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A Note from PPHPOA President *Bob Audette*



W

elcome Back

to our traveling friends and neighbors. More than a year after Hurricane Irma changed our landscape and affected us all, we have come a long way to recovery. Sadly, there are many who still face

the challenges involved with rebuilding or repairing their homes. They have had to contend with complex and often contradictory permitting processes and insurance companies that seem unwilling, at times, to fairly compensate policyholders for their losses. Many have had to hire lawyers to represent them. Some had sold their property and cut their losses. Our hearts go out to all those who continue to strive to stay a part of this wonderful community. You have our support. Fortunately, we were not affected by a major storm this season.

Hurricane marine debris removal from our canals is scheduled to begin about the first of the year, according to the latest update from Monroe County. We will continue to monitor and will advise our residents. Since we do not know where or when the contractors will begin, this will affect our ability to trim. We will advise with updates.

We look forward to a busy winter season with opportunities to share good times with our members and residents. ❄️

PPHPOA CALENDAR



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19

6:00 PM – SANTA ARRIVES 8:00 PM

SANTA IN THE PARK

Key Deer Park (Community Park)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12 @ 10:00 AM

GENERAL MEETING

Key Deer Park (Community Park)

Budget Discussion & Board Nominations

Everyone is welcome.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27 @ 6:00 PM

CHRISTMAS IN JANUARY

Moose Lodge (See page 3)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16

PPHPOA YARD SALE

Individual homes

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23 @ 2:00 PM

PIG ROAST

Key Deer Park (Community Park)

SATURDAY, MARCH 9 @ 10:00 AM

ELECTION MEETING

Key Deer Park (Community Park)

Everyone is welcome.

MCSO Emergency Communications Team Chooses HAM Radio

CHARLES GRIFFIN

The Monroe County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) has named a member of our community, **Virgil Allmond**, Operations Coordinator and Community Liaison for the County's Emergency Communication Team. Virgil, along with a small select group of ham radio* operators, is actively working with MCSO to provide emergency communications after a storm. Each member of this team goes through an extensive background check before becoming an accredited Non-Sworn Reserve Officer of the MCSO.

The Sheriff's Department has provided new ham radio equipment to upgrade the county's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Marathon. The EOC can now provide high frequency radio voice and email contact with anyone in the world — more specifically the State Emergency Management Office in Tallahassee, the Governor, the Florida Highway Patrol, Florida Power and Light, et al. Using a cultivated network of ham operators on mainland Florida and around the southeast US, this team can also pass health and welfare messages to relatives and friends of Keys residents who may not have evacuated during a storm.

Eventually, the team hopes to expand into every MCSO substation, other EOC offices in Monroe County, area hospitals, and broadcast radio stations. When complete, this will provide the Sheriff with immediate post-storm communications with his entire team, the mainland, and other critical county infrastructure.

The MCSO Emergency Communications Team is actively recruiting community-minded residents who want to become ham radio operators. Contact VIRGIL ALLMOND at 770-617-0581 if you have any questions or want to become part of a group which is giving back.

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Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

*Amateur radio, also known as "ham radio", uses a radio frequency spectrum for the non-commercial exchange of messages. Millions of amateur operators all over the world communicate with each other directly or through relay systems and amateur satellites. People use ham radio to talk across town, around the world, or even into space, all without the Internet or cell phones. It can also be used in an emergency such as in this case. 📻

CHRISTMAS

in JANUARY PARTY

JANUARY 27
6-10 PM

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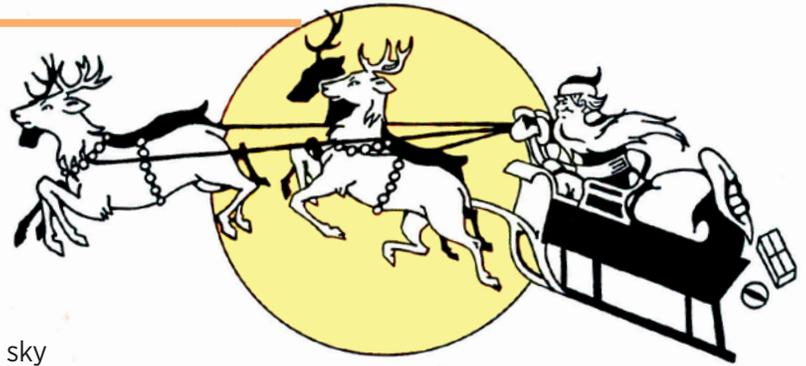
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Watching for Santa's Sleigh on Christmas Eve

PHILIP DODDERIDGE



Santa's sleigh is almost always pictured as a silhouette against a full moon in the winter sky on Christmas Eve as he makes his trip around the world bringing presents to good boys and girls. Although this Christmas Eve is not a full moon, his sleigh should be easy to spot against the moon that is just beginning to wane. The full moon occurs two days before, on December 22, 2018. The next full moon occurring on Christmas Eve will be in the year 2026 and the next one after that will be in 2083!

The December moon is known as the *cold moon* because it is the first winter moon in the northern hemisphere. The December full moon is also called the *Long Nights Moon* by some Native American tribes. Moon watching is a great way to get started on stargazing — watching the night sky — the moon, stars, planets and the space shuttle. The moon can be seen clearly with the naked eye and fairly up close and personal with a pair of binoculars.

An ordinary pair of binoculars can give beginning stargazers a better experience than a telescope. It is usually cheaper and can be used out on the water as well looking at the sky. In choosing binoculars or a telescope, magnification and light-gathering power let you see more of what's up there. For instance, a pair of commonly found 7x50 binoculars, reveals 7 times as much information as the unaided eye can see.

Here in the keys we are blessed with some of the best sky viewing in the world. We can watch the moon during its fullness and watch the stars and planets on the dark of the moon. For a **beginner's guide to the moon** go to: <https://owlcation.com/stem/AstronomyBeginnersGuideMoon-Greensleeves>. This is a great guide to what you can see on the moon.

The best star gazing (non-moon sky watching) happens on a cloudless night near or on the date of the new moon. **It is important to be away from other major light sources which astronomers call light pollution to see the most stars.** We have a great gift of the sky here in the Keys. Unfortunately, as we become more security conscious, we install more night time lighting which degrades the sky viewing experience with light pollution.

If you want to try to spot some meteors get to a dark spot, get comfortable, stay warm, bug free and let your eyes adjust to the dark sky. A cozy lounge chair makes for a great seat, as does simply lying on your back on a blanket, eyes scanning the whole sky.

Here in the Keys we are
blessed with some
of the best **SKY VIEWING**
in the world.

There is an amazing range of beautiful objects you can see in the night sky, from the Moon and planets to star clusters, nebulae, and galaxies you can see with a pair of binoculars or a basic telescope. A little knowledge about the sky will help you understand what is happening in the sky during your stargazing sessions. Understanding the celestial objects you can see in your binoculars or telescope is sometimes as much fun as seeing them. **Some on-line guides for beginning astronomers are: (Click on links)**

<https://www.skyandtelescope.com/astronomy-equipment/how-to-start-right-in-astronomy/>

<https://oneminuteastronomer.com/stargazing-and-night-sky-guide/>

<https://cosmicpursuits.com/99/beginners-guide-to-stargazing/>

And some resources for sky maps are: (clickable links)

<https://in-the-sky.org/skymap.php>

<https://in-the-sky.org/skymap2.php>

<https://thenightsky.com/>

Stargazing Events in Florida Keys



The Southern Cross Astronomical Society hosts a gathering of amateur astronomers from around the world who have gathered every winter for the past 34 years at Camp Wesumkee near Big

Pine Key for their **Winter Star Party**, Also known as the WSP. Approximately 650 amateur astronomers will travel to the Florida Keys to enjoy observing 360° of clear steady night skies, exchange information and advice, meet other SCAS members and distinguished guest speakers, shop for astronomical equipment from the finest vendors in the country, participate in photo contests and workshops, and record the awesome beauty sparkling in the southern night skies. The 35th year WSP 2019 will be held February 4 - 10 at Camp Wesumkee. Registration for tickets is online at <http://www.scas.org>.

Local stargazing clubs

If you are interested in astronomy and want to join others in this pursuit of knowledge and appreciation for the sky, please contact these local clubs.

Florida Keys Astronomy Club, Marathon, https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/club-view.cfm?Club_ID=1279

Key West Astronomy Club, Key West, https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/club-view.cfm?Club_ID=1724

FROM THE EDITOR ELLEN EMMERICH

A big thank you to **Chuck Griffin** for his article on page 2 about recruiting ham radio operators — *and* for regularly reporting on important newsworthy items. This issue also features a wonderfully informative article about sky viewing, **Watching for Santa's Sleigh**, (page 4) by our Port Pine Heights neighbor, **Phil Dodderidge**. On a clear moonless night, the stars practically dip into the Gulf. Our astronomer neighbors (and sea turtles) appreciate those who minimize any night lighting whether for decorative or “security” purposes.

All PPHPOA members are invited to submit articles of particular interest to our neighbors in Port Pine Heights. Aim for 200 to 800 words (space permitting) and photos. This is not an invitation to promote your own service or business, but we do welcome reviews. Send to:

portpineheights@gmail.com

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Keys Strong: Emergency Response Training for Port Pine Heights

After the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma, the Monroe County Office of Emergency Management (County) created the Monroe Emergency Reserve Corps, or MERC, a volunteer organization to train Florida Keys' citizens on emergency response. MERC teaches federally approved Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) to Monroe County citizens. Those who complete all four parts of the CERT-required curriculum will receive post-evacuation reentry placards, issued by the County. The goal is to be able return second after first responders and be self-sufficient and self-sustaining until all services are restored back to normal. The curriculum covers what you will need to do to be prepared, such as learning basic fire safety, light first aid, and what supplies to bring back with you upon reentry.

Those who want to participate in community incident command teams that assist the County as second responders will need to join MERC (www.merc.org). In the event of a disaster, such as the April 2018 Key Deer Refuge fire that burned over 100 acres, the County will call on MERC to assist with non-emergency matters to relieve first responders from non-threatening services, such as crowd control, water distribution, and communications.

The four parts of CERT are: 1) enroll as a volunteer at monroecountyem.com; 2) online FEMA course (<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-317> (6 hours); 3) classroom training (16 hours), and 4) hands on training (8 hours). Once you complete all parts, you will receive a reentry placard issued by the County.

MERC Board Member, **Alan Ballas** is the logistics coordinator for the MERC Big Pine Key Incident Command Team, which covers MM 11 - 39. A CERT training program for Port Pine Heights residents is planned for March 16 and 17 at the Senior Center. For more information on CERT and MERC, please contact Alan Ballas at 850-694-4001. 



Port Pine Heights Property Owners Association Membership Year Starts April 1st

The membership year always runs from April 1 through March 31. You can pay your dues at the *Christmas in January* party, or mail your check with the form below. If you're renewing and your address hasn't changed there's no need to fill out the form.

We've been able to keep our dues at \$25 per year for over 20 years. We thank our long-time members and our new members too. Not a Member Yet? Make this the year to support your community by joining. Whether you're a renter, living here part time or full time, or a landlord, you will benefit from our association. If you need more information please email pphpoa@bellsouth.net or call **Chuck Griffin** at **305-394-7251**.

Where Your Dollars Go THE SHORT LIST

- Maintain pontoon boat for canal trimming
- Key Deer Park and tiki hut maintenance
- Mowing equipment for lots in common
- Newsletter printing and mailing
- Sign maintenance
- Special events and more!

Show your support for your neighbors' efforts to improve our neighborhood

MEMBERSHIP FORM

ELIGIBILITY All residents and property owners of PPH may become members, including residents of Kyle-Dyer and Seaview.

DUES \$25 per household for the membership year: **April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020.**

CHECK ONE

- Full Membership:** For homeowners in Port Pine Heights, Seaview, or Kyle-Dyer. Full Membership includes voting rights in the association.
- Associate Membership:** For residents of Port Pine Heights who do not own a home in PPH. **OR** for owners of an undeveloped lot in Port Pine Heights, Seaview, or Kyle-Dyer. Associate Membership does not include voting rights.

To renew your membership, simply mail in your check.

No need to use this form unless your address or email has changed.

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