

# Airpark Day Takes Off

By Harry Henkel

Airpark Day was a rousing success with a great crowd coming out to enjoy everything the event had to offer!

The day started with several people pitching in at precisely the right times. My neighbor, Cindy, came along to help Judy Sims set up the Friends booth. Paul Sims had his team in place to pick up six golf carts from one of our premier RV Parks to use at no cost for providing transportation to pilots from the Airfield to McLeod Park. Paul managed the Airport part with ease; approximately 36 planes came to the event. The VP and former president of the Lions Club set about staging the food booth. All 10 volunteers for the food booth arrived and began prepping the food.

Pastor Jesse Wilson and one of their musicians arrived and began tuning up. The Car Club "Cool Cruisers" were arriving, and all the vendors were in place. The National Anthem was sung, Pastor Jesse gave an invocation, and our first-ever Airpark Day was officially open. All hands were on deck, and the show ran along as if perfectly staged.

The food was prepared, and all tables were full. The vendors had plenty of patrons, and the car show added that extra dimension for all who attended. The event connected our tiny town to one of its largest assets - the Everglades Airpark - which is adjacent to one of our nation's largest national parks. In a few weeks, Everglades National Park will be dedicating a multi-million dollar Visitors Center like no other in America.

Airpark on pg. 8



Marco Civil Air Patrol with Mr. and Mrs. Bryant Garrett and Collier County Trinity Scott. Bryant is the Collier County Executive Airports Manager, and Scott is the Transportation Management Services Department Head. All enjoyed the Airpark Day's festivities.



Photos by Patty Huff  
The Lions Foundation of Everglades served over 400 sandwiches. Joyce, Connie, Caryn, and Sally were serving.

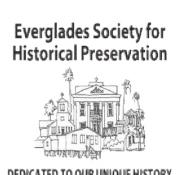
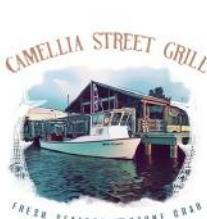


Paul Sims, a Board Member of Friends of the Everglades Airpark, Inc., instructs his granddaughter, Sailor.



Charlie Gray, an instructor for Lorenzo Walker Technical College, explains the programs available for students interested in Aviation.

## - Mullet Rapper Sponsors / Thank You! -



# DECEMBER 2025

Sunday, November 30	Monday, December 1	Tuesday, December 2	Wednesday, December 3	Thursday, December 4	Friday, December 5	Saturday, December 6
Holy Family reopens for "season" Mass at 10:30 am	Varsity Girls Basketball Game EC vs. Seacrest Country Day 6:00 PM	Girls Basketball Game EC vs. Immokalee 5:30 PM Boys Basketball Game EC vs. Immokalee 7:00 PM City Council Meeting 7:00-9:00 PM	Food Pantry 9:30-12 Noon	Ladies Coffee - 8:30 AM Island Cafe Girls Basketball Game EC at Golden Gate 6:00 PM	First Friday Social Gathering Rod and Gun Club 5:00 – 7:00 PM Girls Basketball Game EC vs. CSN 5:00 PM Boys Basketball Game EC vs. CSN 7:00 PM	Swamp Heritage Festival Big Cypress National Preserve 10:00 AM – 3:30 PM Annual Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting 5:00 PM – 10:00 PM
Sunday, December 7	Monday, December 8	Tuesday, December 9	Wednesday, December 10	Thursday, December 11	Friday, December 12	Saturday, December 13
		Book Club Meeting PLUS Holiday Party Linda Williams home Girls Basketball Game EC vs. Mason Classical Academy 5:00 PM Boys Basketball Game EC vs. Mason Classical Academy 6:30 PM	Food Pantry 9:30-12 Noon Boys Basketball Game EC at CSN 7:00 PM	Ladies Coffee - 8:30 AM City Seafood Boys Basketball Game EC at Neumann 7:00 PM Lions Meeting/ Christmas Party Ivey House - 6:00 PM	Girls Basketball Game EC vs. SFCHS 5:30 PM Boys Basketball Game EC vs. SFCHS 7:00 PM Marjory Stoneman Douglas Visitor Center Grand Opening Everglades National Park	Art in the Glades McLeod Park 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Sunday, December 14	Monday, December 15	Tuesday, December 16	Wednesday, December 17	Thursday, December 18	Friday, December 19	Saturday, December 20
Deadline for January Mullet Rapper Article Submissions			Food Pantry 9:30-12 Noon	Ladies Coffee - 8:30 AM HavAnnA Cafe Boys Basketball Game EC vs. Naples Classical 6:00 PM	Girls Basketball Game EC at Donahue Catholic 5:00 PM Boys Basketball Game EC at Donahue Catholic 6:30 PM	
Sunday, December 21	Monday, December 22	Tuesday, December 23	Wednesday, December 24	Thursday, December 25	Friday, December 26	Saturday, December 27
	School Winter Break through January 5		Food Pantry 9:30-12 Noon	Merry Christmas!		
Sunday, December 28	Monday, December 29	Tuesday, December 30	Wednesday, December 31	Thursday, January 1	Friday, January 2	Saturday, January 3
			Food Pantry 9:30-12 Noon	Happy New Year!		





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



Photos Courtesy of Savannah Oglesby

## Field Trip for Future Marine Biologists

By Savannah Oglesby

Have you ever wanted to be a marine biologist for the day? Studying different marine species, gazing at zooplankton under microscopes, and diving along coral reefs sounds like an awesome career! On November 14th, Everglades City School's fourth, fifth, and sixth graders got the opportunity to travel down to the Florida Keys for the day to put themselves in the shoes of marine biologists.

Eighteen students and six chaperones (one of them being myself) boarded a charter bus at 5:30 AM Friday to embark on our two-hour journey to Marine Lab, located in Key Largo, Florida. The bus was buzzing with excitement as we glided down the road, wondering what fun things we all had in store for us. When we arrived, we were greeted by Lucy, one of Marine Lab's biologists, who led us towards their outdoor pavilion where she explained our itinerary for the day and encouraged everyone to put sunscreen on. After a quick swim test, we were put into two groups and led towards the docks to pick up our snorkeling gear and wetsuits. Once everyone had their wetsuits and gear, another marine biologist named Ari met us at the dock; she led one group to a boat and Lucy led



the other group to a different boat. We first went winding through the mangroves of the Keys and ended up in a bay where we were able to get into the shallow water and snorkel. We gathered many different marine organisms into a plastic tub to study them. The organisms we analyzed ranged from scallops to starfish, even different sea slugs such as the lettuce sea slug. After placing them back in the water, we traveled back to the lab to learn about different types of coral in the Marine Lab's floating classroom. The most exciting part of the trip was next. Our groups got back together on boats and cut through the bright blue waves of the Florida Keys to Elbow Reef, where we jumped out and snorkeled above the most beautiful and colorful coral reef. Our students were fascinated by the variety of life under the turquoise water.

After exploring the entire reef, it was time to head back to the lab where our students and chaperones gathered into the lab to study different species of zooplankton. It was incredibly intriguing to watch as the zooplankton sprang from one side of the glass slide to the other. Finally, around 9:00 PM it was time to gather our things and start our journey back home. We thanked each of the marine biologists who let us step into their world for the day and marched to board the bus.

I cannot express how grateful our students and chaperones were to have experienced such an incredible, informative, and unique field trip. Our EVG students, as well as the chaperones, will remember this trip for a lifetime. I cannot wait to see who this field trip to Marine Lab will inspire out of our amazing students to go into marine biology!



Everglades City - Chokoloskee - Conchland - Port of the Islands - Lee - Big Cypress - The 10,000 Islands

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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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## Happy Anglers at Hook'em in the Glades

By Jill Whitcomb

The Eighth Annual Hook'em in the Glades fishing fundraiser tournament presented by the Lions Foundation of Everglades was a huge success! This year's captain's meeting was held at Camellia Street Grill and check-in at Everglades Fishing Company, with approximately 190 anglers fishing. Friday's captains' meeting was packed full of excitement with great music, food, and raffles, as well as our Annual Mullet Toss! This year's Mullet Toss in the Glades champion was Everglades City School's own first grader, Reagan Higgins, with 24 points! Coming in second place was Harper Pratt with 17 points!

We had over 200 people attending to support Hook'em in the Glades and the students and youth of Everglades City! It was a tough day on the water as the water wasn't moving much, but a few captains were able to find the fish!

This year, we opened a new Adult Artificial Team Boat Division and had 10 captains competing for the first Artificial Team Boat Champion in Hook'em history! Capt. Wayne Meland and first mate Matt McLean took first place with 72 points! Coming in second place with 66 points was Sticky Holsters, captained by Kyle Coar and crew! Just behind them was Capt. Sean Morton and crew with 63 points!

Our Adult Open Team Boat division had 42 boats competing for the big trophy! Coming in first place were first-time winners Team Wagner with Captain Brock and Maurine Wagner, and mates Marissa and Melissa Antonucci with a total of 70 points! Only three points separated first place from third place! Francis Santos's Team came in second with 68 points, and Josh and Jody Coar placed third with 67 points! Wow, what a close competition this year!

In the Paddle Division, we had a new winner this year! John Suleski took first place from last year's winner Joe Henary with a score of 56 points! Joe came in second with 44 total points!

Despite a tough day on the water, our Jr. Team Boats, which consisted of a Jr. Angler Captain and all Jr. Anglers as crew members, fished hard and finally found a few fish! Local upcoming future fishing guide from Everglades City, Chase Stokes, won first place! Chase and first mate Kingston Robinson were able to secure the win with 28 points! Second place went to first-year Jr. Team Boat captain Trace Creel and his crew with 15 points!

Our Junior Angler Pee Wee On-Shore champ goes to Brentley



Submitted Photo

Pike with 128 total points! Second place went to Stacia Bagley with 57 points! The Junior On Shore (third -12th grade) championship went to local angler fishing legend, Damien Stokes, with a total of 400 points! Last year's champion, Maddy Thoner, came in second with 250 points! Our third-place winner is new to the leaderboard, but not to fishing! Local angler Mila Valdes landed a huge redfish, which almost got her to the second-place spot!

The junior anglers fishing on adult team boats were also in a heated competition for the longest snook, redfish, and seatrout as individuals! The longest snook winner was Marissa Antonucci with a 28-inch snook! Marissa has fished the tournament for several years and always came up just short, but not this year! Second place in the longest snook division went to Michelle Osceola with a 21-inch snook, and third place went to Jax Kelsea with an 18-inch snook!

The longest Redfish went to Giulietta Tavares with a 25-inch redfish. Second place was twin sister to the longest snook, Melissa Antonucci, with a 24-inch snook, and third place with a 12-inch snook went to Nathan Fernandez!

The longest Seatrout, which was a three-way tie at 15 inches long, came down to the person who caught their trout earliest in the day. Future Everglades City fishing guide Kingston Robinson landed his 15-inch trout at 7:06 AM! Second place went to Isabella Cavero, who landed her trout at 7:18 AM. Third place went to Giulietta Tavares, who caught her 15-inch trout at 1:10 PM!

The adult longest snook, redfish, and seatrout was another close battle that came down to earliest time caught! The winner in the longest



snook contest was Marcos Baldo with a 33-inch Snook caught at 8:37 AM! The winner of the redfish trophy was James Boender with a 27-inch red caught at 12:58 PM, just 25 minutes earlier than the second-place guy! The longest seatrout winner was Wayne Meland with a 19-inch seatrout caught at 7:34 AM!

I have to say one of my favorite parts of the tournament is watching and listening to the kids who fish on shore! One of our seventh-grade girls said, "I'm not going to fish this year! All I ever catch is catfish!" I told her to find Mr. Whitcomb, and she would catch something other than a catfish! She joined up with several other middle school kids at the river, where Mr. Whitcomb was helping, and that decision didn't disappoint! She caught a huge black drum, snapper, and jacks! As I drove along the river, the kids and the adults came rushing to me to show me their giant fish pictures and stories of the ones they lost at the dock! The smiles, laughter, and joking around that went on that day were enough to bring joy to any adult watching!

Hook'em in the Glades and the Lions Club of Everglades would like to thank all the sponsors, raffle donors, fishermen, and friends who joined us at the captain's meeting and supported this event! The money raised will support the students and youth of Everglades City! Some of our big youth groups working to earn money are our cheerleaders, who have 22 girls who want to attend summer camp in Fort Myers! The prom committee has a very special prom planned in Naples that will be remembered by all who attend! The homecoming committee is working to put on a fabulous Homecoming Dance on campus this winter! The student government kids are working to attend the state conference in Lake Worth this winter. The girls' softball team has a senior trip each year that gets funded by the work these girls put in Hook'em in the Glades! And this year, the EVG News crew raised money to fund their field trip to the NBC2 news studio!

Thank you to the Everglades City Lions Club and everyone who fished, sponsored, volunteered, purchased shirts, and attended any part of the event! We couldn't have had this successful event without all of you!



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## Angel of the Swamp

By Patty Huff

Angels come from everywhere to live in the swamp, even from New Jersey. Elaine Middelstaedt comments that even though she is a Jersey girl, Everglades City still welcomed her, even electing her as a city councilperson for three terms (losing by just four votes the

fourth time)! She also served as Chairperson of the Collier County Metropolitan Planning Organization during her last four-year term.

Elaine is everywhere – you see her at most events and meetings around town – because she has volunteered her time and energy for many, many years to be the secretary or treasurer of almost all our non-profit organizations. Currently, Elaine serves as Secretary of the Everglades Lions Club, Treasurer of the Everglades Society

for Historic Preservation, Treasurer of the Friends of the Museum of the Everglades, and was hired by the Everglades Community Church to oversee their finances.

Elaine, with a law degree and a member of the New Jersey and Florida bars, started her own pension administration business in 1996. She continues to work in addition to her tireless service to our community. Elaine, you are a true Angel of the Swamp!



## EC Volleyball Heading to Boston

Submitted

Lions Club President Harry Henkel presented \$500 to Everglades City Volleyball team representatives Ava Lenz and Rylee Mayberry. The team is headed to Boston for the Nationals. Consider donating to our team!



### The City of Everglades

For years, together, we've made the holidays shine a little brighter for the children of our community – making sure every child receives a special holiday gift card and a reason to smile.

This season, we invite you to join us once again in continuing this wonderful tradition of bringing joy to the children of Everglades City and the neighboring communities.

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laughter, warmth, and cheer to local families this Christmas. Your kindness truly makes a difference.

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it off at City Hall, 102 Copeland Ave. N, Everglades City, or mail it to P.O. Box 110, Everglades City, FL 34139.

Thank you for your generosity and community spirit. Together, we can make the magic of Christmas come alive. Wishing you the Happiest Holidays!



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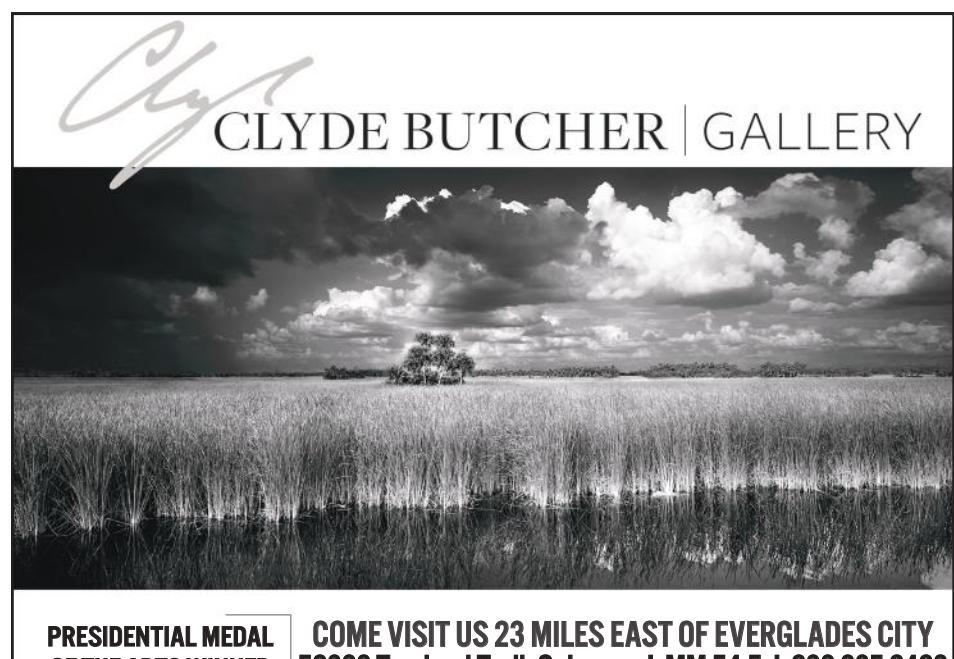
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## FISHING THE EVERGLADES

Capt. Mike Merritt

# December in the 10,000 Islands

The second week of November saw our first real cold front, where temps dropped into the high 40s. We caught several nice Snook, up to 33", even though the bite was slow. I anticipated this as a result of the barometric pressure changing with the front. This is how it can go when fronts approach and move in on us. Sometimes you will catch some good fish just prior to the front. Once the front gets here, the bite is typically slow for at least a couple of days. Cooling water temps will slow the fish until they adjust. They will move to more favorable waters or just hunker down. So don't expect great fishing during a front. But like we did that day, you can manage to pull out some good fish if you are persistent. Just keep on fishing!

There are some positives to colder water temperatures, such as a variety of our winter species moving into feed. Trout fishing will pick up. Sheepshead will move inshore. Black Drum will become more abundant.

And Redfish will move into the rivers and backcountry. This means more opportunities for everyone. Live shrimp will start being the go-to live bait, and a jig worked slow that is tipped with shrimp will do just fine.

Flats fishing with a shrimp and popping cork or a DOA Shrimp under a cork should produce a limit of Seatrout as long as the waters are not stirred up. Working shorelines with the same rigs but a shorter leader will help you locate the Reds and Black Drum. The depth of your rig should always be decided by the water depth. You can work some pretty shallow edges with this rig by keeping it about 12" under the cork. On the flats, you can go as much as three feet under the cork. This rig is very versatile for everything. Trout, Reds Drum, and yes, Snook. How much you pop that cork depends on your target fish. More for Trout, less for the others. Experiment. Pay attention to the subtle differences. This is how you figure it out. Don't be stuck on one thing, or just one technique. I remember fishing with my good friend Ray Culver one December and we started using a 1/8 oz. white jig under a popping cork down a few shorelines and started catching some nice Snook. We got Snook up to 12 lbs that day. It was cold and the water was cold. We were not getting hits on our lures, so we started experimenting. There are a lot of things I do to produce fish that are the



Submitted Photo

result of experimenting on a slow day.

The more you fish, the more you figure out. And then sometimes you just get lucky. Colder water temps usually mean slower moving fish, so slow down your retrieve and action. The fish feel the cold just like we do, but they don't have a jacket, so work it slowly on a cold day! It even pays to drop a shrimp right on the bottom in any rock hole or on the edges of the oyster bars. Everyone loves shrimp, and you never know what you might catch on the bottom.

Enjoy the cooler weather and I hope the winds stay down enough to get in some great days in the Islands! 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.



Submitted Photo

# Picnics for Pilots

## Submitted

Friends of Everglades Airpark -picnics for pilots! Dwight Bowden of Ohio and Paul Sims, members of "Friends of Everglades Airpark" try out the new picnic bench donated to the Airpark.

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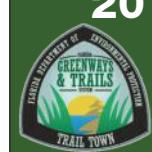


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## Bank of Everglades Building Sponsorship Opportunity

By Patty Huff

In the ongoing rehabilitation of the historic Bank of Everglades building, one of the most dramatic steps is the restoration of the original style windows that graced the 1927 building. These 20 windows will be custom-made to withstand hurricane winds but have the look of the originals.

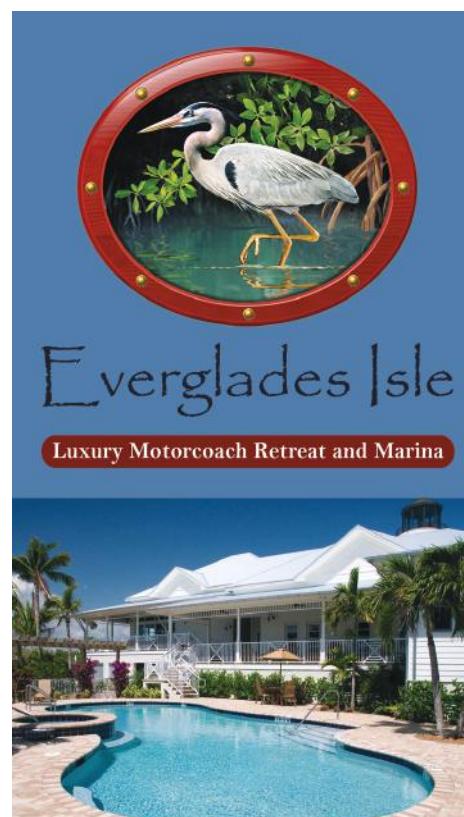
We are ready to once again accept sponsorship for 15 of the casement windows. The cost to sponsor a window is \$15,000 each. A sample of one-half of the casement window is now on display in front of the Bank Building. Additionally, we will be restoring the two-story Palladian window over the front door, a notable feature long missing from this historic structure. Sponsorship of this eye-catching window is \$30,000.

There will be other opportunities in the future to make donations for other areas of the building, but at this time, we are reaching out to

our community to join us in being a part of this window project.

This is a great opportunity to make a year-end tax-deductible donation to a worthy cause. You may also wish to donate in the name of a loved one.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact me at [snookcity@gmail.com](mailto:snookcity@gmail.com) or call 239-719-0020.



## Swamp Heritage Festival

Submitted

Come to the Annual Swamp Heritage Festival, Saturday, December 6th, 2025, from 10:00 to 3:30 in Big Cypress National Preserve.

This year, we hope to inspire visitors to see Big Cypress as a place where 'Art Meets the Wild'. Through artistic talks, cultural demonstrations, thrilling stories, music, and hands-on activities, we will explore the ways in which people have found endless inspiration in the swamp. We strive to provide opportunities to learn about the different lens that people look through to see the Big Cypress National Preserve.

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## Airpark from pg. 1

This Airpark Day was planned and executed on its own merit on one of Florida's most beautiful Saturdays for flying. The Friends of the Everglades Airpark, Inc., just gave Everglades City a new ray of hope for the future of our proud community.

Everglades Air Tours provided a Wingless Piper Cub, allowing children to sit behind the wheel of

an airplane. They also provided a state-of-the-art flight simulator for patrons to try their hand at flying into the Everglades Airpark.

At the end of the day, over 400 sandwiches of pulled pork, hamburgers, cheeseburgers, and hot dogs were served along with water and lemonade. Attendees enjoyed helicopter rides, music, classic cars, and complimentary stone crab from Mike Merritt.



Great fun with a large crowd enjoying helicopter rides, music, classic cars, and complimentary stone crab by Mike Merritt.



This is the Flight Simulator provided by Everglades Air Tours, now currently located at the LaBelle Airport.



Photos by Harry Henkel

Winners of one of the free helicopter rides were Janet and Joe, pictured here with Greg Melanson, who donated the rides on his helicopter.



Over 36 planes came to the event from Venice, Sarasota, Naples, and Miami.



Judy Sims, board member of Friends of the Everglades Airpark. New members are encouraged to join.



Music was provided by Caloosa Country of Alva, Florida.



Cars from Cool Cruisers of Southwest Florida drove their classic cars to Everglades City.



John Shay from Marco Island examines the Wingless Piper Cub provided by Everglades Air Tours from LaBelle, Florida. Shay, a former private pilot in the area for many years, stopped by to wander through the show.



## Giving Back

Pastor Jesse and his wife Charity presented a \$500 donation to Harry Henkel, president of Lions Foundation of Everglades, for all the hot dogs and fixings the club cooked for the recent Trunk or Treat Fall Celebration.

Submitted Photo



### STORIES FROM THE HEART

Pastor Jesse Wilson

## My Favorite Time of Year

By the time this article comes out, Thanksgiving will have passed and most everyone will be preparing for Christmas! Once we get through October, the Holidays officially begin, and I love all of it. During Thanksgiving, I look forward to eating a whole pumpkin pie by myself throughout the long day. Second, third, and fourth helpings of turkey and mashed potatoes spread throughout the day, followed, of course, by another slice of pumpkin pie - well, you can see how eating a whole one would be an easy task. It's like on that one day God steps back and says, "Gluttony is off the list, enjoy yourself!" Okay, maybe God doesn't exactly greenlight my binge eating, but it makes me feel good thinking that! Following Thanksgiving is the world's craziest day, Black Friday.

I love Black Friday not just for the deals, but watching people lose their minds for a \$10 toaster! Before moving to the beautiful Ten Thousand Islands to pastor Chokoloskee Family Church, we used to go to Walmart on Black Friday just to watch the festivities. You know, the moment the Walmart employee would squeeze through a throng of people crowded around a pallet of shrink-wrapped microwaves. Time would stand still as the employee would slowly cut the plastic. People were growing restless as the glorious contents behind the shrink wrap came into view. Then that super short pause as the plastic fell to the floor, the employee trying to get out of the way as a roar filled the atmosphere, and the people attacked the microwaves like a crazed group of hungry hyenas that just took down a water buffalo!

But then we move into December

and to my favorite holiday, Christmas! For us, our Christmas tree goes up right after Thanksgiving and out comes the Christmas music. From the Christmas movies to the decorations on the homes and in the yards and the music filling the stores, playing on all the music stations, the only thing we lack is some snow! Our daughter got an extra early jump on Christmas this year; she put her tree up in October. Yes, Christmas is my favorite time of the year. Like the song goes, "It's the most wonderful time of the year, with the kids jingle belling, And everyone telling you be of good cheer,

It's the most wonderful time of the year."

It's during this time of sharing, caring and dropping some dollars or coins in the bell ringer's cans, of memories of childhood fun and presents given and received, that we pause for a moment and remember that we truly are blessed. Christmas should help us forget the stress of life and think back to two thousand years ago on a chilly winter's night, a young girl with not much money gave birth to whom this greatest of all Holidays is named. May we each discover afresh the true meaning of Christmas this year.

"O holy night, the stars are brightly shining. It is the night of our dear Savior's birth. Long lay the world in sin and error pining, till He appeared and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn. Fall on your knees, O hear the angels' voices, O night divine, O night when Christ was born, O night divine, O night, O night divine."

Merry Christmas!

Jesse currently pastors Chokoloskee Family Church on Chokoloskee Island along with his wife, Charity. Their growing congregation keeps them busy with local outreaches and community events. They have two grandkids who live in the area who also attend their church, along with their daughter and son-in-law.

## Chokoloskee Family Church Christmas Activities

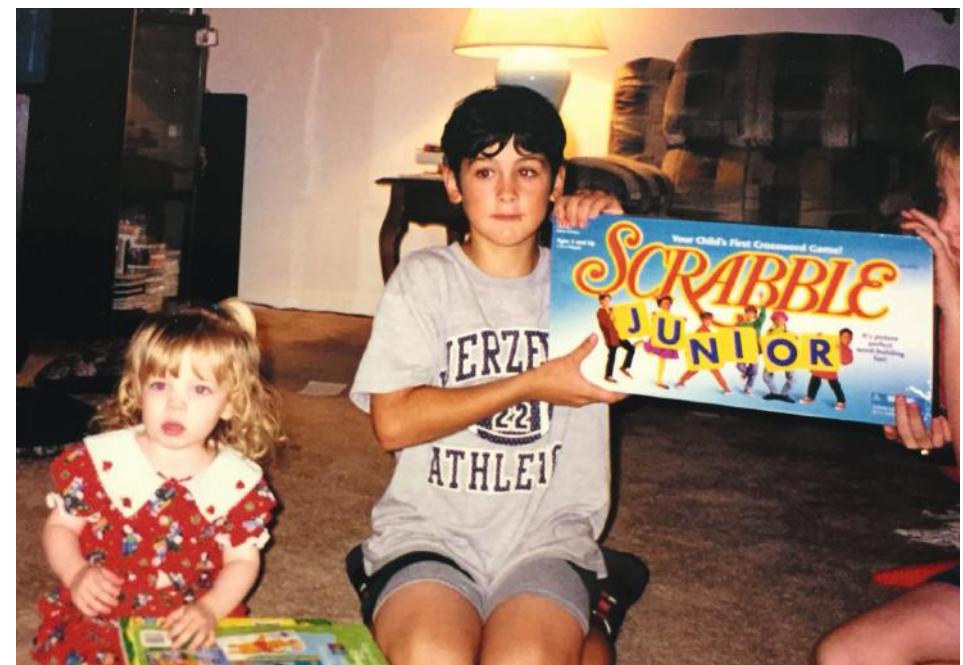
By Pastor Jesse Wilson

On Wednesday, December 17th, Family Church is holding our annual Ugly Sweater Contest. There will be first, second, and third place winners among adults, teens, and children. Come for the sweaters, then stay for the charcuterie



Christmas together with the family 2015.

Photos Courtesy of Jesse Wilson



Christmas memories from the 90s.



Christmas as Elvis singing to my wife, lol



# Welcome Center

By Patty Huff

The “season” is here, and we are greeting more visitors from around the world at the Everglades Area Welcome Center, 207 West Broadway. If you have a few extra hours a week and like to meet people, volunteering is fun! Just stop by and ask about joining us. The Welcome Center is open seven days a week, and volunteers work three to four-hour shifts this time of year. We provide maps and information about specific tours to our visitors, many who have never visited our town and have no idea about the extensive opportunities and adventures they can experience here. The reward is seeing the smile on their faces and the appreciation for catering specifically to each of them, depending on what interests them most.

We hear many times from tourists how little they knew about this area, and that they will definitely come back and spend more time in Everglades City and Chokoloskee.



Photos by Patty Huff

I once received a text from a lady in Germany who said she was sending her parents to Everglades City and the Welcome Center since she had such a great time on a tour we recommended. In mid-November, I met a gentleman from Switzerland who said he had only planned to stay here one day, but after realizing how much there was to do from our “Three Days in

the Everglades” flyer, he planned to lengthen his stay to three days. Everyone loves our laid-back lifestyle – they say, “It is so quiet and everyone is so nice here.” The next day, I had someone call in to find out about an airplane tour over the Everglades as well as a fishing trip with a guide in a canoe. He said he had been searching for information for over a week, and I

was able to provide him with names and contact information within a half hour. We aim to please!

We’re proud of our volunteers and what we have to offer. Our area relies on tourism, and it makes us happy making them happy. Why not show them our best? They’ll come back again, which will only help our local economy and put a smile on your face!

## Everglades Seafood Festival Entertainment Lineup

Submitted

It's never too early to think about the Everglades Seafood Festival, which just announced the entertainment for the 2026 event! This is the 56th annual Seafood Festival, and it promises to be as popular as ever. Three days filled with country music, carnival rides, arts, crafts, and the tastiest seafood from the Stone Crab Capital of the World.

### Friday Feb 13

Join emcee Gator Nate

5:00 -6:00 Aydin Holt

6:15-7:16 Big Cypress Band

7:15-7:25 Drone Show!

7:30-8:30 Fortunat Son (Creedence Clearwater Revival Tribute)

9:00-10:30 Moonstone Riders

### Saturday Feb 14

11:00-12:00 Edison Schetter

12:30-1:30 Bandana Brothers

2:00-3:00 Jack Shealy Band

3:30-4:30 CJ Garton

5:00-6:00 Gator Nate

7:00-8:30 Tyler Farr (Headliner)

9:00-10:00 The Stones (Rolling Stones Tribute)

### Sunday Feb 15

11:00-12:00 Chokolokee

Family Church of God

1:30-2:30 Wes Shipp

3:00-4:00 Charlie Pace Band

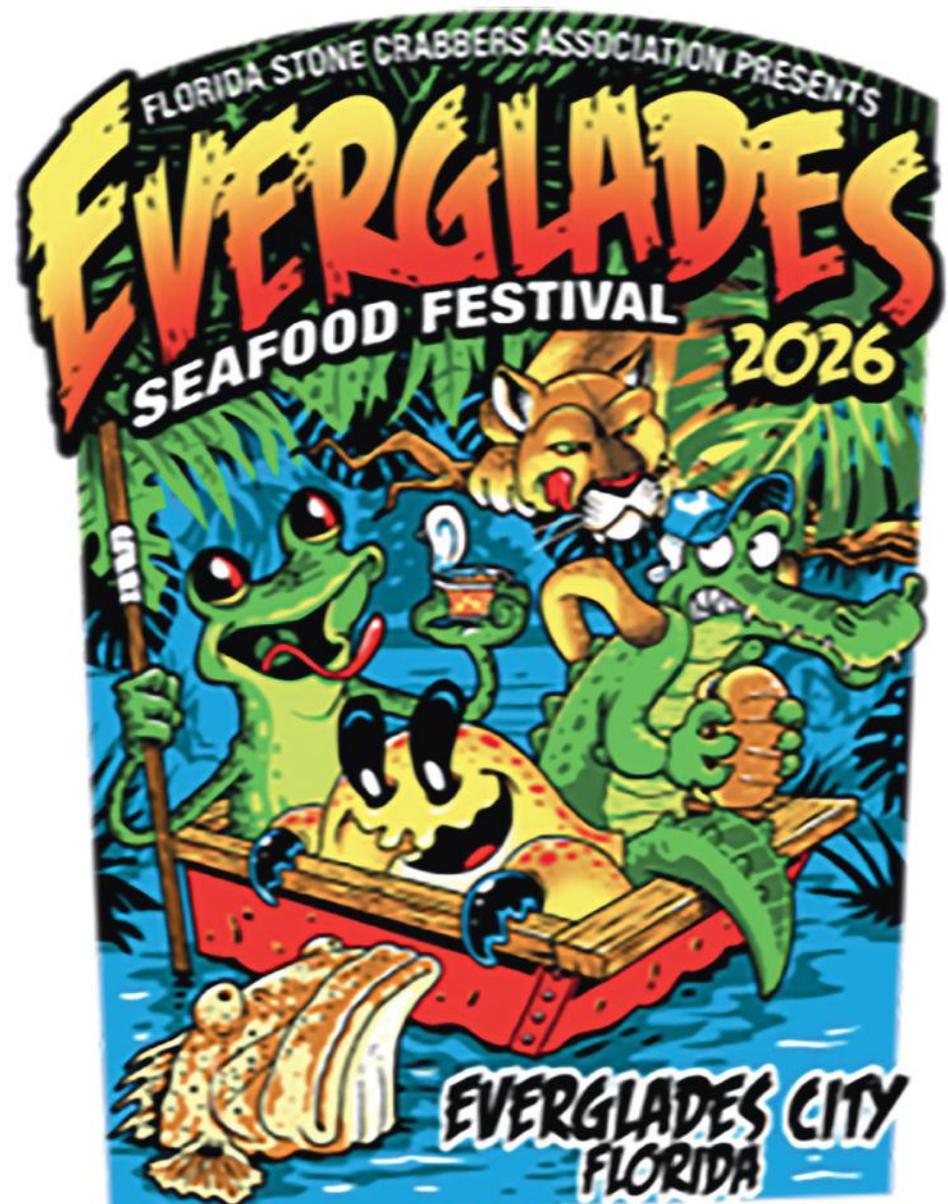
4:30-6:00 Meetloaf

(Meatloaf Tribute Band)

VisitEvergladesCity.com

Your ultimate source for community events, local insights, area news and so much more.

Things To Do | Park Information | Local History  
Community News | Business Directory



## Romp in the Swamp Supports Community

The Romp in the Swamp Naples fishing tournament has raised over \$200,000 to assist local first responders, their families, and local anglers who have been affected by

medical bills and the devastation of hurricanes. Through entry fees, sponsorships, raffles, and silent auctions, the event has provided much-needed financial relief to those in the community facing medical emergencies, recovering from natural disasters, or experiencing other financial hardships.

What makes Romp in the Swamp Naples so special is its local focus: all money raised stays within

(Naples, Everglades City, Golden Gate, Bonita Springs, Estero, Ft. Myers) directly helping those who serve our community—firefighters and other first responders—and those who live and work here. The funds raised have been used to cover a range of needs, from medical treatments for individuals battling serious illnesses to providing hurricane relief for families whose homes were destroyed

by storms like Hurricane Ian.

The event has not only provided crucial financial support but has also fostered a sense of community by bringing together local businesses, families, and anglers to support one another. As the tournament continues to grow, we remain dedicated to expanding its impact and helping even more families in the years to come.

## First Friday at Rod and Gun Club

Submitted

The Everglades Society for Historic Preservation held its “First Friday Social Gathering” event on November 7 in the historic bar at the Rod and Gun Club. There were approximately 40 ESHP members and city residents who enjoyed having a drink (or mocktail) at the famous bar. Thomas Lockyear arrived with three posters of

scenes from nearly 100 years ago, including one of Snooky Senghaas, the club’s manager, who Barron Collier brought over from Bavaria in the 1920s. Everyone enjoyed the trivia games of guessing which U.S. Presidents came to visit or fish, how many movies were filmed in the bar, and what celebrities stayed or came for lunch throughout the years. Patty Huff gave a guided tour of the first-floor area and several people shared their memories. The next “First Friday” event will be held on December 5 at the Rod and Gun Club at 5:00 PM. With such a large crowd, the bar next to the pool will be the venue - with lots more stories to tell of times gone by.



Photos by Patty Huff



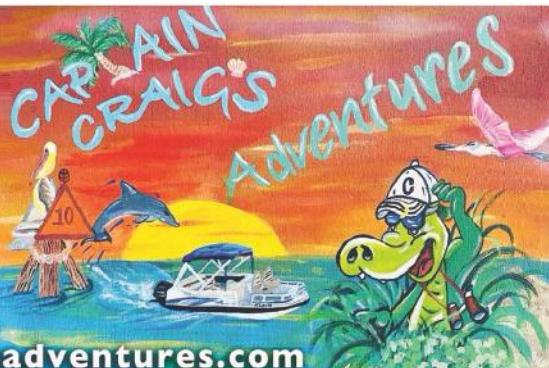
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# CLASSIFIEDS

## Restaurants & Bars

### Everglades City

**Camellia Street Grill**  
Open all week 11 am - 9 pm  
(239) 695-2003

### Captain Morgan's Seafood Grill Co.

Fri, Sat 11 am - 9:30 pm  
Sun-Thurs 11 am - 8 pm  
(239) 695-4700

### City Seafood

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

### Diving Pelican

Sun - Thurs 11 am - 8 pm  
Fri, Sat 11 am - 9:30 pm  
Bar until 1:00 am  
(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

Open for Season!  
7 Days a Week

### Wildman's Pizza Pasta & Pythons

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

### Chokoloskee

**HavAnnA Cafe**  
Open for Season!  
(239) 695-2214

### Goodland

**Crabby Lady**  
Tues-Sat 11 am - 6 pm  
Sun 11 am - 5 pm  
Closed: Mon  
(239) 235-7933

**Kirks Fish House**  
Monday-Saturday  
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

### 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

## 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

(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, 11am Worship and 6 pm Service  
Wed: 6 pm Bible Study  
416 E School Dr, Everglades City

### Holy Family Catholic Church

200 Datura St E, Everglades City  
Sunday Mass at 10:30

### Goodland Baptist Church

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

### Copeland Baptist Church

908 Church Street, Copeland  
Sundays 11 am Service  
Sunday School 10 am  
Bible Study  
Wednesday 6:00 pm.

## Condo for Sale

1 br/1 ba Captain's Table Unit 406. Screened porch, storage garage, new a/c, possible owner financing \$140,000. Call (239) 340-4770

## Help Wanted

Captain Morgans Seafood Grill Corp., has open positions for Full and Part Time Food Runners and Bussers. Send your information to captainmorgansseafoodgrill@gmail.com We are located in 102 South Copeland Avenue Everglades City, Florida 34139. Our phone number is 239-352-0202.

The Mullet Rapper is looking for a part-time freelance writer. Send your resume to val@coastalbreezenews.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](mailto:evergladeslionsclub@gmail.com)

### Ladies Coffee

Thursdays | 8:30 am  
Rotates Everglades City Restaurants  
[snookcity@gmail.com](mailto: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  
**Mullet Rapper/Coastal Breeze News Office** (239) 393-4991.

### 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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