

Meet



Who are these people?

You know the ones I'm talking about. They drive around in their cars with stickers that say, "SSI Local." Is this an exclusive group? If so, how does one join?

When I think about a "real" SSI local, three people come to mind. First is Bill Strother. He is a real native. He was born here, raised here, went to the University of Georgia, came back and raised his family here. We met Bill and his wife, Debbie, when we arrived in 1979. They lived right down the street from us (with their two sons, Carlton and Clay. A third one, Stewart, was still to come).

The island of Strother's youth was much different from today. Bill remembers that back in his youth, young people hitchhiked wherever they wanted to go, including to Brunswick and back to the island.

"One day I decided to skip school. So, while hitchhiking across the causeway, a car did stop to pick me up. It was my mother! What a shock that was!" he recalls.

Evidently, when it came to hitchhiking, safety was never the issue. Back then, you knew everyone.

Those were also the days before political correctness.

"Remember when Hurricane Dora hit our coast in 1964?" Strother says. "There was much beach erosion and President Johnson came to St. Simons Island to see the damage. I rode my bike down to see him, proudly displaying a Goldwater bumper sticker."

Back in his day, there were no corporate jets thundering over the island, just Navy blimps from Glynco drifting quietly overhead. Lest one forget, the firemen stationed on Demere Road always marked the lunch hour with a blast on their whistle at noon. Movies under the stars wasn't a novel treat but a regular adventure at the drive-in theater. The

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