

The MULLET RAPPER



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

Area Information ♦ Tides ♦ Events ♦ Attractions

25¢

FEBRUARY 22, 2020 - MARCH 6, 2020

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P. O. Box 134, Everglades City, FL, 34139

Volume XII • Issue # 358

Festival Highlights

On Friday morning about 4 am the storm blew in threatening to dampen (pun intended) the spirits of potential festivalgoers.

Fortunately, the storms passed but they did leave behind some ponding water, mushy medians and added frustration for those who operate the normal parking areas.

However, the Festival was prepared! Extra fill was brought in before during and after the event to smooth out any area affected and traffic was successfully diverted to areas better suited to park cars.

This year's festival featured some nice changes. A large, covered seating area was erected as an eating area. This was a huge hit evidenced by the area being full almost 100% of the time.

Some food trucks were added to the mix. I heard excellent reviews from festivalgoers about the new options.

The layout of the food area was a bit different. The seating area removed some of the congestion normally seen under the pavilion (as people stood there to eat to get out of the sun). With the dining tent erected, this overflow was removed making traversing the pavilion much easier. I am sure Carol Foss and her hardworking crew were pleased with the changes.



The Collier County Sheriff's Office uses a counter to document traffic in and out of the festival. This year during the three day period, 12,551 vehicles entered the City.

The NTSB estimates that each vehicle contains 2.7 persons, which is a national average. Using that, it would equate to 33,887 people who arrived in cars. The CCSO estimates an additional 1200 people came and stayed in RV's bringing the total to well over 35,000 festival attendees, not including local patrons!

The Everglades Lions Club chuckwagon served hamburgers, hotdogs, and mullet dip and fillets. On Sunday morning at 7 am the Lions set up to serve breakfast for vendors. The weekend was a big success and great fundraiser for the Lions.

As of this writing, no other attendance reports are available but I will go on record to say the festival was very well executed and enjoyed by all! Thank you to everyone who was a part of the seafood festival's 50th anniversary! By all accounts it was a tremendous success. We are already looking forward to next year.

After Irma They Came With Barbecue at the Festival it was Cookie Dough

Immediately following hurricane Irma some very kind people came to the area to offer help. Some came with intentions to work, some brought food. One couple from Ft. Myers came to Everglades City to cook barbecue. Jeff Smith and his fiancée had a booth at the Seafood Festival selling cookie dough.

Their wagon was next to the Lions Club wagon and we had a chance to chat on more than one occasion. It was then that Jeff talked about coming into the City, seeing the devastation and wanting to do something to help.

Knowing that there was no electricity for refrigeration, he knew home cooked meals were not happening for the residents so he came here and served food.

He admitted he enjoyed this trip much more and vowed to return to future festivals with his "fried cookie dough" which was a big success!



It was great to catch up with Jeff and gratifying to know that he came back to our area to experience our town in a more positive way.

Thank you to Jeff for his contribution to our community in our time of need. We also look forward to visiting the "Wonderland Cookie Dough" food wagon during next year's festival.

In the meantime, I won't hold my breath to sample that "no calorie" version of fried cookie dough he mentioned for next trip. Somehow I do not see that as realistic...but one can hope!

Above: The Wonderland Cookie Dough Food Wagon

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FOR AREA INFORMATION, EVENTS, ETC SCAN THE CODE



UPCOMING EVENTS

ART-IN-THE-GLADES

February 22, 10 am to 1 pm



Come out to McLeod Park in historic Everglades City on February 22, 2020!

There will be goodies for the kids (and adults) and plenty of local arts and crafts. Call Marya at (239) 695-2905 for more info. Booths are available (and free). Please be sure to have your area set up before 10 am! *The next Art-in-the-Glades will be held on March 28th.*

Meet Clyde and Niki Butcher

Saturday, Feb. 22nd 10 am – 4 pm

Come out and meet Clyde & Niki Butcher at their Big Cypress Gallery.

They will both be in the gallery all day for a meet & greet and book signing. **This event is FREE and open to the public.** The gallery is located at 52388 Tamiami Trail E, Ochopee, FL 34141.

Pancake Fly-in

February 22, March 21, 10 am to noon

Free Breakfast, Pancakes, Sausage & Beverage!

Fly-ins and walk-ups welcomed!

Future dates: March 21, and April 18th. We hope to see you at the EC Airpark!

Annual ORA Bazaar

February 29, Open at 9 am

The Annual ORA Bazaar, will be held on Chokoloskee Island, on Saturday, February 29th. The gates will open at 9:00. There will be fresh bakery and coffee. The bazaar will feature a White Elephant Sale, a "New 2 U Boutique" (featuring slightly used clothing, shoes, and jewelry). There will be local vendors and craft sales. Lunch and ice cream will be available starting at 11:00. Spaces are available for vendors and crafters to rent for \$10 each. For more information please phone Sherri Parsons at 239-695-2281.



Gospel Music at McLeod Park

March 7th, 11 am to 2 pm

Everyone is encouraged to attend.

Movie Night @ the Museum

Friday, March 13, 6 pm

"Mega Python vs. Gatoroid" In this 2011 picture Monster snakes battle a mutant alligator in the Everglades while rival scientists played by former pop-stars Tiffany and Debbie Gibson save the planet. Seating is outside so bring a chair or blanket and a jacket. See you there!

THE EVERGLADES AREA VISITOR CENTER IS OPEN DAILY FROM 9 AM TO 4 PM! COME SEE OUR GALLERY FEATURING ARTISTS WITH A LOCAL CONNECTION! WE HAVE UNIQUE PAINTINGS, PRINTS, JEWELRY, CRAFTS & MUCH, MUCH MORE! WE ARE THE CORALCOLORED BUILDING LOCATED AT 207 BROADWAY W.

If you would like to volunteer call: Kathy @ 954-662-7003.



A Message from Fire Chief Kingman Schultz

As we celebrated Valentine's Day this February, we saw hearts everywhere; on cards, candy, and jewelry that are all exchanged as a celebration of love and affection. But did you know that February is also American Heart Month? This is a Federal initiative designed to remind Americans to focus on the physical health of their heart. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), one person dies every 37 seconds in the United States from cardiovascular disease and heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States.

Did you know the United States Fire Administration names heart attacks as the leading cause of death for active-duty firefighters? In the last decade, about half of on-duty firefighter deaths were caused by heart attack. Despite these significant statistics, first responders know little about their cardiovascular risks. So why is this occupation so prone to sudden cardiac death?

Firefighting is both a physically and emotionally demanding job. The dangerous work, heavy uniforms, and overwhelming amount of stress cause strain on the heart. This strain, in conjunction with a toxic work environment – breathing in smoke, dehydration and gas exposure – can trigger a sudden cardiac episode.

The President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, Fire Chief Gary Ludwig, kicked off an international campaign yesterday If You Don't Feel Well, Don't Make It Your Farewell. This campaign is to raise awareness in the fire and emergency services about firefighters recognizing the signs of a heart attack before it is too late.

What better way to show your family that you love them than by taking control of your heart health so you are here longer for your loved ones? Here are a few actions you can take today:

Don't smoke. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. If you don't smoke, don't start.

Manage conditions. Work with your health care team to manage conditions such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol. This includes taking any medicines you have been prescribed.

Make heart-healthy eating changes. Eat food low in trans-fat, saturated fat, added sugar and sodium. Fill at least half your plate with vegetables and fruits, and low sodium options

Stay active. Get moving for at least 150 minutes per week. You can even break up the 30 minutes into 10-minute blocks.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

FREE DENTAL, BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INFORMATION FOR ALL

Next Visit: March 17, 2020

The Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida's Health & Smiles Mobile Dental Bus will be in Everglades City on March 17, from 8 am to 4 pm, at the Everglades Community Center (by Thrift Shop) parking lot, providing free dental checks, blood pressure screenings and behavioral health information if requested. For more info or to schedule an appointment: call 239-202-7005.

THE FOOD BANK IS OPEN !

Wed. noon to 2pm

Everglades Community Pantry, a proud partner agency of the Harry Chapin Food Bank, is open every Wednesday from noon to 2 in Jinkins Fellowship Hall at Everglades Community Church in Everglades City. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

E-CITY THRIFT SHOP

Open Tues., Thurs. & Sat. 11am -3pm

The Everglades City Thrift Store is open Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday from 11 am to 3 pm. Our shop is located in the community center next to the Fire Station in Everglades City.



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**What's Going On With the School Ball Field,
 and Where Did All That Dirt Come From?**

by Kathy Brock

Several people have inquired with the Mullet Rapper about the new ball field at the school. Many have also asked about the construction around the school...and why so much dirt was removed from the campus? We spoke with Jill Whitcomb the athletic director and got some answers for you...

The construction around the school perimeter is a barrier wall to help minimize the risk of flooding. The wall was constructed both below the ground level and several feet above. To do this the contractors had to excavate several feet of soil out to build the wall below grade. The project is wrapping up with most of the construction debris and soil now put back into place.

In 2019 the baseball field was elevated and new sod and clay were brought in. The field was beautiful. Then this new school year, that field was torn apart, soil was removed, and a new, artificial turf field was installed. Why?

Well, the ball field at the school only accommodated the boys teams. Girls softball was being played at the field behind the Catholic Church in town. That field's condition was not suitable for continued activity.

The upgrades needed to be made to the girls field at the church property would have cost several hundred thousands of dollars...but the school did not own the property, nor could they obtain a long term lease for it (to justify the expense of building the new field on a property they do not own).

The school district also looked for other locations in Everglades City (and Chokoloskee) to see if there was an alternate location that would be suitable, but there were none.

That is when the Collier school district started looking into a multi-use field option. By installing artificial turf, the field can be converted for both boys and girls teams.

There is no longer any maintenance for mowing and bringing in red-clay each year.

The field is elevated so it stays nice and dry. There is plenty of drainage installed beneath the turf so when it does get inundated, it will drain quickly.

Most importantly, our boys and girls deserve a great field to play on, and now they can both enjoy this new state-of-the-art playing surface. The official ribbon-cutting of the new field was held on Friday, February 21st.

Now about the dirt...to install the new artificial turf, the area needed to be excavated out to install the drainage system for the field. Little did they know that dirt in these parts is a hot commodity. Soon word got out that fill could be obtained quickly and affordably. There was no shortage of people wanting the fill...so fill they did! The city also benefited as it was used in low areas, in medians and all around town. Some of the fill was also used after the festival to repair ruts and tire marks. Let's just say the soil did not go to waste.

Congratulations to the Everglades City School Gators for their beautiful new field. Our thanks and gratitude to the Collier County School District for seeing this as an important need and addressing it for our greatest asset...our children.

Go Gators! Play Hard. We Will All Be Cheering You On!



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Fire that Saves, Part II (See Part I in Feb. 8 edition)

By Antonia Florio, Science Communications Liaison, Everglades National Park

Just an hour after the prescribed fire at Royal Palm, my view looking out over the Anhinga Trail boardwalk changed from tall strands of Phragmites to an expansive sawgrass prairie. Granted, it was still hard to see because there was a lot of smoke, but the sawgrass prairie was definitely there.

A Proactive Approach to Fire

Would Royal Palm have burned without human intervention? Yes. It's just a matter of when.

"The Everglades wants to burn, one way or another. You can either be proactive about it through prescribed fires or reactive when there's a wildfire," Michael Gue, Prescribed Fire Specialist for Everglades National Park, said.

Although the park has carried out prescribed burns for over 50 years now, fire management today is more difficult now than it was even twenty years ago.

There is now more urban sprawl into ecosystems that naturally want to burn, along with hotter and drier conditions resulting from climate change.

In response to this, the park has recently adapted a landscape level approach to prescribed fire management. Since 2017, just over 330,000 acres of the park have been burned, and fires are planned to burn approximately 170,000 more acres over the next 2 years. That means that about one-third of the park, or 500,000 acres, will be burned in just 5 years.

For Gue, prescribed fire is necessary in fire-adapted ecosystems, especially in light of climate change and urban sprawl. These planned burns can save money, people, and the ecosystem.

"The numbers are simple," Gue said. "It costs \$500 an acre to

manage a wildfire in the Everglades and less than \$5 an acre to do a prescribed fire. Plus we are reducing the threat of fire in our cities and protecting our ecosystem, including threatened and endangered species."

And, in fact, a prescribed fire recently saved one population of the federally endangered Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow living in the park.

In 2016, a fire broke out in the Long Pine Key Campground at the park. Because that area hadn't burned in over a decade, the wildfire spread fast and burned hot.

The fire stopped just before the endangered bird's territory. It ran out of fuel because excess vegetation had been cleared a year prior as part of a prescribed burn.

That population of Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow is still doing well, and it has a prescribed fire to thank for saving and protecting it.

The park is paving the way to show that being proactive about fire is the way to go.

What can you do to help?

Spread the word: the Everglades needs fire. Controlled, prescribed fires help protect both our ecosystem and our community.

Put campfires out. Help prevent wildfires by making sure your campfires are completely extinguished before heading to bed or before leaving your campsite.

Report wildfires by calling park dispatch: 305-242-7740.

Below Photos: During (left) and after (right) at the Royal Palm fire. Fire crews used drip torches to light the prescribed, or planned, fire. Prescribed fire is used to clear vegetation to lessen the chance of wildfire. NPS photos by Michael Gue



Mullet Rapper Donations to Everglades City School

~\$8100 to Date and Counting*...

Thank you to everyone who buys the Mullet Rapper every two weeks. Remember, the Mullet Rapper donates 100% of the proceeds from the sale of the print edition of the paper to Everglades City School to help students in need.

When you see the coin receptacle, please put your quarter (or more) into the slot! Remember, When You Buy the Print Edition of the Mullet Rapper, It Helps Everglades City School Students!

*From Nov. 2017 to present


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**EVERGLADES
BOOK CLUB**

Everyone is welcome to join in on the conversation, coffee and comradery.
This year's last two titles are excellent so we anticipate a lively discussion at each meeting. We hope to see you there!
All meetings start at 9:30 am. If you have any questions, please email Diann Lock at: DLock333@yahoo.com.
We look forward to seeing you there!

Book Club Schedule

March 19th
Educated by Tara Westover
hosted by Linda Williams

April 16th
Beneath a Scarlet Sky by Mark Sullivan
hosted by Diann Lock




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Solution to February 8, 2020 Puzzle

1	M	O	R	N	5	C	O	O					
8	A	R	I	A	9	A	L	O	U	D			
11	S	L	I	P	P	E	D	I	N	T	O		
13	P	I	E	S	14	N	A	S	C	A	R		
15	I	B	N	16	S	I	T	U					
17	N	U	T	18	F	U	R	19	R	A	D		
22	A	F	A	R	24	R	E	V					
25	A	S	T	U	T	E	27	B	E	N	D		
28	R	H	I	N	E	S	29	S	T	O	N	E	S
30	M	O	O	D	S	31	I	N	C	A			
32	Y	E	N	33	G	O	E	S					



My Little Slice of Paradise

by Kathy Brock
The Art of Piling On

The Naples News published an article on February 18th titled "Everglades City Gets \$295K to Fix Sewage Plant". It's great that News writer Peter Riley acknowledges Everglades City for being awarded the grant.

What's not so great is his article did what most others have done historically when writing about our City.

First let's own that there are plenty of things in the City's history that help mold it into the perfect punching bag. But, if you take the slice of history from September 2017 to today you would be reading something entirely different. For example:

Only 5 days before the hurricane, Howie Grimm was appointed Pro-tem mayor replacing Sammy Hamilton. Natural disaster strikes-worst case scenario realized on September 10th. All businesses suffer flood damage and close. 60% of homes sustain severe flood damage. The city is in ruins. **But...**

The City rallies. The new city government appoints representatives for all major county boards & councils. The city methodically corrects issues not addressed by the previous administration for what seems like decades.

By mid-2018 new homes are being built all around town, and the building continues throughout 2019 in prices ranging from \$200K to over \$1MM.

Businesses reopen. New businesses open. More new businesses are under construction in 2020 and slated to open mid-year.

A new playground is installed at the City park in December 2019 completely funded by charitable contributions spearheaded by the Everglades Lions Club. The \$90K playground completes phase II of a four-phase park transformation.

In February 2020, the Everglades Area Visitor Center is opened. The ribbon cutting was attended by Federal, State, County, and City officials and dignitaries including a representative, from the office of Senator Marco Rubio, Congressman Mario Diaz Balart, Park Superintendent Pedro Ramos, CVB Chief Executive Officer, Jack Wert, City Mayor Howie Grimm, City Clerk Dottie Joiner, Councilwoman Elaine Middelstaedt to name only a few. These folks seemed to notice the City's resurrection.

If you drive around the streets of the city there are a few reminders of what happened here on September 10, 2017, but not many.

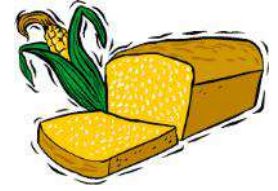
Now, I am not saying that we don't deserve a little kick every now and then. Clearly, things percolated below the surface for far too many years. And we are all responsible for that.

However, you would have to be blind not to see the progress the City is making today. Is everything humming in the City like a Swiss watch? No. Is there more work to be done? Of course there is.

But it seems disingenuous (or maybe just easier) to rehash the ills of the past that have appeared in article after article without also citing some of the obvious progress like what was documented above.

Perhaps it feels uncomfortable for others to see Everglades City in another light. Maybe we are just a convenient punching bag? Negative news sells more papers than positive news..."if it bleeds, it leads" you know. But my headline reads differently and defies publishing wisdom. "Everglades City Proving Naysayers Wrong".

The Island Kitchen
The Best Cornbread
deSha's Tavern Recipe



Ingredients:

- ✘ 3 cups self-rising cornmeal
- ✘ 1/3 cup sugar
- ✘ 6 eggs
- ✘ 1 1/2 cups vegetable oil
- ✘ 3 cups sour cream
- ✘ 2 2/3 cups cream-style corn

Honey Butter

- ✘ 1 1/4 cups butter, softened
- ✘ 1/2 cup honey
- ✘ Mix softened butter and honey together

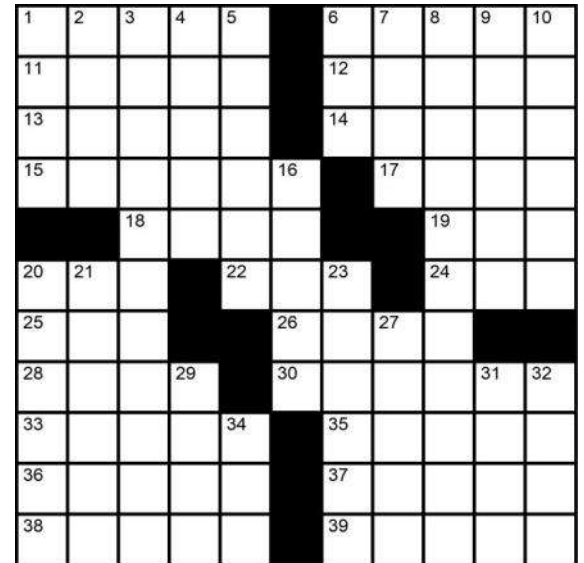
Directions:

- ✘ Combine all ingredients in order listed; mix well. Pour into a greased 9-inch-x-13-inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for approximately 30 minutes.
- ✘ Makes 12 squares of cornbread. This recipe was submitted by Diann Lock who requested the recipe while dining at a deSha's Tavern. Yummy!
- ✘ **deSha's is a popular tavern in Cincinnati, Ohio.**

MULLET RAPPER CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Kid's #1
- 6 Just the _____ Ma'am
- 11 Operatic voice
- 12 In on
- 13 These choristers can be male or female
- 14 Annapurna locale
- 15 "The Lion King" baddies
- 17 Plunge head-first
- 18 Lab product in "Breaking Bad"
- 19 Involuntary muscular contraction
- 20 Immerse
- 22 Destroy
- 24 G M T minus 4h
- 25 Bard's before
- 26 Rock go with
- 28 The "other" white meat
- 30 Tranquil
- 33 Broadcasting
- 35 Stand
- 36 Name
- 37 Turned off
- 38 Perfume
- 39 Without emotion



2/22/20

- 3 Meet painter, surreally prone to excess
- 4 Nary a soul
- 5 Not genuine and usually inferior
- 6 Geisha's prop
- 7 Impressed
- 8 Governmental seat, usually
- 9 Country star, Tritt
- 10 Choose
- 16 Acute
- 20 Train stations
- 21 Humorously sarcastic
- 23 Samuel Goldwyn's homeland
- 27 It happens every birth day
- 29 Ceramicist's furnace
- 31 American _____
- 32 Repudiate
- 34 Soak in liquid





Poetry Street
By Katherine S. Tullie

For those of us who are lucky enough to be free of a physical or mental disability, it is sometimes hard to see all of the challenges a disabled person faces in their everyday life. We all need to open our eyes and our hearts so we can understand what they're facing and to help, if that is necessary. The challenges faced by disabled people is the inspiration for my poem called "Mountain Climbing."

There are mountains to climb
as the days go by
Limitations all around,
with setbacks, as life passes you by
You face your disability
from dusk to dawn
You wish and hope
that it will one day be gone
Two steps forward and one step back
Hoping to get back on track
Discrimination from others is all around
It's enough to knock you to the ground
It is not easy to overcome
all that is in the way
I wish for you an easier path
to pave the way
Mountain climbing
is not easy for anyone, for sure
Let's all pray for the disability cure
Try to look forward
to a future that is bright
And pray for those in difficult situations
to be in the light

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FREE GUIDED BIKE TOURS
Bike Rides Through the Everglades

Loop Road Ride, Date Changed:
February 29th
By Patty Huff



One of the all-time great bike rides in south Florida is located in three separate counties: Collier, Monroe and Miami-Dade.

Loop Road, located south of the Tamiami Trail, has an interesting history in itself but the beauty of the environment is one of its outstanding features. We hope to see lots of wildlife as we bicycle through this off-road rural area 17 miles east of Everglades City. Plan to meet and park at 9:00 a.m. at Monroe Station and we'll cycle a little over two miles to the Gator Hook Hiking Trail.

As we continue along this gravel lane, we'll pass by the southernmost point of the 1,400-mile long Florida National Scenic Trail. There are many culvert crossings in this area where we should find alligators to photograph. At 16.5 miles we will reach the paved section of Loop Road where we will turn around and travel back to Monroe Station, a total trip of 33 miles. This is a self-supported bike tour so bring spare tube, etc. What you'll need for the ride: off-road bicycle, lots of water, sunscreen, snacks, and please wear a helmet!

To sign up and receive more information, contact Patty at 239-719-0020 or email snookcity@gmail.com.

For a loop road guide go to:
<https://visitevergladescity.com/loop/>

Schedule of Rides

February 29.....Loop Road in Big Cypress
March 15.....Bear Island in the Big Cypress

Please email:
SnookCity@gmail.com
or call (239) 719-0020

Everglades National Park
Gulf Coast Center
There Are Many Events at Everglades National Park Now Through April 2020

No Entry Fee for National Parks Week:
April 18-April 26, 2020

There is a full schedule of educational events this season at the Gulf Coast Center located at 815 Oyster Bar Lane, Everglades City. Learn about the wonders of the Everglades from one of our local experts.

Stop in the at the Gulf Coast Center to pick up a schedule or obtain it by download:
<https://visitevergladescity.com/enp/> The Park opens at 8:00 am daily.

There is More Than Maps at the New Everglades Area Visitor Center

The new Everglades Area Visitor Center has been busy each day since its grand opening on February 1st.

If you have not visited because "you know the area" you may want to stop in anyway. Why? The center not only stocks rack cards and brochures for area businesses, it also has a nice assortment of local art and artists' work with a local flair.

There is some beautiful aerial photography, nature photography and nature prints. There are prints with historical relevance. There are some abstract pieces from local artists. You can also view the Everglades Society for Historic Preservation's art collection that includes work by Bob Klotz.

There is pottery, and some jewelry from local artisans and more items arriving regularly..

The center's hours are 9 am to 4 pm daily. If you are an artist interested in having your art in the center, you can call the center at 239-232-0473.

Everglades Area Visitor Center's Featured Artist Reception
February 22, 1 pm
DONALD SUNSHINE

There will be a reception at the Everglades Area Visitor Center for Artist, Donald Sunshine. Sunshine's work include paintings of local history and historic buildings of the Everglades Area.

Donald Sunshine FAIA, Professor Emeritus of Architecture, Virginia Tech, is an award winning architect, author, and artist.

He is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, past president of the Virginia Society American Institute of Architects, and Distinguished Visiting Professor, University of Arizona.

Professor Sunshine and his artist and collaborator wife Joanna, live on their family farm in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. There, in his mid-80s, he continues his

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Living Gulf Coast by Charles Sobczak

Florida Black Bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*) Other names: Bear / Status: FL = endangered, IUCN = LC / Length: 4-6 ft (1.2-1.8 m) / Height at shoulder: 2.5-3 ft (.76-.91 m) / Weight: 150-300 lb. (68-136 kg) / Life span: to 27 years / Breeds: in the early summer with the female giving birth to twins or triplets mid-winter / Found: All six counties, near coast, mainland / Months Found: Present all year round.

Unlike the coyote, wild turkey, and white-tailed deer, the black bear has not done so well adapting to manmade changes in the environment. Secretive and with a low reproductive rate, the black bear struggles throughout its broad range to hang onto its remnant populations from the Midwest to Florida. According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 2,500 to 3,000 black bears are left in the state; some estimates indicate less than half of that. Because of the black bear's reclusive nature and tendency to keep to dense forests with heavy understories, getting an accurate census of the largest land carnivore in Florida is a daunting task.



In Southwest Florida one of the best remaining intact habitats is the Big Cypress National Preserve in southern Collier County. The chance of actually seeing a black bear in Florida are only slightly better than seeing a panther. You might come across bear signs, however, such as bear scat, clawed trees, or tracks (its hind paws resemble a squat, oddly shaped human foot with claws). In the Sunshine State the bear does not hibernate, although it will sometimes remain dormant

during periods of cold weather.

Bear hunting was legal in Florida until 1993 when the state imposed a moratorium that remains in place today. The bear is still hunted across the United States, where more than 18,000 bears are killed annually. Canada, which has an estimated black bear population approaching 400,000, also allows controlled hunts of this impressive predator. The largest black bear ever taken was in North Carolina in 1998. It weighed 880 pounds. The meat of black bear is said to taste similar to pork.

Human/bear encounters are rare and seldom fatal. A mother with cubs presents one of the most obvious dangers, but a young, healthy male is also of serious concern. Most attacks occur in places where bears have been fed, such as dump sites or campgrounds, and happen because the animal loses its fear of people. There have been only 52 documented cases of fatal black bear attacks in North America in the past 100 years, none of which was ever recorded in Florida.

The bear is an omnivore. More than 85 percent of its diet consists of herbs, grasses, fruit, acorns, nuts, and tubers. It is very fond of honey and bee larvae, a trait that often brings it into direct conflict with Florida's beekeepers. It also eats termites, carpenter ants, and other colony-building insects. Less commonly, the black bear will take white-tailed deer and smaller mammals such as opossums and raccoons. It will readily feed on carrion and has been known to chase panthers off of a fresh kill.

In Florida the bear is at the top of the food chain. Only the cubs, which are born extremely small at 7.8 to 10.4 ounces, are vulnerable to predation. The majority of bear cub deaths do not come from other predators but from male black bears wanting to induce the female back into estrus. The female becomes reproductive between three and five years of age and rears two to three cubs every two years.

One of the leading causes of bear mortality in Florida are automobile collisions on remote highways. With its slow reproductive rate and need for large, unbroken tracts of forested lands, it is highly unlikely that the Florida black bear will be removed from its endangered status anytime soon.

Photo: Black bear by Judd Patterson

Charles Sobczak is a nature writer and photographer from Sanibel Island. He has published several books including The Living Gulf Coast, Alligators, Sharks & Panthers and other interesting titles.



Fishing the 10,000 Islands with Captain Mike Merritt

March is approaching and the fishing has continued to be good here. Shrimp have been the go to bait if you want to catch lots of fish and a variety. All the good eating fish like the Sheepshead, Mangrove Snapper, Seatrout, Black Drum and Redfish have been biting really good like this. Now with the warmer waters and weather changing we are getting more Snook along the outside Islands. We got a nice 38" Snook just last week and she was a beauty that obviously came in from offshore.

So, if it is Snook you are after the season is open March 1st. Hopefully we have a good year on the big fish, as we have caught tons of smaller fish all winter. Jig fishing for them is my favorite way this time of year. Winds will dictate whether you fish on the outside or in the back country. This is the windy month so you just never know. Live bait should be moving back into the islands also and this is why the Snook show up. So, if you have some live Pilchards then you are good to go!

Reds have continued to bite and I have only recently noticed a slow down in the amount of Reds we are catching. There are still plenty around but we are now catching more undersized fish. Again, shrimp will do it every time but a jig fished slow is also a sure bet.

Seatrout have not really been as good as usual on the grass flats but we are catching plenty of them in other places. The rivers, deep holes, and drop offs around some of the islands are producing good fish. Just remember the new regulations!

It is a great month to get out and fish artificials as everything is hitting on the jigs. Tipping with a small piece of shrimp will help with some of the species but a plain jig will do just fine. Keep a look out for Tarpon as they will also be here this month in bigger numbers. Whatever you target it is a great month so get out there and make some memories!

Fish With Captain Mike Merritt
Call: 561-252-4324
SnookFishing1@juno.com

Get Accurate 2020 Tides for Individual Southwest Florida Rivers & Fishing Hot Spots at:
www.visitevergladescity.com/tides/



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LOCAL EXTRA

February City Council Update



At the February City Council meeting the Mayor announced that the City was awarded a \$295 million grant to repair the existing sewer and wastewater facility as the City waits in line for grants for a new facility. This is a 100% grant with no matching funds by the City required.

Resident Gail Davenport was granted a variance for her historic home on Storter Avenue so it helps minimize the cost impact of elevating the home. Her home, like many older homes, was constructed very close to the front property line. The city maintained that the porch was in the setback (her property, but within a required setback) but agreed that moving the house back or taking the porch off would cause unnecessary grief for the homeowner. The case is now closed.

The solar street light project is set to begin in stages. The city will install 90 lights overall, but do so in stages as they must prepay for them and wait for grant reimbursement. The first 20 lights should be in the works sometime in March.

The next City Council Meeting will be held on March 3rd at 7 pm in City Hall, 2nd floor.

Major Retail Chains Reconsidering Expansion Model

If you were dreaming about your favorite big box store or mass retailer expanding into SW Florida, don't bank on it.

Consumer spending behavior is changing and retailers have taken notice.

In 2018, Kroger, the country's largest grocer, announced an investment into Lucky's Supermarkets. At the time, Lucky's was experiencing growth and an almost cult-like following.

Two years later, Kroger pulls out and Lucky's announces that they are shuttering stores across the country including the store in East Naples.

What happened? As consumers turn to online e-tailers more and more, brick and mortar retailers are feeling the pinch.

Most indicators point to accelerated growth in online sales...at the expense of in-store sales.

Same day delivery of groceries, and other consumer products, threaten what was once considered sacred ground. This has big retailers like Walmart looking to the future as evidenced by their \$2 billion purchase of jet.com so that they could compete with Amazon. If you don't like the trend, you may want to drive to the store more often!

Fakahatchee Strand News

Winter Fakahatchee Tram Tours Are the Perfect Day-Excursion!

Cooler temperatures make winter the perfect time to experience a swamp walk or tram tour in Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park. The park, east of Naples, is Florida's largest and has been called "the Amazon of North America."

Ghostrider Tram Tours of the park are from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The naturalist led tours are offered for \$25 per person most Thursdays in February and March and are named for the famous ghost orchid found in the park.

The Naturalist Led Tram Tour and Swamp Walks are from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. This excursion takes visitors into knee-high water and is offered on most Tuesdays during the season.

For directions, complete details, pricing and required reservations for all Fakahatchee adventures: www.orchidswamp.org and click on Tours and Events. Please be advised that tours sell out quickly so it is recommended to call and schedule your dates as soon as possible!

You can reach us by phone at (800) 362-8590. We look forward to seeing you there!

The Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park is perhaps the best example of a subtropical, strand swamp in the United States. The Fakahatchee Strand is a linear swamp forest, approximately twenty miles long by five miles wide and oriented from north to south.

FREE Ranger Led Programs at

Big Cypress. Reserve Your Spot Now

Join us as we get out and explore the wonders of the Big Cypress Swamp! Protecting over 729,000 acres of this vast swamp, Big Cypress National Preserve contains a mixture of tropical and temperate plant communities that are home to a diversity of wildlife, including the elusive and majestic Florida panther.

Museum of the Everglades Events March-April 2020

◆March 2nd – May 30th EXHIBIT – “Snakes of the Everglades – Predators in Paradise”

◆Friday, March 13th – Mid-Month Movie (in the parking lot) featuring “Mega Python vs. Gatoroid”(2011) Monster snakes battle a mutant alligator in the Everglades while rival scientists played by former pop-stars Tiffany and Debbie Gibson save the planet.

◆Thursday, March 19th – The Python Problem – How Bad is it and What Can Be Done?

◆Saturday, April 25th 10am-2pm Tamiami Trail Celebration/MoE Birthday Party Saturday – Join us for classic cars, live music, birthday cake and our 2nd Annual Laundry Cart Races!

◆Thursday, April 16th – Dynamite, Dredges, & Determination: Building the Tamiami Trail

1st Baptist Church of Everglades City Event Announcement

Submitted by Rev. Mike Peyton

Join us at First Baptist Church of Everglades City on Saturday, March 14th at 6:00 p.m. and see Trevor Thomas, “Mr. Drama.” Trevor has worked professionally in theater, commercials, television, and film.

He keeps a schedule of approximately 180 engagements each year and he can be seen at churches, concerts, and various special events. Everything varies from funny to serious; however, all of the material is worshipful, evangelistic, and edifying for the church.

It is an unforgettable worship experience for the believer and a picture of salvation for the lost. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is always the theme!

When: March 14, 6 pm

Where: 1st Baptist Church, Everglades City



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EATERIES & AREA WORSHIP

Angler's Cove, Port of the Islands

(642-1025): Closed Mon– Tue-Thurs, 5-11
Fri-Sun Noon - 11 pm

Camellia Street Grille (239-695-2003):

11:00 am – 9:00 pm, Mon to Sat

City Seafood (239-695-4700):

8:00 am – 10:00 am; breakfast
Noon-6pm Lunch & Dinner

Everglades Fishing Co. / Nely's Corner

Open Daily 6 am to 10 pm

203 Collier Avenue, (239-695-4222)

Havana Café (239-695-2214):

Open Daily 7 am to 4 pm

See our ad on page 10!

Hole in the Wall Pizza (239-695-4444)

M-Th 11am-3pm, Fri & Sat 11 am-9 pm

Island Café (239-695-0003):

6:00 am – 9:00 pm; daily

Ivey House (239-695-3299) (Private)

7:00 am – 9:00 am; daily (for guests only)

Joanie's Crab Café (239-695-2682):

Open Daily 10:30 am to 5 pm, Closed Wed.

Rod & Gun (239-695-2101):

11:30 am - 8:00 pm; daily

Triad Seafood & Café (239-695-2662):

Open M-Sat, 10:30 to 6pm, Sun. 10:30-5

MARKETS

Right Choice Market (239-695-4535):

Open 7 days, 9 am to 7 pm

Grimm's Stone Crab (239-695-3222):

Open 8-5, Mon—Sat. Closed Sunday.

Fresh Produce

Right Choice Supermarket

See listing under "markets"

SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICES

Chokoloskee Family Church

Sunday: 10 am Sch., 11 am Worship
Sun. 6 pm & Wed. 7 pm Bible Teaching

Copeland Baptist Church

Sunday: 10 am School, 11 am Worship

Everglades Community Church

11:00 am Sunday Worship, See ad p. 11

1st Baptist Church of Everglades City

9:45 am Sunday School, 11 am Worship
6 pm Sunday, 6 pm Wed. Bible Study

Holy Family Catholic Church

Mass at 10:30 am

St. Finbarr Catholic Church, Naples

Phone: 239-417-2084

San Marco Catholic Church, Marco Isl.

239-394-5181

BARRON RIVER TIDES

LAT: 25.87° N LONG: 81.37°W
More Tides On: www.visitevergladescity.com!

2/22/2020	Sat	1:25 AM	2.6	H
2/22/2020	Sat	9:09 AM	-0.3	L
2/22/2020	Sat	2:48 PM	2.08	H
2/22/2020	Sat	9:16 PM	0.45	L
2/23/2020	Sun	2:01 AM	2.62	H
2/23/2020	Sun	9:45 AM	-0.25	L
2/23/2020	Sun	3:09 PM	2.17	H
2/23/2020	Sun	9:52 PM	0.37	L
2/24/2020	Mon	2:36 AM	2.6	H
2/24/2020	Mon	10:19 AM	-0.17	L
2/24/2020	Mon	3:34 PM	2.24	H
2/24/2020	Mon	10:28 PM	0.31	L
2/25/2020	Tue	3:11 AM	2.53	H
2/25/2020	Tue	10:51 AM	-0.07	L
2/25/2020	Tue	4:01 PM	2.3	H
2/25/2020	Tue	11:04 PM	0.25	L
2/26/2020	Wed	3:49 AM	2.41	H
2/26/2020	Wed	11:21 AM	0.06	L
2/26/2020	Wed	4:30 PM	2.31	H
2/26/2020	Wed	11:41 PM	0.21	L
2/27/2020	Thu	4:29 AM	2.25	H
2/27/2020	Thu	11:47 AM	0.2	L
2/27/2020	Thu	4:56 PM	2.3	H
2/28/2020	Fri	12:19 AM	0.18	L
2/28/2020	Fri	5:13 AM	2.06	H
2/28/2020	Fri	12:08 PM	0.35	L
2/28/2020	Fri	5:19 PM	2.26	H
2/29/2020	Sat	1:04 AM	0.17	L
2/29/2020	Sat	6:05 AM	1.84	H
2/29/2020	Sat	12:22 PM	0.49	L
2/29/2020	Sat	5:37 PM	2.22	H
3/1/2020	Sun	2:01 AM	0.16	L
3/1/2020	Sun	7:17 AM	1.65	H
3/1/2020	Sun	12:34 PM	0.62	L
3/1/2020	Sun	6:01 PM	2.19	H
3/2/2020	Mon	3:12 AM	0.12	L
3/2/2020	Mon	8:47 AM	1.53	H
3/2/2020	Mon	12:52 PM	0.74	L
3/2/2020	Mon	6:42 PM	2.16	H
3/3/2020	Tue	4:23 AM	0.04	L
3/3/2020	Tue	10:23 AM	1.54	H
3/3/2020	Tue	1:21 PM	0.86	L
3/3/2020	Tue	8:06 PM	2.17	H
3/4/2020	Wed	5:27 AM	-0.08	L
3/4/2020	Wed	12:04 PM	1.69	H
3/4/2020	Wed	5:15 PM	0.9	L
3/4/2020	Wed	9:57 PM	2.27	H
3/5/2020	Thu	6:25 AM	-0.21	L
3/5/2020	Thu	12:48 PM	1.88	H
3/5/2020	Thu	6:24 PM	0.83	L
3/5/2020	Thu	11:13 PM	2.48	H
3/6/2020	Fri	7:17 AM	-0.33	L
3/6/2020	Fri	1:18 PM	2.06	H
3/6/2020	Fri	7:18 PM	0.7	L

Snook Season to Reopen March 1st



Snook harvest season will reopen in the Everglades City Area and 10,000 islands on March 1.

However, state waters further north from Gordon Pass county line in Collier County to the Pasco/Hernando through is catch-and-release ONLY through Aug. 31, 2020.

According to the FWC, "Snook are one of the many reasons Florida is the Fishing Capital of the World.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) encourages anglers to carefully handle and release snook they are not going to keep, which helps them survive after being released and helps ensure species' abundance for anglers today and generations to come. To learn more about fish handling, visit MyFWC.com/Marine and click on "Recreational Regulations" and "Fish Handling."

If you are coming to the area to fish for snook and would like to do so with a guide, there are numerous guides in our area that can provide an excellent, and productive day of fishing! These guides can be found on the website www.visitevergladescity.com, click on the directory, and then click "guide services."

Please note the following: Slot Limit: Not less than 28" or more than 33" total length Daily Bag Limit: 1 per harvester per day; zero captain and crew for-hire limit. No matter how you do it, you are sure to have a great time!



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Sunday School Oct. 13th—March
www.ever-community-church.com

CLASSIFIED ADS

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FOR SALE: 3/2 Trailer in Chok. Isl. Pk. Partially furnished, leather sleeper sofa, 2 Q beds, tables. Remodeled after Irma. New central AC. Sleeps 6. Paid 30K, make reasonable offer, moving! Call/text: 907-888-4004, email: wwrmm@aol.com.

FOR SALE: Fisherman's Cove #1 Park model with large enclosed addition. Property includes boat dock. Asking \$99,000. For info call Karen at Glades Realty (239) 695-4299.

FOR SALE TRUCK: White Dodge Ram 1500 Pickup. Single Cab, 6.5 foot bed, HEMI engine, cold AC, and runs great. ~84000 miles. Asking \$9000. Call Steve for more information at 239-695-2397.

FOR SALE: 2005 Shearwater 20', 150 HP Optimax w/400 hrs. GPS, JL audio, jack plate, runs perfect. \$15,500. 954-643-2469, ask for Jeff.

FOR SALE: Large Outdoor Resorts waterfront lot #149 w/ aluminum boat lift. Overlooks Chok Bay, new Trex deck, steps for kayak launch, custom landscape + ORA amenities. Call Jennifer brown at 239-494-7270 or Dan at 954-579-2364.

FOR SALE: Two canal lots side by side in Chokoloskee. For more information call 561-622-6011.

HUGE GARAGE SALE: March 7th from 9:00 a.m. till 2:00 p.m. on Plantation Island 129 Flicker Lane. If you are looking for a treasure you are sure to find it here!

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 at 239-695-2445.

FOR SALE: Canal front vacant lot on Lopez Ln, Chok. Quick & easy access to the Bay and Gulf w/no bridges! . Zoned for homes or mfg. homes. Asking \$99,000. Glades Realty 239-695-4299 www.GladesRealty.com.

RV PAD FOR RENT: In E-City RV park. Full hook-up, 30 amps, 25 x 35 pad, restroom, shower, laundry & rec. privileges, 55+. Wkly, Mthly. Call 269-214-8623 or 941-374-0277.

FOR SALE: Condo @ The Estuary. Corner unit, 2 BR 2 BA + den. Nicely furnished. Large double car garage. Boat ramp & pool onsite. Glades Realty, 239-695-4299, www.GladesRealty.com, \$274,000.

FOR SALE by Owner: 3/2 stilt home at 440 Riverside Drive on Tarpon Creek in Everglades City. Private dock, boat ramp. High & dry in move in condition. See the listing on Zillow. \$449K. Call 954-235-1913.

FOR SALE: 2005 Action Craft Flats Master Boat with 115 HP Yamaha and trailer. 17' fiberglass hull. In exc condition w/trolling motor, marine radio, baitwell, & more. Just serviced. Runs great. Priced below bk value at \$14,500 OBO. Tom (406) 595-1453.

BOAT FOR SALE: 2005 Trophy 18' cabin cruiser. 115 HP Mercury 4/stroke with less than 400 hrs. AM/FM/Marine radio. GPS, Bimini top, and trailer. The boat is located in Everglades City. \$12,500, OBO. For more information, please call 239-695-2006.

The MULLET RAPPER

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

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Lee Cypress, Copeland, Jerome & Ochopee

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We encourage contrasting points of view

The views expressed in signed articles are not necessarily those of the editors or publisher.

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"The Everglades is a test. If we pass it, we may get to keep the planet." ~ Marjory Stoneman Douglas
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