

# Gibsons: 'We Like It Down Here'

BY SUSAN USHER

There was a time, says Flo Gibson, when if she and her husband Dave couldn't be in Myrtle Beach on the Fourth of July they thought the world would stop.

But those days are long gone for the Gibsons, who will mark 50 years of marriage this June. "These past five years of retirement have been some of the best, I think," said Dave.

They started vacationing at Holden Beach in the early 1950s, before Hurricane Hazel changed the landscape dramatically and when access was by ferry and then drawbridge.

"In Red Springs people came to Holden Beach and we came with them," said Gibson, a retired Belk store manager who credits any success of his to his wife Flo's support through the years caring for their home and family and supporting church and community endeavors.

"We like Holden Beach because it's a family beach," said Dave. "At our age we're not looking for a whole lot of activity." When children and grandchildren come, Myrtle Beach is close enough to visit, if they like.

However, the Gibsons didn't initially plan to retire here. They had purchased a lakefront lot and had building plans ready when they "chickened out". At best the beach was to be a part-time place of residence.

Explains Flo, "When we first bought at Holden Beach (in February 1987) we didn't intend to live here all the time. We had a house in Charlotte."

Dave was ready to sell their main home three months after moving into "Flo's Folly," their half of a multi-story duplex on West



FLO AND DAVE GIBSON of Holden Beach enjoy retirement at the beach and the opportunity to be involved in a new church and a new community. Shelling is a favorite pastime of Flo's.

STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick Avenue, with views of both the ocean and the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway.

Instead, they waited a year, but their decision was unchanged. "Everything fell into place; it went like clockwork," Flo recalled.

After years of volunteer work, during that first year of retirement Flo "didn't want to do anything." Gesturing well above her head, she said, "I took a vacation because I had been up to here with everything."

After attending the Holden Beach Chapel, they found a year-round church home at Camp United Methodist in Shallotte.

"The church has always been uppermost part of our life; we can't do without it," said Flo.

Their community involvement has stemmed naturally from the church and the beach. Flo's quite active in the United Methodist Women and their projects, and serves on the church Board of Trustees. She's happily involved with the Holden Beach Beautification Committee and a local shell club, and has turned their small yard into an oasis for birds and friends.

She walks four miles a day on the beach, gathering shells as she goes. "I am actually

closer to God when walking on that strand than anywhere else," says Flo. Baskets and shelves of shells fill their home, including several of the rare North Carolina state shell, Scotch bonnet, found at Holden Beach.

While work had been Dave's hobby before, after retirement, he told Flo, "I can do this stuff as good as you can." Now volunteer work is more or less his hobby.

As a treat for Flo, he does most of the cooking now, and it's become something of a hobby. He volunteers with a meals-on-wheels program one day a week, serves on the Holden Beach Board of Adjustments and is active in the Camp United Methodist Men and the South Brunswick Interchurch Council. He spent several years helping get the now-defunct Brunswick Adult Day Care Center programs up and running.

Both Flo and Dave are involved in Emmaus, an individual and church spiritual renewal program. Dave serves on the regional board of directors.

They also enjoy helping care for a nephew in Georgia, providing

respite for his parents. While the quiet and beauty of Holden Beach are among its chief attractions for these retirees, the gregarious Dave admits to an occasional itch.

"I worked with people all of my life. Once in a while," he says, "I want to be around more people and I get in the car and head to Wilmington."

The Gibsons say they have no regrets in their choice of a place to retire.

"The people in Brunswick County are extremely nice people and very helpful," concludes Dave. "We like it down here."

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