

October 2026

Monthly Newsletter

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Driftwood Becomes Sculptures

Take the ferry and go down the road "a piece" to the delightful community of Oak Island. There, you will find sculptures made from driftwood which will fire the imagination. The "sculptor," Dean Russell is an unlikely artist who makes his living as a landscaper and construction worker. Dean goes out early to collect the hands, feet, legs, and other body parts which he uses for inspiration to construct his imaginative pieces. He gathers pieces until they become part of his village of driftwood creatures known as Guardians of the Dunes. Most are around 8-feet and can be seen as "menacing" up close. But they are not and are considered to symbolically protect Oak Island's precious dunes.



Dean constructs the creatures in his backyard, then moves them to a beach access lot across from his house where they can be admired by all. Presently, there are nearly a dozen guardians in the small lot, made primarily of woods that are slow to rot, such as cedar and cypress, hardened by exposure to sea salt and sun. They've become a hit with locals and tourists alike who invariably stop and pose for selfies with the sculptures.

Dean Russell's driftwood sculptures can be found on East Beach Drive, between 55th and 58th streets, on Oak Island.



Dean Russell



The Guardian



Root Groot

Meet your neighbors - Melanie and Alan Ramos

Melanie and Alan Ramos, our new neighbors in the 1000 Building, are excited about being here. Having just closed in July, Melanie, Alan, and son Nico, 6 years young, are ready to get their good times going. Home base is Knoxville, TN, currently a 7-hour drive, which does not present any obstacles to this dynamic family. Melanie is no stranger to the area, having received her undergraduate (International Business) and graduate (Educational Leadership) degrees from UNC-W. "Wilmington is my happy place. I absolutely love it and still have friends in the area," she explains. After college, her first teaching job was at Trask Middle School in the New Hanover school system. After ten years of teaching, she decided to change career paths, taking a job with Disney. The new position took her to Orlando and it was through travelling in her work that she met Alan--in China! Melanie was there working when she came upon a "lost American," Alan. Can you imagine being lost on the subway in Beijing, China?? Melanie took notice of his plight and offered to help him find his way back to where he was staying. He explained to her that he was on the other side of the world from his home, Bradenton, FL, where he was an assistant principal, recruiting teachers to teach Chinese in his school's system. They got to know each other a bit, then Alan returned to the US, and the two skyped for the next six months. During that time, Alan convinced Melanie to come back, which she did, culminating in the two marrying in 2014 at (where else?!?) Disney World.



During the global COVID-19 pandemic, Disney resorts were not functional and Melanie's job was eliminated. It was good timing as it was when son Nico was born and adopted by Alan and her. They decided it was time for a change and proceeded to weigh their options, hopes, and visions for the future. This profound time of decision took them to Knoxville, where Alan is now an assistant superintendent of schools in the Loudon County school system and where Melanie embarked on a completely new professional life in estate sales.

The Ramoses secured a franchise in a nationwide estate sales corporation, Blue Moon Estate Sales. With Alan working for/with Melanie besides his superintendent duties, they have established a business that has been #1 in sales for four out of the last five years. Melanie says, "We average three sales a week now and it's still growing. We offer to come into a home, sell and otherwise handle its contents, and return the home empty."



The love of the Wilmington area remained in Melanie's heart. Alan and she thought, "How great to have a beach condo? A place where we go and not work?" While living in Wilmington, Wrightsville had been her go-to beach, so they started looking there. She found the ambience had changed, Wrightsville not being the same as she remembered. They moved on down the coast, visiting Carolina Beach and eventually Kure. As with many Ocean Duners, they got to our lovely enclave and immediately were enamored. "We loved it from the first. HOA fees were at first surprising until we calculated all that they entailed with ocean front property. The atmosphere at Kure Beach could not be better. We love that it's not crowded. We were really sold when we visited the indoor pool. We look forward to spending time there as a family."



We look forward to your being here, Melanie, Nico, and Alan, and welcome you to the Ocean Dunes family. See you at the pool

Ocean Dunes Cooks!



Oh, what the heck? Let's get in the Halloween spirit with this decadent seasonal treat. Halloween comes but once a year, so indulge.

Ingredients:

- **1 bag pretzels – circles or square work best**
- **1 bag candy corn**
- **1 bag Hershey kisses**

Instructions:

- **Place a sheet of parchment paper or tin foil down on a cookie sheet.**
- **Arrange pretzels in a single layer on cookie sheet.**
- **Place an unwrapped Hershey kiss on top of each pretzel.**
- **Put cookie sheet in a preheated oven, 250 degrees, and bake for about 4–5 minutes.**
- **Remove cookie sheet from oven and quickly place one candy corn on top of each Hershey kiss.**
- **Place cookie sheet in refrigerator for about 10–15 minutes to allow to set up.**
- **Serve and enjoy!**



Committee Reports

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The committee last met on September 24th, 2026 and discussed the upcoming October newsletter.

We continue to try and interview new owners to introduce them to the community and hear the story of our new neighbors. In the October issue we do have a new interview.

If any owners want to be interviewed, please send me an email at davidbianchi@sbcglobal.net or to odhoaboard@gmail.com.

We are also always looking for good article suggestions or recipes for the season.

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Thanks to the members of the committee for their participation. They are Blossom Gardner, Laura Lee Kendziora, Evan Wittels, and Mike Brown.

BUILDING COMMITTEE

The big push for projects will be starting this month and continue on throughout the off-season.

Big on the list are the tennis/pickleball/basketball courts. The completion of this project will enhance livability at Ocean Dunes and be the culmination of years of planning and budgeting. We were able to employ the excavator, already on the property for the irrigation issue, to tear out the basketball court while we could save money by doing it now and not have to bring it back.

Three projects which stand out: 1) Irrigation system – We will be looking at whether sections of the irrigation system (rec center and oceanside) are salvagable and make budgetary decisions in this regard. 2) Drain system in 1700/1800 parking lot has been cleared by an excavator. 3) A 16-year-old HVAC in rec center replaced. Hard to argue with the replacement of a system this old in a salt air environment.

BEACH PROTECTION COMMITTEE

The coastal engineering project we referenced in the December newsletter began in May with deployment of a buoy 2000' off shore of the northern edge of our beach. This buoy will be gathering data on wave speed and strength and this data will be used to create a coastal protection plan.

Data is currently being processed as it is transmitted.

This plan would be just part of the first step in the planning process to protect Ocean Dunes from coastal erosion.

We have an active grant application in with FMA / FEMA to provide funds for the planning phase.

FMA/FEMA has reached out to us multiple times in the last three months seeking additional information.

We hope to hear soon as to whether or not we will receive the grant.



RECREATION AD-HOC COMMITTEES

The committee last met on September 9th, 2026.

The old tennis court surfaces have been totally removed and our next step will be to begin the compaction of the sub surface.

We have also taken out the current basketball court to optimize the use and cost of machinery and labor while we work on the main courts. In addition, if we did not do it now it would have been very difficult to demolish it later due to constrained access to the courts.

We received good news from the engineering consultants that much of the removed fill can be used to fill back in. This will help with the project costs.

We will be hiring a surveyor to survey the area to make sure we are still within Ocean Dunes property lines as the western boundary is close to the Federal property.

We received a quote from UCC for the total outdoor recreation area project and it was in line with the estimates that we had provided as we did the project planning.

Funding for the project has been included in the 2026 budget with 50% of the project to begin in late Fall of 2026. The completion of the project would be in early 2027. This spreads the cost over 2 years.

Thanks to all the committee members who have participated in this project. We began this committee almost two years ago and have come a long way since then.



LANDSCAPPING COMMITTEE

September 2026

I walked the property with Justin Hobbs on September 24th. The weeds have been very challenging with the amount of rainfall the island has had over the last month! A mass spray was done at the end of August and he has continued to spot spray biweekly. I do see dead weeds, and some yellowing indicates dying out. He will continue to treat regularly.

I asked that when they trim, they pay more attention to the walkways (we cannot spray those, they are too close to the dunes). He can weed whack those that go onto the boards.

We identified pruning. The rec center was done last month and will be done again in November. Oceanfront was done on 9/24. There is some pruning that will not be completed until January due to the nature of the vegetation.

Lastly, I have asked him to put together a proposal to remove the dead trees/limbs along the berm. This would not occur until 2027 from a budget perspective and would likely use the small “extras” we are allotted in landscaping but would make a big impact along Ft Fisher.

Kristen Roeder LoMonaco



LONG RANGE PLANNING AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

The combined Finance and Long-Range Planning Committee have been meeting regularly with the goal of putting together a budget proposal for 2027. We reviewed current expenses for both the operating and reserve funds. We have contacted several vendors for their 2027 pricing.

We have investigated numerous cost savings initiatives wherever possible, including obtaining competitive pricing. We also reviewed the Reserve Study that was completed by G&F Engineering.

In conjunction with our work, CAMs have also formulated a budget proposal providing valuable data. Our committee has now completed our proposal and will present it to the board at their next meeting on 10/7. Pending board approval, we will follow the schedule below:

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|--------------|--|
| 10/9 | • Budget Indfo sent to owners if approved byt BODS |
| 10/15 | • Zoom presentation of budger to owners – Thursday @ 7 pm |
| 10/20 | • Zoom presentation of budger to owners – Tuesday @ 7 pm |
| 10/26 | • Voting Begins |
| 11/9 | • Voting Ends |

I want to take this opportunity to thank the committee members for their involvement and valuable input.

In addition to the board members who participated, non-board members Chris Veit and Marsha Cox's input was very much appreciated.

As I do every month, I urge any homeowner who wants to learn about the HOA finances and how your dues are spent to join the committee. You do not have to commit to doing any tasks; we value all input. If you are unsure about joining, you can attend and see if being a committee member is for you. You can contact the board at ODHOAboard@gmail.com or directly to me at msposato@twcny.rr.com.

**Thanks
Mark Sposato**



Facility Hours of Operation HOA Office:
Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Rec
Center: (Indoor pool, hot tub, sauna &
fitness center) 7 days a week 9:00 a.m. -
8:00 p.m.*

Contact Information

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Rec Center/HOA Office | 910-239-1370(opt. 1) |
| • CAMS Customer Support | 910-239-1370(opt. 2) |
| • After Hours Emergency Line | 910-239-1370(opt. 2) |
| • Kure Beach Fire Department | 910-458-2014 |
| • Kure Beach Public Works | 910-458-5816 |
| • Kure Beach Animal Control | 910-798-7500 |
| • Duke Energy | 800-419-6356 |
| • Kure Beach Water/Sewer | 910-458-5816 |
| • Spectrum (Cable/Internet) | 833-697-7328 |

Kure Beach PD “non-emergency” 910-452-6120

Board of Directors

Evan Wittels - President

Steve Channell - Vice President

Barry Ehret -2nd Vice President

Mark Sposato - Treasurer

Kristen LoMonaco - Assistant Treasurer

David Bianchi - Secretary

Frank Sutton - Assistant Secretary

Management Staff

Community Manager - Mike Brown

Assistant CM - Laura Lee Kendziora

Maintenance Lead - Bryan Barton

Maintenance Tech - Brandon Krieger

Rec Center Attendant (M-F)- Bennett Craven

Rec Center Attendant (Sat) - Zach Pearce

Rec Center Attendant (Sun)-

*** Ocean Dunes Website:**

<https://oceandunesresortnc.com/>

•The PRIVATE Ocean Dunes Owners
Group Facebook page:

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/324887891854120)
324887891854120 •

Town of Kure Beach:

<https://www.townofkurebeach.org/>

***NOTE: To register for alerts, look to**
the upper right corner for the tab
“Register for Alerts” and click to
receive email and/or texts from the
town regarding storms, etc.

•Kure Beach Facebook Page:

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/42704092681)
42704092681

•Kure Beach Pier:

[https://www.facebook.com/search/t](https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=kure%20beach%20pier)
op?q=kure%20beach%20pier

•Carolina Beach Facebook Page:

[https://www.facebook.com/places/](https://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Carolina-Beach-North-Carolina/109744462385819/)
Things-to-do-in-Carolina-Beach-
North-Carolina/109744462385819/

•Town of Carolina Beach:

<https://www.carolinabeach.org/>

•Carolina & Kure Beach Locals:

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1122812144558265)
1122812144558265