Thinking of listing your property?

The EVOLUTION of St. James Properties

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. Think about that! The typical REALTOR® brings in 100 or less prospects to their office.

---

2018 Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sides SOLD</th>
<th>Volume</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>St. James Properties, LLC</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>$15,183,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Discover NC Homes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$3,823,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Coldwell Banker Sea Coast Advantage</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$3,164,470</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>RE/MAX Southern Coast</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$2,022,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Three Rivers Realty of Brunswick County, LLC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$1,408,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on North Carolina Regional MLS Statistics

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Before you list your property with anyone.

1. How many St. James Plantation sales has your company made in the last 12 months?
2. What is your marketing budget for St. James Plantation specifically?
3. How many prospects physically come through your office annually?
4. Do you specialize in St. James Plantation?
5. Are you an exclusive buyer’s agent?

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 the other 880 Brunswick County REALTORS® combined.

800-245-3871 Listing Agents St. James Properties - Lisa Frye, Joanne Penezic and Lisa Nieves
Cat-Tales is published monthly by the St. James Plantation Property Owners’ Association (POA) of St. James, North Carolina to communicate information of interest to its property owners. Reproduction in whole or parts is prohibited without permission from the publisher (POA). The views and opinions of the writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect that of the POA. Per the POA communications policy, the POA does not endorse commercial products, services, or does not publish advertorial, partisan political or religious belief articles.
March 4 was National Grammar Day. But it slipped right by us, with little notice or fanfare. That’s why visitors to the St. James Community Center couldn’t, as in years past, attend seminars on split infinitives and stranded prepositions, followed by the ever-popular sentence-diagramming competition.

Just kidding (happy April Fool’s Day). But National Grammar Day, an event fostered by the Society for the Promotion of Good Grammar (SPOGG), is for real. As most of our contributors know, the editorial staff at *Cat-Tales* is a little geeky about grammar and style. We’ve had many discussions on serial commas, how many exclamation points should go at the end of a sentence (one, as few times as possible) and the like. When we can’t reach consensus, we refer to the Associated Press Stylebook, which most editors use to create a harmonious tone in their publications.

I’m sure other residents perform the same function. Sadly, we couldn’t give Marilyn Rudolph, the associate editor who managed this project, enough space to feature every one of our ambassadors. But those we include represent well the work they all do.

Neighborhood ambassadors aren’t the only ones encouraging friendship and new relationships. Look at Beth Erskine’s piece on Dinners for Five or Six to find out how the Activities Committee uses wine and good food to foster fellowship.

Harmonious takes on a different note in our story on the birds of St. James, co-authored by Dave Filios, Margie Foote and Hugh Shaw. If you’re hearing more melodic sounds recently, it’s probably because St. James is now a bird sanctuary. To pay tribute to this important event, we’re launching a series in praise of our chirpy friends — even those who year after year build their nests on our front porches (mind you, I’m not complaining).

Jim Carey is our stand-up guy for coverage of the St. James first-responder community, and his column appears once again this month. Also this month, Nancy Adelis writes about how St. James residents are helping the Brunswick County Sheriff’s Office. Don’t miss Nancy’s story on VOICE — Volunteer Observers Impacting Community Efforts.

Also beyond our community, Tish Gordon, president of the Garden Club of St. James, explains how our state’s major highways have for the last two decades been havens for wildflowers, and why that’s important. Perhaps members of the Town’s task force on landscaping the new, expanded State Road 211 should include this program in their planning.

Meanwhile, we’ll keep our eye on SPOGG and update you on its many activities. We’ve already booked the Community Center for next year’s National Grammar Day.
During the 2017 annual meeting, I presented data showing the annual POA assessment in St. James Plantation (SJP) compared to other gated or private communities in our local area. You will note we are among the lowest. When compared to other communities with similar amenities, we are the lowest.

We have increased our annual assessment only three times over the past seven years — an average rate of slightly more than 1 percent per year. During the same period, we have continued to enhance our amenities — addressed in my February Cat-Tales article — and have maintained a very healthy Reserve Fund.

I believe a primary reason for our low assessments and strong fiscal position is the commitment and dedication of our volunteers and the committee structure they support. Without our volunteers, we would have to employ a much larger and more expensive professional staff. More than 120 residents work on 14 committees to make SJP an even better place to live. A full description of each committee and membership is on the POA website.

While the monthly workload and hours for each committee vary depending on what projects are underway, members dedicate a significant amount of personal time to committee work. Each committee has established monthly meetings — some once a month and others two or more times a month. During development of the Annual Budget, the Finance Committee meets weekly until the Board approves the budget. Communications Committee members put in countless hours outside of their meetings to publish Cat-Tales, “What’s Up St. James?” and the “St. James POA Sports Newsletter.” I do not have room in this article to describe the efforts put in by the rest of the committees, but they all do great work for our community.

All committee members contribute significant hours to their committee work. But I want to especially recognize the chairs, who put in that extra effort to keep their respective committees on track. They are the schedulers, spokespersons, recruiters and advocates for their respective committees. They take the lead in developing their annual budget; they meet with the Finance Committee and the Board to justify requested funds; they lead committee meetings; and when required, they recruit and train new members. Since they do all this and more with little recognition, I would like to identify and thank these community leaders:

Architectural Control – Chair: Elaine Waddell; Vice Chair: Steve Corbett
Activities – Chair: Kathy Rezza
Communications – Chair: Jerry Iverson
Finance – Chair: Elaine Kontos; Vice Chair: Mark Erskine
Garden – Co-chairs: Al Yoshimura and Cheryl Manger
Investment – Chair: Tom Brown
Information Technology – Chair: Peter Jansen
Infrastructure – Co-chairs: Tom Ferris and Larry Moulin
Landscape – Co-chairs: Sue Almeter and Craig Farland
Nominating – Chair: John Malitoris
Ponds – Chair: Steve Brocker
Rules and Enforcement – No established chair
Safety & Security – Chair: Bob Wright
Transition – Chair: Bob Accordino

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<th>Committee</th>
<th>2018 Assessment</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<td>Brunswick Forest</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compass Pointe</td>
<td>$840</td>
<td>2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landfall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palmetto Creek</td>
<td>$820</td>
<td>475</td>
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<td>Ocean Ridge</td>
<td>$1,034</td>
<td>1,777</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oyster Harbor</td>
<td>$1,016</td>
<td>471</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rivers Edge</td>
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<td>River Sea Plantation</td>
<td>$1,152</td>
<td>550</td>
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<td>Seacape</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$850</td>
<td>4,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winding River Plantation</td>
<td>$1,058</td>
<td>1,134</td>
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What I have most appreciated while serving as a town councilor and mayor has been the support of our very professional and dedicated town staff, a small group that provides a variety of important services to St. James residents. Last month’s mayor’s page focused on town structure and services. This month, I want to introduce the individuals providing those services.

Gary Brown, town manager since November 2014, is responsible for the Town’s daily operations, as well as developing and monitoring budgets, negotiating contracts, providing staff support to councilors and working with county and state agencies. Gary is from Maine, where he worked for 27 years in municipal government management. He and his wife Wanda, a retired teacher, have two sons and are the proud grandparents of twin granddaughters. Much to my dismay as a Pittsburgh Steelers fan, Gary is also a very proud supporter of the New England Patriots.

Judy Hughes has worked as assistant zoning administrator since April 2008. Her responsibilities include reviewing building standards and issuing zoning permits. She enjoys working with the public and getting to know residents and builders. Judy and her husband moved to St. James in 1997 with the “second wave” of transplants. Judy loves golf; she won three ladies’ golf club championships prior to returning to work full time.

Barry Duncan, finance officer since November 2014, is responsible for the disbursement and accounting of town revenues and expenditures, as well as maintaining the general accounting systems. He is originally from Martinsville, Virginia and attended the University of Texas, graduating with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting. Barry moved to North Carolina in 1991 to be closer to family and the beach.

Paul Murphy, St. James Community Center manager, and John Davidson, assistant Community Center manager, are responsible for the daily operations of the facility. With hundreds of events and ongoing activities held each year at the center, Paul and John are very busy creating and adjusting schedules, setting up for events and coordinating with caterers, cleaners and other subcontractors. Paul, a retired school district superintendent, has worked in the Community Center since 2011. He and his wife Shirley are avid golfers and visited the area often prior to moving to St. James from Ohio in 2006. John and his wife Wendy moved to sunny Southport, North Carolina from snowy Albany, New York in 2015, and John began working part time at the Community Center in August. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and worked for 40 years as an auditor for the State of New York.
In addition to protecting your lives and property from fires, your St. James Fire Department (SJFD) also responds to calls for emergency medical services, automobile accidents and traffic control. But in this column, we’ll focus on fires and how you can avoid them.

Last year, we received 45 calls for fire and 71 for fire alarm activation and false alarms. What causes fires? Lots of stuff. Recently, some of the culprits have been space heaters located near combustible material or left unattended. Electrical fires can be caused by an overuse of extension cords or power strips — just because the power strip will accommodate several plugs doesn’t mean it’s a good idea to fill every plug. Have you been “concealing” it under a rug?

If you find power strips or drop cords (southern for “extension cords”) are getting warm or are cracked and frayed, you have a problem. STOP using that cord or strip! If you continue using a hot or frayed cord, it will eventually fail and you will be calling 911 to summon your SJFD. And if you do need to call us about a potential emergency, we encourage you to do so sooner rather than later.

Do not try to stop a fire by yourself. We have a volunteer fire department trained in emergency response.

Smoke alarms are the best protection against a fire. Most alarms are installed in homes, especially near sleeping areas, in hallways and utility rooms or in entrance ways from the garage. If you are hearing impaired, alarms that have louder signals or a strobe light are available. It’s important to test your alarms to ensure they’re operating correctly and safely. Alarms can be tested monthly by pressing the little test activator on the face of the alarm. Changing the batteries annually is a safety must; try doing so at the time change so you can develop a habit.

A chirping alarm doesn’t mean it’s glad to see you; it needs a new battery or replacement. Please remember, a smoke alarm only lasts about 10 years. The expiration date is on the reverse of the alarm in very small print. Your SJFD is happy to respond to an alarm activation. Don’t wait hours to contact us to report it.

This column doesn’t cover all fire safety measures by a long shot. But future columns will. Meanwhile, if you’re interested in becoming a member of your SJFD, we’re always looking for recruits. A new fire house is under construction near SeaSide, which means we really need additional members from that area of town so response times will be shorter. If you’re considering joining, call 910-253-9990 and ask for Chief Dahill. He would very much like to talk to you about the opportunities we have.
Building in St. James for over 15 years.

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Parade of Homes
Diamond Award Winner
Did you know? By Nancy Seyferth

Springtime is almost here, with the promise of a spectacular growing season in the Carolinas. But did you know that with all the different species of grasses, not all will thrive in our southern environment?

The species of grasses that tend to do the best in our area are St. Augustine, zoysia, centipede and Bermuda. Each of these grasses differs in its need for basic care and maintenance.

Here are some tips to make sure you have a beautiful lawn.

**St. Augustine** grass thrives in partially shaded areas. During growing season, it’s best to cut it at a height of around three inches. It can be cut a bit higher if you have an unlevelled lawn that can cause scalping, or the exposure of grass blade stems that are cut too short. The same is true for centipede lawn. Generally, St. Augustine does best with approximately .75 inches of water every three to four days. Always water in the morning, and avoid overwatering.

**Zoysia** is best in full sun and is among the more heat-tolerant grasses; it will also grow in partially shaded areas. During the spring and summer months, keep zoysia cut at a height of around 1.5-2 inches. Zoysia does best with approximately .75 inches of water every three days, always in the morning.

**Centipede** does well in full-sun areas and is among the most heat-tolerant, low-maintenance grasses. Keep centipede height at around 1.5 inches. Centipede likes a good amount of water, approximately .5 inches of water every three days.

**Bermuda**, used by many of the golf courses in our area, thrives best in full sun and is very heat tolerant. It’s best to keep Bermuda cut at a height around one inch. As a rule, Bermuda does best with .75 inches of water every three to four days.

Architectural FAQs: What changed in the 2018 design guidelines? By Genna Porter

In February, the POA Board of Directors approved a revised version of the Architectural Control Committee (ACC) Design Guidelines. The main goal of this update was to clarify some processes and procedures, as well as to update the ACC’s applications and appendices. The most notable changes involve establishing landscaping standards in Appendix D and seamlessly including past amendments into the body of the text itself.

Additionally, the section on Design Standards has been updated to reflect the ACC’s current architectural ideals. If you’re considering making a modification to your existing home or yard, or if you intend to build a new home, you should review this new and improved document.

You can find the 2018 Design Guidelines and all needed forms on the POA’s website under “ACC Documents.” For further questions, please feel free to email Genna Porter, the POA’s Architectural Control Committee administrator, at gporter@stjamespoa.net.
It seems fitting to share this tidbit, some 23 years after a story on Dinners for Six was promoted in the September 1995 issue of Cat-Tales. We’re still writing about these get-acquainted events (see page 25).

In that 1995 edition, an article aptly headlined "Let's Get Acquainted" says, “Back in the ‘Pioneer days’ at St. James, when someone new moved in, everyone knew it. We are now growing so fast that sometimes we lose track of newcomers.” (Another story about the early days and one of St. James’s earliest residents, the Gores, can be found on page 12).

Another article in the newsletter talks about the Dinners for Six as a good way to get acquainted with neighbors. “If you enroll, you will have dinner with six other couples (two couples at a time). You will host one of the dinners, and visit other couples in the other two. Entrée is decided by the host couple, and visitors each bring a dish to complement the entrée.”

The organizer of the event at the time was Ethelann Stumpp, who, with her husband, Fred, was an editor of Cat-Tales.
St. James by the numbers
Compiled by Rick Margin

Single-family homes by neighborhood
Total Homes - 3,067

Source: POA

ICymi
In case you missed it
By Arthur Hill

Acting out his dreams
St. James resident and Cat-Tales contributor Stuart Pike was recently in the news — the Wilmington Star News. According to the profile, Stuart moved to St. James to continue his day job as a financial advisor and spend more time developing his other career — acting.

Since he arrived in 2011, Stuart has appeared in 15 plays, most of them Thalian Association or Opera House Theatre Company productions. In his latest role, he was the narrator in last December’s production, “A Christmas Story.” Other roles include Jacob Marley, Ebenezer Scrooge’s deceased partner in the stage production “A Christmas Carol,” and Captain Hook, the eponymous villain in the Peter Pan story. Stuart also serves on the board of The Thalian Association.

Using his theatrical connections, Stuart has become a St. James maestro. He is the force behind the appearances of the Divine Divas, a group of talented women who have reprised the songs of internationally renowned singers at sold-out performances at the Members Club. Their latest performance is scheduled for April 20-21.

‘Picture perfect in any season’
The Southport-Oak Island Chamber of Commerce has produced an inviting new video of our area, pointing out its virtues no matter what season it is. The 3 minute video features scenic footage of St. James, Southport, Oak Island, Bald Head Island, Bolivia and Boiling Springs Lake. It also promotes the area as a “safe haven” for permanent or vacationing residents who support a wide array of year-round businesses. Look for the video on the chamber’s Facebook page.
A home-grown charm
By Judy Rubin

Smart, determined, warm, friendly and humble easily describes Willie E. Gore — the only born-and-bred Southport native to have made St. James his “forever home.” Willie purchased his lot on a whim in 1991. He was the ninth property owner.

A year later, construction started and on March 17, 1994, the Gores became St. James’ 12th couple.

The only son of entrepreneur Eugene W. Gore and a loving mom, Willie learned the value of hard work and the meaning of giving. His father was a shrimper and fisherman during the times that black men could not be pilots, engineers or captains on local boats. He traveled to other states to find work. By 1962, with changing laws, his commuting stopped. He became the first black captain for Southport’s Menhaden Fish Company. Later, he was a pilot for the Fort Fisher Ferry.

Willie’s dad often worked 12-hour days. He made time for other business adventures — remodeling homes, building an apartment building, operating a general store and running a radio and TV repair business. At 14, young Willie was helping his dad stock shelves in the general store. “We sold everything — kerosene, gasoline, bread, milk, chicken feed, mascara, soap and Band-Aids,” Willie recalls.

After graduation from a segregated high school in 1960, Willie was off to North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro. The only blemish on his pristine record occurred when he was arrested during a protest after four young students staged the historic 1960 sit-in at the Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro to help end segregation.

Commissioned as an infantry 2nd lieutenant, Willie spent time in the Dominican Republic and Vietnam. He served in the Army for 29 years and earned more than a dozen medals. He attended the Command and General Staff College and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces before earning a master’s degree from Howard University.

His next-to-last duty station was Sunny Point. While here on Army business in 1991, his dad told him a developer was building a new golf course outside of Southport. Willie met the salesman, Steve Barfield, who took him on a bumpy, muddy road and talked about “all the pie in the sky — marina, beach club, fitness center, pools and four golf courses.” Willie called the next day to purchase lot 42 — the year he was born — placing a $1,000 deposit on the $45,000 property.
Willie waited a day before calling his wife of 29 years, Lelia, then a nurse in Washington, DC. Her response: “Willie, nothing in Southport costs $45,000.”

Their two children were already out on their own, so St. James became their home. Willie joked about an early conversation: “Lelia, I saw one car today on the road.”

Willie has served on the St. James Transition Committee. Outside the gates, he is a charter member of the Southport Kiwanis, served four years on the Board of Education, coached the high school golf team, was a trustee of the Coastal Carolina Museum, served on the Board of Equalization and Review for Brunswick County, was commissioner of The USS North Carolina Battleship Commission, worked with the Brunswick County Community Foundation and volunteers at church and the Maritime Museum. He is still active with the Cape Fear Jetport, helping make plans for a new terminal.

Willie’s love for the area is evident and his admiration for St. James is clear. We often use the phrase, “Everyone at St. James comes from somewhere.” Willie Gore came from right here. He has made a difference.
The Olympic Rings dessert table was made out of colored Hershey’s kisses with coordinating colored cupcakes. (photo by Liz Hughes)

American Legion hosts Rick Largent to speak on aircraft

By John Muuss

Rich Largent of the Experimental Aircraft Association, local chapter 939, was the guest speaker at the regularly scheduled February meeting of the Richard H. Stewart Jr. American Legion Post 543 held at the St. James Community Center. Rich, who attended the event with his wife, Ginny, spoke about his experience with experimental aircraft and the B17 Flying Fortress, the World War II bomber.
The luncheon was hosted by (l-r) Liz Hughes, Debbie Bromley and Linda Wetterman, who came dressed as the “St. James Curling” Team. (photo by Liz Hughes)

The ladies of Harbormaster attended an Olympic-themed luncheon at the Reserve to celebrate the beginning of the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea. (photo by Hannah Neale)

180 bridge players participate in annual bridge tournament

By Jeff Mount • Photos by John Muuss

In February the St. James Service Club hosted its annual bridge tournament at the Community Center. Teri Harrison, chair, reported the event has grown about 20 percent each year in participation. This year more than 180 players came together for this fundraiser to assist non-profits in Brunswick County; they raised $7,024 in one day. Next year’s tournament has been scheduled for February 23.
James W. McCriskin, DO, cardiologist, is welcoming new patients at NHRMC Physician Group – Cape Fear Heart Associates’ Southport location.

Call for an appointment 910.662.9500
3009 Medical Plaza Lane, Southport, NC 28461

nhrmcphysiciangroup.org
Irish Pub Night

By Liz Ventura and Barbara McGreedy • Photos by John Muuss

Twas’ Irish Pub Night, a wonderful evening of Irish songs and folklore sponsored by the St. James Plantation POA Activities Committee.

Shamrocks in the Wind entertained with Irish songs and ballads. Attendees were wearing green and in the spirit of the festivities.

The food, catered by Middle of the Island, was Irish fare — corned beef and cabbage, bangers and mash, and, for those less inclined to partake in the food of the moment, penne a la vodka.

Sláinte to all who attended the two-night event and a special thanks to all who helped make Irish Pub Night a success.

Men’s Night Out

By Fran Goodman

The Activities Committee sponsored a sold-out, first-time-ever Men’s Night Out Sports Trivia Event in February.

The night was a huge success and enjoyed by all. Door prizes included golf lessons, tennis ball machine rentals, Pelicans tickets, birdie bottles and a special prize — a Clubs discount shopping card for purchases at the golf shops.

A special thank you to the guest emcee, Dan Breitweg. And thanks to all the gentlemen who came and who also offered positive feedback. The Members Club did a phenomenal job on the menu and the staff was great. Many thanks to The Clubs at St. James for their continued support of all events sponsored by the Activities Committee.

It just seems to make us feel good to watch birds (with the possible exception of the much-maligned but beautiful Canada Goose). Whether it’s watching a great blue heron or snowy egret stand motionless on the edge of a pond waiting to strike for its lunch, or a bluebird in flight or on the ground looking for bugs or worms, bird watching brings smiles to our faces. The shrill cry of red tail hawks circling overhead or the sweet song of the mockingbird are some of the pleasures we look forward to every day.

Some people feed the birds and put out bird baths. Others trek through the marshes or woods looking for more elusive species. Still others just sit back and enjoy them. In St. James, where the Town Council recently unanimously voted to make a bird sanctuary, we have more than 50 year-round species. Another 100 spend summers or winters here or just pass through on their way to somewhere else. They include birds of prey, water birds, shore birds, song birds, woodpeckers and numerous others.

Most of us decided to move to St. James to wind down and decompress, hoping we would find more time to smell the roses — and watch the birds.
The St. James Birders is a group of serious and casual bird watchers dedicated to looking after the well-being of our feathered friends. This includes:

- Promoting beneficial habitat, including making and installing hundreds of bluebird boxes all over the golf courses (take a bow, Wayne Moody)
- Encouraging people to save their trees, preserving habitat for tree-dwelling birds, and to plant trees and shrubs
- Offering educational programs and speakers and leading bird walks in St. James and the surrounding areas

The Birders also participate in the Cornell University Great Backyard Bird Count each February and the Audubon bird counts in the spring and in the winter. For more information on the St. James Birders, please go to www.stjamespoanc.org/group/Birders.

Editor’s note: Future issues of Cat-Tales will showcase birds found in St. James.
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New York City has Fashion Week, but St. James has its own “Fairway Turned Runway.” Golf and tennis attire for 2018 is fashionable, fun and made for performance.

The Pantone Institute color of the year is ultraviolet and is dominating the collections. The predominant styles for women’s golf are dresses, skirts and ankle pants. Trending for men’s golf are clothes that go from course to marina to office.

Color is big this season for men’s tennis: yellow, lime green and orange. For ladies, charcoal grey has been huge, but don’t rule out classic white, navy, black and sporty bright colors.

This year’s fabrics come with technology advances, providing comfort and ease of fit. Fabrics have dramatically advanced from the 1970s polyester to leather and silk imitations and have taken cues from other sports like cycling. Everything is wear-tested, breathable and wicks away moisture. Fabrics are easy-wash, hang-dry, no-iron and travel-friendly.

To ensure fashions are on trend and aligned with our St. James demographic, Troon Golf Area Retail Manager Julie Kizzire attends multiple PGA events. The January Orlando show features 400 vendors, predicting styles six months in advance. In July, Julie heads to the Atlanta Market for accessories and holiday gift items. In August, it’s Hilton Head.

“The Clubs are lifestyle shops beyond golf and tennis attire and accessories,” says Julie. “There are basics, designer brands and casual resort wear at various price points.”

Each Club has its own unique set of brands. The Reserve carries Carnoustie jacquard shirts and Turtleson men’s dress shirts. Members is dedicated to FootJoy and Under Armour.


Ladies golf designers include Tail and Jamie Sadock, the “wild one” who adds excitement with zippers and buttons. Try Jofit, GG Blue and Bette & Court for great fit and trendy colors.

Founders Tennis & Golf Pro Shop is the only location selling tennis attire. The shop is packed with clothes and accessories that change monthly. Visors continue to be a big trend for women and backpacks are the latest way to carry gear.

Men’s clothing features the St. James Club or cattails logo; women’s fashion does not. “Placing logos on women’s patterns is difficult,” says Julie. “Items purchased in the Clubs can have logos or initials added through specialized embroidery services.” Get creative with placement — back yoke, bottom of shirt, sleeve or front!

Still not finding something? Just ask at the Club or call Julie directly at 910-477-8500, extension 4004.

Look good. Play good. Go conquer the court or tee. And let the SJP fashion show begin.
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The New 2018 Buick Enclave Avenir
If you attended the St. James Community Chapel Service in February, you were treated to the musical sounds of the Cape Fear Carolers. This group had its beginnings as a quartet (two men and two women) that performed at Southport’s Annual Charles Dickens Festival in 2013. The music program consisted of a few Christmas carols.

The following holiday season, the Carolers sang at the Southport Senior Center Christmas party to thunderous applause, performing two encores.

The Cape Fear Carolers now total nine women and seven men, 12 of whom are St. James residents. Weekly rehearsals are Thursday afternoons in the home of the group’s director, Jane Izod. Fellow singer Lynn McDowell doubles as piano accompanist — but only for rehearsals. The group’s music is a cappella, unaccompanied by instrumentation. Blend, pitch and a keen sense of ear are the keys to success. In addition to carols, they focused initially on madrigals — a 15th-16th century music form featuring “word painting,” when the music reflects the lyrics. If the words are “up and down,” the music literally goes up and down. Melody line shifts are often difficult to sing; precise timing and balanced voices are required.

Music good to the ears travels fast. The group’s appearances have widened, with performances at Brunswick Community College, a Rotary Club lunch and Southport’s Farmer’s Market. In St. James, there was a fundraiser at Artisans Gallery, the Chapel Services, the Holiday Tour and the Festival of Trees.

By 2016, the group had expanded to 14 singers and had increased its music selections, hoping to appeal to audiences of all ages and backgrounds. Examples include, gospel and spirituals (“Down by the Riverside”), Stephen Foster (“Some Folks Do”), children’s music (“Bingo”), folk songs, Shaker hymns, modern (“Swingle Song”) and contemporary (Billy Joel’s “And So It Goes”).

Although the holidays are their busiest season, the Carolers entertain at private parties, ceremonies, clubs and service group gatherings throughout the year. Today’s 16 members, some of whom sing in church or with the Sea Notes, enjoy performing with the group because of the variety of songs where each voice makes a difference.

The Cape Fear Carolers sing free of charge at service organizations and community events. For private gatherings, they ask for a small stipend they use to purchase more music.

Interested in joining or asking the Carolers to sing at a special event? Contact jizod@ec.rr.com.
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Dinners for Five or Six

Story by Beth Erskine • Photos by John Muuss

For many of us, relocating at later times of our lives can be a bit intimidating — a bit like going away to college and not knowing a soul. The St. James POA Activities Committee has an antidote for that — the popular “Dinner for Five or Six” program that began more than two decades ago. Most would agree that fellowship and good food are an appealing way to acclimate to a new environment.

Dinners for Five or Six have proven to be a very popular way to connect with other newbies or to learn from more established residents. As its name implies, the event is a dinner for five or six people, consisting of a volunteer host, plus others who contribute to the meal. An enjoyable evening of conversation, food and drink and meeting new people is most always the outcome. There’s also the chance you may meet your new best friend, or at least others with whom you share interests.

Just over a year ago, George and Diane Barr moved into their new home in The Grove from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. They learned that getting acquainted within their own immediate neighborhood was a natural occurrence, but meeting people outside of that parameter required a bit more effort. The Barrs, believing Dinners for Five or Six provided an opportunity to spread out, signed up for the fall 2017 season and were not disappointed. The dinner evenings provide a more relaxed and intimate setting to get to know people beyond the superficial level that large gatherings often afford. Because of their positive fall participation, the Barrs signed up for the 2018 spring season and hosted their first dinner in February.

Bill and Pat Longshore also were brand-new homeowners in The Grove when they re-located from Cary, North Carolina in August 2017. Not wanting to miss an opportunity to meet new friends, they signed up for the fall session of Dinners for Five or Six. They hosted the first dinner of that session after being in their new home for only one month. That evening was so successful that the Longshores shared Thanksgiving dinner with their new friends. Still enthusiastic, they’re participating in the 2018 dinners with great anticipation.

Dinners for Five or Six take place in spring and fall. Look for announcements about upcoming events in the POA publication “What’s Up St. James,” as well as “This Week St. James” and “Just Judy.”
Located between the gated SeaSide entrance and the SeaSide Club, lot/home packages are still available starting in the high $300s. Models are open! Contact Carol Hobbs 910-619-0777 carol@kenthomes.net for details and to schedule your tour.

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Greetings from Pyeongchang and the 2018 Winter Olympics.

My role — During the Winter Olympics, I was production manager for the Olympic Sliding Center, site of the luge, bobsled and skeleton competitions. This was my third Olympics working in that capacity, but I also worked at eight other Olympic Games in other jobs. Basically, I managed the crew (which pretty much managed itself) while acting as liaison with our bosses, the track operator, the sports people, the Olympic organizer and others.

I arrived on February 1 and departed February 26. During that time, our crew, after set-up, televised eight practice sessions, seven preliminary rounds, nine medal finals, eight venue victory celebrations and one medal award ceremony — all in 17 days. Basically, it felt like we were on-air all the time. Days were long, and we were only dark (off) one day.

How we did it — As this was an Olympics, the crew was international:

Crew size: 160
Nations represented: South Korea, Italy, France, U.K., Poland, Canada, Netherlands, USA, Australia, Switzerland, Germany, Greece and Argentina

Production: 52 Cameras

Our work flow went something like this: Using French TV trucks and truck crews, an Italian director and production team, with a Dutch producer, and facilities built by Polish and Canadian tech managers and American and Korean runners, we fed an Australian coordinating producer at the International Broadcast Center (my boss). Timing came from a Swiss and German team, with specialty cameras from the British and Germans. Logistics were provided by a Greek, assisted by one French person, an American and one Italian. I’m not sure where the Argentine guy was, but he was here and working!

The show’s director talked to the crew in Italian, with a mix of English rolled in. I don’t speak Italian, but I sometimes ended up translating — which was quite humorous.

It may seem a little bit unhinged, but somehow, it all worked.

Rest and relaxation — The Korean people are genuinely nice. But to be truthful, we basically worked, ate and slept. So, it wasn’t often that we had time to just walk around and be tourists. For instance, I lived next to Pyeongchang, and I never visited the town! All our food was catered. We ate very well, but it was mostly western cuisine. The Korean food I’ve eaten is fine, although I don’t really care for the Kimchi.

On returning home — I missed being home, and I remember looking forward to a cold beer in a warm climate. I’ll probably be drinking at Tommy’s by the time anyone reads this.

Editor’s Note: Bob Hughes calls Lake Placid, New York, his “home-home.” But he has been a St. James resident for parts of three years with his wife, Liz, and two puppies. He is the co-owner of a broadcast production company in Sarasota Springs, New York, and was a competitive luge athlete during his college years.
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Every weekday, about 16 people work within the gates of St. James, ensuring the landscaping is well maintained and that unwanted pests aren’t threatening it. These trained staffers work for Bland Landscaping Company, Inc. (Bland), which last year negotiated a three-year contract with the POA that began on January 1.

According to Sue Almeter, co-chair of the POA Landscape Committee, the contract covers a host of services: mowing, mulching, pine straw, turf restoration, weed control, irrigation and water management. Bland landscapers are also responsible for seasonal annual flowers, fertilization, tree and shrub pruning, aeration, pest management and other jobs as assigned by the POA.

Joe Ritchie, Bland vice president, says the contract with St. James is the company’s first in Brunswick County. He said most of the company’s business is in the Triangle area of North Carolina. Bland has six offices and satellites: Apex, where the corporate headquarters is located, as well as Wake Forest, Durham, Chapel Hill, Greensboro and Charlotte. The major difference in landscaping in this area, he says, is that it’s a bit warmer on the coast than inland. Still, he says, the work is “pretty straightforward.”

Sue says five companies bid on the landscaping contract. Bland is a family-owned business that has significant experience in gated communities.

“Bland Landscaping has been in business for over 40 years; what started as a family business has grown into a wholly owned, second-generation, locally grown company” she said. “They’re committed to operating a socially and environmentally responsible business.”

Sue says the Landscape Committee is pleased to be working with a company whose foundation was built on integrity and is committed to providing high-quality service to its clients. She says each year, Bland gives hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations, in-kind services, volunteer hours and collaborative fundraising to community organizations, including providing need- and merit-based scholarships to students studying horticulture. Bland is one of the first Green Plus-certified businesses in the nation.

“Bland’s goal in partnership with the St. James community is to make sure our landscaping is beautiful, well-maintained and provides a serene environment for all our residents,” Sue said.
The neighborhood ambassadors of St. James

Photos by John Muuss

Moving to a new home, neighborhood, town or state has its perils. It’s often difficult to meet new friends and neighbors — even in a community as welcoming as St. James. And most of us are perhaps reticent (shy?) about grasping new acquaintances to our bosoms on our way to building a new and lasting universe of BFFs.

“St. James has a cadre of wonderful residents who spend more time helping build new friendships than anyone this side of the State Department.”

Fortunately, St. James has a cadre of wonderful residents who spend more time helping build new friendships than anyone this side of the State Department. Over the years, their social and organizational skills have brought countless numbers of people together in a carnival of events ranging from neighborhood dinners to cookie exchanges, trips and “find the flag” parties. Their friendly intervention in the lives of residents has created lasting friendships and transformed collections of houses into neighborhoods.

Why did these good neighbors become our neighborhood ambassadors? How did they weave their neighborhoods into a warm fabric, and what motivates them? Here are some of their stories.
A list grows in Woodlands

By Arthur Hill

Not that email is on the cutting edge of high-tech innovations, but it’s unlikely that Kathleen Takvam, a Woodlands neighborhood ambassador, could have done without it.

By the time she and her husband, Olaf, moved to St. James four years ago, Kathleen had already helped neighbors meet neighbors in some of the couple’s former hometowns. But St. James, with its growing population and expanding neighborhoods, presented unique challenges. Undaunted, she placed a small notice in “What’s Up St. James,” seeking Woodlands residents who would enjoy getting together.

From that modest outreach, Kathleen built an email list of 500 Woodlands residents and became a focal point for an endless series of neighborhood events. “We started with quarterly dinners,” she says, adding that last year’s annual Christmas Dinner “sold out in 25 minutes.” This year, she says, the Christmas dinner will be a two-night affair.

Another popular neighborhood event is the annual cookie exchange. Other well-attended occasions include pool parties, a beach night, mahjong classes, weekly “find the flag” driveway parties and game nights (when neighbors meet for a round of Rummikub and other tests of skill).

Road trips are another popular neighborhood entertainment. Kathleen often organizes trips to Wilmington to participate in the Art Council’s Fourth Friday gallery walks and other civic events.

Using Kathleen’s master list, neighbors have formed smaller groups. Meeting regularly for dinners are the South of Holly Oak (SOHO) group, as well as its younger sibling, the North of Holly Oak (NOHO) group. The Woodlands, with Kathleen’s help, isn’t lacking for entertainment.

Chuck Blackburn: Neighbors helping neighbors

By Cheryl L. Serra

“The only way to get to know people is to talk to them.”

It’s really that simple for Chuck Blackburn, nominated as a neighborhood ambassador in Peppervine East by Susan Harman.

Chuck’s neighborhood consists of 12 homes. He says he’s not the only one who helps arrange activities such as driveway get-togethers, parties and a clambake. “We just kind of get together and decide what we want to do and we just do it.”

To help facilitate this friendliness, Chuck has created a neighbors-only directory. When someone new moves in, he brings the directory to them and asks if they want to be included in it.

Chuck’s wife, Barbara, has her own brand of welcoming — she brings over Burney’s croissants to say hi. She and her neighbor also coordinated a driveway party in the driveway between their houses. “We had some new residents, so it was a get-acquainted event,” Chuck says.

The Blackburans bought their property here in 2011 and since 2013 have spent most of their time in St. James. While in Ohio, Chuck organized events such as clambakes and parties for employees at work as well as friends and neighbors.

“I like to help people,” he says. For those hoping to become informal ambassadors, Chuck recommends getting out there to meet your neighbors. Most importantly, find out what people want to do and make it happen. After all, it’s all about neighbors helping neighbors.
A once and future ambassador

By Arthur Hill

When Mary Jean Rose organized her first St. James neighborhood dinner, the year was 2003 and her Inverness neighborhood consisted of six homes. Bill Viraldi, then the executive chef at the Gauntlet (now Founders) Club, prepared the buffet dinners Mary Jean organized and provided each guest with a doggie bag for the trip home.

Life at St. James was different then. But Mary Jean says the friendliness and warmth of Inverness residents — which includes portions of Harbormaster Drive, some homes on St. James Drive, Lawton Court and Inverness Circle — has remained constant as the neighborhood grew.

Each year, Mary Jean organizes a series of well-attended (and noisy) dinners for her neighbors. The dinners have become a popular attraction for newcomers and longer-term residents who seem to blend seamlessly and harmoniously over cocktails and a dinner (without doggie bags). “There’s nothing more beautiful than going out of your way to make life beautiful for others,” says Pat Dashiell, who lives with her husband, Woodie, on Lawton Court. “Mary Jean is a person who is rich with “kindness.”

Mary Jean is quick to credit others with making her neighborhood more closely knit. In recent times, Carol Roche, Pat Grecco and Judy Ozie have organized a popular Mother’s Day event at Waterway Park.

Keeping others involved in neighborhood events is more than just sharing the workload. “Soliciting the help of others keeps people active in our neighborhoods,” Mary Jean advises. “And don’t forget to remind everyone to wear their nametags.”

Using organizational skills for Regency social events

By FJ Harmon

Streets lined with a thousand flags and dinner tables set for 90. The man behind all this activity is Bob Kountz, the unofficial ambassador of the 140 residents that comprise Regency Park, Regency Lakes and the Cottages Lakes.

“Because of his efforts, the Regency neighborhoods are a place where it’s easy to know your neighbors.”

Bob and his wife, Maryann, moved in 2005 to the fourth house built in Regency Park. He soon realized there was an opportunity for more interaction with his new neighbors than a nodding acquaintance. Before coming to St. James, he was a bit of an introvert but decided to apply his organizational skills socially. A dinner-dancing event — Member Mixers — was born and provided an occasion for neighbors to get to know each other.

Neighborhood activities grew into monthly dinners. Other activities followed, such as trips to Myrtle Beach for baseball games and seasonal event outings and block parties. In his spare time, Bob organized four golf groups and a Sunday couples golf outing.

The flag display along Regency’s roadways began when Bob urged the neighborhood to show its support for the Wounded Warrior Ride. With the help of Regency resident Mary Jane Spellman, Bob used donations to purchase the flags, which have become an important part of Regency life. “It’s something I’m very proud of,” Bob says.

Bob continues to provide opportunities for neighborhood social activities; he’s aware of the fun times as well as the sad. And because of his efforts, the Regency neighborhoods are a place where it’s easy to know your neighbors.
"South of the bridge"

By Marilyn Rudolph

Corrie Bovier lives “south of the bridge” in St. James. Since we have more than one bridge in St. James, the question is...which one? Well, it happens to be the prettiest span of all – the covered bridge in the Woodlands.

Corrie is the ambassador for her “south of the bridge” neighbors in the Woodlands, where she has lived for the past four years. She started her ambassador career by planning group theatre and symphony events that have grown considerably and continue to bring neighbors together.

A side benefit of these events is robust discussions that occur when neighbors start talking about what they’ve seen and heard at a play or the symphony.

Corrie also organizes mahjong classes for men, women and couples, but she’s not alone in planning neighborhood activities. Others pitch in to coordinate events such as driveway parties, which bring together established and new residents to meet and greet on a regular basis in the Woodlands.

Carrie worked full time and couldn’t coordinate events in her previous neighborhoods. After moving to St. James, she had some free time and decided it might be nice to open the door and make new friends by coordinating a few activities.

Taking the risk to ask people to participate in an event was a first big step that has been very rewarding for Corrie, and she encourages others to do the same. “Share your interests with others and make new friends. Putting yourself out there is a bit risky but the reward is far greater,” she says.

16 years and going strong

By Marilyn Rudolph

Shortly after moving into the Harbormaster neighborhood 16 years ago, Donna Godbout began organizing activities that continue to grow in numbers. Donna firmly states that the list would not be as long as it is for events and collective charitable donations without the organizational skills of others.

Harbormaster neighborhood activities include: monthly garden parties and ladies’ luncheons; annual pub crawls, holiday dinners and appreciation dinners for vets (for each Veterans Day, Donna generates a list of Harbormaster neighborhood veterans, noting their branch and years of service); biannual nine-and-dine golf outings; and several game nights for Bunko, Canasta (four groups) and Mexican Train.

With the help of others, Donna leads neighborhood fundraisers for Alzheimer’s, military appreciation, lymphoma, Communities in Schools and Rally for the Cure, as well as decorating holiday trees and filling raffle baskets.

Donna greets Harbormaster’s newest neighbors with homemade cookies and a welcome-to-the-neighborhood chat. She shares what she has learned about the new neighbors using the Harbormaster email list.

Before arriving at St. James, Donna was active in a community church. She stepped up to organize events after moving here. She is quick to point out the help of many persons with activities and communications, and her personal goal is to be as inclusive as possible. Donna wants everyone to feel welcome and involved as part of the Harbormaster neighborhood. Her goal is to make it easy to make new friends.
SeaSide Sunday soirees — A standing tradition  By Marilyn Rudolph

You’ll most likely find Bonnie Greco at a SeaSide Sunday Soiree from 5-7 p.m. on every third Sunday of the month. She has lived in St. James for three years and has watched the event grow from a few attendees to many. Started by the original residents of the Cottages of SeaSide a few years ago, Bonnie happily continues the tradition of planning these monthly gatherings.

Bonnie also coordinates the neighborhood phone directory and has established a Facebook page for the Cottages. She is delighted that other neighbors have formed golf and tennis groups and organized annual events such as nine-and-dine golf outings and the Cottages Christmas party.

Supporting neighborhood events and communications for the Cottages at SeaSide wasn’t part of Bonnie’s repertoire before she moved to St. James, but she was certainly willing to give it a try. She does it because she thinks it’s wonderful to have a tight community and likes to see others enjoying themselves. Bonnie invites neighborhood newcomers to events to help them become acclimated and learn more about their neighborhood.

“She does it because she thinks it’s wonderful to have a tight community and likes to see others enjoying themselves.”

Bonnie has advice for anyone who may want to organize neighborhood events. “Someone has to start early and get the ball rolling to gather people together from the beginning,” she says. “Giving everyone a chance to interact with neighbors goes a long way to forming a tight community.”

A Deadender and a ringleader

By Marilyn Rudolph

George Hrebin moved to St. James in 2002 and is the current ringleader of the Players’ Deadenders neighborhood that consists of the area from Regency Crossing to Players Club Drive.

When Ron Renkley (the Deadenders ambassador for about 14 years) moved recently, he anointed George as the coordinator of the neighborhood’s two biggest annual events — the Memorial Day picnic and the holiday party. In addition to taking on these events, George decided to coordinate a men’s night out one or two times a year. Others in the neighborhood help organize weekly summer beach nights, as well as additional events at various times during the year.

A former Raleigh resident, George coordinated get togethers in his neighborhood there. But he confesses it was primarily his backyard pool that attracted his kids’ friends. George had a rule — if kids show up to swim, parents must also be there to supervise. By default, impromptu parties ensued.

Helping foster a friendly neighborhood environment and getting to know his neighbors well give George personal satisfaction. He added that others pitch in to help with coordinating events, making his job as ringleader an easy task.

George has advice for anyone wanting to get started as a neighborhood ambassador. Be willing to take the lead in organizing one or two social functions, and before you know it, others pitch in to make the job easier. Most important, everyone benefits.
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So begins the tour of duty for my partner and me, two VOICE (Volunteer Observers Impacting Community Efforts) volunteers for the Brunswick County Sheriff’s Office (BCSO). There are 49 St. James residents who volunteer for the Sheriff’s Office, including several husband-and-wife teams. These people contributed more than 6,500 volunteer hours in 2017.

VOICE is just one of the many divisions supported by Sheriff volunteers. St. James residents also volunteer for fraud, involuntary commitment transport, unsolved cases, marine patrol, detention lobby, front office administration, animal protective services and the courthouse.

“These are their stories,” as they say in the popular crime TV show, “Law and Order.” My partner drives the Toyota Prius (SD 515) parked in the Town Hall lot, while I remain alert to the subtle events unfurling in the community. VOICE has handled such important events as directing traffic and securing the scene of an accident, where the volunteer call-in is: “Voice 29/83, 10-50, PD/PI, Highway 211 and Executive Drive, Southport.”

A Fraud Division volunteer says, “The job is challenging, and the saddest part is seeing victims lose their life savings to overseas criminals, where prosecution is almost impossible.” Another VOICE volunteer reports it was “an honor to escort the Wounded Warriors through the county.”

The volunteers for Involuntary Commitment accompany a deputy to transport patients to a mental facility, a move based on legal documentation. These dedicated volunteers can work 14 hours in one shift.

The Marine Patrol, operating from Southport Marina, assists the U.S. Coast Guard by escorting ships from Sunny Point and ensuring safe boating. Volunteers serve as first mate and say assisting sinking vessels is exciting.

The administrative volunteers work at the BCSO Bolivia headquarters and the Calabash substation, where they greet the public, assist in records management and prepare the BCSO monthly newsletter. One office volunteer who works 32 hours per month said, “I really enjoy the staff and the interaction with the public.”

In Animal Protective Services, socializing dogs and assisting a family in meeting a new best friend is a highlight. The courthouse volunteers man the Entrance security desk, where one visitor commented to our volunteer, “Gee, I’d love to have YOUR job!”

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Have you driven on a freeway in North Carolina and noticed a beautiful patch of flowers on the side of the road? Maybe they were bright yellow sunflowers or purple, pink and white cosmos. Perhaps you passed by before you could identify them, but you knew they were beautiful and they brightened your travels.

The Garden Club at St. James learned who planted the flowers and why they’re there at a recent meeting. Guest speaker Derek Smith is a roadside vegetation asset management engineer with the North Carolina Department of Transportation and is responsible for roadside beautification.

The North Carolina Wildflower Program began in 1985 as an experiment with 12 acres. Through hard work and trial and error, the program has developed into the nation’s largest seeded wildflower program, with 1,500 acres under its purview.

The Wildflower Program is one of NCDOT’s most popular initiatives. Roadside environmental employees in each of the state’s 14 highway divisions install and maintain the wildflower beds. Each division manages its own wildflower plantings, choosing flowers and the planting design.

Beds are usually about an acre. The design can be simple, like a whole field of red poppies, or more intricate, such as a checkerboard using two different plants. Even more specialized are a bullseye design or a white star in a background of red flowers. Each year, divisions receive awards for the state’s most eye-popping flower beds.

The Wildflower Program beautifies roadways and makes the state an appealing destination for the many tourists on our highways. It eliminates the need to mow the highway medians as frequently, and wildflowers don’t need irrigation or fertilization. Best of all, since the program is funded by fees paid for personalized license plates, there’s no cost to taxpayers.

Birds, bees, butterflies and other pollinators benefit because the wildflowers are a source of food. A study shows that non-mown medians have up to six times more pollinator bees, butterflies and wasps than adjacent mowed areas.

For this reason, Garden Club members and their guests were encouraged to plant wildflowers in their own gardens. Attendees received a packet of seeds and a booklet detailing the 87 varieties of flowers NCDOT uses. Garden Club members gained a greater appreciation of roadside plantings and the work and planning required to create them.

*Editor's note: Tish Gordon is president of The Garden Club at St. James*
The Brunswick Sheriff’s Charitable Foundation held its seventh annual “Diamonds and Denim” Charity Ball in March at the Community Center. The event featured hors d’oeuvres, a buffet dinner, wine and beer. The evening also included music by the Black Water Rhythm and Blues Band, dancing, a silent and live auction and a 50/50 drawing.

Recipients of proceeds from this year’s ball are Brunswick County Habitat for Humanity, American Legion Post 543 and Samara’s Village. In keeping with the mission of the foundation, the board chose these three organizations from numerous non-profit entities located in Brunswick County who offer programs specifically benefiting Brunswick County residents.

The foundation, established in 2012, is dedicated to serving Brunswick County by building permanent charitable capital to support programs and provide services that improve the quality of life for all its citizens.
Unexpected medical needs arise daily, some serious enough to prompt a 911 call. This scenario recently hit home with a 7:03 a.m. wakeup call of my own. I barely answer as my neighbor blurts out, “I’m at work. My husband just phoned and said he called 911. He fainted and woke up on the floor with his head bleeding. Please see if he is OK.”

My husband and I are out the door in a flash and find our friend/neighbor with a large scalp laceration looking very pale. Wow — an unexpected start to a Monday morning. Now we wait for EMS to arrive.

Walking home on this atypical Monday, my first thought was that everyone should offer a HUGE thank you to all first responders — we don’t realize how important they are until we personally experience their services. Next, that Vial of Life question started running through my head. “Hmmm. I need to know more.”

Vial of Life (aka L.I.F.E. or "Lifesaving Information for Emergencies") may help save your life or a loved one’s. This program is designed to help people proactively compile their pertinent medical information so it is readily available to EMS personnel in emergency situations.

Vial of Life medical information forms, decals and materials are available on their website and may be downloaded for free. Everybody should complete a Vial of Life form and place copies in their refrigerator (yes, I said fridge), wallet and glove compartment.

Let’s face it. Many of us are at an age where our medical history and medications may be a tad more complex than they were just a few years back. Review Vial of Life information via the links below. (Note: the Town of St. James website contains Vial of Life information – kudos to those who placed the information there.) Taking a few moments to review the website and fill out a form may help EMS responders add a few years to your life, especially since you don’t know when that unexpected Monday will occur.

http://www.vialoflife.com/how_to_use_the_vial_of_life/

http://www.townofstjamesnc.org/index.asp?SEC=7419285C-4038-4616-8563-89868613C099&Type=B_BASIC

Editor’s note: In addition to being a Cat-Tales writer and associate editor, St. James resident Marilyn Rudolph has an RN, BSN and MBA. She provides healthcare consulting to large hospital systems and ambulatory physician practices.
Every professional baseball player, from the lowest draft pick to “phenoms,” pays his dues in the minor leagues, where tomorrow’s major leaguers are playing today.

For serious baseball aficionados, one of the sport’s joys is tracking the development of players under contract to their favorite major league teams as they climb the minor league ladder. For not-so-serious fans, other attractions at minor league parks might be equally to their liking.

Fortunately for St. James fans, plenty of minor league teams make their homes in North Carolina — several near us. As baseball begins a new season, it’s worth reviewing what’s in store for residents interested in an entertaining, easy-on-the-wallet afternoon or evening. Here’s some of what’s going on at ballparks near us.

Durham Bulls
The Durham Bulls are the reigning champions of triple-A baseball and the top farm club for the Tampa Bay Rays. So the quality of play at the Durham Bulls Athletic Park, a 2.5-hour drive from St. James, is among the highest in our area.

Charlotte Knights and Winston-Salem Dash
If you’re a Chicago White Sox fan, you have the chance to follow in person your team’s best prospects who play for two minor league affiliates in the Tarheel State. The Charlotte Knights is the Chisox triple-A affiliate. The team regularly features up-and-coming White Sox prospects who began their careers with the single-A Winston-Salem Dash (the team’s double-A affiliate is the Birmingham
Barons). The White Sox, thought by many in the game to have one of the best minor league systems in baseball, invited 12 players from last year’s Dash to its spring training season (although most were expected to be reassigned to Birmingham and Charlotte).

**Carolina Mudcats**
The single-A Carolina Mudcats is owned by the Milwaukee Brewers. Among the local team’s headline events for the 2018 season is the Carolina League All-Star game on June 19 at Five County Stadium in Zebulon. The game will feature some of single-A baseball’s best players. In addition to outstanding baseball, expect a complete collection of all-star memorabilia and souvenirs to be available.

**Down East Wood Ducks**
Kinston’s baseball team also plays in the Carolina League. The affiliate of the Texas Rangers is in its second year at Kinston, which for many years supported the Cleveland Indians single-A affiliate.

**Myrtle Beach Pelicans**
Another Carolina League entry, the Pelicans, are the single-A affiliate of the 2016 World Series Champions Chicago Cubs. Coincidentally, the minor league club also won a league title in 2016. Only an hour or so from St. James, Myrtle Beach offers the most convenient location to watch live, professional baseball.

Several other minor league teams play ball in our region, including clubs in Asheville, Buies Creek (near Fayetteville), Burlington, Greensboro, Hickory and Kannapolis. For an interesting change of pace, consider taking in a wood bat game, where collegiate players with major league aspirations learn the intricacies of hitting a baseball with a wooden bat. The Wilmington Sharks play in one of these leagues, as do several other North Carolina-based teams.
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