

PINE KNOLL SHORES

Women's Club

By Michelle Powers

Avert a tragedy this summer. When welcoming summer guests to your home, you need to do more than stock the pantry, spruce up the guest room and power up the golf cart. It is important to educate your guests on the dangers awaiting them at the beach. Rip currents are commonplace here on Bogue Banks, and nationally they account for 80% of ocean rescues on the east, west, gulf and Great Lakes coasts—and they kill more people than sharks or hurricanes.

Rip currents are powerful, narrow channels of fast-moving water that move directly away from shore, pulling swimmers out to sea. Rip currents move at speeds of eight feet per second—faster than an Olympic swimmer. They often form around jetties and other structures perpendicular to the beach. Sand bars in Pine Knoll Shores and the beaches on Bogue Banks are a big factor in the formation of rip currents here.

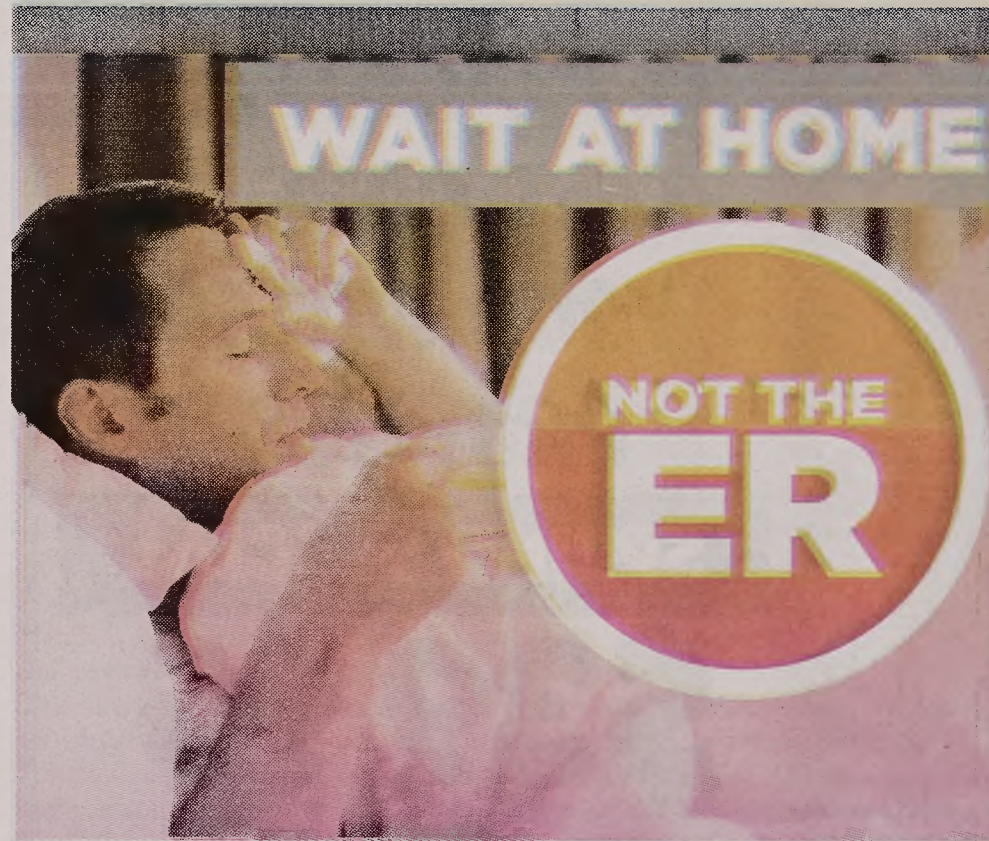
Captain Brooks Graham of the Pine Knoll Shores Fire & EMS Department spoke to the members of the Pine Knoll Shores Women's Club in May and provided useful information on spotting rip currents and "breaking the grip of the rip." Captain Graham outlined factors that contribute to the formation of rip currents (tide, wind, wave height, coastal geography and time of day). Personal factors that complicate one's ability to avoid being caught up in a rip current include age, lack of knowledge of the ocean, use of alcohol before entering the ocean, and ego. Before going into the water, swimmers should try to identify a rip current by looking for an area of choppy or foamy water or, more often, a quiet gap in the line of breaking waves. Before heading to the beach, contact the Pine Knoll Shores Public Safety Department at 247-2268 for the latest riptide information.

Captain Graham offered the following "Brooks' Beach Rules" to minimize danger when at the beach:

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Pine Knoll Shores Fire Department Captain Brooks Graham and Women's Club Vice President Joanne Ferguson.—Photo by Carroll Beckham



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