



Love City Livin'



Photo by ANNE BEQUETTE

St. John residents gather Saturday at Mongoose Junction for a fundraiser for the nonprofit Love City Community Network. The event raised \$10,000 for the internet service provider.

Fundraiser bolsters nonprofit network's coffers

By **ANDREA MILAM**
St. John Correspondent

People crowded into Mongoose Junction on Saturday, a year after residents had gathered in the same spot seeking information just two days after Hurricane Irma hit.

But Saturday's crowd was decidedly more lively, happy, and upbeat. The Mongoose Junction gathering served as an anniversary of that first

town hall meeting, with a positive cause to boot — raising money for the nonprofit Love City Community Network, an internet service provider that started up after the storm with the goal of providing a hardened, resilient network in the event of another disaster.

Between food, drink, and T-shirt sales, cash donations, and a spur-of-the-moment boat trip donation by Blue Line Yacht Charters, the event

brought in close to \$10,000 for the network.

"Almost everyone on St. John has benefitted from LCCN's generosity," said Blue Line Yacht Charters owner Nate Fletcher. "Donating a day on our boat, Poseidon, doesn't even start to compare to the hundreds of hours they have given to our island. We came to the event with plans to write a check to donate, but last minute thought that we could probably gen-

erate more cash by donating a boat trip, and I was thrilled to see the generosity of the folks who bid \$1,300 for a day on the water with us."

The \$10,000 raised represents an important windfall for LCCN, which just last month announced possible scaling back of services due to mounting expenses.

The internet service provider, which is still the only internet available to many St. John residents

following Irma, has several specific projects aimed at growing the network in the works.

How much they're able to accomplish depends on how much funding they're able to bring in, said executive director Devin Murphy.

In the near future, LCCN hopes to solarize the 14 sites that still rely on grid power to provide internet to

See **LCCN**, page 21

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LCCN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

various parts of the island. The next goal will be to set up a new site at Concordia to connect the southeast side of the island, where connectivity remains an issue. Looking to the far future, LCCN hopes to extend its services to St. Thomas, St. Croix, and the greater Caribbean, Murphy said.

"I met a couple at the fundraiser who was here on vacation for the very first time, and they asked me, 'Is the island like this all the time?'" Murphy said of the positive turnout. "I think that proves how incredible the folks are here on St. John. That couple got a true sense of what makes St. John special."

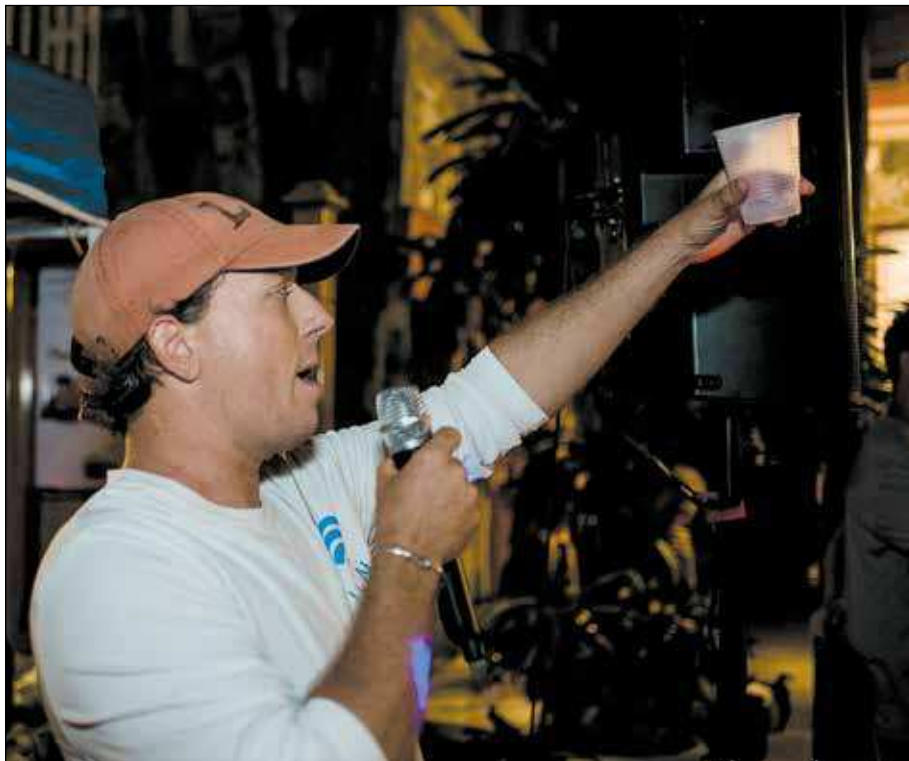
The Mongoose Junction Merchants Association expects the Sept. 8 celebration to be an annual event marking the first post-Irma town hall meeting, said the association's president and North Shore Deli owner D.J. Ahladis. The Saturday fundraiser tied in perfectly with LCCN's goal, Ahladis explained.

"I remember how frustrating it was, the day of the first town hall meeting, being completely knocked out from communicating with the outside world," he said. "LCCN is near and dear to my heart. I feel like everyone showed up to rally around a really good cause. We made the best out of a bad memory."

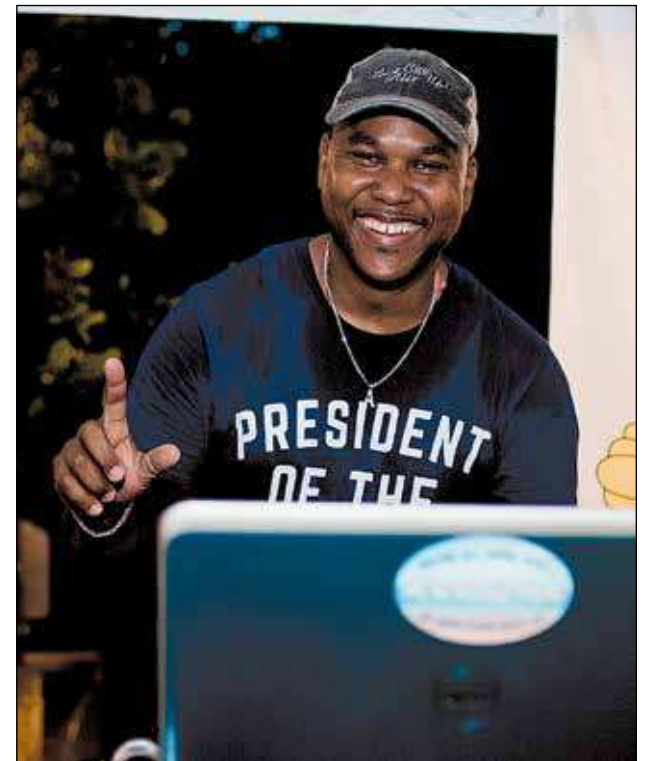
Due to hold-ups with the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, LCCN is still unable to bill for the service it provides, relying solely on donations to stay afloat. A second blow was dealt last month when the nonprofit announced the loss of a prior funding commitment, a move that led to many staffers' pay being downgraded or even eliminated.

"We're absolutely heartened by the support we saw at the fundraiser," said LCCN's outreach and development director Ivan Jacobs. "The project remains very expensive, and if we're going to fill these lofty goals, for which we know there's a real need, we're going to need a lot more support, both from monthly gifts and one-time donations and grants."

Donations to the nonprofit ISP can be made at www.lccn.vi.



Matt Gyuraki, founder of the Love City Community Network.



DJ Adonis Morton.



Glen Speer of Mongoose Junction addresses the crowd, as he did at the first town hall meeting after Hurricane Irma.



D.J. Ahladis, the Mongoose Junction Merchants Association's president, addresses the crowd.

Photos by ANNE BEQUETTE

Love City Happenings

St. John Ice operating from V.I. Port Authority's lot

St. John Ice announces that it has temporarily relocated while the Lumberyard undergoes demolition.

Ice and water will be sold from a truck in VIPA's gravel parking lot daily from 6 to 8 a.m., mostly to service the construction trade.

St. John Ice has a full supply of

water filters for sale. Contact Alan Johnson at **340-690-1062** or stjohnniceco@gmail.com.

Love City Car Ferries hosts essay contest for students

Love City Car Ferries announces its essay contest for sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders who attend school on

St. Thomas or St. John.

The topic, "My Virgin Islands. My Future," should focus on the student's favorite person or event in Virgin Islands history.

There will be one winner per grade, with a prize of \$150 for the sixth-grade winner, \$225 for the seventh-grade winner, and \$300 for the eighth-grade winner.

All entries must be postmarked by

Sept. 30, and can be submitted to P.O. Box 12209, St. John, V.I. 00831, or emailed to info@lovecitycarferries.com with the subject line "Contest."

For more information, visit www.lovecitycarferries.com.

Carolina Corral to hold family fun day Oct. 13

The Carolina Corral will host a

free back-to-school fun day on Oct. 13 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with a variety of games including balloon toss, egg and spoon, and a donkey obstacle course.

There will be crafting activities and a contest to see who can take the best selfie with a Carolina Corral resident, along with food, drinks, and pony or donkey rides.

Free transportation will be provided between Cruz Bay and Coral Bay.

CD release party brings in almost \$3,000 for St. John storm recovery

By ANDREA MILAM
St. John Correspondent

A year after St. John residents hunkered down and waited for one of the most powerful hurricanes on record to pass, residents packed the High Tide Bar & Seafood Grill in anticipation of a song dedicated to their strength and resilience.

The Sept. 6 "Love City Rise Up!" CD release party drew an impressive crowd, raising close to \$3,000 toward the island's recovery.

The song, written by frequent visitor and Just Play coordinator Dean Doeling, featured 14 island musicians and choirs on the track, and was played for the public for the first time at the release party.

"It was an absolute fabulous time," said Doeling, who flew in for the event. "We were pleasantly surprised to see so many attendees. It was great to celebrate and come together and get our minds off the hurricane for a little while."

Doeling also screened a video at the



Photo by BILL STELZER

"Love City Rise Up!" songwriter Dean Doeling speaks to the crowd at the CD release party and fundraiser on Sept. 6 at the High Tide Bar & Seafood Grill.

release party chronicling the making of the song over the course of a week in a makeshift island studio back in May.

The "Love City Rise Up!" song was then played several more times throughout the evening in between sets by a deejay. CDs and merchandise were sold at the party, with funds going to the St. John Community Foundation.

"Love City Rise Up!" CDs and merchandise can be purchased at <https://lovecityriseup.bigcartel.com/>, or on island at the St. John Community Foundation office, Connections, and St. John Spice.

Digital downloads of the song are available across all digital download platforms, with all proceeds going to the hurricane recovery effort.

“It was great to celebrate and come together and get our minds off the hurricane for a little while.”

— "Love City Rise Up!" songwriter Dean Doeling

"As always, St. John just surprises me in the way they've always come together," said Doeling of the event. "I was just amazed and I felt humbled at the amount of people who came out for this release party."

'Tis the season



Daily News photo by ANDREA MILAM

With the peak of hurricane season upon us and with three named storms swirling around the Atlantic, tourism on St. John is decidedly low. A small handful of visitors enjoyed a noticeably quiet Hawksnest Beach on Wednesday afternoon. Tropical Storm Isaac is expected to pass well south of the territory on Friday.

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