FIRST OFF...

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We still focus solely on St. James - while other Realtors sell all over the county.

Top Firms – Home/Lot Sales – 2018 Jan-Sept 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sides SOLD</th>
<th>Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>St. James Properties, LLC</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>$75,098,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Brokerage Firm #2</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>$13,574,170</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Brokerage Firm #3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>$11,122,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Brokerage Firm #4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>$9,787,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Brokerage Firm #3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>$5,258,299</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*St. James Properties, LLC Agents

Source: Based on North Carolina Regional MLS Statistics

Questions to Ask

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?

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.
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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.
In many states, HOA/POA associations are required by law to conduct a reserve fund study or to maintain an adequate reserve fund. As of 2018, there are eight states that require the study and another 12 states that require associations to maintain a reserve fund. While North Carolina has no statutory requirement to conduct a reserve fund study nor to maintain a reserve fund, North Carolina Statute 47F-3-102 does authorize associations to maintain a reserve fund.

In 2011, recognizing the need to maintain POA common property and to preserve individual property values, your POA Board directed the Finance and Infrastructure committees (1) to develop a Reserve Fund Study (RFS), (2) to build a model that could be updated annually and (3) to implement a funding strategy to establish a reserve fund. We are now on the eighth iteration and the quality of the study has improved every year. The RFS has two primary components – the physical analysis and the financial analysis. The Infrastructure Committee identifies all real property owned by the POA to include roads, bridges, buildings, parks and other property that may require repair, replacement or refurbishment over the next 30 years. The Finance Committee, working with the Infrastructure Committee, then identifies the costs required to cover major repairs or replacement of fixed assets. The study also includes capital improvements that have been approved by the Board.

We use a “Threshold Funding” approach for the study. This approach requires that we have sufficient funds to cover all known requirements and still maintain a minimum reserve cash balance at the end of each year, which we have set at $3 million. This buffer is necessary to cover major repairs that may occur earlier than anticipated or to cover unknowns.

The 2018 RFS (2019-2048) has been completed and was approved by the Board at the August board meeting. This year (2018) saw the completion of significant reserve fund projects, totaling approximately $2 million. These projects included expanded parking at the Beach Club and Waterway Park, the new Woodlands Pavilion and continuing major repairs of roadways and bridges. Even with those expenditures, the reserve fund balance at the end of 2018 is projected to be $5.1 million. In 2019, the reserve fund spend plan is approximately $860,000, including major roadwork totaling $600,000. The reserve fund balance at the end of 2019 is projected to be $5.3 million.

The RFS 30-year outlook includes receipts of $24.3 million and expenditures of $25.3 million, with expenditures shown in the table below. The largest single cost driver is the maintenance of our 80 miles of road. The Hurricane & Storm Recovery includes recovery from two hurricanes at $1.5 million per occurrence plus $25,000 a year for clean-up from minor storm damage.

Having a healthy reserve fund is extremely important to: (1) prevent delayed maintenance actions; (2) complete capital improvements; and (3) most importantly, to avoid special assessments. The 2019 study confirms we can meet all funding objectives and still maintain a $3 million threshold buffer in every year.

### RESERVE FUND 30 YEAR EXPENDITURES (2019-2048)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roadways</td>
<td>$15,120</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Club</td>
<td>$1,508</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterway and Woodlands parks</td>
<td>$1,379</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stormwater system and bridges</td>
<td>$675</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$2,265</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane and storm recovery</td>
<td>$3,750</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$24,697</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Just a short time ago, we thought we had put together a pretty good October issue of *Cat-Tales*. Our best-laid plans were blown away when Hurricane Florence came ashore.

September was far from a normal month, not only for us, but for every St. James resident. It was also a challenging time for the POA and town staff, as well as the contractors and volunteers who work every day to keep St. James safe and secure.

We wanted to do our part, with a special report on how the storm affected St. James. So about the same time we normally are in the final stages of proofing the magazine, we decided to add about seven new pages of hurricane coverage.

“September was far from a normal month, not only for us, but for every St. James resident. It was also a challenging time for the POA and town staff, as well as the contractors and volunteers who work every day to keep St. James safe and secure.”

In the days prior to and during the storm, the POA, the Town, the Emergency Management Team and the St. James Fire Department joined forces to prepare and to keep residents advised of their progress — whether they were at home or holed up at distant locations. In a feature story, Managing Editor Cheryl L. Serra’s story tells how the plan worked out. Her coverage includes reports from POA Community Manager Dan Davis, Town of St. James Mayor Jean Toner and Emergency Management Team head Mary Nash.

The bottom line? When weather threatens, we’re covered.

Meanwhile, residents were carrying out their own plans. Whether they stayed home or left, each resident has unforgettable memories about Hurricane Florence. After we decided to add our storm coverage, we sent an urgent plea to our contributors for short pieces on how they or someone they know managed the storm. We received an overwhelming response, exceeding expectations and space. To those who sent contributions, our apologies if we didn’t print them in their entirety.

One story was written by Associate Editor Russ Yarrow. It’s an intimate and revealing look at the uncertainties we face in overwhelming circumstances. What’s notable about this story, as well as those we received from several contributors, is the community spirit and the willingness to work together that prevailed in our community throughout the storm.

Speaking of community spirit, several articles that weren’t part of our hurricane coverage take a look at the ways residents live, work and play together. Leading off is Gina Mancinelli’s piece on best friends who have reunited in St. James or nearby. Beth Klahre’s article on the St. James Chapel is a story about how ministers and music bring people together. Stacey Saveth brings us up to date on activities at the St. James Singles Club. And just in case someone has an idea for a club that isn’t already in existence, DJ Beaton explains how to go about starting one.

We live in a community that fosters caring, unity and a tendency to do the right thing. We also have a group of *Cat-Tales* contributors who respond quickly and professionally during crunch time. Both qualities were on full display in mid-September. We may not need them every month. But it’s nice to know they’re available when we do.
It might be a bit early to think about using space heaters as our temperatures start to fall. But it’s important to know these heaters can be deadly if not used properly.

Here in St. James, we think our houses are warm and comfortable and few space heaters are used. Some of us, however, wait as long as we can before turning the heating system on — we just don’t want to give in to the coming winter. In these cases, some folks resort to space heaters. If you’re going to use one, make sure you have at least three feet of clearance around and above the heater. If anything is closer than that to the heater, like an afghan or piece of furniture, it might ignite.

You also should check the heater’s power cord occasionally to make sure it isn’t getting warm. Be cautious when walking near the heater so you don’t brush up against it or trip and knock it over. Either event could end up as a fire.

Finally, make sure you turn the heater off before retiring for the night; it should not be left unattended.

Speaking of retiring, do you remember the old adage about smoking in bed? While the number of smokers in the area has decreased, there still are some. Recently, the SJFD assisted in a fire caused by a careless smoker in bed. Two people died. The easiest remedy for this is to not smoke in bed. In other instances, you might want to make sure ashtrays are deep enough to prevent the butt from rolling onto the furniture or floor, and to prevent the ashtray from being easily knocked over.

Do not empty hot ashes into the trash, something many people inadvertently do. Since most of us use plastic garbage liners, you might want to soak the ashes with water before emptying them into the trash.

While we’ve turned our attention to this cooler weather topic, remember we’re still in hurricane season. The worst hurricane Southport ever experienced came on October 15, 1954 – Category 4 Hurricane Hazel with an 11-foot surge. Hurricane Florence is a powerful reminder of the destructive force of these storms and our need to periodically review the hurricane and safety preparation tips we provided in the September issue of Cat-Tales.

Your St. James Fire Department is here to serve you, whether it’s a fire in your home or a medical emergency. Call us at 911 before trying to fix it yourself.

If you’re interested in joining the St. James Fire Department, call 910-253-9990 and ask for Chief Dahill. He would very much like to speak to you about opportunities to serve your community. We are looking for new members throughout the Town and fire district, but especially in SeaSide, Woodland and Reserve areas adjacent to the new substation planned on Oceanic Drive.
St. James by the numbers
Compiled by Rick Margin

Where we lived before we moved to St. James

North Carolina — 9.2%
Pennsylvania — 10%
New York — 10.5%
New Jersey 13%
Virginia 15.3%
All Others 19.4%
Illinois — 2.7%
Georgia — 2.6%
Ohio — 3.6%
Connecticut — 6.8%
Maryland — 6.9%

Source: Aggregated data from the POA website for those residents who completed the input field titled “Previous Residence.” For privacy reasons, no personal profiles were reviewed.
The Rodanthe model home in St. James Plantation
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New POA staff members bring variety of skills

By Nancy Seyferth

Three new members have joined the ranks of the POA staff — Angie Hillburger and Barb Ward in POA Client Services and Steve Fitzgerald as facilities manager.

Angie and Barb are the first to greet property owners and visitors as they come through the door. Steve might not be as visible, but his duties include responsibility for making sure the amenities — including the Beach Club — remain in tip-top shape.

Angie came to Brunswick County from Henderson (Vance County), where she ran a dance studio for 25 years. She still has an active interest in dance, but it is the beach and the retirement environment that brought her to Southport. Angie helps maintain the POA property owners’ database and is instrumental in helping property owners access the POA website, providing them with their usernames and passwords as well as guiding them through the site. Her advice to a new or established homeowner is to become familiar with the POA website, because it contains a wealth of information.

The beach also enticed Barb, who is from York County, Pennsylvania. The phrase “southern hospitality” has taken on a true meaning for her in the amazing network of friends she has developed. Barb used her management background to help with the recent plans to upgrade QuickPass, a software program that allows cars through the gates, to a state-of-the-art system. Should you have any question regarding QuickPass, Barb is the go-to expert.

Facilities Manager Steve has always lived near water, sometimes calling a boat his home. He has sailed the world and has attained many skills that make him perfect for his job. In his spare time, you can catch Steve with his band at many Southport and Oak Island venues. So, if you see someone at the Beach Club laboring under the hot summer sun, or on the Plantation in those cool winter months making repairs, stop and thank Steve for the great job he’s doing.
The vision for the park was developed in 2014 with input from property owners, professional designers and POA committees. They aimed to maintain the park in a predominantly passive manner for social gatherings, with activities such as basketball, pickleball or tennis centered in other, less residential areas. The need for the POA to provide venues to support larger gatherings while not disrupting the residential quality of the neighborhood was recognized and emphasized in the design.

The first phase of the design involved terracing the amphitheater, the largest venue in the park with a capacity of 500 guests, so it could accommodate lawn chairs and grass seating on a level surface. During the second phase, we added parking to bring the number of off-street slots to more than 100 spaces.

The third phase of the vision provides an open-air pavilion with a capacity for about 225 guests seated at round tables. The pavilion includes bathroom facilities, a catering kitchen and an adjoining events lawn. It provides a covered space to supplement the Waterway Park pavilion that seats about 75 guests. The pavilion will initially feature 12 round six-foot tables and 120 chairs. The need to add more will be based on usage.

The final phase of the vision will be the development of an event lawn, located immediately adjacent to the pavilion, and will consist of rolling berms surrounding a flat, grassy meadow area. The berms will be landscaped with colorful bushes along with trees to create pockets for small gatherings and places to meet and converse with friends. This final stage should be complete by spring.
C

ub members interested in serving on the Clubs Advisory Committee should apply no later than Tuesday, October 30 to be considered for a January 1, 2019 appointment.

The committee is seeking your nominations of others and/or yourself for upcoming appointments. The purpose of the committee is to provide advice and counsel to the Troon management team. The committee represents membership interests and perspectives in a manner that contributes to the continual improvement of the member experience.

Overview
The Clubs Advisory Committee provides a communication link between membership and club management. It helps prioritize and clarify member suggestions and concerns and provides feedback to Clubs management on projects, programs, policies and procedures. Ideally, nominees should have experience in a private member club. Previous leadership positions in business and/or civic organizations are also important.

The Clubs Advisory Committee is not involved in the operation of amenities, facilities, programming, staffing, accounting and/or related business functions. Operational management is exclusively the responsibility of the Troon professional management staff.

Committee responsibilities include:
• Review and discuss club-related opportunities and challenges, as well as potential solutions and/or feasible alternative courses of action.
• The Clubs’ general manager appoints the committee chair, who is responsible for developing agendas and conducting committee meetings as well as providing concise goals and objectives to the subcommittees.

The committee is comprised of appointed subcommittee members, plus the president of the POA. The committee interacts with the general manager, assistant general manager, director of golf, director of agronomy, director of athletics, director of tennis, and director of food and beverage, as well as other Clubs staff when appropriate.

Subcommittees
The Advisory Committee is comprised of three subcommittees whose areas of responsibility include:
• **Sports Committee**, which addresses issues related to racquet sports, wellness centers and swimming facilities.
• **Golf Committee**, which addresses all aspects of golf and the golf courses, as well as league, tournament and recreational play.
• **House Committee**, which addresses issues of food and beverage and related hospitality services.

Each subcommittee has a chairperson, whose role is to develop meeting agendas and conduct monthly meetings throughout the calendar year. The chairperson of each subcommittee is also a member of the Clubs Advisory Executive Committee. The subcommittees include Troon management liaisons who serve as resourceful, knowledgeable experts. Subcommittee members are expected to represent the broad view of the membership without undue emphasis on their own preference or bias.

Terms of appointment are three years, starting on January 1 and ending on December 31 of the appointment period. Appointed members may be reappointed. An appointed member with a poor record of participation may be replaced.

To apply
Nominees should email a brief statement of the candidate’s subcommittee interest (please specify golf, sport or house subcommittee), a brief resume and direct contact information to Michael Kasavana, Advisory Committee Chair, at kasavana@msu.edu no later than 5 p.m., Tuesday October 30.
In September, the POA Ponds Committee hosted its Annual Ponds Education Meeting at the Community Center. Two guest speakers — Sam Marshall of the North Carolina State Extension in Brunswick County and Scott Blevins of Dragonfly Pond Works — delivered presentations to 125 residents. There were also updates from the Ponds Committee about their latest projects. Sam Marshall, a horticulturist and experienced consultant on pond management, talked about ways to improve and maintain the health of our ponds. Flood control and pollution prevention were at the top of his list. Erosion and silt buildup reduce the holding capacity of our ponds — an important flood control mechanism. He said erosion is caused by mowing grass to the edge and wave action.

Common pollutants are over fertilization, pesticides, animal and pet waste. Sam stated that plants and shrubs will create a barrier or buffer to filter runoff of pollutants and algae-creating nutrients. Buffers with different plants create biodiversity, aquatic and terrestrial habitat preservation, and surprisingly, scare geese. Yes, geese avoid ponds with taller vegetation on the edges. Why? They can’t see predators. Geese, you can imagine, are bad for ponds. So, having plants and shrubs on the pond bank reduces erosion and pollution — double duty!

Scott Blevins, representing the POA’s pond maintenance contractor, gave a presentation on his company’s role in maintaining the health of our ponds. He covered what it does to treat for algae and spike rush (an invasive weed). He also discussed aeration versus fountains, problematic ponds, grass, carp stocking and fisheries management. Dragonfly Pond Works’ contract with the POA was just renewed for another three years, starting in 2019.

Health and Beauty Subcommittee Chair Vicki Fuhrmann’s presentation was highlighted by the buffer zone plants she brought with her and described. She also had copies of buffer zone plant lists for residents. She talked about the three demonstration ponds in the community, one near the Woodlands Circle and two other new ponds to be planted before the end of this year.

Tom Milner, Fishing and Recreation subcommittee chair, talked about the elements of a pond needed to sustain fish. If you’re interested in stocking your pond, he recommended contacting the Ponds Committee for guidance. He showed pictures of the wildlife seen in and around our ponds. He emphasized the complexities of a pond’s ecosystem, both for fishing and maintaining pond health.

Communications subcommittee chair Steve Brocker reported on Pond Views, the new email briefing. Residents interested in receiving periodic information on pond-related topics can opt in by subscribing on the POA website home page under Quick Links. He also discussed the subcommittee’s efforts to categorize and locate important pond information on the POA website.
Help celebrate our town’s 20th birthday

By Becky Dus and Rita Wissinger

Although most of us wish we were celebrating our 20th birthday, instead, it is our Town of St. James that will mark two decades of growth next year.

The history of how St. James became a town — an event which took place before many of us lived here — started with a group of residents who completed the Town incorporation process just before July 4, 1999.

Next year on July 1, we are planning to celebrate this 20th birthday with fun events throughout the day — first a parade, then a picnic and, later in the evening, a concert and fireworks.

But this will be the grand finale. We’re planning four days of activities that will interest everyone, including kids and grandkids. At a kickoff meeting, residents suggested many great ideas, such as Intracoastal cruises, kid games, a 5K walk/run and a movie and concert at Woodlands Park.

However, we need volunteers to start making the ideas a reality. Please join our team to showcase our town and community by contacting Becky Dus at bdus@ec.rr.com or Rita Wissinger at ritabill75@live.com. Thanks for your support.

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ad here
A common refrain 30 years ago was there’s nothing good on TV. Today, with more than 300 channels, we still have that discussion.

One thing is for sure — watching cable TV keeps getting more expensive. The typical cable bill in America recently crossed the $100-per-month mark. According to the Leichtman Research Group, cable bills rose 39 percent from 2011-2015 — roughly eight times the rate of inflation — and the mean pay TV package was recently measured at $103 per month, up four percent from 2015.

Is it time to cut the cord and watch what you want when you want to watch? Are you ready to stream TV?

Streaming content on your TV isn’t a new concept, but it’s reached a point where we can now watch live broadcasts. Before going on, it’s important to understand you must still have Wi-Fi service to your TV, running at a sufficient speed to avoid buffering. You need internet service running at least 100 Mbps (download) or higher coming into your home from ATMC, AT&T or Spectrum. If you have Wi-Fi and a Wi-Fi-capable TV, you can stream.

Some of the more popular streaming brands include DirecTV Now, Hulu, Apple TV, ChromeCast and YouTube Now. Some TVs come with streaming services embedded in them. If your TV doesn’t have these services, you can purchase them on external devices you plug into your TV for $50-175.

Recently, DirecTV Now advertised its least expensive plan, including more than 65 channels, for $40 a month. And the company is offering the first three months for $10 a month. YouTube TV starts at $35 a month for 40 channels. Many of these providers also offer a cloud version of a DVR so you can record your program and play it later.

What’s still lacking in our area is local channel access to the legacy networks — ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS and Fox. However, the situation changes almost daily, and you may soon find some of these local stations on one of the streaming options mentioned above.

If local TV stations are important, you may want to delay streaming until the local stations are available through the services mentioned above. If you want to change now but the lack of local stations is holding you back, new HD indoor antennas may bridge the gap. These new-age antennas attach to a TV and can retrieve broadcast signals within a 25-100-mile range. Reception can be spotty and depends on your location and other factors. Antennas are available at area stores, self-installation is relatively simple and the cost is usually less than $60.

Do your homework and check into each content streaming service. Compare their costs with the channel lineup that you like the best. And don’t get caught up in a long-term commitment. We’re still in the infancy period of content streaming and costs and channel lineups change quickly.
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Managing Florence’s wrath

By Cheryl L. Serra

By now, residents who evacuated during Hurricane Florence are back home, those who stayed consider the storm a more distant memory and the community as a whole is on its way to recovery. It was a momentous occasion — Mary Nash of the Town’s Emergency Management Team (EMT) says its members haven’t experienced a storm of this magnitude.

Cat-Tales is providing a perspective from inside the gates on how St. James managed the storm and its aftermath.

“Once it became evident the hurricane might have a major impact on our community, the POA began to prepare for recovery,” recalls Dan Davis, the community manager who slept on a cot in the POA office for seven days before, during and after the storm. “We rented heavy equipment and staged it in high areas, lowered ponds to their minimum levels, assigned crews to clear potential obstructions from drainageways and alerted our major contractors to have additional manpower available following the storm. After the evacuation went into effect, we went to a skeleton security crew, and finally had to close and secure the entrances.”

The POA was one of the partners in the effort to keep St. James as safe as possible and to coordinate recovery efforts.

Bland Landscaping fed onsite workers, as well as other recovery contractors. The Town’s EMT was instrumental in keeping the community safe. A number of sheriff deputies, sheltered next door to Dan, also slept on cots.

Mary Nash says several of the EMT’s 20 members did not evacuate, while others did. It worked out well, she says, because those who evacuated gathered information from the internet, spotty at best in St. James, and shared it with other team members.

According to Mary, volunteer members of the EMT worked non-stop, coordinating town actions with state and county officials and agencies, various utilities, the Sheriff’s Department, the National Weather Service and others involved in disaster response. They were diligent in ensuring that residents were informed.

When St. James lost power, the Town’s emergency generator allowed team members to continue using computers and the internet to communicate and to plan next steps.

After the storm’s first “windy” day, the POA and volunteers from the St. James Fire Department (SJFD) completed an assessment and developed a plan for removing trees from the roads. SJFD volunteers...
were the first to begin this task, but their efforts soon halted due to hard rains. POA contractors with heavy equipment then took over and worked well into the night. Crews split up to focus on clearing drainageways; they slept on the property and resumed work the next morning.

On the second “rainy” day, the focus changed from cleaning up to a cleanup and major repair effort. Several sections of road, particularly the Green Mile, were washed away by the torrential all-day downpour.

Cameron Pawolczik, the Bland Landscaping account onsite manager, worked throughout the rain on Saturday and Sunday. Monday, Kurt Bland, the company’s CEO, drove six hours to get to St. James. The ride from Cary usually takes two hours. But flooding and road washouts caused several detours, often forcing Kurt to join convoys of big trucks to get through high water.

Kurt, who jokes his real title during the storm was “CMO — chief morale officer,” knew that feeding folks is an important part of the job after major weather events. His truck was packed with enough food to feed the expected eight core employees. However, he needed more. By Thursday, less than a week after Florence made landfall in Wrightsville Beach on September 13, he had collected enough food to feed more than 30 on-site workers, several from other companies.

“Kurt personally cooked meals for the crews, including other contractors helping with cleanup, using the Community Center kitchen,” Dan says. “It was good to see these exhausted men eating steak and baked ziti at 8:30 after working for 13 hours. There was a shared sense of brotherhood.”

The hurricane’s winds provided a substantial wallop, but the floods added to its punch. “The biggest challenge of the storm’s aftermath will be repairing the infrastructure damaged by the second day of rains,” Dan says. “The first windy day downed a lot of trees (60 in Waterway Park alone), but that would have been a simple, albeit expensive, cleanup. Flooding upped the ante considerably.”

In the coming weeks, work will bring a sense of normalcy to the community. Town of St. James Mayor Jean Toner says town contractors will remove storm debris, the POA will be working on infrastructure repairs and the Clubs will restore its amenities.

Jean says Florence is a storm to be remembered. “I will always remember how well everyone in St. James responded during and after the storm and how very proud I am of everyone in our community,” she says.

Jean reports the SJFD responders and emergency medical services personnel were amazing. “They were available 24/7 and responded during adverse conditions to address medical emergencies, flooding issues and blocked and collapsed roads,” she says. “Many residents who braved the storm and stayed in St. James cleared culverts, removed debris, checked on property damage and shared resources with neighbors.”
Jean says she feels “blessed to live in St. James,” adding, “It’s truly a very special place, not only because of the wonderful amenities and beautiful surroundings but because of all of the very special people, our friends and neighbors, who call St. James home.”

“There was a great deal of teamwork and camaraderie,” Dan adds. “The Town EMT kept the residents updated with information blasts on a regular basis. The POA mitigated the damage with boots on the ground and crews jumping into service. Our security people hurried back to provide full coverage by Tuesday morning. And the SJFD served as our ears and eyes, alerting us to dangerous situations and actively assisting residents.”

Everyone affected by Florence has learned from the experience. When do you evacuate and how do you prepare to do so? When do you come back if you’ve evacuated? For those who took care of St. James, there were also valuable lessons learned. Mary says the team will perform a debrief when the EMT’s work is done. But from an emergency management perspective, she believes it’s important to be patient, stay in contact with key partners, have a plan and maintain a sense of humor.

Dan adds, “Be prepared, pre-stage as much equipment as you can, evacuate to a place where you can return quickly to begin recovery. Have plenty of food and water and gasoline on hand in advance.”

The POA’s community manager received some well-deserved kudos for the job he did in managing the storm. “Dan Davis went above and beyond the call of duty during Hurricane Florence,” says POA President Jerry Iverson. “He stayed here, sleeping on a cot in the POA office, working 12-14 hours a day. He performed post-hurricane tasks, assessing the damage and opening the roads throughout St. James. He developed a recovery strategy and hired multiple contractors to execute that strategy, resulting in an accelerated recovery. We all owe Dan a debt of gratitude.”
Hurricane Florence was a time of uncertainty for St. James residents. Most heeded the Town’s directive to leave. About 10 percent thought they were better off riding out the elements at home. No matter where they were, homeowners had their own ideas on how best to handle their situations.

Among those reporting on their experiences were Gina Mancinelli. She told Cat-Tales stay-at-home resident Mitzi Liekweg spent her time relaying humorous emails between the 48 members of Gina’s tennis club scattered across the country and abroad. “One of the girls said she didn’t need to bring a book because she found us way more entertaining,” Gina wrote. “Another reported even the gators were evacuating her pond. My friend’s cat jumped into the hot tub at their resort (would have loved to see that one).”

Russ Yarrow. We are in Cary, North Carolina as I write this — the eighth day of our evacuation. I hope by the time this is published, we’ll be back home in St. James, but I’m not holding my breath.

My wife Kit described our mandatory sojourn as a mixture of boredom and anxiety, which seems to capture our situation perfectly. Living out of a hotel gets tedious pretty quickly, and I’m spending way too much time glued to the TV and the iPad communicating with family, friends and fellow evacuees.

We have become omnivorous consumers of any information we can get on the storm, the state of our community and the condition of our home. Needless to say, getting definitive information on the storm and its impact statewide is a challenge, leading to a constant, low-level buzz of uncertainty and anxiety.

We left St. James on Tuesday, Sept. 11, thinking we would return in a few days at the most. Like everyone, we were astonished at the scope and scale of Florence. We considered heading to Atlanta, but then reversed course back to Cary when it looked like Florence was taking more of a southbound track. And here we are.

I began sending daily updates to friends and family spread across the U.S., which turned out to be therapeutic; at least it provided a semblance of order. We compared notes with fellow evacuees from St. James. And we gratefully and eagerly received updates from those brave souls who stayed behind in our neighborhood.

We moved to St. James three years ago from California, where natural disasters take the form of earthquakes and wildfires. Florence made me miss both. Earthquakes don’t include days of waiting and usually are limited in the scope of their impact. And with wildfires, there’s the chance to fight back and limit or stop their spread. Florence made us feel utterly helpless.

We have two indelible takeaways from this experience.

First, Florence reminded us all of our place on this planet and this universe. We exist as a part of the natural order and in some instances, like Florence, we discover that our powers of innovation and industry simply cannot bend the will of nature. An experience like this may leave us angry, frustrated, and saddened, but it surely also leaves us humbled.

Second, the experience brought out the best in people. From the kindness of friends and neighbors to the generosity of strangers; the heroism of first responders; the grit and determination of those inadvertently trapped in the wake of the flood; the consolation and comfort of loved ones — the bright light of humanity ultimately shone through the darkness of Florence.

Can’t wait to trade stories when we get back!

Editor’s note: Russ Yarrow is an associate editor of Cat-Tales. He returned home shortly after he wrote this article.
Nancy Adelis. “Our equation for surviving Florence was 3-3-2-1 — three adults, three cats, two cars and one hotel room. Our travels took us to Columbia, Augusta, Charleston, then home. We went shopping, swimming, to the movies, to an international arts festival and parented our three traumatized kitties. We’re grateful to our friends, the Menendez, Milners and Roviellos, for reporting on our homes.”

Fred Amman. “We heeded the advice of the Emergency Management Team and headed to our daughter’s home in Greensboro. We brought enough food to make three meals for the family, spent time with the grandkids, helped out around the house when we could and tried to stay out of the way as much as possible.

“After one week, we departed on a zig-zag route to the coast that took us back behind the gate. Before we left however, we bid the family goodbye and thanked them for their hospitality. We were happy to be headed home, and we could tell by their expressions they were just as relieved to see us depart so things could get back to normal.”

“This was our first major hurricane, and I was quite anxious, having lost everything in a fire years ago. I know what it’s like to relaunch one’s life, and I feared having to do it again.”
DJ Beaton. “This was our first major hurricane, and I was quite anxious, having lost everything in a fire years ago. I know what it’s like to relaunch one’s life, and I feared having to do it again. So the minute the South Carolina governor announced a mandatory evacuation, we loaded up our car with family movies and scrapbooks, important documents, and Allen O. Rigby, the dog, and left, knowing the North Carolina governor would follow suit.

“We settled in for three nights in Atlanta, then two nights in Memphis, and waited in Arkansas for the all-clear to come home. We were moved by how quickly our neighbors provided info and pictures to ease our minds that our house was okay, proving yet again that we are family here.”

Barbara Lemos. “Family members greeted my plan to ride out Florence with grim resignation. Only my daughter-in-law called me out, haranguing me and questioning my sanity. Fast forward: We evacuated to her house in New Hampshire with our two dogs. Lashed with Florence’s remnants, we were safe and sound, and we’re still on great terms. We did household repairs, landscaping projects, and cooking and cleaning for our hosts, hoping that they wouldn’t regret inviting us.

“My biggest worry — that our dogs couldn’t handle the two-day, 860 mile journey — proved groundless. They were good as gold.”

John Graves. “We are separate from the real world of rural Carolina. Yet when we all are without power or water or sewage or healthcare, we join together to solve problems. Amazing, the humanity of each of us during these trying times.”

"Sheriffs who lost their homes, still on patrol."

"Grocery store employees without electricity going to work, stocking shelves and checking us out."

"Doctors still at work for the seriously ill."

"Utility workers fighting the elements during the storm to bring civilization back to life. St. James staff and personnel trying to reconfigure the property into a usable space yet again."

"Thank you to each and every one of you."

Beth Klahre. “Stay or go? Brothers Phil and Scott Boyer and their wives, Lori and Susan, knew no matter what the decision, they would be together. Equipped with generators, fuel, food and water, they decided to stay. The generators were a lifesaver when electricity was lost, and they used a hotspot on a cell phone connected to a laptop to stream football in the dark."

"On Saturday, the four made a surveillance drive, using FaceTime to connect friends with their properties. They cleaned out several refrigerators while Scott, a member of the St. James Fire Department, spent hours with a crew clearing essential roads."

"Susan cared for many neighbors’ cats and managed not to lose any. Phil rescued a parrot. I replenished the food and water under the direction of the relieved bird owners who were on the phone,’ Phil says. ’We saw so many downed trees. There are displaced turtles everywhere. And we saw a baby alligator near a neighbor’s house.’"

Kerry Malitoris. “Eight Woodlands residents, including myself, evacuated to Charlotte. Once there, we started hearing from neighbors, also in Charlotte. A couple of them, Robyn Shafer and Kathy Mejia, suggested we have a driveway-like event, a weekly Woodlands social gathering. So I sent an invitation to neighbors, but it went a bit viral and was sent to others. The invitation said, ‘Spend an hour or so chatting with your fellow evacuees. Let’s try to get a photo for Cat-Tales. Stay Safe!’ About 40 people attended the event.”
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Residents’ logs continue

Rick Margin. “We stayed at home for our fourth hurricane in seven years. The wait is always emotional, but Florence was agonizingly slow.

“Friday was awesome. Watching the wind pound our long leaf pines was consuming. Otherwise, we kept an eye on our home for structural concerns. We read, wrote, played music, worked on computer projects and checked on friends’ properties. We had no cable service. Saturday’s passing of the hurricane’s eye was cool.

“My weather station recorded 33 inches of driving rain, 20-30 mph average winds and gusts in the low 40s. Our stormwater management system and fire department volunteers deserve much kudos.”

Robert Pukala. “Like so many others, we were witness to and recipients of so much generosity during Florence. We received offers of lodging from friends and family up and down the eastern seaboard.

“We were briefly in Lumberton North Carolina, a town most vulnerable to flooding. We were told that members of a utility crew rescued two women from a partially submerged car and passed the hat to give them enough money for a night’s lodging.

“Meanwhile, friends watched over our house, notably Bev and Charlie Mastrovich, Jim Brownfield and Phil Boyer. We lost an oak tree, but Phil and Jim took care of it before we arrived home.

“We made our way home in stages and met friends Chuck and Paula Jackson in Myrtle Beach before heading north on the final leg of our return home.”

Judy Rubin. “Gene and Phyllis Ray of Beaver Creek were off to Brussels for a planned visit with their daughter and her family. After arranging to shelter Whitman, their precious cat, in Shallotte, they fled well before Hurricane Florence arrived.

“One Monday, neighbor Judy Sconyers received a call from the shelter, ’We’re closing, please come get the cat.’ She obliged, but they were leaving that afternoon. Ray’s friends, the Benjamins were in charge of watering plants, so Judy asked them to look after Whitman.

“That proved to be a good plan for 24 hours. Suddenly, not staying, they handed those duties to us.

“On Wednesday, heeding the mandatory evacuation order, we elected to go. Three nearby couples remained: Holts, Boyers and Hardenstines.

“Poor Whitman — six different caretakers in 48 hours.”

Marilyn Rudolph. “Hurricane Florence will long be remembered, but not fondly, across North Carolina. She delivered quite a nasty punch to St. James residents, but also brought many of us closer to what matters most — family, faith and friends.

“When it became evident that Florence was going to be a monster, many of us reached out to our family, faith and friends to find shelter, solace and welcome distraction from worry. In the aftermath of Florence, these powerful resources continue to help countless people recover and rebuild.

“My dear mom used to say that I would find comfort in what matters most in troubled times. Mom was right.”

Editor’s note: Marilyn is an associate editor for Cat-Tales.
James W. McCriskin, DO, cardiologist, is welcoming new patients at NHRMC Physician Group – Cape Fear Heart Associates’ Southport location.
When residents requested an occasional adult swim time at the SeaSide pool, Troon responded and held Friday Float Nights on several Fridays at 5 p.m. The pool grill and bar did a brisk business during the events. (photo by Linda Burdoo)
Friends come in many categories — Facebook, casual, work, good/great, fair weather and best friends forever. You’ve known each other for ages, can pick up any conversation from when it began, usually have similar interests, and can share a laugh or cry depending on the situation — your BFF.

As we grow older, we get separated from our BFFs as our lives take different paths. I’m blessed to have several Sleepy Hollow, New York buddies near me, Dotty McInaney and Nancy Gillen in St. James, one in Leland and three in Myrtle Beach.

There are plenty of BFFs here in St. James. Charlene Snyder and Mary Ann Kelly grew up together in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, attending different schools, reuniting at Misericordia University and majoring in English. They had the same classes for four years and worked their way through college at the local hospital.

Upon graduation, Mary Ann took off for Europe for two months and landed her first real job at a magazine when she returned. Charlene headed directly to Maryland to begin her teaching career. Both married in 1970, vacationed together, spent holidays together and continued their friendship though separated geographically.

Charlene moved to St. James in 2003, and after two visits, Mary Ann moved in 2017. These best friends have a “date night” together every Friday.

Carol Bell and Marcie Addams have known each other almost 40 years. They met at the Allen Berry Resort in Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania and discovered they lived in the same subdivision. The two families melded from day one. Their children grew up together and remain friends today. The Bells and Addams, along with three other couples, spent endless time together, including get-togethers and vacations. Many of these friends attended the recent funeral of Marcie’s late husband, Bill.
Both husbands were lawyers, while the girls pursued “careers” in tennis. Their enthusiasm for the sport added to their close relationship. Carol was the first to arrive in St. James. After several visits, Marcie sold her Pennsylvania and Florida homes, and here she is, still laughing together with Carol.

After several visits to long-time friend and matron of honor, Linda Jenkins, Dorothy Gelb and her husband not only moved to St. James, but built the same house with a few modifications. These pals grew up in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, attended different elementary schools, but reunited in seventh grade. Both played lacrosse and field hockey through high school but attended different colleges. They took the same classes, each pursuing a teaching career.

Linda’s life turned to California, and Dorothy’s to Iowa. The girls lost touch with each other for 15 years. Linda was missing her old friends and wondered whom to contact. She called Dorothy’s mother for her number. Picking up where they left off, news was shared, laughs continued.

Dorothy began a career with New York Life and Linda started her own printing and graphic design company. Ironically, Linda had moved to Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, and after losing her husband, Dorothy moved back to Swarthmore. Dorothy was sitting in a doctor’s office with her two boys for allergy shots one day and looked up to find Linda with her two boys. The reunion and melding of the two families began. Linda was matron of honor for Dorothy’s marriage to her current husband.

Here’s to the BFFs in your lives.

Linda Jenkins and Dorothy Gelb
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There’s a simple yet beautiful hymn by Marty Haugen, an American composer of liturgical music, titled “All Are Welcome.” The lyrics sing of a house where all can live safely, in love and hope, and with dreams and vision. It tells of prayers of grace and songs of faith. It chants of hands reaching beyond the wood and stone to teach and serve. And it leaves you happily reiterating the refrain, “All are welcome in this place,” all day long.

It’s as if the composer wrote this hymn specifically about the St. James Chapel.

Homer Wright, St. James developer and visionary, realized that building a house of worship would provide a spirit of community and stability for residents. In 1991, the chapel was one of the first two community buildings constructed. In 1995, the interior was completed and furnished. The first service was in 1995 for Thanksgiving, and monthly services commenced in March the following year. In 1997, Homer deeded the chapel and the surrounding land to the property owners through a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation operated by a board of directors.

Today, the board is a committee of 10 active, dedicated St. James volunteers. Board President Jim Daly and his wife Licia can often be found in the vestibule as services get underway, offering welcoming handshakes and the chapel bulletin that Licia prepares. Vice President John Lewis and his wife Betty serve as ushers and greeters.

Chad Mitchell is responsible for building and grounds. In 2015, capacity was expanded to seat 140. Chad is again leading plans for future growth. Gayle, his wife, handles communications and marketing as board secretary.

Not just for Sunday worship, the chapel is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and is available for baptisms, funerals, memorial services, weddings, bible studies and religious educational programs. And for quiet personal reflection. Board member Sue Almeter schedules special events.

“There are two things that make our chapel in the woods a special place,” says Jim. “The ministers and the music.” Bonnie Tassa schedules the ministers and Pat Bittenbender plans the music ministry. Services are led by visiting area pastors as well as several retired ministers who live in St. James.

In addition to an organist, local musicians and talented St. James residents provide special music that brings the chapel to life. From gospel to choir harmonies to solos, traditional to contemporary hymns and instrumentals by guitar bass, trumpet sax, flutes and harpsichord, there is a genre for everyone. All special musicians are volunteers.

The chapel is financed by congregational donations managed by Mary Stober, board treasurer and historian. The board determines how funds are appropriated. In 2018, gifts were made to the Southport Oak Island Food Pantry, New Hope Clinic, Samara’s Village, St. James Garden Club and the Southport Oak Island Interchurch Fellowship Winter Shelter Program. Board member Beth Caragol serves as the Southport–Oak Island interfaith liaison.

It’s when the chapel is full of people that the sense of welcome and community is undeniable. Nondenominational Christian services are held at 9 a.m. every second and fourth Sunday of the month. Jim wants the residents of St. James to know that “This is your chapel.” And yes, all are welcome.

To reserve the chapel for a religious event, contact Sue Almeter, 910-253-9922. For information about music, contact Pat Bittenbender, 910-253-9846.
The Garden Club at St. James kicked off its new program year at a September meeting that featured Sam Marshall, Brunswick Cooperative Extension agent, who spoke on preparing lawns and gardens for fall.

Garden Club meetings are held at 10 a.m. on the third Tuesday of each month between September and May in the St. James Community Center. All residents are invited to attend.

The club’s mission is to share the joy of gardening through education, entertainment and inspiration. At each meeting, the goal is to provide practical gardening information and helpful resources for new and existing homeowners. Growing conditions in coastal southeastern North Carolina are different than other parts of the country, so having pertinent local advice is essential.

New officers assumed their duties at the annual meeting. Members also looked back and celebrated five successful years. Established in January 2013 from the remnants of the Woodbine Garden Club in Southport, the Garden Club has grown to more than 170 members. President Tish Gordon says the club’s success is measured by the enthusiasm of its members and its commitment to community service.

Starting in 2013, the Garden Club accepted the responsibility of maintaining the grounds of the St. James Chapel. Volunteer service continues today.
In 2015, the club established a scholarship for a Brunswick Community College student majoring in Horticultural/Turf Management. The financial assistance has made a difference in the lives of recipients and their families.

Other organizations receiving Garden Club contributions include Brunswick County Habitat for Humanity, the Kitchen and Tasting Tour of St. James and Lower Cape Fear Hospice.

The club’s newest project is mentoring a fifth grade Garden Club. Last year, the Southport Elementary School requested the club’s help weeding 12 neglected raised beds. Garden Club volunteers rejuvenated the beds and supplied hand tools for each student. Club members met with students once a week to weed, plant vegetables and flowers and to teach basic gardening tasks. Together with the kids, club members have observed butterflies, made bird feeders and decorated flower pots for Mother’s Day gifts.

At the conclusion of each nine-week session, volunteers host a tasting party to introduce the students to various vegetables. Often it’s the first time students have seen or tasted cucumbers, radishes, squash or eggplant. It emphasizes the importance of introducing Brunswick County children to gardening.

My favorite experiences are how excited the kids are to make a floral gift to take home to their mother. Or when they taste cauliflower for the first time and discover they like it. That’s when we know we’ve been successful in sharing the joy of gardening.
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The New 2018 Buick Enclave Avenir
As the St. James Singles Club nears the anniversary of the first meet-up at Members Club, I would like to reflect on its growth. We came together as 35 individuals with two things in common — we were single and living in St. James. Few people came to that initial meeting with friends and or neighbors. Many bravely stepped into that room not knowing if there would be any familiar faces. We now stand 120 strong and have formed a wonderful group of friends.

The year has been fun for all of us. We participated in numerous activities such as home parties and bowling twice a month. The parties started because one of our members was thrilled to get back to entertaining. She opened her beautiful home to many of us and prepared a bountiful feast. This led others to volunteer, and now the home parties are monthly events. As one of our members stated in an email, “I can't tell you how much I enjoyed the party at Ginny’s. Beautiful house, wonderful hostess, good food, and charming people. Thank you so much. I had not appreciated how much I missed companionship.”

Sometimes, when least expected, something special happens. Not only have friendships been forged this past year, but several new relationships have blossomed from chance meetings. We have three couples who have gotten together as a result of this club. As one of them said to me: “I didn’t expect this to happen, but I am glad it did.”

As we move forward into our second year, new activities are being planned. Fall kayak trips for the novice and others are on tap, and last month bowling began. A miniature golf and dinner event on Oak Island is in the works and our final Nine and Dine for the year will be held this month. House parties are lined up through the rest of the year, and our second annual holiday party will again be at the Reserve.

If you are single in St. James, consider joining our group. There’s always room for more at our activities. Contact Stacey at sevanlee53@gmail.com.
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Story and photos by DJ Beaton

Clubs are my thing. Not the sandwiches or the kind you swing at a golf ball or the type that Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble wave around. I love to start the sort of clubs organized around an interest you share with others, like basketball or cars or Hostess cupcakes.

The first club I ever formed was a Paper Doll Club, which was supposed to focus on paper cutouts, but instead was just a plan to get my mother to agree to have several friends over to the house at the same time.

Next was a Dennis the Menace Club for fans of both the cartoon figure and the TV show. I even wrote a theme song for that one, which we sang to start every meeting (and, yes, I still remember the words). There were many clubs after that, up to and including a couple I have started while living in St. James.

Perhaps you have an interest in forming a club yourself. Here are a few tips to help you get started:

**Decide on the target group.** Do you want your club to be open to everyone in St. James or just your neighborhood? Will it be “No Boys Allowed” or only for French-speakers or perhaps aimed specifically at dog owners or fans of classic movies? If it’s game or sports-themed, do you want to limit it to experienced players or will it include novices as well?

**Find out if the club you have in mind already exists.** A list of scheduled clubs is available at the Community Center or online at the POA website. Check to see if your neighborhood has a monthly newsletter that lists its activities. Also, watch for postings in local publications like “What’s Up St. James?”

**Determine if there is any interest in your club.** Post a notice on the St. James Facebook page, the Next Door app and in subscription newsletters. If you get the response you want, survey each person to gauge meeting time availability. Take that information to the Community Center and find a time for meetings on the calendar.

If you prefer to gather in members’ homes or at another location, arrange an initial getting-to-know-you gathering to kick off your club, plan the hosting schedule for the year and agree on rules.

**Don’t forget to name your club.** And put some thought into it. Who wants to join Bob’s Poker Club when they could join the St. James Snarky Card Sharks?

If you really want to see a new club but aren’t inclined to start it yourself, talk to me. Maybe I’ll start it for you. After all, clubs are my thing.
Behind the scenes at the marina

By Loretta Krause • Photos by John Muuss

A strong shove — your boat glides effortlessly from the launch, spotter on board. As it nears E-dock, the spotter leaps off and ties the dock lines securely to the cleats. Your boat is ready to board.

Every day at The Marina at St. James Plantation, this procedure repeats itself many times. A call to the marina one hour before you want to pick up your boat begins the process. This behind-the-scenes choreography takes skill, experience and a dedicated staff with lots of on-the-job training that in an artistic display of water ballet results in the placing of your boat at E-dock.

The spotter who boards your boat is a marina assistant, the formal job title. A spotter’s job is similar to a traffic officer who helps an 18-wheeler turn a tight corner. In the marina, however, he works with boats that a fork lift has plucked from dry dock and carried to the water’s edge.

The spotter directs traffic for the fork lift operator, who could be hauling a boat that weighs up to 13,500 pounds. The fork lift can carry 20,000 pounds, but with variables such as length, weight and center of gravity, its load maxes out at 13,500.

In addition to the fluid grace of spotters gliding boats across the marina, a beehive of activity goes on behind the scenes. Your call triggers a response from an assistant to pull your boat from the dry stacks. The assistant identifies your boat stored in one of four bays, A-D. Each bay has four levels, for a total of 320 slips. This is in addition to the 155 slips in the water.

After locating your boat, the fork lift takes over, transporting it from dry dock to water’s edge at F-Dock, where it’s ferried to E-dock. The return trip reverses the process. The boat is washed and its engine flushed with fresh water before returning it to dry stack.

What else keeps the marina assistants in a perpetual state of activity? When they’re not launching and recovering boats, they’re washing dock boxes, which are like school lockers only for boats, one set at each of the in-water slips that can accommodate a boat up to 50 feet in length. Assistants also replace plumbing lines, maintain the fuel dock, perform a monthly dock check and replace broken boards.

A marina assistant is a year-round job. Peak season starts in May, but transient boaters begin arriving after Labor Day. Fall fishing is prime September through November. “The only slow months are January and February,” says Jon Helms, the marina manager. “That’s when we get the time to do the heavy maintenance work before we begin preparing for the next peak season.”

There’s always work to do, enjoyable work that’s a pleasure to watch. The next time you’re at Tommy Thompson’s, notice the marina assistants in their khaki pants and blue or white shirts working with the grind of the fork lift and the glide of the boats as they’re ferried across the marina.
St. James Fire Department recently received a donation from the Connecticut Club. Joining in a brief ceremony to mark the occasion were (l-r) SJFD President John Young; Randy Lewis, Back Porch Rockers; Eileen McKay; Roger Nejes and SJFD Chief John Dahill. (photo by John Muuss)
Communities in Schools (CIS) receives support from the St. James Service Club, as well as from numerous St. James residents, through programs involving direct student and family contact and fundraising. Driving to Southport on 211, you’ll see one of Brunswick County’s four CIS thrift shops, which provide some of the financial support for this organization.

CIS was founded on the belief that “programs don’t save children, relationships do.” CIS of Brunswick County was established in 1995 and is part of a national network. The CIS mission is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. CIS believes every child deserves a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult, a safe place to learn and grow, a healthy start and healthy future, a marketable skill to use upon graduation and a chance to give back to the community.

Todd Beane, director of Brunswick County Communities in Schools (BCCIS) for the past four years, says BCCIS and the help of some 650 volunteers throughout Brunswick County touched the lives of 4,458 students and families in 2016-2017.

CIS currently offers core service areas that include:

- Action for Success Program, which aims to lower the dropout rate by building relationships that remove the barriers to learning and improve ways our community responds to needs of at-risk students and their families. Calie Hodgson, a Success Coach, recently spoke at a Service Club meeting and shared some of the statistics that contribute to the needs of Brunswick County children. These risk factors include absentee parents, behavioral or mental health issues, homelessness, abuse or learning disabilities.

- 21st Century Community Learning Centers, in partnership with Brunswick County Schools, is an after-school program designed to help students meet academic standards through activities that complement daytime academic programs.

- Parenting Education Programs are provided through classes and support groups.

- Peer Court and Teen Court provide support by youth and adult volunteers to help address the problem of at-risk and delinquent youth in a positive way.

You can participate directly in all areas of the core services, including direct student interaction, mentoring, facilitating and utilizing your professional and personal background and skills. The thrift shops are only part of the financial support for CIS. Visit the website at www.cisbrunswick.org for more information about CIS and how you can help.
A ferry tale

Story and photos by Beth Erskine

Looking to wander beyond the familiar environs of 211 and Long Beach Road? Consider a leisurely ride on the ferry that departs Southport to Fort Fisher every 45 minutes daily. Once across the river, you can easily spend the day at the historic fort as well as visiting the acclaimed North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher.

 Crossing the Cape Fear River by ferry is a unique way to experience coastal Carolina’s enchanting scenery. You can take your car ($5), your bike ($2) or just yourself ($1).

Celebrating its 70th birthday in 2017 as the official North Carolina Ferry System, the ferry harkens back to colonial times, when water passage was required to connect North Carolina’s barrier islands to the mainland. Today, North Carolina operates the second largest state ferry system in the U.S. (after Washington state), with 24 ferries on seven routes across the Currituck and Pamlico Sounds, as well as the Cape Fear, Neuse and Pamlico rivers.

Varying from 20 minutes to 2½ hours, the ferry crossings carry commuters to work as well as vacationers. For a few Outer Banks barrier islands — Knotts, Ocracoke, and Portsmouth — ferries are the only option available for visitors and residents. According to the state Department of Transportation, the busiest crossing is the Hatteras to Ocracoke ferry. The beauty of the Ocracoke beaches draws thousands of day-trippers each year who want to enjoy the sand, the eclectic shops, art galleries and waterside restaurants.
Hatteras Island, the best known of the Outer Banks’ barrier islands, is renowned for its fishing, historical and natural attractions. The Cape Hatteras National Seashore comprises more than half the island. The Fort Raleigh National Historic Site and the Wright Brothers Memorial on Kill Devil Hills are popular spots for visitors. Roanoke Island Festival Park celebrates the first English colonists on North American soil.

Bald Head Island (BHI) is also a popular day-tripping destination, accessible only by a 20-minute ride on a ferry. Hiking, biking, kayaking and golf are the main attractions of BHI. If you’re up to it, climb Old Baldy’s 212 wooden steps and be rewarded with breathtaking views of the surrounding ocean and landforms. The lighthouse is North Carolina’s oldest, built in 1817.

Since cars aren’t permitted on the island, you can rent either bicycles or golf carts to get around while visiting. The BHI ferry has four passenger ferries in its fleet and runs hourly from Deep Point Marina in Southport. Its higher fees ($23 for adults, $12 for children ages three to 12) reflect the fact the ferries are privately operated and not subsidized by the state.

Our state has many unique and stunning attractions along its coastal shorelines. Consider exploring them by ferry the next time you get the itch to wander.

Twenty four ferries operate on seven routes in North Carolina. (internet photo)
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Wild horses and panoramas at Cape Lookout National Seashore

Story and photos by Cheryl L. Serra

In the September issue of Cat-Tales, Nancy Adelis and John Muuss chronicled their trip to Bodacious Beaufort in an article of the same name. This month’s Daytrip may be tacked on to a trip to Beaufort and will provide you an opportunity to see wild horses and the view from 207 steps high.

I drove to Beaufort to revisit a place I first saw some 15 years ago during my first boat trip on the Intracoastal Waterway. We departed from Maryland in winter, and by the time we arrived in Beaufort, we were gleefully ready to abandon our on-board heater. At the time, we heard of a “boaters” pub (aka dive bar), and since I’ve got a few beer-soaked, sticky floors under my flip flops, I wanted to return. I discovered the atmosphere at the Backstreet Pub hasn’t changed in the intervening years, where salty tales are still shared.

I also had a great meal at Beaufort Grocery Company and a snack at FINZ Grill on the water, another hangout for tourists and locals. And I learned about the variety of programs — including one on the art of the (New) Deal about the history of the old Beaufort Post Office Murals and the artist who created these national treasures — from Cape Lookout National Seashore Ranger Kathleen O’Grady.

But enough about Beaufort. While there, visitors can take a private boat or ferry to Cape Lookout National Seashore (CLNS). Island Express Ferry Service ferries depart from either Harkers Island or from Beaufort, and is the only service authorized by the National Park Service to dock at Cape Lookout Lighthouse and Shackleford Banks. It’s less expensive to depart from Harkers Island than from Beaufort (about $17 vs. $35 for a round-trip adult ticket).

The ferry ride crew included Island Express owner George Aswad, who happened to be in town, and Ken Lewis and Bob Trout, both of whom grew up in Beaufort and were excellent sources of information about the
Town, Shackleford Banks and Cape Lookout. Their recollections and stories brought to life the area of decades ago.

The ferry I took departed at 9 a.m. for Cape Lookout and left the national park to return to Beaufort at noon. During the trip, the captain stopped the hardy Corinthian Catamaran ferry off Shackleford Banks, the southernmost barrier island in CLNS and home to more than 100 wild Banker horses. We were delighted to see several of these beautiful creatures on the shoreline. You can learn more here: www.nps.gov/cal/learn/nature/horses.htm.

Upon arriving at Cape Lookout, I followed a suggestion to immediately purchase a ticket ($8 for an adult, and they sell out quickly) to view the black-and-white-diamond painting on the 163-foot-high Cape Lookout Lighthouse. With an hour to kill, I walked a quarter-mile on the boardwalk to the Atlantic Ocean, where I collected some beautiful shells and dipped in the refreshing waves. It was a nice preamble to climbing the 207 steps for a flawless view of the ocean and inland waters and a beautiful Carolina blue sky.

To plan your visit to the CFNS, visit www.nps.gov/cal/planyourvisit/index.htm.
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