

The race is on!

More than 50 people attended the Derby Day celebration to benefit Caswell’s rifle pit

The third fundraiser for the historic World War I rifle range pit drew more than 50 people to Caswell Dunes on Saturday for a celebration of the Kentucky Derby that boosted efforts of the Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range.

The event featured table-top horse races, a raffle, door prizes, a silent auction, a barbecue dinner and celebration of the Kentucky Derby race. Organizers expect the affair to contribute \$2,000 toward an ongoing effort to stabilize and preserve a monument that’s now adjacent to the Oak Island Golf Course.

Built in 1918, the pit and storage area helped train American soldiers in long-range shooting before they shipped off to Europe for the Great War. It is among the few standing examples of that conflict today, historians have said. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2013.

Contracts to remove trees that threaten the walls are being negotiated. The plan is to finish cleaning and repairing the structure and put forth a plan for a standing historical display. The nonprofit Friends group also intends to enclose the storage area.

Celebrants mostly dressed up for the event, and Mike and Joyce Crabtree were judged the best-dressed couple. Russ Barlowe, vice president of the Friends group, took honors for best man’s hat and Laurie Sigle won the award for best lady’s hat.

— Story and photos by Lee Hinnant



Table-top races (above) were featured throughout the afternoon, and prizes were awarded to the Crabtrees (below) for best-dressed couple and Laurie Sigle and Russ Barlowe (right top and bottom) for best women’s and men’s hats.

