

Trusting as little as possible in tomorrow

There’s an old Latin phrase we all know, *carpe diem*. We translate that to “seize the day.” But the rest of the phrase is “seize the day — trusting as little as possible in tomorrow.” That’s the part that often gets left out.



TOM GREENE

The meaningful parts of life require trust or faith in tomorrow. Things like marriage, children, friendships, starting a business or even learning to make really good sourdough. Maybe I’m crazy, but we seem to have lost some faith in “tomorrow.” I’m not saying we’ve totally given up. I’m still buying green bananas and I scheduled a colonoscopy (TMI) for June 2027. Clearly, some part of me remains optimistic.

I think it started in 2020. Once

the world shut down on a random Tuesday with almost no warning, something shifted. In an instant, the future was uncertain. Everything slowed to a crawl. Even if you weren’t afraid of the virus, you were afraid that the world might not ever be the same. That’s fair. Would we ever go back to the office? Would the kids ever go back to school? Would I ever see MeeMaw and PeePaw again?

We were told all of this was temporary, “just two weeks to stop the spread.” Then weeks turned into months and, well, you know the rest of the story. When it lifted, we moved on like it never happened. But it did.

The virus didn’t invent short-term thinking. Americans were perfectly capable of buying cars, trucks and boats they couldn’t afford before anyone had heard of Wuhan. But the pandemic gave short-term thinking a double shot of espresso with a sidecar of Fire-

ball. After all, the future is unpredictable. Life is short. Might as well. Go for it.

But today there is no delayed gratification. With every purchase, you are now offered a Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) option. It’s like a modern version of the Lay-Away Plan. Except you get to take the stuff right away. In 2019, it was used for 6% of purchases. Today it’s 16%.

BNPL hands “future me” the bill for that new Apple iPhone 16 without letting “future me” vote on the purchase. It’s an example of how we are willing to gamble that we’ll have the money in the future. But c’mon, you and I both know that if you don’t have the money today, you aren’t likely to have the money tomorrow either. Not surprisingly, 26% of BNPL users were delinquent in 2025.

The fear here isn’t purely financial. *Carpe diem* is a nice idea, but it originated in 23 BC, back when

the average life expectancy was about the same as my wiener puppy, Peanut. You kinda had to seize the day cause you didn’t really get that many days to begin with. Trusting in the future was kind of a fool’s errand.

But today, the meaningful parts of life require an investment in the future. Things like marriage, children, friendships, starting a business or even learning to make really good sourdough. Nobody on their deathbed ever says, “I sure am glad I bought that iPhone 16 I couldn’t afford in 2026.”

It’s ironic that we are “investing” so little in ourselves at a time when most people are living longer than ever. And, as you and I both know, Father Time is undefeated. And right now everyone is getting extra innings.

A culture of delayed gratification requires more than lectures about discipline. It requires confidence in the future. Not in the

government providing for you, but in you providing for you.

I’m not suggesting we should go back to the days of yore or pretending that something didn’t happen to us in 2020. It did. We learned the hard way that normal is more fragile than it looks. But that’s not a reason to ignore the mess you are creating for “future you”. Seizing the day and trusting as little as possible in the future feels good at the moment. But, in the blink of an eye, future you will be dealing with the consequences.

I’m just a regular guy sitting in a Waffle House restaurant pecking on a laptop. Enjoyed this article? Shoot me an email at t@tom-greene.com. I promise you’ll hear back from me.

Tom Greene is a native of Georgia and a graduate of UGA. His writing can be found at www.tom-greene.com.

MEET THE ARTIST: GINA MARIE RIVERA

SUBMITTED TO FCN

Editor’s note: Meet the Artist is a feature column by Marilyn DeCusati for the Cumming Arts Center.

Painter, illustrator, author, educator and curator Gina Marie Rivera has built a vibrant and imaginative creative career rooted in storytelling, nature and artistic exploration. Rivera has become a key contributor to Forsyth County’s arts community while also gaining recognition nationally through illustration and publishing.

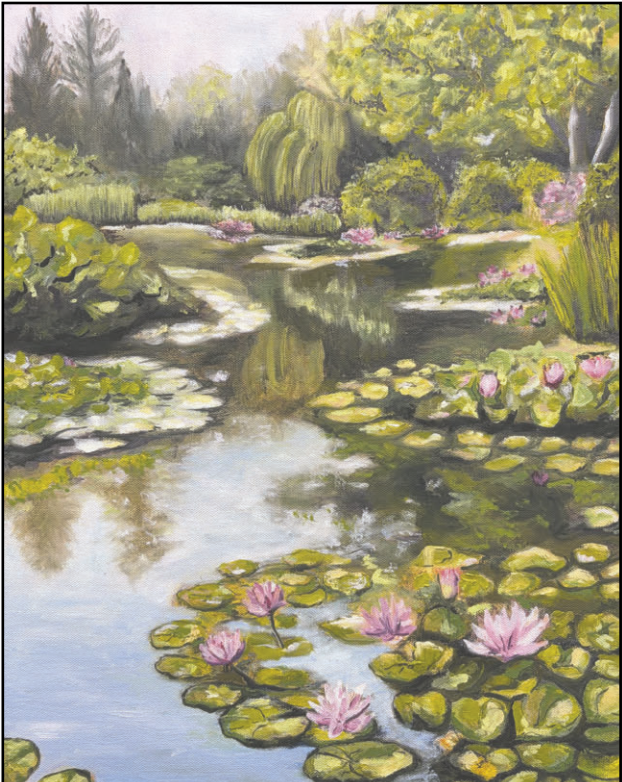


Rivera



Images courtesy of Cumming Arts Center

"Dreams" by Gina Marie Rivera.



"Pond of Lily" by Gina Marie Rivera.

What inspires your creativity and how does that inspiration find its way into your art?

I’m deeply inspired by nature, fantasy, mythology, and the stories found within the world around us. I’m especially drawn to water, landscapes and the contrast between stillness and intensity. Inspiration can come from anywhere — a visual idea, a story, an Inktober prompt or simply something I experience. I tend to follow where that inspiration leads, whether it becomes a painting, illus-

tration, or eventually a written story. I’m always thinking about what story exists inside an image and what emotions or ideas I can share through it.

What experience do you hope people take away from your artwork?

I hope my artwork gives people a sense of wonder, imagination and connection. I want viewers to be able to find their own meaning in the work and perhaps pause for a

moment to experience a feeling of peace or curiosity. With my books and illustrations, I especially enjoy creating opportunities for people to interact with the artwork, imagine their own stories and see the world through their own perspective.

What has been the most important lesson you’ve learned on your journey as an artist?

One of the most important

lessons I’ve learned is to follow the inspiration and allow the creative process to evolve naturally. Not every idea begins with a clear destination. Sometimes an illustration becomes a book or a painting reveals a meaning I didn’t initially see. I’ve learned to experiment, stay curious and not be afraid to explore different mediums and creative directions. The journey itself can reveal where the work is meant to go.

Fun fact

The idea for my children’s book “Fables of Magic & Myth” actually began with Inktober prompts. I started creating the illustrations simply for myself, never knowing they would eventually become a published book that I wrote, illustrated, designed and self-published from scratch. I also made the book interactive, with illustrations readers can color and blank pages where they can create their own

stories and artwork.

Gina Marie Rivera is lead curator for rotating exhibits at the Cumming Arts Center. She was selected as a featured illustrator for WildStork Publishing’s Can You Read National Park Series, illustrating Can You Read Cumberland Island National Seashore, one of twelve books released in late 2025 and early 2026. See the full conversation on cummingartscenter.com under “Member Spotlight.”

New Chick-fil-A announces opening date with ‘moove-in party’

BY KELLY WHITMIRE
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A new Chick-fil-A in west Forsyth County has announced its opening date, along with a unique way to get a free meal.

Chick-fil-A, at 5580 Wren St. at the intersection of Bethelview and Castleberry roads, is opening at 6 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 1, representatives said in a news release.

“Growing up in Georgia, Chick-fil-A has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember,” Kristie Bergstrom, owner and operator of the restaurant, said in a statement. “After seven years serving as an Operator in Southern California, returning home to Georgia in 2024 was incredibly meaningful.

“I’m grateful to be opening my second restaurant here in Georgia and continuing Chick-fil-A’s legacy of signature hospitality in the place where it all began.”

The restaurant is hosting a “Moove-In Party” for opening day, where customers wearing anything from cow-spotted accessories to full cow suits can redeem a free entrée or kid’s meal inside or at the drive-thru.

Chick-fil-A Inc. will also donate \$25,000 to the Atlanta Community Food Bank to celebrate the opening, representatives said.

Representatives said the store will create about 110 jobs and will participate in the Chick-fil-A Shared Table program to redirect surplus food to local nonprofit groups.

The new location will be open Mondays through Saturdays, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. and closed Sundays.

It will offer dine-in, drive-thru, mobile pickup, third-party delivery and mobile drive-thru dining options.

The new Chick-fil-A is part of the Southard Exchange development, which will feature five new drive-thru restaurants, including 7 Brew, Maepole and Shake Shack.

It will be the fourth location in Forsyth County, along with locations at Halcyon, The Collection at Forsyth and Larry Mulkey Memorial Road, which is also owned and operated by Bergstrom.

For more details on the new restaurant, including career opportunities, go to chick-fil-a.com/locations/ga/bethelview-castleberry.



SOPHIE RALPH | Forsyth County News

A Chick-fil-A will be coming to the Southard Exchange development at the corner of Bethelview and Castleberry Road in west Forsyth.

FROM 1A

Dolezal

Kemp said Dolezal’s experience in the state Senate would serve him well in the role, which includes presiding over the chamber.

“I think (the) experience of being in that branch, of knowing the colleagues that are going to be returning (and) that he would be working with and really supporting what Rick Jackson’s going to be doing as governor, I think is very important,” Kemp said.

McCormick, who represents Georgia’s 7th Congressional District, told FCN he is endorsing Dolezal’s campaign.



SOPHIE RALPH | Forsyth County News

Gov. Brian Kemp puts on a sticker that reads “I Support Dolezal.” U.S. Rep. Rich McCormick (left) and Gov. Brian Kemp (right) spoke at Greg Dolezal’s campaign event at Reid Barn.

“I think he’s phenomenally well-qualified. He’s a legislative giant,” McCormick said. “He’s

always been on the forefront of developing good legislation and pushing it (and) getting con-

sensus.”

McCormick said Dolezal’s involvement in the state Senate demonstrates that he is ready for the job.

“(If) you look at the legislation passed, he’s one of the most active state senators out there,” McCormick said. “If you look at his alliances, his ability to advise the lieutenant governor on what needs to be brought to the floor, his chairmanship and what he’s done in that leadership role, I don’t think you’ll find a much more active, more thoughtful representative.”

In his remarks to the crowd, Dolezal said his statewide push for property tax relief starts with his home county.

“We have built the blueprint right here in Forsyth County,”

Dolezal said.

He pointed to the county’s decision 22 years ago to exempt seniors from school taxes and said the school system still has the state’s highest graduation rate and test scores.

“So, you can simultaneously put government on a diet and still deliver quality services,” he said.

He also urged Republicans to unite behind a “cohesive, comprehensive and compelling vision.”

“We have to talk about what we’re for more than we talk about what we’re against, and we have to cause the next generation to fall in love with America again,” Dolezal said.

Dolezal will face Democratic candidate Josh McLaurin in the Nov. 3 general election.