

Baseball, America's favorite pastime and a sport with a long history in the county, is being honored at Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center on Harkers Island on both Tuesday during the monthly community night and Saturday, July 19, for Baseball Day, a reunion of players, coaches and appreciators. (Dylan Ray photo)

PLAY BALL

Core Sound Waterfowl Museum celebrates the boys of summer

BY JENNIFER ALLEN
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The once familiar sounds of a baseball game — the “crack” of a ball against a bat, the crowds cheering from the stands, coaches shouting to players — used to fill summer days at all points in the county.

Though those days of community baseball teams haven't been around since the late 1970s, there are two chances coming up to recall memories and learn about county baseball at Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center on Harkers Island.

The first is during the monthly community night event set for Tuesday. The evening will be led by Rodney Kemp and his panel of experts, and will begin with a potluck dinner at 6 p.m. followed by the program at 7.

“My plan is to take the group through a discussion on the history of Major League Baseball,” said Mr. Kemp. “It will be a night of nostalgia in recalling our memories of the Brooklyn Dodgers, New York Yankees, Ted Williams, Stan Musial, Mickey Mantle, Willie Mays and a cast of thousands.”

Community night will be fol-

lowed by Baseball Day, “Reliving the Dream, Baseball: More than a Game,” Saturday, July 19.

Coordinated by Joe Willis, a Harkers Island native now living in Atlanta, Ga., the all-day event is to honor coaches and players from around the county beginning at 11 a.m. This is the third baseball reunion held at the museum — the first two were in 2005 and 2006 but are now every other year.

“At the event, I plan to highlight all of the county coaches. I want to show people what these coaches did (for their players and community) and tell unique stories,” said Mr. Willis.

The message he is trying to convey is that baseball is more than just a game in the county's past.

He said through the sport, players gained self-confidence, the ability to adapt, learned not to quit and

the desire to persevere and this they learned from the coaches and how their lessons impacted those around them, which is why he is honoring them during Baseball Day.

Baseball Day begins with opening baseball exhibits in the museum at 11 a.m. This is followed by a lunch of Core Sound hot dogs, homemade chili and warm chocolate chip cookies.

At 1 p.m., the program, “Remembering and honoring our coaches from 1940s to 2008,” kicks off.

During this time, coaches from area schools and from senior league, Babe Ruth and Little League will be remembered for their impact on the community.

There will be a break at 2:30 p.m. and then those gathered can discuss stories, statistics and photographs of top baseball players and teams

from the 1930s through 1977 with panel and audience participation.

Topics include top high school baseball teams; Tidewater League 1947-1951; Salt Water/Carteret County League 1952-1957; Seashore League 1974-1977; junior girl and women softball.

Mr. Willis, who has been researching county baseball history for some time and is a former coach, said Baseball Day is a way for him to pay homage to county coaches and bring awareness to baseball history.

During the time Mr. Willis has been researching county baseball, he's gathered countless photos, records, stories and more.

“I have listings going back to the 1920s, lots of pictures, player profiles with specific information of who has done well. I have a coaches list of coaches from all over the county ... they had such a great impact.”

All who know county baseball history, want to know or are a part of it are encouraged to come out and enjoy a day of baseball nostalgia.

For questions, call the museum at 728-1500.

