

CCL Newsletter

November, 2024



Submitted by Kathy Donahoe

President's Letter

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Annual Meeting and Social was held on October 27th at the Warriors Taphouse. What a wonderful time. Everyone had genuine fun, especially with the Trivia Contest. In addition to an update on CCL activities, you re-elected three board members, Amber Torgerson, "Connie" Agresti, and Mike Kelly. Pat Costigan was elected as a new director on the board. Departing board members included Jan Nielsen, treasurer, and Jen Resio, who ran the past two Spring Fling events. They both did an excellent job and provided invaluable service to the Croatan community.

This past Monday, November 4th, the board elected officers for 2025. Bob Lougen will continue as vice-president. Mike Fantozzi stays on as secretary and I will continue as president. Critically important is that Pat Costigan volunteered and was elected as our treasurer.

This past week's meeting was also our second in-person meeting since the COVID restrictions. Zoom works very well but has some limitations for good group dynamics. We will continue to meet in-person although not as often. Meetings will depend on items that must be addressed. I have asked the Board to submit monthly reports on their activities which will be attached to the minutes and posted on the CCL website.

As always, all members are invited to the board meetings. However, attendance has been sparse over the past few years. For 2025, we are going to try Town Hall events. The intent is to provide everyone a chance to get information and for the board to hear your questions, suggestions, and complaints. It is hoped that these will allow more of our members to participate in the civic league and help us make the best decisions as well as hear about the things with which you are concerned. Some items I expect will be updates on the beach and the weir as well as neighborhood safety especially with street traffic and overall security for Croatan.

Do not forget Pictures with Santa on Nov. 17th and the Holiday Lights Contest on Dec. 13th.

The most important part of this newsletter!

Please review **Connie's Safety and Security report for November**. You will find important information and answers to the on-going safety and security concerns that several people have expressed.

There will be no Board meeting for December. I will announce our meeting in January 2025 in the next newsletter.

All the best,

Michael Kelly
President, Croatan Civic League
(703) 439-9153

Did You Know?

Civic League meetings are open to the neighborhood.

We are in need of someone to put together the Holiday Lights Competition on December 13th.



CROATAN BOOK CLUB

Next Meeting Thursday,
November 21, 2024 Time 7 P.M.

Hostess: Susan Martin

Place: 853 S Atlantic

Book: Ordinary Grace – William Kent Kruger

All Neighbors are welcome. Just read the book (or maybe not – come to socialize and hear a review of the book) and notify the hostess that you will be attending via a response to the email. Bring a light snack/wine to share, if desired. We meet on the third Thursday of each month, location varies. Books are chosen by club members with only 2 caveats: (1) the member has read the book, and (2) the book is available through the Virginia Beach library system.

Future Selections (in order)

The Measure – Nikki Erlick

The Heaven and Earth Grocery – James McBride

The Women – Kristen Hannah

Becoming Madam Secretary – Stephanie Dray

The Library of Borrowed Hearts - Lucy Gilmore

The Rose Code – Kate Quinn

VBCCO Meeting Wednesday October 16, 2024

- Rick Boyles, VBCCO President, led the discussion on the following topics:
- Current Association balance \$9K+
- Land Use discussion in the Shadow Lawn area. Development of a particular property.
- September Mayoral Forum discussion. 350+ attendees.
- VB Comp plan final round with 6 public input meetings coming soon.
- 3 Open VBCCO Board positions. Application and resume submission before our next meeting.
- Looking for volunteers for the Program/Event, Membership and By-Laws committees.
- Next VBCCO Membership meeting Tuesday, November 20, 2024 6:30-8:30PM. Bow Creek Recreation Center

Jim Ferrera

Croatan Women’s Club



**Collecting unwrapped toys at the meeting November 18
Please donate!**

See your email for location.

Safety/Security – November, 2024

Bottom Line Up Front:

- Parking Wars
- New Crosswalk Requested
- Cold Weather Fire Prevention Tips – space heaters, chimneys, trees
- Personal Safety when Shopping
- Thwart Porch Pirates
- Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC)

Parking Wars: Some years ago, the Arts and Entertainment (A&E) Channel aired a reality series known as “Parking Wars.” In late-October, Croatan’s long-simmering “parking wars” flared anew and garnered the attention of some high-ranking City officials.

This is an ongoing evolution and Deputy Mayor Rosemary Wilson, who is also our District 5 City Councilwoman, has proposed an action committee among Croatan residents, CCL reps, Public Works (Highways), Police, State, Federal (if necessary), et al, to come to reasonable solutions to the challenges of on-street parking. The primary complaints, risks, and some brain-stormed suggestions to resolve them are itemized below. The list is not all-inclusive, so if we’ve missed something, please let us know.

- **Blocked driveways:** Already illegal in VB. Until we can influence the city to modify their parking enforcement contract, contact police at non-emergency number (757-385-5000) to request the vehicles be ticketed and towed.
- **Blocked mailboxes:** Currently, VB Postmaster does not require delivery personnel to alite from vehicles to delivery mail. Possible solutions:
 - (1) Influence Postmaster to direct drivers to alite from mail trucks and deliver mail. (Opinion: This may be unlikely. USPS has a strong union, and some delivery persons are physically challenged).
 - (2) Because VBPD cannot enforce Federal statutes regarding inhibiting mail delivery, seek an ordinance, through City Council, to make it a ticketed offense to block mailboxes. (Opinion: Reasonable suggestion, but enforcement still a challenge (see above))
- **Blind exits from driveways due to parked vehicles**
 - (1) Ban on-street parking on Vanderbilt and Surfside. (Opinion: The surfing community will undoubtedly oppose any reduction in parking).
 - (2) Limit parking to one side of Vanderbilt and Surfside. (Same challenge as above)
 - (3) Enjoin city to re-measure spaces in consideration of longer, wider, and higher vehicles than existed when parking spaces were first laid out in 2004. (Challenge: unless Federal Highway regulations have changed, city will likely hang their hat on “compliance with Federal regulations”).
- **Lack of sidewalks force pedestrians and bicyclists to walk in roadway.** I do not think that installing sidewalks are practical. It is a beach community, after all and many roads lack sidewalks.
- **Speed Control, Stop Sign Enforcement:** Police allocate resources on a risk management basis. Croatan is among the safest communities in the city. The reality is we’re just not going to get as many patrols as at-risk areas. In response to this most-recent imbroglio, Captain Wesseler, Commander of

the Second Precinct, committed to increasing patrols within available resources. **Note:** on the same day these parking issues came to a head, his precinct was dealing with a traffic fatality at 30th Street and Arctic. Like it or not, parking in Croatan is not the highest priority.

- **Lack of Parking Enforcement:** Notwithstanding the staffing challenges of the police department (and our security patrols), the CCL has long suggested to cognizant city personnel that the parking enforcement contract be modified to enjoin the contractor to monitor and ticket illegally parked vehicles on Vanderbilt and Surfside. We've suggested that the revenue from the parking lot be used as seed money for this action but suspect that the modification will eventually pay for itself through fines. Thus far, city officials have thrown up roadblock after roadblock. I am optimistic, though, that with the Deputy Mayor's support, we can make some headway.
- **Surfers and Bathers changing clothes in public.** Unless the individuals expose themselves, it is not illegal to change clothes while wrapped in a towel or blanket,
- **Missing, Faded, Obscured "No Parking" Signs:** Residents are encouraged to report missing, faded, or damaged "no parking" signs to the city help desk at **3-1-1** or by visiting <https://virginiabeach.gov> -> How do I -> Report a Problem, and completing the appropriate online report.
 - If "no parking" signs are obstructed by foliage or vegetation, they cannot be enforced. If on your property, it is time to prune your trees and bushes. The same goes for "Stop" signs – the corner of Twilight and Virginia Dare comes to mind.
 - This is a case of "Physician – heal thyself."

New Crosswalk Requested: Per the request of residents "almost run over" crossing Croatan Road at Vanderbilt Ave, CCL has requested that the city install a crosswalk at that intersection. On streets where the speed limit is 35 MPH or less, vehicles must stop for pedestrians in marked crosswalks.

Cold Weather Fire Prevention Tips: The crisp autumn air is welcome, but it provides us with the opportunity to review some seasonal fire prevention basics.



Space Heaters: Under the "a picture is worth a thousand words" category, the accompanying photo dramatically reflects what can happen if you plug a space heater into a power strip/extension cord. Don't rely upon the circuit breaker of that < \$20 power strip to trip, if overloaded.

Also, be sure that space heaters have an automatic shut-off feature, if upended, and ensure that throw blankets and robes are kept away from heating elements.

Chimneys: When was the last time your chimney was cleaned? Built-up soot, resin, nesting animals, etc. can (a) impede the draft of the chimney, causing smoke (which kills more people than fire) to enter the home; and (b) heat up to the point of ignition.

Trees: Holiday tree lots will be sprouting up before the end of the month. If you buy a real tree early, please ensure that you keep it well watered, check it regularly, and consider investing in LED lights because they generate less heat than incandescent bulbs. Test the tree's freshness regularly by pinching an inconspicuous branch tip; if the needles break off and fall easily, the tree is under-watered. Cut a new base, if necessary. Because pines contain oils and resins, most holiday trees can explode into towering flames within seconds. Keep candles away.

Personal Safety When Shopping: Stores are already erecting Christmas displays in anticipation of Black Friday and other Holiday shopping. VBPD will be increasing its presence in shopping malls during the shopping season. Police cannot be everywhere, and it is incumbent upon individuals to enhance their own personal safety posture. Some tried-and-true methods to protect ourselves from thieves and ne'er-do-wells include:

- Situational Awareness – avoid cell phone use while walking to/from vehicles.
- Keep your head “on a swivel” to observe your surroundings. Beware of those loitering, looking into vehicles, or testing vehicle handles. Notify police and/or mall security of suspicious actions.
- Shop in pairs – two heads are better than one; four eyes are better than two.
- Keep One Hand Free – don’t get so burdened down by shipping bags that both hands/ arms are encumbered.
- Keep your purse latched or zippered closed and on your person or with a companion at all times. Cross-body straps are better than over-the-shoulder straps. If you can manage without a purse, do so. The more fashionable the purse (e.g., Prada, Coach, Fendi) – the more likely you are to be targeted.
- Park in well-lit areas whenever possible. Locate car fob/keys before leaving mall so that you’re not distracted searching for them outside, where you’re more vulnerable.
- Lock your vehicle as soon as you exit or enter.
- Do not unlock from a distance because the beep or flashing lights alert potential thieves.
- Keep Valuables Out of Sight – in trunk, under sunshade, etc.
- If you feel you are being followed – return to the mall and notify police or mall security.
- If confronted or threatened with a weapon, give up the goods. **Nothing you buy is worth your life.**
- Regrettably, mass shootings do occur, and malls are “soft” targets. If you hear gunshots and cannot readily exit the mall, go to the deepest part of the store and shelter in place. **Silence the ringer on your phone and text 911.**

Thwart Porch Pirates: As online shopping increases, we can expect nefarious opportunists to canvass neighborhoods (especially upscale neighborhoods, like Croatan) for opportunities to pilfer packages left on porches, sticking out of mailboxes, or leaning against garage doors. Some mitigating steps include:

- Schedule package deliveries when you expect someone to be home.
- Consider having packages delivered to an off-site receiving facility.
- Notify neighbors of expected deliveries, especially if you will be away, and ask them to hold the package for you.
- Beware of suspicious vehicles driving through the neighborhood and don’t hesitate to call police, especially if you see multiple passes of the same vehicle or one following an Amazon, FedEx, UPS delivery truck.
- Install surveillance cameras or doorbells.
- Let e-tailers know when their performance was sub-par by responding to those “How Was Our Delivery” emails and texts.

Financial Account Security: Katie Ripberger forwarded to me several account safety tips she received from her financial institution that are worth sharing.

- Keep your account contact information up to date.

- Most institutions have ceased printing the complete account number on monthly statements; yet, if you need to contact your bank or credit union, you often need the full account number. Write it down somewhere safe; and do not carry it with you. Be sure to record the card's 3- or 4-digit security code, as well.
- Also record those 24/7 customer care phone numbers on the backs of cards, otherwise, if the card is lost or stolen, only the thief will have that number.
- Do not keep funds in Zelle, Venmo, CashApp, or other alternative payment accounts. Transfer the money when you need to.
- Establish ATM withdrawal limits (e.g., < \$500 daily) for your accounts.
- Enable biometric (fingerprint or facial recognition) access features for any cellphone apps dealing with money.
- Do not to cold calls or click on links in any emails or texts purportedly from your financial institution. Note the data of the call (including phone number, if displayed) and contact your financial institution separately to ascertain the validity of the communication.
- Do not give out account number, last-four of your Social Security Number, PIN, birth date, or similar identifying information unless you initiate the call.

Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC): The October meeting had to be cancelled. The next meeting is **November 13** - VB Volunteer Rescue Squad #14 conference room (740 VB Blvd – aka: 17th Street). Meetings are open to all. Please park on the east side of the building.

M. C. "Connie" Agresti,
CCL Safety and Security Director

Neighborhood Contacts

Welcome Wagon

Contact Cheryl Garvey
cgcroatan@gmail.com
(757)739-7078



if you know of new
Croatan neighbors

Magazine Collection

Michele Speight,
Teen Crisis Intervention
549 Bushnell Drive
428-7947msp8@cox.net

Book Collection

Betty Rosignolo
760 Virginia Dare Drive
437-8662; rbrosignolo@cox.net
For Sentara Virginia Beach Hospital Auxiliary

Name	Committee	Email	Phone
Elizabeth Antolak	Women's Club	elizabeth.antolak@gmail.com	
Alice Weisz	Book Club	bookclub@croatanbeach.org	425-2068
Wes Laine	Surfing Advisor	surfing@croatanbeach.org	428-2620
Ken Jobe	Special Advisor	kejo425@aol.com	428-0328

Croatan Civic League Board of Directors

Name	Title
Mike Kelly	President, VB Gov
Bob Lougen	Vice President, Website, Facebook, Directory
Mike Fantozzi	Director, Secretary
Patrick Costigan	Director, Treasurer
M.C. "Connie" Agresti	Director, Security, Citizen's Advisory Committee
Frank Borum	Director, Traffic Mgmt.
Kathy Donahoe	Director, Newsletter
Jim Ferrera	Director, VB Council of Civic Organizations, Membership
Bill Garvey	Past President, By-Laws
Cheryl Garvey	Director, Welcome Wagon, Landscaping
Katie Ripberger	Director, Logo wear, Social Activities
Amanda Robinson	Social Activities, Children's Programs

Croatan Civic League Board of Directors

Name	Title
Amber Torgensen	Director
Eileen Wren	Director