

The MULLET RAPPER

What's Happening in the Everglades City Area

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2008

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P O Box 617, Everglades City, FL, 34139

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FUN AT THE FAIR

The 32nd annual Collier County Fair takes place from February 7th to 17th at the Fair Grounds in Naples on Immokalee Road north of Oil Well Road. Besides the fun & games, there are livestock shows and prizes for different crafts. The formal program states that the Fair is dedicated to "the best in agriculture, industry, entertainment, and educational achievements in our community".

The Fair is open during the evenings (starting at 5:00 p.m.) on week days but all day from noon, on the weekends. Admission is \$8.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children but there are special nights with reductions. For more info, see www.colliercountyfair.com or phone them at 455-1444.

DON'T MISS THE BENEFIT LUNCH FOR BRANDY, NATASHA, LUTHER, AND KIM ON SUNDAY, FEB 10, AT THE CAMILLIA STREET GRILL. SEE PAGE 11.

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FEATURE: "TRIBUTE", page 11

FESTIVAL PICS



"Cuervo Gold" and Debbie Moshier sporting their smiles and sunglasses.



Hannah & John Ineson with her paintings agreed that early Saturday morning was the best time for Arts & Crafts sales.



Sheriff's Office horse patrol with "Big Bertha" in the background, the 60-year-old fire-fighting vehicle which was retired recently by the Division of Forestry.

YOUNG SAWFISH SEEN

by Beau Yeiser

Mote Marine Laboratory's Sawfish Research Team fished areas within the Turner River in January and caught a few endangered small-tooth sawfish. Sawfish are born during winter and spring months, typically about 2 feet in length including the saw, and use the shallow bays of the Ten Thousand Islands as nursery areas.

Larger sawfish can be seen throughout the Ten Thousand Islands and Everglades National Park year round, although their endangered status makes them a rare catch. Each sawfish caught is tagged for future identification. The tags are typically orange tags attached to the dorsal fin or yellow, spaghetti-like tags near the base of the dorsal fin.

Whether you catch one or sight one, Mote would like to hear about it! Contact Mote's sawfish research team at 800-691-MOTE or email them at sawfish@mote.org to report a sawfish encounter. We would like to thank Capt Wright, Rich and Jason of Everglades Area Tours for their recent reports. *And, please remember to release all sawfish unharmed as they are a federally protected endangered species.*



If you have news, photos, announcements, or articles ... email snookcity@hotmail.com or phone 695-2905.

FEBRUARY 2008

| <u>SUN</u> | <u>MON</u> | <u>TUES</u> | <u>WED</u> | <u>THURS</u> | <u>FRI</u> | <u>SAT</u> |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| 3 SEAFOOD FESTIVAL | 4 Hour of Prayer Everglades First Baptist Church 7 pm FME mtg Comm. Church 10 am | 5 City Council City Hall, 5:30 pm | 6 Ladies Coffee Havana Cafe 8 am School Early Release | new moon ○ 7 Great Gators School, 9:30 ESHP mtg City Hall, 10 am Lions Club Depot, 7 pm | 8 Blackwood Gospel School, 7pm Wild Turkey Banquet | 9 Pet Vet see p.3 ORA Bazaar Chokoloskee 9 am to 1 pm |
| 10 Benefit Lunch Camellia St Grill, 1 pm, see p.11 Pet Vet see p.3 | 11 Hour of Prayer Everglades Community Church 7 pm OFCD Board Fire Sta, 6 pm | 12 City Council City Hall, 5:30 pm NEW DATE! | 13 Ladies Coffee Everglades Scoop 8 am | 14 Valentine's Day Homecoming School, 6 pm | 15 Speed Zones Comments see p.10 Weight Loss 5:30 pm see p.3 | 16 Jammin' in the Hammock Collier Seminole 10:30 am - 9:30 pm |
| 17 Jammin' in the Hammock Collier Seminole 10:30 am - 8 pm | 18 Presidents' Day Hour of Prayer Copeland Baptist Mission, 7 pm | 19 Reach Out Comm. Church 8:30 a.m. OFCD Board Fire Sta, 6 pm NEW DATE! | 20 Ladies Coffee Sue Evans' Home 8 am | full moon ● 21 Lions Club Bd Mtg, 5:30 pm Copeland Civic 7 pm | 22 | 23 Pancake Fly-In Airport, 10-12 am Paddle-In see p.3 |
| 24 | 25 Hour of Prayer Chokoloskee Church of God 7 pm | 26 MSD Festival SAC meeting Media Center School, 3 pm | 27 MSD Festival Ladies Coffee Triad Seafood 8 am | 28 MSD Festival | 29 MSD Festival | MAR 1 Art-in-the-Glades & Swamp Country Fair McLeod Park 10 am - 3 pm |
| 2 | 3 Hour of Prayer Holy Family Catholic Church 7 pm | 4 | 5 Ladies Coffee Havana Cafe 8 am | 6 ESHP mtg City Hall, 10 am School early release | new moon ○ 7 No School Teacher Planning Day | 8 Pet Vet |

THRIFT SHOP: Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri, Sat, 11:00 am - 3:00 pm

SKATING RINK: Friday/Saturday, 7:00 - 10:00 pm

MUSEUM: Tues-Fri, 9 am to 5 pm; Sat, 9 am to 4 pm

SMALLWOOD STORE: daily 10 am to 5 pm

FOOD PANTRY: Sat, 8:30 to 10:30 am, Community Church

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: Wed, 5 pm, Community Church

CHRIST-CENTERED 12-STEP PROGRAM: Tuesday, 6:30 pm, Chokoloskee Church of God Annex Building

WEIGHT LOSS GROUP: Fri, 5:30 pm weigh-in, 6 pm meeting, Community Church **NEW GROUP!**

NATIONAL PARK GULF COAST VISITORS' CENTER: daily 8 am to 4:30 pm (boats 8:30 am to 5:00 pm)

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE INFORMATION CENTER (Carnestown): daily, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

SHERIFF AT CITY HALL: 2/12 (3-5 pm) 2/13 (9-11 am) 2/18 (9-11 am) 2/20 (noon-2 pm) 2/21 (9-11 am) 2/22 (9-11 am)

A new weight-loss group will meet for the first time on **Friday, February 15**, at the Community Church. Weigh-in is at 5:30 p.m. followed by a meeting at 6:00 p.m.

The annual Paddle-In will be held by Everglades Kayak Fishing on **Saturday, February 23**. Proceeds benefit the Museum of the Everglades this year. About 170 people took part last year. For more info, phone Capt. Charles Wright at 695-9107 or see www.evergladeskayakfishing.com.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is organizing fundraising walks throughout the country. Local firefighter Lt. Bobby Campbell is taking part in the MS walk in Naples on **Saturday, February 23**, and is looking for sponsors. For more info or to donate in his name, go online to www.nmss.org or drop off a check payable to National MS Society at City Hall.

The bookshelves are almost empty and the clothes racks are skimpy – the Thrift Shop needs more things to sell! You can drop off donations when they are open: Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri, Sat from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you have large items, check in advance.. For info, phone Fran at 695-2660.



"String Instruments and their love of music" draw these 7 musicians and singers together each Sunday morning at Everglades Community Church. They can also be heard each Mon, night at one of five different local churches. (Back row) Sauntra Loar, Joe Stem, Jerry Loar, (front row) John Leigh, Mitch Mitchell, Bub MacDonald, (not pictured, Viron Bender). If you want some hand-clapping, toe-tapping gospel music, join them throughout this winter.

PLAN AHEAD IN 2008

- Mar 23: Easter Sunday**
- Apr 19-20: Pet Vet**
- Apr 26-27: Tamiami80 Celebration**
- May 10: Firefighters' BBQ**
- May 23: School Graduation**
- May 24-25: Pet Vet**

MOBILE PET VET

Dr Baker will be here on **Saturday, February 9** in McLeod Park from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and in Copeland from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. She will also visit on **Sunday, February 10** from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for surgery by appointment only. Phone 777-PETS.



OCHOPEE FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

- 01/23/08: Vehicle Accident, 68m I-75
- 01/23/08: Vehicle Accident, 69m I-75
- 01/23/08: Sick Person. Chokoloskee Island
- 01/24/08: Unknown Medical Problem, 5m West of the Jet Port on US-41
- 01/25/08: Vehicle Accident, I-75 at Broward County Line
- 01/25/08: Vehicle Accident, Big Cypress Bend
- 01/25/08: Vehicle Accident, 63m I-75
- 01/26/08: Abdominal Pain, Plantation Island
- 01/27/08: Brush Fire, Burns Lake Road
- 01/27/08: Vehicle Accident, 64m I-75
- 01/27/08: Vehicle Accident, 70m I-75
- 01/28/08: Possible Broken Shoulder, Ochopee
- 01/28/08: Chest Pains, Turner River
- 01/28/08: Unknown Problem, Ochopee
- 01/28/08: Stranded Boater, Turner River 2m from Chokoloskee Island
- 01/29/08: Unknown Medical Problem, Chokoloskee Island
- 01/29/08: Vehicle Fire, Burns Lake & US-41
- 01/30/08: Vehicle Accident, 51m I-75
- 02/01/08: Trouble Breathing, Port of the Islands
- 02/01/08: Vehicle Accident, 63m I-75
- 02/01/08: Unknown Medical Problem, Everglades City Fire Station
- 02/02/08: Laceration, Everglades City
- 02/02/08: Chest Pain, Everglades City
- 02/02/08: Motorcycle Accident, Monroe Station
- 02/02/08: Trouble Breathing, Ochopee
- 02/02/08: Ant Bites, Everglades City
- 02/02/08: Allergic Reaction, Everglades City Fire Station
- 02/03/08: Laceration, Everglades City
- 02/03/08: Assault Victim, Everglades City
- 02/04/08: Grass Fire, Everglades City
- 02/05/08: Chest Pain, Copeland
- 02/05/08: Vehicle Accident, 50m I-75
- 02/06/08: Grass Fire, Port of the Islands

If you pull over on the side of the road, be aware of dry grass which can catch on fire from the heat of your car.

TIDES FOR BARRON RIVER

INFORMATION FROM <http://TIDESANDCURRENTS.NOAA.GOV>

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|-----|---------|------|---|---------|------|---|---------|-----|---|---------|-----|---|
| 02/08/2008 | Fri | 02:35AM | 2.8 | H | 10:31AM | -0.3 | L | 03:49PM | 2.4 | H | 10:38PM | 0.2 | L |
| 02/09/2008 | Sat | 03:16AM | 2.7 | H | 11:04AM | -0.2 | L | 04:14PM | 2.5 | H | 11:21PM | 0.1 | L |
| 02/10/2008 | Sun | 04:03AM | 2.5 | H | 11:37AM | -0.1 | L | 04:38PM | 2.5 | H | | | |
| 02/11/2008 | Mon | 12:09AM | 0.0 | L | 05:01AM | 2.3 | H | 12:09PM | 0.2 | L | 05:04PM | 2.5 | H |
| 02/12/2008 | Tue | 01:05AM | -0.1 | L | 06:12AM | 2.0 | H | 12:40PM | 0.4 | L | 05:35PM | 2.6 | H |
| 02/13/2008 | Wed | 02:11AM | -0.1 | L | 07:41AM | 1.7 | H | 01:09PM | 0.6 | L | 06:16PM | 2.6 | H |
| 02/14/2008 | Thu | 03:27AM | -0.2 | L | 09:40AM | 1.6 | H | 01:10PM | 0.8 | L | 07:15PM | 2.5 | H |
| 02/15/2008 | Fri | 04:44AM | -0.3 | L | 01:20PM | 1.8 | H | 04:13PM | 0.9 | L | 08:51PM | 2.5 | H |
| 02/16/2008 | Sat | 05:53AM | -0.3 | L | 01:40PM | 1.9 | H | 05:42PM | 0.8 | L | 10:29PM | 2.6 | H |
| 02/17/2008 | Sun | 06:53AM | -0.4 | L | 01:57PM | 2.0 | H | 06:49PM | 0.7 | L | 11:41PM | 2.7 | H |
| 02/18/2008 | Mon | 07:46AM | -0.4 | L | 02:10PM | 2.1 | H | 07:44PM | 0.6 | L | | | |
| 02/19/2008 | Tue | 12:37AM | 2.8 | H | 08:32AM | -0.4 | L | 02:23PM | 2.1 | H | 08:33PM | 0.4 | L |
| 02/20/2008 | Wed | 01:24AM | 2.9 | H | 09:13AM | -0.4 | L | 02:39PM | 2.2 | H | 09:17PM | 0.3 | L |
| 02/21/2008 | Thu | 02:07AM | 2.8 | H | 09:50AM | -0.3 | L | 03:00PM | 2.3 | H | 09:58PM | 0.2 | L |
| 02/22/2008 | Fri | 02:48AM | 2.7 | H | 10:25AM | -0.2 | L | 03:23PM | 2.4 | H | 10:38PM | 0.1 | L |

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SCHOOL NEWS

phone: 377-9800 or 695-2561

website: www.collier.k12.fl.us/evg

IMPORTANT DATES

Tues-Fri, Feb 12-15: FCAT (Writing)

Thurs, Feb 14: Homecoming, 6:00 p.m.

Mon, Feb 18: Presidents' Day

Thurs, 2/21: Baseball, 5:00 p.m.

Mon, 2/25: Baseball, 4:00 p.m.

Thurs, 3/6: Early release

Fri, 3/7: Teacher Planning Day



From Savannah's Eyes

I can't believe the Seafood Festival is already over and, boy, did I have fun! I bought a lot of things from the Seafood Festival like some bracelets, necklaces, and I won a goldfish. I got a lot of other stuff, too. I also had fun

on the rides except I did not like one because it made me sick to my stomach and I felt really bad in my head. It also made me very dizzy. I loved all of the other rides, especially Orbiter, 1001 Nights, and the Egyptian Boat that goes up and down really high. My school sold Festival T-shirts and every time a person bought one, the money went to our Everglades City School. Also, the Coke booth money went to my school. The food was great and my dad loved the gator nuggets and Gumbo soup. On Friday night and Saturday morning, my dad sang some songs and they were good. He sang a lot until his time came to a stop. I want to thank everyone who came out to hear him sing. The weather was very nice and on Sunday my mother and I went over to a man and woman who parks near our house every year. His name is Mr. John and he told me to pick out a sticker for my window. He always tells me to pick out one every year because he has a sticker booth by my house and this is his gift for me. I love stickers! My mother, father, and I went to a photo booth that is also right beside my house. They dress people up in old-time clothes and they take pictures of them. Then they make the pictures in black and white. It is awesome! My mommy loves orchids so every year she buys orchids from the orchid lady and she bought a lot this year. And, all of the kids at school love the Seafood Festival so we look forward to next year. Thanks to all the people who helped in the booths for our school. Thank You! Also, the Collier County Fair is coming up on Thursday, February 7, in Naples. "Hooray". Finally, Happy Valentines Day to all!

Savannah Oglesby is a 5th grade student at Everglades City School and a regular contributor to this paper.

BASEBALL SCHEDULE

| | | | |
|-------------|----------------------------|------------------|--------|
| Tues, 2/19 | Gateway Charter J.V. | Away | 3:30pm |
| Thurs, 2/21 | S.W.F.C | Home | 5:00pm |
| Mon, 2/25 | Cape Coral Christian | Home | 4:00pm |
| Thurs, 2/28 | Seacrest County Day- | CANCELLED | |
| Mon, 3/3 | Canterbury | Away | 4:00pm |
| Thurs, 3/6 | S.W.F.C | Away | 4:00pm |
| Tues, 3/11 | Community School J.V. | Home | 4:00pm |
| Thurs, 3/13 | Cape Coral Christian | Away | 4:00pm |
| Mon, 3/17 | Community School J.V. | Away | 4:00pm |
| Thurs, 3/20 | Evangelical Christian J.V. | Away | 6:00pm |
| Mon, 3/24 | Moorehaven | Away | 5:00pm |
| Fri, 3/28 | Canterbury | Home | 5:00pm |
| Tues, 4/8 | Seacrest County Day | Away | 4:00pm |
| Thurs, 4/10 | Gateway Charter J.V. | Home | 4:00pm |
| Fri, 4/11 | Evangelical Christian J.V. | Home | 5:00pm |
| Mon, 4/14 | Moorehaven | Home | 5:00pm |

VALENTINE'S PRIZES

The Media Center will offer prizes on Valentine's Day for Accelerated Readers. Students have to read an AR book, score at least 80% on a test about the book, and put their name in a draw. Names will be drawn on Feb. 14 during the morning announcements. Prizes include a teddy bear, gumball toy phone, chocolate fish, Valentine cookies, light-up pen, and other goodies.



SEAFOOD FESTIVAL 2008 T-SHIRTS

The school still has T-shirts for sale. They cost \$15 for adult sizes and \$10 for children. Phone (239) 377-9837 for info.

HOMECOMING HAS BEEN RE-SCHEDULED AND WILL TAKE PLACE ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14.

START TIME IS 6:00 P.M.

The School needs volunteers so if you can spare a few hours a week, phone Dana Snider at 695-2561.

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Publisher Patty Huff will be out of town until the end of February.
To contact the *Rapper* by phone, call Marya at 695-2905

Recipe for Good Eating

Flavored Mayonnaise

by Marya Repko



Real mayonnaise is made of egg yolks and olive oil mixed into an emulsion (solidity) that forms with slowly, slowly (drop at a time) beating the oil into the yolk. A bit of lemon juice or vinegar is added towards the end of the process to thin the consistency and allow more oil to be added (keep tasting until the balance is what you want). The secret to making mayonnaise is to have the ingredients at room temperature ... and patience! An old French adage is that the colloidal solution forms better if the egg and oil are beaten in a metal bowl but I've made do with crockery.

However, if you have neither patience nor the time (or do not want to risk eating raw egg), you can jazz up store-bought mayo with a number of extra ingredients.

Garlic is the universal flavoring for mayonnaise (in Italian it translates into "aioli"). Just finely chop some peeled garlic cloves and stir into mayo. I also add a herb (dill seed is great with crab claws or other fish). For general use, such as a salad or tomato dressing, cilantro or basil are good. The mix is much better if left in the fridge overnight and I usually have a container there which I use during the week. It goes on celery, potato chips, anything snacky, or on a sandwich instead of butter.

Or, you can go oriental with a small bit of Teryaki sauce and some sesame seeds added to mayo. That makes an interesting dip for rice crackers or slivers of raw zucchini and green bell pepper.

It's fun to experiment ... how about some jerk spice mixed with mayo and spread on bread to be grilled as an alternative to brochetta (a fancy name for toasted cheese)? And, of course, we all know that the sauce for crab claws is horseradish, mustard, and mayo; you can play around with the proportions to produce a lovely mustard sauce for lightly-steamed veggies (green beans, zucchini, asparagus).

GREEN DIMES

by Patricia Huff

Green Dimes. What is it and what can this company do for you? Green Dimes was launched on September 16, 2006, with the purpose of eliminating unwanted catalogs that so many of us receive in our mailboxes every year. It removes your name from the dozens of junk mail lists that are out there and in exchange the company will plant 10 trees on your behalf. I joined this program about a year ago and have noticed the reduction in the junk mail. You choose which catalogs you wish to eliminate. Since 2006 Green Dimes has planted/saved almost one million trees and stopped over three million pounds of junk mail for approximately 185,000 people. If you would like to learn more, check out their website at www.greendimes.com The one-year membership is currently \$20; to me it was worth it.

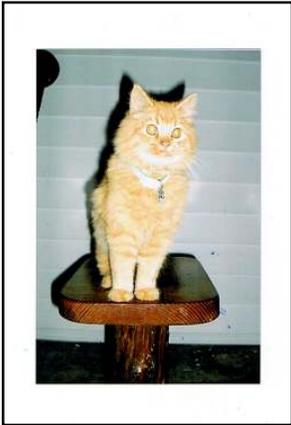
Gardening Tip

Start putting in your plants; work the nutrients in your soil. Wet newspapers, put layers around the plants overlapping as you go. Cover with mulch and forget about weeds. Weeds will get through some gardening plastic. They will not get through wet newspapers.



FELINE NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS - Part 3

by Adela Padron-Butler



Here we were, looking at this teeny fur ball that had appeared at our door. I mused to Bill that somewhere on the road in front of the farm must be a sign that only animals can read since we had become a pet motel over the past five years or so. Needless to say, we took the kitty under our wing. First things first, I fed it and it ate voraciously and continued to do so until our departure for Florida several

months later. Bill fashioned a home for it from a plastic garbage can outfitted with pillow, baby throw and catnip. The temporary home would be on the front porch but it preferred the safety of the fenced side deck. The plan was to find its owner.

In the meantime, we named it Morris because of its likeness to Morris the Cat of cat food commercials. We babied it and it rallied quickly from its scrawny condition, gaining weight and getting furrrier. It acted more like a dog than a cat. It followed us everywhere, helped us do chores, climbed trees, played in the fall leaves and was always underfoot, literally. Curiosity became its middle name because it would pay close attention to everything going on around it almost as if apprenticing to become human. We had to enter the house or car quickly to keep it out. We felt chaperoned by a cat. It loved to be loved, brushed, cleaned and held. It would hang limp in anyone's arms ... honestly, you could drape it around your neck like a fur boa and it would not mind.

Eventually, we learned it had come from a litter belonging to a neighboring farm. The owner informed us of its age, heritage and gender ... Morris was really a Morrissa and its mother was tea cup size and Persian. While compact, stocky and rotund at this point, she had surpassed her mother's size at only four months old.

Everyone that met Morrissa was drawn to her. If she could talk people talk, she would have had plenty to say. She was everyone's friend. By now, Morrissa was eating in our kitchen from her private bowls and sleeping in a cozy basement as the weather had become quite inclement. Winter was setting in.

As our departure date neared, we agonized about what to do with her. We debated bringing her to the Everglades, but her copious fur concerned us. Would she survive the heat? And the trip was long and arduous. The few times she rode in the car with us, she howled and bolted the minute we got home and opened the car door.

Along the way, Morrissa endeared herself to a couple,

Danny and Bonnie, friends of ours in the country. We teasingly called them Morrissa's aunt and uncle. To everyone's relief, they agreed to give her a home that would include three dogs; an outside dog, indoor dog and a basement dog whom she would be sharing quarters with. She would be shedding her prima-donna life style.

On a blustery fall morning, we wrapped her up and took her and her belongings to her new home. True to her heritage, it wasn't long before she had made herself at home, delighting in the fact that the indoor dog had been put in a closed room while she had free-reign of the house.

We said our good-byes which included a lip kiss and nuzzle. We miss Morrissa and look forward to seeing her again in the spring. Meantime, back in the Everglades, I continue to look for the elusive, wild panther sighting.

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Adela Padron-Butler has lived most of her life in Miami, Florida, arriving from Havana, Cuba, in the mid 1950's. She has also lived in Gainesville, FL., New York City and, for the past ten years, in Everglades City where she and her husband enjoy the water, nature and the quiet area. They also spend time on a family farm in Kentucky. She is a graduate of the University of Florida and Nova Southeastern University and also holds a Florida Cosmetology license. Her different careers have afforded her extensive travel. As a TWA flight attendant (a ready job she landed after graduation to start paying back her school loan) she enjoyed coast-to-coast national flights and traveled to Europe with a friend in the early 1970's. By 1979, she went from the skies to the seas, when she became a relief beautician for the infant cruise ship industry in south Florida. During this chapter in her life she traveled the Caribbean and through the Panama Canal. In the mid 1980's, she met her husband, gave up traveling and became a high school teacher until her retirement and move to the Everglades City area. Always a curious mind, Adela has been journaling since her youth but never considered sharing her writings with the public until Patty Huff suggested she write about her island walking experiences for publication in her local paper now called "The Mullet Rapper". Adela's dad was a prolific writer in retirement until his death and she attributes her ability to him. Her latest interest is jewelry making, something that was borne of her affiliation with a cancer support group that makes and sells jewelry with proceeds aiding those touched by the disease. She feels blessed and thankful for her life thus far and hopes her accounts are being enjoyed by supporters of the "Rapper".

Panthers on the Edge of Suburbia

by Dennis Giardina

I was going to write about a completely different topic tonight but today I got a call from the Fish and Wildlife Commission panther capture team leader to see if I could go out with them tomorrow to fill in for one of their guys and that's what I have on my mind right now. I like working with the Commission team whenever I can and this year they have an interesting and different objective. They are capturing and deploying GPS/radio collars on Florida panthers living on the eastern edge of Bonita and Estero, in and around the C.R.E.W. lands and Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. There is a large area of agricultural, natural and undeveloped lands south of the Caloosahatchee River, around Ft. Myers International Airport, Florida Gulf Coast University and north of Immokalee Road. Panthers and many other large animals roam there.

Florida panthers move into this area and others like it to feed on white-tailed deer, wild hogs and other animals that stray out of forests and prairies to feed around Ag fields and other private properties on the edge of eastward sprawling Naples and Ft. Myers. Unfortunately that increases their risk of coming into contact with people. Panthers adapt very well to local conditions and easily available food sources and they occasionally attack livestock and pets that are not secured behind a fence or in a pen at night. Young panthers can't compete with established adults for prey and territory and sometimes range into marginal, urban edge areas. They are hungry. Injured, old or sick panthers have a similar condition and sometimes find their way into these kinds of areas. They are hungry.

The biologists that manage the hands-on recovery of the Florida panther and their colleagues are committed to educating people and helping to protect people and their domestic animals from panthers and vice versa. A protocol has been established called the Problem Panther Response Plan for dealing with panther/human issues and conflicts. A lot of thought, discussion and review went into this plan. It is modeled after similar plans from the Western United States where they have been successfully implemented for resolving problems with cougars and mountain lions.

So then, tomorrow we'll be hunting panthers in the C.R.E.W. lands where two males have been collared in the last six weeks. Female Florida panthers are more discriminating in their habitat preferences. To find a female in this area would be a good sign of the area's ecological quality. GPS and radio tracking these individual panthers may help us determine where the edges of their range overlap ours.

One thing I know for sure is that Roy McBride, the team's hounds man, will be getting up at 4:30 tomorrow morning



photo courtesy of
Ralph Arwood

like he does every morning. At first light he'll be on his swamp buggy, setting out with his grandson Cougar and his dogs to look for panther tracks, scrapes and scent trails. He's been doing this a long time. He and his dogs have pursued big cats around the world, tigers, snow leopards, jaguars and more. To watch him in action and work with him is something that I have the good fortune to do once in while. I have to get up early too and believe me; 4:30 AM comes fast. Goodnight ...

Thanks to the Friends of Fakahatchee who allowed us to reprint this article from the February issue of their newsletter The Ghost Writer. For more info and back issues, see www.friendsoffakahatchee.org.

Dennis Giardina was Manager of Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park until recently and now is the DEP's Exotic Species Control Coordinator for southern Florida. He has been on Panther Capture Teams for 7 years. He is seen below securing a sedated panther.



Swamp Tales

by Bob N. Wallace

One of the most unusual sights I have ever seen while traveling took place years ago in northern Florida behind a semi-trailer truck on an interstate highway. It was when CB radios were the rage and everyone had a "handle". Mine was "Silver Cloud", and the truck I was following was the "Bee Man". I called him on the radio and asked what he had under the tarpaulin of his truck. "Bees," he said. He was bringing several hundred boxes of beehives from up-North down to Florida away from the cold climates of winter, even though bees can survive harsh winters. He was bringing them here to make orange blossom honey, which happens to be my favorite.

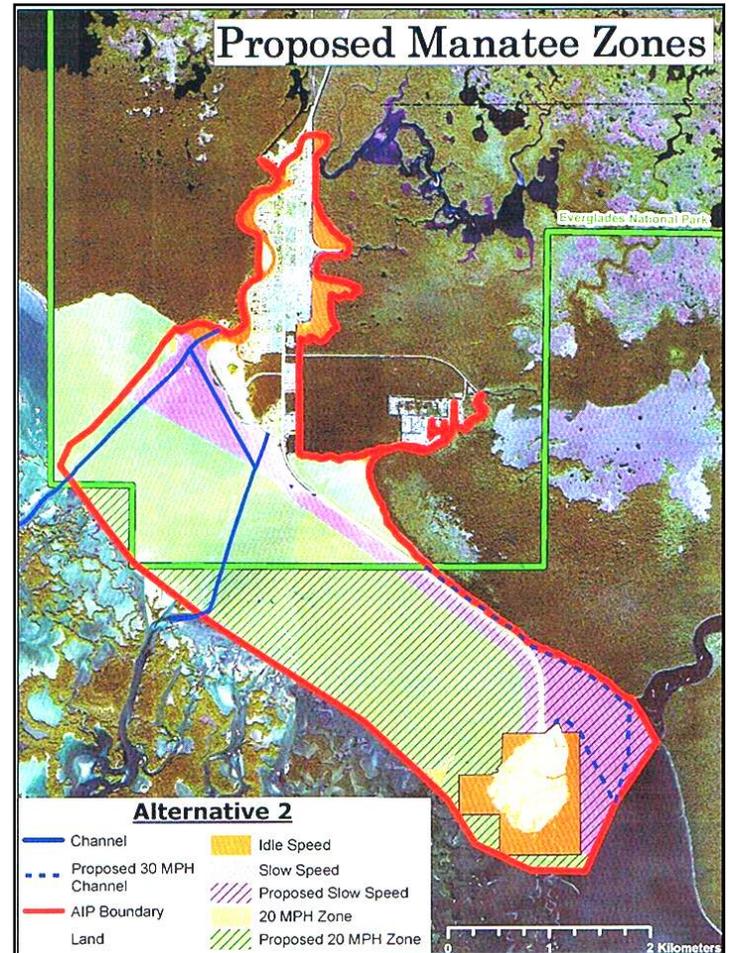
I am told that in order to make real orange blossom honey, beekeepers have to move their beehives into the orange groves just before the orange trees begin to blossom. As the trees bloom, the bees will visit the aromatic blossoms and begin to collect the sweet, citric nectar and take it to their honeycombs. Then, when the last orange blossoms are beginning to grow into sweet, juicy Florida oranges, the beekeepers take their hives out of the orange groves to extract that wonderful orange blossom honey for us to enjoy.

When you stop to think about it, that is a lot of work for those little bees. I am told that bees from one hive fly about fifty-five thousand miles to make just one pound of honey. That is equal to flying one and a half times around the world! So, if one hive is capable of making sixty pounds of honey that equals three million three-hundred thousand flying miles. If they were flying on an airline and got frequent traveler miles, the airline would go broke!

So, if you want a real taste experience, put some orange blossom honey on your hot toast or warm biscuit and say "thanks" to a real little work force that did a big job and went a long way to bring you your treat.



The Rev. Dr. Bob N. Wallace is pastor of Everglades Community Church. He has just published his first novel, *The Convention*, which is described in the blurb "Skullduggery and intrigue are rampant behind the scenes at the annual convention of a church denomination". Bob was born in Tulsa, OK, and earned a string of degrees (including a Doctorate of Sacred Theology). He has been a university lecturer, U. S. Navy chaplain, and weekly columnist for the *Naples Daily News*. He and wife Jane (also an ordained minister) live in Naples but are seen in ECity often at local events. For more information about his new book, phone Marya at 695-2905.



PARK WANTS COMMENTS

The proposed speed zones for boaters in the Everglades National Park in our area are up for comment. The deadline is **February 16** when your opinion must reach headquarters in Homestead. The address is:

Everglades National Park
Attn: Bonnie Foist, Chokoloskee AIP
40001 State Road 9336
Homestead, FL, 33034

or you can email to:

EVER_Ranger_Activities@nps.gov

or comment via the website:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov>

The only difference between the two Alternatives is that Alternative 2, seen on the map above, has a 30 MPH channel along the edge of Chokoloskee Bay near the causeway. The 30 MPH channel is not in Alternative 1.

Speed zones have already been established in the Collier County part of our area, which includes the island of Chokoloskee. The Park is extending these limits into its own territory.

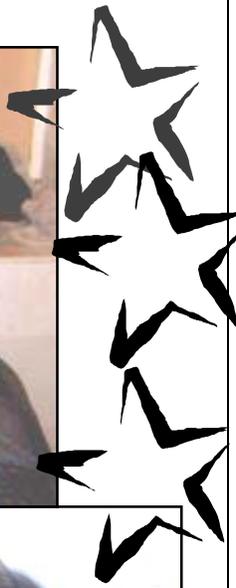
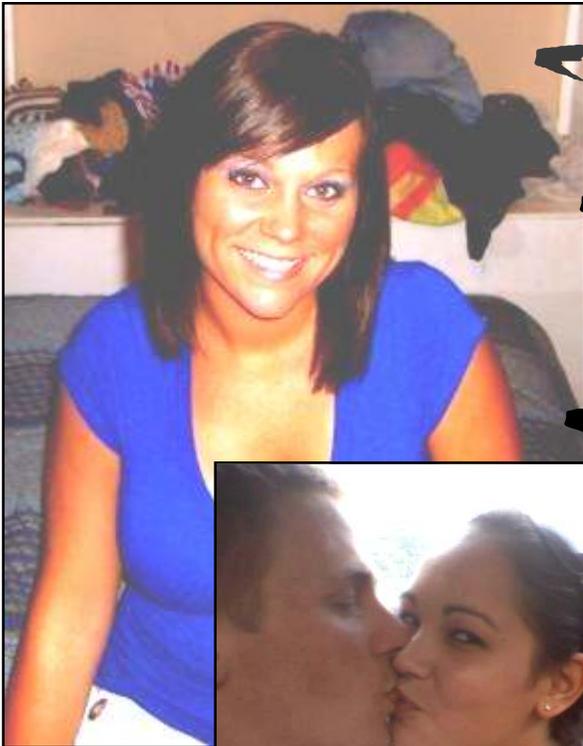
You can pick up a colored map and comment form at the Ranger Station in Everglades City or at City Hall.

CELEBRATE THEIR LIVES!

There will be a tribute on **SUNDAY, February 10**, at Camellia Street Grill for Brandy Stiltner, Natasha Johnson and Luther Dyer who lost their lives in a terrible automobile accident on 1/25/08. Kim Brown, who miraculously survived, will also be feted. A collection to benefit the families will be made.

You are invited to bring side dishes or deserts to accompany the roast pig. Local restaurants have contributed in this community effort and local musicians will be on hand to provide live entertainment.

Please phone Naiara at 289-8392 or Amy at 695-2618 to let them know what you want to add to the feast. Everyone is welcome, with or without a covered dish.



VIP Report

by Shirley Leonard

With Everglades City Hall's flag at half-mast, Saturday's opening ceremony of the 35th Annual Seafood Festival was surprisingly brief. Next-to-no hoopla occurred over the longevity of the celebration. Why?

Donnie Woods on Saturday invoked God's help "for everyone to be safe." The significance of his words was lost to most of the people in his audience. Many of the 50,000-70,000 visitors over the weekend noticed the flag, wondered about it, perhaps even noticed how understated things were. Why?

Just a week before, Friday Jan. 25th, a head-on collision on US-41 killed three people, one from Everglades City, one from Chokoloskee, and seriously injured a teen also from the city. In a town populated by approximately 500 year-round residents, virtually everyone here is related to or knows at least one of the victims.

This is my fourth year to winter in this area but my first as a volunteer (Volunteer-in-Park) for Everglades National Park at the Gulf Coast Visitors' Center here. I attended the festival's opening ceremony. It surprised me initially that none of the speakers mentioned why the occasion was marked with sadness.

Mayor Sammy Hamilton, and Collier County officials including Commissioner Jim Coletta, Property Appraiser Abe Skinner, Director of Emergency Services Dan Summers and Supervisor of Elections Jennifer Edwards, all spoke briefly but never referred to the tragedy. Why?

The omission reminded me of my husband's death over 20 years ago. Our two sons and I did not mention his name for about two weeks following the funeral. It bothered me at the time, but eventually I understood. Our home suddenly felt emptier, was emptier, without his presence. We missed him, painfully so, and any mention of him served only to reopen fresh wounds. Our quiet did not reflect any lack of love. It was quite the opposite: its intensity showed our love's depth.

This dynamic explained the somberness of Saturday's opening ceremony. As much fun as the Seafood Festival can be, the accident hung over it like a dark cloud. It was consideration for those most closely affected by the accident that kept the celebration low keyed.

On behalf of the Gulf Coast Visitors' Center's staff, I extend our sympathies to the families and friends of the victims.



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Publisher Patty Huff will be out of town until the end of February. To contact the Rapper by phone, call Marya at 695-2905

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The MULLET RAPPER

What's Happening in the Everglades City Area

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The Medical Closet at the Thrift Shop has canes, crutches, wheelchairs, walkers, to loan out. Stop by if you need something or phone Fran at 695-2660.

COMMUNITY NOTICES

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED in Museum to greet visitors. Phone Martha 695-0008.

HELP NEEDED for Tamiami Trail 80th celebration on April 26/27. Old photos, uniforms, vintage vehicles, ideas! Phone Carol at 695-2159 for info.

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