



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 25, 2022

Published in the November 14, 2022 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 38, No. 21

---

## Hurricane Ian Heroics and Hospitality

Hurricane Ian wreaked havoc on Florida at the end of September and the beginning of October, claiming more than 100 lives and destroying coastal towns, but stories of heroics and kindness have emerged from the devastation, offering some light during an otherwise bleak moment in history.

When Christine Bomlitz could not reach her 84-year-old mother, Shirley Affolter, in Englewood, Florida, for example, she took to social media in the hope that someone could check in on her.

Bomlitz, who lives in Las Vegas, tried calling her mother on her home phone but there was no answer. Affolter does not have a cellphone, so Bomlitz called police to do a wellness check, but could not quell the anxiety she felt while she waited to hear back on her mother.

“Any of my FL friends know anyone in Englewood? I Need to check on my mom. She doesn’t have a cell. I called to have well check, but who knows when that will be at Lemon Bay Isles. The group she signed up to evacuate seniors did not get her so she rode it out by herself,” Bomlitz wrote in a Facebook post on September 28.

When Cheyenne Prevatt saw the post the following day, she took it upon herself to wade into chest-high waters to find Affolter, Breitbart reported. Affolter was reportedly safe, but stranded, and was relieved to see someone at her door.

Bomlitz was beyond relieved and grateful to Prevatt for her willingness to help a total stranger.



(AP Images)

Prevatt later admitted on social media that she was “scared” to go into the water in search of Affolter, but “would do it 10x over if I needed to.”

When a nurse was on her way to work in Orlando on September 29, her vehicle became trapped in rising waters, but she was fortunately spotted by a news reporter who sprang into action.

Tony Atkins, a reporter for NBC affiliate WESH 2, saw the driver, later identified as Tonya McCullough, waving her hands out the window and calling for help.

Though he was afraid of downed power lines and alligators in the water, he saw that there was no law enforcement in the area to rescue McCullough and decided to help.



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 25, 2022

Published in the November 14, 2022 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 38, No. 21

---

WESH 2 reported that Atkins trudged through the water and was able to get the nurse out of her car. He then carried her on his back to safety.

McCullough's daughter later contacted Atkins in a Facebook post to thank him for his good deed.

"I have so many emotions right now but the main one is gratefulness," the nurse's daughter wrote. "Grateful to God, Grateful the news was right there, Grateful she was able to get out that window, Grateful for Tony Atkins."

Several days later, McCullough had the chance to meet up with Atkins and thank him again for his actions.

"I just wanted him to know how much he was my hero, how brave he was, the love that he showed me and compassion that we don't usually see too much," she told 12 News on September 30.

NBC News reports that a group of Good Samaritans called the "Collier County Cowboys" were captured on video saving an elderly man found in a car filled with water in Bonita Springs.

According to one of the "cowboys," Lemi Gavra, the men were in the right place at the right time.

"It was pretty bad. We wanted to get to the beach. We noticed that no one was covering it out there and wanted to make sure everyone was safe," he said.

It was then that the surge came in. When the men spotted the elderly driver, they sprang into action, rescuing him and getting him to safety.

The United Cajun Navy, a group of volunteer first responders that formed after Hurricane Katrina, arrived in Florida to lend their services in the aftermath of Ian, as they did in the 2016 flooding in Louisiana and after Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in 2017. The group has proven to be so effective during disasters that Florida Governor DeSantis, upon hearing that the Cajun Navy was on the way, voiced his gratitude.

"I think the Cajun Navy is on the way, and OK, there we go. And look, we really welcome them, and those are really some battle-hardened folks," DeSantis said on September 30.

According to Breitbart.com, the Cajun Navy identified a truck stop in Fort Myers that closed for a few days and allowed the group to bring people in who had been rescued. Florida emergency officials then sent people to pick those individuals up and bring them to state shelters.

Brian Trascher, vice president and spokesman for the United Cajun Navy, told 4 WWL the members understand the fear and varying emotions the people of Florida experienced during Ian and that the group hoped their efforts would "soften that blow."

Kevin Ott used his friend's pontoon boat to rescue approximately a dozen people from rising floodwaters in Fort Myers, *The Washington Post* reported.

Ott was on his way to rescue his children's grandmother, Mary Ann Dineen, after receiving a text from her telling him that she feared she and her daughter and daughter's boyfriend would die. Using a pontoon boat, he and three of his children navigated over submerged cars and around downed power lines to reach Dineen, according to the *Post*.

Ott spotted a man whose own boat had broken down while on his way to save some of his neighbors. Ott not only took the man into his boat, but rescued the man's neighbors as well. Over the course of several



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 25, 2022

Published in the November 14, 2022 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 38, No. 21

---

hours, Ott and his passengers spotted several others in need of rescue, including a mother holding a toddler wearing a life jacket.

Though Ott wanted to look for more people to rescue, it began to get dark and he feared the boat would capsize under more weight, so he and his passengers headed back to his boat shop. Ott and his children saved about a dozen people that day, but he told the *Post* that he is haunted by the people he could not save.

“It was horrible. I still can’t sleep at night,” he said.

A number of videos have emerged of people braving floodwaters to save pets for desperate strangers, as well.

Hurricane Ian, like many disasters before it, once again set the stage for Americans to prove that in the face of calamity, they will commit selfless acts of kindness and love.



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 25, 2022

Published in the November 14, 2022 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 38, No. 21

## Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative, non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



[Subscribe](#)

### What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.