



Photo contributed

Norman Sprinthall and Leslie Howe provide names for horses as Norma Eckard writes them down.

## Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range prepare for annual fundraiser

Preparations are well under way for the fifth annual Derby Day celebration at the Caswell Dunes Clubhouse on Saturday, May 6, from 2:30 to 7 p.m. To commemorate the entry of the U.S. into World War I, the 36 tabletop races will be named for World War I military leaders, soldiers, battles, songs, movies and video games.

“A lot of research went into learning about World War I this year in order to be able to list the horse names. Some of us on the committee were not even born and there was not a lot of information available until recently,” Norma Eckard, chairwoman of the nonprofit, said in a news release. “We expect to learn more history in the coming months as we accumulate more details about the part the U.S. played in helping our Allies remain free.”

Sponsoring the derby is the Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range, a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) that was formed to save the 1918 World War I Rifle Range Target Pit and Storage Room located in Caswell Beach.

“As far as we know, the rifle range is the only standing World War I historic structure in Brunswick County,” Ron Eckard, a member of the nonprofit, said in the release. “Contributions are needed to remove soil from the north center passageway wall so that hydraulic jacks may be positioned inside the pit in order to straighten the wall. At present, it is bowed inward six inches with a likely chance of falling if we don’t get funding soon.”

The rifle range remains on the Historic Wilmington Foundation List of Most Threatened Historic Places in the Cape Fear Region that includes Brunswick, New Hanover and Pender counties.

To attend this event, email [ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com](mailto:ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com) for information or go to [caswellriflerange.com](http://caswellriflerange.com).