



MULLET RAPPER



Everglades City · Chokoloskee · Goodland · Port of the Islands · Lee/Big Cypress · The 10,000 Islands

May 2026

mulletrapper.com

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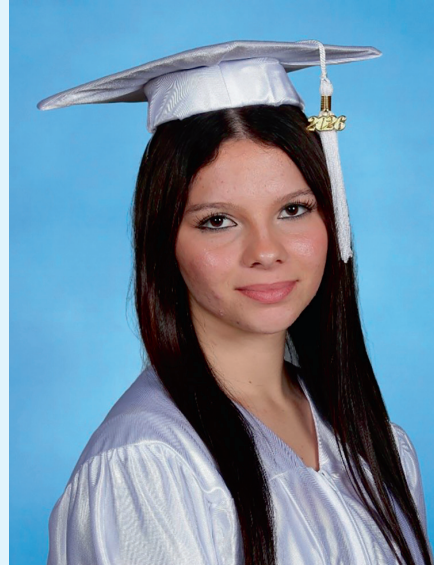
Congratulations Everglades City Class of 2026 Graduates



Jessica Cruz-Matias



Trenton Dampier



Olivia Demere



Steven Harris Jr.



Landon Lenz



Hannah Levingston



Dalton Lucas



Ava Ramos



Kelly Smallwood



Chase Stokes



Logan Wagner

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May 2026					Friday, May 1	Saturday, May 2
Sunday, May 3 AA Meeting 4:00 PM Everglades Community Church	Monday, May 4	Tuesday, May 5 Diaz-Balart Team Everglades City Hall 2:30 PM	Wednesday, May 6	Thursday, May 7 Ladies Coffee 8:30 AM Island Café	Friday, May 8 Friday Social, Rod & Gun Club 5:00 PM	Saturday, May 9 Mayor's Annual Fish Fry 5:00 PM McLeod Park
Sunday, May 10 AA meeting 4:00 PM Everglades Community Church	Monday, May 11	Tuesday, May 12	Wednesday, May 13	Thursday, May 14 Ladies Coffee 8:30 AM City Seafood	Friday, May 15 Paul Tribble Retirement Celebration School Gymnasium 6:00-8:00 PM	Saturday, May 16
Sunday, May 17 AA meeting 4:00 PM Everglades Community Church	Monday, May 18	Tuesday, May 19	Wednesday, May 20	Thursday, May 21 Ladies Coffee 8:30 AM Island Café	Friday, May 22 Everglades City Graduation Gymnasium 3:00 PM	Saturday, May 23
Sunday, May 24 AA meeting 4:00 PM Everglades Community Church	Monday, May 25 Memorial Day	Tuesday, May 26	Wednesday, May 27	Thursday, May 28 Ladies Coffee 8:30 AM City Seafood	Friday, May 29	Saturday, May 30 CPR/AED Demonstration EMS Fire Station 60 10:00 AM-2:00 PM
Sunday, May 31 AA meeting 4:00 PM Everglades Community Church	To list your upcoming event, meeting, or activity free of charge in the calendar, send details to lynn@coastalbreezenews.com. Deadline for the June edition of the Mullet Rapper is May 15th.					

Lions Celebrate Long-Time Members, Welcome New Board

By Harry Henkel

There was a lot going on at the April 9 Lions Club meeting! Three long-time members were honored - Elaine Middelstaedt and Vickie and Bob Wells received Certificates of Recognition from Lions International President A.P. Sing. Past international president Clement Kusiak made the presentation.

Patty Huff was also recognized and received her Ten-Year Award. Secretary Elaine Middelstaedt – who was Huff’s sponsor – and I made the presentation.

Last but certainly not least, the newly elected board was sworn in. Congratulations to everyone!



Submitted Photo
Lions Club President Harry Henkel, Secretary Elaine Middelstaedt, and Patty Huff.



Elaine Middelstaedt, Harry Henkel, Vickie Wells, and past international president Clement Kusiak.



The newly elected Lions Club Board. Board members Joyce Hatton and Vicky Wells, Secretary Elaine Middelstaedt, board member Cecil Barker, Vice President Felton Wells, Treasurer Caryn Wells, President Harry Henkel, past president of Lions Clubs International Clement Kusiak, and board member Ted Lock.



Bob Wells, Harry Henkel and Clement Kusiak.

My Family's Generational Businesses

By Amaia Lynn Mayberry-Freeman

Have you ever had something special passed down in your family for multiple generations? My name is Amaia Lynn Mayberry-Freeman, and in my family, we have multiple restaurant businesses that are passed down to each first-born woman. The incredible and determined women in my family have established two amazing restaurants that have been featured in numerous magazines, newspapers, and even television shows!

It all began with my great-grandma Joan creating Joanie's Blue Crab Café. Located in Ochopee, Florida, it started off as an old barn on the side of US 41. Even though many looked at it as a teardown, she had a vision of turning it into a world-renowned restaurant with delicious food. She started by only selling sandwiches and some beer to fishermen on their way out of Everglades and Chokoloskee, now it is a place that many tourists and visitors stop to eat at every day to get a delicious meal. Walking into this restaurant will bring you back in time, with its unique artwork that is handmade by my Grandy (this is what my brother and I call my great-grandma Joan), to some interesting pictures in the men's bathroom. My Grandy Joanie adds her own twist and wit to things all over Joanie's Blue Crab Café. An example of this is on the chalkboard right inside the restaurant. It says, "If you want fast food, keep traveling 42 miles west or 66 miles east. Happy Trails, y'all." My Grammy Terri (Terri Rementeria, the daughter of Joan) has been helping my Grandy Joanie all along the way. She was inspired by her mom and how she built her business and eventually started her own. This restaurant is in Everglades City and is called Camillia Street Grill.

Camillia Street Grill was founded in 2006. The restaurant has been in business for almost two decades and has passed down once. My Grammy Terri was the one who brought this restaurant to life. Then over the years, my Grammy Terri took over Joanie's Blue Crab Café, and my



Photos Courtesy of Amaia Lynn Mayberry-Freeman
Amaia Lynn Mayberry-Freeman with Grandy, Shane Freeman, Grammy Terri, brother Shane Jr., and mom Naiara.



Joanie's Blue Crab Cafe.

mom (Naiara Rementeria-Freeman) took over Camellia Street Grill. Both restaurants were passed down a generation and eventually, when I'm older, my mom Naiara will take over Joanie's Blue Crab Café, and I will take over Camellia Street Grill!

My mom Naiara is married to my dad (Shane Freeman), who is a Florida

Stone Crabber here in Everglades City. He started his own business and calls his boat \$till Trappen. The stone crabs he catches each day get cooked at the fish house and then brought over to Camellia Street Grill to sell on the menu! Stone crabs are a delicacy down here, and Everglades City is known as the "Stone Crab Capital of the World!" Going out on the boat seven days a week and leaving for work at 3:00 AM is rough, especially when you don't know if it is going to be a good haul for that day. Some days he can come back with 300 lbs. of Stone Crab claws and then there are other days where it can be as low as 100 lbs. But no matter what gets thrown his way, he always ends the day incredibly thankful for everything. My family has worked hard for all that we have, and it is not easy owning three businesses. I am proud to have a family filled with hard-working individuals I can look up to and be inspired by. I cannot wait for the day that I can take over and continue our generational businesses!



Camillia Street Grill.



MULLET RAPPER

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- Christopher Madrid

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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

Everglades Airpark News

By Harry Henkel

In early March of 2025, concern was raised about the possibility of closing the Everglades Airpark. Kevin Dohm wrote an article in the Coastal Breeze News outlining the Collier County plan for considering the closure.

Several community members in Everglades City took action. Fortunately, the County Commissioners agreed to remove the proposal from their "Consent Agenda." An "Ad-Hoc" Committee was established by Stacey Heaton, the Southeast Representative for AOPA, which is a nationally known pilots' association. Stacey set up a series of Zoom meetings allowing an open discussion of the future of the Everglades Airpark.

By mid-July, the fuel tank's card reader was repaired and the tank was emptied to be checked for potential leaks. None were found and 8,500 gallons of fuel were delivered. Later on in July, the Friends of Everglades Airpark hosted its first "Pancake Fly In." 38 planes came, some with passengers, along with several local residents, who enjoyed the return of this tradition. Soon after that, 6,000 more gallons of aviation fuel were delivered. The "Vir-Tower

was repaired and we soon had data on monthly plane activity which steadily increased month to month.

On August 26, Trinity Scott gave a very positive report on the progress of Everglades Airpark since fuel was made available. The County Commissioners unanimously agreed to keep the Airpark open and hasten the repair of the hangar building which has sat idle since Hurricane Ian in 2022.

On November 15, the Friends of the Everglades Airpark hosted its first-ever Airpark Day. Over 300 people showed up, including Bryant Garrett, Head of Collier County's Airport Authority, and Trinity Scott, Head of Collier County's Department of Transportation. We had at least 10 vendors with a variety of aviation-related displays. Included was a representative from Lorenzo Walker Technical Institute, located in Naples. After this event, 7,000 more gallons of fuel were delivered. The Friends of the Everglades Airpark hosted its second Pancake Fly In on March 25, 2026. Thirty-nine planes arrived for that event, and as many came for the Annual "Old Farts" fly-in on March 19. Just two weeks ago, another 7,200 gallons of fuel were delivered to the Airpark.

Collier County is nearing the phase of opening bids for the hangar



Submitted Photo



These four pilots from the UK made use of bicycles provided by Friends of the Everglades Airpark. They flew into Miami and rented planes to fly to the Annual Fun and Sun Event in Lakeland. On their way back to Miami, they flew into Everglades Airpark to see Everglades City and have lunch at one of our local restaurants.

repairs. In the interim, the Aviation Community is making good use of the Everglades Airpark. The Friends of the Everglades Airpark have made a difference in promoting the continued use of operations there. We have provided bicycles for the Pilots to have a means to explore the amenities of Everglades City.

Some take Airboat Rides or explore our museum and the new National Park Visitor Center. Many of them purchase Stone Crab Claws and, of course, patronize the local restaurants or stay a night at our hotels. When the hangars are repaired, this will increase the profits, which will help to prove the value of saving the Airpark.

CLOSED: May 15th to October 1st

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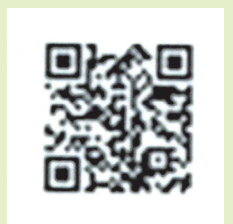
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Mr. Paul “Trib” Tribble

By Patty Huff

I first met “Trib” nearly 30 years ago after purchasing our home here in 1994 and began volunteering at Everglades City School. One of my friends, Jean Schultz, asked him if he would consider teaching an adult art class after school hours. We soon had a classroom full of wannabe professional painters. He was amazing! Trib taught with patience, kindness, and encouragement – it was one of the most rewarding and fun experiences that we all shared. That was just the beginning of Mr. Tribble’s generosity in working after hours. When Karen Cabral and I asked if we could organize an after-school program for third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders, he was more than willing to help us. I still have the now-adult students

coming up to me, saying how much fun they had and how loved they felt.

Mr. Tribble has taught three generations of students and has been an important part of our community for over 50 years with Everglades City School being his first job after graduating from the University of Florida. I can’t imagine the school without Mr. Tribble, not being able to stop by and hear him say, “Hey, Sis, how’s it going?” He has been a friend, a mentor, a confidante, and teacher to hundreds of Everglades City residents, not just the students. He was my inspiration when he decided (for his health) to lose weight and exercise. He was focused, determined, and successful. Mr. Tribble is a man of God who never forgets how blessed he is – for his health, his profession, his students, his friends, and his faith.



Photo by Scott H. Shook

Paul Tribble talks with former students at the March Everglades Seafood Festival.

Mr. Tribble – you will never know how many people (children and adults) you have influenced; how much better this world is because of your love and respect of everyone, no matter who they are or what problems they may have endured. You’re one of a kind,

and we will miss you so very much. Please come back whenever you can – AND, you’re always welcome to start another adult art class – we will find the space – and the students. You will always be a part of our community!

Celebrating Paul Tribble

Submitted

You are invited to the retirement celebration of one of Everglades City’s favorite teachers!

The Retirement Celebration, with food and drinks provided, will be held on May 15 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM in the gymnasium at Everglades City School. RSVP

to the celebration by May 1.

Link to RSVP:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mr-james-paul-tribbles-retirement-celebration-50-years-of-serving-tickets-1986137451583?aff=oddtcreator>

Link to send Trib a message:
<https://www.newlywords.com/paul-tribble-s-retirement-celebration>

A Gem in Everglades City

By Patty Huff

When I first moved here 32 years ago, I was happy to know that we had a convenient grocery store right here in downtown Everglades City. At that time, in the 1990s, it was owned and operated by Everett and Pauline Reeves. Pauline was known for her leadership and was a very important part of our community, establishing the Holy Family Catholic Church and creating our Museum of the Everglades. One of the distinguishing features of our little grocery store was the mural of alligators playing basketball, designed and painted by our local art students under the guidance of Paul “Trib” Tribble. The Reeves sold the store in 1999

to Dave Vecchio, who managed it along with his father, Guido. Dave renamed the store Right Choice Market and owned the business until April 2005, when Petra and Nicolas Gengenbach purchased it, expanding the name to Right Choice Supermarket, as we know it today.

Only six months after the sale, Hurricane Wilma brought in four feet of water to Everglades City. Hurricanes have been a challenge for all of us who live here, but with the grocery store situated at ground level and stocked with perishable items, it has been even more devastating for them. Just as you walk through the front doors, the height of all our hurricanes (going back as far as Donna in 1960) is measured on



Photo by Patty Huff

the wall. You get a better picture of how overwhelming the hurricanes have been to just this one business.

For the past 21 years, we have been fortunate to have Petra and Nic as part of our community, carrying more grocery items and supplies for both our residents and visitors. We all have to run into Naples for errands and appointments, and other grocery chains may offer a wider selection; however, the convenience (especially

as gas prices continue to rise) makes it so convenient to be able to just walk, bike, or ride over to Buckner Avenue. There is a movement across the country to “shop local.” Supporting our local businesses strengthens our community and provides us with the conveniences and amenities that may be lacking in other small towns. If you have not been to Right Choice lately, stop in and check out the fresh fruits and vegetables, and thank them for being here for us.

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Celebrating 98 Years of the Tamiami Trail



Parents and their children get ready for the laundry cart race.



Photos by Christopher Madrid

Guests listen to the music of Caloosa Country while enjoying hot dogs.

By Christopher Madrid

“There isn’t enough fill in the face of the earth to build a railroad across the Everglades,” is a quote often attributed to one of Henry Flagler’s employees, after his attempts at constructing a rail line through the Everglades failed.

Sixteen years later, that all changed when the world’s “greatest highway” was finished on the leftover track Flagler had laid. And now, 98 years later, it means a chance for outdoor fun, which is exactly what transpired on Saturday, April 25.

“I love that Everglades City always comes together to celebrate these things throughout their history,” said Regina Bowden, a local volunteer. “They have a very rich history and culture, so anytime they plan to relish those events from the past, I find it invaluable.”

Tamiami Trail was completed on April 26, 1928. Barron G. Collier called it “the greatest highway that this splendid peninsula has ever possessed” in his opening day speech. Collier bankrolled the Trail’s completion in exchange for having a county named after him. The highway connecting Miami and Tampa radically altered South Florida’s economy, people, and trade, and gave us the name of the county we live in.

For the 98th anniversary celebration, the occasion was

opened by the Caloosa Country band, the delightful duo of Joseph and Jane Winebrenner. Their collection of classics and improvised numbers lifted everyone’s spirits. People jumped in and sang songs side-by-side, including Sheriff Boylan, who vocalized a lovely version of “Daddy Sang Bass.”

Dozens of visitors and residents also bore witness to Everglades City’s most famous tradition: Laundry Cart Racing. Parents packed their children into laundry carts, and if they pushed more vigorously than the opposing family, they would see the checkered flag waved in their honor. The prize: more sullied clothes to clean.

Throughout the festivities, visitors would hear the roar of engines as multiple car clubs arrived on scene, showing off some beautiful and rare cars, like a new Morgan Plus-four, a Porsche 981, an ‘08 Bentley, and the star of the show: an anniversary edition of Toyota’s first car, the Model AA.

The party also served as a commemoration for event host Museum of the Everglades’ 28th anniversary. For arrivals lucky enough to be early, the Museum of the Everglades hosted a private tour guided by historian Thomas Lockyear. Guests described the tour as “insightful” and a “fascinating” way to relive Everglades City’s glory days as the seat of Collier County. This historically preserved site



Sheriff Boylan gets ready to sing her rendition of “Daddy Sang Bass.”

was once a commercial laundry room and features a new orchid exhibit: “Growing Obsession – The Enchanting Story of Orchids in the

Everglades,” which runs through June 20. The Museum of the Everglades is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.



Historian Thomas Lockyear talks about the history of Tamiami Trail.



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FISHING THE EVERGLADES

Capt. Mike Merritt

May Fishing in the 10,000 Islands

By Capt. Mike Merritt

After being disappointed in the outcome for April, I am looking forward to some stable weather! We did catch some nice fish in April and had some good days, but the overall month was less than spectacular. We had some extremely strong winds that really made it tough on the fishermen. Early April had some pretty awesome days of Tarpon and Permit roaming our Islands! The waters were crystal clear and made for some great sight-casting days. On top of this, the backcountry Snook fishing was good, too! Then the winds came, and this changed everything.

So now we are looking for May to finally bring us some warmer waters and an increase of Snook in the Islands. You should also continue to see some Tarpon and the Permit fishing will kick back up. All this makes for some great fishing possibilities. We also expect to see more rain and this will help the Snook fishing. Right now, the salinity levels in the backcountry are super high. This also means the PH level of the water is acidic, as there is no water flow to dilute it. Mangroves put off a

lot of tannin, and without fresh water to flush it out, those levels increase. This is something we have talked about for years, but does not seem to get the attention of too many people.

Snook will be my main target this month as May has always been one of the best months for landing big Snook. I love to use some topwater lures early in the morning for that surface bite! It is definitely the most exciting way to catch Snook. And you may catch the Reds and even some big Trout while you're at it. Of course, there will be plenty of baitfish around and this is always a sure way to get on the bite. Incoming tide in the Islands will almost always be the best feed. Early in the day being the best. Snook season will be over in May, so be sure to handle the big females with care. Hoping we have a good spawn this year! If we get a good rainy season we should get a good spawn. They seem to coincide with each other. Snook seem to like the right level of brackish water to spawn.

Redfish are still here, but their numbers are low. They will show up in larger schools in the fall. You may come across groups of 10-15 fish, but mostly it will be scattered fish. This will change dramatically in the fall when schools in the hundreds may be seen. I had an area that was holding some nice Reds and our best day was over 30 fish this April. But that has tapered off and they are much harder to find in numbers now. Typically, we see schools of the smaller Rat Reds in April and into May, but I have not come across them. I remember in years past catching 50-60 Reds a day in April that were all under 18". Not sure if the forage food is down for them not to be here or why, but we definitely need to



Submitted Photo

figure out why. We still have the same amount of area, but those schools just are not around. I am hoping this all is a cycle and we see their return.

Trout fishing has also been off a little. April is a month that sees some great Trout fishing but the days that I did some of it were a little more than disappointing. The guides that I know who are really good at catching them are even saying it has been tough. Maybe May will see an increase. I know I have said this before but I truly believe that until we see the grass grow back, I don't expect to see our Trout recover. How can they? There is no place to hide, ambush, and feed. There is no place for shrimp and small fish to hide. Our grass flats used to hold millions of Pinfish, Shrimp, and even lots of Seahorses and Pipefish. Now all you see is sand with the occasional weed clump. This is why we are catching more Trout

on the bars and around the Islands. It is because the grass is gone. Again, I am hopeful this will change. The Trout can bounce back quickly!

I hope you get out and enjoy the month of May as it should be a great month of fishing, especially for the big fish! Good luck and be safe! 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.

Learn How You Can Save a Life

Submitted

On May 30, you can learn how to save a life with a hands-only CPR AED demonstration. It will be held at the EMS-Fire Station 60, 201

Buckner Avenue, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, with the Special Operations Unit providing the demonstrations.

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STORIES FROM THE HEART

Pastor Jesse Wilson

That Is Just Who He Is

If you've lived in the Everglades for any amount of time, you've probably heard of him. Or if you're fortunate, you have met him. If you have, you might have noticed that most of his pinky finger on his right hand is missing. A machete swung by an angry person will usually cost you something; he lost part of a finger, and nearly his head too... but the scar on his collar bone lets you know his head was spared.

Upon closer examination, you might notice the scar on his head; someone shooting point blank in an attempt to send you into the afterlife and barely missing will leave a scar. He has a bullet still lodged in him where the shooter didn't miss but also didn't kill him. He would say that was a miracle and I believe him.

Knife scars and various scrapes from a hard life are evident. Yet despite all that and more than I have room to write about it, Craig Daniels isn't the person he was when his body was cut up, shot at, and left for dead at one point.

You see, growing up in these parts as a seventh-generation Daniels meant you could face anything, and you were expected to come out on top. And most always they did. I'm pretty sure that had the Daniels led our troops during World War II, it would have ended sooner!

But like I said, Craig isn't the same person today he was all those years ago. You see, Craig must have had someone praying for him, and a whole room full of angels looking out for him,

because at an important time in his life, Craig found God. Well actually, God found Craig because everybody knows God isn't lost.

It would take three stints in prison, but getting religion, as the old timers would call it, finally stuck. Today, Craig is the owner of Captain Craig's Everglades Boat Adventures, a licensed realtor, and has his captain's license, able to command the big boats! Oh, did I mention he's a certified scuba diver too?

If you want to learn some of the most amazing history of the Ten Thousand Islands, just book a tour with Craig, or go to lunch with him; his stories will put a smile on your face that will last a lifetime. Craig doesn't run from or hide from his past; it taught him too many valuable life lessons that he passes on to others.

And if you find yourself in a bind, like one of our church members did the other day, whose boat quit, phone battery died while in Chokoloskee Pass in a downpour, and the wind howling, Craig might just come rescue you. What complicated things, it was also nine o'clock at night when I asked Craig if he could go looking for him.

He didn't even hesitate, like he always does when someone needs a ride, a prayer, or an encouraging word. Craig is always willing to help. Because that is just who he is. Oh yeah, he is also my associate pastor at Chokoloskee Family Church, where everyone is welcome and we all have a story to share.

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.



Craig Daniels and his beautiful family.

Photo by Maria Ioup Photography



The coolest captain in Chokoloskee.

Submitted Photo



Excellent home style cafe
 Friendly staff, great food,
 reasonably priced.
 Outdoor seating available.

OPEN
 7 days a week, 6 AM - 9 PM

(239) 695-0003

305 Collier Ave • Everglades, FL




MULLET RAPPER

Logo Contest Winner

The results are in!

Congratulations to Paula Gisewhite, the \$150 winner of the Mullet Rapper logo contest!

And we are happy to announce a second-place prize of \$100 going to Kenneth A. Kubik. All entries received positive comments but it was logo number two that took home the prize.

Look for the Mullet Rapper's new look in our June edition!

Our Historical Society

By Patty Huff

When did we organize, and why? What is our mission? What have we done for our community and what are our plans for the future?

The Everglades Society for Historical Preservation (ESHP) was organized in 2004 to "Save City Hall". The first board members were Karen Cabral, Carol Moseman, April Breton, Marya Repko, Jean Schultz, and me. Our purpose was to restore our original county courthouse whose foundation had deteriorated over time. However, Hurricane Wilma hit in 2005, and FEMA stepped in to cover the renovations. So, we focused on other community matters.

Our mission statement at that time was "to preserve historic sites, structures, documents, artifacts, and memories within the Everglades area." Now, under our current Board of Directors (Helen Bryan, Hydie Friend, Hannah Ineson, Don Kim, Elaine Middelstaedt, Tony Pernas, and me), we expanded our mission to say: "Through advocacy, education, and stewardship, ESHP connects the Everglades area to its rich past, celebrating its diverse heritage, inspiring future generations by preserving its shared history, arts, and culture." We intend to look forward to the next generation to inspire them to preserve what is so unique in Florida. Everglades City is a very special place, full of culture and charm. We know that if we advocate for historic preservation and teach our children about our past, this community will continue to be all that our founder Barron Gift Collier envisioned in 1923.

To reach our initial goals, 22 years ago, we started raising awareness and funds by asking residents to "sponsor" the bricks in the walkway in front of City Hall and the banners depicting historic figures, places, and events. We installed historical markers in front of various buildings



and sites around town and provided plaques to homeowners to highlight the original Collier era homes.

In 2020, after the 2017 Hurricane Irma destroyed our very popular Welcome Center in Carnestown and the Chamber of Commerce was dissolved, we took on the role of greeting visitors from around the world by opening the Everglades Area Welcome Center in the Glades Building at 207 West Broadway. This has been a very successful project. In season, we have 11 volunteers who work seven hours a day, seven days a week. Over the past 12 months, we have welcomed 4,871 visitors. It's a lot of fun talking to people from all over this country and around the world, but more importantly, we are supporting the businesses in our community with our recommendations and educating the public about the wonders of our natural resources and opportunities to explore southwest Florida. In addition to providing maps and brochures, our Welcome Center also supports our local artists by providing them with the space to display and sell their crafts.

A few of our other projects are 1) Informational kiosk on CR29; 2) Welcome canvas bag of information for new homeowners; 3) Guided walking tours; and 4) Social gatherings in the historic bar at the Rod and Gun Club.

Our most challenging project to date is the rehabilitation of

the historic Bank of Everglades Building. We have raised over \$3 million which has paid for repairs to the roof, termite and asbestos abatement, demolition of the non-historic rear building and selected interior sections, architectural and engineering services, removal and storage of the original Dade County heart pine floor, installation of new pilings and complete foundation repair, and construction of new stairs leading up to a second-floor balcony overlooking our town. It has been an incredible journey, and it is not over. We still must raise funds to complete the entire project which, we believe, will be the focal point of Everglades City. It will not only be a Welcome Center and Trail Town Headquarters but also an arts and cultural center to introduce local and outside artists, to host events and performances, special parties (a venue for weddings), and small gatherings. It will be the home of our Marya Repko Historical Library with hundreds of books about our area. We will have special programs highlighting our cultural heritage and our fishing industry which has been the mainstay of this community since the time of the Storters and early pioneers. We are so excited about this project coming to fruition.

We would like to take this opportunity to say thanks to the hundreds of donors who have generously supported our Bank of Everglades Building project to



Photo by Patty Huff

The Historic Bank of Everglades under the stars.

date. While most of our funds were received from our federal grant and our state matching grant of \$53,000, ESHP has been the recipient of an additional \$307,037 from our fundraisers, music festivals, guided tours, and private donations. The Colliers (the Barron Collier Jr. Foundation, the Barron Collier Companies, and individual Collier family members) have been our largest benefactor to date over the past four years. In addition, there have been several other significant donations from locals who wish to remain anonymous. We appreciate all donations! Every dollar brings us closer to completing this important project of bringing back an iconic historic building.

For more information about this invaluable undertaking, please contact me at 239-719-0020.

To join our historic society and be a part of our future endeavors, visit the website www.eshp.org or stop by the Welcome Center.

Chokoloskee Family Church
Where Faith and Family Come Together

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Service Times
Sunday: 10 am • Sunday Renewal: 6 pm
Wednesday Youth: 7 pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7 pm

ISAIAH 44:3
"For I Will Pour Water On Him Who Is, And Foods On The Dry Ground; I Will Pour My Spirit On Your Descendants And My BLESSING On Your Offspring"

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Islandchurch1913@gmail.com | www.chokoloskeefamily.com

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www.GladesRealty.com

Your Local Broker With Local Knowledge

Earth Day Celebration

By Brittany Richards

For the Miccosukee Indians, Earth Day is more than a holiday. It is a celebration of life. This year, the celebration, referred to as ‘International Big Mama Day,’ took place on Saturday, April 18, at their village near Miami.

Admission was free and everywhere you looked there was something to do, see, or experience. There were several chickee huts filled with Native American apparel, handmade jewelry, and crafts for sale. There were exciting alligator wrestling shows, educational lectures, workshops, and indigenous music and bands.

Kids enjoyed the coloring stations, bounce house, and obstacle course. Families tasted both native and local cuisine, as the delicious aromas were impossible to resist. If one

needed a break from the heat, the Miccosukee Museum was open and available for self-guided tours.

Emcee of the event, Kendal Osceola, welcomed everyone. She said how special it was to share such good energy with visitors on their village land that has belonged to her mom’s side of the family for over one hundred years.

Councilman and lawmaker, Petties “Pete” Osceola Jr., expressed how sacred this day is for members of his tribe, “It’s part of our DNA and everyday life,” said Pete. “In our culture, the teachings that we have are still from our elders. We believe we come from the Earth, the Mother, and we try to honor and respect it.”

Known as a woman of action, a passionate worker, a leader, and “a true member of the tribe,” Betty Osceola, the organizer of the day, talked about the origin of the event three years ago. One of her nephews, Garret Stuart (referred to as Captain Planet), had come to her and said that he wanted to throw a birthday party for Earth, but he wanted it to be different. “He said that it had to be different because ‘we should find joy and happiness on this Earth and everything about this creation.’ Being the woman of action that I am, I said ‘Let’s do it!’ In my culture, when you show the planet your love, when you show all the creatures and human beings love, it helps with the healing process of the Earth. So how we act is very important.”



Event organizer Betty Osceola.



Tribe lawmaker and councilman Petties “Pete” Osceola Jr.



Photos by Brittany Richards
Kendal Osceola was the event’s emcee.

One of the highlights of the event was a performance by the Ameal Cultural Organization, led by Ms. Cecilia Ortega. They have been great friends of the Miccosukee, and their Aztec dancers have been performing on the village grounds for many years.

Visitors could see the passion and feel the energy emitting from the powerful displays of dance and culture.

After the dance, there was a prayer honoring and giving thanks for Mother Earth. “The only place that we have to live is nowhere else but this place.” The prayer also honored humanity and thanked moms. “We are honoring all this beautiful energy all around us and the life givers. We want to say thank you to all those mothers who brought us, raised us, because thanks to them, we got to have a life, and we got to be here.”

Celebrate Independence Day With Us!

Saturday, June 27th 10 AM – 1 PM @ McLeod Park, Everglades City

Event Schedule:

- 10:00 AM – Opening Ceremonies on the front steps of City Hall
- Parade – Immediately following the ceremony
- Festival at McLeod Park – Vendor booths, delicious food, and exciting raffles
- 11:00 AM – Little Miss & Mister Firecracker Contest
- 12:30 PM – Raffle Winners Announced
- 9:00 PM – Spectacular Fireworks Show

Want to join the parade?

Contact Karen @ City Hall 239-777-6614 or KCoehran@CityofEverglades.org to enter.

Come celebrate with us for a day of fun, community, and patriotism!



Donation Form

City of Everglades
PO box 110
Everglades City, FL 34139
239-695-3871
July 4th Fund

I would like to donate \$ _____ to the Everglades City Independence Day Celebration

Name: _____

Company / Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Make your check payable to the City of Everglades with a memo “4th July”. Drop off at City Hall or mail to PO Box 110 Everglades City, FL 34139. You may donate by credit card by calling City Hall 239-695-3781

City of Everglades

P.O. Box 110, Everglades City, Collier County, Florida 34139
City Hall 102 Copeland Avenue N.
Phone (239) 695-3781 Fax (239) 695-3020



Everglades City 2026 Independence Day Celebration is June 27, 2026

The 4th of July celebration is right around the corner and we need your support to bring the Everglades City annual Independence Day Celebration to life!

We are reaching out to ask if you’d be willing to help support the Independence Day Celebration parade, party, and fireworks show this year.

This event is something a lot of families in our community look forward to every year. It’s a fun way for everyone to come together, spend time with loved ones, and enjoy a great day & night. We really want to keep this tradition going, but we need some help to make it happen.

Fireworks show can be expensive, and we rely on donations from people and local businesses to cover the costs. Any amount you can give would truly make a difference and help us put on a great show for everyone to enjoy.

If you’re able to contribute please stop by City Hall water department or post the check to City of Everglades and mail it to Po Box 110 Everglades City, FL 34139. Please make sure to put July 4th in the memo.

Thank you so much for all your support - we really appreciate it!

Mayor Grimm
City of Everglades



Summer Meet and Greet at the Big Cypress Gallery

Submitted

Celebrate 250 years of America with us at the Big Cypress Gallery on Sunday, July 12, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Meet Clyde Butcher in person and enjoy exclusive summer specials on his art and books—available only at the galleries. This event is free and open to the public. RSVP to be automatically entered into our raffle!

NEW EXHIBIT OPENING

Spanning decades and crossing state lines, This Land We Share: Celebrating 250 Years of America brings together photographs from across the United States, with images on display from every state Clyde Butcher has photographed. From deserts and mountains to forests, coastlines, and wetlands, these works reveal the extraordinary diversity

of America’s landscapes—and reflect Clyde’s lifelong devotion to the land. His photographs invite viewers to slow down, look closely, and feel the quiet power of these places the same way he does when he stands behind the camera.

VISIT THE BIG CYPRESS GALLERY

Located in the heart of the Big Cypress National Preserve, the Big Cypress Gallery has been a source of inspiration for many of Clyde’s photographs; come enjoy the natural beauty of the unique landscape.

Questions? Call the Big Cypress Gallery 239-695-2428.

Link to event on our website: <https://clydebutcher.com/events/christmas-in-july-bcg>

Link to RSVP: <https://clydebutcher.com/events/christmas-in-july-bcg>



CLASSIFIEDS

Restaurants & Bars

Everglades City

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

Triad Seafood Market & Cafe
Closed May 15 - October 1

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

Chokoloskee

HavAnna Cafe
Summer Session
May 14 through July 26
Thursday 11 am-10 pm Karaoke Night
Friday & Saturday 8 am-8 pm
Sunday 8am-3pm

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
Last Day for Season!
May 2: 10 am - 5 pm

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
Sunday: 10 am
Sunday Renewal: 6 pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7 pm
1236 Demere Lane 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
Sunday Services: 11:00 AM-12:30 PM
Sunday School: 10:00-11:00 AM
Bible Study:
Wednesday 6:00-7:00 PM

Lot for Sale

305 Storter Ave. S, Vacant lot. Save impact fees and utilities because property was previously improved. \$120,000 possible owner financing. 239-340-4770.

Help Wanted

The Mullet Rapper is looking for a part-time freelance writer. Send your resume to val@coastalbreezenews.com.

Office Help - Customer service
Computer skills. Full time,
8:00 am to 4:00 pm.
Call 239-695-2414

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

Local Parks
Big Cypress: (239) 695-2000
EVG National Park: (305) 242-7700
Fakahatchee Preserve: (239) 961-1925
Buy, Sell, Trade & More!

New Lower Classified Line Ad Pricing

MULLET RAPPER

\$10 for up to 20 words

\$.25 cents per word after

Send to Val@MulletRapper.com

Feel free to call with any questions!
239/393-4993

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.