FIRST OFF...

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Because after 23 years, we are 96% sold out of developer properties. That’s why we are now Buyer’s Agents, not Developer Agents.
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We still spend one million dollars annually which brings over 2,000 prospects to our office.
That’s right, over 2,000 prospects!

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Contact us for the real facts and let us show you why we can sell your property for the most money in the least amount of time.

Top Firms – Home/Lot Sales – 2018 Jan-June 6th

<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>174</td>
<td>$46,739,050</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Coldwell Banker Sea Coast Advantage</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>$7,730,020</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Discover NC Homes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>$6,430,500</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>RE/MAX Southern Coast</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>RE/MAX Essential</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$3,046,500</td>
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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?

Individual Agents – Home/Lot Sales – 2018 Jan-June 6th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name*</th>
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<th>Volume</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Eddie Addison*</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bill Gralton*</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>$4,234,300</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Howard Molloy*</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$3,259,400</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Dave Poletti*</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>$3,169,900</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>David Nieves*</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$2,726,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Robert Sidden*</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>$2,006,000</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Outside Agent</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>$1,948,650</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Hoke Flynt*</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>$1,863,650</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Bobby Grove*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$1,304,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Outside Agent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$1,189,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*St. James Properties, LLC Agents

Source: Based on North Carolina Regional MLS Statistics
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President’s column
Jerry Iverson / St. James Plantation POA

We have entered the 2018 hurricane season, and we may experience some significant rain events, but hopefully no major hurricanes. I hope you attended the Annual Emergency Management Team Severe Storm Seminar at the Community Center in June. This event provided a plethora of information on what to expect if a hurricane should hit the coastline at or near St. James. My best advice if a major hurricane is forecast in our area is to have an evacuation plan in place and follow it in a timely manner.

“While we have a new security company, property owners will see very little change in our day-to-day operations ... What is new are three new security vehicles — two Jeep Renegades and a Chevrolet Colorado.”

As a coastal community, we will have rain, and lots of it. In May 2018, the weather station in Wilmington recorded 14.4 inches of rain, breaking a 62-year record by more than five inches. It’s not unusual to have 10 or more inches of rain over a few days. In fact, many rain events have exceeded that amount. In 2015, we had an unnamed storm that dropped 14.5 inches over a four-day period. In 2005, we had two tropical storms two weeks apart — Ophelia and Tammy — each producing 15-16 inches of rain in a 24-hour period. During those two weeks, many fairways and roads looked like lakes. The Polly Gully Bridge was closed for two days.

Federal and state government regulations prohibit stormwater run-off directly into the Intracoastal Waterway or the ocean. In coastal counties, stormwater must percolate into the soil to allow for filtration by the plants and soil before it enters the subsurface water table. This natural process prevents fertilizers, pesticides and other harmful substances from entering the Intracoastal and subsequently the ocean, where they adversely impact marine life.

Major rain events can and will produce localized flooding for short periods of time, resulting in water covering roads, private properties and common areas. In most cases, excess water will flow into our ponds or be absorbed into the soil over a 48-to-72-hour period.

We request your forbearance and understanding when you experience localized flooding during major rain events. I guess it’s the price we pay for living near the ocean and reaping the enjoyment it provides throughout the year.

Security contract

On June 8, we signed a contract with Sunstates Security, LLC (headquartered in Raleigh) to provide security services for the next 2½ years. While we have a new security company, property owners will see very little change in our day-to-day operations. The preponderance of employees remained in place, with new uniforms and badges. Existing security procedures, for the most part, remain unchanged. What is new are three new security vehicles — two Jeep Renegades and a Chevrolet Colorado.

In addition to the new vehicles, we have a new on-site manager. His name is Drew West. Drew is a retired Marine Corps Lt. Colonel with more than 20 years’ experience in the security business. He recently moved to this area after selling his security company, The Trident Group, LTD. We are very fortunate to find and hire a new on-site manager with Drew’s experience. If you have the opportunity, say hello to Drew and welcome him to St. James.
I’m willing to bet your first trip up the Green Mile past the Main Gate was an eye-opener, a wonderful first impression that shed a positive glow on everything else about St. James.

But what about the residents who moved to St. James before the Green Mile or St. James Drive existed, or before the many amenities we now enjoy were available? What was it about St. James that attracted its earliest residents before the scenic roads, Waterway Park, the clubs, the tennis courts, the marina, the wellness centers and the 81 holes of golf? What was the eye-opener that sold them?

Many of these pioneers say it was Homer Wright’s basic honesty and his far-reaching vision, coupled with faith in their own vision and good judgment. But one thing is clear — those of us who moved here months and years after these pioneers arrived owe them a great deal. Without them, Homer may not have realized his vision, and St. James may not have succeeded.

Earlier this year, John Muuss, a longtime resident (but one who freely admits he’s a few years shy of qualifying as a pioneer) and David Flinchbaugh, for the past decade a popular Clubs executive, decided it was time to honor these hardy settlers. The two men created a plaque listing St. James’ earliest residents. The plaque was unveiled recently during a ceremony at Founders attended by Homer and many of the couples whose names are on the plaque and will now be linked to the early days of our community.

We also attended the ceremony and listened as the pioneers shared stories about their early days at St. James. Many of those stories have appeared in past issues of Cat-Tales. But thanks to the reportorial talents of contributors Judy Rubin, Beth Klahre and Virginia Brown, residents without access to our archives can get a fresh look in this issue at a community with few homes, dirt roads, boundless optimism and many good times.

Meanwhile, Associate Editor Russ Yarrow has written a piece on Dustin Strickland, the Clubs’ new agronomist, and how he’s coping with the damage a harsh winter inflicted on the Founders and Members golf courses. Beth Klahre has a heartwarming story about a St. James resident and his sister who found a half-sister they never knew existed. Fred Ammann shares a story about sports memorabilia and a unique use for a FROG room, and Associate Editor Mariza Arantes reports how two St. James grandparents entertain their grandchildren each year with an event-filled “Cousin Camp.”

Each month, the editorial staff meets to discuss upcoming issues of Cat-Tales. More often than we would like to admit, we’re writing stories that we believe our readers will enjoy. No one will take an interest in every story we write. We’re hoping, however, you’ll be interested and entertained enough to keep turning the pages until you find an article that tickles your fancy.

We’re always open to fresh ideas, and if you have a story you want us to pursue, or one you would like to write, let us know. Even if you don’t have a story idea, send us an email at cattaleseditor@gmail.com and tell us how we’re doing. It’s your magazine, after all.
A couple things from your St. James Fire Department (SJFD):

**Thing 1.** The fire hydrants in St. James are roughly 700 feet apart. We’re very fortunate to have so many in the town, as the closer a fire truck is to a hydrant the more effective the water flow. However, there have been a couple of issues with how the hydrants are blocked, hidden or overly landscaped.

Clearly, blocking occurs when a vehicle parks in front of a hydrant and hinders access to the hydrant. Some cute videos on YouTube show how some fire companies deal with this issue — breaking out the windows of the vehicle and passing the five-inch large diameter hose (LDH) through the openings. Your SJFD would never do that; we just ask you not to park in front of the large yellow hydrants.

Some folks don’t like a fire hydrant disrupting the beauty of their front yard and will plant foliage to hide it. That’s not a good idea for two reasons. First, foliage makes it more difficult for us to find the hydrant in an emergency, especially at night. Second, we will have to remove shrubbery to use the fire hydrant. The homeowner probably won’t appreciate our efforts.

The fire hydrant pictured above looks like part of the landscaping. Unfortunately, the landscaping would be trampled by firefighters hooking up their LDH from the hydrant to an engine. Water drainage would wash a lot of the mulch away and drown some of the vegetation. And, worst of all, the wrench used to remove the side bonnets or end caps cannot by swung because the mulch is piled too high and there’s an irrigation line wrapped around the base of the fire hydrant.

Please don’t block fire hydrants when parking and make sure your landscaping stays clear of hydrant access.

**Thing 2.** As a follow-up to Marilyn Rudolph’s *Cat-Tales* article about the Vial of Life Program, a blue newspaper stand on the front porch of the firehouse contains vials and forms for storing information about your medications. The form can be used to list medications and allergies for each household member as well as contact information in the case of an emergency. We recommend storing the vials and completed forms in your refrigerator.

**Upcoming.** Stand by — we’ll be sharing the behind-the-scenes information about the new fire substation, letting you know about the folks behind the project and providing project progress in an upcoming issue of *Cat-Tales*.

Also, if you’re interested in joining the SJFD in any capacity (fire, EMT or fire police), please call 910-253-9990 and ask for Chief Dahill. He would very much like to talk to you about the opportunities we have.
St. James by the numbers
Compiled by Rick Margin

SJFD pine straw/mulch performance history

A 14% units increase...

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...but a 90% workload increase per volunteer

Source: St. James Fire Department

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Recently, I received a note from “Frustrated User” who wanted to know if it’s possible to overload a residential Wi-Fi system with too many devices. He has two iPhones, two iPads, several Sonos speakers and two computers operating on a Wi-Fi–powered network. He said it sometimes takes FOREVER for some of these devices to boot up.

Yes, you can overwhelm your Wi-Fi network when too many devices are connected to it. But there may be other reasons for slow response times. First, if you don’t know the speed tier you’re buying from your Internet Service Provider’s (ISP), call and ask. Your agreement calls for the ISP to deliver a set Mbps, or megabits per second, download speed to your home. For most homes in St. James, the speed tier should be 100-400 Mbps on the download. The exact number doesn’t really matter. If your agreement is for 100 Mbps, your Wi-Fi internet speed near the router should be at least 75 percent of 100 Mbps. The further you move from the router, the lower the number. If the speed gets below 10 Mbps and you’re trying to stream Netflix to a HDTV, you’re not going to have a good experience.

Here’s an analogy to help understand how cable modems and routers work. Think of the 100 Mbps or 400 Mbps speed tier coming into your house as your main waterline at full pressure. If you open all the faucets in the house — the equivalent to having devices attached via Wi-Fi — what happens to the water pressure? It drops off, and in some locations, may turn into a trickle. The same principle applies to bandwidth or internet speed. The more devices sharing the connection, the less speed any one device may have at a given time.

Count the number of devices connected to your Wi-Fi. Remember to count each printer, television, speaker, computer and mobile device. Also count Ethernet-connected devices. In our house, we have seven wireless connections and three wired connections sharing 300 Mbps service. With 10 devices connected to our service, I’m sure speed would be an issue if I had less than 300 Mbps.

If your router has two bands, or dual bands, then you could assign devices to a specific band. Remember, however, that you’re still dividing up the same bandwidth coming in from the ISP.

Slow speeds may be caused by more than just the number of devices on the network. Ask your ISP what your contracted download speed is. Check your modem and router to make sure the firmware is updated. If some devices are slow, maybe their proximity to the router is a problem. In the last case, your network may benefit by adding a Wi-Fi extender.
St. James — From dirt roads to promises delivered

Pioneer (from Dictionary.com): One of the first to settle in a territory; a group that originates a new line of thought or activity

The pioneers of St. James did both, founded on the vision and promise of one man.

Last month, 12 of the 57 pioneers of St. James gathered in the lobby of the Founders Club. They were invited to come to The Gauntlet, as it was originally known, to be recognized with a plaque on the wall that lists their names. But they really came for each other. And for Homer Wright, the visionary businessman behind St. James.

In the 1980s, Homer was looking for a place for his parents to retire. St. James was just his dream at that time. The land was nothing but trees.

Forty years and many fulfilled promises later, Homer addressed the group he’s known for decades at Founders: “The goal to develop a great place to live has never changed.” He reminded them that he didn’t develop St. James on his own. “I’m pleased with what you all did. You guided the development. We listened. And overall, we excelled.”

There was lots of laughing, reminiscing and fun stories shared among these very first to live in

Early St. James residents often had fun outings like this boat trip. (photo provided by Mary Winter)
St. James and belong to the Gauntlet... Homer greeted many by their first names, even after all these years. Most of the conversation, however, was of the trust they had in Homer as a true southern gentleman with vision and the promises he kept.

“St. James has been a delight,” Homer concluded. “We had our ups and downs and we faced challenges. And the result? Euphoria!”

Today at 93 years old, Homer enjoys driving through St. James when he’s not working, looking and thinking about what’s next. And he plans to live long enough to see just how far St. James can go.

John Muuss, St. James property owner since 1995, spearheaded the plaque design and recognition event along with David Flinchbaugh, assistant general manager of The Clubs at St. James Plantation. When ownership of The Clubs at St. James Plantation transferred to Troon this year, Flinchbaugh knew it was important to preserve the history of St. James. Troon partially funded the plaque and hosted the reception. The plaque will permanently hang in The Founders Club as a testament to taking a risk and honoring your word.
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‘We took a chance’

Story and photo by Virginia Brown

“We took a chance and we’re happy we did,” said John Beroset of the decision he and his wife, Marcia, made to purchase their St. James lot in 1992. It would be two years before they moved to Southport, living on their boat at Southport Marina while they sold their Pennsylvania home and built a new one on Mariner’s Way.

Marcia remembers the time in Southport as carefree. They enjoyed the sleepy, little town, riding bicycles on the waterfront and making new friends among Southport residents who made them feel welcome. It didn’t matter that they had to go to Wilmington for groceries or anything else that wasn’t available at Rose’s Department Store.

As for St. James, little beyond The Gauntlet golf course (now Founders) and two tennis courts had been developed. At the time of the Berosets’ purchase, only one home was completed, with three more under construction. Three MarshWinds condo buildings and four Lakeside Commons town homes also were built. An unpaved gap split St. James Drive, which extended only to Waterway Park.

So buying a lot seemed a gamble. But the Berosets offer enthusiastic praise for developer Homer Wright, who they believe, has “left no promise unfulfilled.”

The Berosets have good memories of their first Christmas, two months after they moved to the area, when there was a party for St. James residents. Everybody who lived here — about 40 people, plus a Christmas tree — fit comfortably in the conference room and foyer of the double-wide mobile home that served as the sales office (later, model homes would serve as the sales office).

St. James and Southport have benefited from the Berosets’ hard work and knowledge. An avid tennis player, Marcia helped form the St. James Tennis Association and served as its first president. She worked closely with Dave (KJ) Kjome at The Clubs of St. James and others to increase the number of tennis courts and other St. James amenities. Now volunteering at Dosher Hospital, participating in the Southport Women’s Club and golf also keep her busy.

John’s engineering background has come in handy during his time on the Architectural Control Committee and in the design and construction of the St. James Fire Department. He served on the original squad, as president and on the board of directors.

In the early days, the Berosets walked the fire trails in St. James. Now, they bicycle on its roads and go to the beach. Their children are delighted to visit this ready-made vacation spot. Despite fond memories of the “sleepy town” days of Southport, the Berosets welcomed the addition of grocery and hardware stores.

Originally, John and Marcia intended to retire to Savannah, but decided to look at this place friends had told them about. Georgia’s loss became this area’s gain when the Berosets took a chance on St. James.
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"You want me to move where?" Diane, then living in State College, Pennsylvania, asked Jan Calhoun, her soon-to-be husband.

It was 1993. There were dirt roads, a golf club and just a few people living in St. James. Jan and his Brunswick County school co-worker Gloria Talley discussed the attractive qualities of living in St. James. Gloria’s husband Mike was a mechanical engineer hired by land developer Homer Wright to help design the infrastructure in St. James. So, when Homer invited Jan to lunch at the Gauntlet to talk about buying property, Jan accepted.

Jan excitedly recalls the deal that Homer offered: “Buy a townhouse now, and when you’re ready to sell it, I’ll make up the difference if the value drops.”

Jan liked the proposition. Homer was offering a great business deal. Jan immediately trusted Homer, whom he describes as a “southern country gentleman and a successful businessman with a clear vision and a kind heart.” In March 1994, Jan moved into one of three Lakeside Commons townhouses. In August, he married Diane, and the journey began.

Diane was thinking retirement when moving to St. James. But her work at Penn State University helped her find a position at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, as director of professional development. Jan, also an educator, became assistant superintendent of Brunswick County schools and then a financial counselor.

Diane grew up in Key West, Florida and was looking for that same ambiance, warmth and laid-back lifestyle. "I found great solace here," she says. “We didn't have grandiose expectations, just mutual respect for our diverse backgrounds. And I fell in love with Southport.”

Both Jan and Diane were golfers and played in the St. James Thursday Scramble and the Sunday Oak Island Hit and Giggle. Residents who didn’t participate in the scramble came to the Gauntlet for dinner and to socialize. Some even had reserved seats at the bar. “We had more laughs with new friends than ever in our lives,” says Jan.

The Calhouns built their second home on Wild Rye Drive with a beautiful view overlooking The Gauntlet’s 18th green. They hosted many singing and dancing events on their deck. But it was the view from the veranda of The Gauntlet during their wedding reception that’s one of Diane’s fondest memories — the golf course, the sky, the colors, the marsh.

Today, their home is still full of energy, especially when their five children and eight grandchildren visit. Jan owns several acoustic guitars and enjoys sharing his love of music with the community.

Jan and Diane agree on the five things that bind the community — the Service Club, the fire department, support for veterans causes, Southport/Oak Island service clubs and the local schools. “St. James is good for Southport and Southport is good for St. James,” declares Jan. It will be up to the future residents of St. James to protect what is important. “And that,” Diane says, “is keeping St. James an open, responsive, caring community.”
Susan and Ken Dade arrived at St. James in 1994 looking for a simpler, less hectic lifestyle. Until then, Susan had commuted daily from Long Island to New York City, where she worked as a fashion illustrator. The Dades moved into their new home with their son, a sophomore in high school, and her mother.

“It was the right time for our family to make the move,” Susan recalls. “While vacationing in Caswell Beach in the early 1990s, we saw St. James developing,” she says. “It was the chapel and The Gauntlet that drew us in.” Despite only a few houses and an unpaved St. James Drive, she visualized the future community and the lifestyle she desired.

It didn’t take long for the family to become engaged in the community. Susan was one of six parents on the Brunswick high school PTA. Her artistry blossomed in Southport, a town that reminds her of old-time Long Island. Her watercolor art was featured in the “Star News” and exhibited in Southport’s Franklin Square Gallery. She served on the St. James Architectural Control Committee influencing — to this day — home design, color and landscaping.

Susan and Ken watched St. James grow before their eyes. The marina was built, The Players Club opened and Waterway Park became a great place to meet friends. Her son now displays the Hale Irwin–autographed photo from the opening of The Members Club. And Ken resumed deep-sea fishing, one of his loves on Long Island.

The Dades were a busy family: Christmas parties in the sales trailer at the community entrance, big parties in their home, day trips to Wilmington for Susan’s art and even being an extra in a movie. Yet Ken always made time for barbecuing and doing his own yard work.

The scramble still makes Susan smile. For 12 years, she and Ken met with other golf enthusiasts on Thursdays, played nine holes and then gathered at the Founders Club. Golf was very social. “We even held our own tournaments,” Susan recalls.

Susan and Ken are still influencing St. James today. Susan, a member of The Artisans, is the artist behind the garden club and fire department logos, as well as a recent St. James Christmas card. She’s responsible for keeping Tommy’s updated with new works of resident art. Many residents display Susan’s paintings in their homes.

Susan’s hope for the future of St. James is to keep the Artisans Gallery strong and prosperous. “Art and golf are good compliments,” she proclaims. And as owners of a rescue dog, she and Ken love the dog parks. ”The natural beauty, peacefulness and friendship of St. James make it a special place to live,” she says. ”Coming here was the best thing we did.”
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A chat with Willie and Lelia Gore about all they have seen and participated in during their years at St. James is like a deluge of delight. They encourage others to become involved as they have. “You either have the time, or you make the time,” Willie says.

When he bought their lot in May 1991, five months before the grand opening, Willie knew it was a bit risky, but found reassurance in the years that had already gone into infrastructure planning and construction. The Gores had no specific plan for moving. But when a teaching job in the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp (JROTC) program at South Brunswick High School opened, it seemed the right time for Willie to retire from the Army and return to Southport, his home town. Lelia appreciated being closer to her Greensboro family and brought her nursing expertise with her to Brunswick County.

One of the builders they considered was their neighbor, who lived in the only completed home. When Lelia met him, she says they “clicked.” He incorporated her ideas, including the octagon window she craved (even if the only place for it was her closet). More recent arrivals might envy that the construction of the Gores’ home took only five months.

In the early days, all St. James residents knew each other, their kids and their dogs. They met at the mailbox kiosk at the main entrance. At the annual meeting at The Gauntlet, nobody needed a name tag.

Willie and Lelia watched as ponds were excavated, golf courses sprigged, a chapel built and the hole for the marina dug. Willie has played in the opening round of golf on each course except the Reserve, and recently got his first hole in one. Lelia no longer plays, but says, “I still have the cute outfits.”

Through the years, the Gores have been active in countless capacities in St. James, Southport and throughout Brunswick County, and they cherish the many great friends they’ve made. When Willie ran for the Brunswick Board of Education, some of his friends changed their party affiliation so they could vote for him in the primary.

The Gores believe the growth of St. James with people from all over the country has strengthened Southport and Brunswick County. Willie offers as an example the ability to hire retired experienced teachers to work in the schools and administration.

Willie also enjoys helping create connections by showing locals who have never visited St. James what lies behind the gates. One enhancement they would like to see is increased emphasis on the cultural diversity of St. James.

As St. James pioneers, what advice would Willie and Lelia Gore give newcomers? They suggest people get involved, not just in St. James, but in the wider community. “Most people have something to offer,” Willie urges. “Use your talents for good.”
The Tagtmeyers’ true tales

By Judy Rubin

Perhaps it was Gary Tagtmeyer’s belief in Santa Claus that led him and his wife, Tootie, to trust Homer’s master plan and advertisement: “It’s got everything — and it’s all in the right place.” They purchased a lot, built a home and were permanent residents by November of 1993. Today, they are the longest living residents in the community.

They watched the development — the beach club, the “village,” three new golf courses, trailers turned into clubhouses, hurricane floods, miles and miles of roads and thousands of homes. Their contributions to the community are many — Gary served as POA president and appointed a committee to research incorporation of the town. Tootie helped organize the Ladies Golf Association and served as treasurer; a shoebox held the money, thereby avoiding the bank’s $15 service charge. She started a monthly Tuesday bridge group, which still meets today.

Early on, each of the 11 salesmen had to own a four-wheel drive vehicle to take prospective buyers around the muddy roads. The village was a cluster of four model homes near the Beaver Creek intersection — a collection of stunning house plans from Southern Living (Culpepper Cottage, Edisto River Cottage, Sunrise Farm and Sulphur Springs), one of which served as the impressive sales office.

Golf was the main attraction and scrambles the norm. Following golf, non-golfers came to the “Round Table” to attend dinners that followed. “Ocean-golf” was a popular event. Participants played golf, traveled to the Southport Marina, boarded the vessels of their playing partners and had happy hour at the Bald Head Marina.

The opening round at Members makes them both laugh. In November, 1996, a trailer served as the clubhouse, and Hale Irwin was the first to play his course. Hale would meticulously study each putt.

Having missed one on No. 5, he was taking extra care studying the potential birdie on the par-5 sixth hole. The entire community had lined the course watching this inaugural round, so he asked, “Can anyone read greens?”

Gary answered, “Irma Caroon. She’s the best we have.” Irma strolled out in her Scottish cap and told Hale, “one ball to the right.” He looked and laughed, saying, “One croquet ball.” He missed. Irma then handed him her handbag, grabbed his putter, plumbed the green again, aimed just one golf ball size to the right — and bang, center of the cup. The crowd went wild!
When the Tagtmeyers arrived, theirs was the only house on Beaver Creek. As people moved in, Gary and Tootie made sure to include them. Their home became the site of parties, gatherings and conversations. Married for 62 years, this couple has spent nearly a third of their life here at St. James. Their contributions to this community, however, are timeless and endless.
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When everyone knew your name

By Judy Rubin • Photos by Fritz Shenk

Once upon a time, there was one house on the far side of Polly Gully Bridge. Infrastructure in the nascent St. James Plantation was complete with sewage, water and phone, but no television. It did not phase Mary and John Winter, pioneers of 1994. They remember “total darkness, no lights, sitting on the back porch and looking to the stars … no movement on Oak Island, other St. James residents were a mile away, it was just dark.”

And so began the life for Mary and John that February of 1994. The Winters had packed up from Murrysville, Pennsylvania and moved to Marsh Wood Court. John was still working, so Mary became the original Welcome Wagon lady. She would follow the moving vans into St. James to welcome new homeowners and ask for their information. Before the day was over, she returned to make sure the information was correct before placing it in the weekly directory.

That treasured list kept the community connected. It was copied in black and white on 8 x 11-inch sheets of paper and distributed with early issues of Cat-Tales to the kiosk of mailboxes found at the front gate. As residents stopped there daily, new people were greeted and friendships created. Mary continued this role for seven years before the POA issued a small printed directory. Three years later, the fire department took over the task.

Those two documents kept everyone informed of initial activities:

Themed dinners at The Gauntlet’s Round Table, Ladies Golf Association (nine ladies), informal men’s golf with 12 men, the first Firecracker July 4 Scramble (20 players), Gauntlet pool aquacise, Halloween Scramble, kids’ trick or treat, first needy family gift and food drive in December, Christmas party for kids, Christmas cocktail party with 60 people, Christmas caroling with party to follow and the first New Year’s Day Beach Walk — all that and more in 1994.

By the spring of ‘95, there were 400 residents from 33 different states, including: North Carolina (139), New York (60), Michigan (14), Ohio (11), Illinois (8), and California (6). Those logistics made it impossible for Homer Wright to continue his July 4 “Y’all Come Cruise” aboard the yacht in Southport, travel the Intracoastal and return for the town’s fireworks.

While the Winters are delighted with the amenities added since that first year and the fact that so many people here today are able to share this paradise, they can’t help but fondly recall the time “when everyone knew your name.”
Imagine your first day on a new job – a job with thousands of discriminating customers and unpredictable conditions amidst a major corporate transition – and disaster hits.

Welcome to Dustin Strickland’s world.

Dustin is Troon’s new director of agronomy at St. James, overseeing maintenance of nearly 700 acres of turf and greens, a crew of about 50 people, and most important, the playing conditions for legions of golfers at the Members, Founders, Players and Reserve courses. For Dustin, an affable, easy-going Texas native and graduate of the University of Massachusetts, it was a challenge he couldn’t pass up.

And what a challenge it is – the winter of 2017-18 devastated golf courses in the Southeast. “Winterkill” wreaked havoc with Bermuda grass-dominant golf tracks from the Piedmont to Myrtle Beach.

When Dustin was tapped by Troon earlier this year to replace the outgoing Conrad Broussard, the full impact of winterkill was becoming apparent. By the time Dustin officially stepped into the role, he was ready to go to work.

“You never know what you’re going to walk into, but the winter conditions in the coastal Carolinas were especially brutal,” Dustin said. “Add to that the volume of play in St. James (more than 180,000 rounds per year) and you’ve got a challenge. Our goal right now is to fix everything as fast as we can and as soon as we do that, keep improving as we go along.”

Dustin doesn’t consider his challenge overwhelming. “We have a good game plan,” he said. “We’ve put a lot of thought into what we’re doing. And we’ve got a great team.”
Dustin has the advantage of already knowing the turf and topography of St. James golf intimately. He served as superintendent here for almost three years, based at Members Club. The Reserve course was just coming online when Dustin had an opportunity to head agronomy at El Macero, a Troon-managed facility in Davis, California. He was there for 18 months when Troon moved him in 2010 to manage the grounds at the great Silverado Resort in Napa Valley, where he stayed for the next six years.

“Napa was almost home for us,” Dustin said. “Working there was great, especially working with Johnny.” Johnny, of course, is golf legend Johnny Miller, who had just purchased Silverado and begun a major renovation, which Dustin helped lead. The results of the project helped bring a PGA Tour event, the Frys.com Open, to Silverado, which has since become the Safeway Open held every October.

But the call of Texas, where he and his wife grew up, lingered. “I had always promised my wife we’d get back home, so when an opening at La Cantera Resort (a Troon facility in San Antonio) came up, we moved back.”

Then the next challenge appeared – managing 81 holes of golf at St. James. Dustin couldn’t pass it up. With Troon taking ownership of the Clubs and committed to maintaining the courses as one of their marquee facilities, Dustin made the move back to St. James and went to work. His wife and three young children will join him this month after school ends.

“I have a great team,” he said. “We have an educated, motivated crew. It’s my job to make sure that it’s all running right. Get it done, and get it done right. My focus is on quality. I want the team to realize it doesn’t take much more time to do it right the first time.”

The scope of the challenge facing Dustin is significant. Founders is closed through most of the summer and Members remains open, but with temporary greens. The greens at both courses have been “sprigged,” a process where the crowns and roots of new MiniVerde grass are planted and regrown. At the same time, the transition to new turf growth in the fairways, which was hurt by the winter freeze, is being closely monitored on all courses; new greens covers have been purchased; bunkers at Founders are being renovated; and tee boxes are being expanded wherever possible.

On top of all that is daily maintenance and course set-up, including raking bunkers, keeping about 70 ponds free of algae, and setting up to 550 pin placements every week.

(Note to golfers: Yes, those pin placements are set by computer. It’s a program called StrackaLine, and for a fee you can also download the app, which provides contours and putting lines for all 81 greens in St. James.) It’s a lot of work, but for Dustin, it’s more than a job. His love of the game got him into the business. “I was in college in San Antonio playing a lot of city courses and as a college kid, paying $15 a round gets expensive, so when they said I could play for free if I did some work, I was in.” His experience working on sod farms in South Padre Island during high school helped.

Dustin has spent his career working at Troon and he understands the responsibility of maintaining the Troon brand. “We have to do all the basics – get in front of play and maintain conditions, but also focus on doing everything better. The positive thing is we’re building for the future.”

Asked what his favorite course to play is, Dustin replied: "They're like my children. I love them all."
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You’ve probably seen TV commercials for ancestry services that claim to identify your heritage and even find missing relatives. But is it too good to be true? Can a bit of saliva really isolate where your relatives were born and unite long-lost family members? For St. James resident John Hussey, the answer is absolutely yes!

John’s story begins in Columbus, Ohio, when John and his sister Robin were teens. Their birth certificates, found hidden in a dresser drawer, revealed an emotional discovery: their father’s name was John Calvin Wright, not Hussey. John recalls, “We felt lost. Who were we? Not knowing your biological parent is more than genetic mystery. It’s like a missing piece of one’s psyche.”

So, the search began: military archives, Social Security records, marriage certificates. John and Robin’s mother was never forthcoming with information about their father. When they were in their 20s, their mother left home, taking with her any hope of finding their birth father.

Over the years, John’s search stopped and restarted many times. After he and his wife, Betsy, helped their adopted son unite with his birth family in Bogotá, Colombia, John’s hope for finding his birth father resurfaced.

In January 2018, John ordered a DNA test kit. The results identified Suzanne Magee from Dallas, Texas as John’s second cousin. John contacted Suzanne and learned that John Calvin Wright was her mother’s uncle. He died in a car accident in 1962. Suzanne said her mother had been searching for John and his sister for years.

Meanwhile, 1,400 miles away in San Antonio, Texas, Earline Turner had been holding on to a photograph for 40 years: a black and white snapshot of two children. Earline’s father, John Calvin Wright, had given it to her saying the children were her half-brother and half-sister. Earline was always determined to find them despite being told the family had drifted apart. Years of desperate searching led nowhere. Reluctantly, Earline completed a DNA test, a gift from her daughter, but from a different service than John’s. Astoundingly, it, too, identified Suzanne as a cousin!

Using his ancestry service to identify anyone searching for the same person, John stumbled upon Earline’s family tree. And there it was: John Calvin Wright, John’s father, was Earline’s father! Disappointingly, John’s initial attempts to reach Earline were ignored; he later would learn she was hospitalized and offline.

“So I did what anybody does in 2018,” John said, laughing. “I cyber-stalked her!” Eventually, he found Earline’s daughter on Facebook and made one last attempt. Moments later he was on the phone with his half-sister Earline.

On May 3, 2018, John and Robin flew to San Antonio to meet Earline. A homemade sign above Earline’s front door read: “Dreams do come true. I’ve been waiting for you!”

“It felt natural,” John says. “Like coming home. The void is filled. I now know who I am.”

John often contemplates the song lyrics from “Somewhere Out There” from his family’s favorite animated movie. “My family was somewhere out there,” he said. We searched and found those who truly cared about us. Love saw us through.”

The ties that bind: two separate ancestry searches led to a great find — family.
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Volunteer gardeners recently answered the call to spruce up and make minor repairs to the community gardens at Regency and SeaSide before the 2018 season. The results are terrific!

At SeaSide and Regency, with 15 and 38 plots respectively, gardeners spread fresh mulch in the pathways, cleaned work sheds, washed rain barrels and trimmed overhanging bushes and trees. Last fall, to deter four-legged critters seeking a free meal, we added strong fencing around both gardens, anchored to the ground and rising three feet above the surface. We attached the new fencing to the taller fencing.

At Regency, we replaced old, rotting railroad ties used for framing each plot with taller and narrower frames. The new frames look good, will last longer and help slightly increase the growing space. It’s worth noting that several volunteers are new to the gardens, bringing enthusiasm and interest, which will only enhance the gardening experience for all.

An unusually warm weather spell in mid-February encouraged early planting of cold weather crops. Of interest were the various designs of trellises used to provide a vertical path for the pea vines to grow, some as high as seven feet. Gracing gardeners’ tables or nearing completion of their growing cycles is a variety of lettuces, sugar snap peas, bok choy, radishes, spinach, arugula, broccoli and cabbage.

Warmer weather crops are now taking over. One can see the different types of tomato plants in the ground, with the expectation that juicy plump red or yellow tomatoes soon will be on our tables. Nothing like picking a fresh tomato, adding a little salt and biting into it. A tomato sandwich with mayo? Summer treats. Growing along with tomatoes are cukes, zucchini, okra, yellow beans, haricots verts, pole beans and eggplant, among others.

The gardens operate under a strict budget with plot-holder funds used to pay for their maintenance. Critter fencing, the raised bed replacements, mowing and more are all budgeted. Early in the year, we hold an informational meeting to welcome new gardeners and explain each plot holder’s role in the community.

We write a monthly newsletter, full of seasonal advice based on horticultural information developed at the Brunswick County Center North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

The gardens are organized by the POA Community Garden Committee, which meets monthly. Each garden has a monitor encouraging communication and addressing issues as they arise.

Getting your hands into the soil to plant seeds and starter plants from a nursery and nurturing them to maturity is therapeutic, providing a sense of comfort and personal satisfaction. For many, tending a garden makes them feel healthier and is essential for quality of life. The camaraderie among gardeners provides a strong sense of community as they share their ideas and experiences.
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We’re the St. James widows — the group no one wants to join. The “Solos” is the name we have chosen for our group.

I am the coordinator of this merry band of ladies, which we started in the fall of 2015. Sheila Keenan, Judy Hughes, Martha Reiser, Sue Kiely, Nita Robertson and I discussed forming a support group. Each of us sent emails to our widowed friends, and those who were interested decided to join. We started with 24 ladies and have, unfortunately, grown to 85.

As the group’s coordinator, I maintain the mailing list and send messages. We try to meet about every 30-45 days — inviting the entire mailing list. We have also formed some small groups for those who want to get together more often. Some “gourmet” groups have been formed, too.

These ladies have become a very special part of my life, and I believe that to be true for most of those who have stayed active in our group. I have met many through Solos whom I probably would not have known any other way. We don’t play golf, tennis, cards, or attend church together, nor do we meet for any other reason. Yet, our shared experiences have made us very close. We help each other through the many hard times. We share our trials and successes, and we cry, play, eat, travel and party together.

Recently, we gathered to enjoy the Kentucky Derby. We dressed the part, with lovely hats and fascinators. We also enjoyed Kentucky Hot Browns, ham and biscuits, mint juleps and, of course, some friendly wagers. It was lots of fun.

If you’re a widow and would like the company of other ladies who share your loss and can offer some understanding ears, contact me at 910-253-8883. Or email me at dmatteotti@ec.rr.com. I won’t reach out unless you give me name and contact number. I know each person needs her own time to decide when it’s okay to begin moving on. But together, we do move on.

The group that nobody really wants to join

Story and photo by Miriam Matteotti
It’s summer, time for Cousin Camp, a tradition started by Kathy Lance in 2011 to make sure her grandchildren, living in different states, have a chance to bond. They range in age from five to 12 years old. The youngest, Luke, is two years old — too young to attend.

Participation requirements for the week-long camp are: a child must be potty-trained and no longer needs a daily nap.

At first, no parents were allowed. Now that the number of campers is six (soon to be seven), the Lances employ a low-profile “staff parent” to help with driving and chaos handling.

As the Lances became more experienced, Cousin Camp improved and now includes rules. Grandkids and grandparents contribute to setting the rules, which are formally signed by all on the first day. The primary rule is “Have fun!” Others are “Campers go to bed together, get up together and eat together,” “Always be nice” and “Say please and thank you.”

Each edition of the camp has its own theme. But every year starts with a treasure hunt, where the kids follow clues to find a bag or backpack filled with camp t-shirts, a flashlight, “cousin cash dollars” and writing/coloring materials. Themes from past years include “The Adventure Begins,” “Super Cousins to the Rescue,” “Every Day’s a Holiday” and “Finding Adventure in Books.”

Every night at dinner, the family reviews the day’s events. With the kids’ input, Grandma Kathy and Grampa Keith highlight campers who have done something well or have been helpful or nice. Campers are rewarded with cousin cash dollars for their good behavior. Each camp ends with a visit to the “camp store” — a table full of odds and ends (candies, camp memorabilia, small toys, books read during the week) that the kids can purchase with their cousin cash dollars.

The first Cousin Camp held in St. James was during an Olympics year (2016), so the theme was “Gator Games — Let the Games Begin!” (also, to honor the newly discovered alligator in the pond behind the backyard). The Lances staged lots of backyard games, and campers visited the Shallotte Swamp Boat Tour. Given their new environment, they also enjoyed lots of beach and pool time.
The theme for 2017 was movies (“Lights, Camera, Cousin Camp”). Each night, the campers watched a different movie after a day of crafts and adventures based on the film’s title. Besides pool and beach time, field trips in 2017 included Southport, Fishy Fishy Restaurant and the Sunset Beach planetarium.

Last year, Kathy and Keith included the kids in meal preparations, from setting the table to cooking. “It’s a wonderful addition for everyone, and good training for future camps,” says Kathy. The camp culminated with the kids filming their own “Cousin Camp Show,” writing, and acting in their own news production.

For 2018, Kathy and Keith have planned “The Amazing Race” Cousin Camp, with a real scavenger hunt. But rather than retrieving the listed items, the kids will use an iPhone to take pictures of each treasure. Once all the items are “collected,” they will be given one final clue to find their treasures, which, along with their standard t-shirts and gear, will include bandanas to denote which of two teams they’ll be on. They’ll also compete all week for different goals, for which they’ll earn points.

The campers will “visit” Italy and Brazil. While in Italy, they will go to the Positano/St. James Beach Club. They’ll also spend a day focusing on art, with a trip to Pescado Y Amor. The owner, Missy, will offer a fun, Italy-themed art project. The Lances also hope to enlist the help of the Italian Club for a lesson in bocce ball.

The Brazil trip will coincide with Carnival, allowing the kids to wear colorful costumes and dance and sing along to Brazilian samba. Campers will also sample a taste of Brazil, with “pão de queijo” and “guaraná,” among other treats.

The kids enjoy Cousin Camp’s crafts and daily new activities, “especially the emoji light,” says Lane. Rowyn likes working together to create Cousin Camp rules. Tyler values that the cousins get along well. Kayla enjoys visiting with the cousins she doesn’t see for months at a time. “We all have Cousin Camp nicknames,” she says. “It’s surprising how fun it is to be called ‘Kookoo’ every day for a week.”

Cole says, “It’s a time outside holidays that we can spend with Grandma, Grampa and our cousins, knowing we will never be bored.” Camden enjoys working hard for cousin cash dollars to use at the store at the end of the week. “It teaches us that being nice and helping out pays off,” he says.
The weather cooperated beautifully in June when approximately 500 St. James friends and neighbors enjoyed American Legion Post 543’s annual “Military Appreciation Concert in the Park” featuring Mike’s Garage Band. The concert opened with welcoming remarks by Post Commander Mike Fegan, followed by bugler Ray Clemen sounding “To the Colors” as the Post Color Guard Detail of Kirk Davis and Pom Pomeroy raised our nation’s flag. The National anthem was sung beautifully by the duet of Lois Moore and Post member Bob Panko. All veterans present were honored as their service songs were played by the band.
Here’s a plant you don’t often see in St. James. It’s a giant blooming agave, a succulent that’s normally found in the southwestern U.S. and Mexico. Nectar from the plant is used in making tequila and as a sweetener substitute for sugar. But this one — thriving in the garden of residents James and Jo Ann Norman — is used primarily for decoration. Its stem grew a year ago, and the plant is just now beginning to bloom.

St. James resident Jo Ann Norman with her giant agave plant. (photo by John Muuss)

The residents who call themselves the Dead Enders on Players Club Drive were on hand for their annual Memorial Day Picnic. A great time was had by all.

A memorable picnic

Photo by Steve Henne
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At long last, summer is here and there’s nowhere better to be than the beach. The St. James Artisans have directed their artistic energies to creating works focused on the beach as well as the July 4th holiday celebration. For July and August, the Artisans Gallery has been turned into “Everything’s beachy” and some new works will be on display.

Alan Boisvert is one of the newest Artisans, relocated this year from Massachusetts. His work centers on concrete sculptures that he casts and paints. Alan is a retired chef and his artistic endeavors have been primarily in the food industry, where he’s won awards for food displays and sculptures. Now he uses the statuary medium to express his creativity.

“Although I do paint many types of garden statuary, I am most fascinated by the variety of colors found within each species of sea birds in coastal North Carolina,” Alan says, adding he focuses his time and efforts blending colors and creating shades typically found on local sea birds.

Mary Blanding is another new artist in the gallery. According to Mary, her pastel, “Monet’s Cliff,” “Was done on the cliffs above ‘Hole in the Wall Beach’ in the northern part of California’s Santa Cruz County. It is an especially windy location, somewhat desolate, and not easily reached.” The ocean and its aquatic life inspire and nourish her. “I work almost exclusively en plein air for the healing properties of nature. I’ve lived by the ocean all of my life — on both coasts. The dramatic sweep and play of the waves and how the wind and water carve into rock and sand take my breath away.”

Mary works primarily in soft pastels, occasionally oils, and watercolor. She’s been painting since she was very young (her dad was an artist) and started seriously studying with well-known artists on the West Coast in 2005.

“Full moon rising” is a stunning photograph by Karen Mortimore, who recently rejoined the gallery. Karen grew up in Long Island and has a love affair with south-facing beaches, like the ones on which she grew up. Oak Island’s south-facing beach is a benefit of being in St. James and allows her to take amazing photographs of full moons rising and setting over the ocean.

Lori Taylor has been creating jewelry for the gallery for a few years now and says that the “ocean is such an inspiration to me with its treasures and calming effect.” This has led her to create a coastal-themed line of jewelry using pearls, beach glass, sea sediment and beads in various colors of the ocean.
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“The Glue.” It’s a term college basketball coaches use frequently. It refers to players who set the tone, who get everybody pumped up, who get everyone playing together as a team. At Operation at Ease (OAE), our “Glue” players are our monthly coordinators (MCs).

For those of you not familiar with OAE, we are the 250 or so resident volunteers who annually host 50 military families for three-day weekends at St. James. To qualify for a visit, the military family must have been separated for a substantial part of the past year owing to the service member’s deployment to a combat or hazardous duty area.

Each OAE visit requires a team of volunteers to greet, orient, house, feed, photograph and arrange amenities for our visiting military families. Every volunteer must be up to speed on what’s expected. Some team members are first-timers who need guidance through the process. Material support must be gathered and delivered on time. Schedules have to be coordinated to be sure the visit goes smoothly. It’s the job of the MC to make sure each team is prepared to produce a successful weekend for each of the six or seven warrior families who visit St. James each month.

OAE’s team of 10 MCs — Claudia Lowe, Barbara Griffin, Jeannie Rodbell, Stephanie Palmer, Linda Boston, Julie Hackett, Judy Steffens, Kathy McCulloch, Roseann Summerville and Fran Ventola — have been volunteers with OAE for an average of about six years. Most of them started in a less visible capacity and moved up to the leadership position of MC when the opportunity arose. All have now been MCs for at least three years.

Claudia Lowe is one of the longest-serving coordinators. She first volunteered with her husband, Garland, to provide boat tours to the families in 2009. She also did kids’ toy buckets for seven years. Tag-teaming with Barbara Griffin, the two became MCs in 2011. Asked why she does so much, Claudia says “Having an opportunity to give back to our military is a privilege and an honor because of their sacrifice for my freedom and blessed life.”

Julie Hackett has been a coordinator since 2014. Julie’s husband was in Vietnam when their first child was born. She says she understands first-hand the sacrifices these families make and is “so glad to have the opportunity to help (them) spend some quality time together.”

Jeannie Rodbell, one of our newest coordinators, managed operations for the month of May this year. Jeannie learned about OAE in 2015 and immediately jumped at the opportunity to become a MC. “The 20 hours of my time are nothing compared to the commitment these soldiers and their families give me, and us, daily.”

All ten coordinators do a fabulous job of organizing, motivating, and leading their teams, setting an amazing example of dedication to OAE’s mission. Please join the OAE Board in recognizing these ladies for the wonderful way they represent our community to the warrior families who visit us at St. James.
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Rosie the Riveter

Story by Jeff Mount • Photos by John Muuss

In honor of Memorial Day, the St. James Service Club sponsored “Rosie the Riveter.” The program began with the American Legion, Post 543 Honor Guard presenting the colors. Soloist Lois Miller sang patriotic songs to an appreciative audience.

Elizabeth Michaels, an experienced historical story teller, followed with an appearance as Rosie the Riveter. She has performed as Rosie the Riveter and Dolly Madison at the White House Visitor Center, the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. and at Valley Forge National Park.

Rosie the Riveter has been a cultural icon for generations. She represents women who worked in factories and shipyards, many producing munitions and war supplies, during World War II. She’s an inspiring representative of a strong, capable woman who rose to the challenge of her era and became the foundation for the contemporary women’s movement. Today, Rosie is a symbol of feminism and women’s economic power.

Gardener’s delight

By Jerri Ellen Wheeler

St. James garden enthusiasts boarded a bus headed for the Raleigh/Durham area for a springtime trip to Duke Gardens, where they toured the beautiful site using a self-guided “What’s in Bloom” map. After working up an appetite, everyone dined in Durham’s Brightleaf District.

The last stop was a private, guided tour of Plant Delights, considered one of the top seven online nurseries in the country. Tony Avent, the nursery’s founder, is a renowned plantsman, author and speaker. After a lovely trip, everyone was back at St. James in time for dinner.

This trip was sponsored by the St. James Plantation POA Activities Committee. To learn more about future trips, check each week’s issue of “What’s Up St. James.”
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Brunswick County youth will benefit from the efforts of some hearty tennis players.

Shortly after dawn broke on a near-frosty April morning, legging-and-layers-adorned tennis players began arriving at the Founders tennis courts to kick off the 2018 Racquet Relay. By mid-morning, the courts were full, and courtside ticket sales for the 50-50 raffle and prizes were brisk. Over in the Founders clubhouse, set-up of the silent auction was underway and 86 gift baskets were admired by early morning golfers.

Racquet Relay, an annual St. James Tennis Association (SJTA)-sponsored event, now in its 12th year, pairs tennis with fundraising for the benefit of a charitable organization. Providence Home was chosen as the worthy recipient for this year’s event. Providence Home has been operational since 1997 and provides emergency shelter for up to 90 days to Brunswick County youth ages 10-17. While staying at Providence Home, residents receive medical care, counseling, food, and academic support, all within a structured lifestyle.

At the Founders tennis courts, play was going strong for the 118 players, and the weather, always the most important element for a successful Racquet Relay, was cooperating. The sunshine brought out spectators who felt free to provide commentary on the matches being played. On five courts, a battle of the sexes was being contested as a men’s 3.5 men’s team took on a 4.0 women’s team in a fun event. Varsity tennis players from South Brunswick High School also played an exhibition match during the afternoon.

With tennis concluded, the participants migrated to the Founders clubhouse where a social hour was underway to encourage generous bidding at the silent auction. SJTA President Debbie Bailey addressed the crowd and then introduced Warren Mortley, the executive director of Providence Home. His gracious speech was warmly received by the crowd as he thanked the SJTA for choosing Providence Home as this year’s beneficiary.

Happily, the 2018 Racquet Relay proved to be the most successful yet, with 50 corporate sponsors contributing more than $15,000 to Providence Home.
Most of us in St. James have a FROG ("free" or "finished room over garage," depending on who’s talking) that houses family, friends and visiting dignitaries. Most of us converted our FROGs into guest rooms, home offices or work studios. Not Bruce Corrie, the former Duke Lacrosse coach and athletic director at Bucknell, Northwestern and Robert Morris.

Bruce built his bonus room specifically for all his stuff. The six mini-room/cubicles plus office, balcony, foyer and even bathroom are home to thousands of pieces of personal sports memorabilia that Bruce acquired over a lifetime in sports. To my own guests who have had a guided tour complete with great stories told by the man himself, I simply refer to it as the Bruce Corrie Sports Museum.

Bruce graduated from Hempstead High School on Long Island in 1953. He was a diehard Dodgers fan — Brooklyn that is. He has a whole room dedicated to “Dem Bums.” His favorite among the “Boys of Summer” was Duke Snider, and he has several autographed pictures to prove it. There are ticket stubs of games at Ebbets Field, where fans often debated who was the best centerfielder in New York at the time — Willie Mays of the Giants, the Yankees’ Mickey Mantle or the Duke of Flatbush.

Bruce also proudly displays two letters he received from the Dodgers. The first, from the head Dodger scout informing Bruce that 13 was too young for a try-out. The other was a polite response to the now 15-year-old, thanking him for the dinner invitation but declining because of other commitments, signed by Jackie Robinson.
In the international room, there are hundreds of Olympic pins from around the world that Bruce traded for, starting in 1968 in Mexico City. He always left home with an extra suitcase containing hats, shirts and USA pins used for barter and returned with an Olympic-sized haul. He once traded his USA flag shirt for an Australian counterpart. But to sweeten the deal, he insisted the Olympic banner that hung over the streets of Sydney be thrown in for good measure.

One of Bruce’s toughest negotiations came during the 1991 World University Games in Sheffield, U.K., when he was a member of the U.S. delegation. During what started as a street conversation that eventually landed in a local pub, Bruce parted with three Northwestern shirts in exchange for what is now one of his prized possessions, an iconic British bobbies’ hat.

“Bruce also proudly displays two letters he received from the Dodgers. The first, from the head Dodger scout informing Bruce that 13 was too young for a try-out. The other was a polite response to the now 15-year-old, thanking him for the dinner invitation but declining because of other commitments, signed by Jackie Robinson.”

Step into the Duke room and you understand why Bruce’s time spent in Durham was so special. There’s a locker containing his original coach’s jacket, along with numerous sticks, helmets and equipment that depict the evolution of lacrosse. Framed photos of his teams hang on the wall from his 10 years at the helm.

Overhead are pennants from the 14 basketball Final Fours he attended, including two Duke won — 1991 in Indianapolis, when they beat Kansas, and the 1992 championship over Michigan in Minneapolis. There’s also an autographed Mike Krzyzewski bobble-head, various signed team balls and the book Dr. Bruce wrote for the 25th anniversary of the Atlantic Coast Conference in 1978.

Bruce has schmoozed with more big names than anyone I know. As the athletic director, there are pictures of him at a Robert Morris University golf fundraiser with Joe Theismann, Yogi Berra and Joe Namath. He has press box pictures of himself with famed announcers Vin Scully, Brent Musburger and the one-time most trusted man in America, CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite, taken in George Steinbrenner’s private box at Yankee Stadium.

One picture has him courtside with Dick Vitale at halftime of a Northwestern game. Bruce and the legendary basketball color-commentator competed in a free throw contest. When Bruce drained the winning shot, making four out of four, Vitale coined his signature call — “Nothing but net, baby!”

The Northwestern room documents his time as AD at the smallest and only private school in the Big Ten. Bruce attended seven Rose Bowls, courtesy of the conference, and there are pictures, signed footballs and pennants that recall those New Year’s Day events. In 1996, by then no longer associated with the university, Bruce watched Gary Barnett, the coach he had hired, lead the Wildcats to their first Rose Bowl appearance in almost 50 years.

My personal favorite is a plaque with ticket stubs and photos of Bruce throwing off the mound at Wrigley Field in 1991 when he was invited to toss out the first pitch at a Cubs game on Northwestern Alumni Day.

To hear Bruce tell the story, it was a perfect strike. The best part of the tale is the fact that Bruce, as he peered in from the mound before the big wind-up, actually shook off the sign from Joe Girardi, the Cubs catcher, twice. To the best of anyone’s recollection, the only time a guest hurler has had the audacity to do so. But that’s Bruce!

**Editor’s Note:** At every step of the way there was Jane, Bruce’s loving wife of 61 years. You know the saying, “Behind every good man...”
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