

First quarter of the year is always a bit of a struggle for Trinity Center. Like many businesses, we have the inevitable challenge of the cash flow shortage. The first three months of the year are traditionally our quietest months, so all of our business is important. We are a little bit like an old coal-driven locomotive. We take time to build up any steam, and our gears might whine and click while we do, but once we do build up that steam, we usually chug along quite happily.

This year we were particularly challenged by a brief snowstorm followed by one of the longest hard freezes that this county has ever seen. Very early in the morning of Thursday January 4, several inches fell all around Carteret County. That brief snowstorm was followed by 96 hours below freezing. Four straight days. The snow was not the issue. It was a nice powder, and moving through it was not that difficult. The ice that formed underneath it and out of it during the hard freeze caused all of the trouble.

The roads and bridges of Carteret County were covered in a solid sheet of ice. All travel was difficult; in fact, travel for the most part simply stopped. Trinity Center was particularly isolated. Driving on either bridge onto the island was treacherous, and Highway 58 was nearly impassable. For those of you who do not know, Bogue Banks is a twenty-two mile long barrier island, and Highway 58 runs its length. Trinity Center is roughly in the middle of the island.

By the time the hard freeze ended and businesses began to re-open, even my six-year-old boys were ready for a regular routine. They spoke longingly about going back to school. And yet...

And yet there was a quiet beauty around property. The stillness of the unoccupied Trinity Center had its own appeal. The longer I have worked here, the more I have come to cherish the moments when the property belongs, if only briefly, to me and mine. I am the caretaker of almost all I hold dear. The snow hides all the marks that age brings to property, and for a brief moment, all is pristine once again. See the attached pictures for proof.

We survived the snowstorm and its aftermath just fine. There was little business scheduled during the four-day hard freeze, and the maintenance staff had drained all the pipes they could drain and filled all the drains with antifreeze they could fill. Eventually the ice became slush, the slush melted away, and normal routines began again. I will admit that I love being here when the place is hopping and people are finding their own moments of glad grace around property.

Lean in, though, and I'll let you in on a little secret. Few sights compare to the sight of a snow-covered beach as the tide rolls in and eats at that snow bit by bit. My family was lucky enough to see such a sight during that hard freeze. It is a sign we'll not soon forget.

Come and visit when you can.