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Community web site

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

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## Arts of the Inland celebrates first year

By **Patty Brant**  
Immokalee Bulletin

Everyone has creativity in  
some form.

A group called Arts of the  
Inland has set itself a goal to fa-  
cilitate the creative arts in South-  
west Florida's interior counties,  
including the Immokalee area.  
On April 24, the group celebrated  
its first anniversary with a gather-

See ARTS— Page 2

## IHS Lipman Scholarship recipients ...



Special to the Immokalee Bulletin/Lipman  
**Lipman, North America's largest field tomato grower, recently awarded \$30,000 in scholarships to 18 Immokalee High School seniors. Winners were chosen based on essays they submitted to Lipman that detailed their educational goals and demonstrated financial need. Jaime Weisinger, director of community and government relations for Lipman, poses with the Immokalee High School scholarship recipients. See Page 5 for story.**



Immokalee Bulletin/Patty Brant

**Padilla Construction Company owner Manuel Padilla is hoping to grow his newly founded company in the Immokalee area.**

## Padilla Construction - an IMMBIZ success story

Manuel Padilla Inc., a local  
construction company owned  
by Manuel Padilla attended the  
Immokalee Builders' Expo, curi-  
ous to learn if there could be op-

portunity for his small construc-  
tion company to grow and create  
jobs for Immokalee's laborers and  
tradesmen.

See IMMBIZ — Page 2

## High-tech Charter School planned for Immokalee

A New 'Blended  
Model' Charter  
School, "Where every  
student gets an iPad"

A new free charter school  
serving grades 7-12 is planning on  
opening in Immokalee with plans  
on local real-time Florida certified  
teachers, online curriculum, and  
iPad-honed students by the fall of  
2012.

The "blended" model of edu-  
cation is a hybrid of online and  
traditional delivery education. It  
is the best of both worlds. Online  
curriculum interjects hi-interest,  
high sensory, digital and multi-  
media elements to engage the  
student. Combined with individ-  
ualized instruction, while gathering

data and providing analysis for im-  
provement. Campus attendance  
provides in person support and  
social activity. The campuses are  
designed to be student -friendly,  
facilitating personal time in learn-  
ing corals, small group time in  
workshops, hands-on science  
labs and art studios, learning dis-  
cussions in open room, café' set-  
tings, physical activities in exer-  
cise rooms, and extra-curricular  
activities scattered throughout the  
day. The curriculum is designed to  
be mastery-based, allowing each  
student to progress at his/her level  
and speed. A rigorous curriculum  
based on national core standards,  
including a built-in focus on FCAT  
review material. It will also in-  
clude A/P classes, and eventually

See CHARTER — Page 2



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# Newszap gets new look

By Tom Byrd

For over 50 years, Immokalee area residents have continually turned to the Immokalee Bulletin for local news of their community. We appreciate the support readers have shown to us over the years and we remain steadfast in our commitment to serving our readers and advertisers.

But the world has changed much the last five years, let alone the last 50. While the definition of local news may have remained the same, the method in which readers may receive that news has changed dramatically.

Several years ago we introduced an on-line component to our newspaper. Free classifieds and public forums were the most attractive elements to the site, but admittedly, we fell short when it came to providing updated news in a convenient and timely package.

Beginning this month, we're very pleased to introduce our "new and improved" digital component -- a site we invite you to check out for yourself at [florida.newszap.com](http://florida.newszap.com).

Unlike our prior site, [florida.newszap.com](http://florida.newszap.com) offers up-to-date news, expanded photo and video galleries, comprehensive calendars and much more helpful information to readers looking for news not just in Immokalee, but throughout the Glades, Big Lake and Southwest Florida area. We've combined the talents of our news team and contributors to create an online product that we think will be helpful and meaningful to our readers throughout the county and region.

Visitors to our "new and improved" [florida.newszap.com](http://florida.newszap.com) will immediately notice some new features:

- \* Regular local news updates from our acclaimed network of community newspapers serving the Immokalee area and the entire region.

- \* Expanded photo galleries and videos.

- \* The latest in local sports and entertainment news to provide you with helpful information on where to go and what to do.

- \* Enhanced and comprehensive community calendars that are simple to use and easy for anyone to submit events.

- \* And of course, we've kept some of the most popular features such as free online classifieds, local real estate information and obituaries.

The site overall has a whole new feel and look. For simplicity, we consolidated a

number of pages. We think it's more attractive, interactive and easier to navigate. Most important, we think the new sites will be more useful to you as you look for current information pertaining to your local neighborhood.

## New Look for Community Forums

As part of the overall redesign, we have changed the format and location of the public discussion forums.

In the past, the forums were a separate entity, and one of our goals during the redesign was to integrate them into the fabric of the overall website. We chose to do this because we recognize that the public discussion forums are an excellent example of a cohesive online community, and we hope to build and expand this online community by extending and nurturing it.

To nurture the online community in the forums, we want to make it easier for people to obtain local, relevant and credible news they can then weave into their civic discussion. The new [florida.newszap.com](http://florida.newszap.com) makes this possible.

While our new forum platform has some improvements over the old, users may notice some differences in features and functionality. In the spirit of continuous improvement, we are committed to upgrading and adding features to the new forums as soon as possible.

But the primary purpose of [florida.newszap.com](http://florida.newszap.com) remains unchanged. We seek to provide citizens with the electronic equivalent of a town meeting hall -- a place for people to gather, socialize, conduct business, exchange local news and discuss public issues.

As in the past, our public forums will help facilitate discussion and debate (with civility). As we grow, we will add blogs for different points of view and to provide perspective.

If you've never visited our online site -- or if you haven't seen us lately -- please take a moment to visit us at [florida.newszap.com](http://florida.newszap.com). We welcome your ideas about how to improve [newszap.com](http://newszap.com) and make it more useful and informative. Please e-mail your suggestions to [help@newszap.com](mailto:help@newszap.com)

*Editor's note: Tom Byrd is the Immokalee Bulletin publisher and Florida COO for Independent Newsmedia, USA. His email is [tbyrd@newszap.com](mailto:tbyrd@newszap.com)*

## CHARTER

Continued From Page 1

a dual credit option for qualified students.

The campus will operate on extended hours 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. with students given optional or staggered start times. This not only lowers the traffic impact of our schools to our neighbors, but allows our older students the option of scheduling their high school diploma plan around a job or work if needed. For any student faced with the risk of not completing high school for whatever circumstance, this flexibility is very attractive.

The iGeneration Empowerment Academy-Collier County is designed to combine the strengths of old-fashioned face-to-face instruction with the latest in learning device technology. "This is an opportunity not only

for a new education option for the parents in this community, but also an opportunity for new jobs" said Brian Sampson, Project Manager for the iGeneration Empowerment Academy. Based in Hollywood, FL, Sampson has been in town leading various Town Hall (informational) Meetings, for prospective parents and their students.

Another Town Hall Meeting is expected May 22 at 7 p.m. at the Immokalee Community School cafeteria, located at: 123 N 4th St. Immokalee. There is limited space available, so parents are encouraged to go online to: [www.floridasmartschool.com](http://www.floridasmartschool.com) click on enroll, and complete the letter of intent form. This will reserve a place for enrollment, as long as space allows.

You may also call 1(855)iLearn1 for additional questions or if you cannot access form online.

## IMMBIZ

Continued From Page 1

With the assistance and services provided by the Immokalee Business Development Center (IBDC), Manuel Padilla, Inc. was certified as a Section 3 Business eligible to bid on projects funded by HUD. When the Immokalee Stormwater project came up for bid, Manuel Padilla was in a position to pursue a sub-contracting spot with DN Higgins as a Section 3 Business. In compli-

ance with HUD Section 3 requirements, DN Higgins awarded the Section 3 Business sub-contract to Manuel Padilla, Inc. This small business was able to hire local residents for this project.

Manuel Padilla also received his MBE Certification and with the help of BB&T, an SBA lending partner, this company was able to set up their business accounts and obtain a Surety Bond. Manuel Padilla, Inc., continues to receive technical support and coaching from IBDC while his construction company is in the expanding phase.

## ARTS

Continued From Page 1

ing of members at the Firehouse Community Theatre in LaBelle.

President LaVon Koenig walked the audience through the group's first year of existence, recounting an initial year of achievements including the development and acceptance of a logo, various speaking engagements, development of a Web site and a Facebook page.

During its first year Arts of the Inland has attracted 76 members and was represented at some top notch events in the area. These events included its very first function Constitution Day Sept. 17 at Majestic Golf Course in LeHigh Acres.

The group followed that up with Arts in the Park in LaBelle on Feb. 4 and the huge

Balloon Fest in Immokalee, where individual members had booths, the Children's Activity Stage and general outreach. Ms. Koenig was very pleased with the success of the group's efforts at the Balloon Festival here in Immokalee

Some members have also encouraged student interns at these events and, at this point, the group has managed to garner grants and sponsors in the amount of \$3,000. Affiliation with the Arts Council of Southwest Florida should provide even bigger opportunities for grants, Ms. Koenig said. After a summer break from June through August, monthly meetings will resume till January, when Arts of the Inland plans to meet every other month. Ms. Koenig told members that the group is seeking partnerships with businesses and universities to highlight the arts. She said the group also needs additional board and committee members.

Published by

**Immokalee Bulletin**  
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Website: [www.newszap.com/immokalee](http://www.newszap.com/immokalee)

### 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.  
E-Mail: [ibnews@newszap.com](mailto:ibnews@newszap.com)

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Advertising Services: Barbara Calfee  
Publisher: Tom Byrd  
Executive Editor: Katrina Elskan

### 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

### Confiscation and Predation

Confiscation and Predation has been at the core in balancing our economic system for the individual. Not all people with money are predators, but all predators are people with money. The predator is an individual who buys political favors to insure that legislation provides him with an advantage in the market place, a tax loop hole or insures his feeding at the government's trough. The predator will often try to reduce the size of government and eliminate regulations so that they can prey without trepidation.

The predator is deceitful during the attack, he tries to divide and create confusion by falsely declaring that confiscation by means of taxation is a socialist plot to redistribute wealth from the "successful" to the less successful and lazy. Actually, confiscation is the only remedy left when government has allowed excessive predation to occur.

In the new land where speech is money, and fire is now fought with fire, the minions are bought to carry the propaganda and facilitate the feeding frenzy the predator is planning.

If we do not keep the predator in check, he will win.

**Dr. Juan Puerto**  
Immokalee

### Replica Jersey Fundraiser

Immokalee High School is announcing the IHS Football fundraiser selling Jersey Replicas for \$60 without a name on the back or \$65 with a name on the back. If you are interested in supporting IHS athletics, please contact the school at 239-377-1800.

**Tony Allen**  
IHS Athletics

# Commissioner Coletta plans local visit June 6

Jim Coletta, Collier County District 5 Commissioner, will be in Immokalee on Wednesday June 6.

Commissioner Coletta will be attending the Immokalee Chamber of Commerce breakfast meeting at 8 a.m. at the Roma In Havana Restaurant, located at 1025 West Main Street. The public is welcome to join Commissioner Coletta at the Chamber breakfast as he discusses the latest news about our community, and we encourage you to bring a friend and attend this very informative meeting.

Commissioner Coletta will be holding office hours in Immokalee at the CRA Office at 1320 North 15th Street (S.R. 29, north of Lake Trafford Road) from 10:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. until 3:00 p.m.

He will also be attending the Rotary Luncheon at noon p.m. Commissioner Coletta

is a fellow Rotarian and invites you to join him.

Anyone who would like an appointment to meet with him, please contact his Aide, Paula Springs, at 239-252-8097.

"The past three years has been an economic challenge for not only Collier County Government, but many of our citizens. While times are still tough, I can see a light at the end of the tunnel. Some companies are now looking at Immokalee to relocate or grow their existing businesses. When this happens, we will start to see more local jobs and more business for the existing merchants in Immokalee. If you would like to discuss business in Immokalee or any subject of concern, please make arrangements to meet with me on June 6th" commented Commissioner Coletta.

If you would like to speak with him on an immediate matter, please feel free to contact his cell phone at 239-370-0509.

Commissioner Coletta remains available by telephone at 239-252-8391 or e-mail at jimcoletta@colliergov.net.

# Click It Or Ticket - Seatbelt safety campaign begins

Monday, May 21, through Sunday, June 3, deputies will be watching Collier County motorists to make sure everyone is properly buckled up in vehicles when Click It Or Ticket gets under way next week.

All vehicles will be a target during the annual nationwide safety belt enforcement campaign.

The purpose of the campaign is to increase safety belt use and reduce fatalities on Florida's roadways.

The fine for not wearing a seat belt is \$113 in Collier County.

During Click It Or Ticket CCSO deputies will be conducting various countywide heightened enforcement details and efforts to draw attention to the importance of safety restraint use.

Collier County has the highest safety belt compliance rate - 93 percent - in the state, according to the Florida Department of Transportation.

CCSO is joining forces with other law enforcement agencies across the state, along with FDOT and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, to crack down on drivers and passengers who fail to buckle up.

Here are some seat belt safety basics:



Courtesy photo/CCSO

\* The driver and front-seat passenger must wear a seat belt.

\* Anyone younger than 18 must wear a seat belt no matter where they are sitting.

\* Children 12 and younger should ride in the back seat for safety.

\* Children from birth to 80 pounds and 4 feet 9 inches tall should ride either in a car seat or a booster seat, depending on their age.

\* A ticket for a violation of child restraint violations will cost you \$163.

We would like to send a Special Thank You to everyone that helped out in our time of need, during the time of loss of my daughter, San Juanita Garza and her father Leonel Garza, Sr. If you said a prayer, sent a card, provided food or simply had us in your thoughts...

All was appreciated. Thanks a lot and God Bless You.

Sincerely,  
Rose Garza & Family

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## Do you have a Preschool age child?

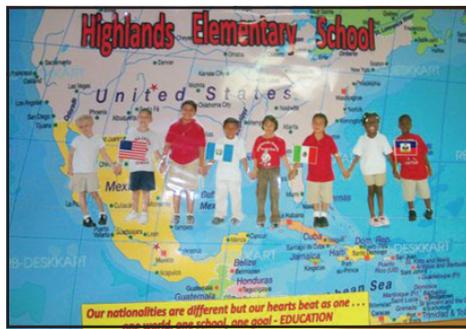
If your child turns 4 years old on or before September 1, your child is eligible for VPK (Voluntary Prekindergarten).

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.

**4C-HENDRY COUNTY**  
863-517-2586  
863-599-8778

**4C-COLLIER COUNTY**  
1-866-987-5678  
239-658-3567



Special to the Immokalee Bulletin/Rick Heers

In the top left photo, Highlands students designed a great bulletin board showing children of all cultures across the country. The children were able to experience different food cultures as well as programs from other countries and cultural dress as well. Overall, a great lesson in multi-cultural experiences for the students.

## Highlands experiences other cultural celebration

By Rick Heers

Special to the Immokalee Bulletin

Students at Highlands got the opportunity to experience cultures of faraway lands without getting a passport or leaving their school last Friday. Staff and parents volunteered to give students to experience the life and foods of different cultures-Africa, Costa Rica, Mexico, Haiti, Germany, and Greece. While the children loved the program in the auditorium and the displays and lessons in the classrooms, the highlight was to be able to experience the food of many different cultures set up in a buffet in the cafeteria. One of the great values that the children were learning was to truly appreciate the many cultures that help to make America great!

Highlands Elementary School (HLE) is celebrating diversity and they held a special "Culture Day" on Friday (May 11). HLE stu-

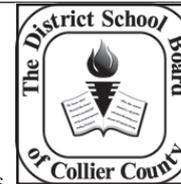
dents learned about a variety of countries and regions by travelling with their class to visit pavilions set up around the school campus. The students visited individual pavilions representing Greece, Germany, Mexico, Africa, Haiti, and Costa Rica. The food pavilion featured a sample buffet where students had the opportunity to taste some culinary treats from various cultures. A literacy pavilion featured the history of comics and graphic novels from American Literature for the first session, and the German fairytale Frog Prince during session two. But, the fun doesn't stop there – a fashion show showcased students modeling ethnic attire.

HLE's Culture Day is not just about learning about other cultures - it's about experiencing the music, art, and foods that make up the diverse backgrounds of so many of the students within Collier County Public Schools.

## Students First

Who wants lemonade?

By Joe Landon  
Collier County District Schools



I just love the saying that goes something like...“when life hands you lemons, make lemonade!” Great philosophy for living life I'd say. Well today, I'm sharing a tall, cool glass of especially sweet lemonade with you. There's been a “Great Lemonade War” going on across the US and one of our schools, Poinciana Elementary School in Naples, has been declared the nationwide winner! The school took part in this competition to raise funds for pediatric cancer research through Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation named for Alexandra “Alex” Scott of Connecticut. She went into business, setting up her first lemonade stand with the idea of raising money for childhood cancer research. Now the amazing thing is, she did this at age four while fighting her own battle with neuroblastoma, a form of cancer. Back here in Collier County, Poinciana has raised more than \$10,000 for the cause and a good slice of it (pun intended) came directly from the students. They set up shop with their own lemonade stands, donating their allowance, piggy bank, birthday, and tooth fairy money, and even volunteering to do some extra chores at home. And, it was all because of the inspiration of two seven-year-olds who understand that there are some sour parts of life, but it's making something

sweet of it that counts. Here's the story:

On the first day of Poinciana's “Lemonade War,” young Elaina Loden had just lost her two front teeth and so she brought in the \$5 left by the tooth fairy to give to the cause. Her parents had always told her that if you do good things, people will notice – and notice they did! Her generosity not only inspired her teacher and Principal Susan Daniel to make contributions in her honor, but Elaina's personal tooth fairy made a donation of \$100 because she was so proud of Elaina's kind heart. Shortly thereafter, first grade student Gabriella Sullinger, with her parents' permission, donated \$100 in birthday money she'd received. Her reason was simple, “I have everything I want and need, but sick children who have cancer need my birthday money more than I do.” Now that is sweet! Poinciana teacher and the school's “Lemonade War” coordinator, Allison Bringardner, tells us that “Gabriella's selflessness inspired several matching donations including one from our principal and a double match from my dad.” It seems generosity can be infectious, as evidenced by the \$10,000 raised by just one school for cancer research.

So I hope you enjoyed your lemonade while learning about these generous and caring students who've replaced the really sour lemons life has dealt to kids fighting cancer with some mighty sweet lemonade, made from the heart.

only our name is changing . . .



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# Lipman awards \$30,000 in scholarships to IHS Seniors

Lipman, North America's largest field to-mato grower, recently awarded \$30,000 in scholarships to 18 Immokalee High School seniors. Winners were chosen based on essays they submitted to Lipman that detailed their educational goals and demonstrated financial need.

"At Lipman, we're dedicated to serving the local community – and investing in education and youth organizations is one of our primary focuses," said Jaime Weisinger, director of community and government relations for Lipman. "We're very proud of these students and their accomplishments, and

we hope that these scholarships will help fund their future successes."

In addition to scholarships, Lipman offers a textbook reimbursement program to all Immokalee High School students who continue their education past high school. The fund reimburses textbook costs up to \$300.

Since 2003, Lipman has provided \$450,000 in scholarships to Immokalee High School students. Located in Collier County, the school has a student population of 1,308. According to the Collier County School Board, 93 percent of those students are listed as "economically needy."

## Learning Showcase hosted by Immokalee High School

Since 2005, the University of Florida/Lastinger Center for Learning has partnered with Collier County Public Schools and the Education Foundation of Collier County to provide Immokalee educators with high quality professional development opportunities. More than forty teachers have received advanced degrees (Masters & Educational Specialists) from the University as a result. The format of the cohorts is a combination of online courses paired with a professor-in-residence that meets with students (teachers) locally.

One component of the program is a unique practice called Teacher Inquiry. It is research conducted by educators based on wonderings from their teaching practice. Inquiry is an intentional and systematic problem solving process. It is based on personal needs or wonders. Teachers examine existing research about an issue, design a study, collect different forms of data, analyze it, and then present their findings to other educators. Immokalee teachers have been in the forefront of Guided Inquiry in Florida and across our nation.

Each year a Learning Showcase/ Inquiry Expo celebration is held, whereby teachers share their projects. This year, it is anticipated that well over one hundred fifty teachers including several from other



Courtesy photo

**This year's event will be held at IHS with over 150 educators in attendance.**

Collier County schools will participate in the Learning Showcase. It's being held at Immokalee High School on June 4 from 3:30–7 p.m. Any and all interested community members are welcome and encouraged to attend!

## Golden Apple Celebration Show Replays

The Education Channel, Comcast cable 99, will rebroadcast The Education Foundation's 22nd Annual Golden Apple Celebration of Teachers TV show starting next week. The show will feature students speaking about their Golden Apple Teachers of Distinction, as well as a look into the classrooms of this year's Golden Apple recipients. Plus, the show will highlight the 2012 Heart of the Apple recipients, Herb and Ann Rowe. The one-hour replays will air on the following schedule:

Through Friday, May 18

1:30–2:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 19 and Sunday, May 20

2–3 p.m., and 9:30–10:30 p.m.

Monday, May 21 through Friday, May 25

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., and 9:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 26 and Sunday, May 27

9:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

Monday, May 28 through Friday, June 1

1:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 2 and Sunday, June 3

2–3 p.m.



### Public Meetings to discuss the Immokalee Area Master Plan

#### Reyinyon Piblik diskite sou Immokalee Master Plan an Reuniones Públicas para discutir el Plan Maestro del la Area de Immokalee

May 23, 2012

Immokalee Community Park  
321 North 1st Street, Immokalee, FL 34142  
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

23 Me, 2012

Immokalee Kominote Park  
321 Nò 1st Street, Immokalee, FL 34142  
5:00 P.M. - 7:00 p.m.

23 de May 2012

Parque de la Comunidad de Immokalee  
321 North 1st St., Immokalee, FL 34142  
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

May 30, 2012

Southwest Florida Works  
750 South 5th Street, Immokalee, FL 34142  
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

30 Me, 2012

Sidwès Florida Works  
750 South 5th Street, Immokalee, FL 34142  
5:00 P.M. - 7:00 p.m.

30 de Mayo 2012

En el Southwest Florida Works  
750 South 5th Street, Immokalee, FL 34142  
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

The Immokalee Area Master Plan is available in Spanish, Creole and English. Speakers of Spanish and Creole will be interpreting via headphones throughout all meetings.

Kopi Immokalee Master Plan an se disponib nan lang Panyòl, kreyòl, ak angle. Entèprèt yo ap disponib nan reyinyon you ki tradui nan panyòl ak kreyòl.

El Plan Maestro Área de Immokalee está disponible en español, creole e Inglés. Los hablantes de español y criollo se interpreta a través de auriculares en todas las reuniones.

**For more information please call 239 - 867- 4121**

**Pou plis enfòmasyon tanpri rele 239-867- 4121**

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## Employment Full Time



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**ESPECIAL DE ENTRADA PIMER MES GRATIS!!**  
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Time to clean out the attic, basement and/or garage? Advertise your yard sale in the classifieds and make your clean up a breeze!

## Haitian Flag Day Celebration planned

The community is invited to attend a celebration to commemorate Haitian Flag Day on Saturday, May 19 at the Immokalee Branch building from 3-6 p.m., 1335 North 15th Street, Immokalee. Haiti was the first independent black nation in the world! There will be free food, sports and activities for all.

Nou invite ou jwenn nou May 19 nan celebrasyon Drapo Haitian 3-6 p.m. Branch Immokalee, 1355 N. 15th Street, Immokalee. Prem nasyon nwa independan nan mond lan.

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## Business & Service Directory

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## FWC plant restoration improves habitat for fish, wildlife in Lake Trafford

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) planted more than 25,000 aquatic grass plants in Lake Trafford on May 8. Biologists designed this project to provide better habitat for fish and wildlife that live in and around the lake. Lake Trafford, in Collier County, is the largest lake south of Lake Okeechobee.



"This grass will provide excellent habitat for fish living in the lake," said FWC aquatic restoration biologist Rodney Hudson. "It will also provide a good foraging area for alligators, otters and birds such as herons, egrets and anhingas."

The grass species, called Paspalidium geminatum, is native to Florida and is popular fishing habitat for anglers throughout many Florida lakes. Some anglers know this grass as "Kissimmee grass."

The grass grows in small, scattered patches around the edges of the lake. Biologists chose to plant additional grasses in areas with little or no vegetation. The recently planted grasses will cover approximately two acres of the lake. In time, these grasses should spread over larger sections of the lake, providing more habitat.

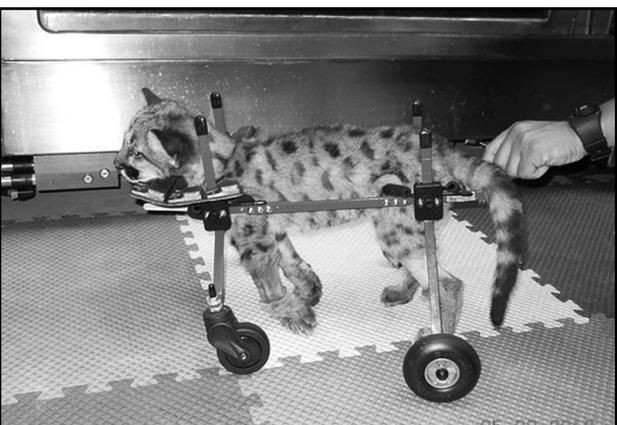
For more information on the FWC's freshwater conservation programs, visit MyFWC.com/Conservation and click on "Freshwater Programs."

## Democratic Club to host meeting in Immokalee

The Democratic Club of Immokalee will meet on Tuesday, May 22 at 6:45 p.m. at Rib City, 621 North 15th Street, Immokalee, 239-657-4003.

# Permanent captivity likely for injured panther kitten

An endangered Florida panther kitten rescued after an apparent vehicle strike in Southwest Florida will likely be unable to return to the wild. Staff from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found the kitten unresponsive on April 23 along State Road 82 in Collier County. A volunteer with the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge on his way to work spotted the injured kitten that morning and reported the sighting.



Courtesy photo/FWC  
**The Florida panther kitten walks with the assistance of a cart. The kitten is currently unable to walk without the cart.**

Rescuers immediately took the then 12-week-old male kitten to the Animal Specialty Hospital of Florida in Naples for treatment. Although veterinarians at the hospital found no major fractures and no signs of significant internal damage, they believe the panther experienced some level of head trauma.

"Unfortunately, this kitten's condition makes it unlikely that he will recover enough to be released into the wild," said Dave Onorato, FWC biologist. "We're grateful to the staff at the Animal Specialty Hospital, who have worked tirelessly caring for him."

The kitten is being transferred to Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo for further rehabilitation. This is the third kitten and seventh panther overall to receive rehabilitation at the zoo. The kitten's prognosis is guarded.

A male panther kitten, believed to be this kitten's brother, died April 7 from injuries also consistent with a vehicle strike.

Collisions with vehicles are the top hu-

man-related cause of panther deaths. More than a third of panther deaths documented last year were the result of vehicle strikes. Drivers are encouraged to slow down and drive carefully in rural areas where panthers are known to live. An estimated 100 to 160 adults of this federally endangered species live in the wild.

To report dead or injured panthers, call the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-FWCC (3922) or #FWC or \*FWC on a cell phone.

Florida residents can support panther conservation efforts through the purchase of a panther license plate at BuyAPlate.com. Fees from these license plates are the primary funding source for the FWC's research and management of Florida panthers.

For more information on Florida panthers, go to [www.FloridaPantherNet.org](http://www.FloridaPantherNet.org).

## Ave Maria Dance Academy Fourth Annual Dance Recital

Over 120 dancers to perform this Saturday

Ave Maria Dance Academy is holding its Fourth Annual Dance Recital on Saturday May 19, at 1 p.m. at the Palmetto Ridge H.S. on Oil Well Road. At this 2 hour event over 120 dancers will be performing in over 25 routines. It will be an exciting day with an audience of 500 spectators. This year's recital theme 'Dancing through the Decades' will feature both students and instructors in a variety of dance styles performing to classic songs from the 1940's to today.

Tickets for reserved seats are \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door and are now available for purchase at the studio or online.

The Dance Academy is proud to be an outstanding member in the community, involved with local events and is pleased

to bring the art of dance to students from all over the local area. Academy dancers come to Ave Maria from several local schools in the Naples area; including Donahue Academy, both Corkscrew Elementary and Corkscrew Middle school, Estates Elementary, Sabal Palm Elementary, Lake Trafford Elementary, and Palmetto Ridge and Immokalee High Schools to name a few.

Karen Ledesma, owner of the studio said "We believe dance should be an integral part of every child's education because it enhances their creative abilities, stimulates their self-esteem, and helps them to develop essential life skills."

Please join them and show your support for the art of dance in our local community.

For more information call: 239-261-2606 or email: [avemariadance@comcast.net](mailto:avemariadance@comcast.net)

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