

A group of baseball players in green and white uniforms are celebrating on a field. One player in the center has his arms raised, and another player in the foreground has his back to the camera, wearing a jersey with "BUTLER" and the number "15". The background shows a green field and a fence.

WESTERN TIDEWATER *Living*

Hurricanes Breathrough Season

PDCCC's Baseball program rewrites records

A Multi-Generational Pastime

Three generations of ball players

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Photo by
Titus Mohler

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BASEBALL, WATERMELON AND STRAWBERRY DONUT PUDDING

It's summer and as we all know with summer comes the dreaded word hurricane. Usually the word hurricane brings thoughts of devastating winds and lots of rain but when it comes to THE Hurricane's, this year, it is all good news. The Camp Hurricanes baseball team took the season by storm, winning first regional and next district titles the Hurricanes pounded their way into nationals. The team is featured on this month's cover and you can find the rest of this fascinating story by Titus Mohler on Page 12.



As the days are longer and the weather is warmer (sans hurricanes) gathering with your "peeps" and breaking bread together is a given. What could be better on a hot day than some ice-cold watermelon and strawberry donut pudding? Strawberry donut pudding? What is that you might ask — not to worry, turn to Page 24 for a recipe that is so decadent it will have your family and friends calling for more. Ever wonder

how to pick the perfect watermelon? Turn to Page 27 for some helpful tips on picking and slicing this summertime treat.

There are many more stories within these pages, and we hope you will enjoy them. As this is a magazine about and for you, we welcome your ideas and invite you to share with us what you would like to hear more about by sending us a note at P.O. Box 497, Franklin, VA 23851, giving us a call at 757-562-3187 or sending us an email at Magazine@TheTidewaterNews.com.

We publish Western Tidewater Living each season — summer, fall, winter and spring. We invite you to pick up a copy of the latest issue as there is sure to be someone you know inside — a neighbor, a family member, a friend or perhaps even you!

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Betty J. Ramsey is publisher of Western Tidewater Living.

party pix

2022-2023 DEBUTANTE/BEAU EXPERIENCE

On Saturday, June 10, at 7 p.m. members of Lambda Psi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® and Southampton-Franklin Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi® Fraternity, Incorporated culminated their 2022-2023 debutante/beau experience with its biennial Cotillion/Beautillion entitled "Stars of Today Soaring to Excellence" at Southampton High School in Courtland. In preparation for the Cotillion/Beautillion 12 debutants and six beaus participated in numerous enrichment activities, created and participated in fundraisers for the fraternity and sorority scholarship fund. On the night of the event the debutantes and beaus performed the waltz and showed their personalities in a fun, upbeat dance presentation called "A Style of Their Own." PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY MICHELLE COVINGTON



Earning the title of 2023 Beautillion King and Queen are Beau Alvin Hick Jr and Debutante Kiersten Nichols.



Named the 2023 First runner-up King and Queen are Debutante Samyra Middleton and Beau LaVonte Evans.



Debutante Kameile Carrington and Beau Justin Preau earned Second runner-up at the 2023 Cotillion.

2022-2023 DEBUTANTE/BEAU EXPERIENCE



Members of the Southampton-Franklin Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi® Fraternity, Incorporated.



Members of Lambda Psi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®.



Ushers for the evening are pictured, from left, front row, Ace Lee, Jordan Evans, Dylan Granger, Morgan West; back row, Camille Smith-Freeman, Deshawnta Jones, Jr., Leah Sherrod, Logan Jetter, Noah Sterling and Brooklyn Rhodes.



Debutants and beaus of the biennial Cotillion/Beautillion entitled "Stars of Today Soaring to Excellence" at Southampton High School in Courtland.

party pix

47TH ANNUAL WINDSOR RURITAN CLUB PIG PICKIN'

This was the 47th Windsor Ruritan Club Pig Pickin', but it was the first time the event was held at the Joel C. Bradshaw Fairgrounds, and it drew more than 900 people. The event featured all-you-can-eat barbecue, coleslaw, beans and cornbread, with beer and spirits. Attendees participated in a cornhole tournament and a 50/50 raffle, and the Island Boys Band performed live. PHOTOS BY TITUS MOHLER AND REBECCA DUCK



Windsor Ruritan Club Vice President Jackson DeMello and his mother Janine DeMello present a quilt that she made and then donated for the 50/50 raffle.



Pausing for a photo as they enjoy the Windsor Ruritan Club Pig Pickin' are Cassie Powell and Corey Powell.



From left, Chad Howell, Reuben Howell and Darla Howell smile as they take part in the Windsor Ruritan Club event.



Putting their conservation on hold briefly for a photo are, from left, Kathy Torrence, Patrick Clark, Laura Smith and Michael Smith.



Ready to serve event attendees are, from left, Windsor Ruritan Club members Don Sproul, Harold Demsko and Macon Edwards and Woman's Club of Windsor members Sandra Quillin and Joyce Copeland.

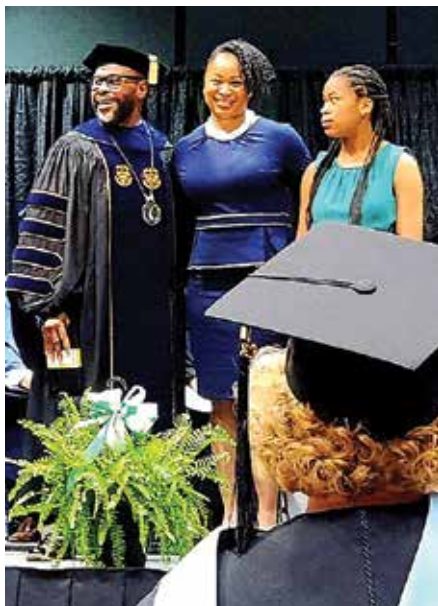


Deputy Mariah Sepeda and Randall Phelps help man the entrance/exit of the Windsor Ruritan Club Pig Pickin'.

COREY MCCRAY INAUGURATION

party pix

Dr. Corey L. McCray was formally inaugurated April 21 as Camp Community College's ninth president before a crowd of state and local officials, community members, his parents, his wife and his daughter, who all gathered in the school's Regional Workforce Development Center in Franklin. SUBMITTED PHOTOS



CCC President Dr. Corey L. McCray smiles as he stands on stage at his inauguration ceremony with his wife, Rasheedah, and his daughter, Morgan.



Dr. Corey L. McCray, left, the ninth president of Camp Community College, and Franklin Baptist Church Senior Pastor Dr. Charles Qualls pose for a photo at McCray's inauguration Friday, April 21. Qualls was one of the speakers during the event who highlighted McCray's proven fitness for leadership. SUBMITTED | TERESA B. BEALE



Dr. Corey L. McCray, center, raises his right hand as he takes the oath of office for the Paul D. Camp Community College presidency during his inauguration as the institution's ninth president that was held Friday, April 21, at the college's Regional Workforce Development Center in Franklin. SUBMITTED | BRITTNEY VANDIFORD PHOTOGRAPHY

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NINTH FRANKLIN CRUISE-IN OPENER

The ninth year of the Franklin Cruise-In opened Wednesday, May 10, with a strong crowd of participants. Organizer Mike Smith estimated that 80 vehicles were on hand on South Main Street and in the city parking lot at the corner of South Main Street and East 1st Avenue in front of the fire station. The cruise-in will be held there each Wednesday from 4-7 p.m. up until the grand finale set for Saturday, Oct. 14, from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. PHOTOS BY TITUS MOHLER



Miguel Stamaría showcases his 2022 Polaris Slingshot on Wednesday, May 10, during the opening to the ninth year of the Franklin Cruise-In.



From left, Kingston Feliciano and Charlie Peirce present Peirce's 2019 Chevrolet Corvette Grand Sport, which he has owned for three months.



Alvin Ricks Jr. stands for a photo next to his 1987 Buick Grand National that he has owned for five years.



Mike Livesay has been the owner of this 2016 Ford Mustang for about three years.



Posing for a picture with his 1998 Chevrolet Corvette is Kenneth Bunch.



Carlton Britt showcases his 1952 Chevrolet Deluxe that he has owned since 2016.

NINTH FRANKLIN CRUISE-IN OPENER



Just arriving at the Franklin Cruise-In opener on Wednesday, May 10, are Megan Doherty and Will Applewhite in a 1971 Volkswagen Super Beetle.



Giving thumbs up to the camera is Richard E. Jernigan with his 1990 Chevrolet Corvette convertible.

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SECOND ANNUAL LUMBERJACK FESTEVENT

The second annual Lumberjack Festevent successfully built on the foundation established by the inaugural event in 2022, drawing more people this year to downtown Franklin on Saturday, May 6, to celebrate the impact that lumber and the logging industry has had on the area. PHOTOS BY TITUS MOHLER

Essence Mitchell competes in a game of tug of war in front of the booth for the Franklin Department of Parks and Recreation on Saturday, May 6, at the Lumberjack Festevent in downtown Franklin.



England Mitchell participates in a game of tug of war, which was one of the activities offered for kids at the second annual Lumberjack Festevent in downtown Franklin on Saturday, May 6.



Nicholas Madrid participates in a tomahawk toss for kids as Anthony Madrid, of Chesapeake, kneels next to him, offering encouragement.



Taking part in the Lumberjack Festevent on Saturday morning, May 6, are Buddy Whitehurst and Dianna Whitehurst.



Enjoying the second annual Lumberjack Festevent in downtown Franklin on Saturday, May 6, are, from left, Owen Isdanavage, Gabrielle Isdanavage, Grace Herion, Danielle Herion and Alpheé Herion.



Denise Raynor feeds alpacas from Benson Alpaca Meadows that were on hand for the Lumberjack Festevent on Saturday, May 6. Looking on in the background are Burt Benson, left, Eric Raynor.

SECOND ANNUAL LUMBERJACK FESTEVENT



Pausing for a photo as they explore the second annual Lumberjack Festevent in Franklin are, from left, Van Nguyen, Ashley Nguyen and Tien Nguyen, of Chesapeake.



From left, Austin Nau, Alex Nau, Shelley Nau, Levi Nau and Andrew Nau came from Windsor to enjoy the Lumberjack Festevent in Franklin on Saturday, May 6.



Franklin Ward 1 Councilman Mark R. Kitchen is inhabiting the role of Paul Bunyan at the Lumberjack Festevent on Saturday, May 6, and he is joined in this photo by Lorraine Greene Whitehead, who is dressed as a turn-of-the-century school marm.



Brandon Jackson and Sherelle Rodgers-Jackson are ready to continue exploring the Lumberjack Festevent after Sherelle successfully took part in the Tomahawk Toss.

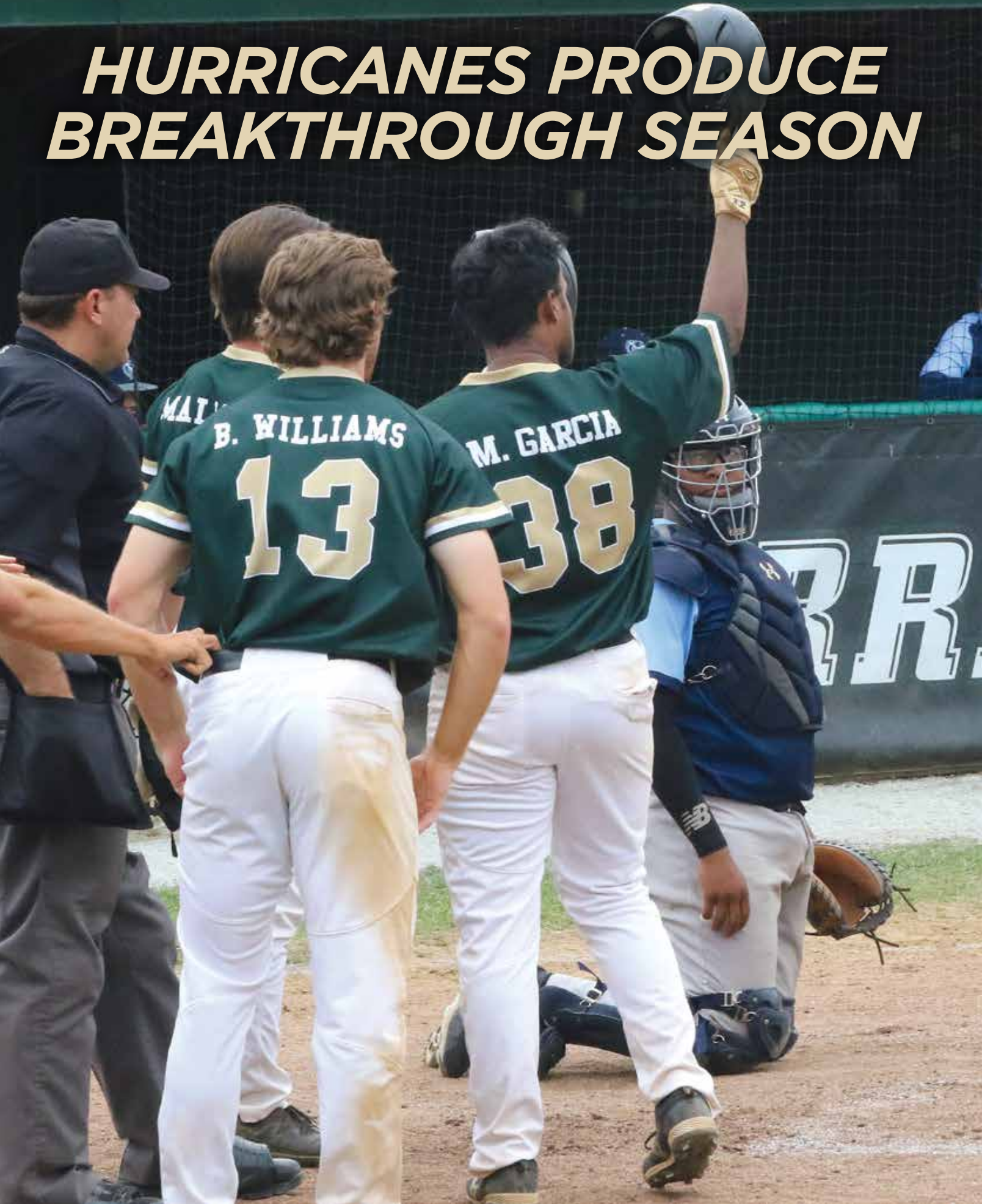


Navigating the Lumberjack Festevent in downtown Franklin on Saturday, May 6, are, from left, Brynlee Marks, Tonya Marks, Brian Marks, Teagan Marks, Clay Blythe, Heather Blythe and Lawson Blythe.



Bill Wolfe, left, and Tommy Lowe, right, operate a two-man crosscut saw as Edward Kinney looks on. Along with Clyde Parker, they represented the Southampton Agriculture & Forestry Museum and Southampton Heritage Village.

HURRICANES PRODUCE BREAKTHROUGH SEASON





STORY BY TITUS MOHLER
PHOTOS BY TITUS MOHLER,
KRYSTLE TOMLIN AND NJCAA

Paul D. Camp Community College's baseball program has been competing since only 2018 and has experienced an impressive amount of success in a short amount of time.

But the 2023 Hurricanes squad took things to another level, recording a breakthrough season that rewrote much of the program's record books and that also penned the first chapter of its history as a postseason participant. And Camp did far more than simply participate.

The Hurricanes opened their inaugural postseason run by winning the National Junior College Athletic Association Division III Region 10 Championship. They clinched the title by routing Surry Community College 31-7 on May 7.

Then Camp hosted Prince George's Community College on May 19 in the NJCAA Division III Mid-Atlantic District Championship series and swept the Owls via 11-3 and 25-10 victories.

Winning the regional and district titles put the Hurricanes among the eight best teams in the country, and those teams competed for the national championship May 27-31 at the NJCAA Division III World Series in Greeneville, Tennessee.

Camp went 0-2 in the double-elimination event but was notably competitive in both games — the stage was not too big for the Hurricanes.

"We were just as good as a lot of the other teams, we just didn't play well enough to walk away with any wins on our side," Camp Head Coach Daniel Rollins said. "But I did feel confident that it was a situation where we definitely deserved to be there. We were competitive, and we tried to

See HURRICANES, page 14

do the best we could to represent not only Franklin and the surrounding communities but the region as a whole.”

The Hurricanes finished the season with an overall record of 33-19.

Hollins described Camp’s year as “an amazing ride.”

“We struggled early, but we also played the ninth-hardest schedule in the country,” he said. “I made the schedule difficult because I wanted us to be prepared at the end of the year to hopefully be playing our best baseball, to have played really good competition and to have been prepared to make the kind of run that we did.”

He admitted that when the team opened the season 1-6, he was asking himself if he did the right thing.

“Come April and May, I had no doubts that I did,” he said. “It was just an amazing ride.”

He noted that the year was an experience that he, the players, the school and the community can be proud of.

“To be the first to do anything is always special, and these guys were a special group, and they’ll never be forgotten for doing what they did and for coming together and playing as well as they did and for earning that opportunity to go play for a national championship,” he said.

Camp Community College President Dr. Corey McCray said he was excited but not caught off guard by the baseball team’s historic season.

“I have witnessed the baseball team and the coaches work so hard on and off the field that the wins were not a surprise,” he said. “They are a committed group of athletes that are second to none!”

He noted that the key ingredients to the Hurricanes’ success were “great coaching, the tenacity and commitment to the team by all the players, and their athleticism.”

Rollins, who just completed his fourth year as Camp’s head coach, expanded on some of the concepts McCray highlighted as he accounted for why the Hurricanes were able to achieve such unprecedented

success.

“In all honesty, it’s all a part of the process,” Rollins said. “In my mind, to me, when I took over, I told the president and the athletic director I didn’t come here to be mediocre and that I had a goal of us being able to compete for regional titles and Mid-Atlantic championships and to get to a World Series.

“And in that process, as far as how we develop our players and having really good kids who buy in and want to work hard and also jell together as a family, that process all played out this year,” he continued. “And it may have played out a little earlier than maybe I even thought it could, but that’s been the goal all along was to make something like this possible from day one.”

The coach highlighted leaders on the diamond that made it possible in 2023.

“We were really an offensive team, and the three guys that started with really were Ben Williams, Joseph Eichelberger and Tyler Cotten,” he said. “Those three guys really set the stage for us to be very explosive offensively.”

At the NJCAA Division III level, the Hurricanes were fifth in the nation in home runs, with 55.

“We finished No. 1 in the country in stolen bases,” Rollins said.

Camp piled up 227 stolen bases this season.

“We also had some big-time guys who stepped up who performed in a way that I don’t even know if maybe they thought they were (capable) of at times,” Rollins said.

He pointed to sophomore infielder Misael Garcia.

“He ended up at the end of the year hitting in the four hole for us every day, and it wasn’t because he hit a bunch of home runs,” Rollins said. “It was because he drove the ball gap to gap and constantly drove in runs, and that was a huge key to our success.”

Assessing Camp’s batters, Rollins said, “I just feel like our lineup, one through

nine, was very, very difficult, and we didn’t have very many holes in it, that’s for sure.”

He went through the list.

Sophomore Ben Williams led off and played center field, freshman Tucker Genovesi hit second and was a designated hitter, redshirt sophomore Joseph Eichelberger hit third and played right field, Garcia hit fourth and played third base, sophomore Tyler Cotten hit fifth and played catcher, sophomore Cole Mallory hit sixth and played first base, freshman Trent Holland hit seventh and played shortstop, freshman John Stansbury hit eighth and played second base, and freshman Luke Schwartz hit ninth and played left field.

“What was crazy was, Luke was a guy who wasn’t even in the lineup starting the year,” Rollins said. “He was a guy who earned his way into the lineup, and once I put him in there one day, I couldn’t take him back out just because he kept performing.”

The coach said it was a similar story with Genovesi.

“I put him in the lineup one day because he had been swinging well in practice, and down the stretch, he played every single day for us and hit in the two hole,” Rollins said. “So having those guys step up and perform on a regular basis was huge.”

Eichelberger and Genovesi were named to the NJCAA Division III All-Region 10 first team. Cotten, Holland, Schwartz and Williams made the second team, and Schwartz and freshman Codey Batten made the Region 10 All-Defensive Team.

Rollins then turned his attention to the mound.

“On the flip side, I don’t want to take anything away from our pitching staff,” he said.

That staff was headlined by sophomore right-hander Gavin Tomlin, of Southampton County. The former Southampton High School student-athlete was also named to the NJCAA Division III All-



Submitted | Nation Junior College Athletic Association

The 2023 Camp Community College baseball team assembles on the field of Tusculum University's Pioneer Park where the Hurricanes made their inaugural appearance in the NJCAA Division III World Series, held in Greeneville, Tennessee. Team members pictured are, from left, front row, Misael Garcia, Tucker Genovesi, John Stansbury, Connor Roberts, Adam Schell, John Butler, Hitting Coach Will Flanders, Pitching Coach Zach Woolard, Head Coach Daniel Rollins, Assistant Coach Tyson Ellis, Cody Lanham, Nick Nichols, Matthew McCray, Cole Mallory, Luke Schwartz, Isael Garcia; back row, Jayce Beck, Tyler Cotten, Kevin Haynes, Quenton Gaddist, Tanner Gates, Trent Holland, C.J. Patterson, Gavin Tomlin, Carter Raper, Cooper Newell, Codey Batten, Connor Blence, Ethan Willis, Matthew Cornwell, Tristan Williams, Ben Williams, Joseph Eichelberger, Brendan Hawley, Eliu McMoore and Jacob Barber.

Region 10 first team.

"Gavin was a team captain, Gavin was a leader on and off the field, and he's the young man who came into this program as somebody that we didn't know how much he would actually pitch for us, and two years later, he's starting game one of the World Series for us," Rollins said. "And he worked his tail off to earn that opportunity, and I couldn't be prouder of him."

Tomlin put into words what it was like for him to be part of Camp's unprecedented run this year.

"For me being from this area and such a small town, it was amazing to be part of the history of the school," he said. "Our team has worked hard day after day, practice after practice. We've had to take one moment at a time. We also had to understand failure as a team and individually. This made our brotherhood stronger, we all had positive attitudes and were focused on the games and eager to win."

Tomlin will now move on to a four-year school, Randolph-Macon College, but he said he is looking forward to coming back and helping Rollins with camps and clinics.

"Giving back to our community has been important to my family especially," Tomlin said.

This expression of character was one

that could also be found in his Hurricanes teammates, and their collective example helped serve as a major highlight for Rollins.

The coach went through the aspects of the year that stood out to him most.

"Obviously going to the World Series is huge, but us having 27 guys get academic all-region during the spring semester when it's so hard to juggle academics and baseball, I couldn't be prouder of that accomplishment," he said. "I can't think of a year we've been anywhere close to that number."

It was a record-breaking season on many fronts.

"We broke just about every school record, offensively, that had ever been set, and that's a testament to our hitting coach, Will Flanders, and his time and effort," Rollins said.

"And again, the stolen bases — last year we ended the year with 195 stolen bases," he said, which put Camp second in the nation at the NJCAA Division II level the team belonged to then. "We had a goal this year of stealing 200, and we worked very hard on the base running, so that was a big deal to me, too, was to finish No. 1 in the country in stolen bases, and to steal over 200 was huge.

"But outside of those things that oc-

curred on the field, I'm so proud of this group off the field," he continued. "I think we had 15 guys graduate. We completed four or five community service events. We fundraised over \$55,000 to support the program so we can pay for things and be able to support our guys in the developmental side of things."

He indicated that achievements in education and character development are his main focus as he works with his players.

"Because it's important for me to know that these guys walk away understanding how to grow as young men," he said. "And by completing community service, by learning how to fundraise, by learning how to get their work done in the classroom at a high level, those things are telling me that these young men are growing up."

"And my ultimate goal is for these guys to become the best future employees, employers, husbands, fathers, all those things," he said. "They mean more to me than any win or any championship we'll ever win, and this group did an amazing job off the field proving to me and to our coaching staff and to our administration that they're going to grow into really good human beings when they leave Camp Community College and when they go out into the real world."

A MULTI-GENERATIONAL PASTIME

STORY BY TITUS MOHLER
SUBMITTED PHOTOS



The Southampton High School varsity baseball team benefited from a family across three generations via the talents of, from left, John Whitman Clark; Whitman's uncle, John Rawls Jr.; and Whitman's grandfather, John Rawls Sr. They are gathered here in this photo taken in June 2023.



STORY BY TITUS MOHLER
PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY TONY
CLARK AND JOHN RAWLS JR.

An enduring family legacy is a powerful thing.
It cultivates unity across generations through shared passions and experiences.

It inspires respect for those who have gone before.
It provides motivation to help sustain the tradition.

It instills confidence by establishing a proven example to follow.

It produces satisfaction in seeing that example followed.

All of these impacts were in full effect, unto the third generation, within the family of John Whitman Clark the moment he set foot on the baseball diamond as a member of the Southampton High School varsity baseball team.

He was carrying on a tradition that had started with his maternal grandfather, John Rawls Sr., who played varsity baseball for the Indians from 1960-63.

Rawls' son, John Rawls Jr., who is Whitman's uncle, followed in his father's footsteps, representing Southampton on the field from 1992-95.

And then Whitman, who recently graduated from Southampton High, made it a triple, competing for the Indians from 2021-23.

The high school took on a new quality for Whitman as a result of the shared experience he had there with his uncle and grandfather.

"It was really great to hear stories from them about playing the same place I played, playing against the same teams, the same schools, all that," he said. "It adds an extra sense of home to where I go to school, knowing that my grandpa went here, my uncle..."

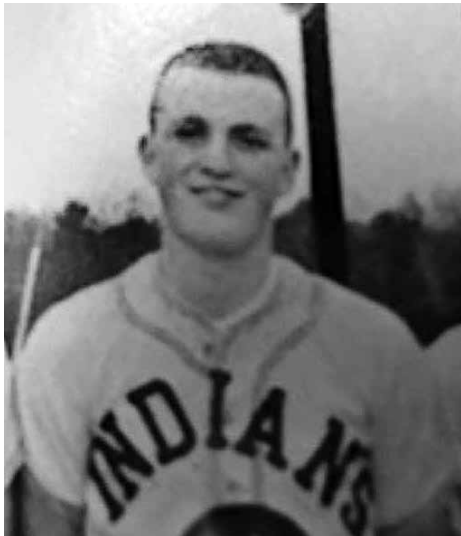
Among the trio, John Sr. may have gone farther in baseball than his son and grandson, but all three shared a love for the game and an ability to play it well, and each of them helped Southampton become district champions in their respective eras.

Paving the way for their successes with the Indians were early starts on the ballfield.

John Sr., who is now 78 years old, estimated he was 8 or 9 when he began playing for the Capron Elementary School team. His coach was Emma Grant.

"I started trying to play with her team when I was 6," he said. "I finally got in the lineup when I was in the third grade. ... My first at-bat for Ms. Grant I hit a





Left, A 1962 yearbook photo shows John Rawls Sr. from his senior year as a Southampton High School Indian. Center, John Rawls Jr. is seen here in a photo taken from during his time as a member of the Southampton High School varsity baseball team. He played for the Indians from 1992-95. Right, John Whitman Clark pitches for Southampton High School during his 2021-23 tenure on the varsity team.

COURTESY | BAILEY HOWELL

PASTIME, from page 18

triple, and from then on, I never got out of the lineup.”

There was no county youth league to play in at the time, so he honed his skills on the Capron Elementary team, and his next stop was the Southampton High squad where he played for Head Coach Joseph Leroy Dail.

John Sr. was a starting pitcher for the varsity team from ninth through 12th grade. He also played center field.

In 1963, his senior year, he pitched the first perfect game in school history, and he led the team in strikeouts and earned run average.

And his abilities were not going unnoticed by people at the highest level of the sport.

“The last game at Southampton High School, there were eight Major League scouts in the stands,” John Sr. recalled.

His efforts on the field helped the Indians win the district championship that year. At that time, Southampton was part of the Peanut District.

John Sr. went on to play for East Carolina University, where he was also a stand-out pitcher, and he was drafted by the Baltimore Orioles during his time there.

“I signed when I was a junior in college,

and they sent me to the rookie league, and I pitched two no-hitters in the rookie league,” he said.

He played five years of professional baseball within the Orioles’ organization, progressing up to the AAA level during that time.

“I was just getting ready to move up to the parent team, and I tore the rotator cuffs,” he said. “I went from 94 (mph) to 70 (mph), and 70 is like throwing batting practice.”

Looking back on his history with baseball, he reflected on what he enjoyed most about playing.

“I just loved the game,” he said. Remembering weekends when he was little, he added, “Most any time the kids from the community here, we’d go up to the old baseball field here in Capron on Saturdays and Sundays and play all day. And we had some right good ballplayers.”

Sharing what it meant to him that good ballplayers emerged in his family in the form of his son and grandson, he said, “I’ve been real proud of both of them.”

As John Jr. and Whitman revealed, John Sr. was influential in helping establish their respective relationships with baseball, but he made a point not to pres-

sure them into the game.

“I always let them go on their own,” he said. “I didn’t think it was a good idea to pressure my grandson or my son to play. Play if you want to, but you’ve got to love the game to be good.”

And he saw that love in both John Jr. and Whitman.

John Jr., who is now 46 years old, estimated that he was 7 or 8 when he first started playing baseball for the youth league team in Capron.

“I was able to play up with the bigger kids because of my size,” he said. “I’ve always been a pretty big guy, even as a boy, so I was able to play a little bit earlier.”

Upon showing interest in the game, John Jr. was coached by his father.

“He was a heck of a coach,” John Jr. said. “He was always very instrumental in guiding me, and I just played right on up through and aged out in county ball, and then I started playing school ball.”

John Jr. played first base and pitcher on the varsity Southampton High team, coached by Bob Wolfe in 1992 and Randy Jessee from 1993-95.

During his time on the squad, John Jr. achieved all-district and all-region recognition, and in his senior year, he helped

PASTIME, from page 18

the Indians win the district championship. At the time, Southampton was part of the Bay Rivers District.

“We had an excellent team,” he said. “It was a blast. It was a group of guys that were super-best friends.”

Being part of that team is what John Jr. said he enjoyed most about the sport during his time participating in it.

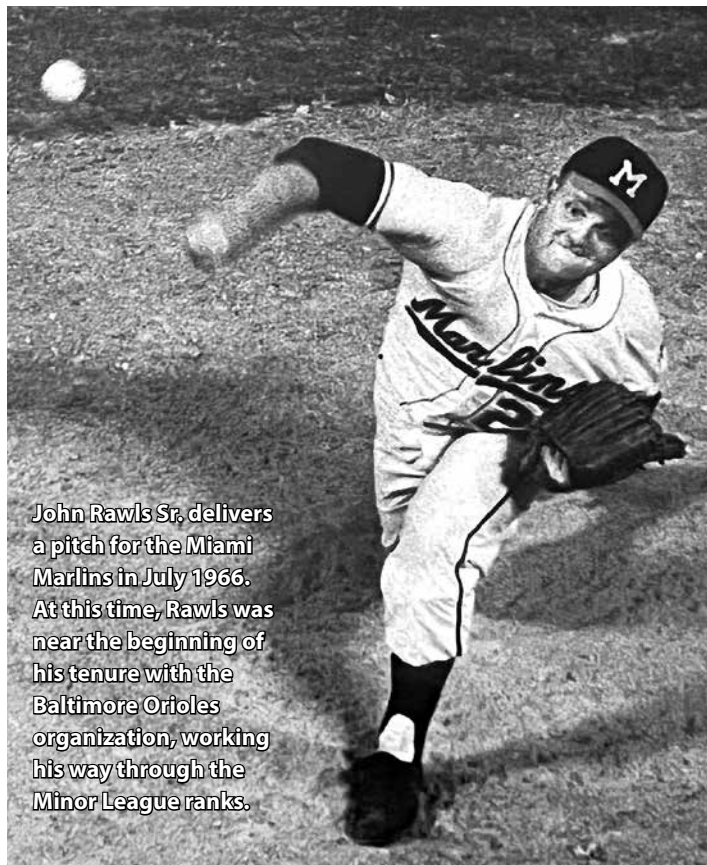
“Man, we had some great guys on that team,” he said. “It was the camaraderie and the friendships and talent — those teams were loaded with talent, and that’s truly what made it so much fun. It even made practice fun, because everybody took it seriously. Of course there was always time to goof off a little bit, but it was just the team and the chemistry and how everybody came together.”

He noted that all the guys on the team had grown up together playing youth league baseball in the county on teams from Newsoms, Sedley, Courtland, Capron, etc.

“We had all played against each other growing up, and we all knew each other, and then when they brought us together on that high school ball team for those three to four years, that’s what I’d have to tell you made it so much fun,” he said.

While he was a standout in baseball, John Jr. stood out even more in football, where he used his 6-foot, 6-inch, 290-pound frame to be an excellent defensive lineman. He did not pursue baseball past high school, instead signing a four-year football scholarship to play at North Carolina State University.

See PASTIME, page 20



John Rawls Sr. delivers a pitch for the Miami Marlins in July 1966. At this time, Rawls was near the beginning of his tenure with the Baltimore Orioles organization, working his way through the Minor League ranks.

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John Rawls Jr. congratulates his nephew John Whitman Clark on a great career after Whitman's final baseball game. Whitman and the Southampton High School Indians had been competing in the Region 3A Tournament.

Looking back on his sports career, John Jr. could not help but credit his parents, John Sr. and Ann Rawls, for being “extremely instrumental, supportive, loving parents that didn’t miss games, practices, hauling you around every which way.

“When kids don’t have parents that are that supportive, I can’t imagine that, because I was so fortunate to have the parents that I got supporting me like I did,” he added.

Asked about his son’s high school achievements on the diamond, John Sr. put a spotlight on John Jr.’s leadership by example.

“I think he led the team his senior year in home runs, batting average and RBIs and stolen bases,” John Sr. said with satisfaction.

The multi-generational baseball legacy that John Jr. is part of is no ordinary thing to him.

“To be a part of that is very special,” he said. “My family is very special to me.”

He noted that he and his sister, Whitman’s mother, have always enjoyed a tight-knit relationship.

“Growing up, and even now as adults, raising our families, we’ve always been extremely close, and to get to watch my nephew carry on the (baseball) tradition or legacy, it’s pretty special,”

See PASTIME, page 21



Sixty years after his own playing days for the Capron baseball team John Rawls Sr. sits with his grandson Whitman Clark after he had his own turn to pitch for the team



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PASTIME, from page 20

he said.

Whitman, who is now 18 years old, estimated he was 4 or 5 when he began playing for the Capron T-ball team.

“Whitman took on to liking baseball very, very early,” John Jr. recalled. “I did coach Whitman back when they started off with T-ball in the county league.”

Whitman said he got into baseball because it was all around him from when he was young.

“My dad, he basically taught me how to play, and then Pop, he would always talk about it,” Whitman said, referring to Tony Clark and John Sr., respectively. “John, my uncle, he would always talk about it. His daughter, my cousin, we played T-ball together. He coached me when I was young. My dad’s coached me. I’ve just always been around (baseball).”

Whitman played for Capron in the county league until he was 14 or so, and he also played for the middle school baseball team. Then he began his playing ca-

reer at Southampton High.

He made the junior varsity team in ninth grade, but the squad had only had the chance to practice for about two weeks before the season was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For his sophomore through senior years, Whitman played on the varsity team and was coached by Billy Jenkins from 2021-22 and Darnell “Bud” Lee in 2023. Whitman pitched and played a little first base during his varsity tenure.

He received all-district honorable mention as a pitcher in his senior year, during which he helped the Indians win their second consecutive district regular season and tournament championships. Southampton now competes in the Tri-Rivers District.

Cheering Whitman on at games during his career were John Sr. and John Jr.

“It meant a lot to have their support, especially knowing they come out there and they know what they’re talking about

when they see me after the game,” Whitman said.

Like his uncle and grandfather before him, Whitman was a multi-sport student-athlete, and though he does not intend to pursue participation in competitive sports after high school, he is looking to provide insight on them for a living.

He is going to the University of Alabama with a focus on sports broadcasting.

Undoubtedly helping fuel his interest in a sports-related career is his passion for the game of baseball, which he described as “the first thing I really ever loved and enjoyed.”

He said, “It was just such a comfort every time I came back to it, whether it was any other practice or a game. It was just something I was used to and never really wanted to be away from.”

And that love for the game was strengthened by being part of an enduring family legacy.

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John Rawls Sr. is pictured throwing the final pitch of a no-hitter for the Miami Marlins in the nightcap of a doubleheader against Orlando on Aug. 25, 1966.

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In this April 2010 photo, John Rawls Jr. coaches his nephew John Whitman Clark at first base after Whitman reached base safely in his very first baseball game.

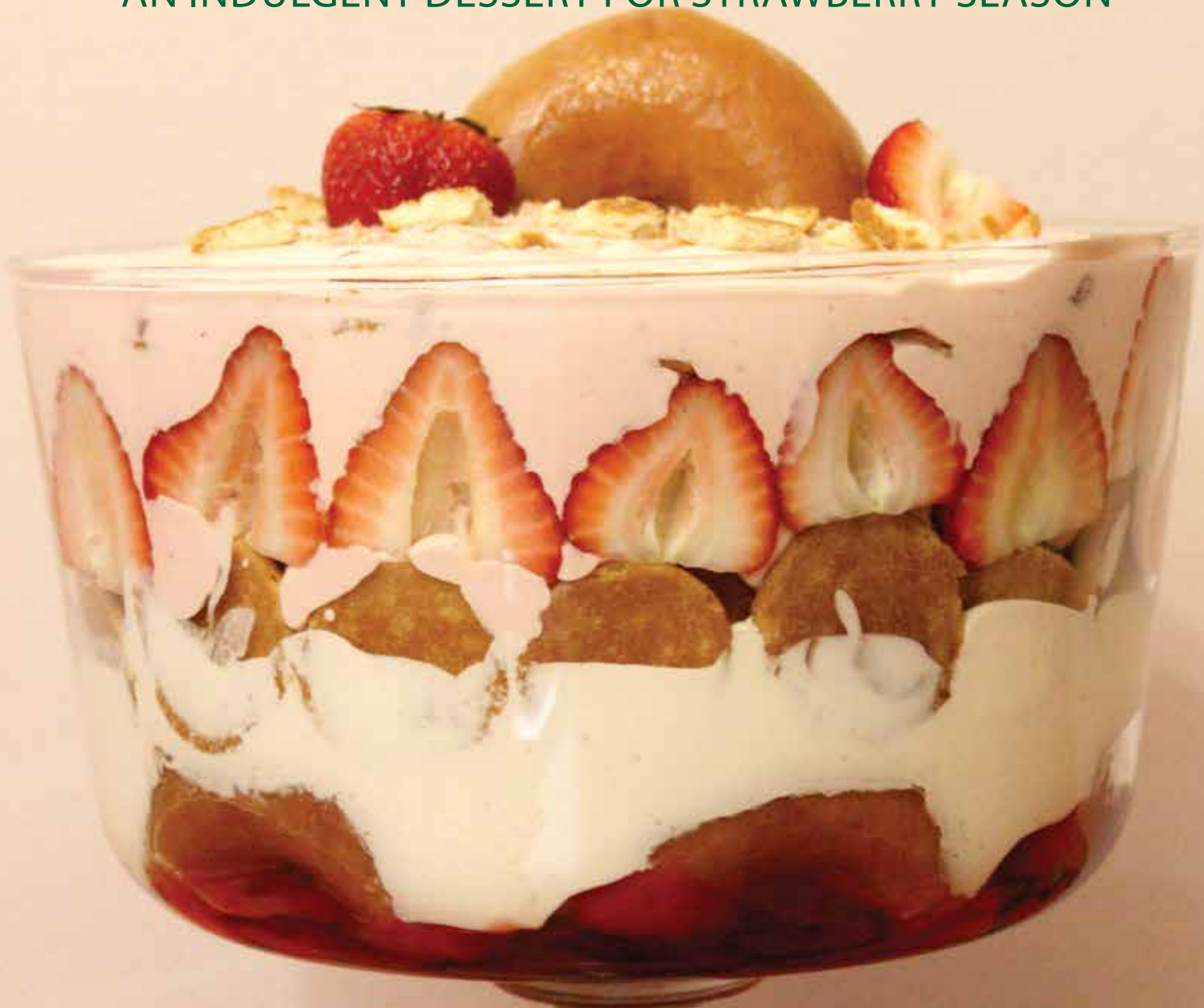


John Whitman Clark tries out a set used for sports broadcasting during a visit to the University of Alabama. He will be attending the school to study sports broadcasting.

recipes

Strawberry donut pudding

AN INDULGENT DESSERT FOR STRAWBERRY SEASON



RECIPE, STORY AND PHOTOS BY ALEXA MASSEY

There comes a time in every food aficionado's life in which they accidentally craft a recipe that is so gloriously tasty but so debilitatingly indulgent that they wonder if their creation should ever see the light of day. They wonder to themselves if

it is perhaps illegal to put together a dish with so much butter, sugar or salt that it could very well bring an army to its knees.

This is my version of that dish.

It's a well known fact to any family member or friend of

See STRAWBERRY, page 24

STRAWBERRY, from page 23

mine that I am positively obsessed with strawberries and strawberry flavored things. May was my birthday month, and it also marked the beginning of strawberry season here in Virginia. In preparing for my birthday, I set out to craft a dessert like no other; a dish that would pay homage to my strawberry obsession while topping any simple birthday cake or strawberry pie.

I came up with an idea for a strawberry twist on the traditional Southern-style banana pudding. However, that just wasn't daring enough. I needed something different. Something revolutionary. Something so decadent (and loaded with sugar) that it should only be consumed once a year.

And what, my friends, is more decadent than a Krispy Kreme donut?

Thus, my strawberry donut pudding recipe was born. This dessert combines creamy whipped topping, banana pud-

ding, sweetened condensed milk and strawberry pie filling to create a velvety-smooth mixture. We layer in fresh strawberries, vanilla wafers and—yes—Krispy Kreme donuts, sending your taste buds straight to heaven. And we'll layer everything in a trifle bowl to turn this dessert into a showstopper that'll be perfect for your next gathering. Oh, and did I mention there's no baking necessary?

Is it a sugar bomb? Yes. Is it a bit over the top? Yes. But it just might be the most special treat you've ever tasted.

Here's the recipe:

STRAWBERRY DONUT PUDDING

Prep time: 5 minutes

Assembly time: 25 minutes

Total time: 30 minutes

Servings: 10-12

INGREDIENTS

1 dozen glazed donuts (preferably Krispy Kreme!)

5 oz. package instant vanilla pudding mix

32 oz. fresh strawberries

2 cups milk

14 oz. sweetened condensed milk

1 tsp. vanilla extract

16 oz. frozen whipped topping (such as Cool Whip), thawed

21 oz. strawberry pie filling

11 oz. package vanilla wafer cookies

RECIPE:

I said once in a previous recipe that I do not bake because baking is a science

See STRAWBERRY, page 25



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STRAWBERRY, from page 24

and I am no scientist. Luckily for us, this recipe requires zero baking whatsoever! Begin by whisking together your pudding mix and milk for three minutes. Once mixed, allow the pudding to set for five minutes before adding in your 14 ounce can of sweetened condensed milk and your teaspoon of vanilla extract. Gently stir the mixture until combined.

After your pudding, vanilla and sweetened condensed milk have been properly mixed, gently fold in your thawed whipped topping. Don't overmix the topping like I did or you'll mix all the air out and the mixture will become the consistency of cake batter. We want to keep things airy if possible!

At this point, separate half of your mixture into a bowl and stir in half of your canned strawberry pie filling. This will turn the pudding mixture into a very pretty pink color, while the other bowl will remain an off-white color. Place both of the pudding mixtures into the freezer to firm up.

While the pudding chills in the freezer, slice 50% of your fresh strawberries in half. Take the remaining strawberries and slice or dice them as you see fit.

Now it's time for the fun part! To really make this dessert pop, we'll layer everything in a trifle dish or large glass bowl. The order of the ingredients is ultimately up to you, but I suggest beginning by first ladeling in the remainder of your gooey, bright-red strawberry pie filling. Cut a few of your glazed donuts in half and place them against the wall of your trifle dish so that you can see a nice arch shape on the other side of the glass. Dice up a few more of your donuts and stuff the donut pieces into a layer at the bottom of the trifle dish.

After establishing your "donut" layer at the bottom of the trifle, I recommend pouring some of your plain pudding mixture over top of the donuts before layering in some vanilla wafers and fresh strawberries. Pressing the wafers and halved strawberries up against the glass walls of the trifle makes for beautiful and fun patterns. After a few layers of donuts, vanilla wafers and strawberries, you can switch over to your pink pudding mixture to add a pink color to the trifle. Then, continue with layers of donuts, wafers, strawberries and pudding until you reach the top.

Once your trifle is filled to your liking, decorate the top with more wafers, strawberries or donuts! There's really no wrong way to put together your trifle.

After completing your trifle, place the dish into the refrigerator for at least 2 hours (if you can wait) to allow the wafers to soak up some of the pudding mixture. This dish is wonderful served cold and tastes great even after a day or two in the fridge.

And there you have it! This strawberry donut pudding will be a hit at your next birthday party or potluck. It's decadent. It's divine. It's chock-full of donuts. I recommend following it up with a cup of coffee and a big nap, and maybe after that... a few miles on the treadmill. But hey! It is strawberry season after all. Why not treat yourself?



Here's an example of one way to layer your strawberry donut pudding trifle. Begin with a layer of gooey strawberry pie filling and glazed donuts. Follow with a layer of pudding. Top these layers with vanilla wafers and sliced strawberries. Repeat this process until your glass dish is filled to the top.

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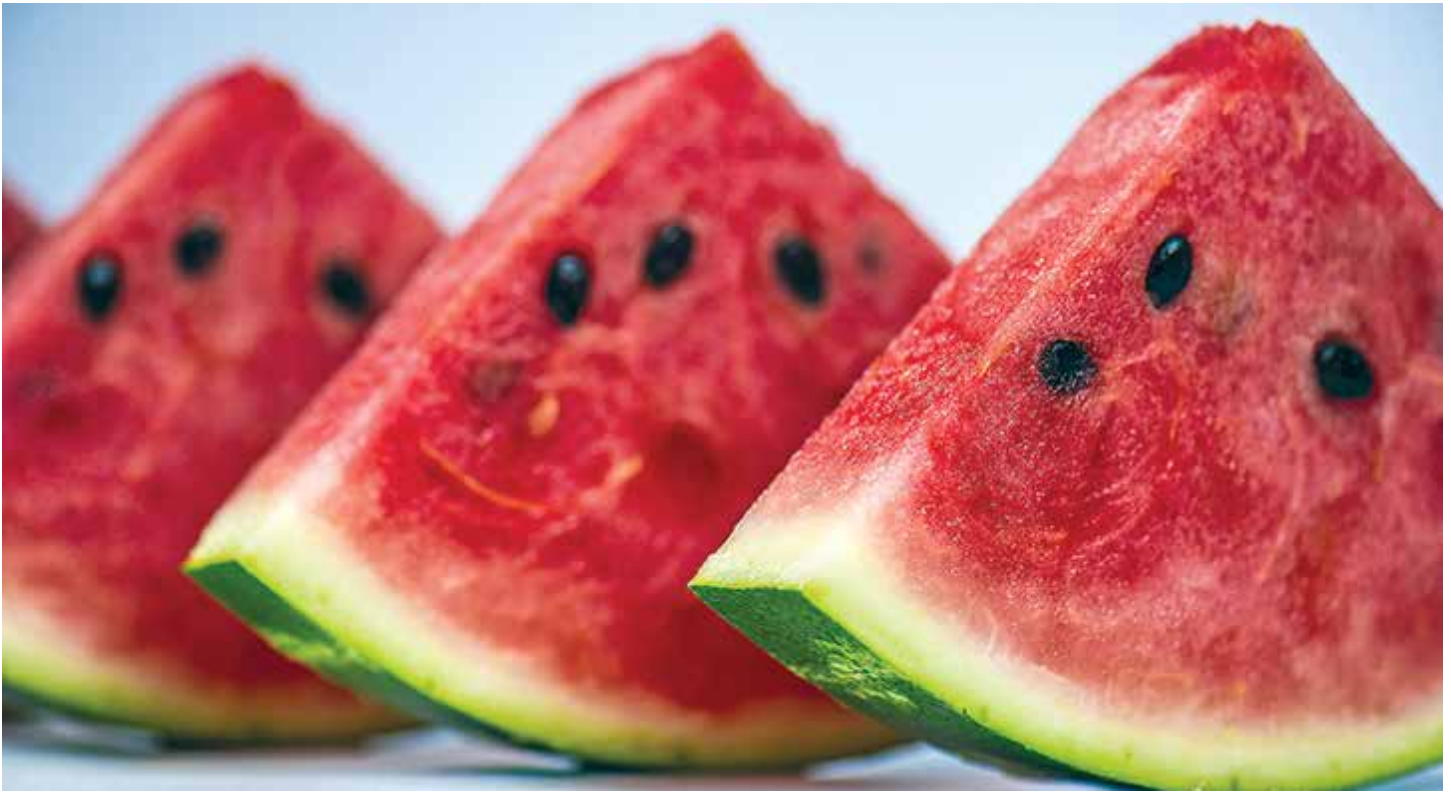
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The key to a tasty watermelon is knowing how to pick one that is ripe, while serving watermelon comes down to understanding some easy cutting strategies.

Helpful tips for picking and cutting watermelon

Watermelon is a summertime staple. Each summer, stores and farm stands have an abundance of watermelons on display, and many people feel no picnic or barbecue is complete without watermelon.

Watermelon is a refreshing option on hot days. It's ideal sliced and served, or can be included in fruit salads, smoothies or even "spiked" cocktails. The key to a tasty watermelon is knowing how to pick one that is ripe, while serving watermelon comes down to understanding some easy cutting strategies.

- Choose a watermelon that has a firm, symmetrical shape. Avoid melons with bumps, dents or cuts.

- Watermelons should be relatively heavy. They're 92% water, and that juiciness should be reflected in a substantial weight for the melon's size.

- Watermelon.org advises looking for a creamy yellow spot on the underside of the watermelon. This is called the "ground spot." It indicates where the

melon sat on the ground and ripened in the sun. Once cut from the vine, a watermelon has about three to four weeks to be consumed.

- All parts of the watermelon are edible, including the seeds and rind. The rind can be pickled or cut up to use in stir-fry dishes.

When bringing watermelon to an event, it is a courtesy to bring it already sliced or cut up. This ensures the host does not have to tackle what can sometimes be a chore. Here are three techniques to cut a watermelon easily.

Cubes

1. Cut both ends off the watermelon.
2. Stand the watermelon on one sliced end. Use the knife to slice down and cut off the rind.
3. After removing the rind from all sides of the melon, cut into discs about 1/2-inch in thickness.
4. Then cut those discs into cubes.

Slices

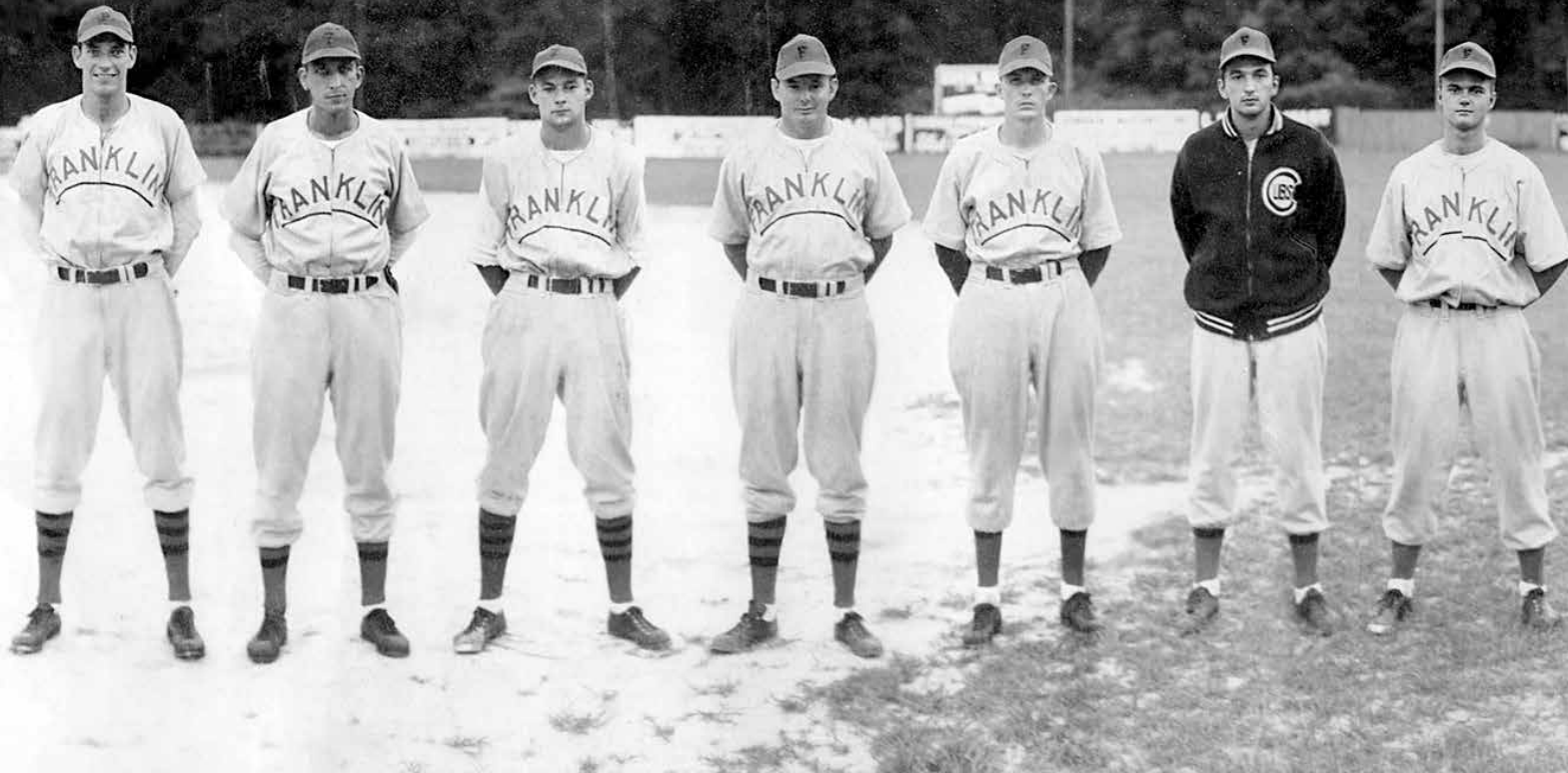
1. Cut the watermelon in half lengthwise.
2. Take one cut half and place it cut-side down.
3. Cut the watermelon into slices.
4. Repeat for the other cut half.

Strips

1. Cut the watermelon as you would with the slices. Rather than leaving it in large slices, turn the watermelon and cut the same size slices in the opposite direction. This creates strips that are easy for kids to grab and maneuver.
2. Repeat with the other half of the watermelon in the same manner.

Now that you know-how to pick a tasty watermelon pick one up at the farmers market or the grocery store. You can be sure that whether you choose to cube, slice or strip your watermelon you are in for a tasty treat. Enjoy!

looking back



FRANKLIN “CUBS” – SOUTHAMPTON “KILDEES”

STORY BY CLYDE PARKER

Seventy-five years ago, on April 23, 1948, the newly organized Class D of the Virginia Baseball League, started its inaugural first season. It was professional baseball. The League consisted of the following teams: Franklin “Cubs,” Petersburg “Generals,” Blackstone “Barristers,” Lawrenceville “Cardinals,” Emporia “Nationals,” and the Suffolk “Goobers.” In its very first game, on April 23, the Franklin Cubs played the Petersburg Generals – with Petersburg winning by a score of 7 to 5.

The Franklin team started out in 1948 as the Franklin “Cubs” – a farm team of the Portsmouth “Cubs,” owned by Frank Lawrence of Portsmouth.

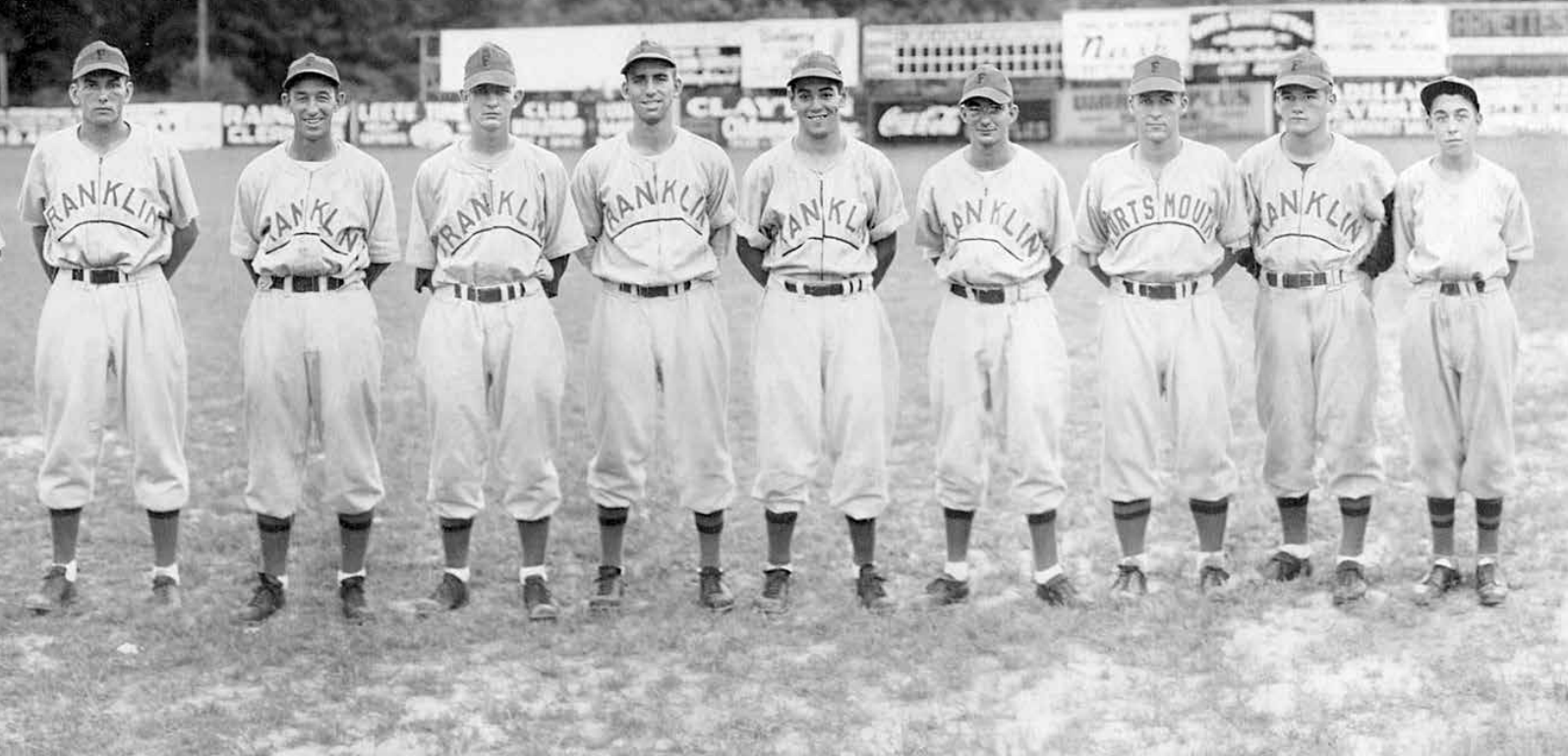
However, in 1949, ownership of the

Franklin “Cubs” was transferred from Frank Lawrence and the Portsmouth “Cubs” to the Southampton Athletic Association which was made up of individuals in Franklin and Southampton. With Harold Atkinson as business manager, and George Lacey as team manager, the Franklin/Southampton team was ramped up and officially renamed the Southampton “Kildees,” however, from then on, the team was called variously – the Franklin Kildees or the Southampton Kildees. Atkinson, due to an injury while playing for the 1948 team, was discontinued as an active player.

Under Atkinson’s leadership, the team developed dramatically in talent and financial support. He was sending out

contracts to prospective players and was developing and organizing the 1949 Kildees team. He was going right ahead with the matter of signing up players, getting the field in proper order, and attending to the multitude of details involved in having everything in readiness to receive the players when they arrived on the scene. He developed a relationship with the Lynn, Massachusetts team of the Class B New England League; exchange of players between Franklin and Lynn took place. Actually, Franklin became that year the site for Lynn’s spring training. Thirty athletes reported for the initial practice. While in Franklin, the Lynn team played an exhibition game against the Portsmouth Cubs at Franklin Field

PHOTO SUBMITTED/CLYDE PARKER

Franklin Cubs 1948.

– which at that time was located on Hill Street (now Charles Street), just behind the old Franklin High School. In addition to all his other duties and activities, Atkinson was busy lining up housing for the Lynn and Killdee players.

The 1949 Virginia League, Class D, consisted of the teams that were in the 1948 league except the Hopewell “Blue Sox” replaced the Blackstone “Barristers”. The 1949 Southampton Kildees ended the season as state champions. Membership of the 1949 team were Tink Cornwell, Jim Gillette, John Zontini, Bob Harkins, John Ricardo, Rick Ricciardi, Lennie Luke, Bucky Jacobs, Bruce Ware, Gene Hoberg, George Lacy, Bob Carlton, Ed Christoff, Arnold Atkins, Joe Marsello, Tim Talas, Everett Clark, Vermeil, Jim McKinney, Red Williams, Ray Blair, Charlie Mattox, and Frank Sangalli.

For a good part of the time, Johnny Peterson was the groundskeeper and with much assistance from volunteers,

kept Franklin Park in good order. Dean Wagenbach and Bobby Guyton were bat boys for the Franklin/Southampton team.

The 1950 Virginia League, Class D, consisted of the Southampton “Kildees,” Petersburg “Generals,” Hopewell “Blue Sox,” Elizabeth City N.C. “Albemarles,” Emporia “Nationals,” and the Suffolk “Goobers”.

The 1951 Virginia League, Class D, consisted of the Southampton “Kildees,” Colonial Heights-Petersburg “Generals,” Edenton N.C. “Colonials,” Elizabeth City N.C. “Albemarles,” Emporia “Rebels,” and the Suffolk “Goobers”.

In 1951, attendance at Franklin Field was dropping. Television was blamed, by many people, for the decline and ultimate demise of minor league baseball in small towns such as Franklin. A headline in the June 29, 1951 edition of The Tidewater News told the story. “Kildees may be forced to quit Virginia League. Poor

attendance at home games to-date seen as reason for tossing in the sponge.” The article stated that unless the team started to draw an average of 650 fans per game, they would be forced to suspend play; the crowds were frequently less than half that amount. The team did survive long enough to close out the season, finishing in fifth place for the second straight year.

The Kildees were able to play out their schedule only because the stockholders were unwilling for the team to quit in mid-season; they came through with the funds necessary to meet all expenses.

Other teams in the Virginia League were experiencing significant decline in attendance and support – obviously, the future of the league itself was in jeopardy. An editorial in the August 31, 1951 edition of The Tidewater News, entitled “Virginia League quits fight to prolong career,” revealed that the Southampton Athletic Association had voted against fielding a team in 1952.



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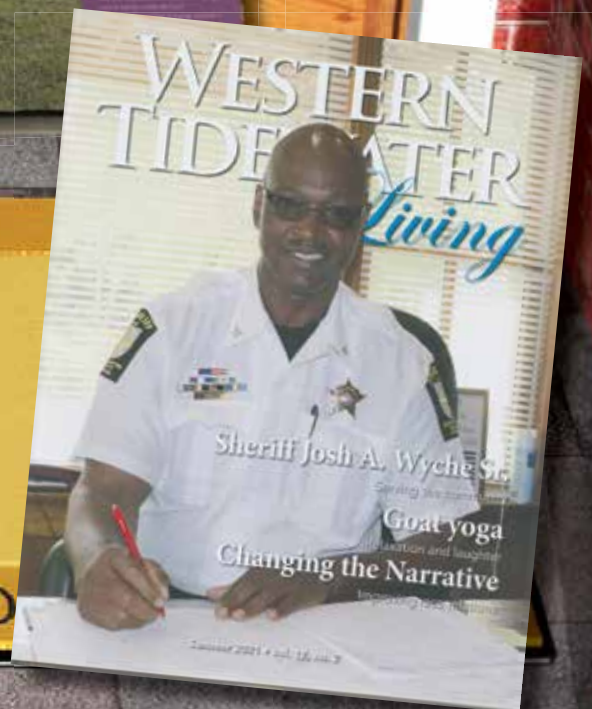
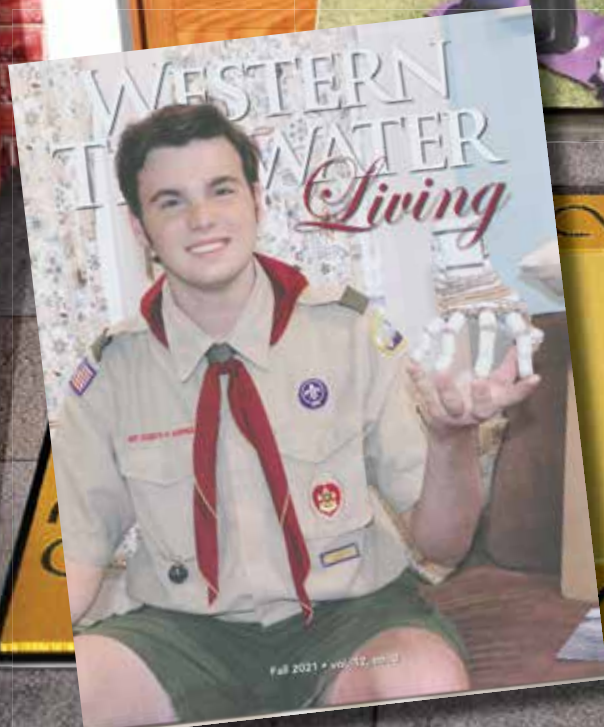
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