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Restoration reviving Lake Trafford

Wildlife, water quality continue to improve a year after major restoration effort

Aquatic plants are experiencing a dramatic recovery to provide important and expansive habitat for wildlife. Largemouth bass are reproducing. And wildlife is thriving on the 1,600-acre Lake Trafford in Southwest Florida.

A year after the South Florida Water Management District (SF-WMD) and its partners completed a major restoration effort on the popular lake in Collier County, scientists are reporting bourgeon-

ing signs of success. Monitoring efforts have identified numerous improvements, including:



Aquatic vegetation such as Vallisneria and bulrush are experiencing a dramatic recovery, providing important habitat for the lake's wildlife.

· Aquatic plants such as Vallisneria, bulrush, lilies and lotus are flourishing.



· Plankton populations, at the

See LAKE — Page 2



Special to the Immokalee Bulletin/SFWMD

Area Master Plan proposal stays alive

By Patty Brant
Immokalee Bulletin

Supporters of the Immokalee Area Master Plan are pleased at the Collier County Commission's adoption of a measure that will keep that plan alive.

The Feb. 28 Collier County Commission meeting showed a commitment by the board members to at least continue to look for a way to make the long-awaited document a reality.

Last December the plan was defeated, with three A "Hail Mary" pass by Commissioner Jim Coletta in December won an extension from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

The new deadline for local

adoption of the Master Plan is September.

The fact that there is still a chance to pass this plan is due largely to the commitment of Commissioner Jim Coletta, whose "Hail Mary throw" got the Legislature to extend the Master Plan vote till September. The local vote was required to keep the plan "on the table."

Commissioner Coletta said he is such a strong supporter of the Master Plan because, he said, "it's the will of the people of Immokalee." He added that it will improve the standard of living and add infrastructure by adding new rules and regulations that reflect Immokalee's

See PLANS— Page 2



Immokalee Bulletin/Patty Brant

Dancin'

It's easy now to keep in shape at Letti Ramos' new Sigurani Dance and Fitness Studio. Located at RCMA Charter School, 123 N. Fourth street, third floor.

Immokalee Chamber of Commerce President Bernardo Barnhart and secretary Myrian Brown helped celebrate its grand opening Feb. 16. For the story, please see Page 2

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LAKE

Continued From Page 1

base of the food chain, are stabilizing.

- Visibility has nearly doubled from less than 6 inches to about 1 foot.

- Wildlife such as black crappie and alligators are thriving.

- Anglers are catching 10-inch, robust largemouth bass.

"The most exciting part of a restoration project is actually seeing recovery of the ecosystem," said SFWMD Governing Board member and Big Cypress Basin Board Chairman Daniel DeLisi. "Flourishing wildlife, along with improved water quality and clarity, are the result of significant investment in Lake Trafford. This beautiful lake is an important part of the greater Everglades as well as a recreation destination and an economic engine for our area."

One of the most successful components of the lake's restoration has been the plant-

ing and subsequent recovery of submerged aquatic vegetation. Well-established aquatic plants prevent sediments from clouding the water and blocking sunlight, which is vital to plant growth. Plants also provide the primary habitat for fish and invertebrates, critical components in the food chain for wildlife such as wading birds.

Restoration of Lake Trafford will continue with activities to maintain its health, including:

- Re-establishing native submerged aquatic vegetation, such as Vallisneria, through plantings

- Monitoring the long-term health of the lake using water quality parameters such as dissolved oxygen, environmental indicators and the recovery of native fish communities

- Promoting additional studies to develop best management practices to control nutrient runoff and minimize growth of invasive aquatic vegetation

Background

Lake Trafford is a shallow lake, marking the headwaters of the Corkscrew Swamp

and the Imperial and Cocohatchee River watersheds, along with the Camp Keais Strand and the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge watershed that drains into the Ten Thousand Islands. Lake Trafford is the largest natural lake south of Lake Okeechobee in South Florida, serving as an important ecotourism resource for recreational boating and fishing.

At one time, the lake was sand bottomed. However, nutrient runoff in the watershed resulted in a shift from native aquatic vegetation to dense mats of hydrilla, an invasive exotic plant. The Hydrilla that remains in the lake today is being successfully controlled using herbicides to prevent the accumulation of dead plant material on the lake bottom and the release of excess nutrients, which in the past triggered algal blooms and impacted prime habitat for native fish species.

The District began the first phase of dredging Lake Trafford in 2004, with a focus on its center, completing the project two years later. A second muck-removal effort

began in November 2006 for the nearshore area and, after being temporarily suspended due to drought conditions in 2007, was recently completed. The District has invested \$21.4 million to restore the lake over the last eight years.

Restoration of Lake Trafford was achieved by local citizens, public agencies and private organizations working together to restore this resource. The project was initiated by the Immokalee Chamber of Commerce. A Lake Trafford Task Force was formed, jointly sponsored by the Big Cypress Basin of the South Florida Water Management District and Collier County, with support from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Environmental interest organizations, such as the Audubon Society and the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, also have supported the project. Florida Gulf Coast University has been a restoration partner in monitoring and vegetation planting activities.

New dance and fitness business brings 'fun and fit' closer to home

By Patty Brant

Immokalee Bulletin

Dance and fitness are great ways to keep in shape and have fun at the same time. Letti Ramos understands that and has opened her dance and fitness studio right here in

Immokalee to share her love of activity with everyone.

With the grand opening of Sigurani Dance and Fitness Feb. 16, Immokaleeans can take up dance and fitness without leaving town. Kids take to hip hop and contem-

porary dancing very quickly - and it keeps those little bodies moving!

For adults, Letti is offering "boot camp," strength and sunrise shaping (a combination of yoga and pilates). And that's not all.

Look out, ladies - Zumba is coming!

A hometown girl and 2005 Immokalee High School graduate, Letti has high hopes for her new venture. She and another instructor are looking forward to teaching kids and adults the skills that can help them get and keep fit.

Letti said fitness has always been important to her, as a lifelong athlete - cross country, track, volleyball - "you name it," she said.

Letti served in the Navy for four years, two of them she led physical training for her command of over 50 sailors. She said the routines were "not too strenuous, just normal workouts" with stretching and exercising with body weights. Letti also formulated her own program activities.

She said she learned dance at Ave Maria and it was just a natural progression to open her own studio.

She also worked at a fitness studio in Es-tero and has known for the past two years she wanted to open her own business.



Special to the Immokalee Bulletin
Letti Ramos enjoys showing local children how they can mix fitness, dance and fun close to their homes.

Sigurani's 12,000 square foot facility is located at RCMA Charter School, 123 N. Fourth street, third floor. Letti said the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) helped her "from bottom up" and contacted RCMA for her to get her a place for her studio.

They are accepting registrations now.

You can check Sigurani's out online at www.lettisigurani.com/fitness or call 239-503-0564. Monthly fees and the studio is open six days a week. Check online for the class schedule. Open six days a week.

PLAN

Continued From Page 1

needs, not those of the coast.

The commissioner added that, one year ago, the final plan went to the county commission and Commissioner Henning supported the plan, even made the motion to submit it for the state's approval. That was the first submission. Such a plan must go to state twice for final approval.

Commissioner Coletta lays the blame for holding up adoption of the Master Plan at the feet of local politics.

When it comes up, the Master Plan will require a super majority for approval - that is, minimum vote of 4-1.

"I have every reason to believe Commissioner Henning will be for it this time," Com-

missioner Coletta said. Commissioner Henning abstained from the vote in December, citing a conflict of interest since he owns property in Immokalee.

Commissioner Coletta is confident that, either the property in question will be sold by the time the plan comes up for a vote again or the board will have an Attorney General opinion that it's not a conflict of interest. He expects a final vote in June, September at the latest. The county has only one commission meeting in July and none in August, he said.

CRA Executive Director Penny Phillippi and her colleagues have been working on the Immokalee Area Master Plan for years. In fact, it has been in the works for ten years and its defeat last December was a blow.

About the unanimous vote that allows the county to continue to consider the plan, she said, "It is good news."

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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

Congratulatory letter

This letter comes from Florida Supreme Court Justice R. Fred Lewis as a congratulatory letter to Albert V. Batista, Esquire, for his recent appointment to the Hispanic Affairs Board:

Dear Mr. Batista:

Congratulations upon your appointment of the Collier County Commission Hispanic Affairs Board. I wish you the best as you assume the duties and responsibilities of this important position. I am confident through your work with the positive and dynamic contribution to your community through your work with the board.

**With kind regards,
R. Fred Lewis**

Economic Development

I-Panave, Immokalee National Park of Vegetables

As a candidate for County Commissioner, District 5, Democrat, one of my goals is to bring Economic Development to Immokalee. Because of our geographic isolation in rural southwest Florida, attracting traditional manufacturing companies to the area is impractical.

Florida is the tourism and theme park capital of the world. So, I've developed a concept to bring a theme park to Immokalee, called "I-Panave, Immokalee National Park of Vegetables," based on a theme park chain in Colombia and Mexico called Panaca. The concept is similar to where Disney World exported their theme parks to Tokyo and Paris.

The idea would be to build a version of the Panaca theme park here in Immokalee.

This would be a 60 acre theme park and a resort for families to celebrate the history of growing vegetables. There would be the traditional Disney-like theme park characters dressed as the Florida panther, black bear, alligator, crocodile and snakes to entertain children.

Visitors would walk or take horse drawn wagon rides to explore exhibits of vegetable growing fields. There would be a farm animal zoo for children.

Pavilions featuring all the local businesses in Immokalee related to the vegetable growing industry would display their products and educate the visitors.

The resort would include all the modern amenities of rooms, restaurants, shops, sauna, swimming pools with majestic views of the natural beauty of Immokalee.

I propose two methods to finance the building of "I-Panave." Immokalee National Park of Vegetables." One would be to solicit the Colombia/Mexico theme park to build a version here in Immokalee. Another method would be to start a non-profit organization to recruit the purchase of land and the development with local Immokalee businesses and the county, state and federal governments.

We could partner with the Immokalee Chamber of Commerce, Immokalee Community Redevelopment Agency, Barron Collier company and state and federal agricultural research organizations.

The construction of "I-Panave - Immokalee National Park of Vegetables" would bring jobs to our residents, increase the county tax base and improve the quality of life in Immokalee.

John Lundin

Immokalee High School Hall of Fame

Hello Immokalee and community friends, it's time once again to submit names for the Immokalee High School Hall of Fame class of 2012. It gave us great pleasure to start the Hall of Fame in 2011 with our inaugural class which included some great names in the history of Immokalee High School. Many in this group have help build the tradition we have here today. That list included: Vic Kirk (Boys Basketball Coach), Bill Broxon (Football Coach), Ike Brown (Boys Track), Mary Stubs (Girls Track and Basketball), Johnny Smith (Football and Track), Edgerin James (Football), John Weber (Football Coach) and Linda Ayer (I.H.S Contributor). Although these were the names chosen, each person who was nominated and completed an application last year is still eligible. If you were nominated and did not complete your application, do so and submit it to the high school as soon as possible. Any new potential candidates must be submitted to the high school by April 9.

Some items considered for induction include:

- Graduated from Immokalee High School for at least 5 years
- High school achievements
- Achievements beyond high school
- Established records

Again we are only looking for potential candidates. If you are chosen as an applicant, you will receive further instructions about the process. I would like to say thank you to the community for all your support. Continue to encourage our young people to be their best and to keep The Immokalee

Pride Alive!

**Yours in Activities,
Tony Allen, Activities Director**

Immokalee's Harvest Festival - 2012

The Immokalee Chamber of Commerce with Florida Community Bank, NA. Harvesting the Past, the Present and the Future of Immokalee. April 12, Harvest Festival Queen Competition - 7 p.m., Immokalee High School Auditorium, 701 Immokalee Drive, Admission \$5 (Kids 6 and under FREE); April 14, Harvest Festival Parade, 11:30 a.m., Ninth and Main Streets. The Harvest Festival features - Wild Hog BBQ with Immokalee Salad - Ethnic Food Vendors - Live Entertainment all day - Lots of Family games, kids tents with arts and crafts, unique arts and crafts vendors, antique car judging, farm workers olympis, photo op stations, live 4-H demonstration, and much more. Free admission parking \$5 per car. Partial proceeds benefit the Immokalee Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Funds for graduating Seniors from IHS. For information contact the Immokalee Chamber of Commerce at 239-657-3237 or eccoc@comcast.net. At the Immokalee Airport, 165, Airpark Boulevard, Immokalee.

Obituaries

Dalvecia Renita Jackson

IMMOKALEE — Dalvecia Renita Jackson passed away Friday, Feb. 24, 2012. She was born June 25, 1980.

Funeral Services were held Saturday, March 3, at First Missionary Baptist Church, 203 S. 3rd Street. Barrett Funeral Home was entrusted with her care.

She leaves to cherish her memories three daughters, Katrina, Tajha, and Anastasia; and her mother, Frances Jackson.

The family would like to thank each and every one for their acts of kindness during Dalvecia's illness and her passing, she is now with her father Edward Rice, and THE Father. Again, Thank You for your cards, flowers, prayers whatever you did to help us to bear this burden for we know we cannot bear this burden alone. Thank you, the family.

Local Weather

Weather forecast for Collier County from the National Weather Service

Local Forecast

Thursday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 86. East wind between 8 and 14 mph, with gusts as high as 18 mph.

Thursday night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 65. East wind between 6 and 8 mph.

Extended Forecast

Friday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 84. East wind between 6 and 9 mph.

Friday night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 63.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 83.

Saturday night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 62.

Sunday: A 20 percent chance of showers. Mostly sunny, with a high near 82.

Monday: A 10 percent chance of showers. Mostly sunny, with a high near 86.

Monday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 59.

Homebuyer education class

Thinking about buying a home or just want to know more about the steps to becoming a homeowner? Now is a great time to buy a house due to the low prices, but do you know what is involved in becoming a homeowner and are you ready for it? These issues and others will be discussed at the Welcome to Homeownership Class to be held Saturday, March 10, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Southwest Florida Works (formerly known as the One-Stop) in Immokalee. In the workshop, we will focus on the pros and cons of owning a house, qualifying for a loan, budget, finding a home, offers, and closing. We will also cover what to expect after closing, how to maintain a home, and how to build and maintain a budget to address unexpected items that may occur.

The workshop is free. To register, please call Angela Johnson at the Empowerment Alliance at 239-658-3325.

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Do you have a Preschool age child?

If your child turns 4 years old on or before September 1, your child is eligible for VPK (Voluntary Prekindergarten).

Community Coordinated Care for Children (4C) in Labelle, Clewiston and Immokalee is open for VPK registration.

Please call the location nearest to you to find out more about signing your child up for VPK. Bring your child's birth certificate and proof of Florida residency (such as an electric bill) to one of the 4C offices located near you.



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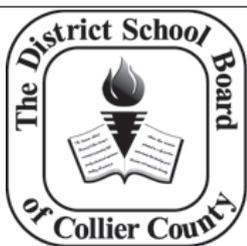
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Students First

Living in a 'Virtual World'

By Joe Landon
Collier County District Schools



Virtually everything is "virtual" today. We truly live in a virtual world, the cyber world, which is certainly a digital world. We depend heavily on today's technology as we navigate each day. We text, maybe tweet, check Facebook, and most certainly exchange tons of emails; and we rely on the World Wide Web for practically everything. Since the first of the year the school district has gone "virtual" with flyers, meant for parents of elementary students, being posted now as "virtual" flyers on the district website at www.collierschools.com. Check them out! It's easy. Simply go to the home page of the site, click on the green backpack (the virtual flyers icon) and voilà, you're there. These are the flyers from various community organizations or governmental agencies with offers of some sort of service available to your child, or news about special events of interest to your child; flyers schools used to send home in your child's weekly envelope or folder. These previously "printed" flyers are now the "virtual" flyers we're talking about here. What this means for you is, when you go online to do anything – on your smart phone, iPhone, iPad, or computer – you'll want to take a quick moment to check out the virtual flyers. You'll be able to see all of the flyers posted, not just those meant for your child's school. Virtual flyers

remain on the website for a full calendar month, so you can easily go back to take another look anytime you'd like.

By posting these flyers online, in the virtual world, we are saving a few trees in the regular world – going green, if you will. With 21,000 elementary school students in our 29 elementary schools district wide, each community organization or governmental agency wanting to reach each of their homes would have to print 21,000 copies to be sent home. And for the community organizations or governmental agencies, posting a virtual flyer is just about as easy as it is for you to look at the flyers.

Now the flyers containing the vitally important information that you'd expect to be coming directly from your child's school – flyers about homework, school activities, PTA/PTO fundraisers, or permission slips for upcoming field trips – are still being printed by the school and sent home with your child in that weekly folder or envelope. Nothing has changed for these communications!

We realize that not everyone has Internet service on a phone or a computer at home. That's why each elementary school has a computer set up in the front office for you to use. When visiting the school, just ask to use the computer and go online to see if there's a posted virtual flyer that's of interest to you.

Have a suggestion for improving this process? Let us know at feedback@collierschools.com.

GED Connection returns

It's that time again for the GED Connection TV show to restart its informative series. If you're planning to take the General Educational Development (GED) exam anytime soon, you'll want to be sure and catch this program that provides adult learners with the skills and knowledge needed to prepare for and pass the GED exam. The GED Connection series combines 39 video programs, print materials, and Internet learning activities to make studying for the test exciting, engaging, and effective. From the first episode through the last, GED Connection takes an in-depth look at the five subject areas covered on the GED exam – reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. The helpful series also provides assistance with a multitude of topics within these subject areas. Some specific episode titles include

"Getting Ideas on Paper," "Poetry," "Economics," "Chemistry," and "Introduction to Algebra."

Tune in to The Education Channel, cable 99, each weekday at 6:30 a.m. and 10 p.m., beginning Monday, March 5, to catch all the 30-minute episodes.

And if you'd like to prepare for the GED exam in a classroom setting, you're encouraged to take advantage of GED preparation classes offered at the following locations:

- Immokalee Technical Center, 508 North 9th Street, in Immokalee, 239-377-9900
- Lorenzo Walker Institute of Technology, 3702 Estey Avenue, 239-377-0984

Visit www.collieradulthood.com for more information, testing fees, and registration details.

Edison to host Dual Enrollment Night

Edison State College Collier Campus is hosting a Dual Enrollment Information Night for all Collier County high school, technical school and home school students, and their parents. The event starts at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 15, in the new Student Services Building, M-106 of Edison State College Collier Campus.

"Area high school students have this opportunity to earn college credit with our dual enrollment program," said Dr. Robert R. Jones, interim President, Edison State College Collier Campus. "This is an excellent chance for students to get a head start

on their college education goals."

Students participating in dual enrollment earn college credit without paying for tuition, fees or books.

"Dual enrollment for high school students is possible thanks to the to a collaborative partnership with Collier County schools," said Dr. Christine Davis, Associate Dean.

Additional information is available by calling 239-732-3107. To confirm attendance, please email Ashley.sunyog@edison.edu.

Families take part in 'Free' program

Pinecrest Elementary parents get finance education opportunity

Restaurant themed workshop introduces students and parents to money matters and math fundamentals in fun way!

Immokalee parents and students at Pinecrest Elementary School will gather together for an entertaining and educational program aimed at helping promote financial education among student families.

What's on the MENU? Financial Education for Families is geared to young families and is offered at no cost to Florida elementary schools or parents as a way to promote long term responsible money management. The program is sponsored by the nonprofit Volunteer USA Foundation and supported by the SunTrust Foundation.

Math is a skill we need to use everyday to be successful in our lives, in every thing we do.

With national reports showing 58% of Americans cannot figure out a 10% tip, the program was launched to help young students understand how math skills connect to money. It also encourages parents to talk to their children about responsible household spending and saving habits.

A fun, "restaurant" themed workshop, complete with chef hats and aprons, provides the backdrop for the training where

parents and children tally up dinner bills, calculate tips and practice other math and money skills. Families also receive a take-home activity bag filled with multiplication cards, measuring cups and "restaurant tabs" to practice the newly-learned skills at home.

"Only about thirty-percent of parents talk with their children regularly about personal finances. We'd like to see that change, so that future generations are able to handle their finances responsibly," said Thomas G. Kuntz, chairman, president and CEO, SunTrust Bank, Florida. "Just as they do in helping their children learn to read, parents should also play a strong role in helping kids understand the value of money, the importance of budgeting, and the need to save for the future."

In addition, with the support of the Florida Department of Education, teachers have free online access to detailed lessons and worksheets aligned with math and financial literacy standards. The lessons focus on teaching young students about banking, budgeting and saving, through the four core math skills including addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

For more information about the What's on the MENU? Financial Education for Families program and to access free teacher resources visit: www.volunteerusafoundation.org

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Healthcare Network welcomes new member

By Rick Heers

Special to the Immokalee Bulletin

Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida hosted a recent welcome luncheon for Florida State University's Dr. Reyes on March 5.

Florida State University College of Medicine (COM) has had a presence in Immokalee since 2007, in partnership with the Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida (formerly CHS Healthcare). Medical students complete elective rotations through the FSU campus in Immokalee, a rural and multicultural health education site. The FSU COM has recently expanded its involvement in Southwest Florida by partnering with Lee Memorial Health System to begin a Family Medicine Residency Program. As FSU's investment in the community grows, so does the need for local leadership to guide the COM's educational efforts, help manage its operations, and further strengthen its relationships with partner organizations.

Elena Reyes, Ph.D., has been named the COM's Regional Director for Southwest Florida, to lead these efforts in the Immokalee, Ft. Myers, and Naples area. Dr. Reyes has been on the faculty of the College of Medicine since its inception and has been engaged in teaching, clinical service, and administration at the COM throughout its first decade. Her passion for serving the multicultural population in the Immokalee area has resulted in a number of successful initiatives with the Immokalee Health Education site, including the development of a psychology



post-doctoral program that has brought new
Special to the Immokalee Bulletin/Rick Heers
From Left, Steve Weinman, Dr. Jerry Williamson, Dr. Elena Reyes, Dr. Bruce Berg, Dr. Alma Littlest, Dr. Mollie Hill, Lesa Peterson, Dr. Chris Mulroney, and Glenda Perez.

clinical psychologists onto the COM faculty and laid the groundwork for the possibility of an American Psychological Association accredited Health Psychology program in partnership with the Healthcare Network. In her new role, Dr. Reyes will provide administrative oversight to the Immokalee Health Education Site and serve as the COM Southwest Florida liaison with community agencies and area leaders. As an experienced clinical psychologist and educator, Dr. Reyes also will be instrumental in developing the behavioral medicine curriculum for the Family Medicine residency at Lee Memorial.

Elena will remain an integral part of the College of Medicine as FSU expands its reach throughout the state. She will begin her duties in Immokalee on a part-time basis in the next couple of weeks and relocate to her native South(west) Florida to assume her new duties on a full-time basis effective June 1. We welcome and congratulate Elena on her new position.

Cars and planes focus of LWIT event

Cars and planes and breakfast, oh my! Lorenzo Walker Technical High School and Institute of Technology will hold "Fly-In Cruise-In" this Saturday, March 10, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Naples Airport (160 Aviation Drive North). Tickets are \$10 per person (children under age 9 are free), and include an "All-You-Can-Eat" pancake breakfast, as well as admission to see the cars and planes that will be on exhibit. Plus, the ticket cost includes admission to the new military air museum housed at the Naples Airport.

All proceeds from the event will benefit Lorenzo Walker Technical High School and Institute of Technology – providing support for the schools and scholarships for deserving students. Car clubs in Southwest Florida are invited to participate and exhibit their cars at this inaugural event. Anyone bringing a car or plane to show off will be admitted at no cost – breakfast included. Tickets are available in advance or on the day of the event.

To learn more or for ticket purchases, please contact the school at 239-377-0900.

Master Mobility Plan first team meeting planned

Phase III of the Master Mobility Plan is currently under way and the consultants are now working to develop language for potential policy changes.

The project website is now located on the County's Transportation Planning page <http://www.colliergov.net/Index.aspx?page=2961> and all scheduled meetings will be located on the county calendar <http://www.colliergov.net/Index.aspx?page=1913>.

Our first team meeting is scheduled for March 28 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in the main conference room at 2885 S. Horseshoe Drive. At this meeting, we are expecting to review the first draft of the proposed language written by the consultants. Contact Debbie Armstrong for any questions.



Special to the Immokalee Bulletin/Bernardo Barnhardt

Chamber Member

Juan Sanchez is the Chamber Member of the week. He is the owner of Sanchez Produce on New Market Road. Immokalee Chamber appreciates what he does for the community and chamber.

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Clerk of Court announces Collier Sunshine Week

March 11-17, is Sunshine Week in Collier County, which corresponds with the national initiative underscoring the importance of "open government" and serves as a reminder to all citizens of their right to access public records and public meetings.

To mark Sunshine Week, Dwight Brock, Clerk of Courts, gave a seminar to about 150 citizens at the South Regional Library on Lely Cultural Boulevard on February 21 which demonstrated how easy it is to access public records using the Clerk's website, www.CollierClerk.com. The seminar was open to the public on a first come, first served basis.

The Office of the Clerk of Courts will accept a Proclamation from the Board of County Commissioners on March 13, declaring March 11-17, Sunshine Week in Collier County.

The Florida Society of Newspaper Editors (FSNE) launched Sunshine Sunday in 2002 in response to efforts by some Florida legislators to create scores of new exemptions to the state's public records law. FSNE estimates that some 300 exemptions to open government laws were defeated in the legislative sessions that followed, in part, because of the increased public and legislative awareness that resulted from their efforts.

Several states followed Florida's lead, and in June 2003, the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) hosted a Freedom of Information (FOI) Summit in Washington where the seeds for Sunshine Week were planted.

With an inaugural grant from Knight Foundation, the ASNE FOI Committee took up the challenge and launched Sunshine Week in March 2005. It continues to be celebrated each year in March, coinciding with National FOI Day and James Madison's birthday.

Sunshine Week is a national initiative intended to open a dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information. Participants utilize print, broadcast and online media, civic groups, libraries, nonprofits, schools and others interested in the public's right to know.

Sunshine Week is about the public's right to know what its government is doing, and why. Sunshine Week seeks to enlighten and empower people to play an active role in their government at all levels, and to give them access to information that is intended to make their lives better and their communities stronger.

Sunshine Week is a nonpartisan initiative whose supporters are conservative, liberal and everything in between. The only requirement is that you do something to engage in a discussion about the importance of open government. It could be a large public forum or a classroom discussion, an article, editorial or series of articles about access to important information.

For additional Sunshine Week information, visit <http://www.collierclerk.com/CommunityOutreach/GovintheSunshine>

Seminole Casino Immokalee hosts children's benefit event

Surf and Song pre-festival concert to benefit SWFL Children's Hospital new 'Navigating Autism' program

As part of the effort to raise funds for the SW FL Children's Hospital's new "Navigating Autism" Program, Seminole Casino Immokalee has partnered with the Surf and Song Festival, the largest all-charity music festival in Florida. The casino will hold a pre-festival benefit concert with 10 bands on three stages and will also sell tickets to the Surf and Song Festival, which takes place in downtown Fort Myers on March 30-31. The casino's weekly line-up of gourmet food trucks will also be on hand, serving up delicious treats including hamburgers, tacos, desserts and more. For more information go

to www.seminolecasinoevents.com <<http://www.seminolecasinoevents.com>>.

The "Navigating Autism" Program will help families identify education and treatment options and help coordinate their child's care as well as community support.

Sunday, March 11 from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Event Pavilion and Outdoor Stage
1 p.m. - Wallow Sound
2 p.m. - Railhead
3 p.m. - Trouble Makers
4 p.m. - Robbie Hutto
5 p.m. - George Lewis
6 p.m. - Beatles Jam
Zig Zag Lounge
3 p.m. - Anthony Wayne
4 p.m. - Patrick Murphy
5 p.m. - Bill Metts
6 p.m. - Alan Bradford
Seminole Casino Immokalee, 506 South 1 Street, Immokalee.

Admission is free. Paradise Food Truck Rally food items range from \$5-\$10 each.

Shopping for a cause benefits TIF students

Waterside Shops, the region's premier shopping destination, is donating 5 percent of all sales to The Immokalee Foundation.

From Friday, March 16 through Saturday, March 17, Waterside Shops will donate a portion of the each day's sales from their retail shops and restaurants to assist The Immokalee Foundation in continuing its mission to build pathways to success for Immokalee's youth. Shoppers simply need take their receipts to the Mall Office, located between Coach and Cole Haan, for validation to be included in the tally of sales.

"Waterside Shops continues to be a great supporter of The Immokalee Foundation," said Liz Allbritten, TIF's executive director. "Along with their financial generosity, Waterside Shops is developing a career panel that will introduce employee retail opportunities to The Immokalee Foundation students."

The Immokalee Foundation has a range

of programs that focus on building pathways to success through career development, college success, mentoring and tutoring, and opportunities for broadening experiences and life skills development. To learn more about volunteering as a mentor or for additional information, call 239-430-9122 or visit www.immokaleefoundation.org.

Waterside Shops is a diverse collection of 60 world-class shops and restaurants, including Nordstrom and Saks Fifth Avenue. The tenant mix features internationally recognized merchants and most in-demand brand concepts including Burberry, Gucci, Hermes and Louis Vuitton, as well as Apple, GAP and Tiffany & Co. Waterside Shops offers an array of cuisine from Brio Tuscan Grille and BrickTop's to more casual fares at California Pizza Kitchen and Silver Spoon. Additional information is located at www.watersideshops.com.

TIF Inter-Club Challenge 2012

The sixth annual Inter-Club Challenge, a spirited golf tournament that pits golf club against golf club in a friendly rivalry, is set for April 30, at The Old Collier Golf Club in Naples. Proceeds from the tournament will support a brighter future for the children of Immokalee through The Immokalee Foundation's programs, including The First Tee of Naples/Collier Program in Immokalee.

The winning team will receive entry into the Charity Classic Pro-Am slated for Nov. 12, at Bay Colony Golf Club in Naples which includes a table at the Charity Classic Celebration taking place Nov. 16 at The Ritz-Carlton Beach Resort, Naples.

Foursomes from some of Southwest Florida's most prestigious communities and golf clubs will participate along with the clubs' golf pros.

TIF students participating in The First Tee of Naples/Collier will be at the tournament to assist with the day's activities allowing the teams to meet the students whose lives they are directly impacting by taking part in the tournament. The students will also have the chance to play with the teams - providing the kids with a wonderful opportunity to interact with their benefactors and pro golfers.

Charles Campbell is the 2012 Inter-Club Challenge Chair and The Immokalee Foundation board member.

The Immokalee Foundation has a range of programs that focus on building pathways to success through college and vocational school, mentoring and tutoring, and opportunities for broadening experiences and life skills development.

The First Tee is a national program whose mission is to impact the lives of young people by providing learning facilities and educational programs that promote character development and life-enhancing values through the game of golf.

Monday, April 30, 8 a.m. registration, breakfast and driving range practice, 9:15 a.m. shotgun start, 1:30 p.m. lunch and awards.

The Old Collier Golf Club
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The Immokalee Foundation, 239-430-9122, info@immokaleefoundation.org, www.immokaleefoundation.org.

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University students reach out to local families

By Rick Heers

Special to the Immokalee Bulletin

Several families in Immokalee this week have been blessed with assistance on home repairs by a group of 21 students and their four sponsors from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. The students are all members of a Lutheran Campus ministry and look for places where they can assist families that are in need. A similar group of students from the same ministry came to Immokalee four years ago and helped several other families in distress. Each year the group visits areas where natural disasters or extended poverty have created unlivable conditions.

Two homeowners-one on El Paso Trail and the other on Breezewood are the fortunate homeowners who are experiencing firsthand the advantages of a group of caring college students, the hard work of the staff of I HOPE and the generosity of the Community Foundation as together they bring a healthier living environment for local residents. While here the students will have some free time to pick some fresh tomatoes at a local farm, and visit some of the interesting places around town.



Special to the Immokalee Bulletin/Rick Heers

This group of volunteers from the Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill knows how to get things done. They have been in Immokalee helping local families with much needed home repairs.



Special to the Immokalee Bulletin/Rick Heers

University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill students put in their best efforts and hearts in helping to repair a floor of a local home in Immokalee. The student volunteers are members of a Lutheran Campus Ministry program and are involved in many projects assisting families in need. The Lutheran Ministry at UNC - Chapel Hill has sent other groups before this one to assist in much needed repairs after local disasters have occurred. Their efforts are much appreciated in the local community.

Entertaining evening benefits The Immokalee Foundation

Supporters of The Immokalee Foundation delighted in an evening of music and entertainment to benefit the nonprofit organization at Naples United Church of Christ. Featuring internationally renowned German pianist and entertainer, Joja Wendt, and rising young British soprano, Belinda Bradley, the night was organized by Hans and Kathleen Schmach of HS Global Consulting Corporation. A courtyard reception was held immediately after the concert, where philanthropic guests were treated to beverages graciously sponsored by Aqua in Naples, as well as a variety of delicious hors d'oeuvres. The Immokalee Foundation has a range of programs that focus on building pathways to success through college and vocational school, mentoring and tutor-



Courtesy photo/TIF

Emily Costigan, Dick Larsen, Margaret Holt, Dierdre Benson and Richard Benson enjoy an evening of entertainment in support of The Immokalee Foundation.

ing, and opportunities for broadening experiences and life skills development. To learn more about volunteering as a mentor or for additional information, call 239-430-9122 or visit www.immokaleefoundation.org.

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