

THE BELLE RINGER

The Belle Meade Upper School Newsletter

NOVEMBER, 2022

ISSUE: 1



WELCOME TO BELLE MEADE!

Pam Mandigo - Head of School

Happy Fall, everyone! What a whirlwind it has been! I've had an absolute blast getting to know the students of Belle Meade. We cannot wait to share with you everything they've been learning and doing this fall at our Trimester Dinner in a few short weeks.

This school is full of brilliant, enthusiastic, wildly talented (don't believe me? Come check out Art Tour next weekend!), and hilarious students. They've taught me a ton so far... including some epic dad jokes.

Why are the mountains the funniest place to go to school? *Because they are hill-arious.*

IMPORTANT DATES

Please mark your calendars and plan accordingly.

- Saturday, Nov. 5th
RAAC Fall Art Tour
- Friday, Nov. 11th
Noon Release
- Thursday, Nov. 17th
Trimester Dinner
- Friday, Nov. 18th
Conferences
- November 21st-25th
Fall Break
- Friday, Dec. 16th
Noon Release
- December 19th-30th
Winter Break



NEW STUDENTS *(Sue)*

Saylor
Middle School



Saylor is always the optimist. She brings joy to Belle Meade.

When asked about having divorced parents, she replied, “It’s difficult but fun; you get two birthdays and two Christmases!”

Saylor lives with her mom and her mom’s girlfriend. She visits her dad regularly. Between the two households, she has three brothers, two step-brothers, and SEVEN dogs.

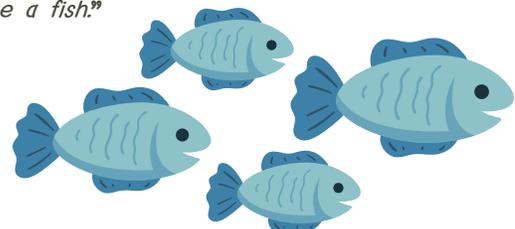
Belle Meade was the first school Saylor and her mom looked at, after moving to Sperryville. Saylor immediately fell in love with the horses. A skilled English rider, she has already built strong bonds with wide-bodied Dakota (appalosa gelding) and tall, slim Rehna (American Saddlebred mare.) When not at the barn, Saylor gets kicked in the shins in PE.

Saylor’s favorite subjects are geography and English.

For a middle school girl, Saylor has an amazing, seemingly-endless, repertoire of dad jokes.

“What’s the difference between a fish and a guitar?”

“You can’t tune a fish.”



NEW TEACHERS *(Shylelagh)*

Pam Mandigo
Head of School

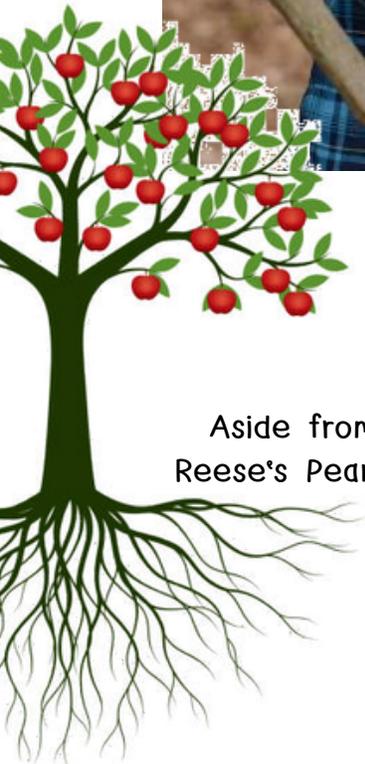
Pam is an honest person you can trust. She is energetic and brings a passion for outdoor education and lots of classroom experience to her work at Belle Meade. She has a great personality and can make people laugh. When her students are down, she helps them be happy again. Pam is very confident in what other people do. She encourages her students to learn more about history and geography. She makes it fun and makes people want to learn about cultures or what's behind their own family history.



Pam loves to be outside. She likes to hike anywhere you find rivers, forests and rocks. Zadie, her wonderful, cute daughter, always goes with Pam for hikes and sometimes Jonathan joins them.

Pam likes to work in the dirt and get dirty. She enjoys working in the school garden and is putting in vegetable beds at her new house in Culpeper. This fall, she's growing garlic, spinach, kale and cilantro.

In her free time, Pam writes plays! She has written more than ten plays in her lifetime and her most recent play is titled "Give Us Good."



Aside from her very healthy eating habits, Pam enjoys lots of black coffee, Reese's Peanut Butter cups and anything that has peanut butter and chocolate in it.

IT'S WHAT WE DO

BELLE MEADE ROCKS THE SHENANDOAH

(Lily)

Building stone cairns is a challenge. You test your knowledge on shapes, weights, and balance (to keep them from falling or knocking them over.) The cairn we made is a compass! We used our knowledge of direction using the sun and we found a rock, that looks like an arrow, to point North. While making cairns, it makes us really look closely for all types of perfect rocks. This gave us the opportunity to use our imagination and discover some weird but cool rocks.



We had an imaginative rock look-alike competition and found rocks that looked like cellphones, a slice of cheesecake, a pointer finger, a remote control, a shoe, and a lighter.

Another talent shared while on the creek bed was skipping rocks. Skipping rocks was a big deal on this trip. Who could skip it all the way across the Shenandoah River? It was a challenge, only a few could get close. Let go too late or early, it's going to curve. Too heavy of a rock it's going to sink. You have to have complete control.

After two long days rocking along the Shenandoah, we were ready to wake up and go home. Slowly, to the sound of light rain, we all woke up with heavy dew on our tents. Layers kept us warm and we saw nothing but fog on the top of the water. Looking (and smelling) like a scene from *Pirates Of The Caribbean*, it was a perfect morning to end the camping trip.



IT'S WHAT WE DO

FALL FARM TOUR

Landen



This year's farm tour was one of the best of all time; there were hayrides, cider making, and face painting. There was a hay bale maze, a chef cook off, a silent auction, a CSA, pony rides, and the raffle tickets for a week-long house rental at the Outer Banks.



When you hop on the hayride for the first time you jump on the hay bales on the trailer that the tractor is towing. Mike starts the tractor and the engine clucks. At the Bed & Breakfast, he talks about the history of the house, built in the early 1900s, and you realize this is no ordinary hayride. Driving past the Woodmor heating system, Mike stops and talks about how the barn was built on the property. The tractor takes us past the lower school and finishes back at the upper school, to visit all the main events again. Stops to let people off so he can go grab a lunch break.

THE WRITER'S EYE

In early October, Belle Meade middle and high school students, along with six upper elementary students, visited the Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia. Students toured the art works selected for the annual Writer's Eye ekphrastic writing competition.

Students are writing poetry or prose inspired by the art they viewed. Entries will be submitted in early November. Look for their ekphrastic writing in the next issue of *The Belle Ringer*.



Please, turn the page and enjoy some creepy campfire stories inspired by our fall camping trip on the Shenandoah.

Brenda & the Port-a-Potty Predicament

~Middle School English Class

It was a rainy day, on the river. Aiden, Saylor, and Blake were headed to their campsite. They paddled down the crazy rapids and swamped the boats, forcing them to pull the canoes to the side to dump the water out. By the time they were done, it started to get dark. While they were setting up their tents, they noticed there were port-a-potties right across the river. They went across the river to use the port-a-potties. However, when they saw a lady dragging a big bag to one of the port-a-potties, they got scared. Saylor passed out from fright. They had to drag her back to the campsite. When Saylor awoke, they went to bed, still afraid of their surroundings.

In the morning, they talked about last night. Blake wanted to go look at the port-a-potties in the daylight, so they all did. The port-a-potties were gone! Confused, they went back to their campsite. This was so weird, they packed-up and got the heck out of there! Canoeing down the river, they found another campsite; it looked good, so they went to check it out. While walking up to the campsite, the kids noticed the same port-a-potties that they found across the river last night. They were so scared, but they wanted to check them out. They had heard rumors about someone named Brenda killing people in port-a-potties, but that was just a rumor, right?

Meanwhile, the Brenda they had heard rumors about was plotting to capture the kids. She was going to kill them and put them in port-a-potties. When Aiden, Blake and Saylor got to the port-a-potties and looked inside one of them, there was a phone. They took the phone back to their campsite. The kids were looking at the phone, but they couldn't figure out how to unlock it without the passcode of the phone. (The person who owned the phone had been captured by Brenda, but they didn't know that.) They gave up on the phone and decided to stay the night and get some sleep, even with the risk.

Saylor woke up. She heard Blake yelling. She came out of her tent and Aiden was gone. Saylor and Blake went looking for him, worried they would never find him. Aiden was tied up in the basement of Brenda's house. He was trying to escape, but Brenda did not like that. Saylor and Blake eventually realized that Brenda had taken Aiden. They knew they had to get him back, but Brenda was going to be a challenge.

They picked up the phone again and realized the passcode was "0000." On the phone they found a video of Brenda capturing a person. They called the police but, when they were trying to show the video to the police, the phone glitched and they couldn't get the video to load. The police were a little ticked off because they thought it was all a big prank; they thought Blake and Saylor were wasting their time. They told them not to make anymore prank calls and videos and to just go home.

By this time, Brenda was freaking out. She had seen the lights and heard the sirens of the police cars. Aiden was still trying to escape when Brenda hit him with a baseball bat. She was hoping he would be dead by the time the police found him. Brenda tried to run out the back basement door to run from the police. Before she left, she said to Aiden, "Goodbye, you brat," Aiden picked up the baseball bat and came out of nowhere. He hit Brenda hard.

On their way back to the campsite, Blake and Saylor saw the port-a-potties were still there; that meant Brenda was still there. They checked one of the port-a-potties and found blood in it written in a number.

They must call the police back and CONVINCED them it is not a prank, show them the port-a-potties, and then return to the house to find Aiden. They got the phone and called 911 again and ran to Brenda's house. The cops thought Saylor and Blake were making another prank call and came back to arrest them. Blake and Saylor asked the police officers to go check out the port-a-potty with them. They saw the bloody number!

The police found lots of port-a-potties, filled with bodies, in Brenda's backyard. There was no sign of Brenda anywhere. . .

Aiden was fine.



Bagel's on the River

~The High School English Class

One bright, sunny, fall day, Highland students launched canoes from Golden Rock campground for a two-day, one-night trip. Four students left the group to go be boys in the woods. As the day grew dark, they headed back to the river. Once they got there, they saw that their group had left them behind. They were so far behind, they would never catch up before dark. They started planning how to survive the night. Hunter, the tall one, went to grab some firewood. Richard, dying of thirst, went to look for a freshwater well. Dylan set up the food and Bagel set up the big tent.

When everyone but Hunter came back, they got spooked by an unusual screech. As they looked around to see where the noise came from, they saw a flash! Hunter came back to the group and, as he came back, they saw a large owl jump in the trees. They huddled together with fright. Once everyone calmed down, Hunter started to build a fire. (Dylan needed fire to cook with.) After dinner, they all sat around the fire. Richard, being the silly teenager he is, asked everyone, "Hey, should we tell some scary stories?" "Sure!" Dylan replied. "I'll go first!" exclaimed Richard.



“One day, all the kids wanted to find a campground to sleep at overnight. One of the kids, named Blake, called a camp site manager to book a reservation. Once the call connected, Blake started playing around... “Hey, um, we’d like to reserve a campsite for a night to have a party!” Blake shouted. “No!” the manager, Brenda, yelled. “But,” she added in a whisper, “stay if you want.” Blake was a little confused by her two different responses. He told her, “Alright, thanks, I guess.” After he hung up, Blake suddenly realized he had to use the loo. He walked to the nearby bathroom and sat down in the port-a-potty, to do his business; all of a sudden, he heard a weird flushing sound. The water in the port-a-potty started to rise. He then felt a tickle and then got bitten on the butt. The tickle of catfish whiskers momentarily distracted Blake from the pain. After the tickling stopped, he fell through the toilet seat and...” Richard stopped and then said, “Blake was never heard from again.”

“Oh, I’ll be back!” laughed Dylan as he walked through the trees to get to the nearby port-a-potties and do his own business. He felt a little tickle on his butt when he sat down. He laughed without thinking of anything. The catfish clamped on Dylan’s rump. In an instant, he was stuck in the seat, tugged down by the big fish. Suddenly, he was gone.

Back at the campfire, Bagel started to worry about Dylan. “I’m worried about Dylan.”

“Me too!” said Hunter.

“Oh, he’s fine,” Richard said.

“It’s been almost an hour since he left...” Bagel whispered.

The three of them went to look for Dylan, just in case he had gotten lost. Hunter, Bagel, and Richard walked towards the port-a-potties. Each of them went to a different stall door, opened it and peered inside to see if Dylan was in there. Hunter and Richard fell into the port-a-potties they were checking and heard the slam of the doors behind them. They both turned and tried to open the doors, but the handles didn’t budge. They heard wicked laughter outside the doors. Bagel heard the laughter, too. He ran from his port-a-potty and hid behind a tree. As Richard searched for a way to escape, he screamed in terror. Dylan’s head was in the toilet. As Richard looked away, he saw a rope dangling from the ceiling. He walked towards it. Was this an escape? The rope wrapped around his neck. The sound of a trap door creaked and Richard fell to his death with the rope still tightening around his neck. Hunter, forever trapped in the other port-a-potty, was never seen again.

Bagel heard and saw everything. He stepped backwards...and a bear trap clamped down hard on his leg. Knowing that Brenda heard him scream, he took off running to the canoe. After getting in, he pulled out his pocket knife and started to cut his lower leg off to free himself from the bear trap and chain. He cut part of his leg off. Freed from the bear trap, he threw it into the water with his foot still clamped in it. He grabbed the paddles and rowed off into the night.



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Thank you!