

BOCA BEACON

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BY THE GRACE OF GOD GO WE ...

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Boca Grande, Florida

Your Locally-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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Inside:

- A new way to clean Lake O
- Hurricane photos
- Federal government response

What's open, what's damaged, what's gone



STAFF REPORT

This is a generic list of what structures, streets and neighborhoods are OK, which ones are damaged and which ones are gone. This is not 100 percent accurate by any means, as we are only getting started on damage assessment. Keep in mind almost all landscaping has been damaged, so we aren't going to put that with each entry.

Boca Grande North

Damage to roofs and other structural issues.

Gulf Shores Drive, Grand Quay/Marina Village, Boca Grande Resort

Damage to roofs, other structural damage. North end of the island in general took a beating.

Major flooding from south end of causeway to the Lee County line. Approximately 2 1/2' deep in most places there, or more.

Boca Grande Club

Fence down all around, tennis courts damaged, condos heavily in some areas. We have a video posted on our Facebook page as of Thurs-

See **DAMAGE** on **PAGE 12**



We have no words

BY MARCY SHORTUSE

It is Monday, Oct. 3. That's what we have to keep telling ourselves as the minutes, hours and days tick by. All meaning of time is lost, to tell the truth. It seems like maybe 48 hours ago we were listening to the wind screaming and pieces of our world flying around, but it has actually been five days. The storm hit on Wednesday, Sept. 28 and now it is Monday. Our Thursday, Sept. 29 edition turned into today.

Where do we start. Well, before we get into all of it let us say this: If you had a vacation planned to this island in the next month or more, please know it is canceled. Unless it is a friend of yours who you are staying with and their house is not damaged, don't plan on coming here. We have had a lot of calls about it, and some people have even traveled this far because their online travel agent has no clue our island is in the state it is in. Computers don't know about those things, and most of the owners of the hotels and rental properties don't have a way to get online to change the status.

So please, call before you come. If you call now, you won't get through. Just keep trying.

We will start with the day before the storm, when we got the majority of this paper together. We are substituting photos for our Ballyhoo section, because Lord knows our businesses won't be holding sales, etc.

On that day, which was Tuesday, Sept. 27, we were witness to a long line of trucks with towers on trailers parked in front of the Fust Library. The sides of the trucks said they were from the University of Florida, and they were storm researchers.

When we stopped and asked one of them what they were doing, they explained they were placing their towers around the island to record "hurricane force winds."

"So that's going to happen here on the island? And you came here instead of anywhere else because you're very sure we are going to get hit?"

"Oh yes, you'll be getting those hurricane force winds," he said, solemnly.

He said there was no way he would



Banyan Street.

stay on this island, and that they were going to be leaving as soon as they were done. He cautioned us to leave and said things would start getting ugly at about 11:30 a.m. the next day.

He was right.

At the same time that conversation was taking place, Jim Cantore from the Weather Channel was setting up camp at a hotel in Punta Gorda. Things were not looking good at all for us. Everyone had either left or were off the streets and were buttoning up. The only people on the roads were law enforcement, fire personnel, a few other island officials and, of course, the newspaper people. Because that is how we roll.

The morning of Wednesday, Sept. 28 wasn't bad at all. There was a little sunshine but mainly clouds and rain. A little wind. By this time we were hearing what our weather researcher friend had warned us about ... buckle down and get ready to ride by 11 a.m., because the storm was coming.

The winds were whipping by noon. By 3 p.m. or so it felt like Ian was between a Cat 2 and a Cat 3. You could still open your front door and look out if you were shuttered in, but the change in pressure in the house told you it wasn't a good idea to do that.

By 6 p.m. all heck was breaking loose. The winds that had been constantly howling were screaming.

There was a brief break in the weather here on the island when the eye of the storm passed over – like maybe 20 minutes or so – and then it was right back at it. Off island, that wasn't the case. There was no eye, no respite. The eyewall seems to have gone all around us, except for the fact we didn't get the water that the west wall brought to Fort Myers and Sanibel, as well as other places south of us. It is beyond description. Our island still looks like paradise compared to their area. So many must be dead, it is beyond comprehension. The water came up and took the Sanibel Causeway away, took so many homes and businesses away. Time Square on Fort Myers Beach is gone. Fort Myers Beach is basically gone.

All of it.

But we are here. The storm began really yelling at about noon on that day, started howling at about 4 p.m. and by 7 p.m. it was screaming relentlessly. At the editor's house (Marcy's house) the ceiling caved in, the windows blew in and, by God, it was cooler in there than it had been in a long time. That's why my 16-year-old son said in the middle of it. At about 9 p.m. my husband leaned over and whispered, "The water is 10 feet from the house." I just nodded so the kids didn't know what

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