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LEE COUNTY NEWS **DANIELS CORRIDOR**

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An Idea Whose Time Has Come By Butch Swank - butch@goodladandswank.com



reason for that.

Photo: Butch Swank, **President of Southwest** Florida Business Alliance; Owner of Goodlad & Swank Incurance, LLC

If you pay attention when driving around town, you will notice a lot of differences when you're on the West side of I-75 versus when you're driving on the East side of I-75. For simplicity, we'll call the West side Fort Myers. When there, you can't help but see lots of restaurants, shopping malls, movie theaters, parks, medical offices, and some pretty good landscaping in and around the roads. When on the East side, you see few restaurants, few shopping malls, no movie theaters, few parks, and few medical offices. You also notice insane traffic, few police, weeds, and garbage,

The East Lee area has tried unsuccessfully in the past to elevate itself from being "unincorporated" to having a formal government. "Unincorporated" basically means you get to pay the same amount of taxes to Lee County as everyone else, but you receive fewer benefits than other "incorporated" areas. Why is that? Well, we

and it just feels well, chaotic. There's a

have elected County Commissioners that largely only think of Fort Myers. Also, the majority of Commissioners represent the West side, so the two from the East side, even if they did strongly advocate for us, will always be outnumbered.

But all is not lost. In 2008, the last time incorporation was tried, 42% of people voted for it. 2008 was a truly bad time for East Lee. Vacant houses were everywhere, and home prices were sinking to amazingly low levels. It is hard to imagine now, but it was not unheard of to buy a threebedroom, two-bath, 1800-square-foot home then for \$50,000. When this happens, the property taxes go down because the values of the houses are down. That means the government has far less money to spend. Consider what we are going through now – that very same home could easily sell for \$300,000. Back in 2008, a study was conducted to see if incorporation made financial sense based on the tax income the new government would bring in. 42% of people back then thought the numbers looked good. In the fifteen years since, our property values have gone up roughly 600% - that \$50.000 home is now worth

\$300,000, after all. Also, consider that we've added at least 50,000 people to the local population. Clearly, the numbers add up now and are very, very promising.

One other thing to consider is how the overall community feels about this topic. This week, I met with a gentleman at my office named Derek Felder. He has a Facebook page dedicated to Incorporation, and it's astonishing how many people are members of his page. People now realize that with our size, things need to change. Derek has given them a place to voice their support and also to organize. You see people discussing things most everyone agrees we need: more police presence on the roads, more shopping and restaurant options so we don't have to drive into Fort Myers all the time, sidewalks, beautified and cared for roads, more parks, more places to meet, actual places to be entertained like movie theaters or venues for bands, and the list goes on and on. As it is, these wants simply will not happen anytime soon, so I believe it is best we do what rational adults do – assess things and take action.

I've already met with our State

Representative, Tiffany Esposito, and she's all in on helping us get the ball rolling. My meetings with different County leaders have shown a consistent theme that they acknowledge it's time for Lehigh to grow up and start taking care of itself. They also realize, and I don't take this as cynical, that we are clogging their roads so if we had all of these nice options, we would no longer need to drive into Fort Myers to experience them. Now, this is a multiyear project and will require a lot of people working together to make it happen. To be completely fair, I have only laid out the positives of Incorporation. A feasibility study must be done to be sure that this is a good idea, not just for the overall improvements, but that it is also a good financial idea. No one, and I am darn sure one of them, wants to pay additional taxes, so being a rational adult, I want to see what this study says, and we can make good decisions then. In the meantime, I suggest we plow forward and get the ball rolling and prioritize that study while also checking off the other boxes to get this going. It cannot go forward without a community vote, no matter what, so this article is merely to plant the seed of what I consider a great idea whose time has finally come. 🙅

Captivating Local Documentaries Unveiled To Illuminate **Community Stories** By Colleen Widemon

Roses From Concrete Public Relations is thrilled to announce the release of a series of compelling local documentary films, shining a spotlight on the diverse stories and experiences within our vibrant community. These thoughtprovoking productions capture the essence of Fort Myers rich heritage, untold narratives, and the remarkable individuals who call this place home. With an unwavering commitment to promoting local talent and shedding light on significant issues. The Grove Studios has collaborated with passionate filmmakers such as Daniel Ortiz and storyteller Sharetha Davis to bring these remarkable documentaries to life. These films offer viewers a deeper understanding of our community"s collective identity and its integral role in shaping our shared future.

THE SERIES OF LOCAL **DOCUMENTARIES**

The series of local documentaries captured the essence of local heroes, unsung champions, and everyday individuals making extraordinary contributions. These documentaries aim to foster a sense of pride and unity among resiour community and encourage dialogue on topics that matter most to us.

THESE DOCUMENTARIES AIM TO FOSTER A SENSE OF PRIDE AND UNITY AMONG **RESIDENTS**

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the filmmakers, production teams, sponsors, and community members who have contributed to the creation of these remarkable documentaries. It is through their passion and dedication that we are able to amplify the voices and stories that make our city so extraordinary. Join us June 30th, 2023 in beautiful historical downtown Fort Myers, FL limited seating RSVP 239-288-9795.

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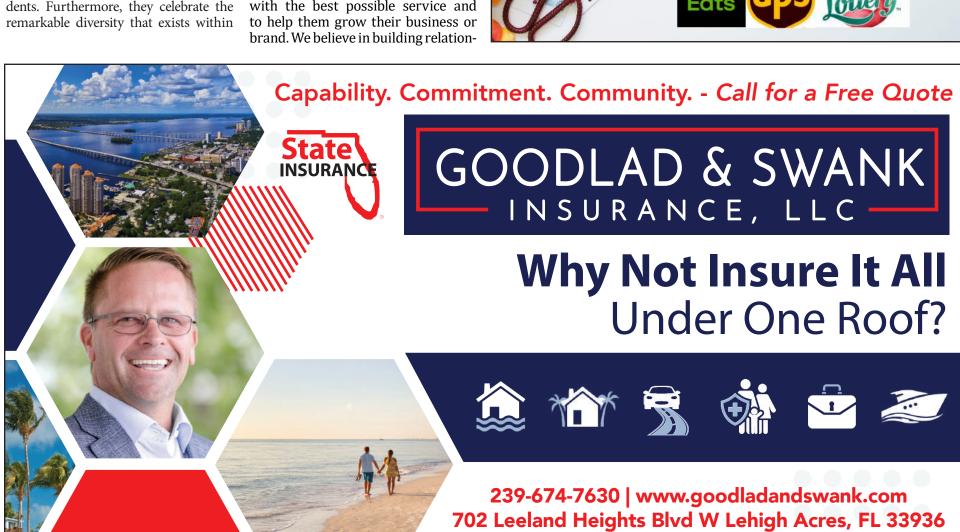
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FRED ELLIOTT









Victory Town Center Presents An Unforgettable 4th of July Fireworks Extravaganza

Celebrating Unity, Local Talent, And The Spirit of Home **Bv Makennah Santana**

Victory Town Center is thrilled to announce its highly anticipated 4th of July Firework Show - a spectacular event designed to bring the community together in celebration of Independence Day. From 5 PM - 10 PM on July 4th, Victory Town Center, located at 1201 Taylor Lane in Lehigh Acres, will transform into a hub of excitement and celebration. Attendees will have the opportunity to groove to the sounds of live music from homegrown talent with live performances by local bands - including the popular Lehigh Acres rock band "White Crow" - creating an electric atmosphere and showcasing the rich musical diversity and creativity of our community.

In addition to incredible live music, the 4th of July Fireworks Show will tantalize your taste buds with an array of delectable offerings from local food trucks and vendors. Attendees can relish the flavors of SWFL cuisine while enjoying all the event has to offer. Our emphasis on community ensures that this event supports and highlights the talents of our local culinary entrepreneurs.

"We are thrilled to host this year's 4th of July Firework Show at Victory Town Center," said Pastor Larry, Lead Pastor at Victory Church. "This event represents our dedication to celebrating local talent, supporting our community, and embracing the spirit of being close to home. We invite everyone to join us as we come together to enjoy an evening of live music, delicious food, and a breathtaking fireworks display."

Here are a few things you need to know before the big event:

• This is a FREE event open to



Photo: Colorful Fireworks Display Lighting Up The Night Sky

the public

- Located behind the Burger King in the center of Lehigh off of Home-
- Fireworks will begin promptly at 9 PM; come anytime between 5 PM - 10 PM
- Parking is available on-site with additional parking at neighboring businesses
- There will be a time for praise and worship by Victory Church.

Victory Town Center would like to thank the following generous sponsors for their continued support and contribution to this wonderful event:

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Families, friends, and neighbors are encouraged to mark their calendars and save the date for this grand evening! For more information on this event and future events, visit victorytowncenter.com.

ABOUT VICTORY TOWN CENTER

Victory Town Center encompasses 12 acres right in the heart of Lehigh Acres. Located between the two main roadways. Lee Blvd. and Homestead Road, Victory Town Center is easily accessible to all the residents of Lehigh Acre with a variety of surrounding businesses and services and plenty of accessible parking.

Victory Town Center strives to serve as a multi-purpose family recreational area with the centerpiece being an outdoor band shell theater which can host community events such as the Annual 4th of July Firework Celebration, New Year's Eve Celebration, Easter Celebration, Fall Festival, car shows, conferences, and more. In tandem, Victory Church believes in evangelising to save the lost, discipling and serving one another, and sending out new churches to spread the gospel into the world. To learn more, visit victorytowncenter.com.

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American Legion Post 323, Lehigh Acres: Law Officer, Firfighter, EMT And Patriotism Awards Ceremony By Dennis Boland

On May 19, 2023, American Legion Post 323 in Lehigh Acres had their yearly awards ceremony for front line defenders who help save the lives of many in our local Com-

We as Veterans are proud supporters of our first responders and believe they the heroes of our Community.

A meet and greet was held before a delicious Prime Rib dinners was served followed by the Award Cer-

It was our honor to present awards to the following First Responders and Patriotism award in our ceremony of the following.

EMT

Our EMT of the year works out of our Lehigh Acres Fire Control and Rescue District. Our EMT of the year started his career on December 11, 2017. He frequently volunteers to serve on committees to select new equipment or develop new procedures.

His supervisors frequently mention him as a mentor for new employees, ensuring they are prepared for their job.

He received several special recognition nomination letters for their 2022 Awards

His passion for EMT and making employees' better clinicians has shown in his day-to-day teaching.

It is an honor to introduce our EMT of the Year: Shawn Mowery.

FIREFIGHTER

Our firefighter of the year works out of our Lehigh Acres Fire Control and Rescue District.

Our Firefighter of the year started his career on January 14, 2013. He frequently volunteers to serve on committees to select new equipment or develop new procedures.

He has completed the required education and evaluation to serve as an Engineer.

He is celebrating his 10 year anniversary this year and has made an incredible impact, both on the members of our community as well as his peers in the organization.

He constantly participates in projects often requiring dedication of his personal time to achieve the committee's goal.

His character truly shined in the weeks following Hurriane Ian's devastating impact on our community

It is an honor to introduce our firefighter of the year: Nicholas Classetti

LAW OFFICER

Our Law Officer of the year works out of our Lehigh Acres Sheriff department.

Our Law Officer of the year is a 9 year veteran who experienced a traumatic event which almost cost him his life and changed things for him, his family, and his law enforcement family forever.

As Deputy Jaquez and deputy Marochi made a traffic stop things turned out for the worst and deputy Marochi said those works that would send chills through the hearts of everyone. "Shots Fired", Jaquez is shot.

Like many of us who have heard the ringing of shots fired, deputy Jaquez calmly returned fire and ended the threat to keep the community

It is an honor to introduce our Law Officer of the Year, Rafael Jaquez.

PATRIOTISM

At a point when the things that used to fill our hunger for purpose: faith, patriotism, family, and hard work, these things seem to be disappearing.

A March 27th, poll surveyed U.S. respondents about the importance of patriotism, religious faith, having children and other traditionally American metrics. Only 47% cared about Patriotism anymore.

We as military veterans hold dearly the symbol of America. It has been at the forefront of many a battle since 1776.

Our brothers and sisters have come home draped in this glorious symbol of our nation. We honor its heritage as a symbol of freedom.

You can't pick a more picturesque sight when coming down Lee Blvd while viewing her flying high in her majestic beauty.

We are proud to present our Patriotism award to Perkins Restaurant.

On a final note. Our EMT and Firefighter of the Year have won The American Legion Department of Florida EMT and Firefighter of the year Award. Both will be enjoying the hospitality of the American Legion at our Department Convention in Orlando on June 16th and 17th to receive their award.



Photo: American Legion Post 323, Lehigh Acres Logo



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Common Parasites Of Pets

a common concern for pets: Parasites. Although there are many different types of parasites, intestinal parasites are becoming more and more concerning for pet parents. Studies have shown that as many as 62% of pet owners allow dogs and cats on their beds. As the relationship between pets and their owners continues to evolve, it becomes even more important to discuss parasitism and how it affects our pet's health and our daily lives.

It is common for a dog or cat to become infected with an intestinal parasite at some point in its lifetime. The most common intestinal parasites that affect our pets are roundworms, hookworms, whipworms and coccidia. These parasites reside in various parts of the gastrointestinal tract causing disease and affecting the daily lives of our pets. They are of high priority because they pose a potential threat to people as well as pets.

ROUNDWORMS

Roundworms can infect dogs, cats and humans. Dogs and cats can acquire roundworms by ingesting infective eggs from the environment. Dogs and cats may also become infected by ingesting other infected animals (including rodents, rabbits, farm animals, and earthworms). In Dogs, roundworms can be passed to unborn puppies through the placenta.

Roundworm infections, particularly minor burdens, usually go unnoticed. Pets will often have distended round bellies and intermittent diarrhea. In heavy burdens, roundworms may often be seen in vomit or passed in the stool (commonly described as "Spaghetti" in shape). Diagnosing roundworm infec-

Veterinarians and pet owners share tion is based on recovery of eggs from a stool sample.

> Roundworms can affect humans (they are zoonotic). Young roundworms can migrate through the skin and into deeper internal organs causing damage. Aberrant migration of young roundworms can cause damage to the liver, eyes, and Central Nervous System of humans.

HOOKWORMS

Hookworms commonly infect dogs and cats. They are acquired through ingestion of milk while nursing, predation and exposure to contaminated stool. Hookworms are very small and are not easily visible in the stool.

Clinical signs of hookworm infection can include anemia, intermittent diarrhea, and blood in the stool. Uncommon signs of hookworm infection include coughing, nasal discharge, fever, and signs of pneumonia. Diagnosing hookworm infection is usually done by fecal flotation.

Hookworms can also infect Humans through exposure of unprotected skin (eg, feet, legs, hands) is exposed to contaminated soil. The parasite causes a hypersensitivity reaction (Rash termed creeping eruptions) on the skin. Hookworms rarely reach adulthood in humans.

WHIPWORMS

This parasite is primarily noticed in dogs. Dogs are infected with whipworms by ingestion of infective eggs from the environment. Whipworms are not visible in the stool with the naked

Dogs infected with whipworms can

By Dr. Veja Tillman, DVM

remain free of clinical signs for extended periods of time. However, heavy infections cause episodes of diarrhea (sometimes bloody) alternating with periods of normal stools. It is not uncommon for owners to delay care because of the intermittent nature of this infection. Diagnosis is best achieved with multiple examinations of the stool.

Cats are not infected by whipworms and the risk of this parasite to humans is very limited.

COCCIDIOSIS

Coccidia is a parasite encountered in dogs and cats. Most clinical cases occur in puppies and kittens that undergo a stressor, such as weaning, change of home, malnutrition, or other illness. But this parasite may also be found in adult pets that are exposed to contaminated stool from the environment.

Dogs and cats acquire this parasite by ingesting infective oocysts (infective particles in the stool) of other hosts (most commonly rabbit feces or other animals) and then become infected by the parasite. Some of these parasites can pass through and exit the pets' stools and not cause disease. Other times, chronic, foul smelling, diarrhea results. Diagnosis is made through a combination of history, clinical signs, fecal flotation, and exclusion of other potential causes.

Generally, humans are not at risk of contracting this parasite from their pets.

CLOSING THOUGHTS: KEEPING YOU AND YOUR PETS SAFE

Most intestinal parasites are diagnosed by evaluation of the stool. How-

ever, lack of detection in the stool does not ensure that your pet is free from infection.

Pets should be treated with periodic prevention (monthly combination heartworm prevention or an appropriate deworming agent). Routine stool examinations should be performed several times during the year to monitor for parasites in the stool.

Preventing predation and scavenging activity by keeping cats and dogs indoors or confined to a leash or a fenced yard will limit the opportunity for pets to acquire infection from an environment contaminated with feces from untreated animals.

Finally, good hygiene and limiting exposure to infective particles will reduce the chance of human exposure. Routine deworming of pets of all ages helps to decrease transmission of these parasites by reducing the number of infective eggs and particles contaminating the environment.

Your veterinarian is a great source for information about parasites and how they can affect your pet. Contact your veterinarian for more details and to discuss a treatment plan for intestinal parasites that best coincides with your pet's lifestyle.

ABOUT DR. VEJA TILLAM, DVM

Dr. Tillman is a 2002 graduate of Tuskegee University School of Veterinary Medicine. Her veterinary practice and work experience focuses on the health and wellness of pets. She is the owner of Just 4 Pets Wellness Center and can be reached at 239-270-5721.

Continental Women's Club By Liz Paul

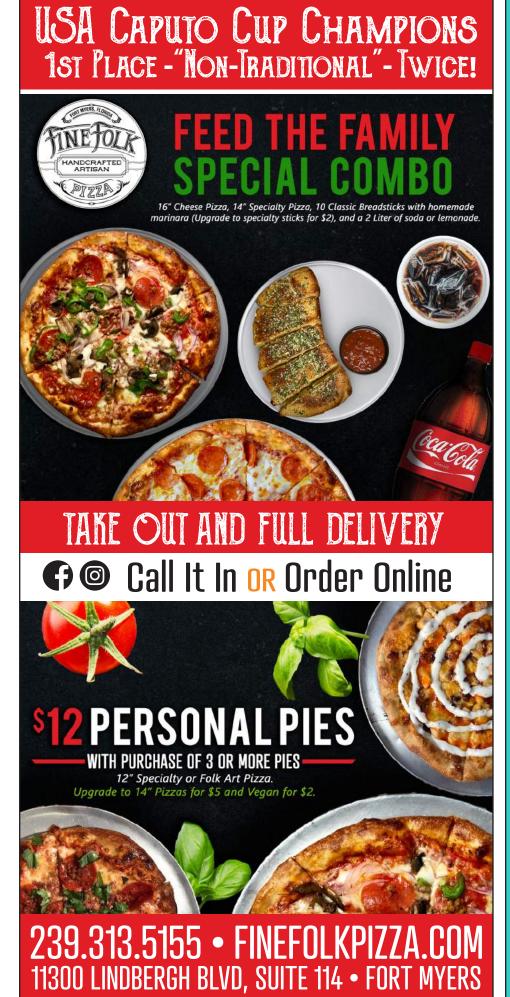
The Continental Women's Club will hold its monthly luncheon meeting on Thursday, August 3rd at 11:30 a.m. at The Hideaway Country Club.

Our August program will feature David Flory, a local ballroom instructor,

presenting a dance exhibition. He and his partners will demonstrate various styles of ballroom dance and discuss the many benefits of dance. Please join us for this interesting, entertaining experience.

Continental Women's Club is a social, cultural, and philanthropic organization established in 1975, and membership is open to women living in Lee County. Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 11:30 am at The Hideaway Country

Club, 5670 Trailwinds Drive, Fort Myers 33907. The cost to attend the luncheon is \$25. Reservation deadline for August is Tuesday, July 25th. Please call Liz Paul at 239-691-7561 for additional information or to make a reservation. 🧩





8911 Daniels Parkway, Suite 7 | Fort Myers, FL 33912

Is AI Coming For Your Job?

IS AI COMING FOR YOUR JOB?

If that concerns you, ask yourself if you can do without it. Do you scan Facebook or Instagram postings, or do you use Google for a recipe, or do you use Siri to make a phone call for you while you're driving? These are all AI-driven tools that help make life easier for you. Do you pay bills online, and how about email? AI impacts our daily lives and is pervasive in our culture.

SO IS AI COMING FOR YOUR JOB?

This isn't a dumb question. Since the tech industry isn't great at explaining itself, let's start with some definitions.

What exactly is Artificial Intelligence (AI)? A straightforward definition is «Machines acting intelligently.» If you think about it, a traffic signal is acting «intelligently,» signaling to people when it is safe to cross an intersection. It has replaced traffic officers and crossing guards at almost all intersections. Today, no one would debate that this adoption of AI wasn't beneficial. Those traffic officers moved into other jobs, but.... sometimes they are called back when traffic signals don't work or they are overwhelmed. AI is pervasive in our world. Sometimes it needs help from humans to work better.

Technically, AI combines math, computer capabilities, and data. A

computer's math models are fed data. Those math models generate an output. So what has changed recently? While there have been gains in computer power, the most significant change has been the explosion in the amount of available data; electronic books, health records, social media, etc. Every 60 seconds, over 12 million social media updates, almost 175 million emails are sent, and 1,820 tetra bytes of data are created.

The « intelligence » of AI can be classified as a) specific or b) general:

Specific Intelligence means that an AI application is knowledgeable about a task, like the traffic signal

or an application that plays chess. It's only successful at doing a particular task. A traffic light isn't able to play chess. The chess program can't control a traffic signal.

General Intelligence is the ability to use Intelligence across many different areas, learning from one and applying it to another. It involves reasoning, adaptive learning, emotions, and values. This is where the human mind is much more advanced than machines. While a human may lose in chess to a machine, that same human can direct traffic AND play

By Terri Lewis



Photo: Ai Machine Handing Scientist A Cup Of Coffee

There are also many types of AI, but what has generated a lot of news lately is what is called generative AI. Generative AI takes prompts in words and generates new data or images. Two generative AI programs in the news are ChatGPT and DALL-E. ChatGPT generates text. DALL-E takes words and generates images. The applications for generative AI are art, journalism, law, marketing, gaming, fashion, medical records, etc. Don't expect them to be accurate or not make up things. AI technology is surprisingly terrible at catching, labeling, and removing lousy content. AI can't reason, has no emotions, or knows right from wrong.

Successful use of generative AI will include a human who can remedy the errors.

Generative AI will change many jobs, but it will be a tool to help humans do their job better. As people get more productive with generative AI, there will be fewer jobs in specific fields. For centuries, with each technological advance, there has been and will continue to be a shift in jobs and job skills, not an overall reduction in jobs.

AI won't take your job, but there is a risk that someone using AI will. 🐇

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Montage Women's Club

The Montage Women's Club is a social and philanthropic club open to all women residing in Lee County. We meet on the fourth Thursday of each month at The Club at Pelican Preserve, 9802 Pelican Preserve Blvd, Fort Myers 33913 (community entry off Treeline Avenue between Colonial Blvd and Daniels Pkwy). Meetings begin at 11:30 a.m. with a short social period followed by lunch at Noon and normally an informative speaker program. Within the organization are various interest groups for members' participation. Membership is open to both year-round and seasonal residents. We welcome you to visit Montage for a luncheon.

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 27th. Speakers will be Dr. Daniel Lyons and Katy Hutcherson from Back in Motion Physical Therapy. They plan to discuss common areas of dysfunction that can lead to pain, how to correct and prevent it, and will demonstrate proper mechanics for key movements we use in everyday life -- ultimately giving us tools to assess and improve our overall mobility. They will also discuss the importance of strength training and how to properly program it to benefit our daily lives.

Luncheon fee is \$28.00 and the menu selections will be either the regular entree of Beef Braciola (braised strip steak) or the plantbased vegan entree of Eggplant Braciola (seared eggplant). Both entrees will be stuffed with carrots, celery, onions, spinach, Feta cheese, and tomato sauce and will be served over gnocchi and broccolini followed by appropriate Chef's choice of dessert.

Montage Women's Club is currently at their maximum number of 125 members permitted by our Club Byand when a slot becomes available, interested women are contacted. If you would like to attend a Montage meeting, need further information, or would like to make a reservation, please call Rita Artwohl at (239) 703-7787. Reservations cut-off to attend this meeting is Noon, Thursday, July

By Rita Artwohl



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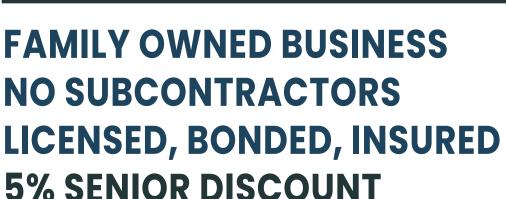
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July Programs At Riverdale Branch Library

This month's roster of activities at Riverdale Public Library offers topics for all ages. The following activities are free to the public:

ADULT PROGRAMS

KNIT AND STITCH - 1 p.m. Wednesdays, July 5, 19

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

STORYTELLING TOGETHER WITH WINDELL CAMPBELL - 2 p.m. Thursday, July 13

MAD SCIENCE LAB - 2 p.m. Thursday, July 20

LITTLE RED AND THE BIG BULLY WOLF - 2 p.m. Thursday, July 27

TEEN PROGRAMS

TEENS PAINT LIKE THE MASTERS ON CANVAS - 2 p.m. Tuesday, July 11

NEVERMORE ACADEMY SCHOOL DANCE & MYSTERY - 2 p.m. Tuesday, July 18

ALCOHOL INKS ON GLASS - 2 p.m. Tuesday, July 25

ABOUT RIVERDALE **BRANCH LIBRARY**

The Riverdale Public Library is located at 2421 Buckingham Road in Fort Myers. For more information about a program or to register, please call the library at (239) 533-4370. Check the Lee County Library System's Web site at www.leelibrary. net to find out about programs at other locations. Call the host library, or Telephone Reference at (239) 479-INFO (4636), for more information about a specific program.

To receive updates from Lee County Government, sign up for the

Submitted By Courtney Barr

newsletter here: www.leegov.com/ resources/newsletters.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Lee County will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in its services, programs or activities. To request an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or a reasonable modification to participate, contact Joan LaGuardia, 239-533-2314, Florida Relay Service 711, or jlaguardia@leegov.com. Accommodation will be provided at no cost to the requester. Requests should be made at least five business days in advance. 😃

Communicate In English With Confidence By Janeth P Castrejon

Why do you want to learn English?

It opens new doors for you and your family when you can speak, write, read, and understand English. That can mean getting a better job and being better equipped to take care of the family, like being more active in their children's education or their own businesses.

Learning a new language, especially as an adult, can be challenging and yes, a little scary.

At Hodges University, our professors understand the challenges of learning English - many have done that themselves. They also know the best way to learn is to immerse their students in the language. It's more than just memorizing vocabulary and phrases. It's a comprehensive program that focuses on five areas: grammar, reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Students get the content they need to learn English quickly and correctly in a program that meets 20 hours a week for a 16-week term.

The Hodges University English as a Second Language (ESL) program helps students understand the American culture, as well as the cultures of classmates. Our students practice what they learn at events hosted on campus, plus they can explore career opportunities by meeting with students in degree programs. Hodges University has been teaching ESL for over 20 years.

Many of Hodges' ESL students continue, graduating with a degree in the career they've wanted.

Classes begin in the fall and financial aid is available to qualified students. To learn more, call (239) 938-7700 or the Spanish line: (239) 938-7755, or email: Admissions@hodges.edu.

Summer Breakspot To Provide Free Breakfast And Lunch While School Is Out By Rob Spicker

The School District of Lee County ing Program for over twenty years" is partnering with Florida's Summer BreakSpot program to keep children healthy and well-nourished while school is out. The Summer BreakSpot Program allows the District's Food and Nutrition Services Department to provide free meals to children who are 18 years and younger at no cost to them during the summer.

This summer, breakfast and lunch will be served at more than 80 schoolbased and community sites in Lee County between June 9th and July 28th. There are no income requirements or registration. Anyone age 18 or younger may come to eat. Meals must be consumed on site as there is no longer any grab and go service.

has partnered with the Summer Feed-

says Food and Nutrition Services Director Kandy Messenger. "Serving summer meals to the students when school is not in session is an important service that we are able to provide."

There are three ways to find a Summer BreakSpot site and serving times for breakfast and lunch: Dial 2-1-1, Text "Food" to 304-304 or visit www. SummerBreakSpot.org. 😩



children for lunch.







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Preparing For Hurricane Season – Addressing Roadway Safety Salvation Army Stands Ready For Residents In Need

By Mike Welch



Photo: Mike Welch Let Us Hear From You! Contact Us At: voicesoflehigh@gmail.

At this writing our communities of East Lee County turn our

attention to preparation for the 2023 Storm Season. Fresh off the experience of Ian there is a heightened sense of anxiety and even fear. This can be diminished by common sense preparation and that involves community participation and communication in that you and your family and friends stay alert and aware. As a way prepare, please visit Lee County Government at www.leegov.com. The materials and information on the County's website will answer a myriad of questions and concerns. Also, if you need to

evacuate look at the evacuation centers near you.

In Sheriff Marceno's article you will notice several issues that he outlines for us with planning for the next storm. His observations come from the experience of his office and personnel who were in the forefront of last year's disaster. The deep marks of Ian are still with thousands who lost their homes, and we remember those who perished. For your sake and your families now is the time to "read up – stay informed and plan".

Major Brenda at the Salvation Army field office – Lehigh Towne Centre writes to inform us that the Army is open with several activities for the summer months that include food, utilities, back to school assistance. Located in the of town at 25

Homestead Road North # 42, the center is ready to help those in need. Office number is 239-491-6071.

REMEMBERING MARALYN WALINE

One of the things that makes Lehigh Acres and East Lee so special is the hometown feel. Florida's greatest resource is her people where many people have come from many parts of the world to make new community. Lehigh and the communities of the East are no different. At the East Lee Chamber of Commerce visitors would be welcomed by Maralyn or would talk to her friendly voice on the telephone as they try to learn about moving to our area or becoming acquainted with our town. Maralyn started as a volunteer and later became staff for the past



Photo: Maralyn Waline - East Lee County Chamber Crystal Star Award - 2020

3 years. She retired earlier this year and passed away on June 19th. She was active in her church and several organizations over the years. She hailed from Iowa and helped make community. We will miss her but are assured as her faith told her – she has gone home to the Father's House.

Lehigh Salvation Army Service Center In Need Of Donations

By Major Brenda Lane

It's already the middle of the year!!! Where has the time gone! We at the Lehigh Salvation Army Service Center have been very busy trying to help everyone that has come to us seeking assistance. We are well aware of the rise in rent, mortgage, gas, food and the over all cost of living these days. It's hard to make ends meet and keep up with all the various bills and necessities of every day living. We are here to help in any way possible. We currently have funds to assist with FPL or LCEC bills, providing you meet the guidelines from the funding source. You can give our office a call and speak with the Social Worker and she will do an assessment over the phone to see how we can assist you and your family. We can also assist with food. We have Pantry every Monday from 9:00 to 11:30 and again from 1:00 to 3:30. You may come to get food once a month. We will also provide you with a list of other Pantries in the area that may be able to

assist you with additional food. There is no reason for anyone to go without food. There are several Pantries in the Lehigh area. We know it is even harder to put food on the table during the summer when the children are out of school and would normally have at least two meals a day at school. We are here to help and are happy to do so. Please don't hesitate to call on us and we will do whatever we can to assist you and if it is something that we can't help with, we will try to find other resources for you. Be sure you make not of the fact that we will be giving out School Supplies starting the last week of July 24-27th. If you have school age children and need help getting the supplies they will need, please come see us and we will be happy to help with the supplies we have.

ATTENTION: If you are 55 years of age or older or you have young children in your home and are in need of a fan,

please contact our office. We will be distributing fans on a First Come basis. We don't have a large supply, but we will give them out until they are all gone. You will need to contact our office if you are interested in receiving a fan. It's going to be a terribly hot summer and we want to help you stay as cool as possible during this horrific heat. Stay indoors as much as possible and make sure you are drinking plenty of water throughout the day to stay hydrated. This is extremely important for the elderly and very young. Another service we offer in our Lehigh Office is Food Stamps applications. Every Tuesday and Wednesday we are assisting with applying and or renewing Food Stamp applications. You can call our office for an appointment. Remember, if you already have Food Stamps and need to renew, it's usually by the 15th of the month. Don't wait until the 15th to try to call for an appointment. You need an appointment, so call early in the month

to set one up so you don't miss out on receiving your Food Stamps on time.

We are in need of canned goods and dry goods such as Mac and Cheese, Cereal, Shelf Milk, Pasta, Powdered Milk, Peanut Butter.& Jelly and any other items you would like to don ate. Please be sure that the items haven't passed the expiration date. You can drop off any of these items at our office Monday through Friday.

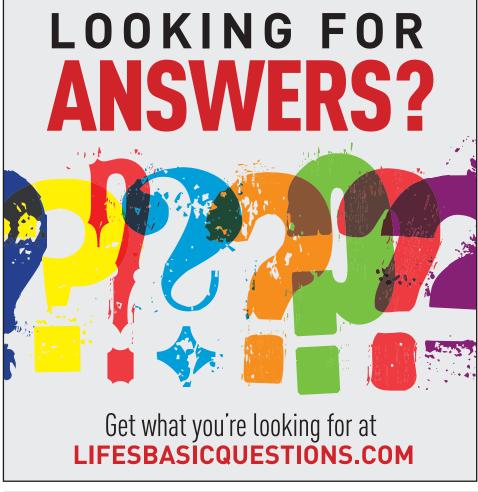
Be careful of the heat and please, be mindful of the extreme temperatures of the ground, streets and sidewalks on your pet's paws. It it's to hot for you to hold the back of your hand to the ground for 5 seconds or more, then it's to hot for your pets to walk on it. You wouldn't want them to burn their little paws.

Stay cool and enjoy your Summer days!!



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Time For Hurricane Preparedness; Addressing Roadway Safety

By Sheriff Carmine Marceno



Photo: Sheriff Carmine Marceno, Lee County

Eight months have passed since Southwest Florida was devastated by Hurricane Ian.

Between the volume of media coverage and the ruins that remain, I am confident that virtually no one wishes to discuss nor consider the upcoming hurricane season.

While wounds continue to heal, Lee County must accept the June 1st arrival of the Atlantic hurricane season.

We are usually fortunate and, despite watches and warnings, our county has generally escaped previous storms with relatively manageable damage. If nothing else, Ian taught us to brace for the worst despite these previous misses.

Ian has taught us, first hand, how vulnerable we are here in Southwest Florida and, while we have no control over the severity or direction of future storms, we have an opportunity to prepare.

We've all seen the hurricane lists...bat-

teries, water, fuel, etc. The list is lengthy. It includes pet needs, mediations, flashlights, etc. and all suggestions should be heeded. Lists of recommended items can be found all over the internet and I won't dwell on the need to purchase most, if not all, of those recommended items.

Rather, let's discuss other issues.

Lee County covers an immense amount of area that includes waterfront property, low-lying regions and rural sections. As a result of these differences, we must fully understand our personal risk in regard to wind and water. Do you live in a floodprone area? An evacuation zone? Are you subject to storm surge?

Consider the structure in which you reside. Is your home a manufactured home? Mobile home? Are you in a single-story structure subject to large volumes of water? Are your exterior doors and garage doors hurricane-proof? What are your home's vulnerabilities?

Do you fully understand the difference between a "watch" and a "warning?" What are your thoughts when you see the "Hurricane Cone of Uncertainty? Do you recognize the potential size and movement of a storm or how quickly both can change?

No one wishes to evacuate their home. No one wants to leave behind cherished items. Sorting through a lifetime of belongings, just days prior to a storm, is nearly impossible. What must you take? What must you leave. How quickly can you safely gather those "must bring" items? Can it be done in advance?

Where would you go? Certainly storm direction plays a role in determining your evacuation plans. If you needed to head north, where would you go? East? South? What options do you have?

How will you communicate with relatives, neighbors, friends? Do you have a communication plan? Will you be able to check on the welfare of family members and friends? Will they be able to contact

What about your needs following the storm? Cash? Fuel? What hazards may surround you? Do you fully understand generator advantages and hazards?

The subject is a bitter one. While it is virtually impossible to find a silver lining

following last year's devastation, we can learn from it. We can be wiser. We can be better prepared.

ON TO ROADWAY ISSUES IN EAST DISTRICT

Our efforts to address speeding and vehicular racing across the county, with a focus on the State Road 82 corridor, Gateway Boulevard, Griffin Drive, Treeline Avenue and Daniels Parkway, is paying dividends.

Those that follow the Lee County Sheriff's Office social media platforms have likely seen numerous positive comments regarding the reduction of speeding, racing and reckless driving along the aforementioned roadways.

A total of 33 scheduled traffic operations, some of which have resulted in the impounding of vehicles, have apparently gained the attention of groups known to be involved in these brash and negligent

Our work will continue. Our commitment to maintaining safe roadways is perennial. 👺

Gov. Desantis Signs Largest Tax Relief Plan In Florida History

By Markham Norton Mosteller Wright & Co., P.A.

Recently Gov. Ron DeSantis signed the largest tax relief plan in Florida's history. This will provide families with \$2.7 billion in tax relief during the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Part of the tax relief package increases the Florida Sales Tax holidays for back-to-school and disaster preparedness to 14 days, giving more opportunities for tax relief on select items. The back-to-school sales tax holidays are July 23-August 6, 2023, and January 1-14, 2024. To help Floridians prepare for hurricane season, the disaster preparedness sales tax holidays will occur

from May 27-June 9, 2023, and again from August 26-September 8, 2023.

Other tax relief items for Floridians include a permanent exemption for baby and toddler necessities such as strollers, cribs, diapers, and baby wipes; as well as a freedom summer sales tax holiday on recreational items and children's toys that will last from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The plan also features a one-year sales tax exemption on gas stoves and Energy Star appliances. There will also be a reduction in the tax

rate on business rent from the current 5.5% down to 4.5% effective December 31, 2023.

Should you have any questions on the above information, please reach out to your tax advisor. Have a nice day! 📽



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July 6 International Kissing Day

Ahhh, it's Kissing Day. The objective of this very special day, is to appreciate and enjoy a kiss. So, go ahead and swap some spit today. Pucker up and give out a big, juicy kiss to anyone and everyone.

July 7 Chocolate Day

Chocolate Day is the perfect opportunity to eat you favorite chocolates in ample portions. Do you really need another excuse to over indulge with vour favorite food treat?

July 11 Cheer up the Lonely Day

Cheer Up the Lonely Day is an opportunity to make a lonely person happy. Any time you can make someone happy, you've done a good thing, and should be proud of yourself.

July 13 Embrace Your Geekness Day

Embrace Your Geekness Day is a great day to be a Geek. Or, to know a Geek. Spend plenty of time with your computer. Talk computer lingo and jargon. If you are a geek, stand tall and proud.

July 17 National Ice Cream Day

When you get the urge for a snack on a hot, humid summer night, what's the first thing that comes to your mind? That's right....Ice Cream! On this day, we hope you enjoy an ice cream cone, a sundae, or a milk shake.

July 21 National Junk Food Day

For some of us, every day is Junk Food Day. For the rest of us, National Junk Food Day is an opportunity to guiltlessly eat your favorite junk food. You get to eat anything you want. Eat any amounts that you want, too.

July 24 Parent's Day

National Parents Day is a special day to honor your mother and father. And, its a time to celebrate the family structure and family values. The family unit is an important structure for the health of children, and the nation. That structure, and those values, are established and nurtured by your parents. The best way to mark this day is by spending time with your parents doing something fun. Its also important that you let them how much they are loved and appreciated.

July 30 National Cheesecake Day

Despite being a rich, high calorie, and cholesterol filled, cheesecake is a very popular dessert. Why? Because it tastes so good. Enjoy the day with a piece of cheesecake, along with your favorite topping.

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