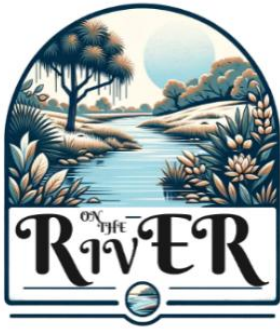


WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 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**

**LOCAL NEWS, Page: 2**

**Contributing Columnists: 15**

**ALVA, Page: 24**

**BUCKINGHAM & FORT MYERS SHORES, Page: 30**

**LABELLE AREA, Page: 33**

**NORTH FORT MYERS & NORTH OLGA, Page: 40**

**FOR ALL OF US, Page: 42**

**SOME LOCAL CHURCHES, Page: 57**

---



*James Kennedy*

**Special THANKS** to all who have already donated to our once a year

## **GO FUND ME**

campaign to support our mission to inform, invite and entertain all of our readers.

**ONE LAST CHANCE: if you would like to contribute:**

**<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1JqtayXQqs/>**

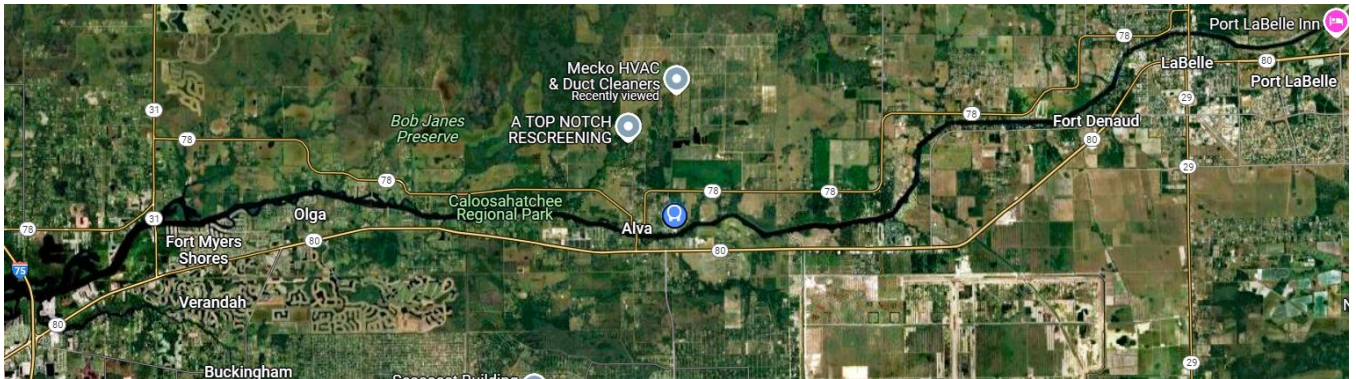
- 1 -

Access link to our ARCHIVE of ALL OTR issues from day 1:

**<https://www.ontheriver.org/archive>**

# LOCAL NEWS

The area we cover for news and non-profit events



**Lee County School District accepts one of ALVA INC's recommended names for the new JOEL BLVD & TUCKAHOE ROAD High School**



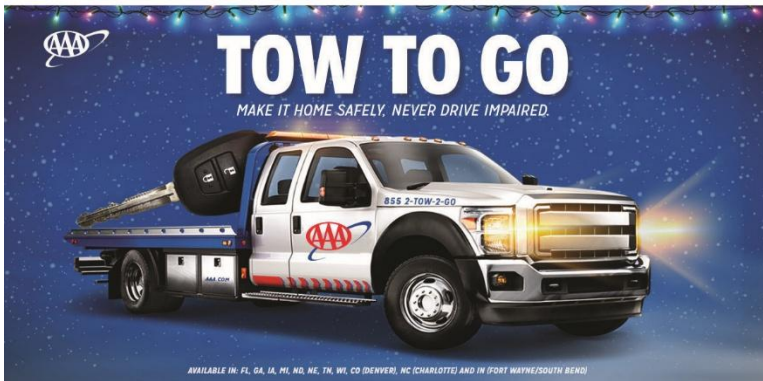
## ALVA HIGH

(TY Gulf Coast News- James Curtis)

In a social media post, the school district shared the names of two new schools, Green Meadow Elementary School and Alva High School, in Alva on the south side of the river and rte 80..

Alva High will open in August 2027 on Tuckahoe Road. Joe Restino, who opened Lemuel Teal Middle School, will be the school's principal, according to the school district.





## AAA offers 'Tow to Go' during year-end holidays to prevent impaired driving

### Call (855) 2-TOW-2-GO for a Safe, Free Ride

(TY Lake Okeechobee News)

AAA is once again offering its lifesaving 'Tow to Go' program to help keep impaired drivers off the road this holiday season. The service will be active from 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 24, 2025, through 6 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 2, 2026, across select states.

'Tow to Go' provides a free, confidential ride and tow for impaired drivers and their vehicles to a safe location within a 10-mile radius. Open to both AAA members and non-members, the program is designed as a last-resort safety net when other options, like a designated driver or rideshare, fall through.

"The holiday season is a time for joy and celebration, but it also carries a greater risk of impaired driving," said Mark Jenkins, spokesman for AAA – The Auto Club Group. "AAA urges Floridians to plan ahead and make responsible choices to keep the holidays both safe and festive. Tow to Go is our gift to the community, ensuring everyone gets home safely to enjoy the holidays with their loved ones."

#### How 'Tow to Go' Works:

Available: 6 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 24, 2025 until 6 a.m. Friday, Jan. 2, 2026

Call: (855) 2-TOW-2-GO

Where: Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, North Dakota, Nebraska, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Colorado (Denver), North Carolina (Charlotte), Indiana (Fort Wayne and South Bend)

What: A free tow and ride home within 10 miles for impaired drivers

Who: Available to both AAA members and non-members

Note: Service cannot be scheduled in advance and should only be used as a backup plan

#### Why It Matters:

Alcohol-impaired driving is involved in nearly one-third of all U.S. traffic deaths

In 2023 alone, over 12,000 lives were lost in alcohol-related crashes - that's one every 42 minutes

AAA's "Crashes Hit Different" campaign reminds us that behind every crash statistic is a real person: a parent, a friend, or a neighbor whose life is forever changed. These tragedies are preventable, and programs like Tow to Go are part of the solution



## Florida Dairy Farmers provide eggnog like coquito recipes

(TY Diahann Smith of Florida Dairy Farmers)

**Family Coquito (No Alcohol):** This creamy, non-alcoholic family coquito blends coconut milk, coconut cream, and warm holiday spices for a rich, festive drink everyone can enjoy. Chilled to let the flavors come together, it delivers the classic coquito taste with a smooth, comforting finish—perfect for serving during the holidays or at family gatherings.

### Ingredients

- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1 can condensed milk
- 1 can of sweetened coconut cream (Coco Lopez or similar)
- 1 can of coconut milk
- 1/2 cup of sugar
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 2 tsp cinnamon powder
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 tbsp grated cooking chocolate
- 1/4 tsp salt



### Preparation

In a metal container combine the egg yolks with the sugar mixing with a metal spoon until the mixture is creamy and turns light yellow.

Combine the milks, cream, salt and yolks in a blender. Add the vanilla, cinnamon powder and nutmeg and blend for 3 – 4 minutes.

Finish by adding two cinnamon sticks, ground cinnamon, or grated chocolate. Save in glass bottles or mason jars in the fridge.

Chilled for a day or two for flavors to incorporate well and enjoy.

For MORE recipes of this classic holiday beverage go to:

<https://www.lakeonews.com/labelle/stories/florida-dairy-farmers-provide-eggnog-and-coquito-recipes,83195>





Defending Rural Florida

17h ·

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Defending Rural Florida

Senator Jonathan Martin Oversteps Local Authority in Attack on Rural Boundaries

Senator Jonathan Martin, a Republican from Lee County, requested the legal opinion from the Florida Attorney General's Office, asserting that the rural boundaries in Seminole and Orange counties are likely unconstitutional. This move raises serious questions: Why is a senator from Lee County working to dismantle rural protections overwhelmingly supported by residents in Seminole and Orange counties?

Notably, Senator Martin did not ask about his own county—Lee County—which has no designated rural boundaries. Instead, he chose to target two other counties whose voters have made their intentions clear about preserving their rural character.

By attempting to undermine long-standing local land-use protections, Senator Martin is inserting himself into decisions that belong to the communities directly affected. His actions represent a troubling example of one lawmaker overriding local self-governance in an area where he has no direct stake.

Defending Rural Florida stands firmly with the residents of Seminole and Orange counties. Their home rule authority must be respected, and their rural boundaries must remain protected from outside political interference.

Sponsored by Defending Rural Florida PC, P. O. Box 20252, St. Petersburg, FL 33742



---

## LaBelle Masons donate \$5,000 to Toys for Tots

(TY Lake Okeechobee News-Phillip Keyes)



Margaret England, Hendry County Toys for Tots coordinator (right)

was introduced to the LaBelle Masonic Lodge members by Tom

Boardman (center) and Lodge Master Isidro "Izzy" Lopez

At a recent meeting, the Masons were expecting a quiet evening with a meal together, a talk by Margaret England, Hendry County Toys-For-Tots Coordinator, then handle a few business items and go home. All that didn't happen. The Spirit of Christmas intervened.

The Lodge's military Veterans plus a few who haven't served, reacted to one of Ms. England's remarks that this year's funding for Toys-For-Tots is not meeting the demand.

After England took her leave and the Lodge meeting continued her comments remained with the Masons and resulted in a pass the hat for money to help buy toys. One member challenged the Lodge that he would match "the Hat's" collections up to \$2,000.

Minutes later when the money was counted it totaled \$2,500 which included I.O.U.'s, a couple of checks, and cash. The \$2,000 match brought the total to \$4,500. It was then decided to add \$500 from the Lodge's treasury to round the total off at \$5,000.



## Tampa reports a single case, Lee County Posse Arena closes temporarily as equine virus fears spread

(TY WINK NEWS-Paul Dolan)

Lee County Posse Arena closes after national EHV-1 outbreak; local trainers cancel shows as precaution. They hope to be well open by the end of December.

The Lee County Posse Arena shut down and canceled upcoming events after a nationwide outbreak of Equine Herpesvirus-1 (EHV-1) was traced back to a rodeo event in Waco, Texas in early December..

While there are no confirmed cases in Florida, horse owners, youth riders, and trainers across Southwest Florida are taking the virus seriously — and many are putting competitions on hold to protect their barns.

### **Riders told WINK News they'd rather pause their season than risk the virus entering Florida.**

Arena representatives say they closed strictly out of precaution, following guidance from state animal-health officials and national equine disease trackers. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) — which monitors reportable equine diseases through its statewide disease map — lists zero EHV-1 cases in Florida as of today but is urging caution due to the virus' fast spread in other states.

The Equine Disease Communication Center (EDCC) has confirmed multiple EHV-1 cases and several deaths following the Texas event, with exposed horses traveling home to Oklahoma, Colorado, Mississippi, and beyond.

Bobbi Harrison, a board member and PR representative with the Lee County Posse, told WINK News the virus can move quickly through a barn if introduced.

"The virus is very easy to transmit. And technically, it can occur sub clinically or manifest into clinical forms, and those forms not only include the neurological issue... but also respiratory and reproductive."

Because the disease may not show symptoms for up to 21 days, even a single exposed horse could unknowingly spread it.

### **At local barns, riders are canceling shows to stay safe**

Just a few miles away at To Fly Equestrian, trainer Ashley Kilmer spent months preparing her riders for out-of-state shows — including one student who qualified for championship competition. Kilmer canceled all of it.

"Two weeks back, we were booked to go to a horse show up north, and... one of my riders had qualified for championships this year, and all of which we decided to cancel and not go due to the... outbreak going around."

For Kilmer, it's not only about competition — it's about protecting animals she considers part of her family. "They're our companions, they're our partners... our friends. So, we try to put them first always."

#### **Why the virus is such a concern; EHV-1 can spread:**

Through the air, On clothing, On tack, brushes, or shared equipment. By people moving between barns

Kilmer explained how easily an exposed horse — or even a human carrying particles on their jacket — could bring the virus home. "Horses can contract it from molecules being in the air... even if it's on your clothing, then you go back to your barn and expose your horse to it."

This kind of airborne and surface contamination is what has barns across the country taking extra steps to limit exposure.

#### **Economic hit for local riders and show organizers**

Canceling shows isn't just emotionally difficult — it's financially painful for barns, trainers, and entire event staffs. "Horse shows obviously are a big money maker... so when that stuff gets side-banked, it hits our pockets in a big way."

Boarding facilities, farriers, veterinarians, hotels, feed suppliers, and local businesses all feel the ripple effect when equine events shut down. Even with financial losses and missed milestones, Kilmer says the decision is easy. "At the end of the day, I put horsemanship and these horses above money and above anything else."

#### **What's next?**

All future decisions about closure depends on no new confirmed cases nationally and continued guidance from FDACS and the EDCC.

Local barns say they will continue practicing strict biosecurity, monitoring symptoms, limiting travel, and choosing caution until the outbreak is fully contained.



For more FLORIDA information: <https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Horses-Equine/Florida-s-Reportable-Equine-Disease-Map/Equine-Herpesvirus-1>



## Buckingham Road and Gunnery Road Roundabout Project Phase 3



Drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists are urged to use extra caution when traveling through the work zone.

- Gunnery Road will be closed from Buckingham Road to Sunset Road. Southbound Gunnery Road traffic will be redirected via a detour to Buckingham Road, then turn left at Sunset Road, then right back onto Gunnery Road to continue south.

o Northbound Gunnery Road traffic will be redirected via a detour to turn left onto Sunset Road, then right onto Buckingham Road to continue onto Buckingham Road north.

- Access to and from Gunnery Road Christian Academy and Gunnery Road Baptist Church will be maintained at all times during the project.
- Motorists should expect intermittent flagging operations between 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Crews will be removing utilities along the east side of Gunnery Road.
- Additionally, temporary traffic signals have been installed at both the intersections of Buckingham Road and Sunset Road, as well as Gunnery Road and Sunset Road.
- Sidewalks will remain closed during this phase. Third Phase is anticipated to be completed Winter 2026.
- Crews are actively working on roadway construction along Buckingham Rd
- As part of the construction activities for this project, sidewalk closures will be necessary.

Pedestrians are encouraged to anticipate detours and make appropriate arrangements to ensure safe and efficient travel through the project site. The work activities above are scheduled to occur; however, unforeseen underground conditions and weather may affect this schedule.

Expect large construction vehicles in the area and watch for contractors in the field. The contractors will use Variable Message Boards (VMB) to notify the public about any traffic pattern changes during construction. The contractor is V & H Construction, Inc. The project is expected to be completed in one

year. Work is estimated to be complete spring of 2026. Work is expected to occur Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM; however, some night and weekend work may be necessary. If you would like to receive updates or have questions about the project, please visit the website [www.BuckinghamGunneryRoundabout.com](http://www.BuckinghamGunneryRoundabout.com) or contact: Mallory Briggs, CMA Outreach Inc., public outreach consultant at 239-337-1071 or email: [info@BuckinghamGunneryRoundabout.com](mailto:info@BuckinghamGunneryRoundabout.com).

## Construction on SR 31 near SR 78 (Babcock Road area)

involves building a new four-lane road east of the old SR 31, expanding it later, adding roundabouts, multi-use trails, and lighting, with the overall project split into phases managed by Babcock Ranch ISD and FDOT, aiming for completion in Winter 2026 for the current segment from SR 78 to Lake Babcock Drive, while further work from SR 80 to SR 78 is in study/planning.



**What's Happening:** A new four-lane road is being built east of the current SR 31; the old road becomes an access road.

**Key Features:** New roundabouts at Shirley Lane, Fox Hill Road, and Lake Babcock Drive; separated trails for bikes/pedestrians; enhanced lighting.

**Timeline:** Construction started Summer 2024, with completion estimated for Winter 2026 (Phase 1).

**Management:** Babcock Ranch Community ISD is managing the design-build project with FDOT oversight.

**Future Plans (SR 31 from SR 80 to SR 78)**

**Status:** A separate Project Development & Environment (PD&E) study is ongoing for this section.

**Goals:** To create a six-lane road with a grade-separated (overpass) interchange at SR 80 for better traffic flow.

**Funding:** Construction for this segment (Phase 2) is not yet funded but expected to start around early 2027, funded by FDOT.

For the most current information, check the official project website: [SWFLroads.com/project/442027-2](http://SWFLroads.com/project/442027-2)



# North East Lee County & North West Hendry County has a **THREE BRIDGE PROBLEM**

(editorial by ON THE RIVER)

Actually, it's a four bridge problem but the fourth, our Fort DeNAUD historic swing bridge can only take lighter weight vehicles and by its historic nature is not at this time part of the discussion.

The three bridge problem over the Caloosahatchee River involves the **RTE 31/Babcock Road bridge** connecting rte 80 on the south side to rte 78 on the north side, the **Broadway Street ALVA BRIDGE** connecting rte 80 and Alva Village and the **LaBelle BRIDGE STREET bridge** connecting rte 80 and rte 78 from the center of LaBelle.

All three bridges are facing more repetitive closures to heavy truck and at times ALL traffic due to the need for emergency repairs.



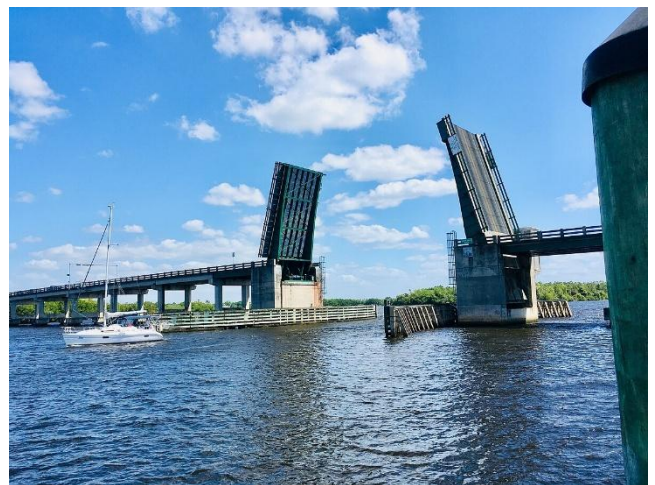
The **ALVA bridge** has had a severe speed restriction for over 10 years to 20 miles per hour for all vehicles and NO heavy vehicles at all. No active plans for long term improvement in place.



The **LaBelle bridge** is facing more closures for repairs now, though FDOT

is planning replacement with two bascule style (same as the current bridge style) in the next several years. No definite start date is projected.

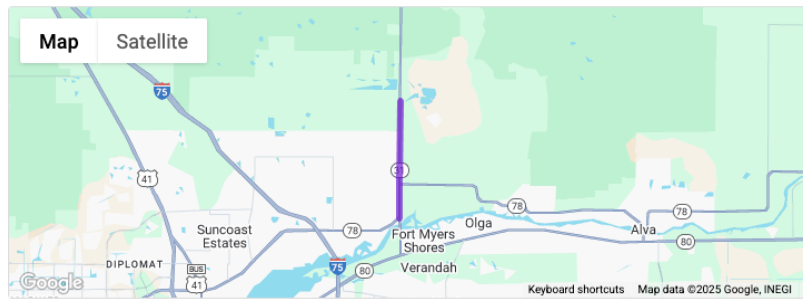
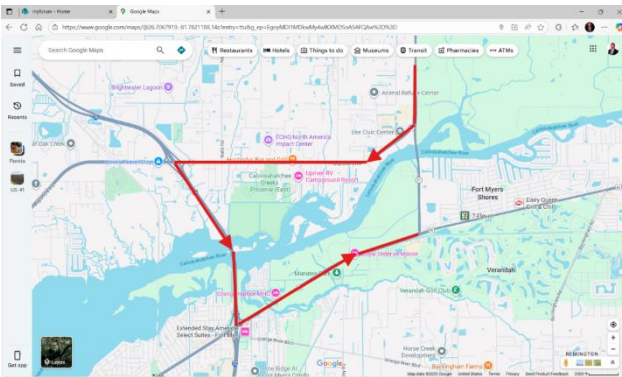
The **rte 31 bridge**, also named the Wilson Pigott Bridge, is currently closed to all truck traffic and has been closed recently several times for emergency repairs. FDOT has been working on a huge infrastructure change to accommodate the thousands of planned new homes in Babcock Ranch and on North River Road, conversations with FDOT officials place construction start on a high, non-drawbridge 6 lane replacement to the current bridge place the multi-year construction on the bridge site no sooner than possibly 2030, and maybe even later. Meanwhile all traffic is encouraged to use the farther west Rte I-75 bridge across the river. Again, trucks MUST use this option or go east all the way to LaBelle to cross.





Causes of our current THREE BRIDGE PROBLEM may be found in many places over the past 20 plus years but the blame game won't get anyone found guilty or fix the problem.

FDOT folks, at every public planning meeting, tell us that all the pre-planning in the world won't make the funding appear. And there are bigger highway projects and bridges to build anew in other, more heavily trafficked, in Florida.



When Ramona and I first arrived in Alva in spring of 2015 we came as most newer residents did. We drove from the Alva Diner and across the bridge into what would become our new home.

Both of us exclaimed as we slowly drove up the bridge ramp, "We have a drawbridge!"

How romantic a thought. For all of us. But romance, as most will attest, is not cheap.

Last note: No one is looking seriously at a rebuild of a mass transit railroad construction project from Naples to Tampa. For that a lot of money and dedicated grit, such as built the TAMIANI TRAIL would have to exist. If such did exist, perhaps it could be called the TAMIANI RAIL.

---

## Trish Petrosky appointed by Governor to fill Mike Greenwell's Lee County District 5 Commission seat

(TY News Press-Amy Bennett-Williams)



Seventh-generation Floridian and month-and-a-half Alva resident Patricia "Trish" Petrosky is Lee County's newest commissioner.

After she applied to be considered for the post, Gov. Ron DeSantis appointed her Dec. 12 to fill the District 5 seat left open when Commissioner Mike Greenwell died in October.

Lee County's new district 5 commissioner is a constitutional conservative (as she describes herself), a seventh-generation Floridian, a Christian mom of three children who attend Evangelical Christian School, where she works as an executive assistant and a 45-day Alva resident.

## Mysterious 'Fix the Bridge' sign on Bayshore Road sparks curiosity among Fort Myers commuters

(TY Fox 4- Allie Kaiser)



A mysterious "Fix the Bridge" sign along State Road 31 in Fort Myers has caught the attention of daily commuters, sparking curiosity about its origin and message.

Amanda and Darius Cochran said they have leased the sign for roughly 25 years. Amanda is currently running for the Lee County Commission.

Fox 4's Allie Kaiser drives past this sign every day to work, and like many other commuters, she was curious about who put it up and why.

"I have no idea who put it up. "I just noticed it," said Robbie Bork, who drives Bayshore Road and State Road 31 daily.

The Cochrans said the recent change to display "Fix the Bridge" reflects their frustration about State Road 31 and the Wilson Pigott Bridge situation.

The Wilson Pigott Bridge has become a concern for local drivers. In September, it was closed for repairs, and now commercial trucks are prohibited from using it.

"It needs to get fixed as soon as possible," Bork said.

Carlos Santovenia, who drives the route to visit family, questioned the timeline: "Why couldn't we get this done before?"

The commercial truck restrictions have created traffic problems in other areas as truckers must take detours around the bridge.



"It's really hectic now going that way, because of the bridge," Santovenia said.

The Florida Department of Transportation is tentatively scheduled to reconstruct the bridge deck in March, which would allow commercial trucks to use it again. However, this reconstruction would require closing the bridge once more.

The Cochran's said they are also concerned that construction would occur at the same time as the SWFL Ag Expo. FDOT says "coordination efforts with the County are ongoing" for the impact reconstruction could have on the event.

FDOT responded to concerns about the situation, stating: "Safety remains our top priority. This detour allows FDOT to protect the traveling public while ensuring that essential maintenance can be completed efficiently."

## FROM TANKS TO TAPS

### Anarchy Ale Works nears opening day as Alva's new brewery

(TY Fox 4 NEWS-Austin Schargorodski)



Something new is brewing in Alva, and it's called Anarchy Ale Works. It's a full-scale brewery is almost ready to open and bring a new gathering spot to the rural community. Fox 4 Community Correspondent Austin Schargorodski went there to get a tour of what's coming.



The finishing touches were going up Wednesday at the new brewery off State Road 80 and Styles Road. Owner John Ford walked Schargorodski through the space, from the taproom, including an indoor wine dispenser truck, to the brewhouse where all the beer gets made. "I have 20 taps, and I'm hoping to have at least 10 of my own when we open," Ford said.



Ford said he's been brewing as a hobby for 30 years, experimenting with unique ingredients and flavor combinations, and decided it was time to go all in on his passion.

"I'm not ready to retire and kick back," Ford said, laughing. "So, I thought why not do something I love doing anyhow and hopefully make a place that everyone loves to come hang out at."

When it comes to the location, Ford said he believes the brewery is in the perfect spot.

"We're right on 80, so we've got 23,000 cars a day pass us. A lot of visibility. Lehigh and Alva don't really have anything like this where you can come have a nice beer, hang with friends, bring your dog in, bring your kids with you," Ford said.

Neighbors like Cory Boyd said this is exactly what the Alva community has been waiting for.

"It's exciting. Alva's a small town. So, when this started here I said hey man that's great. I live a quarter mile away, it's within walking distance," Boyd said.

Ford said he expects to open the doors by the end of January.





### Honoring a Legacy: New Sign Unveiled at Mike Greenwell Regional Park



The Greenwell family joined county leaders for a private ceremony to officially unveil the new sign for Mike Greenwell Regional Park, formerly the Lee County Civic Center Complex.

The renaming honors the late Commissioner Greenwell and celebrates his longstanding commitment to the community. This site will once again serve as the home of the 2026 Southwest Florida Ag Expo, welcoming visitors Feb. 26 through March 8, 2026.

---

The 2026 Southwest Florida Ag Expo is right around the corner, and we have a season full of traditions, celebrations and community spirit to share with you. From MEGAPASS gifts to a special park renaming and a call for your favorite Expo memories.



### Get ready for a season of roots, rides and real fun!

The MEGAPASS is an unbeatable value and the perfect holiday gift or stocking stuffer, giving the recipient gate admission plus unlimited mechanical rides for any one day of the Expo.

Whether you're checking off a wish list, filling a stocking or surprising a friend, a MEGAPASS delivers a full day of excitement they won't forget. But don't wait too long! MEGAPASS sales end once the gates open on Thursday, Feb. 26. After opening day, they will no longer be available. Learn more and purchase tickets at [SWFLAgExpo.com](http://SWFLAgExpo.com).

### Share Your Memories for a Special Expo Photo Exhibit

Lee County Parks & Recreation is inviting residents to submit photos that capture:

Agricultural heritage

Family fun

Community pride

Your favorite midway or livestock memories

Photos can be submitted online at [SWFLAgExpo.com](http://SWFLAgExpo.com)

# Contributing Columnists

---

## *The COLORADO CORNER*

For a taste of nature that does not thrive at near sea level this new OTR column comes from wildlife photographer James DeWalt, our son, who has lived in his 9,000 ft high village of Nederland, Colorado for over 25 years. He is an avid wildlife and nature photographer, and we thank the MOUNTAINEER, his local newspaper, for allowing us to share some of his articles which he creates for them.

Life in Nature: Where Did I Put That Seed

A look at our mountain chickadees and an amazing discovery about stashing food and memories

NEDERLAND-Our first significant snowfall of the season is gently drifting down outside my window as I write. The aroma of a hardy stew on the stove is wafting up from the kitchen and the music selections in my background edge their way towards holiday themes. Winter is finally making its way to the area, and outside there is a notable call from the feeders that always seems to signify the seasonal transition for me, the familiar “Chicka-dee-dee-dee”!

Chickadees are not migratory birds, and we enjoy them year-round. That said, I have always felt like they tend to shift their territories when the traveling bird species arrive and thus seem less prevalent in the warmer months of the year. When I lived on “Hummingbird Hill” years ago, winters found a great plethora of chickadees and other birds foraging the yard. Once the hummingbirds arrived in larger numbers they tended to take over (being the quite bullies I wrote about earlier this summer).



Winter living for any animal can be quite harsh here in the mountains, but these little ones persevere quite hardily. They typically spend their foraging in mixed flocks, often joining Juncos and Nuthatches for better protection from predation. The chickadees are generally found performing “guard duty” as they tend to keep to the outer branches of trees while the nuthatches scurry about the trunks and the juncos often keep to the ground. The familiar namesake call is the bird’s alarm and will vocalize

more “Dee Dee Dee’s” in their song if a perceived threat is near.

While chickadees frequent feeders, only a small portion of their diet comes from our hand-outs. Much of their food consists of insects, spiders and even carrion. We have them to thank for putting in diligent work trying to control our pine beetles. During outbreaks, they are quite happy fattening up on the caterpillars that will later

- 15 -

Access link to our ARCHIVE of ALL OTR issues from day 1:

<https://www.ontheriver.org/archive>



turn into the infamously destructive invaders. When an outbreak of lodgepole needle miners took place in Arizona, one bird alone was found to have 275 caterpillars in its stomach!

Not only do the birds eat while they forage, but these cunning creatures are also quite adept at stashing food for later eating. At a feeder, the birds will crack open the hull to pick out the seed then flit off with their tasty morsel to a hiding spot to be buried until a later date. Stashing behavior is not uncommon for many animals, but the process chickadees utilize in finding the food later is quite astonishing. Studies have shown that they can locate a stash within a centimeter's distance of accuracy.

One group of scientists performed a ground-breaking experiment placing extremely lightweight headgear on the birds to study brain activity as they foraged. When I initially came across this bit of information, I must admit I imagined a flock of little chickadees hopping about the forest floor all looking like Doc Brown in Back to the Future donning ridiculous little helmets with wires and electrodes protruding willy-nilly from their heads.

Brain impulses detected by the headgear showed that when a seed was stashed, the birds created a sort of mental "barcode" of the exact spatial location in a specific small set of neurons of the hippocampus, the brain's memory center. When the birds returned to eat their stash, a similar wave of brain activity was seen in those same neurons. When different seeds were found, it was noted that different sets of neurons fired the "memory" of that specific seed site. This signified a completely different barcode being triggered, even if the stashes were in the same immediate area.

This astounding discovery showed that the birds were not only showing an incredible memory capacity in general but were also able to spatially separate the memories into individual packets of information. This brought about the neural barcode concept.

Using the retail barcodes metaphor, they are unique for not just a type of product, but also an individual iteration of said product. They store vast amounts of information from price to item details to actual location in the store. Without a barcode, finding a specific item would be akin to searching an aisle of a grocery store when all the brand options had no labels.

This neural barcode created by the chickadees packs all of the data in one miniscule packet of memory data, separate from every other stashed seed memory. Quite a shocking and amazing discovery! It is assumed that other food-stashing birds may well have similar neural abilities, but this has not yet been proven. It is further possible that mammals also take advantage of a similar neural process, but it would be difficult to detect if one didn't know exactly when and where to look for it.

Either way, this is yet another stunning example of not only how much we are learning but also have yet to learn from our natural world and the life that we share space with on our grand planet home.

For additional information about James DeWalt Photography, check out <https://jamesdewaltphotography.com>

You may also visit Jame's ETSY store: <https://www.etsy.com/shop/JDeWaltPhotography>

---



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

***By Laurie Dougherty,***

*Community Meeting Facilitator and Trainer*

*Laurie@Dougherty-Inc.com*



---

## **New Year, New Energy: Setting Goals as a Group**

January brings fresh calendars, new ideas—and a good excuse to hit the reset button. While many of us set personal goals this time of year, it's also a great time for groups to take a step back and ask: Where are we headed together?

Whether you're part of a neighborhood group, advisory board, nonprofit committee, or informal team, a few intentional conversations can set the tone for a more focused, energizing year ahead.

Here are some simple ways to set meaningful group goals this season—no flip charts or consultants required:

### **1. Start with Gratitude**

Before rushing into what's next, take time to reflect. What did you accomplish last year? What are you proud of? Recognizing wins (big or small) builds momentum and reminds people why the group matters.

### **2. Ask a Few Good Questions**

Use a regular meeting to spark a conversation around:

- What's one thing we want to keep doing?
- What's one thing we want to do better?
- What's one thing we're ready to let go of?

Even 20 minutes of reflection can help surface shared priorities.

### **3. Set "Good Enough" Goals**

Not every goal needs to be big or long-term. Try setting one goal for the next 3 months. Something simple, realistic, and relevant—like improving communication, increasing attendance, or getting a project off the ground.

### **4. Write It Down and Revisit It**

Once your group agrees on a direction, capture it somewhere everyone can see—whether that's a shared document, a whiteboard, or the back of an envelope. Check in every month or so to ask, "How are we doing?"

5. Share the Load

A goal doesn't mean much if only one person is responsible. Ask, "Who wants to take the lead on this?" or "How can we support each other to make this happen?" Spreading the responsibility helps the goal stick.

Setting group goals isn't about perfection. It's about aligning your energy so your time together feels useful, purposeful, and maybe even fun. A little direction goes a long way in making your meetings feel less like a chore—and more like a community.

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. Laurie has made Alva her home since 2021.

---



*Southwest Florida Cooking by*  
*MAGGIE McManis*  
*of Oak Park, Alva*  
Contact Maggie to find out more at: [Maggi1rn@aol.net](mailto:Maggi1rn@aol.net)



## Shrimp pasta salad

A great quick appetizer or Football Support Food

Ingredients.

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1/4 cup chopped fresh dill

1/4 cup chopped fresh basil

1/4 cup sour cream

1 teaspoon lemon zest

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

2 teaspoons Kosher salt.

One and a half pounds peeled, deveined and cooked jumbo shrimp

16 ounce package bowtie pasta cooked per directions on box

2 cups thinly sliced zucchini.

One cup thinly sliced yellow summer squash.

6 ounce package crumbled feta cheese.

Directions

Whisk together mayonnaise, dill, basil, sour cream, lemon zest, and juice and salt in a large bowl.

Fold in shrimp, pasta, zucchini, and squash.

Top with feta and chill.





## 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 GENTLYUSED BOOK Store in Douglassville, Eastern PA, then sold it. The new owner changed the name and added new titles then added a second location

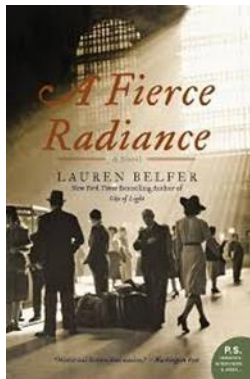
[storehttps://starrbookstore.com/](https://starrbookstore.com/)

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 stores everywhere she goes to save up to 90% off on real paper books. She is not a screen reader. She and Ken have a constantly changing home collection of over 200 titles yet to read. When read they are usually donated to another library book store or friends.

Ramona retired along 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 & Youth Library at Charleston Park

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

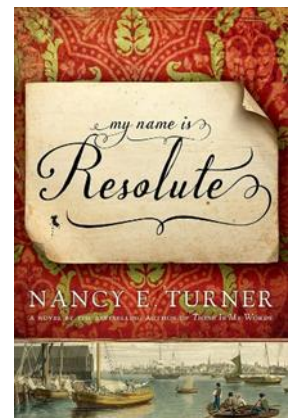


### A Fierce Radiance by Lauren Belfer

the anxious days after Pearl Harbor, LIFE photojournalist Claire Shipley finds herself covering one of the nation's most important stories. At New York City's renowned Rockefeller Institute, researchers are racing to save thousands of wounded American soldiers and countless others by developing a miraculous new drug they call penicillin. But Claire isn't the only one interested in the secret cure. When a researcher dies under suspicious circumstances, the stake becomes starkly clear: someone understands just how profitable the new drug could be - and will stop at nothing to get it. Published in 2010.

### My Name is Resolute by Nancy Turner.

Resolute Talbot's story begins in 1729 and ends in 1781 after a lifetime of pain, love, courage and determination. It's a story of love of honor, country and freedom from oppression and tyranny.



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

(Paid Ad – 12/26)




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

**(239) 470-5611 | PRESS@EASTLEENews.COM | WWW.EASTLEENews.COM**

(Paid Ad – 4/26)




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

**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

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

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers

(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)

Access link to our ARCHIVE of ALL OTR issues from day 1:

<https://www.ontheriver.org/archive>



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

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers

(Paid Ad-5/26)



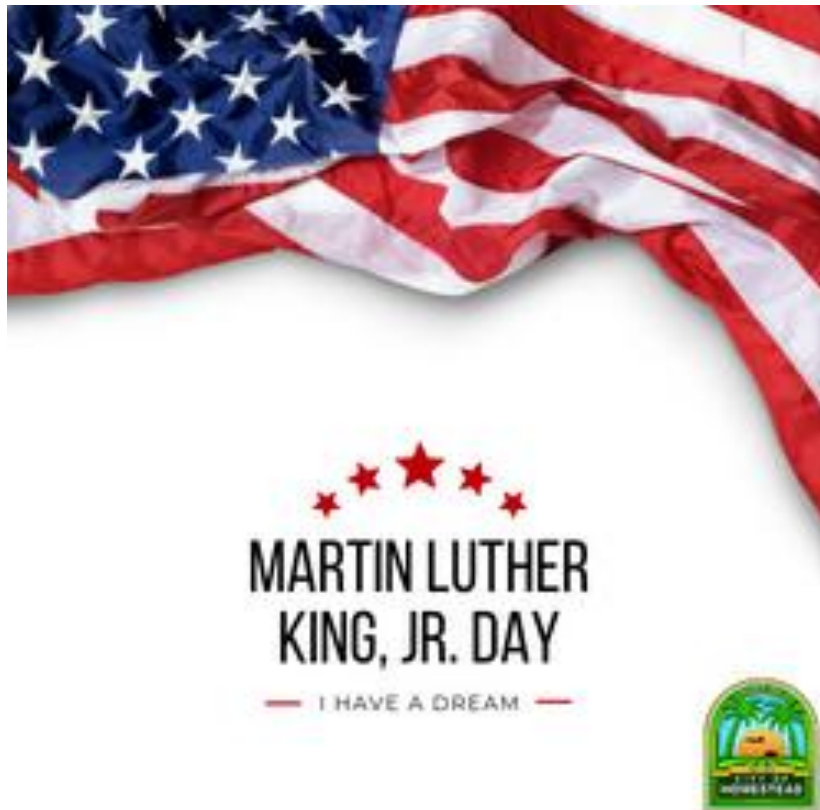
 

Patricia (Patty) Walker  
REALTOR®  
Referrals welcome!

239-340-3904  
PattyWalkerREMAX@gmail.com

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

Each  Independently Owned and Operated



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

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers

# ALVA EVENTS And Services



## 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/>



**Alva Fire Protection & Rescue Service District**

**Join Our Team!**



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

The Alva Fire District is seeking qualified applicants for the position of **Firefighter/EMT**. The individual should demonstrate good 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 Echeverry at [jetecheverry@alvafirecontrol.org](mailto:jetecheverry@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 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.

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>

Grant Fichter is overseeing the museum for the board.



## Big News from the Alva Museum!



We're excited to announce that the Alva Museum has received grant support to launch a new cultural **project: The Cracker Cowboy Project.**

**Timeline:** This initiative will celebrate the history, art, and legacy of Florida's Cracker Cowboys — from the families who worked these lands to the artists and storytellers who keep the tradition alive today.

**Community Involvement:** Planning begins this fall, and we'll be building throughout the year — with events, exhibits, and community programs scheduled to kick off later in 2026.

We want this to be a project for and with our community. If you have stories, photographs, artifacts, or family history tied to Florida's ranching and cowboy culture, now is the time to reach out.

**Coming Attractions (Sneak Peek):** A major exhibit opening next year featuring local Cracker Cowboy artists and historians.

Storytelling nights highlighting ranching families of Alva, LaBelle, Fort Denaud, and beyond. And Youth workshops connecting Florida history with art and culture.



**The Alva Museum  
Upcoming Events**

**Dec. 13  
2-5**  
*Picture with Santa and the Mrs.*

**Jan. 10  
9-1**  
**CAR, TRUCK, AND  
CAR ART SHOW**

**March  
14th  
9-1**  
**The Alva Museum Quilt  
Show and Garden Club  
Strawberry Festival**

21420 Pearl St, Alva, FL  
for information contact 703-403-1560

Thank you Grant  
Fichter for sharing  
this beautiful 1853  
Surveyor General's  
map



**AMANDA  
Cochran**

for Lee County Commissioner

**VOTE AUGUST 18**

## 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!

**Location:** Alva Methodist Church

21440 Pearl St, Alva, FL 33920

Large Plant Selection  
Bake Sale  
Homemade Shortcake



Food Trucks  
Vendors  
Used Books

Free Admission and Parking

NEW! Credit Card Sales for Plants Available

Cash Only for Other Purchases

For more information, visit [www.AlvaGardenClub.org](http://www.AlvaGardenClub.org)



The 2026

## STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

Mark YOUR CALENDARS  
NOW!!!

**Saturday March 14, 2026**

**9am to 1pm**

**is only 2 ½ months away!!!**





## 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.



We are Doghouse Rescue Academy - a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in Alva focused on helping make the world around us a better, happier place. We are a network of foster-based rescuers whose sole mission is to help adoptable dogs find homes.

Let us help you find your happily "fur"ever after!

<https://doghouserescueacademy.org/>

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



## ALVA MIDDLE FFA

**Find us on FACEBOOK**



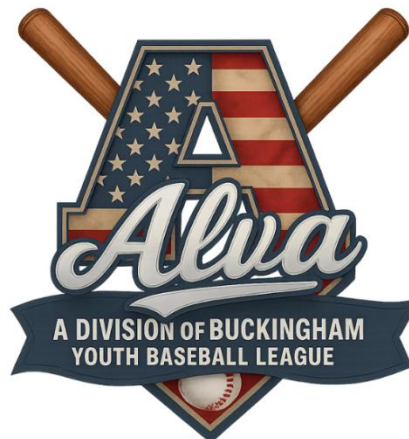
[https://www.facebook.com/AlvaMiddleFFA/?show\\_switched\\_toast=0&show\\_invite\\_to\\_follow=0&show\\_switched\\_to\\_tip=0&show\\_podcast\\_settings=0&show\\_community\\_review\\_changes=0&show\\_community\\_rollback=0&show\\_follower\\_visibility\\_disclosure=0](https://www.facebook.com/AlvaMiddleFFA/?show_switched_toast=0&show_invite_to_follow=0&show_switch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



Buckingham Youth Baseball has partnered with ALVA INC to create and oversee a NEW

# ALVA YOUTH BASEBALL LEAGUE

<https://buckinghamyouthbaseball.sportsengine-prelive.com/page/show/9256737-alva-league>





# BUCKINGHAM & FORT MYERS SHORES EVENTS

## And Services

---

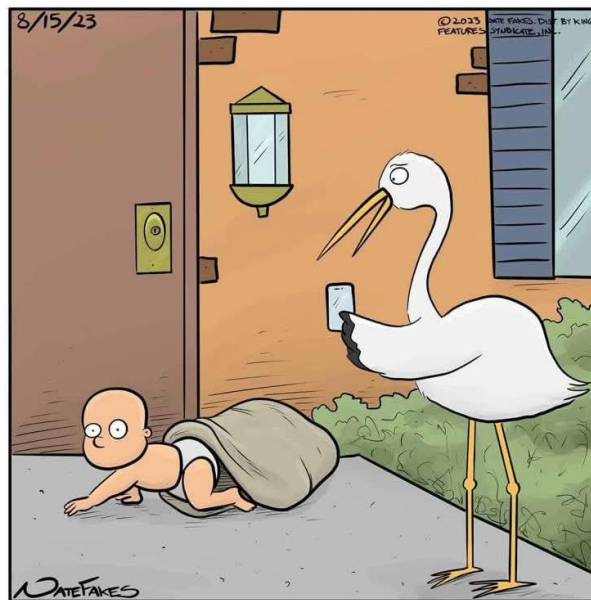


### FORT MYERS EAST ROTARY CLUB

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.fmeastrotary.com/>

---



"Hold still! I have to get a photo to show you were delivered."

## Roast Pork Dinner



Thursday, JANUARY 8<sup>th</sup>, 4-7 pm

Delicious roast pork, mashed potatoes/gravy, coleslaw, corn, bun, drink, and delicious dessert

\$10.00 adult ~ \$5.00 child

Eat in or take out

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

14531 Old Olga RD

Fort Myers, FL 33905

(239) 694-3878

## 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



**Click for JANUARY EVENTS at Riverdale Library:**

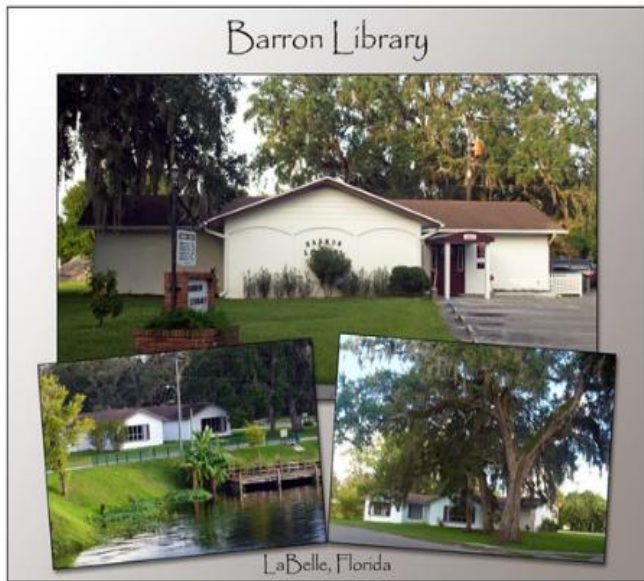
[https://leelibrary.librarymarket.com/events/month/2026/01?branches%5B142%5D=142&branches%5B144%5D=144&branches%5B336%5D=336&bundles%5Blc\\_closing%5D=lc\\_closing&bundles%5Blc\\_event%5D=lc\\_event](https://leelibrary.librarymarket.com/events/month/2026/01?branches%5B142%5D=142&branches%5B144%5D=144&branches%5B336%5D=336&bundles%5Blc_closing%5D=lc_closing&bundles%5Blc_event%5D=lc_event)





# **LABELLE AREA EVENTS**

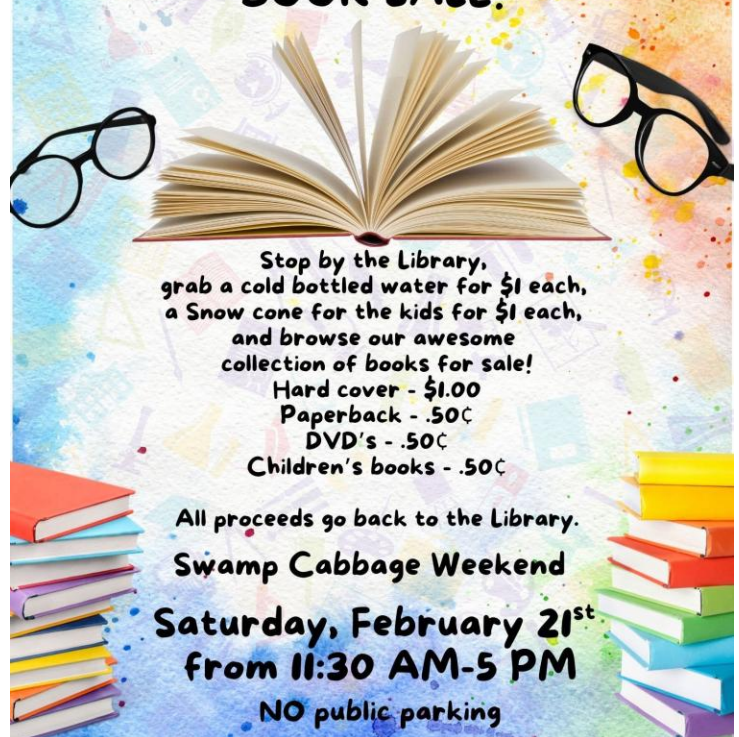
## **And Services**



### **Barron Library**

**461 N Main St, LaBelle, FL  
33935**

**The Friends of Barron Library  
are hosting their first annual  
BOOK SALE!**



Stop by the Library,  
grab a cold bottled water for \$1 each,  
a Snow cone for the kids for \$1 each,  
and browse our awesome  
collection of books for sale!

Hard cover - \$1.00  
Paperback - .50¢  
DVD's - .50¢  
Children's books - .50¢

All proceeds go back to the Library.

**Swamp Cabbage Weekend**  
**Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>**  
**from 11:30 AM-5 PM**  
**NO public parking**



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

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 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!



- 34 -

Access link to our ARCHIVE of ALL OTR issues from day 1:  
<https://www.ontheriver.org/archive>



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

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 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/>

**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

SAVE THE DATE!!

*Swamp*  
**CABBAGE FESTIVAL**

**LAST FULL WEEKEND:  
FEBRUARY 21ST & 22ND**

CELEBRATING THE 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL EVENT  
OUR DIAMOND CELEBRATION

**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.





## DOWNTOWN SUPPORTER MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

**Support the heart of LaBelle and grow with us!**

The LaBelle Downtown Revitalization Corporation (LDRC) is powered by community memberships, fundraising efforts, and a strong public-private partnership. Our success comes from being a local initiative—driven by local people, funded by local support, and focused entirely on revitalizing and preserving the heart of LaBelle. By becoming a member, you're not just supporting a cause—you're investing in a vibrant, thriving downtown for generations to come.

### INDIVIDUAL \$50.00

For residents and supporters who want to show love for downtown!

- Monthly e-newsletter
- Advance notice of LDRC events
- Be seen in our public supporter showcase online

### NONPROFIT \$100.00

Exclusive rate for nonprofit organizations.

- Discounted participation at select LDRC events
- Listing in our online directory
- Featured in member promotions (newsletter & social media)
- Invitations to exclusive networking events and workshops

### COMMUNITY PARTNER \$300.00

Perfect for small businesses and individuals wanting more visibility.

- Business listing in online directory
- Featured in our monthly e-newsletter with options for spotlights, ad placement, and special promotions
- Social media shares on LDRC channels
- Invitations to exclusive networking events and workshops
- Early access to event sign-up

### BUSINESS \$500.00

For businesses who want visibility, impact, and a stronger downtown.

- Business listing in online directory
- Featured in our monthly e-newsletter with options for spotlights, ad placement, and special promotions
- Access to member-only referrals and features
- Social media shares on LDRC channels
- Invitations to exclusive networking events and workshops
- Early access to event sign-up
- 1 free booth at an LDRC Shop Downtown event.

**READY TO JOIN?**

Visit [downtownlabelle.com](http://downtownlabelle.com)

# firehouse community theatre inc.

THE FIREHOUSE COMMUNITY THEATRE  
PRESENTS



*by Jones Hope Wooten*

April 10, 11, 12 and 17, 18, 19

*Five Southern women, whose friendships began many years ago on their college swim team, set aside a long weekend every August to recharge.*

THE FIREHOUSE COMMUNITY THEATRE  
PRESENTS



OUR  
33RD  
SEASON

January  
16, 17, 23, 24 at 7pm  
and  
18, 25 at 2pm

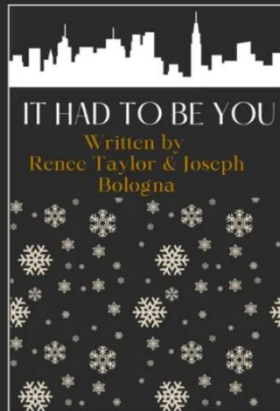
One dark and stormy night, a mysterious, dark, and handsome man shows up at Carla's door. Could this simply be payback from a disgruntled employee, or could it be...love's destiny?

THE FIREHOUSE COMMUNITY THEATRE  
PRESENTS

OUR 33<sup>RD</sup> SEASON

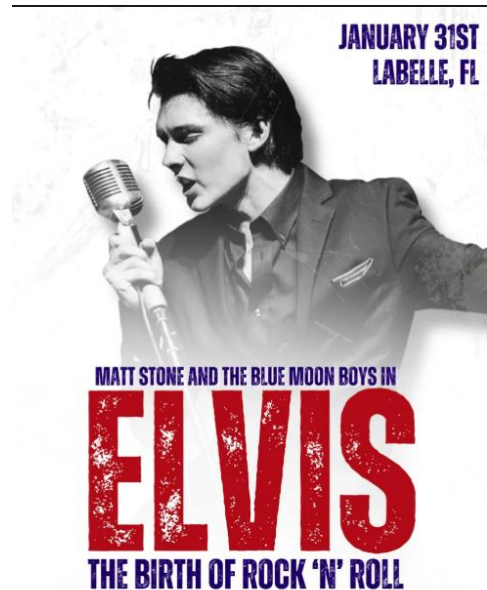
FEBRUARY 27, 28  
MARCH 6, 7 AT 7PM  
AND  
MARCH 1, 8 AT 2PM

THEDA BLAU, A FAILED ACTRESS,  
HEALTH FOOD NUT, AND  
WOULD-BE PLAYWRIGHT  
WANTS TO FIND  
LOVE AND SUCCESS IN  
NEW YORK.



IT HAD TO BE YOU  
Written by  
Renee Taylor & Joseph  
Bologna

JANUARY 31ST  
LABELLE, FL



MATT STONE AND THE BLUE MOON BOYS IN  
**ELVIS**  
THE BIRTH OF ROCK 'N' ROLL





**SMOKE UNDER THE OAKS RIB FEST**

**14TH ANNUAL LABELLE RIB COOK-OFF**

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2026**  
OPENING CEREMONY AT 10:30AM  
10:30AM-5:00PM ADULTS ONLY

**BARRON PARK**  
1554 DESOTO AVE  
LABELLE, FL  
DOWNTOWN LABELLE

**FREE ADMISSION**  
TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

**ATTENTION BBQERS**  
ENTER YOUR TEAM OF 4  
BIBO ENTRY FEE TEAM

**32 RACKS OF RIBS**  
PROVIDES YOUR ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES

**CASH PRIZES**  
**UNIQUE TROPHIES**  
AWARDS GIVEN TO 1-2ND & PEOPLE'S CHOICE

**SERVE TO PANEL OF 3 JUDGES**  
FOR 1-3RD PLACE  
SERVE TO THE PUBLIC  
FOR PEOPLE'S CHOICE

**GUEST JUDGE:**  
TO BE ANNOUNCED

**TASTE-TEST ENTRY & VOTE**  
FOR THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

**1 RIB = \$3**  
**5 RIBS = \$15**  
**10 RIBS = \$29**

**TASTING BEGINS AT 11:00AM**

**FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY**  
OPENING REMARKS - COORDINATION FEE HELP  
ARTS & CRAFTS VENDORS  
LIVE DJ - BOULE & BROS  
LIVE MUSIC - THE WALKER EXPERIENCE  
EXPLORATIONS FOR THE KIDS

**EVENT SPONSORS**

FRIDAY, JAN 9 - SETUP & MANIFEST WITH US  
SATURDAY, JAN 10 - COOKING BEGINS AT 11PM  
REGISTER AT [DOWNTOWNLABELLE.COM](http://DOWNTOWNLABELLE.COM)  
PARKING: 300 N. PALM BLVD  
THE RIB COOK-OFF IS TO PARTICIPATE  
NOT SPECTATE! PLEASE SEE

## Get Ready to Smoke Under the Oaks!

It's almost time for LaBelle's favorite fall tradition the 14th Annual Smoke Under the Oaks BBQ Festival! Join us Saturday, January 10th, 2026 in Barron Park for a day of smoky ribs, live music, local vendors, and small-town fun beneath the oaks.

Whether you're a BBQ team ready to compete, a local business looking to sponsor, or a vendor wanting to join the action, there's a way for everyone to be part of the excitement! Team registration and vendor sign-ups are open now, and sponsorship opportunities are still available for those who want to help make this year's event bigger and better than ever.

Register your team, sign up as a vendor, or learn more about sponsorships here: [Click Here](https://www.eventeny.com/events/smoke-under-the-oaks-rib-fest-2025-23859/)

CLICK HERE:

<https://www.eventeny.com/events/smoke-under-the-oaks-rib-fest-2025-23859/>

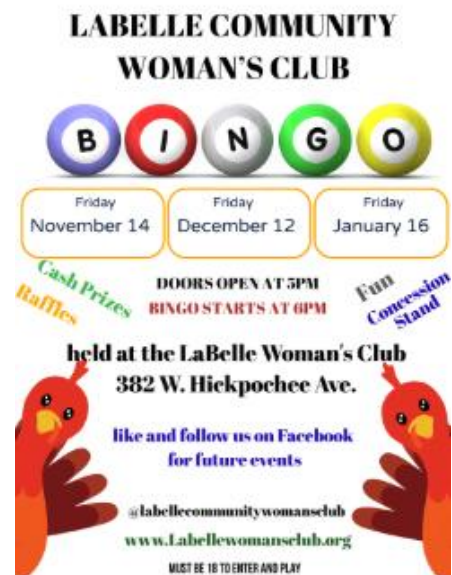


**CALL FOR ARTISTS**

Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation mural coming to downtown LaBelle.

APPLICATIONS CLOSE NOVEMBER 18TH.  
Learn more and apply at the link below/in bio.

Florida WILDLIFE CORRIDOR Foundation  
Scholarship Foundation  
City of LaBelle  
ART GALLERY



**LABELLE COMMUNITY WOMAN'S CLUB**

**B I N G O**

Friday November 14    Friday December 12    Friday January 16

Cash Prizes    DOORS OPEN AT 5PM    Fun Concession Stand  
Raffles    BINGO STARTS AT 6PM

held at the LaBelle Woman's Club  
382 W. Hickpochee Ave.

like and follow us on Facebook  
for future events

@labellecommunitywomansclub  
[www.Labellewomansclub.org](http://www.Labellewomansclub.org)

MUST BE 18 TO ENTER AND PLAY



## The NEWEST Theater in LaBelle!

On Saturday evening, November 8<sup>th</sup>, the cast, crew, and directors of the YOUTH THEATER COMPANY performed a whimsical and fun stage play of ANNIE.

This was their FIRST public program, and it ran through two shows to large crowds. Of course, lots of family and friends of the kids. However, don't believe those youngsters and teens didn't give a heartwarming performance.

Watch for more programs in the future, and I'd advise you not miss a single one.

<https://www.ashtoarttheatre.com/>

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



### 9 LIFE SKILLS TAUGHT in performing arts

- 1 Creativity
- 2 Confidence
- 3 Teamwork
- 4 Empathy
- 5 Time Management
- 6 Adaptability
- 7 Problem Solving
- 8 Public Speaking
- 9 Initiative

## THEATRE INTEGRATES

### Florida's K-12 ELA STANDARDS



Oral Communication  
& Presentation Skills



Reading Comprehension  
of Literary Texts



Writing for Purpose  
& Audience



Collaborative Discussion  
& Active Listening



Language Usage &  
Vocabulary Development



**They are  
accepting donations to purchase new sound  
equipment for every performer.**

## ASH TO ART THEATRE THEATRE FOUNDATIONS AGES 5-8

WEEK 1: NAME AND IMPROV GAMES

WEEK 2: ACTING METHODS

WEEK 3: LEARNING THE STAGE

WEEK 4: VOCAL PROJECTION

WEEK 5: MOVING TO A BEAT

WEEK 6: CREATING A CHARACTER

WEEK 7: CHOREOGRAPHY

WEEK 8: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

WEEK 9: PUTTING ON A SHOW



# NORTH FORT MYERS & NORTH OLGA EVENTS And Services

---



## 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

### TENTATIVE SHOW BILL

**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!**





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

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers



## OCTAGON WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



**41660 Horseshoe Road • Punta Gorda, FL  
33982 • 239-543-1130**

### Most mentioned offerings



Tiger Viewing



Lion Viewing



Guided Wildlife Tours



Bear Encounter



## Events & Services

# FOR ALL OF US



*East Lee Wildlife  
Stewardship Group*

**Donate Today:**

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

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



**Big Brothers Big Sisters**  
of the Sun Coast

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

**COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAM**  
Connecting local mentoring relationships between one-on-one mentors and mentees. During the Big and Little mentorship, Big and Little mentor together. Big and Little meet their Little on the weekends. Big and Little go together with their Little on weekday evenings. Each mentor is assigned and develops a schedule that works for them.

**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 Wainiger at 863-343-0107  
or [lwainiger@bbsuncoast.org](mailto:lwainiger@bbsuncoast.org)

**Big Brothers Big Sisters**  
of the Sun Coast

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

**Community-Based Program**  
Connecting local mentoring relationships between one-on-one mentors and mentees. During the Big and Little mentorship, Big and Little mentor together. Big and Little meet their Little on the weekends. Big and Little go together with their Little on weekday evenings. Each mentor is assigned and develops a schedule that works for them.

**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 Wainiger at 863-343-0107  
or [lwainiger@bbsuncoast.org](mailto:lwainiger@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!

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

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers



## 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://>

---

## Lee County Florida 4-H

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).

A blue poster for the '2024/2025 Youth Livestock Show Ethics and Animal Care Workshop'. The word 'ETHICS' is written in large, bold letters, with each letter containing a different image of a livestock animal (pig, goat, chicken, rooster, horse, cow). Below the title, there is a 4-H logo and a paragraph of text: 'For a list of available virtual and in person workshops, please visit the website. Note that new workshops are being added as needed.' Below this is the website URL: 'https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QcGJ7R-BtCdNkjheHF3oG-mpoIqDIYEiaCct3lW-922o/edit' with a green arrow pointing to a QR code. At the bottom, there is more text: '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!' and '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 or call (813) 627-4229.'



**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

---



**INTERACTIVE Crime Location Map for  
Lee County**

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

**Updated constantly**





## -----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.



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

---



**FOR**



<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>



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>

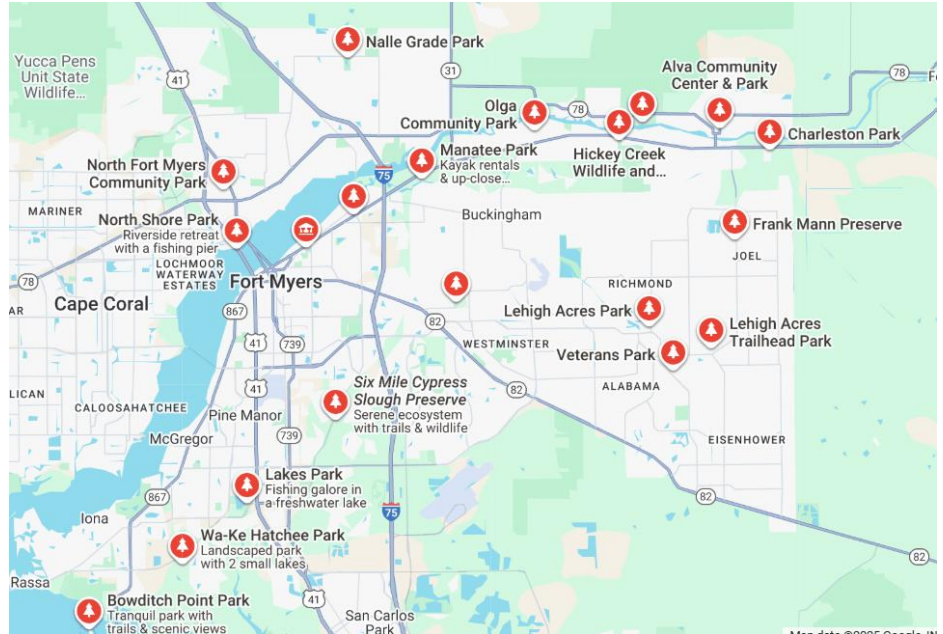
WEBSITE: [www.OnTheRiver.org](http://www.OnTheRiver.org)

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers

Click to link below to all

## LEE COUNTY PARKS

Contact information and  
interactive map



[https://www.google.com/search?q=Lee+County+Parks&sc\\_esv=33d7c6e47e76292a&rlz=1C1CHBDGBUS1185US1185&sxsrf=AE3TifON\\_7qOfPqpR4DZQeqGWYYKd4mXTw:1764776637500&udm=1&lsack=vVowaciiHuWOwbkPj7DsiQ0&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewil9dek4aGRaxVIRzABHQ8YO9EQjGp6BAglEAE&biw=1536&bih=695&dpr=1.25](https://www.google.com/search?q=Lee+County+Parks&sc_esv=33d7c6e47e76292a&rlz=1C1CHBDGBUS1185US1185&sxsrf=AE3TifON_7qOfPqpR4DZQeqGWYYKd4mXTw:1764776637500&udm=1&lsack=vVowaciiHuWOwbkPj7DsiQ0&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewil9dek4aGRaxVIRzABHQ8YO9EQjGp6BAglEAE&biw=1536&bih=695&dpr=1.25)



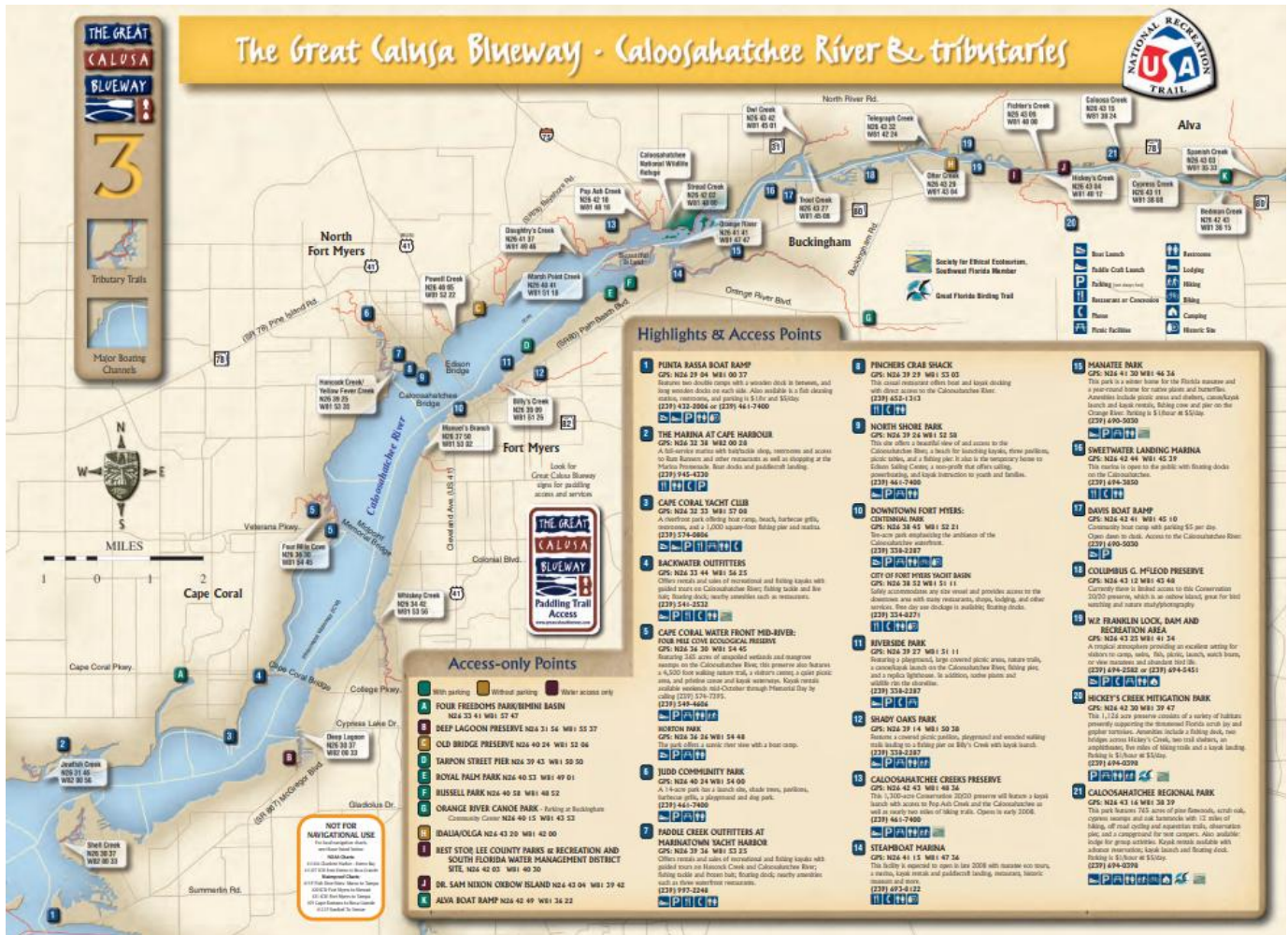
Click the link below for contact,  
direction, and use information for

## LEE COUNTY 20/20 PRESERVES



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







**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@flwgap.us](mailto:jesse.spencer@flwgap.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**





## FLORIDA'S PET LEMON LAW

If your family is considering adding a new furry member, knowing your rights before making the purchase may provide some relief in case something goes wrong.

The Florida Pet Law, [Section 828.29, Florida Statutes](#), provides standardized health requirements for dogs and cats sold within Florida. Pet dealers are prohibited from deliberately misrepresenting the health of any dog or cat within the state. Florida law defines a pet dealer as anyone who sells more than two litters or 20 dogs or cats to the public per year. The Florida Pet Law is not applicable to hobby breeders, county or municipal animal control facilities, or registered nonprofit humane organizations.

Pet dealers are required by the law to provide the consumer with a written notice which details the purchaser's rights, along with an official certificate of veterinary inspection, attesting to the breed, sex, age, color, and health record of the pet, including a list of vaccines. If the dealer is unfamiliar with this requirement or refuses to provide either document, be cautious.

Upon purchase of the pet, the law provides new owners with specific time periods within which certain actions must be completed. Any contagious or infectious diseases must be documented by a veterinarian within 14 days; congenital or hereditary defects, or misrepresentations as to the breed, sex, age or color, must be documented within one year. Upon knowledge of any of the above, the consumer has two days to notify the dealer of the findings, and three days to provide the written documentation.

Upon notification, the consumer is afforded three options:

- The consumer may return the pet to the dealer for a full refund and reimbursement of veterinary costs.
- The consumer may exchange the pet for another of equal value and be reimbursed for veterinary costs.
- The consumer may choose to keep the pet, and the dealer will be responsible for reasonable veterinary costs to treat or cure the animal.

Issues concerning the health certificate should be directed to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at (850) 410-0950.





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.

ENJOY!!

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

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 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.

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

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers

## 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 Ministries**  
FAITH'S WAY THRU PAIN

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

**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

**Trauma Healing INSTITUTE**

HurtMending Ministry Offering,  
in collaboration with

**AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY**

## CHILD CARE

# 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**

- Harms Marsh Middle, *Buchingham*
- 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.

## 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)

- 55 -

Access link to our ARCHIVE of ALL OTR issues from day 1:

<https://www.ontheriver.org/archive>



## Colon Cancer

FGCU Community & Public Health Nursing Students

- Signs/Symptoms of Colon Cancer**  
 Blood in stool, changes in bowel habits (constipation/diarrhea), unexplained weight loss
- How to Screen for it**  
 The best way to detect colon cancer is through a colonoscopy- it usually starts at 45 years old. If your initial colonoscopy is normal, you only need one every 10 years
- Risk factors**  
 High intake of red meats, not enough fiber, alcohol use, smoking, family history, ulcerative colitis, crohn's disease, African Americans are 20% more likely to get colon cancer
- Ways to prevent colon cancer**  
 Eat food high in fiber (beans, broccoli, carrots, apples, almonds, lentils). Reduce smoking or alcohol use
- Report Changes Early**  
 Don't wait—if you have any of these symptoms and are at risk for colon cancer make sure to get screened.

<https://coloncancercoalition.org/>



## BREAST CANCER

FGCU Community and Public Health Nursing Students

Breast Cancer is the most common diagnosed cancer and the 2nd leading cancer resulting in death.

### COMMON RISK FACTORS


Though a woman's chance of developing breast cancer is only 13%, there are certain factors that increase one's risk. Things such as alcohol consumption and decreased physical activity are examples of lifestyle factors while unchangeable risk factors include genetic predisposition and an early start of menstruation.

### EARLY DIAGNOSTICS AND TREATMENTS

Early diagnosis is key to improving outcomes in breast cancer patients. Imaging techniques such as an MRI or ultrasound, or a tissue biopsy may be needed to formally diagnose one with breast cancer. Possible treatments for breast cancer patients include chemotherapy, radiation, and breast reconstruction surgery.

### SELF-BREAST EXAM

Inspect the breasts for any changes in size, shape, and contour. Observe for dimpling, skin irritation, and nipple inversion or discharge. Then palpate in circular motions starting from the outer breast edge towards the nipple in an up-and-down manner. Note any lumps, knots, or tenderness and cover all areas of breasts and armpit.



### WHAT IS A MAMMOGRAM?

A mammogram is a breast X-ray. It is the best screening test for identifying breast cancer at an early stage. It is recommended to start having mammograms at the age of 40 years old. A mammogram should be done every 1-2 years after that. If you have risk factors such as a family history of breast cancer, talk with your doctor to have a screening mammogram sooner than 40 years old.

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY  
[HTTPS://WWW.CANCER.ORG/](https://www.cancer.org/)





# 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	233 Clark St, Labelle, FL 33935
915 Lake Manor Dr Labelle, FL 33935	(863) 675-4227
(863) 675-0900	Pentecostal Church of God
	55 Orange Ave, Labelle, FL 33935
Carlson Memorial Church	(863) 675-0938
310 Campbell St Labelle FL, 33935	
(863) 675-0656	LaBelle Assembly of God
	915 Lake Manor Dr Labelle FL
The Channel UMC Ft Myers/LaBelle	(863) 675-0900
Fully ONLINE LIVE, Mondays, 7pm, EST	
<a href="https://www.facebook.com/TheChannelUMC/">https://www.facebook.com/TheChannelUMC/</a>	LaBelle First Baptist
ZOOM LINK:	330 N Main St, Labelle, FL 33935
<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89527254110?pwd=bWEyL283YW9sck52R2V5UDVqTEJiQT09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89527254110?pwd=bWEyL283YW9sck52R2V5UDVqTEJiQT09</a>	(863) 675-2171
Church of Christ Central	Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish
60 Hendry St, Labelle, FL 33935	355 S Bridge St, Labelle, FL 33935
(863) 675-4796	(863) 675-0030
Eastside Baptist Church	Christ Central LaBelle, Reformed
1110 S Carlyle St, Labelle, FL 33935	540 1st Ave LaBelle FL
(863) 675-3595	(863) 675-2100
El Faro Assemblies of God of LaBelle	Good Shepherd Episcopal
431 Bryan Ave, Labelle, FL 33935	1098 Collingswood Pkwy, LaBelle FL
(863) 675-5947	(863) 675-0385
	<a href="https://goodshepherd.dioswfl.org">https://goodshepherd.dioswfl.org</a>
Grace Baptist	Christ The King Lutheran
4200 Ne Eucalyptus Blvd, Labelle, FL 33935	1362 Thigpen Rd, Labelle, FL 33935
(863) 675-3349	(941) 675-2733
International Christian Fellowship	New Testament Assembly

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

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers

60 Calhoun 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



### Mobile Medical Clinic Schedule

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

<b>Tuesday, January 6th</b> <b>East Naples</b> <b>United Methodist Church</b> 10:00 am to 2:00 pm 2701 Airport Road, Naples, FL 34112	<b>Project SEED Health Fair</b> Saturday, Jan. 17th - 9 am to Noon <b>St Matthews House</b> 630 W Main Street Immokalee, FL 34142
<b>Thursday, January 8th</b> <b>Pine Manor Community Center</b> 9:00 am to 1:00 pm 5547 Tenth Ave Fort Myers, FL 33907	<b>Homeless Service Day</b> Saturday, Jan. 24th - 7:30 am to 1 pm <b>Next Level Church</b> 3637 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33916
<b>Tuesday, January 13th &amp; 27th</b> <b>Cafe of Life</b> 9:00 am to 1:00 pm 26724 Nomad Dr Bonita Springs, FL 34135	<b>Multiple Days a Month</b> <b>Mount Hermon Ministries</b> Call 239-222-1829 to make an appointment 2856 Douglas Ave, Fort Myers, FL 33916
<b>Wednesday, January 14th</b> <b>Baptist Church Ft Myers Beach</b> 9:00 am to 1:00 pm 130 Connecticut St Ft Myers Beach, FL 33931	<b>Friday, January 16th</b> <b>Mahanaim SDA Church</b> 10:00 am to 2:00 pm 318 Sabal Palm Road, Naples, FL 34114
<b>Thursday, January 15th</b> <b>Community Cooperative</b> 9:00 am to 1:00 pm 3429 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Blvd #4403 Fort Myers, FL 33916	<b>Wednesday, December 21st</b> <b>Gladiolus Food Pantry</b> 10:00 am to 2:00 pm 10511 Gladiolus Drive Ft. Myers, FL 33908



**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





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

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

---

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@embargmail.com](mailto:Alvamc@embargmail.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

**-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

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.**

**TY**

[Kendewalt1@gmail.com](mailto:Kendewalt1@gmail.com)

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 2415 Grand Ave., Fort Myers, FL 33901	
Wednesday 6:30-8:30	Ft. Myers Shores Campus 14036 Matanzas Dr., Ft. Myers, FL 33905	
Friday 6:45-9PM	Cape Coral Campus 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

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

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers



## 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@egracechurch.com](mailto:pwinters@egracechurch.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



News

### **Report: Breathing Can Extend Lifespan By Several Decades**

Published: October 5, 2017

ROCKVILLE, MD—Touting the numerous health benefits of performing the activity on a regular basis, a report released Thursday by the National Institutes of Health found that breathing can extend a person's lifespan by several decades. "Our research clearly shows that, if started early enough and performed properly, respiration can potentially help a person live for 80 years or more," said lead author Jacob Hamlin, adding that the data confirmed the enormous long-term benefit of breathing, regardless of gender, ethnicity,

or family history. "Steady inhaling, when combined with equal parts exhaling, is incredibly good for your lungs and promotes healthy brain function. Conversely, however, we found that missing even one day of breathing can drastically reduce an otherwise healthy person's life expectancy." Hamlin went on to say that breathing is not a magic solution and works best as part of a lifestyle that includes eating food and drinking fluids.



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

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 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 "HOPE & Healing" is in a large, stylized font, with "divorce recovery support groups" in a smaller, sans-serif font below it. The "Find a DivorceCare support group" text is in a white box on a green background. Below this are two buttons: "In-Person" and "Online". At the bottom, there is a quote from Melissa: "It was the best thing I did for my kids and myself."



## 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.lee.gov.com/publicsafety/emergencymanagement/plan">www.lee.gov.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

## 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.

---

### 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 1,500 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.png photos or logos. We can also scan any copy and/or photos you provide to create a single j.png 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.

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

Issue 84, January 2026, Circulation: Over 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers

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.**

---

