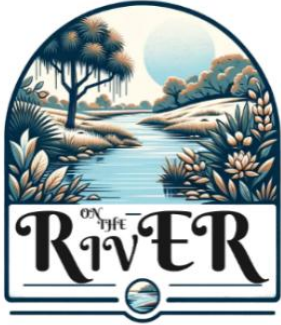


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As always, please share with anyone. Ken DeWalt, publisher, www.OnTheRiver.org



On The RIVER NEWS

Connecting Caloosahatchee River Communities from Fort Myers Shores to LaBelle
For all our NEIGHBORS and NEIGHBORHOODS

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

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The area we cover for news and non-profit events



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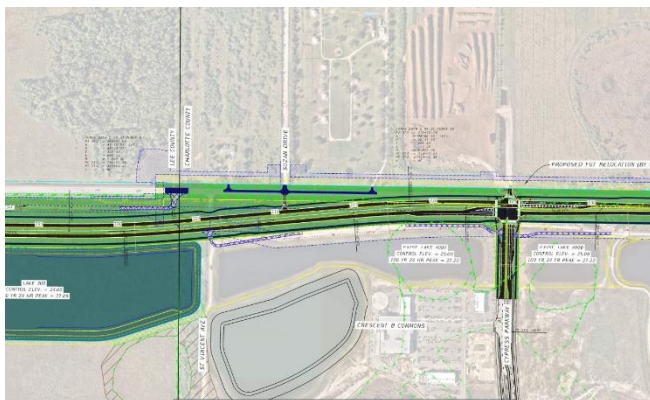
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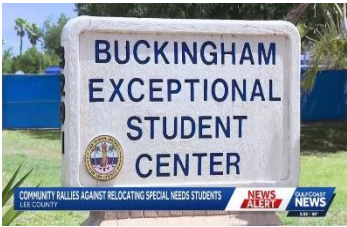
LOCAL NEWS

Babcock Ranch Highway UPDATE

(TY Darla McIntosh, Facebook, March 29)

Here is a new picture of the roundabout at SR 31 and Shirley Ln (from FDOT). Added pictures of each intersection for Bayshore, N River, Ruden, Shirley, Busbee, Suzan, Cypress (Publix), Horseshoe, and Little farm. The old SR 31 road ends right before Suzan Drive.





Buckingham Exceptional Student Center is set to relocate students

(TY GulfCoast News-Nehilah Grand-Pierre)

Parents of students at Buckingham Exceptional Student Center are raising concerns about the Lee County School District's decision to relocate students to Royal Palm Exceptional Center, citing the unique accommodations at Buckingham and the potential challenges of the move.

Cyndi Diaz, a founder of Little Voices of Buckingham, said the school has been more than just a learning space for her son Bruce.

"The moment I came in, everybody knew my son's name," Diaz said. Diaz described the school as a vital and welcoming environment for students.

"This is their home," she said.

Diaz founded Little Voices of Buckingham to unite parents in opposition to the district's plan to relocate all students from Buckingham to Royal Palm Exceptional Center.



"We have different accommodations here. This school was built exclusively for them. We don't have any steps. We're completely wheelchair friendly," Diaz said.

The district stated that all staff and services from Buckingham will move to the new campus, and transportation will be provided. The district also highlights that relocation is not connected to the budget cuts they announced for the upcoming year.

Katie Peterson, another parent, expressed concern about the changes and their impact on her blind daughter.

"It's very concerning to know budget cuts are being made, but yet they would need to make a promise that they're going to add all of these adaptive things to this campus," Peterson said.

She explained the careful considerations she makes for her daughter in everyday situations.

"When we go to a restaurant, I check it out first. I know how loud it is. I know if I can move her wheelchair around. I know if the tables are high top or low top to be able to pull her up to it. I know if the lights buzz," Peterson said.

The relocation is planned for August.



Fix the Civic Center

(TY SWFL Chronical- Amanda Cochran)



Lee County has consistently shown a strong and growing demand for agricultural and civic events. The recent 65th Annual Cracker Day Rodeo, hosted by the Lee County Posse, was a tremendous success — exactly as many in our community expected.

Year after year, the Posse demonstrates exceptional leadership, volunteerism, and a deep commitment to Lee County agricultural activities. As a non-profit organization, they consistently deliver high-quality events using their own property and resources.

And yet, this year, many people were turned away. Not because of poor planning. Not because of lack of effort. And certainly not because of the Posse.

The reality is simple: demand exceeded capacity. A Proven Demand — And a Missed Opportunity

The success of Posse rodeo events makes one thing clear: Lee County has a strong and growing demand for agricultural and civic events.

Just a short distance away from the Lee County Posse Rodeo Grounds sits a county-owned asset that could help meet that demand — the Lee County Civic Center at Mike Greenwell Regional Park. 100 acres. 65,000-square-foot arena. 12 years ago, it could seat 7,800 people. For decades, this facility served the community. Today, it sits underutilized — not because it's unusable, but because it has not been properly maintained. The Fix Is Not Complicated.



For years, residents have asked county leadership for basic, practical improvements:

Replace seating, Renovate restrooms

These are not extravagant requests. They are fundamental upgrades that would allow the arena to return to its full 7,800-seat capacity and functionality — something it sustained for decades.

In 2022, an independent assessment by engineering and environmental consulting firm, Weston & Sampson confirmed that the Civic Center structure remains sound. This is not a question of feasibility. It is a question of priority. Restoring the Civic Center is not about replacing the Lee County Posse or diminishing its role. It's about supporting organizations like them — providing a venue that can meet the demand they have spent decades building through trust, consistency, and community engagement.

A functional Civic Center could once again host:

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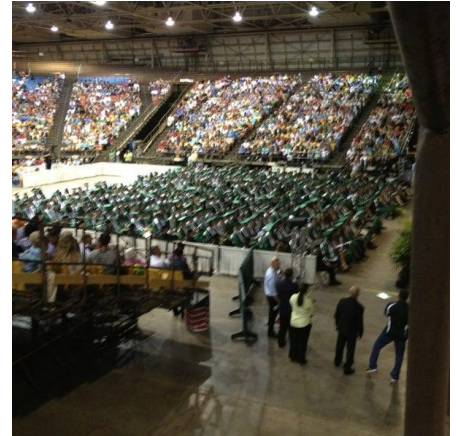
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Large-scale Rodeos, Large-scale Equestrian Events, Concerts and Graduations, Large Trade Expos, Other Major Community Gatherings.

While outdoor venues serve well in cooler months, Florida's extreme heat and unpredictable storm weather limit their use. An indoor, air-conditioned, functional facility would once again allow events to take place year-round – benefiting nonprofits, small businesses, and residents alike.

The Cost of Inaction – What is Preventing Progress?

In March 2023, following the sudden and unnecessary closure of the Civic Center by the Board of County Commissioners, Lee County lost long-standing contracted vendors — including the Citrus Expo, which had been held there for over three decades. These losses were not due to lack of interest. They were the result of inaction and a failure to maintain one of the largest county-owned facilities.



In recent years, county leadership has attributed deferred maintenance to hurricanes, COVID-19, and prior nonprofit management. Yet other county-owned event facilities have continued to receive consistent maintenance and investment.

With a population exceeding 850,000, Lee County should be a regional hub for large-scale agricultural events. Instead, those opportunities — and the economic activity that comes with them — are being lost.

When fully operational, the Civic Center has the potential to:

Attract statewide and regional events, Generate millions in tourism revenue, Support local hotels, restaurants, and businesses

Revenue from events in previous years has historically helped offset operating costs. Maintaining a community-ready facility is not just a community investment — it is fiscally responsible.

Questions Worth Asking

Why hasn't existing tourism development tax revenue (bed tax) been used to make these basic improvements such as seating to allow the arena to be fully functional?

Why does a county of this size lack a fully functional agricultural and civic venue?

Consider this: DeSoto County, with a population under 40,000, operates the Turner Agri-Civic Center — a fully functional facility with adequate seating.

Lee County, with a population of more than 850,000, does not.

From Discussion to Action



For years, the Civic Center has been the subject of studies, surveys, and ongoing discussions — with little to show in terms of action.

These discussions by county leaders point to a larger question: how long will it take to move from conversation to action? How can a county government of this size fail to provide basic seating at a structurally sound facility, limiting its ability to serve the community—particularly senior citizens, disabled veterans, and other residents?

In 2021, developers submitted a proposal to Lee County for a public-private partnership (P3) that would have included demolishing all the existing Civic Center facilities to make way for large-scale redevelopment.

At the February 23, 2026 Budget and Strategic Planning Workshop, the District 5 Commissioner raised the suggestion again of pursuing an invitation for public-private partnership at the Civic Center site.

Yet public input has consistently and loudly shown strong support for preserving and improving the Civic Center for its intended use.

This raises an important question: Are current discussions aligned with the clearly expressed priorities of Lee County residents?

A Practical Path Forward

Rather than spending years on additional plans, studies, and long-range concepts, there is a practical path in front of Lee County leaders — implementing the basic improvements now and utilizing an asset the county already owns. Residents should not have to wait years.

Because the reality is if we wait for a brand-new Civic Center, it may never materialize. County leadership has already expressed concerns about funding large-scale capital projects. In the meantime, the cost of inaction continues to grow — and residents are left without a facility that once served all of Southwest Florida.



The continued success of events like the ones at the Lee County Posse Rodeo Arena demonstrates something very clearly — the demand exists.

Make the necessary improvements now and put this building back into fully functional service.

If the Civic Center is restored, the events — and the people — will follow. The demand is proven. The structure is sound.

Lee County deserves an agricultural and civic facility that meets the needs of its community.

Olde Florida Motorcoach & RV Resort breaks ground on new Public Grill & Rally Center

(TY Okeechobee News, edited)



Olde Florida Motorcoach & RV Resort broke ground on its highly anticipated 10,000 sq. ft. Grill & Rally Center on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at 11 a.m. The ceremony took place onsite at the resort and was followed by a reception noon to 2 p.m.

This new development of a multi-purpose venue that will be open to the public for special occasions creates a new destination in the LaBelle community and greater Southwest Florida region.

The Grill & Rally Center is designed to host a wide range of experiences—from private celebrations and corporate functions to rallies and community gathering.

“This groundbreaking represents more than just a new building, it’s an investment in experience, community, and the future of this region,” said Scott Wagner, Managing Partner of Olde Florida Motorcoach & RV Resort. “We are creating a space that welcomes not only our guests but the public as well. One where people can come together, celebrate, and build meaningful connections.”

Looking ahead, the next phase of development will introduce two additions: the Olde Florida Waterpark and the LaBelle Diner, both expected to open in early 2027.

Local officials, media representatives, and members of the community attended the groundbreaking ceremony.

Old Florida Motorcoach resort is located at 7551 W SR 80 in Labelle.

For more information or to RSVP, please email Tracy Duhaney tracy@theamboseligroup.com or call 239-682-1282.

Can you recognize Florida's native venomous snakes?

(TY Okeechobee News-Lourdes Mederos)

Warmer spring weather means more outdoor activities for both Floridians and native venomous snakes. To help residents understand why snake sightings increase this time of year, where they are most commonly found and how to recognize them from afar, UF/IFAS experts are spotlighting the ASK IFAS Extension publication *Recognizing Florida's Venomous Snakes*, also now available in Spanish.

Florida is home to about 50 native snake species, and six of those are venomous including five pit vipers. These include the eastern diamondback rattlesnake, timber rattlesnake, pygmy rattlesnake, two species of cottonmouth, the copperhead and the coral snake.



A Florida native eastern diamondback rattlesnake is a large, heavy-bodied snake with a broad triangular head, bold dark diamond-shaped markings along its back and a thick tail ending in a prominent rattle segment. [Photo courtesy Cat Wofford, UF/IFAS]

"Snakes are reptiles and are most active when they are warm. As spring arrives and the days get warmer, snakes and other reptiles (i.e. turtles, lizards, alligators) become more active," said Steven Johnson, professor and interim chair of the Department of Wildlife Ecology and

Conservation. "They've been mostly dormant during the winter and start to come out of hiding in spring to hunt for food, and many species are also searching for mates. The fine weather also means that people are more active outdoors so the potential for encountering a snake increases."

Florida's venomous snakes live in a wide range of habitats, from lakes and swamps to forests and brushy fields. Some species are found statewide, but others are restricted to smaller portions of Florida. For example, copperheads only occur west of Tallahassee in a small area along the Apalachicola River and in the northern parts of Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties in the western panhandle. Timber rattlesnakes, on the other hand, are only regularly found in the northern peninsula north of Gainesville. Cotton mouths and the other three venomous species are found throughout the state.

A cottonmouth snake on a beach at Seahorse Key. A Florida native cottonmouth snake is a heavy-bodied, muscular snake with a broad, blocky head, dark brown to black coloration, and distinctive facial bands, often displaying a pale, cotton-white mouth when threatened. [Photo by Marisol Amador, UF/IFAS]



"Florida is one of the most rapidly growing states in the country, and the extent of residential development continues to expand. Thus, humans

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increasingly are encroaching in natural areas that are home to our diversity of snakes, including venomous species,” Johnson said. “It’s not so much that snakes are becoming more common in residential areas, but rather that residential areas are becoming more common in areas that harbor snakes.”



A Florida native coral snake is a small, slender snake distinguished by its smooth, shiny scales and bold red, yellow and black bands encircling the body, with red bands touching the yellow bands. [Photo by Steve A. Johnson, UF/IFAS]

Some nonvenomous species closely resemble their venomous counterparts, making identifying them at a distance difficult for the untrained eye. That is why experts emphasize keeping your distance.

The publication walks readers through key identification tips, including patterns, coloration and habitat clues, while cautioning against common myths.

The five species of pit vipers all share several characteristics. They get the name “pit viper” because of a specially adapted heat-sensing pit located in front of the eyes used for detecting their prey and finding places to hide that provide them with suitable temperatures. The pupils of their eyes are vertical, almost cat-like, and they have a deep facial pit between each eye and nostril. These characteristics can be difficult to see unless a snake is examined closely, which is why experts stress not relying on these characteristics alone when seeking to tell apart the venomous from non-venomous snakes. Pit vipers also have thick, blocky heads with an obvious neck, explained Johnson.

Also, did you know that head shape alone is not a reliable way to determine whether a snake is venomous? A triangular-shaped head does not mean a snake is venomous. When they feel threatened, some nonvenomous species will flatten their head and flare their jaws, making their head triangular.

“This bluffing behavior makes them look more intimidating and helps ward-off potential predators,” he said. Florida’s pit vipers also have a thin ridge, known as a keel, along the center of the scales on their backs, giving them a rough, dull appearance. And relative to their length, pit vipers are heavy-bodied snakes.

By understanding how to recognize Florida’s venomous snakes and where they are most likely to be encountered, residents can better appreciate the wildlife around them while staying safe outdoors.

Johnson recommends several steps to help ensure safety when encountering a snake outdoors.

“The safest thing to do, for you and the snake, is to keep a distance of several feet between you and the snake and just enjoy your fortunate encounter,” he said. “Use your phone to take a photo, zooming in while keeping your distance, and observe the snake’s size, color and markings.”

A Florida native coral snake is a small, slender snake distinguished by its smooth, shiny scales and bold red, yellow and black bands encircling the body, with red bands touching the yellow bands. [Photo by Steve A. Johnson, UF/IFAS]

A Florida native coral snake is a small, slender snake distinguished by its smooth, shiny scales and bold red, yellow and black bands encircling the body, with red bands touching the yellow bands. [Photo by Steve A. Johnson, UF/IFAS]

He also suggests using an identification app, such as iNaturalist, while taking the photo to help determine the species.

Johnson emphasizes never handling or harassing a venomous snake.

“Doing so significantly increases your chances of being bitten, something that is otherwise highly unlikely,” he said. “It is also important to watch where you step when walking outdoors and wear closed-toed shoes when hiking in natural areas.”



The NEW Alva high School construction site at GATE A, Tuckahoe Road and Joel Blvd. on April 8, 2026

Creating class rooms for the
thousands of students...
Predicted to live in the



thousands of homes planned or
in planning to arrive in North East
Lee County over the next several
years.



Current plans for the Neal Development of homes at the Owl Creek Boat Works North River Road



A public meeting was held at the site of the currently proposed Neal development on Tuesday April 7th at 5pm. RVI and Neal representatives spoke to the dozen or so local residents, which included Amanda Cochran, candidate for Lee County Commissioner in the next election.

The gray rectangle surrounding the Boatworks from Rte 78 to the Caloosahatchee River is now proposed to have 380 residences. All are planned to be single-family homes, detached (not duplex) but considered 'affordable', or starting at near \$300,000.

The homes will be clustered in groups with 40- and 50-foot lot fronts, 130 deep foot. There will be 12 feet between homes. Homes will average in interior space from 1500 to 3000 sq ft.

The development is not planned to be gated and will have two entrances and exits. A sidewalk will be laid in front of the development only, from west to east on the south side of North River Road.



County water and sewer has been promised from Lee County coming under the river at Olga. Pipes will be laid from Olga, past the planned Neal-owned Cary-Duke Development and into the Owl Creek development. The Cary-Duke west boundary will be at the Owl Creek east boundary and continue to the east at Olga.

The extensive open space, currently pasture and swamp will be replanted in native trees and low growth plants.

One new item that a representative from the Owl Creek Boatworks mentioned was that while sometimes large semi-truck trailers will have to use the single two-lane street through the development the road should be wide enough to get through.

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ALUMINUM seeks to complete construction on Packinghouse Road, Alva

Originally this pretty wooded site was to be a wedding and party venue. After numerous Lee County permissions were not sought for building and tree removal, zoning was changed to commercial/recreational use in 2022, the owners are now seeking to receive county permission to keep what they have now built and plan to build on the site, a storage warehouse and parking for their fleet of trucks and employee vehicles. The Woodsmen



building is being used now as an office. Zoning would have to change again to Commercial Group One.

On Tuesday April 7 at 4pm RVI, LSI engineering and owners from SWFL Aluminum shared their plans in a public meeting required to be held in the North Olga area of Lee County District 5.

The representatives of the company told a small group of residents that they are now working diligently to pay all past fines, meet all county requirements so construction could begin, hopefully, by 2027.



The 2-acre lot at the intersection of Packinghouse Road and the high-power electric line which runs west to east from Fort Myers to LaBelle (the former railroad grade)

The company would not be permitted to do any manufacturing on site, and only store supplies inside, not outside their buildings. Their business installs gutters and soffit, no roofing or siding.

They told those gathered that they expect no more than about two dozen entries and exits a day though the two entrances to the lot, including employees.

Residents in the area want the vinyl 8-foot-high privacy fence now surrounding the property completely removed and a transparent, possibly chain link fence, put up so the inside may be seen





to be clean and neat by passersby. Buffer plantings outside the new fence would also enhance the properties appearance.

Despite the many violations of county code which still need to be corrected, Lee County has allowed the firm to work on site through most of their ownership.

Residents sincerely hope that by the time construction is completed, even though the pretty grove which once served as the Woodmen of the World's picnic ground is gone forever, this site will at least be neat and clean again.



The National Association of Letter Carriers' annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive returns...



(TY Lake Okeechobee News)

...Saturday, May 9, giving Southwest Florida residents a simple, powerful way to help stock local food pantry shelves at a time of growing need.

In advance of the drive, letter carriers will deliver specially marked plastic bags to homes, condominiums and apartments throughout the region. Residents are encouraged to fill the bags with nonperishable, shelf-stable food and leave them by their mailbox for pickup on May 9. Letter carriers will collect donations along their routes and deliver them to local food banks and partner agencies.

"With more families facing tough choices at the grocery store, the need is not slowing down," said Richard LeBer, president and CEO of Harry Chapin Food Bank. "Stamp Out Hunger makes it easy for our community to take action right from their mailbox and help ensure our neighbors have food on the table."

Items most needed include breakfast bars, canned fish or chicken, dry or canned beans, canned vegetables, pasta and pasta sauce, cooking oil, dry milk, peanut butter and jelly, rice and canned soups.

"Most residents will receive a donation bag in their mail, but if not, any sturdy bag will work," said Steve Camacho, who is coordinating the Stamp Out Hunger initiative in Lee County. "Every neighborhood matters. Our letter carriers and volunteers will be out across Southwest Florida on May 9 collecting food that will go directly to local families."

The National Association of Letter Carriers launched Stamp Out Hunger in 1993. Since then, the effort has collected nearly 2 billion pounds of food nationwide, making it the largest single-day food drive in the country. In 2025 alone, letter carriers collected more than 48 million pounds of food, with 8 million pounds collected just right here in Florida.

Locally, donations from Stamp Out Hunger help support Harry Chapin Food Bank and its network of more than 170+ agency partners across Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee counties, serving neighbors experiencing food insecurity.

For more information about how to participate or support hunger relief efforts year-round, visit [HarryChapinFoodBank.org](https://www.harrychapinfoodbank.org).

ALVA INC hosts candidates for the 2026 Lee County School Board ,District 5, Elections

Grant Fichter, president of the resident's association, Alva Inc, moderated the presentations of three of the four candidates for the Lee County School Board at their meeting held at 7pm Wednesday April 15 at their regular location, the Alva Community center. The fourth candidate who had a previous engagement and could not make it was Jada Langford-Fleming (NON).



According to the Lee County Election Board, Four of the seven seats on the School District of Lee County school board in Florida are up for general election on November 3, 2026. A primary is scheduled for August 18, 2026. The filing deadline for this election is June 12, 2026. A regular term on the board is four years.

The other three are India Palencia (NON), Carline Saintilus (NON), and for re-election Armor D Persons (NON).

Information about each candidate may be found at:

https://www.lee.vote/DocumentCenter/View/688/2026-Candidate-List_040726?bidId=

Here are comments made at this meeting by the candidates in response to questions from the 60 or so attenders, or in their own statements:



Armor Persons

The teacher's union will not let us give a flat raise to every teacher regardless of merit. They want to control where the raises go.

We made a good decision not to pay toward a lobbyist in Tallahassee this year, but to help fund a Washington DC Lobbyist. a lobbyist in Tallahassee was a waste, but not the DC lobbyist.

I am very proud of the construction of the new Alva High School at Joel Boulevard and Tuckahoe Road. We must provide for all of the new families predicted to be buying homes in the Alva area. District Five is the fastest growing area of Lee County.

I am also proud of my continuing Education work over the past two years. I have taken continuing board education for over 100 hours.

I am on the Lehigh Acres Rotary Club Board.

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I promised a much safer school system for our students when I ran the first time for school board and we have improved immensely with new building entrance protocols, training in safety for teachers and students, etc. Lee County is now rated as number one in safety among all Florida school boards.

This year we have the highest graduation rate , 89% ever held in Lee County.

Last summer we had 500 teacher vacancies. Today we have 3.

We've increased career and tech training as many of our kids do not go to college.

I have helped Lee County have the largest ROTC program in the United States, measured by population.

The MAJOR CHALLENGE I see to our school district is students leaving to go to private schools.

Biggest bus problem is late bus arrivals at school, but it's getting better.

We need more active and larger Advisory Committees for our board committees to interact with. But few citizens volunteer for them. Some don't remain after trying it Some don't want to be associated with our school district.

- Carline Saintilus

Trim fat at top. Reduce executive salaries and increase teacher salaries.

I have a heart for this job. I am a long-time local realtor and am accountable now to an annual audit.

One bad decision made this year was to build the new Alva High School in Alva. It should have been built in an already infrastructure location in Lehigh Acres. That's where we know we have too many students for our schools now.

Teachers do not make enough salary, even with last year's increases.

Unchecked development is stretching our teachers and schools.

District 5 has some of the lowest incomes in all of Lee County and yet historically and now we receive much lower investment from all county resources compared with our other districts.

Big problem: schools, classrooms and busses are not safe.

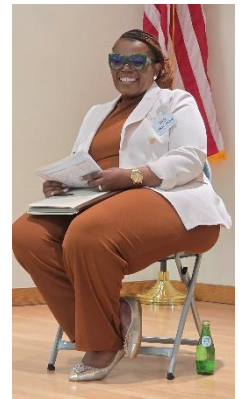
To look as though our teacher needs are being met the board has hired many foreign or less well-educated teachers They are sometimes finding it hard to deal with our kids cultures.

We are not meeting needs of poorest and single moms and grandparents raising kids.

Bus stops should have crossing guards.

No sidewalks: We should be creating walking paths and sidewalks, so kids don't have to walk in the streets.

Public Advisory Committees must be promoted and grown.





India Palencia, From District 6 but candidate for the MEMBER AT LARGE, covering all Lee County Districts.

School executive pay must be held or reduced. Some make more salary than Governor DeSantis.

Creating one year teacher incentives to encourage teachers to move to lower income schools or more challenging populations up to \$9,000 for one year is a short-term mistake. Decision to do this was made when the union could not be present as they did not want it.

Our teachers are leaving. Where will we get qualified teachers for all the new students in newly developed communities?

My qualifications for this job include I've attended school board mtgs for five years, I am a substitute teacher in Lee County now and know how our system works and doesn't. I was employed by AT&T for years and was the union, Communication Workers of America. I know how to work with unions.

I spent a year leading a frustrating effort to get a bus stop moved to a safer location in front of our home. Finally, it did get moved, after a year.

Our budget does not reflect our values in Lee County.

School rebuilds always go way over budget.

We do not pay teachers a livable wage.

Biggest problem: rework the budget we are wasting dollars. Note last night's expenditure decision: 1.6 million was approved last night on apparel and promotional supplies.

Funding charter schools, which are not really public schools, is money we should have more control over.

Lack of transparency in leadership.

Lack of uniform communication with families and school to school. We need a single, well-managed communication system.

We cut number of teachers by cutting school budgets so that's why we have less teacher openings

We have lowered the grading bar to allow more less qualified students to graduate.

School Board members often do not understand laws they need to obey in setting policy and make bad or costly decisions as a result. Example: We have too many bus stops that do not meet state standards.

Transportation Dept leadership is poorly trained and do not know the laws they and our drivers need to follow.

Advisory Committees need real cooperation in setting standards for themselves. Members cannot be business people that could benefit personally from decisions they help make.

We must have town halls, and monthly open discussions with each dept of the school dist. More open meetings not closed doors.

Lee County School District must cut expenses. An election is coming soon.

(TY Facebook)



School District of Lee County

April 18 at 2:00 PM · 🌐



The School District is undertaking a strategic budget realignment to address a projected shortfall in its daily operating fund. In the 2026-2027 school year, the district projects it will spend millions more than student funding generates. The gap must be addressed responsibly and proactively.

Learn more at <https://www.leeschools.net/cms/One.aspx?portalId=676305...>

#LoveLeeSchools



OTR's comment on the SDLC visual aid above...

-We all pray for the many staff and teachers who are already getting notices of being fired. And their 2026-2027 students.

(TY East Lee News/THE ROAR-Katrina Salokar)

The System Behind The Seat

How Appointments, Primary Elections, And A 2026 Ballot Question Could Shape The Future Of Lee County Government

Katrina Salokar | EastLeeNews.com

The appointment of Trish Petronky to the Lee County Commission's District 5 seat has renewed discussion about how local offices are filled and how election rules shape representation in Lee County.

Under Florida law, the Governor appoints a replacement when a county commission seat becomes vacant before the end of a term. That process was used following the death of Commissioner Mike Greenwell in October 2025.

While the appointment followed state law, the circumstances surrounding the vacancy and Lee County's election structure have prompted broader public conversation about appointments, election rules, and how candidates ultimately reach office.

Those questions extend beyond a single seat. They also touch on how commissioners are elected, how primary elections determine candidates, and a ballot measure that could change the county's election system.

Two elections in 2026 will play a central role in those decisions.

The first occurs during the primary election on August 18, 2026. Florida operates under a closed primary system, meaning voters must be registered with the same political party as the candidates in order to participate in that party's primary election.

If only Republican candidates qualify for the District 5 race, the Republican primary could determine the outcome of the seat before the general election. Voters who wish to participate in that primary must be registered as Republicans by the voter registration or party-change deadline of July 20, 2026.

The second decision will come during the November 3, 2026 General Election, when Lee County voters will consider a ballot measure asking whether the county should transition from at-large commission elections to single-member districts beginning in 2028.

Lee County is one of only two Florida counties with populations above 500,000 that still elect commissioners at large.

Supporters of single-member districts argue that the change would allow each district to elect its own representative and strengthen local accountability. Opponents say county-wide elections encourage commissioners to consider the needs of the entire county.

The decision will ultimately be made by voters.

DISTRICT VOTES AND COUNTY WIDE OUTCOMES

Recent election results have highlighted how Lee County's at-large system works in practice.

In the most recent District 5 race, Amanda Cochran received roughly 65 percent of the vote within District 5 itself and led countywide totals on Election Day.

However, because commissioners are elected at large, voters from across the entire county participate in each district race. After absentee and vote-by-mail ballots were counted, the final outcome reflected the countywide totals rather than the vote within the district alone.

For some residents, the result illustrates how district-level preferences can differ from countywide outcomes under the current election system.

WHEN APPOINTMENTS BECOME INCUMBENCY

Appointments are not uncommon in Lee County government.

Commissioner Mike Greenwell himself first entered the commission through a 2022 appointment following the death of Commissioner Frank Mann and later won election to the seat in 2024.

Similarly, Lee County Sheriff Carmine Marceno was appointed in 2018 by then-Governor Rick Scott after Sheriff Mike Scott stepped down. Marceno later ran for election and won the position in 2020.

Supporters of the appointment process say it ensures continuity in government operations. Critics note that appointed officials may later run for office as incumbents, benefiting from the visibility and experience

that come with holding the position.

Both perspectives recognize that the appointment process itself is authorized under Florida law.

CAMPAIGN INFRASTRUCTURE AND POLITICAL CONSULTING

Campaign finance and lobbying records show that several individuals involved in Lee County political campaigns and development issues have worked with the same consulting firm.

TM Strategic Consulting, led by political consultant Terry Miller, has represented Neal Communities on lobbying matters related to utilities and development policy in Lee County.

Public records also show that State Representative Tiffany Esposito has retained the firm for political consulting services, and campaign finance filings indicate that several county commission campaigns have used the firm during recent election cycles.

Miller also authored the biography used to introduce Commissioner Petronky following her appointment and has spoken publicly about her priorities.

Observers note that shared political consultants and campaign infrastructure are common in Florida politics. Others say overlapping relationships between development interests, campaigns, and consultants can influence how local policy discussions unfold.

BUDGET DECISIONS AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Another key responsibility of the county commission is approving the annual county budget.

Public records show that the Lee County Sheriff's Office receives one of the largest allocations in the county budget each year. Commissioners review and approve those budgets annually.

Support for law enforcement remains a widely shared position among local officials.

At the same time, traffic safety advocates have pointed to ongoing

concerns about roadway fatalities and serious crashes across Southwest Florida. Population growth, tourism, road design, and enforcement strategies are frequently cited as factors influencing those trends.

These discussions illustrate how budget decisions, public safety priorities, and policy debates intersect at the county commission level.

THE DECISION FACING VOTERS

The broader structural question will appear directly on the ballot during the November 3, 2026 General Election.

A measure authorized by House Bill 4001 (HB 4001) will ask voters whether Lee County should change from at-large commission elections to single-member districts beginning in 2028.

Supporters say the change would give each district greater control over its representation and improve accountability at the local level.

Opponents say countywide elections help ensure commissioners consider the interests of the entire county.

Ultimately, the decision will be made by Lee County voters.

KEY ELECTION DATES FOR LEE COUNTY

Voter Registration / Party Change Deadline: July 20, 2026
Primary Election: August 18, 2026
General Election: November 3, 2026

Because Florida uses closed party primaries, voters must be registered with the same political party as the candidates to participate in that party's primary election.

EDITOR'S NOTE

This article reviews publicly documented appointments, election rules, and campaign relationships in Lee County. It does not allege wrongdoing by any individual. East Lee News welcomes factual corrections, documentation, or responses from readers and public officials. 📧

Contributing Columnists

Improve ANY meeting you LEAD or ATTEND!

By Laurie Dougherty,

Community Meeting Facilitator and Trainer

Laurie@Dougherty-Inc.com



Do You Really Need This Meeting?

Just because you can call a meeting doesn't mean you should.

Before sending that invite, take a minute to ask a few simple questions. You may not need a meeting at all—or you'll end up with a much better one.

Why This Meeting? What is the purpose?

- Make a decision
- Share information
- Get ideas
- Solve a problem

Try this: "We are meeting so that we can _____."

If that's not clear, skip the meeting and use email or a quick call.

Why Now?

- Is there a real deadline?
- Do people have enough information?
- Are you meeting just because it's "time"?

Meet when there's something real to work on—not just a habit.

Who Needs to Be There? This is where meetings get too big.

Instead of inviting everyone, ask:

- Who has key information?

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- Who will help shape the outcome?
- Who needs to agree?

That's your group.

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.



RAMONA RECOMMENDS

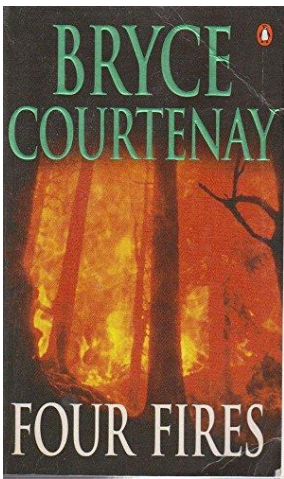


By Ramona DeWalt, Oak Park, Alva, Florida MonaDeWalt1@gmail.com

Mona spent 13 years with Borders Books before she opened her own 5,000 square foot GENTLY USED 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/)

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



Four Fires by Bryce Courtenay

In a small town like any other small town around Australia live the Maloney's' They are a fifth-generation Australian family of Irish Catholic decent who are struggling to reach the first rung of the social ladder. The Maloney's are a family you won't forget: a strong mother, a father broken by war, three boys and two girls, one of whom has an illegitimate daughter. Each of their lives is changed forever by the four Fires - passion, religion, warfare and fire itself.

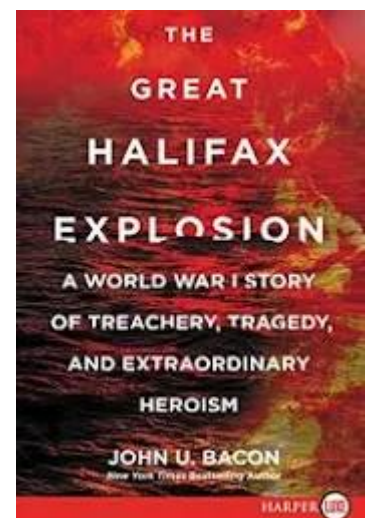
Four Fires is unashamedly a story of the power of love and the triumph of the human spirit against the odds.

The Great Halifax Explosion by John U. Bacon

Brooklyn, New York, December 1, 1917: The Mont-Blanc sails loaded with one of the largest caches of explosives ever packed on a ship, bound for the trenches of the Great War. Five days later, the Mont-Blanc erupted in a cataclysm unlike anything the world had seen before. The extraordinary saga of the great Halifax Explosion had only just begun.....

"John U. Bacon, a superbly talented historian and storyteller, has rescued from obscurity and astonishing episode of horror and heroism."

-- George F. Will



Southwest Florida Cooking by

MAGGIE McManis

of Oak Park, Alva

Contact Maggie to find out more at: Magg1rn@att.net



COOL Shrimp pasta salad

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.

Is this not the simplest & GREAT salad to serve on a hot day???

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.



A look at our smaller, less notorious of the feline neighbors, THE BOBCAT



OTR note: The title above would fit in any Florida article at 20 feet as well as this at 9,000 feet up in Colorado. Read along and see how comparable our home states are. OK. Except for the snow banked up in the background!

Big cats tend to take the spotlight when it comes to talking of our local feline neighbors (for good reasons due to their sometimes-nefarious behavior). This week I wanted to look at the smaller (and generally less problematic) cousin, the bobcat.

Bobcat walking across dirt road

Bobcats are quite common throughout the Peak-to-Peak region and have greater front range, but like their larger relatives, they prefer a life of human avoidance. That said, they are statistically more common to see than mountain lions, and in my experience, tend to be more aloof as opposed to embracing the strict human avoidance lions tend to display.

I've always equated their behavior towards us to that of a house cat. It's not so much that they detest us and avoid us at all costs, as much as having an attitude of us being a nuisance to be ignored as much as possible. You are in their house, no matter what you may think of them lounging in a sunny spot on your deck or driveway.

They can range from 8-30 lbs., so not a large animal to contend with if encountered. They are also typically not a threat to humans (but will fight if cornered or they feel trapped). While there are accounts, they are also typically not a large threat to our pets. They can and may take down a cat, or less likely, a dog, but their preferred meal is rabbit, with rodents and birds being a close second place. On rare occasions they have also been known to take down small deer.

Bobcats have established territories in a wide variety of ecosystems throughout North America and can be found in all contiguous states in the U.S. aside from Delaware (I'm sure there is a good story on their part behind the why of that interesting tidbit...). Preferring to avoid deep snow, Alaska is not to their liking, and apparently none have ever stowed away on a boat to Hawaii.

Sightings of these elusive neighbors often lead to a common discussion, was it a bobcat or a lynx. Know that the lynx is typically not found anywhere on the front range. They tend to prefer life above 10k', mainly sticking to the central mountains and the San Juans where re-introduction programs have proved quite successful. That said, the entire state population of lynx is estimated to only be around 70-100, where bobcats are assumed to have numbers between 10-20k, narrowing the odds of a sighting being a lynx even further.

If you happen to be traveling in the state and see one of the two, there are a few tells that give away which kitty is which. The easiest to spot (mainly because they may well be making their way away from you) is the tail. Both are stunted (as opposed to the longer tail of most cats), but the lynx tail is all black, and the bobcat tail is only black on the top, and white on the bottom, often with black stripes as well.

Further, lynx paws are dramatically larger, a requirement for navigating those deep mountain snows. Bobcat paws are more proportional to their body size, like a housecat. Head hair is also a tell, with lynx having slightly longer and prominent ear tufts, and much more defined sideburns. Think Martin Van Buren as our lynx vs a bit more distinguished John Quincy Adams as the bobcat (for those missing the historic reference, just know that MVB embraced quite the "Wow" factor in his facial coiffure).

If either cat (or any big cat) is spotted, you are entitled to feel quite lucky in your encounter. You can certainly attempt the human luring technique utilized in this article's title; however, you should expect the same smug indifference you might see from your housecat or the bob version in the image accompanying the article. They could likely care less...



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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

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ALVA EVENTS And Services



ALVA INC

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

Meeting ID: 852-1643-8980 Passcode: 302401



Info@AlvaFL.org www.ALVAFL.org NEXT MEETING: Every Second Tuesday, 7pm, Alva Community Center





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Please forward a current resume, application and certs to Chief Echeverry at jetechevry@alvafirecontrol.org or drop-off your resume to Firehouse 121, 2680 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. Applications accepted through March 23, 2025.



Alva Youth Baseball League is in full "swing" and parking can be a but challenging at the Community Center. There is additional parking behind the ball field as shown in the image below. Please utilize that as needed. The closer to 7pm you arrive at the park, the more likely there will be available parking.



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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.



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.



Charleston Park Neighborhood Association

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

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Alva Middle FFA Chapter (c) Florida State Fairgrounds
Photo by: [unreadable]
So excited to be at this year's C&T Conference in Tampa at the Florida State Fairgrounds. The annual Chapter Officer Leadership Training is a great way for officers to further their leadership skills, build relationships with other Florida FFA Chapters as well as bring new ideas to their chapter.

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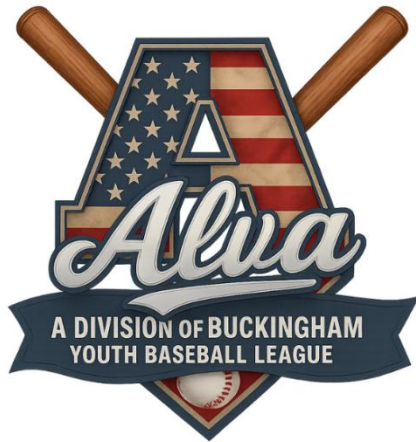
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Best regards,
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(TY East Lee News/THE ROAR-James Kennedy)

The Artists of Florida's Cowboy Tradition, Hobby Campbell, Art With Roots

James Kennedy



Lifelong cowboy and native Floridian Hobby Campbell is known for imagery as detailed it borders on photographic. But that description alone would miss the mark. A few months ago,

he was kind enough to spend an afternoon with me. We talked not just about his work, but about Florida—its wild spaces, its cattle culture, and a way of life that is steadily slipping out of reach.

The interview, however, didn't start when I hit record. It started over lunch at the Gator Shack in Lorida. If you pass through town, stop in and have a bite. The food is excellent. The walls of this local restaurant are lined with several exceptional paintings by Mr. Campbell, creating an unexpected fine art exhibit along a Florida back road.

Before we ever got into art or technique, before we walked among the remnants of an old cow pen talking about history and life, I watched Hobby interact with people who had known him for decades. A friend stopped by. Then another. Stories began before introductions were finished. What stood out wasn't just familiarity, but respect—the kind built not on reputation alone, but on years of shared ground, shared work, and a shared understanding of what this part of Florida still is.

That mattered. By the time we got in the truck and headed out across ranch country, I wasn't just interviewing an artist. I was riding with someone who has lived the very life he paints. That experience shows up in every piece of his work.

Hobby doesn't paint from photographs unless he has to. He paints from memory, built over a lifetime of rodeos, ranch work, and long days in places most people will never see. As he put it, there "wasn't nothing around but horses and cows... that's all I know." That foundation is what separates his work from imitation. You can't fake what you haven't lived, and according to Hobby, you can't feel an old cowboy either.

That standard—being believable to the people who know—shows in everything he creates. It's why the details matter: the way a saddle sits, the way a cow turns its head, even the smallest, almost invisible elements like a scrap of nylon strung tied to a saddle horn. They're there for a reason, not for the casual viewer, but for the ones who know what they're looking at.

And make no mistake, they do notice.

Hobby told me he's watched old cowboys stand in front of his work for half

an hour at a time, just studying it. Not saying much. Just looking. That, more than anything, is how he knew he had gotten it right.

One piece in particular, Cracker Necktie, changed everything.

Painted in the mid-1990s, it was the first work that truly broke through—not just as art, but as something recognized within the cattle community itself. It circulated through the Florida cattle world, drew attention from people who lived the life it depicted, and established Hobby as more than just another painter trying to capture cowboy life from a distance.

A large print of Cracker Necktie hangs in the living room of cowboy, artist, and storyteller Joe Johnson. The two haven't met, but they might as well have.

When Johnson talked about the piece, he didn't describe it like a viewer. He described it like someone recognizing something familiar. The realism, the detail, the feel of it—it wasn't just a painting to him. It was his life, his work, looking back at him.

That's about as high a compliment as you can get, especially from someone who can spot the difference between something that's painted well and something that's lived. That's the line Hobby walks in every piece he creates. What he's painting isn't just a scene, it's a record. A record of a Florida that is still here, but not in the way it used to be.

Ranches that once ran thousands of head have been cut down, sold off piece by piece. Land that held cattle, wildlife, and open ground is being reshaped, repurposed, or lost entirely. As Hobby put it plainly, once it's gone, "it ain't coming back." That reality sits just beneath the surface of the work.

It came into sharper focus as we drove. Hobby talked about a man he knew—someone he had worked for—whose family once ran a large operation. What had supported thousands of cattle was broken apart over time, sold parcel by parcel until only a fraction remained. The money might be there for a while, but eventually it runs out. The land, meanwhile, is already gone.

And once it's gone, it doesn't come back as pasture or open range. It comes back as something else entirely—houses, roads, commercial development. The land changes function, and with it, everything tied to it changes too.

It's not just a cultural loss. There's an environmental one as well.

For years, some of the land around the Kissimmee River was purchased with the idea that removing cattle would allow it to return to a more natural state. But the reality is more complicated than that.

We don't allow the natural fire cycle to occur the way it once did. Controlled burns help, but they don't fully replace that process. And with invasive species now established across much of Florida, something still has to manage the land, keep growth in check, maintain balance, and prevent those systems from being overrun. For generations, well-managed cattle grazing has filled that role.

When handled properly, cattle control vegetation, limit woody overgrowth, and help maintain open grasslands. Those grasslands, in turn, play a critical role in slow water moves across the landscape, slowing it down, allowing it to soak in, and filtering it along the way.

Remove that system, or replace it with development, and those benefits disappear. Water moves faster. Filtration drops. Flooding becomes more likely, and groundwater no longer replenishes the aquifers.

At the same time, many species have adapted to these working landscapes. They've found habitat within ranchlands that are still active, still managed, but still open. Replace that with concrete and density, and that balance collapses. What's lost isn't just open space. It's a system that was working.

As our conversation moved through land loss, fragmentation, and the steady disappearance of rural Florida under a spread of concrete, we eventually circled back to what brought me there in the first place: the art.

It all ties together, but at the center of it is an artist whose work made me want to make the drive, sit down, and understand where it comes from.

Hobby's work is often described as almost photographic in its realism, layered with detail that feels deliberate rather than incidental. But Hobby sees it differently. He believes he can paint a cow better than a photograph, and after talking with him, it's not hard to understand why.

A photograph captures a moment, but it doesn't always capture what you actually see. Your eyes and your understanding pick up on depth, texture, and subtle details that a camera flattens or loses. What Hobby does is rebuild that scene in a way that makes those elements visible again.



Cow Hunter

These landscapes, ranches, hammocks, and open grasslands aren't always obvious to someone passing through. It takes a trained eye—or more accurately a lived connection—to see them fully. Hobby's work gives you that perspective. It lets you see Florida through the eyes of someone who has spent a lifetime in it.

And that level of understanding shows up in the way he works.

At one point, looking at a piece in progress, he mentioned repainting the head of a tacky more than twenty times. Not because he couldn't paint it, but because it didn't meet his standard. He kept working it until it was right.

That kind of discipline carries through everything he does.

It's also why he rejects shortcuts. Everything is built by hand, layered through time and effort. That commitment is part of what sets his work apart. It's not just the result; it's the process behind it.

When I asked him how he got started, his answer was simple: he's been drawing for as long as he can remember.

Horses, cows, and rodeo—that was his world. His father was a cowboy, a ranch hand. He grew up in it, lived in it, and started by drawing what he knew: backing horses, cattle, the movement of animals that were part of his everyday life.

He spent some time at art school in Palatka, but by his own admission, it didn't last long. Rodeo took precedence. Life took precedence. In the end, that may have mattered more than anything formal training could have offered.

Because what defines his work isn't just technique. It's an experience. A lifetime spent working cattle, riding, hunting, guiding, and living in the landscape he now paints. That depth is what gives his work its weight. It's not observation from the outside. It's knowledge from within.

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



Our Mission Statement

The mission of Special Equestrians, Inc. is to enhance physical, emotional, and cognitive growth for individuals with disabilities through equine-assisted activities and therapies.

The organization serves people referred to Special Equestrians by doctors, therapists and teachers. The participant application is on this website on the Classes Page. There is a waiting list to ride in the program, although those potential riders who have flexible schedules will be able to ride sooner.

Call Us: 239-226-1221
Email Us: spequestrians@gmail.com
Map Us: 5121 Staley Road Fort Myers, FL 33905
Mailing: PO Box 61528, Fort Myers, FL 33906-1528
Fax Us: 239-226-1279

BUCKINGHAM BASEBALL

WEE-BALL

ages 3-5
non-competitive
no evaluation required

T-BALL

ages 5-6
competitive with outs and score keeping

COACH PITCH

ages 6-7
bridges the gap between T-ball and machine pitch

ROOKIES

ages 7-8
machine pitch
designed to elevate play and prepare players for upper divisions

MINORS

ages 9-10
evaluation required
draft process by coaches for team placement after evals

MAJORS

ages 11-12
evaluation required
draft process by coaches for team placement after evals

JUNIORS

ages 13-16
evaluation required
draft process by coaches for team placement after evals

SCAN CODE TO REGISTER NOW

BASEBALL LEAGUE, INC.
BIRTH CHART FOR 2026 - BASEBALL DIVISIONS

| | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 | 2016 | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 | 2009 | 2008 | 2007 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| January | 4 | 5 | 10 | 17 | 8 | 14 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| February | 4 | 5 | 10 | 17 | 8 | 14 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| March | 4 | 5 | 10 | 17 | 8 | 14 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| April | 4 | 5 | 10 | 17 | 8 | 14 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| May | 4 | 5 | 10 | 17 | 8 | 14 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| June | 4 | 5 | 10 | 17 | 8 | 14 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| July | 4 | 5 | 10 | 17 | 8 | 14 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| August | 4 | 5 | 10 | 17 | 8 | 14 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| September | 4 | 5 | 10 | 17 | 8 | 14 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| October | 4 | 5 | 10 | 17 | 8 | 14 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| November | 4 | 5 | 10 | 17 | 8 | 14 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| December | 4 | 5 | 10 | 17 | 8 | 14 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |

All player ages are determined by the birth chart shown above. May 1, 2008 will be the deciding date.

Season of 2026:

Cal Ripken - Any player born prior to May 1, 2022 and/or on after May 1, 2012 will be eligible for Cal Ripken Baseball League competition.

Andy Ripken III - Any player born prior to May 1, 2022 and/or on after May 1, 2012 will be eligible to participate in the Cal Ripken III Ball Division.

TJTB - Any player born prior to May 1, 2011 and/or on after May 1, 2009 will be eligible for the TJB Ball League competition.

Please Help Us To Help Them

BACT

Abuse Counseling & Treatment, Inc.
Domestic Abuse Shelter

We are looking for donations of New OR Gently Used Outdoor Toys for the Children. Cash Donations also Accepted.

They need our help.

Questions: Please call 239-693-0351
If you can help, please bring items by March 10, 2026 to:
American Legion Auxiliary Unit 351
4800 Palm Beach Blvd., Fort Myers, FL 33905

MEET THE CANDIDATES!

The candidates for Lee County Board of County Commissioners District 5, representing Buckingham, Alva and Lehigh Acres will address the Buckingham Community

6:30 p.m. Monday, June 22nd
Lee County Mosquito Control, 15191 Homestead Road

Amanda Cochran

Trish Petrusky

- Hear the candidates' plans for preserving our rural community lifestyle
- How can we manage growth in the Buckingham area?
- Learn about the single-member districts amendment
- Ask questions, get answers

• Get your PRESERVE BUCKINGHAM tee shirt!

Follow us on Facebook!
 Buckingham Community Association
 Presented by the
 Buckingham Community Association, Inc.
 A Florida Not-For-Profit Corporation

THANK YOU TICE FIRE DEPARTMENT

FROM THE BUCKINGHAM COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

For a job well done protecting our community.



May In-Branch Events

All library events and programs are free and open to the public.

[Visit Our Online Calendar of Events](#)

Registration is required for events marked with an asterisk [*] and opens 30 days before program date.

For Children

Family Storytime
[10 a.m. Friday, May 1](#)
[10 a.m. Saturday, May 2](#)

Music & Movement
[10 a.m. Friday, May 8](#)

Mother's Day Craft
[Noon Saturday, May 9](#)

Coloring Club
[2 p.m. Saturday, May 16](#)

Mario Kart Tournament
[1 p.m. Saturday, May 30](#)

For Teens

Anime Hour
[2:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 5](#)

Coloring Club
[2 p.m. Saturday, May 16](#)

For Adults

Knit and Stitch
[1 p.m. Wednesday, May 6, 20](#)

Book Discussion: "The Sea Captain's Wife"
[10:30 a.m. Thursday, May 7](#)

Paper Flower Craft*
[10:30 a.m. Thursday, May 14](#)

Coloring Club
[2 p.m. Saturday, May 16](#)

Dungeons and Dragons
[2 p.m. Saturday, May 23](#)

Frauds, Scams and Identity Theft
[10:30 a.m. Thursday, May 28](#)

Registration is required for events marked with an asterisk [*] and opens 30 days before program date.

May Online Events

Basic Beginning Genealogy Research*
[10 a.m. Thursday, May 7](#)

Beginner Spanish*
[6 p.m. Thursday, May 7](#)

Author Event with Marjan Kamali*
[7 p.m. Thursday, May 7](#)

Author Event with Vivienne Ming*
[2 p.m. Tuesday, May 12](#)

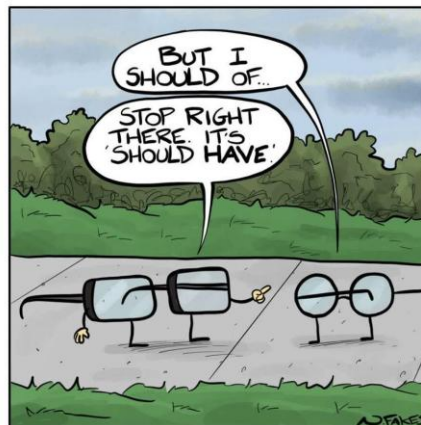
Author Event with Nir Eyal*
[2 p.m. Tuesday, May 19](#)

Beginner Chinese*
[6 p.m. Thursday, May 28](#)



**VBS 2026
TROPICAL TREK
JESUS COMES TO SEEK AND SAVE
JUNE 8-12 FROM 6PM -8:30PM
FAMILY DINNER SERVED
BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
14531 OLD OLGA, FORT MYERS, FL 33905
REGISTER (239) 694-3878**

Please come and join us for a fun filled meal and treat your kids to an exploration of Jesus' words through Music, Crafts, Games and Bible verses. You are also welcome to stay and participate in some activities of your own. Please feel free to call the church at the number above or call Mickie Naumann at (401) 441-8819. We look forward to seeing y'all there!



Corrective Lens

LABELLE AREA EVENTS

And Services

Barron Library

Barron Library

461 N Main St, LaBelle, FL 33935



HERITAGE MUSEUM:
LaBelle's century-old
landmark

NOW Open Saturday's 10am to 2pm

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



BECOME A HEALTHIER You!

PHYSICAL HEALTH MENTAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH SPIRITUAL & SOCIAL HEALTH FINANCIAL HEALTH

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

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

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



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 to start your tour today, or download the app with your Apple or Android device by searching "Downtown LaBelle." Happy trails!

NOW HIRING
Full-time Firefighter/E.M.T.
LaBelle Fire application and job description available on website
www.citylabelle.com

Submit applications in person at 481 W. Hickpochee or email to lisaawbrey@citylabelle.com by November 15, 2025.

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

Meeting are open to the public. For more information on how to request public aid or services as addressed in the American Public Access Act, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 863-675-2872, 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.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>INDIVIDUAL \$50.00</p> <p>For residents and supporters who want to show love for downtown!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly e-newsletter • Advance notice of LDRC events • Be seen in our public supporter showcase online | <p>NONPROFIT \$100.00</p> <p>Exclusive rate for nonprofit organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |
| <p>COMMUNITY PARTNER \$300.00</p> <p>Perfect for small businesses and individuals wanting more visibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 | <p>BUSINESS \$500.00</p> <p>For businesses who want visibility, impact, and a stronger downtown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

The NEWEST Theater in LaBelle!

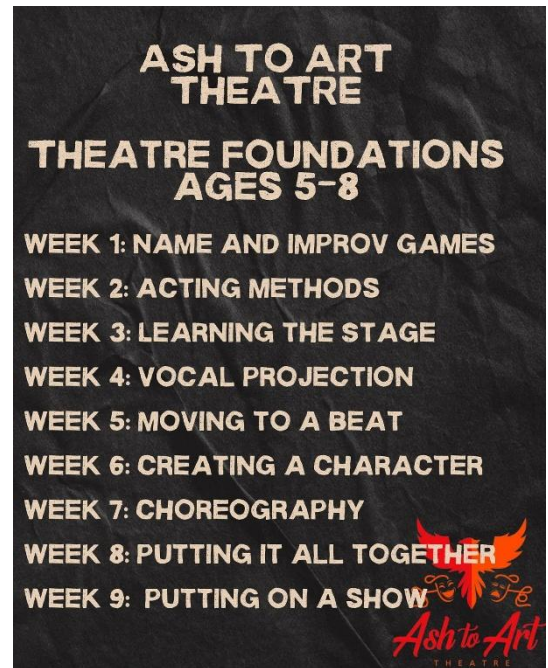
On Saturday evening, November 8th, the cast, crew, and directors of the YOUTH THEATER COMPANY performed a whimsical and fun stage play of ANNIE.

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



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



<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=muse%20community%20association>

NORTH FORT MYERS & NORTH OLGA EVENTS

And Services

OCTAGON WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

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



Most mentioned offerings



Tiger Viewing



Lion Viewing



Guided Wildlife Tours



Bear Encounters

Ft Myers Blueberry Fest



Ft Myers Blueberry Fest – May 2 & 3, 2026 at the Mike Greenwell Regional Park (formerly called the Lee Civic Center) in Ft Myers. Saturday & Sunday 10am-5pm.

Family Fun & Festivities, Fresh Blueberries, Art & Crafts, Free Frisbee Dog Show, Delicious Food, Beer & Wine, Free Bounce Houses, Berry Shortcake, Live Entertainment, Axe Throwing, Free Rock Painting, Blueberry Fudge, Pony Rides, Free Blueberry Relay, Face Painting, Free Hula Hoop Contest, Pie Eating Contest, Free Petting Farm, Berry Cute Baby Contest, Free Sack Races, Free Corn Hole, Yummy Treats & Much More!

Admission \$7 (cash only admission), Kids 2 & Under Free. For \$1 off admission visit our website for coupon or bring a canned good for discount. Benefits the local food pantry.

Mike Greenwell Regional Park – 11831 Bayshore Rd, N Ft Myers, FL 33917.

www.FtMyersFest.com 386-860-0092

AUDITIONS OPEN!

The Mad Adventures of Mr Toad

— Directed by Rainia Ward —

📅 Wednesday, May 6 | 5:30-7:00pm &
Saturday, May 9 | 9:30-11:00am

📍 Location: Firehouse Community Theatre
241 Bridge Street, LaBelle, FL
(863) 675-3066

Ages: 7-18 (HS Seniors)
All experience levels welcome!

Step into the wild world of Mr. Toad! Adventure, chaos, and comedy await!

Questions? Contact:
* Wanted: Eccentric Toads, Loyal Friends, and Mischievous Weasels *

(863) 675-3066

LOTS MORE!



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
Community-based mentoring relationships involve one-on-one meetings and activities. Being things the Big and Little enjoy together. Some Bigs meet their Littles on the weekends. Others get together with their Littles on weekday evenings. Each match is unique 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.

INSPIRE POTENTIAL BECOME A "BIG" TODAY

Community-Based Program
Community-based mentoring relationships provide one-on-one support and activities. Bigs get to know their Littles' interests, hobbies and needs. Bigs and Littles meet regularly to engage and build a positive relationship.

Site-Based Program
Site-based programs are structured at school or other educational sites. Bigs help Littles with homework, reading, and other school-related tasks. Bigs and Littles meet regularly at the site to provide support and encouragement.

TOGETHER, WE ARE DEFENDERS OF POTENTIAL

Learn more about the organization and how your child can benefit from a mentor!
Contact Laurie Waininger at 863-343-0187 or lwaininger@bbsun.org

For the Sun Coast, please call us at 863-343-0187 or visit us at www.bbsun.org

[Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast](http://www.bbsun.org) 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!

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).

2024/2025 Youth Livestock Show Ethics and Animal Care Workshop

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

WEBSITE:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QcGj7R-BtCdNkjheHF3oG-mpo1qDIYE1aCct3IW-922o/edit>

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

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



Local Ladies Social Network, Inc. / LLSN Events
Gulf Coast's Largest Indoor
Arts & Crafts Show
Sun. August 22nd & 23rd 2026 10AM
Lee Civic Center
11831 Bayshore Rd. North Fort Myers FL
Art, Crafts, Food Trucks & More!
Interested vendors please email Christy Dunn at: LLSN@comcast.net or visit
www.llsnevents.com for more information.

Aug 22 at 8 AM – Aug 23 at 3 PM
**Gulf Coast's Largest
Indoor Arts & Crafts Show
at Lee Civic Center**
Public · Event by Local Ladies Social Network,
Inc.- LLSN Events



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.sheriflee.org/crime-map-2-0/>

Updated constantly



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

Sean Ryan, Fatherhood Mentors & Volunteers Administrator,
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 or your local United Way in Lee County to learn about these volunteer opportunities.

Your Best Friend is Waiting

Lee County Domestic Animal Services (LCDAS) has lovable pets of all ages, sizes and breeds waiting to meet you. Every adoption includes spay or neuter surgery, age-appropriate vaccinations, a microchip and a county pet license, making adoption both simple and affordable. Whether you're searching for a playful puppy, a calm senior or something in between, your new best friend may be just a visit away.

Click here to learn more or visit leelostpets.com to browse adoptable animals today!



Calusa Humane Society and Veterinary Clinic

★ 🌟 Sponsorship Spotlight 🌟 ★

We are thrilled to announce that NASCAR's very own **Ross "Melon Man" Chastain** 🍉 has stepped up as a Tailwagger sponsor!

You might've just seen him at the Daytona 500!

His generous donation will make a huge difference in the lives of rescue animals, and we couldn't be more grateful. 🐾 🔄

Be sure to cheer him on this season—because he's not just winning on the track, he's winning for the paws! 🐾 🍉 🏠

SWAMP STOMP 5K
CALOOSA HUMANE SOCIETY

TAIL WAGGER SPONSOR

Melon Man

Ross CHASTAIN
MELONMANBRAND.COM

Watch Ross Chastain  NASCAR
www.melonmanbrand.com

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



FOR



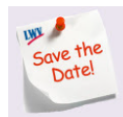
<https://www.aclufl.org/>

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/leclerkofcourt>



LWVLee Educational Events

March 7, 2026, 9-11am, Affordable Housing. --Part 3, Data, Barriers, Solutions, at the Collaboratory. <https://LWVLeeAffordableHousingUpdate.eventbrite.com>

April 4, 2026, 9-11am, Environment, at the Collaboratory. <https://LWVLeeEnvironmentUpdate.eventbrite.com>

May 2, 2026, 9-11am, Partnering and Networking for Voter Engagement at the Collaboratory. <https://LWVLeePreparingfor2026Election.eventbrite.com>

SCORE Florida

2201 Second
Fort Myers, FL

[Grab your reader's attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

South West

Street, Suite 500,
33901

(239) 533-3102, 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

BONSAI SOCIETY OF SWFL

THE Bonsai Society of SW Florida

2026 Annual Auction

Saturday, April 18, 2026 9AM-2PM at the Berne Davis Gardens, 2166 Virginia Ave. Fort Myers, FL

Dave's "Grab 'n Go": **9AM to Noon:** An assortment of items, \$10 or less.

Two Auctions: Silent and Live. You are welcome to participate in both.

The **Silent Auction**, from **9AM to 11:30** is a display of Trees and related items. You may also "Buy It Now" at the price on the tree.

The **Live Auction starts at 12PM to 1:00PM.** This is a chance to purchase some marvelous trees, often at a very low price.

These Auctions will give you the opportunity to acquire basic, as well as professionally developed trees, at the best prices in the area. Start your collection now.....

Free Parking.....Free Admission

Visit us at www.bonsaiswfl.org





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

<https://www.camp1950.flscv.org/>



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



www.lwvlee.org

Public Invited – Free

Saturday, May 2, 2026

**Preparing for the 2026 Election
Partnering and Networking for Voter Engagement**

At The Collaboratory, 2031 Jackson Street, Fort Myers & virtual, via Zoom

Information and Registration:

<https://LWVLeePreparingfor2026Election.eventbrite.com>

Email: lwvlee@lwvlee.org Call: 239-278-1032



Updates on [Florida Voter Registration](#), Voting Requirements, Deadlines, ID Assistance, VoteByMail, Florida Primaries, [VOTE411](#) Nonpartisan Election Information, Election Security, Voter Protection, Voting Rights Restoration, and more . . .

Featured Speakers, 9-11, in-person and zoom

[Lee County Elections Office](#)

- Gaby Aguirre, Communications Director,
- Juan Diez, Director of Community Education Services Department
- Stephen Rumer, Systems Administrator and Public Records Custodian

[VoterRiders](#) Taylor Ashley, Florida State Director,

[Florida Rights Restoration Coalition](#), Marquis McKenzie, Community Violence Intervention Organizer

Working Together – To Get Out the Vote! 11-12, in-person only



Voting is Fundamental to Our Democracy

Ensure Every Voice is Heard!

Florida Primary, August 18, 2026
General Election, November 3, 2026

The League of Women Voters of Lee County, Inc. is a nonpartisan organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League of Women Voters does not support or oppose candidates and/or political parties.

The League of Women Voters is fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice.

www.lwv.org, www.lwvfl.org, www.lwvlee.org, Call 239-278-1032 or e-mail lwvlee@lwvlee.org

[Sign Up for LWVLee Email Notices](#)

[Join LWV](#)

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



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
<https://www.echonet.org>



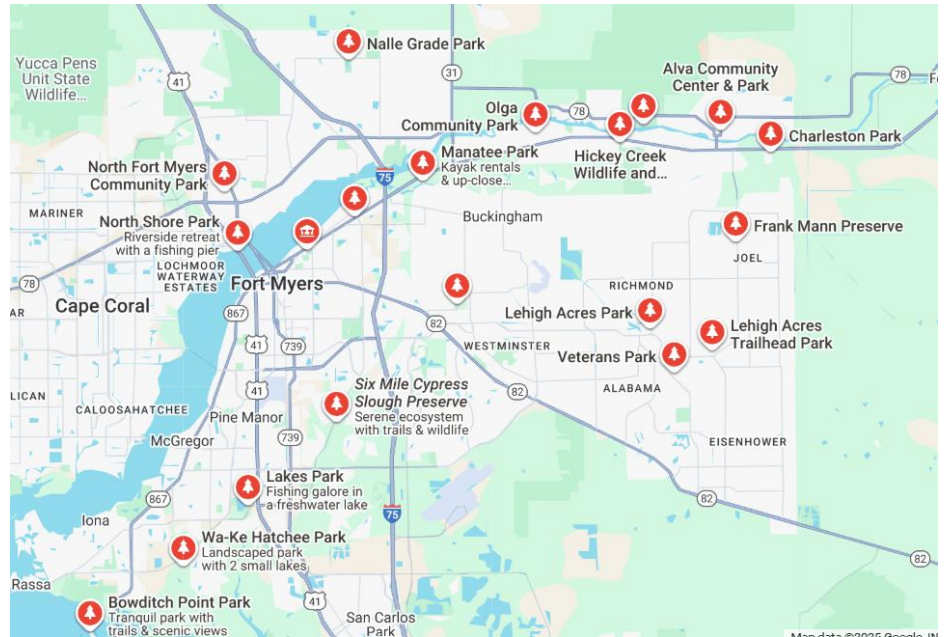
There are six fenced-in "Dog Parks" which allow for off-leash play. On-leash dog walking is allowed at many locations (listed below).

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>

Click to link below to all

LEE COUNTY PARKS

Contact information and
interactive map



https://www.google.com/search?q=Lee+County+Parks&scasv=33d7c6e47e76292a&rlz=1C1CHBDen-GBUS1185US1185&sxsrf=AE3TifON_7qOfPqpR4DZQeqGWYYKd4mXTw:1764776637500&udm=1&lsack=vVowaciiHuWOWbkPj7DsiQ0&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewil9dek4aGRaxVIRzABHQ8YO9EQjGp6BAGIEA&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>

THE FOOD FESTIVAL OF THE YEAR.

SOUTHWEST FL

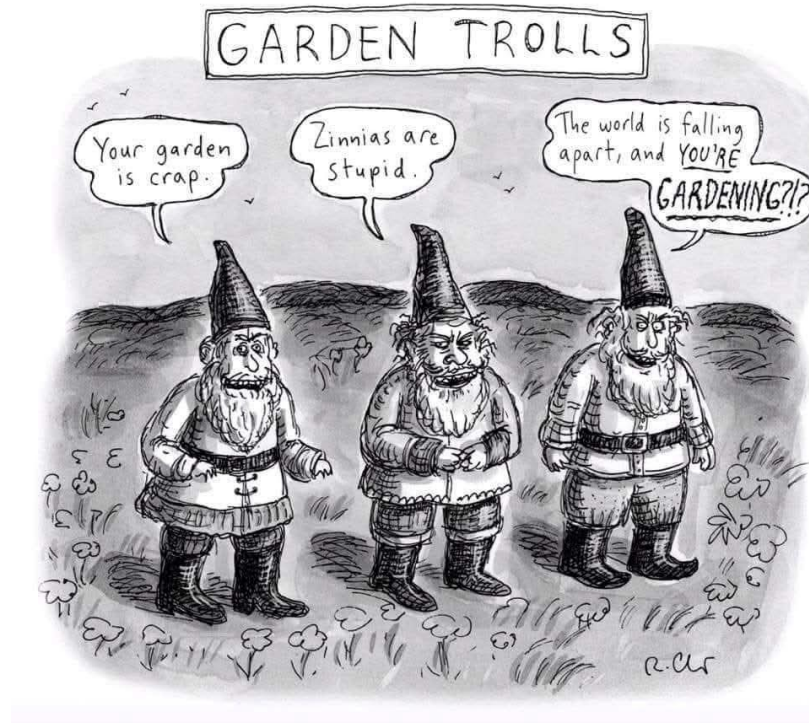
MAY 30TH 2026
12PM-9PM

MIKE GREENWELL REGIONAL PARK
FORT MYERS FL

FOOD FEST & CRAFT FAIR

\$5 OR LESS BITES. DRINKS. MARKETPLACE. CONCERTS.

SWFLFOODFEST.COM





WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CRYPTO

Cryptocurrency (crypto) was first launched publicly in 2009, in the form of Bitcoin. Since that time, more than 2,500 other crypto currencies have been introduced, and the issue of digital currency continues to garner attention. What exactly is cryptocurrency? How is it used? Read on to find out the basic facts about this digital asset.

What Is IT? Cryptocurrency is a virtual currency secured by cryptography (or codes) and does not rely upon a central authority, such as a bank, to manage it. Ownership and transaction records are held in a database (or set) referred to as a block. Blocks, or blocks, are linked from one to the next with a hash (or unique identifier) to form a chain and distributed across a peer-to-peer network of computers, often public. The linked blocks are called a blockchain. Data within any of the blocks cannot be changed without amending data in subsequent blocks, which would require permission throughout the network. Since the blockchain is decentralized and open-source, transactions are recorded throughout the network, verifiable in real time and can be audited inconspicuously. There is no downtime waiting for a transaction to "clear" and no fear of counterfeiting.

Is It Physical Currency? Crypto exists in coin or token form. Tokens are tangible assets on a blockchain, while coins may be tangible, virtual or digital. Bitcoin was the first introduced and is the most commonly traded. Other cryptos, referred to as altcoins, are Ethereum, Litecoin, and Bitcoin, among the thousands of others. All of these are supported by their respective functions and technology; there are payment coins for transactions, utility tokens for smart contracts or platform access, and stablecoins which are tied to assets, as well as less used categories like privacy or meme coins.

How Do You Acquire IT? Cryptocurrencies can be bought and sold in a cryptocurrency exchange, where you swap physical currency (dollars and cents) for virtual currency units held in a digital wallet. A digital wallet can be hardware, software, or a service which stores your public and private keys for digital transactions. Private keys are used to authorize spending and public keys are used for accepting funds.

What Can You Buy with IT? Cryptocurrency payment coins can be used at numerous merchants online to purchase a myriad of goods from home repair items to real estate, including gift cards that can then be used at the designated merchant.



www.FloridaConsumerHelp.com
1-800-HELP-FLA(435-7352) • Mon-Fri, 9am. - 5pm, EST • 1-800-FL-AYUDA(352-9832)



How Is It Backed? Fiat currencies, like the US Dollar or euro, are backed by the strength of the economy rather than a physical commodity such as gold. Cryptocurrencies, however, are backed by the security of the blockchain, scarcity of the currency, decentralization (or ease of transaction validation) and efficacy.

Is Crypto Taxed? The IRS considers cryptocurrency property, and it is subject to capital gains tax.

Is Crypto Safe? Since it is bought and sold on the internet, crypto comes with the usual risks of online purchases. When purchasing, do your research. Consider security, ease of use, assets held, and fees when selecting an exchange. Warm your options with digital wallets, too. Hot wallets, which are connected to the internet, may allow faster trading and more convenience, but are more vulnerable to hacking, phishing, and malware. Cold wallets, however, store your crypto offline in a physical digital storage device, thereby offering a higher degree of security. Beware of losing the device or destroying it, though, because you could permanently lose your funds stored on it.

Final Thoughts! Deciding on an investment takes careful thought and planning. Investing in cryptocurrencies is no different. Continue to research your options and, based on your findings, you can invest confidently as long as you make wise choices.

1. choose a storage method,
2. research coins before buying,
3. utilize a reputable exchange, and
4. always follow the usual cybersecurity rules.

References

Investopedia (n.d.) Blockchain Facts: What Is It, How It Works, and How It Can Be Used. Retrieved from <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/blockchain-facts-and-how-it-works/>

Charon, Andrew (2020) What is Cryptocurrency and How Does It Work? Retrieved from <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/cryptocurrency-and-how-it-works/>

The Motley Fool (2020) What Is Cold Storage in Crypto? Retrieved from <https://www.fool.com/investing/2020/03/11/what-is-cold-storage-in-crypto/>

Holman (2020) How to Store Crypto Safely Retrieved from <https://www.fool.com/investing/2020/03/11/how-to-store-crypto-safely/>



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.



Harry Chapin Food Bank
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Fighting Hunger, Feeding Hope

www.harrychapinfoodbank.org

Give TIME. Give MONEY. Give FOOD.

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

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>

A promotional flyer for Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast. It features a photo of a man and a boy sitting on a bench, and a smaller circular photo of a boy. The text promotes a virtual open house for becoming a mentor (BIG).

Big Brothers Big Sisters
OF THE SUN COAST

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

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

Women of Distinction

10th Annual Kindness Awards Gala

June 13th, 2026

Recognizing Lee County Women for Acts of Kindness

6pm-10pm
 Celebration Barn
 21681 Palm Beach Blvd. Alva, FL
 Tickets required
 Sponsorship Opportunities www.womenofdistinctionleecounty.net
 Cash Bar/ Silent Auction
 Blue Cocktail/Formal Attire Suggested



“One Drop of Kindness Can Flood the World”



Premier



Mobile Health Services

YOUR ROUTE TO BETTER HEALTH






May 2026 Mobile Medical Clinic Schedule

Florida residents 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.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center; color: red;"><u>Tuesday, May 5th</u> Kairos SDA Church 9:00 am to 1:00 pm 701 Camellia Drive North Fort Myers, FL 33903</p> | <p style="text-align: center; color: red;"><u>Multiple Days a Month</u> Mount Hermon Ministries Call 239-222-1829 to make an appointment 2856 Douglas Ave, Fort Myers, FL 33916</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center; color: red;"><u>Tuesday, May 5th</u> North Fort Myers Rec. Center 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm 2000 N Recreation Park Way North Fort Myers, FL 33903</p> | <p style="text-align: center; color: red;"><u>Thursday, May 14th</u> Pine Manor Community Center 9:00 am to 1:00 pm 5547 Tenth Ave Fort Myers, FL 33907</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center; color: red;"><u>Saturday, May 9th</u> Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church 10:00 am to 2:00 pm 207 South 9th St, Immokalee, FL 34142</p> | <p style="text-align: center; color: red;"><u>Tuesday, May 19th</u> Community Cooperative 9:00 am to 1:00 pm 3429 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Blvd #4403 Fort Myers, FL 33916</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center; color: red;"><u>Monday, May 11th</u> S.T.A.R.S. Complex 9:00 am to 1:00 pm 2980 Edison Ave Fort Myers, FL 33916</p> | <p style="text-align: center; color: red;"><u>Wednesday, May 20th</u> Gladiolus Food Pantry 10:00 am to 2:00 pm 10511 Gladiolus Drive Ft. Myers, FL 33908</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center; color: red;"><u>Tuesday, May 12th & 26th</u> Cafe of Life 9:00 am to 1:00 pm 26724 Nomad Dr Bonita Springs, FL 34135</p> | <p style="text-align: center; color: red;"><u>Thursday, May 21st</u> Sunshine Health 9:00 am to 1:00 pm 4901 Palm Beach Boulevard #80 Fort Myers, FL 33905</p> |



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
 (239) 222-1829 or (239)-288-7949



**Premier Mobile Health Services screenings are supported by the Florida Department of Health through the Clinical Health Care Screening Grant Program and are provided at no cost to Florida residents who qualify under the 200% of the Poverty Guidelines. Through this program, we screen for cancer, diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. In addition, we screen for scoliosis in children ages 9-17.

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

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

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



First, report the raid!

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q: HOW WILL THEY GET A LAWYER?

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

Q: SHOULD WE TALK TO AN IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY NOW?

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

Q: HOW LONG WILL THEY BE DETAINED?

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

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

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

Q: CAN WE PREPARE NOW WHILE WAITING FOR COURT?

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

Community of Care How Heart Wounds Heal

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

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

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

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

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



12 Tuesdays
3/4 - 5/20

Time: EST
6:30 - 8:00

Email for Registration
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/Traine
Register at: Eventbrite
Contact: HurtMending@gmail.com
 Grace for Registration fee waived by emailed request



HurtMending Ministry Offering,
in collaboration with





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.



COME GROW WITH US! APPLY NOW

Current Locations

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

Opening Soon
In-School Early Learning Centers

- Harns Marsh Middle, *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



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



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

- bbbsun.org



Please Help Us To Help Them



Abuse Counseling & Treatment, Inc.
Domestic Abuse Shelter

We are looking for donations of *New*
OR
Gently Used Outdoor Toys
for the Children.
Cash Donations also Accepted.





They need our help.




Questions: Please call 239-693-0351
If you can help, please bring items by March 10, 2026 to:
American Legion Auxiliary Unit 351
4800 Palm Beach Blvd., Fort Myers, FL 33905

**Empowering Voters. Defending
Democracy.**



Preparing for the 2026 Election
Partnering and Networking for Voter Engagement



Gaby Aguirre
Communications Director
Lee County Election Office



Marcus McKenzie
Organizer
Lee County Election Administration



Stephen Turner
Lee County Board of
County Commissioners



Taylor Ashley
Board State Director
Board of State



Ivan Diaz
Director of Community Relations
Lee County Election Office

May 2, 2026, 9am to 12pm
Free Public Invited
a LWVLee Educational Event

in-person at The Collaboratory, 2031 Jackson Street, Fort
Myers

and virtual via **zoom** (a zoom link will be emailed to all registrants)

Information and Registration:

<https://LWVLeePreparingfor2026Election.eventbrite.com>

Email: lwvlee@lwvlee.org Call: 239-278-1032

Voting is Fundamental to Our Democracy
Ensure Every Eligible Voter Participates
Florida *Primary* Election August 18, 2026
General *Election* November 3, 2026



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 2nd & 4th 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 915 Lake Manor Dr Labelle, FL 33935 (863) 675-0900 | 233 Clark St, Labelle, FL 33935 (863) 675-4227 Pentecostal Church of God 55 Orange Ave, Labelle, FL 33935 (863) 675-0938 |
| Carlson Memorial Church 310 Campbell St Labelle FL, 33935 (863) 675-0656 | LaBelle Assembly of God 915 Lake Manor Dr Labelle FL (863) 675-0900 |
| The Channel UMC Ft Myers/LaBelle Fully ONLINE LIVE, Mondays, 7pm, EST https://www.facebook.com/TheChannelUMC/ ZOOM LINK: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89527254110?pwd=bWEyL283YW9sck52R2V5UDVqTEJiQT09 | LaBelle First Baptist 330 N Main St, Labelle, FL 33935 (863) 675-2171 |
| Church of Christ Central 60 Hendry St, Labelle, FL 33935 (863) 675-4796 | Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish 355 S Bridge St, Labelle, FL 33935 (863) 675-0030 |
| Eastside Baptist Church 1110 S Carlyle St, Labelle, FL 33935 (863) 675-3595 | Christ Central LaBelle, Reformed 540 1st Ave LaBelle FL (863) 675-2100 |
| El Faro Assemblies of God of LaBelle 431 Bryan Ave, Labelle, FL 33935 (863) 675-5947 | Good Shepherd Episcopal 1098 Collingswood Pkwy, LaBelle FL (863) 675-0385 https://goodshepherd.dioswfl.org |
| Grace Baptist 4200 Ne Eucalyptus Blvd, Labelle, FL 33935 (863) 675-3349 | Christ The King Lutheran 1362 Thigpen Rd, Labelle, FL 33935 (941) 675-2733 |
| International Christian Fellowship | New Testament Assembly |

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

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 239-693-0818

Alva Methodist Church

21440 Pearl St. P.O Box 96

Alva, FL 33920

Alvamc@embarqmail.com

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

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

www.calvarynations.org 239-728-5566

Issue 88, May 2026, Circulation: Over 1,500 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers

First Baptist Church of Alva
2790 Joel Blvd, Alva, FL, 33920
www.alvabaptist.com 239-728-2034

(239) 694-2012
olgabaptistchurch@gmail.com

Grace Church, Ft Myers Shores
14036 Matanzas Drive, Ft Myers, Florida 33905
www.egracechurch.com 239-694-2797

Rosa De Saron Assemblies of God
13235 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers FL
(239) 694-8777

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
14531 Old Olga Road,
Fort Myers, FL 33905
www.blcef.org 239-694-3878

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

Olga Baptist Church
2364 South Olga Drive
Fort Myers, FL 33905
www.olgabaptist.org 239-694-2012
info@olgabaptist.org

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





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.

<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

| 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




14036 Matanzas Dr.

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 or by calling the church at 239-694-2797 and leave a message. We will return your call.

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



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) | www.ready.gov/cert |
| Department of Financial Services (Insurance) | www.myfloridacfo.com |
| Department of Homeland Security | www.dhs.gov/ |
| Florida Lightning Safety | www.weather.gov/safety/lightning |
| Mobile or Manufactured Home Residents | www.flhsmv.gov/mobilehome |
| American Sign Language Preparedness Videos | www.lee.gov.com/publicsafety/emergencymanagement/plan |
| StormReady | www.weather.gov/stormready/ |



You can donate to a number of 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

**Some of Forbes BEST 2025 CHARITIES TO SUPPORT:
Start by checking with your own church or social group.**



American Red Cross
<https://www.redcross.org/>



The Salvation Army
<https://www.salvationarmyusa.org/>



Partners In Health Partners In Health
<https://www.pih.org/>



EARTHJUSTICE
BECAUSE THE EARTH NEEDS A GOOD LAWYER

EarthJustice
<https://earthjustice.org/>



The Nature Conservancy
<https://www.nature.org/en-us/>

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.

Happy Mother's Day



To my two Mom's

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.peg photos or logos. We can also scan any copy and/or photos you provide to create a single j.peg of your ad.

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

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

CONTACT: Ken DeWalt, publisher, with any questions. kendewalt@ontheriver.org

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

