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As always, please share with anyone. Ken DeWalt, publisher

*News, Events, Community Services and more from I-75 to LaBelle*

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# On The RIVER

*Connecting ALVA Florida*

*NEIGHBORS and NEIGHBORHOODS*

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*Photo by James Kennedy*

## FEATURED IN THIS MONTH'S OTR:



- NEW! The ALVA BOOKIE Book Reviews: Two new reads
- LOCAL Environment: Federal EPA: Maybe?
- LOCAL Land Development news: Hope NOT!
- LOCAL History:
- LOCAL: Community Services & Churches:
- LOCAL Clubs and Organizations: Rotary of Fort Myers Shores
- LOCAL Recipe: Florida's BEST Strawberry Cobbler
- LOCAL Sports: Chastain ALMOST.....Daytona 500

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**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](http://www.ALVAFL.org)**

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



**Alva Strong Reports on a federal EPA ruling that  
may change, or delay, everything, maybe**

Encouraging news: in a recent Court decision, the US Government has halted all wetland mitigation permits in Florida and will now be forcing the state and local governments to permit wetlands through the US Army Corps of Engineers at the Federal Level, which could save many of our wetlands and sensitive protected species and their environment. The developers are not pleased with the ruling and are rethinking a lot of land investments at this time. This ruling could help protect Alva and the Duke-Cary+Povia Property from further damaging permits.

**ALVA INC hosts another Babcock Ranch project presentation  
this time in North Olga, Lee County**



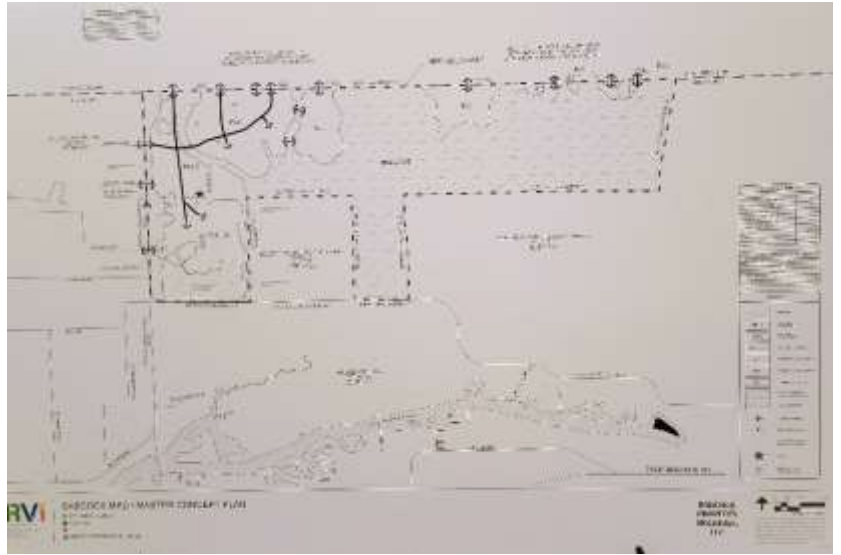
On Tuesday February 13 Alva INC met at the Alva Community Building at 7pm. Alexis Crespo represented Sam Kitson's Babcock Ranch complex as she described the newest expanse of the former only Charlotte County city. Approximately 40 attendees were present.

Miss. Crespo described how in 2018 Mr. Kitson was allowed by Lee County Commissioners to create LIMITED development in Northeast Lee County just south of the Charlotte County line. 1,630 homes in clusters, meaning close built. A 600 room hotel up to six stories high. Also, 60% of the property was to be in Babcock managed preserves/open space.

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Babcock Property Holdings, Kitson's company, is requesting changes to that plan in 2024.

- An increase from 1,630 units to 2,078 homes, with 360 to be multi-family (row or duplex style).
- An assisted living facility.
- Reduction of hotel from 600 to 250 rooms, possibly same height.
- Expansion of preserve area to compensate for more tightly built housing.



Comments and questions for Alexis and several Babcock Corporation representatives included:

Comment- "Are you removing all plants when you replant preserves?"

Answer- "No. We are only removing exotics (non-indigenous and invasive plants and trees) plants."

C- "But I have seen an entire area with all plant life burnt off with a hot herbicide"

A- "We did not do that."

C- "Mr. Kitson is making huge profits now from his venture. Please ask him to take a few millions of those profits and gift the current residents of Northeast Lee County with hiking or other trails, more 20/20 land, etc."

A- "I will ask him."

C- "Will there be future wildlife crossings of Rte 78 since you agreed to place no access road of any kind there?"

A- "Possibly. There will be several streets to allow emergency and regular traffic to enter from the home clusters and at the new Fire Station to be built on rte 31 at the development's lower west corner. A helicopter pad is also being considered.

C- "Doesn't the 100 foot natural barrier along the roads only create an illusion of wooded area?"

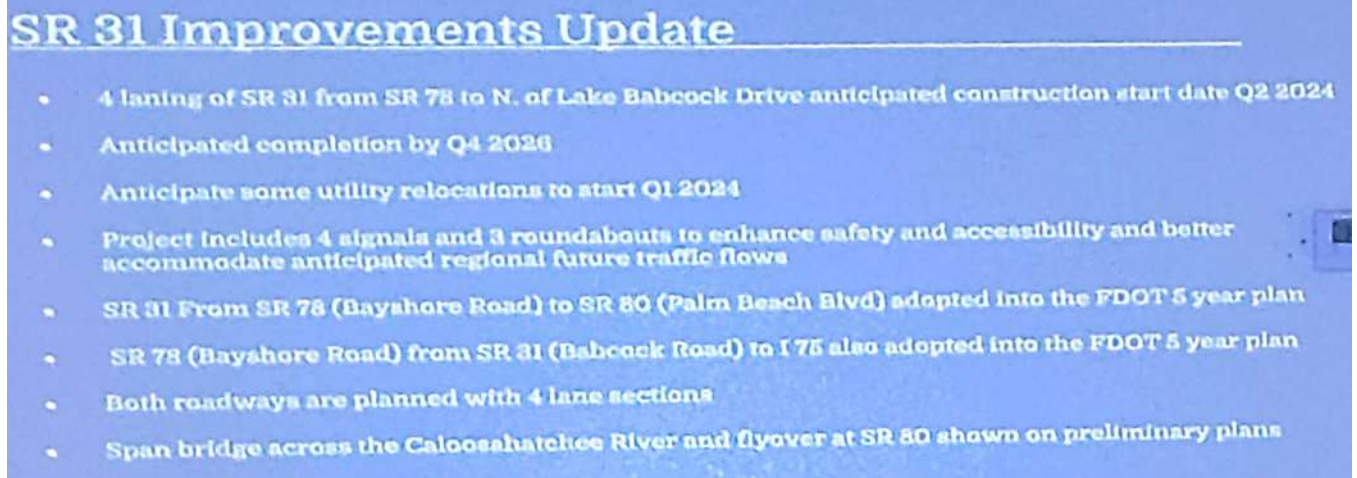
A- "No. Rooftops cannot be seen at all, even the hotel roof, from the roads."

"Also, Babcock is creating public access amenities for all residents in the area:

A public park, multi-use sidewalks on rte 31, public walking trails through the areas preserves

Alexis shared that an outdoor public meeting would be held in North Olga on March 9 at 10am. When asked to move to another date because Alva’s largest public event, the Strawberry Festival, was already scheduled for that date Alexis said she would try to move it.

Sam Kitson confirmed that he will move the outdoor North Olga community meeting to March 16th at 10 am. Location to be announced.



**SR 31 Improvements Update**

- 4 laning of SR 31 from SR 78 to N. of Lake Babcock Drive anticipated construction start date Q2 2024
- Anticipated completion by Q4 2026
- Anticipate some utility relocations to start Q1 2024
- Project includes 4 signals and 3 roundabouts to enhance safety and accessibility and better accommodate anticipated regional future traffic flows
- SR 31 From SR 78 (Bayshore Road) to SR 80 (Palm Beach Blvd) adopted into the FDOT 5 year plan
- SR 78 (Bayshore Road) from SR 31 (Babcock Road) to I 75 also adopted into the FDOT 5 year plan
- Both roadways are planned with 4 lane sections
- Span bridge across the Caloosahatchee River and flyover at SR 80 shown on preliminary plans



At the close of the meeting Denise Eberle asked the attendees to continue sharing their views on the Alva area High/middle school project on Joel Blvd in Alva with the Lee County School Board.

From the beginning of the board’s stated desire to build up to 16 more school buildings in Lee County their goal has been, “Less Bussing of students, more neighborhood schools.”

The up to 5,000 possible students and staff at a school where being planned, not far from the rte 80 and Joel Blvd intersection, is not in any type of neighborhood unless you count horses, and ALL students will have to be bussed or delivered by parents.

Denise asked all to tell the School Board and President Armor Persons to build it in Southwest Lehigh Acres, which has several neighborhoods and sidewalks as well. No sidewalks will be built at the Alva site, because only a very few students would ever use them.



## Speaking of our local SCHOOLS...

At this writing there is as yet no decision announced regarding two Lee County teacher challenges to the new DeSantis promoted laws on BOOK BANNING and DON'T SAY GAY (Anti-Woke) protests in schools.

Some teachers and administrators around the state have been fired, many others have resigned, and some of them have moved to states where they are not forced by government to avoid teaching only Conservative Christian attitudes toward history and all subjects.



You may remember the stories from early February of the two teachers I am referring to.

The first involves a flag created by a teacher (at this writing not identified by the school board or the Riverdale High School where 'he' teaches, or is on suspension at this writing.

Protests sponsored by the Lee County Republican Party (GOP) to have the teacher fired and flag removed at the School Board offices were met by several groups including 'The Purple Group' led by Madelon Stewart who said, "There is this incredible push by partisan politicians to try to control what is going on in public education,". Signs included, "Let teachers teach," and "No more hate."



The GOP led protesters carried signs that read, "sexuality has no business in the classroom," and "Stop Woke Indoctrination".

The Lee School District said they continue to work toward a satisfactory resolution regarding the flag.

In a second situation, closely following the flag debate, a well known and popular history teacher at North Fort Myers High resigned after his administrators removed his personal 600 book history and social studies library from his room when he was not there and locked it up.

This was after almost a year of indecision by the school board and the school leadership over what to do about it. Finally, Michael Andoscia, who has taught for 8 years in the Lee County schools, and 30 years total dropped his resignation letter and announced, "This is ABSURD."

Rather than leave Florida, Mr. Andoscia has retired. His principle told him he may be considered a criminal, and will face loss in income since he is breaking his contract.

His daughter, with one year left until graduation, will continue at the school. Apparently, there is much support for her father among students and faculty. However, fear of just the kind of actions and threats Mr. Andoscia has



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experienced keep most teachers all over our state hunkering down and trying to keep out of sight of administrators often confused by how to follow the law, and how to attract qualified new teachers.

In Lee County there is still a reported 150 full time teacher shortage, with more state government plans being discussed to further reduce qualifications for new hires.

Debbie Diggs, principle of North Fort Myers High, asked him why he just didn't keep the books covered with a cloth, as was suggested at one time in the past. Michael told her, "It's absurd and it's fascism and I'm just not going to participate in that,".

To complicate matters, after Andoscia resigned he got a call from the district saying that he was under investigation. And in a letter sent that evening, Lee Schools Professional Standards Director Fernando Vazquez warned Andoscia that his resignation could have financial consequences.

"There is a possibility that you may not be entitled to your sick time/personal time if you resign in the midst of an investigation," Vazquez wrote.

Andoscia said the district did not tell him what he was being investigated for.

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## Teachers grapple with teaching Black history all year

(TV NEWS PRESS-Alajah Brown)

### New laws make subject a minefield in classroom

During Black History Month, teachers traditionally highlight trailblazers, civil rights leaders and various achievements and experiences from members of the Black community and their impact on today's society.

But this February, things are more complicated in some Florida public school classrooms.

With recent legislation prohibiting topics on critical race theory and the introduction of new standards maintaining that slavery was a "benefit" in some instances, teachers and students are finding this month to be a minefield of controversy to navigate in classrooms.

To keep in compliance with state law, all classroom and media center books are required to be vetted for inappropriate material, and then if cleared, approved by a certified media specialist.



Shari Gerwenter teaches English language arts at Springwood Elementary School in northwest Tallahassee. She used to teach out of a black history book of her choice. "There's this little voice saying, 'Just be careful,' and I've never had a problem before of, 'should I read this book or should I not read this book,'" Gerwenter said.

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## Alva Middle FFA Chapter and The Alva School are community treasures

(TY James Kennedy, Facebook)

Did you know that our school hosts a complete food pantry? Through the hard work of the Alva Middle FFA Chapter, and generous donations from Harry Chapin Food Bank and school community members like Mrs. Shirly Ellis, each Friday, our school sends home over 40 "Blessings in a Backpack." If you'd like to donate, we always need hygiene products, and special treats are great for upcoming holidays.



# March 8, 2024

Born a woman, feeling like a woman, becoming a woman, and all of the above at once...

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# Buckingham residents battle and lose housing density boost Request from River Hall developer

**Approved by Lee County Commissioners unanimously**

(TY Gulfshore Business, David Dorsey)



At 9:30 a.m. Feb. 7 at the Old Lee County Courthouse, Lee County commissioners considered allowing Pinnacle Development Group to build 259 homes on 130 acres instead of the currently permitted total of 160, according to the county.

**For about two hours, 34 Buckingham area residents each took three minutes or less seeking to convince the commissioners to vote otherwise.**

**The commissioners voted 3-0 to approve the amendment, with Brian Hamman making the motion and Ray Sandelli seconding it. Cecil Pendergrass**

**concurred. Kevin Ruane left the meeting early and did not vote. Mike Greenwell, whose District 5 includes the Buckingham area, did not attend.**

The 130 acres are bordered by Orange Grove Boulevard to the north, Staley Road to the west and Homestead Lane to the south, all of which are two-lane roads. The land also connects to the headwaters of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve.

According to minutes from a previous hearing, Carl Barraco of Barraco and Associates said, “The wetlands on the subject property are dying, utility construction on Orange River Road would be necessary for the requested units or the previously approved 160 units, and that the conveyance for storm water on the subject property will require extensive work due to its insufficient ability to drain water from the south.”

Barraco and Associates is an engineering firm working for Pinnacle. Pinnacle and Barraco could not be reached for further comment.

Terri Lodge has lived in Buckingham since 1987 and works as a real estate agent. Even though more housing means more money for her and her business, she has been battling against this density increase for the past three years.

Buckingham Preserve formed as part of the Lee Comprehensive Land use plan in 1988, said longtime resident John Wilkes. It became official in 1991, county records show.

The piece of property in question was not included in Buckingham Preserve, because the owner at the time did not want to be included in it, Wilkes said. But the zoning approval for 160 homes was decided upon—until Pinnacle began seeking to change it in 2021.



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Wilkes said he also had environmental concerns over the density boost.

“We’ve only got so much fresh water in the ground,” Wilkes said. “What are we going to do when we run out of water? These wetlands out here, they’re saying they’re drying up.”

Pinnacle, with help from Lennar Homes and Pulte Homes, developed River Hall near Riverdale. That development received zoning for 2,695 homes on 712 acres, averaging 3.7 homes per acre, county records show.

Pinnacle purchased the 130 Buckingham acres for \$1.23 million in 2014, property records show.

The density boost would help the developer absorb costs of about \$3,000 per home, or \$4,749 per lot instead of \$7,687 per lot.

The density boost would allow two homes per acre instead of 1.2 per acre. The adjacent Buckingham Preserve allows one home per acre.



Nancy Hutto, a longtime Buckingham resident, also plans on speaking at the hearing.

“We’ve been doing this for almost three years. It’s been a hard fight. And we want to be sure and win on this. Because we don’t want this in a rural area.

“We know there’s going to be development. But we don’t want cookie cutter homes here. Horse Creek is beautiful. River Grove is beautiful. We wouldn’t mind that at 1 acre.”

**“No, we didn’t get what we wanted,” longtime Buckingham resident Terri Lodge said. “And it is very difficult. Because in the research I did in the state of Florida, many county commissioners were sued because of decisions they made. A few of them were repealed. A lot of them were not. It’s the same thing here.”**

**“Of course, you’re going to learn to live with it,” Lodge said.**



THE ROAR

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FEBRUARY 2024

09

## LJ's Lounge And Package Closing: Urban Sprawl Is Set To Claim Another Victim

By James Kennedy

The creep of urban sprawl is about to claim another victim. LJ's Lounge and Package, billed by the owner and founder Linda Flaitz and her husband and partner, Marc Murray, as "The Last Cracker Honky Tonk in Lee County" LJ's is facing its last day on February 4th, 2024, at the time this paper went to press. This bastion of redneck revelry and country night life has been a fixture in East Lee County for 33 years, starting initially at a location in Fort Myers Shores on State Road 80, also known as Palm Beach Blvd and is. After a couple of years, LJ's eventually moved around the corner just a little ways down State Road 31, which may be a more fitting home for this humble establishment. But, what used to be somewhat of a back road, just a little off the beaten path, is developing into a heavily trafficked artery thanks to the establishment of the new urban center of Babcock Ranch, the latest blow to the rural heart of Florida.

Marc says he will remember the kindness and friendship that flowed from LJ's, a manifestation of Linda's kindness. While the old watering hole might have had a rough demeanor, the days have passed when bouncers were called for, but the generosity of the owners and patrons hasn't. Marc said they have done benefits every year they've been open, and Linda has always tried to help those in need. When the lights are turned out, another thing that will fade will be this unofficial community center's acts of benevolence.

When talking to the patrons of LJ's there's a noticeable sadness in their eyes and voices as they recall memories spanning the last three decades. The recollections are held close, many joyful and wild, some, well, sadder for lack of a better word. Some folks have been coming here since the doors opened; some

found it yesterday. There is a unique air to the place. This old honky tonk was more than just a bar, ensuring the youthful fire of youngsters, excited to rub elbows with older friends and local legends. In its own way, it became a home away from home, a wild and woolly community center, hosting a range of social events from weddings to wakes and benefits to births. Now, sure, not everybody that went through the doors was a rough and tough cracker cowboy or hiker; the crowd has been a mix of everyone from tradesmen to doctors and lawyers and such. An eclectic mix of the friendly people that live out east. Besides being a spot to decompress from a hard day or an oasis of down-home charm, LJ's played host to many bands, more than anybody seems to be able to count.

The creation of Babcock Ranch, or maybe, more accurately, the reinven-

tion of Babcock Ranch as a sprawling town center in the middle of formerly productive agricultural land, was the final straw for LJ's and the slower-paced rural outposts of SWFL Florida. Nothing lasts forever. In the case of LJ's, the memories made there will preserve a unique aspect of life in Florida's rural country circles.

When LJ's doors close for the last time, it's not just the closing of a bar or the passing of a cultural symbol. It's a loss like that of a home or a friend. Some wonder where they'll go to visit their friends who held onto each other using LJ's as a gathering place. It may just be a bar to some, but it was a treasure to others.

Check back next month for our follow-up article and pictures from the closing. ❤️

## LJ's Lounge to permanently closed on Monday, Feb. 4

(TY David Dorsey, Gulfshore Business)



During these last days of LJ's Lounge, a popular Fort Myers Shores bar that bills itself as the last cracker honkytonk in Lee County, patrons, bartenders and owners have been soaking in the scene, reminiscing about 33 years of history as they prepare for the final last call for alcohol.

LJ's Lounge, 16500 Babcock Ranch Road (formerly known as State Road 31), is scheduled to be bought Feb. 5 by

Neal Communities, LJ's owner Linda Flaitz said. Property records show the Sarasota-based housing developer already paid a combined \$3.7 million for an adjacent 86.75 acres. It is planning to build at least 561 homes or townhomes south of the Wilson Pigott Bridge over the Caloosahatchee River, county records show, with the projects called 31 Oaks and Caloosa Palms.

Flaitz did not disclose the sale price for her 1-acre lot and building, which will be razed, she said, to make way for the planned widening of Babcock Ranch Road and an entrance into the new subdivision.

"I'm 81 years old," Flaitz said. "I need to get out of there. I had two other bars and two restaurants prior to this. Prior to that, I was with State Farm Insurance as an adjuster. I decided to give up the office life because I love people. I'm going to miss all my friends and customers. It's going to be tough."



Tears flowed the week before closing from the dozens of men and women who congregate there.

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In addition to selling the property, Flaitz said she will do separate sales of the liquor stock and the liquor license, the latter of which would carry a price tag north of \$600,000, she said.

When an area bar offered to buy the remaining liquor at LJ's at a 40% discount, Flaitz responded she would rather drink it herself.



That's the kind of humor that seemed to be permeating the bar in its last days. But there also was a lot of sadness over the changing state of Alva, a rural community that's changing into an urban one, potentially doubling from its current population of about 3,000 over the next few years because of all the planned development.

Neal Communities also lobbied for and recently received a sewer amendment from the county for at least 788 homes

it plans to build on the north side of the river, county records show. It owns another property, Owl Creek, that's zoned for 440 units, and in November 2021 it purchased the lot just east of LJ's for \$500,000, property records show.

Dawn and David Jamie Porter met at LJ's Feb. 17, 2010, and they have been together since. They expressed sadness over the impending loss of the bar. "It's just devastating," Dawn Porter said.

"It will be really sad," bartender Brooke Thompson said. "It's hard to see it go. But we'll strive after. We'll make new days and better days."

"The first night it opened," Kenny Nichols said, "I sat right there listening to Charley Pride."

The bar's patrons knew the day was coming, Ricky Weeks said. "I just didn't think it would happen this fast," Weeks said. "Everything's happening so fast." Weeks said he was on the fence about Alva's future. He said he's friends with Lee County Commissioner Mike Greenwell, who is planning a nearby shopping center that will serve the new population growth.

Even Flaitz and her partner Marc Murray lamented having to sell the property.

"I hate it," Flaitz said. "I hate it that we're selling to a community that's going to build a bunch of houses. They need our piece of property to make an entrance and an exit. They're going to build about 200 homes. It's getting too crowded, too crazy out here."







## Downtown LaBelle Rte 29 & Rte 80 and bridge Re-Evaluation FDOT Informational Meeting

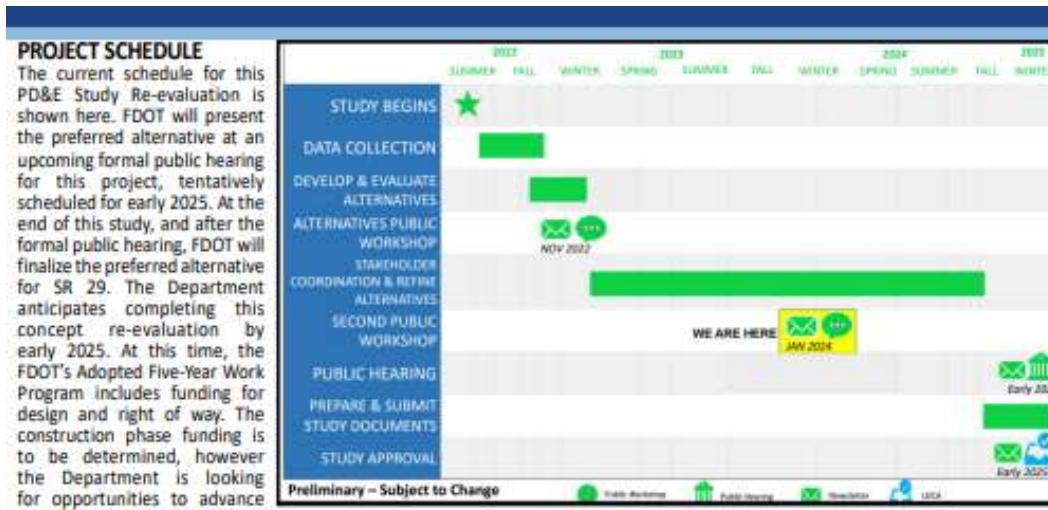
On Thursday Feb 1 FDOT held an in-person progress meeting at the LaBelle Convention Center, and duplicated it on Feb 2 as an online webinar. Both were open to the public and comments and questions were received for continued consideration.

Sadly, for the SECOND BRIDGE local residents group, it appears as though their hope for a bypass around downtown, and indeed all of LaBelle, for the second bridge and truck route for Rte 29 has been rejected. That idea was not shared at all at this meeting, though it has been repeatedly brought up for over a year as this project has moved through its planning stages.

Inwood Consulting Engineers and staff persons of the Florida Transportation Department presented at both meetings.

The essence of the meetings, and the graphics below is that:

- Two-way traffic will be maintained on both Main Street and Bridge Street.
- Sidewalks will be widened to allow for bicycle and pedestrian traffic.
- More crosswalks will be added to each street so downtown can become an easier place to walk.
- A new drawbridge will be built west and next to the current 1959 bridge. Then the old bridge will be demolished and a new bridge built to replace it.
- All truck traffic will use Bridge Street with none on Main.
- All project is projected to start by 2025 and built to meet projected traffic and pedestrian needs until 2040. Completion depends upon funding and of course, other unknowns.



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SR 29 PD&E STUDY RE-EVALUATION

From CR 80A (Cowboy Way) to north of CR 731 (Whidden Road) in Hendry and Glades Counties

SR 80 at Main Street and Bridge Street (CON'T) (VIDEO #2 - South of SR 80)

(Con't.) Alternatives 2B and 2C (NEW) demonstrate the Bow Tie Intersection concept. On the left, Alternative 2B shows roundabouts at Lee Street and Hall Street. On the right, Alternative 2C (NEW) shows roundabouts at Lee Street and Bridge Street.

Both concepts will improve green signal time for vehicles, increase pedestrian safety measures, require right-of-way at the intersections where roundabouts are proposed, and offer a potential gateway feature at each roundabout.



Park Avenue at Main Street and Bridge Street (VIDEO #3 - North of SR 80)

Three alternatives are identified for the Park Avenue intersections at Main Street and Bridge Street – a conventional signalized intersection - 3A, a signalized Florida T intersection - 3B, and a roundabout - 3C.

Common to all proposed alternatives, direct access to the Barron Library will be maintained along Main Street. Additionally, these intersections will transition the two-way pair streets of Main Street and Bridge Street into the divided arterial of SR 29 north of the river.

The conventional signalized intersection (MODIFIED/NEW) will include signalized pedestrian crossings, provides connectivity to Southbound Main Street via Park Avenue, and maintains connections to Park Avenue east of Bridge Street. This concept minimizes impacts to surrounding properties and provides capacity up to 2040.



SR 29 at Buser Avenue/Riverbend Drive (VIDEO #3 - North of SR 80)

The proposed roundabout, shown on the left, would allow for a continuous flow of traffic through the intersection with controlled right turn movements from Buser Avenue and Riverbend Drive to SR 29. Additional north and southbound travel lanes will be added with a grassed median. The roundabout will help decrease speeds through the intersection therefore minimizing the number of severe crashes.



Park Avenue at Main Street and Bridge Street (CON'T) (VIDEO #3 - North of SR 80)

The signalized Florida T intersection (MODIFIED/NEW) features a continuous northbound travel lane and a slow speed southbound right turn maneuver for local access to Main Street. This concept will include pedestrian push button-activated signals working with the traffic signal. In addition, the Florida "T" will not impact Barron Park, provides a traffic-calming and potential gateway feature, and capacity well beyond 2040.



The roundabout (MODIFIED/NEW) will lower the speed at which vehicles move through the intersection, reduce speed through downtown LaBelle, and will accommodate large truck traffic. An additional northbound lane will allow large trucks to navigate the roundabout, similar to the Florida "T" intersection with a free flowing northbound lane. The southbound traffic over the bridge will have a southbound right turn lane for local access to Main Street. The roundabout will include controlled crossings for safer pedestrian crossings. This concept will have minimal impact to Barron Park. However, we are able to create more greenspace for the new park master plan. This concept also provides a traffic-calming and potential gateway feature, and capacity well beyond year 2040.



SR 29 PD&E STUDY RE-EVALUATION

From CR 80A (Cowboy Way) to north of CR 731 (Whidden Road) in Hendry and Glades Counties

SECTION 3, ALTERNATIVE 1 - MAIN STREET NORTH OF SR 80 (VIDEO #3 - North of SR 80)

Section 3, Main Street north of SR 80, currently has two 12-foot travel lanes and intermittent concrete sidewalks on both sides of the roadway. Large oak trees line both sides of the roadway within this civic corridor.

Alternative 1 proposes adding on-street parking where feasible without impacting healthy oak trees. Current gaps in the sidewalk along the southbound direction will be connected with a 6-foot sidewalk. The sidewalk along the northbound side will be widened up to 10-feet, taking care to curve around existing oak trees.



SECTION 4, ALTERNATIVE 2 - BRIDGE STREET NORTH OF SR 80 (VIDEO #3 - North of SR 80)

Section 4, Alternative 2 proposes adding a traffic-calming roadway design, called a chicane, in specific locations. The serpentine curve will be accompanied by a 7-foot sidewalk on the northbound side of the roadway and a 12-foot shared-use path on the southbound side of the roadway.



This study also re-evaluated changes to SIX INTERSECTIONS. Each alternative along with a brief description is provided below.

CR 80A (Cowboy Way) (VIDEO #2 - South of SR 80)

Two alternatives are identified for the Cowboy Way intersection – a multi-lane roundabout - 1A and a signalized rotary intersection - 1B.



SECTION 4, ALTERNATIVE 1 - BRIDGE STREET NORTH OF SR 80 (VIDEO #3 - North of SR 80) (NEW)

Section 4, Bridge Street north of SR 80, currently has two 12-foot travel lanes, a center two-way turn lane, and 5-foot paved sidewalks on both sides of the roadway. Historic buildings line both sides of the roadway within this downtown historic district.

Alternative 1 proposes keeping the center turn lane and adding raised medians with traffic-calming landscaping.



SR 80 at Main Street and Bridge Street (VIDEO #2 - South of SR 80)

Four alternatives are identified for the SR 80 intersections at Main Street and Bridge Street – a conventional signalized intersection - 2A-1 shown on the left below, and a conventional signalized intersection with added signal at Hall Street - 2A-2 (NEW) on the right. (Con't.)



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**NEED FOR THE PROJECT (Video #1 - Introduction)**

The need for the proposed improvements for SR 29 is to improve traffic operations, access, and mobility. FDOT anticipates this project will also enhance safety along the project corridor, improve emergency evacuation, and improve connectivity between Hendry and Glades Counties.

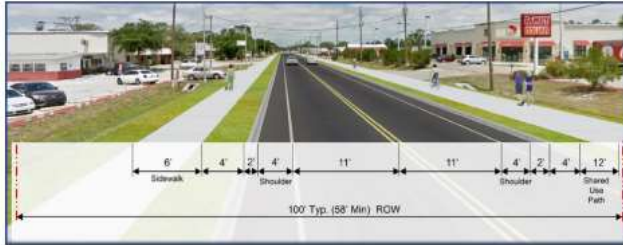
**PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES (Videos #2 & #3)**

Proposed improvements are divided into four sections. Each typical section along with a brief description is included below. New alternatives, not presented at the November 2022 Alternatives Public Meeting are noted as (NEW).

**SECTION 1, ALTERNATIVE 1 - MAIN STREET SOUTH OF SR 80 (VIDEO #2 - South of SR 80)**

Section 1, Main Street south of SR 80, currently has two 12-foot travel lanes, a center two-way turn lane, undesignated bike lanes and a 6-foot paved sidewalk on the southbound side of the road. Businesses along the corridor provide parking within their parcels.

Alternative 1 proposes removing the center turn lane and adding a 12-foot wide shared use path with grass buffer on the northbound side of the roadway, and a new grass buffer between the existing sidewalk and roadway in the southbound direction.



**SECTION 1, ALTERNATIVE 2 - MAIN STREET SOUTH OF SR 80 (VIDEO #2 - South of SR 80) (NEW)**

Section 1, Alternative 2 proposes keeping the center turn lane, adding a 12-foot wide shared used path with grass buffer on the northbound side of the roadway, and a new grass buffer between the existing sidewalk and roadway.



**SECTION 2, ALTERNATIVE 1 - BRIDGE STREET SOUTH OF SR 80 (VIDEO #2 - South of SR 80)**

Section 2 Bridge Street south of SR 80 currently has two 12-foot travel lanes, a center two-way turn lane, and 6-foot paved sidewalk on both sides of the roadway. Businesses along the corridor provide parking within their parcels.

Bridge Street will become the designated Truck Route along SR 29. With that in mind, Alternative 1 proposes removing the center turn lane and widening sidewalks up to 10-feet in width on both sides of the roadway. At points along this section, the sidewalk width would reduce to 6-feet to provide left turn lanes where needed.



**SECTION 2, ALTERNATIVE 2 - BRIDGE STREET SOUTH OF SR 80 (VIDEO #2 - South of SR 80) (NEW)**

Section 2, Alternative 2 proposes keeping the center turn lane and add in raised medians with traffic-calming landscaping.



**SR 29 PD&E STUDY RE-EVALUATION**

**CR 78 (Nobles Road) (VIDEO #3 - North of SR 80)**

At CR 78 (Nobles Road) the existing intersection is signal-controlled.

The proposed roundabout, shown below, would allow for a continuous flow of traffic through the intersection with controlled right-turn movements from Nobles Road to SR 29 and from the existing business driveway to the east. Additional north and southbound travel lanes will be added with a grassed median. Controlled pedestrian crossings are also proposed. The roundabout will help decrease speeds through the intersection therefore minimizing the number of severe crashes.



**CR 731 (Whidden Road) (VIDEO #3 - North of SR 80)**

In the existing condition, the intersection has a full median opening with stop controls on Whidden Road and Marshall Field Road. The proposed roundabout, shown below, would allow for a continuous flow of traffic through the intersection with controlled right-turn movements from Whidden Road and Marshall Field Road to SR 29. Additional north and southbound travel lanes will be added with a grassed median. Controlled pedestrian crossings are also proposed. The roundabout will help decrease the speeds throughout the intersection therefore minimizing the number of severe crashes.







## Chastain wrecks in last-lap pass attempt to win Daytona 500

(7<sup>th</sup> in Atlanta, Feb 25)

Ross Chastain thought a split second of over aggressiveness cost him a chance to win the Daytona 500 ahead of the final lap.

Chastain darted through an emerging gap in the middle of the track, seemingly with enough speed to catch William Byron on the inside. Instead, he went sliding through the infield grass just before reaching the start-finish line, allowing Byron to take the white flag before the caution came out.

Once cleared from the infield care center, and after he lamented the moment with reporters, Chastain turned and had a short chat with Austin Cindric, with whom he collided. Cindric absolved the Alva native of error, saying he was instead clipped from behind by Corey LaJoie.

"Forget what I said," Chastain declared. "I haven't seen a replay!"

Regardless, Chastain could not hold onto the lead following a Lap 196 restart. He survived the "Big One" four laps earlier, pulling away from danger before a chain-reaction pileup eliminated several of the favorites, including Joey Logano, Brad Keselowski and Denny Hamlin.

Byron quickly made his pass and fended off Chastain's advances before the last crash — securing Hendrick Motorsports' first Daytona 500 triumph in a decade, on the 40th anniversary of the team's first Cup Series race. In so doing, it denied Trackhouse Racing a landmark victory in the Great American Race.

"I really do feel content. It's weird to say it, but we did everything right," Chastain said.

"I'm happy for William, and Chevy, and General Motors to win. It was really awesome for us to control some of those green-flag pit cycles and really kick their butts. ... To have all those Chevys there at the end made me feel good."

Chastain, who has three prior top-10s in the Daytona 500, believes he could have allowed things to unfold a bit more before making his move.

"I was just too aggressive with my turn left," he added.

"I should have just waited a little bit longer, obviously. I'm here standing here talking (to reporters) instead of out there (in Victory Lane)."

Chastain led 14 laps of a relatively, and unusually, clean race — with just three crashes spread across the 500 miles. He picked up 24 points, aided by a third-place showing at the end of Stage 1, but ultimately finished exactly where he started in 21st position.

"I took the gap, and I don't apologize for that," Chastain said. "I can go to sleep tonight knowing that I took the white flag, looking to make the move to win the Daytona 500."





# ALVA MUSEUM PRESENTS

On February 10 Southwest Florida legend FOSSIL HUNTER and author, Mark Renz. Two brief lectures with much Q & A were offered. The first at 11am and the second at 1pm. Between the two

presentations about 70 attended, some who had never been to the Library Museum before.

Mammoths, Mastodons, Megalodons and sharks of several kinds were the primary discussion points. Samples of finds were on display however all were encouraged by Mark to visit the large display of his finds at the Clewiston Museum and the Gainesville Museum of Natural History in North Central Florida.



Mr. Renz shared often through his presentation that he is an amateur, not a university trained paleontologist. He also shared that the area centered on Alva is not a particularly great place to find fossils in his experience. On the other hand, he told of an FDOT retention basin he found being dug along a highway not far away that yielded dozens of finds including whole skeletons of ground sloths, mammoths, and megalodon elements over an approved dig lasting 18 months.

Many of Mark's finds are judged by him as of museum or scientific value, and those are sent to the state for evaluation. Other less valuable finds are kept by him or donated to schools, libraries, etc. A while ago he found a species of horse before only found in Texas.

His many books feature stories of his experiences, techniques, fun and comedy.

Mark often leads small groups to fossil sites where he teaches how to carefully discover finds and care for them.



**Thanks to the Alva Library Museum Board for providing these inciteful and well organized public presentations of all kinds!**



## Army Corps begins lowering Lake O's water level; How will it affect the Caloosahatchee?

(TY WINK NEWS-Elizabeth Biro)



The Caloosahatchee is expected to swell when Lake Okeechobee will soon begin dumping enough water to fill an Olympic-sized swimming pool every 22 seconds.

The lake is too high, and the Army Corps of Engineers have said they need to lower it. The Franklin Lock and its dam, known as S-79, is the last lock before water from Lake Okeechobee flows freely through the Caloosahatchee.

**Taking these measures isn't an easy decision for the Army Corps.**

Releases began on Saturday because the lake is too high. The lake is over 16 feet, and keeping it that high stresses the ecosystems inside it and threatens the integrity of the embankment.

To that end, they have to send water out. To the south, Everglades restoration isn't currently at the point where enough water can be stored and cleaned.

Instead, the water has to either go east through St. Lucie or west through the Caloosahatchee.

Both coasts fear the release because of the risk of harmful algal blooms and the threat to animals and plant life in the estuary.

Barry Rosen, a Water School professor at Florida Gulf Coast University, worked for the South Florida Water Management District in the '90s to create the first water management plan with the rain in mind. He said the Army Corps is trying to be proactive instead of reactive.

"We don't have the big blooms to deal with, so better to get it out now and hope that we are being preventative," said Rosen, "because what if this rainfall keeps happening? Because it's El Niño, and the lake gets fuller and fuller, and we have greater and greater discharges. Eventually, it will be warm enough to support a good-sized algal bloom."

While algal blooms are the first thing people often think of when it comes to releases, Rosen said the Army Corps' primary focus on the West Coast is actually oyster spawning season. With that in mind, it's important to get the freshwater out before blooms start because too much freshwater isn't good for oysters.





## Lee County teacher shortage may be more severe than anticipated

(TY WINK NEWS-Reporter: Claire Galt Writer: Nicholas Karsen, Matias Abril)

NOTE: This article of February 22 is shared here because the immediate concern of Alva and anyone living on Joel Boulevard or Palm Beach Blvd., Rte 80, is the possibility of a new High & Middle School of 5,000 staff and students being built near the intersection of those roads. While traffic and loss of environment are the largest local concerns, a major question has come up at repeated concerned citizens meetings like Alva INC and Alva STRONG: How will new schools be staffed if you can't hire enough teachers for the students, you have now?

This article points out that since the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year the Lee County District is consistently short about 200 full time teachers even as we are told that about 1,000 new residents are coming to Lee County every month, many as young families. And of course, we have over 5,000 new homes in planning in the Alva and North Olga areas, and about 10,000 being planned south of Lehigh Acres.

And Alva INC was told several months ago when School Board President Armor Persons spoke to them about the new Joel Blvd school, that up to 15 other new school buildings are being planned to care for the influx of more students in the next 5-10 years.

I have to wonder, is anyone informing new home buyers of the School Teaching Crisis in our county?

I would want to know the quality of education in any school district I moved into if I had a young family.

-Ken DeWalt

-----

Despite the recent pay raise, Lee County Schools are still short on teachers; however, the teachers union claims that the number is higher than the county admits.

The Lee County School Board admits the county is still 200 teachers short.

The chronic problem teachers said is covering multiple classes without a teacher.

What everyone hoped would be temporary has become permanent.

WINK News spoke with Marie Aulino, a teacher who has expressed how overworked the Lee County teachers are.

"I just feel so tired and sad," said Aulino.

WINK met with Aulino in October. Back then, she was a Lee County High School teacher living with her mom, living paycheck to paycheck.

Fed up with her dead-end situation, Aulino quit her job as a Lee County teacher and began working elsewhere.

"I can work at Target and get paid more honestly," said Aulino.

If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>

She said she's no longer living paycheck to paycheck and soon will leave her mother's house.

Aulino is not the only teacher to quit. The teachers' union said that since October, as many as 25 teachers have left the district.

Union president Kevin Daly said that means more work for those who remain and with no bump in pay.

"There are kids that are still having to go into those classrooms every day, so that's teachers or, you know, teachers are having to cover those classes," said Daly.

Due to the shortage, Aulino told WINK News that she would be asked to teach a subject she wasn't qualified to teach.

"I taught Spanish, and you have to cover when you're at that level," said Aulino. "They would have you cover anything. For example, our science teachers are out today, who's available to cover, and they'll call anybody in there," she said.

This became obvious to the children, as Aulino claimed the influx of teachers leaving discouraged students.

Aulino's case is one of many former Lee County teachers have told, each being more frustrating.

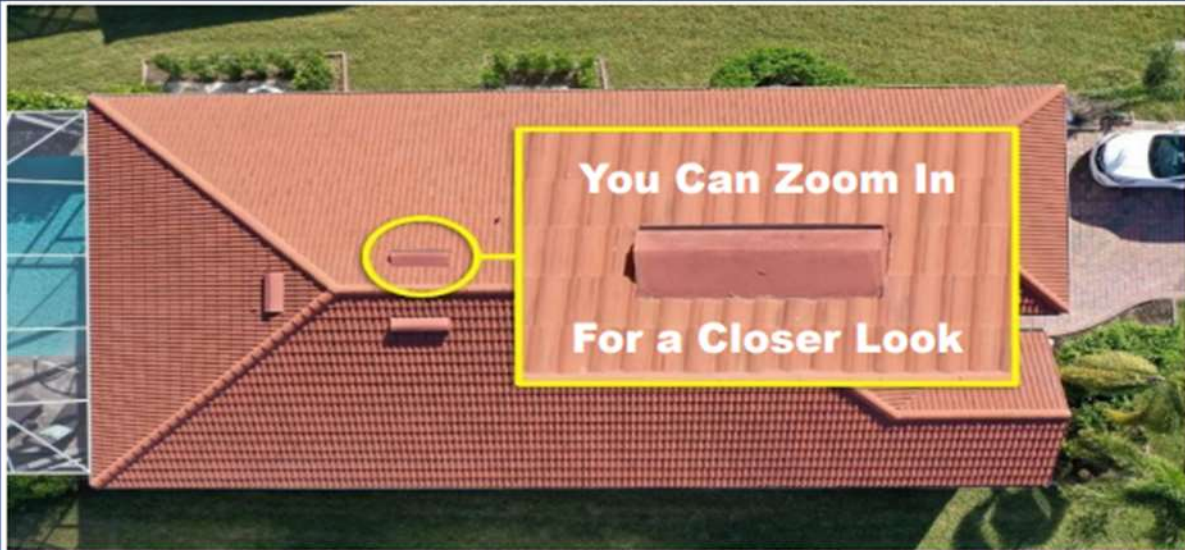
WINK News had tried to talk with Lee County Superintendent Dr. Christopher Bernier about the shortage, but he refused to give a statement.

New teacher contract negotiations for 2025 are currently underway.



St. Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland.

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Annual Meeting  
and Fundraising Benefit

**March 24th, 2024**  
**2-5pm**

Westin Hotel & Resort, Cape Coral, FL

Featuring



Calusa Waterkeeper  
**Capt. Cody Pierce**



Guest Speaker  
**Capt. Benny Blanco**

**An Afternoon of Insight, Inspiration & Community**  
Great Food & Drinks – Exclusive Auction Items  
Celebrate Accomplishments & Support Our Shared Goals



**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**

**TENTATIVE SHOW BILL**

<b>Classes</b>		
1 In-Hand Stewardship	Year Membership (single) \$35.00	
2 Lead Line Class	Year Membership (family) \$55.00	
3 In-Hand Trail Obstacle	Show Cost for Unlimited # of Classes	
4 Trail Obstacle	Members \$50.00 Family \$70.00	
5 Timed Fun Class	Non-members \$70.00 per rider	
6 Gaited Pleasure —W/T	Cost per class: \$15.00	
7 Gaited Pleasure —W/T/C		
8 Slow Western Pleasure — W/T	☆☆ Riders Must Choose W/T/C or W/T, Can not do both.	
9 Slow Western Pleasure — W/T/C	"Show Clinics" are offered on Saturday, a week before the show! <b>Members Only!</b>	
10 Ranch Rail Pleasure — W/T	☆☆ <b>NEGATIVE COGGINS REQUIRED</b>	
11 Ranch Rail Pleasure — W/T/C	<b>PLEASE, NO STALLIONS!</b>	
12 "Timed" Fun Classes — To be determined	☆☆ <b>Riders Receive Placement Awards</b> ☆☆☆	
13 Movie Size Rearing/Backing — Fun pattern work — W/T	Members also receive points from each show for year end prizes at the club party in late spring.	
14 Movie Size Rearing/Backing — Fun pattern work — W/T/C		
15 W/E Ranch Riding class — pattern — W/T		
16 W/E Ranch Riding class — pattern — W/T/C		
17 Basic Western Freestyle Dressage — W/T		
18 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 Comment Class — W/T		
24 Comment Class — W/T/C		
25 Fun Class — On Back		

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

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Facebook Page: [Bit by Bit Saddle Club](https://www.facebook.com/BitByBitSaddleClub)

Contact Adele Smith for more information  
305-799-4651 or E-mail: [bitbybit338@gmail.com](mailto:bitbybit338@gmail.com)

**ABSOLUTELY NO HITTING/ABUSING OF HORSE ANYWHERE, AT ANYTIME!**  
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MULTIPLE ATTIRE AND TACK CHANGES IN BETWEEN CLASSES ARE NOT NECESSARY!



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## Annual Plant Sale & Strawberry Shortcake Festival



— Presented by the Alva Garden Club

9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. Saturday, March 9, 2024

Location: Alva Methodist Church  
21440 Pearl St, Alva, FL 33920

Large Plant Selection  
Bake Sale  
Homemade Shortcake



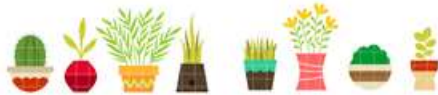
Food Trucks  
Vendors  
Used Books

Free Admission and Parking

NEW! Credit Card Sales for Plants Available

Cash Only for Other Purchases

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



## Annual Plant Sale & Strawberry Shortcake fest supports Alva Garden Club community projects

The Alva Garden Club announces its long running Plant Sale and Strawberry Shortcake Festival, a local tradition for area gardeners and those craving an old-fashioned sweet strawberry shortcake treat.

The event, scheduled from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, March 9 at Alva Methodist Church, 21440 Pearl Street, is an opportunity to purchase healthy living plants at very affordable prices. Visitors can also enjoy a bowl of fresh strawberry shortcake and purchase baked goods made by Alva Garden Club members.

A variety of Florida-grown plants from club members will be sold, in addition to beautiful specimens donated from local nurseries. Plant varieties vary and are sold on a first-come first-served basis.

Homemade strawberry shortcake baked by garden club members will feature indoor seating, along with a large variety of baked goods to take home. In addition, visitors can browse a large collection of gently used books and a variety of craft and food vendors. On-site parking will be available.

Proceeds from this event allow the club to continue providing civic contributions in the community.

In addition to creating community enhancements, club members meet monthly between October and May for educational meetings and to attend area field trips to garden-related destinations. Visit [alvagardenclub.org](http://alvagardenclub.org) for more information.

**Time and Date: 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Saturday, March 9, 2024**

**Location: Alva Methodist Church, 21440 Pearl Street, Alva, Florida 33920**

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

[info@caloosahumanesociety.org](mailto: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/>



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



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## Are YOU qualified to join Lee Counties POLICE CIVILIAN SUPPORT UNIT?

<https://www.sheriffleefl.org/civilian-support-unit/>

There is now a fully dedicated agency team to manage the unit under the direction of veteran Captain William Murphy, Jr. The uniforms, vehicles and training are being updated and branded to reflect this change and we are expanding the breadth of the tasks for the unit.



Our CSU program allows for certified deputies to continue focusing on policing and enforcement functions by providing supplemental and support services. Additionally, these programs create valuable connections between law enforcement and Citizens of Lee County. The volunteers we have today are not just a luxury, but a key component in our Community Policing objectives to keep Lee County a great place to live.

### No excuses, ladies. Get your FREE mammogram and pap smear.



Finding and treating cancer early is important.  
It can be the difference between life and death.

#### Eligibility requirements:

- Women ages 50-64, OR
  - Women ages 40-49 with a parent, sister, brother, or child that has had breast cancer
  - Women ages 40-49 who are Black, Asian, Native American, Hispanic, or Latina.
- Have a household income that is less than or equal to 200% of the poverty level.
- Have no health insurance to cover the cost of clinical breast exams, mammogram, or Pap smear.

#### Screening Locations:

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Call for an appointment at  
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Visit [Lee.FloridaHealth.gov](http://Lee.FloridaHealth.gov) or scan the QR code for more information.



If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>

# BARRON LIBRARY at the LaBelle Barron Park



## USS Hannah Chapter, Alva, Florida,

<https://usshannahnsdar.org/>

### 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](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/FL0533P)



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## A local, Worldwide, Recognition of American Veterans

A service for all American veterans by Alva resident, Richard Erschik

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

### CONTACT:

*Calusa  
Waterkeeper*

*P.O. Box 1165*

*Ft. Myers, FL  
33902*

*info@CalusaWaterkeeper.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





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\* There's no obligation to enroll.

<sup>†</sup> 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)**。

If you w



## Fatherhood Mentors & Volunteers of Lee County, Florida

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

**Joshua Krakow, Active Dads Administrator**

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

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## Alva Fire staff & volunteers honored by Oak Park Village Residents at annual dinner

On Thursday evening, February 8, The Oak Park Village Recreation Committee (RAC) prepared a meal created by many of the resident-neighbors in the community to honor both their own staff members who keep the Oak Park Village humming day to day, and also the members of our area fire PROTECTORS, paid and volunteer.



Many times, throughout a year this 55+ community has the need of medical or other emergency care which our fire brigade is super fast to respond to. From falls, to medication reactions, to...more falls, we all treasure the quick answer to any cry for help.



There is a helicopter pad along the river at Oak Park and sometimes, when the injury or illness calls for it, our Alva Response team calls for a life-flight to come out and speed the patient to the right hospital. This service can also be used by folks in the area not from Oak Park, and is available for police use as well, if needed.

On February 8<sup>th</sup> Chief Etcheverry received this year's Oak Park donation to our Alva Fire Station gathered from all of the residents of Oak Park, the largest gift recorded, according to RAC Chairperson, Mary Lou Linert, of \$4,010.00.

Thank you Chief and all your crew for the care you take of everyone in the Alva area!

You may find more information about Oak Park Village at: <https://oakparkvillage.mycommunitysite.co/>

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**If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>**

## **NEW OTR FEATURE!!**

### **The ALVA BOOKIE Book Review**

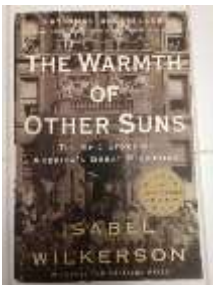


By Ramona DeWalt, Oak Park, Alva, Florida [MonaDeWalt1@gmail.com](mailto:MonaDeWalt1@gmail.com)

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

She and Ken have a home collection of over 200 titles yet to read. When read they are most donated to another library book store or friends.

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



#### ***The Warmth of Other Suns - ISBN 978-0-679-76388-8, Copyright 2010***

Pulitzer Prize Winning author Isabel Wilkerson chronicles one of the great untold stories of American history: the decades-long migration of black citizens who fled the South for northern and western cities, in search of a better life.

From 1915 to 1970, this exodus of almost six million people changed the face of America. Heavily researched by examining official records and interviewing more than a thousand individuals, Wilkerson was able to write a dramatic account of how these American journeys unfolded, altering our cities, our country, and ourselves.

This book should be required reading.... for everyone!



#### ***West With Giraffes by Lynda Rutledge – ISBN 978-1-542-0-23344, Copyright 2021***

Historical fiction at its best!

It's 1938. The Great Depression lingers. Hitler is threatening Europe, and world-weary Americans long for wonder.

They find it in two giraffes who miraculously survive a hurricane while crossing the Atlantic. What follows is a twelve-day road trip in a custom truck to deliver Southern California's first giraffes to the San Diego Zoo.

Part adventure, part historical saga, West with Giraffes explores what it means to be changed by the grace of animals, the kindness of strangers, the passing of time, and a story told before it's too late.

Sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride through this marvelous book based on fact!

**Don't miss Lynda's webpage info on this story: <https://www.lyndarutledge.com/disc.htm>**



**If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>**





## **FORT MYERS EAST ROTARY CLUB**

### **NEW LOCATION!**



Fort Myers East Rotary Club is moving to River Hall Country Club, 3500 River Hall Parkway in Alva on Wednesday, February 7, 7:30 AM for our breakfast meeting.

For more information about this active Rotary Club, call Ellen Erickson at 239-218-4789.



Membership Chair Ron (right) inducts new member Alva Fire Chief Jean (left). Welcome Jean!

We are enjoying learning about Chief Jean and his accomplishments. Come meet Jean and the rest of the Rotary membership any Wednesday morning at 7:30 AM as we enjoy breakfast together!

Also, look for us at the Lee Civic Center as we direct traffic for the Fair like we do each year!



If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>



**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.

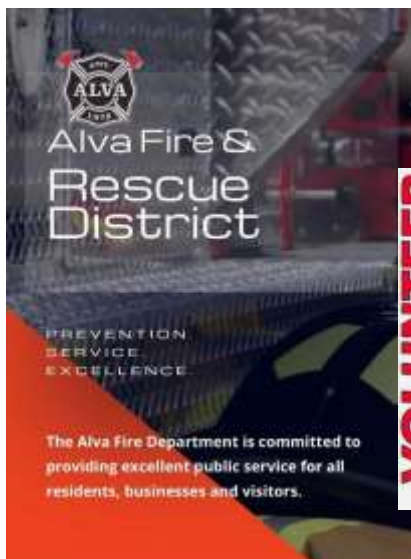
The library-museum Board is making the building available as small group venue for parties, clubs, etc.

**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.



Styles Road, Alva,  
Florida 33920,  
(239) 728-2223



**Find out if a fire fighting career is for you!**

**<https://alvafirecontrol.org/>**

**If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>**

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## 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!**

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## Naples Garden Club™ presents London Floral Designer, Business Woman Extraordinaire and Flower Guru Paula Pryke, OBE

Here is a unique opportunity to see a renowned floral designer demonstrate her techniques and share her knowledge. Grab a friend and have a memorable day at the Naples Botanical Gardens. Ms. Pryke will inspire attendees with an inspirational demonstration and an entertaining and informative commentary on her world-wide adventures in the floral industry.

Two demonstrations, a morning and an afternoon session, will be held on March 4, 2024: 10AM-11:30AM and 2:30PM-4 PM at Kapnick Hall, Naples Botanical Garden.

Paula is a passionate teacher and has published 18 books on floral art. In 2014 she was awarded an Officer of the British Empire (OBE) for her contributions, revolutionizing floral design in the UK, and her worldwide impact on the floral industry.

**Tickets are \$100 and include admission to the Naples Botanical Garden and free parking.**

**More information and to purchase tickets CLICK: <https://naplesgardenclub.org/>**

**If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>**



# 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](http://www.LeeCountyArchers.com) for more information! Or... scan the QR Code below.



**Charleston Park Day 2024**  
**12-8**  
**Saturday April 27th**

**2541 Charleston Park Drive, Alva FL**

**Fun for the whole family!**

- Feed
- Raffles
- Live Music
- Health/Wellness Checks
- And so much more

**Charleston Park**

For vendor information please contact Lashay Russ



If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>

# SCORE Southwest Florida

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

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

## Serving Lee and Hendry Counties

We provide free and confidential one-on-one business counseling by phone, email, and in-person in Lee and Hendry counties We also conduct workshops for both start-up entrepreneurs and seasoned small business owners. SCORE is a fully independent private 501-3C non-profit with accountability to and some funding from the 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](mailto:adjutant@camp1950.flscv.org)  
<https://www.camp1950.flscv.org/>



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

If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>





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

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



## 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>

If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>





**March 8, 2024. Thank a woman for ROARING today!**

If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>

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



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



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

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

FGCU Nursing Students are proud to offer...

## COMMUNITY HEALTH SCREENINGS

- Every Wednesday until April 24th (excluding 3/6, 3/27, and 4/3)
- 10:00 am- 12:00 pm
- Located at Charleston Park Community Center



**Our Services :**

- ✓ Free Blood Pressure Screenings
- ✓ Health Education
- ✓ Community Resource Information

**Health is wealth**

**For More Information:**  
Contact Tina Ellis at (239)-994-3750 or email [tellis@fgcu.edu](mailto:tellis@fgcu.edu)

If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>



The Firehouse Community Theatre, Inc.

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



## Fort Myers CAMERA CLUB



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

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

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

Paid AD

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Fort Myers, FL 33905

Each Office Independently Owned & Operated



## *A bit of ALVA History*



### **Steamboatin' the Caloosahatchee On the Thomas A. Edison**

(TY Florida Weekly)

Their names evoke a long-ago America, a time before planes, helicopters and air-conditioned cars with GPS.

Among the best known were the Anah C. and the Uneeda, the Dixie, Gladys and the Thomas A. Edison. They were steamboats

that plied Southwest Florida waters in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, stitching the area together. They were used for commerce, tourism and transportation.

The arrival in 1901 of a steamboat called the Thomas A. Edison was big news in Fort Myers. The weekly Fort Myers Press trumpeted the news with this headline: "Queen of the Caloosahatchee." In a story dated Nov. 14, 1901, a reporter wrote about traveling on the boat.

"We took a trip to Alva on the new steamer last Saturday to see how she would conduct herself on the crooked river with its sharp turns," the reporter wrote in a story that did not carry a byline. "Capt. Connie Menge was at the wheel, and although a little rusty in piloting steamers on the river, had little difficulty in making the bends, the Edison answered her tiller nicely. The run was made to Alva under slow bell in three hours and 10 minutes, making every landing between the two places, and her regular running time can easily be reduced to 3 hours."

The Thomas A. Edison was an impressive sight.

"On account of her length, 92 feet, it was predicted that she could not make the sharp turns of the river between Denaud and Thompson but she waltzed around those short bends," The Press reported on her maiden voyage,

She remained a fixture on the river until Jan. 30, 1914, when she was destroyed in the Lee County Packing House Fire. A boy named Robert Dupree watched it go up in flames and 58 years later, in 1972, he shared his memories of that night with The News-Press.

"I was watching a merry-go-round run by a steam engine," Mr. Dupree said. "Suddenly someone yelled fire. ... Flames were coming out through the side of the packinghouse. The fire spread onto the Thomas Edison which was docked next to the building."

**If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>**



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



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



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

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



### Six Mile Cypress Slough, Lee County Park

7751 Penzance Boulevard, Fort Myers, FL 33966

A mile of wonder 30 minutes away from Alva.



### Manatee Park

10901 Palm Beach Blvd,  
Fort Myers, FL 33905

**239 690 5030**



### Olga Community Park

2325 S Olga Dr, Fort Myers, FL 33905

(239) 533-7275

If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>



## 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.



If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>





## 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

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## 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/>



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## 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>**



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

uld like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>

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*



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## **CALOOSAHATCHEE REGIONAL PARK**

19130 North River Road, Alva, FL 33920

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

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

**Campground phone: 239 694 0398**

If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>



# 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.

**Caloosahatchee Regional Park**  
19130 North River Road  
Alva, FL 33920

**THURSDAY, MARCH 7TH, 2024**  
REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS THE  
TUESDAY PRIOR TO THE TOUR

 **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.

**(239) 694-0398**  
[www.leeparks.org](http://www.leeparks.org)





## SCAMMERS USE PROMISE OF TAX REFUNDS TO STEAL ID

By Larissa Bungo, Senior Attorney, Federal Trade Commission

Got an email or text message about a tax refund? It's a scam.

IRS impersonators are at it again. This time, the scammers are sending messages about your "tax refund" or "tax refund e-statement." It might look legit, but it's an email or text fake, trying to trick you into clicking on links so they can steal from you. How? They tell you to click a link — supposedly to check on your "tax refund e-statement" or "fill out a form to get your refund." But it's a scam and if you click that link, the scammer might steal your identity or put malware on your phone or computer.

If someone contacts you unexpectedly about a tax refund, the most important thing to know is that the **real IRS won't contact you by email, text message, or social media** to get your personal or financial information. Only scammers will.

If someone does reach out, here's what to do:

- **Never click on any links**, which can put malware on your computer or phone, letting scammers steal from you.
- **Check the status of any pending refund on the IRS official website.** Visit [Where's My Refund](#) to see if you're really getting a refund.
- **Share what you know.** By telling your friends and family members about the scam, you can help protect your community.

If you clicked on a link in one of these messages, or you shared personal or financial information, report it at [IdentityTheft.gov](#) to get a free, customized recovery plan.

If you see this or any other a scam, even if you didn't lose money, report it to the FTC at [ReportFraud@ftc.gov](mailto:ReportFraud@ftc.gov).



If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>

## Salisbury steak Dinner



Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup>,  
4-7 pm

Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, corn, slaw, roll and butter,  
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

**HPCSWF**

### ACA MARKETPLACE & 1095A FORM

**Our Services**

Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida is a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting individuals residing in our 10 counties: Charlotte, Collier, Desoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, and Sarasota in enrolling for affordable health care plans under the ACA. We provide free, unbiased, and confidential assistance in-person and virtual. Although the Open Enrollment period has ended, consumers who experience qualifying life events are still eligible to enroll in a health plan for 2024. Some common life events that can trigger a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) include: loss of health coverage, moving (relocation to an area where your current health insurance is no longer valid), marriage, divorce, childbirth or adoption, changes in citizenship status, or if your household income falls below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level.

If you have experienced any life changes and are uncertain about your eligibility for an SEP, please feel free to contact us at [1.866.547.2793](tel:18665472793) or visit <http://www.EnrollSWFL.com> to schedule an appointment with one of our certified local navigators.

**1095A:** We provide assistance at nearly all VITA sites.

**Can I still get Health Coverage?**

HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

From March 18, 2022, through December 31, 2025, APTC-eligible consumers with expected household incomes at or below 150% of the FPL can get the 150% SEP by submitting a new application or updating an existing one.

**HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA**

**NAVIGATORS**

- Sign up for a Qualified Health Plan inside the Marketplace or another program.
- Apply for financial assistance to lower your premiums.
- Get help comparing health insurance.

**TO SET AN APPOINTMENT!**  
[CALL 1.866.547.2793](tel:18665472793) or  
[VISIT www.EnrollSWFL.com](http://www.EnrollSWFL.com)

**Reconcile**

YOUR FEDERAL TAX RETURN WILL BE REJECTED BY THE IRS IF YOU RECEIVED ASSISTANCE FROM THE HEALTHCARE MARKETPLACE AND FAIL TO INCLUDE INFORMATION FROM FORM 1095-A. IF YOU NEED HELP WITH PRINTING THIS FORM, PLEASE CALL 1.866.547.2793 FOR FREE IN-PERSON ASSISTANCE.

We are here to help you with your application, enrollment and answer any questions you may have about the ACA.

**CONTACT US**

[1.866.547.2793](tel:18665472793) / [www.EnrollSWFL.com/](http://www.EnrollSWFL.com/)

If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>



If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>



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



## FLORIDA'S BEST STRAWBERRY COBLER

### Ingredients-

- 1 cup flour.
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1/2 stick butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon baking powder.
- Dash of salt.
- 4 cups strawberries sweetened with 1/2 cup sugar.



### Directions-

Combine flour, sugar, buttermilk, and melted butter. Stir until blended. Add baking powder and salt, stirring until blended. Pour batter into a greased 9 x 13 baking dish. Pour strawberries evenly on top and bake at 325° for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle with a small amount of sugar, then return to oven to bake for an additional 5 to 10 minutes, just until golden brown.

---



**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 NEWSLETTER NOW!

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.**



If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>





Big Brothers Big Sisters  
of the Suncoast

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

**MENTORSHIP  
MATTERS!**

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

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

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

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

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

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*



**Let's Gather in ....**

**The Channel**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**EVERY one WELCOME!! Really.**  
**Every Monday Evening, 7pm**  
**Eastern Time**

Zoom ID: 895 2725 4110  
Passcode 475719





## LaBelle Downtown Revitalization Corporation

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

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

## COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE



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

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

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



## **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](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)

If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>

# RIVERDALE BRANCH LIBRARY

2421 Buckingham Road, Fort Myers



## Learn English at the Library

### English Café

English Café is a **free** and **informal** conversation session for adults learning English as a second language.

Sessions provide adult learners an opportunity to practice speaking English. You should have basic English skills.

### ESL – English as a Second Language

ESL classes offer adult language learners formal instruction in reading, writing and speaking English. Registration is required.

### Find a Program Near You

We offer sessions throughout Lee County.

Check for locations and times at [leelibrary.net/events](http://leelibrary.net/events) or call 239-479-4636.



[leelibrary.net/events](http://leelibrary.net/events)



**For more information on this and other great programs and resources, please visit our website at [leelibrary.net](http://leelibrary.net)**

If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>



## Alva School Intramurals



### SOCCER SCHEDULE

*All Regular season Games will be played at the Lehigh Soccer Fields*

**Tuesday 2/06 Alva Ramblers v. Harns Marsh**

**Thursday 2/08 Alva Ramblers v. Veterans Park**

**Tuesday 2/13 Alva Ramblers v. Lehigh**

**Thursday 2/15 Alva Ramblers v. Harns Marsh**

**Tuesday 2/27 Alva Ramblers v. Lemuel Teal**

**ALL GAMES START AT 6PM**

*Boys Play First on Tuesdays, Girls Play first on Thursdays*

### PLAYOFFS!!

**Round 1 - Thursday 2/29 Alva Ramblers @ Three Oaks**

*Boys Play First for Round 1 Playoff Game*

**Round 2 - Monday 3/4 Alva Ramblers @ Bonita**

*If we advance, Girls Play First for Round 2 Playoff Game*

**ALL GAMES START AT 6PM**





**LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS**

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adults. You'll build skills and confidence you need to reach out and provide initial support to those who are struggling. You'll also learn how to help connect them to appropriate support.

**AFTER THE COURSE, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO:**

- Recognize common signs and symptoms of mental health challenges.
- Recognize common signs and symptoms of substance use challenges.
- Understand how to interact with a person in crisis.
- Know how to connect a person with help.
- Use self-care tools and techniques.

Join the more than **2.6 MILLION** First Aiders who have chosen to be the difference in their community.

**REGISTER TODAY FOR IN-PERSON TRAINING!**

**Date and Time:**  
March 13-14, 2024  
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Location:**  
Hendry County Emergency Management  
4425 FL 80, Leeland, FL

**How to Register:**  
Email: [Edwin.Melendez@flhealth.gov](mailto:Edwin.Melendez@flhealth.gov)  
[Edwin.Melendez@flhealth.gov](mailto:Edwin.Melendez@flhealth.gov)

Learn how to respond with the Mental Health First Aid Action Plan (ALGEE):  
**A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm.  
**L**isten nonjudgmentally.  
**C**live reassurance and information.  
**E**ncourage appropriate professional help.  
**E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies.



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

**AND**

**Date and Time:**

March 27-28, 2024  
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Location:**

Hendry County Emergency Management  
4425 FL 80, Leeland, FL

**How to Register:**

Email: [Edwin.Melendez@flhealth.gov](mailto:Edwin.Melendez@flhealth.gov)  
[Edwin.Melendez@flhealth.gov](mailto:Edwin.Melendez@flhealth.gov)



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

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

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

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

For Food pickup locations:

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



*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/>





# 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 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays

239-728-2277

## CALVARY NATIONS Church

19850 Palm Beach Boulevard, Alva

Every Saturday, 3pm until supplies run out.

239-7285566

## St. Vincent DePaul RC

Our Lady's Cupboard Food Pantry

Call (239) 694-3985 for hours open.



***Some LaBelle Area Churches:***

---

Assemblies of God  
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

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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

The CHANNEL, United Methodist Church  
Based in LaBelle, FL  
ZOOM worship and prayer  
Open to everyone on the planet,  
and off.

ZOOM LINK:

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

ZOOM ID:

895 2725 4110, pass: 475719

Mondays at 7pm, EST



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### Some Alva & Fort Myers Shores Churches:

St. Vincent DePaul's RC Church

13031 Palm Beach Boulevard, Fort Myers, FL 33905

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

Alva Methodist Church

21440 Pearl St. P.O Box 96

Alva, FL 33920

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

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

Light of the Nations Filipino Congregation

19850 Palm Beach Blvd (at Calvary Church)

Alva, FL, 33920

239-728-5566

First Spanish Assembly of God Church

2219 Joel Blvd

Alva, FL

Countryside Wesleyan Church

17750 Palm Beach Blvd, Alva, FL 33920

239-368-3270

Calvary Nations Church

19850 Palm Beach Blvd

Alva, FL 33920

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

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

First Baptist Church of Alva

2790 Joel Blvd, Alva, FL, 33920

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

Grace Church, Ft Myers Shores

14036 Matanzas Drive, Ft Myers, Florida 33905

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

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

14531 Old Olga Road,

Fort Myers, FL 33905

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

Olga Baptist Church

2364 South Olga Drive

Fort Myers, FL 33905

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

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

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**Crossroads Baptist**

10721 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33905  
(239) 693-2777

**Cielo's Abierto's Ministries**

10721 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33905  
(239) 297-6472

**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



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## 12 Step Programs along the Caloosahatchee

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

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

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

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

### ALVA:

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

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

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

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

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

### FORT MYERS SHORES:

**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

**If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>**

**-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

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

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## Important Phone Numbers & Websites

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

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

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## Manatee & Eco River Tours

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



### SUNSET CRUISE!

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



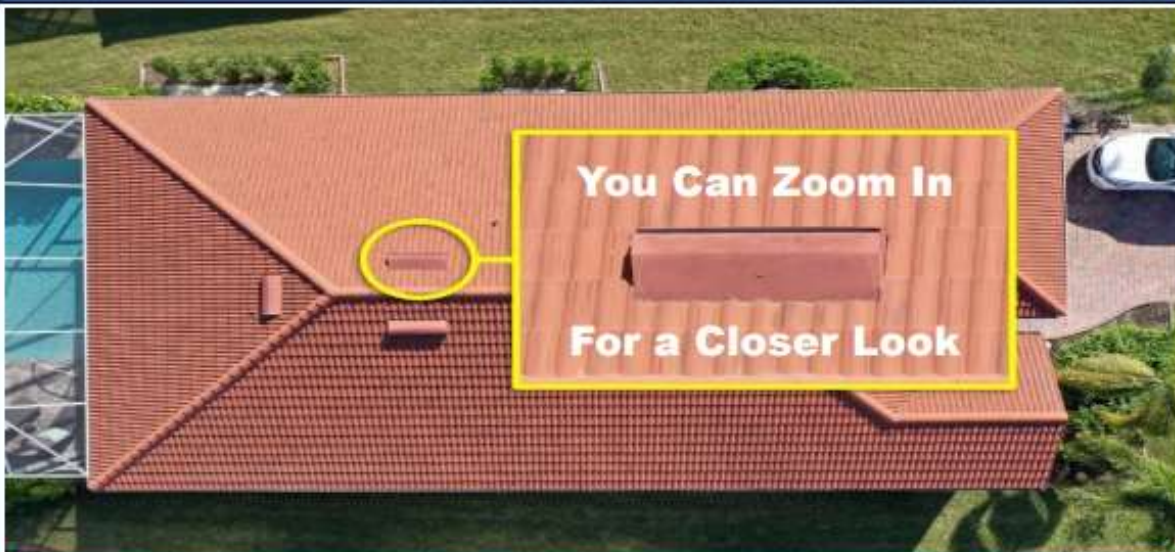
All tours leave from Sweetwater Landing Marina located at 16991 S.R. 31, Fort Myers, FL 33905

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

If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>



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Veteran Owned Company

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Paid AD 3-4/24

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<sup>†</sup> have chosen Humana Medicare Advantage plans and stand-alone prescription drug plans.

### Call a licensed Humana sales agent



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

**Humana.** A more human way  
to healthcare™

\* There's no obligation to enroll.

<sup>†</sup> 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)**。

If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>



Cell  
239-340-3904

Office  
239-693-1959

Email  
[PattyWalkerREMAX@gmail.com](mailto:PattyWalkerREMAX@gmail.com)

Web  
[GulfCoastLivingPatty.com](http://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.**

If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>

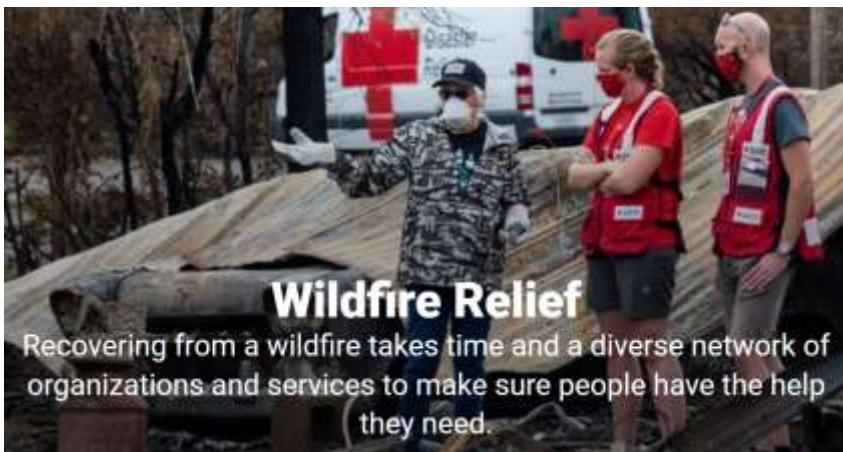


<https://fortmyers.org/resources/hurricane-information/>

## *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>

**If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>**

## 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.

Paid Ad , 3-6/24



**Meet Sam**  
**Owner of**  
**Hopeful Horizons Counseling**

- ~ Registered Clinical Social Work Intern
- ~ Completed Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Florida Gulf Coast University - class of 2022
- ~ Completed Master's degree in Clinical Social Work from University of Central Florida - class of 2023.
- ~ Supervised by Jessica N. DiMaria, LCSW - Florida / SW17667
- ~ Validator, empathizer, warm and non-judgmental to all.

Contact Sam by calling 941-769-2844 or by emailing [Sam.HopefulHorizons@gmail.com](mailto:Sam.HopefulHorizons@gmail.com)  
[HopefulHorizonsCounseling.org](http://HopefulHorizonsCounseling.org)

**HOPEFUL HORIZONS COUNSELING**  
WHERE HOPE MEETS HEALING

If you would like to help support this free news source, CLICK <https://gofund.me/2ce8ee98>

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

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

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

Advertising rates per each month :

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

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

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

**NEW!!! Beginning with the February issue, 2024, Ads will appear at the end and a second time at no additional cost, selectively placed within the body of the newsletter.**

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

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

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

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

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

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



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