Hurricane Dorian lashes Georgetown County as peak season arrives, but inflicts minimal damage

Georgetown County caught a lucky break during the first week of September as Hurricane Dorian brushed by the Carolina coast — staying just far enough away to keep the worst of the winds out to sea.

As expected, storm surge combined with high tides created flooding along the immediate coastal areas and in the City of Georgetown. The majority of damages occurred along the beachfront, and all areas of the coast experienced severe erosion.

County staff is working on damage assessments and should have preliminary figures by the week of Sept. 15.

How to report damages:

Residents are asked to help by sending in photos and descriptions of damages to their property. The county is requesting information on all structural damage to homes and businesses. This does not include damage to accessory buildings such as sheds and fences, or yard damage. See “Hurricane Dorian,” Page 4

Brandon Ellis named county’s new Emergency Manager

Georgetown County is excited to announce that Brandon Ellis of Pawleys Island has been hired as its new Emergency Manager. His first day on the job will be Sept. 16.

Ellis will replace Sam Hodge, who held the position since 2007 and retired on Sept. 2.

“We are fortunate to have someone with Brandon’s extensive background in Emergency Management taking the helm in this area, as we all know how critical this position is,” said County Administrator Sel Hemingway.

Ellis is a seasoned Emergency Management professional with more than 10 years of experience at both the county and state levels. He earned his bachelor’s degree from Francis Marion University while serving as a part-time and volunteer firefighter in Mullins.

He continued to serve in the fire service in Marion after graduation, where he became the Marion County Director of Emergency Management. Ellis served in this capacity for five years, until he was hired by the South Carolina Emergency Management Division as one of six Regional Emergency Managers, covering eight counties, including Georgetown. He has served in this capacity since 2014, and has been an integral part of the Georgetown County team in various emergency response efforts during that time.

In addition to his experience, Ellis has extensive training in Emergency Management at the federal, state and local level. He was recognized as the S.C. Emergency Management Division’s Employee of the Quarter in April 2018, and most recently as the Employee of the Year in January 2019.

Ellis resides in the Pawleys Island area with his wife Brittany and two young daughters, Olivia and Amelia. We welcome him to the Georgetown County team.
Newton named new District 5 Council Member

Raymond Newton is the newest member of Georgetown County Council following a special election on Sept. 10 to fill a vacant seat in District 5.

A Republican, Newton won a two way race against Democrat Thomas Alford with a vote of 634-168, according to unofficial results. The results will be certified by the Georgetown County Elections Commission on Thursday, Sept. 12. Newton will be sworn in the following day at 10 a.m. in County Council Chambers at 129 Screven St. The ceremony is open to the public.

Newton has resided in Andrews for more than 60 years. He is retired from UPS and owned and operated Newton’s Grocery for 22 years. He served in the National Guard, is a Rotary Club Member, is active at Trinity United Methodist Church, serves as chairman of the Andrews Museum and is a member of the Andrews Museum and is a member of the Andrews High School Booster Club. Additionally, he is a husband, father and grandfather.

Marriage license fees to increase

Georgetown County Council took another step toward increasing fees for marriage licenses at its Sept. 10 meeting. Council members gave second reading to an ordinance that would create a new fee structure with different costs for county residents, state residents and visitors who are neither county nor S.C. residents.

County Attorney Wesley Bryant said he was unable to find documentation of the last time marriage license fees were raised, but Georgetown County’s current rate of $40 is one of the lowest in the state “so much so that people are coming from other counties into Georgetown to get licenses because it’s so cheap here.”

The ordinance, which will be up for third and final reading on Sept. 24, repeals any previous legislation regarding marriage license fees and would put the new fee structure in place immediately upon approval. The new rates would be $50 for county residents, $75 for state residents and $115 if neither applicant resides in the county or the State.

The new rates are in line with those charged by other coastal counties, including Horry, Beaufort and Charleston. Probate Judge Lee Boan is in favor of the increase. No members of council or the public expressed opposition to the fee increase.

Get the Chronicle

At Georgetown County, we want our residents and property owners kept abreast of what’s going on inside their local government. That’s why we created the Georgetown County Chronicle in 2012. It’s a vehicle for information about county services and events, important messages from county officials and behind-the-scenes glimpses at how government works.

You can find the Chronicle on our website at www.gtcounty.org or through our Facebook page. If you’d rather have it delivered to your inbox, e-mail jbroach@gtcounty.org with the subject line “send me the Chronicle.”

That’s also the place to send questions and comments about this newsletter and its content. We welcome your feedback and suggestions.

www.gtcounty.org
Tim Conroy returns to Waccamaw Library to lead special series of programs Oct. 2-3

Tim Conroy, a S.C. poet and brother to the late Pat Conroy, will return to the Waccamaw Library next month to lead a special series of programs focusing on the power of writing to help withstand and ultimately understand family dysfunction.

The series starts on Wednesday, Oct. 2, and will continue the following day. Though the programs will explore distressing issues including domestic violence and family strife, Tim’s overall message is hopeful. His point is to inspire participants to transform trauma into healing, and to find their own way to “say the great Yes” by embracing a creative approach to life.

This series is sponsored by the Friends of the Waccamaw Library, and is free and open to the public. Seats for the writing workshop are limited; to register, please email Dan Turner at: dturner@gtcounty.org

On Oct. 2 at 2:30 p.m., the library will screen the film version of Pat Conroy’s 1976 tour-de-force autobiographical novel, “The Great Santini.” The movie features Robert Duvall in an Oscar-nominated role as “the Great Santini,” heroic Marine pilot on the one hand, but abusive husband and father on the other. The movie was released on Oct. 26, 1979, which was Pat’s 34th birthday. Tim will introduce the film.

On Thursday, Oct. 3 at 10 a.m., Tim will serve as the featured presenter for the popular Friends of the Waccamaw Library “First Thursday” speaker series. His topic is “Family Secrets/Family Truths: Writing out of the Shadow of the Great Santini.” He will talk about how his brother pieced together dark family secrets into healing family truths through the power of writing, with focus on “The Great Santini.” Tim will recount his own version of Conroy family secrets and how he now uses poetry as a means for expressing his vision of family truths.

That afternoon, Tim will lead a special poetry writing workshop from 1:30-2:30 p.m. The workshop, “Saying the Great Yes,” will inspire practicing and would-be writers to take the full plunge into poetry. Do you choose to become a poet, or do currents steer you toward poetry’s shore? Once the choice is made, how do you discover your poems? Tim will discuss Pat’s commitment to the writing life at a young age and transition from self-described failed poet to beloved writer of lyrical prose.

Tim will share how, inspired by his brother and sister Carol, he too was finally able to say his own “great Yes” to becoming a writer.

Through excerpts of poetry about writing as well as family stories, this session invites participants to think about and share what has held them back and what has pushed them forward in their own creative lives. We will explore how choice, risk and commitment inform our writing practices.

Sign up for emergency alerts!

Don’t miss out on important information that could keep you and your family safe. Sign up to receive emergency alerts specific to your address from Georgetown County Emergency Management Division via email or phone. Sign up for this free service at www.gtcounty.org or call (843) 545-3213.

Meteorologist Frank Johnson talks Hurricane Hugo’s 30th anniversary

This month marks the 30th anniversary of Hurricane Hugo, one of the most devastating storms to hit the South Carolina coast. Hugo was a Category 4 storm when it made landfall near Charleston in 1989. It caused severe damage all along the Waccamaw Neck.

WBTW Chief Meteorologist Frank Johnson will help us mark the anniversary of Hugo with a special, free presentation at the Waccamaw Library on Thursday, Sept. 26 at 10 a.m. Johnson will explore the origins of the storm and follow its path toward South Carolina. In his talk, “Hurricane Hugo: Looking Back 30 Years,” Johnson will examine Hugo’s impacts on the Waccamaw Neck and compare Hugo to other big hurricanes that have impacted this area.

Following the talk, the library will have a free screening of “Hugo,” an hour-long documentary about the storm’s impact on Georgetown County from the perspective of local residents. The Waccamaw Library is located at 41 St. Paul Place, Pawleys Island. This event is free and open to the public.
Residents who have damage to report may submit photos and details online via https://www.crisistrack.com/public/georgetownSC/citizenRequest.html. Residents without access to the Internet can also submit reports by calling (843) 545-3273. They will be asked to provide their name and address, information on the property owner (if the caller is a tenant and not the owner of the property), the type of damage, and the depth of flooding if flooding occurred.

Debris Disposal:
Georgetown County is not currently offering curbside pickup for debris from Hurricane Dorian. Debris should be disposed of at county recycling convenience centers or the landfill. Vegetative debris must be unbagged to be accepted.

Waccamaw Neck residents with large amounts of debris are asked to take it to the reduction site at the Pawleys Island Recycling Center on Grate Ave. before Sept. 16, when that site will close.

Contractors may not dispose of debris at recycling centers; they must take it to the landfill. Please call (843) 545-3438 with any questions.

LaRocco receives professional development scholarship

Michelle LaRocco, Georgetown County Environmental Services Division Manager (fourth from left), is pictured with the board of the S.C. chapter of the Solid Waste Association of North America. SC SWANA sponsored LaRocco’s attendance at its annual conference as a new-to-the-industry professional, to provide her with the opportunity to gain expertise and bring the latest in best practices in solid waste management to Georgetown. She competed with applicants from across the state and was awarded a scholarship for conference registration and travel stipend for this event.

Register now for adult softball

Georgetown County Parks and Recreation is signing up men and women ages 18 and up for its fall adult softball league now through Sept. 19.

Games will be Tuesday and Thursday evenings from Sept. 24 through Nov. 14 at 8 Oaks Park in Georgetown. Registration fee is $370 per team. A $100 deposit must be paid by the Captains meeting on Sept. 19.

Single players are also welcome to sign up for the department’s free agent roster.

The county is also registering for fall adult kickball and soccer leagues. See page 9 for deadlines and details.

For more information, contact Randy Akers at bakers@gtcounty.org or (843) 359-6419.

The Georgetown County Sheriff’s Office patrols an evacuated community during Hurricane Dorian.

Hurricane Dorian
Continued from front page

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SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, October 19
9 a.m. to noon
Waccamaw High School
2412 Kings River Rd.
Pawleys Island, SC

For more information or to volunteer call: 843-545-3542
Or Email: Stormwater@gtcounty.org

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day
And Paper Shredding Event

Any paper documents with staples, rubber bands or clips.
3-ring binders will NOT be accepted.

Keep pollutants out of our waterways!
The following materials will be accepted:
Paint, batteries (alkaline and rechargeable), incandescent bulbs, fluorescent light bulbs, household cleaners, non-commercial pesticides, fertilizers and anything labeled "warning," "poisonous" or "toxic."

Medication and ammunition are NOT accepted at this event. Please bring those items to the Georgetown County Sheriff’s Office.

Gas, oil, or antifreeze are NOT accepted at this event. Please dispose of these items at your local Recycling Center.

The Georgetown County Landfill on Highway 51 accepts hazardous waste items during normal business hours Monday through Friday.

Commercial Business Items will NOT be accepted at this event.

Sponsored by Georgetown County Department of Public Services

The Georgetown County Sheriff’s Office
Georgetown County plans to lease a portion of a property it owns on Wildcat Way, across from Waccamaw Intermediate School, to a community group that wants to construct a public memorial park at the site.

County Council members gave second reading on Sept. 10 to an ordinance that would allow lease of the property to JB’s Celebration Park Inc. for 30 years at a rate of $1 per year. The property is not currently in use and county officials determined it would be in the best interest of residents to allow the property to be used for a public park and event space. The park will be built with donations and possibly some grant money.

Dr. Cindy Bindner addressed council regarding plans for the park. She said her group envisions it as a beautiful, serene place full of colorful flowers, where people can go to contemplate and remember loved ones. The idea for the park was born after the Waccamaw Neck community experienced a rash of losses. Bindner’s husband, Jim, came up with the idea for the park and was working toward making it a reality when he became ill and passed away in January. His wife and other’s in the community pledged to see his dream to fruition.

Plans for the park include gardens with benches and a memorial trail. Hopes are to eventually add an amphitheater. The site may become a permanent home for various festivals and events in the area. Third and final reading by Council is set for Sept. 24.

Midway Fire Rescue was the grateful recipient of a set of pet oxygen masks from Invisible Fence Company of the Coastal Carolinas last month. These masks will be placed on all first-out apparatus at all three Midway Fire stations. The donation is a part of Invisible Fence brand’s Project Breathe, which was established with the goal of equipping every fire station in America and Canada with pet oxygen masks. These masks allow emergency responders to give oxygen to pets who are suffering from smoke inhalation when they are rescued.

Midway Fire Rescue receives donation of pet oxygen masks

FREE LEGAL CLINICS
GET FREE ANSWERS CONCERNING...

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<th>September 5</th>
<th>FAMILY LAW ISSUES</th>
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<td>Divorce, Custody, Child Support, etc.</td>
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<td>Led by Elise F. Crosby, Esq.</td>
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<td>&amp; Sheri L. McAfee, JD, ELM</td>
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<td>Medicare, Medicaid, Long Term Care, Insurance, Guardianship &amp; Conservatorship, Power of Attorney, etc.</td>
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<td>Led by Jacqueline Ann F. Richardson, Esq.</td>
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TIME: 5:30-7:00 p.m.  LOCATION: Andrews Branch Library
101 N. Morgan Ave., Andrews, S.C. 29510

The clinics will consist of a 30-45 minute lecture followed by an open question and answer session. Clinics are designed to provide general legal information and to provide guidance on your specific situation. If you need legal advice on a specific situation, you will need to consult with an attorney separately. For more information, call the SC Bar Public Service Division at (803) 763-5521, ext. 198.

Find fresh produce and more! Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 122 Screven St., Georgetown across from the historic courthouse

Cindy Bindner addresses Council.
Public to choose winner of regional art show

The Waccamaw Library will again host an annual show of original colored pencil artwork by artists from around the area. Chapter 124 of the Colored Pencil Society of America (CPSA) is having its annual show at the library, located at 41 St. Paul Place, during the months of September and October. The public is invited to visit the library and peruse an array of fine artworks created by 17 local members of the chapter, then choose their favorite and submit their ballot. This event is free and open to the public.

Chapter 124 was formed in Myrtle Beach in 2012 and is the first district chapter in South Carolina. The small but productive group provides the greater area of South Carolina with educational and supportive opportunities, such as hosting workshops on new techniques and materials, inviting guest artists to illustrate their style and focus, holding studio time for artists to work together, and displaying the results locally and online.

The national CPSA promotes colored pencil art as a fine art form. Founded in 1990 it has about 1,600 members worldwide and over 25 district chapters. CPSA sponsors the “International Exhibition,” a juried show for works consisting entirely of colored pencil, and a second show called “Explore This,” which is an online show. It also hosts an annual six-day convention that provides for hands-on trainings for artists, meet-and-greet and demonstrations from corporate representatives and manufacturers, chapter management training, and more.

CPSA Chapter 124 is always welcoming members to join its group whether new to this art medium or as a professional who wants to enjoy the support it can offer. Visit www.cpsa124.org for information.

Deadline to apply for state A-tax grants is Oct. 4

The Georgetown County Finance Department is now accepting applications from local groups that would like to receive a portion of the county’s share of state accommodations tax funds. Application forms are available at www.gtcounty.org and must be received by the county’s Finance Department by 5 p.m. Oct. 4.

The accommodations tax, also known as A-tax, is charged by the state on vacation rentals. Funds are returned to the county where they are collected and are made available to fund projects directly related to tourism. It is currently unknown exactly how much funding will be available.

Applications will be reviewed and judged based on the merits of the application and the proposed event or project. Numerous factors will be considered when making award decisions; however, the most significant factor will be the projected impact on county tourism from the event or project.

For more information, contact Glenda Long at gjlong@gtcounty.org or (843) 545-3251.

Georgetown Library collecting books for fall book sale

The Georgetown Library will have its annual fall book sale Nov. 21-23 and is getting ready by collecting gently-used books. Books may be dropped off at the library, located at 405 Cleland Street.

The sale raises funds for library programs and will offer hardbacks for $1 and paperbacks for 50 cents.

The library and the Friends of the Georgetown Library are also gearing up for other fundraisers including their annual community yard sale (see page 7) and the Yuletide Home Tour on Dec. 14.

Find us online!

Whether you’re looking for jobs, the latest news or to contact a specific department, online is a great way to stay updated or get in touch with us.

Visit our website at www.gtcounty.org. You can also find us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. Just search for GitCountySC.
Employee event supports local nonprofits

The Georgetown County Morale Committee hosted its 3rd annual Employee Pileau and Dessert Cook-off at Beck Recreation Center this summer. The event raised $400, which was split and donated to two local charity groups. Sharon Moultrie (top, center) of the Public Works Division won the dessert contest and donated her portion of the winnings to the American Red Cross. She is pictured with Amy Brauner, executive director of the local chapter of the Red Cross, and County Council Chairman John Thomas. Phillip White of the Sheriff’s Office won the pileau contest. He donated his portion of the funds to Amazing Journey, a support group for the Sheriff’s Re-entry program, which works to reduce recidivism. He is pictured with Debbie Barr, director of the Re-entry Program, Annette Perreault of Amazing Journey and Chairman Thomas.

Guidance for repairing, rebuilding storm-damaged docks, marsh walkways

Homeowners who experienced minor damage to docks and/or marsh walkway structures resulting from Hurricane Dorian must submit a maintenance and repair request to the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control’s office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM).

For dock/marsh walkway structures that have been completely destroyed, property owners will likely need to submit an individual Critical Area Permit application to rebuild the structure. All sites are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Any activities within the tidal critical area will need to be reviewed by OCRM. The OCRM office in Myrtle Beach can be reached at (843) 238-4528 for more information.

An approval letter or permit from OCRM will be required before Georgetown County can issue a permit for these types of repairs, according to staff in the county’s Building Department. Contact the Georgetown County Building Department at (843) 545-3115.

Summer League Champions

Georgetown County Parks and Recreation’s summer adult soccer and softball leagues crowned their respective champions last month. In the soccer league, No. 2 seed Prestige Worldwide (pictured at top) took its fourth league championship in the last six seasons with an 8-0 win over No. 1 Seed MB International. Prestige Worldwide finished its summer season with an overall record of 9-1-1 and a +33 goal differential. In the softball league, the No. 1 seed Skeeter Hawks (pictured above) capped off an undefeated season with a 10-1 win over the No. 2 seed Wicked Angels. This is the second straight league championship for the Skeeter Hawks, who finished their summer season with an overall record of 14-0 and a +91 run differential. Georgetown County Parks and Recreation offers adult sports leagues throughout the year. For more information, see pages 4 and 9.
Tracey Howle named Employee of the Quarter

Tracey Howle, a key member of Georgetown County’s Emergency Services team, was recognized by County Council recently as Employee of the Quarter for the second quarter of this year.

Howle has been employed with Georgetown County for 26 years (since Sept. 1992). She started with Georgetown County EMS, handling administrative tasks, billing and some dispatching, along with other duties as assigned. With consolidation of Fire and EMS operations, she became administrative assistant to the Emergency Services director, and now serves in the expanded role of administrative assistant for the Emergency Services Division, working under the direction of the county administrator.

She coordinates meetings and handles reports and daily administrative details for the county’s two fire and EMS departments, as well as Georgetown County Emergency Management, and works in the county’s Emergency Operations Center when it is activated.

Howle was nominated for this award by Emergency Manager Sam Hodge, who called her “the conduit and the glue that holds Georgetown County Emergency Services together” and keeps it running smoothly and efficiently.

“Not only does Tracey maintain the calendar and schedules for the three agencies under Emergency Services, she also coordinates their purchase orders, P-cards, check requests, time sheets, leave requests, minutes for staff, fuel, safety and OIP meetings, and the list goes on,” Hodge wrote in his nomination. “I must say at some times, this is not an easy task, making sure that the chiefs and managers meet the required deadlines and goals set forth... but Tracey manages to make it happen.”

Midway Fire Rescue Battalion Chief Jeff Pifer recently received the Georgetown County Innovation Award from County Council for his work on a policy that helps the county increase efficiency and cut costs.

Pifer was nominated for the award by his department for a policy he introduced regarding situations in which emergency responders encounter bedbugs in the course of performing their duties. The policy was deemed an effective way of reducing the likelihood of spreading bedbugs to county facilities, and saves money associated with combating bedbug infestation.

Fire and EMS staff are on a daily basis called to enter homes all across their service areas, where they encounter a range of issues. One issue that has become increasingly common is bedbugs. A need was identified to educate fire and EMS personnel about bedbugs and outline procedures to prevent the spread of these pests. Pifer created a policy, that has since been implemented, to address this issue and reduce costs associated with handling infestations after they happen.

Pifer researched policies enacted by larger departments and used those as a basis to craft one that fits the county’s operations. The policy is both affordable and easy to duplicate and introduce in other departments and divisions.

The policy outlines procedures for creating “Bedbug Decon Kits,” which can be deployed by the on-duty battalion chief. The kits can be assembled for $75 each. Not only does this help prevent the spread of bedbugs, but it is significantly less expensive that extermination services after an infestation.

Stop the Presses!
Newspapers in Hollywood’s Golden Era

Special Series of 1930s & 1940s Films selected & introduced by:
“Charles Swenson, Coastal Observer Editor”
Screenings Fridays at 2:30

Friday, September 13, 2019
Citizen Kane (1941)

Friday, September 20, 2019
Libeled Lady (1936)

Friday, September 27, 2019
Mr. Deeds Goes to Town (1936)

Friday, October 4, 2019
Five Star Final (1931)

Friday, October 11, 2019
Nothing Sacred (1937)

Friday, October 18, 2019
Ace in the Hole (1951)

Friday, October 25, 2019
Keeper of the Flame (1942)

Friday, November 1, 2019
His Girl Friday (1940)

Nuccamaw Library • 41 St Paul Place • Pawleys Island
Deborah Thomas, a member of the Friends of the Waccamaw Library, has extended her volunteer efforts to the Library of Congress — and she’d love to see others join her.

Thomas has been volunteering from home to help record the stories of women’s suffragists. She and volunteers from across the nation are working to digitally transcribe primary-source materials so they are searchable by computer. This will improve search, readability and access to handwritten and typed documents for those researching various aspects of this momentous time in America’s history.

The struggle for women’s voting lasted more than seven decades, from 1848 to 1920. Determined women organized, lectured, lobbied, paraded, picketed, and went to jail for daring to support suffrage. Few women who began the struggle before the Civil War lived long enough to witness its final victory, but their work was carried on by younger women, whom they inspired and taught. Many of the personal papers of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Church Terrell, Carrie Chapman Catt, and Anna E. Dickinson are housed in the Library of Congress but have never been fully transcribed.

Volunteers can explore the daily lives of these determined leaders by volunteering to transcribe from home. Find more information and get started at www.loc.gov.

Author David H. Brown will visit the Georgetown Library at noon on Sept. 18 to talk about his new book, “Only Death: Tragedy in Williamsburg.”

The historical novel, set at the close of the Civil War, follows two young Confederate soldiers as they return home and fall in love with the same young woman. Their romantic rivalry turns violent and results in plans for a duel at the Georgetown Lighthouse.

Over time, the feud spans Georgetown, Williamsburg and Charleston counties, and ends in the death of one of the combatants.

The book was a labor of love for Brown, who is the great-grandson of the luckier Confederate soldier. Brown’s family goes back six generations in Williamsburg County, to William Howell Brown, who was a member of General Francis Marion’s brigade, which was organized in the county in 1780 after the surrender of Charleston to the British during the American Revolutionary War.

Brown is a graduate of Clemson University and the College of Pharmacy at the Medical University of South Carolina. He and his wife live in Florence.

Brown’s talk will take place in the library auditorium, to be followed by a book signing until 3 p.m. in the library lobby. Light refreshments will be served.