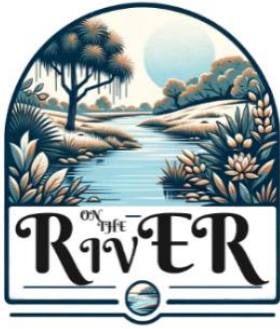


WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers

As always, please share with anyone. Ken DeWalt, publisher, [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)



# *On The RIVER* NEWS

*Connecting Caloosahatchee River Communities from Fort Myers Shores to LaBelle*

*For all our NEIGHBORS and NEIGHBORHOODS*

---

**TO SUBSCRIBE, offer articles, or to contact the publisher/editor with any questions, email:**

**[kendewalt@ontheriver.org](mailto:kendewalt@ontheriver.org)**

*The deadline for receipt of any materials is the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. Issues go out before the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month, and may be edited.*

*See our commercial advertising terms on the last page of this newsletter. We encourage all subscribers to consider patronizing the paid advertisers. Their support of our mission helps us provide you with local news every month.*

## **FEATURED IN THIS MONTH'S OTR**

**AREA NEWS, Page 2**

**ALVA, Page 31**

**BUCKINGHAM & FORT MYERS SHORES, Page 37**

**LABELLE AREA, Page 39**

**NORTH FORT MYERS & NORTH OLGA, Page 45**

**FOR ALL OF US, Page 47**

**IMMIGRANT RIGHTS, Page 71**

**CHURCHES, Page 74**



*Lisa Lashley*

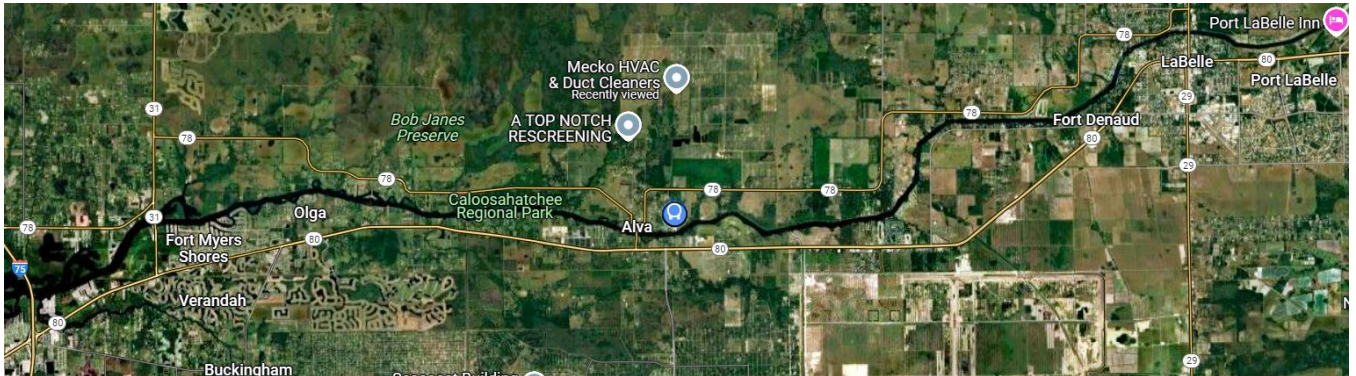
---

**Special THANKS** to all who support our PAID ADVERTISER's.

**AND** to all PRIVATE DONATIONS from readers who help keep the GIGS in our hard drives and the INT in our internet.

# NEWS

The areas we cover for news and non-profit events



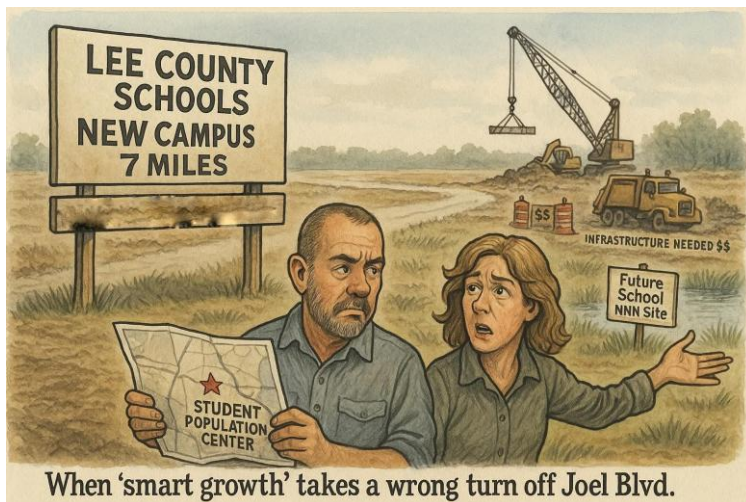
## CORRECTIONS to June ISSUE

I stated that the **Lehigh** Sewer Plant needs enlarged before more sewer units may be added to its grid. It should have read **LABELLE**.

I stated that most dry wells were turning up in **North Lehigh Acres**. It should have read **South & West Lehigh**.

TY Derek Felder for pointing these errors out.

## ALVA INC calls on ALL concerned Alva area residents



### “Plan to attend the July 29 Lee County School Board meeting”

Tuesday, July 29th at 6:00 p.m. at the Lee County Public Education Center, 2855 Colonial Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33966. The primary concern is that the board vote is expected to be the final decision on building or not building the 5,000 plus population NNN high and middle school on Joel Road at Tuckahoe in Alva.

## ALVA INC features John Flood, representing the SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Mr. Flood is a public speaker from the SFWMD response and permitting team. He was an energetic promoter of the work of his huge state agency. Huge in terms of project dollars being used all over our half of the state, and huge in the size and extreme importance of those projects not only to our natural environment, but to the future of drinkable water from our aquifers.

The SFWMD is a 75 year old agency created to plan for the future and mitigate for past errors made before new information changed the minds of Florida's leaders. Changes like the major effort all over South Florida to move more of our northern water south in what's called careful 'sheetflow' through the remaining everglades and into Florida Bay. Changes like the C-43 reservoir



ready to be officially opened in mid July of this year just east of the Lee County line that will take hold (reserve) unpolluted rain and other water to be released into the Caloosahatchee to the gulf so that our river may be refreshed regularly.

Some of the many truths, not rumors, John shared that are not in the presentation slides he sent us to post in this article. See them below.

-There is a complete South Florida water plan that is reviewed every five years Gulf to ocean and Orlando to the Keys which projects how much available good quality aquifer water will be available over the next twenty-five years of projected growth in each aquifer area. Yes, we have many different aquifers, even though all our water is below the whole of our state.

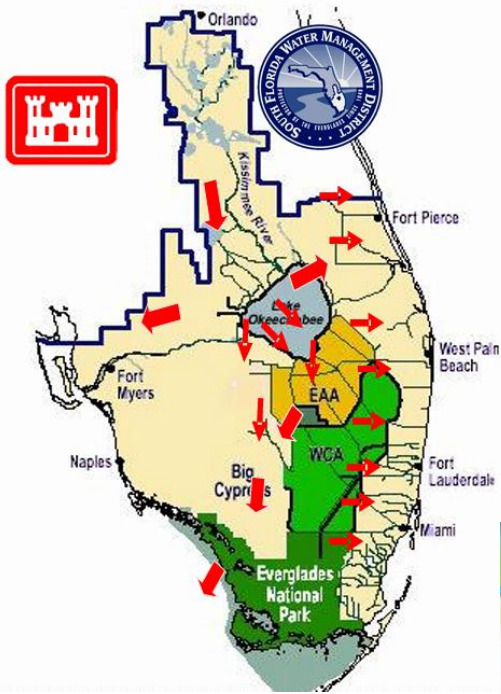
-Aquifer use is defined by how deep the good water is, versus the briney-salt water content, and how much pollution has already reduced viable water accessibility

-Half of Florida's water is and will be used for agricultural irrigation. Hence the many South Florida bans on lawn watering like Lee Counties June through September.

-NO wells may be drilled in developments of certain sizes. They may only be built if they can access public purified water.

-Flood protection is a major part of what the SFWMD cares for especially when permitting development of residential or business construction. We have seen some older nearby resident's property get flooded when developers do not mediate for all of their roads and buildings with high enough and correctly placed berms and water flows. When that happens, those residents call the SFWMD to report it, they check it out, and the developer must pay for that mitigation.





-While there is a lot of excitement today about the opening of the C-43 reservoir in Hendry County the reality is that it has taken over 25 years to get to completion. Construction alone was the least of the time holdup. Lack of some political will, some legal challenges, and major costly events like the 2008 housing crash and the pandemic got in the way.

-To actually complete all of South Florida's rivers, creeks, wetlands and everglades recovery to pre-1980 standards will take two more reservoirs as large or larger than C-43 built in the center and the east side of South Florida. C-43 alone will cost out at about \$1 billion.

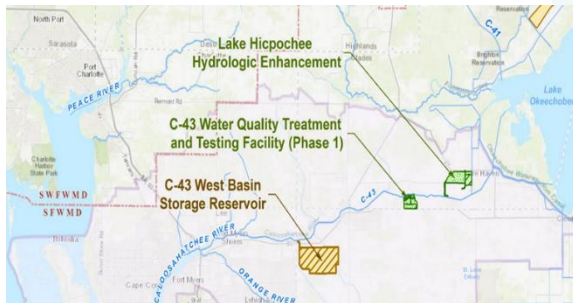
-There is MUCH work left to do.

## District Regulatory Programs

- Consumptive Use Permits
- Environmental Resource Permits
- Works of the District (Water Quality Source Control) Permits



[sfwmd.gov](http://sfwmd.gov)



## C-43 Reservoir - Project Location



### \$28 Million Construction Award

- Public Recreation Features
- Closeout Activities
- Complete 2026

2-years Operational Testing

### Package 4: Civil Works – Public Recreation



[sfwmd.gov](http://sfwmd.gov)

[sfwmd.gov](http://sfwmd.gov)



## Fort Myers has discharged treated sewage into the river for years. When will it stop?

**Spills of raw sewage and unclean effluent flowing to the Caloosahatchee will be a thing of the past by 2032, but it will cost Fort Myers hundreds of millions of dollars to make it happen.**

(TY News Press-Charlie Whitehead)



*Cody Pierce, who sadly passed away last year, tests air quality at the Oak Park Village marina on the Caloosahatchee in Alva, Lee County*

The city of Fort Myers has spent more than \$300 million working to keep its sewage out of the Caloosahatchee River. It will spend over \$350 million more by 2032.

That spending is ordered by a new consent order entered into by the city and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. That agreement gives the city four additional years to meet a goal of eliminating 99% of “surface water discharges.” According to the order, the city discharges 13.89 million gallons of treated effluent into the river daily.

City officials say the new order is an acknowledgement that the city has worked hard to make a situation better. Others believe the agreement simply kicks the can further down the road.

The city received a consent order from DEP in 2021. The order – rooted in a 183,000-gallon spill of raw sewage into Manuel’s Branch – called for the city to eliminate nearly all of the Caloosahatchee River discharges by the end of 2028. Manuel's Branch is a small stream connected to the river basin.

“The fact is we weren’t going to meet it,” said Justin Mahon, the city’s environmental compliance manager. “And who wins if environmental fees stack up?”

**Fort Myers negotiated new water agreement when it couldn't meet the old one**



Meetings between DEP and the city instead produced a new consent order, one approved by the City Council on April 21. City Utilities Engineer Jason Sciandra said the city could have kept working toward a goal it knew it wouldn't meet, but it opted to renegotiate an agreement it could keep.

The new deadline aligns with new state requirements that say all utilities must end surface water discharges by 2032. The new order also recites a litany of spills and exceedances dating back to 2018 and continuing through the end of 2024. Testing results for the first quarter of 2025 were not yet available.

The agreement lists "unauthorized discharges to ground and surface waters, violation to water quality standards, groundwater exceedances, effluent exceedances, chronic levels of elevated bacteria in waters of the state and MS4 permit violations." MS4 is municipal separate storm sewer systems.

The numerous violations focus on the city's two sewage treatment plants. The central facility, 1501 Raleigh St., is designed to treat 11 million gallons per day. The south facility at 1618 Matthew Drive can treat 12 million gallons per day.

### **Corrective action ordered by DEP comes with a big price tag**

There were 44 spills of untreated sewage between 2018 and 2022 at the central facility, and another 26 spills at the south facility. There were also numerous times when the treated sewage didn't measure up to required standards for total dissolved solids, nitrogen, phosphorous, arsenic, copper, fecal coliform, chlorodibromomethane and chlorine as recently as the end of 2024.

The 2021 order called for the city to take 11 corrective actions. It has completed seven of them. Estimates in 2021 were that the remedial actions outlined in the agreement would cost the city \$150 million. So far it has cost close to \$350 million.

The city has \$550 million in its 5-year budget for utilities projects, with another \$400 million in the following five years.

That includes \$250 million of work that improved the quality of the treated effluent from the south facility so that 12 million gallons per day can be piped to Cape Coral for irrigation purposes, plus work underway at the central plant to improve the effluent quality so that it can be disposed of in a deep injection well. Those projects reduced the amount of discharge into the river.



Also, on the good news front the city implemented a pollution reduction plan in 2021 to address long-term elevated level of bacteria in Manual's Branch and Billy Creek. That plan, DEP granted, resulted in two straight quarters in 2024 in which samples did not show untreated human waste. Billy Creek, in the northeast part of the city, is a Caloosahatchee tributary.



The city still samples both water bodies through its MS4 permit, but it is no longer required by the consent order. There is ongoing disagreement between the city and the Calusa Waterkeeper over pollution sampling in the two creeks.

The new date requirements in the updated order call for the creation of a groundwater monitoring plan for the central plant, a requirement the city has already met.

The city has until the end of 2025 to finish and begin using the deep injection well at the central plant. Utilizing the well will help the city hit a goal of reducing Caloosahatchee discharges by 55%, reducing them to 6.25 million gallons per day by the end of 2026.

By the end of December 2028, the city must complete work that will raise the quality of treatment at the central plant so that it, too, could be reused for irrigation in addition to the injection well. That would mean that by the end of 2029 the discharges would be reduced by 85% to 2.1 million gallons per day.

**By 2031, unlawful sewer spills should be virtually eliminated**

Further work to be completed before the end of 2031 would add a deep injection well at the south plant as well as raising the quality of the treated effluent there so it too could be injected or reused. Those improvements would mean a reduction of 99%, leaving only .14 million gallons per day, an amount DEP says would cover emergencies, by the end of 2032.

The city must report the status of the various projects every six months to DEP from now through 2032.

points out some of the lines in the ground in Fort Myers date back to 1910, making it far and away the oldest utility system in southwest Florida. Cape Coral utilities weren't constructed until 50 years later.

Fort Myers has among the highest user rates in the area and raises rates by \$5 a month annually to help pay for the work. Long-time Utility Director Richard Moulton said the recession in the early 2000s put the city behind.

"Different councils had to deal with the recession, and looking back you can see what it did to the capital improvement program budget. That affected where we were years later." "The biggest part of the list from 2021 is pretty-much all mitigated and behind us," he said.

The city also points to factors beyond its control. First the COVID pandemic affected supply chains and the economy. Then just over a year into the 2021 consent order Hurricane Ian hit Southwest Florida.

The massive storm didn't just inflict damage on both treatment plants. It devastated housing on the barrier islands, driving people inland and swelling the city's population quicker than planned. The city also grew when construction workers flocked to the area to help with Ian recovery.



Sciandra also points out that the city's woes are not the main source of water quality issues in the river. "The upgrades will not have a dramatic impact on water quality in the Caloosahatchee River," he said. "Lake Okeechobee is a way bigger issue than the city of Fort Myers. We need to understand we are only a part of the solution."

---

## Olde Florida RV Park on Rte 80, LaBelle, plans to add Diner

(TY Lake Okeechobee News-Katrina Elsen)



Olde Florida RV Park in LaBelle has plans for expansion.

At the June 10 meeting of the Hendry County Board of Commissioners, Scott Wagner said the project is very large and had some hiccups.

"One of our greatest failures this year has been food service," said Wagner. "I have entered into an agreement to purchase and locate a new 1950s-style diner on the front of the property, on the 4-acre out parcel. This is a project I set with an end date of Dec. 20.

"We have large groups coming in starting Jan. 1," he added. He said they discovered there weren't any restaurants near to the park and restaurants nearby. We have competition in other areas with

restaurants nearby.

He said he would like to put a hotel on a larger out parcel. Another potential idea is for a small water park.

---





## Pedaling through peril: Bicyclists at risk in Southwest Florida

(TY News Press-Tayeba Hussein)



On one typical day turned awry, Erin McGuire was riding her bicycle on the 16-mile Pine Island bike path, which runs the entire length of Southwest Florida's largest island. This was no unfamiliar route. This was a route that Erin rode every day.

After Erin's mother passed away a year and a half ago, she started biking. Erin would ride her blue Huffy bicycle for 15-20 miles, "rain or shine," Jackie McGuire, Erin's father said.

On Jan. 27, the 27-year-old Pine Island woman was driving through the crosswalk at the intersection of Stringfellow Road and Alcorn Street when, in a matter of seconds, she was struck by the front of a pickup truck owned by a local contracting company.

Erin's bicycle became lodged under the front of the silver GMC Sierra HD truck and she was dragged several feet before the truck came to a stop, according to a crash report of the incident.

Erin sustained critical injuries across her body and was airlifted to Gulf Coast Medical Center in Fort Myers. She had to undergo multiple surgeries, including facial reconstruction and skin graft procedures.

**Erin survived. Not all bicycle crash victims had the luck that Erin had.**

No margin for error: a sobering reminder of who's most vulnerable on Florida roads

Clayton Miller, 14, was killed in Naples on Saturday evening after being struck by an SUV while riding his electric bicycle. Bicycle crash fatalities are becoming increasingly common in the Southwest Florida region.

In Florida, bicyclists are considered "vulnerable road users," and they are allowed on the roads alongside motorists, according to the FLHSMV.

As of May 30, there have been 149 bicycle crashes in Lee County and 91 bicycle crashes in Collier County, according to the Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Crash Dashboard.

In 2024, there were 342 bicycle crashes in Lee County, 10 of which were fatal. And in Collier County, there were 259 crashes, five of which were fatal.

Several road laws that are applied to motorists also extend to bicyclists. Bicycle users must obey all traffic controls and signals, use directional [hand] signals to indicate making a turn, cannot ride under the influence of alcohol or drugs and more.

Helmets are also required for any bicycle and e-bike riders under the age of 16, although it is recommended that all age groups wear them.



## Wheels of remembrance: turning tragedy into tribute



One man who survived a head-on collision with a vehicle while riding his own bicycle now lives to honor the lives of fatal bike crash victims. David Matthews, of Atlanta, has placed 141 ghost bikes across several states including Florida, Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee.

Matthews has made it his life's mission to make sure that the families of bicycle crash victims never feel like their lost loved ones have been forgotten.

"It still affects me, and these families, just like I have. The only difference is, what I was given was a second chance. I wasn't killed, but I lost everything that I had. I lost my family and everything, because they don't understand what these families go through," Matthews said through tears.

"It's about the only way that I find a way to kind of cope and let me go day to day," he said.

In March, Matthews took a journey of more than 1,500 miles. He travelled a route through Florida placing ghost bike memorials in various cities. One of these ghost bikes was placed in Naples.

Matthews said that he doesn't want local governments to see the memorial sites and assume that he's making a statement about how bad their city is, but rather that there is work to be done in their city.

The ghost bike initiative is intended to bring the attention of our governing bodies to the dangerous road conditions that residents face every day, Matthews said.

Matthews said he believes that the majority of the fatalities that occur on the roads are a result of motorists who speed unnecessarily and only think about themselves, and their own destinations. He believes that if speeding laws and speed limits were more strictly enforced, far less people would be dead.



"We don't treat each other with enough compassion anymore. We just don't," Matthews said.

## Lights, helmets, action: Naples equips commuting workforce with safety gear

For the second year in a row, the Naples Police Department has partnered with the Naples Pathways Coalition in hosting a Lights for Bikes event. The Naples Pathways Coalition is a nonprofit Collier County organization whose mission is to foster a safe and "bike-able" community.

One of the group's initiatives is the Lights for Bikes program, which was "designed to equip commuter cyclists with essential safety gear at no cost."

Police officer Rey Reyes said that the Naples Police Department recognized an area of need in addressing road safety concerns for local restaurant employees.





Many waiters, waitresses and bussers depend on bicycles and e-bikes to commute to and from their workplaces. Additionally, these workers are often dressed in dark uniforms that have poor visibility for drivers who share the road with them, making it more likely for bicyclists to be hit by vehicles.

Earlier this year, one such service worker who was not wearing a helmet ended up being hit by a dump truck and sustaining injuries, Reyes said. He also said he's seen a service worker using their phone as a source of light, which is unsafe as well.

At the event, which was held on March 19, service workers had the opportunity to acquire bicycle lights, reflective helmets, vests and locks for free. Naples police officers, members of the Naples Pathways Coalition and volunteers also educated and provided attendees with information about bicycle laws and how to ride safely alongside vehicles.

"We found that the program is beneficial not only to the workers, but also to the police department: we try to lessen the number of accidents," Reyes said. The installation took place at Cambier Park, which is situated nearby dozens of local restaurants that line the popular Fifth Avenue South of downtown Naples.

"It seems to be successful so far. Especially the restaurant workers are taking advantage of it, which we're hoping they do because that's the primary demographic we're looking to service, because the bike is their primary source of transportation," Reyes said. "Most of them don't have cars so they depend on those bikes, so if the bike has a flat, that's a problem. If they have to ride home with no light, that's a problem."

The Naples Pathways Coalition and Naples Police Department are able to provide free-of-charge safety equipment thanks to contributions and donations from the public. Michelle Avola-Brown, the executive director of the Naples Pathways Coalition, said that initiatives like the Lights for Bikes project are especially important to the Naples community.

"This area is so reliant on the service community and they work so hard making our lives enjoyable. We need to help them get to and from home and work more safely," Avola-Brown said.

Avola-Brown said she has been a victim in a road accident with a vehicle while riding her bicycle. Years later, she continues to receive regular medical treatment for the injuries she sustained.

It is immensely important to be knowledgeable about bicycle safety rules and practices, especially in an area where traffic conditions have become so congested and dangerous, Avola-Brown said.



In fact, her own sons used to ride their bicycles to school and remove their helmets after leaving home. This prompted Avola-Brown to tell the children's school resource officer that they should give her sons a ticket to teach them the lesson of obeying the rules for their own protection.

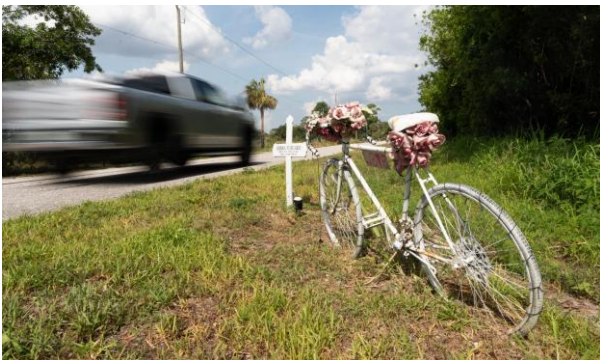
The Naples Pathways Coalition, in conjunction with the Naples Velo bicycle club, also participates every year in the National Ride of Silence.

### **The road they rode: a tribute to those who never made it home**

The Ride of Silence is a national movement that began in 2003, whose mission is "to honor bicyclists killed by motorists, promote sharing the road and provide awareness of bicycling safety."

In Lee County, dozens of bicyclists gathered at the Bell Tower Shops in Fort Myers on May 21 to join the Caloosa Riders Bicycle Club in this year's Ride of Silence. Many of the ride's participants hoped to honor loved ones, close friends and even former members of the Caloosa Riders who have passed away in bicycle accidents.

### **One such rider was Kathy Carbone.**



Carbone has been a member of the Caloosa Riders Bicycle Club for several years and over the course of these years, she developed friendships with many of her fellow bicyclists.

After Fort Myers bicyclist and Caloosa Riders member Debra Purcaro, 64, was killed in a March 2021 hit-and-run in Alva while riding her bike, Carbone established a ghost bike at the site of Purcaro's death and began to participate in the Ride of Silence every year in Purcaro's honor.

On the day of Purcaro's death, Purcaro was riding with Cristin Madden, who had sustained severe injuries to her vertebrae, brain, nerves and carotid artery but fortunately survived. Madden also participated in this year's Ride of Silence.

To this day, the driver who killed Purcaro and fled the scene has not been found.

Like Carbone, another ride attendee was Teresa Greenhalgh of Fort Myers. Greenhalgh's husband, Daniel Greenhalgh, served as the former president of the Caloosa Riders Bicycle Club.

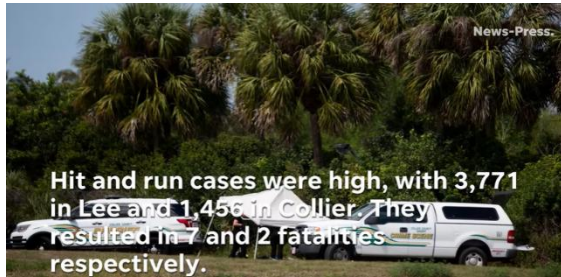
He was killed at the age of 62 in May 2020 after being struck by a vehicle. He was riding his bicycle near his home.

Fort Myers City Councilwoman Diana Giraldo made a statement at the Ride of Silence to address the disservice that she feels is being done to the bicyclist communities across Florida.

Giraldo said in her speech that the Florida Department of Transportation removed all funding for bicycle and pedestrian safety, which has greatly impacted the way local governments have provided outreach and education to the community.

In an effort to reinstate such initiatives, Giraldo said she has requested that \$25,000 be allocated from the city's 2026 budget toward bicycle and pedestrian safety education.





Giraldo herself survived a bicycle crash in which she sustained a brain injury and fractures to her spine, stripping her of the ability to ever ride a bicycle again.

She now urges members of the community to contact their elected officials, as well as the Florida Department of Transportation, and request that the state reinstate funding for bicycle and pedestrian safety education.

"For those of us who are lucky enough to be here, we are the catalyst for change. We are the voices of those who are now silent. While the journey is not an easy one, I have held onto my faith and desire to make things better in this community for bicycle and pedestrian safety," Giraldo said.

---

## Lee County burn ban lifted. What does this mean for Fourth of July fireworks?

(TY News Press-Mickenzie Hannon)

Nothing says the Fourth of July like fireworks. But if you're planning to celebrate in Southwest Florida, it's important to know what's legal, what's not and how to stay safe.

Lee County commissioners officially lifted the burn ban June 3, which had been in effect since April 15. This decision came as the Keetch-Byram Drought Index dropped below 500 after recent rains, indicating improved dry conditions.

While this change means no current county-wide burn restriction, fireworks still pose considerable risks. Florida law allows fireworks on July 4, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day; however, fire departments say residents should think twice before setting them off themselves.

"Fireworks are definitely a part of our American culture," said Fort Myers Fire Chief Tracy McMillion. "But there's just so many different potentials and scenarios that we've seen year after year, and those calls really start logging in right after it starts getting dark."

### **For those determined to light fireworks at home, McMillion and other fire officials recommend:**

Use fireworks on a hard, open surface and never near dry grass or trees

Keep a hose or water bucket nearby

Light one firework at a time and back away

Never relight a dud. Wait 20 minutes, then soak and toss

Supervise children closely and avoid handing them sparklers, which can burn at 1,200° F

Never use fireworks under the influence



Soak all used fireworks before placing them in a metal trash can **Children under 15 make up more than a quarter of fireworks injuries, according to the National Fire Protection Association, which estimates fireworks start over 31,000 fires nationwide each year.**



## Stop Developers' Abuse of the Bert Harris Act

(TY Marsha Ellis)

The Bert J. Harris, Jr., Private Property Rights Protection Act, enacted in 1995, was intended to provide relief to property owners whose land is inordinately burdened by governmental actions that do not rise to the level of a constitutional taking.

The original intent of the Harris Act was to provide a remedy in cases where regulatory actions unfairly burden private property rights beyond what is protected under constitutional takings law. However, early drafts of the Act were criticized by legislators and stakeholders for offering

limited relief—mainly to landowners with already vested or existing uses—thus failing to address the broader grievances that had fueled the property rights movement.

To address these concerns, the final version of the Act included an alternative definition of "existing use" that acknowledged the potential compensability of a "reasonably foreseeable future use." This concept draws from principles in eminent domain law, where the highest and best use of a property—including some future uses—is considered in determining value. Under the Harris Act, Courts could account for the reasonable probability of land use changes if such changes are grounded in suitability and not merely speculative.

While the inclusion of this concept was meant to ensure meaningful remedies for landowners, its interpretation has at times created uncertainty for local governments, especially where landowners assert Harris Act claims based solely on denied upzoning or development applications. Local governments must be able to make land use decisions based on comprehensive plans and the long-term welfare of the community without the undue threat of liability for speculative claims.

### The Problem

Use of "Reasonably Foreseeable Use" to Pressure Local Governments.

In recent years, some developers and landowners have increasingly relied on the "reasonably foreseeable future use" provision of the Bert J. Harris, Jr., Private Property Rights Protection Act as a tactical threat to influence local land use decisions. By asserting that a proposed zoning change or development plan constitutes a "reasonably foreseeable use" under the Act, developers have sought to discourage local governments from exercising their lawful discretion to deny or modify land use proposals—even when such proposals are inconsistent with local comprehensive plans or would impose clear harms on infrastructure, the environment, or community character.

This tactic often takes the form of preemptive legal notices or veiled threats of litigation, in which developers claim that denial of a rezoning or permit application will expose the local government to financial liability under the Harris Act. The mere assertion of a Harris Act claim—particularly when

backed by well-resourced legal teams—can have a chilling effect on elected boards and planning officials, leading them to approve speculative or incompatible development rather than risk costly legal battles.

The problem is compounded when such claims are based on minimal evidence—such as the property's proximity to other developed areas—without formal entitlements, consistency with local land use policy, or demonstrated infrastructure capacity. In these instances, local governments are effectively being bullied into approving rezonings that they would otherwise deny in the public interest.

This misuse of the Act undermines its original intent: to protect property owners from unfair government burdens, not to override legitimate local planning authority or coerce land use approvals through legal intimidation. It also erodes public trust in the planning process and the ability of local officials to act independently on behalf of their communities.

Accordingly, Defending Rural Florida will seek Legislator Sponsors for proposed legislation that clarifies that:

- Not all future uses are compensable under the Act; and
- Local governments maintain the authority to deny rezonings or development proposals when those proposals are speculative or inconsistent with long-term public interests.

### **Summary of the Proposed Bill**

This bill amends Florida Statute 70.001 to clarify the limitations of the Bert J. Harris, Jr., Private Property Rights Protection Act regarding claims based on upzoning or speculative development expectations. It provides a more precise definition of “reasonably foreseeable future use”, giving local governments the discretion to deny such uses when they would create community hardship, strain infrastructure, or conflict with established plans. The amendment seeks to balance private property rights with the public interest in responsible land use and development.

### **What you can do**

Defending Rural Florida is already hard at work building the case for reform. Between now and the start of the next legislative session, we’ll be meeting with lawmakers, coordinating with community leaders, and assembling the legal and policy arguments needed to win support for this crucial legislation.

But we can’t do it alone. This kind of focused, grassroots advocacy takes time, energy, and resources.

If you believe in protecting rural communities and restoring balance to Florida’s land use decisions, please consider donating to support this effort. Every contribution helps us fight back against developer abuse and ensure local governments can serve the public good without fear of legal intimidation.

**Help us secure a legislative sponsor and bring real reform to the Bert Harris Act.**

 **Donate today and be part of the solution.** <https://donorbox.org/stand-with-us-to-defend-rural-florida>. *Thank you, John Hallman, Executive Director, Defending Rural Florida*



## Riverdale Winn Dixie to become ALDIS



Within the last year the American Winn Dixie Food Chain was sold to the German ALDIS Markets and about 200 of the WD stores are being turned into ALDIS Markets. One of them is the longstanding WD in Riverdale. Built originally in the current PUBLIX shopping center at the southeast corner of Palm Beach Blvd and Buckingham Road, a few years ago the store was moved into a new strip in the northeast corner of the intersection.

At noon on Tuesday June 3<sup>rd</sup> two representatives of ALDIS engineering firm, CUHACI PETERSON, Jordan Ford and

Marcus Boyle led a Lee County required development information meeting at the Riverdale Library next to PUBLIX. They are doing this a lot this year, as those 200 changes are being made primarily in Louisiana, Georgia and Florida.

While there are a couple of county permits yet to acquire it looks like the Winn Dixie will close in July and the change to ALDIS will take place after the first of 2026.

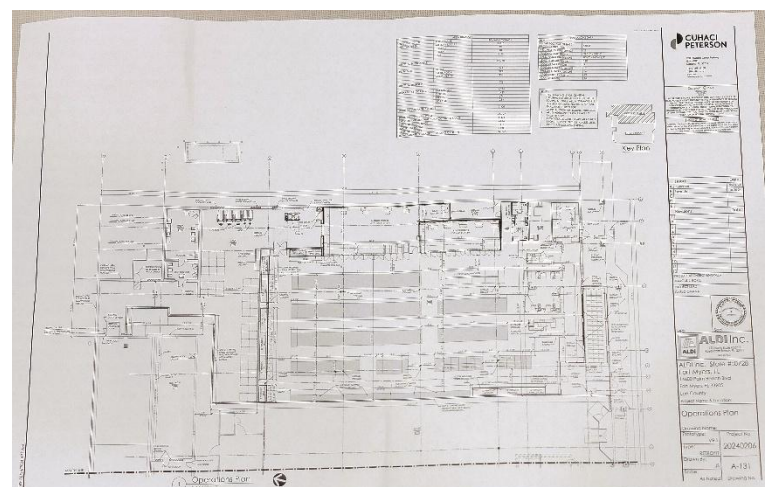


The ALDIS will be designed in the signature style inside while the building appearance outside will retain some of its WD look. The Winn Dixies are larger full grocery line stores while ALDIS are stocked with about 90% of their inventory being their own private label. The store will use less interior space than the former Winn Dixie, at about 25,000 square feet with the remainder probably leased out by the landlord's company to another retail store.

ALDIS stores have won awards for their green, eco-friendly construction techniques and the revision of the Riverdale store will be no exception.

Use of solar power, propane-glycol refrigerant in the air conditioning system (much less air pollution), and LED lighting everywhere are just three areas of revision, IF the older WD is not already built to those standards.

With all the news about the housing sales downturn and about as many people leaving Florida in the past year as moving to the state the representatives said this particular area is seen as definitely growing,



and a target area for increased retail square footage. Asked if the Trump Tariffs have caused any increases in ALDIS construction costs yet they said, "Not at all, yet." Why are these men excited to be building here? "New homes. Lots of new homes coming soon."

ALDIS hiring policy whenever they take over another store brand is to offer employee positions to qualified employees at that store. However, with a smaller ALDIS than Winn Dixie, and a very efficient but much slimmed down product mix, they only require 30 to 35 employees for the entire store.

Worldwide ALDIS is known for its shopping cart return policy. The carts are at the door. You put a quarter in a slot on the handle, use the cart, and return it to get your quarter back. Asked how many of their 25 cent carts are stolen over time (A shopping cart can cost on average \$500 or more) the answer was, "Almost none. The people want their quarters back."



When asked what is appreciated most by ALDIS shoppers the meat and fish assortments are often mentioned. However, Betty Williston, a long time lover of ALDIS shopping who was at the meeting shared that what she likes most are the low prices, kept low by the high quality of the store brand products, and the ALDIS FINDS specials. These are one time deals at greatly reduced prices and can be food and non-food items.

Two persons who were not present at this meeting shared what they will really miss about losing Winn Dixie. One has shopped at WD for decades and just doesn't want change. The other will miss the very large selection of Blue Bell Ice Cream WD carries as opposed to Publix or Walmart. However, both said they believe Publix can't wait for Winn Dixie to close. After all, the only full

line grocery within twenty miles of Riverdale will then be another Publix in Verandah and the Walmart west of LaBelle.

You can't please all of the people all of the time, so you have to have competition!

PS: In case you haven't heard by now, the building in front of the Winn Dixie near Palm Beach Blvd will be a Sherwin Willims Paint Store, not a Target.





## More homes coming to SWFL via huge developments

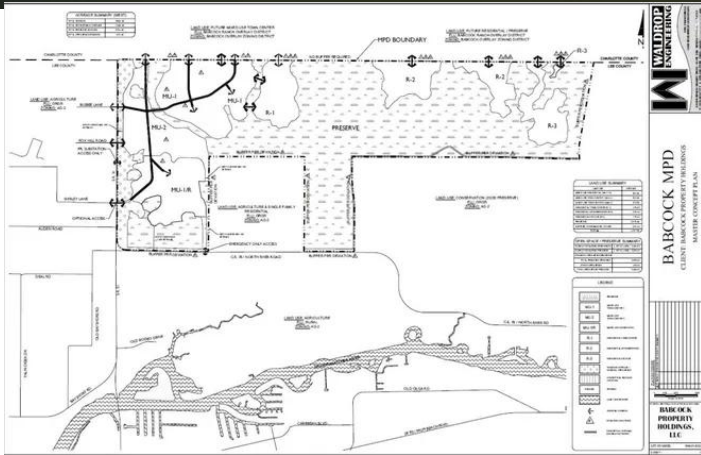
(TY News Press-J. Kyle Foster)



Babcock Ranch has been building south of the Charlotte County line for the first time. This is a recent photo of construction of the 270 unit Canopy Apartments east of Rte 31 and north of Rte 78

There are also several hundred single and duplex homes being built by PULTE on the Babcock site now.

A several story hotel and 45,000 sq ft shopping area is under county consideration at this point.



Currently there are approximately 5,000 more homes awaiting final approvals in Northeast Lee County from I-75 to Alva north and south of the Caloosahatchee River, most by NEAL Company.

Meanwhile, developments elsewhere either under construction or nearing conclusion of the approval process in Lee County include:

- Kingston Development south of Lehigh Acres from Rte 82 to the Collier County line, about 10,000 homes.
- Verdara Village Phase One in Estero is under construction with a planned 2,400 homes.
- Redfish Pointe in Cape Coral south of Rotary Park, which would bring 800 residential units, a 300-room hotel and 38,000 square feet of commercial space, is facing opposition due to worries about flood protection, habitat destruction and increased traffic.
- Alico Inc. plans two 1,500-acre villages of about 4,500 residential units in each along with commercial areas on what is now citrus groves near the intersection of Collier, Lee, and Hendry counties. It also will integrate 6,000 acres of protected conservation land.



## Alva residents worry over new housing plan's strain on Fort Myers sewage

(TY WINK NEWS-

Commissioners recently approved Neal Communities' plan to build nearly 1,100 homes on 788 acres at the corner of North River Road and Owl Creek Drive in Alva.

More residents mean more waste, and the additional strain on the sewage system is raising alarms. The waste will be handled by the Fort Myers Central Facility on Raleigh Street, which environmental groups say is already struggling.



John Cassani from Calusa Waterkeeper warned about the frequency of spills in the area.

"There's probably a spill every couple of months in Fort Myers somewhere, especially around the time a hurricane comes, because the storm water floods," said Cassani. "Those happen too often with this particular facility."

The Fort Myers Central Facility has not been updated since 1985, and it's currently under a consent order from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to upgrade. Despite this, Lee County commissioners approved the facility to service the new homes.

"Why are you depending on all this new growth for the plant that has major problems now, just in ordinary operations, much less a hurricane?" said Cassani. "So, it's just a kind of a disaster waiting to happen, that's why the Alva folks are concerned."



### Residents in Alva are expressing their concerns.

"The Lee County Commission and the Lee County plan to protect us from this kind of dense encroachment totally failed us," said Bill Redfern.

"You lose sleep on it," said Susie Allen. "We're in the middle of storm area. And that can happen here. It's just, it's just a bad idea."

Allen and Redfern acknowledged that development is inevitable as Lee County is expected to reach a population of one million by 2040. However, they question whether Alva can handle the growth.

"I think we deserve to kind of maybe step back and say that some growth is good, but not all growth, even if it's permissible, is good," said Allen.

**Cassani emphasized the ongoing challenge of managing growth in the area.**

"Growth is overwhelming the wastewater treatment infrastructure, so we're in catch up all the time," said Cassani.

He believes that water issues are often overlooked until a spill occurs, similar to the one at Manuel's Branch in 2020.

A spokesperson for the City of Fort Myers stated that the Central Facility has the capacity for the additional flow, and each permit request is evaluated for capacity before approval.



The city is currently under a consent order, and WINK News has reached out to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for further comment on the new development.

---





FACT SHEET

NEW EAST ZONE HIGH SCHOOL NNN

A CALL TO CHANGE

- Lee County needs a new high school to serve students in the East Zone
- Building schools is expensive.
- Tax Revenues are down and the Lee County School District has \$423 Million in unmet school needs.
- Expenses are up (Maintenance, Operations, Staffing) and continue to rise.
- Taxpayers expect their elected officials to make good decisions, fix mistakes, and spend money wisely.
- There are policies and procedures in place to manage this - TIME and TIME again they fail to follow them - wasting money meant for our students. Two of many examples below:
  - Bonita Springs High School - 14+ Million
  - Riverdale High School - 60+ Million
- Lee County School is making the same mistakes with NNN as were made above by issuing a bond to pay for the school before they even know how much it will cost (Guaranteed Price).

“The definition of insanity  
is doing the same thing over and over again  
and expecting a different result”

CURRENT SITE FOR EAST ZONE (LEHIGH ACRES) HIGH SCHOOL NNN  
(Alva: 21700 Joel Blvd at Tuckahoe Rd.)



School Board Property in Orange-surrounded by Conservation 20/20 Property



- No infrastructure - No Water, No Sewer, No Drainage Failing Roads = LOTS MORE MONEY TO BUILD IT.
- Miles away (6.8) from where the students live = MORE BUSES, MORE TRAFFIC
- Environmentally sensitive land with a major planned wildlife corridor and is surrounded by Conservation 20/20 properties.
- Cost estimates already increased 15% and continue to rise.

**BEST SITE FOR EAST ZONE (LEHIGH ACRES) NEW HIGH SCHOOL NNN:**  
(Lehigh: 214 David Ave. and Joel Blvd.)



**Preferred Site for East Lee High School (NNN) at Joel Blvd and David Ave**

- Joel/David site is currently planned for a Future High School
- The School District's plan for students is neighborhood (proximity) schools.
- NNN built at Joel/David fits this model - NNN built at Joel/Tuckahoe does not.
- Students live near Joel/David - reducing need for busing and related operating costs/challenges.
- Joel/David has the infrastructure (Water/Sewer/Drainage/Roads) - LESS MONEY TO BUILD.
- Less costly to operate, Less expensive to build = FUNDS SAVED/AVAILABLE FOR OTHER NEEDS (Teacher and staff raises, bus driver recruitment and raises, instructional enhancements)
- LINK TO ADDITIONAL MAPS -
- DROPBOX  
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/m8q91evowpy11f2yne34u/ADLJ4JIYVCaE5OFZExWxSDQ?rlkey=flr4qa07vxxve83ml3amnouu5&st=oe753xib&dl=0>
- GOOGLE LINK  
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14QV99WTFs-WF8C3xgfldo4G2MCqTCpgx?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14QV99WTFs-WF8C3xgfldo4G2MCqTCpgx?usp=drive_link)

SO WHAT?

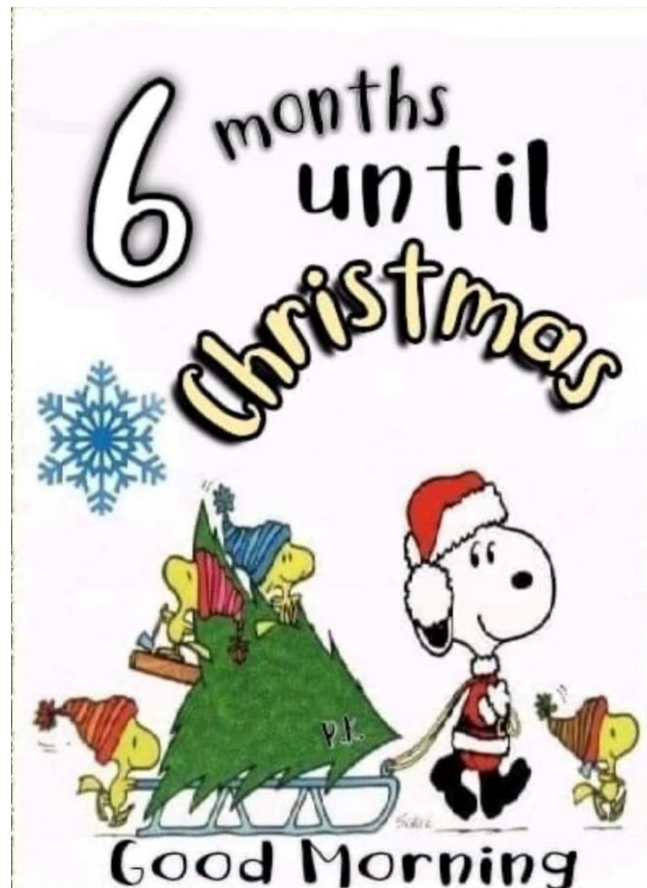
- A school at Joel/David was already planned.
- It is the common sense site:
  - Fiscally responsible
  - Environmentally responsible
  - Keeps students in their neighborhoods
  - Serves the need for a high school where the need exists.

NOW WHAT?

- Share this information with your family, your friends, your neighbors.
- Contact/Call/Email - members of the Lee County School Board to change the site of NNN to Joel/David.

Spending Hard-Earned Tax Dollars Wisely Should be the Norm,  
Not the Punchline of a Joke

---





# Preserving What's Left: Real Options for Landowners

James Kennedy | East Lee County News



In the May 2025 edition, I wrote about the importance of growing what matters here in East Lee County—our land, our local food, and the legacy that makes this place different from anywhere else in Florida. Since then, the conversations haven't stopped.

From Alva to Olga to Buckingham, folks are asking the same question: Is there anything we can do besides sell to developers?

There's a rising sense that if we want to keep what's left of rural Lee County—if we want our kids and grandkids to grow up with clean rivers, cattle pastures, and the space to run and ride—we've got to act. And not just resist—we need to get creative.

This isn't about stopping growth. It's about protecting what makes us us. And thankfully, there are real, working alternatives for landowners who want to do right by their property and their community.

## 1. WATER FARMING: HELP THE RIVER, KEEP YOUR LAND

The Caloosahatchee has taken a beating, but landowners can be part of the solution. The South Florida Water Management District now pays people to hold water on their land through the Dispersed Water Management Program. It reduces runoff, protects water quality, and creates a new income stream—all without concrete or condos.

It's the kind of win-win that reminds us: solutions don't always come from the top down. Sometimes they come from your own back forty.

What to do:

Visit: <https://www.sfwmd.gov/our-work/water-storage-strategies>

## 2. WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY STEWARDSHIP: MAKE ROOM FOR TORTOISES, GET PAID

Florida's gopher tortoise program rewards landowners who agree to serve as recipient sites for this keystone species.

These properties stay wild—scrub, pasture, or pine flatwoods—and in return, you get paid for preserving habitat that supports biodiversity.

It's not just about saving tortoises. It's about keeping your land open and ecologically valuable while holding onto what's yours.

Visit: <https://myfwc.com/license/wildlife/gopher-tortoise-permits/recipient-sites/>

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission: [myfwc.com](https://myfwc.com) or contact East Lee Wildlife Stewardship Group at: [eastleewildlife@myfwc.com](mailto:eastleewildlife@myfwc.com)

## 3. RETHINK AGRICULTURE: MORE THAN CITRUS AND COWS

We need to expand our thinking about what agriculture looks like. Across Florida, people are turning small plots into profitable ventures—gourmet mushrooms, medicinal herbs, bamboo, heritage poultry. These aren't boutique fads. They're real businesses, and they keep land in family hands.

Landowners can lease parcels to beginning farmers, start small ag enterprises, or tap into university programs that offer support every step of the way.

Start with:

UF/IFAS Lee County: <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/lee/>  
USDA NRCS: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>  
USDAFSA: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/>

## 4. AGRITOURISM & EQUESTRIAN LIFE: INVITE FOLKS IN, KEEP YOUR LAND OUT OF A BINDER

We've got history here. Cattle drives, cracker houses, backroad watermelon stands. What if we celebrated that?

Florida law supports agritourism, and many landowners are turning their acreage into destinations: farm-to-table dinners, U-pick fields, ranch tours, even equestrian boarding and clinics.

Not only do these ventures generate revenue, they reinforce rural identity—and help folks fall in love with what we're fighting to keep.

Get started:

• Florida Agritourism: <https://www.followfreshfromflorida.com/>  
• Lee County VCB: [www.leevcb.com](https://www.leevcb.com)

## 5. TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR): SELL DENSITY, KEEP DIRT

One of the most effective and underutilized tools for land conservation and smart growth is the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program. It allows landowners to sell the right to build on their property—often rural or environmentally sensitive land—to developers who want to increase density in areas more suited for growth. The result? The landowner gets compensated, the buyer gets to build more elsewhere, and the original land remains permanently protected. Lee County has an established TDR program in place, and local advocates are working to expand its use as a win-win solution for both conservation and development.

Lee County has a program in place, and advocates are looking to expand it.

To learn more, visit: <https://www.leegov.com/dcd/planning/tldr>

## 6. EASEMENTS, TRUSTS & COMMUNITY PRESERVATION

Land doesn't have to be lost to be protected. You can preserve it yourself through conservation easements, land trusts, or programs like Florida Forever and Conservation 20/20. These tools let you pass on your land's character—and sometimes its value—without surrendering it to the bulldozers.

You can also explore adopt-an-acre programs or community land trusts that keep land local, sacred, and intact.

Resources:

• Conservation 20/20:

<https://www.leegov.com/parks/conservation2020>

• Florida Forever: <https://floridadep.gov/lands/environmental-services/content/florida-forever>  
• Alachua Conservation Trust (as a model): <https://www.alachuaconservationtrust.org/>

## WHAT WE CAN DO NOW—NOT SOMEDAY

We don't have to wait for Washington or Tallahassee. The tools are in reach—but they mean nothing if we don't pick them up.

Here are four things we can do this year:

- **Host a Rural Stewardship Summit** – Bring together landowners, agencies, nonprofits, and experts to put real solutions on the table.
- **Launch a Community Land Stewardship Task Force** – Connect neighbors to resources that fit their land and goals.
- **Start a Farm Incubator or Agritourism Pilot** – Let one success story inspire a dozen more.
- **Advocate for smarter zoning and local incentives** – Expand Conservation 20/20, explore TDRs, and reward stewardship.

## JOIN US: BUILD A FUTURE THAT'S WORTH DRIVING THROUGH

Imagine this: your grandkids driving down North River Road, waving at cows and horses, not cranes and concrete. A river that runs clearer, not browner. A region where rural still means something.

We don't have to imagine it—we just have to work for it. And we can.

Need help? Got ideas? Want to get involved?

• Email: [press@eastleeneews.com](mailto:press@eastleeneews.com)  
• Call: 239-470-5611

Let's grow what matters. Let's keep it growing into the future. 🌱







**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 27, 2025**

**CONTACT: DEP Press Office, 850-245-2112, [DEPNews@FloridaDEP.gov](mailto:DEPNews@FloridaDEP.gov)**

**DEP Advances Statewide Water Quality Protections with Updated Restoration Plans**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has adopted 28 updated nutrient Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs), marking a major advancement in Florida’s commitment to improving water quality and fulfilling the requirements of the Clean Waterways Act.

These BMAPs provide a science-driven, adaptive framework for reducing nutrient pollution in Florida’s rivers, lakes, estuaries, springs and aquifers. Developed in collaboration with local governments, state agencies, utilities and other key stakeholders, each plan sets clear pollution reduction goals and identifies targeted projects and strategies to improve the health of Florida’s waterbodies over the long-term.

“For years, DEP has worked closely with stakeholders across Florida to assess water quality, establish pollution reduction goals and identify projects and strategies to achieve meaningful, measurable improvements,” said DEP Secretary Alexis A. Lambert. “Today’s adoption of these plans is a significant milestone made possible through input, collaboration and dedication.”

Stakeholder engagement played a key role in reaching this milestone. DEP hosted more than 60 public meetings and held over 100 one-on-one meetings with regulated entities. DEP will continue this collaboration as projects are implemented, progress is evaluated and plans are updated to reflect changing conditions and shared goals.

“These BMAPs reflect DEP’s commitment to making data-driven decisions and maintaining transparency in our efforts to restore Florida’s water resources,” said Florida Chief Science Officer Dr. Mark Rains. “By incorporating rigorous scientific analysis and continuous monitoring, we are ensuring that our restoration strategies are both effective and adaptable to emerging challenges.”

While each BMAP outlines localized projects, restoration activities may include wastewater treatment upgrades, stormwater projects, fertilizer ordinances and best management practices. These projects are implemented across various levels, including counties, municipalities and special districts.

The updated BMAPs feature a phased implementation, allowing for incremental project implementation while monitoring water quality changes and incorporating the latest scientific findings. These BMAPs are designed to evolve with science and conditions on the ground.

The Secretarial Orders adopting the 28 BMAPs were signed on June 27, 2025. All associated documents, including finalized BMAPs, meeting materials and recordings, are publicly available on DEP’s BMAP Documents, Meeting Materials and Recordings webpage. DEP’s Statewide Annual Report provides additional detail on the progress across all BMAP-related projects.

**About the Florida Department of Environmental Protection: Visit the department’s website at [FloridaDEP.gov](http://FloridaDEP.gov) <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/FLDEP/bulletins/3e7032b>**

**TY Don Ruane for sharing this DEP resource with ON THE RIVER**

**Please consider supporting our paid advertisers below with your business. They are supporting the mission of ON THE RIVER for you.**

(Paid Ad- 10/25)



**Patricia (Patty) Walker**  
**REALTOR®**  
Referrals welcome!

239-340-3904  
PattyWalkerREMAX@gmail.com

**RE/MAX GULF COAST LIVING**  
12928 Palm Beach Blvd Ste C  
Fort Myers, FL 33905

Each Office Independently Owned and Operated

Ad - 12/25)



**GROW YOUR BUSINESS IN SW FLORIDA!**

**EAST LEE COUNTY NEWS** is a monthly direct mail local newspaper for the Daniels Corridor, Gateway, Lehigh Acres, Alva, Buckingham, and The Shores areas! Advertise in the East Lee County News to reach our 20,000+ direct mail readers and up to 2,500 more from our free pickup locations. Share news and special offers with consumers every month!

**ADVERTISE IN THE ROAR**

**NOW SERVING**  
33936 • 33971 • 33972 • 33974 • 33913 • 33966 • 33912  
ALVA • MOST OF BUCKINGHAM AND THE SHORES

2024 THE EAST LEE COUNTY NEWS RATE TABLE

\*Ask about our Island Ads!  
Custom Sizing & Premium Placement

| AD SIZES | FULL PG | 3/4 PG | 2/3 PG | 1/2 PG | 1/3 PG | ISLAND* | 1/4 PG | 1/6 PG | 1/8 PG | BUSINESS BILLBOARD |
|----------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------------------|
| OPEN     | 1850    | 1525   | 1445   | 1045   | 760    | PCI     | 575    | 445    | 325    | 1x Business Card   |
| 3 TIMES  | 1640    | 1425   | 1280   | 930    | 720    | PCI     | 530    | 420    | 310    | \$145              |
| 6 TIMES  | 1475    | 1260   | 1170   | 900    | 675    | PCI     | 515    | 390    | 300    | 2x Business Card   |
| 12 TIMES | 1325    | 1130   | 1040   | 825    | 610    | PCI     | 490    | 360    | 285    | \$190              |



(239) 470-5611 | [PRESS@EASTLEENews.COM](mailto:PRESS@EASTLEENews.COM) | [WWW.EASTLEENews.COM](http://WWW.EASTLEENews.COM)

(Paid Ad – 4/26)



**CAPABILITY. COMMITMENT. COMMUNITY.**  
**CALL FOR A FREE QUOTE**

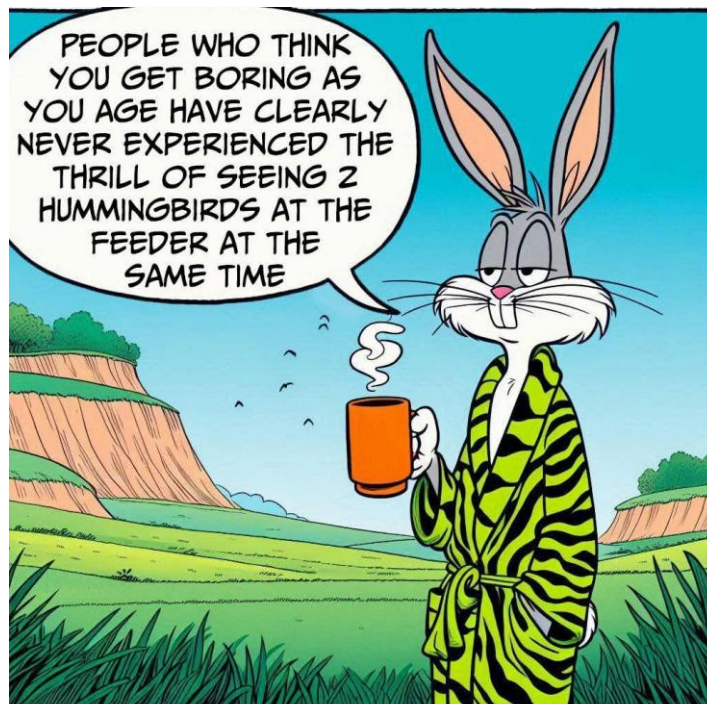
**State INSURANCE**

**GOODLAD & SWANK**  
INSURANCE, LLC

**Why Not Insure It All  
Under One Roof?**



**239-674-7630**  
**[www.goodladandswank.com](http://www.goodladandswank.com)**  
**702 Leeland Heights Blvd W Lehigh Acres, FL 33936**





(Paid AD – 6/26)

## Manatee & Eco River Tours

March through November – join us for an ECO RIVER TOUR where we leave from Sweetwater Landing Marina on SR 31 in Fort Myers and travel eastbound on the Caloosahatchee River through the original river course (oxbows) learning of the history of the area. Travel through the W.P. Franklin Locks and then return to the marina after a lovely 2-hour narrated cruise.



### SUNSET CRUISE!

Join us for a sunset cruise from Sweetwater Landing Marina going westbound on the Caloosahatchee River. A nice spread of hors d'oeuvres is provided along with water and soda. You are welcome to bring your own beverage if you'd like. Enjoy a leisurely cruise on the Caloosahatchee, watch the birds come into rest for the night and enjoy the spectacular southwest Florida sunsets!



All tours leave from Sweetwater Landing Marina located at 16991 S.R. 31, Fort Myers, FL 33905

To book visit our website at: [www.ManateeAndEcoRiverTours.com](http://www.ManateeAndEcoRiverTours.com)

(Paid Ad – 7/25)

# GET A DRONE PHOTO OF YOUR ROOF



**You Can Zoom into Photo  
For a Closer Look**

## WE ARE NOT ROOFERS

Can be Used for Your Insurance Records and/or Hurricane Damage Inspection.  
**Only \$99.00 – MONEY BACK GUARANTEE**  
(Mention this ad and get a FREE glamour-shot of your house with your roof photo)

With this exclusive offer, you save money while gaining peace of mind about the condition of your roof. Within 2-days of ordering, we will "fly-over" and provide you with a "zoomable" Air Shot photo of your roof in .JPG format. Simply provide your name, address, phone, and email, when you order, and we'll handle the rest. Don't miss out - Order now - Available times are limited.

(We also do cars, boats, homes, lanais, pools, property lines, etc.)



Order via PayPal Here

### AIR SHOTS

Drone Pics / Vids by a FAA Licensed Pilot  
**630-642-6500**  
15225 Yellow Wood Dr | Alva, FL 33920



Veteran Owned Company



WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers


(Paid Ad – 11/25)

---

JEANNINE COOK, REALTOR®



---

Jeannine Cook, Realtor  
*The Florida Keys & Southwest Florida,  
not just destinations but lifestyles™*



[www.jeanninecook.net](http://www.jeanninecook.net) 305-794-0184



**ROOK**  
REALTY



---

THE FLORIDA KEYS AND SOUTHWEST FLORIDA.  
*NOT JUST DESTINATIONS BUT LIFESTYLES*

---



*Why settle for searching in just one MLS when you can explore three? With over \$37 million in sales in my real estate career, I'm here to help with everything from residential and commercial properties to vacant land. What exciting step are you thinking about in the real estate market? Let's chat and make it happen together!*

PROUD MEMBER OF THE GULF COAST, FLORIDA KEYS & BEACHES (BROWARD/PALM BEACH/ST. LUCIE) BOARD OF REALTORS

---

Paid Ad – 12/25)



**Digital security tailored to the home and/or small business computers, phones, etc.**

**Strong and seamless protection from online threats and human error.**

**I signed on after being advised to by one of our web designers and numerous other users. At the home rate of \$69.00 a month for 3 devices.**

**-Ken DeWalt, OTR publisher**

**I invite you to check it out.**

**<https://refer.eset.com/ab7n3>**



WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers

# ALVA EVENTS

---



## ALVA INC

21471 N River Rd, Alva, FL 33920

ZOOM access: <https://zoom.us/join>

Meeting ID: 852-1643-8980 Passcode: 302401

[Info@AlvaFl.org](mailto:Info@AlvaFl.org) [www.ALVAFL.org](http://www.ALVAFL.org) **NEXT MEETING: Every Second Tuesday, 7pm, Alva Community Center**

---



## ALVA USS HANNAH CHAPTER

<https://usshannahnsdar.org/>



USS Hannah Chapter, NSDAR, congratulates Caleb Golden, of Babcock Ranch, Florida State President of Children of the American Revolution and member of the Billy Bowlegs Society, C.A.R., on the success of his state project supporting Wolfhounds Legacy. The Florida C.A.R. presented Wolfhounds Legacy a donation of \$6,000.00 at their state conference in February and will continue selling pins (\$10) and challenge coins (\$25) through the Golden administration in April 2025. Wolfhounds Legacy is a Cape Coral based non-profit that pairs dogs from high-kill shelters with veterans and first responders, offering free service-dog training; saving two lives at a time.



If you would like a pin or challenge coin, contact [usshannahnsdar@gmail.com](mailto:usshannahnsdar@gmail.com). Information on Wolfhounds Legacy can be found at [www.wolfhoundslegacy.org](http://www.wolfhoundslegacy.org).



## The Alva Library Museum

21420 Pearl St, Alva, FL  
33920



Public Library, Alva

Originally a public library  
built in 1909, it now serves as a museum of artifacts from the original settlers of Alva.

The library-museum Board is making the building available as small group venue for parties, clubs, etc.

THE LIBRARY IS OPEN FOR FREE TOURS Every Saturday between 10am and 2pm

See a virtual video tour of the Museum at: <http://alvaflmuseum.com> (FOR Virtual Tour)

Grant Fichter is overseeing the museum for the board.

Come on out and check out the Alva Museum this Saturday between 10-2, cool off in the AC and check out some of those long-lost treasures. Also, if you have some Alva area history to share bring it by and let us look at it.

**Alva Fire Protection & Rescue  
Service District**

## Join Our Team!



| <b>BENEFITS</b>   | <b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>   | <b>REQUIREMENTS</b>   |
|---|--|---|
| Florida Retirement System<br>Medical, Dental & Vision Insurance<br>Employee Health & Wellness<br>Uniform Maintenance Allowance<br>College Degree & Cert Incentives<br>Training Allowance<br>Salary Progression Base on Industry<br>Years of Service | Marine Operations<br>Public Outreach<br>Career Advancement<br>Special Events | Valid Driver's License<br>Good Driving Record<br>FL Bureau of Fire Standards<br>& Training Certification<br>AHA CPR/BLS Provider<br>Pass a Physical Assessment<br>Current EMT Certification |

The Alva Fire District is seeking qualified applicants for the position of **Firefighter/EMT**. The individual should demonstrate good moral character and judgement, be able to handle high pressure situations and display effective problem solving and leadership skills. The Alva Fire District consists of a tobacco and drug free workplace environment. Experience preferred.


Please forward a current resume, application and certs to Chief Etcheverry at [jetcherry@alvafirecontrol.org](mailto:jetcherry@alvafirecontrol.org) or drop-off your resume to Firehouse 121, 2660 Styles Road, Alva, Florida between the hours of 9 AM - 4 PM. Applications and Acknowledgement & Full Release of Liability may be downloaded from the District's website at [www.alvafirecontrol.org](http://www.alvafirecontrol.org).  
**Applications accepted through March 23, 2025.**

## The ALVA GARDEN CLUB



Each month we have special speakers presenting interesting and relevant information. We also plan field trips that enhance our knowledge and inspire good garden practices. Membership in the Alva Garden Club is still only \$10 per person. We meet in the Alva Methodist Church Fellowship Hall the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 1 pm.

Everyone is welcomed to join or simply attend the meetings as guests!



**Have a good news story? Our readers want to know about it!**  
Tell us – in up to 100 words – about a heartwarming, encouraging or just plain cheerful thing that’s happened to you or someone you know.  
Scan to email and submit your good news at [goodnews@news-press.com](mailto:goodnews@news-press.com).

---

### Tree of Life winner hails from Alva in annual gardening honors

**Charlie Whitehead**  
Fort Myers News-Press | USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

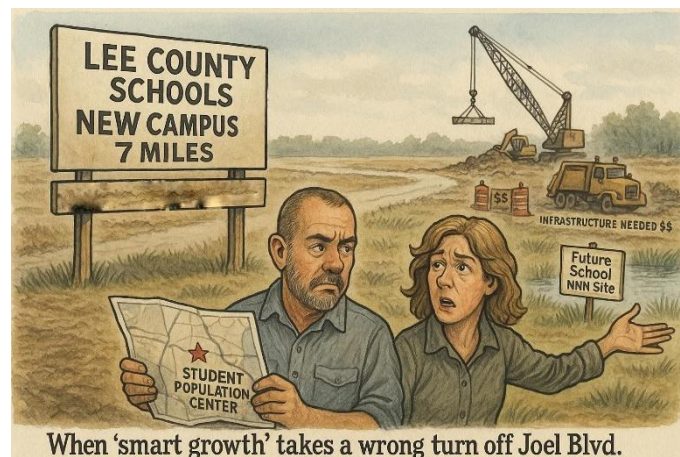
Liz Ingram, of Alva, received the 2025 Berne Davis Tree of Life Award, an annual honor chosen by the Fort Myers-Lee County Garden Council. Ingram was recognized at the council’s awards luncheon April 15 at Fiddlesticks Country Club in Fort Myers.

Ellen Leifeld, the Alva Garden Club’s president-elect nominated Ingram, immediate past president of the club.

As president, Ingram initiated several civic projects enhance the East Lee County community. These include members serving as caretakers for three local gardens, monthly Keep Lee County Beautiful clean-ups, funding a college scholarship at FGCU and club involvement in national and regional projects such as Wreaths Across America, Arbor Day plantings and the Alva School Angel Tree project.

The Alva Garden Club, established in 1957, meets monthly between November and May. Members also attend field trips to garden-related attractions.

Liz Ingram, right, accepts the 2025 Berne Davis Tree of Life Award from Event Committee Chairwoman Susan Lawson on April 15 at Fiddlesticks Country Club. Ingram is immediate past president of the Alva Garden Club. PROVIDED BY THE ALVA GARDEN CLUB



When ‘smart growth’ takes a wrong turn off Joel Blvd.





## Charleston Park Neighborhood Association

2541 Charleston Park Drive, Alva, FL 33920. 239-728-8895

[Charlestonpark1926@gmail.com](mailto:Charlestonpark1926@gmail.com)

Community Center Activities & Training, Lee County Children's and youth sport park, Events throughout the year, Meetings for all every second Monday of the month at 6pm at the Community Center are also available virtually via ZOOM.



## ALVA MIDDLE FFA

**Find us on FACEBOOK**



[https://www.facebook.com/AlvaMiddleFFA/?show\\_switched\\_toast=0&show\\_invite\\_to\\_follow=0&show\\_switched\\_toast=0&show\\_podcast\\_settings=0&show\\_community\\_review\\_changes=0&show\\_community\\_rollback=0&show\\_follower\\_visibility\\_disclosure=0](https://www.facebook.com/AlvaMiddleFFA/?show_switched_toast=0&show_invite_to_follow=0&show_switched_toast=0&show_podcast_settings=0&show_community_review_changes=0&show_community_rollback=0&show_follower_visibility_disclosure=0)



# It's a GIRL!!!!!!

# An Open Letter To Alva: Grow What Matters

James Kennedy | East Lee Wildlife Stewardship Group



As Alva continues to grow, we need to ask ourselves deeper questions—not just what's possible but what's worth protecting and how we can preserve the quality of place that makes living here special.

There's no denying that change is coming to our corner of Lee County. Roads are widening and cutting new paths. New homes are springing up along pasture lines, in skeletal groves, and in once wild places. Traffic is painfully slow, where rumbling tractors were once the only reason for slowdowns. But for those of us who live here, not just to sleep, but to put down roots and raise families, this place means more than the sum of its parts.

If you're a long-time landowner, a homeowner, or someone who deliberately chose Alva for its quiet strength—its open fields, oak hammocks, and generational ties—you already understand what's at stake. Alva isn't just another name on the development docket. It's a living chapter of Florida's rural heritage, and we only get to write this chapter once.

There's a false narrative frequently echoed that communities like ours face a binary choice: either lock everything down in amber or open the floodgates to unchecked growth. But that's not the whole truth. We are not powerless in the face of development. We have choices. And those choices matter more now than ever.

The real challenge is to preserve Alva's rural soul while embracing the right kind of growth—growth rooted in agricultural

innovation, land stewardship, and community resilience. This isn't nostalgia. It is a strategy. It's about building a future that honors the land, sustains our economy, and keeps our community whole, well into the future.

Preservation isn't about standing still. It's about moving forward without losing our way.

Imagine a future where our young people don't have to leave to make a living. Where they return home to farm on various scales, innovate, and build small businesses that enable them to control their destiny. We can make that possible by investing in micro-agriculture and regenerative farming practices that improve the land rather than degrade it. Think farm-to-table operations, heritage crop cultivation, and small-scale food production that serves our neighbors and protects our environment.

We should support the next generation of soil-based entrepreneurs—people who treat land as more than inventory and food as more than a commodity. This means building infrastructure for local farmers markets, food hubs, and agricultural co-ops that keep dollars in our community and put fresh produce on our tables.

Eco-tourism is another opportunity waiting to be cultivated. Our natural areas—our riverways, trails, wildlife corridors—can support guided tours, educational experiences, birding, and kayaking adventures. These aren't just leisure activities—they're economic drivers that align with our values and strengthen our identity.

A healthy, functioning greenbelt isn't a

barrier to progress. It's the foundation of it. It safeguards our water quality, provides natural storm buffers, supports wildlife, and increases property values over time. It makes Alva, Olga, Fort Denard, and Buckingham something greater than ZIP codes. It's what makes them home—imbued with character and gifted with soul.

We do not have to rubber-stamp every upzoning request or density increase just because it's framed with buzzwords like "smart growth" or "mixed use." Many of which have been co-opted by an industry with a voracious disregard for the consequences of its lack of restraint. The truth is, sprawl isn't progress. It's the erosion of everything that drew people here in the first place.

If we're not intentional, we'll wake up one day surrounded by the same strip malls, gas stations, and cookie-cutter subdivisions that stretch from Miami to Tampa. And once we've paved over the last pasture or clear-cut the final stand of trees, we won't be able to get them back. No developer, no matter how well-meaning, can recreate what took nature centuries to grow.

Alva has something money can't manufacture: space, authenticity, and memory. And when you sell that off for a quick return, you're not just losing land—you're losing legacy. You're trading heritage for impermanence.

That's not just a bad deal—it's irreversible.

So let me be clear: I'm not against growth. I'm for the right kind of growth. Growth that respects the land. Growth that empowers working families and farmers. Growth that

preserves our history while creating a future worth inheriting.

I stand for growers and ranchers over speculators, community gardens over cul-de-sacs, and long-term legacy over short-term profit.

Let's not be the generation that gave Alva away. Let's be the ones who protected it and led it wisely into the future. That cultivated something stronger. That said, yes to what matters and no to what doesn't.

Let's preserve the rural fabric that makes this place more than just land. Let's grow smarter, not faster.

Because when the land is gone, it's gone. And no developer can return it.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Kennedy is a Florida-based photographer, U.S. Navy veteran, and offshore surveyor whose work at Tortoise Ranch Gallery captures the rugged beauty of Florida's rural landscapes and fading heritage. Deeply rooted in East Lee County, Kennedy blends art, advocacy, and storytelling to preserve his home state's wildlands, working communities, and historic character. A founding member of the East Lee Wildlife Stewardship Group and a contributor to East Lee County News and The Roar, he works to protect wildlife corridors, resist unsustainable sprawl, and amplify the voices of Florida's rural heart. His photography has been exhibited throughout Southwest Florida, offering a powerful visual record of what we stand to lose—and why it's worth fighting for. 🐾





## Alva was a MOVIE STAR! Sort of.

(TY Alva Inc, Facebook)



In 1989 Alva was a movie set for "Coupe de Ville", a story where three brothers are tasked with driving their dad's prized 1954 Cadillac Coupe de-Ville from Michigan to Florida. Portions of the movie were shot in Cape Coral and other local spots.



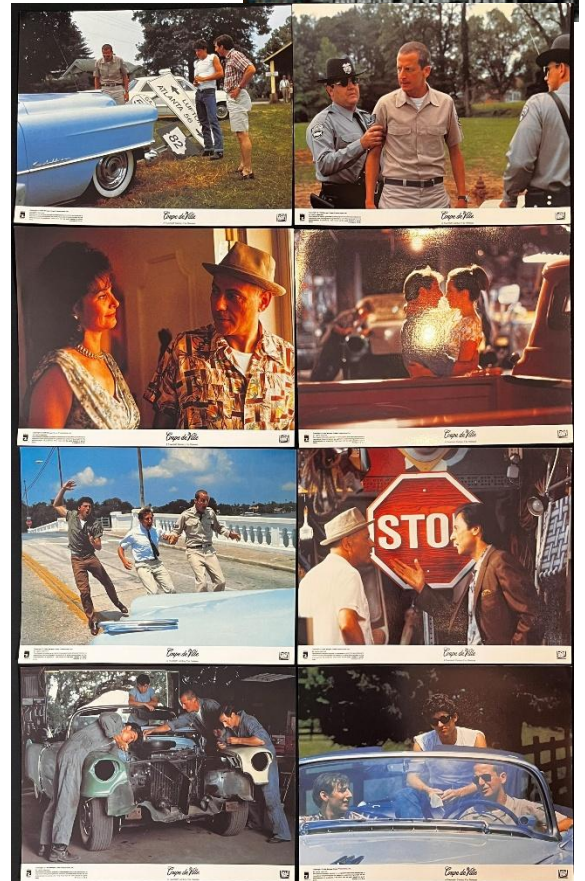
The set in Alva included a feed store that the brothers had to

sleep next to overnight on the trip, being low on money after getting swindled by a small town sheriff for speeding. The feed store set was on North River Rd, near North Olga Rd where the Rock & Rose Nursery is now. They appropriately made sure the Feed Store was named Futral's Feed after the iconic local business here in Lee County.



There were car haulers parked on Cemetery Rd for weeks with old 50's and 60's model cars on them. There is a scene in the film where the boys fall asleep while driving and hit a cow, that

scene was filmed on N. River Rd just east of Cypress Creek. Patrick Dempsey, Alan Arkin and Daniel Stern were the main characters. Not a big hit at the box office, but pretty cool to have been filmed partially in Alva.





# BUCKINGHAM & FORT MYERS SHORES EVENTS

---



## FORT MYERS EAST ROTARY CLUB

Fort Myers East Rotary Club has been in existence since 1973, and helps with so many community projects in East Lee County and with District and International Rotary activities.

They meet Wednesday mornings for breakfast at 7:30 AM at the River Hall Country Club. Stop by and join us for an invigorating meeting with good food, stimulating conversation and great speakers! For more information, contact

[FMERC.Secretary@gmail.com](mailto:FMERC.Secretary@gmail.com) <https://www.fmeastroty.com/>

---



## Hours

Monday: Closed

Tuesday: Noon-8 p.m.

Wednesday: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Thursday: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sunday: Closed

**RIVERDALE BRANCH LIBRARY**  
2421 Buckingham Road, Fort Myers



**Instead  
of this...**

**Try this...**

**“Hoopla is  
our GO-TO  
for E and  
Audio books  
of all kinds”**

*Kex & Mona DeWalt*

audible 



+Babbel 



hulu 



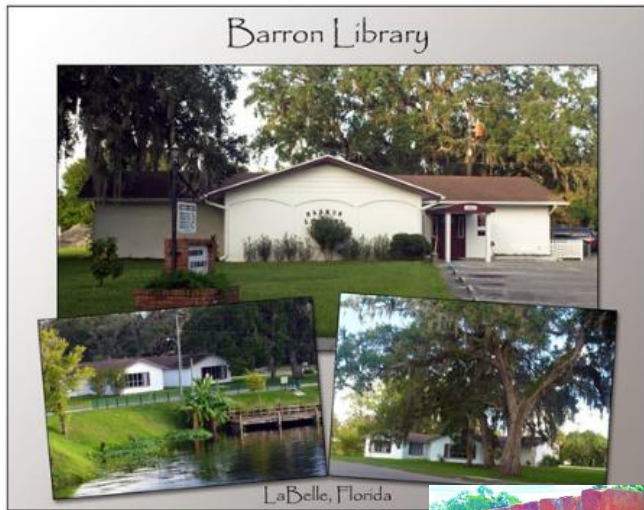
NETFLIX 



amazon 






# LABELLE AREA EVENTS



## Barron Library

461 N Main St, LaBelle, FL 33935

Barron Library is thrilled to announce our collaboration with the C'mon Galisano Children's Museum of Naples! This incredible museum is dedicated to inspiring children and families to have fun while learning together.



**LIBRARY Access PASS**

**Program Details**

- CMON Library Access Pass is good for free admission for up to four guests' (MUST INCLUDE AT LEAST 1 CHILD & 1 ADULT).
- Library Patron with a valid library card may check out a CMON Library Access Pass.
- Patrons must bring the library checkout receipt with them to the museum for entry.
- The pass must be used within seven days of checking it out at the library.

*Libraries are unable to reprint receipts for patrons who lose their receipt. They must Check the pass out again.*

**Hours of Operation**  
Daily from 10 AM - 5 PM  
Closed every Wed.

**Children's Museum of Naples**  
15080 Livingston Road, Naples, FL 34109



### Do you love to bake?

Do you love supporting YOUR Library? Here is the perfect opportunity to do BOTH! Donate your choice of dessert for our annual dessert auction on April 17th, 2025.

Contact Barron Library @ 863-675-0833 or via email at [barronlibrary.2013@gmail.com](mailto:barronlibrary.2013@gmail.com) to sign up!

Let's come together to make a difference in our community. All proceeds from the auction will help supplement Barron Library's annual budget. Every cake, cookie, or pie counts!



**LEGO CLUB**

Join the Lego Club at Barron Library!

1st Thursday of every month  
Starting February 6th - 4 -5 PM

Connect with fellow Lego fans and build amazing structures together.

We look forward to seeing your creations!



**We need you, Friend!**

**BECOME A FRIEND OF THE LIBRARY TO:**

- Support projects & activities
- Enhance the use of the Library
- Assist with programming
- Participate in Community Awareness events
- Organize & Conduct Fundraisers
- Lobby local government
- Volunteer in the Library
- Feel good about your contribution to your community

**Please contact Nicole Hellard:**

(865)675-0833  
or  
[nhellard.barron@gmail.com](mailto:nhellard.barron@gmail.com)



WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers



HEALTHIER HENDRY & GLADES  
<https://healthierhendryglades.org/>

Humane Center 1200 Pratt Blvd, LaBelle

#### OUR MISSION

The Mission of Caloosa Humane Society is to serve, shelter, and protect the homeless pets in our care. We are

dedicated to finding permanent and loving adoptive homes for our companion animals in need. Our no-kill facility provides low cost spay/neuter services to the community with the goal of reducing the extreme overpopulation of unwanted pets.

SHELTER (863) 675-0997   CLINIC (863) 675-7387   [info@caloosahumanesociety.org](mailto:info@caloosahumanesociety.org)  
<https://caloosahumanesociety.org/>



### LaBelle Downtown Revitalization Corporation

proudly announces the Downtown LaBelle Historic Walking Tour! Take a walk into Old Florida's past through our new self-guided tour, featuring audio clips of those that helped make LaBelle what it is today.

Visit [Downtownlabelle.com/walking\\_tour.com](http://Downtownlabelle.com/walking_tour.com) to start your tour today, or download the app with your Apple or Android device by searching "Downtown LaBelle." Happy trails!

SUMMER YOUTH PLAYS  
AT THE  
FIREHOUSE COMMUNITY THEATRE



**CITY OF LABELLE**  
**Commission Meetings**

**SECOND THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH @5:30 P.M.**

City Hall  
Commission Chambers  
481 W. Hickpochee Ave.



Scan the QR Code  
For full agenda  
packet

More information: 863-675-2872  
[www.citylabelle.com](http://www.citylabelle.com)

Meeting are open to the public

IF YOU REQUIRE SPECIAL AID OR SERVICES AS ADDRESSED IN THE AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT, PLEASE CONTACT THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE AT 863-675-2872, NO LESS THAN FIVE (5) DAYS PRIOR TO THE ABOVE STATED HEARING DATE.

**NOW HIRING**

Full-time Firefighter/E.M.T.

LaBelle Fire application and job description available on website

[www.citylabelle.com](http://www.citylabelle.com)



Submit applications in person at 481 W. Hickpochee Ave, or email to [lisaawbrey@citylabelle.com](mailto:lisaawbrey@citylabelle.com) by November 1, 2024

#### Beautification Projects

Thanks to generous donations from Caloosa Title Insurance Company and the LaBelle Fire Department, and the helping hands of the Audubon Society, we've planted vibrant Sunset Mimosas in our downtown planters.



#### Food Truck Events

We're keeping the riverfront lively with our rotating lineup of food trucks Sunday through Wednesday from 11 AM to 8 PM. Vendors can apply online to be featured by clicking the link below!

**We need you, Friend!**

**BECOME A FRIEND OF THE LIBRARY TO:**

- Support projects & activities
- Enhance the use of the Library
- Assist with programming
- Participate in Community Awareness events
- Organize & Conduct Fundraisers
- Lobby local government
- Volunteer in the Library
- Feel good about your contribution to your community

**Please contact Nicole Hellard:**

(863)675-0833  
or  
[nhellard.barron@gmail.com](mailto:nhellard.barron@gmail.com)





WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers



## HERITAGE MUSEUM: LaBelle's century-old landmark

**NOW Open Saturday's 10am to 2pm**

<https://www.facebook.com/labelleheritagemuseum/>

---



## LABELLE NO KILL animal rescue

[https://www.facebook.com/Animalrescue863?rdid=7iFM4y8uy42MaIQ7&share\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fshare%2F14dDMLkKZw%2F#](https://www.facebook.com/Animalrescue863?rdid=7iFM4y8uy42MaIQ7&share_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fshare%2F14dDMLkKZw%2F#)

Animal Rescue Inc. Of Labelle Fl. 100% No Kill Non-Profit 501C3 Rescue

1. Dog & Cat Wet and Dry Food
2. Cat Litter, Dog & Cat Flea Medication
3. Dog & Cat Toys, Blankets
4. Laundry & Dish Soap, Trash Bags, Bleach, Pine Sol

All money donations go to the care of the animals such as food, supplies, medications, and vet care

You can also donate to Caloosa Humane Society vet for Animal Rescue inc. Bills 863-675-7378

Animal Rescue is located at 463 East Lincoln Ave. Labelle Fl, 33935 if you like drop off donation.

You can send check or money order to Animal Rescue inc. P.O. Box 2441 Labelle Fl, 33935 or to the owners' cash app. that is used for the rescue Angel Biles \$angeltopdog

You can also contact Angel at 863-342-2076





WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers



R.S.V.P. TODAY!

**LUNCH AND LEARN**

Mark Your Calendar NOW!

Bring Your Own Lunch  
for a lunch & learn training event

**Human Trafficking Awareness  
& Prevention Training**

Friday, August 8, 2025  
11am - 1:30pm  
Dallas Townsend Ag Center  
1085 Pratt Blvd. LaBelle, FL

Most people know very little about human trafficking and are totally unaware that Florida consistently ranks 3rd in the nation in the number of calls to the human trafficking hotline. During this training you'll learn the tactics traffickers use to recruit, signs that indicate someone may be a victim, and how to report suspected trafficking activity. You'll also learn what you can do to protect yourself and your family from falling victim to human trafficking and sextortion scams.

**This event is FREE of charge and open to the public**  
**Space is limited, reserve your seat today!**

R.S.V.P by sending an email to:  
[jessica.ivy@flhealth.gov](mailto:jessica.ivy@flhealth.gov)

Certificates of training will be provided

  
Presenter: Sgt. Hainley

## Lehigh Acres Fire Control and Rescue District



## NEW YouTube Channel!

We're starting a new mini-series on our YouTube channel called Rig Rundown! Get ready to go behind the scenes with the machines that power firefighting. From rescue trucks to wildland warriors, we're breaking down the gear that keeps our communities safe. Join us as we explore the tools, tech, and heart of the fire service!

Today, we're taking you inside one of the most critical tools in our firefighting arsenal — our Rescue Truck. This isn't just an ambulance; it's a mobile lifesaving hub operated by firefighter-paramedics.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdnNVuxwQic>



# NORTH FORT MYERS & NORTH OLGA EVENTS

---



Vacation Bible School

July 28- August1, 9am- 12pm

Ages 4-14

14531 Old Olga Road

Fort Myers, FL 33905

239-694-3878

(No Charge)

---

Meanwhile in Florida, the finders keepers game is strong.







# BIT BY BIT SADDLE CLUB, INC.

**"A Fun Show for Horse Lovers of  
All Ages, Disciplines and Skill Levels"**

**9:00 am Show Begins**  **Public Welcome!**

**2025 - 26 SHOW DATES:** Oct 19; Nov 9; Dec 7; Jan 11; Feb 15; March 8; April 19

## Classes

- 1 In~Hand Showmanship
- 2 Lead Line Class
- 3 In~Hand Trail/Obstacle
- 4 Trail/Obstacle
- 5 Barrel Race
- 6 Gaited Pleasure ----W/T
- 7 Gaited Pleasure ----W/T/C
- 8 Slow Western Pleasure ----- W/T
- 9 Slow Western Pleasure ----- W/T/C
- 10 Ranch Rail Pleasure ----- W/T
- 11 Ranch Rail Pleasure ----- W/T/C
- 12 Pole Bending
- 13 Novice Box Reining/Boxing --- pattern -- W/T
- 14 Novice Box Reining/Boxing --- pattern -- W/T/C
- 15 W/E Ranch Riding class ---- pattern---W/T
- 16 W/E Ranch Riding class ----pattern---W/T/C
- 17 Basic Western Freestyle Dressage ----W/T
- 18 Fun Speed Class
- 19 English Rail Pleasure -----W/T
- 20 English Rail Pleasure -----W/T/C
- 21 English Equitation -----on the rail -----W/T
- 22 English Equitation -----on the rail -----W/T/C
- 23 Command Class -----W/T
- 24 Command Class -----W/T/C
- 25 Fun Class

**IN Practice Arena!**

**Can be lead line**

Year Membership (single) \$35.00

Year Membership (family) \$55.00

Show Cost for Unlimited # of Classes

Members \$50.00 Family \$70.00

Non-members \$70.00 per rider

Cost per class: \$15.00

★★ **Riders Must Choose W/T or W/T/C. Cannot do both.**

**"Show Clinics" are offered on Saturday, a  
week before the show! Members Only!**

★ **NEGATIVE COGGINS REQUIRED**

**PLEASE, NO STALLIONS!**

★★ **Riders Receive Placement Awards** ★★

Members also receive points from each show for  
year end prizes at the club party in late spring.



**FACEBOOK PAGE**

Bit by Bit Saddle Club

Contact **Adele Smith** for more information

305-799-4651 or E-mail [bitbybit338@gmail.com](mailto:bitbybit338@gmail.com)

**FREESTYLE PERFORMANCES (In Hand & On Back)** ➡ These classes are non-judged & will run during lunch break

## LOCATIONS:

Oct 19; Nov 9; Dec 7: Lee Civic Center 11831 Bayshore Rd, North Fort Myers, FL

Jan 11; Feb 15; March 8; April 19 Lee County Posse Arena 17401 Palm Creek Dr N. Ft Myers, FL

★ **ABSOLUTELY NO HITTING/ ABUSING OF HORSE ANYWHERE, AT ANYTIME!**

★ **PROPER DISCIPLINE EQUIPMENT, HEELED BOOTS, SUGGESTED ATTIRE: SHORT OR LONG SLEEVE SHIRT OR 'CLUB' T-SHIRT, JEANS, BREECHES, LONG PANTS. 18 YEARS OLD and Under MUST WEAR a HELMET!**

★ **MULTIPLE ATTIRE AND TACK CHANGES IN BETWEEN CLASSES ARE NOT NECESSARY!**



# FOR ALL OF US EVENTS



**Premier Mobile Health Services**  
YOUR ROUTE TO BETTER HEALTH

**Orè Klinik Medikal Mobil**

Pasyan ki pa gen asirans sante ki montre prèv revni pi ba pase 200% did Poverty Federal la.  
Pap peye anyen pou sante e sa ki pa rapous a elijans yo. Aj pwèn sante ak yon pri ki vrèman redwi. (Don pri)

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Mèkredi 9 jiyè</b><br><b>FMB Strong</b><br>9:00 am - 1:00 pm<br>820 Buttonwood Drive<br>Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931                              | <b>Plizyè jou pa mwa</b><br>Rele 239-222-1829<br>pou pran yon randevou<br><b>Mount Hermon Ministries</b><br>2856 Douglas Ave<br>Fort Myers, FL 33916   |
| <b>Jedi 10 jiyè</b><br><b>Pine Manor Community Center</b><br>9:00 am - 1:00 pm<br>5547 Tenth Ave.<br>Fort Myers, FL 33907                          | <b>Mèkredi 16 jiyè</b><br><b>Gladiolus Food Pantry</b><br>10:00 am - 2:00 pm<br>10511 Gladiolus Drive<br>Fort Myers, FL 33908  |
| <b>Vandredi 11 ak 25 jiyè</b><br><b>Cafe'of Life</b><br>9:00 am - 1:00 pm<br>26724 Nomad Dr.<br>Bonita Springs, FL 34135                           | <b>Jedi 17 jiyè - 1 pm - 3 pm</b><br><b>Mèkredi 23 jiyè - 9 am - 11 am</b><br><b>Lehigh Community Services</b><br>201 Plaza Drive Suite 103<br>Lehigh Acres, FL 33936                            |
| <b>Samdi 12 jiyè</b><br><b>Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church</b><br>10:00 am - 2:00 pm<br>207 S. 9 <sup>th</sup> Street<br>Immokalee, FL 34142 | <b>Samdi 19 jiyè - 11 am - 3 pm</b><br><b>Jounen Sante Kominotè Wesley</b><br>6100 Memorial Highway<br>Tampa, FL 33615<br><i>Tès depistaj sante ak dan gratis</i><br><i>Manje ak kado gratis</i> |



**Walk-in Klinik/Biwo Prensipal.**  
 10676 Colonial Blvd, Suite 20  
 Fort Myers, FL 33913  
 Mon. rive Vandredi. 8:30 am jiska 5 pm  
[www.PremierMobileHealth.org](http://www.PremierMobileHealth.org)  
 (239) 222-1829 or (239)-288-7949





**Premier Mobile Health Services**  
YOUR ROUTE TO BETTER HEALTH

**Horario de la clínica médica móvil**

Pacientes sin seguro médico y que muestren prueba de ingresos de menos del 200% del Nivel Federal de pobreza no pagan por su consulta. Pacientes que no tienen todos los requerimientos tienen consultas a un precio significativamente reducido.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>miércoles 9 de julio</b><br><b>FMB Strong</b><br>9:00 am a 1:00 pm<br>820 Buttonwood Drive<br>Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931                            | Varios días al mes<br>Llame al 239-222-1829<br>para programar una cita<br><b>Mount Hermon Ministries</b><br>2856 Douglas Ave<br>Fort Myers, FL 33916  |
| <b>jueves 10 de julio</b><br><b>Pine Manor Community Center</b><br>9:00 am a 1:00 pm<br>5547 Tenth Avenue<br>Fort Myers, FL 33907                      | <b>miércoles 16 de julio</b><br><b>Gladiolus Food Pantry</b><br>10:00 am a 2:00 pm<br>10511 Gladiolus Drive<br>Fort Myers, FL 33908   |
| <b>viernes 11 y 25 de julio</b><br><b>Cafe'of Life</b><br>9:00 am a 1:00 pm<br>26724 Nomad Drive<br>Bonita Springs, FL 34135                           | <b>Jueves 17 de julio - 1:00 pm a 3:00 pm</b><br><b>Miércoles 23 de julio - 9:00 am a 11:00 am</b><br><b>Lehigh Community Services</b><br>201 Plaza Drive, Suite 103<br>Lehigh Acres, FL 33936                |
| <b>sábado, 12 de julio</b><br><b>Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church</b><br>10:00 am to 2:00 pm<br>207 South 9 <sup>th</sup> St. Immokalee, FL 34142 | <b>Sábado 19 de julio - 11 am a 3 pm</b><br><b>Wesley Community Health Day</b><br>6100 Memorial Highway<br>Tampa, FL 33615<br><i>Exámenes de salud y dentales gratuitos</i><br><i>Comida y regalos gratis</i> |



**Clinica sin cita previa/Oficina principal**  
 10676 Colonial Blvd, Suite 20  
 Fort Myers, FL 33913  
 de lunes a viernes 8:30 am to 5 pm  
[www.PremierMobileHealth.org](http://www.PremierMobileHealth.org)  
 (239) 222-1829 or (239)-288-7949





**Premier Mobile Health Services**  
YOUR ROUTE TO BETTER HEALTH

**Mobile Medical Clinic Schedule**

Patients without health insurance & that show proof of income below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines pay nothing for care and patients who do not meet income guidelines are provided care at significantly reduced rates.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Wednesday, July 9th</b><br><b>FMB Strong</b><br>9:00 am to 1:00 pm<br>820 Buttonwood Drive<br>Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931                                  | <b>Multiple Days a Month</b><br>Call 239-222-1829<br>to make an appointment<br><b>Mount Hermon Ministries</b><br>2856 Douglas Ave<br>Fort Myers, FL 33916   |
| <b>Thursday, July 10th</b><br><b>Pine Manor Community Center</b><br>9:00 am to 1:00 pm<br>5547 Tenth Ave.<br>Fort Myers, FL 33907                            | <b>Wednesday, July 16th</b><br><b>Gladiolus Food Pantry</b><br>10:00 am to 2:00 pm<br>10511 Gladiolus Drive<br>Fort Myers, FL 33908   |
| <b>Friday, July 11th and 25th</b><br><b>Cafe'of Life</b><br>9:00 am to 1:00 pm<br>26724 Nomad Dr.<br>Bonita Springs, FL 34135                                | <b>Thurs., July 17th - 1 pm to 3 pm</b><br><b>Wed., July 23rd - 9 am to 11 am</b><br><b>Lehigh Community Services</b><br>201 Plaza Drive Suite 103<br>Lehigh Acres, FL 33936  |
| <b>Saturday, July 12th</b><br><b>Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church</b><br>10:00 am to 2:00 pm<br>207 South 9 <sup>th</sup> Street<br>Immokalee, FL 34142 | <b>Saturday, July 19<sup>th</sup> - 11 am to 3 pm</b><br><b>Wesley Community Health Day</b><br>6100 Memorial Highway<br>Tampa, FL 33615<br><i>Free Health &amp; Dental Screenings</i><br><i>Free Food and Giveaways</i> |



**Walk-in Clinic/Main Office.**  
 10676 Colonial Blvd, Suite 20  
 Fort Myers, FL 33913  
 Mon. to Fri. 8:30 am to 5 pm  
[www.PremierMobileHealth.org](http://www.PremierMobileHealth.org)  
 (239) 222-1829 or (239)-288-7949





## 2025 Florida International Airshow: November 1 & 2, 2025



The Florida International AirShow one of America's premier aviation events with an established tradition and reputation, showcasing nationally known performers and exciting static displays of aircraft and vehicles. The AirShow offers opportunities for attendees to learn more about aviation, space, and military services. The show's air and ground displays provide first class entertainment for the entire family. The show has attractive attendee demographics with above average household income, and provides first class amenities and benefits for show sponsors.

**2024 FIAS Canceled Due to Hurricanes Milton and Helene**

### Punta Gorda AIRPORT



**You can VOLUNTEER...**

**<https://www.floridaairshow.com/volunteer>**





WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers



## ***East Lee Wildlife Stewardship Group***

**Donate Today:**

**<https://www.paypal.com/US/fundraiser/charity/5100941>**

Contact <https://www.facebook.com/james.kennedy.96155>



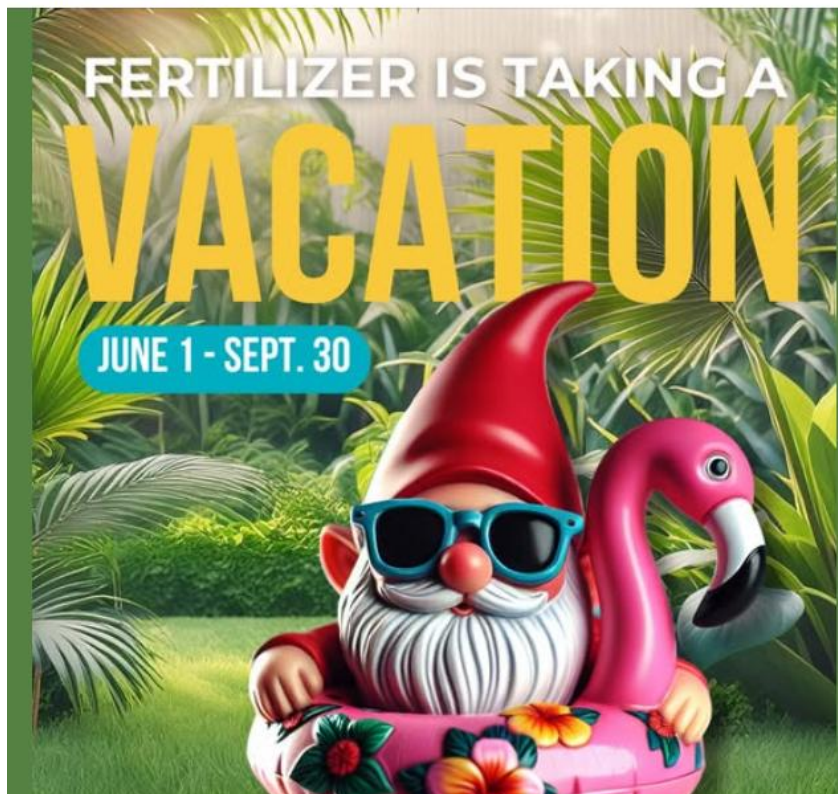
### Lee County Government's Post



Give your fertilizer a break for the summer. 🌴 Stop fertilizing from June 1 to Sept. 30 to do your part in helping us protect our beautiful waterways.

Learn how fertilizer use during the rainy season can impact our local environment and the steps you can take to help at <https://fertilizesmart.com/>

#FertilizeSmart #LeeCounty



WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers



**Big Brothers Big Sisters**

Would your child benefit from having a mentor? **WE CAN HELP!**

**INSPIRE POTENTIAL**  
BECOME A 'BIG' TODAY

**Community-Based Program**  
Community-based mentoring relationships involve mentors and mentees living in the same geographic area. Mentors and mentees meet in person, often at the mentor's home, to build a relationship and work on goals together.

**School-Based Program**  
School-based mentoring takes place at school during one class period a week. Mentors inspire their students to reach their potential as they work on school assignments, promote self-confidence and develop a friendship.

**TOGETHER, WE ARE DEFENDERS OF POTENTIAL**

Learn more about the organization and how your child can benefit from a mentor!  
Contact Laurie Wasinger at 863-345-0107 or [lwasinger@bbsuncoast.org](mailto:lwasinger@bbsuncoast.org)

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast** is here for you and your child.  
Reach out to them today.  
Or, are you interested in beginning a BIG? There are kids waiting for you!

## Lee County Florida 4-H

**ETHICS**

2024/2025 Youth Livestock Show Ethics and Animal Care Workshop

For a list of available virtual and in person workshops, please visit the website. Note that new workshops are being added as needed.

WEBSITE:  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QcGj7R-BtCdNkjheHF3oG-mp0lqDIYE1aCct3lW-922o/edit>

Please note all youth must register to attend an ethics session. They are first come, first serve – don't wait to sign up! If these dates don't work in your families schedule, please see the master list for other dates available from other counties!

Can't remember if your Ethics Number is still valid? Or what it is? If you need your current number or have any questions, please email us at [Emily.Smith@FloridaStateFair.com](mailto:Emily.Smith@FloridaStateFair.com) or call (813) 627-4229.

Are you a 4-H member ages 8-18 and showing a livestock animal? You will need to ensure that your ethics is up to date in order to show at our local livestock shows.

If you're in need of an ethics class, please visit Florida State Fair Agribusiness website at <https://floridastatefairag.com/ethics/>

- Please note classes fill up quickly, and you as the exhibitor/family are encouraged to stay on top of registration. For the full list of classes, please visit the Florida State Fair website (this is updated as classes are added).



## South Florida Wildlands Association

a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of wildlife and habitat in the Greater Everglades.

<https://www.southfloridawild.org/>



<https://flcga.org/>

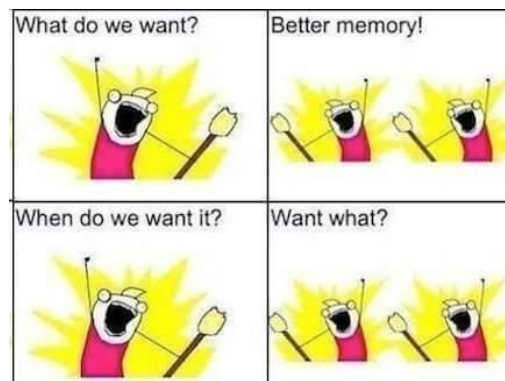
## PROVIDING SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE FOR CITIZENS AND INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS WORKING FOR GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN FLORIDA

The Florida Center for Government Accountability gives citizens the necessary tools and information to engage government officials more effectively by helping them better understand what is happening in their local communities and the effect big money has on local politics.

Traditional news outlets, particularly at the local level, face pressures never before seen and are increasingly unable to meet the informational needs of the public due to limited and dwindling resources.

Florida has the most progressive open government laws in the nation, yet citizen and media demands for public records too frequently result in questionable agency-imposed rules and restrictions and unlawful delays and denials. Also, the lack of accessibility of accurate reporting and over accessibility of inaccurate and biased information on or through the internet and social media more often results in misinformation, rather than accurate and well-researched facts. Citizens need access to reliable, fact-based, non-partisan information in order to hold government accountable.

NICK PENNIMAN, PRESIDENT, NAPLES, FL





WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers

## INTERACTIVE Crime Location Map for Lee County



<https://www.sheriffleefl.org/crime-map-2-0/>

Updated constantly

---



**CIVIL AIR PATROL**  
U.S. AIR FORCE AUXILIARY

# JOIN US!

LEE COUNTY COMPOSITE SQUADRON

*Adults Ages 19+ and Young Adults Ages 12-18*

Non-Pilot, Pilot, Drone, Communications and Many Others  
All Training Provided and No Military Experience Required

**FORMATION MEETING • DEC 7TH • 10AM-12PM**

Base Operations, 5200 Captain Channing Page Drive, Fort Myers, FL  
Contact Lt. Jesse Spencer at [jesse.spencer@flwgcap.us](mailto:jesse.spencer@flwgcap.us) or 239-788-7820

Whatever Your Skill or Interest,  
There is a Place for You in the  
**CIVIL AIR PATROL**



**VOLUNTEERS SERVING AMERICA! [GoCivilAirPatrol.com](http://GoCivilAirPatrol.com)**

---

Deep thought of today:

When you clean out a  
vacuum cleaner.

You become a vacuum  
cleaner.

WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers



**CONTACT:**

*Calusa Waterkeeper*

*P.O. Box 1165*

*Ft. Myers, FL 33902*

*[info@CalusaWaterkeeper.org](mailto:info@CalusaWaterkeeper.org)*

*239-899-1440*



**QUICK 6 Q&A** Celebrate Mosquito Awareness Week by protecting yourself!  
June 15-21

**1**



**What is the best way to prevent mosquito bites?**

- Wear long sleeve shirts and pants.
- Use EPA registered repellent.
- Avoid being outside during evening hours when mosquitoes are active.
- Remove standing water.

**2**



**Why do I get bitten more than others?**

People are unique, so some are more attractive to mosquitoes due to different levels in body temperature (perspiration), carbon dioxide (breath), and lactic acid (skin).

**3**



**What do I do if I need help with mosquito control?**

Contact your local mosquito control program, which can be found here:  
<https://www.fda.gov/Business-Services/Mosquito-Control/Mosquito-Control-Programs>

**4**



**How many species of mosquitoes are there?**

- Worldwide there are over 3,500 species (except Antarctica).
- In Florida, there are more than 80 species.

**5**



**Do bats help control mosquitoes?**

As opportunistic feeders, bats will consume mosquitoes, but not enough to significantly reduce mosquito populations.

**6**



**Why do only female mosquitoes bite?**

Female mosquitoes require the protein from a bloodmeal for the proper development of eggs.



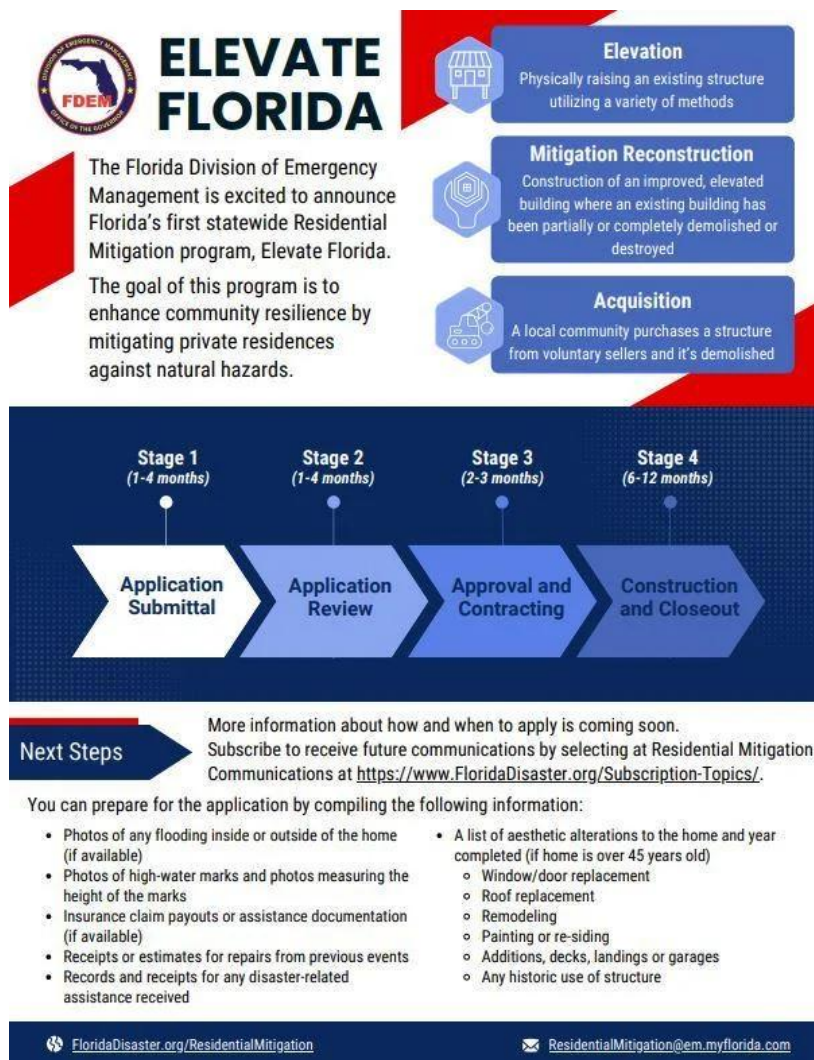


## -----Fatherhood Mentors & Volunteers of Lee County, Florida

Sean Ryan, Fatherhood Mentors & Volunteers Administrator,  
[nearbyclinic@hotmail.com](mailto:nearbyclinic@hotmail.com)

Joshua Krakow, Active Dads Administrator

Single Dads Outreach has leadership opportunities on its Advisory Council for professions, retired or active, in the fields of social work, law enforcement, corrections and education. In addition, Single Dads Outreach services include mentoring from prior, seasoned fathers. Please contact [www.SingleDadsOutReach.org](http://www.SingleDadsOutReach.org) or your local United Way in Lee County to learn about these volunteer opportunities.



## The **ALVA BOOKIE** Book Review

By Ramona DeWalt, Oak Park, Alva, Florida [MonaDeWalt1@gmail.com](mailto:MonaDeWalt1@gmail.com)



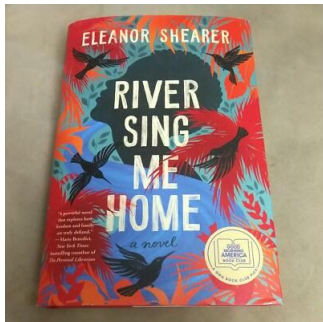
Mona spent 13 years with Borders Books before she opened her own 5,000 square foot used book store in Douglassville, Eastern PA. Ramona retired with her husband, Ken, in 2014 and has since made it her purpose to help others learn the joys of reading from helping to build the Children's Library at Charleston Park to sharing her BOOKIE SENSE (like Spidey Sense only better read) with other readers. She and Ken have traveled the continent over the past 10 summers visiting friends, family, historic and natural wonders AND Friends of the Library Used Bookstores to search for desired used books at up to 90% discount under list prices and in great condition.

Mona visits library and thrift used book sales everywhere she goes. She and Ken have a constantly changing home collection of over 200 titles yet to read. When read they are most donated to another library book store or friends.

You may contact her via email at [MonaDeWalt1@gmail.com](mailto:MonaDeWalt1@gmail.com)

---

### River Sing Me Home by Eleanor Shearer



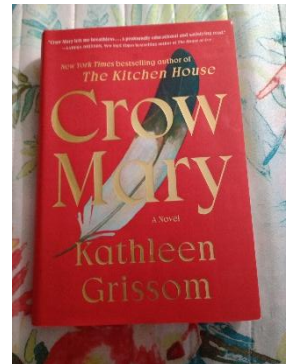
The master of the Providence plantation in Barbados gathers his slaves and announces the king has decreed an end to slavery. As of the following day, the Emancipation Act on 1834 will come into effect. The cries of joy fall silent when he announced that they are no longer slaves; they are now his apprentices. No one can leave. They must work for him for another six years. Freedom is just another name for the life they have always lived. So, Rachel runs.

This book is a moving, powerful, page-turning, and redemptive story of a mother's gripping journey across the Caribbean to find her stolen children in the aftermath of slavery. Published in 2023

---

### Crow Mary by Kathleen Grissom

is a historical novel inspired by the life of the real Crow Mary and endorsed by her great-granddaughter, Crow elders and Crow scholars. It is an epic love story that sweeps across decades, showcases the beauty of the natural world, and probes the intimacies of a marriage and one woman's heart. Published in 2023



**Ramona checks the new Eagle Scout Little FREE Library weekly.**

**It's located in the front yard of the ALVA Historic Library & Museum at Pearl and Julia Streets**



*to protect and preserve the rights and liberties of all people in the United States*

<https://www.aclufl.org/>



Did you know? Criminals can try to steal your home or property by illegally recording a fraudulent deed.



Sign up for free Property Fraud Alerts and get notified within 24 hours if someone tries to file a fraudulent deed or mortgage in your name.

<https://www.facebook.com/leeclerkofcourt>



<https://my.lwv.org/florida/lee-county>

**Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.**



## **SCORE** South West Florida

**2201 Second Street, Suite 500, Fort Myers, FL 33901**

**(239) 533-3102, [ch.admin0219@scorevolunteer.org](mailto:ch.admin0219@scorevolunteer.org)**

### **Serving Lee and Hendry Counties**

We provide free and confidential one-on-one business counseling by phone, email, and in-person in Lee and Hendry counties. We also conduct workshops for both start-up entrepreneurs and seasoned small business owners. SCORE is a fully independent private 501-3C non-profit with accountability to and some funding from the SB

**SCORE Mentors...**with experience in virtually every business category you can imagine help with:

- Business plan development, sales and marketing strategies
- Financing, taxes and E-commerce
- Management, administrative and operational procedures
- Ongoing advice to help your decision making

#### **Life-Long Learning Made Easy**

SCORE mentors, sponsors and local business owners with a specific areas of expertise conduct a variety of very popular, regularly scheduled, low-cost and free educational seminars and online workshops for establishing and managing a successful small business.

#### **Free Resources**

With access to a wide variety of documents, templates and tools to assist you in starting or growing your business, the information provided here covers a wide range of subjects including initial business planning, capital sources, government agencies, and much more.



*Major William M. Footman*

*Sons of Confederate Veterans*

*Camp 1950, Fort Myers, Florida*



Consider joining us at our monthly meeting every 4th Saturday at

Smoke'n Pit Bar-B-Q, 1641 N. Tamiami Trail, North Ft. Myers, FL 33903

Lunch and fellowship - 11:00am, Meeting - 12:00pm

Brigade Commander: Sean McFall

Find out more about us at

Camp Adjutant: Gerald W. Shell, email: [adjutant@camp1950.flscv.org](mailto:adjutant@camp1950.flscv.org)  
<https://www.camp1950.flscv.org/>



*We care for local grave sites of  
Confederate Civil War and  
United States veterans of all  
wars*

## The Great Calusa Blueway Paddling Trail

A 190-mile marked canoe and kayak trail that meanders through the coastal waters and inland tributaries of Lee County, Florida. It attracts everyone from first-time kayakers to advanced paddlers and is home to abundant marine life, shore birds and crustaceans.

<https://www.fortmyers-sanibel.com/calusablueway>



---

[www.RichAndLaurieInSouthFlorida.com](http://www.RichAndLaurieInSouthFlorida.com)



**Listen to the Podcast and follow on Youtube, and more!**

***For information on where to go and what to do in SWFL!***

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvcRaJr9jghdQOgsnU2B6Pw>



## Fort Myers CAMERA CLUB

Photographers at all levels of ability throughout Lee County are invited to the regular bi-monthly meetings of the Fort Myers Camera Club. Meetings are held the 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month (from November 1 to April 3) from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.

Meetings are held at the All Faiths Church, 2736 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers. Annual dues for membership are \$30. Novices are welcome and mentoring is available. Various speakers at the meetings cover topics such as critiquing, competition, and instruction.

**See [ftmyerscc.com](http://ftmyerscc.com) website or email [carolheff23@gmail.com](mailto:carolheff23@gmail.com) for additional information about the Camera Club.**

WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers



The global farm is not only a hands-on training ground for those searching for help in tropical agriculture, but also an educational tool to make the public aware of hunger related issues and the answers there are to alleviate malnutrition and starvation.

17391 Durrance Road, North Fort Myers, FL 33917 | 239.543.3246 | [info@echonet.org](mailto:info@echonet.org)  
<https://www.echonet.org>



There are six fenced-in "Dog Parks" which allow for off-leash play. On-leash dog walking is allowed at many locations (listed below).

Dogs must be accompanied by an adult and must remain on-leash at all times while walking in the park. Find out more at: <https://www.leegov.com/parks/dog-parks>



## Six Mile Cypress Slough, Lee County Park

7751 Penzance Boulevard, Fort Myers, FL. 33966

A mile of wonder 30 minutes away from Alva.



## Manatee Park

10901 Palm Beach Blvd,

Fort Myers, FL 33905

239 690 5030





## **Olga Community Park**

2325 S Olga Dr, Fort Myers, FL 33905

(239) 533-7275



## **Hickey's Creek Mitigation Park**

17980 Palm Beach Blvd, Alva, FL, 33920

-Great for quiet creek kayaking. -Fun for walks and picnics.



## **ALVA BOAT RAMP PARK**

21580 Pearl St,

Alva, FL 33920



## **W.P. Franklin Lock & Dam South Recreation Area**

Franklin Lock Rd. , Alva , FL 33920. Contact: (239) 694-2582



WP Franklin South Recreation Area is a day use area located on the Caloosahatchee River adjacent to the WP Franklin Lock and Dam. Visitors can watch boats traversing the 152 mile Okeechobee Waterway

## **W.P Franklin Lock & Dam CAMPGROUND**

Camp by reservation only

17850 NORTH FRANKLIN LOCK ROAD, ALVA, FL 33920, 239-694-8770

<https://www.recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/233661>





## Alva Community Center PARK

21471 North River Road, Alva, FL 33920 , (239) 728-2882

### Shady lawns & baseball field

-----



## Telegraph Creek: Unspoiled kayak trail

out-of-the-way, uncrowded, scenic,  
quiet and full of wildlife.

-----



## NORTH FORT MYERS Recreation Park

2000 North Recreation Park Way, North Fort  
Myers, FL 33903,

This park features an 18 hole Disc Golf course , call  
(239) 297-8916

-----

## Veterans Park Recreation Center

55 Homestead Road South, Lehigh Acres, FL 33936



## COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE



### *Community Cafe, Mobile Pantry's, and Meals on Wheels*

HOW YOU CAN HELP: DONATE so that we can continue purchasing food to distribute at our Mobile Pantries. HOST A FOOD DRIVE and collect non-perishable food items to stock our shelves.

VOLUNTEER in the Community Cafe, at a Mobile Pantry, or as a Meals on Wheels Driver. Call (239) 332-7687. [Tami@communitycooperative.com](mailto:Tami@communitycooperative.com) or call 239-332-7687, ext. 125.



### **BABCOCK RANCH ECO TOURS, Museum and Gator Shack Restaurant** Go to website to reserve tours

<https://babcockranchecotours.com/>



Lee County Conservation 20/20 manages over 50 preserves spread throughout Lee County, including within the boundaries of most cities. These preserves combined total nearly 30,000 acres.



Preserves are open daily during daylight hours. Access may be limited at certain locations due to temporary flooding, special restoration projects, or isolated location. Information about each Conservation 20/20 preserve can be accessed from the website:

<http://www.leegov.com/conservation2020/preserves>



*Bob Janes Preserve*



*Buckingham Trails Preserve*



*Daniel's Preserve at Spanish Creek*



*Olga Shores Preserve*



*Alva Scrub Preserve*



*Carter's Lane*



WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers



Aerial view of Oak Hammock Preserve

Oak hammock



Telegraph Creek Preserve



Frank Mann Preserve



# CALOOSAHATCHEE REGIONAL PARK

19130 North River Road, Alva, FL 33920

EMAIL: [leeparks@leegov.com](mailto:leeparks@leegov.com)

Shelter rentals, primitive tent camping, Horse and bike trails. **Campground phone: (239) 533-7421**



## ***Improve ANY meeting you LEAD or ATTEND!***

***By Laurie Dougherty,***

*Professional Meeting Facilitator for Community Groups*

*Laurie@Dougherty-Inc.com*



### **Taking Notes That Matter: The 3-Point Summary Method**

Taking notes during a meeting doesn't have to be complicated or stressful. In fact, the best notes are often the simplest. One easy method is the 3-Point Summary. Instead of trying to capture every word, just focus on three key things: (1) What decisions were made, (2) What actions need to happen, and (3) Who is responsible for each action. This way, you leave the meeting with a clear record of what matters most—without pages of extra detail. Be sure to include a list of who was at the meeting, of course!

This method is perfect for small community groups, church committees, or volunteer boards where meetings are friendly but still need to stay organized. After the meeting, you can easily send out the 3-point summary in an email so everyone is on the same page. Keeping it short encourages people to actually read it—and follow through on their tasks. A simple list is often more helpful than long, detailed minutes that get ignored.

If you're worried you'll miss something important, just listen for decisions and next steps. You don't need to write down every discussion or opinion. People will appreciate having a clear, short reminder of what was agreed on and what needs to happen next. Try the 3-Point Summary at your next meeting—you'll spend less time writing and more time getting things done!

**Author:** Laurie Dougherty is a professional facilitator and trainer specializing in helping groups run more effective and engaging meetings. With years of experience in leadership training and community engagement, Laurie provides practical, easy-to-implement strategies to improve group discussions.

-----

This guy just spins the Earth around  
until he arrives at his destination







## LOSS OF HEALTH COVERAGE



You might be eligible for a Special Enrollment Period if you or someone in your household has lost qualifying health coverage in the last 60 days or expects to lose coverage in the next 60 days. Additionally, if you lost Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage within the past 90 days, you may also qualify for a Special Enrollment Period.



Call: 1.866.547.2793  
Visit: [www.EnrollSWFL.com](http://www.EnrollSWFL.com)  
For more information



This program is supported by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$33,762,500 with 100 percent funded by CMS/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government.



### ASSIST CONSUMERS WITH SEP VERIFICATION FOR COVERAGE LOSS

We are contacting you to inform you that pre-enrollment verification for the Marketplace's loss of Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC) Special Enrollment Period (SEP) will start on Friday, May 16, 2025.

#### Impact on Consumers:

If a consumer claims to have experienced or expects a loss of MEC and qualifies for a SEP, but our systems can't automatically verify this loss, they must provide documentation proving the loss or anticipated loss of coverage before using their plan.

A Special Enrollment Period Verification Issue (SVI) will occur when a plan is selected, requiring manual verification for the MEC loss. Consumers will have 30 days to submit the necessary documentation to resolve the SVI. If the SVI isn't resolved within this timeframe, the consumer won't be able to access their health coverage.

LEARN MORE

Contact us  
1.866.547.2793

Visit our website  
[www.EnrollSWFL.com](http://www.EnrollSWFL.com)



HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL  
OF NAVIGATORS

PRESENTED BY  
★★★★★★★★★  
**VICTORY TOWN CENTER**  
SUPPORTED BY VICTORY CHURCH AND  
SWFL BUSINESS ALLIANCE - EAST LEE CHAPTER

5th ANNUAL  
**4TH OF JULY**

**FIREWORK SHOW**  
WITH LIVE MUSIC  
FOOD & ENTERTAINMENT  
(239) 303-9585

TIME: 5PM-10PM | FREE EVENT  
[WWW.VICTORYTOWNCENTER.COM](http://WWW.VICTORYTOWNCENTER.COM)

★★★★★★★★★  
1201 TAYLOR LN EXT,  
LEHIGH ACRES, FL 33936  
BEHIND BURGER KING





## TEACHING YOUR KIDS ABOUT TEXT SCAMS

You're not the only one getting scammy text messages about unpaid toll charges or issues with your Amazon account. Chances are your tweens and teens with phones are getting them, too. Sure, you can tell your kids to delete and never respond to unexpected texts. But if you want them to understand and stay safe, you need to have a plan for teaching them about online dangers and why it is so important to be careful.

The next [scam text](#) you get could be a great way to start a conversation about how text scams work. Scammers impersonate real companies and agencies in text messages. Their goal? Get you to give them information like your Social Security or credit card number. Let your kids know why never to click links in unexpected text messages: not only are people not always who they say they are online, but clicking could lead you to a [website that tries to steal your data](#). Make sure they know that sharing personal or financial information could lead to bigger problems, like [identity theft](#), losing your money, or scammers getting access to your accounts.

Help kids know how to [delete and report junk text messages](#) on their phones. To turn it into a game, ask kids to show you the message first and explain how they knew it was a scam. Here's your answer key — one point each time they correctly [spot a scam](#):

- Scammers might [pretend](#) to be someone from school or a well-known business.
- Scammers say there's a [problem or prize](#) to get you to respond. Not sure that problem or prize is real? Get help from a parent or trusted adult.
- Scammers use [pressure](#) so you don't have time to think. Slow down.
- Scammers tell you to [pay](#) with cash, a [gift card](#), [wire transfer](#), [cryptocurrency](#), or [payment app](#). Paying in these ways makes it hard to get your money back.

Once your kid earns enough points, come up with a special treat to celebrate. Learn more about spam text messages at [fl.gov/textscams](https://fl.gov/textscams).

*Southwest Florida Cooking by*  
*MAGGIE McMan*  
*of Oak Park, Alva*  
Contact Maggie to find out more at: [Maggie1m@aol.net](mailto:Maggie1m@aol.net)



## BUCKINGHAM FIREWORKS CAKE

### Ingredients

#### CAKE:

- Cooking spray
- 1 cup (8 oz.) salted butter, softened
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs, at room temperature
- 3 cups (about 12 3/4 oz.) all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon table salt
- 1 cup whole milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

#### FILLINGS:

- 1 teaspoon cornstarch, divided
- 1 teaspoon water, divided
- 6 ounces fresh blueberries
- 2/3 cup granulated sugar, divided
- 3 tablespoons fresh orange juice (from 1 orange), divided
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (from 1 lemon), divided
- 1/4 teaspoon table salt, divided
- 1 cup chopped fresh strawberries (from 1 3/4 cups whole strawberries)

#### FROSTING:

- 1 (8-oz.) container mascarpone cheese



- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup (about 2 oz.) powdered sugar, divided
- 2 cups heavy cream

#### GARNISHES

- Fresh local blueberries and strawberries

#### Directions

1. Prepare the Cake: Preheat oven to 350°F. Generously coat a 9- x 13-inch baking pan with cooking spray. Line bottom of baking pan with parchment paper; coat paper with cooking spray. Beat butter with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until creamy, about 1 minute. Gradually add sugar, beating until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add eggs 1 at a time, beating until just blended after each addition.
2. Whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. Add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with milk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating on low speed until just blended after each addition. Stir in vanilla. Pour batter into prepared baking pan.
3. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center of Cake comes out clean, 30 to 40 minutes. Transfer Cake in baking pan to a wire rack; let cool 10 minutes. Invert Cake onto wire rack; let cool completely, about 1 hour.
4. Prepare the Fillings: Stir together 1/2 teaspoon each of the cornstarch and water in a small bowl; set aside. Stir together blueberries, 1/3 cup of the sugar, 1 1/2 tablespoons of the orange juice, 1 1/2 tablespoons of the lemon juice, and 1/8 teaspoon of the salt in a medium saucepan. Bring mixture to a simmer over medium, stirring constantly. Continue simmering, stirring occasionally, until sugar dissolves, about 5 minutes. Stir in cornstarch-water mixture; simmer, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens slightly, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Remove from heat; let cool 15 minutes. Process mixture using an immersion blender until smooth, about 30 seconds. (Alternatively, transfer mixture to a blender, and blend until smooth.) Pour mixture into a bowl; cover and chill until cold, about 1 hour. Meanwhile, repeat procedure with remaining cornstarch, water, sugar, orange juice, lemon juice, and salt, using chopped strawberries in place of the blueberries.
5. Assemble the Cake: Place Cake on a serving plate. Using a 1/4-inch-wide wooden dowel or the round handle of a wooden spoon, poke holes spaced 1 inch apart over the entire Cake surface, poking at least three-quarters of the way through the Cake, but not poking all the way to the bottom. Spoon blueberry and strawberry Fillings alternately in lengthwise rows over Cake surface, being sure to fill all holes. Chill, uncovered, 1 hour.
6. Prepare the Frosting: Beat mascarpone cheese, vanilla, and 1/4 cup powdered of the sugar with a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment on medium speed until just combined, about 30 seconds. Add heavy cream; beat on medium speed until foamy, about 30 seconds. Increase speed to medium-high; gradually add remaining 1/4 cup powdered sugar, beating until stiff peaks form, about 1 minute, 30 seconds. (Do not overbeat.)
7. Spread Frosting evenly around sides of chilled Cake. Dollop remaining Frosting onto top of Cake, carefully spreading over top. Garnish with fresh blueberries and strawberries.







SWFL Crime Stoppers is NOT a substitute for calling 9-1-1. In the event of an emergency, please call 9-1-1. Those who submit a tip are called "tipsters" and will remain 100% anonymous. No caller ID. No recorded lines. No tracking of phone calls. We want your information, not your name!

Put simply it is a three-part approach to solving the crime problem. SWFL Crime Stoppers relies on cooperation between our community, the media, and law enforcement to provide a flow of information about crime, wanted fugitives and suspicious activities.



## Mission

Volunteer Florida strengthens Florida's communities through national service, fostering volunteerism and leveraging resources.

<https://volunteer.volunteerflorida.org/>



Effective immediately, persons who are experiencing homelessness (living outside, in a car, or other place not meant for human habitation) and seeking permanent housing resources in the Lee County CoC should contact 239-533-7900, and select options 1, 5, then 3, to complete a Coordinated Assessment.

WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers



All young people  
**DREAM** of a bright  
future—one that's full of  
**OPPORTUNITIES.**  
**POSSIBILITIES.**

**MENTORSHIP  
MATTERS!**

Today's mentee is tomorrow's  
leader, so let's help them  
shape a **strong future.**

Join us for a **virtual open house** to learn  
more about becoming a **MENTOR (BIG)**

**EVERY WEDNESDAY FROM 4 PM - 4:30 PM**

Contact **Teresa Taft** at **941-586-0707** | [ttaft@bbbssun.org](mailto:ttaft@bbbssun.org)

**JOIN US ON ZOOM AT:**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81091089176>  
**Meeting ID: 810 9108 9176**



**Give TIME. Give  
MONEY. Give FOOD.**

To make a donation, **call**  
**(239) 334-7007** or visit

[www.harrychapinfoodbank.org](http://www.harrychapinfoodbank.org)

**We do our best to keep you all informed on where you can get food and how you  
can help.**

**For Food pickup locations:**

<https://harrychapinfoodbank.org/?s=Food+locations>

The **Florida IMMIGRANT Coalition** asks that you copy and print these information cards to share with any person, documented or not, you may know who may be in danger.

ICE and local enforcement of immigration policies have escalated in Southwest Florida. Be aware of your rights.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE WAS PICKED UP BY ICE



### **First, report the raid!**

Contact your local community organization if you have one and share the raid information. If you do not know of any organizations, you can report the raid to the Immigrant Defense Project (IDP) at 212-725-6422. Be ready to provide details about the raid.

**Second, retrieve your loved one's information.** It is important to have your loved one's complete name, date of birth, country of origin, and their A-Number if possible. An A-Number begins with an "A" and is followed by eight or nine digits. This is an identifying number issued by the Department of Homeland Security for anyone who has had contact with any immigration agency.

### **Q: WHAT HAPPENS IMMEDIATELY AFTER ICE DETAINS MY LOVED ONE?**

**A:** If ICE arrests your loved one, they will first be taken to an ICE office for processing and then to a jail where they will be detained. Families will often get a call from their loved one a few hours after the arrest.

### **Q: HOW DO WE KNOW WHEN THE FIRST COURT DATE WILL BE?**

**A:** If your loved one does NOT have an order of removal, in most cases they will be placed in removal proceedings, which means they can fight their case in front of an immigration judge while detained. You can find out when and where the court date will be by calling the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) Automated System at 1-800-898-7180 or by visiting EOIR's automated website: <https://acis.eoir.justice.gov/en/>.

### **Q: HOW WILL THEY GET A LAWYER?**

**A:** Most detained people are unrepresented, because the U.S. government does not provide an immigration lawyer, even if the person cannot afford one. In New York, some detained non-citizens will be appointed an immigration attorney through the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP) after their first court date but before their second court date. This program provides a free attorney to individuals who are detained and do NOT have a prior order of removal (see the information sheet on NYIFUP included on page 27). *Important: if you hire a private attorney before the first court date, you will be disqualified from NYIFUP, even if you cannot afford to pay that attorney in the future.*

### **Q: SHOULD WE TALK TO AN IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY NOW?**

**A:** If a loved one has an order of removal you should consult with an immigration attorney right away. It is important to determine whether the loved one already has a prior order of deportation because they will be at imminent risk of deportation and might need immediate attorney intervention.

### **Q: HOW LONG WILL THEY BE DETAINED?**

**A:** If a loved one qualifies for a way to legally stop the deportation in court, they may be detained for many months and sometimes years, all while fighting their case. Under immigration law, some people qualify for a "bond hearing" within the first few months to try and fight their case from the outside while other people are not eligible. Even with a "bond hearing" many people will not be released or they may not be able to afford the bond amount set. Families should make financial plans in order to have money ready for bond and support themselves, for a potentially long period of time, without their loved one's income.

### **Q: HOW CAN I VISIT THEM AND SEND THEM MONEY?**

**A:** Each jail has different rules. Specific updated information can be found here: <https://www.ice.gov/detention-facilities>. In the following page you can find information for the most common detention centers.

### **Q: CAN WE PREPARE NOW WHILE WAITING FOR COURT?**

**A:** Yes. There are documents that the family can start to collect that may help. In addition, if the loved one had an ongoing obligation to report (maybe to criminal court to pay a fee, probation, a rehabilitative program, etc.), it is important to let the point of contact for that reporting know that your loved one is detained. This can be a long to do list - and a great way for organizers or community members to support the family through this process.



## Community of Care

### How Heart Wounds Heal

A group experience to bring healing to wounds of the heart—emotions, spirit, soul—from the unique hurt, trauma or loss experienced by many in their lives. People experiencing deep hurt of all kinds may find relief, reassurance and healing in this offering of care.

Often, those with heart wounds experience exhaustion, increased irritability or, feeling overwhelmed, isolated, or weighed down by grief or seemingly unending need.

These reactions require the security of a safe fellowship space to facilitate healing. The group will be led by compassionate, faith-filled facilitators who are trained in Bible-based trauma healing.

Together, we will make a safe space for group members to:

- Discover what the Bible says about those who hurt
- Learn about heart or soul hurt and its effects
- Experience being heard and valued
- Release some emotional pain
- Build resilience for the future

**HurtMending Facilitators:**  
**Tee Ormiston**, Adult and Generational Trauma Facilitator/Trainer  
**George Ormiston**, Adult and Generational Trauma Facilitator/Trainer  
**Register at:** Eventbrite  
**Contact:** [HurtMending@gmail.com](mailto:HurtMending@gmail.com)  
 Grace for Registration fee waived by emailed request

**12 Tuesdays**  
 3/4 - 5/20

**Time: EST**  
 6:30 - 8:00

Email for Registration  
[HurtMending@gmail.com](mailto:HurtMending@gmail.com)  
 or  
 Follow us on Eventbrite

**TRAUMA HEALING INSTITUTE** in collaboration with **AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY**

## Buckingham Presbyterian Church

Join us  
**SUNDAY**  
 10 am Worship  
 Followed by Fellowship

Searching for a welcoming, friendly, Bible-teaching place of worship? Look no further! Whether it's Sunday services or Wednesday Night Connection, come see what's going on.

**Weekly Sunday Services:**  
 10:00 am - Worship  
 11:00 am - Fellowship / refreshments

**Wednesday Night Connection:**  
 6:00 pm - Pot-Luck Dinner\*  
 6:45 pm - Bible Study

**Buckingham Presbyterian Church**  
 4241 Buckingham Road  
 Fort Myers, FL 33905  
[BuckinghamPresbyterian@gmail.com](mailto:BuckinghamPresbyterian@gmail.com)  
<https://buckinghampc.org/>  
 239.694.2444

\*Please bring enough to feed 8 people.

Sharing God's Love through Fellowship, Ministry & Worship

## Big Brothers Big Sisters®

### OF THE SUN COAST

# We're Hiring

## JOIN OUR TEAM

### BECOME A MENTOR MANAGER- MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY!

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast is seeking an outgoing, experienced Human Services professional with a passion for working with youth in the role of Mentor Manager.
- BBBS Sun Coast is an Agency that promotes the mentoring relationships between Bigs and Littles for the purpose of igniting the potential in each child served.

**JOIN OUR MISSION APPLY AT**

- [bbbssun.org](http://bbbssun.org)

## CHILD CARE

### of Southwest Florida, Inc.

# NOW HIRING

## EARLY LEARNING TEACHERS & ADMINISTRATORS

Child Care of Southwest Florida is now hiring full and part-time positions at our locations across Lee County and our centers within Lee County schools.

**Current Locations**

- Children's Garden of LaBelle, LaBelle
- Joseph H. Messina Children's Center, Fort Myers
- P.A. Geraci Development Center, Fort Myers
- The Children's Learning Center, Fort Myers
- The Community Children's Center, Lehigh Acres
- G. Weaver Hipps Early Learning Center, Lehigh Acres

**Opening Soon**  
**In-School Early Learning Centers**

- Harns Marsh Middle, Buckingham
- Bonita Springs Middle, Bonita Springs
- San Carlos Park Elementary, Fort Myers
- Ray V. Pottorf Elementary, Fort Myers
- Pelican Elementary, Cape Coral

**SCAN THE QR CODE**  
 to explore career opportunities and apply for open positions online or call (239) 320-7799

**COME GROW WITH US! APPLY NOW**

The school district is neither endorsing nor sponsoring this event, product or service, nor endorsing the views of the sponsoring organization.



# Alva Area FOOD PANTRIES

## Grace Church, Fort Myers Shores

**2nd Saturday every month**

**Food pick-up is by appointment.  
Call the church office at 239-694-2797 for information.**

## Charleston Park Community Center

**239-728-8895**

**FOOD PANTRY**

**Every week, Friday, 10am-2pm**

## ALVA Methodist Church

**Food Pantry @ Bethany House**

**Food Pantry: 9am-12pm 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays**

**239-728-2277**

## CALVARY NATIONS Church

**19850 Palm Beach Boulevard, Alva**

**Every Saturday, 3pm until supplies run out.**

**239-7285566**

## St. Vincent DePaul RC

**Our Lady's Cupboard Food Pantry**

**Call (239) 694-3985 for hours open.**

*Some LaBelle Area Churches:*

---

Assemblies of God

(863) 675-4227

915 Lake Manor Dr Labelle, FL 33935

Pentecostal Church of God

(863) 675-0900

55 Orange Ave, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-0938

Carlson Memorial Church

310 Campbell St Labelle FL, 33935

LaBelle Assembly of God

(863) 675-0656

915 Lake Manor Dr Labelle FL

(863) 675-0900

The Channel UMC Ft Myers/LaBelle

Fully ONLINE LIVE, Mondays, 7pm, EST

LaBelle First Baptist

<https://www.facebook.com/TheChannelUMC/>

330 N Main St, Labelle, FL 33935

ZOOM LINK:

(863) 675-2171

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89527254110?pwd=bWEyL283YW9sck52R2V5UDVqTEJiQT09>

Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish

Church of Christ Central

355 S Bridge St, Labelle, FL 33935

60 Hendry St, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-0030

(863) 675-4796

Christ Central LaBelle, Reformed

Eastside Baptist Church

540 1st Ave LaBelle FL

1110 S Carlyle St, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-2100

(863) 675-3595

Good Shepherd Episcopal

El Faro Assemblies of God of LaBelle

1098 Collingswood Pkwy, LaBelle FL

431 Bryan Ave, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-0385

(863) 675-5947

<https://goodshepherd.dioswfl.org>

Christ The King Lutheran

Grace Baptist

1362 Thigpen Rd, Labelle, FL 33935

4200 Ne Eucalyptus Blvd, Labelle, FL 33935

(941) 675-2733

(863) 675-3349

New Testament Assembly

International Christian Fellowship

60 Calhoun St, Labelle, FL 33935

233 Clark St, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 674-0444



Paynes Creek Primitive Baptist

83 Campbell St, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-1435

Saint Matthews Missionary Baptist

929 Caloosahatchee Ave, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-4451

Bethel Holiness

1153 Cornelia Dr SW, Labelle, FL 33935

Church of Peace

814 Fordson Ave, Labelle, FL 33935 (863) 674-0074

New Bethel Baptist

874 Suwanee Ave, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-3205

Upper Room Church of God

345 S Bridge St, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-7001



---

### **Some Alva & Fort Myers Shores Churches:**

**St. Vincent DePaul's RC Church**

13031 Palm Beach Boulevard, Fort Myers, FL 33905

[www.stvincentftmyers.org](http://www.stvincentftmyers.org) 239-693-0818

**Alva Methodist Church**

21440 Pearl St. P.O Box 96

Alva, FL 33920

[Alvamc@embarqmail.com](mailto:Alvamc@embarqmail.com)

[www.alvamethodist.org](http://www.alvamethodist.org) 239-728-2277

**Alva Church of God**

21520 Park St, Alva, Florida 33920

239-728-2644

**Liberation International Church**

Avenue D, Charleston Park

Alva, FL 33920,

239-601-4870

**New Hope Faith Temple of Jesus Christ**

23210 Avenue D, Charleston Park

Alva, FL, 33920 239-770-4974

**Buckingham Presbyterian Church**

4241 Buckingham Road

Fort Myers, FL 33905

[www.buckinghampc.org](http://www.buckinghampc.org)

**Light of the Nations Filipino Congregation**

19850 Palm Beach Blvd (at Calvary Church)

Alva, FL, 33920

239-728-5566



**First Spanish Assembly of God Church**

2219 Joel Blvd

Alva, FL

**Countryside Wesleyan Church**

17750 Palm Beach Blvd, Alva, FL 33920

239-368-3270

**Calvary Nations Church**

19850 Palm Beach Blvd

Alva, FL 33920

[CalvaryChurchSwfl@yahoo.com](mailto:CalvaryChurchSwfl@yahoo.com)

[www.calvarynations.org](http://www.calvarynations.org) 239-728-5566

**First Baptist Church of Alva**

2790 Joel Blvd, Alva, FL, 33920

[www.alvabaptist.com](http://www.alvabaptist.com) 239-728-2034

**Grace Church, Ft Myers Shores**

14036 Matanzas Drive, Ft Myers, Florida 33905

[www.egracechurch.com](http://www.egracechurch.com) 239-694-2797

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

14531 Old Olga Road,

Fort Myers, FL 33905

[www.blcefm.org](http://www.blcefm.org) 239-694-3878

**Olga Baptist Church**

2364 South Olga Drive

Fort Myers, FL 33905

[www.olgabaptist.org](http://www.olgabaptist.org) 239-694-2012

[olgabapch1@embarqmail.com](mailto:olgabapch1@embarqmail.com)

**Crossroads Baptist**

10721 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33905





(239) 693-2777

Fort Myers Shores Seventh Day Adventist

14830 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers FL

(239) 693-0341

Olga-Fort Myers Shores Methodist

14036 Matanzas Dr, Fort Myers, FL 33905

(239) 694-2797

Olga Baptist

2364 S Olga Dr, Fort Myers, FL 33905

(239) 694-2012

[olgabaptistchurch@gmail.com](mailto:olgabaptistchurch@gmail.com)

Rosa De Saron Assemblies of God

13235 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers FL

(239) 694-8777

Victory Christian Center Assemblies of God

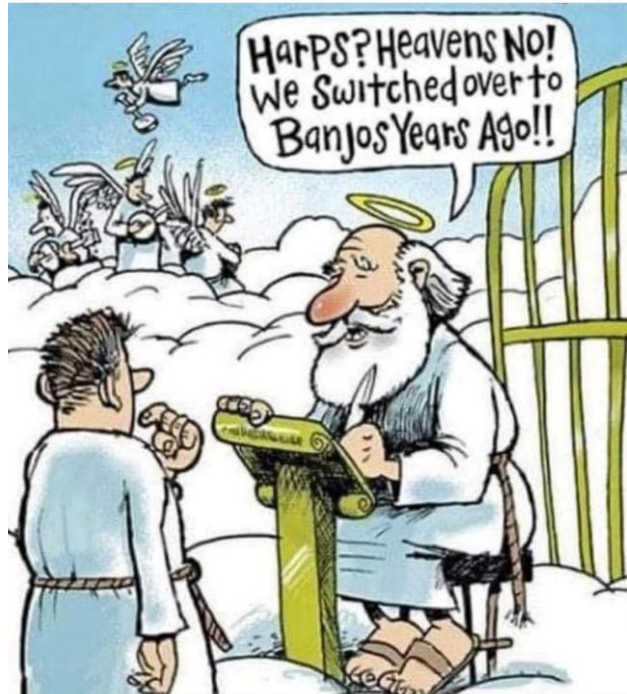
11431 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33905

(239) 694-5131

Cielo's Abierto's Ministries

10721 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33905

(239) 297-6472





## 12 Step Programs along the Caloosahatchee

Because Alcoholics Anonymous was exclusive to people who struggled with alcohol addiction, a vast array of other programs were formed to aid and support those in recovery from other addictive disorders. These include the following groups:

Any type of group you do not find listed below may be sought at this website:

<https://www.addicted.org/directory/category/lee-county-3.html>

**Before going to the meeting, confirm time and place by phone**

### ALVA:

**Alva Community Center**, 21471 N River Rd, Alva, FL 33920

-AA Way, 8pm Wednesdays, Big Book, OPEN

**St. Matthews House**, Cypress Creek & North River (rte 78) Roads, Alva

Jill's Place (for women) AND Justin's Place (for men), 239-687-7633 or [intake@stmatthewshouse.org](mailto:intake@stmatthewshouse.org).

<https://stmatthewshouse.org/whatwedo/justinsplace/jills-place-retreat-center>

### FORT MYERS SHORES:

**St. Vincent De Paul RC**, 13031 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers: Fort Myers Shores Group OStAH – Tuesday, 8:00 pm

**Calvary Assembly of God**, 11431 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers:

-Night Owls OD – Saturday, 10:05 pm

### LEHIGH ACRES:

**-AA SUNRISE GROUP - MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS, FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS 7AM**

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

**LEHIGH ACRES (cont):**

**-AA MONDAY AT A TIME - MONDAY 6:30PM**

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

**-AA CHAIR'S CHOICE - TUESDAY 6:30PM**

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

**-AA SPIRITUAL SEARCH GROUP - TUESDAY 8PM**

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

**-AA THIRSTY THURSDAYS - THURSDAY 6:30PM**

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

**-AA HERE AND NOW- SUNDAY 6:30PM**

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres, 33971,

(239) 275-5111

**-NA HOPE WITHOUT DOPE - THURSDAY & SATURDAY 6:30PM**

705 Leland Heights Blvd. E., Lehigh Acres,

(866) 819-5346

**-AA LEHIGH SUNDAY NIGHT - SUNDAY 8PM**

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

**-AA HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE - FRIDAY 6:30PM**

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

**-AL ANON MOVING FORWARD AFG - MONDAY 10AM**

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres

(888) 425-2666

**-AA FIRST THINGS FIRST - MON-SUN 7AM**

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

**-AA NOONERS - MON-SUN 12PM**

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

**LABELLE:**

**Good Shepherd Church, (239) 275-5111, 1098  
Collingswood Pkwy, Labelle**

-AA-PORT LABELLE GROUP – ODH- SUNDAY 7PM

-MAKING THE EFFORT -OLbHD- MONDAY 7:00 PM

-AS BILL SEES IT- OD- SATURDAY 9:00AM

-WED BIG BOOK GROUP- OBBH- WEDNESDAY NOON

-OPEN DISCUSSION -ODH- FRIDAY 7:00PM

**First Christian Church, Rte 29 & Ford Ave, LaBelle**

-LABELLE GROUP-ODAH- THURSDAY 7:00PM

-STEP GROUP-Cst- TUESDAY 7:00PM

**-AI Anon- AFG - THURSDAY 7PM**

138 Ford Ave, Labelle

(888) 425-2666

**-AA-THURSDAY 7PM**

138 Ford Ave, Labelle

(239) 275-5111

**-AA-MEETING AT THE INN - WEDNESDAY 7:15PM**

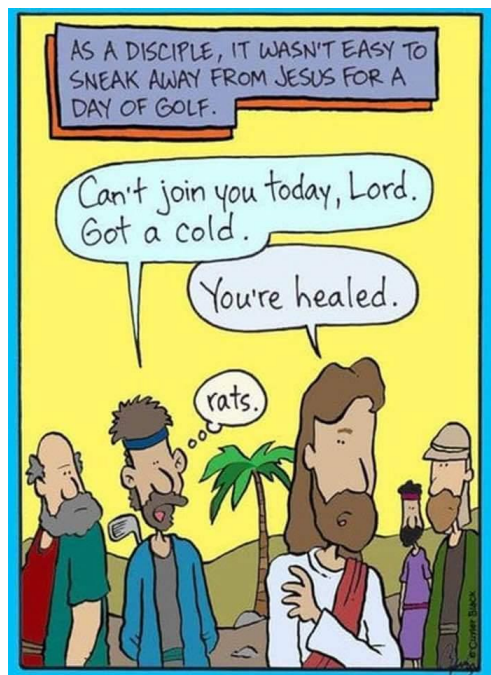
Port LaBelle Inn, 1568 Oxbow Dr, Labelle

(239) 275-5111

**NOT TODAY - MONDAY 6:00PM**

133 N Bridge St, Labelle

(866) 819-5346





Recovery Meetings at Grace Shores

| Meeting Time      | Meeting Type | Location             |
|-------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Monday 12 Noon    | AA Open      | The Lighthouse       |
| Monday 7 PM       | Al-Anon      | Room 1               |
| Monday 7 PM       | Men's AA     | The Lighthouse       |
| Monday 7PM        | CA           | The Cafe'            |
| Tuesday 12 Noon   | AA Open      | The Lighthouse       |
| Tuesday 7 PM      | Men's SAA    | Room 2               |
| Tuesday 7 PM      | Women's AA   | The Community Center |
| Wednesday 12 Noon | AA Open      | The Lighthouse       |
| Thursday 12 Noon  | AA Open      | The Lighthouse       |
| Thursday 7 PM     | AA Open      | The Community Center |
| Thursday 8PM      | AA Open      | Room 1               |
| Friday 12:00 Noon | Co-ed        | The Lighthouse       |
| Friday 12:00 Noon | Al-Anon      | Room 1               |
| Friday 7PM        | AA Big Book  | The Lighthouse       |
| Saturday 7PM      | AA Speaker   | The Community Center |
| Sunday 7PM        | AA Big Book  | The Lighthouse       |

Celebrate Recovery @ all 3 campuses

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Dinner at 6:00, followed by large group then small group meetings. |   |  |
| Monday 6:45-9pm  | Central Campus<br>2415 Grand Ave., Fort Myers, FL 33901           |  |
| Wednesday 6:30-8:30  | Ft. Myers Shores Campus<br>14036 Matanzas Dr, Ft. Myers, FL 33905 |  |
| Friday 6:45-9PM  | Cape Coral Campus<br>13 SE 21st PL., Cape Coral, FL 33990         |  |

The Lighthouse is located at 14006 Matanzas Dr. on the west end of campus. All other meeting spaces are on the main campus at 14036 Matanzas Dr. If you have questions or would like someone from our Recovery Team to call you, please call 239-694-2797

If you know of any other 12 step or non-12 step recovery group in the Alva area (From Hendry County Line to Fort Myers Shores, north and south of our river) please let me know its name, location and the phone number for information to list here.

Thank you! [kendewalt@ontheriver.org](mailto:kendewalt@ontheriver.org)



## Caregiver Respite and Support

12:15-2pm  
every 4th Friday

The challenges of being a caregiver of a loved one can be demanding. We invite you to an afternoon of support and care for you. We will serve you and your loved one (if they are able to attend) a delicious, free lunch. We have activities to engage your loved one while you restore with some relaxation and fun. This is monthly gathering is free and open to any caregiver.

You can register by emailing Paula [pwinters@gracechurch.com](mailto:pwinters@gracechurch.com) or by calling the church at 239-694-2797 and leave a message. We will return your call.



## *The Alva* **ONION SLICE**

<https://theonion.com/>

with sincere homage to



An estimated 80 million Americans suffer from hair loss, including thinning and male pattern baldness. The Onion examines the myths and facts surrounding hair loss.

MYTH: Genetics are the main cause of hair loss.

FACT: Hair loss is most commonly caused by standing too close to an open flame.

MYTH: Hair loss is permanent.

FACT: For six easy payments of \$1,200, nothing is permanent.

MYTH: Baldness is caused by too much testosterone.

FACT: Baldness is caused by too little hair.

MYTH: If your mom's father is bald, you'll be bald.

FACT: If your mom's father ignores the feeble witch on the side of the road, you'll be bald.

MYTH: Too much sun can lead to hair loss.

FACT: Hair needs soil, water, and sunlight to grow.

MYTH: Women aren't attracted to bald men.

FACT: Every woman you've ever met is sexually aroused by Stanley Tucci.

WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers

**I have sponsored and recommended these well led and overseen groups for over 30 years in ministry -Ken DeWalt**

<https://www.griefshare.org/>

<https://www.divorcecare.org/>



**HOPE & Healing**  
divorce recovery support groups

Find a DivorceCare support group

☐ In-Person ☐ Online

“It was the best thing I did for my kids and myself.”  
Melissa

The banner features a video player with a play button icon. The background image shows four people (three women and one man) sitting in a room, engaged in conversation. The text is overlaid on the video player.





## Important Phone Numbers & Websites

Font Size: [+](#) [-](#) [+](#) [Share & Bookmark](#) [\[+\]](#) [Feedback](#) [Print](#)

| AGENCY  | NORMAL BUSINESS | EMERGENCY    |
|---|-----------------|--------------|
| American Red Cross (Local Chapter)                        | 239-278-3401    | 239-278-3401 |
| Arson Alert Hotline                                       | 800-342-5869    | 800-342-5869 |
| Blood Donor Centers                                       | 888-9-DONATE    |              |
| - Lee Memorial Blood Center                               | 239-343-2333    |              |
| - Florida's Blood Centers                                 | 239-574-3170    |              |
| Cape Coral Emergency Management                           | 239-573-3022    | 911          |
| Cape Coral Police Department (non-emergency)              | 239-574-3223    | 911          |
| Dept. of Financial Services (Insurance)                   | 239-461-4001    | 800-22-STORM |
| Federal Emergency Management Agency                       | 800-621-3362    | 800-462-7585 |
| Florida Division of Emergency Management                  | 850-413-9969    |              |
| Fort Myers Police Department                              | 239-321-7700    | 911          |
| Lee County Animal Services                                | 239-533-7387    | 239-533-7387 |
| Lee County Emergency Information Hotline / United Way 211 | 239-433-2000    | 211          |
| Lee County Emergency Management                           | 239-533-0622    | 239-533-0622 |
| Lee County Government                                     | 239-533-2111    |              |
| Lee County Health Department                              | 239-332-9501    | 239-332-9501 |
| Lee County Public Safety & EMS                            | 239-533-3911    | 911          |
| Lee County Sheriff's Office                               | 239-477-1000    | 911          |
| Mobile or Manufactured Home Residents                     | 850-617-3004    |              |
| National Weather Service/Tampa Bay                        | 813-645-2323    |              |
| Poison Information  | 800-222-1222    | 800-222-1222 |
| Salvation Army, The                                       | 239-278-1551    | 239-278-1551 |
| Sanibel Police Department                                 | 239-472-3111    | 911          |
| Traffic Conditions in Florida (Current)                   | 511             | 511          |
| United Way of Lee, Hendry, Glades & Okeechobee Counties   | 239-433-2000    | 211          |

| AGENCY                                       | WEB ADDRESS  |
|--|--|
| Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)    | <a href="http://www.ready.gov/cert">www.ready.gov/cert</a>   |
| Department of Financial Services (Insurance) | <a href="http://www.myfloridacfo.com">www.myfloridacfo.com</a>   |
| Department of Homeland Security              | <a href="http://www.dhs.gov/">www.dhs.gov/</a>   |
| Florida Lightning Safety                     | <a href="http://www.weather.gov/safety/lightning">www.weather.gov/safety/lightning</a>   |
| Mobile or Manufactured Home Residents        | <a href="http://www.flhsmv.gov/mobilehome">www.flhsmv.gov/mobilehome</a>   |
| American Sign Language Preparedness Videos   | <a href="http://www.leegov.com/publicsafety/emergencymanagement/plan">www.leegov.com/publicsafety/emergencymanagement/plan</a> |
| StormReady                                   | <a href="http://www.weather.gov/stormready/">www.weather.gov/stormready/</a>   |



**You can donate to a number of reputable charities that help Ukraine, including these reported by Google as reputable charities**

**Ukrainian Red Cross Society**, A long-standing and trusted charity that provides humanitarian aid and emergency response

**Come Back Alive Foundation**, Provides technology, training, and accouterments to the Armed Forces of Ukraine

**Razom for Ukraine**, Provides humanitarian relief and recovery, evacuates vulnerable populations, and advocates for Ukraine

**United Help Ukraine**, A charity that has been awarded 4 stars on Charity Navigator and Gold Transparency on Candid

**Hope for Ukraine**, A 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization

### **Other organizations that help Ukraine**

World Central Kitchen

Sunflowers for Peace

Caritas Ukraine

Voices of Children

Vostok SOS



## Warehouse Centre for Humanitarian and Medical Aid to Ukraine

### How your donation can help

Donating money allows organizations to help with whatever is needed, source things locally, and transport items quickly.



### Tax deductions

If you donate to a tax-exempt organization like Hope for Ukraine, you may be able to claim your donation as a deduction on your U.S. taxes.

### Before you donate funds to ANY relief organization, Protect Yourself

Give to established charities or groups whose work you know and trust.

Be aware of organizations with copycat names or names similar to reputable organizations.

Be wary of new organizations that claim to aid victims of recent high-profile disasters.

Do your research. Use the Federal Trade Commission's resources to examine the track record of a charity.

Give using a check or credit card. If a charity or organization asks you to donate through cash, gift card, virtual currency, or wire transfer, it's probably a scam. Learn more about this trick from the FTC.

Practice good cyber hygiene:

Don't click links or open email attachments from someone you don't know.

Manually type out links instead of clicking on them.

Don't provide any personal information in response to an email, robocall, or robotext.

Check the website's address—most legitimate charity organization websites use .org, not .com.

After a natural disaster or other emergency, carefully vet any contractors before hiring them to work on your home or business.



WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 78, July 2025, Circulation: 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers

## ON THE RIVER Alva Community Newsletter – Advertising Rates as of March 21, 2025

The FREE monthly online OTR E-Newsletter is circulated to 12,000+ readers including 1,400 individual subscribers. We encourage all to share it as well.

Ads run full across the 9x11" OTR page, then down the fraction of the page you choose.

Advertising rates per each month :

¼ Page... one issue: \$40.00, six issues: \$30.00each, twelve issues: \$25.00each

½ Page... one issue: \$60.00, six issues: \$50.00each, twelve issues: \$40.00each

Full Page... one issue: \$100.00, six issues: \$90.00each, twelve issues: \$70.00each

Upon request we can format ads for you with WORD.doc copy and j.peg photos or logos. We can also scan any copy and/or photos you provide to create a single j.peg of your ad.

You will receive a screenshot proof of the ad for your approval as soon as we have it formatted before its issue is published. Lack of response to the proof will be considered acceptance.

Full payment for all issues contracted for is to be made by the 15th of the month preceding the first month in which the ad is to appear, which is also the date the ad copy is to be received. Payments are to be by check made out to Ramona DeWalt, noted: OTR.

CONTACT: Ken DeWalt, publisher, with any questions. [kendewalt@ontheriver.org](mailto:kendewalt@ontheriver.org)

Special thanks to all whose advertising and donations  
support the mission of ON THE RIVER.



**REALLY**