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ON THE COVER:
“One good Forster’s tern deserves another”
(photo by Jack Eyler)
If you have attended any recent Open Informational Meetings, you have probably heard me thank our committee members for all the work they do in making St. James Plantation a great place to live. Another very important aspect of this volunteerism is lower annual POA assessments. Even with the small increase for 2017, we still have one of the lowest in this area. There are 23 POA/HOA communities in Brunswick County. Of that number there are only four communities with an annual assessment lower than ours.

**Standing Committees:** The Master Declaration and Bylaws established a requirement for three committees. As the community has grown, we have added another 11 committees for a total of 14 standing committees and more that 125 committee members. A full description of each committee can be found on the POA website.

While the monthly workload and hours for each committee vary depending on what projects are currently in progress, all members dedicate a significant amount of personal time to committee work. I want to especially recognize the committee chairs who put in that extra effort to keep their respective committees on track. They are the scheduler, spokesperson, recruiter, trainer and advocate for their respective committees. They do all of this and more with little recognition. I would like to take this opportunity to identify and thank these community leaders.

- **Activities** – Kathy Rezza
- **Architectural Control** – Bruce Ivers
- **Communications** – Linda Eyler
- **Finance** – Elaine Kontos, Mark Erskine
- **Garden** – Gary Eberling
- **Information Technology** – Peter Jansen
- **Infrastructure** – Tom Ferris, Larry Moulin
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- **Landscape** – Sue Almeter, Craig Farland
- **Nominating** – Chuck Krambuhl
- **Ponds** – Tom Jividen
- **Rules and Enforcement** – Bob Wright
- **Safety & Security** – Bob Wright
- **Transition** – Bob Accordino

**Ad Hoc Committees:** In addition to our standing committees, we have also formed a number of ad hoc committees over the years. We currently have two active ad hoc committees – Nature Trails and Water Quality Tiger Team.

Amanda Kiel is the chair for the Nature Trails Committee, and she has successfully implemented two nature trails. The first trail runs from Waterway Park to the marina and is home to many native plants. The second trail is located behind the Founders Club pool and leads out to the marsh for bird watching.

The most recent committee, the tiger team, was chaired by George Freeman. This committee was formed in September of 2016 to address the incidence of high fecal coliform bacteria in some ponds. The committee put in many long hours and weekly meetings to address the issue.

The work has been completed and the committee has written three reports which are on the POA website. The reports addressed: “Sewer System Piping and Grinder Pump Monitoring,” “Improved Pond Management,” and “Pond Testing.” There were a number of recommendations in the three reports – some have been acted upon and some are still in progress.

It is not unusual for coastal Carolina ponds and waterways to exhibit high levels of fecal coliform bacteria, especially after a heavy rainfall. This is due to the animals and birds that live in the wetlands and Carolina bays which make up one-third of the land mass of St. James Plantation. Testing by the TOSJ in June of this year indicated elevated levels of fecal coliform bacteria in five of nine ponds tested. Additional DNA testing was completed on those five samples that showed low levels of human bacteria were present, but below the limit of quantification. Your POA will continue testing selected ponds as recommended by the tiger team.

While the ponds in St. James Plantation were primarily built as part of the storm water system, we do allow fishing on a “catch and release basis” in selected ponds. However, the ponds should not be used for wading, swimming or as a play area for children due to fecal coliform bacteria, as well as alligators and poisonous snakes that inhabit the area.
September is not National Volunteer Month – that’s April. But, still, I want to mention our Town volunteers. We’re recognizing their contributions with a luncheon on September 7, so they’re on my mind right now.

If you have lived in St. James for even a short time, you already know that this community runs on volunteers. Although the Town and the POA have paid staff, most of the work is done by volunteers, and our fire department is an all-volunteer organization.

"If you have lived in St. James for even a short time, you already know that this community runs on volunteers."

Town volunteers who help us get the job done include members of committees (Stormwater, Firewise, Deer and Comprehensive Plan), the Planning Board, the Emergency Management Team and even the Town Council. Without these volunteers, our costs would be much, much higher — which means our taxes would also be higher.

If you’re looking for something to do besides golf and all the other fun things in this area, why not apply for the next volunteer opportunity? And for those who put in so much volunteer time, thanks — you make it all work.

Now let’s talk about Town employees. Some Town functions do require paid staff. Like our counterparts in other towns, we try to hire highly qualified employees, which means offering competitive salaries and benefits.

For that reason, we asked Becky Veazey of the Management and Personnel Services Group to perform a salary and benefits study. Ms. Veazey interviewed all our staff members, reviewed their job descriptions and compared job responsibilities and salary ranges for nearby towns, among other tasks.

Note that St. James is different from other towns, because our POA manages many functions which would normally be municipal responsibilities. Also, our fire department is a separate corporation, not a Town department.

Ms. Veazey provided some interesting findings and recommendations. Some were easy to accept – title changes for our Town Manager and Assistant Zoning Administrator – while others needed further study. For the most part, salaries and benefits offered by the Town are competitive, and that’s good news. Remaining items for study/action are not big issues and should be addressed in September or October.

I’ve mentioned several times that we have three council positions open this year. Four candidates have filed for these positions, including one incumbent, Wayne Deutscher. The other three candidates are David DeLong, Jeff Mount and Stephanie Macaluso. We’re scheduling a “Meet the Candidates Night” to hear the candidates talk about why they’re running and to answer your questions. I hope you will attend, especially if you are still deciding which candidates to vote for.

Last, if you haven’t met him yet, please stop by the community center and say hi to Randy Gillette, our new assistant community center manager. Prior to coming to us, Randy was at the Southport Center, where many of you may have worked with him. He’s off to a great start.
The worst of the hot season will soon be behind us. But this year, the St. James Fire Department has experienced more than its usual amount of heat-related issues.

Unfortunately, some of us think that if a friend or spouse is suffering from a heat-related issue, we should run to Walmart for Gatorade. Nope. That’s not the right answer. Correct answers are below, but you should know that you cannot go wrong if you dial 911 in any type of an emergency.

Reading this article won’t make you a first responder to the three major heat-related issues. It’s intended to raise your awareness so you can assist if your golf partners or tennis buddies become ill. The chart below provides symptoms and first-aid interventions for these incidents.

**Heat stroke** is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body can no longer control its temperature. Body temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails and the body can’t cool down. When heat stroke occurs, body temperature can rise to 106 degrees Fahrenheit or higher within 10-15 minutes. Without emergency treatment, heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability.

**Heat exhaustion** is the body’s response to an excessive loss of water and salt, usually through excessive sweating. Folks most prone to heat exhaustion are the elderly, those with high blood pressure and people working or playing in a hot environment.

**Heat syncope** is a fainting (syncope) episode or dizziness that usually occurs with prolonged standing or sudden rising from a sitting or lying position. Factors that may contribute to heat syncope include dehydration and lack of acclimatization.

Your SJFD firefighters are frequently exposed to excessive heat, which is exacerbated by the personal protective equipment we wear. We’re constantly monitoring each other and consuming copious amounts of water and fluid replacement beverages. We’re also fortunate to have Emergency Medical Services standing by to monitor our vital signs for any signs of heat or medical issues.

Thanks to the Center for Disease Control for some of the technical aspects of this article.

**Editor’s Note:** Jim Carey is the SJFD public information officer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heat-related incident</th>
<th>Heat-related symptoms</th>
<th>First aid for heat-related incident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heat stroke</strong></td>
<td>Confusion, altered mental status, slurred speech, loss of consciousness (coma), hot, dry skin or profuse sweating, seizures, very high body temperature, fatal if treatment is delayed</td>
<td>Call 911 for emergency medical care. Stay with person until emergency medical services arrive. Move the person to a shaded, cool area and remove outer clothing. Cool the person quickly with cold water or ice water if possible by wetting the skin on head, neck, armpits and groin, or soak clothing with cool water. Circulate the air around the person to speed cooling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heat exhaustion</strong></td>
<td>Headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, thirst, heavy sweating, elevated body temperature, decreased urine output</td>
<td>Call 911. Stay with person until help arrives. Remove person from hot area and give liquids to drink. Remove unnecessary clothing, including shoes and socks. Cool the person with cold compresses or have the person wash head, face and neck with cold water. Encourage frequent sips of cool water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heat syncope</strong></td>
<td>Fainting (short duration), dizziness, light-headedness during prolonged standing or suddenly rising from a sitting or lying position</td>
<td>Sit or lie down in a cool place. Slowly drink water, clear juice or a sports drink.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A dozen steps towards a Firewise home

By Barbara Lemos

As a Firewise USA Community, St. James is working to mitigate the risks of property damage from regional wildfires. Educational outreach is a major element of the Firewise program. Firewise Committee members were pleased to meet with residents during the recent Severe Storm Fair.

Regardless of where you live in St. James, you can take several steps to better protect yourself and your property from fire danger. Here are a dozen practical ways to create and maintain “defensible space” around your home and prepare for fire emergencies.

1. Add emergency telephone numbers to your mobile phone directory. Always dial 911 in case of emergency. The Fire Department non-emergency is 910-253-9990; the St. James Emergency Operations Center, 910-253-4945; recorded message: 910-253-0949. Also, sign up for alerts.

2. Attach one or more garden hoses to functioning outdoor faucets — front and back — so they will be readily available if needed to wet down vegetation and exterior house surfaces.

3. Check window boxes, hanging planters and other “attachments” and remove highly flammable material such as coconut fiber that could be ignited by embers.

4. Similarly, patrol your garage, porches and patio for flammable materials such as propane tanks, gasoline cans and aerosol sprays and move them away from possible ignition sources.

5. Consider replacing dead plants and shrubs with fire-resistant species listed in our St. James Design Guidelines (found at www.stjamespoanc.org under “Resources” then “Architectural Control Guidelines”).

6. Prune shrubs and plants near your house to create a buffer zone to reduce fire risk. This provides the added benefit of facilitating maintenance such as painting and power washing.

7. Check your roof and gutters for accumulated pine needles and remove them (or arrange for someone else to do it while you remain safe!).

8. If you’re worried about dead trees or overhanging tree limbs, have a tree service give you an assessment and estimate of costs to remove them. Prioritize by those trees/limbs posing the greatest risk to your home.

9. Measure and mark off a 30-foot perimeter around your house and porches. This is the minimum recommended defensible space in which to focus your protective efforts.

10. Within your 30-foot perimeter, remove pine straw mulch, and replace it with bark nugget mulch which burns at a much slower rate.

11. Routinely clear your defensible space of anything that is not “lean, clean and green” such as pine needles, leaves, sick or dead plants and branches.

12. Scan your homeowner’s insurance policy and save it as a PDF file. Email it to yourself or save it on a flash drive so you can access it remotely in case of emergency or evacuation.

Further Firewise outreach will be held at selected community events, and Firewise literature is available at our Town Hall. Information to guide you on your Firewise journey can also be found at www.firewise.org/usa.

Editor’s Note: Barbara Lemos is a member of the TOSJ Firewise Committee.
Architectural FAQs: yard ornaments

By Genna Porter

Can’t resist that lovely statue of a pelican? Want to jazz up that special spot where you love to read while sitting in a chaise in the back yard?

Have some fun with yard ornaments, but be aware of the guidelines pertaining to them. Yard art must conform to the neighborhood and the generally accepted ambiance of St. James (so the five-foot-tall replica of David won’t cut it).

You can have up to 10 ornaments, but no more than seven, on the front yard or on the rear yard backing up to a golf course. Waterfalls and rock gardens are no-nos in front or side yards abutting a street.

Deck or yard furniture used for dining or entertaining (including serving carts) are not considered yard ornaments.

All permanent yard ornaments larger than 18 inches and located outside of your setback envelope require an Existing Home Modification form for Architectural Control Committee (ACC) review and approval. You may also showcase your favorite holiday and seasonal decorations if they’re removed within two weeks after the end of the holiday or season they represent.

Editor’s note: Genna Porter is the POA ACC administrator.

Casting your line in a pond?

By Nancy Seyferth • Photo by John Muuss

Residents and their guests can fish in some St. James ponds.

There are 245 ponds covering 175 acres of ponds in St. James. The POA owns 45 percent of the ponds, the Clubs own 32 percent and the remaining 23 percent are owned collectively by the Developer, Arbor Creek, TOSJ, condo associations, Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District and individuals. It’s important to know about the pond where you plan to fish. Residents must accompany their guests if they are planning to fish.

Fishing is allowed in certain publicly-accessible POA ponds, subject to the following rules. Violation of these rules can result in the loss of pond fishing privileges.

- North Carolina fishing regulations apply. Residents and their guests who are at least 16 years old must have a state-issued fishing license in their possession while fishing at the ponds.
- Fishing is permitted from sunrise to sunset.
- Fishing is catch-and-release. Caught fish must be returned to the pond immediately.

Fishing is not allowed under the following circumstances:

- On golf course property and resident-developed (unless you are the pond owner) and undeveloped lots
- Within construction zones or areas restricted by the POA, Town, Developer or their representatives
- In wetlands and areas with sensitive or protected plant life

Parking is not permitted in areas that impede traffic or cause damage to private or community property, including irrigation, landscaping or terrain.

Exercise common-sense courtesy so as not to disturb neighboring residents. Observe conservation practices for the protection of natural habitat. Don’t leave behind debris such as cans, bottles, fishing tackle, unused bait, etc.

For more information on pond fishing and the location of recommended fishing ponds that have been enhanced with fish habitat and stocking, check the POA website under the “Resources” tab/POA Document Library/Ponds Committee Guidelines for the “St. James Plantation Fishing Guidelines” or “Ponderings: A simple guide to a healthy pond.”
“This is the first issue of a new monthly newsletter for all St. James Plantation property owners,” reads the single-page, double-sided black and white sheet dated November 23, 1993 and evidently mailed with the December 1993 calendar (the staple marks, and the address and 39-cent postage stamp on the back of the calendar gave it away). What appears to be a prototype of the newsletter called “Your Viewpoint” is dated July 30, 1993 and includes an article on pool furniture arriving and another on a new restaurant on the Southport waterfront — Provisions Co. “The Provisions Co. is the only waterfront restaurant in Southport that offers outdoor dining,” the article says.
**Historical perspective.** While we were always the leader in resales, for almost 20 years, St. James Properties sold more developer sales. Understandably, many owners still maintain that perception.

**But times have changed. Here’s why.** After more than 4,700 sales over a 23 year period, more and more properties come up for resale. That’s what happens as a community matures. As a result, there are far more resales available than developer sales.

**So, a few years ago, we changed our whole approach to sales...**

We became Buyer’s Agents versus Seller’s Agents. We also formed a separate exclusive group who are Listing Agents. They work solely for our listing owners.

We specialize in St. James Plantation only, while other real estate firms sell and list all over the county.

**Million dollar marketing budget.** For the past 20 years, we have spent over $1,000,000 annually to promote St. James. This consistent effort results in over 2,000 prospect tours each year. The typical REALTOR® brings in 100 or less prospects to their office.

**Results.** As a result of the changes, approximately two-thirds of our total sales are now resales. Moreover, we sell more resales in St. James Plantation than all other REALTORS® combined. That’s right! And there are more than 800 other REALTORS® in Brunswick County!

**2017 YTD Top Listing Agents – Home and Lot Sales – 1/1/17 - 8/2/17 - St. James Plantation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sides SOLD</th>
<th>Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Karen Gaspar (St. James Properties)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>$18,570,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lisa Frye (St. James Properties)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>$17,412,745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jerry Biffle (Re/Max Southern Coast)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$5,389,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ben Styers (St. James Properties)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$3,602,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nolan Formalarie (Discover NC Homes)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$3,576,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on North Carolina Regional MLS Statistics

800-245-3871
Listing Agents St. James Properties - Lisa Frye, Karen Gaspar and Ben Styers

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Chuck Krambuhl, the chair for the POA’s Nominating Committee, is leading the effort to give property owners the necessary tools and information to vote for the open POA board positions.

Chuck, who settled in St. James in 2008, is a member of the much-appreciated Mike’s Garage Band. Besides being a committee chair and musician, he was a member of the Troon Advisory Group for four years. Now he is busier than ever with four grandchildren – two sets of twins, ages four and seven.

The committee’s basic function, as required by the POA governing documents, is to solicit candidates for the POA board, review their credentials and nominate at least as many candidates as there are open positions.

“By early September, each property owner will receive a package in the mail with a proxy ballot, instructions and candidate resumes.”

Committee members get very busy in early summer. You’ve already received the mid-July email blast that solicited interest from residents to be potential candidates for the three open board positions. Following that request, residents submitted their interest and resumes.

In parallel, the committee’s election sub-committee members have established the early voting procedures. They will also review and count early ballots, conduct election day balloting, tabulate votes (several times) and report the results at the annual meeting.

By early September, each property owner will receive a package in the mail with a proxy ballot, instructions and candidate resumes. An open forum scheduled for September 7 at 4 p.m. will give voters a chance to meet the candidates and ask questions. Look for POA email blasts that will include additional details.

Owners can mail or deliver a proxy ballot to the POA office or submit it online on the POA website. On the annual meeting day, owners who didn’t submit a proxy ballot can vote in person. The votes are due before the start of the POA annual meeting on October 14.

The committee members, besides Chuck, include Sue Wooldridge, John Malitoris and Ken Best. POA liaisons are Dan Davis (community manager), Mike Farage (POA board) and Su Peyton (IT committee).

Every member brings capabilities and expertise to the committee. For example, Sue is an attorney; John worked in corporate education; Ken was in the U.S. Marine Corps; Dan knows the POA rules; Mike provides board insight and support and Su will make sure the online voting goes smoothly.

Chuck also stressed that they couldn’t complete these tasks without help from the POA staff. They have a major role throughout this process and ensure that administrative functions are completed in accordance with the committee’s established schedule.

Chuck clearly summarized the committee’s goal, “By making the voting process easy to understand and use, we hope to increase participation and ensure confidence in the outcome of our POA board elections.”

(l-r) Sue Wooldridge, Chuck Krambuhl and John Malitoris (Ken Best absent)
The board of directors of the Marina at St. James Plantation Owners Association Inc. would like to thank slip owners, Harborside condominium residents, adjacent property owners and visitors for their patience during the leveling and repair of our marina walkways. This project began in November 2016 and the work on the walkways was completed in August.

New LED lighting will be added to the walkways this month. Contractors also will rebuild the areas housing the trash cans, dock carts, electrical equipment and safety equipment during this time.

This has been a major project for the marina and its owners. We particularly want to express our thanks to the landowners surrounding the marina area whose property, through an easement, provided us access to perform the necessary maintenance work. Wherever possible, we used vacant lots to transport supplies and materials. But in some areas, we had to use private yards for access.

We would also like to remind everyone visiting the marina area that the land adjacent to the walkways is the private property of the homeowners. As you stroll around this beautiful area, stay on the walkways. To get to marina walkways, use one of the five access points which are located near the corners and through the Harborside entrance. The board hopes you continue to enjoy your visits to St. James Marina.

Editor’s Note: John Neuner is president of the St. James Marina Owners Association.
Best in the U.S.
St. James has made a list of the “50 best master-planned communities in the U.S.” According to the editors of Where to Retire magazine, the list is a compilation of “an elite selection of neighborhoods across the country that provide the active lifestyles retirees seek.” The list features communities in 18 states, with six in North Carolina. Prices for homes start at $80,000 and go to $3 million. Monthly homeowners’ fees range from zero dollars to $648, and the top five amenities are tennis, on-site dining, green home options, golf and access control.

St. James made the list, according to the magazine, because it offers “the best in coastal living thanks to inviting temperatures that span four distinct seasons.” The publication points to other benefits, including the marina, golf courses, the Beach Club, the Dosher Wellness Center and the “great blue herons that soar above 36-plus miles of nature trails.”

Play ball!
The August 2 issue of the State Port Pilot featured an extensive article on softball at St. James. The St. James Gators have been pounding the leather at ballparks around Brunswick County since 2001, when coach Tom Pezanowski recruited players for the team’s first season. This past spring, a second St. James team took the field for the first time, when the new Jimmies joined the Gators as members of the Brunswick County Senior Softball League. With the spring campaign completed, players have been preparing for the fall season, which begins this month and runs through mid-November.
Psst, What’s the password? Remember when the only time we heard that question was when we wanted to get into the treehouse? Now, we’re being asked for passwords, sometimes when we don’t know we established one!

It’s estimated that the average internet user has more than 20 websites or apps that require a user name and a password. Making it worse, some of those require you to change your password every 90 days! Fortunately, big changes are on the horizon.

Before we consider the near future, where are we now? If you’re like most baby boomers, you have a password-protected computer, mobile phone and iPad. You also have passwords for games, financial accounts, stores and more. You may have more than 20 passwords in your password book or on your password list. You may be asked to sign in, confirm, change and reconfirm your passwords almost every day.

Why do you need passwords? Safety, security and I forget the third; which is okay because one thing we boomers have in common is forgetting our passwords. We’re often fooled by phishing attempts. The FBI estimates that every year, internet scams take in more than $50 million in the U.S. The internet is the wild west, and there’s no sheriff in town.

The first rule of passwords, all passwords, is that they’re case-sensitive. Even your answers to security questions — like "What was the name of your first pet?"— must be exact. If your answer when you created the security question was "Fluffy Mae," then you must enter it exactly that way, spaces included.

The second rule is to use more than eight characters. Most vendors require you to use a capital letter, a lowercase letter and a number. Some allow characters like $, % or &. I recommend that you use them when making up your passwords.

Make your passwords hard to guess and don’t change them unless you’re hacked. The current thinking is that it doesn’t make any sense to keep changing your password every 90 days if you have a strong password. Use phrases like Angry@myISP or I*hatebroccoli2. Avoid using anything that may be part of a public record, like your middle name or birth date.

User name is the password’s sibling. It may or may not be case-sensitive. Today, most user names are valid email addresses. Vendors need every user to have a unique identifier, so most choose to use email addresses. This way, they can also send you an email message to verify that you are who you say you are. So, while your Gmail address might begoodperson@gmail.com, you may use that Gmail address as your Apple ID or for any other vendor that wants you to use an email address as your user name.

Soon, passwords may be replaced by facial recognition cameras, fingerprints and iris scans. Until that happens, remember your passwords. Keep them protected, and when you change them, make sure you record the change. Otherwise, you could get locked out of the treehouse.
Nic and Kate Branson moved to North Carolina from Connecticut two years ago because they wanted Lily, their four-year-old daughter, to be near both sets of grandparents. Today, Lily can choose between her grandparents and St. James residents, many of whom act grandparently to her and her family, including the nice neighbor who leaves her flowers on the porch.

Nic and Kate aren’t the kind of residents who come to mind when thinking of St. James. They’re not retired, and they have a school-aged child. This month, when many residents will take advantage of cooler temperatures to play another round of golf or tennis, the Bransons will start another year of integrating the commute to Lily’s preschool with Kate’s work at home for an insurance company and Nic’s job managing Island Bicycles.

According to a Brunswick County school spokesperson, 18 school-age children who live in St. James take the bus to public schools. This number does not include children who are driven to public schools or those who attend non-public schools.

Nic says they chose St. James because there weren’t many children and it was quieter, which suits their private lifestyle. They’ve met other St. James parents through Lily’s preschool, he says.

They’ve also made great friends in their Sanderling Drive community. He doesn’t feel different because he’s somewhat of an anomaly. “Being in a retirement community, everyone watches out for Lily,” he says.

Nic says they take advantage of amenities
such as Waterway Park and other uncrowded outdoor areas. “There’s a lot to do without having to go out of the way or spend a lot of money.”

Then there’s Elisabeth and Matt Scharf, who, along with their son Cameron, have lived in St. James since 2007. Cameron was eight and in grade school at that time. Now, he’s 18 and heading off this fall to William Peace University.

Elisabeth states unequivocally that St. James has been a great place to raise a child. The community has nearby amenities (Beach Club, boating and water sports) as well as attractive neighborhoods, golf, tennis, parks, swimming pools — and eventually, Cameron’s part-time job at the Reserve. The Scharfs have had similar experiences as the Bransons — the benefit of St. James amenities and great neighbors who like having a child nearby. Their Beaver Creek neighbors have enjoyed watching Cameron and friends grow from children to adults.

Cameron has friends inside and beyond his neighborhood. Best friends and schools are rarely right next door, no matter where kids live. So driving to and from school, sports (Cameron plays lacrosse) and activities with friends is much the same for parents living in St. James as elsewhere.

Once, when Cameron was asked about possibly moving, he responded “Why would we want to leave St. James?” Cameron is now “leaving” St. James, but for good reason.
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St. James Fishing Club Derby

By Jerry Hrabica and Chuck Jackson

The fishing club holds a year-long fishing derby (ending December 31) to recognize the anglers that caught the longest fish in each species, the angler with most number of species caught, and the boat captain who hosted the most number of winning anglers. Here’s the leaderboard as of July 31st.

### Current Leaderboard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FISH</th>
<th>ANGLER</th>
<th>LENGTH (inches)</th>
<th>CAPTAIN</th>
<th>DATE Caught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALBACORE FALSE</td>
<td>Greg Wojtowicz</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Hiroki Toma</td>
<td>5/23/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMBERJACK</td>
<td>Greg Wojtowicz</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>Hiroki Toma</td>
<td>7/27/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARRACUDA</td>
<td>Tony Sappio</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Phil Keipper</td>
<td>5/27/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLUEFISH</td>
<td>Paul Woodyard</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>Jerry Hrabica</td>
<td>4/11/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COBIA</td>
<td>Steve Semke</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Jerry Hrabica</td>
<td>6/13/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOLPHIN</td>
<td>Ted Koeng</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Ted Koeng</td>
<td>7/17/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRUM, BLACK</td>
<td>Harry Howard</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>Richard Beich</td>
<td>5/5/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRUM, RED SLOT</td>
<td>Patrick McTavish</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Chanor</td>
<td>6/15/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRUM, RED RELEASED</td>
<td>Steve Semke</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>Duncan Sillars</td>
<td>3/29/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLounder</td>
<td>Bob Pearal</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>Jerry Hrabica</td>
<td>3/31/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUPER, GAG</td>
<td>Jerry Hrabica</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Jerry Hrabica</td>
<td>5/22/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRUNT</td>
<td>Tom Soory</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>John Schneder</td>
<td>7/14/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOGFISH</td>
<td>Jude Panetta</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>Ted Koeng</td>
<td>3/25/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACKEREL, KING</td>
<td>Tony Sappio</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>Phil Keipper</td>
<td>4/11/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACKEREL, SPANISH</td>
<td>Tom Bell</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>Tom Bell</td>
<td>5/18/2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>POMPANO, FLORIDA</td>
<td>Joe Frangiosa</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Beach</td>
<td>6/14/2017</td>
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<td>7/27/2017</td>
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<td>Ted Koeng</td>
<td>6/4/2017</td>
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<td>TROUT, GRAY</td>
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<td>17.5</td>
<td>Jerry Hrabica</td>
<td>6/27/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TROUT, SPECKLED</td>
<td>Forest Duncan</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Forest Duncan</td>
<td>1/13/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUNA, BLACK IN</td>
<td>Ted Koeng</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Ted Koeng</td>
<td>4/15/2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLUEGILL</td>
<td>Laura Miller</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Pond</td>
<td>9/13/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATFISH</td>
<td>David Mullaney</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Pond</td>
<td>4/20/2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>LARGEMOUTH BASS</td>
<td>Laura Miller</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>Pond</td>
<td>9/13/2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During her presentation to the birders, Janet showcased three of their five special-permitted educational birds with injuries too severe for release. Tim is a Brown Pelican whose tendons in one wing were severed by fishing line. Not only does he educate humans, he is also the mentor for other resident pelicans, teaching the youngsters good manners, how to eat frozen fish and how to pass through a trap door to their outside pool area.

Also on display was Shadow, a barred owl hit by a car and now blind. She has huge black eyes set into big grey facial feather discs — a truly gorgeous gal. Lusby, a black fish crow with one partially amputated wing, helps feed rescued baby crows.

This all-volunteer organization depends on area veterinarians who provide expertise and use of medical equipment. But Sea Biscuit needs financial help to purchase their wish list items: medical or cleaning supplies and food such as freeze-dried crickets or meal worms — not your everyday pantry items. Visit their website at www.seabiscuitwildlifeshelter.org to help.
The St. James Birders Club grew as an outcrop of those who helped build the Marsh Trail near the Founders Club pool. After Cape Fear Audubon President Charley Winterbauer and bird store owner Jill Peleuses walked the trail, they told their St. James companions that having an osprey platform was an excellent idea and the marshes and fresh water ponds would make a “wonderful stopover for migrating birds.”

The club’s 91 members host speakers, facilitate bird excursions and take part in national bird counts, such as the Audubon’s Christmas and the Great Backyard counts. Check out their webpage on the POA website under the Clubs and Groups/Environment tab.

Members learn about factors affecting the bird environment, bird photography, native plants that benefit the birds and how to attract birds to backyard feeders. They’ve also built nesting boxes for bluebirds and brown-headed nuthatches, which are losing the pine trees needed for food and nesting.
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FREE ESTIMATES
Two Living Shore volunteers with bags of oyster shells used to replenish the reefs in the ICW by Waterway Park.
The world is your oyster

By J. Taylor Ryan • Photos by John Muuss

For 11 years, St. James citizen scientists, UNCW and high school students, including aquaculture students from South Brunswick High School, have supported the St. James’ Living Shoreline.

Since we’ve started, we have

- Built and replenished eight oyster shell reefs in the ICW by Waterway Park using 2,850 bushels of shells.
- Built six loose-shell reefs in Beaver Dam Creek using 850 bushels of shells.
- Planted more than 11,600 plugs of Spartina Alterniflora and Spartina Patens to control erosion.
- Planted 150 flowering plants.
- Assisted Oak Island in building its oyster reefs with the N.C. Coastal Federation.

With the building of three reefs and the planting of more than 5,000 plugs of Spartina Alterniflora and Patens, this year has been special. Thanks to more than 270 St. James volunteers and UNCW’s Benthic Ecology Lab, led by Professor Troy Alphin, UNCW’s Ocean-17 camp students, the Waccamaw Boys’ and Girls’ Home, P.R.I.D.E. and the N.C. Coastal Federation. Also, special thanks for the support from TOSJ, POA, Developer, Troon and the State Port Pilot.

Our next big event is the Eighth Annual Oyster Dinner — now the Oysterfest/Oktoberfest — on Thursday, October 26. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Ami E. Wilbur, UNCW Director, Shellfish Research Hatchery. Watch for sign-up announcements.
Peachy keen season for late-variety freestone peaches

By Cheryl L. Serra • Recipes by The Clubs
Executive Chef Randy Tugwell

If you’re crazy for cobbler or screaming for homemade peach ice cream, get ready for a season that will leave you full and happy.

Some peach orchards across North Carolina were hit with a late freeze, but the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services reports growers from the mountains to the coast are cultivating a good crop of late-variety freestone peaches.

But you may need to get ’em quickly, as their season will end soon. According to the release, “Many consumers enjoy freestones for the ease in which the flesh of the peach separates from the seed, making these varieties easy to enjoy as a snack.”

Did you know North Carolina is home to more than 1,200 acres of peach orchards? Growers produced 5,290 tons of the fruit in 2015. More information about the state’s peach industry is available from the department’s website and www.NCPeachGrowers.com.

Grilled peach and arugula salad

With crispy prosciutto, goat cheese, white balsamic dressing, candied pistachio

Serves 4

Ingredients
2 ripe N.C. peaches, peeled and cut in half
½ lb. julienne-cut prosciutto ham
4 oz. goat cheese, crumbled
1 lb. fresh arugula
½ lb. shelled pistachios

For the dressing
¼ cup white balsamic vinegar
¼ cup apple cider vinegar
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
1 Tbsp. honey
1 tsp. fresh thyme, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, miniced
½ Tbsp. shallot, miniced
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
1 cup canola oil

Blend first eight dressing ingredients in a food processor by slowly adding them until emulsified.

Adjust with salt and cracked black pepper.

To build the salad

Marinate the peaches in half of the vinaigrette for 10 minutes. Preheat grill.

Candy the pistachios by steeping in 1 cup of simple syrup, drain, place on sheet pan and roast in a 300-degree oven for 10-12 minutes or until done, let cool.

In a sauté pan, heat ¼ cup of olive oil, quickly fry the prosciutto until crisp, drain onto paper towel.

Grill the peaches until caramelized.
Assemble salad: Place grilled peach halves onto salad plate and top with crumbled goat cheese. In a small bowl toss the arugula with a touch of vinaigrette until coated. Place the arugula aside the peaches. Top with crispy prosciutto and the pistachios. Drizzle with remaining dressing and enjoy.

Escoffier’s peach melba

Ingredients
6 ripe, tender peaches
sugar
1 ½ pints vanilla ice cream (fresh homemade is best)
1 heaping cup fresh ripe raspberries
1 heaping cup powdered sugar
6 Tbsp. blanched raw almond slivers (optional)

Boil a medium pot of water. Keep a large bowl of ice water close by. Gently place a peach into the boiling water. Let the peach simmer for 15-20 seconds, making sure all surfaces of the peach are submerged. Remove the peach from the boiling water with a slotted spoon and immediately plunge it into the ice water for a few seconds to cool. Take the peach out of the ice water and place it on a plate. Repeat the process for the remaining peaches.

Peel peaches when all of the have been submerged. Their skin should come off easily if they are ripe, thanks to the short boiling process. Discard the skins. Halve the peeled peaches and discard the pits.

Optional step: Place the peeled peaches in a large bowl of cold water mixed with 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice or ascorbic acid powder. Let the peach halves soak for 10 minutes. Drain off the water and gently pat the peach halves dry with a paper towel. This step will help to keep the peaches from oxidizing and turning brown.

Sprinkle the peach halves with sugar on all exposed surfaces. Place them on a plate in a single layer, then place them in the refrigerator for one hour to chill.

Meanwhile, make the raspberry purée. Place the raspberries into a blender and pulse for a few seconds to create a purée. Strain purée into a bowl through a fine-mesh sieve, pressing down on the solid ingredients and agitating the mixture with a metal spoon to extract as much syrupy juice as possible. It will take a few minutes to extract all of the juice from the solids. When finished, you should only have seeds and a bit of pulp left in the strainer. Dispose of the solids.

Sift the powdered sugar into the raspberry purée, adding a little powdered sugar at a time and whisking in stages till the sugar is fully incorporated into the syrup. It will take several minutes of vigorous whisking to fully integrate the powdered sugar into the syrup. Refrigerate the raspberry syrup for one hour, or until chilled.

Assemble six serving dishes. Scoop ½ cup of vanilla ice cream into each serving dish. Place two of the sugared peach halves on top of each serving of ice cream. Divide the raspberry sauce between the six dishes, drizzling the sauce over the top of the peaches and ice cream. Top each serving with a tablespoon of raw almond slivers, if desired. Serve immediately.
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Stephanie Marie Wentzel

While most elementary school children were selling lemonade by the side of the road, Stephanie was busy creating earrings, rings and bracelets to sell. Her passion continued into adulthood, where she learned much more about fashion and jewelry while working at three different jewelry companies.

Initially, Stephanie’s jewelry was unique because she customized pieces based on a customer’s personal style and energy. Her endeavor, aptly named “The Jewelry Psychic,” was founded on the premise of creating pieces that resonate with the recipient, whether it was their favorite color, animal spirit or personality trait.

She would intuitively recognize an individuals’ personality and interests and work from there to create pieces that spoke to the psyche. This evolved into designing jewelry as readymade gifts for people who connected with her pieces. She prides herself in creating “meaningful jewelry” and typically uses healing stones that emit therapeutic energies to the wearer. She creates each piece with the hope of inspiring people through her art.

Stephanie is mostly self-taught but always is open to learning more and has taken metalsmithing courses at the local community center. The “jewelry psychic” predicts, “The best is yet to come!”

Cliff Bennet

Art wasn’t part of Cliff’s early years. Rather, expectations directed that he obtain work that would pay the rent and put food on the table. After a few working years, he took a job that gave him the opportunity to travel, work and live in more than 40 different countries and many places in the U.S.

Cliff believes you work so you can live. That attitude, coupled with the variety of locales in which he has lived, gave him the chance to try his hand at photography and to appreciate the art and crafts and their requisite skills that abound in our world.

While stationed in the Philippines, he was introduced to Chinese painting and studied the classical/traditional method of Chinese brush painting. He also studied the contemporary/freestyle method of Chinese painting. In the U.S., Chinese and Japanese brush painting are both identified as “Sumi-e,” and Cliff has had several paintings juried into national shows of the Sumi-e Society of America.

Cliff’s interest in art has led him to take classes and experiment with other genres including painting with acrylics, oils and watercolor; pottery; silk screening; relief printing with lino blocks; etching with Dremel® tools; lithographic printing with drawings on stone; religious icon painting; rug hooking; picture framing; and photo book design and printing. These art excursions gave him an appreciation for the skills and dedication of the artists who pursue each art form.
Autumn is upon us. Although the St. James Service Club does not have regular meetings during the summer months, members have been busy organizing the many activities and fundraisers the organization runs each year. In July, St. James residents donated thousands of school supply items and club members organized these for distribution to 3 local charities. Our thanks go to all who contributed. In addition, many of the Service Club’s ongoing committees were meeting and planning for many events and fundraisers to come.

The Service Club is lucky to have a new president at the helm. Eileen DeSerio has lived in St. James for 10 years and has been in the Service Club for nine years during which she participated in many committees and capacities. She recently reflected on the Service Club’s theme for the year, Helping Our Brunswick County Community with Hearts and Hands. “We would like to make a difference to the lives of our children, the future of Brunswick Community College, the seniors who need some comfort and the neglected or injured animals. Deep down, we all want to make a difference and it becomes easier when we understand it doesn’t have to be newsworthy. Just a small act of kindness, a helping hand, can create the most impact”.

The Service Club is planning an Ambassador program in each neighborhood to reach out to new and long time residents and to help new members integrate into the club and activities. Newcomers bring new experiences and ideas and always generate new energy! Look for information in online communications, or go to the Service Club website www.stjamespoanc.org/serviceclub.
Education budgets continue to show little growth. But Brunswick County fine art teachers are finding ways to ensure that students receive some form of quality art education. They often apply for educational grants from Stepping Up for Arts (SUFA), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit which helps subsidize costs.

Here are some SUFA-funded projects in the county:

- At Bolivia Elementary School, fourth- and fifth-graders had fun using new iPads to create digital artwork and music. Spearheaded by art teacher Noah Klein, three distinct art disciplines came together in the production of a class video. Art students using Minecraft Creative Mode developed three-dimensional monuments expressing the First Tee core values. Music students used GarageBand to create digital compositions and language arts students developed the script that accompanied the musical score and dimensional figures. ATMC also provided funding for this exciting synthesis of art, music, language arts and technology.

- Cedar Grove Middle School used its grant for clay and an iPad2. Stacey Belter’s eighth grade, advanced art students used their air-dry clay experience to create beautiful pieces out of kiln clay, adding glazes for the final powerful impact. Next year, Belter will provide the clay experience to more students. The iPad2 satisfies additional curriculum requirements. Students are keeping a digital portfolio to document their art journey.

- Students at Jessie Mae Monroe Elementary School created art based on the work of Dean Russo, who paints mixed-media pictures of animals, donating some of his earnings to fight for animal rights. With the SUFA grant, second- to fifth-grade students studied the artistic style of Mr. Russo to see how art can have a positive impact on their community. The students raised almost $500 through an auction of their works, which they donated to Paws Place and to the Sunset Beach Turtle Watch.

Teacher Theresa Reiter, like the other teachers who benefitted from the grants, was thankful. “We would not have been able to do this without the grant,” she said. “Not only did my students benefit by exploring an entirely new medium, it also brought together the school, student, parents and community. This was such a positive experience we plan to make this a permanent part of the Jessie Mae Monroe ‘Gotta Have Art Show.’”

For more information about how you can support art development in Brunswick County Schools, contact SUFA at www.stjamesartisans.com and click on “Stepping Up for Arts.”

**Editor’s note:** Noah Klein, Tracey Belter and Theresa Reiter contributed to this story. Nancy Adelis is SUFA vice president for community arts.
September is the curtain month for the two local musical theater companies, Opera House (OHTC) and Thalian Association (TACT). OHTC will begin on its season on September 10, while TACT will raise the curtain on its 2017-18 season on September 29. Both companies will offer Wilmington-area premieres.

Opening on August 30 and running the next two weekends will be the unique story of Peter and “Blackstache” before they became Peter Pan and Captain Hook. In recent years, prequels have become quite popular. How did Luke, Han and Leia become the protagonists of the “Star Wars” saga? How did Don Corleone become, well, Don Corleone?

The prequel to Sir James M. Barrie’s wonderful tale of Peter Pan at the OHTC is titled “Peter and the Starcatcher.” Billed as a play with music (not a musical), the story revolves around Molly Aster, the daughter of Lord Aster, who has been charged with safely delivering the Queen’s trunk, filled with “precious cargo,” to the remote island kingdom of Rundoon. There’s much mayhem along the way, involving a vast cast of characters who may — or may not — ultimately become someone else.

Be advised this is not “Peter Pan,” and theater goers should be prepared for over-the-top, scenery-chewing performances. Consider what “Spamalot” is to “Camelot” when you attend.

Much like “Spamalot,” “Young Frankenstein” has a near-cult following among movie buffs of a certain age. The story is the same as the movie. It will induce many patrons to speak the punch lines to many of the jokes such as: “Werewolves?” “Over there, and there and there,” and “I can fix that hump.” “What hump?” I urge all to suppress their “inner-performer” so as not to spoil the humor for anyone who may not have seen the movie — if that person exists!

Of course, what sets the play apart from the movie is the addition of songs. “The Happiest Town,” “Transylvania Mania,” “He’s Loose,” “Join the Family Business,” “Roll, Roll, Roll in the Hay,” “Please Send Me Someone” and “Don’t Touch Me” are just a few of the tunes that move the story musically.

Adding to the enjoyment are several company dance numbers, in addition to the well-known “Puttin’ on the Ritz.” With the zany writing of Mel Brooks and directed by Mike Thompson (award-winning director for “The Addams Family”), I fully expect this show to be a rollicking good time.

Both shows will be staged at historic Thalian Hall. Located at 310 Chestnut Street, the hall is just blocks from some of Wilmington’s favorite restaurants. So plan to make an evening of your theater experience. Tickets can be obtained by going to the box office, calling the box office at 910-632-2285 or visiting the website at www.thalianhall.org.

Hope to see you at the theater!
How often, driving to Wilmington on Midway Road, have you noticed it on the right — just past the sweeping curve at the Antioch Baptist Church? “It” is the Buddhist temple with its “Visitors Welcome” sign out front.

Curious about this bit of Asia so close to St. James, my friend, Anneke Pin-Jantzen, and I decided to accept the invitation.

A little research at www.wat-carolina.com revealed that Abbot Tan Ajahn Buddhamonpricha, who came to the area from Thailand, established the Buddhist Association of North Carolina and Wat Carolina Monastery in 1987 on 21 acres donated by his siblings. An important criterion for selecting the land for the temple was a sense of its positive, spiritual “vibes.”

After calling ahead to make an appointment, we arrived at the shady, peaceful compound, uncertain where to go. There are two main buildings on the site, a house/office area and the temple. As we headed for the temple, somebody called to us. A monk in a cinnamon-colored robe greeted us and led us to the abbot.

Abbot Tan Ajahn Phraku, a slight, older man with a kindly demeanor, asked if we wanted to learn about Buddhism. We didn’t know what to expect, but we said yes.

The abbot, using a large wall chart, props, stories and analogies, explained in heavily-accented English the main tenets of Buddhism, such as the Eight-Fold Path of the Middle Way and the Wheel of Life. Throughout, seated on a low platform and surrounded by stacks of books.
of papers from which he frequently produced handouts, he evinced a keen insight into modern life and an engaging sense of humor. Presenting us with Buddha necklaces, he invited us to an upcoming celebration commemorating the Buddha’s first sermon.

Before we left, we were encouraged to explore the temple. Wooden walkways cross the low-lying land to the Thai-style building which houses what in a church would be the sanctuary. Front and center of an open, carpeted area is a large, green, seated Buddha, flanked on the left by smaller gold-colored standing Buddhas in various poses and on the right by a raised platform where the monks sit. There are pictures representing events from the life of Prince Siddhartha Gautama, who eventually became the Buddha, and other artifacts, including the Tipitaka — 48 volumes of Theravada Buddhist scripture.

On a hot afternoon, Anneke and I were almost reluctant to leave this serene, cool oasis. But, we knew we would return. There’s a celebration to attend, and Thailand is only 10 minutes away.

**Editor’s note:** Stay tuned to read about Virginia’s experience during the celebration of the Buddha’s first sermon in a future issue of *Cat-Tales.*

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*The altar area of the temple sanctuary with its large green, seated Buddha*
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By Marilyn Rudolph

By now, Dosher Wellness Center (DWC), near the St. James SeaSide entrance, is a familiar site to us. We observed curiously as land was cleared, construction began, a building went up, and then, following the building’s completion, attended the September open house. Each of us is nearly a year older since that date, and so is the DWC.

Some open house attendees likely are patients who have benefited from services now provided at the center. Each patient may also have contributed to the impressive growth statistics (nine months through June 2017) noted below.

- The family medicine practice (note to parents of youngsters — they accept pediatric patients) has surpassed expectations, when they treated patients at Dosher Medical Plaza. In addition to patients in Oak Island and Southport, they’ve added new patients from St. James and Bolivia. This growth prompted the addition of a third healthcare provider, a nurse practitioner.
- Cardiac rehabilitation was relocated from the hospital, and patient volume is up 29 percent over last year.
- Physical therapy patient volume at the hospital and DWC is up nine percent over last year with most of this growth at the center.

An indoor walking track for cardiac rehabilitation and physical therapy patients is a new and extensively used service and X-ray services are available to anyone with a prescription. When necessary, the center will open the second floor to additional services and providers.

DWC services also include a cardiologist and a vascular/endovascular surgeon. DWC expects to announce the arrival of additional physician tenants later this year.

Dosher’s James Goss, director, marketing and community relations, is proud that a group of cardiac rehab patients recently donated a new picnic table in appreciation of the high-quality care provided by the DWC staff. He also noted that the staff played a large role in the DWC design, which helps promote a better work environment and greater staff satisfaction, both critical to the success of the center. Rick Silvestri, a patient, said of the new cardiac rehabilitation facility, “It’s great. It’s a lot bigger. There are more amenities and machines to use.”

The success of DWC reflects the growing need for healthcare services in our community. The good news is that the center is poised and ready to meet current and additional needs. Keep an eye on the DWC for future services, and the first anniversary open house is September 7.

For more information on the wellness center services, call 910-454-1234 or visit www.Dosher.org/Clinics.
Exploring the graveyard of the Atlantic

By Arthur Hill

Descending slowly in the Atlantic waters off the North Carolina coast, the diver checked his equipment and looked about to see what awaited him.

Then he saw, just feet away, a three-foot barracuda, motionless and eyeing him cagily. Focusing warily on the barracuda’s sharp teeth, the diver wondered whether he was being measured for dinner. He glanced about, looking for his diving buddy, then turned back to the barracuda. But the fish had vanished, as quickly as it had appeared. Apparently, there were better dinner options.

For St. James residents inclined to enter this beautiful but challenging world, the 300 miles of coastal waters off North Carolina are considered the best for diving on the eastern U.S. coast. Attractions include warm and clear waters for several months during the year, a diverse array of wildlife, especially in the Gulf Stream, and a remarkable collection of 5,000 sunken vessels that have marked the waters off our coast — the “Graveyard of the Atlantic.”

Wreck diving offers new or experienced divers more than the remains of vessels sunk over the centuries. Each wreck is what one dive shop website calls an “ecological metropolis,” where wildlife of all species and sizes from reef fish to sea turtles, barracuda, pelagics and sharks gather for nourishment and shelter.

No law requires it, but aspiring scuba divers should become certified (responsible dive shops won’t rent air tanks to divers without certification). Courses range from resort certifications (one morning in a pool with dive equipment — not recommended) to more rigorous and challenging programs. For certified divers with rusty skills, refresher courses are available.

Dive shops in the area offer certification and refresher courses, as well as equipment. They also offer tours to dive meccas around the world, beginning in our back yard. Just off the coast lie such interesting and accessible wrecks as the Sherman, a one-time British blockade runner that sank in 1874. Another wreck considered good for beginning divers is Mt. Dirfy’s, a 400-foot Greek freighter that sank in 1936 and lies in about 30-40 feet of water.

Divers with a taste for archeology can combine their interests at the N.C. First Heritage Dive Site, where the Civil War blockade runner Condor rests in 25 feet of water. According to the North Carolina Office of State Archeology, the vessel is one of the best-preserved...
Civil War blockade runners found anywhere in the world.

More experienced divers usually head to the Outer Banks, where the World War II German submarine, U-352, lies offshore. The 218-foot boat, considered the most popular dive site in North Carolina, lies in about 90 feet of water, where a U.S. Coast Guard vessel sank it 75 years ago. It remains almost completely intact and is an impressive sight for any diver. Consider visiting the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum at Hatteras, which focuses on the shipwrecks of the Outer Banks.

Even more impressive than a barracuda.

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Another significant chapter in our national life opens again this fall — students return to their schools, and educators gear up to meet the challenge. The fate of our society hangs in the balance. Someone once wrote: “A society’s strength can best be measured by its respect for education.” Actually, I just wrote that.

“She gave a stubborn little boy an unlimited horizon.”

The people of St. James are well educated by almost any measure, and many share their knowledge by serving as substitute teachers, classroom helpers, one-on-one tutors and literacy volunteers for adults. We support education. Our taxes support education. However, the lower taxes that often are an incentive for people to move to our area provide less money for public education.

I remember my own grammar school in West Orange, New Jersey, where Mrs. Goldfinger was my teacher. She insisted that I learn to read in the third grade. When she was on playground duty she did her best to cure me of causing mischief. She triumphed academically but behaviorally — I am a great reader. What would Mrs. Goldfinger make of my honors English literature at Yale or classwork for a Doctor of Ministry degree?

Mrs. Goldfinger was about the same height as her third-grade students. She used this to her advantage when she looked them in the eye. Did she have a personal life? Was there a Mr. Goldfinger who welcomed her home with fresh martinis after a hard day with the likes of Billy, Jamey and both Bobbys? Wasn’t she just a part of the school like desks and books and — my favorite — the playground quite possibly activated by a motion sensor?

By insisting that I learn to read, she taught me I could learn, if I put my mind to it. She gave a stubborn little boy an unlimited horizon.

She was never my favorite teacher but she has had an impact on every child I have had the privilege of encouraging: my own kids, their kids, kids and teens in Sunday schools and youth groups of the churches I served and many more.

Here’s to you, Mrs. Goldfinger — could you not pinch my shoulder or ear so hard as you explain good behavior? Here’s to you, Mrs. Goldfinger — you touched my world and shaped me. Gregory School may not exist any longer, and many of your colleagues have gone to their reward, but you all sent us out to change the world.

To our education-focused St. James residents, “Thank you!” All the children around us with their varied personalities and life situations are our “proto-grandchildren.” I’m sorry Mrs. Goldfinger, I had to make that word up.
I’ve been asked by some who read my stories in *Cat-Tales* or the State Port Pilot how I got interested in writing. My stock reply is I needed an activity to fill the void when I wasn’t on the bike, in the kayak or curled up on the couch napping.

As a teacher (social studies, not English), I had to use language creatively when developing lesson plans for my students. Now, with time on my hands, writing just became a logical extension of trying to reach a different audience.

“With time on my hands, writing just became a logical extension of trying to reach a different audience.”

My first attempts at writing dealt with growing up in the 1960s. I reasoned there would be an instant connection with most people in St. James because of our common ages. Friends, school, music and girls were high on my list in these coming-of-age memories.

Next, I stuck with things I knew about, such as sports and teaching. Later, daily observations on living in the South and “behind the gate” supplied material for stories. I once worried about running out of ideas, but that hasn’t happened. Right now, I’m working on a piece about what the interior of your garage says about your personality. If you see me peering in, give a wave.

I mentioned biking and kayaking. Ironically, some of my best writing comes when I’m on the road or in the water. During those jaunts, I work out whole sequences, individual paragraphs or even a single sentence. For instance, in my essay, “St. James and sports,” I started with this sentence: “You see numerous sports cars on St. James roads.” When I finished my two-hour paddle, it had become; “Of course, there are also many way-past-mid-life crisis, two-seater sports cars. You see them crawling along St. James Drive, straining to stay under 30 before making the turn on 211 and racing off like the Indy 500 into Southport.”

One of the hardest things to do is keeping to the *Cat-Tales* limit of 500 words or so. Often, my pieces swell to 1,000 words or more. Like a too-long movie, some of my best work winds up on the editing floor. In the article, “Six little words,” which ran in the August 2017 issue of *Cat-Tales*, you never read this edited-out paragraph; “Like many in our generation, I was spanked and this was common practice for minor misbehaviors. Dr. Benjamin Spock, whose “Baby and Child Care” was the bible for our parents, was ambivalent on the subject and didn’t come out against the practice until 1989. This of course was too late to save us baby boomers.”

In trying to develop my own style, I looked to some of my favorite writers — the self-deprecating humor of Rick Riley in Sports Illustrated, the wit and cynicism of Matt Taibbi in Rolling Stone and the storytelling of David Sedaris. I’ve tried to blend the elements of what they bring to a story and make them my own, always remembering, however, to find common themes to connect with the reader.

*Editor’s Note*: This article contains 499 words. Well done, Fred.
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Remember the days when you jumped out of bed refreshed and ready to start a new day? Jumping is a word that no longer exists in my vocabulary. It’s now a three-step process. Bend and flex the knee until it stops cracking, put both feet on the floor and push up to a standing position and, lastly, remain still until you’re sure your brain has sent a message to all pertinent areas so you can begin activation.

One of the hardest adjustments I’ve had to make is to start wearing sensible shoes. With this transition, I no longer have fashionable shoes, the “Where did you get those?” shoes. We St. James gals pretty much have the same variation of shoes that don’t hurt our feet. I thought my daughter would salivate over the fact that I had a Trader Joe’s bag full of my rejected primo shoes for her. The “Are you kidding me?” response was not the excited, best-mom-in-the-whole-world response. It was the “Are you out of your mind?” kind of response. Well, was my nose bent out of shape!

I use the former phrase loosely, as I was recently informed I can add deviated septum to the plethora of terms associated with this “Do you qualify for a senior citizen discount?” life. Another new vocabulary word for me is bunion. My beautiful, plump, Italian grandma used to order shoes by phone from the Lane Bryant catalogue. They would arrive several weeks later. They were always the same exact shoes, always black and always squishy. She would then take a razor blade and make a slit on the side of each shoe. She called them her peek-a-boo shoes. I now know they were for bunion relief.

So far I have a knee doctor, foot doctor and a nose doctor. Not too long ago I saw a notice in one of our community publications for a soccer pickup game. Wow! I used to be on a women’s travel soccer team in my former life; perhaps I can dazzle them with my footwork. Maybe I still had that old snap that gave me my signature header goals. Now that I think about it, that was probably the cause of the deviated septum! After careful consideration I decided I shouldn’t tempt fate and add yet another doctor to my list.

Yes, as we are all aging and enjoying beach life, travel, happy hour at any time, new neighbors and friends, special events, grandkids and living the good life. This oldish gal wouldn’t trade it for anything.
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