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- Behind the scenes
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## JUST RIGHT FOR NOW

- Living forward

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Cover photo: "Red, white and blue at sunset"  
By Jack Eyler

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Please email photos, articles and comments to cattaleseditor@gmail.com
Submit address changes to POA

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About two years ago, I addressed our stormwater system in a Cat-Tales article. However, over the past couple of months, I have received a number of concerns from residents about localized flooding and standing water in roadside swales following heavy rain events. We have entered the 2017 hurricane season, and we will likely experience some more significant rain events. As a consequence, I would like to address this issue one more time.

One of the best things about living in St. James Plantation (SJP) is its proximity to the ocean. We can enjoy the beach club, swim in the ocean or just cool it on the beach. That proximity to the ocean is also one of our challenges. Due to our coastal location, government agencies and regulations determine what we do with stormwater runoff following any rain event.

"While heavy rain storms can result in standing water and inconveniences, the stormwater management system generally works as designed."

And we do have rain. There have been a number of heavy rain events over the past few years. It’s not unusual to have 10 or more inches of rain over a few days. In fact, many rain events have exceeded that amount. In 2015, we had an unnamed storm that dropped 14.5 inches over a four-day period. In 2005, we had two tropical storms two weeks apart — Ophelia and Tammy, each dropping 15-16 inches of rain in a 24-hour period. The greatest rainfall in SJP history occurred in September 1999, when Hurricane Floyd produced more than 24 inches of rain over a four-day period.

The stormwater runoff cannot be diverted or allowed to flow directly into the Intracoastal Waterway or into the ocean. The stormwater management philosophy in North Carolina coastal counties is to have the rain percolate into the soil to allow for natural filtration before the water enters the subsurface water table. Our coastal location requires the development of a stormwater conveyance system, which includes swales, pipes, ponds, dry ponds and land usage requirements to ensure we comply with state and federal requirements.

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is tasked to “protect North Carolina’s environment and natural resources.” DEQ is the agency that approves stormwater permits and as such dictates stormwater management requirements for SJP. The roadside swales are part of the stormwater system and are normally documented in the stormwater permits. As such, roadside swales cannot be filled, modified or altered without specific approval from the POA staff.

Major rain events can and will produce localized flooding for short periods of time, resulting in water covering roads and other properties. Each developed area within SJP has defined maximum impervious limits to ensure absorption of the stormwater. The approved stormwater permits define and establish adequate pervious open land to allow stormwater to percolate into the soils over 48-72 hours, resulting in water standing in swales and ponds overflowing for several days during and after a major rain event.

While such heavy rain storms can result in standing water and inconveniences, the stormwater management system generally works as designed. The Developer and the POA are required by law to continuously address the design and maintenance of the stormwater conveyance system to minimize the impact of heavy rains and to ensure the environmental integrity of coastal waters and the ocean.
July is here and summer has officially arrived. One of the biggest and best summer events in St. James is the annual Youth Fishing Derby.

The St. James Fishing Club organized the first derby as part of the Town’s 15th Anniversary celebration in 2014. It was so popular that members continued to schedule it every year around the July 4 holiday. This year’s contest was on July 1, and I hope you attended. Even if you don’t have children or grandchildren in the derby, it’s a lot of fun to watch the younger ones proudly walk their fish to the weigh station. We have pizza afterwards, and the club presents medals to all participants and trophies to the winning anglers. Photos from this year’s event should be on the Town’s website soon after.

“Even if you don’t have children or grandchildren in the derby, it’s a lot of fun to watch the younger ones proudly walk their fish to the weigh station.”

Reminder: If you plan to run for Council, you must register at the County Board of Elections Office July 7-July 21. Three seats will be open, as Bruce Maxwell, Wayne Deutscher and I will be “retiring.” I can assure you that it’s interesting and rewarding volunteer work, and you’ll have excellent Town staff to work with. Do you have questions about what council members do? Any member of council, or Gary Brown, our town administrator, will be happy to talk to you.

Another reminder: Please don’t paint the street lights. In case you missed the blast email sent out in May, here’s the gist: The Town leases the street lights which are Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation (BEMC) property. We essentially pay for the light poles and fixtures over the term of the lease. When someone paints a light fixture, BEMC has to replace it. The Town (or you) pays for the cost of that fixture in one lump sum instead of over the term of the lease (the fixture’s life expectancy). If a street light is shining into your house, notify the Town office and we’ll arrange to have a shield installed — a much less painful solution to the problem.

Finally, in June, the Council voted to accept Comprehensive (Comp) Plan V, which was developed by a committee of the Planning Board and town residents. You probably know that Brunswick is one of the fastest-growing counties in the nation and that St. James is one of the fastest-growing towns in the county. Comp Plan V pulls together very nicely current status and expected growth/development in and around the Town, and addresses some implications of this growth for the Town, POA, Fire Department and Developer – and for our neighboring municipalities. It’s interesting reading and you can find it on the Town’s website.

Summer’s here — enjoy!

And while I’m talking about happy events, did you read that Mike’s Garage Band received a Medallion Award for Volunteer Service from Governor Roy Cooper? The award was in recognition of all the times they’ve performed at events since the band was formed to raise funds for Brunswick County charities.

What a great group. Congratulations to Mike Haase and all the band members.
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Remember that tag line that Smokey the Bear always used? “Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires!” And then he got in your face about the horrors that could result from not having guarded your campsite fire.

In a manner of speaking, the same can be said for St. James residents. Only you can prevent home fires. We’re not talking about grease fires, outdoor lighting fires, smoking-in-bed fires (do people still do that?) or any of those common problems. We’re referring to the need for you to monitor what’s going on inside and outside your home.

During the past few years, we’ve had major fires attributed to lightning strikes. Here’s the lesson to be learned: Your SJFD is highly trained to extinguish or contain fires. We’re also adept at responding to fires when we’re notified. And there’s the rub. If you aren’t aware that a close-by lightning strike impacted your home, how can SJFD respond to your evolving emergency?

Case in point: During the weekend of May 13, we had a major weather event (rain, wind and lightning). Lightning struck near a couple of homes, and the owners called the SJFD. Fortunately, someone was there to tell them to call 911, so we could be paged, thereby marshaling our firefighters. We can’t respond to an emergency called into the fire house. The County Communications Center must be the one to page SJFD, as well as mutual-aid stations should the alarm become a major event.

Your SJFD arrived on the scene quickly and evaluated the event. After a complete inspection of the home, including the attic, we didn’t locate a fire anywhere, in spite of an odor of smoke. Your SJFD has a protocol for carrying out these inspections. One of the last items is to inspect the crawl space. Bingo! A fire involving floor joists was smoldering in the crawl space. We stretched a hose under the house and a team of fire fighters applied the wet stuff to the red stuff (actually, it was more gray than red) and we extinguished the fire.

Had your SJFD not been notified or had our firefighters not observed their inspection protocol, we might have had a different outcome to this call. The two major takeaways from this event are (1) the home owner or neighbors must have situational awareness of fire potential in stormy weather and (2) your well-trained SJFD followed the appropriate protocols in discovering and putting the fire out.

If you’re interested in joining the SJFD, you can just stop by the fire house or call using our NON-emergency number (910-253-9990) to chat with Chief John Dahill or Harry Einbinder.

“If you aren’t aware that a close-by lightning strike impacted your home, how can SJFD respond to your evolving emergency?”

Here’s a tip: If you experience a lightning strike and lose power, your circuit breakers shut down your power or you smell an ozone-like odor, call 911 so we can respond to your potential emergency.
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The weak link in the computer security chain is us

By Chris Nicholas

Last May, headlines all over the world screamed “Ransomware Infects Over 200,000 Computers in More Than 150 Countries.” Cyber security analysts warned that this one attack, which occurred on a Saturday, was going to grow even larger as people went back to work the following Monday — and it did. Hackers had, with the computer owners’ cooperation, invaded computers, locked files and requested at least $300 per computer as a ransom payment. Despicable and unfortunate as it is for us, ransomware attacks are on the rise worldwide.

We’ve talked about ransomware before, as part of the overall topic of computer security. But in this column, it’s our sole focus. What is it? How does it work? How can you prevent it?

Ransomware is the term used for a Trojan virus that enters your computer and encrypts your files. The most famous one today is the WannaCry virus, because if it happens to you, well... These viruses enter your computer almost always with your consent. When you click on a link in an email or from an untrustworthy internet site, there’s a chance that you’re downloading a virus, malware or ransomware that will cost you headaches and hours trying to fix it.

Experts all agree — the weakest link in cyber security is OURSELVES. We’re quick to click on a link in a friend’s email without checking first to see if the email is really from the friend.

So, what are the best practices to keep your computer and data safe?

Slow down and read the danger signs. If you aren’t expecting an email with a link in it, don’t click on the link before you verify it by another method. Call, text or email the sender. Ask him if he sent you an email with a link in it.

It’s easy to embed a link and cover up what’s really lurking under it. The best example is a link that looks like this: “Verify Your Account.” if you roll your mouse over the link, “Verify Your Account,” you may find that it begins with "http://xees.sfefight.fedikf.exe." Clicking on that link will not take you to your account. It takes you instead to an executable file (.exe) that will corrupt your drive or lock your files.

“The most famous [Trojan virus] today is the WannaCry virus, because if it happens to you, well...”

Back up your important files. This could be as easy as buying a flash drive or an external portable drive large enough to hold your images, music and important files. For most people, a 128 GB flash drive is large enough. Copy your files to the drive and keep it in a safe place (not connected to your computer). Once a month, add new files to it. If you really want an additional safety net, Carbonite, Dropbox or similar online backups are available.

The bottom line: We are the weakest link in the security chain. People with evil intent exploit our fear of losing data or having our identities stolen. Stop and think before clicking. Stop and think before allowing someone you don’t know to have access to your computer.
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COME VISIT OUR LATEST MODEL HOME AT 3045 MOSS HAMMOCK WYND ON FRIDAYS OR CALL TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT!
Water Quality Tiger Team completes its mission

By Steve Brocker

The Town of St. James (TOSJ) Stormwater Committee routinely tests various watersheds across St. James. Test results in 2016 indicated high levels of fecal coliform in some test samples. Additional DNA testing revealed human contribution in some of these test samples.

In response to these findings, the St. James Plantation POA board asked resident George Freeman to form and lead a tiger team to gain an understanding of the problem(s) and to make specific actionable recommendations. The goal is to achieve optimal water quality levels for the more than 240 ponds in St. James.

Although many of these ponds were formed as the result of taking soil out to create developable lots, their combined primary function is to serve as part of the St. James stormwater management system. Preservation of their holding capacities and viability to host living ecosystems is essential.

In response to these findings, the St. James Plantation POA board asked resident George Freeman to form and lead a tiger team to gain an understanding of the problem(s) and to make specific actionable recommendations. The goal is to achieve optimal water quality levels for the more than 240 ponds in St. James.

George’s team of individuals represents a wide range of expertise. Members included Brunswick County Public Utilities, Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District, North Carolina Cooperative Extension at Brunswick County, POA board, TOSJ Stormwater Committee, POA Ponds Committee, Troon Golf and the POA engineer.

The Team examined the problems from the perspective of two separate, yet integrated systems:

- The two St. James waste water transportation systems being run by Brunswick County Public Utilities and the Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District
- The St. James stormwater management system.

Additionally, the Team secured the support of Baynard Court residents to establish an isolated beta test area. Included were approximately 50 homes with lots on or near 10 ponds. The Team used this area to test and evaluate various ideas before codifying them into formal, proposed actions.

Upon completion of its nine-month effort, the Tiger Team will have provided more than 50 specific proposed actions included in the major deliverables to the POA board listed below:

- **Sanitary sewer system piping and grinder pump monitoring** (February 2017). Two of the 25 recommendations in this report have already led to a change in the TOSJ’s electrical code for grinder pump alarms and formal monthly reporting procedures by the waste water treatment utilities.
- **Improved pond management plan** (April 2017).
- **Pond testing plan** (May 2017).
- **An integrated communications plan.** An essential part of implementing the diverse recommendations made to the POA board will be the execution of a comprehensive communication program, specifically targeted to those impacted. This program will communicate requirements to utility companies servicing St. James and proactively alert residents, builders, landscape/lawn contractors and future purchasers of pond lots of any new requirements. The plan will include information to assist existing pond lot residents on best practices for maintaining their property near the edge of a pond.

The Tiger Team’s efforts and its products include specific, actionable recommendations that will lead to improved surface water quality while decreasing the cost to maintain ponds across St. James.
On the road, again

By Ted Stephens

Many have asked why we do what we do to the roads in the area. Road maintenance (not the initial building of the roads) is a responsibility of the POA’s Infrastructure Committee. This includes patching, preservation, major milling and overlay, full depth reclamation and striping.

From time to time, it’s necessary to close either a lane or an entire road, which is an inconvenience for all. Inconvenience is a huge consideration whenever we do any work. We have to coordinate with so many touch points, including trash and recycle pickup; resident notifications; construction and mail delivery; turning off irrigation (including those managed by the POA); clubhouse access; golf course crossings, maintenance and pro shops; Fire Department access; POA updates; security; and the guards at each entrance.

And the whole schedule has to change if the weather doesn’t cooperate.

Why do asphalt roads eventually deteriorate? One answer begins with the soil conditions under the roadbed. We do live in a marsh, and roads in a few of those areas eventually require major repair. Fortunately, most of our roads are in good-to-excellent shape. Our goal is to maintain them and eliminate major expenditures in the future.

Ultraviolet rays (UV) from the sun have a major impact on asphalt. Over time, UV dries the oils that act as a binder of the stone. This leads to cracking, which allows water to penetrate and weaken the asphalt.

What’s that black stuff we’re putting down and what does it do? One of the solutions we use is called HA-5. This product prevents additional loss of asphalt oils by shielding it from UV and sealing small cracks. It doesn’t fill the cracks. But it helps keep moisture from collecting underneath. The result is significantly less deterioration.

The expected lifespan of an HA-5 coating is five to seven years, with a five-year warranty. Our current plan is to review the road condition in five to seven years, when we are likely to do this process again.

This work is all about preserving St. James roads in a financially sound manner. More than 99 percent of you are very courteous and understanding about our work. We did have one resident who didn’t think the signs and barricades were for him. And the UPS and FedEx folks and a few contractors thought they were too important to stay off the wet roads.

To the 99.9 percent of you, thank you for your cooperation.

Q: What does the roadwork cost?
A: Compared to adding one inch of asphalt, using the HA-5 preservation system saves about $100,000 per road mile.

Q: Will the black stuff come off my grass?
A: Yes.

Q: Why did it take longer than a day to reopen my road? The memo said only one day.
A: Weather, sun and heat have a huge impact on drying time. On one occasion, someone left their sprinklers on, which delayed the crews from spraying for about four hours. This delay caused the two coats to be sprayed later in the day and we lost four hours of sunny drying time.

Q: Can you spray if it’s going to rain later in the day?
A: Rain will make a huge mess of material that’s not totally dry. That’s why you will see work stop if rain showers pop up on radar. Yes, this causes unexpected delays and possible inconvenience to residents.

The final product
Biking in St. James—You can do WHAT? By Gary J. Mlynek

A recent email blast from POA President Jerry Iverson reminded us of the need for safety on our roads. As a former member of the Bicycle Safety Committee, allow me to clarify some issues that may not be fully understood by St. James residents.

Riding on St. James Drive
Recently, I was riding my bike on St. James Drive from Ridgecrest Drive to the community center and through the Main Gate. An irate driver yelled at me (not the first time), advising me I wasn’t allowed on St. James Drive. I’ve also been stopped by security and told the same thing.

Right about now, you’re thinking, “I can’t ride on St. James Drive.” But yes, you can! This is permitted. The TOSJ and the POA both allow riding on St. James Drive between Ridgecrest Drive and the Main Gate. Check the brochure, “Guidelines for Bicyclists, Pedestrians, and Motorists to Promote Courteous Sharing of Roadways and Sidewalks,” which states, “Due to heavy traffic and limited sight-lines, bicyclists are prohibited from riding on St. James Drive between Ridgecrest Drive and Players Club Drive” (emphasis mine).

Sidewalk or street?
Another irate driver once yelled that I should get off the street and ride on the sidewalk. Wrong! And was this courteous to a fellow resident? No! Sidewalks are for pedestrians. Bicyclists are not required to ride on the sidewalk. The brochure states, “Sidewalks are not considered bike paths; however, sidewalks can be used by slower riders and children.” If using the sidewalk, remember bike traffic must yield to pedestrians. Those riding on sidewalks face several hazards, including walkers and runners (some with ear buds), dog walkers (dogs on leashes can dart in front of bikes and their leashes can become tripping hazards) and opposing bike traffic (which can require a quick detour onto sand or grass).

Helmets are hot!
Besides they mess up hair and we aren’t riding fast. So, we don’t need them. That’s not true. Many times, we have seen children under 16 years old riding without helmets. This is against the law in North Carolina, including in St. James. Accidents can happen close to home (and at slow bicycling speeds).

Riders of all ages should wear helmets (this includes any wheeled conveyances, such as skateboards and scooters). Even slow-speed accidents on a bicycle can result in head injuries. Helmets have air vents and can mess up hair. But combing your hair beats a skull fracture.

Finally, remember to be careful and courteous to all road users and to follow the rules of the road. All residents, property owners and visitors need to understand that bicycle riders must ride with traffic and walkers and runners must move in the opposite direction facing traffic.

Editor’s note: Detailed information on guidelines for all road users is outlined in the brochure mentioned above, copies of which are available at the POA office.
St. James residents have received a firm warning from the Brunswick County Sheriff’s Department to avoid scammers who are feasting on the good will and pocketbooks of a growing number of Americans.

Speaking at the POA’s monthly open information meeting (OIM), Brunswick County Sheriff John Ingram reported scamming is on the rise, and county residents are suffering serious losses. He said losses in 2017 are $1.5-2 million. And in the weeks before his end-of-May briefing, he noted that scammers had defrauded five St. James residents. “These crimes aren’t as easy to solve as a break-in,” said Ingram.

To combat the increase in scamming, Detective E. H. Carter of the Sheriff’s Department listed the most frequent scams plaguing Brunswick County residents. They include fake lotteries in which victims who scammers claimed have won a prize are asked to send “fees” in advance of collecting their non-existent winnings; home improvement scammers who want money up front, then fail to show up to complete the job; and overseas fraudsters, who use a variety of scams to extract money or personal information such as Social Security numbers.

The Sheriff’s Department has several documents that can help residents side-step scammers. Information is also available on its Facebook “brunswicksheriff” page. Finally, the OIM presentation is on the POA website, under POA Contacts tab/POA Communique/2017 Open Information Meetings.

**Cat-Tales photo contest**

The *Cat-Tales* photo contest is back! St. James property owners are eligible to enter one digital photo per category: 1) people/activities; 2) wildlife/animals; and 3) scenery. Photos must pertain to St. James and the surrounding area, taken any time of year.

Winning photos will be displayed at the POA Annual Meeting this fall and also featured in *Cat-Tales*. The POA will have the rights to use the photos in its communications venues. Photographer credit will be included as appropriate.

Photos may be in portrait or landscape configuration and in color or B&W. The digital photo size must be between 800 kB and five MB to ensure sufficient resolution when printed as an 8x12.

Submit your entries August 1-25 using the contest entry form on the POA website. Email cattaleseditor@gmail.com if you have any questions.
In case you missed it

Editor’s note: Beginning this month, we’ll offer notes on stories that appear in the media which affect St. James — just in case you missed them.

Growth spurt. St. James now is the fastest-growing community in the Cape Fear region, which includes Brunswick, New Hanover and Pender counties. According to new census data that appeared in the “Star News,” St. James is coveted for its easy access to Brunswick County beaches as well as Oak Island and Southport. “It’s a beautiful area,” Mayor Becky Dus told the paper. “The amenities in St. James are a definite draw.” (www.starnewsonline.com)

Improving the scenery. Is the impending widening of Route 211 an opportunity to improve the looks of the portion of the highway that passes St. James? Two Town of St. James (TOSJ) officials want to consider the possibilities, according to an article in “The State Port Pilot.” In the paper’s May 24 edition, Stephen Dragos, vice chairman of the TOSJ’s planning board, and Mayor-Pro-Tem Bruce Maxwell presented their views to the council on how it could improve the looks of the 3.4-mile portion of Route 211 that falls inside its jurisdiction. (www.stateportpilot.com)
Clam Bake

ticket sales

Mark your calendar and reserve either Sept. 22 or Oct. 20 for the annual Clam Bake at Waterway Park from 5 p.m.-8:30 p.m. DJ Don Jewell will provide music.

Middle of the Island will cater both events, providing local shrimp, clams, oysters and andouille sausage, steamed with corn on the cob, onions and red potatoes. Sides include fried chicken (cooked separately), a baked potato bar, strawberry spinach salad, penne pasta with vodka sauce, Brussel sprouts, mac n’ cheese, cornbread and apple crisp dessert. Sweet and unsweetened ice tea is included, but bring your own wine and beer. Also, don’t forget to bring your own tables and chairs.

Tickets go on sale Wednesday August 23, 10 a.m.-12 noon, at the community center. SJAC has 200 tickets for each event and asks that attendees select only one of the two dates to give everyone a chance to attend.

Tickets are non-refundable and cost $35 per person, with a limit of 10 tickets per sale. Please pay by check. The committee has a stamp to fill in the “Pay to the order of” field. For more information, contact Beth Nilsen at bethnilsen@aol.com.

The Clam Bake now has its own Facebook page at www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1158872374234943&ref=br_rs

Divine Divas return

The SJAC recently hosted an evening with the Divine Divas from Thalian Association.

POA beach parties

Mark your calendar for these free-of-charge beach parties. DJ Z will play your favorite tunes on Friday, August 11, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Karaoke, too! Then, enjoy the music of big band/jazz on Sunday, September 10, 3-6 p.m.

Bring your beach chairs, table, food and beverages. The location for both parties is on the beach (where else?) in front of the St. James Beach Club at 72nd Street on Oak Island.
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The POA Architectural Control Committee (ACC) must approve fence installations. Residents may install fences as long as they aren’t more than four feet high, don’t block desirable views and do not enclose their entire lot. There are a variety of materials that are acceptable for fences but split rail, chain link or welded fencing are not allowed. Residents may not construct pet pens or dog runs.

Residents must place their fences no less than 36 inches inside property lines to leave room for screen plantings on the outside of the fence. Plants used for screening must primarily be evergreen and placed every six feet, depending on the setting in the surroundings.

Residents whose property abuts golf courses should provide a gate for player access.

When submitting a request for ACC review, include a color image sample of the desired fence and a site plan showing the fence location and footage from the property line. Also include the necessary fees and “Modification to Existing Home” application.

Check the POA website under the Resources tab to review the "2015 POA Design Guidelines." If you have questions, email me at gporter@stjamespoa.net.

**Editor’s Note:** Genna Porter is the POA ACC administrator.
Memorial Day ceremony

Article and photos by John Muuss

More than 350 people gathered at the Veterans Memorial by the St. James Town Hall when the American Legion Post 543 held its annual Memorial Day ceremony.

Post Commander Gary Crowden provided the opening remarks with Bill Morgan as the master of ceremonies. The guest speakers, U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sergeant Karen Beirne-Flint and Chief Master Sergeant Shane Flint presented a wreath in honor of Karen’s teammates lost in operations in Afghanistan. Commander Crowden and WW II veteran Bob Baddicich presented another wreath.

Military Appreciation Day Patriotic Concert

Photos by John Muuss

The Military Appreciation Day (MAD) Committee held its annual Patriotic Concert at Woodlands Park. Approximately 500 people attended to hear Mike’s Garage Band. This fundraiser supports the American Legion’s activities to help veterans, families and children in our communities.

Wreath presentation during Memorial Day observance

Part of the crowd that attended the Patriotic Concert.

Mike’s Garage Band performed at the concert.
The Cape Fear Flyfishers
By Judy Rubin

The ultimate reward of fly fishing is catching the fish. But mastering the art of casting with the rod (when a tiny fly is attached at the end of a long thin line) might be the bigger thrill.

Fly casting places patience and finesse over brute force, often allowing women to be quicker learners. The quiet surroundings lend themselves to tranquility and peace, which in itself is a big bonus. In addition, the Cape Fear Flyfishers club — 70 percent of its members live in St. James — has benefits.

The club began in 2006 as an informal group of fly fishermen. It’s grown to 82 men and women who have learned the joy of wading in secluded waters, listening to nature’s sounds. “Big fish” stories were shared at their well-attended annual June picnic. Under President Jim White’s leadership and enthusiasm, it’s easy to understand why this club has progressed with programs, events and increasing membership (www.capefearflyfishers.com).

This group convenes the third Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the St. James Community Center. Meetings begin with a practice clinic and a “Meet and Greet” (bring your own munchies and drinks) in the parking lot.

During my first time with a rod and reel at a recent clinic, Harry Risley taught me some basics — terminology and technique. Then the club’s best caster, Matthew Kraker, explained that proper casting takes skill and practice.

“Back to 10 o’clock, forward to two o’clock as it unwinds like a snake,” he said, speaking of the rod’s position. I heard the analogy about the clock. I just didn’t like thinking the line would become a snake.

People think fly fishing is an expensive sport, but you can set yourself up for less than $200. Once hooked, you’ll have many opportunities to upgrade your gear and deflate the wallet. The club offers three-hour seminars throughout the year with topics of how fly fishing works, fly rod ratings, assembling techniques, fly-tying, casting, and finally, hooking, then reeling in the big fish.

Among the club’s benefits are the trips it organizes. Last October, 44 members and spouses headed to Waynesboro, N.C., casting in the Tuckasegee River. Each November, members travel to Morehead City and Cape Lookout to fish for false albacore, and in early May to the Roanoke River for stripers. Trips to Montana and Louisiana are often planned, as are local one-day outings (red drum, speckled trout and flounder) and to Georgetown, S.C. for redfish and specks.

On last month’s agenda were the “bucket-list” trips — Colorado, Yellowstone, tropical locations, California and Alaska. Members or spouses who aren’t “fisher people” often tag along. Some have — in a word — converted.

I’m thinking fly fishing gear might be under our Christmas tree.

(l-r) Mike Comiskey, Ed Smith, Craig Thompson, Dan Sokoloski, Forest Duncan and Jim Smith at Wilbur Dam (Watauga River), Tenn.

Jim winning the war and his “prize,” a red drum from Georgetown
The Garden Club at St. James closed out its 2016-17 season in May with a President’s Tea and the annual meeting. The coming year’s proposed budget was adopted and the new officers for the 2017-18 season were introduced.

Outgoing president Julie Livingston thanked the club’s 145 members for their support and recapped the year’s accomplishments and keynote events. The club’s success has led to a 50 percent increase in its scholarship contribution to Brunswick Community College Horticulture and Turf Grass program for this current year.

The Brunswick County Master Gardeners Volunteer Association (BCMGVA) supported the club on many levels. Besides being a valuable resource for St. James gardeners, BCMGVA member Amanda Kiel and the Garden Club co-hosted with Charlie Winterbauer, the Cape Fear Audubon Society president, a “Bringing Nature Home” event with author and University of Delaware Professor, Doug Tallamy. In addition to Dr. Tallamy’s world-class lecture, three vetted, native plant vendors from area conservation groups provided information on native plants.

The Garden Club contributed funds to the Lower Cape Fear Hospice SECU Hospice House garden project in Bolivia. The hospice center’s new garden will be a welcome addition, and upon its completion, the club will need volunteers for the garden’s ongoing maintenance.

The club provided gift cards for gardening needs to a Southport Habitat for Humanity home recipient and participated in the Service Club’s holiday events by decorating a beautiful Christmas tree and providing small flower arrangements for the holiday tour homes. It donated flower arrangements to a kitchen on the Lymphoma Kitchen and Tasting Tour. Ongoing projects include maintaining the St. James Chapel’s landscaped grounds (chaired by Heather Adams) and the nature trail at Waterway Park.

The Garden Club meets on the third Tuesday of the month, September-May. The club welcomes new members and guests. Visit the club’s webpage at www.stjamespoanc.org, under “Clubs and Groups” tab/Garden Club, where you can find more gardening resources and membership information.

See you next season.

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THE ARTISANS' CORNER
Compiled by Barbara White

Lori Taylor

Lori specializes in jewelry design. Her love for making jewelry began in high school, when she participated in a talented art program and studied under a metalsmith. After her introduction to this medium, Lori set up her jewelry studio at home and began making sterling silver pieces.

After college, Lori worked in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, where her daily walks through the galleries stimulated her creativity and love for ancient gold jewelry pieces and bead work.

The jewelry Lori creates reflects a sense of passion and love of earth’s finest materials and beauty. She works in sterling silver, gold-fill and 14-karat gold metal, pearls, gemstones and hand-blown glass. Because beads come in every shape, color and style, she easily creates one-of-a-kind pieces.

Lori intends to continue creating jewelry that reflects the personality of the wearer through the lively colors of the contemporary glass jewelry, the classic styles of the freshwater pearls or the natural look of the earth-tone gemstones and sea glass.

Nancy Young

Nancy comes from a family with a long art history. Her great-grandfather was a pen-and-ink artist and her mother, now 103, painted in the Chinese watercolor style. With encouragement from her parents, Nancy studied art in college and taught art in the Michigan school system.

Nancy prefers to paint landscapes but has done some portraits, notably one of her mother. She likes to use oils as she finds the colors are more brilliant and easily blended and retouched. She does, however, use other mediums, such as pastels and watercolor.

St. James became home for Nancy because she was drawn to the beauty of the area — ideal for painting landscapes, flowers and wildlife. She enjoys interacting with the many artists in the area and has continued exploring art through classes with Wilmington’s own impressionist artist-in-residence, Chappy Valenti.

Samples of Lori’s jewelry

Nancy’s portrait of her mother
Are you having nightmares, calling out “Rack ‘em up!” or “Bank the eight?” Do you toss and turn over what English, draw, or follow to use for perfect position? Worry no more, your tables await you. The St. James Pool League is alive and well in our own River City.

Why play pool again? Somewhat surprisingly, the health benefits of playing pool should not be overlooked. According to an article by health expert Samir Becic in “Health/Fitness Revolution,” pocket billiards improves one’s health in several ways:

**Slows aging.** Drinking beer while playing a game of pool helps combat aging by providing the senior player a casual activity that utilizes muscles.

**Helps build focus.** The ability to focus on a given objective is essential in achieving happiness. In billiards, players must focus on angles and targets.

**Tones muscles.** Physical benefits of pool include lower back toning, hip and leg muscle stretching and arm/hand coordination found in cue-stroking movements.

**Improves cognitive skills.** The infinite table layouts presented by each broken rack provides mental stimulation that’s rich and variable. These layouts challenge the player’s imagination, visualization, and creative problem-solving skills.

**Burns calories.** A typical two-hour game of eight ball includes 100 trips around the table’s perimeter — the equivalent of walking nearly three-quarters of a mile.

Ok, so maybe it’s not exactly the fitness center. It’s not fine cigars, billiards and brandy. The Pool League, however, is an opportunity to enjoy some friendly competition and camaraderie with a great group.

According to founder Frans Kuipers, the league has been playing eight ball at various homes for more than 10 years. This year’s first place team, “Rackem,” won 150 games during the season. Led by the steady hands of Captain Don Albright, the other team members include Ernie Groelly, Earl “Tec” Knaus, Craig Chancellor and Doug Linn.

Finishing only two games behind Rackem was Ocean’s Eleven, the previous year’s winners, led by Captain Wayne Dadetto. Tom Lippard’s “Newbees” took third while Dwight Annesley’s “Motley Crew” rounded out the top four finishers for 2017.

The league currently has 14 teams, but new players are welcome to join as regulars or subs. Contact league commissioner Tom Lippard at tomlippardiii@gmail.com for further details. No, you don’t need your own table to join a team.

As the noble philosopher Forrest Gump might say, “Life’s like a pool table...sometimes you gotta’ walk around it but there’s always a shot.”
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The Devanskys’ diligence
By K. Frances

Last fall, when the POA asked property owners for landscape project recommendations, the Muskogee Circle neighborhood property owners responded quickly with photos and suggestions for their circle, which needed landscape attention. However, the plan couldn’t be implemented because it appeared there was no water supply.

Last winter, Brunswick County completed a long overdue water main flush program. The residents of Muskogee Circle were surprised one day to see a fountain of water as Brunswick County flushed the water main located on the circle. To everyone’s surprise, there was a water supply!

To everyone’s surprise, there was a water supply!

Neighbors took photos and went to work. Ken and Charlene Devansky formed a committee, got signatures from residents throughout Woodlands Park and presented a landscape proposal to the POA. After numerous meetings and presentations, the POA agreed to support the Muskogee beautification efforts, allocating a budget and installing several foundation trees.

The Devanskys then created landscape plans, secured the promised POA budget, collected additional donations from interested property owners and solicited bids to water the new plantings from irrigation companies. The neighbors seeded a wild flower patch which Ken has watered daily while neighbors await irrigation system installation. Ken also collected leftover plantings from other residents and planted them with the help of the Kanichs and the Ertlschweigers.

The group used the funds they collected to buy shrubs and trees at the Brunswick County Master Gardener sale. Once again, the group spent hours toiling in the dirt, digging holes and planting their purchases.

Muskogee Circle is still a work in progress. But it’s a beautiful improvement over its former self. Recently, several neighbors added some colorful (and temporary) pink flamingoes to the circle to highlight the new scenery and help others take notice of what can be accomplished when residents work with the POA.

Ken and Charlene Devansky – your neighbors thank you for your labor of love.
This month, we continue to explore the various house styles in St. James. The first two homes are superior brick houses—one is coastal and the other is “Jeffersonian.” The third house is representative of the dozens of “marina”-style houses. The fourth is a Mediterranean-style home and the fifth is French country.

The first house is a grand coastal-style brick house. With its formal front staircase, elegant two-story porch front and widow’s walk, this beauty would be popular in many east coast cities. Because the entire front façade is white wood, visitors have to look twice to see that this is indeed a brick house. This home is on Mariner’s Way.

The second house is one of the first built in the Reserve — and it still is one of the most elegant. With its rich brick, stately curved portico, many chimneys and simple form, this house could have been designed by early architect Thomas Jefferson and would be right at home in Charlottesville.

The third house is representative of dozens of houses in the marina area. They tend to be narrow, three
or four stories high, have garages underneath, a grand stair in the front, porches on multiple levels and an elevator. This particularly elegant house has the classic arrangement of a stair in the middle, garages on either side, a porch across the front and a cupola. The house has a steep roof in the front, which descends to the porch. Three large dormers punctuate the roof, which flattens out in the rear to allow porches on two levels. The color scheme is subtle with brown and beige. This house is on Midshipman Court.

The fourth house is the granddaddy of all the Mediterranean homes in St. James. It has a clay tile roof, which required special permission from the Architectural Control Committee. It’s large and sprawling, with a fountain and palm trees. This house is on Marsh Point Lane.

The fifth house is a French country-style design. The moldings under the eaves, the brackets holding up the overhangs, the arched windows and shutters and the hipped roof are characteristic of this style. The home is painted in a very distinctive pale blue. This house is on St. James Drive.
St. James residents are making driveway parties very popular events. Driveway parties may be the easiest, least expensive and most convenient way to meet your new neighbors. Hosts don’t need to send reservations, spend money, cook or clean. All that’s required is a willingness to share your driveway for an hour or so.

The idea started last spring at a Woodlands Park neighborhood luncheon. Margie Laughton described to the group a party idea from her old neighborhood. A resident would place a flag outside the house in the morning. Neighbors who “found the flag” would drop by the residence that evening to meet and chat in the driveway with other flag finders. It was a much smaller neighborhood!

Marcy Speidel and Nancy Opsahl loved the simple concept and have helped to develop a variation that makes sense for the Woodlands Park neighborhood. In May of 2016, Nancy placed a beach-themed flag near her mailbox and the “raise the flag” gatherings began.

Woodlands Park has had an event each week in 2017 since Feb 20. Attendance at each week’s gathering is 35 to 75 people. It’s not unusual for people to arrive on bicycles — Sue and Alan Albert’s party included seven dogs and a puppy on her first social outing. One of the dogs arrived on a bicycle.

Carlos and Kathy Mejia’s gathering included an opportunity for guests to examine the airplane Carlos is building in his garage.

The process for a driveway party is simple

- The host sends an email to the neighborhood by Sunday, with the day and address of the upcoming week’s gathering.
- Neighbors arrive at the driveway around 5 p.m. and spend an hour or so chatting with hosts and any other neighbors who attend.
- Wearing nametags is encouraged.
- Neighbors bring their own beverages.
- A host volunteer sheet is available at each event for neighbors to sign up to host their own parties, and the list of dates for future parties extends into October.
- The concept is growing in popularity. Driveway parties are taking place (or being planned) all over St. James — including the Moss Hammock, Regency and Harbormaster neighborhoods.
To say that Carol and Bob Harris share an interest and background in flying is a bit like saying that some St. James residents enjoy golf.

Carol and Bob met 10 years ago at a picnic for Angel Flight pilots in Nantucket. Maybe love at first sight isn’t apropos for the over-60 set, but these two made an immediate connection. Carol attended the event as one of more than 100 pilots who flew in from all over the Northeast to catch up and be recognized for their work. They were seated at the same table. The rest is history.

When they decided on a Sunday in March 2010 to call the justice of the peace and arrange their wedding, the first consideration was the weather. Wednesday of that week looked perfect. It happened to be St. Patrick’s Day, and they were married in their Cessna 172 airplane, 2,000 feet above their home in Newtown, Conn.

Bob’s aviation background is somewhat traditional. He learned to fly in the Army, flew combat support missions in Vietnam and then became a commercial pilot. After retiring as a captain with 30 years’ service with American Airlines, he moved on to private aviation, piloting a Gulfstream.

Carol attributes her change in vocation to mid life. On a comfortable and predictable path to retirement, she was looking for something more fulfilling. Having always loved airplanes and flying, she decided at the age of 51 to learn to fly. One year later, she was licensed and ready to go.

Then came Angel Flight NE, a nonprofit organization that provides free medical air transportation for people in remote areas and those needing frequent trips to a hospital. Carol had purchased her Cessna in 2000 and piloted the four-passenger plane at her own expense to and from numerous airports in the Northeast, including JFK.

Since there are no medical personnel on board, Angel Flight patients must be ambulatory. In some cases, immunity problems prevent them from flying in the petri dish of a commercial flight. In addition to medical missions, these angels fly compassionate missions, transporting family members to be with loved ones undergoing treatment. These included families and victims of 9/11.

Carol flew 80 missions, sometimes alone and sometimes with a co-pilot, prior to moving to St. James. Her stories are harrowing, rewarding and sometimes comical. As one who becomes immersed in a new passion on the back nine of life, she has embraced many aspects of flying.
About 16,000 years ago, natives in Alaska watched the land bridge connecting them to Russia slowly sink into the Bering Sea. In May, St. James residents living south of Polly Gully experienced a very small version of that sinking feeling as they watched workers close the picturesque roadway which links us provincials with the St. James mainland.

Of course, the provincials could rejoin the mainland during this period of much-needed repairs, but they had to circumnavigate St. James. What used to take a couple of minutes to drive to Founders took much longer during those weeks. But then Founders shut down for repairs to its golf course. The club’s empty parking lot added to a sense of isolation.

It’s not that the detour was inconvenient, or annoying. The temporary Polly Gully closing had some benefits. It was great getting to know the security guards at the brand-new Grove Gate, and the provincials still had clear access to Tommy’s (unlike the mainlanders). But not a few provincials missed the journey down St. James Drive north of the bridge, the quiet beauty of the green mile and friendly waves to Glen the Goose at the Main Gate.

Now that the Polly Gully repairs are nearing completion, the provincials are getting ready to reunite with the St. James mainlanders. It’s a good time to review what took place at Polly Gully that caused all the excitement in the first place.

First of all, most residents (including your humble reporter) probably didn’t know that the Polly Gully bridge isn’t a bridge. Except for a 50-foot concrete culvert span, the remaining 500-foot roadway is a “causeway,” built — many years ago — as a logging road. The causeway today, as then, sits on land surrounded by wetlands.

According to POA board member Jeff Toner, who coordinated the construction project with the contractors, the last time the causeway was repaired was more than a quarter century ago (the Developer rebuilt the small bridge in 2003). So, this year’s reconstruction couldn’t come too soon.

The project involved building new walls on either side of the causeway for protection and stability and to prevent erosion. The walls are made with interlocking, 12-foot vinyl sheets, strapped together by horizontal “walers” on each side. A two-piece, straw-shaped anchor extends diagonally through the walls at five-foot intervals. Jeff reports that each anchor can withstand at least 9,000 pounds of force. Those walls aren’t going anywhere soon.

When completed, new wooden guard rails with LED lighting will frame the causeway, and the Jersey barriers that line each side of the bridge will boast a new stone facing. Finally, a new one-inch coating of blacktop will blanket St. James Drive from the bridge through the circle at Waterway Park.

It’s a job well done, and we provincials are glad the causeway won’t be sinking into Polly Gully anytime soon. In fact, Jeff notes, it will be at least 50 years before we have to do this again. Too bad the Alaskans didn’t have that option.
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St. James residents Liz Hughes, Debbi Bromley and Linda Wetterman hosted the Harbormaster Ladies Monthly Luncheon in May. To mark fond childhood memories of the now-closed Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, the group went with a circus theme, and everyone wore their red noses.

It’s already time to think about school.

For more than 10 years, the St. James Service Club (SJSC) has helped local charities by providing school supplies for those in need. Items collected in St. James are given to three recipient charities — Brunswick Family Assistance, Communities in Schools, and Hope Harbor Home — for distribution to students at county schools. The SJSC depends on volunteers for picking up donations from designated collection points and sorting them for distribution.

Last year’s chairperson, Lynn Douglass, reflected on the fact that so many of us have fond memories of the end-of-summer, school-shopping ritual. But in Brunswick County, many school children live in families below the poverty level. In 2016, residents contributed approximately 2,600 items valued at $6,800.

The SJSC will collect supplies during the second half of July at designated drop-off time at The Clubs and the community center. All St. James residents can help! It’s easy to pick up a few school supplies while shopping.

Watch for details published in online communications as well as the SJSC website www.stjamespoanc.org (Clubs and Groups tab/Service Club).
Hot dogs, hamburgers, homemade ice cream, watermelon, parades and, of course, fireworks dominate our local landscape during the first week of July. But two local theater offerings, both opening this week, offer great options for what to do with the family after the last of the fireworks fizzle and the last ember in the grill dies.

I mean, how much time can we spend on the beach or at the golf course anyway? Opera House Theater Company will stage their second show of the summer at Thalian Hall beginning July 5. The show, the Lerner and Loewe classic, “Camelot,” will run on weekends through July 23. This tragic love story about Guinevere, Lancelot and King Arthur and their quest for a “new world order” is known and beloved by millions. With songs like “What Do the Simple Folk Do?” “The Lusty Month of May,” “How to Handle a Woman,” and the title song, “Camelot,” patrons may be tempted to sing along — and rightly so. They’re some of the best-known tunes in Broadway history.

I have been told the director for this show is planning a departure from the beauty and pageantry that most of us associate with “Camelot.” Instead, the show will be staged in a “barbarian chic” style. I freely admit I’m not sure what that means, but the songs and story will not change. For tickets, contact Thalian Hall at 910-632-2285.

Opening the night before, on July 4, is a production that may very well be the theater experience of the year. The Thalian Association, in conjunction with the Friends of the Battleship NORTH CAROLINA, is producing the stage version of the movie classic, “Mister Roberts,” on the fantail of the battleship North Carolina.

Set on the USS Reluctant, a U.S. Navy cargo ship stationed in the South Pacific during the latter days of WWII, “Mr. Roberts” is the story of Lt. Doug Roberts and his efforts to transfer from the Reluctant to a fighting ship. Standing in his way is the petty, childish and dictatorial Captain Morton, the recipient of the admiral’s award for efficiency in cargo unloading — a beloved potted palm. These two roles were made famous in the movie by Henry Fonda and Jimmy Cagney.

This quintessential good cop (Roberts), bad cop (Morton) story includes additional characters who provide comic relief. There is Ensign Pulver, “officer for morale and laundry,” whose two purposes in life are avoiding Captain Morton and adding to his list of sexual conquests.

Then there’s Doc, the ship’s doctor and resident Anne Landers, whose drink of choice is orange juice and rubbing alcohol. And, of course, there is the requisite crew of misfits who round out the cast. Your humble writer appears in the performance as Captain Morton.

This production marks the first time an effort of this magnitude has been attempted, so please make plans to attend. Show dates are Thursday-Sunday, July 6-23. All shows begin at 8 p.m. For tickets, visit www.Thalian.org or www.battleshipnc.com.
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BY C.L. SMITH CONSTRUCTION, INC.
It’s been 222 years since the Southport’s Fourth of July Festival celebration first received mention in a newspaper. At that time — 1795 — ships anchored in the harbor discharged salutes from their cannons, beginning at daybreak. The ships’ officers and town officials toasted the young nation’s independence during what was at that time called the “Festival of Free Men.”

Fast forward to the 1950s, when the celebration was called the “Live Oak Festival” and included parades and dance balls. And to the 1960s, when two relatively new organizations, the Southport Jaycees and the Junior Woman’s Club, helped lay the groundwork for the parade by separately holding a boat raffle on what is now Whittler’s Bench on the Southport waterfront and starting an arts festival. With the support and enthusiasm of the community and tourists, the Fourth of July Parade was first held in Southport in 1964.

The festival was incorporated in 1972 as “North Carolina Fourth of July Festival, Inc.,” a nonprofit organization. The parade’s board of directors, professional staff at the Southport-Oak Island Chamber of Commerce and many volunteers have worked diligently to grow the parade to what it is today. For information on the July 1-4 events, visit www.nc4thofjuly.com.

Duncan B. Hilburn, this year’s parade president, became involved with the parade 12 years ago when his boss asked him to show up at 5 a.m. to pound stakes into the ground to set up the parade.

“While the early wake-up time was admittedly painful on what is usually a holiday, I was impressed — even moved — by the way the community came together through this rich tradition of celebration,” he said. He’s been volunteering in some capacity ever since.

However, the festival itself has struggled financially over the last three years. Hilburn says more aggressive and year-round fundraising is needed, as is securing grant funding. Costs are outpacing resources for the free event, which he says helps unite the community in a polarizing time in the world.

**Editor’s note:** The Southport-Oak Island Area Chamber of Commerce provided some of the information for this article. Photos are reprinted with permission of the North Carolina 4th of July Festival Collection, Randall Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Wilmington.
It was said that Merlin of the Arthurian legends lived backwards — he grew younger every year.

I wonder what Yogi Berra would have made of St. James. The baseball philosopher, who lived in my hometown of Montclair, New Jersey, once said, “When you come to a fork in the road, take it!” Yogi lived on a huge circle street in Montclair, like some of our streets, and you would get to his house whichever way you turned.

Yogi Berra’s confident pronouncements might help me with the hardening of attitudes that I am threatened with as I age. You would think a wide-ranging life with varying challenges and helping others through such challenges would lead me to seek out people who hold opinions different from mine. You would think my “chronological advantage” would provide such perspective that I would be protected from the secret glee which comes when someone who sees things differently stumbles in some situation.

Yet, I’m tempted to seek out and listen to only those facts and opinions that reinforce my long-held beliefs. Part of me wants to believe that my “good old days” were better than those of my parents. Do I believe that mine are probably better than the good old days my kids and grandkids are living through now? Will they look back on their struggles with fondness?

As I think about it, what made the good old days good was joining with others to meet challenges, using what we knew and what was available then. Think of all the manual calculations that went into the early days of our space program as explored in the movie, “Hidden Figures.”

I live in the hope that those who mentored and inspired me gave me something I made part of my life. I have been blessed by people with 10 or more years of life experience who helped me — not back into their heydays, but forward into mine.

All around us and in the pages of Cat-Tales, we see people at St. James who give away what they have learned and discovered, not to shape others to their preconceptions, but to give it away in all humility in the hope it will help.

As Yogi said, “Nostalgia ain’t what it used to be.”

“What made the good old days good was joining with others to meet challenges, using what we knew and what was available then.”
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