

Paying homage to America’s pastime

Do you remember the Tidewater League? Does the name Jake Wade ring a bell?

How about the Seashore League? How many Sunday afternoons have you spent “under the pines” at Smyrna School listening to the crack of the bat and the rattle of baseballs in the woods below center field? Were you there when the Blues were young?

If any of this brings back a memory or two, then the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center (CSWM) is looking for you.

The CSWM is pulling together photographs, newspaper clippings, interviews and players spanning 40 years of baseball in Carteret County, from 1940 through the 70s, with a documentary/reunion entitled “Reliving the Dream — Baseball: More than a Game.”

“Throughout my life, I have often gone back to the basic fundamentals that I learned growing up in Carteret County,” said Joe Willis, former Eastern Blues player, coach at East Carteret High School and Harkers Island native.

“I was one of many who have been influenced by the game of baseball, and the people associated with it. This event will not only give us an opportunity to have fun reminiscing with old friends while we relive our ‘Field of Dreams’ all over again, but it will also allow us to document our history and the significant impact that baseball had on both the county and the lives of the young men growing up here.”

On Saturday, May 21, former players, coaches, fans and the sons and daughters of all these generations will gather on Harkers Island to share their memories and remember those who gave so much to the communities of down east Carteret



The men of the Davis baseball team from 1946 take a break on the grass with their bat boy. (Mailboat photo)

County and beyond.

“Baseball was more than a game down east; it was the spirit of community, a culmination of extraordinary talent across generations and a wonderful piece of Americana that lived — and still lives — right here on the coast of North Carolina,” said Karen Amspacher, executive director of the CSWM. The 40 years we are documenting sent players to the majors, developed coaches for the next generation and provided scholarships for successful careers in teaching, business and across the board. It is an interesting and important part of the heritage of Carteret County, especially down east, and we want to make sure it is not forgotten.”

In preparation for this baseball reunion, the museum is asking

all who have photos, newspaper clippings, uniforms, bats, gloves, interviews, stories and anything from these teams, to come and share them with museum staff and volunteers. Any artifacts or memorabilia that you are willing to loan will be collected for a large display on May 21. Photos and newspaper clippings can be scanned for use in the display and in publications now being gathered to mark the day.

A special day — Saturday, April 30 — has been set as “collection day” and the museum invites everyone to come and talk to the planning committee to share your memories. Anyone who is not available that day may call the museum to set another time.

Artifacts and memories from all the county teams are welcome

— Beaufort, Newport, Salter Path, Morehead City, Croatan and all the teams down east.

Reunion day, May 21, will include a history of Carteret County baseball presented at 1 p.m. by Rodney Kemp, Joel Hancock, Joe Willis and others, followed by a ball game at 3. Other baseball honors are now being planned, including activities for children, a yard/bake sale early that morning and food throughout the day.

To learn more, or to contribute to the tribute, call the museum at 728-1500.

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