

# For Our Longer Lives

By Joan Lamson

So, here we are in the middle of winter in North Carolina. Christmas, with all of the "felt" obligations of trees, decorations, gifts and whatever else is usual to your own family culture, is behind us and the joy of being with family and friends is fading. New Year's Eve with its revelry (maybe for some) and New Year's Day with the black-eyed peas, collards and cornbread are also just a memory. I just learned that peas are for pennies, collards are for dollars and cornbread is for gold. Did you know that?

I still make a number of New Year's resolutions. Perhaps it is more like a list of goals for the year—or maybe it is just a list of things I want to remember. It is always better to write them down. I have been surprised sometimes by someone who said, "Yes, you said you would do that." Apparently, I sometimes change my mind on what I think I will do.

We all do have some decisions to make this year, some sooner than others. Some are facing the decision of where to live. Shall we stay here? Or do we need to consider moving closer to kin? Or are there other options? For some of us, the option of staying here includes the consideration of our current home. Can we continue to "move around" in our own home? Are there too many steps? Are the doorways too narrow or are there rooms we can't get to? Is there a need for outdoor or indoor maintenance and repairs? Is the high cost of insurance a problem? Can this be fixed?

Then there is the issue of health care. Mercy Sakes. (That is an old Colorado invective, not Southern, but I think you'll know what it means.) What happens if we need critical health care? The recent expansion of our local hospital with the new cancer center and some excellent physicians makes me more comfortable. The new cardiac catheterization lab, which is under construction, will bring much-needed additional services to us here on the edge of the continent. But there are some who do not have a good physician/patient relationship, and that brings angst.

Who can we depend on if we can't drive? What happens if we don't know our neighbors well, or maybe they just don't live here all of the time? Who is in our circle of friends? According to Tonya Cedars from the Office on Aging, we need to identify these people and let our family know who they are—in addition to family, of course.

There are so many questions and so much to think about. As the Age-Friendly Community Advisory Committee continues its work this year, perhaps we can find some solutions for some of these issues. We hope you will join us by letting us know what you are thinking about. The committee meetings are on the third Thursday of each month at 2 p.m. at town hall, followed by the Third Thursday Forum at Four (4 p.m.). We're looking forward to seeing you there.

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK Have You Heard . . . ?

**Fort Macon named NC Park of the Year.** Fort Macon State Park has been named the 2015 North Carolina State Park of the Year by the NC Division of Parks and Recreation, and will hold that distinction throughout the year-long centennial celebration of the state parks system. The park was chosen for its "exemplary contribution to the North Carolina state parks mission of stewardship, public service and education," and specifically recognized for initiatives in expanded recreation opportunities, volunteerism, interpretive programming and sustainability.

"It's fitting that, during our 100th anniversary, Fort Macon will be honored as State Park of the Year. It was the first North Carolina state park open for visitors, having been created in 1924," said Mike Murphy, state park director. "With its outstanding professional staff and careful stewardship of both fragile natural resources and a historic landmark, Fort Macon represents all that a state park should be."

Even with more than 1.2 million visitors during the year, the staff at Fort Macon found time to create the park's first nature and wellness trail, building more than 800 feet of boardwalk and raising over \$40,000 in private funding for the project. A new 600-square-foot exhibit space was created, and the staff directed major renovations to the park's bathhouse and enhanced a sustainability program that reduced water usage by half. Rangers and volunteers provided 1,090 free interpretive programs and hosted 14 special events and demonstrations. Events for the year culminated with the December 31 firing of three cannons to welcome in the New Year.

**New Senior Services Director for Carteret County.** Beth Harrell is the new Senior Services Director for the county. She comes to our area from the Mid-East Commission Area Agency on Aging, where she was the Aging Services Coordinator, responsible for monitoring the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services in Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin and Pitt counties. A graduate of NC State University, Ms. Harrell has over five years of experience with the Grace Martin Harwell Senior Center in Washington (NC).

**CSS Neuse center features "Treasures from the Vault."** Rarely seen Civil War-era artifacts are included in the "Treasures from the Vault" exhibit at the CSS Neuse Civil War Interpretive Center in Kinston. The temporary exhibit, which will be available through June, will display unseen items from the museum's collection and also present eastern North Carolina's Civil War history more broadly. "Many museums like ours are only able to show a small percentage of their collection at any one time and this gives us an opportunity to show items that have never been displayed and are usually stored away in our collections vault," observes Site Manager Matthew Young.

The CSS Neuse is the only remaining commissioned Confederate ironclad above water. It was part of a new technology that the Confederacy used to combat the superior manpower and firepower of the Union Navy.

The museum is open Tuesday-Saturday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and is located at 100 N. Queen Street in Kinston. Call 252-522-2107 for more information.

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