

FORT MORGAN NEWS

June 2018~Issue 136



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi, Folks,

We had a good turnout at the May meeting. David Whetstone told us about his plan for forming a group of supporters to help us in our efforts to control development on our peninsula.

Hope to see a good crowd at the June meeting.

Paul

Paul Barefield



MEMBERSHIP

~~~~~CHAN WEST, TREASURER

On May 7 we mailed out 130 delinquent dues letters to 2017 members who receive the monthly NEWS by email and had not paid 2018 dues. **To date 56 still have not paid.** In the past, our policy has been to drop from the membership list all who have not paid by April 30. This year, since there was such a large number, we have extended the drop date to June 15. Those who do not do email already have been dropped.

### Fort Morgan Volunteer Fire Department ~~~~~Chief Glenn Stevens

Your Fire Department responded to 22 calls in April:

~ 10 medical            ~ 7 false alarms            ~ 4 public assists            ~ 1 illegal burn under a house

Please be advised that we are under an ADEM air quality burn ban from May 1 through the end of October.

Even though Fort Morgan experiences a similar number of drownings as other beach communities, Fort Morgan draws more negative publicity due to the lack of municipally-supported beach safety programs like those in Gulf Shores and Orange Beach. Local news media have erroneously reported our drowning count at 7 for the past two years, when the actual number is 2 for 2017 and 1 for 2018.

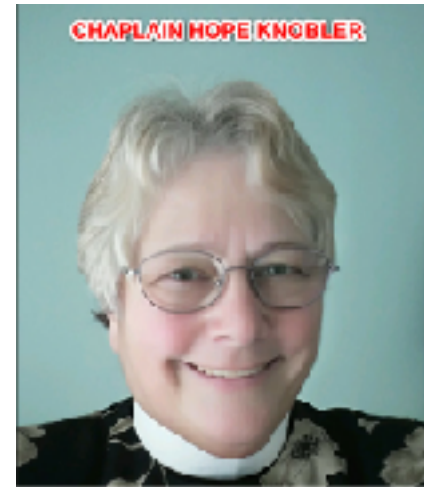
[Editor's NOTE: If making any comparisons, remember that Fort Morgan Peninsula is nearly 20 miles long, while Orange Beach and Gulf Shores have a few miles each to cover with life guards on duty supported by city budgets.]

The Baldwin County Commission, in coordination with EMA and Fort Morgan VFD, has decided to take a proactive role in publicizing the dangers of swimming in the Gulf when rip current advisories have been issued. The County Commission agreed to purchase the following signs that would advise and educate residents and tourists:

- Every public access point will display a sign explaining the dangers of rip currents and a sign advising swimmers to call 968-TIDE for surf conditions before entering the Gulf.
- There will be "Danger-High Risk of Rip Current" signs placed strategically along Hwy. 180, and the Fire Department can light them up when appropriate using remote control devices.

In addition to these signs, the EMA has agreed to let us use their portable LED highway signs, if available, for holiday weekends expecting a high risk of rip currents. **Two were in place along Fort Morgan Road for the recent Memorial Holiday week-end.**

Commissioner Skip Gruber pushed through a proposal that authorized the County Commission to purchase a remote-controlled buoy, called the “EMILY,” and donate this device to the Fort Morgan Volunteer Fire Department. The “EMILY” would be used for rescues when conditions are too rough for rescue swimmers or watercraft to enter the Gulf. The swimmer in distress would need to be conscious and have enough strength to hold onto the buoy. Another use for “EMILY” would be getting a flotation device out to the swimmer in distress while the watercraft is enroute. We are very appreciative of the steps taken by our County Commission and EMA. The delivery of “EMILY” and the initial installation of the signs are expected around mid-June.



The Fire Department is proud to announce that a Chaplain has been added to its membership. Hope Knobler, a pastor with Grace Lutheran Church, has graciously volunteered her services to our Department. Chaplain Hope will be of great value helping our firefighters cope with the stressful situations they encounter and lending her assistance to families that have been devastated by unexpected circumstances.

As always, our meetings are open to the public every 1st and 3rd Monday at 6:30 p.m. at Fire Station No. 1.

**For the safety of your family, visitors or tenants:  
Monitor surf advisories before going into the Gulf  
Obey any flag warnings posted**

**Post reminders in your home of the dangers of rip tides and storm currents  
SEE ATTACHED RIPTIDE NOTICE & POST IN YOUR HOME**

**HAPPY NEWS!**

### **Gulf Highlands Parcel Update**

Alabama Coastal Heritage Trust just announced that the acquisition of the wonderful 113-acre Gulf Highlands parcel is now complete. This rare large undeveloped Gulf-front parcel is located just west of the Beach Club. ACHT proposed this acquisition to the state of Alabama to utilize BP NFWF funds generated by the post-oil spill settlement with BP. The Trust anticipates that a festive “ground-breaking” event will be scheduled in the coming months to celebrate the preservation of this superb beach and dune habitat. All friends will be invited. Many Fort Morgan community members have been deeply involved through many years in protecting this treasure. Stay tuned!

### **Alabama Coastal Heritage Trust Seeks Board Members**

For the past 23 years, ACHT has been the guardian and champion of preservation on the Fort Morgan Peninsula where pristine beach and dune habitat continues to be endangered by aggressive development. The late Tom Hodges of Fort Morgan community was a founding member of ACHT. The Trust would now love to have another board member from the Fort Morgan community to assist in their exciting work. ACHT continues to build and marshal an endowment and receive donation of lands to preserve more of Fort Morgan in its natural state. Anyone interested in becoming a board member is asked to contact Hank Caddell at 251-478-8880 or email [hhc45@bellsouth.net](mailto:hhc45@bellsouth.net). For more information about ACHT, visit the website: <http://alabamacoastalheritagetrust.org>

### **Keep Fort Morgan Beautiful~~~~~Chan West**

We now have volunteers signed up for all sections except Mile 14 to the city limits. We do have a couple of volunteers who have been doing a mile for a long time and would welcome a replacement or assistant. Miles 14 to 15 were recently picked up by the Lions Club, but they do that only twice a year – so we need a good citizen to take on that short section (city limits at 14.7 to mile 15). Grabbers furnished! Call or email me to volunteer. Any time that you see roadside trash and have a few minutes, consider picking it up.

## **Turtle Tracks Fort Morgan 2018~~~~~Total: 3 Nests!~~~~~Debbie Harbin, Team Leader**

Fort Morgan Share the Beach team wants to thank everyone who donated to make it possible for us to have a UTV to make our turtle patrol run much smoother. A special thanks to Fish River Grill, Sunset Cork Room, Dr. John McAtee, Jeannie Grandberry and the Lee Family Trust, Alabama Fleet Feet Running Club and Sassy Bass Fort Morgan Restaurant. The employees from Sassy Bass also donated from their tip money to our fund. To all the individuals from Fort Morgan and around the country THANK YOU.



We had our first nest on May 19<sup>th</sup>, and having the UTV getting the equipment out to process the nest so much easier.

Volunteers & New UTV at Nest A-1 5/19/18! →

Sunday May 27<sup>th</sup> was an exciting night. Visitors called the turtle hotline and alerted the team that we had a turtle on the beach. An “All Hands” call was sent out. On arrival, Mama Turtle had just gone back into the water but several team members were lucky to see her. Mama had no flipper tags. [She had not been tagged during the USGS study of our turtle population the last several years]. Because of its location, the team moved 121 eggs to safety near the dunes. Thanks to all who came out because this is no easy task in the dark. Barb Nash, our expert egg locator, found the eggs. This is Nest A-2, the second in Fort Morgan Community.

Nest A-3 was found Wednesday the 30<sup>th</sup> near the Beach Club. The clutch of eggs was moved closer to the dunes due to the high water level in the nest.

Please take your chairs and beach supplies in at night and turn off bright outside lights. Thank you for your interest and support of the Fort Morgan Share the Beach Team. If you have questions or need additional information, contact team leader, Debbie Harbin, at 251-391-8333 or Ken Lee at 410-610-3690.

## **Fort Morgan Crime Report~~~~~Donnie Payne, BCSO**

Well, it has been another quiet month on the peninsula. There were only four reportable cases: a natural death investigation, a criminal mischief, theft of a tag and an investigation where a gun was pulled on a security guard that was determined to be unfounded. All but the death investigation occurred at the Beach Club.

### **FMCA Executive Board Contacts**

#### **Officers**

|                |                |              |                                                                            |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| President      | Paul Barefield | 540-7727     | <a href="mailto:csbarefield@gmail.com">csbarefield@gmail.com</a>           |
| Vice President | Ernie Church   | 334-220-0851 | <a href="mailto:ecaces4@gmail.com">ecaces4@gmail.com</a>                   |
| Treasurer      | Chan West      | 979-4932     | <a href="mailto:chan@goefish.com">chan@goefish.com</a>                     |
| Secretary      | Carol Kittrell | 251-605-4134 | <a href="mailto:ckittrell@southalabama.edu">ckittrell@southalabama.edu</a> |

#### **Standing Committee Chairs**

|                               |                 |              |                                                                    |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| District 25 Planning & Zoning | Chan West       | 979-4932     | <a href="mailto:chan@goefish.com">chan@goefish.com</a>             |
| Editor Fort Morgan NEWS       | Sonja Sanders   | 233-6208     | <a href="mailto:39sunnisands@gmail.com">39sunnisands@gmail.com</a> |
| Future Fort Morgan Options    | Ernie Church    | 334-220-0851 | <a href="mailto:ecaces4@gmail.com">ecaces4@gmail.com</a>           |
| Membership                    | Bonnie Lowry    | 540-9327     |                                                                    |
| Sunshine                      | Vickie Matranga | 543-1555     | <a href="mailto:vpowers110@gmail.com">vpowers110@gmail.com</a>     |

### **FMCA 2018 MEETINGS**

**FMCA Monthly Member Meetings ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, 6:30pm, Shell Banks Church**

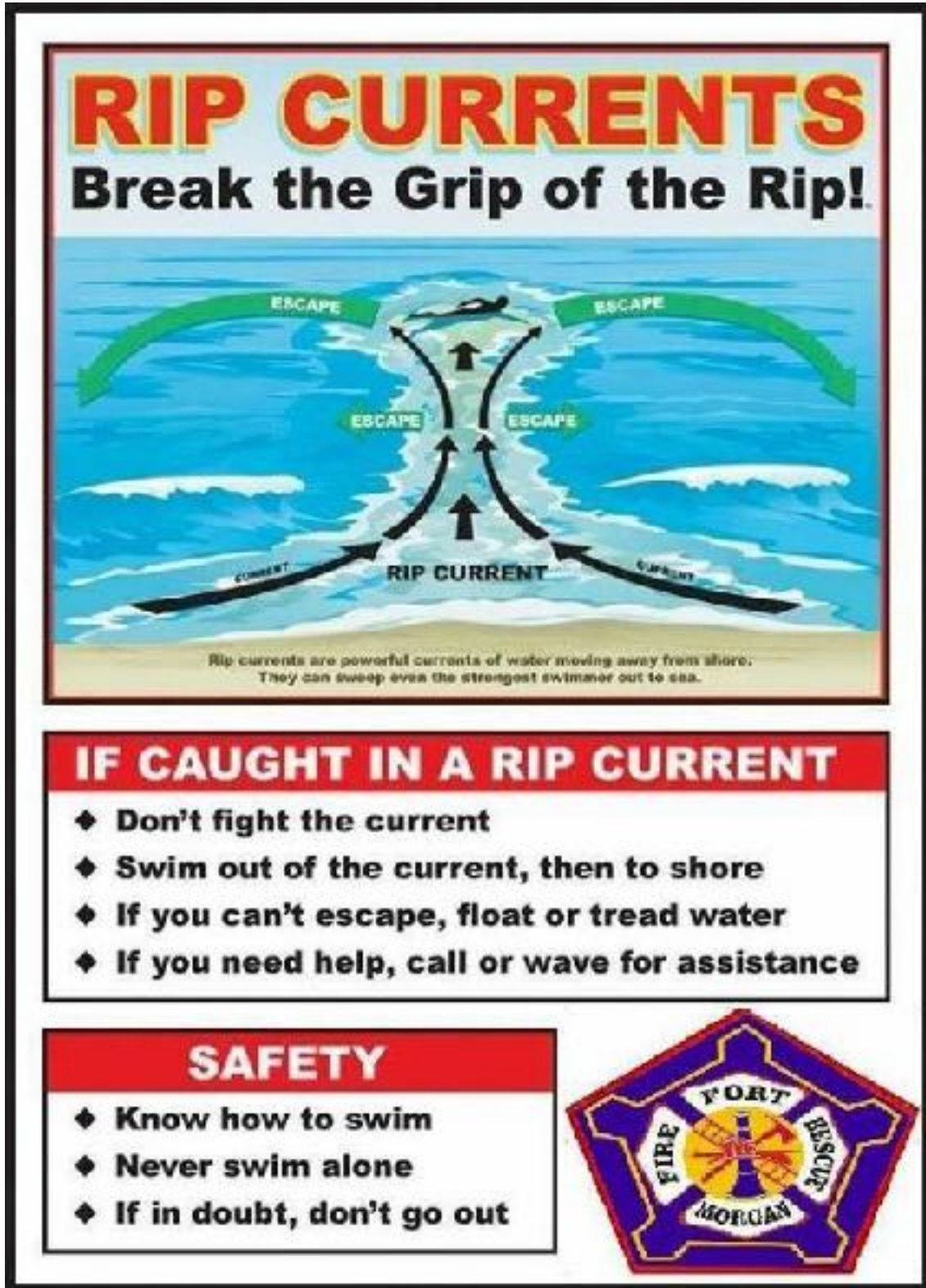
**June 11 ~ July 9 ~ August 13 ~ September 10 ~ October 8 ~ November 12**

**Fort Morgan Civic Association**

**P. O. Box 5313 ~ Gulf Shores, AL 36547**

**[www.fortmorgancivic.org](http://www.fortmorgancivic.org)**

Please post the Riptide Poster in your Fort Morgan home.  
Advise your family, friends and visitors of the dangers of this deadly phenomenon.



**RIP CURRENTS**  
**Break the Grip of the Rip!**

The diagram shows a swimmer caught in a rip current. Black arrows labeled 'CURRENT' and 'RIP CURRENT' point away from the shore. Green curved arrows labeled 'ESCAPE' point back towards the shore. A swimmer is shown in the center of the rip current, with arrows indicating the path to escape.


Rip currents are powerful currents of water moving away from shore.  
They can sweep even the strongest swimmer out to sea.

**IF CAUGHT IN A RIP CURRENT**

- ◆ Don't fight the current
- ◆ Swim out of the current, then to shore
- ◆ If you can't escape, float or tread water
- ◆ If you need help, call or wave for assistance

**SAFETY**

- ◆ Know how to swim
- ◆ Never swim alone
- ◆ If in doubt, don't go out



The logo is a purple pentagon with a yellow border. Inside, there's a yellow circle with a red fire hydrant and a red fire truck. The words 'FORT', 'MORGAN', 'FIRE', and 'RESCUE' are written around the circle.