



The GP Responder

March 2024

<https://gp-cert.org>

Vol. 5, Issue 1

Message from GP-CERT Leader, Gordon Holtby

I hope you enjoy this 15th Edition of The GP Responder. While it is still very early, unfortunately the stars are aligning for a very busy hurricane season. The Tropical Atlantic remains much warmer than average, and this impacts both the frequency and how quickly storms can intensify. This gives impacted areas much less notice and opportunity to evacuate safely. It also highlights the need for all of us to make our plans early and to stay vigilant.

The first article in this month's bulletin provides an inspiring story of teamwork. Our second article is timely, as it provides a hurricane season checklist. The third article is disaster planning for domestic and rural pets, and the last profiles one of the key members of the GP-CERT Command Team, Richard MacCready. Rich is just one of the many invaluable volunteers who lives within GP.



All residents are welcome to join the all-volunteer GP-CERT team. GP-CERT is about empowering our community – both educating our volunteers about disaster response, and communicating safety messages and information to our residents. If interested in learning more about GP-CERT, please reach out to any of the volunteers listed at the end of this newsletter for more information. Our next bi-monthly meeting is on Tuesday, May 14th, 2024 @ 6:30 pm in the Craft Room, so please feel free to join us at that time.

Sincerely,
Gordon Holtby
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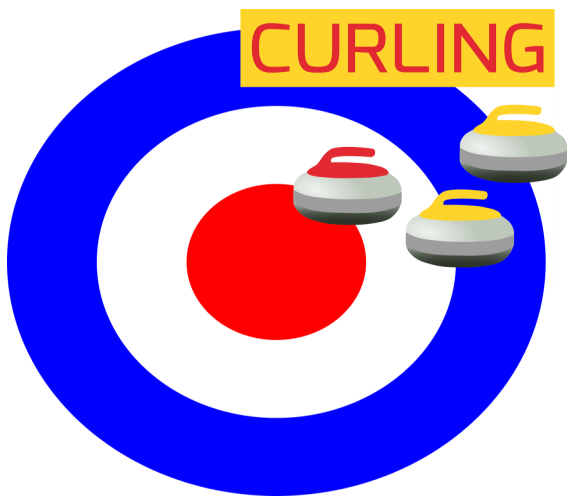
Volunteers Needed!

GP-CERT is a volunteer organization that deploys in the aftermath of disasters in the community. There is a continued need for volunteers to assist in areas such as damage assessment, access control, communications, and triage (basic first aid). Volunteers will be assigned to tasks based upon their desires, skills and experience. Background/training in these areas is encouraged but not required. The GP-CERT training and preparation will allow community members to respond and assist each other in those hours or days between the incident and the return of our property management staff. For more information or to volunteer, please go to the GP-CERT website at <https://gp-cert.org> or contact Gordon Holtby at gordon.holtby@gmail.com



TEAMWORK

Submitted by Robert J. Spong, Ed. D.



Graphic courtesy of Pixabay

A core value of the Gran Paradiso CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) as expressed in the name is Teamwork. This teamwork is accomplished in GP through the efforts of an excellent leadership team, ongoing training, and diverse inclusion. CERT leadership has brought together community member volunteers **to serve the community**. They have a vast array of different cultural, educational, career and lifestyle backgrounds. This diverse group of volunteers has formed into a well-trained, functional service team. They can prepare for and respond to neighborhood needs following a devastating storm. The following short inspirational story demonstrates how the right leadership and the right team can stand ready in the face of overwhelming obstacles.

Curling is an ice sport in which two teams of four players each slide 40 pound granite rocks or “stones” down a 150 foot long sheet of ice toward a target at the other end. Each team tries to get more of its stones closer to the center of the target known as the “button” than the other team.

The performance of the American Curling team during the 2018 winter Olympics has been described as amazing. After a loss to Norway, the Americans were on the brink of elimination. But then fans witnessed an unprecedented event in the world of curling. The U.S. team, not known to be the most accurate, exhibited courage, heart, and extraordinary teamwork to come from behind to achieve a first ever win over Canada. What followed was historically incredible. The U.S. team bested Switzerland and Great Britain to win a spot in the semifinals, then beat Canada once again. Finally, the U.S. team led by John Shuster, beat Sweden, the top ranked team in the world, to win the gold. Five consecutive victories culminated in something that had never happened before; an Olympic gold medal for American curlers.

Inspirational stories abound in sports, and many teams have exhibited that indomitable human spirit that exceeds the level of expected accomplishment. Gran Paradiso community members should feel proud and inspired by the accomplishments of their very own CERT team. Since 2019 when the GP CERT program was first organized by Gordon Holtby and joined over 700,000 volunteer members of similar community programs across the country, the team has been soliciting new volunteers and steadfastly preparing to aid our community in the event of a storm or other natural disaster. This preparation has included monthly meetings, training at the local and county level, connecting with other community CERT programs and county/city emergency response professionals. Grants have been written and received for financial support and radio communications have been established locally.

The CERT team has grown in experience and learned valuable lessons from storms like Irma, Michael, and Ian. New volunteers and their expertise are encouraged to join the CERT team and aid in the training and preparation for the next storm season.

Hurricane Season Checklist

Submitted by Cheryl Heeren

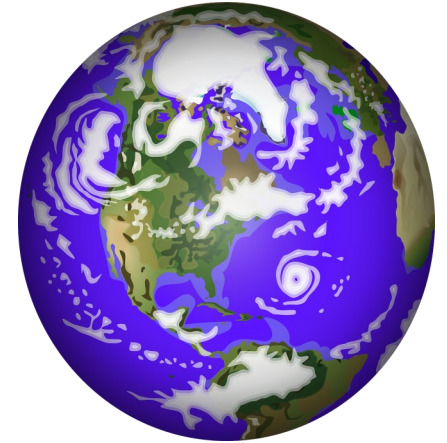
Hurricane Season is quickly approaching and with less than 100 days until the start of hurricane season (June 1st) the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) suggests the following:

For Yourself & Your Family

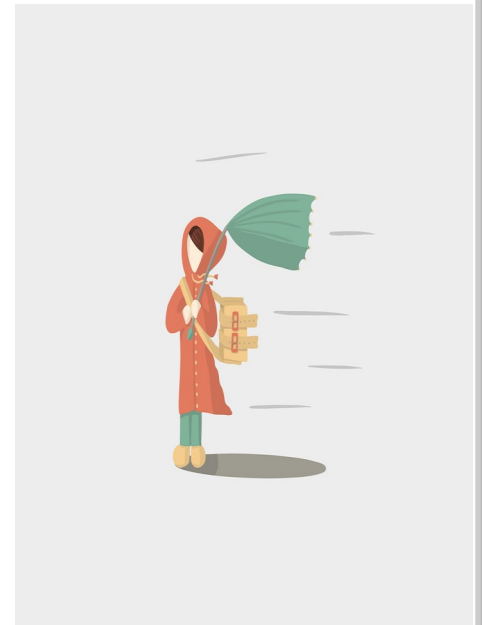
- Make a Plan (stay home or evacuate)
- Know your Evacuation Routes and location of local shelters
- Let family members know your plans and situation
- Know your Flood Zone and your home
- Stock a Disaster Supply Kit (include first aid supplies, blankets and extra clothing and rain gear)
- Stock at least 7 days supply of food and water
- Have a 2 weeks' supply of medications and a detailed list of required medical devices
- Have batteries, flashlights and cell phone chargers
- Update Insurance Policies
- Reinforce your home (shutters, sandbags, removal of outside furniture, grills, flags, etc. and any items that can become airborne)
- Document your property [before and after (if damages)] with pictures
- Make a list of important documents and valuables
 - o Include copies of Photo ID, Birth Certificates, Social Security Cards
 - o Include important phone numbers, i.e. family members, doctors, etc.
- Have a way to receive Weather Alerts
 - o NOAA weather alert radio (battery or hand crank)
- Keep motor vehicle tanks filled with gas and propane tanks filled for your grill
- Make sure your generator is working properly and keep a supply of oil and gas
- VERY IMPORTANT: Keep CASH on hand in case ATMs are not operational
- Practice your Emergency Plan

FOR YOUR PETS

- Enough supplies for your pets for at least 7 days
 - o Include: food, water, medications, vet paperwork
 - o Collars with ID tags leashes/carriers
 - o Favorite toys comfort items



Graphic courtesy of Pixabay



Graphic courtesy of Pixabay

Find More Information on Disaster Supply Kit Checklist @ floridadisaster.org/planprepare. Most Importantly - Stay In The Know: Sarasota County is actively monitoring weather conditions and will provide updates as they occur. Take this time to make sure you are signed up for emergency alerts from Sarasota County Government at AlertSarasotaCounty.com.



City of North Port, Public Information Office

Join us on Saturday, April 20, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the George Mullen Activity Center (1602 Kramer Way), to learn how you can prepare for the 2024 Hurricane Season! Still recovering from the impacts of Hurricane Ian? Make sure to visit the Long-Term Recovery Group booth for information about Hurricane Ian recovery resources currently available to residents. Listen to presentations about the upcoming hurricane season by the National Weather Service, meet the new Sarasota County Emergency Management Chief, or learn about flooding from the City’s Stormwater Manager.

Disaster Planning for Domestic and Rural Pets

Submitted by Carole Myles

Sarasota County has a [website](#) to plan for the safety of your beloved pets during an emergency or hurricane event. If you decide to move to an evacuation center, be aware that Sarasota County evacuation centers accept only domestic dogs and cats. In addition to what was mentioned on page 3, you’ll also need to bring a carrier or cage (large enough for your pet to move in), a cat litter box (small enough to fit in a cat carrier), plastic bags (for handling waste) and scooper, disinfectant and cleaning materials, and a current photo of you with your pet (in case you’re separated).

“The safety of your family pets depends on you, especially in an emergency. During severe weather or other emergency situations, if it is unsafe for you to stay in your home, it is also unsafe for your pets. Don’t leave your pet behind and don’t use your pet as an excuse not to evacuate.”



Don't put yourself, your family and your pet at risk! You are responsible for planning for your pet. Just as you should prepare an emergency kit for yourself, you should also prepare one for your pet. If an evacuation is called for, take your pet-emergency kit with you wherever you go. The safety and successful evacuation of your family and pets depends on a good plan and being prepared with the proper supplies.

All of Sarasota County's evacuation centers are pet-friendly, but you must be prepared before you go. Bring a crate for your pet if you plan to stay in a Sarasota County evacuation center. If your pet is not accustomed to being confined, acclimate it to the crate before an emergency to help alleviate stress.

Sarasota County evacuation centers accept only domestic dogs and cats.

What to bring for your pets to an evacuation center:

- One week's supply of food (with can opener if necessary) and medication.
- One gallon of water per pet, per day for three days.
- Food and water bowls.
- Current vaccination records.
- Proper ID collar and rabies tag/license and leash.
- Carrier or cage large enough for your pet to move around in.
- Cat litter box (small enough to fit in cat carrier) and scooper.
- Plastic bags (for handling waste).
- Disinfectant and cleaning materials.
- Current photo of you with your pet (in case you're separated).
- A comfort item such as a favorite toy, blanket or treats.

The safety of your family pets depends on you, especially in an emergency. During severe weather or other emergency situations, if it is unsafe for you to stay in your home, it is also unsafe for your pets. Don't leave your pet behind and don't use your pet as an excuse not to evacuate. The best plan is to identify a safe location that allows pets. Keep in mind that boarding kennels may be without electricity or potable water and have limited personnel and supplies for days to weeks following a disaster.

Command Team Bio Spotlight

Richard MacCready



Richard MacCready retired from the CIA after 37 years in communications, software engineering, Presidential communications, Emergency Management and IT program management. After retirement he spent another three years supporting the CIA through contracting efforts in both the IT and medical areas. Mr. MacCready also has 25 years of operational experience with Sterling Volunteer Rescue Squad in Loudoun VA as an Advanced Life Support (ALS) provider.

Of special note is his leadership of a volunteer programming effort that replaced the County's outdated pager system with a more cost effective, phone text-based system saving the county \$250K a year. He also holds ICS certification in both the EMS and CERT arenas. Mr. MacCready taught Emergency Medical Services classes for 16 years at the Northern Virginia (VA) Community College in Springfield, Virginia. He also taught similar classes for the Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Academy in Leesburg, VA for 10 years. Throughout his EMS career, he often served as an EMS certification evaluator for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Mr. MacCready moved to Gran Paradiso in June 2020 and immediately joined the CERT effort. He has taken an active role in helping the GP-CERT run its training and practice drills as well as working to document lessons learned and managing the GP-CERT communications. Mr. MacCready has a Technician-level amateur radio certification and is a member of the Tamiami Amateur Radio Club, where he recently accepted the role of Quartermaster. Mr. MacCready recently accepted the role as President of the SRQ CERT Association, an organization with the charter to provide CERT based training and standard communications to the CERT teams of Sarasota County.

Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday

The tax holiday creates two 14-day "disaster preparedness" sales tax holidays from June 1 – 14, 2024 and August 24 – September 6, 2024 for disaster preparedness supplies. Some examples of tax-free items include: flashlights and lanterns costing \$40 or less; reusable ice costing \$20 or less; radios costing \$50 or less; tarps and ground anchors or tie down kits costing \$100 or less; coolers and portable power banks costing \$60 or less; batteries and fuel tanks costing \$50 or less; smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and carbon monoxide detectors costing \$70 or less; and generators costing \$3,000 or less. The holiday also includes a number of items related to the safe evacuation of household pets.

New Weather Underground URL

Take a look at the new Gran Paradiso weather station located at

https://www.wunderground.com/dashboard/pws/KFLVENIC211?cm_ven=localwx_pwsdash

Follow the local temperature, dew point, humidity, precipitation, wind speed, wind gust, wind direction, and pressure. Many thanks to David Elwart for supporting the weather station for several years.



The Gran Paradiso Community Emergency Response Team (GP-CERT) has been formed to assist neighbors in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. The team is comprised of your neighbors who have undertaken the appropriate training to assist where needed.

Please submit articles and/or corrections to the newsletter publisher, Carole Myles, at cmyles252@gmail.com.



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The GP Responder is a publication of the Gran Paradiso—Community Emergency Response Team. Our plan is to publish it every third month throughout the year. The GP Responder is forwarded to all residents by KW, our management company, and it is also available for viewing on the GP-CERT website at <https://gp-cert.org>

