



A New Chapter for Bank of Everglades

By Patty Huff

What a great day it was to celebrate the groundbreaking of the historic Bank of Everglades Building on February 21! Approximately 95 people attended the ceremony, and we would like to thank the community for its support, Classic Carpentry for organizing the event, and our caterers Patricia Briggs, Sherry Geiger, and Debbie Dowacter.

Not only is our historical society saving this iconic building from deterioration but also enhancing its purpose for the good of the community

and our visitors. The building will be the home of the Everglades Area Visitor Center & Trail Town Headquarters (which is currently located across the street at 207 West Broadway). Everglades City was designated a Florida Trail Town in 2019, so it was natural that the Bank Building be the central source of information about the amenities and the opportunities for tourists to experience the wonders of our seven national and state parks and preserves. Everglades City is the

hub of so many outdoor activities, and our visitor center has brochures and maps pertaining to bicycling, hiking, paddling, and birdwatching. Our volunteers make recommendations based on specifically what the visitor is looking for, whether it's learning about our history, getting out on the water or into nature, or where to eat.

In addition to serving as Everglades City's and the area's Visitor Center, the Bank Building will be the focal point

See **Bank**, p4



Let's Roll

By Denise Wauters

Something exciting is happening in Everglades City, and it's got wheels! The Gator Island Family Fun Center, located at 201 S Copeland Ave, is now partially open, bringing a whole new way to explore the area.

Right now, they're rolling out scooter and golf cart rentals, so whether you want to cruise through town, roll down to Chokoloskee, or just feel the wind in your hair, you're covered. Rentals are available for two, four, or eight hours, so take a quick spin or make a whole day of it.

But Gator Island is more than just a fun way to get around—it's the first step in something much bigger. Owner Tukey Oliver envisions a true gathering place for the community, a spot where families can connect, kids can stay active, and everyone has a place to belong. "It's not about the money," Tukey shares. "I want to create something meaningful, a space where people feel welcome and engaged. I was lucky to grow up with plenty of positive activities, and I want to give that same opportunity to our kids."

See **Roll**, p4

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Bears in Those Everglades!
Pastor Jesse Wilson's first article in the Mullet Rapper p6



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Students influence new community center plans! p9



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Local Event Calendar

March 16, 2025 to April 26, 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
March 16 Turkey Shoot p3 Fresh Market p3 Rapper Submissions Due #471	17 St. Patrick's Day 	18 Code + P&Z p3	19 Food Pantry p2 Wilderness Wed p7	20 Ladies' Coffee L Williams 8:30a Third Thursday p7	21 Fresh Market p3	22 Art in Glades p2
23 Fresh Market p3	24 No School	25	26 Food Pantry p2 Outreach Prog p3 HavAnnA Paint p2	27 Ladies' Coffee Island Cafe 8:30a	28 Grapefruit Gala p7 Fresh Market p3	29 - RAPPER #471  New Moon
30 Fresh Market p3 Rapper Submissions Due #472	31	April 1 City Council p3 Díaz-Balart's p3	2 Food Pantry p2	3 Ladies' Coffee City Seafood 8:30a	4 Fresh Market p3	5 5K p9
6 Fresh Market p3	7	8	9 Food Pantry p2	10 Ladies' Coffee HavAnnA 8:30a Book Club p3	11 Fresh Market p3	12 - RAPPER #472  Full Moon
13 Fresh Market p3 Rapper Submissions Due #473	14	15 Tax Day Code + P&Z p3	16 Food Pantry p2	17 Ladies' Coffee Island Cafe 8:30a Third Thursday p7	18 Fresh Market p3	19 Eggstravaganza p2
20 Easter Sunday	21	22	23 Food Pantry p2 Outreach Prog p3	24 Ladies' Coffee City Seafood 8:30a	25 No School	26 - RAPPER #473 Museum Party p2

Events

Community

March 22 | 10 am - 1 pm
Art in the Glades

Join us for ART in the GLADES on Saturday, March 22, from 10 am to 1 pm. at McLeod Park in Everglades City. A delightful Arts & Crafts Sale showcasing unique local creations. Admission is free. More Information: (239) 451-0265.

March 28 | 5 pm - 8 pm
Grapefruit Gala

Join us in the parking lot at Museum of the Everglades for our annual whimsical country dance. Enjoy live music, tasty finger foods, and complimentary wine along with fresh local citrus as we celebrate the birthday of county founder Barron Gift Collier. No formal attire required at this gala. Just bring a chair and don't forget your dancing shoes.

March 26 | 4 pm
HavAnnA Painting

Join local artist Lisa Gilmore of Stroke of Serendipity at HavAnnA Cafe in Chokoloskee on March 26th from 4 to 6 pm for an Open Paint event! Stay tuned for more details: Instagram [@Hav.annacafe](#) and Facebook [@HavannaCafeEverglades](#).

April 10 & 11
Florida Greenways & Trails

The Florida Greenways and Trails Council will be having ty, designated a Trail Town in 2019. The public is invited to attend the meeting from 10 am to 3:30 pm on Thursday, April 10, and 9:15 to 12 noon on Friday, April 11. Details of the meeting and the agenda will be posted online closer to the meeting at: <https://floridadep.gov/parks/ogt/content/florida-greenways-and-trails-council>.

April 19 | 10 am - 1 pm
Eggstravaganza

Bring your basket and join us for the Annual Everglades City Eggstravaganza on April 19 from 10 am to 1 pm, where the fun happens in McLeod Park on Copeland Ave and Hibiscus Street West in Everglades City. This event features 4,000 candy-filled Easter eggs waiting to be found, inflatables for the little ones to bounce on, cash-filled eggs adding an extra thrill to the hunt, free food to fuel the excitement, amazing giveaways adding to the joy, a petting zoo and pony rides for extra fun, and lots of happy kids enjoying the festivities and creating cherished memories with their families!

April 26 | 9 am - 2 pm
Anniversary & Museum Party

This combination celebration of the 97th Anniversary of the completion of the Tamiami Trail and the "birthday" of Museum of the Everglades (opened on the 70th Anniversary of the Trail in 1998) is a fun-filled afternoon with live music, complimentary hot dogs, and the only laundry cart races in the country! Join us early for a complimentary walking tour, sign up and take part in the races, peruse the display of classic cars, or just relax and enjoy the music with a slice of birthday cake!

Everglades Area Information
Daily | 9:30 am - 4 pm

The Everglades Area Visitor Center is located at 207 Broadway W., Everglades City. The Visitor Center is open daily 9:30 am to 4 pm.

Food Pantry
Wednesdays | 9:30 am - Noon

Food is distributed from the rear of Everglades Community Church located at 101 S. Copeland Ave., Everglades City. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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MULLET RAPPER

Publisher

Denise Wauters, Paradise Web
7000 Wilkinson Street,
Bay St Louis, MS 39520
MulletRapper@gmail.com
(941) 999-1237

2025 In Stand Dates

- January 18
- February 1
- February 15
- March 1
- March 15
- March 29
- April 12
- April 26
- May 24
- June 21
- July 19
- August 16
- September 13
- October 11
- October 25
- November 8
- November 22
- December 6
- December 20

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Contributors

Patty Huff, Elaine Middelstaedt,
Marya Repko, Denise Wauters,
Pastor Jesse Wilson, Dr.
Chrissann Ruehle, Jill Whitcomb,
Michael McComas, Capt. Mike
Merritt, Dr. Cherie Allison.

Publishers Emeritus

Kathleen Brock, K Bee Marketing, Inc.
Patricia A. Huff, Snook Publications.

Publisher's Statement

We cover news and events for Everglades City, Chokoloskee, Plantation Island, Port of the Islands, Copeland, Jerome, Ochopee, Goodland, Lee Cypress, Big Cypress, and the 10,000 Islands. Our aim is accurate and diverse reporting. Opinions expressed may differ from 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*

Seeking Mementos



Plans are underway to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Everglades Community Church, founded in 1926. The Historical Committee is organizing the event and researching files and historical materials. The committee is also seeking pictures, letters, or documents.

For more information or to contribute call (239) 784-7318 or text (615) 889-8560.

New Banners

By Patty Huff



As you drive into town, you may have noticed the new banners on the light poles. The Everglades Society for Historic Preservation has installed nine signs encouraging our visitors to "Stay & Play" in "Historic Everglades City". We want tourists coming into town to recognize all that our area has to offer: historic buildings, fishing, hiking, biking, paddling, birding, good restaurants and much more. We will soon be including the 2025 high school graduates!

If you are interested in sponsoring any of these banners, please contact Patty at (239) 719-0020.




Joanie's Blue Crab Cafe (Ochopee)
Weekends

Little Bar (Goodland) Every night.

Crabby Lady (Goodland) Weekends

Stans (Goodland) Tuesday - Sundays.
Shows start at 1 & 5

 **Everglades Lions Club**
Family Friendly Event!
Turkey Shoot
March 15 10am-5pm
March 16 12pm-5pm
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Ochopee, FL 34141
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Rev. Dr. Bob N. Wallace Pastor
 **Sunday Worship**
11:00 am
Online Sermons
EvergladesCommunity.Church
(239)784-7318
101 S. Copeland Ave, Everglades City

BOOKCLUB
2024-25 Season
Join us for our final book club meeting at 9:30 am.
April 10
Doll House
By Fiona Davis
Host: Connie Barker
Location: Home of Host
Info: dmlock333@gmail.com

Ladies Coffee

Thursdays | 8:30 am

Ladies Coffee is a casual weekly gathering for women every Thursday at different local breakfast spots or homes. No rules or fees, just a welcoming space to connect and forge friendships.

Rep. Díaz-Balart's in EC Office

First Tuesday | 2:30 pm

Every first Tuesday at 2:30 pm, a member of Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart's team will be at Everglades City Hall to assist with federal casework, including USPS, social security, veterans' benefits, immigration, and other federal issues.

City Council Meeting

First Tuesdays | 7 pm

City Council meetings are held every 1st Tuesday of the month @ 7 pm in the City Council room, 2nd floor City Hall. The public is invited to attend. Info: <https://www.cityofeverglades.org>

Code Enforcement + P&Z

Third Tuesdays

Code Enforcement and Planning & Zoning meetings are held monthly on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. City Council room, 2nd floor City Hall. Info: <https://www.cityofeverglades.org/Meetings-Agendas>

Fresh Fruit & Vegetables

Friday & Sunday

Find farm-fresh produce Fridays and Sundays from 10 am to 2 pm next to the Everglades City Post Office.

Holy Family Church

Outreach Program

Forth Wednesday | 9 am - 11 am

Volunteers from SVDP San Marco Conference offer financial assistance at Holy Family Church on the fourth Wednesday of each month from 9 to 11 a.m. Appointments are required—call (239) 259-4591 or (239) 259-4593 or email svdpsanmarco@gmail.com with your name, phone number, and type of assistance needed.

Live Music

Gator Hole Bar (Everglades City)
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HavAnnA Cafe (Chokoloskee)
Thursdays - Sundays

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\$795,000

Bank

From Page 1



for the community to enjoy indoor and outdoor concerts, lectures, art shows, special events, local crafts, and much more. All this will be accessible on the first floor where there is ample room. The vault will be the "Bob Flick" theater, which will play Wind Across the Everglades, the only request Bob Flick asked of us. There will be a conference room on the second floor for our local organizations to use,

two classrooms for a wide variety of activities, and a historical library. Our historical society has been receiving interesting artifacts from people around South Florida, which will be on display. We will continue to work closely with the Museum of the Everglades, as well as United Arts Collier and other county organizations, to coordinate events so as not to overlap but to enhance the programs offered to our community.

This \$7 million project is a significant milestone in our ongoing effort to preserve local history while creating a dynamic new resource for both residents and visitors. However, funding remains a challenge. We still need \$4 million to complete the restoration, and I am hopeful that assistance from the State Legislature and contributions from the public will help bring this vision to life.

The Bank of Everglades, originally established in 1923—the same year Collier County was founded—played a crucial role in the region's early development. Its revival not only honors this legacy but also ushers in a new era of community engagement and tourism. Among those present at the groundbreaking ceremony were Barry



Photo by Marc Rasmussen Consulting

Collier, who expressed admiration for the commitment to preserving history, as well as officials from Collier County, the National Park Service, and representatives from state and federal government. Their presence underscored the widespread support for the project and its potential impact on the community.

With construction now underway, excitement continues to build for the day when the doors of the Bank of Everglades will reopen, once again playing a central role in the life of Everglades City. So, stay tuned as we move forward on this exciting project to benefit both our residents and our tourists! 🐾

Roll

From Page 1



Permits are in the works for the next phase, which includes outdoor activities, and community events. Once approved, construction will begin.

Gator Island will be a go-to destination for both tourists and locals, offering axe throwing, mini golf, and a game lounge for full-family fun.



For now, though, the adventure starts with you! Grab a golf cart, hop on a scooter, and hit the road.

To book a ride or learn more visit: gatorislandfl.com. 🐾

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Everglades Visitor Center Celebrates Five Years

By Patty Huff



School, who began volunteering nearly two years ago and has been an incredible help, especially during the summer months! Gena will graduate

The Everglades Area Visitor Center is celebrating its fifth season at the Glades Building, located at 207 West Broadway Avenue. After Hurricane Irma devastated the Welcome Center in Carnestown in September 2017, Everglades City was without a visitor center until the Everglades Society for Historic Preservation held its grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony on February 1, 2020. Since then, we have welcomed thousands of visitors each year to the Everglades area, all thanks to our wonderful volunteers who work seven days a week.

We would like to recognize Gena Collins, a senior at Everglades City

this year and has accepted a paid position to assist with her upcoming college expenses. We wish her the best and extend a heartfelt thank you for being there every week for our visitors. We will miss you!

In March, many of our seasonal volunteers begin to leave, so we also want to say thank you and wish you a wonderful spring and summer. You have made managing the Visitor Center effortless and fun!

If there is another student or full-time resident interested in greeting visitors from around the world, please call me at (239) 719-0020. We guarantee you will enjoy it!



AI: Your Secret Gardening Tool - Making Your Garden Thrive

By Dr. Chrissann Ruehle, DBA, MBA, CPM
AI Consultant and Strategist, & Management Faculty at Florida Gulf Coast University

A New Season, A New Tool

As March brings in prime gardening season in the Everglades, local gardeners are discovering an unexpected ally in their quest for the perfect garden: artificial intelligence, or AI. While it might seem unusual to blend traditional gardening with cutting-edge technology, new AI tools are revolutionizing how we plan, maintain, and optimize our gardens, especially in our unique climate.

Smart Design for Local Conditions

Everglades area gardeners face challenges like intense heat, seasonal rainfall patterns, and specific and sometimes challenging soil conditions. AI-powered garden design tools can be game-changers. These sophisticated systems create personalized garden layouts tailored to our local growing conditions, suggesting plant combinations that will thrive here. Whether you're dreaming of a native



Generated with ChatGPT 4.0 and Dall-E3

plant garden that attracts local wildlife (minus the alligators) or seeking a low-maintenance landscape that can withstand our summer heat, AI can help visualize and plan your ideal garden.

Your 24/7 Garden Assistant

Surprisingly, AI's capabilities extend well beyond initial design. Modern AI-powered tools serve as round-the-clock

See AI, p10

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There's Bears in Those Everglades!

By Pastor Jesse Wilson
Chokoloskee Family Church

When my wife and I moved to the Everglades in 2019 to take the pastorate on Chokoloskee Island, we figured the change from one rural area to another would be simple. We were in for quite a surprise! Coming from Brooksville, Florida, to the heart of Everglades National Park brought with it a few surprises.

We immediately fell in love with the communities that make up the Ten Thousand Islands. The friendliness of the people was a welcome change, having lived mostly in much larger areas, such as Tampa for over a dozen years. Then we moved to a smaller community—if twenty thousand residents can be called small. The move to Brooksville gave us a taste of rural life, and we loved it.

Pulling into the golf community where we had bought a home, on any given night, we would see deer, raccoons, feral pigs, the occasional fox, a few baby alligators, and lots of rabbits! What we never saw were any black bears. That is surprising since Florida is home to some four thousand black bears.

So, when we moved to the Everglades, we expected to see wildlife because, well, you know—we were moving from one rural area to another. Living here in the Everglades, we got used to seeing alligators on 41, deer off Turner River Road, turtles crossing the road on 29, and various species of birds. My wife saw a fox or a coyote one morning while driving to work on 41 toward Naples.

We were told when we moved down here that there were black bears in the area. Of course, we never saw any up close or far away for the first few years. That all changed one Monday while visiting a member of our church, Carl Nicholson.

Carl works at Wooten's Airboats and has wrestled alligators, tended to the lions and tigers in their exhibit, and

entertains those who take rides on his airboat. While at his house that morning, we looked across the pond, and there stood one of the largest black bears I had ever seen. And he was staring back at us as well—before deciding we weren't exciting enough for him and wandering off.

Carl didn't seem to care too much that a bear of that size was living behind his house. You see, up to that point, Carl had sent me various videos of black bears on his property, or he would call me on FaceTime for some live-action scenes that seemed straight out of a movie.

Carl would show me the black bear on his property, then proceed to chase it off by making loud screaming sounds as he ran toward the bear! One night, after having packed his freezer full of deer meat that had been processed for him, Carl was awakened by some loud noises coming from his porch—the porch where his freezer stood. The freezer that he had earlier filled with fresh deer meat.

As he looked out the window, there was the furry beast—a black bear that stood over seven feet tall when standing up and weighed hundreds of pounds. He had managed to open the freezer and help himself to a delicious amount of fresh deer meat.

The sensible thing to do would have been to make some noise in hopes of scaring off the bear while standing safely inside the house. But this was Carl—the one who had wrestled alligators, fed lions and tigers, and hunted down some large pythons. He decided the best course of action would



Photo by Carl Nicholson

be to confront the bear like David confronted Goliath.

So, he opened his door, jumped out onto his porch, and started yelling. According to Carl (and verified by his wife, who is trustworthy), the bear nearly fell over in total fear. Then, in what can only be described as something out of an old Clint Eastwood movie, the bear took the nearest exit off Carl's porch—and it wasn't the stairs he had walked up. He made a new exit, right through the porch side rails and toward the woods.

According to Carl, that specific bear has never been back to check the freezer!

Rumor has it there's a black bear in the Everglades still running for his life—a black bear who met a man named Carl, who defended his porch, his freezer, and his deer meat!

Yes, there's black bears in those Everglades!

Pastor Jesse Wilson Bio

Jesse Wilson is an ordained minister with the Church of God and has dedicated over 28 years to ministry. Alongside his wife, Charity, he has pioneered two churches, served as an associate pastor, and worked in street ministry. Since April 2019, Jesse and Charity have led Chokoloskee Family Church, bringing their passion for revival to the 10,000 Islands community.

Jesse holds an associate degree in theology and is a published author of Christian devotionals and children's books. His writing reflects his deep faith and belief that good triumphs over evil, dreams can become reality, and doing the right thing leads to positive outcomes. His love for storytelling extends to screenwriting, with aspirations of seeing his faith-based stories brought to life on screen.

Jesse and Charity have been married for 32 years and have two grown children, Caleb and Jessica. Jessica and her husband, Tukey, serve alongside them in ministry.

New Restaurant in Port of the Islands Hotel



If you're looking for something new and exciting right here in our area, you've got to check out the Saigon to Paris Café at the Port of the Islands Resort.

This cozy spot has brought a delightful twist to our local dining scene, offering the best of French and Vietnamese flavors, and it's quickly becoming a favorite among locals.

From warm, buttery French pastries



to a steaming bowl of Vietnamese pho, there's a little something for everyone here. You can sip on refreshing smoothies or boba tea, enjoy a slice of cake, or dive into a hearty meal that feels like a home-cooked dish. Whether you're in the mood for a light treat or something more filling, Saigon to Paris Café has got you covered.

What really sets this café apart is the welcoming vibe—it's got the charm of a coffee shop, a bakery, and a full-service restaurant all rolled into one. The café also offers a full bar, a tiki bar, and live music, so it's the perfect place to relax, grab a drink, and spend time with friends and family.

Plus, for those days when you want to enjoy great food without leaving the house, they offer online ordering for takeout.

Saigon to Paris Café is located at 25000 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, FL 34114, inside the Port of the Islands Resort. It's definitely worth the visit, whether you're a local or just passing through. To learn more, check out their website at saigontopariscafe.com.





CHOKOLOSKEE FAMILY Church

CHURCH SCHEDULE:

Sun. Worship	10:00AM
Sun. Kids Church	10:00AM
Sun. Renewal	6:00PM
Wed. Youth Renewal	7:00PM
Thurs. Bible Study	7:00PM

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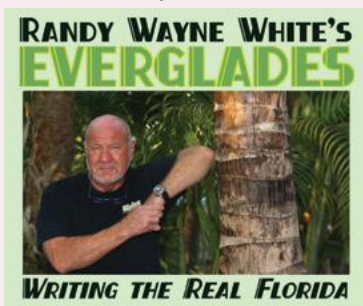


Originally a 1927 commercial laundry, the Museum of the Everglades building testifies to the town's history as a bustling business center and the region's first county seat. Now a museum, it's open

Tuesday to Saturday from 9 am to 4 pm with free admission. Certain events may require reservations. Book your reservation at colliermuseums.com or call (239) 252-5026. Come explore Everglades heritage today!

Exhibits

Randy Wayne White's Everglades - Writing the Real Florida
Jan 14 – May 3



Randy Wayne White, a best-selling South Florida author, spent 13 years as a fishing guide based on Sanibel Island, leading over 3,000 charters. When government regulations ended his livelihood, he turned to writing and created Marion "Doc" Ford, a former national security agent turned marine biologist.

Drawing on his deep knowledge of Florida's waters and culture, White launched a successful series that now spans 27 books, blending thrilling action with the unique spirit of the region.

The Everglades often serve as a central backdrop in White's novels, vividly portraying the challenges of preserving "old Florida." His stories resonate with readers, connecting them to the area's landscapes, people, and history. Our temporary exhibit, Randy Wayne White's Everglades, celebrates his work and its role in bringing the authentic Florida experience to life.

Wilderness Wednesday Series



January 15 - March 19 | 2 – 3 pm

Join Gulf Coast rangers at the historic Museum of the Everglades for Ranger Talks, where you'll explore the ecology and cultural history of the 10,000 Islands region of Everglades National Park. These engaging sessions include topics such as alligators and crocodiles, mangrove ecology, and the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Wilderness. Mark

your calendars for: 3/5, 3/12, at 2 pm.

Third Thursday Talk Series

Driving Passion - The Collier Family and their Cars



*Miles and Sam Collier
Photo Courtesy of the Revs*

March 20 | 2 – 3 pm

County founder Barron Collier's involvement in the construction of the Tamiami Trail, making it possible for the growing number of Florida visitors to explore the Everglades region by car, is common knowledge. However, many remain unaware that his family's love

affair with the automobile extends well beyond its utility as transportation for tourists. Mr. Collier himself was deeply involved in all aspects of traffic safety, even authoring a book entitled Stopping Street Accidents, and his sons became avid auto-racers, building hotrods and establishing one of the earliest and most elite racing clubs in the country. This talk will explore all these aspects, culminating with the remarkable collection amassed by grandson Miles Collier and his creation of the Revs Institute to house more than a hundred vintage vehicles and scores of artifacts.

Pastor Appreciation



Pastor Bob Wallace has been servicing this community and our Everglades Community Church for 19 years. Connie Barker and Steve Lee presented him and his wife Millie with flowers and appreciation on Sunday, February 23.

It all started with grapefruit.

The Annual Grapefruit Gala

a casual country dance with fresh Florida citrus and music by Gator Nate

FRIDAY, MARCH 28TH 5PM – 8PM

Museum of the Everglades
105 W. Broadway
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239-252-5026 for more information

Outside in the parking lot – Bring Your Own Chair!

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& Quarterly Newsletters

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we're stewards of the past
for future generations.

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EvergladesMuseum.org

Become a Member of Friends of the Museum of the Everglades
and be part of a legacy that keeps our local history alive.



EVG School Updates

By Dr. Cherie Allison
Principal, EVG, Everglades City School

Everglades City School's spring Scholastic book fair was a huge success! In addition to earning funds for our media center, the excitement for reading was felt by all! Students were so happy with their new books! We are especially thankful to Deputy Sue Gentry and the Police Activities League for purchasing a NEW book for all the EVG students! Monday, March 3rd Deputy Sue shopped and purchased a book for each EVG student! Wow!



EVG would like to thank the incredible EVG business community that came forward to sponsor EVG classrooms!

Thank you to the following EVG businesses/sponsors:

- Pre-K: Island Café
- Kindergarten: Everglades City Ladies Coffee Group
- First Grade: Camellia Street Grill
- Second Grade: Island Café
- Third Grade: Rock Can Handy Man LLC., Down South Adventures and Viki Andrews
- Fourth Grade: Trail Lakes Campground and Glades Reality, Inc.
- Fifth Grade: Everglades City Fishing Company
- Middle School: Camellia Street Grill and REMAX Partners.
- High School: Bob Wells Real Estate
- Media Center: The Lions Foundation of Everglades.

These exciting new books will benefit the entire school and enhance literacy at EVG! Thank you so much for your support!



Seventh-grade students from EVG recently participated in the CCPS-sponsored field trip to Florida Gulf Coast University, focusing on the College and Career Readiness Experience. The purpose was to promote student interest in pursuing post-secondary education.

Through the experience, seventh-grade students saw the connection between school and careers and can start thinking about a plan for the upcoming transition from middle/high school to college and careers.

While at FGCU, the seventh-grade students took a guided campus tour and had access to classrooms, dormitories, the library, student center, sports facilities, and the College of Construction Management.



The students had a great time seeing all the different options on FGCU's campus, but I think their favorite was all the different selections of where to eat on campus, including a Chick-fil-A, Starbucks, and Dunkin' Donuts.



Everglades City School student government attended the FASC state conference on Feb. 21-23 at East River High School in Orlando with about 1,500 other students.

The students had 3 full days of leadership seminars, motivational speakers, and team building!

What an incredible opportunity provided to our students thanks to the Hook'em in the Glades fishing fundraiser!

EVG Champs Again

By Jill Whitcomb

On January 16, 2025 the Everglades City School middle school boys basketball team coached by Coach Gene Combs, won the Southwest Florida Athletic Conference championship for the second year in a row! Being a repeat champion in this tough conference with Marco Charter Middle School, Oak Creek Charter School, Naples Classical Charter, and Gulf Coast Charter School is no small feat!

The Gators were led by 8th grade stars Kyrie Huggins and Lanvin Fairclough. This dynamic duo combined for 80% of the points for the Gators and led the team

with assists! Eight grade standout Aaron Smith was strong on the boards and a force to be reckoned with under the basket! The Gators also had defensive specialist Zyion Jones to help stop any threat the opponent posed. Sixth grader, Ace Mitchell, stepped up in the second half of the season to create a new threat to the opponents! Ace's ball handling and outside shooting helped the Gators in clutch situations!



This Southwest Florida Athletic Conference championship trophy makes the 4th trophy in 2 years the middle school Gator Athletes have brought home! Last year our middle



school girls' and boys' basketball teams won the Southwest Florida Athletic Conference championships. This year our middle school Lady

Gator Volleyball team brought home the trophy too! Congratulations to the Gators!

CLYDE BUTCHER
FLORIDA HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

VISIT HIS BIG CYPRESS GALLERY 23 MILES EAST OF EVERGLADES CITY
52388 Tamiami Trail MM54.5 Ochopee 239-695-2428

Explore Big Cypress
LODGING & SWAMP WALK TOURS

CLYDE BUTCHER'S BIG CYPRESS GALLERY
"A guided swamp walk feels like stepping into a sweeping photo of natural Florida." —Visit Florida

Reservations Required
explorebigcypress.com
52388 Tamiami Trail Ochopee
239-695-2428



EVG Calendar

- Mar 15
Boys VR Baseball Home
- Mar 20
Girls VR Softball Home
- Mar 26
Girls JV Softball Home
- Mar 27
Boys VR Baseball Home

WINGED FOOT SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE
 March 28, 2025

Attention – Senior Athletes applying for the Winged Foot award must turn in their application by March 28, 2025 by 3 pm. Applications can be found on the EVG website or contact Mrs. Whitcomb.

CC Public Utility Alerts with NotifyNow

Collier County Public Utilities has introduced NotifyNow, a new notification service designed to keep customers informed about important water service updates.

With NotifyNow, customers will receive timely alerts about service interruptions, boil water notices, and other essential information directly to their preferred communication channels. They can also use the system to report water service issues quickly.

Customers are automatically enrolled but can opt out at any time. To ensure they receive notifications, they should verify their contact information at colliercountyfl.gov/paywater.

To learn about NotifyNow visit colliercountyfl.gov/notifynow.



Update From City Hall

By Michael McComas
 Everglades City Council

On Tuesday February 18th City Council held a workshop to get the citizen's input on the proposed plans for the replacement of the Community Center above McLeod Park. McFarland Johnson, our Public, Private partner presented plans for the members who attended to review and comment upon.

The proposed plans first indicated three separate buildings with separate functions in each including a Multi purpose room with a computer room, a meeting room with conference room and offices and an athletic room. The meeting was well attended with a large contingent of students who had valuable input into the uses and needs of the facility.

After much discussion the representatives of McFarland were asked to present us with plans for two rooms including an enhanced athletic room with full court basketball capability including manager offices and storage. They will return with updated plans for continued community review and input.

The Mayor reminded the attendees that the funds for this project were currently in the Ways and Means committee of the US House of Representatives after being proposed by Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart.

There ensued a short discussion about opening McLeod Park for Public usage and the Mayor explained that it was available to any adult willing to take responsibility for the operation and maintenance much as Councilperson Diana Valdes does currently on Friday nights for local youth.

Code Enforcement Board meeting, the Board was lacking a quorum and consequently could not legally meet.

EVG District All-Star | February

We're thrilled to share that one of our very own EVG School students has been selected as this month's CCPS District All-Star! Join us in celebrating their outstanding achievement as they shine among the best student-athletes in the Collier County Public Schools District



Freshman Jamere Osceola is known as a great ball handler and pure shooter from his shooting guard position on our boys varsity basketball team here at Everglades City School.

Jamere is averaging 21 points and 5 rebounds per game this season for our Gators. He also earned a MaxPreps "Player of the Game" honor in November. Coaches say that Jamere is an excellent defender as well, and even though he is just a freshman, they consider him one of the best players in Southwest Florida.

For Sale: Mobile Home Park
 \$749,900 | Commercial
 1165 Rewis Drive, Chokoloskee

Jennifer & Tabby Barnett
 (239)289-4400 | [lpt](http://lpt.com)
 Info@TheBarnettTeam.com

WALK

powered by Suncoast Credit Union

COLLIER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2025

Saturday **04.05.2025**

Learn more or register visit: CollierSchools.com/ccps5k

Havanna Cafe
 Daily | 8am-8pm
 Full Kitchen Menu
 Weekly Events
 Live Music

Delicious Cuban & Cracker Cuisine
 Unique Beer/Wine Inspired
 Craft Cocktails

191 Smallwood Dr
 Chokoloskee
 (239) 695-2214

[HavAnnaCafe](https://www.instagram.com/HavAnnaCafe) [HavannaCafe](https://www.facebook.com/HavannaCafe)

WELCOME TO THE EVERGLADES!
 AREA VISITOR CENTER TRAIL TOWN HEADQUARTERS

FREE INFORMATION ABOUT
 Local Businesses
 Things To Do
 Places To Eat
 Local History
 Unique Local Art

Everglades Area Visitor Center

207 West Broadway Everglades City
 Open 9:30 am to 4 pm Daily

Operated By
 EVERGLADES SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 Dedicated to our Unique History
 ESHP.org

Chocolate Covered Watermelon



Ingredients:

- 1 small seedless watermelon, cut into small 1/2" wedges
- 2 Tbsp. Coconut Oil
- 2 Tbsp. Chocolate

Topping:

- Flaky Sea Salt or Sprinkles

Directions:

Line a baking sheet with wax paper, spread watermelon pieces, and freeze for 1 hour or overnight.

Melt together coconut oil chocolate.

Remove watermelon from freezer and dip each piece in melted chocolate.

Sprinkle with topping and return to baking sheet. Serve immediately or freeze covered until ready to serve.

AI

From Page 5

gardening assistants, offering real-time advice on crucial aspects of plant care. For instance, the [Plantix](#) app can identify plant diseases, pests, and nutrient deficiencies from photos, providing recommendations for treatment and care. [Gardenate](#) is perfect for those growing vegetables and herbs, offering planting reminders and care tips tailored to our climate. [GrowVeg](#) helps plan your vegetable garden, suggesting optimal plant placements and schedules. Additionally, the robotic lawn mower can autonomously maintain your lawn, ensuring even trimming and reducing manual labor. I saw a robotic mower driving on a lawn on Marco Island the other day! These tools are especially valuable in our region, where rapid identification of issues like fungal diseases or invasive pests can make the difference between a thriving garden and a failing one.

Sustainability in the Everglades

For those interested in sustainable gardening practices, AI tools analyze soil samples and environmental conditions to recommend eco-friendly solutions. They suggest drought-tolerant plants that require minimal watering, identify native species that support local pollinators, and help create gardens that contribute positively to our local ecosystem. Some systems even integrate with smart irrigation controllers to optimize water usage, a crucial consideration for environmentally conscious gardeners in our area.

Making Gardening Accessible

The technology is also making gardening more accessible to newcomers. Through AI-powered apps and platforms, beginning gardeners can access instant information about plant identification and care, receive step-by-step guidance for various gardening tasks, and learn through visual aids that explain complex gardening concepts. This democratization of gardening knowledge is helping more residents successfully grow their own food and create beautiful landscapes.

The Future of Garden Maintenance

Looking to the future, AI-enhanced automation is set to transform routine garden maintenance. Smart systems can already help control irrigation based on soil moisture and weather forecasts, and emerging technologies promise AI-powered robots capable of tasks like precise lawn mowing and even selective weeding. I love the idea of a robot doing the weeding! These innovations could make garden maintenance more manageable, especially during our intense summer months.



Generated with ChatGPT 4.0 and Dall-E3

Finding the Right Balance

However, it's important to remember that AI is meant to enhance, not replace, the fundamental joys and skills of gardening. The satisfaction of working with your hands in the soil, the pleasure of watching plants grow, and the wisdom gained through hands-on experience remain at the heart of successful gardening. AI simply provides additional tools to help make informed decisions and optimize our efforts.

As we embrace these new technologies, Everglades area gardeners can look forward to creating thriving, sustainable gardens with a little help from our gardening friend, AI. 🌱

March 1, 2025 Puzzle Solution

J	O	B	J	A	R		R	O	A	R
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I	N	S	E	A	M		B	I	D	S
L	I	S	P		E	B	B	O	U	T
			L	E	N	I	E	N	C	E
S	L	A	I	N		D	R	Y	E	R
H	A	T	B	O	X	E	S			
E	N	M	E	S	H		T	E	S	T
I	G	O	R		O	P	A	Q	U	E
L	U	S	T		S	A	M	U	E	L
A	R	T	Y		A	S	P	I	R	E



MULLET RAPPER CROSSWORD

Across

- Bothers
- All excited
- Dolly ___ of "Hello, Dolly!"
- They're boring
- Beehive, e.g.
- Dresses
- "Saving Private Ryan" or "Apocalypse Now"
- ___-eyed
- Ardent affection
- Give off, as light
- Arrow groove
- Griddy's protective gear
- "We've been ___!"
- Adaptable
- Charm
- Greasy
- Balkan land
- Hawaiian strings
- About to explode
- Sermon basis

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9
10					11				
12					13				
14				15			16		
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	19	20				21			
22					23				
24				25			26	27	28
29			30				31		
32							33		
34							35		

Down

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. "What ___ blow!" | 8. Captured again | 22. Uniform shade |
| 2. Good Hindu spirit | 9. Big Bertha's birthplace | 23. A chorus line |
| 3. "Your turn" | 11. Gangster's blade | 26. Small child: Var. |
| 4. Indefinitely | 15. Bugbear | 27. Holly |
| 5. Amazon menace | 18. Chuck | 28. Dermatologist's concern |
| 6. Watch chain | 19. Bewitch | 30. Auction offering |
| 7. Of part of the eye | 20. One of the Gorgons | |





Fishing Insights

By Captain Mike Merritt

March is here and we are seeing some warmer weather. But, as you know it also means high winds! And we have been getting plenty of wind lately. It makes for some tough fishing conditions and many times it becomes non fishable on the outside. Thankfully we have options here in the National Park. We can go fish the back country and make a day of it.

Right now the Trout fishing is definitely the strongest bite going on. Especially for those wanting a fish dinner. These fish have been biting really good on the incoming tide as long as clean water is moving in. The flats and some bars around the Islands have been producing plenty of action.

I am catching some up in the back country too so when it is too windy or too dirty to fish the outside we have managed some good action in the rivers and back country.

The Redfish bite has been tough lately. Historically I am catching good fish pretty consistent in the back, but this year that has been a little tougher. I have noticed that a lot of areas in the back have stayed stirred up more than what I normally see. Not sure



why this is happening but it might be due to less grass on the bottom, or fewer oysters? We need to find this out.

So these factors affect the fishing, and also affects the bait, so these fish move. I have noticed a lot of changes over the years and am hopeful in the long run that our Everglades heals.

The Snook fishing is decent in the back country right now. The best bet is to use lures or jigs and work as much shoreline as you can. Of course areas that have drains or areas that pinch down are always worth trying first. Snook love to ambush so they will find a good place to feed and hang there as long as the food keeps coming. Lots of casts and accurate casts are a must for success.

Of course we can't forget that the Tarpon bite has started. But the winds are making it very difficult. These fish are moving in and you may find large numbers, of just a couple fish. But they will continue to arrive in greater numbers and hopefully hang around a while.

Spring time is usually when we find some decent Tripletail too! But again, high winds can make this difficult. Seeing these guys floating on the surface makes for some great fun and a challenge to the novice angler. But the reward can be very tasty! So keep your eyes open!

Let's hope for calm waters and good fishing as Snook season is now open! Good luck out there and remember to be courteous.

Capt. Mike Merritt, Guide

(561) 252-4324 | SnookFishing1@juno.com

Florida Bass Gains Official Recognition



Photo Courtesy Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

At its February meeting, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recognized Florida bass as a unique species and incorporated the name change into rules. As stated in a 2024 news release, the American Fisheries Society confirmed Florida bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) as a separate species from largemouth bass (*Micropterus nigricans*). The updates do not alter the existing bass fishing regulations.

"This is exciting news for Florida and for bass anglers everywhere," said Tom Graef, Director of FWC's Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management. "Florida bass grow bigger than any other bass and recognizing them as a unique species highlights just how special they are. This distinction strengthens our commitment to conserving and promoting Florida bass, ensuring future generations can continue to experience the thrill of catching a true giant."

For more information about the Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management, contact Michelle Kerr at 850-510-4776 or Michelle.Kerr@MyFWC.com.

Gulf of America

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has made it official—say goodbye to the Gulf of Mexico and hello to the Gulf of America. Following President Donald Trump's Executive Order 14172, all FWC maps, documents, and regulations will now reflect the patriotic new name. More details (or at least a fresh map) at MyFWC.com.

First Baptist Church

Knowing Him and making Him known!

All-ages Sunday School: 9:45 am

Sunday Worship: 11:00 am & 6:00 pm

Wednesday Worship: 6:00 pm

416 School Drive | P.O. Box 550

Everglades City, FL 34139



Barron River Tides				
3/15/2025	Sat	4:01 AM	2.53	H
3/15/2025	Sat	11:16 AM	0.19	L
3/15/2025	Sat	4:04 PM	2.56	H
3/15/2025	Sat	11:37 PM	0.06	L
3/16/2025	Sun	4:38 AM	2.4	H
3/16/2025	Sun	11:45 AM	0.31	L
3/16/2025	Sun	4:26 PM	2.57	H
3/17/2025	Mon	12:12 AM	0.01	L
3/17/2025	Mon	5:18 AM	2.23	H
3/17/2025	Mon	12:09 PM	0.44	L
3/17/2025	Mon	4:46 PM	2.55	H
3/18/2025	Tue	12:50 AM	-0.01	L
3/18/2025	Tue	6:03 AM	2.03	H
3/18/2025	Tue	12:25 PM	0.56	L
3/18/2025	Tue	5:05 PM	2.51	H
3/19/2025	Wed	1:30 AM	0.01	L
3/19/2025	Wed	6:56 AM	1.82	H
3/19/2025	Wed	12:30 PM	0.67	L
3/19/2025	Wed	5:27 PM	2.46	H
3/20/2025	Thu	2:20 AM	0.05	L
3/20/2025	Thu	8:08 AM	1.63	H
3/20/2025	Thu	12:35 PM	0.76	L
3/20/2025	Thu	5:56 PM	2.4	H
3/21/2025	Fri	3:27 AM	0.09	L
3/21/2025	Fri	9:42 AM	1.55	H
3/21/2025	Fri	12:46 PM	0.85	L
3/21/2025	Fri	6:36 PM	2.33	H
3/22/2025	Sat	4:45 AM	0.08	L
3/22/2025	Sat	7:42 PM	2.26	H
3/23/2025	Sun	5:53 AM	0.03	L
3/23/2025	Sun	2:43 PM	1.84	H
3/23/2025	Sun	5:48 PM	1.03	L
3/23/2025	Sun	10:14 PM	2.29	H
3/24/2025	Mon	6:51 AM	-0.04	L
3/24/2025	Mon	1:33 PM	1.98	H
3/24/2025	Mon	6:57 PM	0.91	L
3/24/2025	Mon	11:38 PM	2.46	H
3/25/2025	Tue	7:42 AM	-0.1	L
3/25/2025	Tue	1:47 PM	2.15	H
3/25/2025	Tue	7:49 PM	0.73	L
3/26/2025	Wed	12:43 AM	2.68	H
3/26/2025	Wed	8:27 AM	-0.13	L
3/26/2025	Wed	2:08 PM	2.32	H
3/26/2025	Wed	8:35 PM	0.5	L
3/27/2025	Thu	1:36 AM	2.88	H
3/27/2025	Thu	9:09 AM	-0.1	L
3/27/2025	Thu	2:30 PM	2.49	H
3/27/2025	Thu	9:18 PM	0.25	L
3/28/2025	Fri	2:23 AM	2.99	H
3/28/2025	Fri	9:48 AM	-0.02	L
3/28/2025	Fri	2:53 PM	2.66	H
3/28/2025	Fri	10:02 PM	0	L

LOCAL SERVICES & CLASSIFIEDS

Restaurants & Bars

Everglades City

Camellia Street Grill

Mon-Thurs 12-9
Fri-Sun 11-9
(239) 695-2003

Captain Morgan's Seafood Grill Corp

Thur-Mon 12 pm – 8 pm
(239) 232-0041

City Seafood

Mon-Fri 8 am – 3 pm
Sat & Sun 8 am – 4 pm
(239) 695-4700

Diving Pelican

Sun-Thur 11 am – 8 pm
Fri-Sat 11 am – 8:30 pm
(239) 232-0475

Everglades Cafe

Closed
(239) 351-4875

Gator Hole Bar

Wed-Thur 11 am - 7pm
Fri-Sat 11 am – 12 am
Sun 11 am – 7 pm
(239) 232-0475

Island Cafe

Daily 6 am – 9 pm
(239) 695-0003

Nely's Corner (Inside EFC)

Fri-Sun 6:15 am - 3 pm
(239) 695-4222

Rod & Gun

Daily 11:30 am - 7:30 pm
(239) 695-2101

Triad Seafood Market & Cafe

Thur-Sat 10:30 am – 8 pm
Sun-Wed 10:30 am – 4 pm
(239) 695-2662

Wildman's Pizza Pasta & Pythons

Wed & Thurs 12 pm – 8 pm
Fri-Sat 12 pm – 9 pm
(239) 426-9453

Chokoloskee

HavAnnA Cafe

Daily 8 am – 8 pm
(239) 695-2214

Goodland

Crabby Lady

Tues-Sat 11 am – 6 pm
Sun 11 am – 5 pm
(239) 394-5663

Kirks Fish House

Mon-Sat 10 am - 5 pm
(239) 394-8616

Little Bar

Daily 11:30 am – 12 am
(239) 394-5663

Paradise Found

Thur-Sun
(239) 330-7773

Stans Idle Hour

Fri-Sun 11 am - 6:30 pm
(239) 394-3041

Port of the Islands

Saigon to Paris Cafe

Thur-Mon 8 am - 3 pm
Thur-Mon 6 pm - 10 pm
(239) 970-0020

Ochopee

Subway

Daily 7 am – 7 pm
(239) 695-0949

Joanie's Blue Crab Cafe

Mon, Tues, Thur 10:30 am - 4 pm
Fri-Sun 10:30 am - 5 pm
(239) 695-2682

CR92 & US41 (Naples)

Gator's Crossing

Daily 11 am – 11 pm
(239) 394-0288

Markets

Right Choice Supermarket

Daily 9 am – 7 pm
(239) 695-4535

Glades Haven General Store

Daily 9 am – 7 pm
(239) 232-0486

Grimm's Stone Crab

Mon-Sat 8 am - 5pm
(239) 695-3222

Worship

Chokoloskee Family Church

Sun: 10 am School & Worship, 6 pm Service
Wed: Youth 7 pm
1236 Demere Ln, Chokoloskee

Everglades Community Church

Sun: 11 am Worship
101 Copeland Ave, Everglades City

First Baptist Church

Sun: 9:45 am School, 11 am Worship & 6 pm Service
Wed: 6 pm Bible Study
416 E School Dr, Everglades City

Holy Family Catholic Church

Mass Sun: 10:30 am
200 Datura St E, Everglades City

Goodland Baptist Church

Sun: 10 am Worship
Wed: 6 pm Bible Study
410 Mango Ave. Goodland

For Sale

FOR SALE: 60 hp Tohatsu outboard motor. Engine has 1,000 hrs. Runs perfectly. Tiller steer. Spare propeller. \$3,200. Call (239) 302-8610.

FOR SALE: 40 Ft. Shipping container, water tight, good floors, located on Chokoloskee Island, \$1950 or best offer. Call Gar (954) 695-1284

For Lease

FOR LEASE: Deep water commercial dock and lot on Barron River. Premium sought-after location at 909 DuPont St. in Everglades City. Perfect for, eco-tour business, commercial fishing or even a restaurant with chickee bar and tourist gift shop attraction. Newly refurbished Dock Available now. Email E010101@aol.com, Call (727) 480-1640

FOR LEASE: Annual Lease of 600 sq. ft. Cafe space next to the Everglades City Visitors Center, with heavy tourist traffic. Restaurant equipment also available for sale. Also potential use as a gift shop, tourist office, etc. Email us for details at bonniewoodward@gmail.com.

Housing

FOR RENT: 1/1 Everglades City Villas, W/D, Wifi, pool, ramp, boat lift available. Yearly or Seasonal. Pets with Deposit. Annual \$1600, Seasonal \$2400 mo. Diane (561) 255-7184

FORRENT: Second floor 2-bedroom/1 bath apartment, WiFi, washer/dryer, screened-in porch, fully furnished. Great location in Everglades City. Annual rental. Email us for details at bonniewoodward@gmail.com.

Help Wanted

HELP WANTED: Part Time help needed! Carpentry, painting, drywall, laying floors, tile, cabinets, etc., odd jobs. Wage determined based on experience \$18-25 hourly. Contact Charley 810-399-7592

Wanted

WANTED: Bridge Players wanted! If you are a beginner or a professional bridge player, come join our group for a fun afternoon of bridge. Call Patty at (239) 719-0020.

VOLUNTEER: The Big Cypress National Preserve is currently seeking volunteers for our Reed Visitor Center docent and park ambassador. For those interested, please reach out to Annie Kilby, the Visitor Services Program Manager at (239)719-0207 annie.kilby@nps.gov.

Clubs

Everglades Lions Club

2nd Thursday of the month | 6 pm
September - May
Jinkins Fellowship Hall behind Everglades Community Church
101 S. Copeland Ave, Everglades City
evergladeslionsclub@gmail.com

Ladies Coffee

Thursdays | 8:30 am
Rotates Everglades City Restaurants
snookcity@gmail.com
(239) 719-0020

Goodland Civic Association

3rd Tuesday of the month | 6:30 pm
Goodland Community Center
417 Mango Ave, Goodland
(239) 776-1372

Helpful Numbers

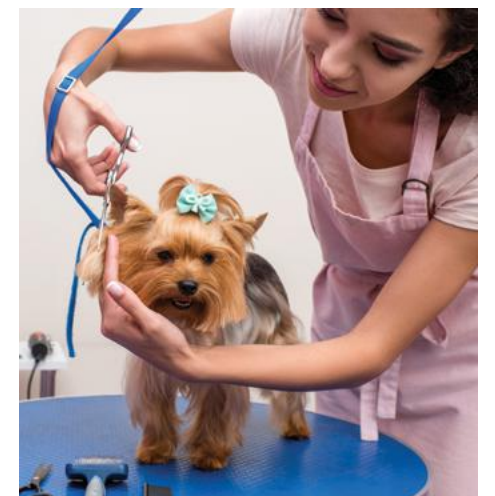
EC Airpark: (239) 252-6298
EC City Hall: (239) 695-3781
EC Public Library: (239) 695-2511
EC Trash Pickup: (239) 252-2380
EC Visitor Center: (239) 232-0473
Goodland Recycle: (239)252-2380

Post Office

Everglades City & Chokolossee: (239) 695-2174
Ochopee: (239) 695-2099
Goodland: (239) 394-7387

Local Parks

Big Cypress: (239) 695-2000
EVG National Park: (305) 242-7700
Fakahatchee Preserve: (239) 961-1925



Buy, Sell, Trade & More!

Reach local buyers and sellers with a classified ad in The Mullet Rapper. List items, services, job openings, and more!

Place Your Ad Today!
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(941) 999-1237