



Coconut Telegraph

April 2023



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- **Annual meeting on April 15 at 11AM. A picnic lunch will be provided!**

Chief Bill is cooking burgers and dogs! Side dishes by Pede! **Hope to see you!**

(Check the website and Facebook concerning location)

- **Membership submitted by Dawn**

If you haven't received your membership packet, it should be arriving in your mailbox soon.

Thank you to those who have already taken advantage of the online membership registration and payment option. If you want to renew or sign up at the Annual Members meeting on Saturday, April 15th, that is always an option. Cash or check only at the meeting, please.

To register and pay online, visit www.lgpoa.org/membership

Any questions, please send an email through the website or direct to dawnbokar@gmail.com



- **Summary of Volunteer Involvement submitted by an Islander**

As we somberly mark the six months since Hurricane Ian bludgeoned this little island we call home, it helps in our healing to reflect on the many blessings that continue to grow out of the destruction.

Blessings like watching neighbor helping neighbor, old wounds being forgiven out of the realization that sticking together is more productive than hanging on to bitterness, and the joy of new friendships being forged by islanders who previously never really knew each other.

And then there are the many volunteers, most of them complete strangers, who appeared like angels to assist us in our darkest hour.

Scores of men and women showed up to assist people they didn't know and will never see again. They came from around the nation, driving at their own expense from as far away as Oklahoma and Indiana simply because they wanted to help people who were hurting.

The largest volunteer effort on LGI was spearheaded by a non-profit disaster relief organization called CityServe USA (cityservenetwork.com) and their partner, Spokes of Hope. From the first few days of October well into February they worked long hours doing everything from complete cut-outs, to tarping holes in roofs, the drywalling, to electrical work, to mold remediation. But the most impactful and lasting acts of love were to give us hope and stand with us in prayer, increasing our faith in God and the goodness that exists in humanity when you look for it.

CityServe heard about LGI through an islander who knew the founder and called to describe the huge unseen need. While Sanibel and Fort Myers Beach received widespread media coverage, LGI was unknown and alone. Dave and Kristy Donaldson, the founders of CityServe, quickly caught the vision to help. They contacted one of the smaller non-profits in their network that specializes in the kind of disaster relief and recovery that LGI needed. Shane Zoccole, the head of Spokes of Hope in South Carolina, drove all night to witness the wreckage himself. What he saw here broke his heart. Within his first hour at LGI Shane committed to bringing supplies, skilled workers in various trades, and most of all, people filled with love and generosity to come help us.

CityServe then contacted Christian philanthropists from across the country to raise the funds needed to sustain the months-long operation. These donors will never visit LGI, and we won't ever know their names. But God does, and it is He who will bless them.

Shane and his core team of five arrived on the island within days to set up "camp" in the lot beside the Fire House. The deck underneath the house became ground zero for all operations for the five months of work.

As the core Spokes team assessed the many LGI needs, they would send a list through CityServe's network of churches of the kinds of skilled volunteers needed, and when. It was a complex, ongoing process to orchestrate the 212 volunteers who answered the call to serve. Equipment and building supplies were scarce in our area, so they had to be located and transported from other states. Thousands of gallons of fuel, food, water, and other supplies required to sustain the operation also had to be purchased and transported.

The volunteers were people of all denominations, from different states, and many with their own challenges and hurts to deal with. Yet, they came to bless us. Most of them would never be able to afford to own a home on a barrier island, and they were aware that it is difficult for many islanders to do so too. It didn't matter to them how much money someone has or doesn't have - they know that suffering is universal; that emotional and physical loss is no respecter of persons.

Below is a summary of what these wonderful people accomplished under the leadership of Shane Zoccole and his dedicated and loving team. Please know that this work would not have been possible without the help of many islanders and Eldred's Marina. For those five months Eldred's allowed the volunteers to park for free. The Marina was also used as a staging area for many mainland operations, including the distribution of tractor trailer loads of toilet paper and cleaning supplies to the island and nearby communities. Once again, Eldred's helped save the day for LGI, just as they have done for decades.

One of the biggest local heroes throughout the effort is our own Robert Hill. He barged some 87 loads of building materials, vehicles, equipment, and supplies - every single trip at no charge. Had it not been for Robert giving of his time and out of his own pocket, the relief effort would have been much, much smaller. LGI residents and visitors alike will be blessed for years to come because of Robert Hill's generosity.

And then there was the daunting task of securing beds for the volunteers who were coming and going. Although they are used to sleeping on cots or sleeping bags wherever they show up to work, a group of LGI homeowners vowed to make sure these hard workers got a good night's rest. We all owe a debt of gratitude to the many homeowners who graciously housed the volunteers for the benefit of our entire community, some giving up much-needed rental income. A special thanks goes out to Scott, Barbie, and Bret Pendergrass, who generously housed Shane and another worker for the entire five months.

And what about the feeding of the 212? Spokes of Hope supplied breakfast each morning under the Firehouse while the volunteers received their assignments for the day and bagged their lunches to take with them. Another group of islanders decided that these people deserved a hot meal at the end of each long day, and they took on the job of organizing dinners. A big thanks to Terrie Weibley and Karress Boyer for recruiting and coordinating the many kind islanders who supplied dinner each night. If you were one of them, please know that your thoughtfulness and delicious contributions were deeply appreciated by tired and hungry volunteers!

Then there are the kind people like William and Raphael Meyers who posted the many Facebook notices required to keep the communications going, provided rides for the volunteers to their job sites, and helped in general coordination. They are island heroes. And we are grateful to the islanders who stopped working on their own homes to provide golf cart rides to and from job sites or boat rides across the bay to pick up volunteers and make runs for more supplies.

If you are one of the many who loaned tools, donated treats, provided a golf cart, or assisted this effort in any way, please know that your work was vital to the success of the operation. The entire island is better because of you.

And, of course, our own awesome Fire Chief Bill Underhill and his wonderful family patiently hosted the operation “headquarters” underneath their home and provided logistical and practical help throughout. Chief Bill, you and your kids are a treasure to LGI.

Many islanders have asked how they can help Spokes of Hope. Although the group accepted no donations for what they did for LGI, if you are so inclined to support a future effort for the next victims of disaster, you may donate through this link.

[Donate to Hopeful Restoration Group INC](#)

[paypal.com](#)

All gifts are tax deductible as 501(c)3 donations. (NOTE: the DBA is Spokes of Hope but the 501(c)3 name is Hopeful Restoration Group). You can read more about Spokes on their Spokes of Hope Facebook page. A total of 18,600 volunteer hours were donated to LGI over five months. The simple motivation is the biblical command in Luke 6:31: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

Work included:

- The Fire House interior was gutted and completely rebuilt including walls, insulation, floors, ceilings, painting, the supply of furniture, light fixtures, appliances as needed, and decor.
- The donation and installation of a 48kw Generator (large enough to run 7 homes) but solely will be used for all operations of the Fire House in case of power outage.
- The donation and installation of a 500-gallon propane tank to run the generator to keep the Fire House fully operational in times of outage. The first 500 gallons of fuel were also donated.
- 98 homes assessed to determine condition and action needed moving forward
- 21 complete home cut outs completed
- Scores of partial home cut outs completed
- 63 homes sprayed and fogged for mold remediation
- 49 homes had roofs tarped by a professional roofer
- 84 residential yards were cleaned of debris and brush, often including cutting downed trees and branches
- 6 islander boats received engine service of some kind by a certified Yamaha mechanic
- 120 hand-made quilts, made with love and bathed in prayer by a group of volunteers. were given to islanders

A partial list of other equipment and supplies secured and used on the island:

- Backhoe

- Skid Loader
- Vehicles
- Multiple Power Tools
- Tarps (10 pallets)
- 2 bundles of 2x4's (560 total)
- 120 gallons of shockwave (mold remediation)
- over 1000 sheets of drywall and the screws, tape, and mud
- 60 large rolls of insulation both for attics and walls
- 1 semi load containing 52 pallets of cleaning, toiletry, and bug products
- 60 gallons of wall and ceiling paint
- Various Items of specific needs
- Thousands of gallons of fuel

Yes, there is much more to be done on Little Gasparilla Island. Together - and with help from God and good people - we will recover!



- **Volunteer Thank-You!**

Thanks to all those involved in chain sawing, hauling, burning, cooking, repairing, washing, cleaning, caring, listening, etc.

Chief Bill and family, Richard, Glenn, Robert, Evan, Taylor, Emmett, Bruce, Melissa, Jack, Ashton, Karess, Scott, Barbie, Brett, Terrie, Rebecca, William, Raphaela, Chris, CityServe, Spokes of Hope and Shane

Please let us know if we have other island "heroes" that should get a big handclap, slap-on-the-back, shout-out for jobs well done during the stressful and challenging times of Ian.

- **Beach Nesting Season Has Arrived submitted by Barb**



Shorebird Nesting Season February 15 - August 31

Sea Turtle Nesting Season. May 1 - October 31

One of the greatest challenges that Florida's beach nesting species face is the presence of dogs on our beaches. To shorebirds and sea turtles, domestic dogs are predators just like crows, raccoons, or coyotes. In turn, dogs naturally see them as a source of prey or as something new to investigate. Shorebirds nest directly on the sand. Even curious innocent encounters are dangerous for the beach nesters and often lead to colonies and nests being abandoned due to fear.

If you must bring your dog to the beach, always keep it on a leash. Keep your dog as far away from wildlife as possible. Do not allow your dog into the dune areas unattended. Pick up & properly dispose of all pet waste.

You can do your part to help. While enjoying the beach take these simple steps:

- Observe wildlife from a distance.
- Fill in any holes, knock down sandcastles & remove all personal belongings daily.
- Keep the beach clean by removing all trash & food scraps.
- Reduce artificial light visible from the beach. If you need to replace exterior lights consider using shielded lights, low wattage lights or amber, orange, or red lights.

Call Charlotte County Parks & Natural Resources at (941)613-3220 if you have any questions.

Call the Venice Wildlife Center if you encounter an injured animal at (941)484-9657

- **Install House Numbers submitted by Barb**

The sheriff & fire chief suggested at last year's meeting to make sure house address numbers are installed on your property. The landscape of our island has changed dramatically since Hurricane Ian. It would be helpful for emergency personnel coming to the island, especially for those unfamiliar with the island if house numbers were evident. Numbers on houses would allow these emergency personnel to get to the correct address without delay. Dock numbers should also be added if they were lost in the storm.

Homeowners are encouraged to include house number & dock number with the rental information you have for tenants & guests. House names are fine, but they are not specific enough for the 911 operator to get emergency personnel to the correct property.

The simple task of installing house numbers could be a lifesaver.

- **Garden Club submitted by Brian**

Great news from Bob at the Island Garden Club! Every month the club will be giving away plants to island residents and club members. The plant of the month is the coconut palm!



- **What Is This? Coconut Palm submitted by Laurie**

Coconut palms are a major crop of the tropics, including LGI. They can grow up to 80 feet and have fruits (coconuts) that float in the ocean currents. Propagation is possible by putting the unhusked ripe coconuts on their side and almost covering them with the soil. Seedlings should appear within a few months, and trees bear fruit after 5 or 6 years. Fifty coconuts per tree annually is considered a good yield. Products from the tree include coconut flesh, milk, copra, oil, palm cabbages, and coir; a fiber used for ropes, mats, and baskets. [COCONUT OPENING - The Best Coconut Technique - jak najlepiej otworzyć kokos - YouTube](#)



- **Navigation Lights**

[Boat Navigation Lights - YouTube](#)

Please use navigation lights during darkness as you are boating from mainland to island! It helps to keep us all safe.

- **Island Debris**

Please get all your debris out to the right of way to ensure a pickup by the FDEM/FEMA group. After they leave, you will be on your own to pay for and remove any debris! Taylor and Evan may be the only option. Do not pile up debris on the paths, after FDEM/FEMA have left the island.

It is your responsibility!

- **Tax Relief submitted by Dawn** (from Scott, treasurer of Palm Island HOA)

“Hey Islanders, this is a quick reminder that IF your home is "destroyed or rendered uninhabitable" due to Hurricane Ian, you can apply to Charlotte County to get a little bit of tax relief for your 2022 taxes. If this applies to you, please be sure to file your application by April 3rd, 2023 if you have not already done so. You can apply for a maximum of 95 days of relief for '22, which covers from Ian's landfall through 12/31/22.”

Here's the site to use:

>> www.ccappraiser.com

Please feel free to email Laurie Tremblay at jltremblay125@gmail.com with any information you would like to publish in the Coconut Telegraph by the 25th of each month. The content is reviewed by board members for approval before publication. Thank you.

