

Tacks in the Road

By Mayor John Brodman

My two-cents worth

Memorial Day weekend and the Kayak for the Warrior (K4TW) events are in the books, and by the time you read this, we will be preparing for **Independence Day weekend** and the annual Pine Knoll Shores parade, which will be held on July 3 this year, at 10 a.m. at Garner Park. This is one of the best and favorite small-town events we put on each year, and I'm predicting it will be even greater this year after the pandemic-related hiatus of last year. Summertime flies by fast here, and this is an event you don't want to miss. Also, on Monday, July 5, the Parks and Recreation Committee (PARC) will hold its annual post-July 4 beach cleanup. We meet at 8 a.m. at the Iron Steamer beach access and fan out to scour selected sections of the beach for trash. Come and join us.

While there is a full report about the K4TW events and upcoming PARC events elsewhere in this issue, I would be remiss if I didn't point out that shortcomings in our timing apparatus didn't allow us to properly recognize several winners in the 65-and-over age groups. For example (and while I don't mean to divulge anyone's age here), in the general kayaker category, Cindy Moeller placed second overall among the female competitors, but first in the 65-and-over category, and Bill Brophy, who placed sixth overall among the paddleboard racers, placed first in the 65-and-over group. We'll work on this for next year and maybe even offer a medal for the oldest and youngest participants. Thanks to all.

On the pandemic front, town hall is re-opened. Following recent guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and the NC Department of Health and Human Services, the Board of Commissioners voted at its meeting on May 26 to reopen town hall to the general public on May 28. At the same time, we lifted the COVID state of emergency, which had been in effect since March 2020. The main doors will now be unlocked during normal business hours, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. We still have a few precautionary measures in place related to COVID regarding entry and use of town hall: 1) If you are unvaccinated, please wear a mask upon entering town hall; 2) One-on-one meetings/discussions with staff members will take place in either the board room or the conference room. Please let Betty Carr know who you would like to speak to, and if they are available they will come up front to greet you and conduct business. The best way to accomplish this is to call ahead to the appropriate staff member and schedule a meeting (252-247-4353); and 3) homeowner associations, clubs and other groups that have traditionally used town hall for meetings should schedule these meetings and reserve a room with Betty Carr as you did pre-COVID. We are working on putting some procedures in place related to cleaning/sanitizing that we will ask you to follow, and entry to town hall on the weekend will be a bit different as we now have a new keypad entry system.

Would-have, should-have, could-have reviews of what went right and wrong during the pandemic, including political recriminations and speculation about the origins of the virus, are ongoing. Many developing countries are still far behind us in their attempts to get the pandemic under control and deliver vaccinations to their citizens. While we may have seen the worst of it, it is far from being over on a global scale. Even here at home, many of the longer-term

effects of the crisis on our personal and social behavior, and on our economy, are just beginning to be understood. Nevertheless, even though our track record as humans leaves much to be desired when it comes to learning from past experiences, we still need to try to learn from our mistakes in order to be better prepared if and, heaven forbid, when something like this should ever happen again. When all is said and done, it will be interesting to see, for example, how Sweden, which imposed relatively few pandemic restrictions on its citizens, fared in comparison with several of its European neighbors who were more restrictive. The same goes for here in the U.S.—for example, with Texas, Florida and Georgia on the one hand compared with New York, California and Michigan on the other. Stay tuned.

Letter of thanks to Lois Jean O'Keeffe. On June 2, Community Appearance Commission Chairman Steve Felch, several commission members, Public Services Director Sonny Cunningham, and staff of the Public Services Department joined Mayor Brodman, Brian Kramer, Julie Anderson, Betty Carr, Connie Shelton, Sheryl Woodbury and Paul O'Keeffe in a ceremony to recognize and celebrate Lois Jean's 41 years of service to the Town of Pine Knoll Shores. Lois Jean does many things for the town, but she is especially known for designing and overseeing the construction of the beautiful Hereth Garden in front of town hall. Lois Jean and her husband, Paul, continue to care for this garden and manage to keep it in full bloom year-round. The mayor read aloud the letter below, written by Town Manager Kramer, with input from Lois Jean's husband, and proclaimed June 2 to be forever known as Lois Jean O'Keeffe Day in Pine Knoll Shores. The mayor then granted Lois Jean the rest of the day off for her 41 years of service to the town . . . what a generous guy.

Dear Lois Jean,

On behalf of the entire town, I want to express our sincere appreciation for your decades of volunteer work to make Pine Knoll Shores a great place to live. Our town is truly a natural beauty, and you have helped make this happen since moving here in 1980. There are very few people who can claim to have 41 years of "hard labor" in PKS on their resume, but you certainly can.

Your incredible list of volunteer efforts has no equal. While it is impossible to capture all of this in a single short letter, I will do my best to recognize you for all of the following things you have done for Pine Knoll Shores.

You have served honorably on three town boards. As a member of the Planning Board, the Board of Adjustment and the Community Appearance Commission, you made the tough and sometimes unpopular decisions to keep the town looking the way it does today.

You served on the Pine Knoll Association Architectural Review Committee, helping to keep the appearance of our largest homeowners association in line with the standards those members desired.

You were a two-decade volunteer at the North Carolina Aquarium. This includes not only normal volunteer work at the facility, but you also served as a member of the aquarium's Community Advisory Committee.

You volunteered countless hours to the Pine Knoll Shores Garden Club, serving as president on two occasions. This organization thought so highly of your contributions that they made you an Honorary Lifetime Member.

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