

# The MULLET RAPPER

## WHAT's Happening in the Everglades City Area

### FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2007

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P O Box 617, Everglades City, FL, 34139

Volume II • Issue #43



#### MUSEUM WELCOMES ARTIST

Oil paintings of old buildings in the area are featured in the new exhibit at the Museum of the Everglades. Artist Jerry Vallez will be the Honored Guest at a reception on **Monday, December 3**, at 1:30 p.m. after the luncheon. Phone 695-2397 for info.

Prints and cards of his images of the Rod & Gun, Inn, JT's, Market, and Smallwood Store are available for sale. The exhibit runs for the month.



### EXCITING ELECTION!

People were standing around in anticipation outside City Hall before the polls closed at 7:00 on Tuesday evening and about 60 locals gathered in the Council Chamber to wait for the results. While the absentee ballots were being counted, the Mayor was presented with a plaque listing his achievements in office.

But the excitement was not just in the evening. The campaigns resulted in over 65% of the electorate casting votes, a tremendous turnout!

About 20% of the votes were from absentee ballots. The total number of registered voters in the precinct is 319, of whom 167 went to the polling station and 41 used paper absentee ballots for a total of 208.

The final result was no change. Sammy Hamilton got 77.56% of the votes for Mayor. The two City Council seats were closer with Parker Oglesby and Tammy Smallwood getting about 36% each and Elaine Middelstaedt with almost 25%.



photo courtesy of Florida State Archives

### Do You Remember?

President Harry S Truman was in Everglades City exactly 60 years ago on December 6 to officially open the National Park. The anniversary will be commemorated in City Hall on **Thursday, December 6**, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with refreshments.

After the President's speech is read, local residents are invited to join in sharing their memories of that day in 1947. The event closes with the showing of the TV series *Everglades!* from the 1960s.

For more info, phone Dottie at City Hall on 695-3781.

### ARTS & CRAFTS SALE

Enjoy your holiday shopping this year at Art-in-the-Glades on **Saturday, December 8**, in McLeod Park from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

There will be live music and a fish fry by the Church of God Youth Group, as well as a chance to catch up with friends and neighbors.

Vendors are welcome to set up at no charge. Phone 695-2905.



### TURKEY SHOOT

The Lions Club Turkey Shoot takes place on **Saturday and Sunday,**

**December 1 & 2** at Port of the Islands from noon to 5:00 p.m. There are raffle drawings every hour plus the Grand Raffle Prizes, all of which have been donated. Phone 695-3514.



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**FEATURE: SHOP LOCAL, page 7**

<u>SUN</u>	<u>MON</u>	<u>TUES</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THURS</u>	<u>FRI</u>	<u>SAT</u>
<p><b>NOV 25</b>  <b>Clyde Butcher</b>                      Ochopee                      10 am - 5 pm</p>	<p><b>26</b>  <b>Hour of Prayer</b>                      Copeland Baptist                      Mission, 7 pm</p>	<p><b>27</b>  <b>City Election</b>                      Community Center                      7 am - 7 pm  <b>City Council</b>                      City Hall, 5:30 pm</p>	<p><b>28</b>  <b>Ladies Coffee</b>                      Triad Seafood                      8 am  <b>Chamber of                      Commerce</b>                      Oyster House                      5:30 pm</p>	<p><b>29</b>  <b>Big Cypress                      ORV Meeting</b>                      ECity School                      3:30 pm</p>	<p><b>30</b>  <b>Big Cypress</b>                      deadline for                      comments</p>	<p><b>DEC 1</b>  <b>Turkey Shoot</b>                      see p.1  <b>Pet Vet</b>, see p.3  <b>Pancake Fly-In</b>                      10-12 am, see p.3  <b>Christmas Drama</b>                      6:30 pm, see p.3</p>
<p><b>2</b>  <b>Turkey Shoot</b>                      see p.1  <b>Hanging of the                      Green</b>, First                      Baptist, 6 pm                      see p.3</p>	<p><b>3</b>  <b>Hour of Prayer</b>                      Chokoloskee                      Church of God                      7 pm  <b>Museum Lunch                      &amp; Reception</b>                      see p.1</p>	<p><b>4</b>  <b>ESHP mtg</b>                      City Hall, 10 am  <b>City Council</b>                      City Hall, 5:30 pm</p>	<p><b>5</b>  <b>Ladies Coffee</b>                      Havana Cafe                      8 am  <b>Santa List</b>                      deadline, see p.3</p>	<p><b>6</b>  <b>Great Gators</b>                      School, 9:30  <b>Park 60<sup>th</sup></b>                      City Hall, 5 pm                      see p.1  <b>Lions Club</b>                      Depot, 7 pm</p>	<p><b>7</b>  <b>Christmas                      Tree                      Lighting</b>                      City Hall                      5:00 pm                      see p.3</p>	<p><b>8</b>  <b>Art in the                      Glades</b>                      10 am - 2 pm                      see p.1</p>
<p><i>new moon</i> ○ <b>9</b></p>	<p><b>10</b>  <b>Hour of Prayer</b>                      Holy Family                      Catholic Church                      7 pm  <b>OCFD Board</b>                      Fire Station, 7 pm</p>	<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>12</b>  <b>Ladies Coffee</b>                      Jan Brock's Home                      in Ochopee, 8 am  <b>Book Signing</b>                      Seafood Depot                      5:30 pm, see p.3</p>	<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b>14</b>  <b>Santa Visit</b>                      City Hall, 3 pm  <b>Lasagna</b>                      Community                      Church, 5-7 pm                      see p.3</p>	<p><b>15</b></p>
<p><b>16</b></p>	<p><b>17</b>  <b>Hour of Prayer</b>                      Everglades First                      Baptist Church                      7 pm</p>	<p><b>18</b>  <b>Reach Out</b>                      Comm. Church                      8:30 a.m.  <b>SAC meeting</b>                      School, 3 pm</p>	<p><b>19</b>  <b>Ladies Coffee</b>                      Everglades Scoop                      8 am  <b>Chamber of                      Commerce</b>                      Seafood Depot                      5:30 pm</p>	<p><b>20</b>  <b>Lions Club</b>                      Bd Mtg, 5:30 pm</p>	<p><b>21</b></p>	<p><b>22</b></p>
<p><b>23</b></p>	<p><i>full moon</i> ● <b>24</b>  <b>Candlelight                      Service</b>                      Everglades                      Community Church                      7 pm</p>	<p><b>25</b>  <u><b>Christmas</b></u>  </p>	<p><b>26</b>  <b>Ladies Coffee</b>                      Roadkill Cafe                      8 am</p>	<p><b>27</b></p>	<p><b>28</b></p>	<p><b>29</b>  <b>Pancake Fly-In</b>                      Airport, 10-12 am</p>

THRIFT SHOP: Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri, Sat, 11:00 am - 3:00 pm

SKATING RINK: Friday/Saturday, 7:00 - 10:00 pm

MUSEUM: Tues-Fri, 9 am to 5 pm; Sat, 9 am to 4 pm

SMALLWOOD STORE: daily 11 am to 5 pm

FOOD PANTRY: Sat, 8:30 to 10:30 am, Community Church

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: Wed, 5 pm, Community Church

CHRIST-CENTERED 12-STEP PROGRAM: Tuesday, 6:30 pm, Chokoloskee Church of God Annex Building

NATIONAL PARK GULF COAST VISITORS' CENTER: daily 9 am to 4 pm (boats 8:30 am to 4:00 pm)

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE INFORMATION CENTER (Carnestown): daily, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

SHERIFF AT CITY HALL: 11/30 (9-11am) 12/4 (3-5 pm) 12/5 (9-11 am) 12/7 (9-11 am) 12/10 (9-11 am) 12/12 (12-2 pm) 12/14 (9-11 am)

**POST OFFICE DEADLINES FOR CHRISTMAS MAIL:**

- 12/4 First Class to Central/South America
- 12/11 First Class to Europe/International
- 12/15 Parcel Post to USA
- 12/20 First Class to USA

**THRIFT SHOP OPEN 5 DAYS A WEEK**

The Reach Out Thrift Shop, behind the Fire Station, is now open on Thursday, as well as Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. Hours on all days are 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**BUSY, BUSY WEEKS ON THE CALENDAR!!!**

**Free Breakfast at the Airport**

Wings invites everyone for the first Pancake Fly-In this season on **Saturday, December 1**, at from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

**Christmas Drama**

Cooper City Church of God Drama Ministries return to Chokoloskee this year on **Saturday, December 1**, with "The Birth of the King" which will be performed at 6:30 p.m. at the Church of God. Entry is free.

**Catholic Mass**

Holy Family Catholic Church will hold **Sunday Mass** every week at 10:30 a.m. beginning on **December 2**.

**Hanging of the Green**

Everyone is invited to Everglades First Baptist Church on **Sunday, December 2**, at 6:00 p.m. for the "Hanging of the Green", a service that focuses on the birth of Christ. There will be a parade of flags by the children and songs from their choir, Christmas carols, and the decorating of the church. Refreshments follow.

**Santa Lists Deadline**

Drop Santa wish lists into City Hall by **Wednesday, December 5**. Blank forms are available there and at Right Choice Supermarket. Each parent is asked for three ideas, each under \$50. See Santa's Visit in next column.

**Tree Lighting**

The Christmas tree will be in front of City Hall this year and children are invited to help decorate it on **Friday, December 7**, beginning at 5:00 p.m. After the lights are switched on, there will be cocoa, hot cider, and cookies. Everyone is welcome! Bring a decoration.

**Book Signing**

The author of *Words on the Wilderness* will give a talk and sign books on **Thursday, December 12**, at 5:30 p.m. at the Seafood Depot. This new work is about the naming of places in our area and was published after Larry Perez spent over three years researching their history. The event is hosted by the Everglades Society for Historic Preservation but guests are welcome. Phone Marya at 695-2905.

**Santa's Visit**

Some of the items on the wish lists should arrive by special Santa messenger on **Friday, December 14**, in front of City Hall at 3:00 p.m. Make sure you're there!

**Lasagna Dinner**

Everglades Community Church is holding a dinner on **Friday, December 14**, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. The menu includes salad, drink, and dessert. Ticket are \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids under 10. Proceeds go toward tiling the floor in the Fellowship Hall. For info, phone Virginia on 695-2223.

**OCHOPEE FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT**

- 11/21/07: Unknown Medical Problem, Everglades Fire Station
- 11/22/07: Vehicle Accident, 66m I-75
- 11/23/07: Call Box Activation, 59m I-75
- 11-23/07: Chest Pains, Lee Cypress
- 11/23/07: Vehicle Accident, 54m I-75
- 11/23/07: Sick Person, Chokoloskee Island
- 11/23/07: Vehicle Accident, 53m I-75
- 11/24/07: Blood Pressure, Everglades Fire Station
- 11/24/07: Unconscious Person, Chokoloskee Island
- 11/24/07: Abdominal Injury, Ochopee
- 11/25/07: Vehicle Accident, 65m I-75
- 11/26/07: Unknown Medical Problem, 64m I-75
- 11/27/07: Injuries due to Motorcycle Accident, Everglades Fire Station

**MOBILE PET VET**

Dr Baker will be here on **Saturday, December 1** in **McLeod Park from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm** and in **Copeland from 2:00 to 4:00 pm**. She will also be here on **Sunday, December 2** from **9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** for surgery by appointment only. Phone 777-PETS.



**RESTAURANT NEWS**

Roadkill Cafe now has Indian Burgers every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. They also have daily specials on the weekend.

You can now order the new Board Game "Evergladesopoly" on line at [www.reachouteverglades.com](http://www.reachouteverglades.com). There are also paper order forms in the Thrift Shop if you would rather pay by check or cash.

**TIDES FOR BARRON RIVER**

INFORMATION FROM <http://TIDESANDCURRENTS.NOAA.GOV>

11/30/2007	Fri	01:31AM	0.8	L	06:18AM	2.6	H	02:20PM	0.2	L	08:11PM	2.4	H
12/01/2007	Sat	02:53AM	0.7	L	07:41AM	2.4	H	03:20PM	0.3	L	08:54PM	2.4	H
12/02/2007	Sun	04:11AM	0.6	L	09:03AM	2.2	H	04:18PM	0.5	L	09:35PM	2.5	H
12/03/2007	Mon	05:15AM	0.4	L	10:27AM	2.2	H	05:11PM	0.6	L	10:14PM	2.5	H
12/04/2007	Tue	06:07AM	0.3	L	11:44AM	2.2	H	06:00PM	0.7	L	10:51PM	2.6	H
12/05/2007	Wed	06:52AM	0.1	L	12:42PM	2.2	H	06:44PM	0.8	L	11:25PM	2.7	H
12/06/2007	Thu	07:33AM	0.0	L	01:24PM	2.3	H	07:26PM	0.8	L	11:59PM	2.8	H
12/07/2007	Fri	08:12AM	-0.1	L	01:59PM	2.3	H	08:04PM	0.9	L			
12/08/2007	Sat	12:30AM	2.9	H	08:50AM	-0.2	L	02:33PM	2.3	H	08:39PM	0.9	L
12/09/2007	Sun	12:59AM	2.9	H	09:27AM	-0.3	L	03:10PM	2.3	H	09:12PM	0.9	L
12/10/2007	Mon	01:27AM	2.9	H	10:05AM	-0.3	L	03:50PM	2.3	H	09:45PM	0.9	L
12/11/2007	Tue	01:54AM	3.0	H	10:42AM	-0.3	L	04:33PM	2.3	H	10:19PM	0.9	L
12/12/2007	Wed	02:23AM	2.9	H	11:21AM	-0.3	L	05:19PM	2.3	H	10:57PM	0.8	L
12/13/2007	Thu	02:59AM	2.8	H	12:00PM	-0.2	L	06:03PM	2.3	H	11:43PM	0.8	L
12/14/2007	Fri	03:43AM	2.7	H	12:42PM	-0.1	L	06:46PM	2.4	H			

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# SCHOOL NEWS

phone: 377-9800 or 695-2561

website: www.collier.k12.fl.us/evg

## IMPORTANT DATES

<b>Fri, Nov 30:</b>	<b>Report Cards</b>
<b>Fri, Nov 30:</b>	<b>Girls' Basketball, 5:00 pm</b>
<b>Fri, Nov 30:</b>	<b>Boys' Basketball, 6:30 pm</b>
<b>Mon, Dec 3:</b>	<b>Girls' Basketball, 4:00 pm</b>
<b>Mon, Dec 3:</b>	<b>Boys' Basketball, 5:30 pm</b>
<b>Tues, Dec 4:</b>	<b>Girls' Basketball, 5:00 pm</b>
<b>Thurs, Dec 6:</b>	<b>Great Gators, 9:30 pm</b>
<b>Tues, Dec 11:</b>	<b>Girls' Basketball, 5:00 pm</b>
<b>Tues, Dec 11:</b>	<b>Boys' Basketball, 6:30 pm</b>
<b>Thurs, Dec 13:</b>	<b>Boy's Basketball, 5:00 pm</b>



### From Savannah's Eyes

I hope everyone had a nice Thanksgiving. And now on to the next holiday, Christmas, which to me is the best holiday of all because it is all about giving and receiving. Also, it is Jesus' birthday so my class did a program called "Adopt-a-Soldier". We all put something in the box for the soldiers out in Iraq and at boot camps and everywhere else in the world. We got a certificate from the Sheriff's office for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade and for helping a soldier. We are all proud of ourselves for helping a soldier get what he or she needs. We are thankful for our soldiers for fighting to protect our country. They work many long hours to help save our country. If I had one wish it would be that the war was over and the soldiers would come home safe to their children and families. Wow, what a wonderful Christmas that would be! Joy to the World, we would sing.

*Savannah Oglesby is a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student at Everglades City and a regular contributor to this paper.*



*Thanks to Trina Mitchell for this photo of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade posing for the certificate described in Savannah's article.*

## NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

November 19, 2007

Everglades City School has been notified by the City of Everglades that the City water has passed inspection and is safe to drink.

Therefore, we will resume the use of campus drinking fountains rather than bottled water. Please alert your children that bottled water will no longer be furnished for the classrooms. **Bottled water only** brought from home in clear containers is acceptable, but PowerAde, Gatorade, Propel or sodas will not be permitted in the classrooms.

Thank you for your cooperation,  
*Bobby Jones*

**Media Center:** The Media Center is open daily from 8:00 a.m. until 3:15 p.m. You are welcome to come into the media Center during these hours to check out books, use the computers, read, research, or simply browse the collection, and peruse free newspapers. The Media Center is open for reading and research during the middle school and high school lunch. You may **not** bring food or drink into the Media Center. Students coming from a class must have a pass signed by a teacher stating the purpose for coming here. This pass must be presented to a library staff member. Parents are welcome to use the Media Center and check out books for three weeks.



**Bus Privileges:** Bus transportation is a service provided to students. Riding the bus is a privilege that may be withdrawn if a student's behavior warrants such action. Improper conduct on the school bus presents a safety hazard and will not be tolerated.



**The articles above are a sample from the excellent weekly Everglades City School Newsletter. Our thanks to Mrs Gilmore for keeping us informed.**

-----

SAC, the School Advisory Committee, will meet on **Tuesday, December 18**, after school at 3:00 p.m. All parents, teachers, and interested citizens are encouraged to attend. New officers were elected at the November 27 SAC meeting. Congratulations to Pam Drake, Chairperson; Dana Snider, Vice-Chair, and Betty Oglesby, Secretary. A committee chaired by Vicky Wells was appointed to work on the selection of new uniforms for next year. Please call Vicky at 695-2660 if you would like to participate.

-----

**The Kids' Activity, Club, which meets on Thursday after school, needs volunteers! There are over 25 youngsters and only a few adults to help them. If you can spare the time between 2:45 and 4:00 p.m., phone Pam Drake on 695-2843.**

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## SHOP LOCAL FOR HOLIDAYS GIFTS!



The **Ivey House** gift shop has books, prints & photos, and clothing, all with an emphasis on the outdoors.

**Everglades City Cycle**, behind Roadkill Cafe, has everything that a bike aficionado could want.

**WinCar** offers such a wide choice there is always something for the people on your list, from fishing tackle to household knick-knacks. There is a huge selection of books of Florida interest plus lots of cards and wrapping paper.

**BP Gator Express** has tourist gifts and Santa might find some cute stuffed toys here.

The **Thrift Shop** has the Reach Out cookbook, holiday cards, and order forms for the new board game. You might also find just what you want among the used books and other items, some of which are almost like new. There are also some attractive Christmas decorations at good prices!

Stop in at **City Hall** to order commemorative bricks for your friends and family. You won't get bricks to wrap up but will receive a greeting card that you can send.

**Right Choice Supermarket** has T-shirts and hats as well as practical items like baby supplies and soaps.

**Spa-Fari** has an array of lotions, potions, aromatic oils, and body care products in their gift shop. They also offer gift certificates for massage and other treatments, an ultimate indulgence for the recipient.

**Cocoplum** is an imaginative gift shops in town. Rebecca has collected some interesting items for all ages, including quite a few things for toddlers and kiddies. She also has local artworks for sale. Look for the lavender sign in the median to advertise that she is open.

The **Museum of the Everglades** has a good selection of local books, prints, cards, and unique pillows made from Seafood Festival T-shirts.

Another fascinating gift shop is **Sea Gull Studios** operated by Ms Klotz. Besides the original paintings of her parents, she has a huge collection of shells, jewelry, wind chimes, and knick-knacks.

**Vicky Wells' Gallery** carries original paintings and prints by local artists.

The **National Park Visitor Center** sells videos and books about our natural surroundings.

**Glades Haven** has fishing tackle and offers a Rod & Reel Mending service. There is also a selection of wines and spirits, a welcome gift during the holiday season.

On Chokoloskee, visit **Havana Café** for local art works and the **Smallwood Store** for books and Seminole clothing. Kenny Brown's **Outdoor Resorts Marina** has fishing tackle for your outdoor enthusiast. **Parkway** also sells fishing requisites.

Heading out of town, stop at the **Chamber of Commerce Welcome Center** for books, T-shirts, and tourist items.

The **Oasis Visitor Center** in Big Cypress Preserve sells books and videos. A few miles further east, **Clyde Butcher's Big Cypress Gallery** has his photos, cards, books, and 2008 calendar.

All the **boat tour** companies have gift shops catering to tourists. Many have books of local interest, T-shirts, hats, and little unusual items. Visit **Totch's Island Tours**, **Everglades National Park Boat Tours**, **Ervin Stokes**, **Doug's**, **Speedy Johnson**, and

**Wooten's**. And, **Shealy's Skunk Ape** videos could be an unusual gift.

Most **restaurants** will sell gift certificates that you can give as a special treat to the people on your list.

Don't forget our **stone crab** fish houses. What nicer gift than a bag of claws, straight from the source. But, you would be wise to order in advance. Sources are **City Seafood**, **Grimms**, and **Triad**.

Or, treat your loved ones to a day out with one of our local **Fishing Guides** or **Kayak/Canoe** operators.

Finally, give a subscription to the **Rapper**. We will send a greeting card with the first issue to say it is a gift from you.

At **Art-in-the-Glades** on **Saturday, December 8**, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. you'll be able to buy crafts and gift items from independent vendors, many of whom are not mentioned in this list because they are crafters who work on a small scale or artists who do not have their own galleries here.



**Mari and Nick Varallo** were among the 27 members of the Chamber who attended the general membership meeting hosted by Bob Miller at the Oyster House. The next meeting will be **Wednesday, December 19**, at 5:30 pm, at the Seafood Depot when new Board Members for 2008 will be elected. Everyone is encouraged to attend. If you would like to join, phone Winnie at 695-3172.

# Panther Crossing

By Avery Sumner

**It was exactly seven years ago, the autumn of 2000, that I discovered this little island made of shells. It's one of those stories filled with magic like the kind lovers are fond of telling regarding their first meeting.**

I drove over from the Florida Keys with an ex-boyfriend, across the Tamiami Trail, passed endless cypress trees, wide open saw grass landscapes; and finally into the river-banked town of Everglades City, where Washintonia Palms towered and swayed above the old Collier-built cottages and smallish stilted homes awaiting over-zealous high tides.

Even further, across the land bridge over to Chokoloskee Island we visited the Smallwood Museum, a reddish wooden building situated over the water that once was the area's trading post.

Jutting out into Everglades National Park, Chokoloskee is surrounded by undisturbed wilderness. No traffic sounds at all, just bird quiet and zephyr.

At Smallwood's I felt the breezes move through the open-aired structure and heard the gentle mangrove filtered sea-water lapping the dock pilings below.

I want to live here, I said. It was hard not to want it, to possess the natural quiet I'd discovered. And so I looked at houses, jobs and stumbled on a historic storefront called JT's for sale. When the realtor showed me the ramshackle building I ignored the dilapidation, instead listening intently to the history.

But what sealed JT's fate as my future was a short ride down Janes Scenic road in the neighboring Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve. I can't remember exactly why we had time to kill, but it was dusk and we had just enough time to take a drive down the preserve's dirt road.

I remember so well how touching the wilderness of that evening was. We rode slowly, with the windows open, taking in the sweet water smell and the sounds of the enclosing cypress swamp. Then, ahead in the distance a large tawny cat with a long tale crouched low and moved across our path. It's a sight I had never seen before in all my Florida native life. A sight I never saw again in all the time that I have lived here since. Seven years ago, my youth time ago.

I took that Florida Panther as a sign that I was meant to be here. So I figured a way to buy a termite infested storefront on Chokoloskee. I was 25 years old at the time, desirous and determined. Thus I bought my piece of this land and doggedly worked to pay my mortgage, to own it and the life I'd bought.

With the help of my boyfriend we slowly and tirelessly restored the building and built a café business. The boyfriend eventually left and I continued on, plugging away at what we built – a commercial kitchen, a store, a business, so much.

But what I'd wanted, what that panther meant to me. That life, I never got. And I became haunted by images of panthers in my distant dreams.

While living and working here I've taken my down time to the woods as often as I can. I've heard the growl of a big cat, seen fresh tracks, even smelled feline in the air. But I've been so busy building, possessing my piece of this wild life, that I have not again glimpsed a tawny shadow.

I've known something was not quite right. This business, this project, has not always felt good. I've changed things and simplified, hoping that somehow the original draw of this place would come back to me. Sometimes I wonder if I saw a panther that day at all, or was it just an image I'd made up, created to fuel my need to seize a part of this landscape.

Regardless of what it was, I have finally let it go. Last month I sold the business I built with my youth and dreams. I sold my historic storefront for less than I spent on it, less in dollars and far less in body and soul.

What I eventually understood was that my purchase did not bring me the quiet, still life I'd sensed on that dirt road. It had not brought a roaming panther freedom, but rather a domestic collar.

I knew what I had to do, and so put my place up for sale at a very low price. It wasn't until after a contract was drawn that I fully grasped what I was doing. Emotions I never expected came up, making me work through doubts and fears, to arrive at a very whole acceptance of my decision to pass the building on. It was then that I began to sense the world differently.

I found myself driving across the state over one of those roads not shown on most maps, feeling new, open. When off to the right a tan animal bounded down from somewhere high, then craftily crept as cats do, into the sawgrassy oak hammock, and disappeared as quickly as she'd surfaced.

I wept. For again my fate had appeared.

I don't know if the panther felt my renewed freedom and showed herself in welcome, or if my change of mind simply allowed me to see her large beautifulness that had been visible all along.

And now I don't know if either cat was really there. I honestly don't know, from here at my computer desk far from the woods. But the images are vivid to me. Real or imagined, I am left with the lesson that Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings spoke of in her memoir *Cross Creek*.

Rawlings wrote, "It seems to me that the earth may be borrowed but not bought. It may be used, but not owned. It gives itself in response to love and tending, offers its seasonal flowering and fruiting. But we are tenants and not possessors, lovers and not masters."

It was only in letting go of my desire to have this landscape, that it again became available to me in its entirety.

Many neighbors and customers have asked me if it was sad to sell the place that was my identity for so long. They seem worried for me. But please, rest easy. Believe me when I say this tenant life suits me like a natural skin. I am more fluid now. Like the birds, the tide and the elusive she cats.

**Avery Sumner was the owner of Big House Coffee & Gumbo Limbo Gallery (also known as JT's Grill & Gallery) in Chokoloskee. Although she has moved from the area to concentrate on writing and sailing, she will continue to submit articles to the Rapper.**







## LOCAL HISTORY

The old Everglades Inn on Broadway is no more. It perished in a fire on May 11, 1987. First-responder firefighter Tommy Mitchell told the *Rapper* that it was about 5:00 a.m. when he got the call. His first concern was for the 20 people who lived on the upper floors. As it turned out, many of the lodgers were crabbers or other workers who had left earlier. It was 5 or 10 minutes before the first volunteer arrived and another 15 minutes before the Ochopee fire truck arrived. The fire was put out but the huge cypress posts in the foundation kept smoldering for about three weeks and all the firefighters could do was flood the ground, which continued to bubble as the logs burnt.

Many local people remember the Sundries, WinCar, and Mama Dot's. Before that, until the Collier Corporation left town in the early 1960s, it was a thriving social hub with a grand restaurant and Manhattan Mercantile department store on the ground floor.

*This picture is one of the collection by Jerry Vallez on loan by ESHP to the Museum for the month of December (see page 1).*

## GOODLAND'S PAST TALK & WALK

There are two days of programs about Goodland archeology. On **Tuesday, December 4**, archeologist Dr. Robert Carr talks at 7:00 p.m. at Mackle Park Civic Auditorium on Marco Island. The next day, **Wednesday, December 5**, he leads a walking tour of Goodland to explore the historic and pre-historic sites in Goodland. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at Stan's Restaurant. For more info, phone Betsy, (239) 394-6917.



## Recipe for Good Eating

### Calamandin Vinaigrette by Denise Rousseau



1 Tablespoon calamandin marmalade      1 teaspoon Roses Lime Juice  
2 Tablespoon white wine vinegar      ½ cup extra virgin olive oil

This is particularly nice on a salad made with Boston lettuce, thinly sliced red onions (soak them in water for an hour to cut down the heat), and a lightly veined blue cheese (such as cambrazola) or feta.



## Off the Shelf - Book Review

by Marya Repko

### "The Ghost Orchid Ghost and Other Tales from the Swamp"

The English indulge in spooky stories at Christmas, maybe to dilute the heaviness of too much food and tinsel. Here's a little book full of just the antidote to sugariness that one needs – and it's set in Florida.

Author Doug Alderson has collected his yarns about ghostly encounters in a paperback published recently by Pineapple Press. The title reflects the local nature of the supernatural events. He writes "I gazed into the orchid's center at what appeared to be a face ... a dancing fairy or a queen on the throne, the queen of Fakahatchee ... suspended in air, like an apparition."

The author has been telling these tales to groups of all ages so it's an appropriate family read at "dark-thirty" time when weird things happen. However, he's a practical man with cautionary tips about survival in the swamp. At the end of each piece there are a few paragraphs of historical and environmental background to put the subject and location into context. And, if your appetite isn't sated, there's a good list of further reading about haunting folklore.

## Angel of the Swamp

by Patty Huff



During the holidays we are reminded of all the Angels in our area who do little things every day to make life simpler and happier for others. This month's Angel is someone who is always there, always available, to be of service to his neighbors and community. Whenever he is called upon to help with the booths at the Seafood Festival, to pick up food from Collier Harvest, take a neighbor to a doctor's appointment or get a prescription, Jim Thomas is there. Chris Ammerman of Reach Out says that she can always rely upon Jim to help. He is dependable when needed to take a community member shopping or to shop for Reach Out. Chris says "he's just wonderful at helping." Jim, with his wife Winnie, was a seasonal resident beginning in 1994 when they discovered how much they loved this area. They purchased their home in Chokoloskee in 2001 and moved to the Everglades full time in 2004 after Jim retired from his automobile dealership. Winnie is the manager at the Welcome Center for the Everglades Area Chamber of Commerce, and when Jim is not assisting others, he loves to watch football and enjoy his hobbies of fishing, hunting and spending time with their grandchildren in Pennsylvania and Atlanta. Jim and Winnie celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary last January! We are all fortunate that they decided to retire to our area and wish to express our appreciation to Jim for all the volunteer work that he does to help others in this community. A well deserved Angel of our Swamp!



## A Czech Pizza Party

by Sue Evans

Our first long-term (seven months) mission project was in 1994 to the beautiful city of Prague, Czech Republic. The European Baptist Union was renovating, updating and, in some cases, rebuilding four 250 year-old buildings to house the International Baptist Theological Seminary. What an amazing history those buildings have! At the Seminary, people from all over the world would be trained to serve as pastors, teachers, missionaries, and workers in other church-related positions.

Jasper's job was to supervise the volunteer construction teams who came from the USA as well as several foreign countries. My jobs ran from working in the kitchen to helping in the bookstore and business office and, on a second seven months term there in 1995 as Jasper continued to supervise the construction, I served as Business Administrator of the Seminary.

There were four other Americans on the project and one Saturday night we decided it sure would be nice to have an American-style pizza party – meaning home-delivery to our apartment. One of the young men, a fellow volunteer from Texas, had been studying the Czech language and felt certain he could handle a simple task like ordering pizza. Wrong!!!!

We didn't have a phone in the apartment and had to go to the Seminary gatehouse to use one. I stood beside him as he attempted to order and give our address. His Texas accent did not translate well into a language that seems to use the letters "y" and "z" more than any others and scatter "n", "b", and "t" in the most unexpected places. And, the numbers associated with our address were even more difficult. As he hung up the phone, we had serious doubts we would ever see the pizzas and, if we did, how much of our order was understood by the Czech order-taker? What would those pizzas have on them? And, how much was it going to cost???

We returned to our apartment and with much laughter told the others of our English/Czech communications experience; letting them know we may or may not have pizza for supper. But, would you believe about 45 minutes later the pizzas were delivered right to our door and were delicious??!! What a great party we had!

In the Bible, in the second chapter of Acts, a miracle of communication occurs. Joe and I decided this was another communications opportunity for the Lord to work a miracle. He saw our need for a taste of home, took pity upon us and Joe's attempt to speak the language of the Czechs, and graciously worked a miracle as only God can do.

Thanks be to God for all His blessings ... big and small ... at home and abroad!

## Letter to the Editor

I received 97 votes from the 208 people who voted in this week's election. Although I did not win a seat on the city council, I am humbly gratified to have received a vote from nearly 1 out of every 2 voters. I thank all who voted for me, and all who helped to spread the word of my candidacy. The election generated a lot of excitement, and there was a real improvement in the voter turnout. Congratulations to all who took the time to vote!

*Elaine Middelstaedt*

## Symposia on Conservation and Restoration in Southwest Florida

Ecological restoration and conservation will be the topics of two major meetings occurring Dec. 6 and 7<sup>th</sup> at the Conservancy of Southwest Florida in Naples. The Mark A. Benedict Symposium on Science, Conservation, and Restoration of Southwestern Florida Ecosystems will occur Thursday December 6 and the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Exotic Species Workshop will follow the next day.

Research and natural resources management are of critical importance to conserving and restoring the ecosystems of southwestern Florida and to minimizing the impacts of invasive species. During these two days of meetings, gains and losses in terms of environmental protection and restoration will be synthesized with currently on-going projects to produce recommendations for future actions by researchers and natural resource managers. See [www.fws.gov/floridapanther/exotics/exotics\\_index.html](http://www.fws.gov/floridapanther/exotics/exotics_index.html).

The Exotic Species Workshop will focus on insect and plant species that threaten native habitats. The speakers will cover topics from Melaleuca, Brazilian Pepper and online databases of invasive plant tracking maps, to important invasive insects to be aware of in natural and agricultural areas. Some insects are being introduced to control plants or other insects like fire ants, such as the Mexican Bromeliad Weevil, while others need to be stopped because they threaten to kill or disease our native trees.

## Gardening Tip

Before you start digging around without gloves, scrape your fingernails on a bar of soap. You'll stop the soil getting under your nails and find it much easier to clean your hands later.



## EARLY BIRDS CATCH THE FESTIVAL

The Rookery Bay Birding Festival takes place in 2008 on January 18-20 but registration is already open for this popular event. The cost for the three days is \$20 for adults but free for children under 12. For more info or to secure your place, see [www.rookerybay.org](http://www.rookerybay.org) or phone them at 417-6310.



## Fishing Report

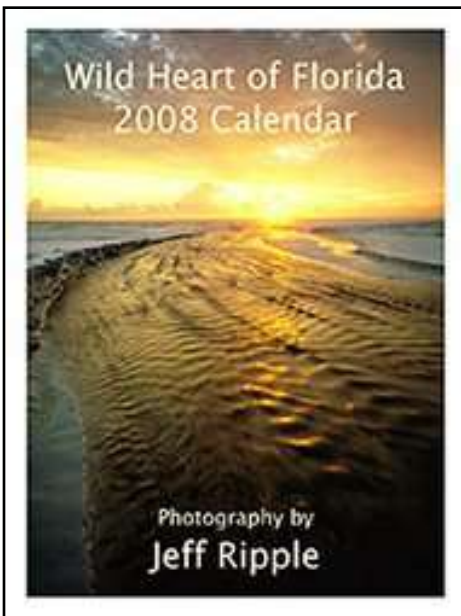
by Bill Lindsay

As water temperatures drop into the low 70°s Cobia, Mackerel, Jack, and Pompano start to show up. That's not to say that many of us don't still chase Tarpon, Snook, and Redfish. When running from one spot to another, look for Pompano "skipping" across your boat wake. I stop and cast a small jig with little or no leader. Cobia can be found on the shallow wrecks. Most people use live bait but rubber eels or even a jig with a whole squid will work. Sheepshead will move into shallow water and can be taken on fresh shrimp or fiddler crabs. For the second month in a row, Captain Tim Brady has told me that cut mullet or ladyfish has out-fished live bait. Captain Don Cochran reports large schools of big Jacks and lots of Spanish Mackerel. Captain Herb Kehoe had a great day of Pompano fishing on the shallow wrecks and some nice Redfishing on the oyster bars.

*Capt. Bill Lindsay lives in Chokoloskee and has been fishing in the Everglades National Park for 27 years. In 1992 he was Master Angler of the MET Tournament.*

## GIFT IDEA FROM FWC

Five specialty Florida license plates are offered by the agency as suitable presents that will also help conserve our wildlife. Besides the large-mouth bass shown here, there are designs with a panther, black bear, manatee, or turtle. Gift certificates for them can be purchased at our local tax office (in the Library at City Hall) and then used to upgrade a tag during regular registration. For more info, see the FWC website [www.myfwc.com](http://www.myfwc.com) or phone 850-410-5291.



## Florida Calendar

Photographer Jeff Ripple has announced that his calendar for 2008 is available. The cost is \$35 but some of the profits benefit conservation organizations. To order copies of the calendar or his photos, see his website [www.jeffripple.com](http://www.jeffripple.com).

## MEMORIES

“Dear Baby” by Barbara Hoffman Daniels

I think one of the most priceless experiences I ever had out here in my “Glades Heaven” was the little fawn that was learning. He appeared one day in my back yard with three full-grown doe deer and looked to be about three weeks old.

It was a beautiful fall day, early morning and the deer were frisky and playful. They would graze a few minutes and then cavort like acrobats, jumping high, twisting their bodies and pitching their heads. Then all of a sudden they started a graceful race around a clump of Myrtle bush and back to the grazing field. The little fawn had participated to a small extent in the cavorting but this thing of racing sway back, head high, flag raised and unbelievably beautiful and graceful was something new to him and as he watched his elders race around the bushes, you could see he knew they expected him to try and so – he did! He lowered his head like a bull, back arched, flag lowered, and took off around those bushes and carried that stance the whole way through (like a bull after a matador). He continued that way about two rounds and stopping long enough for approval from his elders. He must have received a message to try harder, though. All of a sudden he lifted his head high, his flag in the air, his back arched beautifully, legs extended, and made that circuit twice just as gracefully as his elders.

What can I say. All children learn from their elders. I've had as many as 5 deer at a time in my yard out here because in my thirty-one years I have discouraged hunting near my home.

*Barbara Hoffman Daniels grew up in Everglades City. She lived for over thirty years in the Big Cypress where she had the experience of seeing what our animals are really like.*

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### The MULLET RAPPER WHAT's Happening in the Everglades City Area

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We strive to present the facts accurately without political bias or personal opinion.

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