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Archives and MORE at www.OnTheRiver.org

On The RIVER

Connecting ALVA Florida

NEIGHBORS and NEIGHBORHOODS



Photo by: Jeanine Cook, November, 2023

TO SUBSCRIBE, offer articles, or to contact the publisher/editor with any questions, email: kendewalt@ontheriver.org

The deadline for receipt of any materials is the 15th of the month.

Issues go out before the 1st of each month, and may be edited.

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FEATURED IN THIS MONTH'S OTR:

- LOCAL Alva area development: Lee Cty Civic Center
- LOCAL history: Paradise Shores
- LOCAL Community services: SCORE no cost Women's Entrepreneur's Forum
- LOCAL club and organization: Ft Myers Camera Club
- LOCAL recipe: SWFL Pecan Pie Bread Pudding
- LOCAL Sports: Bit by Bit Saddle Club



ALVA INC, At the Alva Community Center.

ZOOM access:

<https://zoom.us/join>

Meeting ID: 852-1643-8980

Passcode: 302401



Info@AlvaFl.org WEBSITE www.ALVAFL.org

NEXT MEETING: Every Second Tuesday, 7pm, Alva Community Center

Agribusiness program at Florida Gulf Coast University Presentation



Alva INC's December meeting on Tuesday the 12th was a potluck meal loaded with Christmas delights and fried chicken. All members were invited as well as guests.

The program for the evening was presented by an Alva/Fort Denaud resident, Ashlynn Dunn. Ashlynn is the Marketing and Communications Coordinator for the relatively new Agribusiness course of study at the Lutgent College of Business at FGCU in Fort Myers.

She began with a brief history of this new minor in the universities offerings from 2018 to the present.

By 2023 they were offering business education for all types of agriculture from dairy to cannabis. You might guess which subject gets the most student applicants. They also began offering very popular farm tours as hands on experiences for those interested in agribusiness.



Also, and very well attended was the 2023 FORUM, where 17 vendors displayed and shared their products and business models with young students and anyone interested in agribusiness. 15 schools from around Florida sent students as well to make the 440 attendees count a win for this program, and it will happen again in 2024.

In fact, Alva Middle School sent their ag class and instructors and reports were TWO THUMBS UP by all.

Ashlynn had a very lively Q & A session at the conclusion of her well organized and interesting presentation which included these questions as well as many more:

-What are farmers with failed or unprofitable crops, such as citrus which dies from greening disease, doing with their land? The answer was not often putting in another crop, or raising livestock for market. Often Florida farmers need to recue their lost investments in farming by selling off the land, if they can, to a developer for construction of homes or commercial use.

ON THE RIVER – Connecting ALVA Florida NEIGHBORS and NEIGHBORHOODS monthly, online, FREE

-Do you teach retail agribusiness? Not at this time, though basic business practices are available in the full School of Business.



-What is the most profitable crop or animal in Florida? Sugar, by far. And that means US Sugar and its farmers now. Serious or annual profitability is hard to find in ANY other Florida farm or ranch venture.

-Are there online classes available? Not yet, but its coming.

-May anyone audit a class? Yes, but only if a class is not already full of credit seeking students.

To find out more about the new AGRIBUSINESS CENTER at FGCU go to:

<https://www.fgcu.edu/cob/agribusiness/>

The business of protecting Alva from encroaching residential development continued before this holiday event, and does so from the day after.

Join ALVA INC nest the second Tuesday of January at 7pm at the Alva Community Building.

A letter from your neighbors at Alva INC

Dear Alva Community:

We have covered many issues concerning the Alva Community this past year and we thank you for your interest and participation. We predict that this is only the beginning and we need to continue being alert and working together to preserve the tranquility and beauty of Alva

For this past year, Alva Inc has increased our membership with fifty-one (51) new Family Memberships for a total of 155 Alva Inc members. That is a 40% increase in memberships.

In the past year, we collected \$3972.00 from our membership fees and individual donations. Our expenses totaled \$3822.43. Alva Inc's projected minimum expenses for 2024 are \$3,232.00.

We are asking anyone who values what we are doing, especially those of you from the Alva Community who haven't joined yet; consider it!

Alva Inc hasn't increased the membership fee of \$25 since we began in 2002. Contact us at Info@AlvaFl.org to find out how to join your neighbors.

ALVA, Inc. has a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. Federal ID# 65-1120852. Donations are tax deductible. You can help your community by donating to Alva Inc TODAY.

Send donations to: A LIVING VISION OF ALVA INC., PO Box 2022, Alva, FL 33920.

Connie Dennis, President Paul Furbay, Vice President

Roxanne Gause, Treasurer Rose Conner, Secretary

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Board of Lee County Commissioners to vote on the CARY+DUKE+POVIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT.

A hearing date HAS NOW BEEN SET for WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17th at 9:30am in the Board of County Commissioner Chambers, (Second Floor), 2120 Main Street, Fort Myers, FL 33901

The public will be permitted to speak at this hearing for up to three minutes each.

IT IS NECESSARY THAT THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HEAR FROM THE PUBLIC. WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE ALL IN ATTENDANCE TO ARRIVE EARLY, FILL OUT A COMMENT CARD, AND, AT THE VERY LEAST, STATE YOUR NAME AND OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT.



As most should know by now, Neal Communities has submitted a request to the Lee County Government for approval of a Large-Scale Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment to add the 788 +/- acres subject property to the Lee County Utilities, Future Water Service Areas Map (Map 4A) and Future Sewer Service Areas Map (Map 4B).

This means, in order to bring public water and sewer utilities to this property, it requires changes be made to the established Lee County Comprehensive Plan.

Any changes made to the Lee County Plan MUST go through the process of a Comprehensive Plan Amendment which requires specific steps. At this point in the process, the LEE PLANNING AGENCY has already voted (3-2) NOT to recommend approval to the Board of County Commissioners to amend the current Lee County Comprehensive Plan in order to bring public water and sewer to the Duke+Cary+Povia property. (This is positive news for Alva and Northeast Lee County.) Although the Lee Planning Agency is NOT recommending approval, the Board of County Commissioners can still vote to approve the proposed amendment.

Alva's District 5 Commissioner has made comments in a recent radio interview indicating that he will be voting to approve the proposed amendment, specifically when Commissioner Greenwell states, "we don't want 750 septic tanks on the river." (Begin at 2:27 mark).

(<https://www.facebook.com/DrewSteeleRadio/videos/1621513234924275>)

A possible future concern for Alva residents is, if the public water and sewer connection for the Neal Planned Development is approved by the Board of County Commissioners, surrounding property owners will be required to pay mandatory assessments to cover the costs of forced connection to these utilities.

Thank you

ALVA STRONG



The future of the Lee County Civic Center

(TY WINK NEWS- Reporter: Jolena Esperto Writer: Rachel Murphy)



Lee County Commissioners debated how to best breathe new life into the 45-year-old Lee County Civic Center on December 6th, 2023. The civic center is due for some repairs, from the drywall to termites in the bleachers, including cracks in the foundation and water damage.

Commissioners said that the plan is to handle all that as best as possible over the next three – five years.

“We understand that the civic center will be replaced, and the commissioners gave direction that it will be replaced with something larger, that will hold more people, more modern. Something that all of us in the county can be proud of again,” said Mike Greenwell.

The Lee County Civic Center has certainly gotten its use after years of RV shows, gun shows and the fairs hosted on the property. Commissioners said Waley Hall inside the civic center will be demolished because it’s not worth repairing. They expect a final vote for the future of the civic center during the spring of 2024.

Fun fact: Florida is the only place in the world where you can interact with wild, baked potatoes in their natural habitat...



Could we re-wild the Caloosahatchee?

(TY News Press -Amy Bennet Williams, our Alva resident journalist!)

The full article may be found at this web URL. Because of its length, I have only printed several parts of it. Because of its possible future impact on river residents, and its fascinating concept, I urge you to read it all.

Type **CONTROL** this link at the same time to read the full story:

https://www.news-press.com/story/news/environment/2023/12/06/rewilding-the-caloosahatchee-river-at-risk-could-benefit-from-nature-ease-water-pollution/70147244007/?utm_source=newspress-newsalert-strada&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsalert&utm_term=hero&utm_content=pftm-fort-myers-nletter02

For more than a century, the Caloosahatchee has led a double life.

Though commonly called a river, as far as the federal government is concerned, it's a canal: a manmade, man-managed waterbody connecting Lake Okeechobee to the Gulf of Mexico. With a deep-dredged channel straight enough for ship traffic, it's the western leg of the cross-state, 154-mile-long Okeechobee Waterway, a fact duly noted on the bridges traversing it.

Now separated by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-run locks into three tidy segments, the river's salty, tidal portion is walled off from its upper freshwater reaches.

Because in addition to making the watershed more human-friendly, all that reengineering sickened the river itself.

As longtime environmental scientist and water quality advocate Bill Hammond points out, each segment is essentially a huge, pooled lake, corralled by mechanical weirs. And as pool owners can tell you, fertilizer plus heat turns water stagnant green, which happens reliably to the river, when runoff spawns algae blooms.

The question now: If people broke the Caloosahatchee with the best of intentions more than a century ago, can they put it back together? To use the contemporary term, can the river be rewilded and returned to a more natural state?

No one's suggesting a pre-1800s river is possible, but advocates argue much can be done to undo the collateral damage of the river's taming.

Because as humans were changing the Caloosahatchee and the St. Lucie to the east, farmers were moving in south of the lake, now that it was safely (mostly) behind a huge dike.



More than 100 years ago, Walter Barbach, the political cartoonist for Estero's long since-defunct Kissimmee newspaper, the *American Eagle*, was urging change to the Caloosahatchee watershed. This one ran in 1906. The News-Press Archives



That left a challenge for those who would rewild the Caloosahatchee: “The Everglades Agricultural area has been designed in such a way – and not to pick on agriculture – but that is the bottleneck. The water has to go south, so until and unless you remove that bottleneck and reopen the Everglades to be a system ... you’ve got to have the ability to move massive amounts of water in a quantity and timing that will take the pressure off the two estuaries,” she said. “You can’t ever drain through a blocked pipe (and) with Lake Okeechobee,



you’ve got a rock wall (the Herbert Hoover Dike) and there’s only so much you can do with that unless you could open up the bottom side of the lake, which would be all Everglades Agricultural Area.”

For whatever reason, says FGCU Professor James Douglass, who works in the department of marine and earth sciences, the idea of rewilding the Caloosahatchee hasn’t caught fire here yet. “I think it could catch on, but there’s a lot of work and outreach we’ve got to do to change the attitudes that lead to water pollution.”

Click the link above to read the [WHOLE STORY](#)

Donation made to the LaBelle Heritage Museum

A BIG THANK YOU TO FLORIDA SW STATE COLLEGE PI THETA KAPPA FOR THE DONATION TO THE LABELLE HERITAGE MUSEUM.



C-43 Okeechobee Reservoir progress: Giant pumps can move 650,000 gallons of water a minute

(TY News-Press, Amy Bennet Williams)



Caloosahatchee advocates celebrated Tuesday morning, as four of the largest pumps on the planet thrummed to life, sending a muddy surge swirling into a retention pool.

Their purpose: moving water into and out of a once-vast Hendry County citrus grove, now the in-progress Caloosahatchee (or C-43) Reservoir intended to keep the river cleaner and its estuary healthier.

The giant inland lake will help by:

- Capturing excess basin water from the surrounding area during the wet season
- Storing releases from Lake Okeechobee and
- Improving the salinity balance for the Caloosahatchee estuary by providing freshwater when the river needs it during the dry season.

With a 2025 target completion date, the reservoir is part of the state-federal Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan and will hold some 170,000 acre-feet of water (55 billion gallons) in two walled cells and marshy treatment areas that will provide wildlife habitat and eventually be open for recreation. (The morning of the celebration, a young alligator and a male anhinga were already using the retention area around the pump station.) The four pumps will be able to move 650,000 gallons of water a minute, the equivalent of the Kansas City Zoo's aquarium.



Finishing the seven-story pump station was a heartening milestone for the assembled officials, environmental advocates and stakeholders. Building the 11,000-acre reservoir has been a bumpy ride for the South Florida Water Management District, which is overseeing the nearly half-billion-dollar project. After chronic delays and disputes, in June, the district board fired the original contractor, Lane Construction, for not meeting construction deadlines. In short order, Lane filed a federal wrongful termination lawsuit, which it later withdrew, and the district went after Lane for damages.

Then, instead of looking for another principal, the district took matters into its own hands and is now "cooking with gas," Executive Director Drew Bartlett told the gathered crowd at the pump station ribbon-cutting.

The pairs of hands on the giant scissors included: Hendry County Commissioner Ramon Iglesias, LaBelle Commissioner Hugo Vargas, Hendry Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard, Hendry Commissioner Mitchell Wills, Hendry Commissioner Emma Byrd, District Governing Board Chair Chauncey Goss,

Florida Rep. Adam Botana; Florida Senate President Kathleen Passidomo, Florida Sen. Jonathan Martin; governing board member Charlette Roman, Sanibel Councilwoman Holly Smith, Hendry Commissioner Karson Turner, LaBelle Mayor Julie Wilkins, Florida Department of Environmental Protection Deputy Secretary Adam Blalock, Army Corps of Engineers Maj. Cory Bell and district governing board member Ben Butler.

Ed. Note: At first read you may think this has nothing to do with Northeast Lee County and the Alva area, but we all know what lies between Charleston Park and Tice: Our River.



The man of the hour? John Creswell the reservoir project manager, under whose watch things have zoomed ahead. "Give him a hug," urged Bartlett, before offering a few now-and-then examples. Lane averaged 92 linear feet of soil cement poured on the embankment per day, Bartlett said. "Now, we're up at 800 linear feet per day," he said. "In the first four years, (Lane built) eight miles of perimeter canal; now we're up to 12 in the last six months."

As Goss, governing board chair, characterized it, "He absolutely turned this project around ... taking it to a whole new level." For Goss, a Sanibel resident, the project is personal. He's seen the mess a dirty river can

make of the estuary that surrounds the region's barrier islands. "This is going to be a game-changer," he said.

Another recurring theme: shared mission. Though inland and coastal communities have sometimes seemed at loggerheads about water quality and who's responsible for what, this project has helped unite stakeholders, pointed out Sanibel Councilwoman Holly Smith, "In 2017 ... people were not at the table together and I look around and see how far we've come getting to the table together," she said. "We're recognizing the importance of what we each have in each piece of the puzzle and knowing together, we're going to succeed, and divided, we're just not."





BIT BY BIT SADDLE CLUB, INC.

"A FUN SHOW FOR HORSE LOVERS OF
ALL AGES, DISCIPLINES AND SKILL LEVELS"

9:00 am Show Begins ☆ Public Welcome!

2023 - 24 SHOW DATES: Oct 15; Nov 12; Dec 10; Jan 14; Feb 18; March 17; April 14

Classes

- 1 In-Hand Showmanship ←
- 2 Lead Line Class ← *IN Practice Arenal*
- 3 In-Hand Trail/Obstacle ←
- 4 Trail/Obstacle
- 5 "Timed" Fun Class *Can be lead line*
- 6 Gated Pleasure —W/T
- 7 Gated Pleasure —W/T/C
- 8 Slow Western Pleasure — W/T
- 9 Slow Western Pleasure — W/T/C
- 10 Ranch Rail Pleasure — W/T
- 11 Ranch Rail Pleasure — W/T/C
- 12 "Timed" Fun Classes... To be determined
- 13 Novice Box Pleasure/Boxing — Fun pattern work — W/T
- 14 Novice Box Pleasure/Boxing — Fun pattern work — W/T/C
- 15 WE Ranch Riding class — pattern—W/T
- 16 WE Ranch Riding class —pattern—W/T/C
- 17 Basic Western Freestyle Dressage —W/T
- 18 English Rail Pleasure —W/T
- 19 English Rail Pleasure —W/T/C
- 20 English Equitation —on the rail —W/T
- 21 English Equitation —on the rail —W/T/C
- 22 "Timed" Fun Class
- 23 Command Class —W/T
- 24 Command Class —W/T/C
- 25 Fun Class — On Back

TENTATIVE SHOW BILL

Year Membership (single) \$35.00
Year Membership (family) \$55.00

Show Cost for Unlimited # of Classes
Members \$50.00 Family \$70.00
Non-members \$70.00 per rider

Cost per class: \$15.00

☆☆ Riders Must Choose W/T/C or W/T. Can not do both.

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

☆☆ **NEGATIVE COGGINS REQUIRED**

PLEASE. NO STALLIONS!

☆☆ Riders Receive Placement Awards ☆☆

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

 **FACEBOOK PAGE**
Bit by Bit Saddle Club

Contact Adele Smith for more information
305-799-4651 or E-mail bitbybit338@gmail.com

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

LOCATION: Lee County Posse Arena | 17401 Palm Creek Dr N. Ft Myers, FL

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

★ PROPER DISCIPLINE EQUIPMENT, HEELED BOOTS, SUGGESTED ATTIRE: SHORT OR LONG SLEEVE SHIRT OR "CLUB" T-SHIRT, JEANS, BREECHES, LONG PANTS. 18 YEARS OLD and Under MUST WEAR a HELMET!

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





Join Us for a Free
CarFit Event & Resource Fair

Wed. January 24, 2024
9 am to 1 pm
LaBelle Civic Center
481 W Hickpochee Ave LaBelle, FL 33935

You Hold the Keys









CARFIT is an education program developed in collaboration with AAA, AARP and the American Occupational Therapy Association.

SHELTER (863) 675-0997 CLINIC (863) 675-7387
<https://caloosahumanesociety.org/>

info@caloosahumanesociety.org

Caloosa Humane Center 1200 Pratt Blvd, LaBelle

OUR MISSION

The Mission of Caloosa Humane Society is to serve, shelter, and protect the homeless pets in our care. We are dedicated to finding permanent and loving adoptive homes for our companion animals in need. Our no-kill facility provides low cost spay/neuter services to the community with the goal of reducing the extreme overpopulation of unwanted pets.



South Florida Wildlands Association

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

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



ALVA HAS A BUY NOTHING FACEBOOK PAGE!

This page is all about getting rid of stuff you don't need/want & helping others in the community!

You can press and hold the QR Code & It will take you straight to our page!

Feel free to join & share with your neighbor. Here's the link also:

<https://m.facebook.com/groups/607856844854663/?ref=share&mibextid=OjTNLd>





From Lee County Sheriff's Office

Drunk, drugged, drowsy or distracted???

YOU Stay off Lee County roads!!!

(TY News Press also)

Last year, Lee County crashes saw the highest death toll in more than 10 years with 137 fatalities. 2023 has already passed 100.

Authorities are reminding motorists of a growing epidemic a year after Lee County crashes saw their highest death toll in more than 10 years. Members of the Florida Highway Patrol, Fort Myers Police and Cape Coral Police were among the agencies in attendance shining light on the impact of drinking, drugs, distracted and drowsy driving.



Nationwide, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs continues to be the most often committed and deadliest crime, authorities reiterated. "Distracted driving, which has become an epidemic that threatens the safety and wellbeing of all road users," Fort Myers Police Chief Jason Fields said. "With the ever increasing presence of smartphones, or other electronic devices, the temptation to divert our attention from the road has become almost irresistible."

Fields said these crashes are preventable.



"We must act collectively as a community to raise awareness and change our behavior behind the wheel," Fields said. Lt. Greg Bueno, spokesperson for the Florida Highway Patrol, said drowsy driving is the often-forgotten "D."

"Yet it is just as dangerous as someone driving drunk," Bueno said. "It is just as dangerous as someone driving distracted. And it is certainly just as dangerous as someone driving drugged." Bueno

said drowsy driving slows down one's thought process and the reaction time. He added the lack of quantity or quality sleep are leading factors.

As opposed to turning up the radio or getting a cup of coffee, Bueno recommended, motorists traveling lengthy distances should take breaks every 100 miles or two hours.

"As troopers we respond to tragedies each and every day," Bueno said. "Unfortunately, one poor decision can result in a tragedy ... having to tell a parent, a husband or a wife, that their precious gift, their loved one, is not coming home, is certainly heartbreaking."





Bueno urged the gift of safety this year.

"It's a gift to yourself. It's a gift to your family. It's a gift to all of our families because all of our families are using the very same roads," Bueno said. Bueno said "it's always good to end with a good advice quote, especially from the jolly good old fellow himself."

"He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake," Bueno said. "He knows whether you've been bad or good. So be sober. Put your phones down and stay awake. For goodness sake."

in 2022 Lee County ranked 23rd for most dangerous metropolitan areas in the nation.

Cape Coral Police Sgt. Alisha Cody, who's assigned to the Special Operations Bureau where she leads the traffic homicide unit, said drug-impaired driving has a "tremendous" impact on road safety for the community and traffic crashes.

Cody said 55.8% of drivers involved in a serious-injury or fatal crashes tested positive for at least one drug and 13,384 deaths nationwide were due to impaired driving crashes in 2021.

"Driving while impaired by any substance, whether it is legal or illegal, places you and others in danger," Cody said. "The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reminds us that if you feel different, you drive different and if you drive high, you get a DUI."



Dr. Joseph Lewis, who works at the Lee Health trauma center, said that in 2021, out of 43,000 road fatalities nationwide, 13,000 fatalities involved at least one driver that was impaired with alcohol, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

In 2021, Lewis said, Florida saw 3,554 fatal crashes of which 407 reported alcohol was involved. "Friends don't let friends drive drunk," Lewis said. "Let's keep each other alive for next year."

Lewis said speed kills for every 10 mph increase. He said that in 2022 Lee County ranked 23rd for most dangerous metropolitan areas in the nation.

In 2022, Lewis said, Lee County reported 15,292 crashes with 137 deaths. As of Nov. 25, Lee County reports 103 fatalities on its roadways stemming from 13,778 crashes.

BARRON LIBRARY

at the LaBelle Barron Park



USS Hannah Chapter, Alva, Florida,

<https://usshannahnsdar.org/>



Saturday December 16 the ALVA Chapter led the community in another laying of Christmas Wreaths on veterans graves. The weather was promising to be uncooperative so attendance was slim but heavy rain held off till after the morning wreath laying.

Support Veterans buried at Alva Cemetery in 2024

Help the *USS Hannah* Chapter, NSDAR, honor our veterans by making your donation to Wreaths Across America now and get more bang for your buck!

From DEC 16 THRU JAN 16, 2024, all purchases are doubled.

1 wreath becomes 2, 10 becomes 20 and so on. Even if you purchase a wreath for a different location, as long as it is done using our code, FL0533P, *USS Hannah* Chapter will get credit for it.

www.wreathscrossamerica.org/FL0533P





A local, Worldwide, Recognition of American Veterans

In the quiet town of Alva, Florida, where the sun paints the skies in hues of orange and pink as it dips below the horizon, lives a man named Richard Erschik. A proud Vietnam War veteran of the United States Army, Richard's life is a tapestry woven with threads of service, hard work, compassion, and a commitment to honoring those who have walked the path of duty alongside him.

Drafted into the Army in 1965 at the young age of 20, Richard embarked on a journey of discipline, commitment, and respect that would shape the rest of his life. Dutifully earning his rank of Sergeant E-5 and Non-Commissioned Officer, he navigated the challenges of the military landscape with determination and resilience. The memories of his military years remain etched in his mind today, vivid, and poignant, as if the passage of time has not dimmed their significance. His book about his time served is available on Amazon, aptly titled, "My Time Served in the United States Army."

While he was living in Homestead, FL in 2015, five decades after Richard last donned his military uniform, a spark ignited within him that was fanned by an unexpected source of inspiration. The catalyst for what would become his Veteran Visitor program emerged during his involvement in organizing a formal military-related event for the Military Affairs Committee of the Homestead Chamber of Commerce. This event, a gathering that brought together nearly forty World War II veterans, each in their 80s and 90s, became the crucible where the idea of the Veteran Visitor program was born.

As Richard witnessed the faces of often-unsung heroes light up with smiles and delight, he realized the power of shared experiences and the bonds forged in the crucible of military service. The veterans, some of whom might have felt forgotten or overlooked, found solace and connection in the simple act of relatable conversation. While eating dinner at their table, Richard spoke of the chow-line, the motor-pool, and KP (Kitchen Police), triggering memories that have weathered the sands of time. Every one of them remembered those terms.

"I saw their faces light up from my mention of the chow-line, motor-pool, KP, and suggested that one of the four proud veterans at my table had Pots-n-Pans after the event. That's when my light went on for the idea of a hospital bedside and/or special occasion Veteran Visitor initiative," Richard recalls, his eyes reflecting the passion that will fuel his extraordinary endeavor.

The idea was simple yet profound – to extend the hand of gratitude and recognition to veterans, not in eulogies at funerals but in the warmth of shared moments while they can still savor the appreciation. It was a vision that evolved into the Veteran Visitor program, a personal visitation initiative that aims to honor veterans from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.



The early days of the Veteran Visitor program consisted of in-person visits, with Richard personally engaging with veterans, listening to their stories, and leaving behind tangible mementos of appreciation. The veterans he visited were not mere names on a list but living testaments to the sacrifices made and the camaraderie forged in distant places.

Word of the program spread. Families eagerly nominated their loved ones, and veterans, who might have felt the weight of time bearing down on their memories, welcomed the opportunity to connect with someone who understands the intricacies of their military experiences. Their names and listings are on the website.

In 2024, the Veteran Visitor program is taking a significant leap forward. Embracing the changing times and limitations of travel, Richard, now 78 years old accepts mail-in and/or online submissions for listing on the Veteran Visitor website. The move embraces technology without losing sight of the program's core essence—honoring veterans with a personal touch. Those accepted for listing include not only living veterans but also posthumous entries, ensuring that the legacy of service endures beyond the passing of time.

The program's expansion to online submissions brings with it a new dimension. It is no longer confined to the physical presence of Richard, and the reach of the Veteran Visitor program extends beyond the borders of Alva, FL. Families from far and wide can submit entries, sharing the stories of their veteran loved ones and expressing a collective desire to honor and acknowledge their service.

The Veteran Visitor program is not just a story; it is a living tribute to the unsung heroes who have shaped the course of history and to one man who has made it his mission to ensure they are never forgotten.

In the quiet moments of reflection, as Richard watches the sun set over Alva, he can take pride in knowing that his efforts have created a ripple in the fabric of time. The past and the present are woven together, and the Veteran Visitor program stands as a beacon of gratitude that will continue to shine brightly in the years to come. Richard Erschik, the humble Army veteran from Alva, has not only recognized his peers; he has become a guardian of their stories, ensuring that the legacy of service lives on in the hearts and minds of those who follow.

Reference the Veteran Visitor website and read the stories. CLICK HERE: www.VeteranVisitor.com

Contact Richard by email at CLICK HERE: SgtErschik@VeteranVisitor.com or by phone/text at 630-642-6500

On this day in history: In 1927, Ricky Dale Everclear becomes the first man to put oversized rims on his truck with his girlfriend's tax return.



CONTACT:

*Calusa
Waterkeeper*

P.O. Box 1165

*Ft. Myers, FL
33902*

*info@Calusa
saWaterk
eeper.org*

**239-899-
1440**



Winter 2024 Session Schedule

Saturday, January 6, 2024 | 9:30am
Fort Myers Regional Library
South Building, Meeting Room A
1651 Lee Street
Fort Myers, FL 33901

Saturday, February 3, 2024 | 9:30am
Location TBD

Saturday, March 2, 2024 | 9:30am
Location TBD

CWK Ranger Academy - Winter 2024 Session



FORT MYERS EAST ROTARY CLUB



We meet every Wednesday at 7:30 AM at the Cracker Barrel at I-75 (Exit 141) and Palm Beach Boulevard. Contact Ellen Erickson at 239-218-4789 for information.

Fort Myers East Rotarians have had a busy month of service. One weekend they rang the bell for Salvation Army at the Verandah Publix. People were so generous and friendly!

Another December Saturday, Fort Myers East Rotarians and families and friends packaged meals for those who need food to feed their families. Lots of fun every year and such a worthy event! It's an assembly line event at the Lee Civic Center.





**The Alva Library
Museum**
**21420 Pearl St, Alva, FL
33920**



Public Library, Alva

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

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

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

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

Grant Fichter is overseeing the museum for the board.

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

2023-2024 Alva Ramblings November 10, 2023

WELCOME FAMILIES!

Newsletter Prepared/Managed by Ms. Corbett's Journalism Classes alvaflnews@alvafl.net

Calendar:

- November 13: Volleyball Away Game vs Veterans Park 6:00 pm
- November 14: Volleyball Home Game vs LAMS 6:00 pm
- November 15: Interest Report Cards for Quarter 2
- November 16: Fall Foli 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
- November 20-24: Thanksgiving Break - No School
- November 25: Volleyball Home Game vs Lamsoul Trail 6:00 pm
- December 5: Volleyball Playoffs Home vs Gateway 5:30 pm
- December 6: S.A.V.E. Club 2:45-4:00 pm
- December 7: Picture RETAKES

ALVA'S FALL FESTIVAL NOVEMBER 10th - 12th

- 9:00am-11:00am: Fun!
- 11:00am-1:00pm: Food
- 1:00pm-3:00pm: Fun!
- 3:00pm-5:00pm: Fun!
- 5:00pm-7:00pm: Fun!

Athletics Volleyball

Games:

- Tues 11/7 Boys Play First @ Harris Marsh 6:00 pm
- Thur 11/9 Girls Play First @ Veterans Park 6:00 pm
- Tues 11/14 Boys Play First @ Alva vs LAMS 6:00 pm
- Thur 11/20 Girls Play First @ Alva vs Lamsoul Trail 6:00 pm

NO GUM ZONE

GUM chewing will no longer be allowed on campus with consequences beginning 10/30

ABC

To See More News Details - The Alva Ramblings News-Site!

The School Board of Alva County, Florida District 5 - Anne Peters (Chair), District 1 - Sarah Finner (Vice Chair), District 2 - Amber W. Greenwald, District 3 - Tracy A. Peterson, District 4 - Debbie Jester, District 6 - Jack Langford, Planning District 7 - Catherine Thomas-Wright, Superintendent - Dr. Stephanie Bunker

Important Information for Parents

Florida Statute 223.28 requires that students at Alva must be using an IEP or a 504 plan for the entire school year. The following students at the Alva School are not currently using an IEP or a 504 plan for the entire school year. Please contact the school principal for more information. The following students at the Alva School are not currently using an IEP or a 504 plan for the entire school year. Please contact the school principal for more information. (2023-2024)

**Alva School's BRAND
NEW NEWSLETTER!**

**CLICK
HERE**

To Subscribe!



Alva Fire &
Rescue
District

PREVENTION.
SERVICE.
EXCELLENCE.

The Alva Fire Department is committed to providing excellent public service for all residents, businesses and visitors.



Styles Road, Alva, Florida 33920

(239) 728-2223

The Alva Fire Control District is Seeking Firefighter Applicants

The Alva Fire Control District is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Firefighter/EMT. The individual should demonstrate good moral character and judgement, be able to handle high pressure situations and display effective problem solving and leadership skills. The Alva Fire Department continually strives to provide a caring, courteous and a highly competent Fire and Rescue Emergency Service. We service over 39 square miles of predominantly rural development, approximately 3,200 residents and encompass numerous miles of the Caloosahatchee River. Experience preferred. The Alva Fire Control District has a tobacco and drug free workplace environment.

Minimum Application Requirements:

1. Florida Bureau of Fire Standards and Training Certification
2. Valid Florida Motor Vehicle License & Good Driving Record
3. Clean Criminal History
4. Current State of Florida EMT Certification
5. AHA CRP/BLS Provider

Required Documents:

You must present a copy of the following documents with the application:

1. Florida State Firefighter Certificate
2. Current Florida Motor Vehicle License
3. Current State of Florida EMT Certificate
4. AHA CPR/BLS Provider

To Apply:

Please forward a current resume and application to Chief Kuhn at bkuhn@alvafirecontrol.org or drop-off your resume to Station 121, 2660 Styles Rd., Alva, Florida 33920 between the hours of 9 AM - 4 PM. Applications can be picked up and delivered to Station 121.

The process consists of an application, written test and oral interview. Any applicant offered a conditional offer must be able to pass a physical exam, background check and a drug test. For any questions contact the Alva Fire Department at 239-728-2223

Applications will be accepted until 4 PM on April 22nd.



The ALVA GARDEN CLUB



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

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



Dec 19 Meeting

At the regular monthly meeting about 40 of the 85 members celebrated Christmas with some very NON-DIETARY foods and a gift exchange.



Connie Dennis, president of ALVA INC, the local area development watchdog group, shared stories of the group and its purpose.



Youths and Adults **EXPERIENCE ARCHERY**



Lee County Archers welcomes youngsters, adults, individuals, and families, to experience and enjoy this exciting and emerging sport. An affordable individual or family membership fee provides full range access 24/7. Non-members are also welcome on Thursdays and Saturdays, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, for an introduction to the range and/or the basics of archery.

Join us at **Lee County Archers**, where skilled instructors and top-notch facilities await the adventurous. Become a part of our welcoming community. Visit our website www.LeeCountyArchers.com for more information! Or...

scan the QR Code below.



SCORE Southwest Florida

2201 Second Street, Suite 500, Fort Myers, FL 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 SBA.

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

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

Life-Long Learning Made Easy

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

Free Resources

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



Major William M. Footman

Sons of Confederate Veterans

Camp 1950, Fort Myers, Florida

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

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

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

Brigade Commander: Sean McFall

Find out more about us at

Camp Adjutant: Gerald W. Shell, email: adjutant@camp1950.flscv.org
<https://www.camp1950.flscv.org/>



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



JOB-LINK

Florida Job Link connects talent



and opportunity, enabling on-the-spot HIRING!

UPCOMING EVENTS BELOW! WE KEEP FLORIDA WORKING! The Best and Brightest Candidates connect with Top Florida Employers face-to-face via our Hiring Events in cities throughout Florida! Florida Job Link is voted #1 Job Fair experience in the state of Florida by attendees!

<https://www.indeed.com/q-Goodwill-I-Lee-County,-FL-jobs.html>



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.



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>

ON THE RIVER – Connecting ALVA Florida NEIGHBORS and NEIGHBORHOODS monthly, online, FREE

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>

BUCKINGHAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WORLD FAMOUS FISH FRY

MENU
Lightly Battered Fried Fish
Salted Potatoes
Cole Slaw
Roll
Brownie

Friday
Dec. 1, 2023
4:30 - Until 7
Tickets
1 for \$13.00
2 for \$25.00

Future Dates
January 5, 2024
February 2, 2024
March 1, 2024
April 5, 2024

**Drive-thru
&
Limited Inside Seating Available**

Buckingham
Presbyterian Church
4241 Buckingham Rd.
Fort Myers, FL 33905
239-694-2444

A Roman legionnaire walks into a bar, holds up two fingers and says, "Five beers, please."

The Firehouse Community Theatre, Inc.

241 N Bridge St, Labelle, FL 33935 (863) 675-3066



Auditions at Firehouse Community Theatre will be held Saturday January 6th, at 10 am at 241 North Bridge Street for "THE BOOK CLUB" play.

The play will run April 19, 20, 21, 26, 27 & 28, 2024.

Rehearsal dates to be determined.

This is a fun and energetic production!!

If you are not comfortable onstage but interested in volunteering, call the theatre or stop by! The theatre always needs help back stage, concessions, lighting, etc. The theatre is a non profit organization and relies on its volunteers!

Questions: Call the theatre line at (863) 675-3066 (Leave a message and someone will contact you) or contact Cindy Louise Scott-Shough at 239-850-1992.



by Jordan Harrison

January
5, 6, 7 &
12, 13, 14,
2024

Tickets
CALL: (863) 675-3066 (leave message)
Online
www.firehousecommunitytheatre.com

Drama
It's the age of artificial intelligence and 85-year-old Marjorie, a jumble of disparate faded memories has a handsome new companion who's programmed to feed the story of her life back to her. If technology can help us remember or forget the past, given the choice what would we replace?

Fort Myers CAMERA CLUB



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

Meetings are held at the All Faiths Church, 2736 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers.

Annual dues for membership are \$30. Novices are welcome and mentoring is available. Various speakers at the meetings cover topics such as critiquing, competition, and instruction.

See ftmyerscc.com website or email carolheff23@gmail.com for additional information about the Camera Club.



Up in flames: homeowners celebrate mortgage burning

Yvonne remembers the range of emotions leading up to the closing of her Habitat home like it was yesterday. "I was a single mom with three kids and I had two jobs. It was a struggle," she said. "But I did it, and it meant the world to me to have my own house."

She purchased her home in February 1997 in Habitat's Harlem Heights neighborhood and was happy to have a stable home for her family. Twenty-six years later, she's celebrating a different milestone. "No words can really describe the emotional part of getting a house, paying for the house and then achieving your dream. I did it and I'm just overwhelmed."

Yvonne was one of 15 families who celebrated paying off their mortgages at a mortgage burning event joined by Habitat for Humanity of Lee and Hendry Counties' staff, board of directors, homeowners, donors and community members. Families threw a copy of their mortgage documents into a fire to symbolize the American Dream of living mortgage-free.

Over the last two years, 52 homeowners met their personal goal of paying off their Habitat loans in full. This achievement means they can experience more financial freedom by owning their homes outright. The homeowners paid off their mortgages over an average of 15 and a half years.

"It takes perseverance, it takes resilience, it takes strength and just the determination to continue to forge forward and pay those mortgage payments every single month," said Habitat Vice President of Strategic Partnerships Elisha Baird. "As a mortgage lender, a retail operation, a construction company and a land developer, it takes all of us to make this happen."



Since 1982, Habitat has partnered with more than 1,800 families in Lee and Hendry Counties, helping them to achieve the dream of purchasing their own homes. Three hundred and ten homeowners have satisfied their mortgages.

"I was scared at the beginning, but it was well worth it. Where I got my home, I was there as a child playing in that area, and it just meant the world to me," homeowner Yolanda remembered. She and her husband purchased their Habitat home in Clewiston in 2004. They've been mortgage-free since 2022. "The home meant having a secure roof for my children, where they can grow and make memories."

"Many hands make light work," said Baird. "Each one of us coming together to build the homes, our partners, our donors, our volunteers; this is what makes it all possible."

Roast Pork Dinner

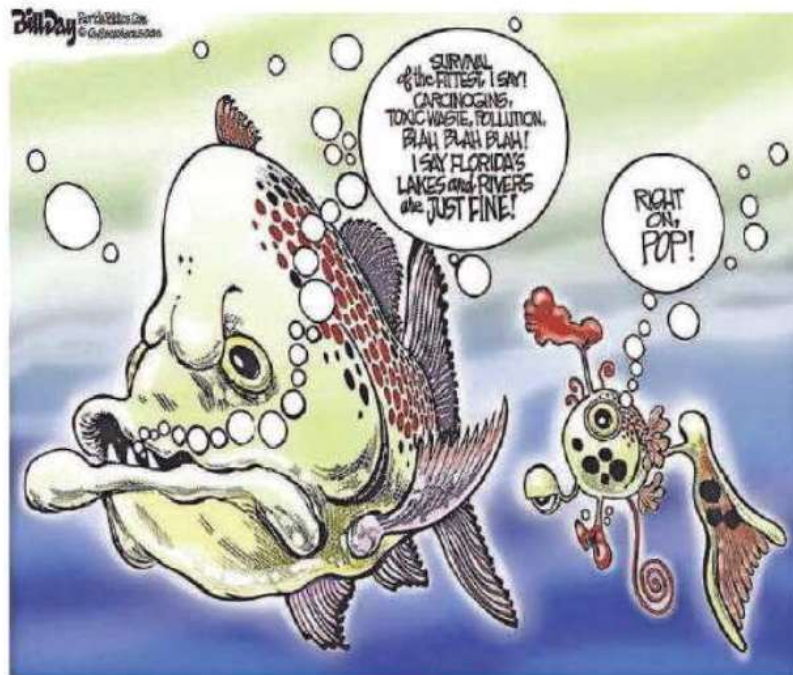


Thursday, JANUARY 11th, 4-7 pm
Delicious roast pork, mashed potatoes/gravy, coleslaw,
corn, bun, drink, and delicious dessert

\$10.00 adult ~ \$5.00 child

Eat in or take out

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
14531 Old Olga RD S.E.
Fort Myers, FL 33905
(239) 694-3878

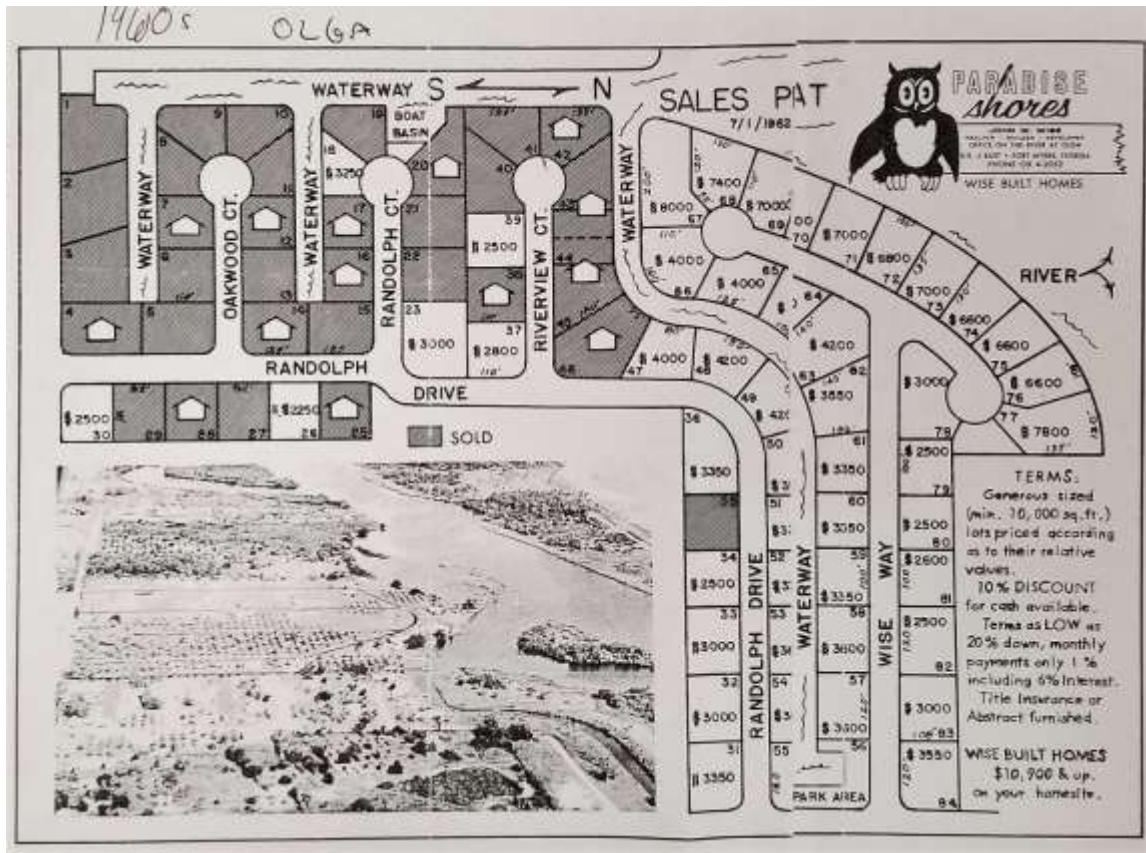


A bit of ALVA History

Imagine if you had bought for \$11,000 in 1960!

If you were 25 then, you'd be 88 NOW.

And your kids could sell your home for about \$200,000



You have to look at this photo sideways to see the same perspective as the 1960s layout above. Match the direction of the curved road here to the one at the top.

Important Dates for ACA Open Enrollment Period

We are currently in the heart of the Open Enrollment Period. Have you booked your appointment yet? This is a critical time to review, renew, or change your health insurance plan for the upcoming year.

In the meantime, here are some crucial dates to keep in mind:

- ✔ **December 15th:** The first key date to mark on your calendar is December 15th. This is the last day to enroll in a plan for your coverage to start on January 1st, 2024. If you want your health coverage to begin at the start of the new year, ensure that you have completed your enrollment by this date.
- ✔ **January 17th:** Traditionally, the final day of the 11th Open Enrollment period falls on Monday, January 15th. However, in 2024, January 15th also happens to be a federal holiday, Martin Luther King Jr. Day. As a result, the leadership has decided to extend the Open Enrollment period for the Federally facilitated Marketplace (FFM) by an additional 24 hours.

This means that instead of ending Open Enrollment at 5 am Eastern Time on January 16th, the Open Enrollment period will now conclude at 5 am Eastern Time on January 17th. Any plan selections made during this extra 24-hour period will still be effective from February 1st.

This extension provides an additional opportunity for individuals and families to secure the best health coverage to meet their needs in the coming year.

As always, it's important to consider your health needs and financial situation when choosing a plan. The ACA offers a variety of plans to suit different needs and budgets, so take the time to explore your options. If you have any questions or need assistance with the enrollment process, don't hesitate to reach out to us, Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida, Inc., We can provide valuable guidance and help you navigate the sometimes complex world of health insurance.

Don't miss out on this important opportunity to secure the coverage you need for the upcoming year.

Call: 1.866.547.2793

Visit: EnrollSWFL.com

To make an appointment with your local navigators.



Our services are free!



NOU PALE KREYÒL * HABLAMOS ESPAÑOL



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>



Six Mile Cypress Slough, Lee County Park

7751 Penzance Boulevard, Fort Myers, FL 33966

A mile of wonder 30 minutes away from Alva.



Manatee Park

10901 Palm Beach Blvd,
Fort Myers, FL 33905

239 690 5030



Olga Community Park

2325 S Olga Dr, Fort Myers, FL 33905

(239) 533-7275



Hickey's Creek Mitigation Park

17980 Palm Beach Blvd, Alva, FL, 33920

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



ALVA BOAT RAMP PARK

21580 Pearl St,

Alva, FL 33920



W.P. Franklin Lock & Dam South Recreation Area

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



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

W.P Franklin Lock & Dam CAMPGROUND

Camp by reservation only

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

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



Alva Community Center PARK

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

Shady lawns & baseball field

Telegraph Creek: Unspoiled kayak trail

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





NORTH FORT MYERS Recreation Park

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

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

Veterans Park Recreation Center

55 Homestead Road South, Lehigh Acres, FL 33936



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

<https://babcockranchecotours.com/>



Alva Angel's



Giving back to the families of our community

Are you cleaning out your house and planning to donate the items you no longer want? Please consider donating those items to Alva Angel's. We can pick up small and large items and we will gift those items to people in need or sell the items to raise money for the upcoming holiday season to purchase wish list items.

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AlvaAngelsOrganization>

If you're cremated after you die, you can be put into an hourglass and continue to participate in family game night





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

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

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



Bob Janes Preserve



Daniel's Preserve at Spanish Creek



Carter's Lane



Buckingham Trails Preserve



Olga Shores Preserve



Alva Scrub Preserve



Telegraph Creek Preserve



Oak hammock



Frank Mann Preserve



CALOOSAHATCHEE REGIONAL PARK

19130 North River Road, Alva, FL 33920

EMAIL: leeparks@leegov.com

Shelter rentals, primitive tent camping,
Horse and bike trails.

Campground phone: 239 694 0398



EXPLORE
Cypress Creek





COME ON A GUIDED TOUR WITH US!

🚶 Important Information
Experience Level: Beginner
Cost: \$25 - includes kayak, paddles, & life vest
Time: 9 a.m. - noon

Please come prepared with a water bottle, hat, bug spray, sunscreen, water shoes, & SPF shirt (recommended).

SPACE IS LIMITED TO 12 PERSONS.

🚣 Kayaking Tour Description
This slow paced tour will allow you to gain confidence on the water and learn about the history of Alva, Florida. The program will begin on land with a demonstration before launching. Once on the water, kayakers will be guided upriver through farmland and preserves.

Caloosahatchee Regional Park
19130 North River Road
Alva, FL 33920

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11TH
REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS THE TUESDAY PRIOR TO THE TOUR

(239) 694-0398
www.leeparks.org



ONLINE SHOPPING: BREEZE OR BUMMER?

Online shopping can make checking off that holiday list a breeze. But what happens when your package doesn't come when the seller said it would? Or what if it never comes at all? All your holiday cheer can quickly turn to anger and frustration, and that can be a real bummer.

The federal Mail, Internet, or Telephone Order Merchandise Rule applies to most things you order by mail, online, or by phone. It says:

- Sellers must ship your order within the time they (or their ads) say. That goes whether they say "2-Day Shipping" or "In Stock & Ships Today." If they don't give a time, they must ship within 30 days of when you placed your order.
- If there's a delay shipping your order, the seller must tell you and give you the choice of either agreeing to the delay or canceling your order for a full refund.
- If the seller doesn't ship your order, it must give you a full refund — not just a gift card or store credit.

Avoid online shopping headaches by following a few simple tips.

- **Check out the company.** Search online for the name plus words like "review," "complaint," or "scam." See what other people say about it.
- **Check out the product.** Read the seller's description of the product carefully. If expensive brand-name items are offered for bargain prices, they could be counterfeit or stolen. Be sure to verify the item's availability and the total cost before you place your order.
- **Check the seller's refund policies.** The seller should disclose whether you can return the item for a full refund. If you can return it, find out who pays the shipping costs for returns, how many days you have to return the item, and if there is a restocking fee.
- **Pay by credit card.** Credit cards give you some protections that other payment methods may not. If there is a problem, the law allows you to dispute charges and temporarily withhold payment while your dispute is investigated.
- **Verify the site is secure.** Before you enter your payment information, verify that the website address begins with "https." The "s" stands for "secure" and means that your information is encrypted before it is transmitted.

If you don't receive your order

- Contact the seller. Most businesses will work with you to resolve the problem and keep you as a customer.
- If you paid by credit card, dispute the charge. The Fair Credit Billing Act treats certain credit card charges that you dispute as billing errors. Billing errors include charges for items that you didn't accept or that weren't delivered as agreed, involved the wrong amount, were unauthorized, and certain others. By law, credit card billing errors must be disputed in writing within 60 days of the date that the first statement with the billing error is sent to you. Some card issuers let you dispute billing errors over the phone or online. However, to be sure that you get the full protection of the law, follow up with a letter.
- If you paid by debit card, contact your debit card company (often your bank or credit union). Ask if they can help you. The consumer protections for debit cards are different from the protections for credit cards. You may not be able to get a refund for non-delivery or delivery of the wrong item. Some debit card issuers may voluntarily offer protections. Start by calling the customer service number. Follow up with a letter.

A word on timing, as the holidays approach: online sellers are required by law to ship when they (or their ads) say they will. If they don't ship then, they must tell you and give you a chance to cancel and get a full refund. If they don't give a shipping date, they have 30 days to ship from the date of your order.



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



SWFL Pecan Pie Bread Pudding

Ingredients

8 cups of bread cubed
4 eggs
1 ¼ cups light corn syrup
¼ cup sugar
¼ cup packed brown sugar
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup Pecans chopped



Instructions

Line an 8×8 or 9×9 baking dish with parchment paper and spray it with non-stick cooking spray. Fill the prepped baking dish with bread pieces and cover that with melted butter.

In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, corn syrup, sugar, brown sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, salt, and pecans. Pour the mixture over the bread and make sure all the bread pieces are completely coated.

Bake at 375 for 45 minutes



Southwest Florida

Southwest Florida SCORE to Host Women Entrepreneurs – Positioning Your Business for SUCCESS

Expert Business Owners will Address a Variety of Topics

(Fort Myers, Florida)—(Southwest Florida SCORE will give local female entrepreneurs the opportunity to get answers to their business questions with its (Women Entrepreneurs – Positioning Your Business for SUCCESS workshop on January 24, 2024) at the Collaboratory, 2031 Jackson Street, Fort Myers Florida. At 9:30am to 5:00 PM. Speakers will cover a range of topics, including:

- How Well is your Website Working?
- Elevate your Pitch with SCORE's Tips and Tools
- How to Get your Business into the Media
- Funding your Business through Grants, Loans and Investors

Featured at the presentation will be Bridget Weston, SCORE Association CEO.

"We'll be addressing issues that are some of the most difficult problems that new and growing small business owners face," says Southwest Florida SCORE Chapter Chair Bill Robertson "We put together the Women Entrepreneurs Conference to show attendees ways they can grow their businesses, answer their questions, and expand their business networks, so they can focus on other challenges and opportunities," Eileen Buchanan adds.

The Women Entrepreneur's Conference is the latest in a series of seminars and events held by Southwest Florida SCORE to assist local business owners. Sponsors include Wells Fargo, Lee County Economic Development Office, Small Business Administration and BankUnited. Attendees can register at <https://bit.ly/3Gqz0o4>

About SCORE

Since 1964, SCORE has helped more than 11 million entrepreneurs start, grow or successfully exit a business. SCORE's 10,000 volunteers provide free, expert mentoring, resources and education in all 50 U.S. states and territories. Visit SCORE at www.score.org.

Funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. All opinions, conclusions and/or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA.



SWFL CRIME STOPPERS
SAY IT HERE!
WHY?
We guarantee anonymity!
We pay cash rewards.
HOTLINE: 1-800-780-TIPS
CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT A TIP
DOWNLOAD OUR FREE APP NOW! GET THE APP FOR FREE!

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.





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

The **ONLY** Online Based
Church in Southwest
Florida fully open to all,
all over the world.

Small Groups - Worship -
In Person gatherings for
locals – Counseling –
Prayer – no grass to mow
- no sidewalks to sweep.

Lead Pastor

Rev. Christy Holden

LaBelle Downtown



Let's Gather in

EVERY one WELCOME!! Really.

Every Monday Evening, 7pm
Eastern Time

Zoom ID: 895 2725 4110
Passcode 475719

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!



COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE



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

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

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



ALVA MIDDLE FFA

Find us on FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/AlvaMiddleFFA/?show_switched_toast=0&show_invite_to_follow=0&show_switched_tooltip=0&show_podcast_settings=0&show_community_review_changes=0&show_community_rollback=0&show_follower_visibility_disclosure=0

RIVERDALE BRANCH LIBRARY

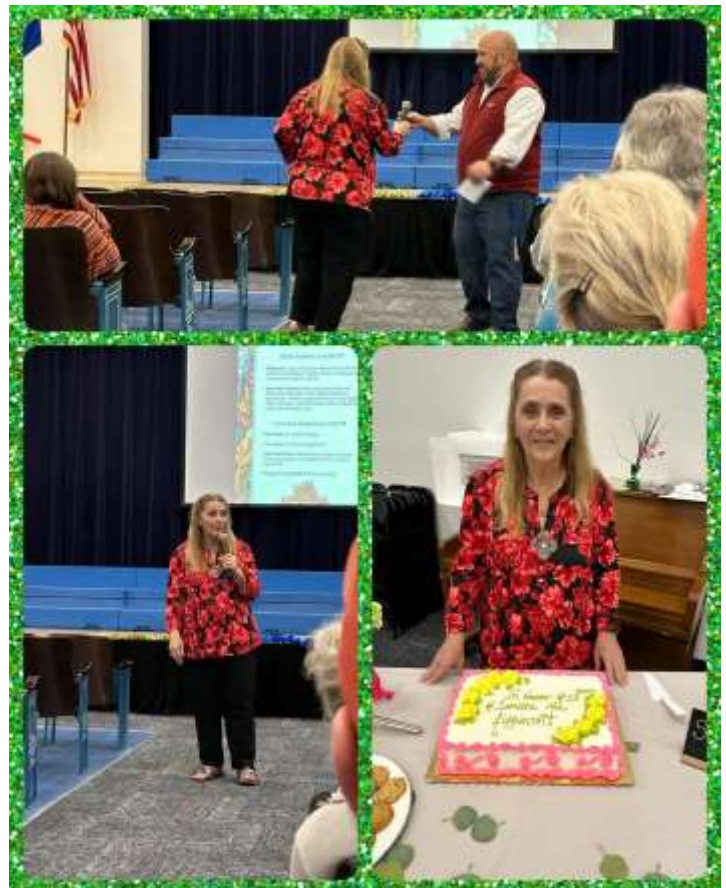
2421 Buckingham Road, Fort Myers



The ALVA SCHOOL



Thursday December 7th the Alva School and Alva Garden Club honored Ms Charlotte Lippincott for 50 years of teaching children, and serving her community with graciousness and love.





Hey there, festival enthusiasts and local artisans! The much-celebrated [Swamp Cabbage Festival](#) will be here before we know it; the vendor applications are now open for sign-ups.

If you've got unique crafts, mouthwatering treats, captivating art, or one-of-a-kind products to share with our vibrant community, this is your chance to shine! Join in making this year's festival an unforgettable experience for all attendees.

Festival Date: Feb. 24 & 25, 2024

Location: Barron Park, LaBelle, FL

Vendor Application Link

<https://www.eventeny.com/events/vendor?id=10967>

Hurry and submit your application soon, as spaces are limited and they're filling up.

THE FIREHOUSE THEATRE LABELLE, FLORIDA



matt stone as

ELVIS
In Person

7:00 p.m. on

JANUARY 20TH | ELVIS: IN PERSON

JANUARY 21ST | ELVIS: GOSPEL SHOW

3:00 p.m. matinee

TICKETS \$30



Thrift Store at Grace Church Central is 🎉 celebrating friendship at Grace Church, Fort Myers Central Campus. 8h · Fort Myers · 🌐

LOOK WHAT \$1. BUYS! AMAZING BARGAINS! boutique only \$3. Where? [Thrift Store at Grace Church Central](#) 2415 Grand Ave Ft Myers Florida 33901. Corner Edison Ave. Also available at bargain Prices, Jewelry, shoes, Purses, linens, kitchen accessories, kid's clothes and toys, home decor accessories, most men's clothing only \$2. Christmas Decor! WHEN??? EVERY THURSDAY FRIDAY AND SATURDAY. 9:30-2:30. DEBIT AND CREDIT ACCEPTED. SE HABLA ESPAÑOL. EVERYONE WELCOME TO GRACE CHURCH. SHOP LOCAL AND SUPPORT THIS WONDERFUL OUTREACH CHURCH. DONATIONS WELCOME DURING OPEN HOURS. THANKS!



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Give TIME. Give MONEY. Give FOOD.

To make a donation, **call (239) 334-7007** or visit www.harrychapinfoodbank.org

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

For Food pickup locations:

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



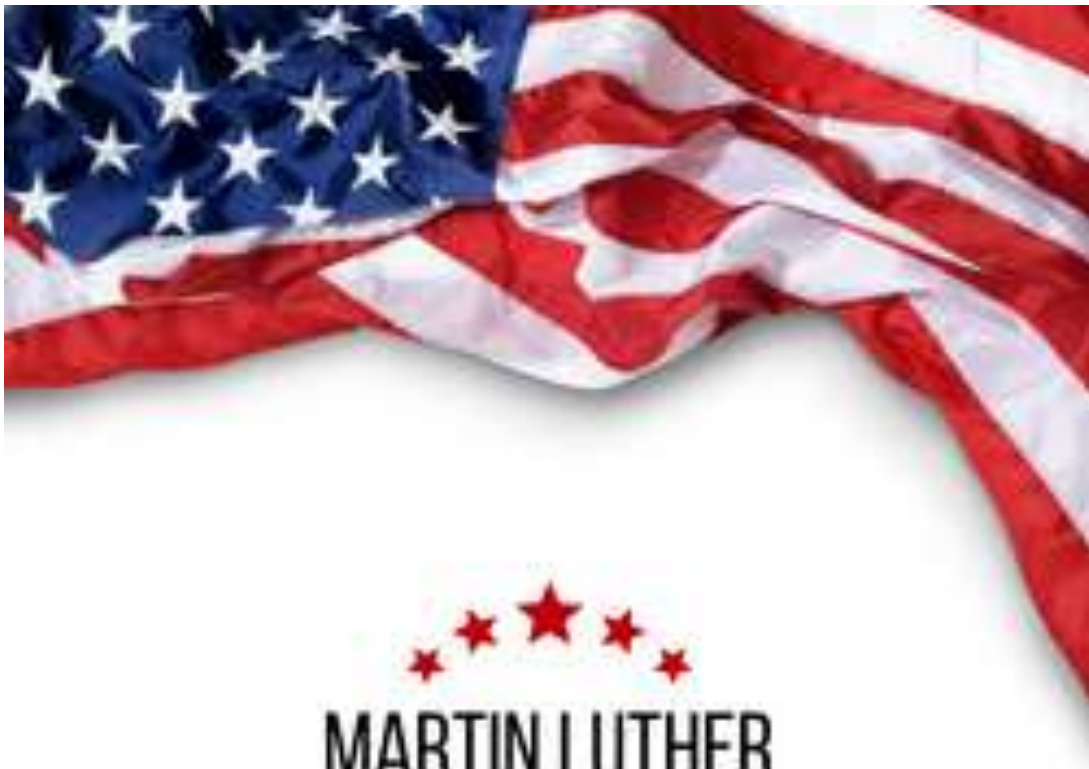
Behavioral Healthcare for All

Call our
Welcome Center at 239-275-3222 Mon. –
Fri. 8:00 am – 5:00 pm to speak with a
customer service representative to
schedule a Care Connection appointment
in-person or via tele-health.

SalusCare is a Fort Myers, Florida based not-for-profit mental health and substance abuse service provider.

SalusCare has 6 locations to serve you throughout Southwest Florida. Our fees are affordable and may be adjusted to the means of our patients based on household income.

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



**MARTIN LUTHER
KING, JR. DAY**

— I HAVE A DREAM —





Alva Area FOOD PANTRIES

Grace UMC, Fort Myers Shores

Second Saturday Free Meal & Food Pantry, 8am to 2pm

CALL to RESERVE your FOOD

239-694-2797

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

LaBelle Assembly of God
915 Lake Manor Dr Labelle FL
(863) 675-0900

Carlson Memorial Church
310 Campbell St Labelle FL, 33935
(863) 675-0656

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

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
233 Clark St, Labelle, FL 33935
(863) 675-4227

New Testament Assembly
60 Calhoun St, Labelle, FL 33935
(863) 674-0444

Pentecostal Church of God
55 Orange Ave, Labelle, FL 33935
(863) 675-0938

Paynes Creek Primitive Baptist
83 Campbell St, Labelle, FL 33935
(863) 675-1435

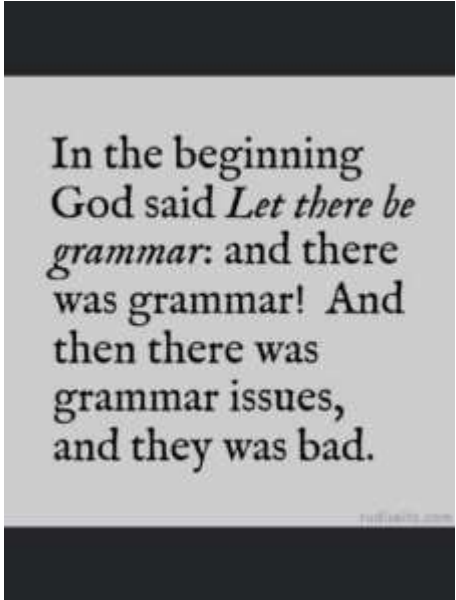
Saint Matthews Missionary Baptist
929 Caloosahatchee Ave, Labelle, FL 33935
(863) 675-4451

Bethel Holiness
1153 Cornelia Dr SW, Labelle, FL 33935

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

New Bethel Baptist
874 Suwanee Ave, Labelle, FL 33935
(863) 675-3205

Upper Room Church of God
345 S Bridge St, Labelle, FL 33935
(863) 675-7001



In the beginning
God said *Let there be
grammar:* and there
was grammar! And
then there was
grammar issues,
and they was bad.

rufl.us10.com

Some Alva & Fort Myers Shores Churches:

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.ouralvachurch.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

First Baptist Church of Alva

2790 Joel Blvd, Alva, FL, 33920

www.alvabaptist.com 239-728-2034

Grace Church, Ft Myers Shores

14036 Matanzas Drive, Ft Myers, Florida 33905

www.egracechurch.com 239-694-2797

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

14531 Old Olga Road,

Fort Myers, FL 33905

www.blcefml.org 239-694-3878

Olga Baptist Church

2364 South Olga Drive

Fort Myers, FL 33905

www.olgabaptist.org 239-694-2012

olgabapch1@embarqmail.com

Crossroads Baptist

10721 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33905

(239) 693-2777

Fort Myers Shores Seventh Day Adventist

14830 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers FL

(239) 693-0341

Olga-Fort Myers Shores Methodist

14036 Matanzas Dr, Fort Myers, FL 33905

(239) 694-2797

Olga Baptist

2364 S Olga Dr, Fort Myers, FL 33905

(239) 694-2012

Rosa De Saron Assemblies of God

13235 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers FL

(239) 694-8777

Victory Christian Center Assemblies of God

11431 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33905

(239) 694-5131

Cielo's Abierto's Ministries

10721 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33905

(239) 297-6472





12 Step Programs along the Caloosahatchee

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

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

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

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

ALVA:

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

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

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

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

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

FORT MYERS SHORES:

Grace, Fort Myers Shores, (239) 694-2797, 4036 Matanzas Dr, Fort Myers:

-AA COED, Open Disc: Mon, 12pm, office

-AA Men: Mon, 7pm, office

-AA Women: Tues, 7pm, office

-AA COED, Open Disc: Wed, 12pm, office

-AA Open Disc: Thu, 7pm, office

-AL Anon COED: Fri, 12pm, Classroom 2

-AA COED, Open Speaker: Sat, 7pm, Community Center

-AA COED, Open Disc: Sun, 7pm, office

-CHOOSE RECOVERY: 6:00pm, Grace UMC Shores Facebook Page LIVE until COVID-19 is under control.

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

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

-Night Owls OD – Saturday, 10:05 pm

LEHIGH ACRES:

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

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

LEHIGH ACRES (cont):

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

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

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

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

-AA SPIRITUAL SEARCH GROUP - TUESDAY 8PM

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

-AA THIRSTY THURSDAYS - THURSDAY 6:30PM

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

-AA HERE AND NOW- SUNDAY 6:30PM

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres, 33971,

(239) 275-5111

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

705 Leland Heights Blvd. E., Lehigh Acres,
(866) 819-5346

-AA LEHIGH SUNDAY NIGHT - SUNDAY 8PM

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres
(239) 275-5111

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

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres
(239) 275-5111

-AL ANON MOVING FORWARD AFG - MONDAY 10AM

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres
(888) 425-2666

-AA FIRST THINGS FIRST - MON-SUN 7AM

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres
(239) 275-5111

-AA NOONERS - MON-SUN 12PM

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres
(239) 275-5111

LABELLE:

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

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

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

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

-WED BIG BOOK GROUP- OBBH- WEDNESDAY NOON

-OPEN DISCUSSION -ODH- FRIDAY 7:00PM

First Christian Church, Rte 29 & Ford Ave, LaBelle

-LABELLE GROUP-ODAH- THURSDAY 7:00PM

-STEP GROUP-Cst- TUESDAY 7:00PM

-Al 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

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



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/

Manatee & Eco River Tours

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



SUNSET CRUISE!

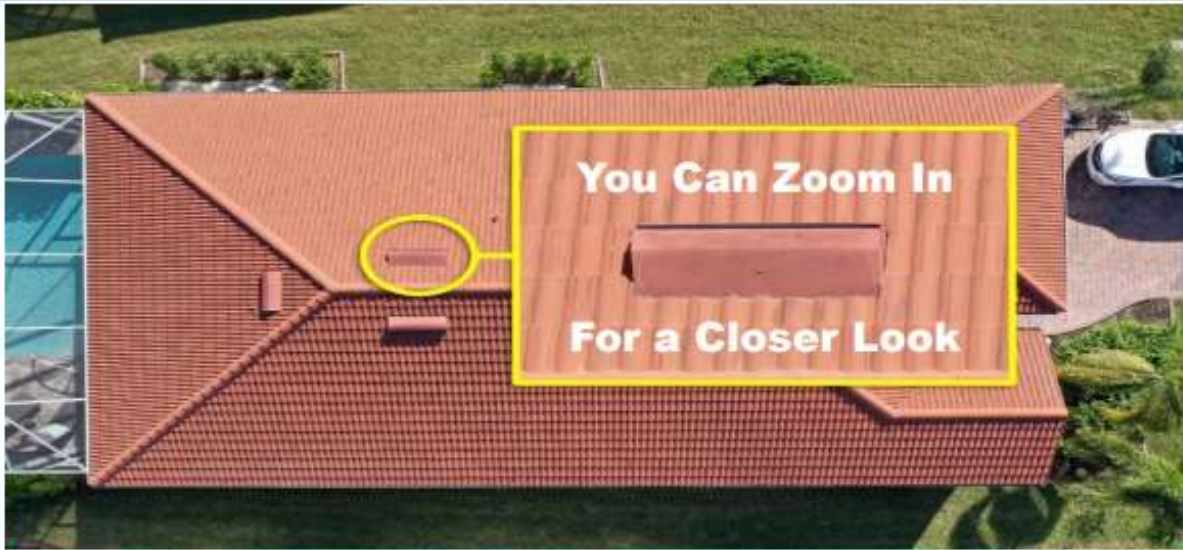
Join us for a sunset cruise from Sweetwater Landing Marina going westbound on the Caloosahatchee River. A nice spread of hors d'oeuvres is provided along with water and soda. You are welcome to bring your own beverage if you'd like. Enjoy a leisurely cruise on the Caloosahatchee, watch the birds come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



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

To book visit our website at: www.ManateeAndEcoRiverTours.com

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Turning 65 or new to Medicare?

It's time to get Medicare-ready

Get a free* benefits review from a professional

Whether you have Medicare already or you're taking your first steps toward it, now's the time to learn about what Humana Medicare Advantage plans are available for 2023 and what they offer.

More than a plan

Humana goes the extra mile to help you get the care you need. This is more than health insurance. It's human care.

See why more than 8.7 million people across the country[†] have chosen Humana Medicare Advantage plans and stand-alone prescription drug plans.

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Breanna Willis
 239-771-9949 (TTY: 711)
 Local Alva agent
 7 days a week
 bwillis12@humana.com

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* There's no obligation to enroll.

[†] Humana Inc. First Quarter 2022 Earnings Release, April 27, 2022. Humana is a Medicare Advantage HMO, PPO and PFFS organization with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in any Humana plan depends on contract renewal. **At Humana, it is important you are treated fairly.** Humana Inc. and its subsidiaries comply with applicable federal civil rights laws and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, ancestry, ethnicity, marital status, religion or language. **English:** ATTENTION: If you do not speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call **877-320-1235 (TTY: 711)**. **Español (Spanish):** ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al **877-320-1235 (TTY: 711)**. **繁體中文 (Chinese):** 注意: 如果您使用繁體中文, 您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 **877-320-1235 (聽障專線: 711)**。



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239-340-3904
Office
239-693-1959
Email
PattyWalkerREMAX@gmail.com
Web
GulfCoastLivingPatty.com
Address
12928 Palm Beach Blvd., Ste A
Fort Myers, FL 33905
  Each Office Independently Owned & Operated



<https://supportukrainenow.org/>

Support Ukraine Now (SUN), we are a community of Ukrainian and international activists. Our mission is to engage the network of leaders in supporting Ukraine.

We work on providing the most effective help to Ukraine, in immediate response and rebuilding, by enabling foreigners (individuals and organizations) to help.



We started as an informational platform, and turned into an ecosystem of diverse projects in the civil sector, economy, diplomacy, and welfare.

Initiated by Global Shapers Hubs in Ukraine (Kyiv, Lviv), and supported by the Global Shapers Community and the World Economic Forum.



<https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/maui-strong>

The Maui Strong Fund is providing financial resources that can be deployed quickly, with a focus on rapid response and recovery for the devastating wildfires on Maui.

HCF will not be collecting a fee for donations to the Maui Strong Fund; 100 percent of the funds will be distributed for community needs.

<https://fortmyers.org/resources/hurricane-information/>

Hurricane Ian

The Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce seeks to provide solutions and strengthen our local economy following Hurricane Ian. Please complete our Business Damage Assessment Form, which you will find below along with numerous hurricane-related resources. This includes important articles, volunteer/donation opportunities, emergency information, FAQs and more.

Wildfires are EVERYWHERE in North America, Europe, Africa...everywhere this year.



What can you do to help people dealing with the loss of homes, loved ones, entire communities?

<https://www.redcross.org/donate/donation.html>

∟



Is MSF providing medical care in Israel?

MSF does not currently run medical programs in Israel. This is because we focus on filling the greatest gaps in health care, and Israel has strong emergency and health systems. MSF has offered its support to Israeli hospitals treating large numbers of casualties following attacks by Hamas militants on October 7.

How is MSF helping in Gaza?

MSF's activities in Gaza are currently very limited. We are unable to safely coordinate and run our usual activities. We have made the very difficult decision to move our international medical staff to the south of the Gaza Strip following Israel's evacuation order. Some Palestinian staff have also moved south. However, some of our Palestinian colleagues have remained in northern Gaza, on an individual basis, and continue to offer their support to the wounded under extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

<https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/get-involved/ways-to-give>

Before you donate funds to ANY relief organization, Protect Yourself

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

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

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

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

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

Practice good cyber hygiene:

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

Manually type out links instead of clicking on them.

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

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

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

ON THE RIVER Alva Community Newsletter – Advertising Rates as of August 28, 2023

The monthly online OTR E-Newsletter is circulated to 12,000+ readers and is FREE to subscribers. We encourage subscribers 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

Ads will only appear on pages following all articles and nonprofit promotions are formatted. 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 as soon as we have it formatted for your approval 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 who financially support the mission of
ON THE RIVER.

We especially encourage our readers to patronize the
professional and community supporters who advertise with
us.

