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DECEMBER 2024

Anthony's On The BLVD Now Open At Its Original Location

Owner Tony Serrago's Vision Lives On

By Doreen Brown, TRI Fusion Marketing

Cape Coral's beloved Anthony's on the BLVD, located on Del Prado Boulevard, is now open just in time for the holidays.

The iconic restaurant faced significant setbacks after the passing of its original proprietor, Anthony "Tony" Serrago, on Sept. 9, 2022, followed by damages sustained during *Hurricane Ian* and other weather events. After extensive repairs, the restaurant is ready to welcome the community back to its favorite gathering place.



Anthony "Tony" Serrago

Anthony's on the BLVD has long been cherished for its delicious American and Italian dishes, exciting events, and dedication to the local community. The estate overseeing the reopening is committed to honoring Tony's vision of creating a friendly, welcoming spot where people can enjoy great food at great prices.

What's New And Returning

- **Expanded Hours:** Now open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner with limited menus initially.

- **Breakfast:** Served from 8 to 11 a.m., featuring favorites like daily quiche and made-to-order omelets.

- **Lunch:** Starting at 11 a.m., with options like fresh salads, sandwiches, and classics like the famous fish fry and BLVD burger.

- **Dinner:** Available after 4 p.m., featuring crowd-pleasers like our meatloaf and the All-You-Can-Eat Fish Fry returns on Friday nights.



- **Happy Hour:** Back from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., offering drink specials.

- **Fan-Favorite Events:** Karaoke, BARGO, and trivia will resume during the opening week, with plans for live music on the patio and other performances in the near future.

- **Sunday Breakfast Buffet:** Set to return after the New Year.



- **New Features:** Updated building improvements, a new website, www.AnthonysontheBLVD.net, and a friendly, refreshed staff.

Full-Service Dining And Catering

Anthony's on the BLVD offers a spacious dining room perfect for large groups, an indoor lounge, and an outdoor patio ideal for enjoying Southwest Florida's beautiful weather. The staff is ready to assist with all party and catering needs, whether hosting on-site or bringing catering to an off-site location.

Originally opened in 2007, Anthony's on the BLVD is located at 1303 Del Prado Blvd., Cape Coral, FL.

For more information on special events, visit www.AnthonysontheBLVD.net or call (239) 800-5451.

Come celebrate the reopening of a true Cape Coral treasure!

Cape Coral 40th Art Festival & Market Place And New This Year, Boat Show!

Saturday, Jan. 11 and Sunday, Jan. 12

The members of the Cape Coral Rotary and Cape Coral Rotary Foundation are pleased to host our 40th Annual Art Festival and Market Place. Come visit all the artists on Saturday, Jan. 11 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, Jan 14 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., located in downtown Cape Coral, Cape Coral Parkway (between Del Prado Boulevard and south to S.E. 10th Place).



Andee Axe, Book World, 2C and 3D Mixed Media

New This Year – Boat Show!

The Rotary Club of Cape Coral has invited boats, RVs, motorcycles and "outdoor" businesses to display at their annual festival joining the existing hundreds of art and marketplace exhibitors. The show has added over 2,000 feet to Cape Coral's downtown parkway Art Festival & Market Place.

The Cape Coral Arts Festival & Marketplace is one of Lee County's largest Special Event according to the Lee County Tourist Development Council and the Lee County Visitors and Convention Bureau bringing over 100,000



Wendy Allen, Eliza Tea Cup, Fiber and Fiber Wearables



John Formato, Golfers In Cart, Metal

[Cape Coral 40th Art Festival & Market Place on page 2](#)

New Year's Eve Celebration And Ball Drop

Tuesday, Dec. 31 – 6 p.m. to midnight
SE 47th Terrace (between SE 9th Place and SE 11th Place)

The City of Cape Coral will host its first New Year's Eve Celebration!

Help us ring in 2025 with not one but two great opportunities to welcome in the new year! This free community-wide event is open to all ages.



[New Year's Eve on page 4](#)

Cape Coral 40th Art Festival & Market Place from page 1

attendees to enjoy the arts in January 2024. Attendance in 2024 was lower than 2023 attendance of 140,000 due to inclement weather. In 2020, our Art Festival was voted the Best Outdoor Event by the readers of *Gulfshore Life Magazine* and the 5th best Art Festival in the nation by Sunshine Artists. For 40 years, the Rotary Club of Cape Coral has been proud to bring this event to the community. All proceeds from booth sales are donated by the Cape Coral Rotary Foundation to improve the community of Cape Coral.



Kim Crouthamel, Guitier, 2D and 3D Mixed Media

With the explosion in Cape Coral home sales during the past few years, new residents are eager to buy unique art to decorate their new homes!

Art Festival – Enjoy ceramic, digital, drawing, fiber, glass, graphics, jewelry, metalworks, mixed media, paintings, photography, sculpture, wearables and woodcraft.

Market Place – Shop the stores, restaurants, professional services and a wide variety of local businesses and nonprofits.



Scott Macklin, Alpha Omega Snake Ring, Jewelry



Virginia Aldean, Tropical Floral Bowl, 2D and 3D Mixed media



Jim Rajner, Turtle Family, Sculpture



Tess Dirienzo, Come Fly With Me, Glass



Moises Biton, Doc Holiday, Painting

Art Way on the Parkway – Enjoy the art of the students of Lee County from Elementary through High School.

Food Vendors – Little Joe's Special Event Services, Inc. is the responsible party for all food and beverage concessions at this event.

There is no charge for public admission to the festival and free parking is abundant.

For more information, please visit www.capecoralartfestival.com or visit us on Facebook.

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Book Review: *The Grey Wolf* By Louise Penny

A Masterful Tale Of Mystery And Redemption

By Lillian Till,
Flutterbuy Books and More

Louise Penny, the beloved author of the Chief Inspector Armand Gamache series, returns with *The Grey Wolf*, a haunting and intricately layered novel that explores human frailty, resilience, and the lengths we go to protect those we love. With her trademark prose and deep psychological insight, Penny crafts a gripping mystery set in the picturesque yet shadowy world of Three Pines, the fictional village her fans know so well.



In this latest installment, Gamache is drawn into a complex case that begins with the discovery of a wolf, lifeless on the outskirts of Three Pines. The animal's death, seemingly unrelated to human affairs, is soon tied to a chilling crime that forces Gamache and his team to confront secrets buried deep within the community—and within themselves.

A New Mystery With Familiar Depth
Penny's ability to blend the quaint charm of Three Pines with dark, brooding mysteries has long been her hallmark, and *The Grey Wolf* is no exception. While the story begins with the simple image of a wolf in the snow, the narrative quickly unravels into a tapestry of interconnected lives, old grievances, and fresh betrayals. Penny uses the wolf as a symbol of both danger and loyalty, themes that resonate throughout the novel.

Gamache, now retired but unable to fully let go of his calling, is reluctantly drawn back into police work when a brutal murder shocks the community. The victim, a controversial writer with a talent for stirring up trouble, leaves behind a trail of enemies. But in true Louise Penny fashion, the story isn't just about uncovering a killer—it's about understanding the humanity behind the crime.

Complex Characters And Emotional Resonance

One of Penny's greatest strengths is her ability to create characters who feel achingly real. Gamache, as always, serves as the moral compass of the story. His wisdom, empathy, and quiet strength make him one of the most compelling protagonists in contemporary crime fiction. In *The Grey Wolf*, Gamache faces personal and professional challenges that test his resolve, deepening his already rich character arc.

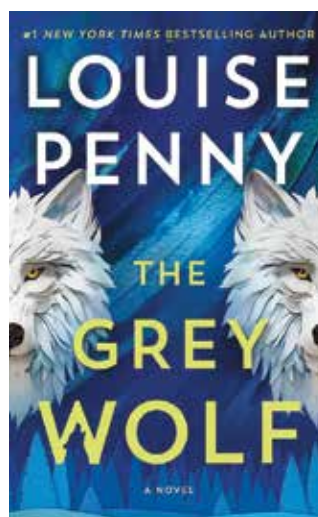
The supporting cast shines as well. From the sharp-tongued poet Ruth Zardo to the ever-loyal Clara Morrow, the residents of Three Pines bring warmth and humor to an otherwise chilling tale. Penny expertly balances the intimacy of village life with the darker forces that threaten its tranquility, crafting a narrative that feels both cozy and suspenseful.

In this novel, Penny also introduces new characters who complicate the story in intriguing ways. A wildlife biologist studying the wolf's migration and a reclusive artist harboring secrets of their own become central to the unfolding mystery, each adding layers to the plot.

Themes Of Redemption And Forgiveness

At its core, *The Grey Wolf* is a redemption story. As Gamache delves into the case, he's forced to confront his own past decisions and the ripples they've caused. The novel asks profound questions about guilt, forgiveness, and the possibility of change. Can people truly move beyond their mistakes, or are they doomed to repeat them?

Penny weaves these themes seamlessly into the narrative, creating a story that's as emotionally resonant as it is thrilling. The tension between justice and mercy—central to Gamache's character—plays out in unexpected and deeply moving ways.



The Intricate Puzzle Of The Plot

Fans of Louise Penny know to expect a carefully constructed mystery, and *The Grey Wolf* does not disappoint. The plot is layered with red herrings, subtle clues, and surprising twists, keeping readers guessing until the final chapters. Penny's pacing is deliberate, building tension with each revelation while allowing space for moments of reflection and character development.

The wolf's presence in the story is more than symbolic; it's a key to unraveling the mystery. Penny's use of animal behavior and mythology adds a fascinating dimension to the plot, making the connections between predator and prey, loyalty, and betrayal, all the more poignant.

A Feast For The Senses

As always, Penny's prose is richly evocative, painting vivid pictures of Three Pines in winter. The snow-covered village, with its flickering fireplaces and cozy bistros, starkly contrasts the chilling crimes at the heart of the story. Her descriptions bring the setting to life, immersing readers in a world that feels both idyllic and menacing.

Penny's love for language extends to her dialogue, which crackles with wit and authenticity. The banter between characters feels natural, and the emotional weight of their conversations lingers long after the page is turned.

Conclusion

The Grey Wolf by Louise Penny is a masterful addition to the Gamache series, blending an engrossing mystery with profound emotional depth. With its compelling characters, intricate plot, and thought-provoking themes, the novel showcases Penny's unmatched ability to craft stories that resonate on multiple levels.

Whether you're a longtime fan of the series or a newcomer to Three Pines, *The Grey Wolf* is a must-read that will stay with you long after you've turned the final page. Louise Penny once again proves why she is one of the most celebrated authors in contemporary crime fiction.

Lillian Till has been a dedicated nurse in our community for 30 years. Married for 35 years, she is the proud parent of two children and grandparent to three. Lillian is often found at Flutterbuy Books and More where she is the proud owner. Opening a bookstore of her own has always been a dream, one she continues to nurture with every turn of the page.



Wishing you a Blessed Merry Christmas and a Peaceful Start to the New Year!

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Gloria Raso Tate
Jeremiah 29:11-13





FOS And The Cape Coral Chamber Of Commerce Celebrate First Responders At The 23rd Annual Special Event



By Joe Yapello, Sun Publisher

FOS Furniture owner Pat Corlew wanted to honor our local responders after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on our country, so he started an award night in 2002 that has carried on now consecutively for the past 23 years.

Partnering with the Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce, the event was held this past November at FOS as part of the Chamber's Business After Hours. Members of the Cape Coral Fire Department, the Lee County Sheriff's Office, and the Cape Coral Police Department were presented awards for their special achievements and service to the community based on their accomplishments in 2023.

"As our city continues to grow, we are very fortunate and blessed for our outstanding, well-trained and professional first responders," Corlew said. "They are special people that protect and serve the rest of us 24 hours per day. This night is to let them know we do appreciate all they do and the hard work it takes to keep our community safe."

The recipient winners honored by their exclusive departments include Officer of the Year Jarret Bridges of the Cape Coral Police Department, Firefighter of the Year Logan Moore from the Cape Coral Fire Department, and Officer of the Year Sgt. Robert Patton from the Lee County Sheriff's Office.

"This is one of our favorite Business After Hours of the year," Chamber of Commerce President Donna Germain said. "We often take for granted what our first responders go through on a daily basis, and they face just by going to work. Our hearts go out to these heroes and their families. They sacrifice so much to keep our community safe and we are truly honored to be able to recognize them each year."

The following details were submitted by their respective departments.



Officer Jarret Bridges

Officer Jarrett Bridges was awarded our 2023 Officer of the Year after receiving two back-to-back Lifesaving Awards.



One Lifesaving Award resulted from an incident on Oct. 30, 2023. Officer Bridges and Officer Steven Klakowicz were called to help a man who was trapped under his car after his carjack failed. The officers lifted the car off the man, saving his life.

The second Lifesaving Award was from a traffic crash on Oct. 16, 2023. Officer Bridges quickly noticed the driver of one vehicle was unconscious and unresponsive. Officer Bridges and Officer Martinez performed CPR and were able to save his life.

Officer Bridges has worked for the Cape Coral Police Department for 3½ years and continually shows poise and a high level of awareness on the job. He prioritizes his physical fitness (to the point where he can lift a car). He acts without hesitation to save lives and serve his community. Officer Bridges embodies what it means to be a Cape Coral Police Officer every day and was selected this last year to be a member of the K9 Unit.



Firefighter Logan Moore

A true test of character is the ability to overcome and then succeed when faced with a challenge.



Though Firefighter Moore was faced with challenges when he first arrived at his new station, he soon thrived and became a leader amongst the crew.

He demonstrates his role as a leader through his daily actions and habits. He is the first person to begin daily duties, the first to welcome and give assistance to newer members, and the first person to check over the work being done to make sure it is up to standard. He does all of this every day because he wants to, not because he feels he has to.

In addition, he has been pursuing his career goals through education. He is an acting engineer and is preparing for the engineering exam. He gained his Florida Fire Instructor 1 and plans to become a Boat Operator FTO.

On a recent call for a boat fire in a canal, while enroute he had the foresight to request putting Marine 9 into service for water access as the engine accessed the property from the street, resulting in a positive impact in response to the call. This is just one example of his situational awareness and leadership. He is a positive role model and can always be counted on to perform at or above expectation and can handle difficult tasks without concern for follow up. It is for these reasons and more that Firefighter Logan Moore has been selected as the Cape Coral Fire Department 2023 Firefighter of the Year.



Sgt. Robert Patton

On March 15, 2015, the Lee County Sheriff's Office responded to Plumosa Avenue in reference to a home invasion robbery. One of the victims explained unknown males entered the home, bound the family with zip ties, and beat them with a firearm causing the death to one of the family members.



Also, on Sept. 21, 2015, the Lee County Sheriff's Office responded to the intersection of Venetia Street E., and Naples Avenue S. in reference to a vehicle fire. While searching through the burnt vehicle, a decedent was located in the rear with a gunshot wound.

Major Crimes Detectives were requested and arrived on the scene to assume the investigation. Robert Patton was assigned both of these cases as the lead detective.

During the course of these investigations, all leads at the time were exhausted and they became cold, but Detective Patton was resilient. He continued to look outside the box, served search warrants to obtain new data as technology made advancements, interviewed multiple witnesses, and followed up on all possible leads. Detective Patton was even able to link the Sept. 21, 2015 to another homicide that was being investigated by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office. He was able to identify a suspect involved in their homicide, which led to an arrest/conviction in that case.

Over the past month or so, Detective (now Sergeant) Patton's persistence paid off. Both of these "cold cases" have been closed with multiple arrests for homicide and human trafficking. Detective Patton was able to bring closure to family members seven years after the murder of their loved ones, and they commended him for his diligent and tenacious efforts.



New Year's Eve from page 1

The streets of downtown Cape Coral will be closed off to traffic as thousands of attendees enjoy free live music, entertainment, countdown fireworks, and more!

For those too excited to wait until midnight, there are separate ball drops at both 8 p.m. and midnight.

This large, family-friendly street festival will include shopping, food vendors, and games and activities for children while waiting for the countdown to 2025!

The main stage is located at SE 47th Terrace and SE 10th Place. The stage entertainment is free and open to the public. No admission charge is required.

DJ Rifik will start performing at 6 p.m. Deb & The Dynamics will take the stage at 8:15 p.m. and waiting in the wings will be Baha Men.

For more information visit www.capeconcerts.com.

For questions and more detailed information call (239) 573-3128 or email seclerk@capecoral.gov.

City of Cape Coral
NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION
2025

DECEMBER 31
SE 47TH TERRACE
6PM - MIDNIGHT

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT CAPECORALNYE.COM

Holiday Lighting Tips To Keep The Season Bright

Plug Into Holiday Safety!

By Karen Ryan, APR,
CPRC – LCEC Public
Relations Director



More fires happen per year due to issues with decorative and holiday lights. The following are some tips for a safe holiday:

Only use lights, electric decorations, and extension cords that are Underwriter Labs (UL) certified.

Inspect electrical decorations for damage before use. Cracked or damaged sockets, bare wires, and loose connections may cause a serious shock or start a fire.

Do not overload electrical outlets or extension cords. Overloaded electrical outlets are a common cause of holiday fires. Only plug one high-wattage cord into each outlet at a time and do not daisy-chain extension cords.

Never connect more than three strings of incandescent lights. More could potentially blow a fuse, or worse, cause a fire.

Protect cords from damage. To avoid shock or fire hazards, be sure to never pinch cords, hide them under furniture, place them near a heat source, or secure them with nails or staples.

Unplug when not in use. Never leave holiday lights on when not home or while sleeping. It is estimated that half of all home fires happen between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Go LED For An Energy Efficient Holiday

When making the season bright this holiday season, consider using light-emitting diode (LED) lights.

LED lights are bright, last 10 times longer than traditional holiday lights, use approximately 80 percent less energy and stay cool to the touch.

Other ways to be energy efficient with LED lights is to utilize automatic timers and power strips. Automatic or programmable timers and smart power strips let you manage your holiday displays which means no more forgetting to switch off the lights at bedtime.

To be truly energy efficient this holiday season, opt for shiny ornaments, tinsel and mirrors which can create the appearance of lighting or magnify lighting without upping your energy usage.

Karen Ryan, APR, CPRC is the Public Relations Director for LCEC. She has been on the LCEC team since 1997 and has been writing about energy safety, savings and utility cooperatives for decades. LCEC served nearly 250,000 members in a six-county service territory and has been delivering electricity in Cape Coral since 1958. Karen serves on the Board of Directors for United Way of Lee, Hendry, and Glades and the Edison & Ford Winter Estates and is a past member of the Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce. She is also a past-president of the Florida Public Relations Association and the Edison Festival of Light and past chair of the American Heart Association Heartwalk and United Way campaign.



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Parking Lot Safety

Many of us will be scouring mall parking lots for open spots and, quite likely, settling for a parking space quite far from mall entrances.

These far reaches of the lot are rarely used ... likely only during holiday season ... and often lack sufficient lighting and security cameras.

While I'll always recommend parking in a well-lit area, this may not be possible during the holiday shopping season. That being said, we need to do a bit of additional thinking and planning when parking far from store/mall entrances.

Before you leave your home ... not while in the parking lot ... ensure that all valuables that can be removed are, indeed, removed. Doing so once inside the parking area may tell unscrupulous individuals that you are storing expensive and valuable items in your trunk ... or hiding them within the vehicle itself.

Before you walk away from your car or truck, take note of where you are parked. Have a genuine understanding of where your vehicle is and where store entrances are positioned. Roaming a dark lot upon concluding your shopping, packages in hand, unable to locate your vehicle, increases your chances of victimization.

Don't linger in the lot ... not before entering the mall/store or after.

Upon leaving your vehicle, ensure that all doors are locked and that there are no valuable, shopping bags, etc. visible through the windows. Upon your return, have your keys/fobs in your hand. Fumbling through a purse or pockets in search of keys/fob, especially in the dark, provides opportunity for individuals with bad intentions.

When you return to your vehicle, look into the back seat before entering. Ensure that your vehicle is empty prior to entering it.

If possible, avoid cellular distractions. Look around, know your surroundings, and avoid texting and phone conversations.

Lastly, report suspicious activity. Trust your instincts. If a situation even remotely appears unsafe, seek assistance immediately.

Additional Lee County Sheriff's Office staff and resources will be noticeable during the holiday season. Help us help you remain safe by utilizing these safety recommendations.

Tour De Cape – Jan. 17 To 19, 2025

The Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department is proud to host the 34th Anniversary of Tour De Cape! The event includes a 5K, a Mini Kids Ride, and 15-, 30-, 62- and 100-mile bike tours in the northwest and southwest regions of Cape Coral.

The 5K will be chipped, and scored by Lin-Mark Sports of Cape Coral – texted results will be available to all persons who sign up for it during the registration process.

Early registration deadline has passed, but you can still register – \$25 (\$30 day of race) which includes performance shirt (while supplies last), breakfast, chip time and video finish.

The weekend will begin with a kickoff celebration at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road on Friday, Jan. 17 from 4 to 7 p.m. Participants can pick up packets, maps and T-shirts!

New! We will have a food truck from 4 to 7 p.m. Join us for complimentary Sunest Yoga to prepare your body for the weekend's activities. Please bring your own mat and towel. Yoga begins at 6 p.m.

5K Run/Walk – Saturday, Jan. 18

Packet pickup: 6:30 to 8 a.m., race time: 8 a.m.

The 5K run/walk is designed for advanced and novice runners. A grab-and-go breakfast will be available for participants. We highly encourage you to bring your own water.

Registration includes a performance shirt (while supply lasts), chip time, and video finish!

Mini Kids Ride – Saturday, Jan. 18

Packet pickup: 9:30 to 10 a.m. Safety and helmet check: 10:15 a.m. Ride time: 10:30 a.m.

The Mini Kids Ride is a fun addition for the family during the Tour De Cape weekend. Participants will receive a kid's performance shirt (while supply lasts) and lunch. The course is designed to be safe, flat, and well-supported by the Cape Coral Police Department. Bicycle helmets are required.

Each participant will automatically be entered to win a new kid's bike! Adult riders with paid children are free.

Tour De Cape Bike Rides – Sunday, Jan. 19

Packet pickup: 6:30 to 7:45 a.m. Ride times: 62- and 100-mile – 7:45 a.m., 15- and 30-mile – 8 a.m.

Sunday's bike tours offer varied routes from 15-, 30-, 62-, and 100-mile courses in the west and north sections of Cape



Coral. The event provides a grab-and-go breakfast, lunch, on route rest stations with snacks and beverages, SAG vehicles, police support, and route maps.

Registration includes a performance shirt (while supply lasts), breakfast, speed zone, 5K chip time, lunch, and bike chip time!

Important Information:

The Tour De Cape is not a race and is not a closed course. This year there will be no rolling stop with the police motorcade. You must abide by all traffic laws. Police support for all routes will end at 3 p.m.

Combination – Saturday And Sunday, Jan. 18 And 19

Run and ride combination (includes the 5K on Saturday and the bicycle tour on Sunday).

Cost is \$55 on or before Jan. 16 which includes performance shirt (while supply lasts), breakfast, speed zone, 5K chip time, lunch, and *bike chip time. *(Bike chip time is an additional \$5 after Jan. 11.)



Trek Speed Zone

There is a new "speed zone" challenge which will time your final quarter-mile, no matter which tour ride you sign up for. This challenge is a fun thing for you, the biker, to try! We will also note that all persons who opt to participate in the speed zone and complete the quarter-mile in under a minute have a chance to win a Trek gift card. Winners will be notified by the end of January.

Photos from last year's 2024 Tour de Cape event

The Rynski Report: Angels For The Holidays And Beyond

By Ryn Gargulinski [Rynski]

Would you believe I actually did more paddleboarding in the Arizona desert than I do here in Florida? Well, it wasn't actually in the desert but on a lake in the desert. And the lake didn't have sharks. That explains a lot. But that's not what this column is all about.

The column is a tribute to angels and yes, it relates to paddleboarding. I had been trying for months to do a paddleboard headstand but to no avail. Until I remembered there is an angel for everything. So I called on the paddleboard headstand angels and guess what? My next attempt at a headstand on my paddleboard was a total win.

Every time I remembered to call on the paddleboard headstand angels going forward, my subsequent attempts were wins, too.

So not only is nothing too big, small or medium-sized for angels to assist, but they are always more than willing to do so. All we have to do is ask.

Sometimes they'll help even if we don't ask. I'm convinced angels protected me during my drinking days when I should have been dead about 5,006 times.

We don't need to wait until we're facing death or trying to do a paddleboard headstand to benefit from angelic intervention, either. We're all graced with a guardian angel who is said to be standing behind us at all times.

One of our biggest faux pas as earth-living beings is to totally forget about them, to leave them unemployed. Life gets so much easier when we remember we have immediate assistance at the ready. Not just from our guardian angels, either.

Let's outline a typical trip to the beach, calling on a batch of archangels to see how it could unfold. Ready?

We get in our car and already know driving down Del Prado is a bear, so we ask archangel Michael to protect us from barreling dump trucks and weaving semis.



Michael wields a sword of light and slays demons, so he can certainly handle a semi or two.

All the stop-and-stop traffic is giving us a headache, so we call on Archangel Raphael to soothe our tension and pain.

Raphael is the master of health and healing.

Once at the beach, we call on archangel Ariel. She's connected to nature and wildlife. We thank her for looking after the earth, the birds, the glorious sea – and ask her to protect us from sharks.

When we catch ourselves thinking about work or taxes when we're supposed to be out enjoying ourselves, archangel Jophiel can help clear the chaos and bring us calm. As the angel of artists and creativity, she may even inspire a poem.

Messenger archangel Gabriel can help us pen the poem and share it with others. And archangel Chamuel, who aims to bring peace to the world, can help us with apologizing to our significant other for barking at them when we had a headache during the stop-and-stop-traffic trip.

We top off the outing with a call out to archangel Azriel, the angel of transition and change. We ask for help changing our attitude and actions on the drive home – and to move forward with the biggest change of all. The change to remember to call on angels for anything, anytime, anywhere.

Ryn Gargulinski [Rynski] is a Cape Coral freelance writer, artist, speaker and healer who loves to entertain and inspire. In addition to more than 10 published books and multiple awards, she holds a BFA in Creative Writing, an MA in English literature, minister ordination, and Reiki and coaching certifications. Founder of the Sanctuary of the Wild Souls community, Rynski lives with her two happy hounds, one happy hubby and way too many crystals. Learn more at RynskiLife.com. Contact: Rynski@RynskiLife.com.



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Another Night Before Christmas

Playing In The Off Broadway Palm Theatre

Get ready to laugh and be inspired as Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre presents the heartwarming and hilarious musical comedy *Another Night Before Christmas*, running now through Dec. 25, 2024, as part of their Off Broadway Palm series.

This modern holiday story follows Karol, a cynical social worker, who unexpectedly encounters a homeless man claiming to be Santa Claus on Christmas Eve. With charm, wit, and a touch of holiday magic, *Another Night Before Christmas* delivers a delightful reminder that the true spirit of the season can be found in the most surprising places. For those seeking a fresh and funny holiday show, this feel-good comedy will leave audiences reflecting, smiling, and maybe even believing in miracles.

Tickets for *Another Night Before Christmas* are on sale



and can be purchased through the Broadway Palm website, calling the box office, or in person at the theatre. Matinee, evening, and twilight performances are available. Make sure to secure your seats for this holiday treat!

Show Details

Dates: Now – Dec. 25

Location: 1380 Colonial Blvd., Fort Myers

Tickets: Available at BroadwayPalm.com or by calling (239) 278-4422

Prices: \$55 – \$70, with special rates for groups

About Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre

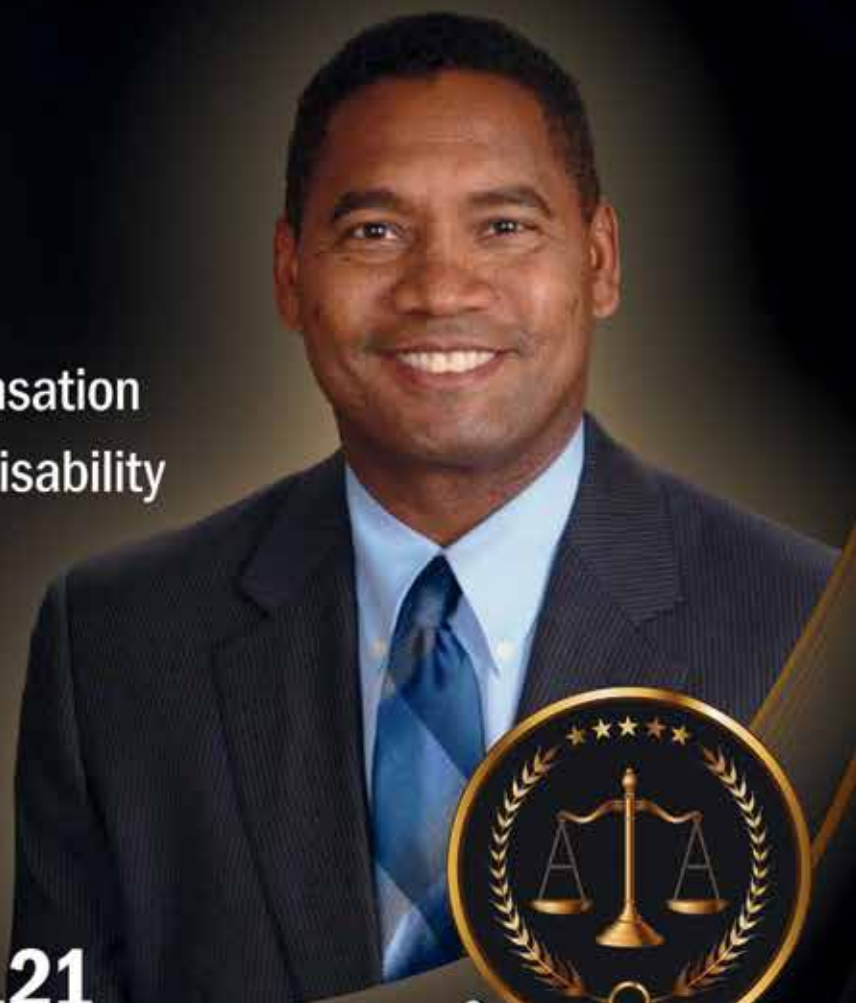
Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre is the premier destination for live entertainment in Fort Myers, showcasing a variety of productions that entertain and inspire audiences of all ages. With delicious dining options and a commitment to high-quality performances, Broadway Palm is dedicated to creating memorable experiences for every guest.



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Sudoku

	8	9			5	1	4	
3			8	1	7			6
7	1		6		4	3	8	
	4	3	9					
9	7						1	4
					8	7	3	
	9	6	4		2		7	1
4			1	5	9			2
	2	1	7			4	9	

Answer in this issue



Cape Coral: Open For Business And Thriving With Opportunity

Submitted by The Office of Economic & Business Development, City of Cape Coral

Cape Coral, celebrated for its stunning waterfronts and vibrant community, continues solidifying its reputation as a hub for its resilience and entrepreneurial success. Recently, Cape Coral earned the No. 13 spot on CoworkingCafe's *Top 20 Best Cities for Small Businesses* list¹, underscoring its dynamic economic climate and robust support for business growth. Adding to this accolade, WalletHub's *Best Cities for Hispanic Entrepreneurs* ranked Cape Coral No. 6², highlighting its inclusivity and opportunities for minority-owned businesses. These achievements demonstrate that Cape Coral is not only open for business but thriving.

A Magnet For Entrepreneurs

Cape Coral's charm extends beyond its picturesque canals and waterfront properties, it's a city brimming with opportunity. With a self-employment rate of 14.1 percent, the sixth highest in the nation³, Cape Coral fosters a vibrant entrepreneurial spirit. In 2023 alone, the city recorded 2,748.3 business applications per 100,000 residents, ranking ninth nationally⁴.

The city's economy reflects its vitality, with a 34.2 percent increase in GDP in 2023, placing Cape Coral among the 12 fastest-growing economies in the United States⁵. WalletHub's ranking further highlights Cape Coral's strong purchasing power (20th nationally) and its business-friendly environment (eighth nationally for Hispanic entrepreneurs²). These factors create a fertile ground for businesses of all sizes and backgrounds.

Resilience Amid Adversity

Cape Coral's success is as much about its determination as its data. The city's response to Hurricane Milton demonstrated unparalleled resilience, ensuring that businesses could recover quickly and thrive.

Key initiatives during the recovery included:

- **Immediate Action:** By dawn after the storm, crews cleared roads for safe passage, while emergency calls were addressed within hours⁶.
- **Power Restoration:** In partnership with LCEC, staged linemen restored power, and all traffic lights were operational within 48 hours⁶.
- **Rapid Assessment:** City teams evaluated 136,479 structures—99 percent of all buildings—within 72 hours⁶.
- **Business Support:** The launch of the Business Emergency Coordination Center (BECC), in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, delivered essential recovery resources and strengthened communication channels with local businesses and residents.

Positioned For Growth

By focusing on industries like healthcare, technology, light manufacturing, corporate headquarters, and back-office operations, the city continues to diversify its economic base. With a cost-of-living index of 105.7 and average labor costs of \$39,129⁸, Cape Coral offers a competitive yet affordable environment for entrepreneurs.

The city's extensive canal system and waterfront properties, combined with proactive policies and business-friendly initiatives, make it a magnet for investment in tourism and real estate-related industries.

Supporting Hispanic Entrepreneurship

Cape Coral's inclusion in WalletHub's *Best Cities for Hispanic Entrepreneurs* ranking reflects its commitment to diversity and inclusion. As the Hispanic and Latino community grows nationwide—Cape Coral stands out as a leader in fostering opportunities for minority-owned businesses.

Programs like the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan and free consultations through the Florida SBDC provide essential resources for startups and expansions⁹. The city's Economic Development Office also offers tailored guidance and access to incentives, ensuring that entrepreneurs from all backgrounds can achieve their goals.

1. CoworkingCafe, *Top 20 Best Cities for Small Businesses in the U.S.*, 2024.
2. WalletHub, *Best Cities for Hispanic Entrepreneurs*, 2024. 2, 3
3. CoworkingCafe report, 2024.
4. U.S. Census Bureau, *Business Formation Statistics*, 2023.
5. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), *Regional Economic Data*, 2023.
6. City of Cape Coral, *Post-Hurricane Milton Recovery Report*, 2024. 2 3
7. Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce, *Hurricane Milton Business Recovery Resources Overview*, 2024.
8. Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER), *Cost of Living Index*, 2024.
9. Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and Florida Small Business Development Center Network (SBDC), 2024.

Business Spotlight

Roman Roofing Inc. Redefining Excellence In Cape Coral's Roofing Industry

When it comes to roofing, Roman Roofing Inc. stands as the epitome of quality, professionalism, and reliability. Since its inception, this Cape Coral-based company has built a reputation for delivering unparalleled service, earning the trust of homeowners and businesses alike.



What sets Roman Roofing apart? It starts with a commitment to excellence. Specializing in tile, metal, and shingle roofing systems, Roman Roofing offers tailored solutions for Florida's unique climate. Every project is executed with precision, using only top-tier materials designed to withstand the state's harsh weather conditions, from intense sun to hurricane-force winds.

"Our goal is not just to meet expectations but to exceed them," says Owner Norm Dopfer. "We pride ourselves on our craftsmanship, transparency, and dedication to customer satisfaction."

The company's highly trained team ensures each roof is installed to perfection. Roman Roofing's robust training programs ensure employees stay at the forefront of industry standards, delivering superior results every time. The company is also a champion of community values, supporting local initiatives and contributing to Cape Coral's growth.

Unlike competitors, Roman Roofing believes in open communication, offering detailed estimates, timely updates, and no hidden costs. Customers frequently commend their seamless experience, praising the company's integrity and attention to detail.

Roman Roofing is licensed, insured, and boasts an impressive portfolio of completed projects, making it the go-to choice for anyone seeking dependable roofing services. Whether you need a simple repair or a full installation, Roman Roofing is equipped to handle jobs of all sizes with efficiency and care.

For those in search of a roofing partner that combines skill, trustworthiness, and exceptional service, Roman Roofing Inc. shines as Cape Coral's roofing leader. Discover the difference today—because your roof deserves the best.



Roman Roofing Inc.
(239) 458-7663, www.romanroofing.com.

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Did you miss an issue of the *Cape Coral Sun*? No worries! Visit our website to access archives of past issues, catch up on articles, and discover more about the community. You'll also find a wealth of exclusive online content, including extended ads from local businesses not featured in print.

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The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year: Holidays Encourage Senior Socialization

The holiday season is a beautiful array of lights, with joy and community woven through the month of December. It means spending time with family and friends, giving gifts to those we love most, and gathering around the dinner table to celebrate what really matters – connections. Even for independent older adults who live far away from their children and grandchildren, the holiday season inspires the child within and brings up warm memories.

There are so many ways for independent older adults to have an exciting holiday season. Companionship, community



and trying something new are three of the best things that a senior can experience, and the winter holiday season is no different. For those living in a senior living community, the festivities are numerous and can be shared with new friends.

When family is far away and you're not able to spend the actual holiday together in-person, consider planning for a virtual holiday. There are many technology tools available to see and talk to family over a smartphone, tablet or laptop computer. Plan ahead so these tools are readily available, and the device is set up properly. It's also a good idea to consider writing or typing out instructions so all runs smoothly.

If getting together before or after the actual holiday is more convenient for everyone, this can become a new family tradition with its own set of special memories. Create your own day and make it yours!

Holiday activities can be something simple like baking a holiday dessert, having a nice dinner together, or watching a favorite holiday movie, all of which can be enjoyed from the convenience of your senior living community. Venture out to see Christmas lights, listen to carolers, or attend a local Chanukah celebration. Many independent senior living communities offer holiday-themed activities throughout the month of December, so there are ample opportunities for you to participate in an on-campus activity and meet new friends.

Gulf Coast Village, Cape Coral's only life plan community, hosts daily interactive events and gatherings during the holidays, including religious services, sip and shops, holiday-themed parties, musical events, and off-campus activities, like trips to view the Holiday Festival of Lights in Cape Coral. Fostering a sense of community and companionship is implemented into the lives of independent living residents daily, but even more so during the holiday season, when friendship and quality time are particularly important.

Making plans with friends is another great way to embrace the holiday spirit throughout the entire month of December. Don't feel any pressure to host a large gathering – even the simplest of activities can guarantee a good time. Some festive ideas include:

- Take a stroll through your senior living community and check out your neighbors' decorations.
- Grab a couple of your neighbors and have a movie party in your apartment. To make it even more fun, pick a holiday treat and make it together.
- Organize a White Elephant or Secret Santa gift exchange with your closest friends and swap gifts over cocktails at happy hour.
- Gather your friends for a few local events, like *The Nutcracker* at Barbara B. Mann, the Chanukah Festival and Menorah Lighting at the Chabad Jewish Center in Cape Coral, or the Boat-A-Long parade of boats at Four Freedoms Park in Cape Coral.
- Do you need to finish wrapping the gifts for everyone on your list? Chances are, your friends do, too. Invite them over for a gift-wrapping party and do it together!

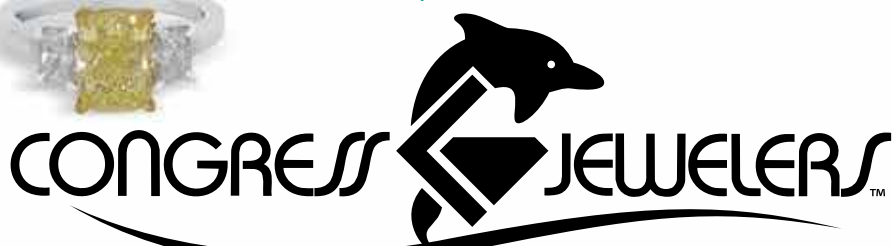
Holidays don't always have to be extravagant – small activities can make the holiday season all the more joyful. There are so many ways to blend the past and present, to enjoy a season filled with joy and new memories.

Gulf Coast Village is Cape Coral's only life plan community. To learn more, visit GulfCoastVillage.org or call (239) 510-8712.



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Cape Coral 50 Plus Softball 2025 Winter Season

We are now accepting applications for the 2024 Winter Season. This season will consist of 30 games, starting on Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025, and continuing through April 17. Following the regular

Cape Coral 50 Plus Softball



season, there will be a two-game tournament for the top eight teams. The application fee is \$80, and the application and payment must be submitted by Saturday, Dec. 14.

Applications can be turned in to any board member or mailed to the address below. Please make checks payable to Cape Coral 50+ Senior Softball.

Cape Coral 50+ Senior Softball League, Inc.
PO Box 150033
Cape Coral, FL 33915-0033

The league has been active for over 40 years and hosts games on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the evenings. The games start at 6:30 p.m. and 8 p.m., respectively. Additionally, we organize batting practices every Saturday morning, which are open to everyone from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Both the games and practices take place at the Cape Coral Sports Complex, located at 1510 Sports Blvd, Cape Coral, FL 33991.

Everyone is welcome to join us. Our main objective is to provide excellent exercise opportunities while promoting social interaction for seniors who are young at heart.

We are always looking for new players and friends. For further information call Tony Volpe, (315) 246-5056; Julio Lock, (239) 823-0134; Bill Hoover, (970) 261-0023; or Tom Busatta, (239) 410-9529 or visit our website at www.capecoralsoftball50.com.

Cape Coral Art League

Open Painting

Enjoy the company of fellow artists. Just drop by and bring your own art project and supplies. Enjoy some yummy snacks and enjoyable music too! No registration required! (Adults only, please).



Every Wednesday (September through July) from 1 to 4 p.m. Open to the public. \$3 for members, \$6 for nonmembers (Pay at the door).

Student Sundays – Teaching Young People Art (October Through June)

Exposing young people to the visual arts can help in the development of motor skills, language skills, social skills, teamwork, decision-making, risk-taking, and, of course, inventiveness. At the Cape Coral Art League, we strive to teach the next generation about drawing, color, layout, perspective, and balance – skills that can benefit them in their academic work as well as expand their creativity. And they have fun while learning!

Ages 6 to 14 (no younger, please). 1 to 4 p.m. Fee: \$20. All materials provided. Cash or check at the door only. Please arrive 15 minutes early to register – no pre-sign-ups. No reservations required. New lesson every week. Check our Facebook page or our website for updates.

December And January Classes

- Beginning Acrylic – Mondays, 10 a.m. to noon
- Intermediate Acrylic Painting – Mondays, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.
- Learn to Draw – Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to noon
- Creative Watercolor for the Beginner and Above, Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to noon
- Pastel Painting for Beginners – Tuesdays, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.
- The Art of Zentangle – Tuesdays, 1 to 3 p.m.
- Oil Painting for All Levels – Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to noon
- Digital Photography and Graphics (Adults 16-plus) – Wednesdays, 3 to 5 p.m.

- Hooked on Watercolor – Intermediate – Thursdays – 9 a.m. to noon
- Intermediate and Advanced Pastel Painting – 9 to noon



Scan the QR code for the schedule.

January Exhibit – Water Wonderland

Save the date, Jan. 9, 2024, and join us from 5 to 6:30 p.m. for a wonderful reception. Mingle with fellow artists, enjoy wonderful goodies, have a glass of wine and be sure to vote for the People's Choice Award. Check out exhibit in Studio 1 where we have Member's Month on exhibit. We look forward to seeing you!

Upcoming Exhibits

February – Wild About Wildlife

- Opens Thursday, Feb. 6
- Wine and Cheese reception, Thursday, Feb. 6 from 5 to 6:30 p.m.
- March Simply Red
- April Celebrating Color
- May Florida Life

Please consult www.capecoralartleague.org for more information.

Unique Gifts At Reasonable Prices!

The gift shop is located inside the Cape Coral Art League and showcases talent within the League.

Come browse the creativity of local artists. Thinking of a gift for someone special? You will find it here among the unique and treasured. Artistic expression is found here – come in and experience it. Don't forget to pick up a mini – small originals made by our members – they are a perfect gift!

Speaking of gifts

Give a gift that keeps them creating! The Cape Coral Art League gift certificates are available in any amount. They can be redeemed toward a variety of classes and workshops for adults and children.

Office, gallery and gift shop hours are Monday through Thursday: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Cape Coral Art League, 516 Cultural Park Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33990, (239) 772-5657, www.capecoralartleague.org.

Create
SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

Cape Coral Museum Of History

Remember When... Christmases Of The Past



Holiday Boat-A-Long

The annual Holiday Boat-A-Long starts at Four Freedoms Park. The boats, which light up Bimini Basin and adjacent canals, come in all shapes and sizes – all brightly decorated for the special holiday event with colored lights, Christmas trees, elves, reindeer, giant candy canes, and more. — in Cape Coral.

The city tradition began in 1976 when Archie and Edwina Hahn organized the first boat parade in Cape Coral. They continued to plan and host the event for a number of years. After the Hahns passed, Dave Drake took over the responsibilities of organizing the parade nearly 10 years ago.

This special Florida-style celebration is one of the most-anticipated events over the holidays in the Cape community.



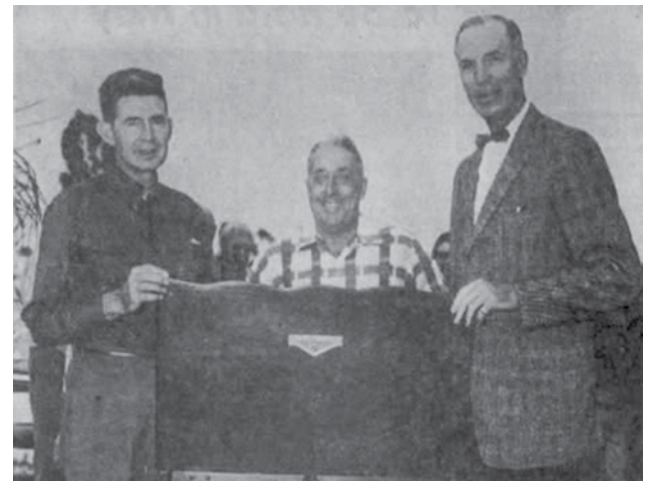
Christmas Pedaler

A jolly St. Nick nearly stopped traffic on Cape Coral Parkway when he stopped by The Fun House toy store to load his warm-weather sleigh with \$2,000 worth of toys for Lee County's foster children. The red-suited gent, also known as Ken Lee Jr., business manager at Palm City Chrysler Plymouth in Fort Myers, said the dealership is one of several area merchants donating toys for distribution to more than 100 foster children in the county during the holiday season.



Miss Merry Christmas

Little is known about this photograph, which shows Miss Merry Christmas, a Cape Coral beauty queen title. This parade took place in Fort Myers. While no one has been able to identify Miss Merry Christmas herself, the names of the Boy Scouts walking next to her royal car are known. They are, from left to right, Andy Garrow, Duane Seger, Bobby Baumann, and Louis Benson.



Best Yuletide Home Decorations Winner

Roland Wilborg of Redfish Way, Cape Coral is presented with a hi-fi set by Connie Mack Jr. and Col. R.G Crawford, Director of Community Relations, as the winner of the development's contest for the best Yuletide home decorations. The Wilborgs strung lights on their royal palms to form Christmas trees, and a lifesize Santa was also used. The second prize, a 20-pound turkey, went to the Joseph Strippolis of Delido Court for their display of multi-colored lighting on the roofline and twinkling tree lights. Judges were Sheriff and Mrs. "Snag" Thompson and Mr. and Mrs. Win Ellis of Fort Myers.

Hours: Closed Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Admission: Adults \$5, Members Free, Students with ID, Free, Children 17 and under Free

Cape Coral Museum Of History, 544 Cultural Park Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33990, (239) 772.7037, capecoralmuseum.org.



Go Slow, Look Out Below

Manatees are on the move to warmer waters. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is reminding you that it's a critical time for boaters to be on the lookout for manatees as they travel to warmer water sites around the state.

Manatees need to access water that is warmer than 68 degrees Fahrenheit to survive the winter. As temperatures start to dip, manatees travel to Florida springs, power plant discharge areas, and other warm water until temperatures rise again in the spring.

Manatees, though large, can be challenging to see in the water. Boaters can better spot manatees by wearing polarized glasses, going slow, and abiding by all manatee protection zones.

During colder months, seasonal manatee zones require boaters and personal watercraft users to reduce speed in or avoid certain areas to prevent collisions that can injure or kill manatees. Manatee protection zones are marked by waterway signs; maps of these zones are available online at MyFWC.com/MPZ.

Boat strikes are a major threat to Florida manatees. FWC law enforcement officers patrol state waters, informing boaters of seasonal manatee speed zones and taking appropriate enforcement actions when necessary. Boaters and personal watercraft users are reminded to comply with the regulatory signs on waterways.

When viewing manatees as they congregate at warmwater sites, it is important to give them space. Disturbing manatees at these sites can cause them to swim out of protected areas and into potentially life-threatening cold water. Manatees are a protected species, and it is illegal to harass, feed, disturb, or harm them.

If you see an injured, distressed, sick, or dead manatee, report it to the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at (888) 404-FWCC (3922) so that trained responders can assist.

Manatee Park



Manatee Park is a non-captive warm water refuge for the Florida Manatee.

Currently, manatees are being seen at Manatee Park. Manatees are more likely to be seen at Manatee Park when the temperature in the Gulf of Mexico drops below 68° F (20° C).

For more information or to view the live camera, please visit www.leegov.com/parks/parks/manateepark.

Manatee Park, 10901 State Road 80, (Palm Beach Blvd.), Fort Myers, FL 33905

Concur Or Object: Differing Viewpoints From Diverse Attorneys

Should You Say “Merry Christmas” Or “Happy Holidays?”

A Merry Defense Of “Merry Christmas”

By Robson D.C. Powers, Esq.

The phrase “Merry Christmas” should be a source of joy, not contention. It’s a celebration of faith, an expression of goodwill, and a reflection of the Christian heritage upon which our nation was founded.

Christmas brings communities together, fostering compassion and generosity. It’s a time to give thanks and commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ.

The freedom to express our faith, including wishing others a “Merry Christmas,” is a fundamental right protected by the First Amendment. This phrase is not meant to exclude or offend; rather, it honors the Christian values and traditions that have shaped our country.

Let’s reclaim “Merry Christmas” with pride. It’s a warm and friendly greeting that should be shared without hesitation. If my saying “Merry Christmas” offends you, then you’ve missed the point of the message – it’s about spreading joy and celebrating my faith, just as you are free to celebrate yours.

During this season of celebration, let’s embrace the spirit of goodwill and respect one another’s traditions.

Therefore, to all of you, I say: Merry Christmas!



Happy Holidays: A Season Of Inclusion

By Kara B. Rogers, Esq.

The holiday season is often a time for reflection, generosity, and connecting with loved ones. It’s a period where many of us, regardless of our specific beliefs, find ourselves drawn to values like compassion, hope, and goodwill. While the United States has historically been associated with Christianity, our nation has always been home to a diverse array of beliefs. Today, that diversity is more apparent than ever, with a growing number of Americans identifying as religiously unaffiliated or embracing spirituality in ways that transcend traditional labels.

What should concern us as Americans, regardless of our faith, is that religious intolerance is on the rise. Recent studies from the Pew Research Center show a sharp increase in perceived discrimination against Jewish communities, and polls have reported a high level of perceived discrimination against Muslims for more than a decade. This trend should give us pause, especially during a season meant to celebrate peace and goodwill.

Perhaps this year, we can honor the spirit of the season by embracing inclusivity. After all, Jesus himself was a marginalized figure who championed compassion and acceptance. He reached out to the poor, the sick, and the



outcast. Shouldn’t we strive to do the same?

This holiday season, let’s focus on spreading love and tolerance, just as Jesus did. Instead of insisting on “putting the Christ back in Christmas,” let’s remember that our society thrives on diversity.

As an attorney, I took an oath of fairness, integrity, and civility, and I promised to champion the cause of the defenseless and the oppressed. So, this December, I’ll be wishing everyone “Happy Holidays.” It’s a small gesture, but it acknowledges the vast array of religions and beliefs that make up our community. I believe that showing love and respect to my neighbors, regardless of their faith, is the best way to honor the true spirit of the season and the oath of my profession.

Robson D.C. Powers, Esq. and Kara B. Rogers, Esq. are the founders of Powers & Rogers, PLLC located at 615 Cape Coral Pkwy., W., Suite 206, Cape Coral, FL. Attorney Powers was admitted to the Florida Bar in 2012, and Attorney Rogers was admitted in 2017. Both have been selected as Rising Stars by Super Lawyers, a recognition bestowed on only 2.5 percent of attorneys in the state. In addition, Attorney Powers has been selected as a fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America and Attorney Rogers is the president of the Lee County Association for Women Lawyers. They practice in civil litigation including business, real estate, construction, and probate litigation. This column will explore the diverse viewpoints of Mr. Powers and Mrs. Rogers on a variety of subjects including legal issues and current events.

Disclaimer: Nothing contained herein should be construed as legal advice. You should always consult an attorney for any legal questions.



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Coming Up In The Cape

Kountry Sunshine Karaoke at Lake Kennedy Center Tuesday, Dec. 17 – 5 to 8 p.m.

Get your singing voices ready for a fun night on Tuesday, Dec. 17 from 5 to 8 p.m.

Sing to the music you love and/or come out to cheer on your friends! The cost is just \$5 per person. BYOB and snacks.

For more details, call (239) 574-0575.

Holiday Boat-A-Long, Four Freedoms Park Saturday, Dec. 21 – 4 to 9 p.m.

Don't miss Santa Claus and his elves spreading holiday cheer along the Bimini Basin! This free, family-friendly event features stage entertainment, local food trucks, crafts, a visit from Santa Claus, and the boat parade. For those interested in having their boat in the parade, please register with Sea Tow by calling (239) 945-4820.

Following the boat parade will be a FREE Movie in the Park. Be sure to bring your lawn chairs and blankets to enjoy the festivities!

New Year's Eve Celebration And Ball Drop Tuesday, Dec. 31 – 6 p.m. to midnight

Help us ring in 2025 with not one but two great opportunities to welcome in the new year! This free community-wide event is open to all ages.

The streets of downtown Cape Coral will be closed off to traffic as thousands of attendees enjoy free live music,

entertainment, countdown fireworks, and more!

For those too excited to wait until midnight, there are separate ball drops at both 8 p.m. and midnight.

This large, family-friendly street festival will include shopping, food vendors, and games and activities for children while waiting for the countdown to 2025!

For more information, visit www.capeconcerts.com.

LCEC 5K Run/Walk To Benefit United Way At Jim Jeffers Park

Saturday, Jan. 4 – 7 to 9 a.m.

Join us at Jim Jeffers Park, 2817 SW 3rd Lane, Cape Coral on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025. Race begins at 7:30 a.m.

and completing by 9 a.m.

For more information contact Jenell Dolan at jenell.dolan@lcec.net.

Tour De Cape

Friday, Jan. 17 – 6 p.m.

The Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department is proud to host the 34th Anniversary of Tour De Cape! The event includes a 5K, a Mini Kids Ride, and 15-30-62-100-mile bike tours in the northwest and southwest regions of Cape Coral. The event will begin and end at Rotary Park (5505 Rose Garden Road).

See details at www.tourdecape.net.

Cape Coral Annual Holiday Boat-A-Long

Saturday, Dec. 21 – 4 To 9 p.m.

The City of Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department is thrilled to announce the Annual Holiday Boat-A-Long, set for Saturday, December 21, from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Four Freedoms Park, located at 4818 Tarpon Court.



This beloved holiday tradition invites residents and visitors to gather along the Bimini Basin to enjoy an evening filled with holiday cheer, family-friendly fun, and festive boat displays. The event is free and open to the public, making it an ideal outing for families looking to celebrate the holiday season.

Event Highlights

- **Santa Claus and His Elves** – Don't miss Santa and his helpers as they bring holiday magic to the event.
- **Entertainment** – Enjoy live stage performances and holiday music to get everyone in the spirit.



• **Food Trucks and Crafts** – Local food vendors will be onsite, along with craft stations to entertain the little ones.

• **Boat Parade** – The evening's main attraction, the parade, will showcase decorated boats making their way from Bimini Basin and winding through South Cape Coral's scenic canals.

For those interested in joining the boat parade, registration is required through Sea Tow. Call (239) 945-4820 to secure your spot.

As dusk falls, the festivities continue with a screening of *The Polar Express* (2004, Rated G) on a large outdoor screen. Be sure to bring your lawn chairs and blankets for a cozy viewing experience under the stars.

Parking and Shuttle Service: A free shuttle service will run between various downtown parking lots and the event venue, making it easy for attendees to get to and from the festivities.

For more information, visit the event page at <https://bit.ly/46PhG7X>.

Understanding Spam And How To Stop It

Spam calls have become an unavoidable nuisance in modern communication. Whether it's robocalls from businesses, online surveys, political solicitations, or outright scams, the majority of these calls aim to manipulate or deceive their targets. Shockingly, recent research reveals that Americans receive an estimated 2.7 billion spam calls each month, each lasting an average of four minutes. In the past year alone, Americans lost a collective 248 million hours—equivalent to 10.3 million days or 339,000 months—answering these unwanted calls.

The most common types of spam calls are related to credit card fraud, identity theft, Medicare and insurance scams, social security impersonations, car warranties, and debt collection schemes. Many people struggle to recognize unwanted calls, making it easier for scammers to succeed in their tactics.

Spam's Stronghold Across The States

Spam call rates vary by region. The 10 states most affected are Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Tennessee, Wyoming, and Ohio.

Conversely, areas receiving the least spam include Puerto Rico, Alaska, Hawaii, Massachusetts, and Vermont. Despite location differences, unwanted calls are a widespread issue, but there are methods to manage and minimize them.

What You Can Do

Here are three strategies to help protect yourself from spam calls:

Hang Up Immediately

When you answer a robocall, avoid pressing any numbers to connect to an operator or remove yourself from the call list—this may lead to even more spam calls.

Use Call Blocking And Labeling Apps

Caller ID and spam-blocking apps are invaluable tools in combating spam. These apps can automatically block spam calls and SMS, identify unknown numbers, and allow you to search unlimited phone numbers. Some even offer call recording features for added security.

Question Your Caller ID

Scammers can "spoof" caller IDs, making any name or number appear on your screen. This technique means that even if a call appears to be from a government agency or a familiar local number, it could still be a scam.

Spam calls waste time, spread fraudulent schemes, and prey on the vulnerable. By staying vigilant and using available tools, you can reduce their impact and protect yourself from unwanted—and potentially harmful—communications.

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Catch The Action

December On The Water

By Capt. Bill Russell

December brings cooler days around Southwest Florida and a change in the way many of us fish. As temperatures drop it will push small baitfish offshore and south to warmer waters. As this occurs, shrimp will become the primary diet for most fish through the winter months. There are few fish in our coastal waters that won't eat shrimp; in fact, shrimp is the mainstay for most inshore species' diets, especially through the cold months.

We are getting to that time for targeting sheepsheads as big pre-spawn fish move inshore and nearshore as water temperatures drop. Unlike the northern species with the same name, our saltwater sheepshead is excellent on the table. Look for fish, with many scaling over five pounds, hanging around structure, including dock and bridge pilings, rock jetties along the beach, and oyster bars. If you don't mind fishing in the cold, then this is your fish, colder is often better for sheepsheads.

Pompano are similar to sheepsheads in the fact that they will not eat any type of baitfish, but feed primarily on small crustaceans including shrimp, crabs, sand fleas, etc. Quarter- or eighth-ounce nylon jigs tipped with a small piece of shrimp can be deadly on pompano when properly bounced across the bottom. Popular colors are white, pink, and yellow. Silly Willy or Crazy style jigs have gained a lot of popularity since introduced and are a good option if you like casting. Live shrimp suspended near the bottom under a popping cork is also a great offering. Both sheepsheads and pompano have relatively small mouths, so it is important not to use a large hook, if you are unsure of the size, stop in at your local tackle shop and let them hook you up. I prefer a 1/0 or smaller circle hook.

Sea trout season is open and provides good catching opportunities as we close out the year. Look for fish moving

off the shallow grass flats to deeper protected areas as temperatures drop. Deep areas around oyster bars, creeks, canals, channel edges and sand holes are good areas to target. Live shrimp and soft plastic baits mimicking shrimp are top baits.

Snook are catch and release only. Snook will transition to deeper protected waters over the month where they spend the winter. In season or not, snook are always a blast to catch, just make sure and release them quickly.

Redfish season remains open for those interested in a fish dinner. Extreme low tides over the winter months offer good sight fishing opportunities for redfish throughout the inshore grass flats. Smaller reds are numerous in creeks with hard shell or oyster bottom and hanging around oyster bars. Anglers hunting sheepsheads will score with redfish plus black drum fishing around structures such as docks, piers, and bridges.

Many anglers look to take advantage of nearshore reefs on good weather days. Many of the snapper that frequented the inshore waters through the warmer months relocated offshore and have grown larger. Bottom fishing with a shrimp/jig combination or shrimp on a knocker rig will get attention from many tasty fish including mangrove and lane snapper, sheepsheads, grunts, and possible hog fish, permit, tripletail, and more. Larger fish including cobia, king mackerel, barracuda, sharks, and others could show up at any time offshore. Bottom fish with light tackle but keep a heavier rod at the ready.

With the holiday season here, there is no place like a day on the water to get away from the crowds. There will be good fishing opportunities as we end the year, plus if you enjoy wildlife and nature, this is as good as it gets. Even if the fish aren't biting, I can't think of a better place to spend the day than on the water with nature and tranquility, and away from the crowds.

Stay up to date with fishing regulations by visiting the



Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission at: www.myfwc.com. Also, upload the Fish Rules app on your phone. It has current regulations with pictures to help identify fish.

Thanks for taking the time to read our column. Everyone have a safe and Happy Holiday season as we look forward to the New Year.

For charter information, please contact us at Gulf Coast Guide Service and "Catch the Action" with Capt. Bill Russell, call or text (239) 410-8576, website: www.fishpineisland.com, email: gcl2fish@live.com.

Capt. Bill Russell is a native and lifelong resident of Pine Island who has spent his entire life fishing the waters surrounding Pine Island and Southwest Florida. For the past 28 years, Bill has been a professional fishing guide who takes pride in customizing each trip to ensure everyone on board has a great time and will return again. Come join us and "Catch the Action."



Designing Spaces, Shaping Lives: My Journey In Interior Design

By Linda Lopez

"Our surroundings don't just reflect who we are – they shape who we become."

Interior design has always been more than a career for me; it's been a way to create harmony in the world around me. Growing up I didn't have a stable environment, so I understand deeply how a beautiful, functional space can be a sanctuary, a place to heal and grow.



Designing spaces for clients is more than making spaces beautiful; it's about crafting environments that inspire and empower. The spaces we inhabit influence how we feel, how we think, and how we live. A well-designed room can foster confidence, creativity, and a sense of belonging.

For me, interior design has been a personal journey of empowerment. It's taught me to trust my instincts, celebrate my creativity, and believe in my vision. Each project is an opportunity to connect with people, to listen to their stories, and to translate those stories into spaces that reflect their unique personalities and aspirations.

Empowering others through design is about more than aesthetics. It's about creating spaces that work for people, a home office that inspires productivity, a living room that invites connection, or a bedroom that feels like a sanctuary. It's about helping people see their worth through the environments they live in.

When I design a home, I bring that understanding to every decision. It's not just about choosing the right furniture or paint color (though I love a good sage green accent!). It's about creating spaces that empower people to live their fullest lives – spaces that are a reflection of their unique story.

As a designer, I've seen how even the smallest change-like adding a calming color palette or improving natural light can have a profound impact on someone's mood and mindset. Design is powerful. It has the power to transform not only spaces but lives as well.

To me, the true magic of design lies in the ability to uplift. It reminds us that we deserve to live in spaces that reflect our best selves. And in creating those spaces for

others, I've found my own strength and purpose.

In this column, I'll share design tips, trends, and ideas to help you transform your home into a space that supports your dreams and motivates you to achieve higher goals. Along the way, I'll also share pictures of my journey – the lessons I've learned, the obstacles I've overcome, and why I believe good design is about more than aesthetics.

Whether you're decorating for the holidays, planning a renovation, or simply seeking inspiration, I hope you'll find something here to help you create a space that feels like home.

Let's embark on this journey together. Contact me if you would like me to highlight on a specific topic or question you may have.

From serving our country to serving our community, United States Army Veteran Linda Lopez creates a unique approach in creating interior design for her clients. Merging psychology science and art for a harmonious space. Great design goes beyond what's trending. Great design is where science and art harmonize.

For more information, please contact Linda at (239) 499-8672, llopez.ccsun@gmail.com.

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Calusa Sportsman Foundation Raises \$177,000

Proceeds Help Support Boys & Girls Clubs Of Lee County, Valerie's House

The Calusa Sportsman Foundation's fourth annual Inshore Benefit raised \$177,000 to support a pair of nonprofit organizations serving children and families in Southwest Florida.

The two-day fishing event, which was held at The Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village, started with a Captain's Dinner and raffle on Sept. 6 before the fishing tournament, awards dinner and live auction on Sept. 7.

On Sept. 30, representatives from the Calusa Sportsman Foundation presented \$88,500 checks to Boys & Girls Clubs of Lee County and Valerie's House, with the two nonprofits splitting the proceeds.

"These funds that our community has helped achieve will go towards renovation projects and program enhancements that will allow growth and additional opportunities to the children and their families they serve," said Mike Dannenhauer, founder of the Calusa Sportsman Foundation. "We are truly honored to be a part of these initiatives and humbled to know that our contribution will help make an impact to those around us."

The mission of Boys & Girls Clubs of Lee County is to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens. The mission of Valerie's House is to help children and families work through the loss of a loved one together and go on to live fulfilling lives.

Valerie's House was the sole beneficiary during the event's first three years. The Foundation added Boys & Girls Clubs as a beneficiary in 2024. Over four years, the Inshore Benefit has raised \$645,000 in charitable support.

"We were ecstatic to be selected as a new beneficiary of the Calusa Sportsman Foundation, which over the years has generated incredible support for charitable causes in our community," said Denise Gergley, CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Lee County. "Our After-school Program and Summer Enrichment Camp continue to grow, so securing additional support allows more children and teens to access programs that will help them reach their full potential."

"The Calusa Sportsman Foundation has been one of the largest supporters to our children and families over the past three years, and we have formed many relationships, including volunteers and connected with new Valerie's House families



Angela Melvin (Valerie's House) and Denise Gergley (Boys & Girls Clubs)

thanks to this partnership," added Angela Melvin, founder and CEO of Valerie's House.

The Calusa Sportsman Foundation was founded by Mike Dannenhauer, Mark Wiles and Jeff Richards, who lead the organization today along with board members Darin McMurray, Dave Nitsche and Sean Russ.

Event Sponsors

Juniper Landscaping was the Grand Charter Sponsor. Additional sponsors included Wayne Wiles Floor Coverings (Hat Sponsor), Five County Insurance Agency (Shirt Sponsor), Better Buildings Inc. (Beverage Sponsor), Lennar (Buff Sponsor), Mike Patrick Electric (Awards Dinner Sponsor), All About Closets (Bucket Sponsor), The Nunez Law Firm (Ruler Sponsor), Hooters (Captains Dinner Sponsor), Boone Distributors (Scoring Sponsor), MasterBrand (Raffle Sponsor), Conditioned Air (Towel Sponsor) and Royal Shell (Auction Sponsor).

Platinum Sponsors included Boatmaster, Builders, Conte Wealth Advisors, Daltile, EverGreen Erosion Services, Extreme Companies, Lee Mar Building & Construction Corp., MAB Homes, Miloff Aubuchon Realty Group, Mohawk, Proflex, Shaw Floors, Shoreline Florida Supplies and Wildcat Renovation.

Gold Sponsors included Boyce Solid Surface Solutions, Bozac Site Development, Classic Floors by Ferrazzano, Coastal Marine Group, DEC Contracting Group, Emser Tile, Finlay Plumbing, Happy Floors, Jackson Citrus, Pacific Peak, R.S. Walsh Landscaping and Timberlake Cabinetry.

Silver Sponsors included Captain Steamer, Cougar Companies, Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers Memorial Gardens, Frank R. Jenkins Custom Homes, Knox Technology, Stanley Stephens Company, Tesoro and Westlake Royal Roofing Solutions.

Additional sponsors included Glazzio Tiles, Karastan and Republic.

About Boys & Girls Clubs Of Lee County

Established in 1974, Boys & Girls Clubs of Lee County serve children and teens through school-based, neighborhood and community club locations. The nonprofit's mission is to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens. After-school and summer programs focus on five core areas: education and career; service and leadership; health and wellness, the



arts, and sports and recreation. For more information, please visit BGClee.org or call (239) 334-1886.

About Valerie's House

Valerie's House opened its first location in Fort Myers, FL, in January 2016 and has served more than 5,000 children and their families from Lee, Collier, Charlotte, and Hendry counties. The organization provides a safe, comfortable place for children to share, grieve and heal together following the death of a close family member. Valerie's House has three Southwest Florida locations: 3551 Valerie's House Way in Fort Myers, 819 Myrtle Ter., in Naples and 233 East McKenzie St., in Punta Gorda. Valerie's House also expanded into Northwest Florida in 2021 with a home in downtown Pensacola. For more information, visit www.valerishouse.org.

About Calusa Sportsman Foundation

The Calusa Sportsman Foundation is a group of prominent business leaders in the community that have come together to host fundraising events for the avid sportsman. The founding members of this organization are Mike Dannenhauer (Five County Insurance), Mark Wiles (Wayne Wiles Floor Coverings) and Jeff Richards (Better Buildings, Inc.). They are dedicated to creating fun outdoor activities with an overall goal of helping less fortunate residents in Southwest Florida. These lifelong residents share a deep sense of community stewardship that is coupled with a passion for the camaraderie their events provide. We hope that you will join them in support of this great cause.



First Place Winners – Guided Division



First Place Winners – Weekend Warrior Division



Real Estate Corner

By Kirstin Moll

Is Now the Worst Time to Buy in Cape Coral, Florida?

It might feel like the worst time to buy a home right now, with property taxes, insurance costs, and interest rates all on the rise. And yes, we just got back to back hurricanes, too. So, why even consider buying? Well, here's the thing – if you're looking at Cape Coral, there are actually some big advantages for buyers right now. Let me break it down.

First, unlike a lot of the rest of the country, we have inventory – and a lot of it. That means two things: one, you actually get to choose from a variety of homes rather than feeling pressured to grab the first thing that pops up, which was the case not too long ago. Remember when homes were getting snatched up in a day or two? Those days are behind us.

Second, the extra inventory means sellers have competition, which usually leads to price reductions, incentives, and some great deals for you. Homes are sitting on the market longer (around 75 days, on average), so most sellers are open to negotiating and understand they may need to sell below their listing price. This is all good news if you're buying!

If you're still thinking: "But Kirstin, we still can't afford to buy." I hear you. However, there are some options you might not have considered yet. If it's the mortgage rate that's the hurdle, here's what we can do. First, shop around for mortgage rates – I know a few great lenders if you need recommendations. We can also negotiate a seller-paid rate buy down, where the seller helps lower your rate temporarily. For example, if your rate is 7%, a 2-1 buy down would mean you pay 5% the first year, 6% the second, and 7% in the third year. This can save you quite a bit.

If you're short on cash for closing costs, we can negotiate with the seller to help cover those. And if you're concerned about insurance, consider looking at new construction. Many builders are offering lower rates and incentives right now, which could mean big savings on insurance, too!

So, yes, there are options. And with inventory creeping up, this might be the right moment to buy before rates drop and demand picks up again. The election is over and many people were waiting to see the results before making a move. A lot of those people have entered the market again. The bottom line is everything is negotiable right now. So why not make your move?

And before you think I forgot about the hurricane objection, I want to address it. Our homes are built to handle them. There are also areas here that have less risk for flooding. But let's face it, every place you live is going to have something – tornadoes, fires, snow storms, etc. At the end of the day this is paradise. And a pretty awesome one if you ask me.

If you're thinking about buying, reach out to your agent! And if you don't have one, reach out to me. Let's find something you'll love and get you in before the new year!

The Cost To Build A Home Is Rising Again?

You read that right. The cost to build a home in Florida is on the rise again, particularly in coastal areas. Lee and Collier County got hit by three major hurricanes (Ian, Helene, and Milton) recently and because of that, there are some changes coming for 2025. I sat in on a builder's meeting last week and they talked about how codes will be changing to improve the safety of homes. Unfortunately, this will come at a cost. We can expect to see about a 15 percent increase in cost to build reflected in the first quarter of next year.

What does this mean for you? Well, if you've been on the fence about building, now might be the time to jump in full force before those prices start to go up. There's so many great benefits to building, plus, if you're not seeing the style you like, you can build custom! My heart belongs to Aubuchon Homes but there are other great local custom builders as well.

Some reasons you might consider building:

1. Peace of mind knowing everything is new and built to the newest codes that protect you against hurricanes.
2. Decreased insurance costs.

3. Fewer repairs in the near future.
4. Energy efficient.
5. The option to customize it exactly the way you want.

But what if you don't want to build? Do the price increases affect you at all? Possibly. With the cost to build new rising, this might mean buyers will be pushed to buying resale homes instead.

So if you're looking to sell your home, early 2025 might be the perfect time! And if your home is updated to look new, even better! While this change is not predicted to increase the value of your home, it could very well entice someone to choose your home over brand new. And in this slower, more normalized market, that is definitely worth something.

Kirstin made the move from Missouri to the sunny shores of Southwest Florida in 2015 and has been proud to call it home ever since. Before stepping into the world of real estate, she honed her skills as a marketing director for a real estate company and then moved on to be a creative director, designing campaigns for some of the top companies in the country. Kirstin's background in marketing and design gives her a unique edge in showcasing properties in their best light. Kirstin is passionate about providing a full-service luxury experience for every client, whether buying or selling. From the initial consultation to closing, she ensures that every detail is meticulously handled, delivering a seamless and elevated process tailored to meet each client's needs. Please contact Kirstin at (573) 450-3181 or email with any questions to realestate@kirstinmoll.com.



Cape Coral Volunteer Fireman's Benevolent Association Donates \$125,000 For Playground

The Cape Coral Volunteer Fireman's Benevolent Association (CCVFBA) has donated \$125,000 to Lee Health Foundation for resurfacing the infant/toddler playground at Lee Health's Cape Coral Child Development Center. This much-needed upgrade will replace the current mulch and sand with a safer poured-in-place rubber surface, addressing key safety concerns for children at the center.

"Lee Health is honored to have the support of the Cape Coral Volunteer Fireman's Benevolent Association," said Katy Martinez, senior director of development for Lee Health Foundation. "Their generosity directly impacts the lives of our children and families by ensuring that we can provide a nurturing environment for their development."

The current surface presents challenges, such as loose mulch that can be difficult to manage and sand that requires extra maintenance to ensure cleanliness. The lack of a smooth surface also prevents children from using

developmental toys like push toys and tricycles. Support from CCVFBA will provide a safer, more suitable play environment.

This donation comes at a critical time, as the demand for services at the Cape Coral Child Development Center continues to grow. The center currently serves 90 children, with over 130 on a waiting list. This upgrade will allow the children to play safely, promoting their physical development while reducing maintenance costs and safety risks.

The CCVFBA board includes President Andre Panetta, along with Bill Gladick, Lew Gladick, Guido Orcile and Bob Philip. Since its founding, CCVFBA has been dedicated to helping children in Lee County, particularly in Cape Coral.

For more about healthcare advocacy in Southwest Florida and philanthropic opportunities with Lee Health, visit LeeHealthFoundation.org.

About Lee Health Foundation

Lee Health Foundation raises philanthropic dollars on behalf of private nonprofit Lee Health to establish, expand and enhance innovative, lifesaving and preventative programs. The Foundation provides financial support for all five Lee Health hospitals including Golisano Children's Hospital and Lee Health Fort Myers, opening late 2027, as well as many service areas including Lee Health Cancer Institute, Lee Health Coconut Point, Lee Health Heart Institute, Lee Health Hospital at Home, Lee Health Musculoskeletal Institute, and Community Health Clinics. Over the last year, the Foundation has distributed more than \$27 million to support Lee Health's mission. Please visit LeeHealthFoundation.org or call (239) 343-6950 for more information about the role of Lee Health philanthropy in Southwest Florida.



Cape Coral Volunteer Fireman's Benevolent Association (Left to right): Bob Philip, Lew Gladick, Bill Gladick, Andre Panetta.



Bob Philip, Lew Gladick, Andre Panetta, Bill Gladick with art from grateful children.

Health Myths You Can Safely Ignore

“Don’t swallow your gum, it’ll take seven years for your stomach to digest!” “Ah, just pick it up off the floor – five second rule!” Most of us grew up with wives’ tales



such as these, and we probably believed them. However, as we’ve become older and wiser, we’ve found that many of them just aren’t true – and that there are many health concerns that we really should be getting checked out instead. Here’s a list of medical myths, both old and new, that have been debunked.

Carbs Make You Fat. Carbs are not only not bad for you, but they’re essential to a healthy diet. Holland Matheson, a nutrition specialist, says, “Carbs are the essential nutrients our body needs to survive. It’s the first macronutrient we use to burn energy and survive. Cutting carbs or completely omitting your primary energy source is not sustainable, causing many people to rebound. Go for the good complex carbs, like whole grain pasta and oatmeal, rather than carbs like potato chips or ice cream.”

Fat Makes You Fat. In fact, fat doesn’t make you fat, and the right kind of fat can be very good for weight maintenance and your heart. As nutritionist Holland Matheson says, “My motto has always been moderation. It’s what I always recommend to my clients and what I regularly practice.”

Vaccines Cause Autism. Several years ago, two studies came out that said vaccines cause autism. Since then, both studies have been proven to be critically flawed and have been retracted. Several more recent credible studies have been published which do not find any correlation between vaccines and autism.

It Takes Seven Years To Digest Gum. While your body can’t really digest gum, it also is smart enough to

just move it through your system – i.e., you poop out gum with everything else.

Sleeping After A Concussion Is Dangerous. If a person is awake and able to carry on a conversation, they are perfectly fine to sleep after a concussion. In fact, sleep is an important way for your brain to heal after a concussion. Just limit more vigorous activities and allow the brain to rest.

The Five-Second Rule. The five-second rule suggests that you can safely eat food that’s fallen on the floor if you pick it up within five seconds. Believe it or not, researchers did a study on the five-second rule, and it is officially untrue – germs transfer before five seconds. Further findings from the study are that women use the rule more than men, and the rule is more likely to be invoked for cookies than for cauliflower.

Flossing Is Key To Dental Health. It’s not that flossing is bad for you, but it may be a bit overrated. You should probably still do it, but its benefits have not been as strongly proven as you might think, based on how sternly our moms have told us to floss.

Coffee Is Dehydrating. While caffeine can have a mildly diuretic effect, there is no evidence that it increases the risk of dehydration. Water is still your best bet for staying hydrated, but there’s no need to be concerned about that afternoon cup of coffee throwing off your hydration.

You Use Only 10 Percent Of Your Brain. This myth has been the subject of many intense conversations and even a Hollywood movie. While it’s a fun one to discuss, this myth is “almost laughable,” according to Barry Gordon, a neurologist of the John Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore who made the statement in a *Scientific American* article. Turns out we use almost every part of our brain, and our brains are active almost all the time.

Milk Is Crucial To A Healthy Diet. The U.S. Department of Agriculture tells adults that they should drink three cups of milk a day, mostly for calcium and vitamin D. However, studies show that there isn’t an association between drinking more milk and having fewer bone fractures. In fact, sometimes milk consumption can correspond to an increased risk of fractures or of death. While correlation and causation aren’t the same thing, the benefits aren’t proven and there may be risks.

Cheese Is Bad For Your Heart. You would think that since milk isn’t so good for you, cheese would be even worse. Counterintuitively, researchers at Penn State found that cheese uniquely has a positive effect on the cardiovascular system, despite its sodium content. This study only measured the short-term results of 55- to 60-year-olds eating cheese versus soy cheese and pretzels, but they are currently conducting a longer-term study. In the meantime, you can continue eating cheese snacks in moderation.

Humans Have Five Senses. This myth has been disproven many times but is still repeated. You may have even heard it recently and believed it. But, what about time, balance, or temperature? Or, what about sensing pain or the

sense that keeps us from walking into things all the time? There are easily more than five.

Carrots Help You See At Night. Perhaps as a child you heard that eating carrots would help your night vision. Alas, this myth has been around for a while and was started by WWII propaganda. Eat all the carrots you’d like, but it’s not going help you see in the dark. That said, carrots are rich in beta-carotene, which the body converts to vitamin A – a nutrient essential for good vision.

You Can Scare Away Hiccups. Hiccups is, for most of us, an occasional annoyance. There are plenty of old wives’ tales about suggested remedies, but they don’t hold up under medical scrutiny. If you want to try one, fine; they’re pretty low risk. It probably won’t work, but can’t hurt, and the hiccups will probably go away on their own.

You Should Drink Eight Glasses Of Water A Day. It’s a common saying that we need to drink eight glasses of water a day to stay healthy. The only problem is that there’s no scientific basis for that statement. You certainly don’t want to be dehydrated, but the best way to make sure you’re hydrated is to drink when you’re thirsty. The amount of water your body needs also depends on a variety of factors, including size, weight, activity level, and where you live.

Alcohol Increases Your Risk Of Heart Disease. While alcohol isn’t known for being a huge promoter of health, red wine may have a beneficial effect on our hearts. The benefits haven’t been strongly proven enough that you should start drinking if you don’t already, but if you already do, maybe switch out a margarita for a glass of Cabernet Sauvignon occasionally, just to be safe.

Eating Turkey Will Make You Sleepy. The amino acid tryptophan does play a role in sleep, but turkey has the same amount of tryptophan as chicken or ground beef. Pork and cheese have more tryptophan than turkey. We probably associate turkey with sleepiness because of heavy Thanksgiving meals – likely with a glass of wine or two.

Old Diseases Such As Measles Are Gone. Widespread epidemics such as whooping cough, measles, and polio may be considered relics of the past, but we still need to get vaccinated for them; otherwise, they can come back. For the vast majority of cases, the potential side effects of vaccines are minor – such as a sore arm or headache – and much easier on your body than potentially getting any of those terrible diseases that can and should stay in the past.

A Nightcap Will Help You Sleep. While alcohol can help you fall asleep, a review of 27 studies found that alcohol reduces REM sleep, and furthermore, that more alcohol leads to worse REM sleep. Ultimately, even if it feels like it’s helping, it’s more disruptive and you won’t wake up feeling as rested. Try taking a warm bath instead.

Reading In Dim Light Hurts Your Eyesight. While reading in dim light can cause temporary strain, most ophthalmologists agree that it’s unlikely to damage your eyesight permanently. Your eyes may be uncomfortable when you’re reading in dim light, but don’t be concerned about damaging them long term.

Florida's Fishing Season Guide

SPECIES	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Amberjack	G	G	E	E	E	E	E	E	G	G	G	G
Blackfin Tuna	E	E	E	G	G	G	F	F	F	F	E	E
Black Grouper	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
Blacktip Shark	G	G	G	G	E	E	E	E	E	E	G	G
Blue Marlin	F	F	F	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	F
Bonefish	F	F	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	F	F
Cero Mackerel	E	E	E	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	E
Cobia	G	E	E	E	G	F	F	F	F	F	G	G
Dolphin	F	G	G	E	E	E	E	E	G	G	F	F
Gag Grouper	E	E	E	E	E	G	G	G	G	G	G	E
Mangrove Snapper	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Jack Crevalle	E	E	E	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	E	E
King Mackerel	E	E	E	E	G	F	F	F	F	F	G	E
Lemon Shark	G	F	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	G	G
Mutton Snapper	E	E	E	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	E	E
Permit	F	F	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	F	F
Sailfish	E	E	E	E	G	G	G	F	F	G	F	F
Swordfish	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Tarpon	N	N	F	E	E	E	G	F	F	N	N	N
Wahoo	E	E	E	E	G	G	G	G	G	E	E	E
Yellowfin Tuna	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Yellowtail Snapper	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E

E Excellent G Good F Fair N Not Available

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Seven Mistakes To Avoid When Making Your New Year's Resolutions

The new year is hot on the horizon, which means the time for setting resolutions has arrived. If you haven’t had much luck achieving your goals in the past, you might be making some mistakes that derail your success. Here are some things to avoid as you come up with your New Year’s resolutions for 2025.



- 1. Setting Unrealistic Goals.** New Year’s resolutions are meant to help you achieve something, so you should set yourself up for success when you come up with your goal. In other words, if you’ve been swearing like a sailor for 20 years, your resolution should be along the lines of “cut back on swearing” or “stop saying [insert specific obscenity here],” rather than “quit cussing completely by March.”
- 2. Making Too Many Resolutions.** When it comes to resolutions, start small. There’s no need to pile goals on yourself. Yes, the new year is a great time to come up with bars to reach, but nothing is stopping you from accomplishing one resolution by March and moving into a new one thereafter.
- 3. Taking An All-Or-Nothing Approach.** Setbacks should not end your journey toward your New Year’s

- resolution. It’s okay to fumble along the way, but that should not deter you from your end goal. Instead of an all-or-nothing outlook, give yourself some grace and build space for slipups.
- 4. Being Too Vague.** Be specific when setting your resolution. A resolution like “eat healthier” is more open-ended, so it provides you with less direction, making it harder to get anywhere with your goal. Instead, consider something like, “limit processed side dishes like boxed macaroni and cheese and replace them with fresh vegetables.”
 - 5. Failing To Make A Plan.** If you want your New Year’s resolution to go off without a hitch, make a plan. We repeat: Make a plan. If you head in blind, you are probably setting yourself up for failure instead of success. Create a realistic plan of action, outlining specific steps and milestones to shoot for.
 - 6. Ignoring Small Victories.** Don’t focus solely on outcomes. Revel in any and every small victory that comes about along the way. The positive reinforcement will give you an extra boost to keep going.
 - 7. Underestimating The Time Commitment.** Goals are not accomplished overnight, and you shouldn’t rush your resolution. If you’re planning to lose 20 pounds, don’t set a one-week deadline to that goal. There is no world in which that is the right move.

Tommy Bohanon Foundation Collects 600 Toys, Raises \$20,000 At 2024 Softball Tournament

The Tommy Bohanon Foundation collected 600 toys for local children and raised \$20,000 in monetary contributions at the fifth annual Tommy Bohanon Foundation Softball Tournament.

Held Nov. 30 at the Northwest Softball Complex in Cape Coral, the event drew 12 coed teams of varying skill levels – many clad in



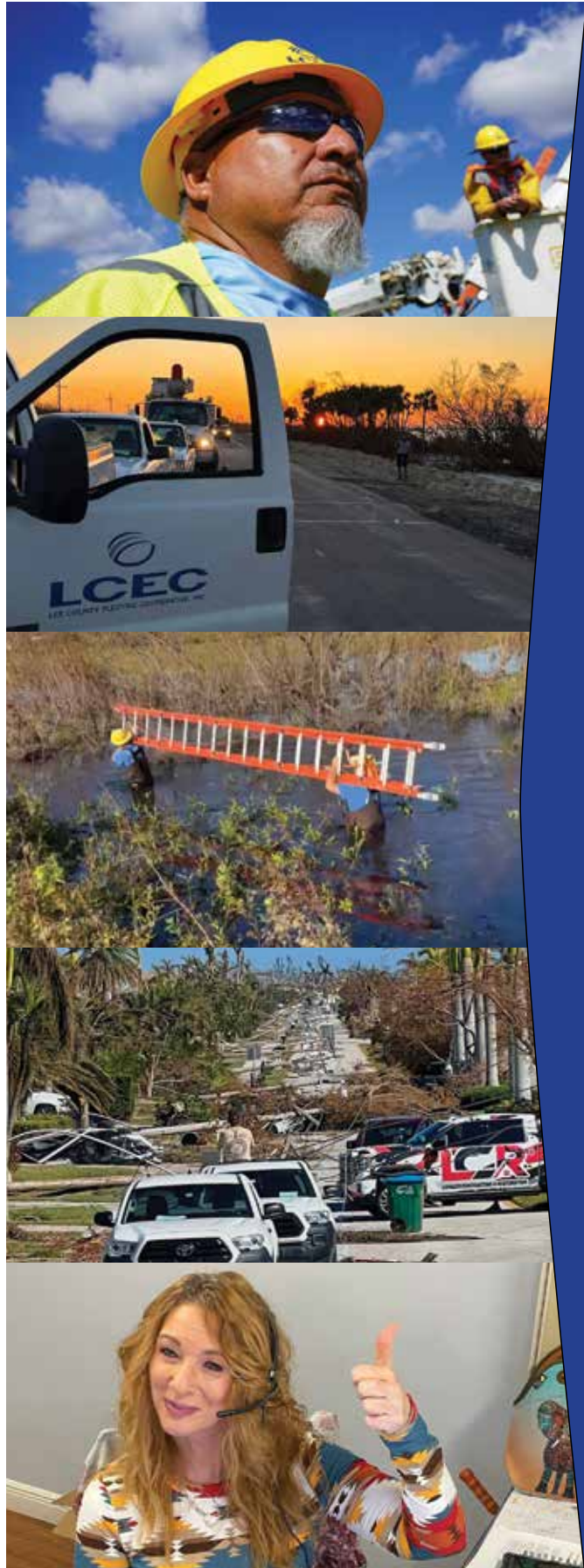
Katie Bohanon, Santa Claus



Santa Claus listens to what children want for Christmas.



Santa Claus walked through the Northwest Softball Complex in Cape Coral speaking to children.



PLAN. PREPARE. PATIENCE.

LCEC works year-round to harden the system and prepare for storm season. Utility customers are encouraged to prepare with a plan that includes special needs, evacuation, and a storm kit.

The plan

LCEC has a tried and true plan that is updated and practiced annually. The electric grid is built to be resilient. Resources and relationships are cultivated in case they are needed.

Preparation is key

LCEC has comprehensive vegetation management, inspection, and maintenance plans to mitigate the potential for outages. When power is interrupted, the LCEC team is prepared to respond as quickly and safely as possible.

When the lights are out, we are on!

Since 1940, LCEC employees, contractors, and vendors have been there to respond to every major event with a sense of urgency. We know our members depend on electricity to power their lives and we are committed to meeting the needs of our community 24/7/365.

Visit the lcec.net Storm Center for more information about Storm Preparedness.

HOW LCEC RESTORES POWER

Safety is the priority

During disaster response, and every day, safety is everyone's responsibility. While LCEC and all of our responding partners are laser-focused on restoring power as quickly as possible, safety is always the priority.

- Stay clear of downed power lines, as they may be energized.
- Puddles of water contacting downed lines are dangerous.
- Keep LCEC phone lines clear for emergency calls by only calling to report safety threats.



custom Christmas uniforms – and featured 18 local vendors selling holiday crafts, food, artwork and home decor. Children enjoyed a bounce house, arts and crafts, and other games, along with opportunities to take photographs with Santa Claus.

Beneficiaries of the 2024 event included Children's Advocacy Center of Southwest Florida, Children's Network of Southwest Florida, Living Word Ministries, Lucy's Love & Light Ministries and North Fort Myers Fire Control & Rescue Service District.

"Sixty-five percent of families live below the poverty line in Southwest Florida," said foundation President Tommy Bohanon. "If we can help give the kids a Christmas they wouldn't otherwise have, then we're taking a step in the right direction."

The Softball Tournament, which was held on Small Business Saturday, featured local vendors selling a variety of items, including Bella's Custom Creations, Bright Blooms by TLR, Brookes Nugget Wagon, Bowtique, Cosmic Cupcake Creations, D1 Craft Room, Diggin' For Treats, Factory 44, Forever Wear Permanent Jewelry, Jayce's Freeze Dried Candy Shack, Jewelry by Kaye Krest, Maryland Original Snowballs, McCuties Children's Boutique, Southern Grace Co., Tangled Roots Potting Bar, The Brunchy Bunch, The Crafty Cuties and WJ Designs.

Over its five-year history, the Tommy Bohanon Foundation Softball Tournament has raised \$90,000 worth of toys and contributions, which help provide shopping trips for local families in need.

About The Tommy Bohanon Foundation

The Tommy Bohanon Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting young athletes reach their highest potential on and off the playing field. Former NFL fullback Tommy Bohanon returned to his hometown in Southwest Florida to pursue his vision of ending generational poverty for at-risk youth. The foundation funds annual scholarships, sports equipment grants to local high schools, youth football camps, seminars and programs, as well as funding for other local nonprofits. For more information about the Tommy Bohanon Foundation, visit TommyBohanonFoundation.org or call (239) 671-0441.



Tommy Bohanon eyes the pitcher during his Foundation's annual Softball Tournament.

AFTER A MAJOR EVENT... HERE'S HOW THE RESTORATION PROCESS WORKS



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STEP 3. QUICKLY & SAFELY

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STEP 4. REMAINING OUTAGES

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www.lcec.net



Closed Shell Factory & Nature Park Finds Homes For All Nature Park Animals

Collaboration With State And National Agencies Helped Find Qualified Caretakers

Over 350 animals, birds, reptiles and fish from the now-closed Shell Factory & Nature Park have found homes in Southwest Florida, Michigan and Alabama, with the final few animals to be rehomed by the end of November.



The efforts to find homes for unique animals and critters, including a variety of birds, iguanas, tortoises, alligators, fish, a camel and more from the 4.5-acre Nature Park involved a close collaboration between the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission (FWC), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Shell Factory Nature Park for transport and relocation to approved facilities with qualified caretakers. After all the animals are rehomed later this month, a final walk-through with FWC is planned to review the final acquisitions list. During placement efforts, the Shell Factory staff continued to care for the animals, and no animals were sold.

“We are grateful for the care and dedication of Karen Schneider, our Nature Park manager for 16 years, who oversaw all of the transitions through the two-month process and has been really critical to animal care through the years,” said the park’s owner Pam Cronin, who worked tirelessly to preserve the property and its proud traditions for the past 27 years, before making the difficult decision in September to close the Shell Factory and sell the property. “We are delighted that many of our animals have found forever homes in places where their fans can still visit them. In addition, many of our animals will help boost the programs and further the missions of the facilities that house them.”

To ease their transition to new homes, Shell Factory staff sent detailed care instructions along with favorite toys, dietary preferences (such as how they like their bananas—cut/mashed/sliced), and more.

As a result, Cronin calls some of these transitions to their new homes “love stories,” including:

- Camel Goofy went to Alabama to Grizzly Ranch, which is five acres. He came to Shell Factory when he was 6 months old and is now 17. He even has a new girlfriend now.
- Rita the keel billed toucan, Dusty the Moluccan cockatoo, a blue crowned pigeon and a violet turaco went to Wonder Gardens in Bonita Springs.
- Sloths Sid and Sylvia went to Monroe County Sheriff’s Office Animal Farm in Key West, a rehab facility for recently released inmates to help them adjust as they get out of the prison system. The sloths will help bring additional revenue to their program.
- Moo Cow, a 1,200-pound steer, went to greet guests at Blossom & Brie, a North Fort Myers farm, restaurant and event venue offering farmside dining.
- Nan’s Ranch, a working animal ranch open to the public run by the Lee County Sheriff’s Office and maintained by non-violent inmates, now houses two lemurs, two coatimundi, two albino turtles, one bare-eyed cockatoo and one three-banded armadillo.



Established in North Fort Myers in 1938, the 18-acre, old-Florida roadside attraction has entertained multiple generations with amusement-style rides, arcade games, miniature golf, 50,000 square feet of gift shops, a 4.5-acre nature park with over 350 animals, birds, reptiles and fish that have been rehomed since the attraction closed, and much more. In 1997, Cronin and her late husband, Tom, took the helm of the property when it was under foreclosure and lovingly transformed it from a roadside tourist spot to a sought-out destination for locals, seasonal residents and tourists. The park has also supported many local nonprofits by serving as the host venue for countless fundraisers and events that rallied the community together in support of important community, animal and wildlife missions.



About Shell Factory & Nature Park

For 86 years, the Shell Factory & Nature Park entertained children and the young at heart, with something for everyone before closing in September 2024. The sought-out attraction provided a full day of fun, including amusement-style rides, arcade games, gift shops and much more. The Nature Park, run by a nonprofit organization, offered over 350 critters, birds, reptiles and fish, with a variety of critters from armadillo to a zebra.

GMA Architects & Planners Completes Designs For Cali Coffee In Cape Coral

GMA Architects & Planners has unveiled its initial architectural designs for Cali Coffee and an adjacent tenant space planned in Cape Coral. The design is one of the first locations for Cali Coffee planned in the area.

The building, planned at 942 Pine Island Road, is a single-story, 3,900-square-foot building, with space for one or two additional tenants. The site has been planned by Avalon Engineering, and construction by GCG Construction is expected to begin in early 2025.

The architectural design by GMA aims to create a dynamic contrast between modern and classic aesthetics. The front façade has two styles, sleek modernity with clean lines, bold finishes and a striking angled roof extension. The other embraces a timeless, classic look, highlighted by a brick façade and architectural elements inspired by Georgian style, bringing an elegant, historic feel



to the overall structure.

The first primarily drive-through-based flagship Cali Coffee was built in Hollywood, Fla., in 2017. Most locations currently are on Florida’s east coast, but additional locations are planned in Cape Coral, Bonita Springs and Fort Myers.



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Cape Coral PAL (Police Athletic League) – Heroes and Helpers

A huge thank you to Target for making our first-ever Heroes and Helpers event a reality! With Target's support, we teamed up with our community to take some of our PAL (Police Athletic League) kids shopping. It was an unforgettable day filled with fun, smiles, and holiday cheer, making this season extra special for these amazing kids!



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Sudoku Answers

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3	5	4	8	1	7	9	2	6
7	1	2	6	9	4	3	8	5
2	4	3	9	7	1	6	5	8
9	7	8	5	6	3	2	1	4
1	6	5	2	4	8	7	3	9
8	9	6	4	3	2	5	7	1
4	3	7	1	5	9	8	6	2
5	2	1	7	8	6	4	9	3



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Dr. Hanna Schnars, DVM, Joins Cape Coral Animal Shelter

Clinic Now Open Six Days A Week

The Cape Coral Animal Shelter, Cape Coral, FL, proudly announces that Dr. Hanna Schnars, DVM, has joined our affordable care veterinary clinic as a full-time veterinarian overseeing patient care for our clients.

From an early age, it was apparent to her family and friends that Hanna would dedicate her life to the care and wellbeing of animals. Originally from Fort Myers, she completed



Dr. Hanna Schnars, DVM

her undergraduate studies in Animal Science at the University of Florida. While pursuing her studies in Gainesville, a little dog happened along Hanna's way, or as the story goes, he came running straight into her arms. A lonesome, lost Jack Russell Terrier. He inspired Hanna even more to pursue her veterinary degree. To this day, Jack remains faithfully by her side.

Schnars fulfilled her dream of being a veterinarian and graduated from the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine in May of 2022. During veterinary school, she completed the Maddie's Shelter Medicine Certificate Program as well as multiple shelter medicine externships.

"We are so pleased to have Dr. Schnars join our practice" said Cape Coral Animal Shelter Executive Director Liz McCauley. "She truly enjoys general practice and serving the community, but also has a passion for shelter medicine and the unwanted and abandoned animals we save every day. With her experience, compassion, and knowledge of new and innovative practices in modern veterinary medicine, she is the perfect fit for our expanding clinic."

Dr. Schnars is certified in Fear Free Practices, and, with her leadership, our entire veterinary staff has also become certified. Fear Free veterinary visits reduce fear, anxiety, and stress, creating an experience that is more enjoyable and safer for pets and their people. Some of Dr. Schnars' other interests include Integrative Medicine, Ultrasonography, Arthritis and Pain Management, Feline Friendly Practices, and Soft Tissue Surgery, all of which are offered at the Cape Coral Animal Shelter Veterinary Clinic.

With the addition of Dr. Schnars, the Cape Coral Animal Shelter's Veterinary Clinic is once again open six days a week, Monday through Saturday. New patients are welcome, and we look forward to serving even more clients and their pets. To book an appointment, please call (239) 573-2002, Ext.106.

The mission of the Cape Coral Animal Shelter is to engage a special bond between people and animals by means of adoption services, medical care, education, and training for the prevention of cruelty and abandonment. We provide a safe place where animals will remain in our care until they are placed in qualified, forever homes.

HELP OUR FELINE FRIENDS

The Cape Coral Animal Shelter is sponsoring **75 Trap Neuter Return (TNR)** surgeries thanks to a grant from Florida Animal Friend in partnership with Cape Coral Pet Vet. This is to help the effort in reducing the community cat population.

Community cats need protection and care to thrive in their environments and avoid suffering.

Get Involved Today!

Participate in our program by calling Cape Coral Pet Vet at 239-772-2009.

CAPE CORAL PET VET 239-772-2009

Consumer Alerts

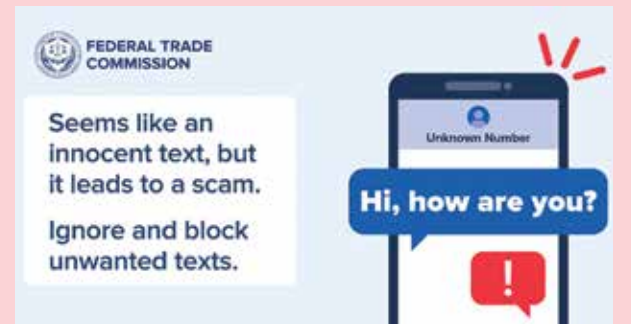
Why It's Not Rude To Ignore "Hi, How Are You?" Text Messages From Strangers

By Gema de las Heras, Consumer Education Specialist, FTC

A text message from an unknown number that simply says: Hi, how are you? seems harmless. Your first instinct might be to respond to see if it's someone you know. Or maybe tell them they made a mistake. But it's best to ignore these type of text messages. Scammers are using this tactic as a conversation starter, so don't text back. If you do, here's what happens next.

The person (a scammer) on the other end of the text will probably apologize ... and find a way to keep the conversation going to befriend you. Then, once they have your trust, they'll try to offer you advice on investing in cryptocurrency or claim they can teach you the secrets to making big money in the crypto markets. For a fee, of course. But it's all a scam and they'll just steal your money.

Even if you just reply to the text but don't engage in conversation, you've still confirmed they reached a working telephone number. Which could lead to more calls and texts from scammers.



What's the best way to avoid scams if you're getting messages from numbers you don't recognize?

Don't reply to text messages from unknown numbers. It could lead to a scam. Delete and report them using your phone's "report junk" option or forwarding unwanted texts to 7726 (SPAM) and unwanted emails to your email provider.

–Never click links in an unexpected message. Some links might steal your information or install malware that gives scammers access to your device.

Don't trust anyone who says you can quickly and easily make money. Every investment has risks. Only scammers guarantee you'll make lots of money in a short time with zero risk.

Have you lost money to a scam like this? Tell the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.



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Cape Coral Sail And Power Squadron

November's general membership meeting for the Cape Coral Sail and Power Squadron featured Gwen Carlisle and Zachary Gogel, both from the City of Cape Coral Redevelopment Agency (CRA). The agency's purpose is to enhance the South Cape area (or Cape Coral Strip) of Cape Coral, specifically from the Cape Coral Bridge, west along and on either side of Cape Coral Parkway to Santa Barbara Boulevard as well as north along Palm Tree Boulevard to include the old Cape Coral Golf and Tennis Resort.

Armed with financial tools provided under state law and local ordinances, the CRA is tasked with cleaning up blighted areas, assisting businesses with marketing efforts and utilizing planning tools. An example includes the South Cape Banner Program, allowing local businesses and nonprofit organizations to place banners on poles on Cape Coral Parkway and Del Prado Boulevard.

Areas under construction discussed were The Cove development on 47th Terrace and parking structure, and the Bimini Square development on the south side of Cape Coral Parkway. The Cove will have 290 residential units and 18,000 square feet of retail space with 525 parking spaces, 125 spaces reserved for public use. The public spaces will have a sliding fee structure, ranging from free to \$2 an hour. The parking

project received a \$10.35 million infusion from the CRA. Fire hydrants along a portion of 47th Terrace will be moved north to allow for greater flexibility of street closures on 4th Terrace for special events. The estimated completion date is Spring 2025.

The Bimini Square development will have 190 residential units, a 47,000-square-foot medical office space leased to Lee Health, 7,500 square feet of waterfront restaurant use, 625 parking spaces including 125 spaces reserved for public use as well as 27 boat slips and renovation of the mooring field for vessels in Bimini Basin. Off-site improvements for sewer and stormwater treatment are estimated to be \$3.2 million. The estimated completion date for Bimini Square is Fall 2025 with the adjacent mooring field in Bimini Basin being completed in Winter 2026.

The Cape Coral Sail and Power Squadron welcomes members, both boaters and non-boaters alike. Known as America's Boating Club®, its emphasis is on boating education and boating activities, as well as land-based social functions for its members. For information about membership, please call (239) 549-9754.



Fun Facts About — The Florida Climate In Winter

Whether you're a Florida native or a relative newcomer, you probably know the Sunshine State isn't always warm and bright. In fact, there are times when it can get downright cold in Florida, even in the far southern part of the state. Here you'll discover some interesting tidbits about the Florida climate. You'll also find some statistics highlighting record lows, average temperatures, and even a few unique wintertime weather events.

The Average Winter Temperature

In the Lakeland area, winters are typically quite mild. There are only a few days each year – if any at all – that might prompt you to turn on the heat. According to the United States Climate Data website, the average annual low temperature is about 63 degrees. During the winter months, this falls to between 50 and 53 degrees Fahrenheit. For some people, the cool weather is a respite. They open their windows in the evening hours to “air out” their homes. For others, 50 degrees Fahrenheit is too cool for their liking, and this prompts them to turn on the heat at night to stay cozy and warm.

Florida Climate Anomalies

Unique weather events occur all the time, and Florida is certainly no exception to that rule. Though the Florida climate is known for mild temperatures and comfortable humidity, even in mid-January when much of the country is blanketed in snow and ice, it can get downright cold. Though official records only date back so far, the coldest temperature ever recorded in the state of Florida occurred on Feb. 13, 1899, when temperatures plummeted to a bone-chilling -2 degrees Fahrenheit. This temperature was recorded in Tallahassee, and since then, it's the only time a sub-zero temperature has been verified in the state.

Wintry Precipitation In Florida

When it comes to the Florida climate, snow is rare just as it is in much of the Southern United States, but that doesn't mean it doesn't fall. On March 6, 1954, a record-breaking 4 inches of snow fell in Milton, which is just a few miles northeast of Pensacola. In 2014, the Florida panhandle was covered in snow and ice, bringing traffic to a standstill and causing power outages for hundreds of customers. And in early January of 2015, those living in Jacksonville, Fla., got quite the treat when they saw flurries falling outside their windows. Though measurements were only trace, it tied a record set for 57 years prior.

As you can see, the Florida climate isn't always sunny, warm, and humid. There are times when it gets downright cold and staying comfortable involves using your heating system. Fortunately, snow and ice are quite rare, and storms such as these occur once in a generation according to meteorologists. Nonetheless, snowstorms aren't impossible, and cold temperatures occur all the time.

Cape Coral Fire Department

In November, your Cape Coral firefighters responded to 2,456 calls. They also held their Open House and welcomed the community into all 13 fire stations. Over 2,500 visitors had the opportunity to meet firefighters, learn about our fire apparatus, equipment, and services, and interact with partner agencies.

Category	Count
Medical	1,427
Vehicle Accidents	79
Special Operations	110
Fires	43
Other	797
Community Outreach	18
Total	2,456

Station/Unit	Count
Busiest Station (Station 3)	250 Calls
Busiest Unit (Engine 13)	230 Calls

Prevention

- Investigations: 12
- Inspections: 823
- Corrective Actions: 140
- Plans Reviewed: 539

Over 2,500 guests visited Cape Coral fire stations during Open House to meet firefighters, learn about our fire apparatus, equipment, and services, interact with partner agencies, and even dress like a firefighter and run a firefighter obstacle course!

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