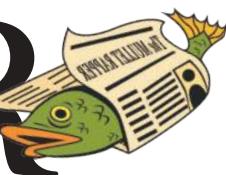


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MULLET RAPPER



August 1 - August 31, 2025

mulletrapper.com

Vol. XXV • Issue #476 • Free

Pancake Fly-in Breakfast

By Mullet Rapper Staff

Pilots from all over the state of Florida came to the second shortest public runway in the state of Florida for the Pancake Fly-in Breakfast.

Friends of the Everglades Airpark brought back this popular morning tradition to call attention to the county's proposal to close the airport.

Speakers at the Pancake Fly-in talked about the county deciding not to invest in any repairs at the airpark after the recent hurricanes that hit the area, while also saying that it wasn't making any money. Supporters of the Airpark created a document to let the county know what the economic impacts would be to Everglades City should the Airpark close. Besides being a gateway to the Everglades, Everglades Airpark is a hub for emergency services. The county recently repaired the fueling facilities, and so the fuel pumps have been turned back on.

Stacey Heaton, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) Southern Regional Manager couldn't attend but sent an email of support.

Anyone interested in supporting this effort is encouraged to sign up with Friends of Everglades Airpark.

Thank you to Judy Sims for some of the photos and Blue Sky Aviation Pilot Training for the images taken from their YouTube Channel. For more on the Fly-in Breakfast, visit <https://youtu.be/pYt9gvDwJ34>



Images from Blue Sky Aviation Pilot Training YouTube Channel



Angel Sims keeps the pancakes coming!



Photos by Judy Sims



The Bobs from the Marco Island Civil Air Patrol all with their signature blue shirts.



Mayor Grim (raised hand) talks with a group of breakfast goers.

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Get Ready for the
School Year

Page 4



Blessing of the
Stone Crab Fleet

Page 7



The Ashley
Gang's Reign of
Rebellion

Page 10

Calendar

					Friday, August 1st	Saturday, August 2nd
					Office Hours of Rep. Mario Diaz Balart Staff Member Everglades City Hall 2:30-4:30	
Sunday, August 3rd	Monday, August 4th	Tuesday, August 5th	Wednesday, August 6th	Thursday, August 7th	Friday, August 8th	Saturday, August 9th
		City Council Meeting 7:00 -8:00 pm	Food Pantry 9:30 -12:00	Ladies Coffee 8:30-10:00 am		
Sunday, August 10th	Monday, August 11th	Tuesday, August 12th	Wednesday, August 13th	Thursday, August 14th	Friday, August 15th	Saturday, August 16th
	FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL		Collier County School Board Meeting 9:00 am MLK Admin. Ctr.	Ladies Coffee 8:30-10:00 am Third Thursday Talk at the Museum Remembering Mayor McLeod August 21st 2:00-3:00 pm 105 Broadway W		
Sunday, August 17th	Monday, August 18th	Tuesday, August 19th	Wednesday, August 20th	Thursday, August 21th	Friday, August 22th	Saturday, August 23th
			Food Pantry 9:30 -12:00	Ladies Coffee 8:30-10:00 am		
Sunday, August 24th	Monday, August 25th	Tuesday, August 26th	Wednesday, August 27th	Thursday, August 28th	Friday, August 29th	Saturday, August 30th
				Food Pantry 9:30 -12:00		
Sunday, August 31th						
						

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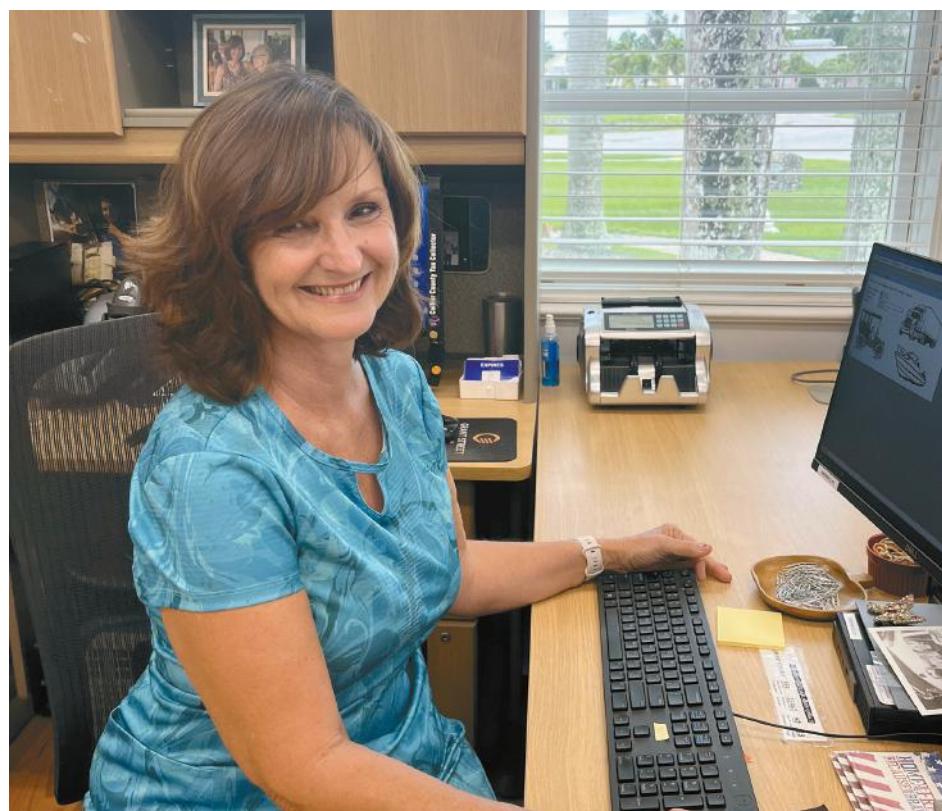
239-970-5563

Angel of the Swamp

by Patty Huff

What would we do without our county services and library conveniently located in City Hall? We would have to travel to Naples for all the services that are provided, just as Naples' residents had to do a hundred years ago when Everglades City was the county seat!

It's not just the accessibility of having county offices available; it is Roberta Stone that brings expertise and experience as she represents the Collier County tax collector, clerk of court, and the library. Although Roberta was featured as our "Angel" 16 years ago in the March 9, 2009, issue of the *Mullet Rapper*, she deserves recognition again now that she has worked in this position a total of 27 years! No one knows as much as she does about county procedures. She is not only indispensable, but she goes above and beyond her job description to be of assistance to area residents



Roberta Stone.

Submitted Photo

as well as visitors. There are many examples of how Roberta has helped our community, and each of us knows personally how she has saved us time and energy in so many ways.

It is time to recognize Roberta as our Angel of the Swamp. Although we may not always say it, we wish to thank you for being such an integral part of our lives here in the Everglades!

Bank of Everglades History

by Patty Huff

As we move forward with the rehabilitation of the historic 1927 Bank of Everglades Building, I thought it would be fun to reminisce about its past. For those of us who have lived here for 20 years or more, you may have memories of those who operated various businesses in the Bank Building. Please send me any of your memories at snookcity@gmail.com. I would love to share your stories in the *Mullet Rapper*.

One of my favorite times was when Cheryl Henderson opened her Everglades Spa-Fari in 2001, operating several businesses within the historic building: 1) a popular gift shop, 2) a beauty shop with Shelly Wooten working there for a short time, 3) overnight accommodations with wine awaiting you in your room, a light breakfast in the morning, and a tour guide (Liza McClannahan) to take visitors to the museums, airboat and swamp buggy rides, Clyde Butcher's,



Cheryl Henderson.

Submitted Photo

the Big Cypress, and the Fakahatchee Strand; lunch was included at a local restaurant, and 4) the spa with Cheryl providing facials, massages, clay cleansing baths, colon hydrotherapy, and essential oil therapy. Cheryl was magical with her facials, which I enjoyed at least every other week. I took all this for granted -- that we would always have a spa in Everglades City. In 2008 Cheryl made the decision to move to Englewood where she continued offering spa treatments. She now lives in Michigan near her sister and enjoys traveling.

Such fun times!

Aviation Fuel Now Available

Submitted

Aviation fuel is now available for pilots at the Everglades Airpark. It is also available to Airboaters. Take advantage of this self-serve station!



Submitted Photo



MULLET RAPPER

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"There are no other Everglades in the world. They are, they have always been, one of the unique regions of the earth; remote, never wholly known. Nothing anywhere else is like them."

~ Marjory Stoneman Douglas

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Blessing of the Stone Crab Fleet

By Holly Dudley

Join us for the annual 2025 Blessing of the Stone Crab Fleet at Camellia Street Grill on September 20th! We'll kick off the festivities at 10:00 AM with the boats docking at 10:30 AM. Once the boats arrive, we'll bless them along with the hardworking crabbers, their families, and friends.

Let's come together to support our local commercial fishermen and celebrate their hard work! Get ready for a fantastic time filled with great company, local live music, local vendors, and delicious food.

Don't miss this wonderful community event – mark your calendars and bring your friends.



Photos Courtesy of Holly Dudley

Celebrating Marya Repko

By Helen Bryan

Relatives and friends of Marya Repko celebrated her birthday with a luncheon, cake, and gifts in June.

Everglades City Councilperson Vicky Wells presented Marya with a gift from the City saying, "You make a difference – above and beyond, Marya. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication."

Patty Huff also presented Marya with a card which read "Marya, in recognition of your passion in preserving and promoting the history of the Everglades area and its people, the ESHP honors you by naming the library in the Bank of Everglades the Marya Repko Historical Library."

Well deserved, Marya!



Photos by Helen Bryan

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Sun. Renewal	6:00 PM
Wed. Youth Renewal	7:00 PM
Thurs. Bible Study	7:00 PM



FISHING THE EVERGLADES

Capt. Mike Merritt

Summer Fishing

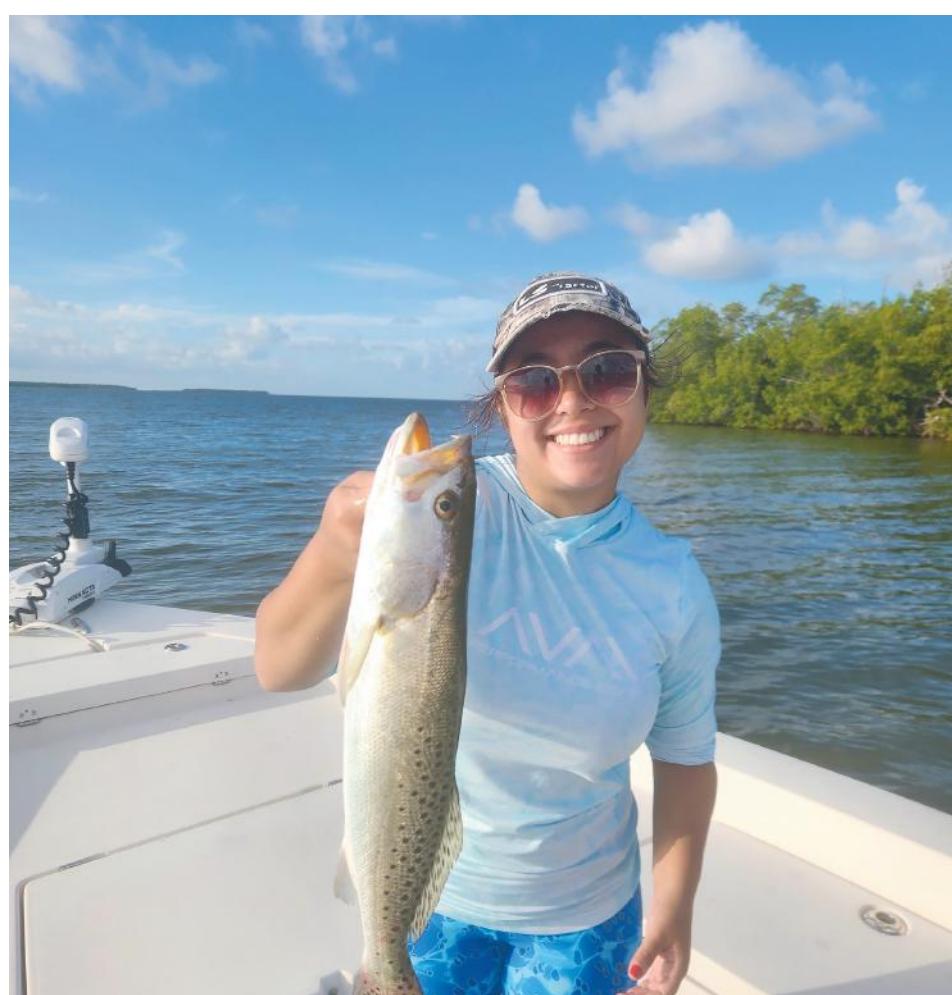
As summer persists and the heat, mosquitoes, and rain all continue to remind us we are in the Everglades, we continue to catch good fish. It seems if we can get a good morning rising tide, we are going to have a good day fishing. Snook, Redfish, Trout and yes, even some Tarpon are all still around. But added in now that we have some calmer waters, is offshore fishing. Red Grouper, Mangrove Snapper, and Lane Snapper are all biting. Go early and beat the afternoon rainstorms coming in early. The nearshore wrecks will also be more easily accessed due to calm winds. Whichever you decide to do can make for a great day on the water! Kids will be going back to school before you know it, so get the family out before their summer ends!

Inshore fishing right now is mostly Snook fishing. They love the warmer water temps, and summer is when the big females are spawning, so they will be feeding in between spawns. Handle them with care and get them back in the water quickly, as they are the future. Also, as the waters are warmer, the sharks have moved inshore in large numbers. Be careful when releasing fish after a fight as the sharks have a way of finding them after you release them. Sometimes you may have to move the fish to a safer place if you see a large shark circling. If I see a big shark patrolling, I will move to a new location so I don't accidentally feed a big Snook to these guys. This is something we all have to be aware of, and as a guide, I am always wanting to ensure the safe release of these big female Snook. The outside Islands are producing the best action on big Snook, but the river mouths are also going to hold fish. Incoming tide means bait is moving, but it also means cooler water moving. Both of these will produce some good action.

Redfish always seem to love the incoming tide, also. The water is pretty clear right now in a lot of places, so we have actually been sight casting some decent Reds. Live baits or jigs are both getting bit. And of course, a live shrimp is always a sure way to get some Redfish action. Work them under a cork, free-lined, or with a small lead. Fishing just along the edges of Mangrove Islands will get action. And you never know what will happen. A couple weeks ago, Capt. Bobby Johnson had a client and a huge Permit doing just this. So, keep on fishing and good things will happen.

Trout are still biting and if you need some fish for a fish fry, these are great. Live shrimp or a DOA shrimp under a popping cork will work. And of course, a jig will always produce. The color tail you use will depend on water clarity. Chartreuse is hard to beat when the water is dark. I use a lot of Glow and Chartreuse tails. Trout are not as plentiful as in the winter months, and you may not find as many big Trout, but they are still here. Timing your tides depending on what area you fish, and which species you are after takes experience and practice. But part of the fun is figuring things out. There are tons of apps out there to help you become a more successful fisherman, but nothing beats experience. So, get out and experience the Everglades' shallow water fishing we have to offer. Stay hydrated and bring your rain gear! Till next time, good luck fishing! Capt. Mike Merritt

Captain Mike Merritt was born in Coral Gables, Florida, lived in Australia as a child, and then moved back to Everglades City, Florida where he graduated from Everglades City High School. He caught his first snook at the age of eight and has been catching them ever since. He is a third-generation fisherman and has been guiding in the Everglades National Park for over 30 years. While the glades are his primary fishing grounds, he also owns The Amazon Prime Ecolodge and has been fishing in Brazil's Amazon for the last 12 years.



Photos by Capt. Mike Merritt

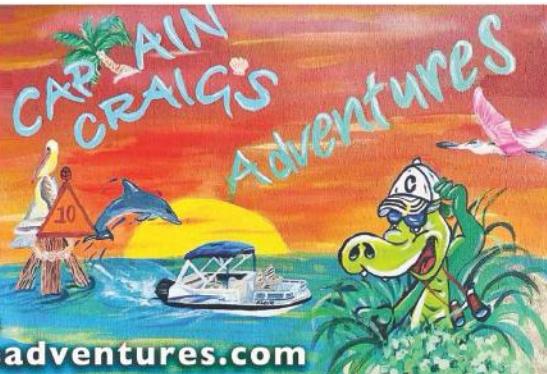
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Fishing for a Cause

By Alexandra Blanco

Thank you to everyone who attended and supported the Everglades Middle School Volleyball team. We were able to reach our goal!

A special thank you to EFC for donating the prizes won, Darcy for providing snacks for the kids, and the moms who baked for the bake sale.

Also, we would like to thank the Nate Edward Foundation and Island Cafe for being our top donors!



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Get Ready for the School Year

By Dr. Cherie Allison

EVG would love to welcome back our Reading Coach Mrs. Gretchen Byers. We are thrilled to have her expertise back in the school building. We would also like to welcome Mrs. Maria Christmas in Fifth grade and Ms. Amy Flannery to our Kindergarten class. Both ladies come from Collier County with many years of experience and are so excited to be a part of the EVG Elementary team. Mrs. Bryan will be moving to our third grade class. We are so happy Mrs. Whitcomb will be our new Media Specialist, and we cannot forget our new Activities Coordinator, Mr. Jason Mayberry! Teachers will start on August the 4th and students will start on campus on August the 11th. We are thrilled about this school year and our initiative "The Power of Yet!" The "Power of Yet" is a concept rooted in growth mindset that emphasizes

the potential for learning and improvement over time. It encourages individuals to add the word "yet" to statements that reflect limitations or perceived failures, shifting from a fixed mindset (believing abilities are static) to a growth mindset (believing abilities can be developed).

Here's a breakdown of the key principles taken from a growth mindset popularized by Stanford University Psychologist Dr. Carol Dweck:

Embracing Challenges: Instead of viewing setbacks as evidence of inability, the Power of Yet reframes them as opportunities for growth and learning.

Seeing Potential for Growth: The addition of "yet" implies that while a skill or goal may not be achieved now, it is attainable with effort and perseverance.

Fostering Resilience: By embracing the Power of Yet, individuals develop resilience, learning to persist in the face of obstacles and setbacks.

Shifting from "Can't" to "Can't Yet": This simple linguistic change transforms the perception of



Submitted Photo

limitations, promoting a belief in one's capacity to learn and improve.

Focusing on Effort and Process: The Power of Yet encourages focusing on the process of learning and the effort required, rather than solely on the outcome.

Building Confidence: Over time, consistently applying the Power of Yet can build confidence in one's ability to learn and overcome challenges.

Simply adding the word "yet" to a statement has the power to transform that thought from an "I can't" failure to one of potential and at EVG we believe every student has unlimited potential. Yet gives a student confidence to persist while making mistakes without giving up. If you would like to partner with the school on this new initiative please feel free to contact me at 239-377-9804, I'd love to talk. It's going to be a fabulous year!!

Old Mullet Rappers Live On

by Patty Huff

Did you know that you can look up copies of the old *Mullet Rappers* online? More than eighteen years ago, when I was publisher and editor of the *Mullet Rapper*, I received a call from the University of Florida asking me if I would like to have our local newspaper stored electronically. They were contacting all the small-town newspapers throughout Florida to provide one online source for our state. All I had to do was give them permission; it's a great resource and a glance back at the history of our community. Check it out and read some interesting past articles.

To access just go to the Florida Digital Newspaper Library at <https://newspapers.uflib.ufl.edu/AA00019229/00001> to view the first issue that they published online (October 20, 2006). Since then, they have added 438 issues of the *Mullet Rapper* to their digital library; click on the "Go To" bar and you can search through the years. The very first paper edition of the *Mullet Rapper* was published on February 1, 2001, and earlier copies are available through the Everglades Society for Historic Preservation.

LARGER TIDE TABLE **25¢**

The MULLET RAPPER

WHAT's Happening in the Everglades City Area

FRIDAY, AUGUST 3, 2007

© 2007, Snook Publications P O Box 617, Everglades City, FL, 34139 Volume I • Issue #33

Sales Tax Holiday

 It's almost "back-to-school" time and for ten days (Saturday, August 4 through Monday, August 13) there will be no Florida State Sales Tax on children's clothing & shoes, books, and school supplies (pens, paper, tape, disks, etc.).

There are price limits for the tax exemption: clothing or books must normally sell for under \$50 and school supply items must be under \$10.

School starts again on Monday, August 20.

BIG CYPRESS TRAILS

 **YARD SALE FRIDAY!**

Spa-Fari is having a yard sale on Friday, August 3, starting at 9:00 a.m. in front of the old Bank building. Items include designer clothing and gifts. The sale continues on Saturday morning, if there is anything left.

KIDS' TRIP TO PARK FRIDAY

Local youngsters have been invited for a day out on Friday, August 3, to

CITY COUNCIL

A special meeting of the City Council was convened on Tuesday, July 31, to set the millage rate and the dates for special hearings on the budget. These will be on Tuesday, September 4, and Thursday, September 13, at 5:30 p.m. in City Hall.

There will be a full City Council meeting on Tuesday, August 7, at 5:30 p.m. Mayor Sammy Hamilton told the *Rapper* that he has not been idle during the three-month break since the last regular meeting. The FEMA audit is almost ready to sign off, way ahead of the time it normally takes to prepare one. He is working on the Comprehensive Plan for the City and hopes to get some grants.

Submitted Photo

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THROUGH HARPER'S EYES

Harper Hancock

My Hometown

Everglades City is known for fishing, both recreational and

commercial. Those of us who live here, I guess you could say it runs in our blood. My biggest fish was a 26-inch snook that I caught fishing in a tournament, "Hook Em' in the Glades" tournament. The best tasting fish, in my opinion, is a snook! Fishing in Everglades City dates back decades, especially at The Rod and Gun Club, which has been around since 1923 and hosted many famous

and prominent figures, even United States Presidents!

Everglades City was founded in the late 19th century and it evolved from a small fishing village. The region was originally inhabited by the Calusa people, whose civilization thrived in Southwest Florida around 2,000 years ago. The name was changed in 1965.

Today, Everglades City has airboat tours, fishing charters, and wildlife exploration. My personal favorite place is the Collier County Museum which used to be a laundry building.

Everglades City is rich with history and is a really awesome place to visit, and an incredible place to call home!

Save Everglades Airpark



Submitted Photos

Judy Sims and Friends of Everglades Treasurer Paul Sims, and President Deborah Trujillo.

The Friends of the Everglades Airpark participated in the festivities at McLeod Park during the City's Independence Day celebration on June 28th by distributing information about the new Friends' nonprofit organization. The collection of model airplanes was included on display by Judy and Paul Sims.



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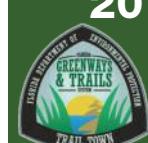


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Remembering Mayor McLeod

Submitted

Museum Manager Thomas Lockyear will share the story of Daniel W. McLeod on Thursday, August 21, from 2:00 – 3:00 PM at the Museum of the Everglades. McLeod still holds the record for longest continuous service as an elected official of Collier County - 37 years in total with 35 as the Mayor of Everglades City. A native Floridian and master of many trades, McLeod served as the County's first Tax Assessor, Vice-President of the Bank of Everglades, President of the Board of Everglades Community Church, and the first publisher of the Collier County News, among other endeavors. As namesake of the town's central McLeod Park—home of the annual Everglades Seafood Festival—his numerous contributions to the community spanning nearly four decades have been recognized in perpetuity. Come learn more about Mayor McLeod on August 21!



Photo Courtesy of Collier County Museums

Also, from now through August 9th, each Collier County Museum will have special backpacks filled with activities, props, and more that will help your children investigate our museums by exploring our history in a hands-on way, all while having fun together. Backpacks are designed for K-5th audiences and are free to borrow during your time at a Collier County Museum. Ask a greeter at any museum front desk until August 9th about backpack availability!

Romp in the Swamp is Coming!

Submitted

The 2025 Romp In The Swamp is scheduled for September 26 and 27th. Registration is open at <http://www.rompintheswampnnaples.com>. Or call/text Rob 1-239-777-4519





STORIES FROM THE HEART

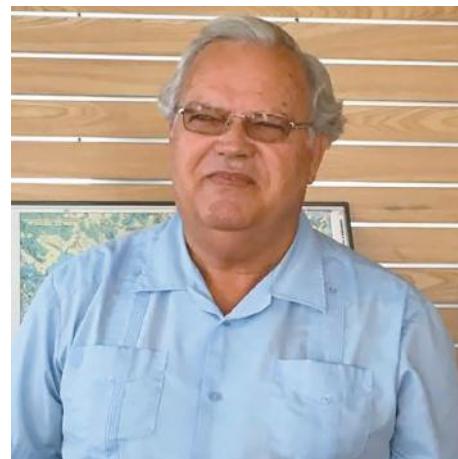
Pastor Jesse Wilson

A Real-Life Encyclopedia Brown

I love a good mystery! Growing up in Northern Michigan in the 70s and 80s, I was pretty much a bookworm. I could spend hours reading a book, and my favorites were Louis L'Amour Westerns and the Encyclopedia Brown series of books. Louis L'Amour stories were filled with gunfights and breathtaking action. Having been named after Jesse James, the famous gunfighter, I think contributed to my love for westerns. Growing up, I was told I had been named after Jesse James because some of our relatives hailed from Kentucky, and Jesse James apparently had relatives there that we were attached to through marriage.

Years later, a DNA test from Ancestry would fail to prove that story true. Oh well, it was nice while it lasted! I'm not giving up hope, though, that somewhere in my family history I'm related to some gunfighters and bad guys. When I wasn't reading Westerns and acting out the stories (I always played Jesse James), I was busy reading mysteries. Encyclopedia Brown was my go-to book. Oh, I read Sherlock Holmes as well, but Encyclopedia Brown was easy to relate to. His name was Leroy Brown, and he was only ten years old. Pretty much every story was the same: something disappeared, or someone was being framed for a petty crime, and while listening to the facts, Encyclopedia would discover something within the story that would lead to him solving it. So besides helping his dad, who was the police chief, he also ran his own private sleuth business out of his dad's garage helping the neighborhood kids.

Years later, and many other books having been read, I moved to



Kenny "Encyclopedia" Brown.

Chokoloskee to take the pastorate of the local church on the island.

One day, I rode my bike to Outdoor Resorts of America and ran into a man whose office sits alongside the parking lot for the boat ramp. I didn't literally run into him, though I am known to be a crazy driver at times. I met the person who runs the boat ramp and sees to it that tourists have a place to stay, either in his little motel or with their RV inside the ORA campground. The moment I met Kenny, I knew I had discovered something that thousands of others have discovered. Encyclopedia Brown is alive and well; he lives here in South Florida and goes by the name Kenny Brown.

Kenny was born and raised here on Chokoloskee, and due to the beauty and unique history of the Everglades, we get visitors from all over the world. It's not uncommon to walk into his office with views of Chokoloskee and the islands seen from his desk, and meet people from Germany, Denmark, or the U.K. And they'll usually be enjoying a short history lesson from Kenny Brown.

Want to know about the Calusa or the Seminoles who lived here? Kenny's great-great-grandfather, John Joseph Brown, worked with them as an agent here on Chokoloskee back in the 1800s. Did you know there have been some high-profile plane crashes in the Everglades? Kenny can share things with you about some of those as if it happened yesterday. Sure, larger cities have libraries and thousands of books, but Chokoloskee has Kenny Brown. He not only shares a wealth of information about many topics, but the stories come alive like a real-life movie when he shares them.

So, the next time you're hankering for a story, some real history, instead of



Kenny's office and storytelling place.

Photos by Pastor Jesse Wilson



The beautiful view from Kenny's office.

running to the local library in Naples, take a short drive over to Chokoloskee, to a place called Outdoor Resorts of America, and stop in. The coffee is fresh, the smiles are genuine, and there you'll find Kenny ready to serve up some real Everglades stories that will keep you fully engaged. You might also meet some folks visiting from around the world, or from across the country. Seems like Kenny has a lot of friends from all over, people who have discovered that down in the Everglades, on a small island, resides a real-life Encyclopedia Brown, Kenny Brown that is. And tell him Pastor

Jesse sent you; he'll be waiting for you with an exciting tale to share!

Jesse currently pastors Chokoloskee Family Church on Chokoloskee Island along with his wife Charity. They are beginning their seventh year and have overseen the construction of a new 160 seat church that is scheduled to open in August of this year. Their growing congregation keeps them busy with local outreaches and community events. They have two grandkids that live in the area who also attend their church along with their daughter and son in-law.

Spice Up Dinner with Fresh Herbs

By Patty Huff

Live up your dinners by adding some fresh botanicals. Everglades City area residents and visitors are invited to stop by the Welcome Center at 207 West Broadway and snip some of their fresh herbs for your dinner. Enjoy!



Photo by Patty Huff

CLYDE BUTCHER | GALLERY

PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF THE ARTS WINNER | COME VISIT US 23 MILES EAST OF EVERGLADES CITY | 52388 Tamiami Trail, Ochopee | MM 54.5 | 239-695-2428

The Ashley Gang's Reign of Rebellion

By Matea Denisen

In the shadows of 20th-century Florida, where cypress knees rose like sentinels and sawgrass stretched for miles, a legend took root, one that still echoes through the Glades today. The Ashley Gang, led by the enigmatic John Ashley and his partner-in-crime Laura Upthegrove, carved a path of rebellion, romance, and lawlessness that some say rivaled the Seminole Wars in its defiance of state control.



—IN MEMORIAM—
CAPTAIN GEORGE B. BAKER, WEST PALM BEACH

George B. Baker was the Sheriff of Palm Beach County during the height of the Ashley Gang's criminal activity in the 1910s and 1920s. He led numerous operations against the gang and became John Ashley's chief adversary. Their feud spanned years and included multiple arrests, escapes, and ambushes. Baker is the one who ultimately ordered or oversaw the deadly ambush at the Sebastian River Bridge in 1924, where John Ashley and several of his gang members were killed.

"To understand the Ashley Gang, you have to understand the Everglades - not just as a place, but as a force of nature," says Aubrey Brown, creator of Florida.Folk.History on Instagram. "John Ashley grew up on the edge of the St. Lucie River, the son of a trapper and trader. He wasn't just some petty outlaw out for fast money. He was shaped by the frontier, by poverty, and by a deep-rooted distrust of authority."

Ashley's descent into notoriety began in 1911 with the alleged murder of Desoto Tiger, a Seminole man. Though arrested, Ashley never stood trial. Instead, he vanished into the wilderness, setting off what would become a decade-long saga of jailbreaks, bank heists, and Prohibition-era bootlegging. "Some say he did it. Others believe he was framed," Brown notes. "Either way, it lit the fuse."

The Ashley Gang struck banks from Stuart to Miami and hijacked rum shipments bound for the East Coast during Prohibition, amassing an estimated \$1 million - an astronomical sum for the time. "In comparison, Bonnie and Clyde robbed only robbed in the thousands," said Brown.

Ashley's deep knowledge of the Everglades allowed him to disappear without a trace, moving at night along old Seminole trails. "Lawmen would chase them in and get turned around, lost in the maze," Brown says. "They disappeared like smoke."

But the legend of the Ashley Gang is inseparable from the woman by John's side - Laura Upthegrove, often referred to as the "Queen of the Everglades." "And she earned that title," said Brown. Far from a mere romantic figure, Laura was a force in her own right. She drove getaway cars, smuggled liquor, and was known to carry a pistol on her hip. "Her life before Ashley was hard - early marriage, poverty, a sense of being caged in," says Brown. "With him, she found freedom and power. Some even say she was the true brains of the operation."

Their defiance struck a chord with working-class Floridians. At a time when banks were foreclosing on farms, politicians were entangled with big business, and the state was selling off land to railroads, the Ashley Gang became folk heroes to many. "[They] looked more like rebels than criminals," Brown explains. "They robbed the rich, outran corrupt sheriffs, and made fools of the system."

The gang's reign ended in 1924 on the Sebastian River Bridge. According to official reports, Ashley and several members were killed in a shootout. But suspicion lingers. "Many believe it was an execution," Brown says. "Their guns were still in their holsters."

Laura Upthegrove didn't live long after Ashley's death. She died in 1927 under mysterious circumstances - Lysol poisoning, possibly suicide or accident. "Some say she died from heartbreak and addiction," Brown added. She was just 30 years old.

Their story has been dramatized, most notably in the 1973 film *Little Laura and Big John*, but Brown cautions against taking such portrayals at face value. "It turns Laura into a lovesick girl and John into a tragic antihero, which misses the truth. They were two broken, brilliant, dangerous people who challenged the system in one of the wildest corners of America."

Today, the Ashley Gang's story lives on not in statues or museums, but in whispers carried by the Everglades breeze. "You won't find many markers with their names," Brown said. "But their story rides through the cane fields and across the water. It's the story of a Florida that once was - untamed, defiant, and free."

You can find thrilling stories like the Ashley Gang and more on Aubrey Brown's Instagram account, @Florida.

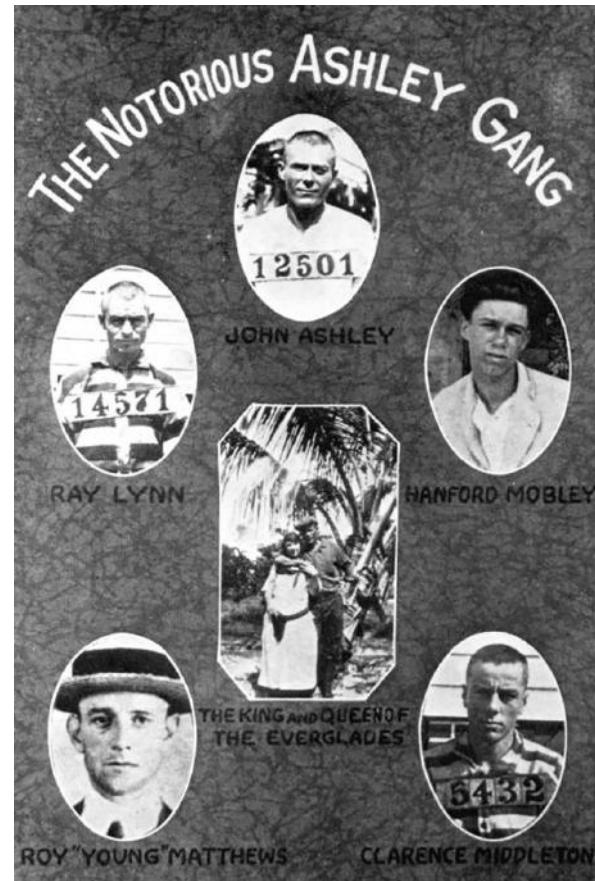


Photo from Florida Memory

The notorious Ashley Gang, composed of John Ashley, Ray Lynn, Hanford Mobley, Roy "Young" Matthews, Clarence Middleton, and Laura Upthegrove. Together they amassed more than 12 million dollars in today's money from robberies and bootlegging.



Clarence Middleton of the Ashley Gang.



Hanford Mobley of the Ashley Gang.



Roy Young Matthews of the Ashley Gang.



Photo by Florida.Folk.History

Self-portrait of Aubrey Brown, storyteller, historian, and artist behind Florida.Folk.History.

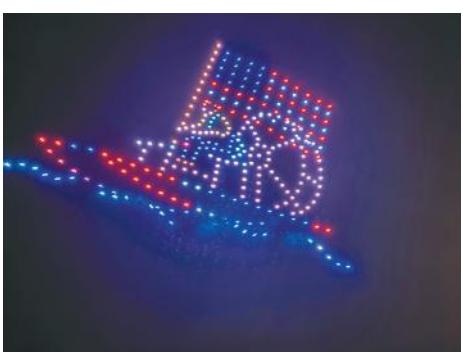
Folk.History, where she brings the Sunshine State's hidden past to life through bite-sized storytelling, archival photos, and field research. Brown studied art and marketing but always felt drawn to history. What began as a personal search to reconnect

with her Florida roots has grown into a widely followed platform celebrating overlooked legends, unsung heroes, and the folklore that textbooks leave behind. "Florida history isn't just what you find in a museum," she says. "It's what's whispered in barrooms, passed down in kitchens, and hidden in the sawgrass."



EC Celebrates Independence Day

Last month's Independence Day festivities on June 28th started with the Everglades City parade and festivities at the park, including the winners of the Little Miss and Mister Firecracker Contest. The Lions Club served hot dogs and everyone enjoyed a great afternoon outdoors. Then when the sun went down, everyone was treated to a fabulous drone show.



CLASSIFIEDS

Restaurants & Bars Everglades City

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

Captain Morgan's Seafood Grill Co.
Wed-Sat 11 am - 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

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
Closed for Summer

Wildman's Pizza Pasta & Pythons
Wed & Thurs 12 pm - 8 pm
Fri-Sat 12 pm - 9 pm
(239) 426-9453

Chokoloskee

HavAnnA Cafe
Closed until October 24th
239-695-2214

Goodland

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

Kirks Fish House
Closed for Season
(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

Ochopee

Subway
Daily 7 am - 7 pm
(239) 695-0949

Joanie's Blue Crab Cafe
Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri, Sun
10:30 am - 5 pm
Closed Wednesday
(239) 695-2682

CR92 & US41 (Naples)

Gator's Crossing
Daily 11 am - 11 pm
(239) 394-0288

For Sale

5 th Wheel RV \$20,000 On permanent lot in Chokoloskee Island Resort, 2011 Chaparral 276
RLDS 30' loa, call 231/357-1103.

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
Closed until October
(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
Closed for Season
200 Datura St E, Everglades City

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

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.

years of age or older. An adult will need to be present to supervise any participants under the age of 16.

This activity is a part of the program: Adopt-a-Highway. Please respond to the following email if you would like to be a part of reducing human impact on this rich ecosystem. Safety training videos are available. <https://www.fdot.gov/maintenance/aahinfo.shtm> bcg@clydebutcher.com

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 & Chokolosee:
(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

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Send to Val@MulletRapper.com

Feel free to call with any questions!
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