

# Matecumbe Neighbors



Newsletter of the Lower Matecumbe Key Association

March-April 2009

## March Meeting "Assignment"

Please attend critical Village council meetings scheduled for March:

**Wastewater Workshop—Mar 25**

**Council Meeting—Mar 26**

The meetings begin at 5:30 pm at the new Community Room next to the pool at Founders Park.

Instead of having a Lower Matecumbe Key Assoc meeting in March, we ask that all members make an effort to meet at the community room to learn about significant wastewater issues facing everyone in Islamorada.

**See story inside!**

## Lower Matecumbe Key Annual Walk

**Monday morning March 30 8:30 a.m.**

Meet at the Boy Scout Sea Base and walk as far as you like. For the hardy, we'll end at Robbies! Water, first aid, and shuttle from Robbies back to the SeaBase provided. Government officials have been invited to join us to get to know our residents, our island and our hopes for tomorrow!

Join in the fun... visit with neighbors as we get some fresh air and exercise. Don't panic, we walk slowly! And you can walk as far as you like.

**A tour of the new fire station is planned!**

## Critical April LMKA Wastewater Meeting

**Date: April 14 Time: 7:00 PM**

**Place: BoyScout SeaBase Admin Bldg  
2nd floor, MM73.7 bayside**

**Program: Wastewater only**

Come get the latest updates on wastewater projects, costs, schedules from the Village. You are encouraged to bring questions and get answers!

The guests included in this discussion will be the Village Manager, Ken Fields, director in charge of wastewater, Myles Milander, Village Council, Village engineers and project managers from Hazen and Sawyer. and the upper Lower Matecumbe Decentralized Wastewater Steering Committee.

## Upper Lower Matecumbe Wastewater steering committee

**Date: March 24 Time: 4 pm**

**Place: Islamorada Library**

For those residents living from MM76.2 north, the steering committee is meeting to discuss the current status of the EPA grant project. Engineers from Hazen and Sawyer will be present to discuss the direction of this project that has been stalled recently. Critical decisions often start at the committee level! If it affects you...try to attend!

## Mark your calendars and please spread the word!

**March 24, 4 PM, Library—Wastewater Steering committee Meeting**  
(for property owners from MM76.2 and north)

**March 25, 5:30 PM, Founders Park Community Room—Wastewater Workshop**

**March 26, 5:30 PM, Founders Park Community Room—Wastewater decisions**

**March 30, 8:30 AM, MM73.7, Boy Scout SeaBase—Annual LMKA Walk!**

**April 14, 7:00 PM, MM73.7, Boy Scout SeaBase, April Meeting—WASTEWATER**

*These are all critical meetings.... Your presence will help!*

**Make your feelings known!**

## LOWER MATECUMBE FIRE STATION NEARS COMPLETION

The Lower Matecumbe fire station, known as Station 19, will be completed soon. The target date for firefighters/paramedics to occupy their new home is May 7, 2009. Station 19 will be the permanent home for Rescue 19, which will be responding to all medical emergencies, and Engine 19, which will be responsible for fire suppression and all other emergencies.

This station incorporates several new and exciting ideas for fire stations. An in-ground cistern will capture all the rainwater from the station's roof and re-use that water for irrigation at a later date. There is a large propane generator to supply electrical power to the station in case of power outages or hurricanes.

After 4 years with a temporary station, we'll finally welcome the completion of Station 19, on-time and on-budget. Station 19 has already received many compliments about its looks and its design. It is a much needed addition to our community and will make our island safer for our families and our guests.

### **Lower Matecumbe Key Association Statement of Purpose**

**The Lower Matecumbe Key Association, Inc. shall actively work to preserve and enhance the quality of life and environment through participation and democratic process by the residents.**

**Goals shall include:**

- 1. Monitoring activities such as zoning and construction.**
- 2. Communicating with all members to alert them to potential problems or opportunities.**
- 3. Coordinating the efforts of the individual neighborhood associations on common objectives.**
- 4. Providing an open forum for presentation and discussion of issues.**
- 5. Taking appropriate action on behalf of the membership.**

**Board of Directors:**

**President Gordon Hadley: 305-664-0621; [gordo0621@aol.com](mailto:gordo0621@aol.com) Vice Pres Donna Gleason**  
**Treasurer Ted Blackburn Secretary Claire Johnson**

**Board members: Ann Haber, Ron Winget, Dave Elbaum, Pat Gaetjens, Gretel Duncan**

**Newsletter: Sue Miller**

**Wastewater..... It's Time to Speak Up!**

**“Nobody spends somebody else's money as carefully as he spends his own. Nobody uses somebody else's resources as carefully as he uses his own.”**

So if we want efficiency, effectiveness, and common sense, we all need to be involved in the Village sewer decisions! It's our money as taxpayers! Show up, speak up. Write letters!

We are a small community of 7000, spread over 18 miles and 4 islands, solid coral rock islands! There are few areas anywhere that have a more difficult geography to sewer. And we are being told to sewer the entire village in the next 2-5 years with or without promised help, at a cost that will surely exceed \$150 million in Village capital costs (\$20,000—\$30,000 per home) plus an average of about \$5,000/household in costs you'll pay to get a pipe to the street and decommission your septic. And then you'll pay about \$85 - \$100 per month for operating costs. Economic times couldn't be worse for taking on this type of expense!

Perhaps we are behind in our effort to fix wastewater problems. But everyone knows we all want clean water. The water is probably why we are here. Are we being asked to do the impossible by the very state government that promised to help but can no longer give us that assistance.... because they are facing their own dire financial issues. Surely they know we can't perform this miracle!

Meeting after meeting, the Islamorada Village Council has heard speakers parade to the microphone at meetings, emphatically and emotionally repeating one message:

*Economic times are horrific. Do not continue outrageous spending practices. Don't undertake a \$150 million sewer project while businesses and residents are already under unbelievable financial stress..... and the worst may be yet to come!*

**Why Us?**

Monroe County generates 8 million gal/day of wastewater. In 1999, the Legislature passed a law requiring upgrades to all Monroe County wastewater treatment by 2010. Just last year, the same Legislature passed a law establishing deadlines for Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach. They have been dumping 300 million gal/day of wastewater into the ocean! They have until 2018 to treat the wastewater to the same standards applied to Monroe County. They have until 2025 to stop dumping wastewater into the ocean.

In the six years since the village approved the bid to sewer N. Plantation Key, less than half the properties have been hooked up, there have been homes destroyed by back-ups, they are several million over budget on capital costs and operational costs. Operating costs for customers are the highest in the Keys. The capital assessment to property owners has been miscalculated for the last three years. Our general fund has paid \$350,000 and will pay another \$100,000 this year as initial installments to repay debt for re-use so we can water playing fields at Founders Park with treated effluent. But there's salt in the system. Are we ready to take on far bigger wastewater projects when we haven't proven we are capable?

We face an impossible deadline during the worst national economic downturn in generations! And the Council seems determined to proceed no matter what the impact on the community. Everyone needs to pay attention, attend meetings, speak up and help to find appropriate solutions.

**'A government big enough to give you everything you want, is strong enough to take everything you have.'**

**Thomas Jefferson**

# President's Corner

[By Gordon Hadley](#)

The election of LMKA officers for 2009 has been completed. On behalf of the newly elected board of directors, I must say "thank you". We appreciate the faith and trust you have in us. We will do everything in our power to continue to enhance the island lifestyle on Lower Matecumbe Key.

The board has set several goals for this year and, although it appears to be an uphill battle, we intend to do our best to achieve our objectives.

Our 1st goal is to provide our membership with as much wastewater information as possible. We want you to have clear and accurate information on all wastewater issues facing us: deadlines, costs and inconveniences - LMKA wants you to be prepared.

Our 2nd goal is to make the bike path safer and to provide more landscaping along it.

On the surface, these goals might seem easily attainable, maybe even thought of as a 'no-brainer.' We'll work hard to make them a reality and we hope our local government will assist us.

## Membership Application/Renewal

**First Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Last Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Local Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone (local):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Provide your email please!

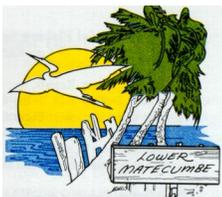
Get your newsletter faster and save LMKA printing/postage costs! We only use the email address to send newsletters, information and reminders about Lower Matecumbe.

### Make check payable to

**LMKA P. O. Box 911, Islamorada, FL 33036**

**Family \$20; Single \$12**

**Enclose a note if you will serve on the Board, volunteer with projects or newsletter or if you have ideas for making our community better.**



Lower Matecumbe Key Assoc  
P. O. Box 911  
Islamorada, FL 33036

**News From  
Islamorada!!!**