

FORT MORGAN NEWS

April 2019~Issue 146



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all FMCA members!

Spring has sprung and it looks to be another busy year in our little corner of paradise. You may have noticed an increased police presence in the Fort Morgan community lately. The Baldwin County Sheriff's Department is out patrolling the area to ensure public safety and quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Sergeant Walker with BCSO Criminal Investigations has indicated that he would like to hold a Q&A meeting for District 25 residents near the end of April. I will be sure to keep you all in the loop on the date and time. I'm glad to know that the BCSO is interested in community feedback and actively working to keep the lines of communication open.



It's with a heavy heart that I announce that Ms. Sonja Sanders has passed. Sonja was a huge part of this organization as the Editor for 145 editions of the Fort Morgan News. For 12 years, even through her struggle with a terminal illness, Sonja made this publication available every month in order to help strengthen the Fort Morgan community through the sharing and exchange of information.

I am happy to say that, as this community often does, a volunteer has stepped up to take over the role as Editor of the FMCA News. Ms. Karrie Lovins will be coordinating this publication for our group for this 146th edition and onward. Karrie, thank you for taking on this role. We all certainly appreciate your time and effort.

This month our guest speaker will be Ms. Chan West. She is presenting, from what I have heard, a very informative presentation about the sea turtles that call our beaches and waters home. ***FYI*** We will now be including the coming months meeting agenda in the newsletter. This is being done to help get and keep members more involved with what is discussed at our meetings. As always, I encourage members to help spread the word about our association. If your neighbors aren't members, invite them to a meeting! See you all on April 8th!

Joe

Joe Emerson

FMCA April Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Monday April 8

FMCA 2019 MEETINGS:

FMCA Monthly Member Meetings ~ 2nd Monday, 6:30pm, Shell Banks Baptist Church Fellowship Hall
April 8 ~ May 13 ~ June 10 ~ July 8~ Aug 12~Sep 9~Oct 14~Nov 11~Dec 9

FMCA Membership Report~~~~~~ Greg Strategier

242 members have renewed and we have 405 total members. **Annual Dues Were Due December 31!** If you have not yet paid 2019, please send the attached Membership Form [see last page of this newsletter] with your \$15 annual dues to the address on the form as soon as possible to ensure you continue to receive correspondence from FMCA.

Agenda for April FMCA General Meeting~~~~~Carol Kittrell

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance	Joe Emerson, President
Minutes	Carol Kittrell, Secretary
Treasurer’s Report	Greg Strategier, Treasurer
FM Fire & Rescue Report	Ernie Church, President FM Fire & Rescue BOD
Old Business	
-Master Plan	Ernie Church, Vice President
New Business	
- Need for a Grant Researcher	
Comments/Announcements	
Guest Speaker - “Sea Turtles, How We Got to Where We Are Today”	Chan West
Adjournment - Next Meeting, May 13	

Fort Morgan Planning & Zoning Committee~~~~~Chan West, Chair

The special meeting of the Fort Morgan Planning and Zoning Advisory Committee, which was called by Vince Jackson, Baldwin County Planning and Zoning Department Director on March 13, was well attended. He patiently discussed the issues with the Seaglade at St. Andrews Bay Planned Residential Development. He reassured everyone that this PRD designation would not allow any increase in density and would only allow the 27 existing lots to be developed with single family houses.

The Planning & Zoning Committee will meet at 9:00, Wednesday, April 3, at Shell Banks Baptist Church to consider two variance requests. Detailed information on the requests below is posted on our website.

V-190013, Jelenko property, 2610 Ponce de Leon Ct., requesting a variance from rear and west side yard setbacks to enclosed an existing entry deck.

V-190015, Brislin property, 7 Bonita Ct., requesting variances from jurisdictional wetlands setback and VE flood zone requirements to allow for construction of a single-family dwelling. Additionally, a semi-annual meeting is scheduled for 9:00 am, Wednesday, April 17, at Shell Banks Baptist Church. Those members of this committee who live outside of District 25 are invited.

Fort Morgan Peninsula Neighborhood Safety & Crime Report ~~~~~Mike Walker, BCSO

For the month of March, the number of total calls on Fort Morgan Road was 198. Out of this there were 113 Close Patrols done by deputies, 17 Traffic Stops, 15 Special Detail and 53 calls for service. There was only 1 report of theft in the total calls– pretty amazing. In general, the activity on Fort Morgan with Spring Breakers has been less than previous years during this same period. Additionally, compared to last year overall crime is down in the area. There are no major spots of criminal activity, and nothing unusual to report.

EMERGENCY: 911

Report all potentially life-threatening and suspicious activities

Sheriff’s Department—Administrative Office.....972-6802

Sheriff’s Office Website: www.sheriffofbaldwin.com

Anonymous Tip Email Address (NOT for Emergencies):

<http://sheriffofbaldwin.com/contactRC.asp>

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

Your Fire Department responded to 23 runs in February:



17 medical response
1 false alarm
1 car accident/ vehicle fire
1 elevator entrapment
1 electrical fire
2 public assists

I hope everyone remembered to change their smoke detector batteries when we switched to daylight savings time. Anyone interested in joining the Fire Department can join us at our training meetings at Fire Station No. 1 on the 1st and 3rd Mondays each month at 6:30 p.m. Pictured is our new Asst. Training Officer, Paul Hagen.

USF&W ABM Regulations follow up Report~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Bill Linn, USF&W

Per the FMCA members' request at your Monday meeting – the following are the specific regulations (Code of Federal Regulations) (CFR) that empower us to make conservation requirements for a Habitat Conservation Plan and our permit issuance criteria. The requirements of a Habitat Conservation Plan are at 50 CFR 17.22(b)(iii)(B) and (D). For permit issuance criteria conditions are 50 CFR 17.22(b)(2)(i)(B) and E. See the attached regulations. These regulations allow us to set permit requirements for endangered species, which protect the Alabama beach mouse (ABM) and its habitats in our issued permits.

In our issued permits, for new construction, we stopped allowing the use of gravel or gravel type substances in ABM habitat because it is a threat of a larger loss over time. After seeing gravel dispersed by tropical storm surges (especially after the 2004 and 2005 tropical storm season) over a larger area than the permitted footprint. Still to this date, fifteen years later, the majority of dispersed gravel has not been removed on private property from these storms. It is readily still visible in areas of Fort Morgan. If we allowed it to continue, we will see a larger loss of ABM habitat and habitat quality over time due to storm-driven gravel dispersal, because tropical storms and storm surges are certain to happen. Although the sand can be shifted, the sand shifters will not remove all of the gravel. Additionally, FEMA, Baldwin County and especially private landowners cannot afford to shift this sand to remove the gravel. Other issues arise with accessing private property to perform cleanup work. It is much easier and much more affordable to shift, clean, and remove large chunks of concrete or asphalt than gravel.

So, for the protection of the ABM and its habitats (sand dunes of Fort Morgan), we require concrete, asphalt, geoweb, or a polymer-based driveway in our current permits. These permit requirements also serve to protect and preserve the aesthetics of Fort Morgan.

Illegal Dumping~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Baldwin County Solid Waste

Baldwin County Solid Waste actively monitors Fort Morgan on a very regular basis for illegal dumping. As a courtesy the Baldwin County Commission allows the solid waste department to utilize our resources, to sweep the area for debris on an almost monthly basis. The state does not actively patrol this area for dumping and does not have equipment to remove large items. The state does patrol the area for litter but we are not aware of the frequency of those patrols. Therefore, other than notifying BCSW or the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office, and us assisting in finding the dumpers there is not much else we are able to do. Most of the dumping in

Fort Morgan involves contractors completing renovations. Criminal Littering is very hard to prosecute, because you must see them do it and be willing to testify.

Baldwin County Solid Waste Contact Information:

Deputy Solid Waste Officer	Kim Grainger	251-972-6878 ext 2781
Collections Supervisor	Sherman Boutwell	251-972-6878 ext 6824
Assistant Collections Supervisor	Charlie Stanford	251-972-6878 ext 2789
Customer Service Manager	Susan Kilby-Aaron	251-972-6878 ext 7150

Special Update: Proposed Seaglade Subdivision Case #Z-19009 ~~~~~Jamie Strategier

Case #Z-19009 is an application for a Planned Residential Development to be known as Seaglade at St. Andrews Bay. This application is for development of a Subdivision of 27 track homes to be built with an access road joining Triple Tail Lane & Pontoon Lane in the 3rd tier. The location is north of Ponce de Leon Court and south of State Hwy. 180.

Baldwin County Commissioners met on 3/19/19 to vote on case Z-19009. Commissioner Billie Jo Underwood motioned to table this case for 60 days while additional information can be obtained, questions could be answered and commissioners have more time to review the entire case. This motion was passed by Baldwin County Commissioners.

There will be a Commissioner work-session to discuss case #Z-19009 on April 9, 2019 @ 8:30a.m. in Fairhope. The vote will be on May 7, 2019 @ 8:30a.m. in Bay Minette during a regular Baldwin County Commissioner Meeting.

Please contact Baldwin County Commissioners and express your interest (for or against) in this case. The Commissioners should to know your concerns, questions and/or opinions so they know the expressed interest of Fort Morgan Community and make the best decision when voting on this case. Contact Information for Baldwin County Commissioners via phone or email:

<http://baldwincountyal.gov/all-mobile/government/BC-commission>

Submitted by: Jamie Strategier, samsplace41805@gmail.com, 504-616-3275

Jamie has been researching & attending all meetings regarding this case. If you have any questions, please contact Jamie directly

Special Remembrance – Sonja Sanders~~~~~Robert DeWitt

Just about every community has its Boo Radley. Down on Bernard Court West, Sonja Sanders filled that role. For those of us who knew Sonja, a soft-spoken, engaged, witty and cerebral lady who passed away March 9, that might sound a bit strange. That’s because she let us inside to see and know the real Sonja. But that’s how folks who were looking in from the outside, saw it. I’m lucky because I got to see both sides and my life is better for it.

Those of you who have read Harper Lee’s “To Kill a Mockingbird” know that Boo Radley was the reclusive, mentally retarded man who struck fear in the hearts of little children in the small fictional southern town where the tale was set. They feared what they didn’t know. Sonja lived almost at the end of the street in a tiny little house with a magnificent view of the Gulf. No one ever saw her. The only evidence that she existed was the late-model car that sat in front of her house and the sudden staccato chatter of Sassy and Max, her beloved Schnauzers, when she opened her side door to let them get some fresh air.

When she was seen, she was known to scold people who abused the beach or allowed their pets liberties that crossed what she believed was appropriate boundaries. Some of the street's residents and seasonal regulars trod lightly and warned their children to do so as well. All they ever saw as the, shall we say, "prickly" side of Sonja. And thus, it is that legends are born.

My first real contact with Sonja was when I wrote a column in The Tuscaloosa News about the Fort Morgan Civic Association's victory in its efforts void Gulf Shores' annexation of land in this area. She asked if she could reprint it in the Fort Morgan Civic Association newsletter and I gave permission. I also told her that my then vacation house and now permanent home was on her street and ask her which house she lived in. She told me she had the turtle mailbox and I told her I had the wiener dog sign.

It was a couple of years later that I actually met her. I was walking to the beach about the time I moved down here from Tuscaloosa and saw her getting out of the car. I saw the oxygen tank and line leading to her nose and realized she had groceries. So, I did what any southern gentleman would do – ordered and underling to relieve her of her burden while I made polite conversation. "Bob," I told my son, "Help this lady with her groceries." Then I turned to her and said, "He'll carry them for you ma'am." Sonja peered back a bit suspiciously but graciously agreed and thanked me. She told Bob to leave the groceries on the outside of her door. Sassy and Max didn't take to kindly to strangers. I introduced myself and reminded her of the column I'd written. She remembered. I told her I would be around full-time now and I knew carrying groceries and other items up and down was ward. I'd be glad to do it anytime.

I learned that Sonja's reclusiveness was not by choice; she was physically unable to get out and about very much. Over the next few months Sonja would let me know that she'd be heading into town and would need a little help when she got home. She lived a pretty spartan life and ate like a bird. Just one of our weekly grocery trips probably would have gotten her through the Biblical seven years of famine. There wasn't a shopping trip she made that would take me more than one trip up the stairs.

The first few times I helped were strictly business. But as we got to know each other a little better, she started telling me a bit more about herself. We talked about the difficulties of quitting smoking, the root of her advanced emphysema. When I found out she was a native Floridian, like my parents, I wanted to know more. It turns out she'd had a lifelong love affair with the beach. She told me in a very simple and unadorned way that as a young woman her whole life revolved around going to the beach with her friends and ... "and boys." She smiled when she said it. I know that doesn't sound like much but somehow it made me feel like I knew her better.

She never lost her love for the beach even though she spent a lot of time away from it. I don't remember how she and my wife, Regina, got to know each other better, perhaps just chatting when she called to ask me to help her with a load of groceries. Regina spent her career as an IT person and when she found out Sonja spent years at IBM, they talked shop. She was part of one of the major players that was on the cutting edge at a crucial time in the technology boom. And they both had a mutual love for their little dogs. I still remember the sad day when she called to let us know that she had unexpectedly loss Sassy to illness. It was now just her and Max.

As much as she loved the beach, it's hard for me to picture Sonja in the desert. But for 30 years she worked with the University of Arizona. She secured grants and worked with Native Americans researching their culture and helping them obtain higher education. "Sonja dearly loved her time spent with Native Americans and made many friends who are still so today," said Bill Sanders, her brother.

Maybe it was through Sonja that Regina got interested in "The Turtle Patrol." After her time in Arizona, Sonja moved to Fort Morgan and was the first Fort Morgan Team Leader with Share the beach, the organization that works to help sea turtle nests hatch successfully. "She was very dedicated," said Debbie Harbin who inherited Sonja's role in these parts. "Back then, they didn't have a whole lot of volunteers and they really didn't know what to do. It was a learn as you go

experience with Sonja. She got the whole thing started down here.” Sonja was among those who helped turn Share the Beach into the well-oiled turtle saving machine that it is today. But as members of the Civic Association know, Sonja’s interest didn’t end with turtles. “She really cared a whole lot about Fort Morgan,” Harbin said.

I have edited publications, from weekly newspapers to outdoors magazines, throughout my career. I hope those of you who have contributed over the years won’t take offense but I’ll have to say that, from my experience, herding cats would be infinitely easier than consistently directing volunteer contributors. Sonja did it month after month with the Fort Morgan Civic Association newsletter and it was a labor of love.

A couple of years before Sonja died, she had to leave her tiny house on Bernard Court West and move inland to Hardwood Court. She just couldn’t handle the stairs anymore. She searched high and low for a ground-level house in the Fort Morgan area. But in the end, she had to settle for living down Fort Morgan road on the outskirts of Gulf Shores. Eventually, I think she enjoyed her little brick house and loved having a backyard for Max. But when she moved, she worried about moving out of Fort Morgan. She told me that she didn’t want to lose her connection to the community. Even though she left its physical boundaries she carried it in her heart until the day she left this world. Our little patch of sand is a better place because she was here. You just had to know her a little better to figure that out.

Robert DeWitt is a Fort Morgan area resident and former editorial page editor of The Tuscaloosa News. He still works as the Outdoors Writer for the newspaper and works at Gulf Shores Plantation.

Upcoming Events in Fort Morgan:

Share the Beach 2019~~~~~Debbie Harbin

The kick off meeting for Share the Beach 2019 sea turtle season will be Thursday April 4th at 6pm at Erie Meyer Civic center, 193 2nd St. Online sign up will be available for those who cannot make the meeting. Training for Fort Morgan team will be April 13 & 14 at 2pm, 1929 Highway 180. It is not required to attend the kickoff but there is valuable information for new volunteers. Training is mandatory. We are looking forward to a good year.

<https://www.facebook.com/Fort-Morgan-Share-the-Beach-363244223801060/>

Fort Morgan Migratory Bird Banding at Fort Morgan State Historic Site~~~~Heather Tassin

Public bird banding returns to the Alabama Gulf Coast again this spring, courtesy of Birmingham Audubon and its partners (Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Mississippi State University, Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism, the Edwin L. and Elizabeth L. Skelton Foundation, the Alabama Historical Commission, Mobile Bay Audubon Society). This year’s banding event runs from **Tuesday, April 16th, 2019, to Saturday, April 20th**. The public is invited to join the event during the following dates/times*:

Date:	Time:
Tuesday, April 16th, noon to 3 p.m.	Noon - 3 p.m.
Wednesday, April 17th	8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Thursday, April 18 th	8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Friday, April 19 th	8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Saturday, April 20 th	8 a.m. to noon

This event provides an invaluable look at spring migrants traveling across the Coastal Alabama section of the Mississippi Flyway. Throughout the week, participants enjoy unparalleled access to the researchers and the work, with up-close-and-personal views of some amazing birds. Remember to bring water, bug spray, sunscreen, and perhaps an outdoor chair; restrooms and concessions are available next to the ferry, and all ages are welcome to attend.

*Daily admission to Fort Morgan State Historic Site is required or a weekly pass can be purchased at the gate for \$12.

More information is available at <https://birminghamaudubon.org/birdbanding/>

Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge

For upcoming events please visit our online sites at <http://www.fws.gov/bonsecour>; <http://facebook.com/BonSecourNWR> , or contact the Refuge Office by phone (251) 540-7720 or in person Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Fort Morgan History:

Dixie Graves Parkway..... Chan West



THE ONLOOKER
Foley, Alabama, Thursday, June 17, 1937

Alabama's outstanding Fourth of July event will be observed Monday, July 5th, when all roads will lead to historic old Fort Morgan for a gigantic fish fry and ceremony for the dedication of the first paved link in Alabama's new scenic highway.

Gov. Bibb Graves and Congressman Lister Hill will be the principal speakers and will dedicate the 22 miles of road paved by the Works Project Administration and the State Highway Department.

NOTE:
The article below includes a photo of Governor Graves with the heading: TRUE BELIEVER IN BALDWIN COUNTY and a caption: "One of Baldwin County's most devoted and ardent boosters is Gov. Bib Graves, who will be the principal speaker at the Fort Morgan July 5th celebration and dedication of the newly paved Gulf Coast highway between Fort Morgan and Gulf Shores, south of Foley. The Governor has a nice cottage at Gulf Shores, where he spends all of his leisure time. As a Baldwin County resident, Gov. Graves has done much to aid in the progress of this section." I well remember the "cottage" as it was adjacent to the beach house my father's company, Underwood Coal and Supply, maintained for the use of its employees and guests, on what is now West Beach Boulevard, not far from the junction with the road from Foley. – Chan West

The joint dedication ceremonies will be under the joint auspices of the State Highway Department, which sponsored the road paving, the City of Foley and County of Baldwin, and the National Park Service, which has charge of the highway beautification and fort restoration project. Eventually the 22-mile stretch will be flanked by rows of crepe myrtle and oleanders and will be one of the most beautiful drives in the South.

A center of warlike activity in years gone by, historic Fort Morgan until now was accessible only to those who could afford boats and willing to brave the treacherous county road which traversed the narrow southwestern tip of Baldwin county, where tired had to be deflated to keep from sinking into deep, shifting sands.

“The mixed-in-place sand asphalt road to Fort Morgan opens up the new and undeveloped waterfront for Alabama, where both fishing and bathing may be enjoyed,” said C. J. Sherlock, Jr., first assistant state highway engineer.

“Some of Alabama’s most beautiful beached have heretofore been inaccessible, and the road should lead to the immediate development of the peninsular, with the Gulf of Mexico and the open sea to the south, and Mobile Bay on the north. It is the ideal summering place.”

With the all-weather paved road completed, the National Park Service, using labor from the CCC camp, has started landscaping and beautifying the shoulders.

“It will be a picturesque road, in Spring, when the work is completed,” Sherlock said.

The new road is reached by way of Alabama Highway No. 3, of which Gulf Shores is the southern terminus. The program to which the public is invited is scheduled to begin at 11 a. m.

Dr. W. C. Holmes, of Foley, will serve as master of ceremonies, and the invocation will be by Rev. Tom Byrne of Foley.

Among the more prominent officials who are to attend will, beside the Governor, be Representative Lister Hill of Montgomery, A. P. Morgan, Jr. of Montgomery, Works Progress Administration, Carter Scott of Montgomery, president of the State Highway Commission, Judge L. L. Homberg of Gadsden, H. D. ----- of Decatur, associate highway commissioner, Col. Page S. Bunker, state forester, Armisted Leake of Mobile, district director, WPA, Ira B. Lykes, Atlanta, district project engineer, National Park Service, Jams E. Gaston, Fairhope, chairman of the Baldwin County board of revenue, and S. J. Cumming, highway department district engineer.

Courtesy of Baldwin County Department of Archives and History

FMCA Executive Board Contacts

Officers

President	Joe Emerson	550-9021	captjoesells@gmail.com
Vice President	Ernie Church	334-220-0851	ecaces4@gmail.com
Treasurer	Greg Strategier	337-849-6506	samsplace41805@gmail.com
Secretary	Carol Kittrell	251-605-4134	ckittrell@southalabama.edu

Standing Committee Chairs

District 25 Planning & Zoning	Chan West	979-4932	chan@goefish.com
Editor Fort Morgan Newsletter	Karrie Lovins	580-917-4593	klovins68@icloud.com
Future Fort Morgan Options	Ernie Church	334-220-0851	ecaces4@gmail.com
Land Use & Conservation	Chan West	979-4932	chan@goefish.com
Legal	Judy Newcomb	955-1572	judynewcomb@aol.com
Legislative/Government	Bonnie Lowry	540-9327	
Sunshine	Vickie Matranga	543-1555	vpowers110@gmail.com

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

2019 MEMBERSHIP FORM – ANNUAL DUES \$15.00

Name(s) _____ Date _____

Mailing Address _____ Phone _____

City, State, Zip _____

Fort Morgan Address _____ Phone _____

This property is west of mile 14.7: yes no -- See Article III, Section 1 below Associate Member? yes

Email (please provide for special alerts) _____

[Save trees, stamps, time, get your news sooner by e-mail.] Send newsletter by email by U.S. Postal Service

Your employment _____ Spouse's employment _____

Reason for joining the Association _____

We need volunteers to help the Association in the following areas. Which can you assist in? (circle)

- Program Planning: Speakers Phone/Survey Members for Interests
Zoning: Attend Meetings of Baldwin County/Gulf Shores Write Brief Reports
Membership: Recruitment Phone Tree Hospitality at Meetings Help with Pot-Lucks
Communications: Postal Mailings E-mail Writing for Newspaper, Publicity Releases, etc.
Newsletter: Desktop Graphics/Layout Gather/Submit News Items Write Brief Articles Photography
Computer: Set Up/Maintain Data Base Spreadsheets Excel Access Word PowerPoint
What other skills, experience or talents could you volunteer? _____

From the By-laws Adopted April 11, 2005

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

- Section 1 Regular (voting) Membership in this association shall be open only to property owners and/or residents in the unincorporated area west of mile 14.7 of the Fort Morgan peninsula.
- Section 2 Associate (non-voting) Membership shall be open to residents of areas outside the Fort Morgan Peninsula whose interests coincide with those of the Association including the preservation of the environment and quality of life of the Fort Morgan peninsula.
- Section 3 Membership application shall be made by completion of a form provided by the Association and payment of the required dues. Dues for the following year shall be determined at the October general meeting and shall be for the following calendar year January 1st through December 31st.
- Section 4 Payment of Regular (voting) Membership dues entitles a member household to one (1) vote. A member household is comprised of Association members living at one physical address. Past year member households paying dues after January 31st and new members joining the Association will have no voting rights until thirty (30) days after payment of dues.
- Section 5 Payment of Associate (non-voting) Membership dues entitles the member to attend all member meetings and receive the monthly newsletter.

Make checks payable to: **Fort Morgan Civic Association or FMCA**

I would like to make a donation to the Operating Fund in the amount of \$ _____

2019 dues @ \$15/household \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Your donation to the Fort Morgan Civic Association is not tax deductible as we do not qualify because of our political activity in attempting to prevent proliferation of large-scale high-rise development on Fort Morgan Peninsula.