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KNOW AND VOTE

CANDIDATES ANSWER QUESTIONS

(SEE INSIDE PAGES>>>>)



No, your eyes weren't playing tricks on you.

The Topsail area had 3 very unique visitors last week. During the annual Gordon Bennett Gas Balloon Race, Team France flew over 1600 miles, starting out on Saturday in New Mexico and arriving on Wednesday in Jacksonville, NC. The second-place team, Germany 1, was less than 50 miles behind.

Several people witnessed a man and his faithful horse, traveling along Hwy 17. After 3,000 miles and 184 days, Matt Perella and his horse Buck, safely arrived in Camp Lejeune after being cheered on along the way. Mr. Perella made the trek to raise awareness of PTSD and to support The Righteous Life Rescue Ranch located in Asheville, NC. During this long ride, his horse Buck became the fastest horse on record to travel from California to North Carolina. Mr. Perella plans on making another trip in 2 years.

On Tuesday, the largest banana on wheels arrived at the Paradise Axe and Arcade in Holly Ridge. Creator of the vehicle, Steve Braithwaite, English born from Oxfordshire, England, accompanied by his friend Chris Palmer (also of England) travel the country in the giant banana in hopes of great adventures and making new friends. The vehicle, built on the chassis of a 1993 Ford F150, is easily spotted with the naked eye. One of the rare treats regarding a visit of the great banana car, is that a lucky few will actually get a ride as a guest.

The unique vehicle took almost three years to build and the help of a lot of creative people who helped Steve make his dream come true.

Currently the Big Banana Car holds the Guinness Book of World Records for longest banana car.

Don't be fooled and think this car is a slow poke, thought it may only get 8-10 miles per gallon, it can get up past 75 mph if necessary with it's V8 motor and almost 50 gallon gas tank. Hold on to that banana!

After an amazing visit, Steve hopes to return in the spring for a longer visit to tour more of the local area and to offer more rides.





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**TOPSAIL
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NEWSPAPER**



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Topsail Times Newspaper, LLC

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- Pamala Hall
- Fred Fontana
- Connie Pletl
- Rena Bragg

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Lock Your Vehicles

By Dorothy Royal

Owning a firearm is a BIG responsibility. You, as a gun owner, are responsible to make sure your gun is secured, which includes not leaving your firearms accessible in your vehicle. Recently a report came out that 64 firearms have been stolen from unlocked vehicles in the Wilmington area this year alone. That is 64 firearms in the hands of criminals.

Bad guys do not legally purchase firearms. Criminals don't care about rules and laws. They break the law. That is why they are called criminals. We must stop making it easier for criminals to get hold of firearms.

1. Lock your vehicles and if you have a firearm in the vehicle make sure it is locked as well (in the glove box or in a lock box).

2. Park in a well-lit area with cameras if possible.

3. Do not advertise to sell firearms privately and if you do, make sure you do not meet people at your home. Meet people at a gun shop or police department. If someone refuses to meet you there, you have your answer.

4. If you believe a gun is lost or missing, report it to local police and to ATF. Having a firearm recovered during a crime that has not been reported can be another headache. Contact local shops and pawn shops with the information. Contrary to popular belief, Gun shops are

not provided a list of stolen/lost guns by local law enforcement.

5. When buying a firearm from a private person, ask to meet at a local gun shop. A private sale can now be conducted at a local gun shop and the 4473 Form is filled out and the gun shop can verify if the buyer is eligible to own a firearm. A minimal transfer fee will be a peace of mind since in NC the seller is responsible for verifying the buyer is eligible.

With cooler weather comes the perfect time to head to the range for some practice. Haven't used your firearm in a while? Make sure you clean and inspect it thoroughly and make sure you are using good ammo. In our salt air environment, both firearms and ammo can become damaged from the salt air. Don't ever use old or visibly damaged ammunition. Not sure if your firearm is clean and functioning well? Take it to a local gun shop to have it cleaned and tested. Your safety is very important!

Election time is right around the corner. Just because this year's elections are local, doesn't mean they won't affect you directly. More rules and regulations passed locally can affect your daily life. Taxes, schools, paid parking, parks and recreational services, and zoning issues can make a big difference in your life. Pay attention to the candidates. Find out if you are eligible to vote and if so, is there early voting and where are the polling places?

Ask questions, be assertive.

Elected officials work FOR THE PEOPLE, not the other way around.

Remember knowledge is power, lock your vehicles, and get out and VOTE!



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A Halloween Tale - Serenade Of The Cattails: Part 2

By Carol Ann Ross

"That's the brooch you gave to Naomi." Norwood leaned against the doorjamb, sipping from a cold glass of iced tea.

"I know."

They were quiet as they made their way through the living room turning off lights. Norwood closed the backdoor, flipping on the light there and watched as the insects immediately swarmed toward the brightness.

"Why'd you do that?" he spoke, slowly moving toward the kitchen. "Why'd you even tell him about the pin?"

"Well, honey, he said the pin had my initials on it, and I know it does. All my pins have my initials on them in case I lose them or they get stolen..."

Norwood moaned and shaking his head reached for Mary's hand, "Sweetie, that boy is going to be back, you are a suspect and he had you pegged as one before he even knocked on our door."

"He liked the fish and hushpuppies and did you see how he gobbled up those green beans?" Slowly gathering dishes from the table, Mary commented coolly, "He likes me, he likes us."

Standing next to his wife, Norwood grasped her hand once more, "I know you didn't kill him, my love."

"I'm not sorry he's dead."

"It's not beyond who?" her husband asked.

"Oh, I'm just thinking, just wondering if ol' Towler had anything to do with that

greasy Elmo, with killing him."

"I think if it poured rain for six days you'd blame it on that man, not the weather. And you know, I don't care for him either, sweetie pie, but what makes you think he has anything to do with that poor lost boy?"

"I don't know... wishful thinking I guess. I know he had something to do with Mr. Burger getting off scott free for killing that little California girl. I wonder why old Towler did that."

Norwood stood thinking for a moment, his hands full of the dirty silverware he'd gathered from the table. He shook his head, yeah, that was rotten. But he's a big dog and you know how it goes for the big dogs."

"Ain't fair."

"Life isn't fair, sweetie, you know that."

They were both quiet for a while as they continued clearing the table, filled the sink with sudsy water and began the process of washing dishes. Tonight was Norwood's night to dry.

"I'd just like to see someone get their comeuppance."

"That's not in our hands, sweetie." Norwood leaned and kissed his wife's cheek and held her gaze with his dark green eyes, "You've always been a curious cat."

Quiet once again, as they completed the tasks of washing and drying dishes, Norwood studied his wife's expressions. He could almost see the wheels turning in her head, figuring out what could have happened to Elmo, and why, and if

Naomi could have been the one to do it.

Sure, the Bolton's had known Elmo, but like Mary had explained earlier, most of what they knew had come through the grapevine. Mrs. Plung called about an herb potion to help with her cold, Mrs. Casstions called about her daughter's allergies-*do you have a home remedy, the prescription from the doctor does nothing.* It was calls like these, from people who rarely associated with the Bolton's, that offered grapevine gossip in exchange.

Then there was Norwood's ever observant eye and open ears gathering information as well. He helped in local flower beds, cleaned upstairs gutters, hosed down boats and decks. It was amazing what people chatted about so nonchalantly, as if he wasn't even there.

On one of the Bolton's many evening walks through the neighborhood, they'd seen Elmo sneaking around the Simpson home; they'd seen him leave early one morning too, all while Roy was away at war, and they had put two and two together, so they knew about Naomi's entanglement with Elmo, they knew what kind of person he was, they were sure of the sexual conduct and mostly, from Mary's intuition, knew about the unwanted pregnancy.

"We could have helped her." Norwood spoke.

"She didn't want our help. She doesn't believe we can help. She doesn't believe. She never believed in the brooch."

Setting the dish towel across the back of a chair, Norwood reached an arm across his wife's shoulders. "Hey, why don't we go for a walk, down the road, maybe to the Simpson house?"

Wringing the dishrag tightly and draping it across the faucet, Mary nodded. She reached a wrinkled hand into her pocket and felt for the brooch, wondering why Naomi would have let Elmo have the sister pin. She wondered if he'd stolen it. If he'd threatened to tell Roy about the pregnancy or about the drugs.

"I bet they've spilled their guts to each other about everything." Norwood chuckled.

"Umm, probably." Mary lifted her face to kiss her husband's lips. "They seem so in love. They seem so happy. I think you're right. I have this feeling." She rubbed the brooch still in her pocket, "I think they are each other's best friend."

"like we are." Norwood squeezed Mary close to him.

"So if all is right with their world, why would Naomi kill Elmo?"

Threading his arm though Mary's, Norwood led the way out of the house. "Maybe she didn't." He answered. "Maybe Roy did."

Her fingers still stroking the wisteria brooch, Mary contemplated the ifs and whys, she simply wasn't sure, except for one thing. She knew that the wisteria brooch held powers, especially during the season when the plant itself flowered. It was that season.

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Coastal Common Sense

By Kim McGahey

We live in a time that is filled more with leisure than with work. But what are we doing with our spare time?

In past centuries, there was no such thing as leisure time off. The American continent and our great country were built on the backs of hard working men and women who labored 15 hours a day 7 days a week for 60 years and then died.

There was no living into your 80's. A life of hard manual labor made you physically and mentally fit, but it greatly shortened the average life span. If the back breaking work didn't kill you, the lack of modern medical technology certainly would. No artificial knees or hips, no corrective back surgery, no plethora of drugs to keep you alive and well and no retirement homes to replace putting Aunt Ethel in the back room until she met her untimely demise.

Workers were at the mercy of unsafe factory conditions and exhausting farm life. Neither the city nor the country offered any reprieve from the back breaking, life threatening work that occupied their daily travail. Staying alive to keep food on the family table was the norm and the prospect of getting ahead was not available to most Americans. A subsistence lifestyle meant endless days and a short life filled with honest work and no time for goofing off.

Somewhere in the post World War II era that work ethic changed.

The War victory cast America into the role of world leader and brought widespread economic prosperity to our doorstep making upward mobility readily available to the working masses who were moving off the farm and congregating in the cities.

This post war urban population concentration combined with an explosion of innovative technologies created untold wealth in our country and planted the seeds of the leisure lifestyle that dominates our culture today. As a result, the baby boomer generation has become a human laboratory for leisure studies ranging from skin cancer caused by too much time in the sun to world travel in a shrinking globe. It's the first generation that has plenty and is living large.

Silicon Valley and the likes of Elon Musk is the epitome of the final transition from using our backs to using our brains. Over the past 50 years, the 15 hour 7 day work week has disappeared and been replaced by a 5 hour 4 day work week squeezed in around all the leisure activities the recreation industry can impose upon us.

High tech innovation and the invention of Al Gore's internet has made it possible, even likely, that nobody is now working more than playing. And the recent Coronaphobia pandemic made even more people realize that they don't have to live and/or work in a 30 story building in downtown Los Angeles or Chicago.

They can now live and work remotely in a cool place like Topsail Island and conduct their digital business around the world while sitting on the beach with a laptop.

But are we being productive with our leisure time? Are we making our communities and our country better places to live?

Are we using our spare time to help those less fortunate around us? Or have we become so self-absorbed that we use our free time only for ourselves? We may want to consider how to use our spare time to make a meaningful contribution and spread some light into the dark corners of our world.

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Candidate Questionnaire: Joshua Patti For Holly Ridge Council

Joshua Patti



1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

As an educator, I have acquired skills that I believe would translate well into being an effective elected official. First, communication is paramount in both education and public service. I possess strong interpersonal and public speaking abilities, which are crucial for articulating ideas, listening to constituents, and fostering open dialogue. Additionally, my experience in education has equipped me with exceptional problem-solving skills. This allows me to analyze complex issues, consider diverse perspectives, and develop pragmatic solutions. Patience and adaptability, essential qualities in teaching, have taught me how to navigate challenges with a level-headed approach and adjust strategies as needed. Furthermore, I have a deep commitment to community engagement and fostering inclusivity, which are vital for representing the diverse needs and voices of our community members effectively. Finally, my background in education has instilled a passion for lifelong learning and a genuine desire to contribute to the betterment of my community. These strengths and skills collectively position me to be a dedicated, empathetic, and effective elected official.

Simply, I love Holly Ridge. I am vested in its success as I plan to raise my family here and hope to encourage my children to remain part of this ever-growing community for years to come.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

Initially, my desire to run comes from a longstanding wanting to be part of local government. Throughout my life I've acquired an interest in government and giving back to the community. With the support of my family, running for office became a reality. Upon the onset of my campaign, I made it my mission to learn as much as I possibly can about Holly Ridge. One issue that stands out and has motivated me further is improving emergency services. When I met with Chief Brandon Longo of HR Fire

and Rescue, we discussed possible improvements and areas of concern.

We agreed that improving emergency services in Holly Ridge is a critical concern that directly impacts the safety and well-being of its residents. Timely and efficient emergency response is paramount in saving lives during crises, such as natural disasters, medical emergencies, or accidents. Adequate funding and resources must be allocated to ensure that first responders are well-equipped and trained to handle various situations. Enhancing communication systems is imperative for swift coordination of crucial information during emergencies. This includes modernizing technology and establishing communication networks that can withstand challenging conditions. Moreover, accessibility to emergency services, particularly in remote or underserved areas, needs to be addressed to ensure that every resident has equal access to life-saving assistance. Talking to residents it pains me to hear that ambulance response times can be up to and over an hour. Finally, community education and preparedness initiatives play a vital role in empowering residents to respond effectively in emergency situations, creating a more resilient and self-sufficient community overall. This is why, even before the election takes place, I've invited Chief Longo to give a presentation to the members of my neighborhood. His acceptance of this invitation shows a willingness to get to know and inform the community of emergency services and make them stakeholders in suggesting possible improvements.

By prioritizing and continually improving emergency services, Holly Ridge can significantly enhance its ability to protect and support its residents during times of crisis.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

No, I have not currently or have ever held an elected office before. However, I have a lot of experience working with elected officials, from school board officials, municipal governments, and state representatives.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

My experience with zoning began in college. I took various courses that dealt with appropriate land use, zoning regulations, and community planning. I gained a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies involved in land-use planning, zoning regulations, and the

approval process for development projects. As an educator I had the opportunity to be part of a school district planning advisory committee that made recommendations for land use and renovations within the spectrum of our district. This allowed me to approach zoning decisions with a community-centric perspective, having been directly involved in discussions and decisions related to local development and land use for schools. I had the opportunity to work with other community members, officials, and experts, gaining valuable collaborative skills. Many of the discussions revolved around the implementation of zoning codes, ordinances, and regulatory frameworks, as the recommendations made needed to fit within the prescribed law.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

I agree wholeheartedly that traffic is a concern in the Greater Topsail Area. This issue exists because proper planning for roads has not kept up with the rapid growth of the various communities in the area. Sidewalks are crucial to making sure community members have safe access to businesses, government services, and residences around town. I am happy to hear from Town Manager, Heather Reynolds, that the push to create a true downtown in Holly Ridge is in the planning process. If elected, I will make sure the new plan focuses on walking access to town. Building sidewalks around town will not only bring people to surrounding businesses, but it will create a more sense of community. Additionally, the planned Holly Ridge to Surf City walk/bike trail is a great start solving the walkability issue of the area. Imagine, being able to enjoy the beautiful landscape in our area, like Morris Landing, and walking/biking to Surf City. What an experience that would be and it will be in our own backyard.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

It's important for us to work closely with the nearby towns and counties because our area is made up of a bunch of small towns and two counties. When we team up, we can use our resources wisely and make sure everyone gets the services they need. We can also find opportunities to help our local businesses and plan out our

neighborhoods in a way that makes sense for everyone. Taking care of our environment, staying safe, and having good roads and public transportation are things we can do better together. Plus, when we all work together, we can build a stronger, more connected community where everyone feels like they belong. If there are specific things we need to focus on, like affordable housing or protecting nature, we'll talk to our neighboring communities and figure it out together. Our goal is to make sure our area is a great place for everyone to live and grow.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm? 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

Hurricanes are indeed a significant aspect of life in Holly Ridge, and ensuring preparedness is crucial. Regarding the first question, I believe our town has made commendable efforts in preparing for major storms. However, continuous assessment and improvement are essential in the face of evolving challenges. In terms of communication, I would like to see enhanced systems in place, including multiple channels for disseminating critical information to residents. This could involve utilizing social media, text alerts, and community notifications to reach a broader audience. Regarding shelters, it would be beneficial to invest in facilities that are not only robust in terms of safety but also adequately staffed and equipped to accommodate a larger number of residents. In my meeting with Chief Sorg of HRPD, he expressed the need for an emergency response headquarters. I would support this need if elected. Additionally, training and resources for emergency response staff should be consistently updated to ensure a prompt and effective response in the event of a major storm. These improvements are vital to enhancing our town's resilience and safeguarding the well-being of our residents during hurricane events.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

If elected, I would carefully consider any proposal regarding term limits and assess it based on its potential impact on the effectiveness of governance and representation. I would consider various perspectives and consult with constituents to make an informed decision that best serves the interests of the community. It's important to approach such matters thoughtfully and with an open mind, weighing the benefits and potential drawbacks of

implementing term limits. For example, with larger municipalities where the potential candidate pool is higher, term limits may allow fresh perspectives to enter the council. In Holly Ridge, where the potential candidate pool is smaller, term limits may make it harder to find future people to run. It is a unique proposal which would need to be vetted properly.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

Absolutely, I wholeheartedly agree that as an elected official, it is my paramount responsibility to be well-prepared and knowledgeable about the topics to be discussed ahead of meetings. Time is indeed a precious resource, and by thoroughly understanding the issues at hand in advance, I can contribute to more efficient and productive discussions. This not only helps expedite decision-making but also ensures that every decision is made with a clear understanding of its potential impact on our community. It's a fundamental part of being accountable and effective in representing the interests of the Holly Ridge constituents I serve.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

N/A

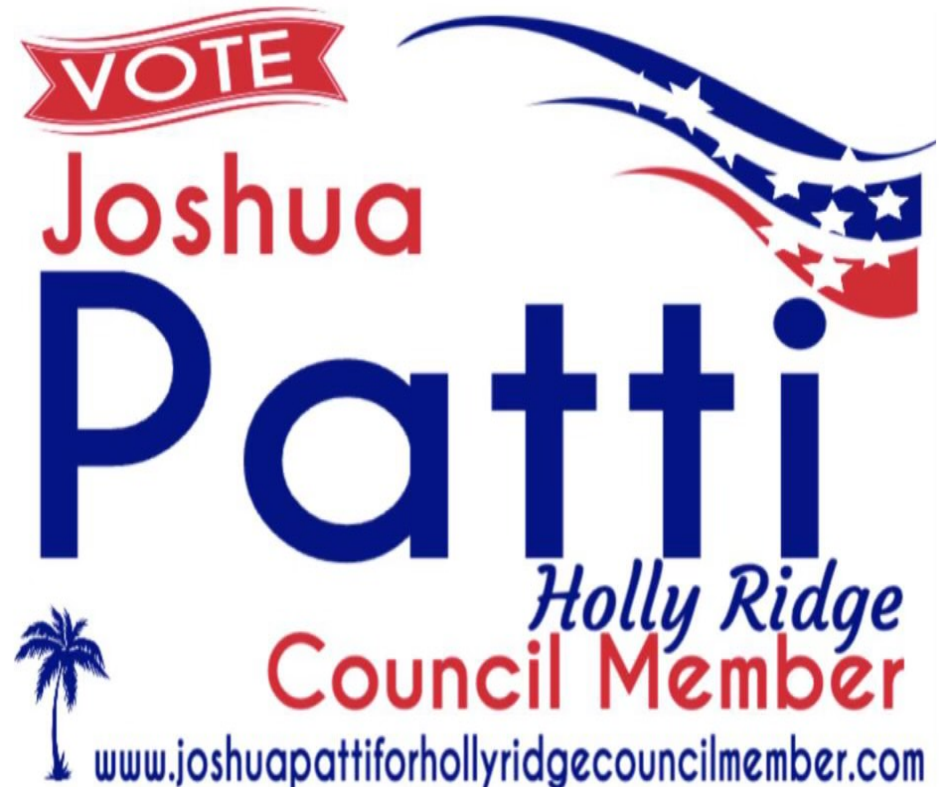
11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

My wife Nicole and I have seven beautiful kids whom we homeschool. As teachers we thought we were up for the challenge, but realized we had a lot to learn. Through the process I learned how to adapt to the needs of each kid. Almost looking at each situation uniquely. I also learned how to take on multiple tasks at once. This is invaluable to making sure the job gets done. One of the most important lessons I learned while homeschooling my children is listening and collaboration. I found myself listening to my kids more and seeing what questions and issues they had, instead of dictating what I thought they needed. At the same time, I collaborated with my wife Nicole to craft a school day that was informative but fun.

When I started this campaign, I soon realized what I've learned by homeschooling my kids are skills I can use to be an effective government representative of Holly Ridge. You see, each problem or issue we have in Holly Ridge is unique and warrants special

attention. Much like homeschool, there are a multitude of topics I will be dealing with if elected, and I am confident I can multitask effectively through them all. I intend to listen to the people of Holly Ridge and allow them to guide my decisions while collaborating with fellow elected officials, government staff, and townspeople.

My experience with my kids taught me a valuable lesson. Learning never stops and there is always something new to learn in order to make the best decisions possible.



Candidate Questionnaire: Heather Allen For Surf City Council

Heather Allen

1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

I have been a very involved citizen. I will be a strong advocate for all Surf City residents and will be persistent in finding solutions when concerns arise.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

Surf City is clean, safe, a great place to raise a family and has award winning schools. It reminds me of the small beach town I grew up in, however, due to poor policies, my hometown quickly lost all of those positive attributes. I am extremely motivated to preserve everything wonderful about Surf City!

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

No. I will be coming in with fresh eyes.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

I have done a lot of research regarding this issue and I believe it will benefit Surf City to adopt a Unified Development Ordinance. We also should be listening to the School Board members when they say class sizes are

becoming overcrowded. I understand we passed the school bond (we still have not finished paying off the previous bond), but we are years away from a new school being built. On the other hand, new apartment complexes are being built in record time in our town.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

I recently made a video questioning our random sidewalks. I absolutely believe paving sidewalks that actually connect will bring a sense of community to Surf City. I will say that every time I host a Meet and Greet, not one person supports a "bike lane" but I do agree a separate bike path, especially one that connects to the beach, would be a safe alternative for our younger generation to get around. It would also be great if we could lower the speed limit to 35mph on some Surf City streets so more neighbors can utilize their golfcarts. I would definitely support a traffic expert to come to Surf City and give us their professional opinion concerning our traffic lights and roads.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns

and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

The biggest complaints I hear from residents is about paid beach parking. Everyone knows I am no fan of this myself. If we are going to charge people to utilize their own beach, it would be nice if all three cities were cohesive. If you pay for the day in Surf City and decide to head over to North Topsail, you will be ticketed. I understand that both North Topsail and Topsail Beach decided not to continue with an original beach renourishment plan that Surf City is still involved in. It would be beneficial if we could work together on this project.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm? 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

Very few cities of our size have an Emergency Management Coordinator. Surf City is lucky to have that in Mr. James Horn. This demonstrates the town is putting in the effort to be prepared. According to a veteran Surf City Fire Department employee who has also worked for four other local governments,

our city is doing a phenomenal job when it comes to hurricane readiness. As a Councilperson, I would make it my priority to know which residents do not have "smart phones" in order to ensure they are aware of storm protocols.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

100% and I give Marc Caldwell a lot of credit for bringing this topic to light

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

Absolutely. What I find unfortunate is that our Town Hall meeting starts at 4:30 on a Tuesday when most Surf City residents are working. I feel if we move the time back just one hour to 5:30, more citizens will be able to engage with the council and speak up about their concerns. I personally have the time and a lot of energy to meet with residents and small business owners and will be happy to do so face to face, by email, social media or phone, and talk about the needs of our city.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and

would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

Pull up a chair and stay for a while! If it were solely up to me, I would abolish the entire beach paid parking system. I don't think it is right to force "certain" Surf City residents to pay their government to enjoy their local beach. Surf City has been established for almost 75 years and never needed to charge people before. Local government in Surf City has already increased the price and extended the time frame to pay, at a time where everything in life costs more. Not to mention we have people who come out to volunteer to clean Surf City's beach with Coastal Cleanup of Topsail and get ticketed (not a great way to incentivize volunteering in our city). I have been working hard to at least get these volunteers free parking passes

while they are picking up trash off of Surf City's sand. Some of my own family members do not own "smart phones" and would have an extremely hard time paying to park. More residents do not know where 100% of the funds go, than residents who do know. I know I am not the only one who registered their plates and still received a ticket and had to take time out of my day to clear up the mistake.

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

I am extremely excited to pilot a Jr Lifeguard/Jr Waterman program in Surf City. I believe our town is lacking in youth activities and this would be so well received, not to mention revenue generating. I've met and spoken with intelligent people in this industry and

know we can put an amazing program together that will teach our children how to respect our ocean, look for riptides, perform CPR, make rescues and stay in shape during the summer. I will absolutely make this a priority for our town.

Buck reaches North Carolina!

On October 7th, Matt Perella and Quarter Horse, Buck, made history by being the first Marine to go from Camp Pendleton, CA to Camp Lejeune, NC on 1 horse.

"We have ridden through 17 states in 1.5 years raising awareness for veterans with PTSD. 6,700 miles covered between the 17 states including the 1500 miles of training before we even started. Buck deserves every bit of the legendary status he had gained for himself. I have never known anyone or anything tougher than him."
- Matt Perella, Facebook



Candidate Questionnaire: Marc Caldwell For Surf City Mayor

Marc Caldwell



1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

I have over 24 years of proven leadership experience and am an excellent communicator. These two skillsets coupled with understanding what the town needs from both the administration side and from what the people are asking for helps set me apart.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

There has been an ongoing appointment problem going on for years. Right now half of our elected officials are currently appointed and that isn't representative of what this town necessarily wants. I will ensure that special elections are instituted like they are all over the country ... instead of hand-picking replacements.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

I have not.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

I don't have experience with zoning, however, I see and am told of a lot of questionable zoning issues (like

approving construction on known marsh and wetland areas) and I will ensure that those likely infractions do not happen during my tenure.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

I agree that during tourist season there is a major traffic-ability issue in the town. I will push to get sidewalks added so that locals and tourists alike are able to transit safely to and from the island in an effort to cut down on beach traffic. The Greenway project has been talked about for years and most of us have seen little to no movement in that program.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

Absolutely! Holly Ridge is coining their town as the Gateway to Topsail ... and historically we have not partnered with them to ensure we are supporting each other. I will ensure that a new relationship with Holly Ridge is established and we do as much as we can to help each other. Additionally, Holly Ridge (Onslow County) has struggled with overcrowding in their schools like we have; I would propose that our town and theirs look to encourage, facilitate, and/or look for funding for a private school (K-12) in Holly Ridge so that it will ease the overcrowding in both of our towns/counties schools. I know that everyone can't afford private schools (but there are enough that can and are looking to have another option for their children's education), however, having

one that both towns are able to use will relieve the pressure of overcrowding that all of our schools are seeing/feeling. Historically, our town has taken the stance that the county will take care of this issue, however, I believe that our mayor needs to be the biggest advocate for our towns' youth.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm? 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

I don't believe our town is able to handle a major storm, however, they have done an adequate job in the past to do what they can. In an effort to improve how we manage a major storm next time, we absolutely need to do a number of things to ensure the town is ready. For instance, we should designate local hurricane shelters and if there aren't enough then we should work with our neighboring towns (which we historically haven't done) to make sure that we have something for everyone that can't afford to evacuate. Additionally, we need to conduct practice runs every year prior to hurricane season to ensure that everyone from the town employees to the local residents know what to do when this does eventually happen again.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

I would 100%, without hesitation support term limits. Term limits encourage fresh perspectives and stays in tune with what the public voice is currently echoing.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

This is without a shadow of a doubt a requirement that all of our elected officials should be required to do.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

There are a number of issues with the paid parking. To start, only two passes are given to each home even though there might be more than two drivers in every home. From what I understand, the paid parking was created to help raise money during the summer months to offset beach repair after major storms; however, the extended time tables don't make sense ... there should only be paid parking from Memorial Day to Labor Day which coincide with logical summer time frames. Additionally, there should be a tapered payment process for locals that live in the ETJ, and our neighboring towns that used to frequent our beaches but hesitate to do so now. Moreover, businesses on the island have to pay extra to get additional parking passes so that their employees don't have to pay to come to work ... these issues really need to be sorted out and it's difficult to articulate all of the possible solutions ... but changes absolutely need to be made so that the town isn't excluding our businesses, locals and our neighbors.

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

I have been married for 26 years and have 3 wonderful children. I served 4.5 years in the Navy as a rescue swimmer and 20 years as an intelligence officer in the Marine Corps. I have circumnavigated the globe on many occasions and see how things work effectively ... and ineffectively. I am proud to be part of this community and will strive to be a great leader for this town.

Candidate Questionnaire: Nicholas Tripp For Holly Ridge Council

Nicholas Tripp

1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

I am passionate about our community and driven to help make it better for current and future families.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

I believe That Holly Ridge has grown very rapidly over the last few years, and that as a town we need to build our infrastructure to match the growth.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

I have never held a political office but have been elected and served my neighborhood community as HOA president for two years.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

I currently serve the Town of Holly Ridge as a member of the Planning Board for the past 2 years.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

As a member of the Planning Board, I have taken the firm stance that new communities and new buildings need sidewalks. Green areas would be a great asset and draw for the Town of Holly Ridge.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

I believe that more work is needed. Although we have a good relationship with Surf City, I think we need to strive to be more self-sufficient and other communities within Onslow.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm? 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place,

regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

Holly Ridge needs to invest in Emergency Services. The town should research an Emergency Services Director. This would help with ensuring safety for the community.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

I am a firm believer in term limits. The ability to have new perspectives and views is paramount for the growth of a town and residence.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

It is a disservice to the residences of Holly Ridge if an elected official is not informed on topics that require action.
10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

I believe paid parking is a deterrent for tourism. There are other opportunities to explore that could benefit both the town and visitors.

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

I currently work for Pender EMS and Fire as an Advanced EMT and have spent 15 years in the Fire and EMS services.

Holly Ridge Candidate Forum
Thursday, October 26th 6-8pm
Located at Holly Ridge Community Center on Sound Road

Candidate Questionnaire: Dexter Sholar For Holly Ridge Council

Dexter Sholar



1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

I am business minded and pay attention to detail but most of all, I use common sense in my decisions.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

I am currently on the Town Council but what initially motivated me to run was I didn't like the way the departments were being run and it seemed like no one knew what was going on.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

I am currently on the Holly Ridge town council.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

I have been on the council for 4 years and I am still learning everyday. No one can know everything but with time I will get better. That is why it is important not to elect new people every term.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

Sidewalks and bike paths are a part of our master park plan that we have been working on since 2021.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

Yes, all towns and counties should do their best to work together to make the area great for all citizens.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major

storm? 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

We currently have an emergency management plan that has been working great in the past.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

Term limits are not needed in local government. You currently are elected on 4 year terms and if the citizens aren't happy with you they can elect someone else.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

I agree if you take on the responsibility of any job or position you are to do it to

the best of your ability. If that means research, then you must take the time to do it to make your own informed decisions.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

We do not currently have paid parking but I don't agree with paid parking in towns. In my opinion, you should want people coming to your town, spending time and money to increase revenue. That helps keep taxes low for citizens.

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

I was born and raised in Holly Ridge. I am a husband, father and police officer. I currently help run our two family businesses. I enjoy camping with my family and cruising in our Jeep Wrangler.

Coffee with a Candidate
Wednesday, October 25th 4-6pm
127 Sound Road in Holly Ridge
Coffee provided by The Ridge Coffee House

Candidate Questionnaire: Ken Bradshaw For Holly Ridge Council

Ken Bradshaw

1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

I ran a hard wood flooring construction crew of over 20 people and I would run the jobs from start to finish from job proposal, ordering, scheduling, day to day jobs. I dealt directly with architects, designers, suppliers and builders. I handled complaints and issues, making sure workers had a safe work environment, ensuring customers were satisfied with completed jobs, keeping jobs on schedule. I would fill in where needed whether it was getting supplies, running heavy equipment, or handling phones. I understood that every day the team had to work as one to successfully get the jobs done. "There's a reason they call them hard wood floors, because there is nothing easy about them."

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

I have attended almost every meeting for the last 4 years after moving here. I go to them to learn about what's going on in the community. I'm always surprised at how few people actually come to the meetings. I have been to a few meetings were larger groups have come because of a specific topic and I'm not sure that the council members have heard the concerns those people have had. If I'm elected, I want to make sure

that everyone who comes out and voices their concerns are heard. People work hard and everyone is so busy these days that it takes a lot for some people to be able to make to a meeting. We need to make it clear that we value their time. The council works for the people of this community. That's what we are here for.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

No, I have not.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

I've learned a lot from coming to the meetings. In the last few years there have been a lot of new subdivisions and a lot of new plans regarding the industrial park. It's kind of exciting how things are changing and growing, but of course with that we all have to learn so we make the right decisions.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

I'm really worried about the number of people I see running or biking along Hwy 50 heading toward the beach. I pass people all the time and there isn't even a shoulder for them to get off the road

safely. I think it's real important that we work with DOT and Surf City to get a real bike lane and side walk to connect the two communities.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

Our area is very unique and we can benefit by working with the other local towns and counties. Being a town on the border of two counties gives us an advantage where we can draw from both areas.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm? 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

I do not feel that Holly Ridge is currently able to handle a major storm. The only shelter I could locate was Coastal Elementary School. With the past two tropical events we had this season I felt there was a huge disconnect with getting valuable information out to the residents and business owners in Holly Ridge. Too many people don't follow Facebook and this needs to be improved right away. Tax payers depend on information being provided by the town and they didn't receive it.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

Yes. The good Lord above is the only one without a term limit.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

Absolutely. If residents are able to get agendas ahead of time, we need to make sure that we not only get the agendas but that we research and ask questions to make sure we have answers during the meetings. No one wants to waste time.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

Holly Ridge currently does not.

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

I often get asked if I'm a biker because of my beard, but honestly the reason I have this beard is because I am a die hard Jet's fan and as a Jet's fan, I couldn't stand Tom Brady and the New England Patriots (a few years back) and when I found out the New England Patriots played in Gillette Stadium (Gillette Razor Company) I vowed I would never shave again!

Candidate Questionnaire: Chelsea Kurtz For Holly Ridge Council

Chelsea Kurtz



1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

I have two degrees in politics, one Bachelor's and one Master's degree.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

Yes, lack of infrastructure and vision for the future of this town.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

Yes, I have been elected twice, for two three year terms on my HOA board.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning.

What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

As a real estate agent, I am familiar with zoning. I am always seeking advice from experts in their respective fields and if a particular issue arose that I understand needs more clarification and depth of understanding, I will be seeking that expertise prior to decision making for the town.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

We absolutely need sidewalks here, I plan to push for sidewalks and pedestrian paths from 17 to Surf City along highway 50.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

Yes, we must consider our relationships and geographical significance with Surf City, Sneads Ferry and Hampstead. Specifically, we should consider working with Surf City as much as possible, since most of our only amenities are located there.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm? 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

We need better mass communication to update our citizens in real time and to prepare them for evacuations ahead of time. Currently Surf City has an instagram, and a much more robust website. We need communication across multiple platforms, not just the facebook page.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

Yes, I personally don't believe anyone should hold the same position for more than a decade.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

Of course, the town council meeting itself should not be the fact finding mission. This allows items to be tabled and forgotten or delayed action becomes the pace of the council.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

N/A

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

I have a bachelor's degree in Politics and a Master's degree in Conflict Management and Negotiation. I'm a mother, a military spouse, a business owner, and a Christian. I'm always willing to discuss opinions or ideas that conflict with my own. I want what's best for the community.

Candidate Questionnaire: Teresa Batts For Surf City Mayor

Teresa Batts



1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

First and foremost, I have a strong background in public service and community engagement. I have actively participated in local initiatives, serving on various community boards and committees, which has given me a deep understanding of the needs and aspirations of the town's residents. I have a genuine passion for Surf City and its residents. I also have a deep-rooted love for the town and a strong desire to make it an even better place to live, work, and play. My dedication to improving the quality of life for all residents is shown by my community involvement and commitment to listening and responding to the needs of the people.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

I am motivated to run for mayor because I have a deep passion for local issues. I have a personal connection to the community and a desire to give back.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

Yes. I currently hold the office as Mayor of Surf City. In 2017 and 2021 I ran successful elections for Surf City Town Council. Before becoming mayor, I sat as a Surf City Councilwoman for five years.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

I have Planning Board experience and professional experience with zoning. Zoning shapes the places where we live and helps ensure protection of the health, safety and welfare of our

residents and visitors. Understanding the current regulations and as the Town embarks on updating those codes to align with our updated Comprehensive Plan, having someone in place that has a thorough understanding of this will benefit the others.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

As the Region continues to grow, traffic has grown with it. We're seeing investments in our community that will help alleviate the congestion and those investments not only prioritize vehicular traffic but also bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Bicycles and pedestrians should be a concern and current efforts such as the East Coast Greenway Feasibility Study, S. Shore Multi-Use Path, and various other connections throughout our community will help. I'd like to see changes by creating the necessary links to allow people to visit multiple places and businesses without having to get in their car for short distances from "A" to "B".

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

We're fortunate to have a good relationship with our island communities to Topsail Island, Pender County, and Onslow County. A linkage between all these entities is through the Topsail Island Shoreline Protection Commission, that has representation from the towns as well as the counties. Cooperation also occurs through the transportation planning process as well as regional economic development efforts.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm? 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

1) It only takes one storm to have an adverse impact on our town. Thankfully the town staff has put in place processes and procedures to make sure we are doing everything we can to be prepared for that event. This includes securing town assets, making sure we have adequate fuel and supplies and documentation. 2.) We have learned that you can never communicate enough before, during, and after a storm event.

Staff and I maintain constant communication to make sure that the appropriate message is getting out not only right before and during the event, but year-around, especially as we have numerous new residents moving into our community.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

While term limits could have benefits like reduced influence of special interests and fresh perspectives, there could also be drawbacks like reduced experience of elected officials and loss of institutional knowledge. The benefits and drawbacks of term limits are complex and there is no easy answer. It is important to weigh the pros and cons carefully before I would decide whether or not to support term limits in our community.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

When individuals have a good understanding of the topics at hand, they can provide informed opinions, ask relevant questions, and propose practical solutions.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

The biggest issue we have faced with paid parking is helping people get used to it as Surf City has gone a long time without it. Paid Parking has brought an effective management tool to parking

regarding offering a safer environment for motorists and pedestrians as well as delineating specific areas for parking rather than the disorganized parking on the right of way and private property. We always strive to have parking as a support tool and not sure enforcement especially for those that may be visiting for their first time.

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

I'm the mother of three extraordinary sons and two amazing grandchildren. In 2016 my life changed forever when I lost my son Tanner. Life without him will never be the same however life did continue and I thank GOD every day for this COMMUNITY that we LIVE in. This COMMUNITY took CARE of me and LOVED ME in some of the darkest days of my life. I learned that Unoccupied TIME was not my friend, so I started doing more!

In 2006 I started volunteering my time for Surf City boards and committees. I have served on the Surf City Planning Board, Topsail Island Shoreline Protection, Surf City Shoreline Protection, Cape Fear Council of Government. It is extremely important to have good relationships and connections on local, state, and federal levels no matter if you are red, blue, or purple. I was recently appointed to the Coastal Resource Commission.

I LISTEN, I AM HUMBLE, I AM RESPECTFUL, I AM LOYAL and I am going to STAND UP for YOU! There comes a TIME when we all need to STEP up to the PLATE & now is that time for ME!



Fire Prevention

MONTH

"Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety"

- Hear a BEEP, get on your feet. Get out and stay out. Call 9-1-1 from outside.
- Hear a CHIRP, make a change. A chirping alarm needs attention.
- Replace the batteries or the entire unit if it's over 10 years old.
- Test all smoke alarms at least once a month.

National Fire Protection Association nfpa.org

Letter From The Mayor

By Teresa Batts

Many lives can be impacted by a knowledgeable, connected, and focused mayor - a mayor who knows our town, a mayor who understands local, state, and federal regulations, and a mayor who knows how to protect our town and residents in an emergency and what resources are available to us for support. As a resident of Surf City, you must ask yourself, who is the best person for this job?

I am Teresa Batts. I am your friend, your neighbor, and I am asking for your vote on Tuesday, November 7.

Surf City is where I was born and raised. Born to Larry & Linda Batson, who taught me to listen before I speak, to earn before I spend, and to never give up. A proud mom to three wonderful sons - Casey, Tanner, and Frank - and a Gigi to two amazing grandchildren. In 2016 my life forever changed when I lost my son, Tanner. Life without him will never be the same, however, life continues. It was this community that helped me through these tragic times. This community took care of me, loved me, and provided opportunities to be more involved. Since then, giving back has been my passion. I served on the Surf City

Planning Board, Topsail Island Shoreline Protection, Surf City Shoreline Protection and Resilience Committee, and regionally serve on the Cape Fear Council of Governments. I was also recently appointed to the Coastal Resources Commission by North Carolina's Governor. This commission establishes policies for the NC Coastal Management Program, designates areas of environmental concern, adopts rules and polices for coastal development, and certifies local land use plans. In 2017, the town council appointed me to fill a vacant seat and have been fortunate to have received your vote of confidence for reelection.

In December 2022, when Doug Medlin stepped down from his role as mayor, the town council, as well as Mayor Medlin, unanimously appointed me as your mayor. It was an honor, and I was, and still am, sincerely humbled to have 100% of town council and former Mayor Medlin's support.

As an elected official, we must be innovative, steadfast, and unbiased to make the right decisions for all our residents. Sometimes, this means officials may make some unpopular decisions. Our town has come a long way since its

incorporation in 1949, but we still have a long way to go to meet the needs of our growing town. We must all share in the responsibility toward sustainable growth, which includes public safety for residents and visitors, protecting our beaches and providing access to them, emergency preparedness, communication, enhanced pedestrian facilities, infrastructure for water, sewer and roads, quality parks and open spaces, and reviewing town policies and ordinances to guide the future growth of our town.

Surf City is a very special place and I have always felt fortunate to call this home. What used to be a little beach town, is now a town with a beach. I want to continue to serve and make Surf City an even better place to live, work, and play. I have a tremendous amount of respect for our city and our environment and want to preserve it the best we can. I will continue to stand up for you!

I, Teresa Batts, humbly ask for your vote on November 7, 2023.

Voting polls will be open at 6:30am and close at 7:30pm. There are two locations for registered voters in Surf City:

Pender County Residents: Surf City Community Center (201 Community Center Dr., Surf City, NC) Onslow County Residents: Folkstone Freewill Baptist Church (133 Old Folkstone Rd., Holly Ridge, NC)

If you have any questions, or would like more information, please visit my website at teresabattsformayor.com or email me at teresabattsnc@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Teresa Batts



Paid for by Teresa Batts for Surf City Mayor



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Candidate Questionnaire: Alicia Hawley For Surf City Council

Alicia Hawley



1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

Over the past 20 years living in the Surf City area I have gotten to know the community and its people. I think a part of being a good elected official is the ability to listen to your community members and understand what their needs are for the community. Then be able to turn those needs into viable solutions to take to the council and be able to work together to find a result that works for the majority. A good council member should also be able to help communicate information back out to our community so that they understand current events and projects and how they will effect everyone in our community. As a person working in marketing communication is a big part of what I do and I am looking forward to helping improve that between the town and its residents and visitors.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

As a parent of an elementary aged child I have seen the growth in our population specifically with young families. However, when you look at the current seated council members this is a demographic that is lacking from our elected officials. I plan to be the voice of those young families and make sure that their wants and needs are taken into consideration when the council makes decisions for our community.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

I served as the Surf City Elementary PTA President for two years which was the max term limit. I am still a member at large for the board for the PTA as well. I was also voted in as Treasurer for Triton Village Homeowners Association.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

I have made it a point to learn as much as possible over the last year by

going to the Town Council and Planning Board meetings. I think we have done a great thing by implementing the new Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

I feel by holding to the new rules and regulations we have set in place we can continue to make our growth in Surf City meaningful. I have also seen first hand how some zoning regulations do not benefit community members like the ability to have gates and the requirement for a second entrance/exit to new communities over a certain number of homesites. Rules like this force pre-existing communities to have an open flow of traffic to their neighborhood by pre-existing easements with no ability for the current communities to hold the new ones accountable for maintenance. I would like to see some of these rules modified to take all communities into consideration. I understand that the purpose is safety but we have to make sure we look at the whole picture as well.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

Traffic is a major issue and I experience it first hand living in the southern part of Surf City on the island. The current sidewalks are not wide enough and they almost always have some sort of debris on them whether it is sand or gravel. I would like to see the sidewalk maintenance done in a more regular and routine fashion including cutting back brush along the sides. I know that repaving of South Shore Dr by NCDOT is in the works and if they could increase the side area to include a dedicated bike path then the sidewalks would remain for pedestrian traffic only. This would be nice to see Surf City follow on our portion of South Shore drive as well. If we are able to accomplish this then it would also be nice to see the same thing follow through on the mainland side of Hwy 50.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

Hearing our community referred to as Topsul Island instead of the 3 municipalities is a great thing. I do feel that there are things we have done well so far but also things that are missing. Possibly pooling our tourism committees when we do large events such as Surf City Live, Ocean Fest, Autumn with Topsail, Liberty Festival,

Spot Festival and Jazz Festival would be great opportunities to work with our adjacent towns. Topsail Area Chamber of Commerce is leading the way in connecting our communities and I would like to see more town support for them in this as well. I know Onslow County has a wonderful Parks and Recreation established and with our new facilities it would be great to work with and partner with them on some things also.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm?

Surf City has done a lot after Florence to increase readiness for another storm of that capacity. Our Emergency Management committee is constantly working to improve the way we handle and communicate inclement weather. I am looking forward to having the opportunity to have additional insight into this area by serving as a council member. One of my main goals is to increase communication in general between the town and its citizens. Possibly holding a town event prior to us entering hurricane season where we can discuss how to be prepared and what to do in the event of a large storm would be beneficial to our newer residents.

7.2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

I think we have come a long way since Florence but our full time population continues to increase as well. Setting up community members that have a task to make sure their neighbors are updated on storm plans and impact would be a great community outreach program. They could also be the dedicated agents to access communities and properties in the event of another large storm and be granted early access to Surf City in the event of an evacuation so they can report back to their direct community members.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

Yes I do believe that in order to prosper you need to bring in new ideas and new people that are passionate about the health and wellbeing of our community. There are always opportunities for council members to stay involved even if they are not sitting in an elected seat. They can take their knowledge of the community and continue to put it to work in other committee areas.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

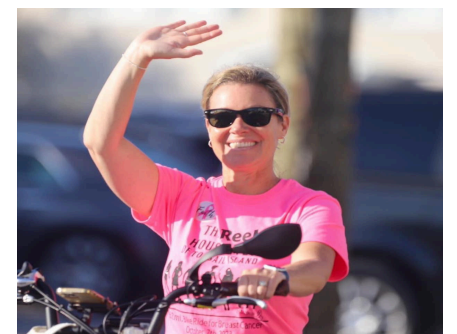
Having a degree in chemistry I feel knowledge is a requirement in making any decision. It is our job as council members to find the areas that someone might have overlooked or discuss with community members that might be impacted to see how they feel prior to meeting at council to make a decision. Most of us just live in one house in Surf City and what might help one might hurt another. It is our job to take both of those people into consideration. The same goes for businesses and the environment. Yes or no decisions should be backed with facts not just feelings. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

I do think that paid parking allows us to generate revenue without having to raise taxes. However I do see some parking areas sitting with little to no vehicles in them most of the summer. I would like to find a way to determine which lots generate the least revenue and offer those as free parking year round. Also given that most of the profit from parking goes to beach nourishment as we get closer to our goal for that project I would like to see those revenues go back into things like better sidewalks, bike paths and parks and recreation upgrades. These are things that our local community would use and have access to year round.

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

I moved to the Surf City area to work at Sears Landing Grill and Boat Docks when it first opened 20 years ago. I have grown up with this small town and went from college student waitress to having a family and small businesses locally in our community. I have worked on Camp Lejeune as a contractor and love our military community as well. When it comes to someone who is genuinely invested in our community I am the epitome of that. My house, my heart, my livelihood depends on the success of Surf City and I will not fail at taking care of our community and its members.



Candidate Questionnaire: Donald Helms For Surf City Council

Donald Helms



1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

I have over 23 years of knowledge and experience with the town's inner workings, infrastructure, and departments. I am a liaison with the utility department and the Fire Department with over 20 years of experience, and I am currently a ladder captain. I have experience with the Police Department as I am a retired Highway Patrolman. I have experience with Parks and Recreation, being on the council when the land was purchased for

Soundside, Nelva Albury, and Kenny Batts Park on the island. To sum all of this up, knowledge and experience is a valuable asset to the taxpayers and the Town of Surf City.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

Beach Nourishment and advancing our infrastructure.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

I currently have 23 years of experience as a Town Councilman for the Town of Surf City.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

With my 23 years of experience dealing with all kinds of zoning, I have a very good knowledge of Zoning laws.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

Yes, but we have redesigned a lot of our sidewalks and bike paths for use by

pedestrians for walking and bicycling, including the Mountains to Sea Trail.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

Yes, we need to work with our neighbors. This includes North Topsail, Topsail Beach, as well as Onslow and Pender County. We need to work with our county commissioners about adding schools.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm? 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

Yes, we are very well prepared, and we now have our own radio communication system.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

It has its good points and bad points. You must understand that experience cannot be replaced.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

Yes, and I go over the Council agendas with the town manager before going into meetings for this purpose.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

Our parking program is very good. It still has a few bugs, but overall, it is in a very good, and please remember, that the money collected from parking goes directly to the beach nourishment fund.

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

I have 23 years of experience on the Town Council and 23 years of experience with the Town Fire Department, in which I hold the rank of Captain.

Candidate Questionnaire: Joann McDermon For N. Topsail Beach Mayor

Joann McDermon



1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

Organization, communication, listening and negotiation skills.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

I'd like to finish the projects currently underway to renourish the beach, establish a bike lane, build a new firehouse and expand our community events.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

I am currently the Mayor of North Topsail Beach.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

North Topsail Beach has a comprehensive CAMA land use plan that guides the boards decisions regarding Zoning. As you know, we are mostly residential.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

We are working with the DOT currently regarding a bike path expansion.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

All the island towns and Holly Ridge work closely together. We also have a great relationship with Onslow County which is where North Topsail Beach resides.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is

properly prepared to handle a major storm? 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

North Topsail Beach needs to work towards an off island Emergency Operations Center and Stormwater projects to improve drainage after storm events.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

The charter for North Topsail Beach outlines the term limits of the Mayor being 2 year terms. I am not looking to request a change to the current Charter.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

Absolutely.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

I am not looking to make any requested changes to our program. We in North Topsail Beach are lucky enough to have Onslow County as a partner.

There are several Onslow County lots that offer free parking.

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

I am a resident of North Topsail Beach and also have investment properties in Sneads Ferry. I moved here full time in 2013 and love it here. I am lucky enough to have the children and grandchildren close by. I would like to continue to serve the residents of North Topsail Beach for the next few years to complete some of the in work projects, several beach projects are underway, a bike lane and a new desperately needed fire station.



Candidate Questionnaire: Phil Misciagno For Holly Ridge Council

Phil Misciagno



1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

Servant Leadership style... I want to be aligned with families of Holly Ridge to help Holly Ridge maintain sensible growth. asset to the taxpayers and the Town of Surf City.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

Just looking forward to the opportunity to serve Holly Ridge. I want to make sure we are making sure the Industrial Park is being utilized to its fullest capacity that benefits, small business and Holly Ridge. Also, I have concerns with Onwasa and the relationship this business has with the

Holly Ridge.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

No.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

Zoning is always a hot topic, you need leadership that understands how important current and future land use is impacted by zoning. Zoning dictates allowable uses, density, and so much more that will lead to positive and in some cases negative change. As a Real Estate Professional, the zoning ordinances are over 200 pages long and before any decision is made; I assure you that this will be a well informed decision based on research and allowable use.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

This will always be an issue with the amount of tourists, but yes I totally understand that there is need for improvement for pedestrians to have sidewalks and bike paths.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that

we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

Absolutely, we must work with our neighboring cities and municipalities for the greater good of Holly Ridge citizens

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm? 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

Great question, citizens should have access to local emergency services where they get real time updates through AM/FM Channels. Cell towers should be updated to reflect the growth of our neighborhoods.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

Yes.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

Yes agreed, and If I have any questions or a lack of understanding it is my responsibility to do my fact finding to be

well informed prior to a town council meeting.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

Not tied to Holly Ridge.

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

I am a retired Navy Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman from 2016, I have lived in eastern NC since 1995 and married a local from Richlands in 2000. The last seven years I have been a Real Estate professional putting the needs of families first. I spent ten years in the Chiefs community where I served as a Command Career counselor, financial specialist, equal opportunity advisor, casualty assistance calls officer and a train the trainer Chief. I have been on the leadership teams at the command level serving our great service members for the Navy and the Marine Corps. I was also the treasurer for the Corpsman Memorial foundation where we finished this project in October of last year after 15 years. As a Real estate professional, I do not buy and sell. I help Realtors through the intricacies from being a new agent through a seasoned agent understanding contract law and living by the code of ethics as a trusted advisor.

VOTE FOR PHIL MISCIAGNO

YOUR VOICE, YOUR TOWN, YOUR FUTURE.

HOLLY RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL



Phil Misciagno is a 24 year Navy Veteran. He has been a current Real Estate Professional for the last seven years. He will put the Holly Ridge community first, and he believes it will be a better town, together.

Paid for by Committee to Elect Phil Misciagno. 2023.



Candidate Questionnaire: Aaron Ritter For Holly Ridge Council

Aaron Ritter



1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

During my 10 years as a police officer and 22 years in the Army, I've had a great deal of experience to help me hone my leadership skills and abilities. I think my top three strengths are my ability to work in a team, think critically, and ability to communicate and provide transparency.

Teamwork: Any political position comes with its own conflict, but I'm dedicated to keeping an open mind and looking beyond myself to engage in "productive conflict" in order to come to resolutions the council believes are in the best interest of the community.

Problem Solving: I am an outside-of-the-box thinker and I'd use every means at my disposal to bring positive change to Holly Ridge, all the while keeping its citizens and businesses first. Also, as an experienced military planner, I'm able to take into consideration the long-term ramifications of the decisions I support.

Transparency / Communication: I am a strong believer in being transparent; what you see is what you get.

Transparency and communication are paramount to building trust between the town and its citizens, and I vow to keep those lines of communication open and develop relationships with those in the community (and the surrounding area) in order to support building an even better Holly Ridge.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

While I was initially approached to provide a voice for the Summerhouse community, I've come to see a lot of untapped potential for Holly Ridge that the current council has not capitalized on. Holly Ridge has the hottest housing markets in North Carolina, and I think it's so desired because it's the best of both worlds with its small-town feel and proximity to the beaches.

As I drive through Surf City or Hampstead, I've really come to appreciate that small-town feel and that is what motivated me to run for office, to preserve Holly Ridge's identity.

I feel I can bring a fresh perspective to the table and have ideas on how to help develop Holly Ridge's vision to allow it to grow and prosper while doing so sensibly so that it does not lose that small-town feel and does not go against what is in the best interest of the community.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

While I have not held an elected position before, I believe I have the leadership skills necessary to effect positive change on the council, and the community as a whole. I am a quick study and am successful in any roles I've filled in the past. Lastly, what you see, is what you get. I don't have any skin in the game or ulterior motives as some others might have to run for the council. I just want to do my best to serve my community by bringing a new perspective and vision to the community.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

While I don't have any professional experience with zoning, I plan to proactively take training to become familiar with the ins and outs of zoning, I have read over the ordinances and I plan to take additional local government training, if elected, to further educate myself on important topics such as community development, intergovernmental cooperation, and infrastructure. I will also be relying heavily on the subject matter experts in the town administration and planning committee to help educate me so I can make informed decisions that are in the best interest of the community.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

Traffic is becoming a larger problem by the day, and it will only get worse as further development occurs, particularly for those unincorporated areas in which there are little controls on what type of business or developments go where.

That is why I believe Holly Ridge needs to commission a comprehensive study and develop a deliberate, phased, "whole community" master plan to address these concerns, as well as address things such as land use and beautification. With the continued growth of the industrial park and the

town's desire to attract certain types of businesses, sidewalk expansion would be necessary. But beyond that, there could be other possibilities.

One potential opportunity would be to work with Pender and Onslow counties, as well as the Wilmington Urban Area, as they continue to develop and refine bicycle and pedestrian plans to connect communities throughout the Cape Fear and Topsail region. This could eventually lead to a dedicated path from Holly Ridge to Surf City that will allow walkers/joggers/bicyclists to be active and enjoy the Topsail region without having to worry about driving or their safety with increasing traffic along Highway 50.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

Although Holly Ridge is fully in Onslow County, residents rely heavily on the offerings of Surf City and Sneads Ferry, which is where Holly Ridge children attend school. Therefore, it's imperative to maintain working relationships with the other communities and address any shared issues.

I would like to promote more cooperation with the neighboring communities to identify what the region, as a whole, needs and to help work together to bridge those gaps. Such things could be a sports complex, splash park, or even a satellite hospital with outpatient services that all communities in the region can benefit from.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm. 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

While I am no emergency management expert, I think the town and the Holly Ridge Fire Department do a lot to ensure all of its residents are informed, especially via social media. However, I think one thing I'd like to see is maybe some informational sessions hosted by the town for new residents on how to prepare and respond to a hurricane, especially since the town has so many residents moving in, many of whom have never lived on the coast or experienced a hurricane.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

I would not be opposed to term limits if the council and community believe that would best serve the community. However, I believe the town would be best served by allowing council members

to serve two or three terms. I say this because it takes a while for a candidate to become familiar with all of the ins and outs of town administration and this would provide continuity within the council. However, limiting the number of terms allows fresh perspectives to be introduced on the council and works to mitigate potential conflicts of interest that might be formed over time.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

Yes, in fact, there are occasions in which current council members have admitted they did not fully read the agenda and associated documents for a topic requiring a vote. Council decisions can set precedence so it's important to be fully informed on a topic before making a decision that can have ripple effects down the road. I also think it's important for a council member to do his or her own homework by speaking to all stakeholders on all sides of an issue so they can determine what the best course of action is for the community as a whole.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

Although efforts are still ongoing with the current council, I would continue to work avenues in which Holly Ridge could partner with the Topsail Island communities to get some sort of concessions in terms of beach parking, whether that be reduced pricing or perhaps free parking.

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

I've dedicated a large part of my life to the service of others. I've been an EMT, a community service officer, and a police officer for 10 years. I'm a disabled Army veteran with 22 years of service where I did two deployments (Iraq and Afghanistan) and have led hundreds of troops until my retirement in 2022. I also volunteer as an assistant scoutmaster with the Sneads Ferry Boy Scout troop.

Of all of those roles, the underlying theme is dedication to others and service to my community. And that is why I am running for town council. To help forge a fresh, cohesive vision of how Holly Ridge can grow and be prosperous without impacting the way of life, Holly Ridge residents have grown to love about their home. And it's with that goal I hope I can earn your vote and you'll allow me to represent you on the Holly Ridge Town Council.

Candidate Questionnaire: Pam Hall For Holly Ridge Council

Pam Hall

1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

I believe a strength I bring to this council is my motivation to get to bottom of a situation. To look at ideas, issues and plans with an open mind and willingness to engage anyone with their thoughts. I remember a specific incident when a citizen attending a council meeting provided insight that exposed the perfect solution. That is the opportunities we all should be looking for and why it is important for attendance at the meetings. The council is 6 people. We do not have all the perfect answers.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

Not that I remember. While I was running a café in town, I heard conversations that were critical of the town. I wanted to advocate fixing things versus being critical and thought the only way I could do that was to be on the council. That and I believe in always looking for the positive before the negative.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

No. I have been on this council 8 years and before that with Parks and Recreation a year.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

A zoning request or a zoning issue is always different from the last one you worked on. I believe the key is to study the one in front of you, learn as much as you can about it, rely on the town planning staff to answer the questions, and then listen to the person who is requesting the change. You may have to go research again and learn more, before you can be a part of the decision making.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

Those items did show up on the Land Use Plan and there is work being done concerning some of these. What I know is that bike paths or multi use paths on the side of state roads are done through a process. I was recently appointed by the council to sit on the JUMPO Transportation Advisory Committee. This committee collects the transportation needs across the county (multi-use paths are included). They then add suggested

priorities and submit them to the next level for approval, funding and ultimately getting on the schedule. What I have however noticed is that the length of time to go through these steps is long. Not impossible, just not quick. Those items are important to the town and we have to keep looking for ways to get them.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

For a while now the town of Holly Ridge has been actively meeting with North Topsail, Surf City, and Topsail. There are currently 3 groups within the town staff and council, that meet routinely with representatives from each of those. Those relationships have produced mutual agreements, combined ideas and shared experiences. Very important!

What I would like to see go back on the topic list? At one time it was discussed about putting a magistrate in the Holly Ridge Police Department. That magistrate judge could service our community as well as the other 3 towns. Trips to Jacksonville for Holly Ridge and North Topsail and trips to Burgaw for Surf City and Topsail police could be handled here. Same goes with citizens who need a magistrate judge. Cost of officer's time, citizens' time and gas would be reduced significantly. This decision involves agreements across at least 4 police departments, 4 city governments, 2 county court systems and more. It stalled somewhere in there. I believe it is truly worth working on. I hope it will resurface.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm. 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

I absolutely believe our emergency plans and operating procedures make us prepared. Of course, after every event we learn something new as I am sure everyone does at their home. After every event the town staff meets to discuss the good and bad of their operation during the storm. They identify the changes to be made and they are diligent in updating the plan. I lived here and had a business during last big storm. I don't have any suggestions to improve the process we have, but feel the town staff would listen to any ideas presented to them via a council meeting or a direct call.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you

support it?

Hard to say. Being on the council is not a continuous 8-hour day, 40 hours a week job focused on one skill. After 8 years, I feel like I have enough knowledge to know where to find answers, am comfortable enough to seek help from town staff, co-council and citizens and I am not surprised when we come on something I haven't dealt with before. So, I really would like to stay on the board another term, but can understand why people think about term limits.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

I have a couple of thoughts about this. Some councils actually have a pre-meeting workshop to discuss agenda items. It is not a decision-making meeting and I believe it should not become an opportunity to get consensus before the public meeting. That would be disingenuous to the position. But as complex as some subjects are and the larger cities like Wilmington having so many agenda items, I understand why have those workshops. But Holly Ridge

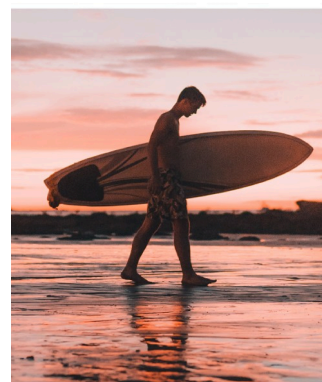
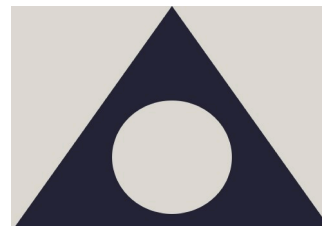
doesn't. What we do have is this: We receive the agenda the week before the meeting. We have time to read, research, ask questions, and do a field trip if necessary. You have to do that! I don't believe you should make a decision on something that you have only heard about at the meeting. I also believe you shouldn't come to the meeting with your decision already made.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

N/A

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

Instead of about me, I would like to express something to everyone who wants to be happy and proud of their community. ALWAYS ask questions about everything you hear. Go as close to an expert as you can get, call a council person, call the town staff – but don't jump to conclusions when you hear things, especially bad things. Go for the truth and if it is not to your liking, then speak up at a council meeting. Also, get on one of the various committees or run for an office so you can be a part of the change.



**When: Tuesday Nights
7:00 - 8:00pm**

NOTE: AL-ANON MEETING IN THE SAME BUILDING AT THIS TIME

Meeting Location:

Hampstead United Methodist Church

15395 US-17, HAMPSTEAD, NC 28445

GYMNASIUM

IN THE FAMILY LIFE CENTER BUILDING BEHIND THE CHURCH

Candidate Questionnaire: Fred Fontana For N. Topsail Beach Council

Fred Fontana



1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

I have served as an Alderman since November 2022, appointed to fill a vacant position. Previously, I served on the North Topsail Beach Planning Board and I continue to serve on the Topsail Island Shoreline Protection Commission and the Jacksonville Urban Area Transportation Advisory Committee. I'm also well aware of environmental concerns through my volunteer work on the Topsail Island Turtle Patrol and through the Shoreline Protection Commission. In addition, I have a good understanding of the needs of diverse individuals in the community, through my volunteer work with Share the Table and the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

Issues that motivate me include: First: Re-nourishment of the beach and dunes systems. Second: Continue to make North Topsail Beach an attractive destination for tourists and residents while being prudent with residents' tax dollars.

This will include improving the safety of all residents and visitors by replacing the fire station on the south end of the town. It will also include eliminating much of North Topsail Beach from the CBRA designation that prohibits residents from qualifying for the federal flood insurance program and restricts veterans from applying for VA housing loans. Third: Improve recreational activities by establishing bike lanes on New River Inlet Rd and expanding activities at Richard Peters Park.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

I was appointed as an Alderman to fill a vacant position in November 2022. I am now running for a 4-year term. Previously, I was elected for four consecutive years as president of the Onslow United Transit System Board of Directors and elected for three years as the president of the North Carolina Public Transportation Association.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

I served on the North Topsail Beach Planning Board for almost two years. My experience on that board will benefit voters in that I am knowledgeable of zoning requirements and the zoning process for the town.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

Bike lanes are a pet project of mine.

I'm working with NCDOT to develop plans for bike lanes on New River Inlet Road from Town Hall to the north end. Also working with the local police department to identify potential safe pedestrian crosswalks.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

I've been active on the Topsail Island Shoreline Protection Commission for over two years. The three island towns – North Topsail Beach, Surf City, and Topsail Beach – work collaboratively on many common issues. These include keeping the beaches clean by encouraging everyone to not use plastics and to remove debris. Also, we are working on a vitex removal program to eliminate this invasive vine from the dunes. I also participate in the Four Town meetings, which involve the island towns and Holly Ridge discussing issues of concern to all of us. As the North Topsail Beach representative on the Greater Topsail Area Chamber of Commerce, I am involved with addressing many issues affecting both Onslow and Pender Counties.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm? 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

North Topsail Beach has a solid Emergency Management plan. The Town Manager coordinates with police, fire, county emergency management staff

and town elected officials in the event of a hurricane. All Alderman are available to serve as needed at the Emergency Operations Center.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

Term limits exist in that, every four years, voters have the opportunity to choose their board members.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

Absolutely, preparation and knowledge are essential to the role of Alderman, particularly in regard to ensuring meetings are run efficiently and effectively, allowing adequate time for comments from the public.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

North Topsail Beach's paid parking helps fund beach projects and helps keep property taxes low.

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

I'm not a politician. I'm an average citizen living in North Topsail Beach. I want to continue to work toward preserving the natural beauty of the area and continue to make this an enjoyable place for residents and tourists alike.



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Candidate Questionnaire: Connie Pletl For N. Topsail Beach Council

Connie Pletl



1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

Some of my greatest strengths and skills are related to my keen sense of curiosity. I want to know about the issues and challenges that the town faces and I want to know not only the quickest and easiest solutions, but what solutions are best in the long run. I also look at every side of an issue, and will choose to fight for the side that I believe is the will of the majority of townspeople, and is best for the town, even if it is not always the one I would have personally chosen for myself.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

I have watched the town grow over the years and while decisions that are made at the federal level are the big ones that make the news, it's the decisions made by small, local governments that affect people's lives the most; I want to make good decisions for the town and help move it forward in a positive manner.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

The only office I have ever been elected to is the one I am currently

holding. I was appointed to the North Topsail Beach Board of Aldermen in July 2021 to fill the position of Alderman Richard Peters, who passed away while in office. I ran for, and won, the seat in that November's election.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

The experience I have with zoning issues is what I have studied pertaining to issues in North Topsail Beach and what I have learned at town meetings.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

North Topsail Beach has a "share the road" bike path on Island Drive and a mile-long multi-use path from the town hall north to the Richard Peters Park but a continuation of a bike path is sorely needed for New River Inlet Road, which is narrow and winding. To that end, the issue of a share the road bike path that would not only provide a continuous safe riding lane for the whole town but also connect to the entire island, has been something the town board has been working to make happen. I am happy to say that the current board has approved funding to move forward on that issue so that our town roads will be safer.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

I feel it is very important to work with neighboring municipalities as well as Onslow and Pender counties. The island towns and counties have issues that are unique to the coastal area. For example, hurricane preparedness, evacuation and reentry are topics of extreme importance where all local coastal entities need to work together. While they all work together well, every storm is different and we should always strive to improve.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm? 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

North Topsail Beach is prepared to handle a major storm but improvements can be made. The town needs an off-island reliable emergency operations center, and the current board has been discussing that issue.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you support it?

I would support a proposal for term limits. While I feel the voters should always have the choice of who they want to represent them, fresh ideas can sometimes move the government forward in a more positive light. That being said, it sometimes takes years for someone to work through projects to their fruition, so I would not want to cap the amount of terms that an elected official could serve concurrently at too low of a number.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

Absolutely I do. Issues should always be studied in preparation for meetings; however, elected officials should always keep an open mind in case new information is brought up during meetings.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

I am satisfied with the paid parking in North Topsail Beach. It is a fair system of obtaining revenue. Property owners pay taxes to NTB, vacationers renting in town pay accommodations tax, it only makes sense that day trippers should also contribute. I feel our rates and times are fair. Additionally, there are county lots in the town that do not charge for parking.

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

I have been a fulltime resident of North Topsail Beach for over 27 years. From 1999-2012, I worked for the Topsail Voice newspaper and covered island and area issues. I attended hundreds of town meetings, county meetings, area events and environmental symposiums – giving me the unique experience of learning about many aspects of the coastal area and the town of North Topsail Beach. Additionally, I worked for two other newspapers through 2014. Even after leaving the newspaper business, I continued to stay in tune with the happenings of the town of North Topsail Beach. I enjoy representing the citizens of the town and also strive to look out for the interests of all who live, own property and vacation in our beautiful town.

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Sunday, October 29th
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127 Sound Road in Holly Ridge**

Candidate Questionnaire: Rena Bragg For Holly Ridge Council

Rena Bragg



1. What are your greatest strengths and skill set that will make you a good elected official?

My greatest strengths are: I am honest, fair, unbiased and a good listener. I investigate issues brought to my attention and give a timely response. If needed the question(s) will be directed to the appropriate individual to handle, if I am unable to do so.

2. Is there a particular issue that motivated you to run for office?

No particular issues, but I want to ensure that the entire town is represented in its entirety.

3. Do you currently or have you ever held an elected office before, and if so, what office?

Currently elected as a Holly Ridge Town Council Board Member. Prior offices held in Holly Ridge are: Mayor and Mayor-Pro-tem.

4. As an elected official you will have to make decisions regarding zoning. What, if any, is your experience with zoning and how will it benefit the voters if you are elected?

Zoning goes through the Zoning Department, then to the Planning Board, and presented to the Town Council for a final decision. As a Town we have worked very hard to change the perception of not being "business friendly". Over the last four years we have been able to change that mindset. To continue that trend, we are always looking for ways to make ordinances and regulations as easy to comply with as possible. All incorporated Towns should have Zoning Regulations in place to encourage appropriate growth for the Town.

5. Traffic is a major issue, especially during the tourist season. One concern is the lack of sidewalks and dedicated bike paths. Do you agree this is a concern and if so, what would you like to see changed or added regarding sidewalks and bike paths?

Multi-use paths would be a fantastic amenity to this area. These would include bike and Pedestrian areas. A huge goal of mine would be to join the

multiuse paths between the residential areas, the Island area, recreation facilities and the Industrial Park to connect people with jobs. Not having sidewalks/bike paths has been a concern of mine because they should be put in place to ensure the safety of the citizens as they are traveling to and from their destinations.

6. Our area is unique in the fact that we are comprised of several small towns and two counties. Do you feel it is important to work alongside the neighboring towns/counties and are there any specific issues you want addressed or feel needs more work?

It is very important to network with neighboring towns and counties, because networking allows us to inquire of them and receive feedback to get joint projects completed correctly the first time. Time spent collaborating with them is a benefit and could be cost effective for the Town. I would like to see cross walks at High-way 17 intersection, and at the Municipal Park and other areas as needed so streets can be crossed safely.

7. Hurricanes are a way of life in coastal areas. 1) Do you feel your town is properly prepared to handle a major storm? 2) What improvements, if any, would you like to see take place, regarding communication, shelters, or staff?

Our Town continues to work on being as prepared as possible considering they are unaware of the final strength of the incoming storm until being alerted by the news or Emergency Operations Center. Our Mayor and Town Manager are in constant communications with our Local County Emergency Operations Center and State Communications Center for alerts and directions to notify our citizens, so they can plan accordingly. Our citizens are notified of shelter locations and times. Staff is readily available to assist before and following the storm. An improvement for the Town as a whole is to possibly consider building a new Municipal Complex that doubles as an Emergency Operations Center. During the development stage ensure the complex is wind rated for category 5 storms. Possibly add a Recreation Center with the same wind rating and it could double as a shelter which would be an additional benefit for the Town to support our citizens. Having a Local Emergency Operations Center will allow quicker recovery time and it may allow our citizens to leave when mandated knowing they may be able to return to their homes sooner.

8. If elected and a proposal was created regarding term limits, would you

support it?

Yes, I fully support term limits if proposed. This would help ensure the Board and Town does not become stagnant.

9. As time is always precious, do you agree that as an elected official, it is your responsibility to learn about the topics to be discussed ahead of time to help expedite discussions and decisions during the meetings?

Yes, I agree. In the past it was proposed that the council hold public work sessions prior to the Regular Meeting. This seems to be common practice in other municipalities. To date, this has not been approved by our Board. Every Board member has been made aware and has the option to ask any questions prior to meeting, to assist them in being better prepared for the meetings.

10. If your community has paid parking: What issues do you have regarding the current program and would you work to change or alter the existing program in your community?

N/A

11. Tell me something about yourself that may be of interest to the community.

My dad, and I moved to Holly Ridge in 1976. We originally lived in the old barracks that were left by the military from Camp Davis. From there, we moved into the newly built Holly Plaza Apartments. After a few years I purchased my first mobile home, and we lived just outside of the city limits north of Holly Ridge. In 1984, I married

Cleveland Bragg (deceased). Cedric, Cleveland Jarrod, and Jamaica are the special children in our lives. In 1993, Cleveland and I purchased a home within the city limits. Since I have been on the board, I have been blessed to achieve as well as participate in the following:

- Currently serving as a board member at Roots of Recovery
- Currently serving as a board member of Embracing Hearts
- Currently serving as a Town Council Board Member
- Member of Manhollow Missionary Baptist Church
- Past Assistant Church Announcement Secretary
- Past Stenographer for Manhollow Missionary Baptist Church
- Notary Public
- Previous Fire & Rescue person
- Assisted with concessions for local park events
- Worked locally, and retired from J & J Snack Foods
- Past Worthy Matron of Love & Union Chapter #551, Order of Eastern Star
- Past Mayor and Mayor Protem of the Town of Holly Ridge
- Past Board member of Onslow County United Way
- Past Board member of Onslow County Partnership for Children
- Past Vice-Chairman of Holly Ridge Housing Authority Board
- Past member Holly Ridge Planning BoardMember of P.A.R.E.N.T.S.S – Parents Active in Recreation and Enrichment Needs for Today's Special Society

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Community Updates

Hampstead's Knights Of Columbus Charity Golf Tournament Raising Funds For Individuals With Intellectual Disabilities

On September 25, 2023, All Saints Church's Knights of Columbus Harry "Hap" Hanson Council hosted their 4th Annual Charity Golf Classic at Castle Bay Country Club in Hampstead. This outing is dedicated to raise funds and awareness of the LAMB Foundation of North Carolina. The LAMB Foundation of NC is a public not-for-profit charity dedicated to assisting people who have intellectual disabilities. The Tournament funds supports agencies right here in Pender and Onslow County, especially within the Topsail and Dixon School Districts where grants are awarded for educational, sporting and social programs.

The full field of golfers enjoyed a fun day of golf, hole contests, and raffle prizes contributed by many of our Topsail Island and Hampstead businesses, and friends. This year's post tournament Corporate Luncheon Sponsor was Infinity Payment Systems of Wilmington, who also serves many Topsail Island and Hampstead businesses. The Golf Tournament is one of the Knights' largest fund raisers and in 2022 raised over \$20,000 for the LAMB Foundation. The tournament is open to the public and work is already being started preparing for next year's outing.

Contact information can be found at www.knightsofcolumbus12281.org or on Facebook at Knights of Columbus Council 12281.

Kyle Thorpe, President of Infinity Payment Systems with Kevin Borton Tournament Co-Chair. (below)



Knights' luncheon at Castle Bay Country Club.



Castle Bay Arts And Crafts Fair

Castle Bay will be hosting its fourth arts and crafts fair on October 21, 2023, from 9 AM until 1 PM. The fair will be held across from Castle bay Mailboxes.

Many returning Artisans and Crafters will be in attendance, including watercolorist, Gene Hansen; woodcrafter Nancy, Smith; Copper, Artist, Jan Ryan, and others. Our new participants include LeAnn Steffen, who paints shells; Jennifer Blizzard, making wreaths and floral decor; Karen Turbeville uses many

nature found items to create home decor; Marta Latham, making handsewn baskets, book covers, and more.

Face painting by Jamie Connor will be available for the children and The Philly Invasion will be on site for lunch.



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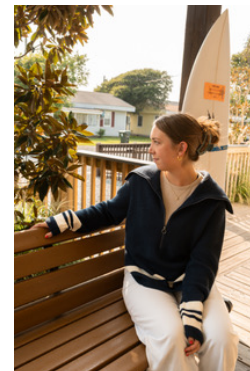
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