



The MULLET RAPPER

TIDE TABLE &
RESTAURANTS
PAGE 11

What's Happening in the Everglades & 10,000 Islands
DECEMBER 30, 2017 - JANUARY 12, 2018
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!



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P O Box 134, Everglades City, FL, 34139

Volume X • Issue # 302



Renovations Complete! Everglades Museum Reopens for Visitors

The reopening of the Everglades Museum marks the true rebirth of our area after “the big one” more commonly known as Hurricane Irma. It was touch and go for a few days...but the area, and our residents, proved far “tougher” than any silly hurricane or storm surge (OK, not so silly, but...).

Most of our restaurants are in operation and our hotels have reopened too. In fact, you may not even suspect a hurricane went through the area if you didn't already know what happened here.

Yes, there are still some issues, but things are looking almost normal around these parts. What's more, the things we are most famous for, fishing and stone crabs, are as good as or better than ever, so we are classifying Irma as a mere “setback” albeit a very expensive one.

Other Key Re-Openings

Everglades National Park Gulf Coast center has also officially reopened in temporary quarters. A new facility was actually under discussion and Irma has moved that schedule up! The temporary welcome center and boat tours will function as normal for the foreseeable future.

Our grocery store, one convenience store and most restaurants are all cooking. Our post offices are either open (Chokoloskee) or set to open any day now (Everglades City). Everglades Motel has rooms open now too. Captain's Table and River Wilderness have stayed open all along.

City Hall is undergoing renovations and will be ready sometime before spring. For now, the temporary building behind the community center (which is in the midst of renovations) will serve as City Hall.

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FEATURE: WHALE BEACHING UPDATE, P. 8

Rep. Diaz-Balart Fights for and Secures Additional Housing and Infrastructure Funding to Address Hurricane Recovery

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart (FL-25), Chairman of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations Subcommittee, issued the following statement after additional supplemental disaster relief was introduced. Diaz-Balart has been a strong advocate for disaster relief funding in response to the 2017 Hurricane Season and the California wildfires. As Chair of the THUD appropriations Subcommittee, he has hosted several roundtables and briefings on disaster relief programs in the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, including the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program.

“Immediate disaster assistance is the crucial first-step in helping communities recover after natural disasters. However, additional assistance is required to support the long-term recovery efforts of states and localities. I have seen firsthand the damage areas like Everglades City, Chokoloskee, and Immokalee have suffered as a result of Hurricane Irma, and they will need significant resources to fully recover. Funding from programs like CDBG-DR are essential to cover the unmet needs the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Small Business Administration (SBA) were not able to address. **Within this account is a new mitigation set-aside that will help prepare our communities for future natural disasters, of which Florida will receive over \$200 million.** Resilient construction is a key step to preparing our homes for natural disasters, and this mitigation investment is important to minimizing expenses in the future. I am grateful for the opportunity to be able to assist Florida and our country as our hometowns rebuild from the storms, and we must ensure we provide them with the adequate resources they deserve.”

As Chairman of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee, Diaz-Balart was able to secure the following for this supplemental funding:

- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA): Provides FAA with a total of **\$114.6 million** for facilities damaged by hurricanes in 2017, and for operational expenses.
- Federal Highway Administration-Emergency Relief Program: **\$1.37 billion** to address infrastructure damage from the 2017 hurricane season.
- Federal Transit Administration-Public Transportation Emergency Relief Program: Provides **\$269 million** for transit systems affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, to restore critical transit assets such as buses and shelters, ferry terminals, and rail systems stations.
- Community Development Block Grants-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR): Provides **\$26.1 billion** for CDBG-DR to meet the full commitment in this program to address unmet housing, business and infrastructure needs for communities devastated by disasters in 2017, including Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. **\$12.5 billion is allocated to address mitigation projects to help communities protect against future natural disasters, and to protect the taxpayer from recurring costs of rebuilding after storms.**


Also included in the legislation are the following items that will benefit Floridians and Americans across the country and in Puerto Rico that are still recovering from the 2017 Hurricane Season and recent wildfires in California:

- \$2.6 billion** for agriculture assistance to support Florida's agriculture industry, including the citrus industry that has an estimated **\$760 million in damages alone.**
- \$2.9 billion** to assist schools in Florida and elsewhere that accepted students from Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane Maria.
- \$12.1 billion** for repairs to existing Army Corps of Engineers projects that were damaged during the storm, including those projects in Everglades National Park.
- \$1.66 billion** to support the Small Business Administration's disaster loan program, allowing the agency to provide up to \$12.2 billion in disaster loans.
- \$616.4 million** for repairs, clean-up, and recovery at national parks such as Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks.

Thank you to Rep. Diaz-Balart for fighting for the citizens affected by Hurricane Irma and for visiting the Everglades area residents after the storm so you could see the damage for yourself. We all appreciate your dedication!

If you have news, photos, announcements, or articles ... email us at: mulletrapper@gmail.com or call us at: 954-662-7003.

DECEMBER 30, 2017 – JANUARY 20, 2018

<u>SUN</u>	<u>MON</u>	<u>TUES</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THURS</u>	<u>FRI</u>	<u>SAT</u>
31 New Year's Eve!!! 	JAN.1, 2018 full moon ○ Happy New Year!	2 City Council Mtg 7:00 pm, City Hall	3 Ladies Coffee Island Café, 8 am	4	5	6
7	8 ESHP Meeting 8:30 am	9 FME Board Mtg ,4 pm-Patty Huff's House	10 Ladies Coffee City Seafood, 8 am	11	12	JAN 13 RAPPER Movie Night, Venue TBD Plant Sale 9am-1pm
14 Bike Ride, see p. 3 & 10	15	16 new moon ● Dental Bus, see p. 3	17 Ladies Coffee Havana Café, 8 am	18 Book Club, see p. 3	19	20 Art-in-Glades Community Cleanup II Pancake Fly-in, see p.3
21	22	23	24 Ladies Coffee Island Café 8 am	25	26	JAN 27 RAPPER
28	29	30	31 Ladies Coffee City Seafood 8 am	February 1	2	3

February 9-11: Seafood Festival

February 20-26: MSD Festival

March 24: Calusa Days

THRIFT SHOP: Closed until further notice
 LIONS CLUB: 2nd Thursday of month, 6 pm
 DR DEMARTINO: Marco Island office information on p.3.
 DR MARTIN: Call for appointment: 813-787-9738
 AA: Wed., 5:00 pm, temporary City Hall bldg.
 MUSEUM: Open Monday-Saturday, 9 am to 4 pm. 239-695-0008
 CARNESTOWN Recycle and Trash: 2nd Saturday, 9 am to 3:30 pm

SKATING RINK: Closed until further notice
 REACH OUT: 3rd Tuesday, 9:30 am, location TBA
 LITTLE GATOR CLINIC: Not seeing patients at this time
 VETERANS SUPPORT: 2nd & 4th Wed. of month, noon—2 pm
 COMMUNITY CHURCH FOOD PANTRY: See p. 3
 SMALLWOOD STORE: 10 am to 5 pm
 PANCAKE FLY-IN: 1/20, 2/17, 3/17, 4/21 at 10 to 12, E-City Airport

SHERIFF AT CITY HALL: Tuesdays, 2 to 5 pm
 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: Mon–Thurs (9 am to 2 pm); Fri-Sat (9 am to 3 pm)
 COLLIER COUNTY: 239-252-8999

POST OFFICE PHONE NUMBERS & HOURS: TEMPORARY HOURS DURING REMODELING

Everglades City (239) 695-2174 (no phone now)	Mon-Sat: 10 am to 3 pm-Truck in circle by City Hall
Chokoloskee (239) 695-4468	Mon-Sat: 10 am to 3 pm– PO is reopened. Stamps, mail, no weighing.
Ochopee (239) 695-2099	Mon-Fri: 8 am to 10 am, noon to 4 pm; Sat: 10 am to 11:30 am

SHERIFF: 239-252-9300 CITY HALL: 239-695-3781 PUBLIC LIBRARY: 239-695-2511 AIRPORT: 239-695-2778
 FAKAHATCHEE: 239-695-4593 BIG CYPRESS: 239-695-2000 EVG NATIONAL PARK: 239-695-3311
 CURBSIDE TRASH PICKUP (FRIDGES, WASHING MACHINES, TVs): 239-252-2380, CALL TUESDAY FOR THURSDAY PICKUP

What's Happening

In and Around Town



COME RIDE WITH US! January 14th

Join our group as we cycle through the beautiful Everglades and enjoy the nature and comradery of our fellow riders.

For more information, please email info@evergladesrogg.org or call Patty at: 239-695-2397. You can also review the schedule online at www.evergladesrogg.org/events.

January 14 – Everglades City / Chokoloskee (on-road). Meet at McLeod Park, Everglades City

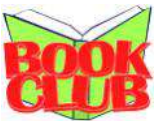
February 11 – Loop Road in the Big Cypress & ENP (off-road). Meet at west end of Loop Road

March 11 – Ave Maria (on-road). Meet at McLeod Park, Everglades City

April 8 – Bear Island in the Big Cypress (off-road). Meet at Bear Island (end of Turner River Road)



Book-of-the-Month Club January 18th, 9:30 am



Join us as our annual book club meets each month at 9:30 a.m. to discuss an interesting title. Below is our winter schedule. For more details, contact Patty Huff at: 239-695-2397.

Jan. 18: Granny D's Walk Across America at Age 90, hosted by Dianna Pollock

Feb. 15: The Orphan Train, hostess to be announced

Mar. 15: A Girl Named Tommie, author will attend and Elaine Middelstaedt will lead discussion

Apr. 19: The Tale of Edgar Sawtelle, Hostess Diann Lock, 498 Collier Ave., phone: 812-361-7402

PANCAKE FLY-IN BREAKFAST January 20th, 10 am to noon



The pancake fly-in is back! Please join us each month to meet and enjoy a free pancake breakfast with sausage and coffee. Of course, fly-ins are encouraged and we welcome walk-ins as well! Fly-in dates are: 1/20, 2/17, 3/17 and 4/21. We hope to see you there!

FOOD BANK OPEN! Wednesdays 11 am to 1 pm

The Harry Chapin Food Bank is resuming weekly food distribution in December every Wednesday from 10 AM to noon in the parking lot in front of River Wilderness Waterfront Villas, 210 Collier Avenue, across from the Marathon Service Station. This is a temporary arrangement until Jinkins Fellowship Hall at Community Church has been repaired.

EVERGLADES CITY SEAFOOD FESTIVAL, FEB 9-11

The annual Everglades City Seafood Festival will go on as planned and take place February 9, 10 & 11. The three days of fun will feature foods, carnival rides, arts & crafts and the (almost) famous collectible Budweiser mugs. Great country music will be performed by local artists and national headliners!

COMMUNITY SERVICES



DOCTOR'S CLINIC

Dr. Kirk DeMartino is seeing patients in his Marco Island Office. You may call his office to schedule an appointment to see him there: (239) 642-5552.



NATURAL MEDICINE

Dr. John Martin can see patients in E-City. Call to make an appointment: 813-787-9738.



~ ACCOUNTING SERVICES ~ MIKE "THE TAX GUY"

Local and professional, personal & business tax services in Everglades City. Call 239-595-4203 to set an appointment. Email: nfn19842@naples.net for more information.



THRIFT SHOP

Sorry...the thrift shop is currently closed for repairs! We are working hard to reopen as soon as possible! Thanks for your patience while we make repairs.



FREE DENTAL SCREENINGS ALL AGES– JAN. 16th 9 am to 4 pm

The Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida's Health & Smiles Mobil Dental Bus is scheduled to be in Everglades City on **January 16th** from 9 am to 4 pm, in the Fire Station parking lot, providing free dental health screenings. You can also schedule an appointment for cleanings, fillings, extractions and x-rays. For more information or to make an appointment call 239-986-7323.

A Message from Fire Chief Kingman Schuldt



The United States Fire Administration recently released the 2016 Firefighter Fatality report. Eighty-nine firefighters died while on duty in 2016, one less than the 2015

total of 90, and five fewer than 94 firefighter fatalities in 2014. 22 of these fatalities were part of inclusion criteria changes resulting from the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefit Act, a program administered by the U.S. Department of Justice to families of public safety officers killed in the line of duty, as well as those permanently disabled while on duty. When not including these fatalities for the purposes of trend analysis, there were 67 non-Hometown Hero firefighter fatalities in 2016, the second lowest annual total in recent history.



A Special Thank You to Our Firefighters

As grateful as we are to see the decrease in firefighter fatalities this does not diminish the sacrifices made by any firefighter while on duty, or sacrifices made by their family and peers. On average from 2004 to 2016 there were 102 firefighter fatalities annually in the U. S. Generally, the majority of firefighter fatalities result from heart attacks while engaging in fireground activities or soon after these periods of stress.

It takes a special kind of person to become a firefighter. They throw themselves into dangerous situations with little regard for their safety, work extended hours away from their families, and experience things that affect them both mentally and physically. Despite this, they continue to perform their duties without fanfare, protecting our communities.

As we go about our busy schedules this holiday season, please take time to thank all of our first responders; fire-rescue, EMS, and law enforcement, many who will be away from their families and loved ones during the special days ahead.

Happy Holidays to All!

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11	S	I	E	V	E	12	O	Z	O	N	E								
13	I	S	L	A	M	14	P	A	W	N	S								
				15	E	16	M	I	L										
17	A	18	L	P	I	N	E	21	E	M	M	24	Y						
25	S	A	U	D	I	A	R	A	B	I	A								
27	A	P	S	E		28	D	I	S	A	R	M							
				29	A	30	P	E	S										
31	U	32	N	C	L	E	34	E	L	E	G	38	Y						
39	F	A	U	L	T		40	T	O	S	E	E							
41	O	B	E	Y	S		42	O	N	T	O	P							

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Sun-N-Fun Lagoon Opens for Collier County Schools' Winter Holiday Break

Friday, December 29 through Wednesday, January 3
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Sun-N-Fun Lagoon Water Park will open for the Collier County Schools' Winter Holiday break from *Friday, Dec. 29, through Wednesday, Jan. 3, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day.*

The park is offering a special discount for the Winter Holiday Break for Collier County residents. Residents with a Florida driver's license showing a Collier County address will receive \$2 off any entry for those 48-inches or taller (normally \$13). Individuals less than 48-inches tall enter for \$6.00: children age three and under enter free. Sales tax will be added to all fees. Of course, non-residents are welcomed for regular pricing!

Sun-N-Fun Lagoon Water Park Facility Attractions

- One waterslide drops into the 1,200-foot-long Sonny's Lazy River
- Four water slides lead to a drop pool
- Heated family pool
- Tadpole Pool, a children's wading area with a slide and more
- Turtle Cove, a pool for children ages 5 to 12 with lily pads and ropes for climbing

Group rates, seasonal passes, and party packages are available. For information call (239) 252-4073. For more information about Sun-N-Fun Lagoon visit napleswaterpark.com or call (239) 252-4021.



Everglades Seafood Festival February 9, 10 & 11

The annual festival features carnival rides and games for the kids and crafts and Country Music for the entire family.

Of course, the key to the event is the seafood, and there will be plenty of the traditional local favorites including stone crabs! You won't want to miss a single day of this event so book early and get your taste buds ready.

While you are here you can also book an airboat ride and a day of fishing with one of our expert guides. We will see you there!

Fishing Regulations Snapshot SW Gulf Coast*

- Cobia: 33" at fork, 1/day/license. 6/vessel/day max
- Drum, Black: 14-24" slot, 5/day/license 1 over 24" permitted per day
- Drum, Red: 18-27" slot, 1/day/license
- Flounder: 12", 10/day/license
- Grouper, Black: 24" min., 4/day/license
- Grouper, Gag: 24" min., 2/day/license (open June-Dec.)
- Grouper, Red: 20" min., 2/day/license
- NOTE: 4 of any/combo grouper/day/license limit
- Mangrove Snapper: 10" min., 5/day/license
- Florida Pompano: 11" at fork
- Seatrout: 15-20" slot, 4/day/license. 1 over 20" permitted per day/vessel
- Snook: *Closed*

Collier County Police Athletic League Celebrates With Area Kids at 2nd Annual Breakfast

Island Café hosted the 2nd Annual PAL Breakfast where over 60 Area children met Santa, Frosty the Snowman and mingled with CCSO deputies. The residents of Barrington Terrace made stockings for every child and drove down to join in. A special thanks to Rick Perez, Joe West and Billy and Shannon Snyder for their generous donations and to Island Café for the use of the Ice Cream Shop!



Top: Children gather for a photo, bottom, Frosty, Mr. & Mrs. Claus, CCSO deputy and representatives from Barrington Trace. Photos by Sue Gentry

School Schedule:

January 4: Students return to school

January 24: Report cards issued

February 14: Early dismissal day

For school information, visit <http://www.collierschools.com/EVG>

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My Little Slice of Paradise

By Kathy Brock

Christmas in the Everglades & the Power of F³

I love Christmas in the Everglades area for so many reasons. This year it is so much more significant because of what we all went through here this year. I have been thinking about it a lot and what keeps popping into my head is F³, or "Faith, Family & Friends."

Faith can mean different things to different people. Most of us connect the concept of faith to God and to our own religious beliefs.

But there is also a type of faith in our fellow man, and I think what we witnessed here this summer could serve as a renewal of faith in humankind. Think about all of the people who have been here to bring basic supplies, food, gifts and to donate their time and money. Many did this anonymously, with no expectations or strings attached. If that doesn't renew your faith in others, I do not know what will.

Then there is your family. Mine is very small, but it is so important to me, just as yours is to you. When you are down, family picks you up. When you are afraid, like I was when the winds were blowing, it was Tim that said we will be OK...and I was. Sometimes I just need to talk to my brother...so I will call him. I can because he is there. Many are not that lucky.

On Christmas Day it is now just the two of us, me & Tim...and some of you have larger families and big celebrations, but I feel very fortunate because there are many out there who are completely alone on Christmas and I am with the person I love most. *That's fortunate.*

Friends. People here value things like F³ that is what makes this area so special. We were lucky to celebrate with a great group of people on Christmas eve, then again with more friends on Christmas day and there will be more celebrations in the coming days with even more of our friends here. Friends help make the days here so much fuller and are another reminder of how fortunate we are.

A colleague of mine was looking at a copy of the Mullet Rapper and commented on how many churches there were in such a small area...I said that is because the area is faith-based, it is just the way it is. It is also very likely the reason that our little paradise rebounded the way it did...people had the faith, family and friends to carry them through it all.

Now that is the power of F³. Happy New Year!

Plant Sale-Fundraiser

January 13th, 9 am to 1:00 pm

Please come out to our plant sale on January 13th at McLeod Park to help support the Everglades City School Athletic Department.

There will be a wide variety of plants to choose from that are easy to grow in our area.

100% of the proceeds will go to the school's athletic department. We hope to see you there. For information call Kathy at 954-662-7003. Thank you!

Recipes for Good Eating

Submitted by Elaine Middelstaedt
Fresh Broccoli-Cauliflower Salad

Ingredients

- 1 head cauliflower
- 2 heads broccoli
- 1 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- Package Craisins-dried cranberries
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup sunflower seeds

This dish was brought to the Holy Family Catholic Church potluck dinner in December 2017 by Bernice Stippich. It was a huge hit and Bernice shared the recipe with Elaine. Elaine brought the dish over to my house on Christmas day...and it is a dish that goes with any meal and one that must be shared. It's light, yummy and good for you!

Directions: Mix sugar, vinegar and mayonnaise in a small bowl. Set aside to rest. Clean cauliflower and broccoli and cut into small pieces. In a larger bowl mix all ingredients together and put into the refrigerator so the flavors meld. Serve chilled with dinner and enjoy.

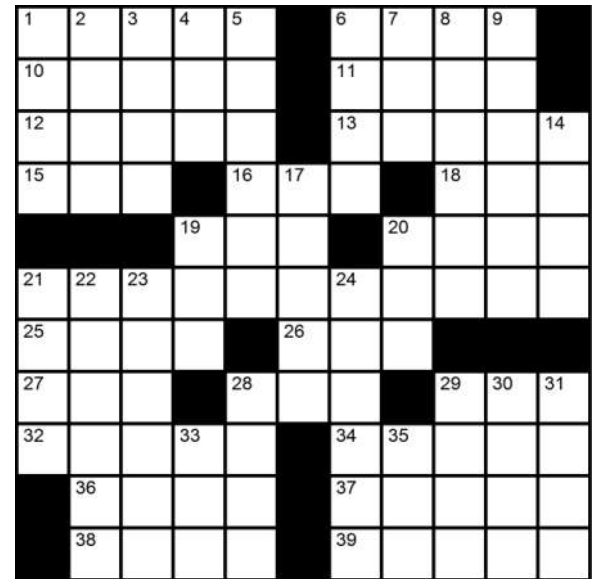
MULLET RAPPER CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Color of an unclouded sky
- 6 Memorable pop Mama
- 10 Immigration essentials
- 11 Aussie gemstone
- 12 Not capable
- 13 Under
- 15 Pre-Tivo device
- 16 Recede
- 18 Gone by
- 19 For each
- 20 Mogadishu-born model
- 21 Breakfast greeting
- 25 Musical phrase
- 26 Chisholm Trail state
- 27 Everything
- 28 Gave food
- 29 Sports org. producing "Deuce" magazine
- 32 Picture holder
- 34 Bury
- 36 Separate article
- 37 With a single voice
- 38 ___ / ___ life!
- 39 Puts the plane down

Down

- 1 Tel follower in Israel
- 2 It galvanizes
- 3 Addict
- 4 You may get a bad one
- 5 Respect
- 6 Former baseball icon Ty
- 7 Emulate
- 8 Italian sausage
- 9 Advertising tagline
- 14 "The World of Suzie --": 1960 film
- 19 Adobe format
- 20 Tavern
- 21 Wife of Agassi
- 22 Roughneck's workplace
- 23 Not long ago
- 24 Tire type
- 28 Agency visible after Hurricane Irma
- 29 2000 lbs (2 words)
- 30 Look after
- 31 A step above VP
- 33 Encountered
- 35 Cryptographic org



12/30/17



MASS STRANDING OFF CHOKOLOSKEE STILL A MYSTERY
Over 80 Animals Perished off of Hog Key in January 2017
Excerpts from NaplesDaily.com



Scientists have concluded that scores of dolphins that beached themselves in southern Collier County in January 2017 died of exposure, but a mystery remains about why they came ashore in the first place.

It was one of the largest marine mammal strandings in U.S. history and the largest to occur in the Southeast. More than 80 animals are known to have died, including 10 that had to be euthanized in the field. An additional 13 dolphins were seen, but scientists don't know what happened to them.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) still is waiting for the results of tests that could rule out disease or biotoxin as a cause of the stranding.

It was on January 14, 2017 that scores of dolphins, a species also known as false killer whales,



beached themselves on Hog Key, and island on the western edge of Everglades National Park south of Chokoloskee. Nearly 100 animals beached themselves, of which more than 80 died, the largest mass stranding in the Southeast. NOAA scientists are still trying to determine what caused the incident. "It's rare when we have a smoking gun," said Blair Mase, NOAA's coordinator on marine mammal strandings.

Mase said the remoteness of the site made it impossible to collect samples from all of the stranded animals, but biologists found no underlying disease in any of the necropsies. One theory is that a few sick false killer whales might have

led the rest of the group ashore from their normal home range in deeper waters, Mase said.

They were found with empty stomachs and intestines, but it is unclear whether they stopped eating before or after they left deeper waters, she said. Mase said it is "highly unlikely" that sonar testing at Key West or seismic exercises off Cuba had an influence in the stranding because of the distance from the stranding site and the timing. NOAA is following up with experts to confirm that, she said.

A Golden Gate lawyer who was camping at Hog Key and witnessed the stranding said he is not expecting scientists to come up with a cause. "It seemed to me this was a random thing I hear about all over," Louis Erickson said.

In December 2013, 10 pilot whales died on Highland Beach, not far from Hog Key, and 40 other pilot whales swam in very shallow water offshore. A Marco Island couple shelling on Kice Island in January 2014 found 25 dead pilot whales on a nearby barrier island, less than a week after a team of boats steered the whales out of Gordon Pass in Naples.

Eight dead pilot whales were found at New Pass near Lovers Key State Park in south Lee County. Other false killer whale strandings in the Southeast included 28 in the Florida Keys in 1986, 40 at Cedar Key in 1989 and two in Yankeetown in Florida's Big Bend region in 2009.

ABOUT FALSE KILLER WHALES

The false killer whale is the fourth largest oceanic dolphin. It lives primarily in tropical waters throughout the world. The main characteristic it shares with the larger and more widely known killer whale (*Orcinus orca*) is that it preys on other marine mammals.



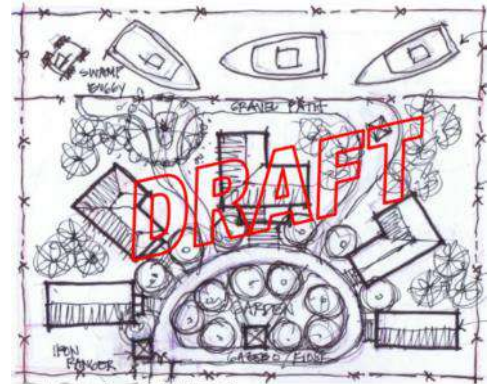
The false killer whale is black with a grey throat and neck. It has a slender body with an elongated, tapered head and 44 teeth. The dorsal fin is sickle-shaped and its flippers are narrow, short, and pointed. The average size is 16 feet and as much as 4900 pounds.

Global populations of false killer whales are declining. A recent study of the local population of false killer whales in Hawaii shows evidence of a dramatic decline over the last 20 years. Five years of aerial surveys from 1993 through 2003 show a steep decline in sighting rates. Group sizes of the largest groups documented before 1989 surveys were almost four times larger than the entire 2009 population estimate.

Photo: Two deceased false killer whales off Hog Key, January 2017 by Louis Erickson

Support Everglades City Historical Village
Sign the Petition & Attend Commission Meeting on January 9th at Collier Government Center!

We are on a mission to create a Historical Village that will serve as a tourist attraction - and a way to create new business opportunities and more jobs in the Everglades City area.



By preserving historic homes and structures flooded during Hurricane Irma, like the little yellow house pictured below, and then moving them to a designated area, we can create a historic village, like the one pictured above, where new businesses will have a place to operate to provide goods and services for the tourism industry and area residents.

Marya Repko is spearheading the great idea and is moving it forward with the Everglades Society for Historic Preservation and Collier county.

The Board of County Commissioners has now agreed to hear the proposition in a meeting on Tuesday, January 9. It is important that we show our support for the initiative by showing up.



If you would like to show your support in person, please attend the meeting at Government Center in Naples. The schedule will not be printed until a week in advance but we expect the item to be early, soon after the start of the meeting at 9:00 a.m. If you have questions or would like more information, call Marya at 239-695-2905.

When: January 9th, 2018

Where: Naples Government Center, 3315 Tamiami Trail E., Naples



Living Gulf Coast

by Charles Sobczak

Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

Other names: sawbill, fish duck, hairy-head / Status: FL=stable, IUCN=LC / Life span: to 9 years / Length: 20-25 in. (51-64 cm) / Wingspan: 26-29 in. (66-74 cm) / Weight: 2.5 lb (1.2 kg) / Nests: in the far north all the way to the edge of the Arctic Ocean / Found: All Counties, coastal, near coast, mainland / Months found: **JFMamjjasOND** (note: mergansers migrate north during the summer where they breed and raise their chicks).



A good-sized diving duck, the red-breasted merganser is quite common and prefers the saltwater estuaries to lakes and ponds when in Florida. The female merganser can often be found in midwinter feeding in the tidal flows found in estuaries all along

the coast. The male tends to prefer the offshore habitat to the back bays and estuaries and as a result is much harder to find.

Its annual migration takes the merganser to the far north all the way to Hudson Bay and the coast of Greenland. In the summer, the male merganser sports a black head and crest with iridescent, greenish overtones and a clear white band around the neck. This breeding plumage is almost never apparent while the bird is wintering in Florida.

One of the fastest flying ducks, it has been clocked at more than 100 miles per hour. An extremely adept swimmer, it feeds primarily on fish but has been known to eat shrimp and crabs as well. The merganser is equipped with a serrated mandible, which greatly enhances its ability to hold on to slippery fish.

The red-breasted merganser is primarily monogamous and a solitary ground nester. Predation occurs mostly in the breeding grounds from gulls, coyotes, foxes, hawks, and owls. Because of the fishy flavor of its meat, the merganser is seldom a target of duck hunters.

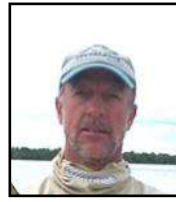
Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*) Other names: didapper / Status: FL= stable, IUCN=LC / Life span: to 5 years / Length: 12-15 in. (34-38 cm) / Wingspan: 17.7-24.4 in. (45-62 cm) / Weight: 9-20 oz (.25-.57 kg) / Nests: along the northern tier of North America from the Ohio Valley into far northern Canada / Found in all coastal Southwest Florida counties.

A small waterbird, the pied-billed grebe is a fairly common sighting along Wildlife Drive in the "Ding" Darling refuge in midwinter. It seldom takes flight when threatened or approached, preferring instead to dive for cover. Although it swims and behaves like a duck, the grebe does not have webbed feet; instead each toe has lobes that flare out when paddling.

This bird is seldom found far from shore and prefers much shallower water than does the loon or boobie. It is an omnivore and opportunistic, consuming equal amounts of minnows, crustaceans, and vegetative matter, as well as marine insects. During the winter tourist season the tiny pied-billed grebe should be an easy addition to your Sanibel and Captiva life list. The name *pied-billed* refers to the multicolored bill, which develops a dark ring during breeding season. When wintering on the islands, however, the grebe will not display this ring.



This article is an excerpt from *Living Sanibel-A Nature Guide to Sanibel & Captiva Islands* by Charles Sobczak. The book is available at all the Island bookstores, Baileys, Jerry's and your favorite online sites. Photos by Richard "Dick" Fortune.



Winter Fishing in the 10,000 Islands

With Captain Mike Merritt

The main piece of advice I can give people when fishing this time of year is live shrimp. If you fish live shrimp, you will catch fish. The fish are feeding on them naturally so why not use them? If you fish often and have

tried frozen shrimp versus live shrimp you will see the difference. With live shrimp you have a chance at catching more Snook than with frozen. And there are days when they just work better for Reds and Black Drum too. If you are going to take the time and spend the money to go fishing why not use the best possible bait? The right bait can mean the difference between a good day and a great day. Shrimp will even out fish live bait such as Pilchards this time of year. Of course water temps will change this, but overall shrimp is the way to go.

Fishing the incoming tide is the best choice but again this can change. We will have some extreme low tides and this can make for some tough conditions when coupled with high winds. That is the time to fish in the rivers or in the back country. You can use the shrimp back there too. There has been a problem with the fresh water killing the live shrimp but as the water levels drop this will not be as much of a problem.

Trout fishing on the flats should continue to be good for the entire month. Finding the grasses is the key. We did lose some grasses due to the hurricane but there are still plenty of places that have it. Live shrimp on a popping cork rigged about 18" deep will work great. Of course, I always like the DOA 1/2 oz. shrimp. The glow shrimp is my favorite but if that doesn't produce try the other colors.

The Redfish bite has remained really good in the islands. We are still catching fish up to 25-26" with the occasional larger ones. There are plenty of 16-20" fish around to make for a good Redfish bite. Rig live shrimp about 12-18" deep according to the water depth. You will want the shrimp to be just off the bottom and even dragging a little at times. I like the Cajun Thunder style corks for the Reds. Pop these corks but not as aggressively as you would for trout. If nothing is biting with the corks, sometimes a knocker rig will work. Use a 1/4 oz. to 1/2 oz. sinker again according to current and depth. A lot of times the best bite comes just as the water starts to flow good. The bite can be at different times during the tide. It can also be different at different spots. You will find one spot works great at the beginning of the tide while another spot works better at the top of the tide. If the bites not on then moving slowly down a shoreline till you find fish is a great way to locate some. Using the popping cork while doing this is a great technique.

Black Drum are also around this time of year and they can be taken using the same methods as you do for the Reds. Sheepshead is another fish you will catch doing the same thing. Of course, when targeting Sheepshead it is sometimes better to use just a piece of shrimp and fish the deeper rock holes. And you can catch some really big Sheepshead on the wrecks offshore.

Snook fish will be best in the back country this time of year but again this will depend on water temps, cold fronts and winds. We are still catching Snook on the outside and in the river mouths right now, but most of the fish are in the back country. Soft plastics are a great way to work the mangrove edges as the fish in the back country will be hiding under the edges where they can ambush their prey. You can also deploy the same live shrimp under a cork and fish along the edges in the back country. This will produce all of the above species as they all make their way into the back in the winter.

Tarpon have been around in good numbers as I write this. We were in a large school of 50-100lb fish just yesterday. These fish were on the outside feeding on the schools of small pilchards. They were gulping mouthfuls and flying out of the water while feeding. We fished them for over an hour but no takers. These fish can be the toughest some days and the easiest on others. As the water gets colder there will be less of this going on.

Winter fishing can be some of the best action all year due to the variety of fish that are here. Many days I will have clients keep 4-5 different species for a fish dinner. It's like having a variety pack. So whatever your desired species is you can count on shrimp to make it happen. Happy New Year and good luck fishing! ~Capt. Mike Merritt

Local News

Generosity & Christmas Spirit Delivered by Tice United Methodist Church!



Above Connie Barker & Helen Bryan Receive Gifts Prior to Delivering Them

On Friday, December 22nd Tice United Methodist Church of Ft. Myers delivered 48 wonderful, wrapped gifts for selected seniors in our area.

Connie Barker coordinated the deliveries to seniors in Everglades City, Chokoloskee, Plantation Island and Copeland.

Judging by the smiles, the Christmas Spirit was certainly evident. Thank you to Tice United Methodist Church in Ft. Myers for their generosity.

Chokoloskee Church of God Reopens With Joyous Rededication Ceremony



December 15th marked the much anticipated reopening of Chokoloskee Church of God for parishioners. Pastor Lynette presided over the rededication to a packed-full-house!

Thanks to everyone who helped the church with their renovations so that the reopening could happen in time for Christmas worship! Above, Mayor Howie Grimm mingles with the crowd.

Officers and A Gentleman (Firefighter) Extend Kindness to Young Tourist

Lindsay Wurm and her 5-year-old son were visiting the area from Minnesota. They were taking a walk Christmas morning when they saw two Collier County Officers & firefighters.

She wrote to the Mullet Rapper to share how nice they were to her and her son, Hudson...and they even let her son see inside of the Sheriff's vehicle! How thoughtful!



Park News

The Gulf Coast Center is Open!!

On Thursday, December 21, Everglades National Park opened a temporary visitor contact station at its Gulf Coast entrance in Everglades City, just in time for the holiday visitor season. The Park's facilities in Everglades City were severely damaged by hurricane Irma in September 2017, and most are scheduled to be demolished. "Opening a visitor contact station is a great step forward for both the Park and the people of Everglades City," said Park Superintendent Pedro Ramos. Visitors can now get information about exploring Everglades National Park and other attractions in the region at the Gulf Coast station from 8 am to 4:30 pm daily.

The Park's Gulf Coast site is the gateway to the 10,000 Islands region of Everglades National Park, an area that features the largest and best protected mangrove estuary in the northern hemisphere. Visitors can explore by boat or canoe. Wildlife and bird watching are excellent in the area; sightings of manatee and dolphin are common. As the mangrove forest is ideal fish habitat, the area makes for a world class recreational fishing destination. Free ranger led programs are offered daily through the end of March.



A public canoe launch at the Gulf Coast site sits as one end of the 99-mile long Wilderness Waterway running between Everglades City and Flamingo. The Wilderness Waterway features backcountry campsites on chickies, beaches and islands along the mangrove coast. A limited number of campsites are open while the Park continues to repair and restore the backcountry camps and aids to navigation. Visitors who want to camp in the backcountry must obtain a backcountry camping permit at the Gulf Coast visitor contact station, or at the Park's Flamingo Visitor Center on Florida Bay. A backcountry trip planner and current information about camping is available on the Park's website, at NPS.GOV/EVER.

The Gulf Coast visitor contact station is located at 815 Oyster Bar Lane, in Everglades City. Visitors should be prepared to bring their own water and be aware that the only restroom facilities on site are porta-potties. Concession services, including scheduled boat tours and canoe rentals, are expected to resume soon. Call Everglades National Park Boat Tours at 239-695-2591 for current information.



Photos: Top, visitors are greeted by "a ranger." Below, temporary center is operational !



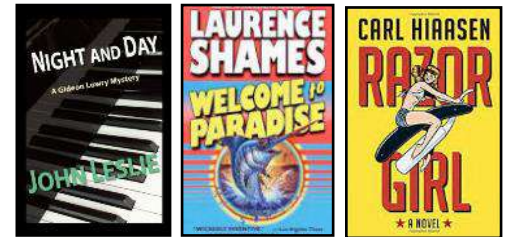
**Book Reviews
Florida Fiction**

by Marya Repko

I've been on a virtual vacation to Key West, re-reading favorite authors.

Laurence Shames writes about a 90-year-old retired Mafioso with his weakling chihuahua and a love of good clothes who still has enough connections to bail out the rest of the zany characters when they get into trouble.

Author John Leslie features a private eye who is a proud Conch and bemoans the changes that come to his home city which has turned into a strip of cheap T-shirt shops.



Most recently, Carl Hiaasen hops down to the rock in his 2016 book "Razor Girl" where the central character, a disgraced police detective reduced to finding roaches in restaurants, is fighting to stop a megamansion from being built next to his old cottage. The action bounces around, helped by the smart con-woman of the title, and includes fake hillbilly stars of a TV show and a genuinely crazy redneck with a knife and a gun.

Hiaasen's quirky writing usually includes a serious message. He tackles beach re-nourishment when one of his borderline crooks tries to import sand from Cuba; that is not so far-fetched -- *The Naples Daily News* reported on 12/19/17 that sand for Naples beaches might come from the Bahamas in future. He also mentions that high condos right on the beach block the sea breezes from moving inland. And, of course, they also block everyone behind them from the view.

This new book and many of his and the other author's titles are available at some branches of the Collier County Public Library.

Weather Observer Needed!

The National Weather Service needs an official weather observer in Everglades City to monitor and report the weather on a daily basis (equipment to do so is supplied). It is easy to do and something very important to our area. Even if you are a winter resident, we still want to hear from you.

If this sounds like something you might be interested in, or if you have any further questions about what is expected, don't hesitate to contact Christopher Fisher at the National Weather Service by email at: christopher.fisher@noaa.gov.



EATERIES & AREA WORSHIP



Angler's Cove, Port of the Islands
(642-1025): Mon.– Wed. 5 -11 pm,
Thurs. to Sun noon - 11 pm;

Camellia Street Grille (695-2003):
We have reopened! Call to verify hours!

City Seafood (695-4700):
8:00 am – 6:00 pm; daily
Supper upstairs is
currently closed

Glades Haven Deli (695-2091):
Sorry, Closed for Repairs
Live bait available at marina.

Havana Café (695-2214):
7 am to 3 pm daily

Island Café (695-0003):
6:00 am – 9:00 pm; daily

Ivey House (695-3299):
6:30 – 9:30 am; daily

Joanie's Blue Crab Café (695-2682):
We Are Open!
M-Sat. 11 am to 5 pm

Oyster House Restaurant (695-2073):
Sorry, Closed for Repairs
Please Check Back!

NEW! Right Choice Pizza (695-0102)
Local Delivery!
Closed for repairs.

Rod & Gun (695-2101):
We are open! Call for hours

Sweet Mayberry's Café is Closed
We have enjoyed serving you.

Tastes of the Everglades (695-0075)
Closed, reopening soon!

Triad Seafood & Café (695-2662):
8 am to 5 pm

MARKETS

Right Choice Supermarket (695-4535):
Open 9 am to 7 pm Daily

Grimm's Stone Crab (239-695-3222):
8 am to 5 pm Mon—Sat, Closed Sunday

Fresh Produce

Chokoloskee, see p.5, E-City, Marathon Gas

SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICES

Chokoloskee Church of God

Sunday Sch, 10 am, Worship 11 am
Tues, 7 pm Prayer Mtg Wed. 7pm Hr of Prayer

Copeland Baptist Church

Sunday: 10 am School, 11 am Worship

Everglades Community Church

9:30 am Sunday Worship

1st Baptist Church of Everglades City

Sunday School 9:45 am, Worship 11 am
Evening Services: Sun. & Wed. 6 pm

Holy Family Catholic Church

Sunday Mass 10:30 am

St. Finbarr Catholic Church, Naples

Phone: 239-417-2084

San Marco Catholic Church, Marco Isl.

Phone: 239-394-5181

EVERGLADES CITY TIDES

LAT: 25.87° N LONG: 81.37°W

Check: www.weather.gov for conditions

2017/12/30	Sat	7:21 AM	-0.4	L
2017/12/30	Sat	1:04 PM	2.3	H
2017/12/30	Sat	7:17 PM	0.7	L
2017/12/31	Sun	12:03 AM	3.1	H
2017/12/31	Sun	8:11 AM	-0.5	L
2017/12/31	Sun	1:54 PM	2.4	H
2017/12/31	Sun	8:09 PM	0.6	L
2018/01/01	Mon	12:48 AM	2.96	H
2018/01/01	Mon	09:00 AM	-0.7	L
2018/01/01	Mon	02:47 PM	2.23	H
2018/01/01	Mon	08:58 PM	0.59	L
2018/01/02	Tue	01:32 AM	3.06	H
2018/01/02	Tue	09:49 AM	-0.75	L
2018/01/02	Tue	03:35 PM	2.24	H
2018/01/02	Tue	09:47 PM	0.56	L
2018/01/03	Wed	02:18 AM	3.05	H
2018/01/03	Wed	10:37 AM	-0.71	L
2018/01/03	Wed	04:22 PM	2.23	H
2018/01/03	Wed	10:37 PM	0.52	L
2018/01/04	Thu	03:09 AM	2.94	H
2018/01/04	Thu	11:24 AM	-0.59	L
2018/01/04	Thu	05:08 PM	2.22	H
2018/01/04	Thu	11:29 PM	0.48	L
2018/01/05	Fri	04:09 AM	2.73	H
2018/01/05	Fri	12:11 PM	-0.41	L
2018/01/05	Fri	05:52 PM	2.21	H
2018/01/06	Sat	12:24 AM	0.45	L
2018/01/06	Sat	05:14 AM	2.47	H
2018/01/06	Sat	12:59 PM	-0.18	L
2018/01/06	Sat	06:38 PM	2.22	H
2018/01/07	Sun	01:25 AM	0.41	L
2018/01/07	Sun	06:24 AM	2.17	H
2018/01/07	Sun	01:50 PM	0.05	L
2018/01/07	Sun	07:25 PM	2.23	H
2018/01/08	Mon	02:36 AM	0.36	L
2018/01/08	Mon	07:41 AM	1.9	H
2018/01/08	Mon	02:48 PM	0.27	L
2018/01/08	Mon	08:13 PM	2.24	H
2018/01/09	Tue	03:50 AM	0.28	L
2018/01/09	Tue	09:01 AM	1.71	H
2018/01/09	Tue	03:50 PM	0.44	L
2018/01/09	Tue	09:02 PM	2.26	H
2018/01/10	Wed	04:56 AM	0.16	L
2018/01/10	Wed	10:29 AM	1.62	H
2018/01/10	Wed	04:51 PM	0.56	L
2018/01/10	Wed	09:52 PM	2.28	H
2018/01/11	Thu	05:55 AM	0.03	L
2018/01/11	Thu	12:28 PM	1.66	H
2018/01/11	Thu	05:50 PM	0.63	L
2018/01/11	Thu	10:44 PM	2.31	H
2018/01/12	Fri	06:47 AM	-0.09	L
2018/01/12	Fri	01:26 PM	1.75	H
2018/01/12	Fri	06:45 PM	0.66	L
2018/01/12	Fri	11:33 PM	2.36	H
2018/01/13	Sat	07:33 AM	-0.2	L
2018/01/13	Sat	01:54 PM	1.81	H
2018/01/13	Sat	07:33 PM	0.66	L

Gone But Never Forgotten
The Friends We Lost in 2017



We lost too many of our friends, neighbors and loved ones in 2017, but we know they have moved on to a better place.

Below is a list of those that have passed on and the date of the issue their tribute was published.

Lost Loved One	Issue Date
Harold Gene Enquist	2/25/2017
Margaret Mannon	2/25/2017
Gaston Giguere	3/11/2017
Susan Langner	3/11/2017
Gary Thompson	4/8/2017
Virginia Lee Hamilton	4/8/2017
Dorothy Ann Miller	4/8/2017
Philip Portz	4/8/2017
Danny Neal Mitchell	4/22/2017
Juanita Weldon	6/17/2017
Eloise Barrows	6/17/2017
Lillie Mae McFadden	6/17/2017
Gerald Berry	7/15/2017
Ronald Joseph Gervais	7/29/2017
Glenn Greeman	7/29/2017
Derrick Lamar Thompson	7/29/2017
Phyllis Hamilton Brown	7/29/2017
George Hartman	8/26/2017
Eleanor Dowacter	10/7/2017
Devan Raymond Rewis	10/7/2017
Mary Freeman	10/7/2017
Lee Marteeny	10/21/2017
Michael Anthony Rain	10/21/2017
Walter Hoffman	11/4/2017
Marilyn Valkema	11/4/2017
Martin Weeks	11/4/2017
Gerald David LaPlant	11/18/2017
Bessie Peggy Lee Mason	11/18/2017
Jerry Walter Hall	12/16/2017

Feral Felines Donation Stolen! Help Needed
Say it isn't so! Someone stole the donation for the feral felines from Right Choice Supermarket leaving Barbara, and the kitties, in a bit of a pinch. Can you help? If you can, please mail your donation to:
Feral Felines, P O Box 564
Chokoloskee, FL, 34138

CLASSIFIED ADS

RV HOOKUPS, Everglades City. Two Sites, 30 and 50 amps. Service, water, no sewage. Rent nightly or weekly. Rough boat ramp, 100 ft. dock. Private & secure. Contact Capt. Wayne of Fish Hunt Charters at 239-695-2445.

BOAT FOR SALE: 2016 Carolina Skiff 24 DLX. 2016 Yamaha F115 motor. 2nd Bimini top, Garmin 740, front bench/cooler. Used 3 months. Perfect boat for the Everglades. Very stable and perfect for commercial use, boating, guiding or photography. Mint. Asking \$28,000. Call Sandee Harraden @239-250-4662.

FOR SALE OR LEASE: 1700 SQ FT commercial building in Everglades City. For more information, please call 239-253-3942 or 239-232-0443.

REDUCED! 2 stilt houses EC: NOW \$239,900 for 408 Buckner; NOW 339,900 for 309 S. Storter. GREAT shape! Call Steve 910-599-2698. Available dock.

FOR RENT: Studio apartment. Includes water, electricity and garbage pick up. \$700/mo. annual lease. 1st, last, security to move in. Call 239-340-4770.

FULL-TIME JOB: Cashier at Joanie's Blue Crab Café. Experience preferred. Must be reliable and honest. The restaurant is located at 39395 Tamiami Trail E, Ochopee, FL. Please call Joanie to schedule an interview to be considered for this position at: 239-695-2682.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR LEASE: Deep water commercial dock and lot on Barron River at 909 DuPont St. in Everglades City. Perfect for business, commercial fishing or restaurant with chickee bar and tourist gift shop attraction, \$1000 / month. Contact: Rancho T Properties LLC, (727) 480-1640.

FOR SALE: RV Lots with docks. Call Bob Wells Real Estate @ 239-695-2660 for more information.

FOR SALE: New Forest Wolf Pup Toy Hauler. Ltd Pkg. 13.5 K A/C, 14" alum wheels, 20 BTU furnace, 6 gallon gas/elec. DSI water heater, friction hinge door, high gloss seamless countertop, LED pancake lights, night shades, RV fridge, spare tire, stabilizer jacks, stereo with in and outside speakers, upgraded, hypoallergenic evergreen mattress, all hoses and propane tank. Brand new, never used. Brought from Indiana for someone in need of housing. Will sell "at cost", \$13,000. Can be seen in Everglades City. Call 812-327-7195.

JOB OPPORTUNITY: Become an election worker for the 2018 elections. Qualifications: Be a registered voter in Collier County. Be able to read and write English. Complete the orientation and training. You must be available to work a 12-14 hour shift. Get started today! Complete your application at www.CollierVotes.com. Call us if you have questions. By email at: ElectionWorker@colliergov.net. Or by phone: (239) 252-VOTE (8683).

The MULLET RAPPER

What's Happening in the Everglades & 10,000 Islands

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