

B&G Club from 1A

They wanted to share their story, one that is vital to the lives of this community.

It begins in 2014. During that period, Trent was what he called "a happy retired camper." He had been in the area since 2010, collecting his retirement checks and spending a modicum of time volunteering with Backpacks for Kids.

Dale Edwards, who was on the board of the Boys and Girls Club, needed someone who had financial experience to help out. Trent joined the board, only to find the club was going through the most tumultuous period in its history.

When asked why he got involved with the club, Trent didn't hold back: "I used to be one of these kids."

Trent came from a troubled home in the Midwest; the oldest of five kids, dirt poor and food insecure. When his father was jailed, his mother decided it was high time the family went to church. They didn't know which church, though, so Trent and three of his siblings went walking to find one.

They got lost along the way when a white bus pulled next to them. It was from the Seminole Baptist Church. The pastor, noticing the disheveled kids, offered them a lift to the church they were looking for.

"Or you could just come with me (to my church) where we

meet every Sunday," he offered.

Trent went to the Baptists, and soon after the pastor took him under his wing.

"If it hadn't been for him, I would have followed my father and my brothers to prison," he said.

Trent went on to become a successful businessman that led to his life as "a happy retired camper."

Davis, however, came from a decidedly different background. In his words, he was "privileged." Like many teenagers, he didn't have much direction.

He got into to the University of Oregon but had no idea what his major would be. He chose journalism, not because he held any deep love for the profession (though he loved to write), but simply because it didn't have any math requirements.

He graduated, but the news didn't fit his liking. Instead, he went into business, owning a few fairly successful companies.

But priorities changed and he found himself in Florence, commuting to Newport to work for the paper in advertising.

The Newport News Times is owned by Siuslaw News' parent company, News Media Corporation, so communication between the two papers was regular.

Siuslaw News' then-publisher John Bartlett offered Davis a job, first in the advertising department, then in the editorial room as a journalist.

One of Davis' first beats was the Boys and Girls Club.

Incidentally, Trent was just beginning his tenure on the board at that same time.

"I had been trying to get an interview with the director of the club (Jonathan Hicks), but I was having no success," Davis said.

However, he was able to get an interview with a few members of the board, including Trent, who informed Davis that the club was in turmoil.

"We had a stack of checks that hadn't been mailed out that was 2 1/2 inches thick," Trent recalled.

These checks for local vendors were never sent out simply because the club had no ability to pay.

All told, the club was \$120,000 in debt. That didn't include the \$30,000 in back taxes it owed.

"When you have the IRS come knocking on your door with their gold badge, that is not a pleasant experience," Trent recalled.

Davis went on to describe the meeting: "Sitting down and talking with these three board members, I was thinking 'This is going to be an obituary.'"

"What kept coming back in my mind was their tenacity. Have you ever seen that cartoon of the heron with the frog in his mouth, but the frog has his hand around the heron's mouth, never letting go? That's what I was seeing in these guys."

To Davis' surprise, the board's enthusiasm worked. The group started chipping away at the club's debts, even if it meant chipping in themselves. Board members donated \$60,000 to the club from their own pockets.

"Then the next story I got to write was how they had reduced their debt," Davis said. "They closed down the Teen Center, but it was to reorganize it."

Before this period, the Teen Center was considered an eyesore. It was run down, the lights always partially off. The components existed for something grand — pool tables, televisions, etc. — but the only things that were utilized were a few computers, used mainly to play Minecraft.

When the Teen Center reopened, the games were set up, the walls were painted, windows were opened and programs were being instituted.

"It started growing on me," Davis said. "Wow. I kind of want to be involved with this. So my wife and I came over and we started clearing trash out. I started to write more stories about how the club was improving. When the club got to reopen, it was only nine kids, but the feeling was, 'Wow, we got to open. Our feet are on the ground again.'"

It was then that John and Patricia Hardison came into the picture. According to Trent, John Hardison came to Trent and said, "Tell me about the Boys and Girls Club. Half of this town absolutely hates you guys. The other half absolutely love you guys. So tell me what the real story is."

At that point, Trent pulled out all of club's financial information and told Hardison, "I don't know if we can pull this off or not. But I'll tell you, as long as there is a breath in me, I refuse to give up."

Hardison trusted Trent's commitment.

According to Trent, he pulled him aside and said, "I've got some good and some bad news."

"The good news is that I'm going to give you money, and with what you shared with me, I know you can do this. The bad news is, you can't get it until I die. But the good news is the doctor only gave me three months to live."

All told, the Hardisons gave the club \$200,000.

They even donated the wood carved bear that sits outside the club entrance. Inside the bears mouth when it was presented to the club? A check for \$20,000.

Since the angel contributions of the Hardisons, the club has regained its footing. As improvements came, so did the public attention. Soon, donations were being made from across the region.

"This club was just coming back up from an impossible experience," Davis said. "Then I got to experience not only the

club, but the kids and their reaction to all this stuff going on. All of sudden they get programs that they care about."

Both Trent and Davis wanted it pointed out that the club is in no way "rich," a perception they believe some in the community have. While debts are now paid off, the programming and activities for the children are constantly expanding and improving. Current club fees don't fully cover everything.

The remodels that the club is going through are also costly. It has built a garden and paved a basketball court, and will install another building soon.

And then there's the personnel funds. Forty-seven percent of the youth club members are on scholarships.

And Trent only gets paid \$1 a year.

As he is still retired, Trent and the board decided it was time to make the director position paid again and turn the reigns to someone else.

When Davis found out about the open position early in 2017, he knew he had to apply. Over the next six months, he was interviewed eight times, three of them by students.

The toughest interviewers of his life, he said.

And of Davis' new pay? "I'm holding out for double of what Chuck makes," he joked.

When asked why Trent felt Davis was the best choice for the position, Trent pulled it back to story.

"Telling the story is what this (directorship) is really about," he said.

To Trent, it's about recognizing the story of each child. And not a story about a statistic or a quick anecdote, but of an individual with specific moments that add up to form a life.

It's the director's job to crystallize those moments in a clear manner, and present them in ways that truly communicate the love the program provides.

That, in Trent's mind, is why he has faith in Davis. Because he can tell the story.

When Davis was asked what his fear is for his new position, he went quiet for a moment. He looked down to the new-orientation paperwork littering his desk and said, almost in a whisper, "Let the kids down. Because without them it's nothing."

Trent has no fears about the transition.

"I have 100 percent confidence in Jack," he said. "What's impressed me about him and his wife Lori is that in the middle of the storm we were going through, Jack came to us and said, 'What can I do to help you?' When you've got people who come in and roll their sleeves up, I just have tremendous respect and admiration. I know he has the drive, not because he had to, but he wanted to."

This ultimately drove Trent's thoughts to why the club means so much to him.

"It's humbling when you see people, especially those who don't have a lot to give ... It's those that are the ones that matter the most," Trent said, tears swelling up in his eyes. "It's those that truly sacrifice. The fact that they trusted me, the fact that every time I asked, for anything, they were always there for me. That's my hope that they give that to Jack".

Trent will never leave the club, he said. It means too much to him. He'll be on the board of directors and volunteer at least once a week, probably more.

"These are like my grand-kids," he said.

And Davis won't be a complete stranger to the newspaper business, either. Aside from missing what he called the camaraderie of the Siuslaw News staff and the pure thrill of getting in a story in just before deadline, he'll be in charge of one of the Boys and Girls Club's primary modes of storytelling: Press releases.

While Trent and Davis' mediums may change, they'll go on telling the stories that they believe matter.

Like a double blind survey by the Boys and Girls Club, finding that the children's satisfaction with their work "blew the roof" over national levels, according to Davis.

Or that 100 percent of the teens are expected to graduate high school because of tutoring the club provides.

Or that one time the kids got together and... Those are other stories for another time.

And Davis and Trent will be there, enthusiastically waiting to tell them.

Stocks. Bonds. CDs. IRAs. Mutual funds.

Andy Baber, AAMS®
Financial Advisor
1010 Highway 101
Florence, OR 97439
541-997-8755
www.edwardjones.com

Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Member SIPC

Let me Showcase your property.



Ed Kopilec
Principal Broker
541 991-8630



221 Munsel Cr Lp – Log-style Fuqua home in Florentine Estates is within easy walking distance of the club house. This 3 bdrm 2 bath home has vaulted ceilings, propane fireplace in great room, butcher-lock island, ceiling fan, enclosed porch and so much more. \$210,000. #2704-17180449

TR HUNTER REAL ESTATE
541-997-1200

1749 Highway 101 • 541-997-1200



Burns' Riverside Chapel
— Florence Funeral Home —

*Your Community Friend-
Compassionate Care
for you and your loved ones.*

2765 Kingwood St. 24 Hours
Florence, OR 541-997-3416
burnsriversidechapel.com

Mr. Wizard to perform at TRC

Three Rivers Casino Resort, 5647 Highway 126, will present the band Mr. Wizard at Blue Bills Sports Bar and Tap Room on Friday, July 21, and Saturday, July 22, from 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. The group shifts from rock to top 40, country, reggae, funk and blues.



COURTESY PHOTO
Mr. Wizard

Celebrating

1995 **22** 2017

Years

Take advantage of our Anniversary Special: Take Financial possession of your new home before July 31, 2017 and receive **\$1,995.00 off** of your August Rent!


Contact our Community Relations Director for details....



Spruce Point
an assisted living and memory care community

375 9th Street ~ Florence, OR 97439 ~ (541) 997-6111 Prestige Senior Living

THE S I U S L A W N E W S . C O M



FRAA ART CENTER
120 Maple Street
Phone: 541-997-4435
Hours Open: Wed-Fri noon-5pm,
Sat 10am-5pm, Sun. noon-5pm

Classes and Workshops

Ceramics Classes:
Kids Summer Clay Camp w/ Ben Cahoon
July 24th, 25th, 27th and Art Show on 28th 2nd - 8th grade. \$55/student. All supplies included. To register: benjaminjcahoon@gmail.com

Whimsical Hand Building Ceramics w/ Alissa Clark
Wednesdays, 3-5 pm and Thursdays, 6-8 pm
No classes from July 3rd - 19th

Open Lab Ceramics on Saturdays
Drop in, work at own pace. Sat 12-5 pm
No classes from July 3rd - 19th

All ceramics classes held at Alissa's Studio, 180 Laurel Street. Call Alissa with questions: 503-857-5222

Open Studio at FRAA, Thursdays
No registration required. Drop-in, bring your materials, and create. All artistic mediums welcome. Every Thursday, 1-4 pm

Creative Writing Workshops - Writers on the River w/ Catherine Rourke
Stay tuned for next class! All writing levels and genres. Contact: 541-708-2120; CJReditor@gmail.com

Painting with John Leasure
Saturdays 9 am - 12 pm
July 15, 22 and 29, August 5, 12
Contact: jleasure@hotmail.com or 541-991-2754 for details and fees.

Oil Painting with Michael Wood
Wednesdays 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm
Contact: fmwood@msn.com for fees and more information.

For more information about classes, visit fraaoregon.org. To register for these classes, please call or visit FRAA at our art center on Maple Street.