LeBuff Publishes New Sanibel Lighthouse Book

One of America’s greatest authors, Mark Twain, once stated, “Write what you know.” For Charles LeBuff, that subject would certainly refer to the iconic Sanibel Lighthouse.


The longtime wildlife technician, who served 32 years working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, knows quite a bit about the lighthouse, having lived in its keeper’s quarters from the end of 1958 until July 1979.

Author Charles LeBuff with his newest book about the iconic structure

Last week, LeBuff’s latest book, The Sanibel Island Lighthouse: A Complete History, was released via Amber Publishing. It is currently available on Sanibel at MacIntosh Books and Paper (as the exclusive seller of signed and personalized copies) and online at Amazon.com.

According to LeBuff, his latest book chronicles Sanibel Island’s early history and photographically documents the changes to the Sanibel Island Light Station over the past dozen-plus decades. The book contains 130 pages along with 66 illustrations in both black-and-white and color.

In the online description of the book, LeBuff writes about Sanibel being first visited by Juan Ponce de León in 1513. “In 1884, construction of the light station’s wrought iron Sanibel Lighthouse was completed and the landfall light was activated,” he wrote. “The lighthouse continues to serve as a functioning aid to navigation.”

Last week, LeBuff discussed some of his fondest memories of living in the shadow of Sanibel’s best-known landmark. “The first time I saw the lighthouse was in 1952,” he recalled. “Me and a buddy of mine from Estero came over to do some shelling and exploring. I could see the light coming from the lighthouse from Bonita Beach and I asked my friend, ‘What’s that?’

Jensens Pitch In To Help Veterans Group

The founder of a Southwest Florida-based veterans group can always count on the Jensen brothers.

Over the past several years, whenever Capt. John “Giddyup” Bunch made a request for virtually anything from the Jensen family on behalf of Operation Open Arms – whether it’s been accommodations for a combat-wounded veteran at their Captiva resort or fishing excursions with all amenities included for active duty military personnel in dire need of some R&R – siblings Dave, Jimmy and John have granted those requests on every occasion.

Last week, the Jensens came through once again.

According to Bunch, longtime island resident Dr. Frank Watkins had recently relocated to Maryland. Dr. Watkins’ daughter, Lee, suggested to her father that he should donate his boat, motor and trailer to Operation Open Arms. Lee Watkins was a high school classmate of Bunch’s wife, Jennifer.

Once arrangements for the donation continued on page 25

The Jensen brothers – Jimmy, Dave and John – proudly display the Good Samaritan E-Award they received in 2013 from the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau for their contributions to Operation Open Arms

Sanibel & Captiva Islands, Florida

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Arms Circle of Honor years ago for their all been named to the Operation Open resident of St. James City. “They have done for those who protect our freedoms,” things people like the Jensen brothers Jensens didn’t ask for a penny. and equipment might have cost Operation rehabilitation, including new springs and Trailers in Fort Myers for extensive marina, the trailer was shipped to Rocket Frozen,” essentially stuck in a position that couldn’t be raised or lowered. “We had to wait until high tide to get that boat out of the water,” Jensen said. “Then we had to dig the trailer out of the sand from inside the boathouse… it looked like it hadn’t been used for about 10 years.” While towing the boat back to Jensen’s Marina, they discovered that the steering mechanism was frozen as well. While minor repairs to the boat’s steering and engine were performed at the Captiva marina, the trailer was shipped to Rocket Trailers in Fort Myers for extensive rehabilitation, including new springs and hubs.

Bunch, who estimated that the towing, repairs, shipping and storage of the vessel and equipment might have cost Operation Open Arms “hundreds of dollars,” the Jensens didn’t ask for a penny. “I had to tell this story of amazing things people like the Jensen brothers do for those who protect our freedoms,” said Bunch, a charter fishing captain and resident of St. James City. “They have all been named to the Operation Open Arms Circle of Honor years ago for their countless unselfish acts. I’m in awe of Team Jensen Brothers and I wish parents would teach their kids who the real role models of Southwest Florida really are.” As you might imagine, John Jensen humbly accepted the praise offered by Bunch, explaining that he and his brothers have long admired the bravery of America’s military veterans. “We really enjoy giving back whenever we can,” he said. “Our uncle was a longtime U.S. Navy man. And whenever we get a veteran staying at the resort or taking a fishing charter, they always tell the most amazing stories. It’s hard to believe their courage and what they’ve gone through.” A few years ago, the Jensen brothers were recognized for their years of community service and support of America’s military veterans when they were awarded the 2013 Good Samaritan E-Award, presented by the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau. That same year, they hosted Lance Corporal Christian Brown and his mother as their special guests during Operation Open Arms’ eight anniversary.

Brown, a United States Marine wounded in Afghanistan, was given the VIP treatment throughout his five-day vacation, which included fishing excursions, a helicopter tour, fish fry, shopping and dining outings as well as a special Marching Mullet Parade held in his honor.

Last year, the Jensens invited Brown to be their guest once again. And, once again, they didn’t ask for a penny. “Jensen’s has been a bigger part of Operation Open Arms than any other group,” Bunch added. “I’m not sure that you could find three other men that are greater advocates for our troops than the Jensens. Honestly, I can’t think of any time that I’ve asked for something for our troops that they haven’t been there for us. They’re just amazing.”

On Thursday and Friday, May 18 and 19, the Jensens and Operation Open Arms will be taking part in the prestigious “Ding” Darling & Doc Ford’s Tarpon Tournament. For the sixth consecutive year, the brothers are taking care of the tournament entry fee, fishing tackle and bait, accommodations and other expenses for a pair of active duty soldiers: Army Staff Sgts. Dylan Driskell of Punta Gorda and Toby McGlothin of East Palmetto.

Resident Artist
will be required to capture 30 digital, high-resolution photos and/or videos that highlight the unique attributes of different communities within the county. In addition, the selected candidate will be asked to post images regularly to social media and attend a monthly status meeting with VCB managers. How to apply:

• Submit a 500-word statement, share your approach for capturing elements of the destination and state what you hope to gain from participating in the program.
• Provide a link to your online portfolio and your active social channels (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) as well as the numbers of followers/subscribers per channel.
• The deadline for entries is June 9.

The candidate that is selected will be notified shortly after the close of the application period.

“Our next resident artist will join a growing list of local creatives whose work has helped us to create high impact visual assets that effectively position Lee County as an attractive tourist destination,” said Brian Ososky, the VCB’s director of marketing. The bureau expects the new set of images to further bolster its Islandology marketing and advertising campaign that celebrates the unique way of life in Southwest Florida.

The Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau retains full rights usage for images selected. Stipend will be paid in full following program completion. No living accommodations, studio or equipment will be provided.

For more information or to apply, visit www.leeccb.com/rap.