

IMMOKALEE BULLETIN

Serving Immokalee, Ave Maria and Eastern Collier County

Vol. 43 No. 13

Thursday, April 1, 2010

Happy Easter

Harvest Fest photos...
Page 8

Egg Hunt Fun Day set for April 3

The Egg Hunt Fun Day at Immokalee Sports Complex located at 505 Escambia St. will begin at 10 a.m. until noon on Saturday, April 3. The event will also include a giant slide, food and prizes. At 11 a.m., an egg hunt will take place for all ages. Admission to this Easter event is free. Call 239-657-1951 for more information.

Visit www.collierparks.com for more information and find us on Facebook!

Courts office closing

The 20th Judicial Circuit of Florida, Collier County, has decided to suspend its Immokalee court and court related functions, as well as Probation services, effective June 1, 2010. As a result, the Clerk of Courts will review the need to continue its satellite operations in Immokalee. The Probation office operation will be moved to the Naples courthouse. The current budget situation has caused the consolidation and does not allow for satellite operations. Immokalee operations will be re-established as soon as they may be adequately funded. The Clerk welcomes public input prior to making a decision which may significantly impact the Clerk's services to Immokalee residents.

See Page 2 for information about how to contact the newspaper.

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Immokalee youngsters are having a "spashing good time!" A partnership formed between Housing and Family Services and the YMCA gets kids "into the swim" at the Immokalee Pool. Sporting their Splash Week YMCA t-shirts are: L-R Gabriel Aguilar, Daniel Trejo-Garcia, Je'an Espinoza, Linda Gomez. See story SPLASH Page8

Fireman promoted to Deputy Chief of Operations

On March 12, Lt. Raul Dimas Jr. accepted the position as Deputy Chief of Operations. Chief Scott Birge stated "each candidate interviewed, held individual beneficial attributes, making the decision even harder, it was the Lt's added knowledge in administrative duties that contributed to the deciding factor".

Lt. Raul Dimas was born and raised in Collier County. He began his career as a volunteer firefighter with the Immokalee Fire Dept. in the summer of 1986; he continued as a volunteer firefighter throughout his senior year while attending Immokalee High School, graduating in 1987. In July of 1989 he was offered the position as a full-time firefighter. He attended the Fort Myers Fire Academy in the fall of 1989, graduating from fire school as a certified firefighter in Dec. of 1989. Fire fighter Dimas Jr. was then promoted to Lt. in 1992. With the ever changing advancements in technology and various components within the fire industry Lt. Dimas Jr. continued his edu-

cation through Edison College, Florida State Fire College and attended various fire related classes offered. In July of 2009 he was awarded a plaque for his 20 years of service and dedication to the Immokalee Fire Control District.

The Immokalee Fire Control District congratulates Lt. Raul Dimas Jr. and look forward to expanding on his experience and leadership abilities as the new Deputy Chief of Operations.

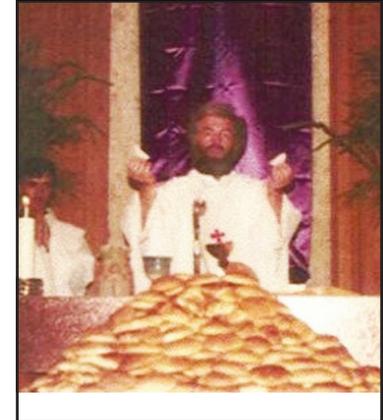


Special to the Immokalee Bulletin/Elisa Yanes
Lt. Raul Dimas, Jr is presented with a plaque for his recent promotion by Chief Scott Birge. Dimas was promoted from his current title of Lieutenant to Deputy Chief of Operations.

Immokalee remembers Father Richard Sanders

Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Immokalee, celebrated the 25th anniversary of the death of a beloved priest, Father Richard Sanders, on March 18. Father Sanders served in Immokalee from 1981 until 1985, when he died of a massive heart attack and subsequent strokes at age 47. Prior to Immokalee, he started the first Hispanic Mission at St. Peter the Apostle Church in Naples, and before that he was a Trappist Monk at Our Lady of Mepkin Abbey in South Carolina.

The people of Immokalee loved him so much that they buried him on the church grounds, opposite the grotto of Our Lady of Guadalupe and next to his church that is now called Sanders Hall. His headstone reads, "Love One Another as I Have Loved You." Since Father Sanders' death, the parish has been managed by Scalabrian priests, an Italian order started by John Scalabrini that ministers to migrants worldwide. Father Pio Battaglia, the current pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, remembered the years of the Vatican II Council



Courtesy photo
Devout Priest, Father Sanders says the Holy Thursday Mass, 1981

See SANDERS — Page 2

SANDERS

Continued From Page 1

and the great turmoil in the Church and the society, until its culmination with worldwide protests in 1968. It was during those years that Fr. Sanders reviewed his Trappist vocation and choose to serve the Church working among the poor.

Father Sanders served alone in Immokalee at a time when most Hispanic immigrants came to their priest for almost everything. He kept clothing and food at the rectory/office and when migrants knocked on the door, day or night, he would give them clothing and make them soup and sandwiches. He was the first Immokalee priest to learn Haitian Creole, as the Haitians had only recently started coming when Father Sanders arrived. He also sent a bus to Devil's Garden to pick up Guatemalans and would not start Mass until they arrived.

The recent freeze has shown how devastating freezes can be on migrant farm workers, and there were four freezes during the four years Father Sanders spent in Immokalee. His staff managed Guadalupe Social Services, and he helped the SSND sisters open the Guadalupe Center Soup Kitchen and Clothing Room. One of his biggest concerns was the terrible worker housing in Immokalee, and he hired the staff that would later develop Immokalee Non-Profit Housing and build a subdivision named after him, called Sanders Pines. He also recognized the need for a new and larger church, as growing numbers of people had to stand outside the church to hear Mass. He started the plans

and the fund-raising for a new church, but never lived to see it.

The 25th anniversary celebration Mass was attended by about two hundred people of mixed ethnicities, with music provided by the Guatemalan choir. The Mass was led by Father Pio Battaglia, the Scalabrinian pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and concelebrated with Father Benjamin Casimir and Father Onorio Benacchio.

After the Mass, Father Sanders' older brother Jim Sanders, who had flown in from New York for the celebration, talked and received a standing ovation when he told the people how much their love had meant to his brother. Fanoly Dervil, Father Sanders' old roommate and Haitian Creole teacher, spoke about his old friend, in three languages.

The people processed to Father Sanders' gravesite, and sang and prayed. Members of the band who played at Father Sanders' funeral 25 years ago led the people in one of the most touching songs, Te Vas Angel Mio ("My angel, you are departing - you leave my heart wounded and my soul to suffer.")

Afterwards, delicious food was served by volunteers in Sanders Hall that was decorated with the colors of Latin America, and memories were shared by all. The centerpiece for the service was an enlarged photograph of Father Sanders, framed with his Mexican Mass stole and his chalice and paten which were given to the parish by Jim Sanders. Father Pio gratefully accepted the gifts in the community's name.



Special to the Immokalee Bulletin /Joanne Loukonen

Always Royalty

These ladies will always be "Royalty" as they are previously crowned Harvest Festival Queens. The Harvest Fest began with the crowning of the queen in 1965 and the last queen was crowned in 1993.

Driver disappears after crash

Authorities say only minor injuries occurred in a two-vehicle crash in Immokalee early on March 29. At about 6 a.m. a driver identified only as "Carlos" was traveling southbound in the left turn lane of East Main Street, approaching the intersection of CR 846. He was driving a 1996 Isuzu.

A second vehicle, a 1992 International bus, driven by Earle Wilson, Jr., 64 of LaBelle, was northbound in the inside lane.

According to Florida Highway Patrol, the Isuzu driver failed to observe the bus and made a left turn into the Sunoco gas station at 726 E. Main Street. The front of his vehicle struck the front of the bus and rotated counterclockwise then overturned on its right side. At the same time, its roof struck the front left of the bus.

After the crash, the driver of the Isuzu

abandoned the crash scene. He was the only occupant of the vehicle.

The driver of the bus, Mr. Wilson, and passengers Anthony Wayne, 43, of LeHigh Acres and James Cooper, 36, of Immokalee were all uninjured.

Several other passengers in the bus suffered minor injuries: James Pender, 23, Ernest Gamble, 27, John Garbello, 33, Joey Joseph, 23, Terry McGruff, 39, Bernardo Black, 43, James Bradford, 47, Edwin Parrilla, 28, Marcus Gaskin, 29, Anthony Hickman, 23 and Robert Magno, 45, were taken to either North Collier or Physicians Regional. All were from Immokalee. None were wearing seatbelts.

Volunteers to gather for community clean up project

By Rick Heers

Special to the Immokalee Bulletin

County Commissioner Jim Coletta of District 5 and local church representatives from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will be meeting to discuss proposing a Proclamation for a "Day of Service" on April 24, to benefit the community of Immokalee. The proposed beautification project involves over 600 volunteers from the communities of Bonita Springs, Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Immokalee, Lehigh Acres, and Naples.

On April 24, 908 Roberts Ave W - Immokalee- 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Organized crews of volunteers will gather with donated resources to paint approximately 14 homes and 1 church between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Youth from ages 12-18 are making over 100 hygiene kits to donate to the Shelter for Abused Women and Children in Immokalee. Younger children are making goodwill baskets. The day will end with a lunch provided by more community volunteers.

The day is part of a Southeastern United States program whereby thousands of volunteers donate hundreds of hours of service to their communities on April 24, aimed at bringing relief to those struggling because of

the economic downturn.

For more information on the Day of Service in the Southeastern United States, visit www.dayofservice.org



Special to the Immokalee Bulletin/Rick Heers
Here's a group of hardworking volunteers helping to get it done cleaning and clearing during a recent effort in the local Immokalee area. The group is from Montana and are working during their Spring Break.

Published by
IMMOKALEE BULLETIN
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To Submit News

The Immokalee Bulletin welcomes submissions from its readers. Opinions, calendar items, story ideas and photographs are welcome. Call (239) 657-6000 to reach our newsroom. The deadline for all news items is 11 a.m. on Monday prior to the following Thursday's publication.
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Our Purpose...

The Immokalee Bulletin is published by Independent Newspapers of Florida. Independent is owned by a unique trust that enables this newspaper to pursue a mission of journalistic service to the citizens of the community. Since no dividends are paid, the company is able to thrive on profit margins below industry standards. All after-tax surpluses are reinvested in Independent's mission of journalistic service, commitment to the ideals of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and support of the community's deliberation of public issues.

We Pledge...

- To operate this newspaper as a public trust
- To help our community become a better place to live and work, through our dedication to conscientious journalism.
- To provide the information citizens need to make their own intelligent decisions about public issues.
- To report the news with honesty, accuracy, purposeful neutrality, fairness, objectivity, fearlessness and compassion.
- To use our opinion pages to facilitate community debate, not to dominate it with our own opinions.
- To disclose our own conflicts of interest or potential conflicts to our readers.
- To correct our errors and to give each correction the prominence it deserves.
- To provide a right to reply to those we write about.
- To treat people with courtesy, respect and compassion.

Letters to the Editor

Roe v Wade anniversary

Last Jan. 22, close to 50 people gathered together to stand up for the right to life of unborn children. That day marked the 37th anniversary of the infamous Roe v Wade decision that gave woman the legal - though not the moral - right to kill their unborn children by abortion. Abortion is permitted from conception through nine months of pregnancy. One-half of all abortions are performed on minority babies.

Once again, to draw public attention to this tragedy, Dr. Villarosa organized the demonstration, which included members of Couples for Christ Youth, students from Ave Maria University, religious sisters, and families with children from the surrounding area. The participants held signs expressing the truths to which they came to testify, such as "Abortion Kills Children" and "Abortion Hurts

Children." They also held crosses, made last year, each of which represented one million babies killed by abortion. As they stood along the sidewalk, the participants prayed for an end to the destruction of human life. At the end of the hour, the demonstrators knelt in a circle on the grass and prayed for unborn children and their parents. They also prayed that abortionists and those who work for them will have a change of heart, that government officials will promote the culture of life and not of death, and that people who are against abortion, yet remain silent, will become more active in the defense of life.

Mothers in a problem pregnancy can get help for themselves and their unborn babies by contacting the Immokalee Pregnancy Center which is located at 106 2nd St (The Amigos Center). This center can be reached at 239-657-2016.

Mary Jo Klein, PhD

Local Forecast

Weather forecast for Collier County from the National Weather Service

Immokalee Forecast

Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 81. Calm wind becoming east around 6 mph.

Thursday night: Mostly clear, with a low around 59. East wind between 4 and 7 mph becoming calm.

Extended Forecast

Friday: Sunny, with a high near 84. Calm wind becoming east between 4 and 7 mph.

Friday night: Mostly clear, with a low around 61. East wind between 5 and 8 mph becoming calm.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 85.

Saturday night: Mostly clear, with a low around 63. **Sunday:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 85.

Sunday night: Mostly clear, with a low around 62.

Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 85.

EOC and Immokalee get ready for coming hurricane season

By Rick Heers

Special to the Immokalee Bulletin

Dan Summers, Director of Collier County's Bureau of Emergency Services led a meeting at the iTECH Center in Immokalee to prepare a course of action to see that a command center in Immokalee-called the IRCC (Immokalee Recovery Coordinating Center) could operated effectively and efficiently from this state-of-the-art vocational education center recently opened.

Accompanying Dan Summers was Judy Scribner, Immokalee's frequent link to the EOC accompanied Dan, along with Deputy Ron Mosher, Robert Halman, and I HOPE Executive Director Rick Heers on a tour of the iTECH center led by Gerald Williams, Coordinator of Workforce Education at the CCPS facility. Ron Mosher, with Rick Heers acting as backup will direct activities at the IRCC in the event of a natural disaster hitting our area.

Plans were laid out as to how operations could continue even if our community was out of power for an extended period of time. The facility also appears to be a possible staging site for delivery of FEMA emergency

food supplies to the community in an emergency.

Collier County will participate in a state-wide hurricane exercise in early May, with the IRCC going through the drill to be sure that all bases have been covered for future disaster events.



Special to the Immokalee Bulletin/**Rick Heers**
A busier than normal hurricane season is expected this year and planning is key to being ready. A team including Judy Scribner, Dan Summers Robert Halman and Ron Mosher are discussing feasibility of setting up command at the iTECH Center.

Immokalee Foundation welcomes new director

The Immokalee Foundation is pleased to announce Liz Allbritten as the new executive director. For the past 23 years, Liz has built a résumé that spans higher education, educational programs, and non-profits. Most recently, she served as The Immokalee Foundation's director of programs.



**Exec. Director-
Liz Allbritten**

"Liz is a tireless and inspirational lead-

er," says John Henry, board chair of the Immokalee Foundation. "Her leadership skills and experience make her the right person to grow the organization."

In her new position, Allbritten will be responsible for furthering the Foundation's mission, enhancing its programs, and expanding its relationships throughout the region.

"The Immokalee Foundation is a tremendous organization," says Liz. "I am excited about continuing the great work of the foundation and increasing the opportunities for the children of Immokalee."

Guest Commentary

Improving Florida's education - adopting the Common Core State Standards

I give a standing ovation that the release of the Common Core State Standards for public input as a common sense step toward a better education system. These consistent standards may be defined as a simply as the skills and knowledge young people need to be successful in careers and college. The standards are evidence and researched based; include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills; build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards; aligned with college and work expectations; informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society.

Teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. As a parent and grandparent, I know clear consistent standards empowers parents to work with their child (ren) in achieving their learning objectives.

The best and most exciting points that the standards establish is what students need to learn, but they will not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers will collaborate and decide how best to assist students reach their highest potential through critical thinking and problem solving skills to reach the standards. The consistency of the standards translates into what all parents want for their students, the ability to graduate from school prepared to succeed, and build a strong future for themselves and the country.

Using the Common Core State Standards should mean that a parent who must move from one school to another, the student will assimilate into any school because of consistent standards across the state and nation. The rigor of academia will be consistent and the student's diploma upon graduation will

mean the same as the top schools throughout the country no matter where student may decide to go for higher education or into the career world. In short, our students will be prepared to compete in the global world and economy. Parents, this means that you will save money on college remedial courses that often are required for admittance into a college, university or technical school.

Teachers, principals, parents and others should take the time to review the standards during this public comment period. Please go to <http://www.corestandards.org/> to view the Common Core State Standards, and I urge you to take advantage to this short period offered for public comment. The standards are expected to be finalized in early spring. There was only a twenty-day window for public participation. Log on today to provide your thoughts at <http://www.corestandards.org>.

Respectfully submitted by: Karin Brown, President

Florida Parent Teacher Association (FPTA)

KarinB277@aol.com

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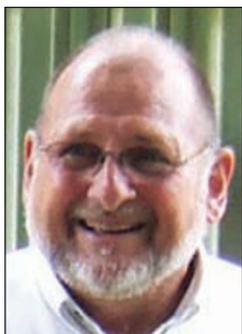
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I HOPE partnership feeds hungry in Immokalee

By Rick Heers

Special to the Immokalee Bulletin

Eighty-eight cartons of dried food packets put out by "Kids Against Hunger" arrived this week in Immokalee thanks to a cooperative relationship between I HOPE, one of its sister Disaster Recovery Programs, LASER (Lake And Sumter Emergency Relief), and Morrison United Methodist Church of Leesburg. The church paid for all the food products and organized a youth group who packaged all the food for shipment to Immokalee.



Rick Heers

Representatives from LASER heard Rick Heers' plea for assistance for unemployed farm workers in Immokalee last month at a Florida VOAD meeting in Orlando, and worked with the youth of Leesburg, who put together over 3,000 packages of dried rice and vegetables, each of which has 6 servings of nutritious meals. LASER delivered the food to Immokalee this week, and a local

Haitian Church-Fountain of Grace Church of God, and a Hispanic Church-Peniel Mission, that is regularly feeding 600-800 farm workers each Friday.



Special to the Immokalee Bulletin/Rick Heers **David Grove, Supervisor of I HOPE on the left, and on the right is Pastor Wilson Joseph receiving a shipment of 9,500 meals.**



Special to the Immokalee Bulletin/Rick Heers **Pastor Miguel Estrada of Peniel Mission in the center, also receiving 9,500 meals.**

Little league club seeks photographer

Immokalee Little League is seeking proposal to be submitted for a photographer for this year's season. Please submit your proposal to anyone of the board members below. Closing date is Tuesday, April 6.

President: Juan Garcia Jr. 239-643-2407 or email: juan.garcia@lcec.net; Vice President: Hector Ramos 239-564-9645; hectorramos@iw-sd.com Secretary: Terrie Aviles 239-503-5568;

taviles@guadalupcenter.net; Treasurer: Lori Garcia 239-935-9182, email: l0rymar@hotmail.com; Equipment Manager: William Trevino, 239-357-3823 email: wtk-tchr3@aol.com; Information Officer: Lisa Garcia 239-503-0922 email: lalaland0203@aol.com; Auxiliary Manager: Corina Garcia 239-462-8705 mudbabel@yahoo.com.



Special to the Immokalee Bulletin/DAS

Pets of the Week

Izzy is just 1 year old. She is a female Hound mix and loves to go for walks and play fetch. Maggie is a 2 year old female Shepherd mix who loves to sit with you. Maggie loves to be outside.

Adopt from Collier County Domestic Animal Services located in Naples at 7610 Davis Blvd. Please call 239-252-PETS (7387) or visit DAS online to find a lost or adoptable pet at: www.collierpets.com and give these loving pets a chance at a new home. Cats are \$60 to adopt and dogs are \$85.

Questions for school district leaders invited

The Superintendent and the School Board Chair are currently welcoming viewer e-mail questions for this week's eConnection TV show taping. The e-mail address: eConnection@collier.k12.fl.us. On the show, questions submitted by viewers will be answered by Dr. Dennis L. Thompson and Kathy Curatolo. Questions may also be sent directly to the eConnection show host, Jan Goldsmith, at [\[tv@aol.com\]\(mailto:tv@aol.com\). First names only are used on air. The eConnection show is on TV nightly \(Monday thru Saturday\) at 9 p.m. on The Education Channel, Comcast cable 99. The show being taped this week will begin airing on Monday, April 5. The current show, on this week and next, features the Superintendent and School Board Member Pat Carroll fielding viewer questions.](mailto:janeducation-</p>
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Collier County earns reaccreditation of its parks

Collier County Parks and Recreation Department has achieved reaccreditation by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA).

Parks and Recreation is one of only 90 park and recreation agencies in the country to currently hold national accreditation, and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) announced Collier County's distinguished accomplishment on March 19 in Washington D.C. at the organization's 2010 Legislative Forum.

"The process of reaccreditation is extensive and to accomplish this, our team continually monitors our business and customer processes to ensure we are meeting the

public's needs," said Collier County Parks and Recreation Director Barry Williams. "We invite residents and visitors to rediscover our fantastic park system, where there is something for everyone."

After completing the reaccreditation application, Collier County developed a detailed self-assessment, which was then followed by a visit in December 2009 by a CAPRA-appointed review team of experienced park and recreation professionals. Finally, CAPRA conducted a review of the Collier County's scores and the Commission then formally awarded reaccreditation to the department on March 19.

Every five years, an accredited agency

must be thoroughly reviewed to ensure continued compliance with accreditation standards covering all areas of operation. National accreditation requires park and recreation agencies to respond to 144 standards representing elements of effective and efficient operations. To become accredited, agencies must fully meet 36 standards deemed fundamental to a quality agency and at least 92 of the remaining standards. Collier County passed all 144 standards with a perfect score.

The Commission is comprised of representatives from the National Recreation and Park Association, the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, the Na-

tional Association of County Park and Recreation Officials, the International City/County Managers Association, American Association for Physical Activity and Recreation, the Armed Forces Recreation Society, and the Council of State Executive Directors.

For additional information on park and recreation agency accreditation, contact the National Recreation and Park Association's Accreditation Manager James O'Connor by calling 703-858-2150. Media may also contact Collier County Parks and Recreation Regional Manager Shari Ferguson for interviews by calling 239-252-4030.

Exhibit focuses on rural lifestyle history

Away from the tourists and crowds and tucked away in forgotten rural landscapes, are Floridians hanging on to vanishing lifestyles and livelihoods. They continue in ways of life that are disappearing. At the Crossroads, a new exhibit at Immokalee Pioneer Museum at Roberts Ranch, combines photographs and selected oral histories to help the public learn more about the people, stories and events that make up rural communities in Florida.

The black and white photographs depict people who still enjoy a simpler way of life. These images offer a frame-by-frame glimpse into the lives of those who weave the past into the fabric of the future.

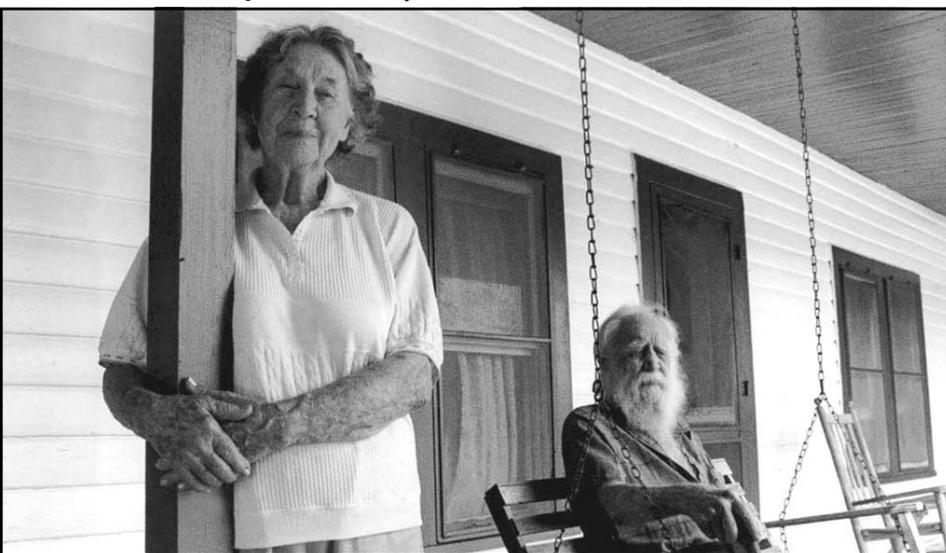
"Without the stories and documentary photography, the personal perspectives on historical events may be lost," said Eric Dusenbery, photographer of At the Crossroads and executive director of Cinderic Documentaries, Inc., a nonprofit organization with a mission to preserve history and

traditional culture of vanishing places and lifestyles. "It's vital we document and record the history of these rural areas, and the importance of the subjects and their relationship to the community before it's too late. All too soon the opportunity will be lost forever."

Dusenbery photographed people on their front porches, in fishing boats, inside their barns and other locations while listening to their stories.

"People tell their stories and explain how things used to be," Dusenbery said. "It was the 'good old days.' Many people may have forgotten the history along the banks of meandering rivers and streams, but not rural folks who know every inlet and the secrets hidden in palmetto swamps."

The exhibit will be featured at the Immokalee Pioneer Museum at Roberts Ranch through March 31. For more information, call 239-658-2466.



Courtesy photo/Vera Floyd

This photo of Vera Floyd on her front porch is part of the exhibit - the Crossroads, at the Immokalee Pioneer Museum at Roberts Ranch. The museum combines many old photos of "rural life" with other historical backgrounds to educate visitors of life in rural communities.

Horse owners urged to vaccinate animals for mosquito borne diseases

With the arrival of spring and warmer weather, Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Charles H. Bronson today reminded horse owners to get their animals vaccinated for mosquito borne diseases.

The two principal equine diseases associated with mosquitoes are Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus (WNV), and the majority of cases of each can be prevented with proper vaccinations, according to animal health officials.

"The key is to make sure that a horse has been vaccinated against these mosquito-borne diseases and to check with your veterinarian to determine whether an animal's booster shots are up to date," Bronson said.

So far this year, Florida has no equine cases of EEE or WNV, but that can change quickly as mosquito populations increase significantly with the warmer weather and can explode in areas with heavy rains and standing water.

Humans, too, need to minimize their contact with mosquitoes as mosquitoes remain the largest carrier of diseases that

afflict people.

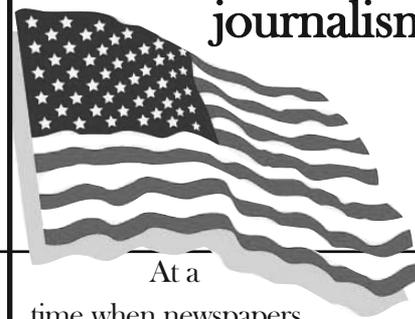
Toward that end, Bronson is recommending that Floridians:

Remove standing water from their property by emptying out stagnant water from kiddie pools, old tires, birdbaths and any other receptacle that holds water.

Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outside around dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.

Use a good mosquito repellent.

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Sun N Fun announces Spring Break hours

Sun-N-Fun Lagoon Water Park will open up for Spring Break from Saturday, March 27 through Monday, April 5, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day.

Relax right in your own back yard this Spring Break at Sun-N-Fun Lagoon's family friendly attractions. Plus, Collier County residents with a driver's license showing a Collier County address receive a discount of \$2 on entries for those 48 inches or taller!

With a Florida Driver's License showing a Collier County address, you and your party will receive \$2 off any 48 inch or taller entry, normally \$12. Children three and under enter free and those shorter than 48 inches are just \$5.50. Add sales tax to all fees listed above. Group rates, seasonal passes and party packages are also available. Call 239-252-4073.

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11 a.m. for Thursday publication

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Harvest Fest Parade - A fresh way to bring in Spring



Special to the Immokalee Bulletin/Joanne Loukonen
 Little Jesse Loukonen doesn't look too happy about his "face art" at the Harvest Fest held on March 20, but his brother, Johnny Loukonen is pleased to get to hold a soft rabbit at the children's petting zoo at the event.



The Harvest Fest Queens Float included many of the Harvest Queens crowned beginning with the first one in 1965 Grace Osceola Holdiness, Bernadette Starling (1967), Linda Lewis (1968), Ellen Batchelor (1973), Bonnie Lancaster (1974), Pam Lewis-Adams (1975), Toni Gibson (1984), Loretta Miller (1986), Jennifer Whately-Rhoden(1992) and last queen, Lori Loukonen-Steele (1993). Immokalee Little League Angles made their parade debut as well as Arizona Running Back and Immokalee Native Edgerrin James and former Queen, Linda Lewis.

Partnership and Splash Fest get kids 'into the swim'

Immokalee Housing & Family Services (IHFS) announced at the beginning of Spring Break a partnership with YMCA of the Palms (YMCA). The IHFS after school program to children in the Eden Park area - School's Out. The program takes place Monday through Friday afternoons and during school vacations at the Carl J. Kuehner Community Center at Timber Ridge.

This spring break, YMCA has offered students of the IHFS School's Out program the opportunity to participate in Splash Week: a program in which children learn about water safety. As the warmer months arrive many children will be closer to water hazards. According to the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (www.cpsc.gov) the risk that children face in regard to drowning not only occurs in a public swimming pools, but also in inflatable backyard swimming pools, bathtubs, and even buckets. IHFS is dedicated to ensuring the safety of the children in our community.

What began on March 29, has brought nearly 50 children, ages 3-12, transporting

them to the Immokalee Sports Complex (known locally as the "Immokalee Pool") to take part in the Splash Week program. YMCA is focusing on teaching basic swimming skills intertwined with YMCA core values - caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. The program and transportation is being provided by YMCA.

The families and children of Immokalee Housing and Family Services are grateful for the opportunity to partner with YMCA of the Palms. Sheryl Soukup, executive director of IHFS shared her enthusiasm about Splash Week.

"We are so excited that YMCA of the Palms was able to fund the program in Immokalee this year. Our students participated in Splash Week two years ago, and we still see them proudly wearing their Splash Week t-shirts. They regularly ask when they will be able to go to the pool again, since it is a very special and favorite activity for the schoolchildren at IHFS," says Soukup.



This year's Splash Fest helped local Immokalee kids like Amy Ramirez (left) and others including Je'an Espinoza, Martin Trejo, Daniel Trejo-Garcia, Gabriel Aguilar (right) to become great swimmers and to enjoy their Spring Break Week. The YMCA is teaching the children the basics skills in swimming but they also learn important values including respecting others, honesty, caring and responsibility.

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