



The MULLET RAPPER

What's Happening in the Everglades & 10,000 Islands
~~Special Hurricane Edition~~

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**Come out and Celebrate the
Blessing of the Fleet & Area
Rebirth Post-Hurricane Irma**



Hurricane Irma's winds battered and flooded our homes and businesses but we are not going to let that stop us from celebrating our area's beloved and important stone crab industry. On September 30th, come out and share in the annual blessing of the fleet at the Rod & Gun Club.

In addition to celebrating our hard-working crabbers, we want to celebrate the rebirth of our area that is struggling to recover from the effects of Hurricane Irma. It is a perfect time to thank all of the wonderful people who have come into our community to help families clean up after the storm. This has been, and will continue to be, a complete community effort. It is important to take a day to take some time and pray together for the health and welfare of our crab fleet and the families impacted by Hurricane Irma. After the blessing, we can then get back to the task of getting our homes and area businesses back into shape.

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AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE
IRMA & RELIEF EFFORT

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INFORMATION, WHAT'S NEXT?

Dear Readers:

Due to the effects of Hurricane Irma, we lost power for 9 days (my power has still been going on and off tonight) and most of us are still without internet service including email. Since we rely of this for much of our information (and we have all been busy cleaning up our homes) this shortened edition will be devoted to reporting about the hurricane and relief services that our readers may find useful.

Our goal is to resume our normal publication on October 7th. Please accept our apologies for this temporary inconvenience! ~*The Mullet Rapper*

Hurricane Irma Slaps Our Coastline, 7 foot Storm Surge Devastates Homes & Businesses **Power Restored After 9 Days, Governor Visits E-City**

Hurricane Irma pummeled the Southwest Coast as a Category 3 hurricane before heading inland and eventually fizzling out. Before she left, the winds churned up a storm surge of approximately 7 feet...half of what some meteorologists were predicting.

The aftermath is unbelievable. There are very few who did not incur some type of damage due to the flooding or winds. As the days have passed, the debris piles are growing and growing. The mud the storm left behind is slippery, smelly and in our homes, cars and boats.

The good news is that there are so many wonderful people who have come into the community to help. One church group came in mass with shovels and rakes and started cleaning up yards and hauling debris. Another church group is helping some families tear out walls to help them mitigate water and mold to prepare for reconstruction.

Once the electric was turned back on in Everglades City, Barbara Kearney's home on Allen Avenue caught fire as a result of severe flooding caused by the storm. Every local restaurant suffered severe damages. Win-Car and the grocery store are also closed for the foreseeable future. Everglades City and Chokoloskee post offices are closed because of damages. Many families in low-lying homes lost everything due to the flooding. The lower portions of stilted homes are completely flooded out. Landscaping is pretty much shot. Debris from Rod & Gun was found just south of the school. Boats were picked up and moved, cars were completely immersed and golf carts ruined. Frankly, Irma really walloped us. Right now, the streets are a sad reminder of what happened 2 weeks ago.

The first few days after the storm were very difficult. It took emergency relief teams a few days to get here, so we were on our own. But once they came in, it became a bit more bearable with folks delivering cold beverages and meals. Supplies also started coming in; so much food was donated the fire chief is now having to turn it away!

Principal Jim Ragusa was amazing in the days after the storm. He personally got some of his friends to donate money so that he could get supplies in quickly. He and his girlfriend have been here everyday during the relief effort cleaning, serving food and talking to people in the community. Coach Jill Whitcomb has been out in the community delivering meals and encouraging people. The entire school staff has been nothing short of amazing.

On Sunday, Governor Scott and Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart visited the area to assess the damage and discuss next steps. They discussed emergency funding and the Governor assured the Congressman that "he has a plan".

Pro-tem Mayor Grimm has also been very busy. He met and spoke with both politicians and assured me that he will do everything he can to make sure the area is operational for the season. City Clerk, Dottie Joiner has been tirelessly working to keep everything moving...It has not been easy but we are survivors!

Above: Mayor Grimm speaks with Congressman Diaz-Balart as Marya Repko listens in



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Above: Mayor Grimm speaks with Congressman Diaz-Balart as Marya Repko listens in

If you have news, photos, announcements, or articles ... email us at: mulletrapper@gmail.com or call us at: 954-662-7003.



Governor Scott, Kathy Brock, Tim Brock, Mario Diaz-Balart meet in E-City



This is the slimy, smelly mud we all have in and around the home



Allen Avenue tree damage and debris piles



A sign from the Barron River ends up at the docks in E-City



This and several other docks were lifted up or destroyed



The boat in storage at Win-Car is off its trailer and through the fence



Look how high the water got on this house, well above the window



Parker Ogelsby & Lt. Jake Walker at the fire station



The supplies started rolling in. Here is a big shipment of water!



Jill Whitcomb is delivering food and cold drinks to the community



The food & supply distribution tent set up behind the fire station



Not even a hurricane can stop the mail from being distributed!

INFORMATION & RESOURCES DURING THE RELIEF EFFORT

Area Related Issues:

- ◆ **Mail can be picked up** at the mobile units in front of City Hall until service is restored at Everglades City and Chokoloskee post offices.
- ◆ **The boil water notice has been lifted.** Please still minimize water use as much as possible. Refrain from washing cars and using sprinklers until damages can be repaired.
- ◆ It is recommended that you get a **tetanus shot** if you have not had one in the last 5 to 10 years. Shots have been available at the school but may be moved or stopped in the area. If you still need one, you can get one at the Health Department on the corner of 41 and Airport Pulling Road in Naples.
- ◆ **Clinical needs**— If you get cut or have open wounds, it is recommended that you have them cleaned very well. The dust and mud can cause severe infections. If local services are no longer available, please go to the EMT at the fire station or to the emergency room. If you need help, call 911.
- ◆ There is a **shower facility** located at the airport. Collier Area Transit (CAT) has been providing bus service to the area so you may get a nice, hot shower! It is critical to clean cuts or wounds to prevent infection.
- ◆ There are **portable toilets** located throughout the community if your home's facilities are not operational. Please be kind and clean up after you use the facility so it is ready for the next person.
- ◆ If you need **food or water** you can get it free behind the fire station in Everglades City, this also may be available at McLeod Park. This service will be terminated in the near future so please think ahead.
- ◆ **City Hall** is closed for renovations. There will be temporary buildings for City Hall operations starting Wednesday, September 27th. A City Council meeting is tentatively scheduled to approve the budget on September 27th 5:30, location TBD.
- ◆ **Garbage pickup** has resumed on the regular schedule. The big trash piles of all of the debris will (eventually, we think next week) be picked up by FEMA. Please use caution when discarding glass construction debris. Glass by the side of the road can easily break causing bigger problems for children, adults and pets.
- ◆ **Ladies coffee** will be held on Wed., September 27th at 8 am at Marlene Sassaman's: 935 Panther Creek Lane, Dupont (321-682-6288).
- ◆ The normal schedule for everything is pretty much interrupted. Please be patient as the community recovers.

Getting Help & Making Claims:

- ◆ When discarding items ruined in the flood, be sure to **get photographs for insurance or FEMA claims**. It is recommended that you take photos of the item and the serial number/model number of the item so that it can be accurately identified for your claim. Do not just take a picture of your trash pile, the insurance will not use this to assess a claim. You must have photos of the individual items. You will need a list of all items you are claiming. Consider hiring a public adjuster. This person represents you and they do this type of work for you. The insurance adjuster works for the insurance company. You can find a public adjuster online or from a neighbor or friend who is using one. There is no upfront cost to using a certified public adjuster. They keep a percentage of the claim they recover on your behalf.
- ◆ Several groups are mobilizing to offer **tear-out and reconstruction assistance** in the community. Joe West is helping coordinate this effort with others and will be compiling a list of those that need assistance and/or supplies. To contact Joe, call him at 954-558-0545.
- ◆ **Counseling** will be available at the school for any children and adults who need it. Please contact the school at 239-377-9800 or 239-695-2561 for more information. Feeling overwhelmed is normal; do not hesitate to reach out for help if you need it.

School News:

- ◆ **School will reopen on Monday, September 25th.** The normal schedule will resume.
- ◆ The **volleyball schedule** will resume on Monday as follows: Monday, September 25th, at SW Florida Christian: 4:30 Varsity, 5:30 JV, 6:30 Varsity (double header). Tuesday, September 26th, at Canterbury, 4:30 Varsity, 5:30 JV, 6:30 Varsity (double header). Thursday, September 28th games have been cancelled. No word on rescheduling at this time. Monday, October 2nd, at Evangelical Christian, 4:30 Varsity, 5:30 JV, 6:30 Varsity (double header).

Here is How You Can Help:

- ◆ Reachout Everglades, a local and registered and recognized 501 (C)(3) is accepting **your tax deductible donations** to provide relief to the many victims of Hurricane Irma. If you would like to donate, please visit www.reachouteverglades.org. You may also contact Elaine Middelstaedt at 239-695-2695.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who are helping us in the community!

Thank you DEB Printing in Ft. Lauderdale for printing this issue for us for free!