

School Plan Puts Politics Over Students
\$400M School Bond Advances Without Oversight—
Community & Students Left Behind

Concerned Residents of East Lee County

For several years, residents of East Lee County have spoken out about the lack of transparency and accountability in how the School District of Lee County sites new schools. Despite attending town halls, submitting public comment, meeting with board members, and sending hundreds of emails, our voices have largely been ignored.

The issue has now escalated with the approval of a \$400 million Certificate of Participation (COPS) bond known as Lee 2025AB. This bond, pushed through at the June 3, 2025 school board meeting, funds three new schools: Hector Cafferata, Cypress Lake, and the most controversial—‘School NNN,’ a high school planned for the Joel and Tuckahoe site in rural Alva.

While the need for updated facilities at Cafferata and Cypress Lake is clear, the case for building a massive new high school in Alva is not. The rural region has just 732 enrolled students in all grades combined. In contrast, Lehigh Acres has over 7,900 students and continues to grow rapidly. Yet, the District has opted to prioritize an isolated, rural site that lacks critical infrastructure like water, sewer, and safe roads.

This decision contradicts the District’s ‘Student Proximity and Neighborhood School Model.’ A new school in Alva would require nearly all students to be bused in, creating a commuter campus instead of a neighborhood school.

A federal inquiry (OCR Complaint #04-25-1677) has been filed under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, questioning whether this decision diverts resources from racially and economically diverse communities like Lehigh Acres. This echoes a similar federal complaint that halted a school project in Estero in 2021.

At the June 3 board meeting, five of seven board members expressed serious concerns about the site in

Alva. They cited the lack of utilities, failing road infrastructure, environmental risks, and absence of walkable neighborhoods. Some called for another public workshop or bond modification.

Rather than address those concerns, Superintendent Carlin and senior staff gave inconsistent responses about the bond’s flexibility. Chief Strategy Officer Ken Savage recommended moving forward regardless, and suggested one-on-one ‘walk-arounds’ with board members, raising Sunshine Law concerns.

The board then voted 7-0 to approve the \$400 million bond with School NNN included—without resolving the objections or hearing further public input.

This decision is part of a larger pattern. In the past year, the District cut its board meetings in half and dissolved five citizen advisory committees without public vote. The Construction Committee has vanished, and public speakers are sometimes limited to one minute.

The Audit Committee, one of only two remaining oversight groups, has issued warnings about financial mismanagement, ignored audit findings, and repeat cost overruns on school projects like Riverdale and Bonita Springs High.

There is growing concern that political influence is behind the push. A major developer with ties to recent board campaigns has multiple projects near the Joel/Tuckahoe site. That developer would benefit from new taxpayer-funded roads, utilities, and school-based growth incentives.

Meanwhile, the District already owns a construction-ready site at Joel and David in Lehigh Acres. That site has infrastructure in place and is surrounded by the very students who need relief from overcrowded schools. It was purchased in 2022

and cleared for use by July 2025.

If built there, the new school could serve students immediately, avoid an estimated \$60 million in inflationary costs, and eliminate the need for new utilities or unsafe bus routes.

Joel Boulevard is already at capacity and is a failing, flood-prone road. Four-laning the road is not included in the MPO’s 10-year plan. Alva has no sidewalks and no utility service franchise assigned. This is the wrong place and the wrong time for this school.

We urge Congressman Greg Steube—whose district touches the affected area—to look into the matter. This is about more than one school. It’s about how public funds are used, how communities are heard, and whether we’re building schools to serve students or developers.

A full dossier of documents has been submitted to state and federal agencies, including audit reports, enrollment maps, and confirmation of the federal Title VI complaint.

Students in Lehigh Acres shouldn’t be bused past their homes. Residents in Alva deserve real transparency. And taxpayers deserve accountability.

It’s not too late to change course. The District can swap timelines—build now at Joel/David and reserve Joel/Tuckahoe for future use. This would restore trust and serve the actual needs of our community.

Respectfully,

Concerned Residents of East Lee County

WHAT THIS MEANS
FOR RESIDENTS NEAR
JOEL/TUCKAHOE

- **Dangerous traffic will increase.** Joel Blvd is already near

failing status—school traffic will overwhelm this two-lane road with no sidewalks or safe turn lanes.

- **Student drivers and buses raise the stakes.** Teens and heavy buses will navigate unsafe roads daily, increasing the risk of serious accidents or fatalities.
- **Infrastructure costs could fall on you.** There’s no water, sewer, or utility franchise assigned. Taxpayers may foot the bill for road and utility expansion.
- **Your rural quality of life is at risk.** A 2,800-student school could invite dense development, changing the area’s character forever.
- **You had no real say.** Despite board member concerns, the public was bypassed, workshops canceled, and oversight committees quietly dissolved.
- Second Amendment rights in jeopardy.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR
STUDENTS & FAMILIES IN
LEHIGH

- **Lehigh is overlooked again.** Thousands of East Zone students will commute miles farther—despite a ready-to-build school site in Lehigh.
- **Longer rides, greater risk.** Lee County leads the state in serious traffic crashes. Longer daily commutes raise the odds of accidents, missed class time, and fatigue.
- **Overcrowding in Lehigh continues.** The district’s own data shows Subzone 2 remains over capacity—but gets no immediate relief.
- **Wasted taxpayer dollars.** Building in Alva requires new utilities and infrastructure, adding millions in cost and delaying relief for the areas that need it now.
- **Civil rights concerns under review.** A federal Title VI investigation is underway, questioning whether this decision disadvantages diverse, lower-income communities. 🐾



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The Long Road to Representation: Lee County’s Push for Single-Member Districts Heads to the Ballot Box

Katrina Salokar | East Lee County News

In the heart of one of Florida’s fastest-growing counties, a decades-long fight for fairer, more accountable local government has reached a turning point.

For more than 75 years, Lee County’s five county commissioners have been elected in countywide (at-large) races—even though each commissioner represents a distinct geographic district. Critics say that system has repeatedly diluted the voices of local communities, allowed money and influence from other districts to sway elections, and made it nearly impossible to hold commissioners accountable to the voters they’re meant to serve.

Now, thanks to persistent public pressure, a groundswell of bipartisan support, and decisive action by state lawmakers, Lee County voters will have the final say in 2026.

A HISTORY ROOTED IN SUPPRESSION

The problem of at-large elections in local government isn’t unique to Lee County—it has deep historical roots across the country.

Through the Jim Crow era, many states adopted at-large election systems that effectively diluted the voting power of minority and rural communities. Court rulings over the last century have repeatedly affirmed that these systems were designed to suppress representation, not broaden it.

The at-large system was imposed on us in 1947, when the population of Lee County was less than 25,000. Despite explosive growth to over 800,000 residents accompanied by increasingly complex needs, the system has remained unchanged.

REFORM EFFORTS THAT FELL SHORT

Voters and citizen committees

have repeatedly tried to change the system, but each effort stumbled due primarily to backroom political interference from county commissioners and their closest supporters who would lose control under the district-based model. In most cases, the reforms were never even allowed to make it to the ballot.

Lee County Property Appraiser Matt Caldwell has been blunt in his critique of these failures, calling the county’s charter review process a “paper tiger” and arguing that “the deck is stacked,” as he wrote in a December 2024 editorial, urging the state legislature to step in and let the voters decide once and for all.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION CHANGES THE GAME

In a rare show of unity, the Lee County Legislative Delegation responded in early 2025. In January, the delegation voted 6–1 to advance a local bill that would put a single-member district system on the 2026 general election ballot.

That bill—HB 4001—proposes a straightforward change: beginning with the 2028 election cycle, county commissioners would be elected only by the voters in their district, not countywide. Similar models are already in place for Florida’s state legislators, school boards, and many city councils.

The bill passed overwhelmingly in the Florida House (94–11) and unanimously in the Senate (36–0). On July 18, 2025, Governor Ron DeSantis signed HB 4001 into law, officially placing the issue on the November 3, 2026 general election ballot.

THE REFERENDUM QUESTION

The ballot will read: “Shall the method of electing members of the

Board of County Commissioners of Lee County, Florida be changed from countywide voting to single-member district voting, where each commissioner is nominated and elected only by the voters in the district they represent?”

A YES vote supports the transition to single-member district elections, making commissioners accountable only to the voters within their district.

A NO vote keeps the current at-large system, allowing all county voters to vote in every commission race.

WHY IT MATTERS

Supporters of the reform say this is a matter of simple fairness: If a commissioner is going to represent District 3, for example, only the voters in District 3 should elect that person. Under the current system, voters in the other district areas can outvote the residents of the actual district and effectively impose the commissioner on them. Caldwell and others have noted that nearly 40% of contested commission elections since 1980 have produced outcomes where the district’s choice lost due to outside votes.

- Switching to single-member districts, supporters argue, would:
- Make commissioners more accountable to their constituents
- Lower the cost of running for office, allowing more diverse candidates to compete
- Improve transparency and trust in local government
- Reduce the influence of out-of-district special interests

WHAT’S NEXT

Between now and November 2026, both sides are expected to mount campaigns.

Opponents—many of them current or former elected officials—are likely to warn against “outside interference” or claim the changes could weaken countywide unity.

Supporters, including civic organizations like the League of Women Voters, the NAACP, and the Southwest Florida Business Alliance, are already organizing town halls, registering voters, and preparing a broad educational campaign to make sure voters understand what’s at stake.

As Caldwell recently wrote: “This is about putting voters back in charge of their government. Nothing more, nothing less.”

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Residents who support the change can:

- Join outreach efforts led by civic groups
- Attend public forums and legislative updates
- Volunteer to register and educate voters ahead of 2026
- Share materials and spread awareness in your community
- Most importantly, VOTE YES on the 2026 referendum

To stay informed and get involved as the issue progresses, visit www.swflba.com and sign up for updates from the Southwest Florida Business

Alliance. You’ll receive alerts about upcoming meetings, community events, volunteer opportunities, and voter education tools.

After nearly eight decades of debate, the decision will finally rest where it belongs—with the people. In 2026, Lee County voters have the opportunity to vote YES for fair representation, district accountability, and local democracy. 🐾

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River Oaks Preserve: Estero’s Natural Gemstone

Charlie Vavrina and Marlene Rodak | The Coccoloba Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

It’s Tuesday morning and Florida Gulf Coast University students are arriving at River Oaks Preserve to earn required Service-Learning hours. They are greeted by a volunteer who quickly puts them to work. Today, the ground is moist from a soaking rain, so students will be installing native plants in selected areas. They pull exotic weeds first, observe a planting demonstration, and then plant pinelander heliotrope, Keys blackbead, limber caper, teabush, firebush and more.

After the Village of Estero purchased the 10-acre parcel in May 2022, it selected The Coccoloba Chapter of the statewide Florida Native Plant Society to manage it and an adjacent two-acre right-of-way. One goal of the project is to restore and maintain valuable native Florida habitat for the enjoyment of residents. Additionally, a native plant nursery on site offers exciting new landscaping options for homeowners and community landscape committees. The parcel, which is bisected by the north branch of the Estero River, allows for better stormwater management and helps to prevent flooding.

Over the past three years, the all-volunteer, non-profit chapter has supervised the removal of invasive and exotic plants, established electrical service and a solar-powered irrigation system, set up retail and propagation nurseries, started a long-term planting program to restore natural habitats, mapped gopher tortoise burrows, and secured nearly \$27,000 in USDA government funding. Hundreds of volunteers made this happen. Many of those volunteers

were university students.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Had this parcel been paved over and developed, we, along with all the other native creatures here, would have lost a sliver of the real Florida habitat. This is especially true because so many of our developments use non-native plantings that do not support pollinators, birds, and other wildlife that once were abundant in south Florida. Natural areas are also essential for human beings. Spending time in them has been linked to a host of psychological and social benefits including improved cognition, better mental health, increased empathy, and cooperation. And who doesn’t need more of that!

SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Well, you can sit by and complain about overdevelopment, or you can make a difference. Get outside and discover the real Florida. The real Florida has mature pines and massive live oak trees populated with resurrection fern and air plants. The real Florida also has small trees, shrubs, and ground covers that provide nesting sites, berries, seeds, and nectar for birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

Why not make space in your own yard for a bit of real Florida? Bring pictures of your yard or common space to the nursery at River Oaks Preserve and talk to the volunteers. They will provide free landscaping assistance and help you select plants to create the look and features you want. They will also refer

you to other native plant nurseries in our area for a wider selection of plants. While you are at it, encourage your HOA to set aside or create natural areas.

Better yet, join the group of volunteers at the Preserve. Or even better, bring your volunteer organization out for a workday in our amazing location. There is so much to do and you will make lots of new friends.

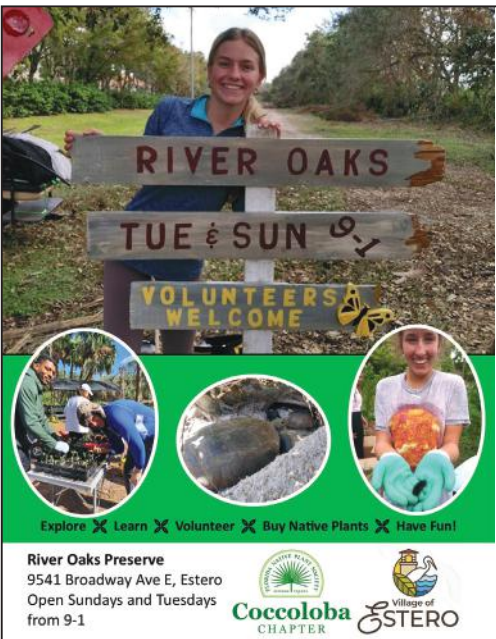
WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR RIVER OAKS PRESERVE?

The development of River Oaks Preserve is at an early stage. Although the site is currently home to gopher tortoises, eastern cottontail rabbits, squirrels, many bird species, and bobcats, it has the potential to bring in additional species as more native plants are installed. As the natural landscape and restoration areas mature, you will experience the amazing aromas of fiddlewood trees, sweet acacias, Simpson’s stoppers, snowberry, and little strongbacks. Come see an abundance of southwest Florida birds and butterflies delighting in the Jamaica caper tree and scarlet hibiscus blooms. Where can you go to see that?

As planning begins for classroom space and necessary storage sheds, equipment, and supplies, slip on over for a peek. Want to explore like Ponce de Leon? Teach a class? Brainstorm with other volunteers? Take your youth group on a field trip? All of this is possible.

Preserving this sliver of land benefits area residents and the environment. The Preserve is a priceless resource right in the center of Estero. Kudos to the Village of Estero leadership for preserving this pristine land and for engaging an all-volunteer organization like the Coccoloba Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society to manage it in the best way possible.

River Oaks Preserve is located at 9541 Broadway Ave E. It is open to the public on Sundays and Tuesdays from 9-1, or by appointment. The preserve is closed to the public other times. The Coccoloba Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society is a 501(C)(3) organization established in 2001. Their mission is to preserve, conserve, and restore native plants and native plant communities of Florida. Visit www.FNPSCoccoloba.org for more information. 🐾



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From Anxiety to Assurance: Redefining Your Financial Future

Tyler Smith | Brightway Insurance

When it comes to managing finances, it's no secret that everyone—from Gen Z to Boomers—deals with money-related worries, whether it's covering monthly expenses or planning for long-term needs like retirement care. According to the 2024 Insurance Barometer Study from Life Happens and LIMRA, a large chunk of Americans (44%) are particularly anxious about saving for retirement—a consistent concern since the study began in 2011.

MILLENNIALS TAKE CENTER STAGE

There's been a noticeable shift over the years. While the overall concern about retirement has stayed roughly the same, Millennials are now voicing more worry about many financial issues than any other generation. In the recent study, Millennials led the pack in worries on nine out of 15 financial topics compared to Gen X's dominance on 14 of these topics just two years ago. Here's a snapshot of how the two generations compare on key financial issues:

- **Retirement Savings:** 54% of Millennials versus 48% of Gen X are worried about having enough saved.

- **Emergency Funds:** 45% of Millennials are concerned about saving for emergencies compared to 38% of Gen X.
- **Income Protection:** 45% of Millennials worry about supporting themselves if illness or injury prevents them from working, versus 39% of Gen X.
- **Long-term Care:** 40% of Millennials fear the high costs if they need long-term care, while 37% of Gen X share this concern.
- **Medical Expenses:** 40% of Millennials are anxious about covering medical costs in case of illness or injury, compared to 34% of Gen X.

BRIDGING THE COVERAGE GAP

Despite these concerns, fewer Millennials (50%) are purchasing life insurance than Gen Xers (55%). Many Millennials find life insurance too expensive - 42% of them believe so - and almost half of them (47%) admit they are just making a rough guess when estimating its true cost, with 46% overestimating it by five times or more.

Aside from life insurance, there are other types of coverage that can help ease financial worries. For in-

stance, while 45% of Millennials are concerned about income protection if they become disabled, only 19% have disability insurance, and a similarly low percentage feel confident about what it covers.

Another interesting option is a combination policy that blends life insurance with long-term care coverage. This kind of product can help address both the worry about leaving family members with financial strain (38% of Millennials worry about this) and the challenge of paying for long-term care (40% are concerned).

THE PATH FORWARD

The solution is straightforward. Take a look at the options available—life, disability, and long-term care insurance—then have a conversation with a trusted insurance professional who can help tailor a plan to your budget. The best part is, these consultations are completely free and without any obligation. If you need guidance, talk to your local agent. If you don't have a local agent, the professionals at Brightway Insurance, The Smith & Mitchell Agency, are ready to help you navigate these decisions.



Photo: Family of Four. Dad, Mom, and Children

Taking this proactive approach not only safeguards your financial future but also provides a sense of reassurance for you and your loved ones. Losing a family member is inherently challenging, and with the right life insurance coverage, you remove the added burden of financial stress during those already difficult times.🐾

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The Alsatian and the Pioneer’s Daughter: The Story of Fichter’s Creek

James Kennedy | Community Organizer

As a writer for The News-Press, local resident Betty Hawkins captured many in-person interviews that reflected the history and development of Southwest Florida. With permission from her estate, we wanted to share some of the tales from her collection *Twice Upon a Time: Stories of Southwest Florida’s Early Settlers*.

For our first selection, we’ve chosen a story about the Fichter family’s arrival in Southwest Florida. We hope you enjoy reading it — and that it inspires you to explore more of the history that shaped our area.

THE STORY OF PETER FICHTER

Early in the 1880s, a lone stranger rode into the new settlement at the Caloosahatchee crossing. Intending to stop only for a rest, he found he had reached the end of a pilgrimage which had started years before, far across the ocean.

Born in Alsace-Lorraine, a region wedged between France, Switzerland, Germany, and Belgium, Peter Fichter had left his native land to come to America and join relatives in Cincinnati. He had heard of the lands being granted by the government to homesteaders, and it was his chance to have more land than he had ever dreamed of owning. Learning he must be of age before making a claim, he remained in the rolling hills of Ohio until twenty-one, then journeyed southward hunting for a compatible climate and good soil.

Long months of travel following trails made by other adventurers, animals, and Indians brought him to the Caloosahatchee region and ultimately to the up-river settlement where he must cross over on his southward journey. The warm friendliness of the pioneers encouraged him to stay on for a while and accept their hospitality.

As he sauntered about the countryside, he was impressed with the beauty and fertility of the terrain and began feeling an affinity for the region. One day, while roaming several miles west of the settlement, he came across a verdant section sliced through by a sleepy, meandering creek and knew he had found what he had long sought. He staked out 160 acres, built a modest house, and after improving

the required acreage, cleared out the creekway which his neighbors at the crossing immediately dubbed “Fichter’s Creek.”

Anxious to help the young stranger and pass on to him their experience in growing things, the settlers shared seedlings from citrus fields they had already started and invited him for substantial meals to break up the monotony of bachelor cooking.

The home of Mrs. Margaret English, who had arrived with her four sons and three daughters in 1876, seemed the center of activity for the budding community, and it was only natural the young Alsatian would gravitate to where companionship and fine food were in abundance.

It was only natural, too, that Margaret’s dainty little daughter, Nettie, would catch the eye of the young man who leaned against the great hewn-log mantelpiece and stroked his smart Vandyke beard as he watched her flitting lightly about her maidenly chores. Peter fell in love at once, but little Nettie had a bit of growing up ahead of her, and it was a few years until he asked for her hand in marriage.

There were no honeymoons in those days, and after their wedding the couple drove out the dusty trail to Peter’s house bordered by his winding creek. Furniture brought in by sailboat from New Orleans was put off at the Fort Myers landing, and Nettie delighted in decorating her home while Peter worked the land and brought up its potential.

In following years, when two sons and two daughters comprised their family, Peter built a fine two-story house and also added to his holdings by buying the Brenheiser homestead which adjoined his property. As the children grew, the devoted parents warded off the loneliness of their isolation with standing invitations to the English cousins and youngsters in the vicinity to visit at their home.

Nettie, following her mother’s custom, always had a stone crock filled to the brim with fragrant fresh-baked cookies, and Peter made available materials for a spacious playhouse and equipment for fishing. As an added feature of attraction, he subscribed to the New York Times, and the pages of

comics, saved for years on end, were a source of pleasure to every child for miles around.

The nearest neighbor at that time was a Frenchman, Alex Longot, who had previously homesteaded on the riverbank across from Peter. As he was in delicate health, the Fichters took him under their wing. Nettie saw to his meals, and the children paid daily visits to “Uncle Alex” to assuage his lonely hours. When the little man became too ill to live alone, the Fichters took him into their home as a member of the family.

At his death, Nettie and Peter learned he had willed his homestead to them, and that, added to their own acreage, placed them among the largest landowners in the area. Now having a clean sweep clear to the river, Peter built sturdy docks from which to ship his fruit and that of neighbors who were beginning to settle nearby. In time, big steamers were putting into his wharf to lay over night, and soon pleasure boats joined the merchant vessels.

Among these was the luxurious yacht Willena out of Chicago, owned by Dr. Peter Fahrney, the patent medicine tycoon. Handsome young John Hasley, captain of the “floating palace,” was privileged to leave the boat while in port, and the first evening of their stay walked into Alva, where he was surprised to meet a boyhood chum, Wilbur Watkins, from his home state of Wisconsin.

He was invited to attend a village social and was introduced to Peter and Nettie Fichter’s charming daughter, Margaret. It was love at first sight, and a whirlwind courtship began. By the time the Fahrneys were ready to depart for home, John and Margie were engaged to be married. When the Willena hoisted anchor, young Captain Hasley and his pretty bride were aboard.

At Sarasota, Fahrney changed his mind about proceeding north and put into port for a much-extended vacation. All during that time, John and Margie lived aboard and planned for the time when they would have a permanent home. They finally decided, as the vacation wore on, that after returning to Chicago, John would leave the doctor’s employ and go back to Wisconsin to buy a farm.

They carried through with their plans and farmed until, weary of long winters of cold and idleness, Florida’s warm weather lured them south again. Once more in Margie’s homeland, they settled with their little ones — Margaret, Walter, and Hellen — on a parcel of her father’s property, built an attractive house, and welcomed two more babies, Peter and Kittie Bess.

Margie’s brother, Henry, had married Ruth Walker and moved to Miami. Her other brother, James, having married Olive Whitten of Punta Gorda, had gone back to college for his master’s degree in agriculture and was heading up a five-county conservation district centered at Vero Beach. Younger sister, Bess, was still at home with her parents, but they all missed the days of activity and greeted the Hasleys and the return of the zest of old times with enthusiasm.

In the 1920s Nettie and Peter died a few years apart, and Bess continued on in the old homestead until she married. Except for the lazy creek which dreams its way from the Caloosahatchee to the back country, the Fichter name is seldom heard in the area, but three grandchildren live on part of the original homestead and uphold the traditions of their pioneer forebears.

None of the children speak or read German, so they can only look at their grandfather’s album from the old country and wonder at the captions and entries on each page. It is understandable they didn’t learn the language, for Peter was so determined to be an American that he never resorted to his native tongue.

It had been so long since he had spoken German that when his brother and wife came to see him, the three found they were no longer able to converse. After a brief visit, struggling to communicate with gestures and a remembered word here and there, they said “auf Wiedersehen” — but in their hearts they knew they would never meet again.

Although they said goodbye 100 years ago, Peter’s descendants remain in Alva today.

For more information on this article contact press@eastleenews.com 🐾

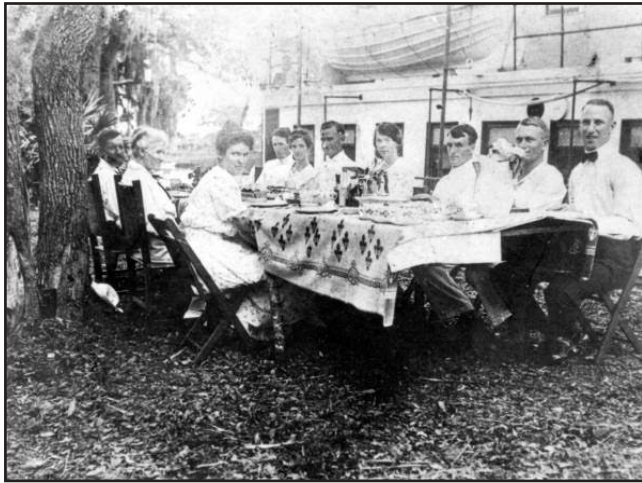


Photo: The wedding breakfast is for Margaret Fichter (Mrs. Margaret Fichter Hasley) and John Hasley. [From left to right] Peter Fichter, Jeanette Fichter (Mrs. Peter), Bess Fichter, Henry Fichter, Margaret Fichter Hasley, John Hasley, Pauline Parker, and unknown.



Photo: Peter Fichter Homestead. ack row Left to Right] Henry Fichter, Alonzo Lewis, Colin English, Louise Bonniwell, Maurice English, Margaret Fichter, George Bonniwell, Flora English, Helen Scott, Walker Blount.?, Philip Barney; [Seated Left to Right] Frank Cook, Vivian Lee, Joseph W. Sherrill holding Edwina Parkinson, Charlie Blount, Walter Hicks.



Photo: [Middle Row] Zonie English, Katie English, Perry English, Katherine E. Solomon, Margaret English (Grandma), Jeanette E. Fichter, Flora English, Mary Stebbins. [Back Row Left to Right] A. J. English, Ida English holding J. Daniel, John C. English, Captain J. B. McKinley, Peter Fichter with James N., Hugh Sampson English. [Bottom Row] Maurice English, Henry Fichter, Elizabeth Fichter, Margaret Fichter, Colin English.



Photo: Peter Fichter’s son. Henry English Fichter



Photo: Glenn, Stacy, Amy, Grant Fichter



Photo: Grant, the late Henry “Hank” English Fichter, Glenn.

Protecting Pets from Bufo Toads: What Every Pet Owner Should Know

Dr. Veja Tillman, DVM | Just 4 Pets Veterinary Wellness Center

Bufo toads—also known as cane toads or marine toads (*Rhinella marina*)—pose a serious threat to pets, especially dogs and cats. These large, toxic amphibians thrive in warm, humid areas like Florida, Texas, and Hawaii, and are known for secreting a potent toxin that can be deadly to animals.

HOW TOAD TOXICITY HAPPENS

When threatened, Bufo toads release a milky-white toxin from glands behind their eyes and across their skin. Pets are most at risk when they lick, bite, or mouth the toad, as the toxin is quickly absorbed through the soft tissues in the mouth. Even drinking water that a toad has been in can cause poisoning.

This toxin mainly affects the brain, heart, and muscles. It contains chemicals that can throw off heart rhythms and interrupt normal nerve function, often with life-threatening results.

HOW TO SPOT THE SIGNS

Symptoms usually show up within

minutes and can get worse quickly. What to watch for:

- **Mouth issues:** Lots of drooling (often thick and foamy), red or irritated gums, or your pet pawing at their mouth like something’s wrong
- **Stomach problems:** Vomiting and diarrhea
- **Acting strangely:** Confused behavior, wobbliness, twitching, or even full-body shaking (seizures)
- **Heart and breathing troubles:** Fast or irregular heartbeat, heavy panting, or gums that look blue or very pale
- **Other signs:** Big, wide pupils, or your pet feeling very hot to the touch—especially if they’ve had a seizure

If you notice any of these signs, treat it as an emergency. Without fast care, the toxin can lead to brain swelling, fluid in the lungs, or even death.

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

If you think your pet has come into

contact with a Bufo toad:

1. **Get your pet away from the toad right away**
2. **Rinse out their mouth** using a gentle stream of water. Keep their head tilted down so they don’t swallow the water. You can also wipe the inside of their mouth with a wet cloth for up to 20 minutes.
3. **Don’t use a hose with strong pressure**, as this could send water into their lungs
4. **Take them to a vet immediately**, even if they seem okay
5. **Wear gloves when handling your pet**, and wash your hands after

HOW VETS TREAT IT

There’s no antidote for Bufo toad toxin, so vets focus on supportive care. Treatment usually includes flushing the mouth again, giving IV fluids, controlling seizures or irregular heartbeats with medication, cooling the body if needed, and closely monitoring vital signs. Fast treatment gives your pet the best chance of recovery.

HOW TO PREVENT IT

- Always supervise pets outside—especially at night or after it rains
- Bring in food and water bowls and turn off outdoor lights
- Keep your yard trimmed and free of hiding spots
- Cover pools and consider putting up pet-safe barriers
- Stay alert if Bufo toads are active in your area

Being prepared and acting fast can save your pet’s life. Stay watchful—and keep your furry friends safe.

ABOUT DR. VEJA TILLMAN, DVM

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

Fresh Cuts & Full Hearts: Country Cuts Hosts Back-to-School Bash

Katrina Salokar | East Lee County News

Country Cuts brought the buzz—literally and figuratively—at this year’s **Back-to-School Free Haircut Day** on Sunday, delivering nearly **100 haircuts** in just a few hours. Boys from Kindergarten to 12th grade lined up for their fresh start to the school year, with free school supplies handed out to set them up for success.

“It was awesome—never been so busy in such a short amount of time,” said owner **Billy Youngs**. “Brought joy to my heart for sure.”

The event was powered by an outpouring of community support, with generous sponsorships from:

- Ament Construction Inc.
- Blue Diamond Plumbing, Inc.

- Capling Leveling, Inc.
- ET Air LLC

The **Garage Gals Motorsports Meet & Greet** added extra excitement for kids and parents alike.

And the giving spirit doesn’t stop there—**Country Cuts is offering 10% off any service through December 31, 2025**. Coupons available at **The Buckingham Blues Bar**.

Whether it’s a fresh fade, a clean shave, a senior discount, or a mullet revival—Country Cuts has you covered.

Follow for updates and deals: [facebook.com/countrycutsfortmyers](#)

Thanks to everyone who came out—we can’t wait to do it again!





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Lee County Public Safety Center Hosts Business Emergency Preparedness Workshop

Chad B. White | Blue Horn Consulting, LLC

In advance of the 2025 hurricane season, Lee County’s Horizon Council Business Issues Committee hosted a Business Emergency Preparedness Workshop at the newly expanded Lee County Public Safety Center in Fort Myers. The event offered local business owners firsthand insight into preparing their operations and employees for potential natural disasters while showcasing the region’s state-of-the-art Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

A FORTRESS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Lee County Public Safety Center, formerly known as the EOC, is located at 2675 Ortiz Avenue and recently underwent a \$38.5 million expansion. Originally built in the 1970s as a nuclear fallout shelter, the facility now spans over 70,000 square feet, with the new addition accounting for more than 36,000 of those. It is built to withstand 200+ mph winds and a Category 5 storm surge, positioned 32 feet above sea level. The hardened structure houses critical county functions including Emergency Management, 911 Dispatch, EMS, and Sheriff Communications, as well as the Department of Transportation’s traffic monitoring operations.

Designed to operate independently for up to 10 days without external support, the facility includes three 1,250 kW generators, backup potable water and sewer systems, chillers, and fuel reserves. Its communications

hub is outfitted with climate-controlled workstations, five-monitor setups, circadian lighting, and modern data infrastructure to ensure 24/7 readiness.

EMPOWERING BUSINESSES TO PREPARE

John Shultz, Chief of Emergency Management, opened the workshop by emphasizing the three pillars of business storm preparedness: continuity, safety, and resilience. “The ability to rebound after a storm begins long before landfall,” he said. “Business owners must ensure not only that their buildings are secure, but also that their employees are personally prepared.”

Elizabeth Goldbach, Director of the Florida Small Business Development Center at Florida Gulf Coast University, followed with an overview of how small businesses can access capital through the Small Business Administration (SBA). She provided attendees with planning checklists and financial preparedness tools to navigate both the pre-storm and recovery phases.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND REAL-WORLD ADVICE

Attendees learned how their businesses can support regional relief efforts by offering parking lots, warehouses, or open land as staging areas post-disaster. Those who might grant emergency access to secured facilities were advised to prepare authorization letters and identification creden-

tials for designated employees.

A panel discussion included experts from key sectors:

- **Butch Swank**, the Owner of Goodlad and Swank Insurance, representing the insurance industry, outlined best practices for filing claims and understanding coverage.
- **Mary Gentile**, CRX, CSM, the President and Principal of LQ Commercial Property Management, offered insights on building security and tenant communication.
- **Tiffany Allard** of Suncoast Credit Union discussed how banks maintain operations during and after a storm.

FACILITY TOUR UNDERSCORES PREPAREDNESS COMMITMENT

After the presentations, Kevin Gigras (Emergency Management Coordinator) and Thomas Robertson (Mitigation & Accreditation Coordinator) led attendees on a tour of the facility. From backup generators and secure data rooms to employee sleeping quarters and safe rooms, the tour highlighted the county’s deep investment in readiness and inter-agency coordination.

The Public Safety Center can

support 100–150 personnel during normal operations and scale to over 250 during a full emergency activation. Amenities include full kitchens, showers, restrooms, and decompression spaces to support responders during extended activations.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

The workshop served as a reminder that true preparedness begins with people. Business owners were encouraged to ensure their employees have storm plans in place for their families first—because if their home life is secure, they’ll be better equipped to help businesses recover.

“Test your plans before the storm,” one speaker emphasized. “You don’t want to discover what’s missing when it’s too late.”

As hurricane season begins, the Lee County Public Safety Center stands ready. With continued collaboration between the public and private sectors, the region is better equipped than ever to weather the storm.

For questions or comments please contact Chad at chad@bluehornllc.com 🐾



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Different Doesn't Have To Be Divisive

Joe Maguire

As a young child, the pinnacle of important conversation comes up, “what is your favorite color?”

This question, while seemingly simple through the rear view of history, forms our earliest understanding of choice, social consequence, and different opinions. What is my favorite color, and the more important question, why is it my favorite color? Does my best friend like blue? Should i change my answer to blue?. Do i even understand why i like blue (the why). Can i change my answer now or later, why should i change it, does that mean i was wrong or did my perspective just change.

These nuances, while not necessarily fleshed out at the early childhood stage, are present and formative. What isn't often present is the divisiveness that comes with difference/division. I like blue and you like red, so i don't like you anymore.

Division is a separation of opinion or feeling, while divisive is defined as creating dissention or discord. In the context above,

sammy and james both like blue, joe likes red. Sammy and james are sitting at the same lunch table, sammy tells james that if joe doesn't like blue, he can move tables and not sit with them. Instead of accepting that difference of opinion is normal and ok, sammy seeks something more. He seeks to separate, thus moving from division to divisiveness.

At a recent lee county school board meeting, school board member melissa giovanelli, responding to public comment about the placement of new high school nnn, stated that if people didn't want to live near the new school they could move. This comment./Approach is wrong - full stop.

Election to public office is a form of public service.

Responsibility to the public: elected officials are entrusted with the responsibility of representing and serving the interests of their constituents. No cut outs.

- Decisions for the common good: decisions and actions are expected to prioritize

the needs and welfare of the community, rather than personal gain or partisan interests.

- Upholding ethical principles: public service involves a commitment to integrity, transparency, and placing commitment to ethical principles.

Divisiveness runs counter to transparency, accountability, trust, and building a sense of community. Telling community members that they can move if

they don't like something is outrageous. Difference of opinion creates diversity, communities thrive with diversity. The community deserves and expects better.

As the Joe in the story above,I had both blue and red as my favorite colors during my childhood days. As an adult i understood that difference of opinion was good, was healthy, and my favorite color became purple, the exact outcome when you mix red and blue. 🐾



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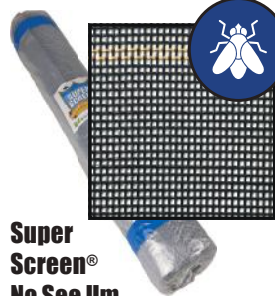
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Building Community In The East: Why You Have To Show Up For Family Dinner

Katrina Salokar | East Lee County News

In East Lee County, the ties that bind our neighborhoods, businesses, and individuals are stronger when we break bread together. Enter Meeting in the East – Family Dinner, a monthly gathering hosted by the Building Industry Alliance SWFL /Custom Home Builders Association, (BuildingSWFL.com) and the Southwest Florida Business Alliance (SWFLBA.com), every fourth Thursday, held from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Buckingham Blues Bar in Buckingham. Sign up online or call/text 239-470-5611.

Last month, our “Family Dinner” drew a notable 40 attendees—real people from across various industries who came together to network, share stories, and reinforce the sense of belonging that defines our region.

offers a relaxed atmosphere for genuine connections with our neighbors and the broader network.

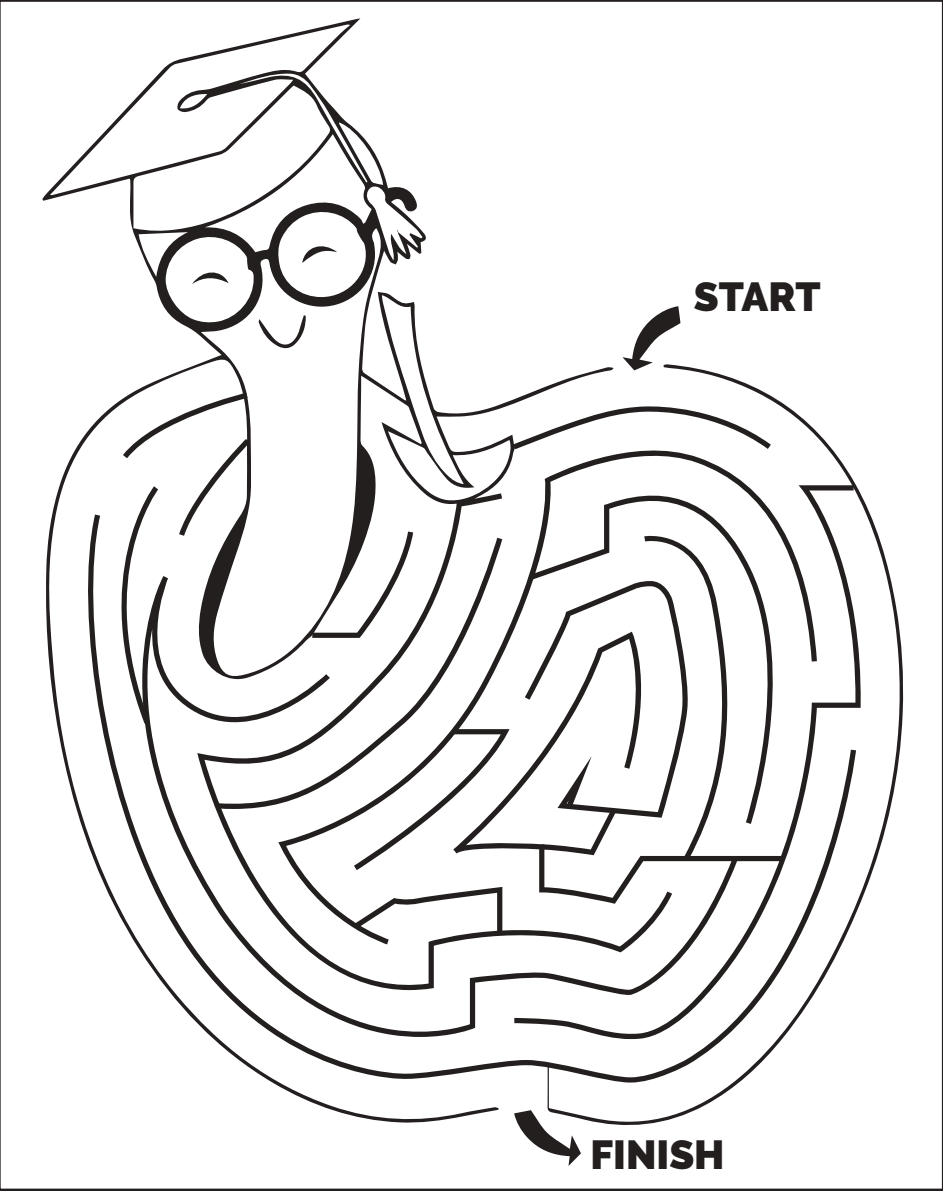
- 3. Inclusive and Accessible:** Open to anyone looking to expand their reach—or simply enjoy camaraderie over Italian-themed fare—the Family Dinner includes a catered Italian meal (with vegetarian options) for just \$10. You can sign up online or pay at the door; however, an RSVP is not required, making it easy for newcomers to join.
- 4. A Catalyst for Growth:** From Lehigh Acres to Fort Myers, the eastern communities of Lee County are among the fastest-growing and most dynamic areas in the county. Bringing people together over dinner gives momentum to new ideas, initiatives, and collaborations—just the kind of grassroots energy that builds a thriving region.

WHY FAMILY DINNER MATTERS

- 1. Fostering Belonging and Pride:** The name “Family Dinner” conveys warmth and trust. It invites professionals, entrepreneurs, and civic leaders to gather not as strangers, but as neighbors—part of a growing and diverse East Lee County community.
- 2. Networking That Doesn’t Feel Like Work:** Networking will kick off at 6:00 PM, with introductions scheduled for 7:00 PM. Informal networking will continue well past 8:00 PM. This event

WHY YOU HAVE TO SHOW UP

Because Family Dinner isn’t optional—it’s essential. Whether you’re a seasoned business owner, a community leader, or someone just looking to belong, this event is your chance to be seen, to meet, and to belong. If fifty people become forty, join them—because every voice and handshake strengthens the next gathering. Visit www.swflba.com or call/text 239-470-5611. 🐾



NEW LOCATION! ITALIAN NIGHT
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Thursday, August 28th, 6:00pm-9:00pm
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Meeting 7:00pm-8:00pm
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BRAND NEW HOME ON HALF ACRE IN NE LEHIGH



Brand New Home located in Northeast Lehigh on a HALF ACRE LOT at the end of a QUIET DEAD END STREET, MOVE IN READY 3 BEDROOM 2 BATH WITH A DEN with a closet that may be used as 4TH BEDROOM. C.O. HAS BEEN ISSUED, double door entry to the den for privacy, 32 X 32 POLISHED PORCELAIN TILE FLOORS THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE HOME with 5 inch baseboards, impact resistant windows, covered front porch leads to large great room, high ceilings throughout with tray ceilings in the living room and master bedroom, shaker cabinets with soft close doors and drawers, pendant lighting over breakfast bar, QUARTZ TOPS in kitchen and baths, stainless steel appliance package, pantry, large dining area off of the kitchen, spacious master bedroom with walk in closet, private bath with dual sinks and tiled walk in shower, indoor laundry room, covered porch in rear overlooking the HALF ACRE backyard with plenty of privacy, double garage with auto opener, extra long driveway with plenty of parking, excellent location just minutes to SR 80, I-75 and Ft Myers.

Offered At.....\$350,000

Charlie Bonacolta 239-994-1062 charlisold@gmail.com

2 + DEN / 2+ BATH TOWNHOME IN GATEWAY



Popular Villages of Stoneybrook, NO AGE RESTRICTIONS HERE, PETS OK, 2+Den/2+ Bath 1400+sf Townhome in GATEWAY. Enjoy all that Gateway Living has to offer! Huge HEATED POOL w/Wading Pool for Kids, Soccer, Playgrounds, Basketball, Walking/Biking/Running Trails, Shops, Dining, Sports. The association put NEW TILE ROOFS ON IN 2024. Impeccable Condition: HVAC new in 2015* New 1st Floor LUXURY VINYL PLANK FLOORS 2019* New Sparkling Stainless Steel Appliances 2019* New Washer/Dryer 2019* New Disposal 2020 - Thousands of \$ in Beautiful updates/upgrades The Village of Stoneybrook is a Gated Community with Pool/Play Area/Pet Friendly. This condo has in-Home 2nd floor Washer/Dryer, private ensuite bath in primary bedroom with Great Flex Space: Den/Office/loft/ Extra Guest Area. Third half bath located on the first floor for guests, Enjoy Morning Coffee or Sunset Cocktails on the Western-Facing Screened Lanai with Private Landscaped Preserve View. Super low HOAs include water and sewer. Golf Memberships available @nearby "The Club at Gateway". LOCATION? Quick to I-75, SWF International Airport and FGCU. Speaking of SCHOOLS? Choose from Charter, Public & Private Schools nearby. HEY SPORTS FANS! JetBlue Park at FENWAY SOUTH is "just around the corner." NO FLOOD INSURANCE REQUIRED.

Offered At.....\$199,900

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4 BEDROOM 2 BATH IN TOWNLAKES COMMUNITY



Large 4 bedroom 2 bath home on a quiet cul-de-sac in popular Town Lakes community with gated entry, sidewalks, central water and sewer, low HOA fee of \$90 per month, NEW ROOF IN 2018, large lot overlooking the intersecting preserve canals in the backyard, tiled throughout, cathedral ceilings, breakfast bar in the kitchen, pantry, indoor laundry room with Samsung Washer and Dryer included, large master bedroom with wood laminate floors, walk in closet, dual sinks in master bathroom, shower tub combo, pull down stairs attic entry, Quiet neighborhood with sidewalks and gorgeous views of the intersecting canals, located just minutes to Lee Blvd, I-75 and Ft Myers and walking distance to the newly renovated Williams Ave Community Park. NO FLOOD INSURANCE REQUIRED HERE. LEHIGH IS THE HIGHEST ELEVATION IN LEE COUNTY.

Offered At.....\$314,900

Nick Bonacolta 239-887-0468 nbonacolta@gmail.com

3 BEDROOM 2 BATH COACH HOME- NO AGE RESTRICTIONS



Affordable 3 bedroom 2 bath coach home with an oversized double garage, NO AGE RESTRICTIONS HERE, PETS OK, second floor unit with screened in balcony with tiled floors, spacious primary bedroom with access to the balcony, large walk in closet and private ensuite bathroom with large walk in shower, new light fixtures, faucet and toilet, spacious guest bedrooms, NEWER CENTRAL HEAT AND AIR IN 2023, NEW WATER HEATER IN 2023, NEW SCREENING ON THE BALCONY IN 2023, EXCELLENT VIEWS OF THE SUNSET FROM YOUR BALCONY, breakfast bar and pantry in large kitchen with solid surface countertops, newer stainless steel appliances with French door refrigerator, dishwasher and built in microwave, tile wall under the breakfast bar, CROWN MOLDING THROUGHOUT, newer ceramic tile floors in the main living area, dining area with new light fixture, guest bathroom with new fixtures and toilet as well, new hinges and handles on the interior doors, double garage with opener and laundry tub sink, washer and dryer located in the garage but there is also a hookup on the main level in a closet off of the guest bathroom, CENTRAL WATER AND SEWER, LOW QUARTERLY HOA FEES INCLUDE THE ROOF, excellent location just minutes to SR 82, I-75 and Ft Myers. NO FLOOD INSURANCE REQUIRED HERE. LEHIGH IS THE HIGHEST POINT IN LEHIGH.

Offered At.....\$225,000

Charlie Bonacolta 239-994-1062 charlisold@gmail.com

3/2 POOL HOME STEPS AWAY FROM CALOOSAHAATCHEE RIVER



Newly refurbished POOL HOME just feet from the CALOOSAHAATCHEE RIVER, quiet low traffic street, 3 bedroom 2 bath on an oversized lot, FENCED YARD, SCREEN ENCLOSED INGROUND POOL with new diamond brite finish, 22 X 12 covered screened lanai plus plenty of open deck space around the 35 X 41 pool area, oversized driveway for plenty of cars, boat or RV, covered carport plus 20 X 17 storage/utility room, freshly painted interior, NEW LUXURY VINYL PLANK FLOORS throughout the entire home, newly remodeled kitchen with QUARTZ countertops, new lower cabinets with soft close doors and drawers, newly remodeled bathrooms with new vanities, fixtures, commodes, soft close doors and drawers on the bathroom cabinets, master bedroom with large walk in closet, private bath with newly tiled shower, glass tile accents, QUARTZ tops in the bathrooms as well, new ceiling fans in the interior with new LED lighting, TRANE CENTRAL HEAT AND AIR NEW IN 2020. NEW METAL ROOF IN 2016.

Offered At.....\$259,900

Charlie Bonacolta 239-994-1062 charlisold@gmail.com

3/2 IN TOWN LAKES COMMUNITY



Pristine move in ready 3 bedroom home with a large den in the popular Town Lakes gated community! NEW ROOF IN 2023, tile throughout, kitchen was updated in 2024 with new stainless steel appliances, backsplash, and underneath lighting on the cabinets, exterior of the home was painted in 2024, property is one of the largest lots in Town Lakes with close to half an acre of land, central water and sewer, both a formal living room and a family room gives you plenty of space in this over 2,200 sq ft home! Large den that can be used as a home office, playroom, workout space, or even a 4th bedroom, huge backyard with beautiful views of the lake and nature, walk in closet in Master bedroom, master bathroom has been updated with a newly retiled shower and new vanities, dual sinks, indoor laundry room with washer and dryer included, located just minutes to Lee Blvd, I-75 and Ft Myers and walking distance to the newly renovated Williams Ave Community Park. NO FLOOD INSURANCE REQUIRED HERE. LEHIGH IS THE HIGHEST ELEVATION IN LEE COUNTY.

Offered At.....\$319,900

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3/2 IN COUNTRY CLUB ESTATES-OVERSIZED CORNER LOT



Excellent Country Club Estates location on an oversized corner lot beautifully landscaped with mature trees, palms avocado etc. NO mandatory HOA FEES OR RULES, CENTRAL WATER, NEW CENTRAL HEAT AND AIR IN 2021, NEW WATER HEATER IN 2018, NEW DIMENSIONAL SHINGLE ROOF IN 2016, the backyard has an above ground pool, covered trellis with water features, a large firepit area with landscape lighting, open patio, plenty of room for entertaining, storage shed, plenty of privacy, possibility of purchasing lot 2 behind the home at 18 Hampton Ave, oversized screened double garage with opener, NEWER French doors to the lanai from the formal living room and the breakfast, ceramic tile and parquet wood floors, formal living and dining room plus family room off of the kitchen with breakfast nook area, primary bedroom has a large walk in closet and ensuite private bath, guest bedrooms located on the other side of the home both with walk in closets, guest bath has pool bath with access to the backyard, indoor laundry room with laundry tub, side entry double garage with driveway access from Irwin Ave. Excellent location in a nice neighborhood atmosphere and minutes to SR-82, I-75 and Ft Myers yet walking distance to the stores, etc. NO FLOOD INSURANCE REQUIRED. LEHIGH IS THE HIGHEST ELEVATION IN LEE COUNTY.

Offered At.....\$295,000

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3 BEDROOM 2 BATH IN SW LEHIGH



Affordable 3 bedroom 2 bath in SW Lehigh, NEW DIMENSIONAL SHINGLE ROOF IN 2025, NEW WATER HEATER IN 2025, NEW CENTRAL HEAT AND AIR IN 2023, covered front porch plus a 10 X 25 screened lanai in the rear overlooking the backyard, oversized corner lot in an excellent location, quiet low traffic dead end street located just minutes to I-75, Ft Myers and SWFL International airport, cathedral ceilings, plant shelves, primary bedroom with walk in closet and private ensuite bathroom, built in desk/office area in the middle of the two guest bedrooms, breakfast bar and pantry in the kitchen with all appliances, indoor laundry room, NO FLOOD INSURANCE REQUIRED. LEHIGH IS THE HIGHEST ELEVATION IN LEE COUNTY.

Offered At.....\$280,000

Charlie Bonacolta 239-994-1062 charlisold@gmail.com

2/2 EAST GREENS CONDO - 55+ COMMUNITY



Spacious 1,700 sq. ft condo in the quiet community of East Greens. Located just feet away from the heated community pool and clubhouse, recently updated master bathroom with new wood like tile floors, dual sinks, new walk in shower with new tile and glass sliding door, storm shutters on most of the windows, this community is located in the middle of the Lehigh Resort Golf Course, beautiful views throughout, new roof in 2016, ceramic tile and wood laminate floors throughout, extra large indoor laundry room with plenty of extra cabinets, laundry tub etc, breakfast bar and pantry in kitchen with all appliances, central water and sewer, covered carport parking. 55+ Community, plenty of space with a large den and a Florida Room, attached carport.

Offered At.....\$205,000

Nick Bonacolta 239-887-0468 nbonacolta@gmail.com

2/2 + DEN VISTANNA VILLA



Popular Vistanna Villa 2 bedroom 2 bath with den that may be used as a THIRD BEDROOM, EXTENDED LANAI IN THE REAR 12 x 19 overlooking the golf course with plenty of privacy, common resort style pool plus a playground area, gated entry, excellent location just minutes to SR 82, I-75 and Ft Myers, newer luxury vinyl plank floors throughout, solid surface countertops in the kitchen with breakfast bar, pantry and stainless steel appliances including a French door refrigerator and brand new built in microwave, CENTRAL HEAT AND AIR NEW IN 2017 AND NEW WATER HEATER NEW IN 2017, primary bedroom in the rear with plenty of natural light, large walk in closet, ensuite primary bath with dual sinks with newer faucets, new commodes and tiled walk in shower, newer granite top in the guest bathroom with new commode as well, indoor laundry area with full size washer and dryer, plenty of room in the screened double garage with pull down stairs for storage and laundry tub, screened front entry door as well, screened from the front to the rear for excellent cross ventilation on those nice days. NO AGE RESTRICTIONS. Pets OK. NO FLOOD INSURANCE REQUIRED. LEHIGH IS THE HIGHEST ELEVATION IN LEE COUNTY.

Offered At.....\$239,900

Charlie Bonacolta 239-994-1062 charlisold@gmail.com

3 BEDROOM 2 BATH + DEN POOL HOME



Three bedroom two bath POOL HOME with a den that can easily be used as A FOURTH BEDROOM, ALMOST 2200 SQUARE FEET OF LIVING AREA, NEW DIMENSIONAL SHINGLE ROOF IN 2022, NEW CENTRAL HEAT AND AIR IN 2024, NEW GUTTERS IN 2024, excellent COUNTRY CLUB ESTATES LOCATION (NO HOA) ON A BEAUTIFULLY LANDSCAPED OVERIZED LOT, CANAL VIEWS, PLENTY OF PRIVACY, CENTRAL WATER AND SEWER, quiet low traffic street, SCREEN ENCLOSED IN GROUND POOL with plenty of covered and open space for entertaining, separate pergola on the pool deck, built in cabinets and countertops, plenty of room for outdoor TV etc., double door screened front entry leads to entry foyer, cathedral ceilings in the formal living room with SKYLIGHT and faux fireplace (was a working fireplace and may be opened up again) large formal dining room, open kitchen with large breakfast bar with QUARTZ tops, pendant lighting, oversized sink with disposal, newer cabinets with pull out shelving, all appliances, eat in kitchen/dinette area with pocket sliders to the pool area, upgraded wood laminate flooring with tile in the bathrooms, newly remodeled bathrooms with new vanities, QUARTZ tops, new commodes and fixtures including VINTAGE MOEN FAUCETS AND FIXTURES, primary bedroom with ensuite private bathroom featuring dual sinks, walk in shower with newly tiled floor, large walk in closet with plenty of built in custom shelving, formal living room leads to the family room under air with built in shelving, access to the pool area, French doors to the separate den/office/4th bedroom, custom wood molding, crown molding in guest bedroom, new interior doors throughout, oversized indoor laundry room with plenty of storage cabinets, full size washer and dryer and built in ironing board, oversized double garage with plenty of storage, one workbench will convey along with storage shelving, FRESHLY PAINTED EXTERIOR, 8 X10 storage shed in the yard, excellent move in condition with upgrades galore in a excellent location. This is a definite must see. NO FLOOD INSURANCE REQUIRED. LEHIGH IS THE HIGHEST ELEVATION IN LEE COUNTY.

Offered At.....\$400,000

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