



Everglades Community Church Celebrates Centennial, Memorializes Pastor Wallace

By Christopher Madrid

Everglades Community Church celebrated 100 years of continuous gathering Sunday, March 22, while honoring the life of Dr. Pastor Bob Wallace, who recently passed away. The joy of the centennial was mixed with emotions of sadness and pride with the congregation cherishing and celebrating Wallace's life.

"I remember the last time I saw him, he was in an ambulance, and I asked, 'How are you doing Bob?'" said Collier County School-board member Tim Moshier. "He said, 'No Tim, how are you doing?' and shook my hand."

Wallace left a lasting impact on Everglades City. His ministry lasted 20 years, contributing to the restoration of the historic church and the community as a whole. He is succeeded by Pastor Gary Haug, who moved to Everglades City last August.

"Church is an important part of the

community, so with God's leading and help, I pray I can just fill a small part of his shoes," said Haug, who stepped in as pastor two weeks ago. "Everyone is welcome here: this is a community church. It isn't necessarily tied to any one denomination; we're here to serve the Lord and the people."

Although the congregation traces its roots to Presbyterian origin from the 1880s, the organization has been non-denominational since 1940. Officially established in 1926, Everglades Community Church met in many locations and was served by various traveling ministers. As part of a gift, the land and building were constructed under the condition that the grounds remain non-denominational and be completed prior to October 1940. Both conditions were met, with a fellowship hall and breezeway added in 1957. After Hurricane Wilma in 2005, the church suffered damage, and under Pastor



A Navy Honor Guard presents the colors to Millie Wallace and her family.

Submitted Photos

Wallace, 26 stained-glass windows were added, and the bell tower and narthex were repaired. In 2014, the Ron Slutter Memorial Garden was added next to the main entrance.

The day began with the 11:00 AM service, which dove into Revelation, Chapter Three. Pastor Haug spoke on how God will judge the faith of a person before judging their worldly strength. When the service

concluded, welcoming remarks were spoken by G.B. Barnard, followed by the Wallace family's chosen song, Amazing Grace, sung by Lillian Kee.

Refreshments in the beverage hall were next. Conversations about Everglades City flowed, as memories of Wallace were shared. People dined on macarons, tea, and a cake

Church pg. 3

Rev. George W. Gatewood, Fishing, the 1900 Census, and Religious Zeal

By Craig R. Woodward

This article is being published to commemorate Pastor Bob Wallace, who led the Everglades Community Church with inspirational sermons for nearly 20 years, following in the historical path of Reverend George W. Gatewood. Dr. Bob Wallace was a regular contributor to the Mullet Rapper.

The first full-time minister in Southwest Florida was George W. Gatewood. Before Reverend Gatewood, at age 24, came to scout out the area in 1886, there had been traveling Protestant preachers who held periodic revivals as well as Roman Catholic priests from Key West, who came to the Chokoloskee area to attend to the spiritual needs of the Santini family and other Catholics, but none of them actually resided here. In the late 1800s, Key West was the principal city of the area, and a number of the Conchs were Methodists. "Conchs"

being the name given to transplanted white Bahamians who had moved to the Keys, many of them were descendants of British royalists who had escaped to the Bahamas after the Revolutionary War. Rev. Gatewood was a Methodist minister based in what is now Everglades City. He traveled the Ten Thousand Islands area (Marco Island, Fakahatchee Island, Halfway Creek, and Chokoloskee) for four years as a "circuit preacher." In 1892, at age 30, he married his wife, Minnie Clark of Leesburg, Florida, who was 16 at the time. The couple would document their adventures in the Everglades—Minnie by keeping a diary and George, years later, by writing two books about his days in Southwest Florida, one published in 1939, and the other in 1944.

George Gatewood built a church along the then Allen River (now the Barron River) in the town of Everglade (the name later changed to add the current "s") and organized, as Rev.



Photo Courtesy of Craig Woodward

G.W. Starter's Store on the Allen River with the Starter home in the rear (currently the Everglades City Rod and Gun Club).

Gatewood would call it, "a little group of Methodists," who became the core of a larger congregation which included Seminole Indians.

The Seminoles were in town to deal at G.W. Starter's store near the current Rod and Gun Club. George Starter was a key member of Gatewood's church. Gatewood reported that the Seminoles insisted on first selling their hides and furs and receiving their cash

before they, in turn, purchased any supplies. The seating at the church during service was no problem, as the Indians refused to sit on the benches and would sit cross-legged on the floor.

Transportation at the time was solely by sailboat, as there were no roads in Southwest Florida. Many of his reminiscences had to do with bad

Fishing on pg. 3

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April 2026

To list your upcoming event, meeting, or activity free of charge in the calendar, send details to lynn@coastalbreezenews.com. Deadline for the May edition of the Mullet Rapper is April 20.

			Wednesday, April 1	Thursday, April 2	Friday, April 3	Saturday, April 4
			EC Girls Softball vs. Lely 7:00 PM	Ladies Coffee 8:30 AM City Seafood EC Boys Baseball vs. Naples Classical 3:00 PM		
Sunday, April 5	Monday, April 6	Tuesday, April 7	Wednesday, April 8	Thursday, April 9	Friday, April 10	Saturday, April 11
EASTER 	EC Girls Softball at SFCHS 4:30 PM	Everglades Book Club Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart Team 2:30 PM Everglades City Hall EC City Council Meeting 7:00 PM City Hall, Second Floor		Ladies Coffee 8:30 AM Dulce's Café EC Girls Softball at CSN 6:00 PM	ESHP First Friday Social Gathering 5:00 PM Rod & Gun Club	
Sunday, April 12	Monday, April 13	Tuesday, April 14	Wednesday, April 15	Thursday, April 16	Friday, April 17	Saturday, April 18
AA meeting 4:00 PM Everglades Community Church	EC Girls Softball 7:00 PM at Lely			Ladies Coffee 8:30 AM HavAnnA Café Third Thursday 2:00 PM Museum of the Everglades The Spirit of '26: Barron Collier's American Dream EC Girls Softball vs. SFCHS 5:00 PM		
Sunday, April 19	Monday, April 20	Tuesday, April 21	Wednesday, April 22	Thursday, April 23	Friday, April 24	Saturday, April 25
AA meeting 4:00 PM Everglades Community Church	EC Girls Softball vs. Dunbar 5:00 PM		EC Girls Softball vs. East Lee County 6:00 PM	Ladies Coffee 8:30 AM Island Café		98 th Anniversary of Tamiami Trail Completion 9:00 AM-2:00 PM
Sunday, April 26	Monday, April 27	Tuesday, April 28	Wednesday, April 29	Thursday, April 30		
AA meeting 4:00 PM Everglades Community Church				Ladies Coffee 8:30 AM City Seafood		




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Church from pg. 1

decorated in purple and white.

A collage of Wallace with friends and family, mixed with photos of the Community Church reconstruction, lined the foldout tables in the rear.

A montage of Wallace's spirit echoed throughout the room as a presentation was shown on TV.

Secretly, by the altar, church members constructed a memorial commemorating Wallace with photos of his teenage years and Everglades City days. His Navy jacket and hat were the centerpiece with mementos and memories surrounding it.

As the refreshments finished and the assembly returned to the hall, everyone admired the presentation.

Hymns were sung, prayers were made, and Pastor Haug spoke. Wallace's grandson Cory played the bagpipes in honor of their Scottish heritage, which could be traced back to William Wallace, Guardian of Scotland. His surviving children sang Amazing Grace in harmony. Family members and friends were moved and made comments, all memorializing Wallace or reciting stories. One resounding consistency



The light from the stained glass windows floods the church as the congregation rises from the pews.

was his love for others. Regardless of the situation, he was there for them.

"Dad dearly loved this church, his ministry here, this congregation, and the community of Everglades City. He told me that being called to be the pastor of Everglades Community Church was the happiest and most rewarding time in all of the years and places of his teaching," said Carol Hodge, Wallace's eldest daughter.

"I love you very, very much, Dad, and I miss you."

The ceremony concluded in the Ron Slutter Memorial Garden. Three members of the Navy presented the

Stars and Stripes to Millie Wallace—Bob's wife—and as a trumpet blew, tears appeared on parishioners' cheeks. Wallace's ashes were placed under a purple banner in the Memorial Garden, and as the crowd dispersed, people made their peace.

"It's a tremendous loss to the family and to the church to lose Bob's leadership, but we're very blessed to see the new pastor, and we pray that the church will continue to grow," said Dave Shirley, Wallace's surviving stepson.

"After 100 years, it's endured. It's still here and thriving."

Fishing from pg. 1

weather, boating accidents, and delays in travel. He reported that his 1893 trip to the Florida Methodist Conference in Palatka, Florida, took eight days of travel time. Rev. Gatewood accepted part of his pay in produce, including bananas and sugar cane syrup, and took those items with him to sell to finance the trip. On December 5th of 1893, he started out from Everglades City toward Marco with another man and, when their borrowed sailboat capsized near Fakahatchee Island (due to a strong northern headwind and a "head tide"), a barrel of syrup poured out and "sweetened the bay for a considerable distance." They waded out into the water and pulled the boat ashore. On December 18th, he again started out for the Conference, this time accompanied by his wife with Captain R.B. Storter at the helm, but they immediately got stuck in Chokoloskee Bay at low tide. Later, when the tide came up, they were able to get to Coon Key and anchor for the night. The next day, they got to Marco and ate dinner with George Gatewood's friend, Capt. Bill Collier and the following day sailed north facing a strong headwind but were able to get to Punta Rassa (at the base of the current Sanibel Bridge) by 4 AM. The following day, they sailed to Punta Gorda and it took several more days by train to Bartow, to Orlando, then to Leesburg, and finally to Palatka, where the Methodist Conference was being held.

Gatewood, during his 62 years here, was a keen observer of this area and especially the fishing industry. He reported that Captain Fred Quednau (later the mayor of Punta Gorda and the sheriff of Charlotte County) had once

been in a boat off of Cape Romano, seeing "50 acres of redfish where the water was about 25 feet deep and they were stirring up the sand from that depth. So many (redfish) were there that the fish at the surface were being lifted up by those below, creating the appearance of a coral oyster rock rising slightly above the water level. The red cast of color was from the red color of the fish and their rippling of water helped give the appearance of being above the general surface level." In 1892, Rev. Gatewood reported seeing a 56-foot-long whale, "nearly dead," that had drifted into a pass west of Chokoloskee Island. The whale, tied to a mangrove tree, was being harvested by the Santini family of Chokoloskee, who reportedly got 30 barrels of oil from the whale. When George and his wife Minnie rowed their boat around it, they estimated the jawbone to be ten feet in length and the teeth to be "the size of a Jersey's cow horn."

In 1900, George Gatewood was appointed the "federal census enumerator" and sailed the islands in a light draft sailboat, locating citizens and taking down data. He stumbled upon a vacant cabin and, while looking for the residents, found a moonshine still in the backyard. He quickly left and headed across the bay to another house where he found two men, both drunk with "a barrel with the makings in it." They had seen him and knew he had landed at the cabin and had discovered their still. They were not reassured that Gatewood and the man with him (named Parker) were not "revenue agents," but finally, they answered the census questions that Gatewood posed to them. It helped a lot that Parker was armed with a six-shooter.

One incident that did not turn out as well involved residents of Marco Island and their lack of Christian zeal. Gatewood built the first chapel on Marco. One of Rev. Gatewood's Methodist congregation members in Everglade, "Brother Lockhart," who lived at Halfway Creek, and was described as "a steward, and an exhorter and was very zealous," became concerned over the "flock at Marco." When Rev. Gatewood told him that he did not see "any change in them," Lockwood, who had been recently licensed as an exhorter by the church, preached a sermon to Gatewood to demonstrate what he believed it would take to convert the Marco folks. At Rev. Gatewood's request, Lockwood accompanied him on the next trip to Marco and did the preaching. Gatewood thought Lockwood did well but noted that after the service, those who attended chatted among themselves for a while, then all went home. Lockwood said nothing as he and Rev. Gatewood went to their boat to prepare their dinner; when asked why he was so silent, Lockwood replied: "Well, I was just thinking about Paul when he was shipwrecked on the island of Melita where barbarous people showed him no little kindness and these folks here haven't even asked us to dinner."

Both of George W. Gatewood's books are long out of print and his wife Minnie's original diary is now located at Florida Gulf Coast University. They provide a rare look into everyday life at the turn of the century. George Gatewood died in 1947 at age 87, and his wife predeceased him in 1944, however their home still exists in Punta Gorda.



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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

Pancake Fly-in Unites Airpark and Pilot Community

By Christopher Madrid

Pilots throughout Florida gathered at the runway on Saturday, March 28, in support of the Airpark's continued service, blueberry pancakes, and pleasant conversation.

"There is something that is very constant with pilots: we love to fly, and we love to eat," said IT specialist Victor Popiol, who flew in with friends. "Wherever you can go, and either walk to a restaurant, or there is a restaurant in the field, we will be there."

Friends of the Everglades Airpark returned the wildly popular 'Pancake Fly-in' tradition, which boasted over three dozen planes and dozens more guests. Though it hasn't been long since the sale of the Airpark was halted, Friends of the Everglades Airpark remain vigilant in maintaining the site.

"Collier County is letting us keep the Airpark, but the new major concern is the hangars," said Friends of the Everglades board member Harry Henkle. "We need to replace the doors and fix up the facility, or else it gets harder and harder for pilots to stay."

The hangars, which have been in disarray since the last hurricane, could safely house airplanes from heat damage and flooding. Henkle says they would also encourage a tighter-knit aviation community, allowing pilots to stay the night in Everglades City, which could potentially stimulate an air-tour scene.

"A group of people that flew down here ended up wanting to stay. They ate a meal at the Island Cafe, knocked their socks off, went over to Grimm's Seafood, bought stone crabs, and then went back. The Airpark has made an absolute impact. Several pilots have said, 'Where could I spend the night?' So the hotels will get business. They can go see the new visitor center, then go on a kayak, fly over the Everglades... maybe charter a boat: you name it."

Many aviators flew in for Everglades City's picturesque scenery and cuisine. Birches Resort owner John Willard, from Maine, said, "It's just a



Photos by Christopher Madrid

Dozens of pilots from Miami to Canada cut through blueberry flapjacks while delighting in intercontinental conversation.

lot of fun to come here. It's right on the water, beautiful approach, very pretty—and the pancakes are great. I'm a blueberry pancake fanatic."

The Airpark represents a safety net for the community, and aviators recognize its importance.

"It's a great emergency and fuel stop if you're on your way to the Keys," continued Willard. "The town likes it because if they have a storm, it's a good way to get helicopters and airplanes in."

Many more pilots arrived in support of the Airpark's continued service, maintaining its significance for pilots everywhere.

"We flew in to support the airport because we heard they were going to close it. We were very upset. We love this area, and we love coming here," said clinical pharmacist Yamil Cabrera, who flew in from Broward.

"Any airport that closes is frustrating, because that means the community is shrinking."

For more information, visit Friends of the Everglades Airpark on Facebook.



Sporting an inexpensive fuel cost and kitsch donation pitcher, the stand proudly displays Friends of the Everglades Airpark charm and hospitality.

Fishing in the Everglades

By Tyler Rackay

Everglades City, located in Southwest Florida, offers a unique ecosystem with incredible fishing opportunities. From freshwater marshes to brackish estuaries, the area presents many species of fish to catch, such as smaller species like bluegill and bass, to bigger fish like tarpon and snook.

Depending on where you are fishing from, you can catch various types. In freshwater areas you can cast your line out and catch largemouth bass, bluegill, and sometimes even

peacock bass if you're lucky! In the brackish water areas, which is a mixture of both salt and fresh water combined, you can cast out a line and catch species such as snook, redfish, tarpon, and even sharks! Sometimes a strong fish will run my line out and when I reel it in, I find a blacktip shark on the end! The best time to fish is from about April to November. However, if you are trying to catch bigger tarpon, February is when the big tarpon start to roll in the Ten Thousand Islands and Barron River.

When I go fishing, I always go to my local bait and tackle store,

Everglades Fishing Company, to get some live shrimp and crabs. After I get my bait and tackle that I need, I go from dock to dock and drop down a knocker rig with the shrimp or crabs on it. A knocker rig is when you have a weight above your fishing hook that can move freely up and down your line. I like using this because when you drop it down, it holds the bait down until a fish eats the bait, then the weight stays and the line moves easily, preventing the fish from getting spooked. On my best days with this rig, I've caught redfish, grouper, and snook.

The next time you plan a trip, think about coming down to the Everglades, where you can catch plenty of fish, enjoy the amazing views that the Everglades offers, and eat some delicious food from our local restaurants. If you catch a fish or two, you can take them to one of our many restaurants in the area and they will cook them however you like. Always be ready to have a good time when you're in the Everglades and enjoy the thrill of not knowing what you will reel in!

Tyler Rackay is a junior at Everglades City High School.



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STORIES FROM THE HEART

Pastor Jesse Wilson

Where Has The Time Gone?

Maybe it has something to do with getting older, but time sure does seem to go by quicker. I remember when I was young, summer never lasted long enough and school was too long!

In Michigan, summer began the first week of June and ended the day after Labor Day; we actually would get close to three full months off, which was great. I spent part of my summer on my grandma's farm in Gaylord, Michigan, which was considered northern Michigan.

I loved the smells of the farm, the cows, horses, pigs, and chickens. It wasn't very large; she owned a hundred acres right alongside Highway 75. Spending a few weeks there each summer taught me that hard work was good for you. Now

that doesn't mean it was always enjoyable. Getting up at 5:30 AM to go feed the cows and gather eggs wasn't my idea of a good time, especially the ornery bull my grandma had, who just didn't like me. And some chickens didn't take too kindly to me stealing their eggs while they were keeping them warm. But my most favorite time of summer break was home out in the country with lots of woods to explore with my cousin.

I don't know how my parents survived without having smartphones to check on us. I'd yell over my shoulder as I ran out the door, "I'm going to Roy's mom, be back later!" She always hollered back, "Don't you be late for lunch!" Now that's one thing a young boy didn't do: show up late for lunch! My mom and stepdad grew up during a time when kids obeyed without question, and if they didn't, well, the wrath of God was brought down! And they taught that same belief to their children, namely me and my two other siblings. So no matter what my cousin and I were doing, when lunchtime came, we didn't walk home; we ran like our lives depended on it, because back then, it did!

Building forts high up in trees or coming across some wild blueberries that kept us fed, or cutting trees down for the fun of it, after we had grown tired of climbing them, summers were filled



Photos Courtesy of Jesse Wilson

My grandpa and grandma sitting in front of their home. He was an original cowboy.

with adventure and exploration!

But like I said, summers never lasted long enough and school took forever before we got our summer break. Once I graduated, all that changed. Before I knew what happened, college was over, I was living in Florida, married with two kids and wondering where the time went. Now we have grandkids, about to celebrate 35 years of marriage and time seems to be moving at breakneck speed. It seems like yesterday we celebrated a new year, now it's April. Where has the time gone?

I think a lot of it is daily routine, we get up and have our week planned out and before we know it, the weekend is here and gone and it starts over again. Which brings me an

important life lesson. We should live life intentionally, enjoying family and friends, making and cherishing memories, enjoying each new day as a gift from God, because, well, it is. And like any gift, He wants us to enjoy it, so that when we look back over our life and someone asks, "Where has the time gone?" we can smile, and honestly reply, "I don't have the answer for that, but what a journey it's been." Enjoy it, friends.

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.

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Letter to the Editor

Thank You

We want to sincerely thank the Lions Club for putting on this year's Turkey Shoot. Thank you to all the volunteers and big thanks also go out to all of the businesses that donated door prizes. What a large variety of

items they had and some fabulous large items as well. We love this activity and are very grateful for all the help different volunteers gave us. Thank you all again!

*Dave and Madge Kelleyhouse
Everglades City, Florida*



CHOKOLOSKEE FAMILY CHURCH

CHURCH SCHEDULE:

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Wed. Youth Renewal	7:00 PM
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Deep Everglades – Protection Reimagined

Submitted

At 34 years old, Anthony “Romeo” Payne Jr. is redefining what protection looks like.

Born and raised in Minnesota, the Land of 10,000 Lakes, Romeo grew up surrounded by water, woods, and relentless summer insects. For most people, bug bites are a nuisance. For him, they were a serious issue. Highly sensitive to bites, he frequently experienced allergic reactions, breakouts, and hives. And for reasons he still jokes about, maybe it is sweet blood, insects have always been drawn to him.

Instead of accepting it, he created a solution.

Deep Everglades was developed in the spring of 2023 while Romeo was serving as General Manager of a resort in Port of the Islands, Florida. Living and working in one of the most mosquito dense regions in the country, he needed something that worked without relying on harsh chemicals.

He formulated his own.

The product was first tested in Florida’s heat, humidity, and heavy mosquito conditions. That same summer, Romeo brought it back to Minnesota and tested it against horse flies, ticks, and the famously aggressive northern mosquitoes. It proved effective across climates, regions, and insect types.

After two years of hands-on testing and refinement, Romeo realized he had not simply created a personal remedy. He had developed an entirely new category.

Deep Everglades is positioned as a Luxury Skin Defense, a multi-use botanical formula designed to protect, nourish, and perform. It functions as an insect defense, a moisturizer, a sun protective barrier, and offers water resistance for a measured duration. Unlike conventional repellents that rely on synthetic chemicals such as DEET, Romeo’s formulation is built with non-toxic, naturally derived ingredients designed to be gentler on the skin.



The product has been voluntarily tested across a wide age range, from toddlers to senior citizens, reinforcing its versatility and skin-friendly performance.

When Deep Everglades officially launches, Romeo will debut a Limited Edition Gold Shimmer formula, an elevated version of the product designed to combine protection with a subtle, luxury finish. The shimmer launch represents the brand’s identity: functional, refined, and visually distinctive.

Looking ahead, Romeo’s expansion strategy is ambitious and hospitality focused. His goal is to secure placement with a major cruise line and boutique or luxury hotel properties, positioning Deep Everglades as an essential amenity for travelers in tropical and coastal environments. The long-term vision also includes a Deep Everglades pets line, extending the brand’s natural defense philosophy to companion animals.

An entrepreneur at heart, Romeo has built strong retail relationships across Florida, Colorado, and Minnesota. Multiple locations have expressed

interest in carrying the product based solely on his demonstrations and brand presentation. There has also been early interest from a contact connected to Shark Tank, as well as attention from a major beauty brand, strong signals that the concept resonates beyond regional markets.

Deep Everglades is not simply another jar on a shelf. It represents

resilience, innovation, and the merging of wilderness with refinement.

From Minnesota’s lakes to Florida’s mangroves, Romeo transformed a lifelong irritation into a scalable luxury brand. Deep Everglades is protection reimagined.

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In Memory of Myrna Baier

Myrna Lee Baier, 94, of Cissna Park, IL, passed away at 5:15 AM on Friday, February 20, 2026, at Accolade on Pells in Paxton.

Born on August 15, 1931, she was the oldest daughter of Leonard L. and Lena Potts Leiding. She was baptized at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Woodworth, Illinois, on February 14, 1932. She was confirmed at Trinity Lutheran Church, Cissna Park, Illinois, on July 27, 1952.

She resided in Crescent City, Illinois, for three years and then in Watseka, Illinois, until the time of her marriage to Richard D. Baier at First Christian Church in Watseka on July 2, 1950. She graduated from Watseka Community High School in 1949 and continued her education at Ray Vogue School of Dress Design in Chicago.

She and Richard lived in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina,

and Alexandria, Virginia, from January 1951 until October of 1951 while he was in the Marine Corps, and then moved into their home on North First Street in Cissna Park. During their retirement years they wintered at Everglades City, Florida. In 1958, they formed Baier Publishing Company, where they published the Cissna Park News and Rankin Independent and did job printing. Myrna worked as bookkeeper and proofreader for many years until son, Rick and wife, Sharon, took over and purchased the business.

She served as bookkeeper, treasurer, and box office manager for the Country Theatre Workshop for many years. In 1993, she became treasurer and overseer for the timeshare, River Wilderness in Everglades City, Florida, where she and her husband lived during

the winter months. She was an active member of Trinity Lutheran Church and an associate member of Everglades Community Church. Myrna was a long-time member of the Cissna Park Jr. Woman's Club, Trinity Ladies Aid LWML, where she served as President, and also the American Legion Auxiliary. She served as President of the Illinois Association of Fire Protection District Ladies Auxiliary for four years. Myrna was dedicated to her family, an avid quilter and made quilts for family members. She loved playing games with her family, doing jigsaw puzzles, and reading.

Survivors include four children, David Lee (Beth) Baier, Ricky Alan (Sharon) Baier, Bruce Edward (Venetia) Baier, and Barbara Ann Baier, all of Cissna Park; six grandchildren, Kara (Andy) Peabody of Noblesville, Indiana, Mitchell

Baier of Tacoma, Washington, Trevor (Jill) Baier of Ames, Iowa, Lauren (Jake) Sanders of Mahomet, Logan (Sami) Baier of Chatham, and Whitney (Jake) Wise of Loda; nine great grandchildren, Kallianne, Annika and Alden Peabody, Ian, Brynn and Dylan Baier, River and Skye Sanders, and Lucas Baier; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Richard; parents, Leonard and Lena Leiding; two sisters, Patricia Barth and Joyce Henke; and an infant nephew, Paul Edward Barth.

Memorials may be made to Trinity Lutheran Church, Cissna Park, or its sewing group.

Please share a memory of Myrna at www.knappfuneralhomes.com. To plant trees in memory, please visit the Sympathy Store.

Where the Everglades Still Speak

Community, Culture, and Celebration at Parkway Motel and Marina and HavAnna Cafe

By Joseph A. Federico

In Chokoloskee, Florida, where the Everglades stretch wide and wild, there's a certain rhythm to life that can't be replicated anywhere else. It's in the water, in the air, in the stories passed down from those who came before, and it's alive and thriving at Parkway Motel and Marina and HavAnna Cafe. That's a promise.

At Parkway Motel and Marina, this isn't just a place to stay; it's an experience rooted in heritage and respect for the land and waters that define the Everglades. As we move into spring and summertime, Parkway is proud to offer local discounts, welcoming nearby residents to reconnect with a place that feels both timeless and deeply personal. With the BIG America250 celebration on the horizon that we're all preparing for, there's also a renewed focus on honoring the generations who built life here...the fishermen, families, and pioneers whose legacy still shapes every sunrise over the marina.

There's something sacred about our corner of Florida. Whether you're heading out for a day of fishing, watching the tide roll in, or simply taking in the stillness, Parkway offers a rare opportunity to slow down and be present. In a world that moves fast, this is where you remember what matters.

Just steps away, HavAnna Cafe continues to bring energy, music, and flavor to the heart of the community. This past season has been filled with unforgettable performances and vibrant nights that brought people together from all walks of life. Regular sets

from The Manzies and Raiford Starke have become staples, creating a weekly rhythm that locals and visitors alike look forward to. Alongside them, a rotating lineup of talented performers such as Aldo Puentes, Neil Matsch, and Michael Nichols has helped shape HavAnna Cafe into more than just a dining spot; it's a living, breathing stage for the Everglades.

As our season begins to wind down, HavAnna Cafe is far from slowing down. Guests can still enjoy current food specials, including crowd-favorite foot-long hot dogs, along with refreshing drink and cocktail specials that perfectly complement a warm Florida evening. And every Thursday night, the spotlight turns to the crowd with karaoke...an open invitation to sing your heart out, step outside your comfort zone, and become part of the experience. We must also share that our "summertime hours" will come into play soon and are as follows:

Thursdays, 11-8; Fridays, 8-8; Saturdays, 8-8; Sundays, 8-3.

For those planning gatherings beyond the cafe, HavAnna also offers catering services, bringing the same local flavor, energy, and hospitality to private events and celebrations. It's an extension of what makes this place special...connection, authenticity, and a genuine sense of community.

As for celebrating on the island, April 1, 2026, was our anniversary, which equates to moving into our fifth year of operation! It's undeniably exciting because we dedicate ourselves to community and exploration, and attempt to exude true American values, both past and present, while preserving



Team HavAnna Season Four.

Submitted Photos



Happy customers.

the future. We also have some news regarding our Hometown Heritage Hero, Aaron Tabor! Gulfshore Living is sharing an article on him in April (check it out), and we can't wait for the world to learn more about his passions and dreams, but more importantly, how his unwavering commitment to our shared past sparks fresh ways for us all to celebrate, preserve, and pass on our stories.

Together, Parkway Motel and Marina and HavAnna Cafe offer something increasingly rare: a destination that feels real. It's where history is honored, music is celebrated, and every guest becomes part of

OUR story. In Chokoloskee, time doesn't just pass; it's experienced, shared, and remembered.

And as we look ahead to a new season and a historic milestone with America250, one thing remains certain: there's no place quite like this. And we love it that way.

Joseph A. Federico is The Marketing Maven for Parkway Motel and Marina and HavAnna Cafe and is now accepting new clients. He has been with The Boys of Chokoloskee since the pandemic, and visits frequently. He may be reached at 973-289-3517 regarding any social media or event management inquiries.

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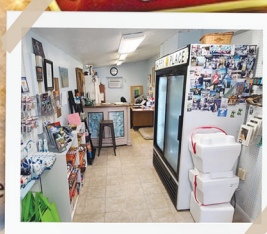
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Museum of the Everglades April Events

Submitted

Museum of the Everglades is celebrating a legacy individual and a legacy event in April!

Founder Barron Collier gets his due at the Third Thursday lecture on April 16 at 2:00 PM. "The Spirit of '26: Barron Collier's American Dream (America250)" goes back to 1926 when

Everglades (now known as Everglades City) was in its heyday and Collier founded the town. Museum Manager Thomas Lockyear turns back time 100 years to explore the town that Collier built and how its present-day incarnation reflects the intrinsic American values that form the fabric of our nation.

Then on Saturday, April 25, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM, it's a commemoration

of the 98th anniversary of the completion of Tamiami Trail and a celebration of the "birthday" of the Museum of the Everglades, which opened in 1998. The afternoon features live music, complimentary hot dogs, and laundry cart races. Come early for a complimentary walking tour, sign up and take part in the races, check out the classic cars, enjoy music, and some birthday cake. It's a feel-good, family-friendly annual event.



Submitted Photo

Bank of Everglades Building Update

By Patty Huff

The Everglades Society for Historic Preservation is pleased to report that the Bank of Everglades Building project has made great progress during the past few months. This photo shows the rear of the building with the completion of the back stairs (with the planter on the right side), the ramp and the outside wall wrapping around the vault and the elevator shaft. In the next few weeks, the side stairs facing the Rod and Gun Club and the balcony over the vault will be done which will complete Phase I. The next steps will include installing the new floor joists as well as work on the interior (steel for the new staircase and overhead beam), as well as the new windows,

plumbing, electrical, mechanical, etc. All of this will be included in Phase II. We are still in need of additional funding to move forward on this next phase. We are very disappointed that our request for funding did not pass the House and Senate this year; nor were funds allocated to the Division of Historic Resources, where we had been approved for matching funds. We will now be relying on individuals and foundations who share our vision to honor Barron Collier's legacy, restore this iconic building to its original grandeur, and be a resource not only for our visitors but also for our entire community. For more information, visit our website www.eshp.org or call me at 239-719-0020 to learn how you can be a part of this endeavor.



Photo by Patty Huff

Gratitude for our Volunteers

Submitted

It's that time of year when our winter residents begin their journey back north. It is also the time we like to acknowledge them and thank them for all the services they provide to this community. You will see them collecting trash along the road, at the food pantry every Wednesday, helping out with the many Lions Club events, church programs, AND greeting the hundreds of visitors who come to our Everglades Area Welcome Center. Mike Mostachetti is one of our volunteers who works

every Saturday welcoming tourists to our area. Being a volunteer at the Welcome Center is very rewarding. We have people coming from around the world and most have never been to the Everglades before. We guide them to the various tours, parks/preserves, restaurants, and activities. If you are interested in learning more about becoming a volunteer and meeting new people, please contact Patty at 239-719-0020 or stop by the Welcome Center and talk to one of our volunteers. And, again, thanks to all our volunteers, part-time and year-round.



Submitted Photo

Everglades Area Welcome Center

FREE INFORMATION ABOUT

- Local Businesses
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- Places To Eat
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Spectacular Turkey Shoot

Submitted

There was lots of fun to be had at the annual Everglades Lions Club Turkey Shoot on March 21 and 22! The event features paper targets (no birds are hurt) and featured a perfect location and weather. Since the rifles use birdshot at the targets, winners are crowned by random, pure luck! The judges used calipers to see which shooter got closest to the target center. And of course, safety was the name of the day with strictly enforced guidelines.

Much thanks to Robby Mayberry for hosting the Turkey Shoot at his Cypress Tower Road Camp in Ochopee for the second year.

Congratulations to these grand prize winners:

Lyle Demere of Chokoloskee won the \$500 gift certificate to Bass Pro Shops.

Toddler Rosalie Johnson, visiting her grandparents on Chokoloskee, won the \$250 gift certificate.

Mark Chesser of Everglades City won the \$150 gift certificate.



DeSantis Visits Camellia Street Grill

By Christopher Madrid

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis recently visited the Camellia Street Grill as part of his “Diners, Drives and DeSantis” social media campaign on Tuesday, March 24th.

As part of an ongoing series, DeSantis is visiting locally owned establishments throughout Florida. He previously stopped at Culhane’s Irish Pub in Jacksonville and Buccan Sandwich Shop in West Palm Beach.

Camellia Street Grill owner Terri Rementeria said the meeting was wonderful and a treat. Accompanying DeSantis was FWC Executive Director Colonel Roger Young. They discussed the environment, the importance of




Photo Courtesy of Terri Rementeria owner Terri Rementeria.


local restaurants, and delicious food.

Some Everglades City residents were indifferent to the visit since he vetoed \$1.6 million dollars for the Bank Restoration Project in 2025.

He has also allegedly stated he may approve the funding, according to his Policy and Budget team. However, any exact commitment remains unconfirmed.



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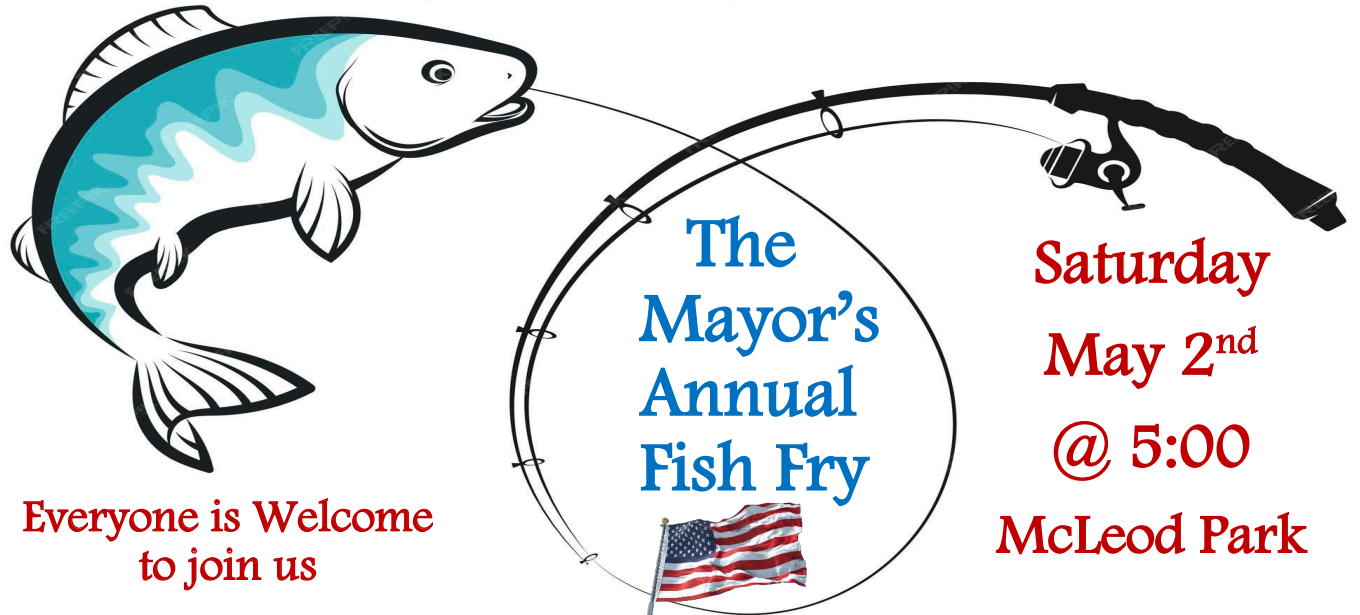


Submitted

If you enjoy meeting people from around the world and telling them about our wonderful community and things to do here, then you would enjoy volunteering at the Everglades Area Welcome Center across from the Rod and Gun Club!

Join us for a *fin-tastic* celebration honoring our hometown heroes!

Sheriffs, Fire Fighters, EMS & Veterans



Everyone is Welcome to join us

**Saturday
May 2nd
@ 5:00
McLeod Park**

Let's come together for great food, great company, and to thank the brave men and women who serve and protect our community every day.

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Restaurants & Bars

Everglades City

Camellia Street Grill

Open all week 11 am - 9 pm
239-695-2003

Triad Seafood Market & Cafe

Open for Season!
7 Days a Week

Island Cafe

7 days per week 6 am - 9 pm
239-695-0003

Chokoloskee

HavAnna Cafe

Open for Season!
239-695-2214

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

Goodland.

Kirk Fish House

Monday-Saturday 10 am - 5 pm
239-394-8616.

Volunteer Opportunity

If you enjoy meeting people from around the world and telling them about our wonderful community and the things to do here, then you would enjoy volunteering at the Everglades

Area Welcome Center next to Dulce's Café.

High School Students who are interested in fulfilling their volunteer service hours should also contact Patty Huff at 239-719-0020

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

Lot for Sale

305 Storter Ave. S, Vacant lot. Save impact fees and utilities because property was previously improved. \$120,000 possible owner financing.

Help Wanted

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

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
Mullet Rapper/Coastal Breeze News Office (239) 393-4991.

Post Office

Everglades City & Chokoloskee: (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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