogers said.

Rogers has more than 30 years of professional experience. She will be leaving her current position as business manager at BSI Professional Services and Solutions Inc, based in Reston. She holds a bachelor’s degree from George Mason University with a double major in accounting and business management.

## Free arts workshops for adults over 65 offered

### Staff Reports

Are you looking for fun opportunities to socialize in your community? The Hylton Performing Arts Center is part of a collaboration that has received a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant that is supporting a series of free 10-week arts engagement workshops on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from Sept. 3 to Nov. 7, 2019.

If you are eligible, you will be randomly assigned to participate in one of three opportunities:

- Social and Well-Being Workshops
- Ukulele/Guitar Workshops
- Ballroom Dance Workshops

Each session is 45 minutes in length. These workshops are designed to study how arts engagement benefits active adults 65 and older and improves overall health.

Participants who complete the workshop series will receive vouchers for free Hylton Center tickets to select performances. If you are interested in the free 10-week workshops listed, please call 703-993-5970.

The grant aims to measure health-related quality of life, physical performance, cognition, social engagement, and self-perceptions through testing after participating in the workshops. Staff will examine these measures three times: before, immediately after, and one month after the workshops. Each testing session will last 90 minutes. Participants who complete the workshop series and testing will receive vouchers for free Hylton Center tickets to select performances.

### BUSTER BROWN, from page 22

dle shoes or burgundy loafers. One year it was black MaryJanes. But they were always Buster Browns.

Inside the shoe where your heel would sit was a round decal bearing the image of the little Dutch boy with his dog.

I looked forward to our trips together to shop for school, the smell of her cologne, the brush of her coat against my cheek and walking out of Miller’s with a brand-new pair of Buster Browns.

My pencils sharpened, my books meticulously covered and my fountain pen not leaking, I was ready to walk down the hallways and find a new classroom each year.

I felt sorry for Stephen as he never mastered the fountain pen routine. He did, eventually, lose his taste for ink but then couldn’t keep away from that pasty white glue.

Reach Anita Sherman at [asherman@fauquier.com](mailto:asherman@fauquier.com)



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# Memories of Mama

My mother's name was Aurora. Her funeral was held on what would have been her 94th birthday a distant July ago. The service was small, and I was fine until the notes of "Malaguena" wafted through the air.

When my sister phoned to say that our mother had died, my sadness was overshadowed by my relief. Her last years had been difficult and without dignity for her.

A series of strokes had left her unable to walk and her entire left side was paralyzed. Her vision, which was already bad, worsened and she wasn't able to hear.

Yet, her mind was intact, and even though she tended to wander down paths of the past, she still was aware of her deteriorating condition and frustrated by her inability to do the things she loved.

She could only read for small periods; the letters appeared jumbled when she was able to make them out, and her fingers had long ceased to be able to crochet or hold a pencil long enough to fill in the blanks of the daily crossword puzzle.

But there was a time when mother was strong and her fingers were nimble.

Some of my earliest memories are of my mother carefully fingering brilliant white gloves onto my hands when I was very small. They were the final touch to my new navy-blue coat that had a large white collar, edged with scalloped lace. I also had a white beret that she stylishly pushed to one side.

My greatest pleasures were found in the shopping trips that we took together.

We'd get on a faded red bus that wound its way through our neighborhood nearly on the hour and head to downtown Portland some 30 minutes away.

Once there, she rarely released my hand, and we would go to our favorite haunts, which included Old's and King and Meier and Frank department stores.

On one trip, she bought me a pale green sweater that didn't ride up my arms. I remember the polished buttons. She also bought me a new lunch box for school. She liked the one with a Scottish plaid design but let me buy the one plastered with Superman comics.

Then she took me to the toy depart-

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ment and let me choose a new doll. She loved dolls, especially the ones with porcelain heads and fancy dresses.

When our shopping was done, we'd usually go to the basement cafeteria of Meier and Frank and have clam chowder and egg salad sandwiches. When I was older, we'd frequent the Georgian Tea room and have a glass of wine with our meal.

I had my first cup of coffee when I was about 12. It was heavily sedated with cream and sugar. Later I drank it black, like my mother did.

One of my mother's particularities was that she absolutely would not drink coffee from anything other than a cup and saucer. She rarely would use a mug, and under no circumstances would she touch Styrofoam.

She loathed the sight of a ketchup bottle on the table.

One wintry day as I was walking home from St. Rose Catholic School, I caught a glimpse out of my left eye of chubby Steven Cooke abreast a hill crafting a snowball. I should have followed my instincts and crossed the street but I did not. Once his snowball was done, he let it loose, and it hit me hard on the forehead.

I still wasn't too big to sit on my mother's lap. As she wiped away the tears streaming down my face, she told me not to be offended by the uncivilized acts of uncouth and naughty boys, and then she offered me a Cadbury bar.

That was another of her favorites - chocolate, and the richer the better.

Mother loved the taste of butter. She explained to me that she'd rather spend money on butter than beauty parlors. In her mind, butter was a much better bargain.

My first piano lessons were with a bitter little nun that had bad breath and scared me to death. She'd place her bony hands atop mine and scream at me when I didn't get a note right.

My mother wanted me to learn to play and found a different teacher that lived near us. I loved Mrs. Booth and her two furry dogs and

flourished under her direction.

I would sit and play the piano for hours while my mother would read or knit. Her favorite composer was Chopin, and even though she couldn't read music, she knew when I'd made a mistake.

She was a consummate reader and loved poetry, particularly Wordsworth.

She discovered Carlos Castaneda before I did when I was in college and introduced me to Wallace Stegner.

My mother loved the ocean, as I do now. She cherished the roar of the sea's waves, its icy fingers gripping the shore and the sound of seagulls - to her a wild symphony of nature. She'd collect small shells and I can remember her smile at the discovery of an intact sand dollar. She enjoyed watching others fly kites and she always had a good book to read when she wasn't walking barefoot in the sand.

Our bathroom always had a different scent because my mother loved soaps. But she refused to use grocery-store brands. She told me that they were harsh and would burn your skin. Instead, whenever we went on our shopping trips, she would buy a box of special soaps. I liked them because the bars were always larger and sculpted and I never got burned or had red skin after using them.

There were a lot of things about my mother that bothered me, and as I was growing up, I knew that I

would be different from her.

She never drove a car and never worked outside the home, even though she had been a teacher before she married my father. Her gradual loss of hearing was annoying, and she was always nagging me about standing up straight and wondering if I was happy.

She had no financial sense and no understanding of the business world. She had no interest in politics and couldn't understand why I wouldn't wear my skirts longer.

But my appreciation for her catapulted upon the birth of my own daughter. Now, a mother myself, I could comprehend the awesome responsibility of raising a child and wanting to do it with heart.

I'm a big girl now and have three children of my own and three grandbabies. I certainly learned to drive a car and have jobs and, on occasion, balance a checkbook. I understand about dying and death and loss.

But whenever I am cuddled up with a freshly sharpened pencil and a crossword puzzle - or hear a prelude by Chopin - or reach to take the ketchup bottle off the table - or add butter to a recipe - or bathe with lavender soap - I remember Mama and wish that she and I could share a cup of coffee together again.

Reach Anita Sherman at [asher-man@fauquier.com](mailto:asher-man@fauquier.com)

## Mother Nature challenges participants to live a healthier life

NATURE, From Page 26

### Adult program slated to start this fall

In the fall, Verdun will begin its SOAR project (Success in Overcoming Adversity in Recovery), which is an eight-week, adult collaborative effort designed to provide a supportive community service for tri-county citizens who are struggling with

opiate addiction. It will be funded by the Northern Piedmont Community Foundation, Come As You Are coalition, and BWell Today For Tomorrow.

*Honore Hastings or Sean McElhinney at Verdun Adventure Bound will be able to answer questions about any of the programs. To learn more about BWell Today For Tomorrow, visit [bwelltoday.org](http://bwelltoday.org)*

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# Still singing for Sarah

Another July. It's been seven years since my fellow journalist and friend Sarah Greenhalgh was tragically slain.

I remember sitting in the then Fauquier Times-Democrat newsroom. I was the managing editor of the Culpeper Times in 2012 but worked mostly from our Warrenton office. I was busy working on a story. I recall Mark Grandstaff, a young reporter who was covering crime, courts and government, coming into the newsroom, reporter's notebook in hand and looking rather shaken. He said there had been a fire in Upperville. I heard him but keep typing. Then, he went on, "it was a fire but there was a woman found dead inside... her name was Sarah Greenhalgh."

I shot up. "What?" "What...what did you say?" "I know her," I stammered. "She used to work here."

My mind raced, thinking of those writers and friends who knew Sarah. Had they heard? Did they know? And her mother ... I couldn't imagine her disbelief and grief.

It was July 9, 2012 and as the details unraveled her death became more sinister. Not only burned but shot in the back of the neck. Killed and then consumed by flames. The firefighters had responded to a house on fire, not the scene of a murder.

It was grisly.

I had met Sarah years before when we were both in the newsroom. I was covering education and Sarah was tackling government and also put together our arts section. I remember so clearly on 9/11 when the twin towers were struck. Most of us were spellbound watching the television and realizing that it wasn't

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a plane gone astray but targeted attacks. Sarah was quickly at her desk, on the phone and putting together a story. She was tough, gritty, no nonsense and a professional.

She could also be quick to comment and not always kind. She clashed with her editors, was stubborn, opinionated and oftentimes harshly blunt. She was competitive and cherished challenging her photographer colleagues like Doug Lees and Betsy Burke Parker when it came to capturing flying horses on film.

She was also my friend and we shared laughs. She came one year for Thanksgiving dinner, bringing a delicious baked brie smothered in pecans and cranberries. She cherished her cats, she moved easily in the equestrian world, she had a flare for color and obscure bits of information and, if she liked you, was loyal to a fault. While we shared the same profession, our lives were different. She was single and I married with children. Both of us consumed by our respective paths but found kindred souls in spirit.

My youngest son and I helped Sarah move from her apartment in Middleburg when she got a position at a paper in Florida. She treated us to a pasta dinner. Her mother was worried about Sarah's plans to drive a truck alone carrying her belongings south,

but Sarah was strong willed and the next day was on the road.

Over the years we'd exchange Christmas cards (hers were handmade with glossy photographs of her cats bedecked in bows and ornaments or a pride of lions from an African safari) and occasional phone calls and Sarah was hoping to get back to Virginia, back to her old haunts, Saturday night polo matches to watch and being in a newsroom.

So, when she landed a job as a government reporter with the Winchester Star, it was a happy time for her. She was excited and told me that she'd found a small place to rent on a farm in Upperville.

I was honored to be asked to speak at Sarah's funeral. The church was filled at Trinity Episcopal in Upperville. She is buried there with a simple marker. I had lunch one March with her mother and a friend to remember Sarah's birthday in spirit. We visited her gravesite. Over the years, I've kept in touch with her mother who, in her mid-80s, seems to have accepted the fact that she will not see closure on her daughter's death in her lifetime. How very sad.

As another July comes and goes, I am heartened to learn that Scott Hook, the interim Fauquier commonwealth's attorney, has requested a special prosecutor to continue investigating this crime. Paul Walther, Culpeper's Commonwealth Attorney, is a good and thorough man. I had many occasions to meet with him when I was in Culpeper and as the special prosecutor appointed, I



PHOTO BY DOUG LEES

Journalist Sarah Libbey Greenhalgh died July 9, 2012. Her body was found when firefighters responded to a fire on a farm in Upperville where she was staying in a rental on the property.

am confident he will be diligent. I know that the Fauquier sheriff's office does not consider Sarah's death a "cold case." Even with the passage of years, their intent is to find out who did this to her.

I penned a column when this tragedy happened. I titled it, "A song for Sarah."

Ironically, had this happened to another, Sarah would have been on this story like glue, tirelessly dogging all involved to find answers. She would have been outraged at the deed and bent on finding justice. No doubt she would be pushing, badgering and relentless.

I hope to give her voice and that perhaps this renewed resolve by law enforcement will add a new chapter to this tragic tale.

I still sing for Sarah.

Reach Anita Sherman at [asherman@fauquier.com](mailto:asherman@fauquier.com)

## Old Rag Master Naturalists offers course

Staff Reports

Would you like to know more about the environment that is right outside your door? Are you curious about natural history? Would you like to make a positive difference in the conservation of Virginia's natural resources? If so, consider becoming a Master Naturalist.

Old Rag Master Naturalists will offer a basic training class (limited to 15) starting in March 2020 and running for 14 weeks. The class will be held on Mondays between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the VFW in Culpeper on Route 522. Cost for the classes, field trips and materials is \$170, payable by check at the first class.

The Master Naturalist program is supported by Virginia Tech and various sponsors that are involved in conservation and land management. Master Naturalists work on citizen science projects, educational outreach to the community and help with conservation of natural resources and public lands. The Old Rag chapter is



based in the Piedmont area.

The basic training includes but is not limited to the following topics: geology, ecology, weather, entomology, mammalogy, forest management and botany.

Those interested may visit the website at [www.oldragmasternaturalists.org](http://www.oldragmasternaturalists.org) to view an online application. Send completed application to: Old Rag Master Naturalists Application, c/o Dee Dee Lyon, 1266 Old Blue Ridge Turnpike, Madison, VA 22727 or email to [deedeelyon531@gmail.com](mailto:deedeelyon531@gmail.com). Applications are being accepted now through Oct. 31.

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