

# SALT & OAKS

WHERE COAST MEETS CANOPY



MARCH / APRIL 2026

33.8737° N, 78.0015° W

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# A NEW YEAR, BUILDING ON MOMENTUM

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTE



**Doug Jones, BHA Executive Director**

A new year brings an opportunity to reflect on our progress and set a clear course for the months ahead. Over the past year, our island community accomplished a great deal through the dedication of residents, volunteers, staff, and partners who care deeply about preserving the character of this special place. We begin the year with gratitude for that shared commitment and a continued focus on working together.

Collaboration remains central to our efforts. Strong partnerships among island organizations and leaders help ensure that priorities are aligned and resources are used thoughtfully. By coordinating initiatives and supporting one another's work, we strengthen the quality of life for everyone who calls this island home, whether year round or seasonally. Our responsibility is not only to maintain what makes this community distinctive, but to build on it with care and foresight.

On February 20, the Association Board and Executive Director gathered for their annual retreat to review accomplishments, assess opportunities for improvement, and establish goals for 2026 and beyond. The retreat also provided time to explore new initiatives

that reflect both the island's founding vision and the evolving interests of today's residents.

In the coming year, we look forward to expanding lifestyle focused programs and experiences that bring neighbors together. Community gatherings, educational offerings, recreational activities, and family centered events create meaningful connections and lasting memories. These efforts support a vibrant community life while honoring the island's longstanding commitment to conservation and family living.

We will also distribute community surveys in the months ahead. As our island continues to grow and change, it is important to keep our understanding current. These surveys will help update demographic information and provide residents with a direct opportunity to share perspectives. Your input plays an essential role in guiding decisions and identifying areas where we can improve.

Our shared goal is clear: to keep our island community among the very best places to live, visit, and gather with family and friends. With continued engagement and open communication, we can build on our momentum and ensure a strong future for generations to come.

**PHOTO BY  
MYRA HERRLE**

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### **Editorial Policy**

Letters to the Editor and articles written by property owners about BHI issues and experiences are encouraged, subject to the content approval guidelines as well as the following space guidelines:

(1) The maximum length of a letter for publication in the *Salt & Oaks* will be 250 words. This limit will be strictly enforced. If the article or letter exceeds that length, the contributor may be granted more space by the Communications Manager or Executive Director, if appropriate. (2) Any individual will be limited to one letter every six months. BHA reserves the right to edit letters in the interest of accuracy and civility or to publish a letter as written, followed by a correction by the editor. In the interest of covering diverse topics and opinions, BHA reserves the right to select among submissions for publication. Deadlines are the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month for the following issue.



LIVE

PHOTO BY  
KIMBERLY BANDERA

# A PLACE TO BE KNOWN: MORTIMER MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Everyone has a story, and every story matters. We want to know you, for you to know us, and to grow together in the love of God through Jesus Christ.

These are not stories of careers or accomplishments, but honest, personal stories about real life—struggle and recovery, joy and love, change and renewal.

The fellowship is named for Bruce Mortimer, one of its first speakers. Bruce was a successful businessman, a loving father to two daughters, and a faithful husband to his college sweetheart, Karen, for more than 50 years. He owned a home on Bald Head Island for over 20 years. But the story that mattered most to Bruce—and the one he courageously shared—was his struggle with alcohol and his 30 years of sobriety.

Bruce described a desperate prayer to God that marked a turning point in his life. In his final years, he devoted himself to supporting a program in Baltimore that provides housing, care, and hope to men and women battling addiction. Bruce, who passed away in December 2024, embodied the heart of this fellowship—loving God, loving people, and sharing faith-filled stories.

We meet twice a month to support one another, with no requirements, only a willingness to be known and to know others.



PHOTO BY  
CINDY ROSS

## MORTIMER MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

- OPEN TO ALL MEN
- MEETS EVERY OTHER MONDAY  
FROM 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.
- IN PERSON AT THE BHA BUILDING OR  
BY ZOOM (SCAN QR CODE)



Each gathering may include a personal story, a follow-up from a previous discussion, a book study, a glimpse into life from another part of the world, or a presentation from a guest speaker. The group is known for its open, honest, and often humorous conversations. All discussions are confidential.

For more information, please contact:

- Dick: [erj@bellsouth.net](mailto:erj@bellsouth.net)
- Rocky: [rockyrausch@gmail.com](mailto:rockyrausch@gmail.com)

We look forward to having you join us—in person at the BHA, by Zoom, or a mix of both—which fits perfectly with the Bald Head Island lifestyle.

## EASTER SUNDAY AT THE VILLAGE CHAPEL

**SUNDAY, APRIL 5**

### Service Times

**6:45\* 8:30 10:00**

\*6:45 service will be an outdoor sunrise service



# THE STORY BEHIND THE BHI LENDING LIBRARY

Did you know that the Lending Library was not always a library at all? The small, much-loved building began life as the Dockmaster's Office, with its main door facing the opposite direction from where it stands today. What started as a practical marina structure was transformed in the 1980s into a place of warmth, generosity, and community, thanks largely to the vision and determination of one island resident who believed that no decent marina should be without a library.

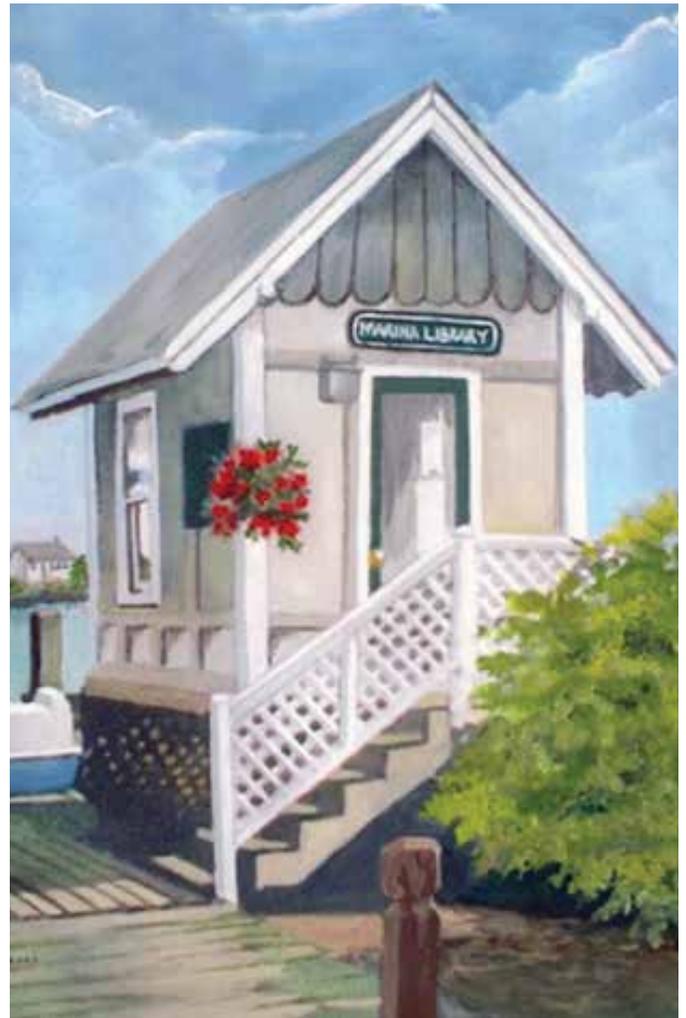
In the 1980s Sue Liese, an emergency room nurse at Doshier Hospital and Harper Peterson's sister-in-law, convinced Kent Mitchell to donate the building, which was the original dockmaster's building. She then got several contractors to build the shelves and paint the building inside and out.

Sue hung a big potted geranium just outside the door. She collected books, games, and jigsaw puzzles from all the homeowners to fill the shelves. She put down a little rug and a big, overstuffed armchair in the middle of the room for a person to sit and read. According to Nancy Giacci, in the winter months it was as warm as toast with the sun streaming in and pure bliss sitting there soaking up sunshine and heat with a good book.

Although the sign outside the library said Marina Library, it was Sue who called it the BHI Lending Library. If you borrowed a book or a game, you were to bring it back or replace it with one of your books, games, or toys. According to Nancy Giacci, the Lending Library was an immediate and huge success. Games and puzzles flew out of the door. It was the first time there was anything out here to occupy children and adults with things to do on a rainy day; especially the jigsaw puzzles.

Nancy painted a watercolor of the Lending Library and named it the Liese Library as it was Sue Liese who created it and cared for it but never got the recognition she so richly deserved. There have been many caregivers since Sue moved off the island, but she—and she alone—created the Lending Library.

At some point the door to the library was changed to the north side where it is now. The building stayed in



LENDING LIBRARY  
PAINTING BY NANCY GIACCI



SUE LIESE  
PHOTO BY NANCY GIACCI



PHOTO BY  
NANCY GIACCI



JUDY AGNER

place, just the stairs and door were switched. This either happened after a storm or was done for some repairs to the marina wall. There are two competing stories about this, and the timing of the switch is not known either.

According to Joyce Fulton of BHI Ltd., “Judy Agner started working in the library perhaps as early as 1991. Judy was the Guest Services Manager for BHI Ltd. and was responsible for many events on the island, including cookouts, the fishing rodeo, taking care of the library and much more. Judy was held in high regard by everyone. She was an employee of the Mitchells at the time of her death in 1999. To honor Judy’s memory the Mitchells re-named the library after her.”

The library has had many wonderful caretakers in the ensuing years. In 2019 Elyse Armitage and her sister organized the library with fiction alphabetized by the last letter of the author’s name, and set aside shelves for Biography, Cookbooks, Sports, Humor, Faith, etc.

In January 2025 a team renovated the library with Andrew Hano and Jim Feeney painting the entire interior of library and the front door. Deb Feeney washed all the windows, which may have made as much of a difference as the painting. This year Jay Phillips of Phillips Heating and Air donated the equipment and manpower to bring heat and air conditioning to the building with BHI Ltd. supplying the power source. Together, these efforts reflect the same spirit of care and generosity that has sustained the Lending Library from its earliest days and continues to shape its future.

In honor of Sue Liese, a red geranium sits outside the front door in the summer and native plants are planted to the west side of the Library. We don’t have room for an easy chair now, but the children’s dinosaur chair is popular.

The Lending Library’s motto is “Take One, Leave One” and is a gem on this island, enjoyed by homeowners and visitors alike. We appreciate the vision of Sue Liese, the dedication of Judy Agner, and all those who have followed. If you’ve never been to the Lending Library, please come visit, and for those who are regulars, thank you!

**Elizabeth (Betsi) Hervey Stephen, Nancy Giacci,  
Joyce Fulton and Trisha Howarth**



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# PLAY

PHOTO BY  
KIMBERLY BANDERA

## A CHANGE OF PACE: RUNNING ACROSS BHI

For Jennifer Wigen, Director of Education and Engagement for the Bald Head Island Conservancy, the Badwater Cape Fear Ultra race is more than a test of endurance. It is a rare opportunity to experience Bald Head Island in a deeply personal and immersive way.

Jennifer ran the 50K Badwater Cape Fear race in March 2022 with her husband, turning a demanding ultra into a shared bonding experience. A trail runner for more than 20 years, she had already completed multiple marathons and half marathons, but this event marked only her second ultra race. What set Badwater Cape Fear apart was not just the distance, but the way it invited her to move through the island she works to protect, step by step.

The course begins on Bald Head Island's quiet roads and forest trails, including one mile of singletrack through the Bald Head Island Woods. For Jennifer, those early miles felt familiar yet transformed. "It's a special way to take it all in," she explains. Running allowed her to notice details she might otherwise miss, even in places she visits regularly. As a scientist and educator, the race became another way to observe the island's natural systems in action.

The most challenging stretch came on the beach between Bald Head Island and Fort Fisher. There, firm sand gradually softened, demanding constant adjustment and focus. The remoteness of that section



JENNIFER WIGGEN

"WE'VE RECEIVED  
INCREDIBLE  
SUPPORT FROM  
THE VILLAGE AND  
LOCAL BUSINESSES  
AND RAISED OVER  
\$150,000 FOR THE  
CONSERVANCY. REACH  
OUT VIA EMAIL IF  
YOU'D LIKE TO LEND A  
HAND!"

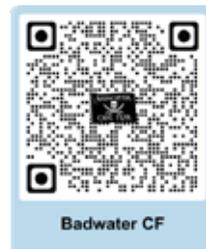
Chris Kostman, Badwater Race Director  
[adventurecorps@gmail.com](mailto:adventurecorps@gmail.com)

stood out, both physically and emotionally. Along the way, Jennifer spotted oystercatchers along the shoreline, dolphins offshore, and sand dollars scattered across the beach. One sand dollar turned out to be fossilized, and she carried it with her all the way to the finish line as a quiet reminder of the journey.

Badwater races are known for their seriousness and their respect for the natural world, a philosophy that resonates with Jennifer. The course demands attention to weather, tides, and terrain, reinforcing a healthy respect for Mother Nature. In March, cold conditions added another layer to the experience, giving Jennifer a deeper appreciation for what Bald Head Island offers outside the busy season.

One insight Jennifer shares is how accessible the island's ecosystems truly are. On foot, runners move seamlessly from maritime forest to coastal dunes to salt marsh, experiencing transitions that many visitors only glimpse from a golf cart. For her, adventure running is about exploration, awe, and connection. It is hard work but deeply rewarding.

As runners return to Bald Head Island for the next Badwater Cape Fear race on March 21, Jennifer's experience offers a powerful reminder that even a familiar place can reveal something new when experienced at a different pace.



Badwater CF

# BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER, ONE EVENT AT A TIME



The Education and Recreation Committee is starting the year with plenty of energy and a full calendar that blends learning, creativity, and fun. The season kicked off with a warm and welcoming potluck dinner honoring the No Boundaries artists, setting the tone for what's ahead. These popular potlucks offer an easy way to connect with neighbors and share good food and conversation. The next one is March 9<sup>th</sup> with a program discussing Artificial Intelligence presented by Ian Oeschager of UNCW.

April 4<sup>th</sup> brings the much-loved Easter Egg Hunt back to Cape Fear Station to delight families and visitors alike. New this year is *It Takes a Village*, a cocktail party on April 9<sup>th</sup> designed to recognize the volunteers and organizations whose time and effort help make Bald

Head Island feel like home. It's a chance to say thank you, celebrate collaboration, and enjoy an evening together.

Together, these events reflect the committee's ongoing commitment to creating opportunities for connection, appreciation, and shared experiences that strengthen the Bald Head Island community throughout the year.

*It Takes a Village*

**A BHI Community Celebration**

We invite you to join your neighbors in recognizing the organizations and volunteers who serve the BHI community.

**April 9 | 5-7 p.m.**  
**BHI Club**

Registration  
\$20/pp

Members use BHI Club app  
Nonmembers use QR code





## COASTAL CORNBREAD

### INGREDIENTS:

- 3 cups flour
- 3 cups cornmeal
- 1-1/2 cups white sugar
- 3 tsp salt
- 9 tsp baking powder
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 3 cups milk
- 8 oz butter, melted
- 1 cup honey

### DIRECTIONS:

- Combine dry ingredients.
- Whisk in beaten eggs.
- Whisk in milk.
- Melt butter and honey together and add last.
- Bake at 350° in a greased baking dish for 20-25 minutes.

Recipe Courtesy of Maritime Market

# AROUND THE ISLAND

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### March 2026:

Howl at the Moon — “Worm Moon”	3/3/2026	5 p.m.
Community Potluck Dinner	3/9/2026	6 p.m.
Project Longevity	3/10/2026 and 3/16/2026	1:30 p.m.
Youth Sustainability Symposium — BHI Conservancy	3/17/2026	8 a.m.
Badwater Cape Fear Ultra Marathon	3/21/2026	8 a.m.

### April 2026:

Howl at the Moon — “Pink Moon”	4/1/2026	6:30 p.m.
Good Friday (BHA Offices Closed)	4/3/2026	
5K Turtle Trot	4/4/2026	8 a.m.
Artisan Show & Sale — BHA	4/4/2026	10 a.m.
Easter Egg Hunt — Village Commons at Cape Fear Station	4/4/2026	10 a.m.
Easter Service — Village Chapel	4/5/2026	8:30 a.m.
Musical Offering: Catherine Lan & Claude Jaffe — Village Chapel	4/8/2026	7 p.m.
It Takes a Village Community Celebration	4/9/2026	5 p.m.
Earth Day	4/10/2026	10 a.m.
Project Longevity	4/13/2026 and 4/28/2026	1:30 p.m.

### Ongoing:

Village Chapel Services	(Traditional Service) Sundays	8:30 a.m.
Mortimer Men’s Fellowship	Mondays	8:30 a.m.
Knitting Group	Wednesdays	9:30 a.m.
Yoga Classes	Mondays & Wednesdays	11:15 a.m.

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# LEARN

PHOTO BY  
CHRIS WEBB

# BOOTS ON THE BEACH: COASTIES ON BHI DURING WORLD WAR II

**W**hen we began studying WWII in middle school I was blown away that the levels from my favorite video game, Call of Duty, were actual battles. I admit that was one of my early inspirations to pursue the study of history. Since then my interests ranged from Civil War, to American Revolution, Panama Canal, and yet, I still have a soft spot for WWII. Consequently, I am particularly excited to write about Coast Guardsman Jack Murphy's Horse Riding Boots that he wore while stationed here on BHI during WWII.

Wilmington was known as the "Defense Capital of the State" during WWII. The Wilmington shipyard, Ft. Davis and Ft. Fisher, and the Coast Guard bases on Bald Head and Oak Island, inspired that nickname. The main purpose of the Coast Guard on BHI was to surveil the beaches for Nazi submarines. Indeed, in the first six months of 1942 Nazi submarines sunk 397 ships, including 96 off of NC alone. Twenty-four miles off BHI the *John Gill* was sunk by a U-Boat on March 12, 1942. Boatswain Chester Hennis



THE COAST GUARDSMEN AT OAK ISLAND STATION BEFORE THEY CROSSED TO BHI. NOTE THE BOOTS ON THE GROUND IN FRONT OF MURPHY. PHOTO COURTESY OF OBF



JIM GREEN (TOP) AND JACK MURPHY (BOTTOM) ON KING. NOTE MURPHY IS WEARING THE BOOTS. PHOTO COURTESY OF OBF

remembered, "We got to see a lot of ships being sunk because they were sinking these ships right off the eight-mile slough through the Frying Pan Shoals." Foot patrols were inefficient, whereas automobiles used easily spotted lights and guzzled gasoline, thus, the Coast Guard relied on horses to carry our Coasties. Subsequently, earning them the nicknames "beach pounders." These leather boots were worn by Jack Murphy, who stood at six foot five, as he rode his horse King across the beaches of BHI. Poker and Pee Wee were two horses also stationed on BHI. The Coasties also had two German Shepherds (ironic enough) named Wolfe and Gypsy. The lads were stationed "at the last palmetto tree on Bluff Island." The boots were donated to the OBF in 1996 by the family of Jack Murphy.

**Jake Grossman**  
Educator and Collections Coordinator  
Old Baldy Foundation





# CONNECTING YOUNG MINDS TO BALD HEAD ISLAND'S NATURAL WORLD

**E**ach fall, the Bald Head Island Conservancy welcomes every sixth grader in Brunswick County to Bald Head Island for a day of discovery through our Barrier Island Botanists (BIB) program. This field trip gives students a chance to experience the island's ecosystems firsthand, many for the first time, and to learn how plants help protect and shape the coast.

The program began in 2018 with support from a Duke Energy grant, paused during the pandemic, and returned in 2022 thanks to the generous support of Jim, Devon, and Sinclair Brown. Since then, BIB has brought more than 1,000 students to the island each year, turning a science lesson into a lived experience.

On a typical BIB day, 60-70 students travel by boat to Bald Head Island and rotate through three outdoor learning stations led by Conservancy educators. Each station highlights a different ecosystem: coastal dunes, salt marsh, and maritime forest. Students explore how plants stabilize sand dunes, survive in salty water, and anchor the island's interior. These lessons are tied directly to North Carolina's sixth-grade science standards, but they feel more like exploration than schoolwork.

What makes this program special is its accessibility. BIB is designed so every student can participate, regardless of background or ability. Our team adapts activities for students with mobility limitations, Exceptional Children's (EC) classes, and students who speak languages other than English. We are currently translating all materials into Spanish so language is never a barrier to learning.

In 2024, 90% of participating students were considered economically disadvantaged by the state. Many told us it was their first time riding a boat, walking in a salt marsh, or visiting the beach. Watching their excitement as they step into these environments is a powerful reminder of why this program matters. These moments spark curiosity, confidence, and a sense of connection to the natural world.

Barrier Island Botanists is more than a field trip. It's often a student's first meaningful experience with nature. And for our education team, it's one of the most rewarding parts of the year. We're already preparing for the next group of students and are excited to offer fully bilingual materials in English and Spanish beginning in 2026.



**Heather Bariso**  
Coastal Educator II, BHI Conservancy



# HERE TO HELP: HOW THE ARC IS EXPANDING FOR YOU

**T**he Architectural Review Committee (ARC) is committed to transparency, consistency, and helpful communication while serving the island community. As the island continues to grow, the ARC is expanding its processes and capacity to better meet the needs of residents, while still preserving the unique character that makes Bald Head Island special.

To improve service and efficiency, the ARC is refining its structure. We are pleased to introduce dedicated ARC Specialists who will oversee specific areas of the island, with Madison Baughman assigned to Section A/Middle Island and Allison Heafner to Section B/Harbour. The ARC is excited to create these new opportunities by restructuring two existing administrative roles.

This approach will allow staff to focus their time and attention on their designated areas, providing support to homeowners from research at the initial application stage through final inspections on new construction projects. The new positions also extend our focus on the community-wide standards inspections by adding more dedicated time and by tapping into our newest inspection software upgrades. Our ARC Specialists are committed to delivering positive customer experiences and serving as knowledgeable, accessible resources.

As ARC Coordinator, I will continue to support and champion the team while providing technical expertise as needed.



MADISON BAUGHMAN  
ARC SPECIALIST A



ALLISON HEAFNER  
ARC SPECIALIST B

The ARC's goal is to build trust, provide clarity, and ensure homeowners feel supported throughout the renovation/building process, and this team is ready to do just that!

### **Madison Baughman - ARC Specialist A**

*Madison@BaldHeadAssociation.com*  
(910) 457-4676, ext 128

*ARC Section A reviews submittals West of Muscadine Wynd except for BHA PUD and multi-family communities. ARC Specialist A will also work with Middle Island properties.*

### **Allison Heafner - ARC Specialist B**

*Allison@BaldHeadAssociation.com*  
(910) 457-4676, ext 123

*ARC Section B reviews submittals East of Muscadine Wynd as well as the following BHA PUD and multi-family communities: Cape Fear Station, Flora's Bluff/Killegray Ridge, Ibis Roost, Keeper's Landing, Lighthouse Landing, Royal James Landing, Sabal Palm Cottages, Sumner's Crescent, Surfman's Walk, The Hammocks, The Villas, Timbercreek. ARC Specialist B will also work with Harbour properties.*





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# CULTURE

PHOTO BY  
AVERY MASON PHOTOGRAPHY

# SHAPED BY HEAT AND HAND

**A**fter more than three decades as a registered nurse, many of them spent in the intensity of an emergency room, Jana Cruse found balance through making art. “Art is an outlet for stress,” she says. “It lets me shut out everything else and focus.” That focus now finds its clearest expression in fused glass, a medium that rewards patience, precision, and trust in the process.

Cruse has always been a maker. She began sewing her own clothes in high school and later made garments and quilts for her children and grandchildren. Quilting, with its patterns, repetition, and layered construction, continues to influence her glass work today. “I see glass the way I



## BALD HEAD ISLAND ARTISANS SHOW & SALE

Saturday, April 4, 2026

BHA Center “Generator Society Hall”

Sally Klippel: [sallyklippel@gmail.com](mailto:sallyklippel@gmail.com)  
for details

see fabric,” she explains. “It’s about color, shape, and how pieces come together.” That connection led her naturally to fused glass, where design and structure matter just as much as creativity.

Fused glass begins with cutting and layering sheets of colored glass, which are then fired in a kiln at temperatures exceeding 1,400 degrees. As the glass melts and fuses, edges soften and colors shift, creating results that are partly planned and partly a surprise. “You can have a vision,” Cruse says, “but you also have to let the glass do what it wants to do.” She is especially drawn to functional glass, bowls, trays, and jewelry meant to be used and enjoyed every day.

That appreciation for process and people shaped her years as owner of *All About Art* gallery on Bald Head Island. The gallery became a place to connect with visitors, collaborate with fellow artists, and support creative growth. Cruse enjoyed working with both new and established artists and watching emerging talent gain confidence. The gallery also featured work from the No Boundaries International Art Residency program, introducing island audiences to artists from around the world.

Community remains central to her art journey. As a member of the Art Bald Head Artisans and the Smith Island Art League, Cruse values the shared inspiration that comes from creating alongside others and learning from different approaches.

Now that she is no longer running the gallery, Cruse is enjoying the freedom to focus on glass, experiment with new ideas, and stay active. Teaching may be in her future as well. For Cruse, fused glass offers the same clarity she once found in quilting and nursing, a way to slow down, focus, and create something both beautiful and useful.

# NO BOUNDARIES ART RESIDENCY FINDS CREATIVE GROUND ON BALD HEAD ISLAND

Each winter, Bald Head Island becomes a temporary home and shared studio for artists from around the world through the No Boundaries International Art Residency. This year's residency brought together ten resident artists for two immersive weeks of creative exploration shaped by place, community, and collaboration.

Founded on the belief that creativity thrives without constraints, No Boundaries has welcomed artists from nearly 200 countries over the years. Participants range

Artists are given flexibility in how they use their time and materials. Some paint indoors, others take their work outside. Days often include walking the beach, hiking through the maritime forest, and collecting objects or visual references from the island. Wildlife, light, and the natural rhythms of Bald Head Island leave a visible mark on the work created during the residency.

Each artist follows a distinct process. Some approach their work with careful planning, others are more intuitive and spontaneous. Working side by side creates a natural exchange of ideas. Themes and symbols begin to surface



ADDIE HIRSCHTEN

widely in age, background, and discipline. Many are educators, others are full-time artists, and most arrive without knowing one another. What unites them is a willingness to experiment and engage.

"This is very different from how many of us usually work," said Jonathan Summit, a current resident artist and former president of No Boundaries. "A lot of artists are accustomed to working alone. Here, you're sharing space, ideas, and time. You can feel how that changes the work."



ANNABELLE PUTTBACH

across different pieces, shaped by conversation and shared experience.

"You start to see influences move through the group," Summit said. "Someone's use of color or imagery sparks something in another artist. That cross-pollination is one of the most meaningful parts of the residency."

While the program is intentionally low cost for artists, it relies on community support to thrive. Local chefs and caterers provide dinners throughout the two weeks, with group dinners serving as the only required daily

gathering. These shared meals are central to building connection and dialogue.

This year, Harper Peterson donated studio space, further strengthening the island's role in supporting the arts. Artists are also asked to give back by donating two pieces of work created during the residency to No Boundaries, helping sustain the organization and its mission.

Todd Carignan, president of No Boundaries and a former resident artist himself, emphasized the importance of accessibility. "Keeping costs low allows us to welcome

For many students, the experience went beyond art. It was their first ferry ride, and for some, their first time riding in a golf cart. One student reportedly hoped the ferry might actually be a fairy ride. The sense of wonder stayed with them throughout the day.

No Boundaries has deep roots on Bald Head Island. Kent Mitchell and his family were instrumental in bringing the residency to the island, and longtime supporters like gallery owner Jana Cruse have helped introduce artists' work to the community over the years.



JONATHAN SUMMIT

artists who might not otherwise be able to participate," he said. "That diversity of experience and perspective is essential to what we do."

Community engagement extends beyond the island. A meaningful partnership with the DREAMS Center for Arts Education in Wilmington brought resident artists to the Conservancy for a day of hands-on work with students ages eight to twelve. Artists guided students through painting techniques and creative expression, including a collaborative piece depicting an oyster catcher, a species facing increasing environmental pressure.



GRAYSON "GERB" TOAL

The impact of the residency continues long after the two weeks end. Alumni often form lasting friendships and professional connections, frequently recommending the program to fellow artists. "By the end, you have a sense of who this experience would be right for," Carignan said. "People want to share it."

As No Boundaries continues to welcome new artists and benefactors, Bald Head Island remains an essential part of the program's story. The island offers not just inspiration, but a rare environment where creativity, generosity, and connection come together naturally.

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- Vincent, Owner, Bald Head Island



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# LEADERSHIP

PHOTO BY  
COURTNEY ATKINS

# BHA PRESIDENT'S LETTER

**Christine Osborne, BHA President**

Wow. For the second year in a row, our Annual Meeting faced a challenge from Mother Nature, and this one was a whopper! Thanks to the dedication of our team members, led by Executive Director Doug Jones, the meeting went smoothly despite the weather. A special thank you as well to our island presenters, who shared thoughtful and informative updates about the work happening across the island. It was a lot of great information in a short amount of time. If you were not able to join us, the full meeting is available on our YouTube channel through the BHA website.

I am deeply grateful to our members for your support and for electing me to a second term. I am humbled by your confidence and excited to continue serving alongside the Board, including our newest member, Bob Carter. Together with our team members, we remain

committed to keeping member service at the center of everything we do.

Staying connected with our Island partners remains important, and we will continue meeting with leaders from the other island entities. Our next meeting is scheduled for March and will be hosted by the Bald Head Association.

By the time you receive the next issue of *Salt & Oaks*, spring will be well underway. The “snow cane” will be a distant memory, replaced by green grass, a full forest canopy, and the return of our wildlife. We also look forward to welcoming back neighbors and friends who spent the winter farther south.

Thank you for being part of our Island community.



## A GUIDE TO THE VILLAGE'S ANNUAL BUDGET PROCESS

The annual budget process for the Village kicks off each year with the Village Council's annual retreat. The retreat is usually held at the beginning of February, over two days, and was this year (February 3 & 4), so budget season has officially begun!

If you missed the retreat itself or the Village's coverage of it, you could get up to speed by reviewing the written recap and presentations, which are on the Village website and featured in the February issue of the Village's Voice e-newsletter. A video of the retreat can be found on the Village's YouTube channel, organized by topic.

During the retreat, the Village Council heard from its consultants, outside specialists, department heads, and other Island entities. The intent was to reorient the Council, update data, and strategize areas of focus for the upcoming year, including potential budget implications.

The budget process takes several months, and the Village must meet statutory requirements in relation to its annual budget, many of which come with deadlines. These requirements and other budget-related activities are presented to the Council and the public via the annual budget calendar, which was introduced at the annual retreat. The budget calendar is posted on a webpage dedicated to the annual budget process that the village has utilized over the last few years. A link to the webpage can be found on the Village's website homepage ([villagebhi.org](http://villagebhi.org)).

Between the Council's retreat and June, when the budget is typically adopted, there are several internal staff meetings and public meetings (workshops). These workshops are open to the public, and that is when Islanders can hear presentations, discussions, and deliberations leading up to the final budget. Islanders can attend the budget workshops in person or online via Zoom. Recaps of the workshops, including the presentation slides, are posted on the annual budget webpage. The number of workshops that take place each year is driven by the Council's need for additional information and/or time for discussion.

North Carolina law establishes several key statutory requirements for municipal budgeting. These include adopting a balanced budget, submitting the proposed budget and budget message to the governing board by the required deadline, holding a public hearing on the proposed budget, and adopting the budget ordinance by the statutory deadline.

- **Balanced budget** – a balanced budget means that the Village's total projected expenditures may not exceed the amount of total projected revenue.
- **Budget and budget message submission** – the proposed budget ordinance presents balanced revenues and expenditures for each fund operated by the Village and includes the proposed tax rates and other fees in accordance with direction from the Village Council. The accompanying budget message provides an overview of the proposed budget, highlighting significant changes from the prior year as well as any special projects, new activities, or additional positions. The budget and budget message must be submitted to the Council by June 1 each year.
- **Public hearing** – Before adoption, the Village Council is required to hold a public hearing on the proposed budget. This hearing provides an opportunity for the public to offer input in a formal setting. In addition, Islanders may submit comments to the Village Council throughout the budget process via a link on the annual budget webpage.
- All North Carolina municipalities are required by NC General Statute to have a budget ordinance adopted by July 1 each year.

If you have any questions about the budget process or need assistance locating the information discussed in this article, please contact the Public Information Officer at [public.information@villagebhi.org](mailto:public.information@villagebhi.org) or call (910) 457-9700, ext. 1025.

**Carin Faulkner**

Village Public Information Officer, Village of BHI



# BUSINESS

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### March 2026:

ARC-A Meeting	3/6/2026	9:30 a.m.
ARC-B Meeting	3/20/2026	9:30 a.m.
Village Council Meeting	3/20/2026	10 a.m.
BHA Board Meeting	3/27/2026	8:30 a.m.

### April 2026:

ARC-A Meeting	4/2/2026	9:30 a.m.
Good Friday (BHA Offices Closed)	4/3/2026	
ARC-B Meeting	4/17/2026	9:30 a.m.
Village Council Meeting	4/17/2026	10 a.m.
BHA Board Meeting	4/24/2026	8:30 a.m.

### Around the Corner in 2026:

ARC-A Meeting	5/1/2026	9:30 a.m.
ARC-B Meeting	5/15/2026	9:30 a.m.
Village Council Meeting	5/15/2026	10 a.m.
BHA Board Meeting	5/22/2026	8:30 a.m.

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# PARTNERS

PHOTO BY  
KIMBERLY BANDERA

## SILT RECEIVES TWO NEW LAND DONATIONS

**B**ald Head Island is a unique and special place—and it's not by accident. Thanks to the forward-thinking of many families on BHI, a large portion of the Island is permanently protected. The non-profit group, the Smith Island Land Trust, has played a large role in helping protect key properties.

Maybe you have noticed bollards around the island marked with the Smith Island Land Trust logo? These signs recognize families who have donated property as a perpetual gift to the Smith Island Land Trust (SILT). And you can expect to see even more SILT bollards soon, as two more families generously donated undeveloped lots to SILT in 2025.

In total, SILT protects more than 100 acres across Bald Head Island and Middle Island. Collectively, these properties represent over 10 percent of the island's developable land along with a substantial portion of otherwise unbuildable areas, such as the maritime forest, the dunes along East Beach, and stretches along South Beach.

Donating land to SILT may provide meaningful financial benefits for the donor. The assessed value of donated property can be deducted from taxable income, and qualifying donors may also receive a North Carolina Conservation Tax Credit equal to 25% of the fair market value of the donated land. Donors eliminate future property tax obligations, and undeveloped land near your home can help moderate temperatures, potentially reducing utility costs.

Protected land safeguards not only the island's beauty, but also the natural systems that make Bald Head Island resilient and livable. Forested land provides stronger natural storm protection and plays a critical role in protecting water quality across the island. These areas naturally filter runoff, support the water table, and reduce strain on island infrastructure, especially during droughts, peak summer season, and storm events.

SILT properties also maintain essential wildlife corridors and help prevent the fragmentation of natural habitats. These areas protect rare plant species, along with insects, pollinators, and birds that are vital to the island's ecological health.

Beyond the ecological benefits, land preservation protects views, reduces light and noise pollution, and enhances privacy for residents. But most importantly, a gift to SILT reflects a commitment to Bald Head Island's founding vision of living in harmony with nature.

Want to find out more? Visit: [SmithIslandLandTrust.org](https://SmithIslandLandTrust.org)



# BHI IN FOCUS

Share Your Island Moments!



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GIGI WILLIAMS



PHOTO BY  
LARRY GITTLEMAN

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## Bald Head Island Tide Charts

usharbors.com

March 2026		High Tide		Low Tide	
		AM	PM	AM	PM
1	Sun	5:50	6:03	11:45	11:56
2	Mon	6:37	6:52		12:32
3	Tue	7:21	7:38	12:46	1:17
4	Wed	8:02	8:22	1:34	1:58
5	Thu	8:42	9:05	2:19	2:37
6	Fri	9:22	9:47	3:02	3:12
7	Sat	10:03	10:29	3:43	3:44
8	Sun	11:46		5:25	5:14
9	Mon	12:12	12:33	6:09	5:45
10	Tue	1:00	1:24	6:58	6:26
11	Wed	1:53	2:16	7:54	7:24
12	Thu	2:48	3:10	8:51	8:34
13	Fri	3:44	4:04	9:46	9:40
14	Sat	4:41	4:59	10:39	10:41
15	Sun	5:35	5:51	11:29	11:38
16	Mon	6:24	6:39		12:16
17	Tue	7:06	7:21	12:31	1:00
18	Wed	7:45	7:59	1:21	1:44
19	Thu	8:23	8:36	2:11	2:26
20	Fri	9:02	9:15	3:01	3:09
21	Sat	9:45	10:00	3:51	3:51
22	Sun	10:36	10:54	4:41	4:37
23	Mon	11:37		5:35	5:27
24	Tue	12:01	12:44	6:35	6:26
25	Wed	1:17	1:51	7:38	7:35
26	Thu	2:28	2:55	8:40	8:44
27	Fri	3:33	3:56	9:40	9:48
28	Sat	4:34	4:55	10:36	10:49
29	Sun	5:32	5:52	11:28	11:44
30	Mon	6:23	6:43		12:16
31	Tue	7:08	7:30	12:36	1:01

April 2026		High Tide		Low Tide	
		AM	PM	AM	PM
1	Wed	7:50	8:13	1:25	1:44
2	Thu	8:30	8:54	2:12	2:24
3	Fri	9:10	9:33	2:56	3:01
4	Sat	9:50	10:12	3:37	3:34
5	Sun	10:30	10:48	4:17	4:04
6	Mon	11:10	11:24	4:56	4:31
7	Tue	11:53		5:35	5:01
8	Wed	12:01	12:41	6:18	5:40
9	Thu	12:49	1:33	7:08	6:33
10	Fri	1:50	2:27	8:04	7:44
11	Sat	2:49	3:21	9:00	8:59
12	Sun	3:45	4:16	9:54	10:06
13	Mon	4:41	5:10	10:46	11:08
14	Tue	5:35	6:02	11:35	
15	Wed	6:25	6:49	12:06	12:23
16	Thu	7:12	7:34	1:01	1:10
17	Fri	7:57	8:17	1:55	1:57
18	Sat	8:44	9:04	2:47	2:44
19	Sun	9:36	9:57	3:39	3:33
20	Mon	10:34	10:59	4:31	4:23
21	Tue	11:37		5:24	5:17
22	Wed	12:07	12:41	6:21	6:17
23	Thu	1:14	1:44	7:20	7:22
24	Fri	2:17	2:43	8:18	8:28
25	Sat	3:14	3:40	9:14	9:30
26	Sun	4:07	4:35	10:07	10:28
27	Mon	4:59	5:29	10:57	11:22
28	Tue	5:48	6:18	11:43	
29	Wed	6:35	7:04	12:13	12:28
30	Thu	7:18	7:46	1:02	1:09

These tide charts are believed to be accurate but should not be relied upon for navigation or other safety-critical purposes.