

FIFTY YEARS AND COUNTING

Owners, family, friends and local officials honor two longtime landmarks



TOM O'DARE / FOR THE HORRY INDEPENDENT



Myrtle Beach Mayor John Rhodes joined Legacy Committee members, Bowery staff and longtime patrons in recognizing the Bowery's longevity in the city and county since first welcoming country music fans through its doors in 1944.

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In the days before an array of multistory hotels popped up, the tallest structure on Ocean Boulevard in Myrtle Beach was the Gay Dolphin Gift Cove tower.

Not only was it the landmark that let you know you were "at the beach," it was also a tourist attraction that offered a bird's eye view of downtown. For a quarter, you could climb the winding stairs to the top of the tower, peer down at the activity on the street below or into the massive gift shop featuring thousands and thousands of

items of every description. Because of modern day liability concerns, the tower is no longer open to the public, but the Gay Dolphin still occupies the same space it has since Justin Plyler opened it in 1946.

Hurricane Hazel destroyed the original building in 1954, but the Plylers rebuilt on the same site.

While other businesses have come and gone along the boulevard, the Gay Dolphin remains one of the busier sites, and still boasts thousands and thousands of items to match the tastes and whims of the millions of visitors who come to the

giant store every year.

Today, the iconic store is run by Justin's son Buzz, who first started working at the Gay Dolphin when he was 8-years-old. He still lives in the apartment at the top of the store.

A block or so away is another Myrtle Beach icon that continues to be a major draw for visitors and locals.

The Bowery is one of the most famous country music bars, not only in Myrtle Beach and South Carolina, but also all over the U.S.

The nightclub and bar that hasn't changed very much since it first opened in 1944 had a house band for much

of the 1970s through July of 1980 called Wild Country.

Those band members later changed their name to Alabama and went on to become one of the most popular acts in the history of country music. The Bama boys still drop by their old haunt every now and then.

Both of these businesses were honored recently by the Horry County Board of Architectural Review's Legacy Business Committee.

The committee gives special recognition to businesses in Horry County that have existed for more than 50 years.

Myrtle Beach Mayor John

Rhodes said both businesses are true Myrtle Beach legends that have withstood the test of time.

Rhodes and Plyler reminisced about growing up in Myrtle Beach when times were much simpler.

"Buzz's dad had the foresight to come up with a business that visitors would return to every year," Rhodes said. "In addition to the Gay Dolphin, there was Jones Bingo adjoining the gift shop and he also had a Krispy Kreme donut shop."

Victor Shamah has owned The Bowery since September of 1980. He says he's tried to keep things pretty much the

same for the people who come back year after year.

Rhodes said The Bowery has much history that most people don't even realize.

"In addition to Alabama, there have been waiters who were very unique, girls dancing on the ceiling, and, of course, Bowery beer."

Legend has it that Alabama's Jeff Cook told Lionel Ritchie about the girls on the ceiling and that inspired his hit "Dancing on the Ceiling."

The county's Legacy Business Recognition Program has been recognized as one of the state's most innovative programs to promote economic longevity.

Horryites participate in Leadership Conference

Horry County students Kristen Chestnut and Lindsey Gerald were among 47 rising high school juniors and seniors from across South Carolina who recently participated in the S.C. Farm Bureau Federation's (SCFB) 2016 Youth Leadership Conference in Newberry.

The conference, held on the campus of Newberry College June 12-15, allowed students to gain valuable leadership skills and a better understanding of S.C. agriculture and the state's legislative process.

"Our Youth Leadership Conference, sponsored by the SCFB Women's Leadership program, allows students to explore opportunities within agriculture while developing their skills to be leaders in the industry," SCFB ag literacy director Vonne Knight said.

The conference operates on a two-year curriculum cycle where students learn about agricultural marketing and promotion one year and about government relations and agricultural advocacy the next. This year's conference focused on legislative action in South Carolina.

Industry professionals addressed students on leadership, goal setting and the legislative history of South Carolina. Dr. Nathan Saunders, curator of manuscripts at the University of South Carolina's South Caroliniana Library, discussed with participants the history of South Carolina legislation and how they can become involved in the leg-



COURTESY

Kristen Chestnut, left, and Lindsey Gerald were among 47 rising high school juniors and seniors to participate in the SC Farm Bureau Conference.

islative process. Director of organizational training and leadership development for SCFB, Jessica Cabrera, engaged participants in leadership activities essential for students to develop personally and professionally.

2016 SCFB Youth Ambassador Dalton Stalvey said, "Youth Leadership Conference is a great way to meet people from all across South Carolina who share a passion for agriculture. We were able to build leadership skills while expanding our network and agricul-

tural knowledge."

The Newberry County Young Farmers and Ranchers also hosted their annual Ag Olympics competition for the conference attendees.

"South Carolina's agricultural industry is a vital part of the state's economy," SCFB President Harry Ott said. "We advocate so our children and grandchildren can farm long after we are gone. Educating our youth on opportunities available to them within the agriculture industry is the first step

in involving students so they can have a lasting voice in today's issues."

The S.C. Farm Bureau Federation is a nonprofit membership organization formed to promote and preserve the work of family farmers and rural lifestyles across the state.

Persons interested in supporting agricultural education are encouraged to contact their county Farm Bureau office or the S.C. Farm Bureau Federation at www.scfb.org for additional information.

Two Horry County teachers learn how to incorporate ag lessons into their classes

Horry County teachers Elisabeth Capers-Funk and Melissa Bleakney were among 49 educators from across the state who recently learned how to incorporate agricultural lessons into their classrooms.

The S.C. Farm Bureau Federation (SCFB) hosted its annual Ag in the Classroom Summer Teacher Institute recently in Anderson where teachers of grades pre-K through 8 in public and private schools learned how to teach the importance of family farmers and domestically-produced food, fiber, forestry products and fuel to their students.

"It is so important that students learn where their food and resources come from," Vonne Knight, SCFB director of ag literacy said. "Providing teachers with not only the information and lesson plans they need, but also the confidence to teach agriculture makes it easy for them to do just that."

In addition to instruction about their learning and teaching styles, Institute participants also heard from agriculture and education experts from Clemson University's College Relations/Ag Careers Department, Department of Animal and Veterinary Science, the S.C. Ag Statistics Department, Clemson's apiculture specialist, and the S.C. Department of Agriculture. Participants also experienced two days of farm tours in the upstate, including Major Farm, Berry Acres, Greenbrier Farms, Kings Sunset Nursery, Setzler Farms and Sat-

terwhite Farm.

"The Ag in the Classroom program is so beneficial because we can educate teachers about the importance of agriculture, and those teachers are then going to take that back to their own classrooms of sometimes thirty students. The overall outreach of the program is unmatched," said SCFB President Harry Ott.

"I never cease to be amazed at the positive agricultural impact this course makes in the lives of teachers from across the state during this one week," Knight said. "Teachers leave with a greater understanding of and appreciation for agriculture. I have never been part of a more rewarding higher education experience."

Ag in the Classroom Institute participants received lesson plans aligned to the state curriculum standards to use in their own classroom this fall. They also left with resources they can use to teach students about agriculture and the benefits farmers add to the economy, the environment and the community.

Participants received three hours of graduate credit for recertification from Winthrop University, courtesy of SCFB's Ag in the Classroom Fund. Along with a modest registration fee, which many County Farm Bureau chapters reimburse to participants, sponsorships raised through the SCFB's Ag in the Classroom Fund cover the cost of tuition, room