

FORT MORGAN NEWS

August 2017~Issue 126



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi, Folks:

Not much to report. Typical situation for this time of year--too much traffic, lots of rain, and heat!

Hope to see you at our August meeting.

Paul

Paul Barefield



MEMBER NOTICES

Fort Morgan Volunteer Fire DepartmentChief Glenn Stevens

The Fire Department is very appreciative of the generous response that we have received since our donation request letter was mailed out last month. The letter was intended not only to help generate revenue for the Department, but also to inform the community on how the funds are being spent. I want to thank everyone for their continued support of our Volunteer Fire Department.



June turned out to be one of our busiest months on record with a call volume of 52 runs. With dangerous surf conditions caused by Tropical Storm Cindy, we rode the beaches informing visitors to stay out of the water, posted warnings on our marquee sign at Station 1, and called all the television news stations so that they could announce the danger of swimming while under tropical storm advisories. With all our attempts to advise the public of the danger in the Gulf, we still suffered 3 fatalities during the month of June. In addition to the 3 fatalities, we had 17 near drownings (2 transported by helicopter) and 3 water rescues. Other calls that were non-water related included:

- 7 false alarms · 6 general medical · 4 personal assists
- 3 missing persons · 3 grease fires · 2 car accidents
- 2 elevator entrapments · 1 illegal burn · 1 animal rescue

If anyone has an interest in being involved with the Fire Department, come by and watch us train on the 1st and 3rd Mondays each month at 6:30 p.m. at Fire Station No. 1.

New High Water Rescue Truck

Fort Morgan Planning & Zoning Advisory Committee.....Chan West, Chair

The Baldwin County Planning Commission has approved an amendment to our District 25 zoning regulations covering parking space requirements for dwelling units with a large number of bedrooms. This is awaiting action by the County Commission. The hope is that this will alleviate some of the parking problems on streets near the beach. Details will be given after the County Commission acts.

Our advisory committee will meet at 9:00 am Wednesday, August 2, at Shell Bank Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, to consider a variance request (V-170029) related to a rezoning request which was approved last month. They are requesting a variance for a 58' lot width to 60' (60' is the zoning specification). This is no change from what was in the rezoning request. Last month's report is copied:

- Z-17025 To rezone 6.532 acres on the south side of Highway 180, east of Pontoon Lane, Palmtree Penthouses, from RSF1 to RSF4, 98 lots into 17 lots approximately 60' x 180' for single family dwellings. There was much discussion from the attendees about the types of higher density development that could happen under the RSF4. If this request is approved, only single family dwellings would be permitted. The rezoning to 4 was needed to meet the minimum square feet of the lot. Anything else would require another re-zoning request. The committee recommended approval.



Please document, with photos, any problems you see with overflow parking along the streets in District 25 due to high-density “duplexes.” Send to Chan West at chan@goefish.com

The Fort Morgan Planning and Zoning Advisory Committee will post on our website [www.fortmorgancivic.org] re-zoning and variance request notices received from the county commission. Please refer other non-FMCA property owners who wish to stay up to date to our website. Notices of rezoning requests are posted on the property involved and mailed to adjacent landowners by the County.

FMCA also will send a special email to all members on our email list of the time and place of our Fort Morgan committee meeting and will post signs on Fort Morgan road near both fire stations. Our email notice to members is to let non-adjacent property owners who may be affected by the request express their concerns to our local committee before it submits a recommendation to the county. Any FMCA member who receives the Fort Morgan NEWS by U.S. Postal Service and wishes to receive these rezoning request notices will have to furnish us with an email address, to be sent to Chan West at: chan@goefish.com

We encourage property owners with vested interests to bring their concerns and comments to these meetings. In most cases these notices are received about 10 days before the county Planning and Zoning Commission or Board of Adjustments meeting.

Get Out the Vote!

Remember to vote August 15th for the U.S. Senate vacancy left by Jeff Sessions. There are 18 candidates—10 Republicans and 8 Democrats! If needed, a runoff will be held September 26th. For those of you who are new to Fort Morgan community, our polling place is Fort Morgan Fire Station #1, next to Shell Bank Church, on Fort Morgan Road. Polls are open 7am to 7pm.

Fort Morgan State Historic Site.....Mike Bailey, Senior Historian

On August 5 there will be a commemoration of the Battle of Mobile Bay which was fought in 1864. This year there will be a number of reenactors from Mississippi and Alabama. We will be firing artillery, including the 32-pounder seacoast gun, as well as infantry drill. The event will start at 9AM and will end at 3PM.

Community History ~ The “Indian Ditch”

Who would ever guess that a five-year-old boy in Andalusia, Alabama, picking up arrow heads on his grandparents’ farm would someday be inspired to investigate a phenomenon long referred to by locals as a ditch and dream of it becoming world-famous?

Harry among the Utah Petroglyphs

Harry King of Little Lagoon has been investigating for the past five years the existence of what is called by long-time residents “The Indian Ditch.” After retiring from the Navy in Pensacola in 1992, Harry and his family settled in Gulf Shores along the Lagoon. About five years ago, he became interested in the “Ditch” and began kayaking along the shores of Oyster Bay and Mobile Bay, intrigued by rumors of prehistoric Indian villages along the coast. He researched the written historic materials available but none provided information on the Ditch and indicated there probably were no permanent Indian settlements in this area. For several years, he kayaked along shell mounds and identified what he



believed were signs of a Native population. But the Ditch remained elusive. He acquainted himself with neighboring property owners, gaining permission to walk the land in search of a portion of the Ditch. Long-term property owners were understandably extremely suspicious of strangers wandering around, and Harry was turned away and shut out many times. He did, however, have a stroke of luck when he met one particular lady who recognized him as the person who had done her a favor 20 years earlier! Walking with a cane, she took him to see where part of the Ditch was located. What he observed was a hand-dug canal 30 feet wide and six feet deep.

Since then, Harry has—with the help of local people and the director of the Archeology Department at the University of South Alabama—uncovered evidence that the Ditch was indeed dug by local Native Americans approximately 1400 years ago! Carbon dating has been obtained with the help of the USA Archeology Department. Harry is working on the theory that this site is part of an Indian Trade Canal dug in order to provide a safe trade route by avoiding rough seas in the Gulf, much like the current

Intra-Coastal Waterway. Currently, there is only one other known Indian Trade Canal—near Naples, Florida. Harry has been in touch with their museum’s curator who confirms that canal is about 1200 years old.

Along with the USA Archaeology Department chair, Harry and volunteers will be excavating on Fort Morgan peninsula this coming fall. Anyone interested in volunteering for this difficult work may contact Harry King to be considered for this historic team. Contact Harry at: (251) 610-1565 (call or text) or harryking1525@gmail.com

[We will be providing more information on this project in future NEWS editions.]

ATTENTION FORT MORGAN STORYTELLERS ! DO YOU KNOW ANY FORT MORGAN STORIES?

Do you have an interesting story or a fond memory of earlier days in the Fort Morgan community? Once again we’re requesting articles from folks who have history in this area describing earlier times in our Fort Morgan community. We would welcome stories about the people and events recalled from growing up or living here—stories which make this area unique and unforgettable—or historical events before any of us lived here. Photos would be especially appreciated (with or without a story)! If you know a good tale or have a valued memory but are unable to write it out and would like to tell it, please let the Editor know. A story-telling session can be arranged, in person or by phone, and your story will be rescued for posterity. Call Sonja at 251-233-6208 or email her at 39sunnisands@gmail.com

LET’S CAPTURE FORT MORGAN COMMUNITY HISTORY BEFORE IT’S TOO LATE.

No-Name Road Repair Update

The following message was received from Heather Tassin, Site Director for Fort Morgan.

“I did meet with USFWS late last week and we discussed options for replacement of the current asphalt. My goal is to have a plan in place this fall so we can identify funding sources. Thank you for your continued interest and support of Fort Morgan Historical Site.”

Fort Morgan Hurricane Re-Entry Pass Available Only at Gulf Shores City Hall



Baldwin County has elected not to mail Fort Morgan residents decals for the 2017-2018 season. As a courtesy, re-entry decals for Fort Morgan residents may be picked up in person at Gulf Shores City Hall Revenue Division. Two decals per unit may be purchased at the cost of \$5 each, unless a hurricane or tropical storm **watch** has been issued for our area, in which case the fee doubles. Use the main entry at City Hall, stop at the security window, show your proof of residence (deed, lease or utility bill showing property street address) and your ID. It is a quick, painless process if you have the proper items. **Decals will not be issued after a hurricane or tropical storm warning has been issued.** For more detailed information about decals call (251) 968-1120 or visit the city’s

website at www.gulfshoresal.gov.

Turtle Tracks 2017 ~~~~~ Total = 68 Nests!!

HATCHING TIME IS HERE!!! This week four nests are being monitored for activity, and next week 5 will be added to the list. Monitors are ready to begin nest sitting as soon as sounds of activity are heard in the nest.

Although we lost 8 nests to Tropical Storm Cindy, the future of 4 is still hopeful. Two are already exhibiting healthy hatchling noises.

4 Important Reminders “For the Turtles”

- [1] **Turn Off Lights** at dark that shine on, or can be seen from, the beach. “Turtle Lighting” is available from local home supply stores.
- [2] **Use Red Light Only** on the beach at night, not LED or white light. LED lights blind not only the turtles, but the volunteers, too!
- [3] **Fill in Holes** dug in the sand when leaving the beach for the day. Some huge holes have resulted in turtles being stuck and unable to lay their nests.
- [4] **Remove Items** from the beach when leaving each day to prevent turtles from becoming entangled and stranded.

Fort Morgan Crime Report ~ July 2017.....Sgt. Nathan Lusk, BCSO

July 2, 2017	Breaking and Entering Vehicle	6000 blk of Sea Shell Drive	firearms stolen
July 13, 2017	Breaking and Entering Vehicle	4500 blk Highway 180	firearms stolen
July 14, 2017	Breaking and Entering Vehicle	400 blk Harbor Light Cir	firearms stolen
July 14, 2017	Breaking and Entering Vehicle	2000 blk Ponce De Leon Ct	firearm stolen

These were all thefts from **unlocked** vehicles and preventable crimes. Please remove valuables from your vehicles and lock your doors. Security cameras and exterior lights are encouraged. If you have video cameras and are near the areas listed, please check them and call the Sheriff's Office. As always, report suspicious activity.

We request that a family member notify us of any FMCA member's death and the website where an obituary and funeral arrangements can be found. With over 400 member families, we have no certain way of knowing of a member's death.

Baldwin County Commission Contacts

Commissioners:

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To speak at a regular commission meeting, you must have signed up before the meeting. Check the dates, times and locations for all meetings at <http://www.baldwincountyal.gov>

FMCA Executive Board Contacts

If you have questions, need information or would like to volunteer, please contact one of the following board members.

Officers

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Paul Barefield

540-7727

csbarefield@gmail.com

Vice President

Ernie Church

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Treasurer

Chan West

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Secretary

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FMCA 2017 MEETINGS

FMCA Monthly Member Meetings ~ 2nd Monday, 6:30pm, Shell Banks Church:

August 14 ~ September 11 ~ October 9 ~ November 13

Fort Morgan Civic Association
P. O. Box 5313 ~ Gulf Shores, AL 36547
www.fortmorgancivic.org

Community History

The following poem was shared with us by Hattie Little Smith a while before she passed away. Hattie was one of the first residents of Surfside Shores, before there were phone lines or school buses. Her son Barry has given permission for printing here. I read the poem to him by cellphone while he was in Spain, toward the end of a pilgrimage. He had never heard it before. As usual, Hattie struck a chord with her images of the Gulf.

“17”

How far is it from out of a box and onto a seagull's wing?
From the grocery list to a page of poetry?

I live 10 miles from the beach.

I always walk too fast at first for the beach.
It takes a steady, slow beachcomber's stride.
And measured strokes of a walking stick,
preferably a bamboo cane
washed up by the tide.

Beachcombing is a skill, an art.
Walking should be done steadily,
but not so steadily as to prevent hesitance at some seadrift,
poking with the stick to uncover a treasure.
A whelk, an angel's wing, a plaid coquina.
And always a long look at a bottle...a message? a map? a distress note?

More than once
I have taken my own distress to the beach,
tightly corked inside some container of my life,
and in the remarkable release of the sea, have set it free.

A beachcomber nears sandpipers on the tide line and sets them into flight.
Memories are stirred like that.

Finding the remains of a bonfire
reminds me of evenings when stars replace the gulls in the seascape.
The magnetism of warmth and
firelight draws the cottage dwellers together.
Sometimes it seems like a primitive ritual:
fickle sun worshippers by day turning with casual infidelity
to their fire gods at night.

But even in the communal spirit of a beach bonfire
there is a sense of separateness,
each one from the other.
No matter how many footprints
mark the wet sand in any one place, every pair
belongs only to itself
beside the sea.

The sea makes every one a loner.
Perhaps it's the vastness of the almighty ocean and
every man against the elements.

The beachcomber meanwhile maintains Shalom.