

SWFL CHRONICLE

SERVING CHARLOTTE, LEE & COLLIER COUNTIES | AUGUST 2025



Naples Johnnie Reid, who works at the State Attorney’s office in Naples, just broke a national record at The Senior Games in Iowa. She ran 100 meters in 13.6 seconds in the 60-64 age group.

ASIAN REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR CONGRESS	6	EX NFL QB TEDDY BRIDGEWATER	30
ARMOR PERSONS LEE COUNTY SCHOOLS	10	DUNBAR SNUBBED BY COUNCILWOMAN	32
MARCO ISLAND: ZHERO	14	SENIORS & SEX FROM INTERCOURSE TO OUTERCOURSE	34

SWFL CHRONICLE

theswflchronicle.com

PRINT PRICING

Outside Back Cover \$1000

Ad size: 10" wide x 15" high. Or by pixel: 3,000 px wide x 4,500 px high.

Double Center Spread \$800

Ad size: 10" wide x 15" high. Or by pixel: 3,000 px wide x 4,500 px high.

Inside Front/Back Covers \$525

Ad size: 10" wide x 15" high. Or by pixel: 3,000 px wide x 4,500 px high.

Full Page \$450

Ad size: 10" wide x 15" high. Or by pixel: 3,000 px wide x 4,500 px high.

Half Page \$225

Ad size: 10" wide x 7.35" high. Or by pixel: 3,000 px wide x 2,205 px high.

Quarter Page \$125

Ad size: 4.875" wide x 7.35" high. Or by pixel: 1,463 px wide x 2,205 px high.

Business Card \$65

Ad size: 4.875" wide x 3.5" high. Or by pixel: 1,463 px wide x 1,050 px high.

AD DEADLINES & SPECS

DEADLINE FOR ADS IS THE 18TH OF THE MONTH PRIOR TO PUBLICATION.

Please send **PRINT READY ADS** to specifications listed below) High resolution PDF files are preferred but will accept .jpg and .png files as long as they are 300 dpi (high resolution).

Questions, please do not hesitate to contact production@oasgraphics.com.

**** E-mail pictures to:**

production@oasgraphics.com

**** Make checks payable to SWFL Chronicle,**

PO Box 61947, Fort Myers, FL 33906

(Memo line: SWFL Chronicle Ad & Size)

DIGITAL PRICING

Main Banner \$2,700

Homepage: 1,260 px wide x 240 px high. Pricing per month.

Video - Center \$2,400

YouTube Video. Centered. Pricing per month.

Ad One - Top \$1,500

Homepage, 600 px x 480 px. Pricing per month.

Ad Two - Bottom \$900

Homepage, 600 px x 480 px. Pricing per month.

Ad Three - inside pages \$750

Inside pages, 600 px x 480 px. Pricing per month.

WHO WE ARE

Publisher: McKinley G. Williams

Advertising Director/Operations: Elbert Zeigler

Administration: Maisha Custard

Distribution: Jean Pierre, Joe Wise, Frank Reagan, and Rebeca Gonzalez

Production: OAS Graphics

Photography: Broderick Hall

Contributing Writers: Vernon

Brown, Dr. Petruchka Moise,

Michael H. Blank, Monique

Wooley, Roberto Fuller,

Melvin Whitlock



GOT AN EVENT?

Visit us online at

theswflchronicle.com/community-events

Submit your community
event to go online.

theSWFLChronicle@gmail.com | Address: P.O. Box 61947, Fort Myers, Florida 33906

TOBLER CONSTRUCTION, INC.

COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE!

When it comes to construction
we do it all.

PROVEN EXPERIENCE

RESIDENTIAL | ROOFING | HVAC | COMMERCIAL

LOCAL TALENT

We take pride in our personal attention to detail and close relationships with our clients and would be honored to be considered for your future projects. We are in the business of building quality.

With our guaranteed pricing, easy step-by-step building process, and exceptional customer service we are dedicated to your project.



CGC1511572 CCC1327749 CMC1249805

📞 **239.337.1320**
🌐 TOBLERCONSTRUCTION.COM
✉ INFO@TOBLERCONSTRUCTION.COM
📍 3071 DR MARTIN LUTHER KING JR BLVD,
FORT MYERS 33916

Who Says Government Doesn't Get Things Done?

MAYOR TERESA LEE HEITMANN
CITY OF NAPLES

239-213-1000
Mayorheitmann@naplesgov.com



As we move through 2025, the Naples City Council remains focused on delivering progress that reflects our community's values, preserving our natural beauty, investing in resilience, and enriching the quality of life for all who call Naples home.

The first half of the fiscal year has been marked by meaningful achievements across a wide range of priorities. Here are just a few of note.

Leadership and Planning

In January, the Council appointed Gary Young as City Manager, effective February 1, 2025, bringing steady leadership to guide our vision for Naples' future. We also advanced long-term planning by approving a professional services agreement with Johnson Engineering to modernize the City's Comprehensive Plan. This critical update will reinforce our long-term goals, strengthen resilience strategies, manage growth thoughtfully, and preserve the unique character of our community.

Economic Development and the Arts

Naples continues to flourish as a center for culture and creativity. The beautifully renovated Sugden Theatre reopened in June 2024, earning LEED certification and offering improved acoustics, accessibility features, and a new sensory room. In October 2024, Gulfshore Playhouse unveiled the Baker Theatre and Education Center, featuring two state-of-the-art performance stages and expanded educational spaces that will inspire and enrich generations to come.

Infrastructure and Resilience

We have made significant investments in infrastructure and environmental resilience:

- In spring 2025, the new 1st Avenue South Parking Garage opened in the Design District, adding 364 free parking spaces to support downtown accessibility
- In January, the Council finalized a downtown traffic study contract to address congestion and enhance pedestrian safety
- In April, we approved a \$2.59 million contract to restore 30 beach access points damaged by Hurricanes Ian, Helene, and

Milton. These improvements include ADA compliant features, storm resilient pathways, and refreshed landscaping

- The Multi Basin Stormwater Plan, received in June 2025, lays the groundwork for long-term drainage solutions to protect both homes and natural habitats
- We also authorized the replacement of Raw Water Production Well No. 408 to ensure a reliable supply of potable water, and advanced stormwater lake restoration projects for North Lake and South Lake to improve water quality and flood control

Conservation and Stewardship

One of our most significant achievements this year was the permanent protection of 104 acres at the Naples Beach Club through a recorded conservation easement in October 2024. This vital step secures open space and recreational lands for public use and environmental preservation for generations to come.

Healthcare and Community Services

To expand access to life-saving medical care, the Council approved the site plan for the Naples Community Hospital Heart, Vascular, and Stroke Institute, with a ceremonial groundbreaking held in June 2025.

Strategic Investment in Key Corridors

In February 2024, the Council launched the conceptual master plan process for the Miracle Mile Corridor, an exciting opportunity to reimagine one of Naples' signature gateways and support thoughtful, well-designed development along this vital route.

It has been a productive and purpose-driven season, and we know that the challenges in the next legislative session will be just as demanding, invigorating, and full of opportunity. With your continued engagement and support, we will keep building a Naples that reflects the best of who we are, now and for future generations.

Blessings,
Mayor Teresa Lee Heitmann

morning art breaks

AMY MOGLIA HEUERMAN

Debut at Amy Art Gallery + Studio
in Partnership with The Bakery at Grappino
By: Amy Art Gallery + Studio
Beginning Sat Aug 16, 2025
10:30am to 11:30am

Held at Amy Art Gallery + Studio at 950 1st Avenue North in the Naples Design District—just steps from The Bakery at Grappino — the one-hour sessions offer a refreshing way to start the weekend, and a celebration of Naples’ creative spirit and sense of community—especially during the quieter summer season.

Each Morning Art Break features:

- **Guest Hosts & Insightful Dialogue:** Rotating experts lead conversations that explore art’s role in everyday life.
- **Art by Amy Moglia Heuerman:** Attendees will view and discuss original works by nationally known painter and gallery owner Amy Moglia Heuerman.
- **Pastries & Perks:** Light treats from The Bakery at Grappino and a coupon for savings at Grappino, exclusive to guests of the events.



To reserve, call Beth Preddy at 239-404-5014 or email beth@preddypr.com.

Enjoy an exclusive tour focused on Amy Moglia Heuerman’s coastal, figurative, and abstract works — exploring technique, materials, and artistic vision.

MORNING ART BREAK

SUMMER 2025 SCHEDULE

Saturday, August 16 • 10:30–11:30 a.m.

How to Buy Art

Host: Dr. Leslie Vega, Ph.D., Amy Art Gallery Director

Gain practical advice on starting or expanding an art collection, from understanding value to working with galleries. Ideal for beginning or experienced collectors.

Saturday, September 20 • 10:30–11:30 a.m.

Behind the Scenes at Amy Art Gallery

Host: Dr. Leslie Vega, Ph.D., Amy Art Gallery Director

Learn more at visitnaplesfl.com

30 Years of Experience

Chosen by the Florida State Chapter of the National Bar Association as one of 15 trailblazing Black Attorneys who were admitted to practice in the 1980's.

Donald Isaac Esq.
Attorney at Law

239-275-2200

5237 Summerlin Commons Blvd., Fort Myers, FL 33907



AREAS OF PRACTICE:

- Guardianships
- Probate of Estates, Administration of Trusts
- Real Estate Matters, Deeds, Landlord / Tenant Matters
- Drafting Wills, Trusts, and Durable Powers of Attorney
- Defense of Collection Lawsuits and Garnishments
- Civil Litigation
- Business Formation, Drafting Contracts, and Advice in Contract and Business Matters

Call for a consultation today, 239-275-2200

Evenings and Saturdays by appointment only | disaac@donaldisaaclaw.com

dear voters

of Lee, Charlotte, and Collier Counties,



Jenny Lu | Potential Republican Candidate for FL-19

I hope this letter finds you safe and well. I write to you today as an Asian-American Republican and long-time resident of Southwest Florida—working quietly behind the scenes but now on the fence about running for Florida’s 19th Congressional District seat, held by Representative Byron Donalds. I value your trust and want to be fully transparent about the motivations and challenges I’m wrestling with.

1. WHY I’M CONSIDERING A RUN

I’ve built my life here—rooted in values of hard work, community, and family. As an Asian-American conservative, I’ve often felt overlooked in our political representation, especially in a district as diverse as ours. If I run—and win—I’d bring fresh perspective: a commitment to conservative principles, shared typical life paths in faith, education, small business, and public safety, but with deeper representation of our Asian-American communities and an eye toward bridging cultural divides.

2. THE STAKES: IMMIGRATION, COMMUNITY SAFETY, AND TRUST

One major issue dominating the regional and national conversation is the recent establishment of the “Alligator Alcatraz” immigration detention center in Collier County’s Everglades. Built in late June 2025 through an executive order, this facility—named after the notorious Alcatraz prison and sited in remote swamps—can detain up to 5,000 migrants. It is operated by the Florida Division of Emergency Management alongside DHS, and began receiving detainees in early July 2025.

This facility was erected quickly and secretly—local officials in Collier were not informed until construction had already begun. It has raised serious concerns over executive overreach, environmental damage to the Everglades, and human rights. Critics call it “inhumane,” “psychological terror,” and “degrading,” especially in light of reports of worms in food, lack of medical care, and unsanitary tents.

Proponents, including Gov. Ron DeSantis, former President Trump, and Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, defend it as a necessary deterrent to illegal immigration and a model for expanding federal-state partnerships.

3. A LITMUS TEST FOR LEADERSHIP

This issue crystallizes a broader clash of values. As your potential House candidate, I view “Alligator Alcatraz” as a critical litmus test for conservative leadership in FL-19:

- If we **prioritize lawfulness** and border security, we must also ensure due process, environmental stewardship, and humane treatment.
- If we **distrust overreach**, especially where emergency powers sideline local voices, we must demand transparency and oversight.
- If we believe in **fiscal responsibility**, we must weigh the estimated \$450 million/year price tag, diverted from hurricane and disaster relief funds.
- If we **champion conservative compassion**, we must balance firm enforcement with fundamental decency and respect for legal norms.

4. MY TENTATIVE VISION

If I choose to run, here’s what voters can expect from me:

- **Responsible border policy:** Support comprehensive immigration reform—deterrence when warranted, but also legal pathways, watchdog enforcement, and clear congressional oversight.
- **Oversight of detention practices:** I will push for House hearings and full transparency regarding “Alligator Alcatraz” and similar facilities. Local, environmental, tribal, and human rights voices must be heard.
- **Environmental stewardship:** Protect fragile ecosystems like the Everglades—especially when emergency actions risk long-term damage.
- **Community safety and fiscal discipline:** Staffed with local input, facilities must operate within budget and legal standards—not as political theater.
- **Bridging representation gaps:** As an Asian-American Republican, I’ll fight stereotypes, amplify immigrant success stories, and strengthen conservative outreach to diverse communities.

5. WHY THIS MATTERS FOR LEE, CHARLOTTE, AND COLLIER

- **Lee County:** With expanding families, retirees, and a robust business base, voters want secure borders—but also sustainable growth and preserved quality of life.
- **Charlotte County:** Rural and suburban voters seek assurance that their voices aren’t drowned out—or bypassed—by state executive orders.
- **Collier County:** The epicenter of the controversy, where residents were blindsided. They deserve accountability and stronger local input.

Across all three counties, voters can reinforce what kind of leadership they want: conservative, yes—but also just, humane, and community-focused.

6. YOUR ROLE IN THIS DECISION

Before deciding, I’m listening—to you.

- What concerns do you have about “Alligator Alcatraz”?
- Would you support a conservative candidate who emphasizes oversight and human dignity?
- What other issues—economy, education, healthcare—top your list for Congress?

Your feedback right now will shape whether or not I step forward. I’ll host listening sessions in our communities soon, and I invite all of you to join the conversation.

This is more than just a possible campaign; it’s a moment of truth. Will Southwest Florida accept a candidate who seeks to blend strong conservative values with principled oversight and compassionate governance? Your voices can make this happen.

Thank you for considering, for caring, and for being part of shaping our region’s future leadership.

With respect and hope,

Jenny Lu

Southwest Florida Resident &

Potential Republican Candidate for FL-19





Veronica Shoemaker

FLORIST

A Professional Certified Full-Service Florist

"Fabulous Flower Arrangements with Flair"

Flowers and Gifts for Every Occasion

Every customer is very important to us. Our expert florists and professional staff are dedicated to making your experience a pleasant one.

Call Now to Place Your Order!

Phone: 239-332-1802 Fax: 239-332-4588

Hours of Operation

M—F 8:30 a.m.– 5:30 p.m. & Saturday 9 a.m.—1 p.m.

3510 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Fort Myers, FL 33916

www.VeronicaShoemakerFlorist.net



Manatee & Eco River Tours

UNFORGETTABLE ADVENTURES

Embark on a Journey Like No Other – Discover Hidden Gems on the Water with Our Exclusive Boat Tours

(239) 693-1434



More than just a boat ride!

Take a comfortable ride on the new accessible, covered, and dog-friendly 40-foot pontoon boat that can hold up to 24 passengers and 2 crew members. However, we have a minimum of 6 passengers required in order to operate. Check your calendars and plan a trip with us! You'll be glad you did!

Call today **(239) 693-1434**

manateeandecorivertours.com | swfl.ManateeTours@gmail.com

Who Am I?

THE RISE OF ZHERO

BY (ZHERO)



I am not here for fame. I'm here for impact. Making sure to mentor myself through my trauma. Healing my inner child. Sharpening my voice to one day lead a reformation of the system starting with Southwest Florida then one day, the world.

MY NAME IS ZHERO.

Blessed with the gift of discernment and cursed with the weight of truth, I was born to see through illusion. Questioning everything from systems, stories and structures. Never seeking the convenient answer, but the divine truth. I was created in duality, a man of both light and shadow. A soul forged from pain, speaking for those the world attempts to forget.

Zhero is not just a name he is my altar, my weapon, and my response to oppression. He is the warrior I became when nobody listened. The voice I had to create when the world turned its back on me and my family. He is the prophet of Misfit Island, where the broken, the black sheep, and the brave come together, not to beg, but to build.

But to know Zhero, you must rewind...

BACK TO 1997, NAPLES, FLORIDA.

In a city known more for its wealth than its wounds, a different kind of soul entered this world. Ed wasn't born into comfort or privilege. He was born into resistance. The oldest of six, raised by his grandmother, a quiet warrior with iron strength, he had to grow up fast. His mother was battling mental health challenges. While she did her best, it was his grandmother who stepped in. Ed had to become a protector before he could ever indulge in his childhood. He's been through it all. From homelessness to trap houses, to living in the kind of hell that hardens most men. But through every storm, he carried something sacred. An unshakable hope in himself and faith in his Creator. That is what kept him breathing, kept him building, what pushed him to sacrifice for his loved ones. This is what molded me into the man I am today.

WHAT I REPRESENT?

God doesn't waste pain. I became a builder instead of a victim. Brick by brick, I am constructing my legacy for my son, for my people, and for the kingdom of God.

I will walk through fire yet will come out colder. Never flinching at pressure because I was raised in it. Studying law through survival. Speaking politics, business, and Black history with the mind of a scholar and the heart of a revolutionary. I write like Pac. I question like Malcolm. I lead like Moses. I hurt like Job. And I pray like Levi.

I represent every misfit who's been called "too Black" or "too white". "Every kid who lost their voice in the foster system. Every father still fighting to break generational curses. Every mother battling addiction. Every soul told they'd never be enough. Every and Anyone carrying trauma caused by the system.

MY MISSION

Zhero is proof that even the coon can evolve. That even the lost can lead. God uses the worst of us to reveal the light we carry.

I am not here for fame. I'm here for impact. Making sure to mentor myself through my trauma. Healing my inner child. Sharpening my voice to one day lead a reformation of the system starting with Southwest Florida then one day, the world.

I fight for the unheard, for the poor, for the homeless and for humanity and above all for the Kingdom of God.

In a world of governments and empires, I refuse to bow to anything less than the Most High. I am a champion of truth. A prophet of the people. A son of struggle. A father of hope.

I am Zhero.

And the kingdom is coming.



St Mary's Missionary Baptist Church Food Pantry Board Brunch



The Church's Secretary Stephanie Hall presented Anna Callwood with Certificate of Appreciation for her prominent role as The Church Advisor.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED for St. Missionary Baptist Church Food Pantry. Saint Mary Missionary Baptist Church has partnered with Harry Chapman food bank to provide food for the local community. Volunteers are needed.

Please give your time to help those in need and support the local families in Punta Gorda.



The North Law Firm, P.A.

Accident and Injury Cases

Call Joseph Jr. at (239) 337-1191

Car & Truck Accidents
Motorcycle Accidents
Drunk Driving Accidents
Serious Injury Cases
Family Law
Custody & Support Cases
Paralysis Cases
Apartment Shootings
Gun Violence Cases

Workers Compensation
Wrongful Death Cases
Pedestrian Accidents
Bicycle Accidents
Dog Bite Cases
Slip & Fall Accidents
Negligent Security Cases
Settlements
Courtroom Trials

Joseph Jr. is here for you!

TheNorthLawFirm.com

5220 Summerlin Commons Blvd., Suite 300
Fort Myers, Florida 33907

Attorney Joseph North, Jr.

Armor Persons

LEE COUNTY SCHOOL'S HOMEGROWN ADVOCATE

BY MCKINLEY G. WILLIAMS

One of the most powerful titles any man can have in any educational system is the title of “Coach.” When a student, parent, school administrator, or even the school’s resource officer calls a man “Coach” it signifies: authority, endearment, mentorship, and trust. That is exactly what Armor Person embodies.

Armor Persons is a sixth-generation Lee County native, whose deep roots in our public school system run from Edison Park Elementary to Fort Myers High School. With a family tradition of attending local schools—including his own children, and now his grandchildren—Armor brings a powerful personal commitment to serving the community he knows inside and out.

Growing up in Fort Myers, Armor attended Edison Park Elementary, moved on to Fort Myers Junior High, and received his diploma from Fort Myers High School in 1971. After high school, he pursued further studies at Edison State College and Florida Southern College. He has lived in North Fort Myers and runs his local business, Courtmaster, in Southwest Florida for over 30 years—a tennis-court construction, resurfacing, and maintenance company that has become a trusted fixture across the region.

Armor’s deep ties to education extend beyond his own schooling: he later coached youth tennis, earning the nickname Coach, and shared his passion and discipline with countless students across the county. Through his work with Wilson Sports, membership in the US Pro Tennis Association, and advisory roles in local tennis programs, Armor has inspired generations of children to pursue excellence both on and off the court.



In August 2022, Armor Persons unseated incumbent Gwynetta Gittens *(picture of Gwynetta Gittens) in the District 5 primary, winning with 55% of the vote—clearly signaling community trust in his vision and leadership. The race, which covers Lehigh Acres and part of North Fort Myers, gave him the seat.

He officially began his term in November 2022, which runs through November 2026.

Soon after he joined the board, widespread concerns including Hurricane Ian’s cascading impact on the district budget and increased school safety threats galvanized him to act. One of his first priorities was advocating for the Guardian Program, a plan to allow trained school staff to volunteer as armed guardians to enhance security—a proposal he had campaigned on and later successfully passed through the board in May 2023. The policy had failed multiple times under previous boards, but with Armor’s resolution, community outreach, and law-enforcement support, it was unanimously approved—a historic shift permitted by the board’s new culture of cooperation and conservative



alignment.

Armor has emphasized budget transparency and accountability throughout his tenure. Working alongside fellow new board members, he helped bring in external oversight, including an audit by the Lee County Clerk of Court, to bolster public trust in the district’s nearly \$2 billion operations and internal processes. He frequently advocates for open-door communication, workshops, and parent inclusion—marking a sharp shift from prior board culture toward more participatory governance.

Facing rapid population expansion—especially in the East Zone (including North Fort Myers, Alva, Lehigh Acres, and others)—Armor has helped oversee major capital investments. In March 2024, he described the district’s \$1.5 billion Capital Plan, earmarked to add three new high schools, three middle schools, and four elementary schools, creating over 12,000 additional seats. Already underway are new schools like Amanecer Elementary and Lemuel Teal Middle, plus expansions and renovation projects such as a 200-seat pre-K addition at G. Weaver Higgs and a \$100 million overhaul of Riverdale High School. Armor views these investments as critical to serving growing communities fairly and proactively.

As the former Board Chair, Armor Persons has highlighted the strengths of the School District of Lee County versus private alternatives—particularly its—programmatic breadth and open accessibility. In April 2025, he detailed the district’s offerings:

- Advanced academic tracks including AP, Cambridge AICE, IB, and Dual Enrollment with Florida SouthWestern State College—at no cost to families.



- Extensive Career & Technical Education (CTE) across 17 career clusters, equipping students with industry-recognized certifications, from IT to health sciences.
- The one of nation’s largest JROTC program (over 7,000 cadets in 15 high schools), cultivating leadership, discipline, and scholarship for future careers or military service.
- Intensive early intervention in reading and math, support for neurodiverse learners, and enrichment programs to help students graduate on schedule.

Through these initiatives, Armor consistently promotes the message: public education in Lee County is both equitable and high-quality—and open to every student, regardless of background.

Armor has never shied away from sensitive or controversial civic topics. In November 2024, he authored a public board message explaining the district’s alignment with Florida’s Fairness in Women’s Sports Act (SB 1028), under which students must participate and use facilities according to their biological sex assigned at birth. He framed it as following state law while ensuring fair opportunity for female athletes to compete and earn recognition in a structured environment. He emphasized the policy with care and respect, giving weight both to legal compliance and to the perspectives of students and parents.

Armor’s deep family legacy in public schools, his role as a grandparent of current students, and his 30+ years of coaching and mentorship via tennis reflect the lived values he brings to his board service. His nickname “Coach” underscores how central youth engagement and personal guidance are to his identity.

His small-business background in running Courtmaster gives him a unique perspective on community needs—especially in relation to infrastructure, internships, employment pathways, and technical careers. Firmly embedded in the East Lee County business and educational landscape, he serves as a practical liaison between local families, schools, and economic development.

In Short, Armor Persons has brought to the Lee County School Board:

- **Local heritage:** As a life-long resident and multi-generation school family, he brings an authentic connection to the district’s heritage.
- **Safety initiatives:** He championed the Guardian Program, helping secure unanimous board approval.
- **Fiscal transparency:** He supported external audits and open budgeting to restore public confidence.
- **Infrastructure planning:** He backed massive capital investments to respond fairly to East Zone growth.
- **Academic and career access:** He enhanced visibility for public academic excellence and workforce preparation, from AP to CTE and JROTC.
- **Policy clarity:** He addressed difficult issues—like transgender participation in sports—with thoughtfulness and legal grounding.
- **Community engagement:** Through his small

business, coaching, and local involvement, Armor fosters trust and visibility across diverse communities.

As his term continues through 2026, Armor Persons remains focused on building upon recent gains. His priorities include:

- Ensuring ongoing equity in school funding and planning, especially for growing but underserved areas.
- Continuing support for the Guardian Program, while refining training, oversight, and communication with families.
- Expanding academic and professional pathways, particularly in CTE partnerships that link schools with local employers—including potentially through his own tennis business or allied sports industries.
- Fostering a collaborative board culture that listens to parents, respects diverse viewpoints, and anchors decisions in student-first. Armor Persons’ journey—from a sixth-generation student in the same schools, to coaching young athletes, running a community business, and ultimately serving on the school board—embodies a rare fusion of local legacy, hands-on mentorship, and public leadership.



He has helped shepherd policy changes—from school safety to student equity—and backed bold infrastructure plans to meet the needs of rapidly growing communities.

For Lee County families in District 5 and beyond, Armor represents the kind of public servant who understands local schools from the classroom to the boardroom. Through his deep roots, conservative policy priorities, active community presence, and sustained dedication to youth, Coach Armor Persons continues to mentor not only through tennis, but through strategic, responsive governance—always putting the well-being and success of students first.

For Lee County families in District 5 and beyond, Armor represents the kind of public servant who understands local schools from the classroom to the boardroom. Through his deep roots, conservative policy priorities, active community presence, and sustained dedication to youth, Coach Armor Persons continues to mentor not only through tennis, but through strategic, responsive governance—always putting the well-being and success of students first.

Lee County parents are pleased to have a humble servant on the front line in Armor Persons.

THE SWFL CHRONICLE
PROUDLY WELCOMES
JUDGE SEAN LUX
TO THE CHARLOTTE
COUNTY BENCH



The SWFL Chronicle is proud to officially welcome Judge Sean Lux as one of the newest members of the Charlotte County bench.

Judge Lux was honored in a heartfelt investiture ceremony, surrounded by family, colleagues, and community leaders. A veteran of the U.S. Air Force and a former trial attorney, Judge Lux brings decades of experience in public service and the legal profession. His commitment to justice, integrity, and the people of Southwest Florida will undoubtedly shape his service on the bench.

Among the notable speakers were State Attorney Amira Fox, Judge Lux’s former supervisor; his wife, Debi Lux, who also serves as Mayor of Punta Gorda; and Attorney Richard Ruhl, his law partner of nearly four years. In a symbolic and touching moment, Judge Lux was sworn in by Circuit Judge Shannon McFee, who played a pivotal role in encouraging his judicial journey. His father, Wayne Lux, had the honor of assisting with the traditional enrobing, marking a proud moment for the entire Lux family. The ceremony was presided over by Chief Judge J. Frank Porter.

Judge Lux is widely regarded as a humble, principled, and community-focused leader. Together with his wife Debi, he has long been deeply invested in the betterment of Charlotte County, not just in public service but also through civic and charitable engagement. Their shared dedication to the region reflects a vision of leadership rooted in service, accessibility, and care for their neighbors.

Judge Sean Lux’s addition to the judiciary brings a powerful combination of legal acumen, military discipline, and genuine community spirit to the Charlotte County bench. The SWFL Chronicle congratulates him and looks forward to the continued positive impact he will have in our courts and community.

KUDOS MY FRIEND. I BELIEVE IN YOU AND AM SURE YOU WILL DO AN EXCELLENT JOB FOR THE PEOPLE OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY.

*McKinley G. Williams, Publisher
Southwest Florida Chronicle*



OUR MISSION

Is to cultivate a community of believers where we serve together, grow together and do life together by adding redemptive value to every person, relationship, and family!

OUR VISION

Is to provide relevant ministry to the whole person: every spirit that yearns for hope, every soul that is seeking peace, everybody that needs healing and every person in search of a deeper relationship with God!

OUR VALUES

Relevance, Excellence, Justice, Generosity, Service, Leadership, Healthy living, and Love.

Sunday Service Every Sunday at 11am

AUGUST 23, 2025 | MEN’S FELLOWSHIP GANES

An engaging gathering for men to connect, compete in games, and strengthen brotherhood in faith.

AUGUST 31 | YOUTH SUNDAY

A dynamic worship service led by youth, showcasing their gifts and spiritual growth.

2856 Douglass Ave, Ft. Myers, FL 33916 | mthermonchurch.org

This must be the turning point in my life.

It must be. Your strength will make me perfect even in the strongest of temptations. You in my life will enable me to live in the freedom that I need. That I have desired so long for. My dreams lie beyond the ordinary and my reasoning for that matter how beautiful this is. It will not be about what I do it will be about how I do what I do. It will be substantially real, other times it will be hidden and subtle. Only you would take me to 1000 places I would never go on my own. Places that may be uncomfortable and inconvenient. You have always started in a small way with me.

It's time to do something. Anything. And if the water gets too deep I know that you're the one leading me there. And I will never drown... and I trust you to hold me up. Deep unto deep. Perhaps true faith isn't always this way. Sometimes, however, I can't be completely sure. I will act on the part of your direction that I do understand and the results are yours and when I don't understand I still go. Someone has to make the first move. Still my thinking and my actions need to be grounded. The hard times that I've endured is what is shaping me and that is how I am growing. Time.

Time such a scared gift. And this has been very costly. Very. Nothing will be as it was. Is that a good thing? Your word says that you give and you take away but your word also says that you will restore

double what was lost. I cling to that while you do this very deep work in my heart. I am made for depth. And I'm not the person I used to be. You have taught me to dream again and you have planted vision inside of my heart a kind of vision that lets me see the invisible things.

The struggles I've been through have sometimes pushed me to the place where I have easily lost track of the truth. The difficulties will continue to come. I look back at my life and I can see you in it everywhere. You want me to respond even when opposition comes and it comes. My focus will not be in the wrong place anymore no matter what. You are my refuge. You protect me. You cover me. And nothing I could ever do or say or believe or suffer will ever change that. Who I am is still unfolding. I think this is going to help anyone that carries a heaviness today. Because when I wrote this.. I was in a heavy place.

The future that is ahead is infinite compared to what is behind. You will teach things over and over until I learn them. You're not letting me go. I will not be discouraged with what I am still working through. Don't you see it? How when people gave up on me you were always still there? Well I'm ready. I'm ready now for what's next my heart is ready I am wiser now and I'm stronger now. I've learned so so much through all the hard places. I survived this season and I am hopeful now I'm not in darkness anymore anything that is truly for me in my life you will not let get away from me.





Attorney Joe North



The North Law Firm, P.A.

Accident and Injury Cases

Call Joe at (239) 337-1191

Car & Truck Accidents	Workers Compensation
Motorcycle Accidents	Wrongful Death Cases
Drunk Driving Accidents	Pedestrian Accidents
Serious Injury Cases	Bicycle Accidents
Family Law	Dog Bite Cases
Custody & Support Cases	Slip & Fall Accidents
Paralysis Cases	Negligent Security Cases
Apartment Shootings	Settlements
Gun Violence Cases	Courtroom Trials

Joe North has been helping clients with injury cases and death cases for more than 30 years.

TheNorthLawFirm.com

5220 Summerlin Commons Blvd., Suite 300
Fort Myers, Florida 33907

We Live Where You Vacation, But What Happens When We Can't Afford To?

BY ZHERO

Southwest Florida is shifting before our eyes. Locals across Charlotte, Lee, and Collier counties are watching in quiet heartbreak. The traffic is worse than ever before as well as rent being at an all-time high and continuing to rise. The places we grew up in are turning into overpriced playgrounds for snowbirds, retirees, and investors. Benefiting everyone except for the actual locals.



COMMUNITY TO COMMUTER

Each morning, the highway to Collier County crawls with a slow-moving river of cars. Brake lights glow like embers in the early dawn. Inside the vehicles, drivers sit quietly, gripped by routine and resilience. Some listen to talk radio, while some scroll through phones. Others clutch their morning coffee, sleepy-eyed and quiet. Meanwhile, the lanes heading back toward Lee County remain almost empty.

Eerie roads that whisper a hard truth. The people who build, serve, and maintain these communities are being pushed away. Forced to chase a living from the outskirts.

This daily migration is more than a traffic pattern. It is a powerful symbol of a deeper change. A shift from rooted neighborhoods to a commuter economy, stretched across county lines. Some call it slow motion displacement. Costs rising so high causing a gradual ejection of working families from the homes they have passed down for generations.

Nearly one-third of the local workforce, more than 52,000 people, now commute in from outside the county. Not by choice, but by necessity. Teachers, EMTs, bus drivers, and retail workers who keep this place running cannot live in the towns they serve. That weakens schools, strains services and it erodes community bonds.

Civic engagement from the local families disappears with them. There are fewer voters, fewer advocates, fewer neighbors willing to speak up. In their absence, wealthier seasonal residents take control. Policy shifts, priorities change, the gap between where we live and where we work grows larger by the mile. With it, the soul of Southwest Florida begins to fray.

THE DISAPPEARING LOCAL BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

Beloved mom and pop shops are vanishing. In their place come upscale boutiques, self-storage buildings, high end chains, or empty storefronts waiting for the next developer's blueprint.

More than thirty restaurants across Lee and Collier counties closed in early 2025. Local favorites like "Bistro Forty-One", "Cru", "Bonita Bill's", "Voodoo Brewing Company", and "Divine Donuts". Gone. In Punta Gorda, "Dean's South of the Border" closed its doors after 30 years and put the property up for sale. Naples has lost long standing staples like "Yabba Island Grill", "Ziggy D'Amico's Whiskey Bar and Diner", "AZN Asian Cuisine", and "The Pearl Steak and Seafood".



These are not just business closures. These are cultural landmarks. They are places where memories were made and families gathered, but now they are fading and fast!

HOUSING IS OUTPACING INCOME

According to the "Florida Gulf Coast University Housing Affordability Index", first-time buyers can no longer afford median-priced homes in any of the three major counties. Even repeat buyers are being priced out of Lee and Charlotte. Only Collier remains barely within reach, and even that is slipping.

In early 2025, Collier's housing affordability score fell to 0.85. This means the average person does not qualify for a median-priced home. In Lee and Charlotte, affordability improved slightly, but the reality remains harsh.

In just 5 years, home prices in Southwest Florida rose by more than 60%.

Lee County climbed 67.8%.

Collier rose 62.3%.

Charlotte jumped 69.7%.

And wages barely moved.



THE RENT BURDEN

Rent prices are exploding even faster. In 2022, the average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment required more than 38% of household income – well above the recommended 30% threshold. In Lee County alone, rent jumped 47% in a single year.

More than 44% of residents rent rather than own. In Collier, the median rent for a 3-bedroom unit can climb to \$6,800 per month. Meanwhile, most essential workers earn between \$40,000 and \$50,000 per year.

So, What Now

This is not about left or right. It is not about red or blue. It is about stewardship. It is about legacy. It is about whether working people have a future here.

Because, if the people who ring the registers, clean the streets, and teach the children can no longer afford to live nearby, then what kind of community are we building?

We live where you vacation.

We work where you live.

This is not a complaint. It is a call, for fairness, for accountability, and a future where families can put down roots and build something lasting.

Let us not become tourists in our own home. Let us reclaim the promise of Southwest Florida. Not just for the few, but for all.

■ ■ ■ ■
**QUICK
FOOD
MART**



Stop by today!

1802 Victoria Ave
Fort Myers, FL 33901

Open 6a-10p everyday

■ ■ ■ ■

Utopia UniSex Salon

where ideas become perfection

Shop - (239) 337-7574 or Cell - (239) 745-8423
DeborahANewson@yahoo.com

3069 Martin Luther King Blvd.
Fort Myers, Florida 33916



Lighthouse Grill & Tiki Bar
260 Maryland Ave.
Channel Marker 17A
Englewood, FL 34224





Dolphin Tiki Bar & Grill

Marco Island

1021 Anglers Cove
Marco Island 34145

The **Minnows** group
(ages 5 - 7) of the Edison Sailing
Class had a fantastic time in July.



Edison Sailing Center
1420 Del Rio Dr
Fort Myers FL 33901



**Business
Network Inc.**

1631 Del Prado Blvd. S Suite 300 #1080
Cape Coral, FL 33990
Office: (239) 313-3700 Cell: (941) 421-8754
www.EZBusinessNetwork.com
info@EZBusinessNetwork.com

Social Media is not a substitute for a website. They could shutdown your account without warning. You need a website because it is yours! You own it!

Turn Your Business Card into a Powerful Online Tool!

With a Digital QR Code Business Card
Online Presence with QR Code Website
Custom QR Code links to your 1-page website
Listing on EZToUse.org business directory

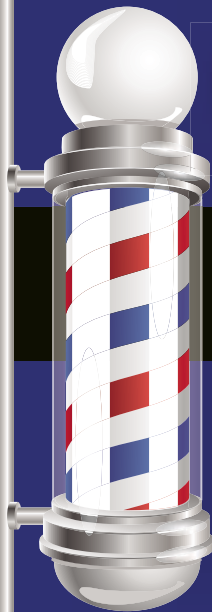
EZToUse.org

"If You're Not Online You Don't Exist!"



"Call Us Today We'll Get Started Today!"

50% Off Sale Act Now!
Offer Ends Soon
Setup \$100 | \$25/month



M & M HAIR MECHANIKS

We specialize in "Fine Tuning The Hair"

WALK-INS WELCOME!
772-332-1935 MOSES

3102 Lincoln Blvd. Fort Myers, FL 33916
239-771-8764 | mlrayner7@aol.com

f HAIRMECHANIKS

**Custom
Made Tees**

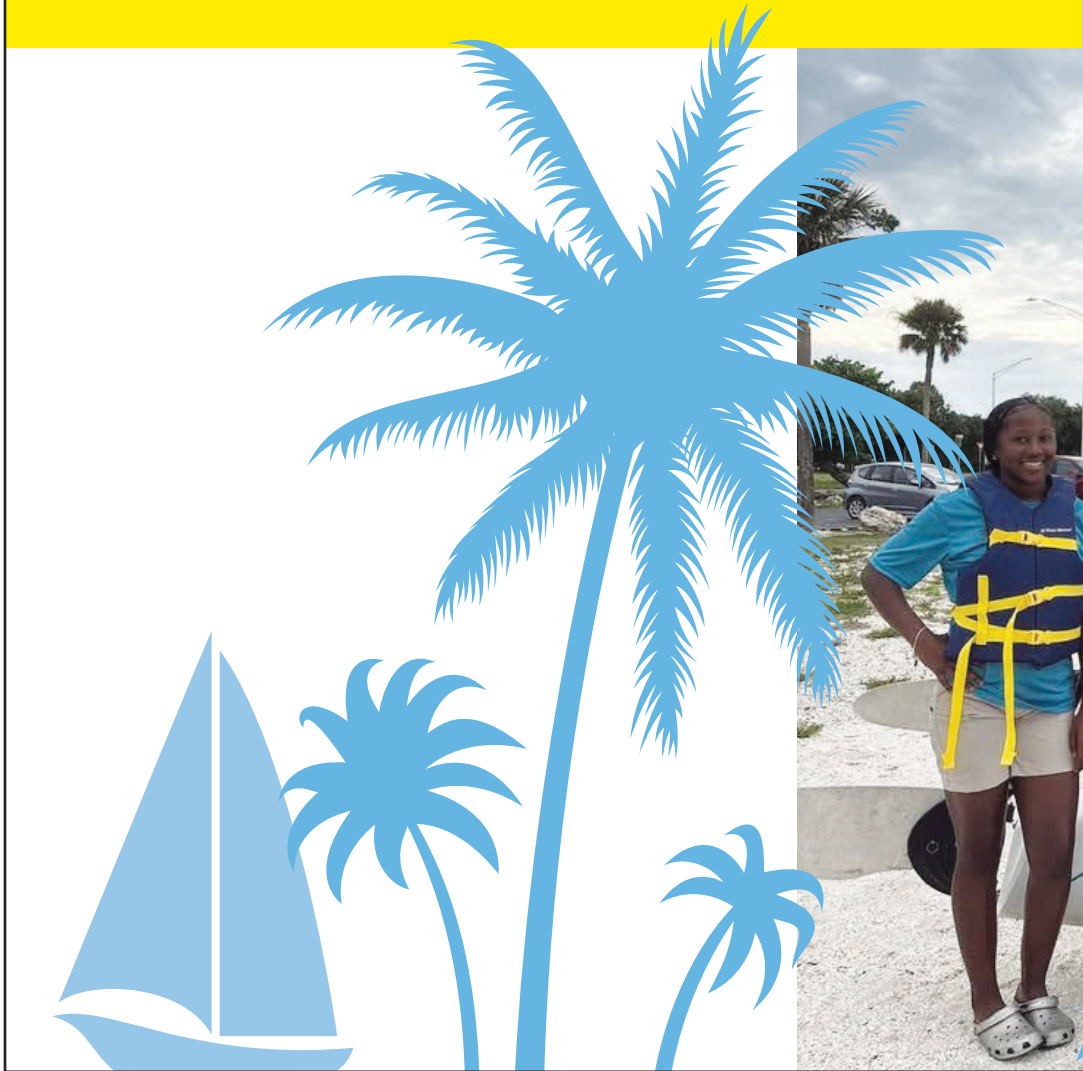
We'll bring your
custom design to life!

Cache Kelly, Owner
(239) 204-1881
lapd2k23@gmail.com



www.lapd2k23.com
LaChe's ArtPrint & Design

A group from Dunbar's STARS Organization participated in sailing classes as well in July.



SHERIFF CARMINE MARCENO REMINDS YOU...

School Bus Safety Tips

1. BE ON TIME. DON'T RUN TO OR FROM THE BUS.
2. STAND BACK FROM THE CURB.
3. CROSS AT LEAST 10 FEET IN FRONT OF THE BUS.
4. DON'T CRAWL NEAR THE BUS IF YOU DROPPED SOMETHING.
5. WAIT FOR THE BUS TO COME TO A COMPLETE STOP.
6. NEVER WALK BEHIND THE BUS.



Hiring a good personal injury attorney is crucial for several reasons:

- 1

EXPERTISE IN PERSONAL INJURY LAW: Personal injury law can be complex, and having an attorney who specializes in this area ensures that you have someone who understands the nuances of these cases. This includes knowledge of statutes of limitations, liability laws, and the specifics of what victims are entitled to in terms of compensation.
- 2

VALUING YOUR CLAIM: An experienced personal injury attorney will know how to properly value your claim. This involves understanding and quantifying not just direct costs like medical bills, but also intangibles like pain and suffering, loss of enjoyment of life, future medical bills, and lost earning capacity.
- 3

NEGOTIATION SKILLS: Most personal injury cases are settled out of court. An attorney with strong negotiation skills will be able to ensure that you receive a fair settlement, as they'll know how to present evidence, counter lowball offers, and argue effectively on your behalf.
- 4

ACCESS TO RESOURCES: Good personal injury attorneys have access to a network of experts, from medical professionals to accident reconstructionists. These experts can testify on your behalf or provide important information to strengthen your case.
- 5

OBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVE: After an accident, you may be dealing with physical pain, emotional trauma, and stress. A personal injury attorney offers an objective perspective on your situation and can make decisions based on the facts and law rather than emotions.
- 6

CONTINGENCY FEE BASIS: Many personal injury attorneys work on a contingency fee basis, meaning they only get paid if you do. This aligns their interests with yours, as they have a vested interest in ensuring you receive the maximum possible settlement or judgment.
- 7

FACING INSURANCE COMPANIES: Insurance companies are in the business of making money, which means they'll often aim to minimize payouts. A seasoned personal injury attorney knows the tactics these companies use and can counteract them to ensure your rights are protected.
- 8

COURT EXPERIENCE: If negotiations fail and your case goes to trial, having an attorney with court experience is invaluable. They'll understand the procedures, what evidence is compelling, and how to present your case effectively to a jury.
- 9

SAVES TIME: Dealing with the aftermath of an accident can be time-consuming. From obtaining medical records to communicating with insurance adjusters, a personal injury attorney can handle these tasks for you.
- 10

PEACE OF MIND: Knowing that you have a competent professional handling your case allows you to focus on recovery and healing. They'll ensure all paperwork is filed correctly, deadlines are met, and that you're kept informed throughout the process.

Ultimately, while it's possible to handle a personal injury claim on your own, the expertise and guidance provided by a good personal injury attorney can make a significant difference in the outcome of your case.

BY MCKINLEY G. WILLIAMS

ARIAS LAW FIRM, P.A.

VICTOR M. ARIAS, ESQ.

ATTORNEY & COUNSELOR AT LAW



- Accidents
- DUI Defense
- Personal Injury
- Criminal Defense
- Workers' Compensation
- Social Security Disability

239-945-2121

varias@ariaslawfirm.com

www.AriasLawFirm.com

📍 **3013 DEL PRADO BLVD. SUITE 6 CAPE CORAL, FLORIDA 33904**

Fekel Attineaux
estero, fl



If you had told me five years ago I'd be trying to build one of Florida's largest Christmas light businesses, decorating homes, lighting up commercial buildings, and now wanting to help motivate the next generation of leaders, I'd probably ask what you were smoking.

But in one of the hardest years of my life, I had to make a decision.

I was in a dark place mentally, unsure what was next, and trying to find something, anything, that would keep me pushing forward. I saw a post from one of those business guru types that started with, "How to make \$100,000 hanging Christmas lights." I'd be lying to you if I said I didn't roll my eyes and literally say, "There's no way I'm making \$100K doing that."

But something about it stuck. Maybe if I could make someone else happy, I could borrow a little of that for myself. That first season turned into the thing that kept me going. One house led to three. Three led to ten. Suddenly I had a second job on my hands and a reason to show up to life with more energy and a reason to keep growing.

In 2021, SWFL Lights was born. Now, that same company is Gulf Coast Holidays (GCH), and we're heading into our fifth Christmas season.

We've grown into a full-service holiday lighting business and added a year-round division that focuses on outdoor

architectural lighting, landscape lighting, and event lighting. The goal? Keep growing, keep creating jobs, and keep making things brighter, literally and figuratively, for homeowners, small businesses, and non-profit organizations across the Gulf Coast. We're aiming to go from four to ten full-time team members by January, and this year we're committed to giving away over \$75,000 in lighting services to local families, nonprofits, and organizations that are doing good work in the community.

And yeah, it's a bold target, but we're serious about it. It's not about the attention. It's just part of the mission. If we're going to grow, we want to grow with purpose. And to us, giving comes before getting.

I've had my share of tough breaks. When Hurricane Ian came through, Christmas lights weren't exactly top of mind for most people. I've lost clients, including one that hit for \$30K. I slept in my car for a few months. But we stuck with it.

A big part of our identity is keeping things accessible. While a lot of companies focus on large estates and big-ticket installs as nice as those are, we're still here for the people who just want something simple that makes them feel good. The old couple who doesn't want to hop on a ladder anymore. The new homeowner lighting up their first place. The business who wants their palm trees to shine a little brighter. The church or non-profit that needs a small glow-up for the holidays. That's where we started, and we don't plan to lose sight of it.

We're always looking for new people to join the team, too. You don't need experience in lighting. You don't need a resume with fancy credentials. If you're motivated, reliable, and want to win, reach out. We'll train you. We want people who are serious about showing up and doing good work.

Over the years, I've learned the value of collaboration. One of the first people who gave me time and perspective was Peter

at Light Up Naples. He called me out of the blue and invited me to lunch. At first, I thought he was going to size me up as a competitor. Instead, he gave me advice, we traded stories, and we both walked away better. Unfortunately for him, I stuck to him like glue. He’s been an instrumental part of our growth, and i don’t know where i’d be without his advice. It was the first time I understood there’s room for competition and collaboration to coexist. Iron sharpens iron.

I didn’t set out to get involved in local politics, it kind of happened naturally. I started showing up, helping out with events, and talking to the people behind the scenes. Over time, that led to joining the Lee County Republican Executive Committee, and it gave me a closer look at how things actually move. Not just in politics, but what really goes into building a community.

At the same time, I was going to networking events as a business development professional, attending nonprofit meetings, and pitching in wherever I could. Whether it was a breakfast with HOA and buildings manager, an apartment association volleyball event, or a community cleanup, one thing became clear: I kept seeing the same thing: there’s a lot of opportunity to make a difference if you’re willing to show up. And even more room to build if you actually stay consistent.

Around that time, I also stepped into a business development role at a local construction company. I was a newbie to sales, but I treated it like a gym. Showed up every day. Asked questions. Took the hits and learned from them. Within a year, I helped generate over \$2.5 million in revenue and landed four government contracts. More than anything, it taught me how powerful relationships are the flowers you least expected to bloom. And although i’m no longer with that company, that experience made me better at business, and also sharpened how I see people and opportunity.

What I saw was this: there’s real opportunity to make change, but the pipeline for young leadership just isn’t there. A lot of folks my age want to step up, but don’t know how, or don’t feel like there’s even a place for them if they tried. That’s why NextUp was founded.

NextUp is a young professionals club for people under 35 who want to get plugged in, learn how things work, and contribute to something bigger than themselves. We’re a soon-to-be chartered Republican club, but we keep the focus on real work and real community impact. If you’re motivated and want to show up, we want you at the table.

We’re planning to start with small events, hands-on workshops, and more social meet-and-greet events for people trying to figure out their next step. Part of our focus is bridging that generational gap, making space for new ideas while still learning from what came before us.

That’s what we’re about. No need to overcomplicate it.

Growth isn’t glamorous. It’s not always profitable, and it’s definitely not comfortable. But I’m trying to build something that lasts, something that helps people smile, pays people well, and gives people a shot at doing something they’re proud of.

We live in a time where you can create your own opportunity. I’m not waiting around for permission, and I don’t think anyone else should either.

As Tim Grover said,

“Winning takes you through hell. And if you quit, that’s where you’ll stay.”

And we’ve got a busy season ahead, and we’re ready for it. Whether you’re a customer, someone looking for work, or just trying to figure out your own next step I want you to know it’s possible to build something from nothing.





MUSINGS

OF AN EPISCOPAL PRIEST

The Very Rev. A Charles Cannon, III | Saint Hilary's Episcopal Church

It is August in Florida again, with a steamy mix of sunshine, storms, and seasonal weather shifts. Weather & Climate sees average highs range from 88°F to 91°F, with humidity often above 75%. **We are experiencing the warmest water of the year**, as our water surface temperatures can reach 87°F, making it feel like swimming in bathwater. **The summer rainy season is at its peak**: so, during those predictable summer storms, what can we do?

Events & Festivals

Lobsterfest: the start of our seafood celebration, marking the beginning of the lobster season. **Comic Con** comes to the West Coast of Florida with the pop culture extravaganza known as cosplay, informative panels, and celebrity guests. Some of our local restaurants engage in a month-long culinary event offering discounted meals at top restaurants. If you like beer, there is a craft beer, food, and entertainment event in Tampa's Amalie Arena.

In our streets, there are Fewer crowds as August usually sees a drop in tourists as school resumes. Suppose you enjoy visiting the numerous natural springs in Florida. In that case, this is the ideal time to experience nature at springs like Ichetucknee and Juniper Springs, which provide cool escapes from the scorching heat and humidity.

As the warm-weather adventure offers us a splash of spontaneity, please do not forget the faith journey. Our churches are emptier, yet we still provide services to fill your hearts with love. With school just around the corner, there will be back-to-school supply drives, backpack drives, and opportunities to provide food for less fortunate kids and families.

God is still working in our hearts all day, every day, and in many amazing ways. Christianity celebrates the Transfiguration of Jesus on August 6th. This day commemorates Jesus' transformation on a mountain top and recalls his conversation with the spirits of the Jewish leader of the Israelites, Moses, who led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, and the process of leadership change as the Hebrew Prophet Elijah died and left his mantle of authority to his prodigy Elijah. Spiritual retreats and summer camps for adults, teens, and children are plentiful in Florida and throughout the northern United States.

Many Blessings as you continue this year exploring issues of faith and refreshment in your lives.
Father Charles Cannon, Saint Hilary's Church, Fort Myers.



Translation Services

Traducción profesional, para una comunicación clara y concisa.





Traducción de documentos:
Legales
Médicos
Escolares



Interpretación Simultanea



Ingles - Español



SCAN ME!

Camila Veltze Junior Translator
(239) 465-7584
cveltze@sc-translationservices.com
@sctranslationservicesllc



Translate





Saint Hilary's Episcopal Church



Sunday Morning Worship:
8:00am, Contemplative Rite I | 10:00am Rite II

We are a faith community where progressive Christianity meets the tradition of common prayer, social justice, and outreach.

The mission of Saint Hilary's Church is "to make known the love and kindness of Jesus Christ to all people" within our congregation and in the wider Fort Myers community through worship, service, and compassion.

5011 McGregor Boulevard, Fort Myers 33901
239-936-1000 | sainthilarys.org



CYPRESS LAKE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



MISSION: To LOVE God, to GROW as disciples, and to SERVE others.



VISION: Radiating God's love – here, there, and everywhere.



8570 Cypress Lake Drive
Fort Myers, Florida 33919
(239) 482-1250
cypresslakeumc.com



ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



St. Mark's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Rooted in love.

Shaped by prayer.



ST. MARKS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

1101 N Collier Blvd.
Marco Island 34145
stmarksmarco.org
239-394-7242

St. Mark's Is Here to Serve

Episcopalians believe in a loving, liberating, and life-giving God and follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, whose life, death, and resurrection saved the world. All faith traditions are welcome here: the seekers, explorers, the lost, the found, the drifters and the stayers. All of God's Children are welcome here. There are no exceptions.

Winter Schedule: November – April

9:00 AM Contemporary Family Service with Band

10:30 AM Traditional Service with Choir



McGREGOR BAPTIST CHURCH



By God's grace, we
desire to glorify God
by magnifying His
Word to develop
disciples who:
think biblically
live missionally
give generously
love sacrificially

3750 Colonial Blvd,
Fort Myers, FL 33966
mcgregor.net
239-936-1754

Leading with Heart: Carol Blankenship and the Circle of Art at DASF



BY CAROL BLANKENSHIP

When I was asked to write an article on “Carol Blankenship as President of DASF,” I initially struggled to get started. I joined **DASF (Dedicated Artists of Southwest Florida)** in 2009 with absolutely no artistic background – though my mother was a talented artist – and had just retired from Cummins, Inc. as a Materials Director. Coming from a high-pressure corporate career, I understood early on that success is built on collaboration, dedication, and the strength of a supportive team.

DASF is a vibrant local club with approximately 60 members who are full- or part-time residents of cities across the tri-county area. Our members attend monthly meetings at the Cape Coral Art League, where we feature engaging art programs that may include acrylics, watercolor, pastels, or colored pencils. While art remains the central focus, DASF – being a 501(c)(3) nonprofit – also champions a wide range of philanthropic efforts.

We are proud supporters of the Harry Chapin Food Bank and award a \$1,000 annual scholarship to a Lee County high school senior who plans to pursue art professionally. Our Memory Box program donates hand-painted keepsake boxes to hospitals for grieving families to hold mementos of a lost child. We also decorate and provide cases for the Children’s Network of Southwest Florida. To fund these community initiatives, DASF hosts an annual winter luncheon and fundraising gala, welcoming 150 guests to a local country club. The event features a silent auction of our members’ beautiful artwork, themed gift baskets, and a festive boutique with stocking stuffers and handmade treasures for sale.

While I may not be the most skilled artist, I bring other strengths to the table – namely, team building, leadership, and organization. Our Board of Directors is an exceptionally talented, generous group. I love witnessing their collaboration and how one idea can spark another, leading to something truly impactful. The Board members are cross-trained and eager to step in for one another when needed. This flexibility fosters a strong sense of trust and unity.

One of the most enriching additions to our programming has been the “Mini-Seminars.” These smaller, more intimate sessions provide hands-on learning and strengthen friendships among members – always followed, of course, by lunch and lively conversation! We’ve also embraced technology; several of our members offer Zoom art classes, allowing us to stay connected and continuously improve our artistic skills. As artists grow in confidence and ability, many give back by mentoring others, teaching classes, or donating their work – what I like to call the “Circle of Art.”



dasfartists.com



DEAR *Beloved*

Pastor Dr. Deb Walsh | Mountain Mover & Water Walkers

God wants your excellence not perfection.

God wants your obedience more than sacrifice. *1 Samuel 15:22 "... Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed [is better] than the fat of rams."* God is looking for you to just do your best. He is not looking for perfection. The only person to ever live that was perfect was Jesus. Perfection itself can be a form of self-reliance that will take over your life and box out "God from being God." Nobody else can "do you". The creator of all things created you and you are made in His image.

2 Timothy 1:7 "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline." Perfection can be paralyzing. It can actually be a form of fear. A form of pleasing others and not God. When Saul offered the sacrifice instead of waiting for the prophet, Samuel, it was because he was more concerned about pleasing the people than he was pleasing God. It costed him his kingship. God is not looking for us to be entertainers, perform circus acts or to be caught up in the lights. He is looking for us to be obedient. He wants us to walk in our calling and when we go outside of our "calling" we begin to accept calls from others. In other words, we accept what others say we are and not what God says we are.

When we strive for perfection or to over achieve, it can actually

hurt you. You will compare yourself to others, it can actually stop you for becoming what God intended you to be!! Don't think you have to be "more than" or that you are "not as good as" etc. God is looking for you to do what He planned for you. He is looking for you to walk in the steps He ordered for you. Not anyone else's steps. He is looking for you to be obedient to the "call". When we have greater expectations of ourselves than what God expects- that is when we allow the enemy to come in and depress us, stress us, or let competition be our driving force instead of God being our motivation.

God did not come that you may fail at life and be in a constant state of fear. He came that you may have power, love and self-discipline! Life abundantly!! You are the vessel of God. You are enough! You are powerful! You can step on scorpions and snakes. You can bind on earth and in heaven. You can do greater things! I can go on and on but I ask you today, stop letting the enemy paralyze you in fear. Stop letting perfection rule your actions. Let God have His way in your life to do what only you can do! You are enough and God loves you and so do I.

Pastor Dr. Deb Walsh

A Peaceful Garden Funeral Home, Inc



Quality Service at an Affordable Price

Paulette Lubin Leopold, CEO

Willie Lee, Manager | Horace Barrett, Jr., Director in Charge



Jean Carlo Thomas
07/03/2025

3580 Fowler Street, Fort Myers, FL 33901 | 239.337.3223 | F: 239.337.3220 | APeacefulGardenFH@yahoo.com

From Victory to Vigilance:

Why Involvement Still Matters



Fellow Conservatives,

We've secured a majority—and that's no small achievement. It means voters across the country have responded to our message: limited government, strong borders, individual liberty, economic freedom, and American strength. But let's be clear—winning the majority is not the end. It's the beginning of a new chapter.

Now is not the time to check out. It's time to lean in.

When we're in power, we must work even harder to ensure our leaders stay true to conservative values. History teaches us that majorities can drift without active grassroots oversight. We can't afford that. We must hold the line both nationally and locally. Nationally, on fiscal responsibility, border security, the sanctity of life, and parental rights. Locally, on School Board, County Commissioner, and City.

And let's not forget—our opponents are not going to stop organizing, raising money, and pushing their agenda. If we sit back, we risk losing the ground we've worked so hard to gain.

This is our chance to lead with bold reforms.

That only happens when we keep the pressure on, stay informed, and stay engaged—at town halls, school board meetings, ballot boxes, and beyond.

It's also about the future. We need to support conservative candidates at every level, mentor the next generation of leaders, and ensure our values are being passed down—not just through politics, but through culture, education, and everyday conversation.

So celebrate the win—but don't stop there.

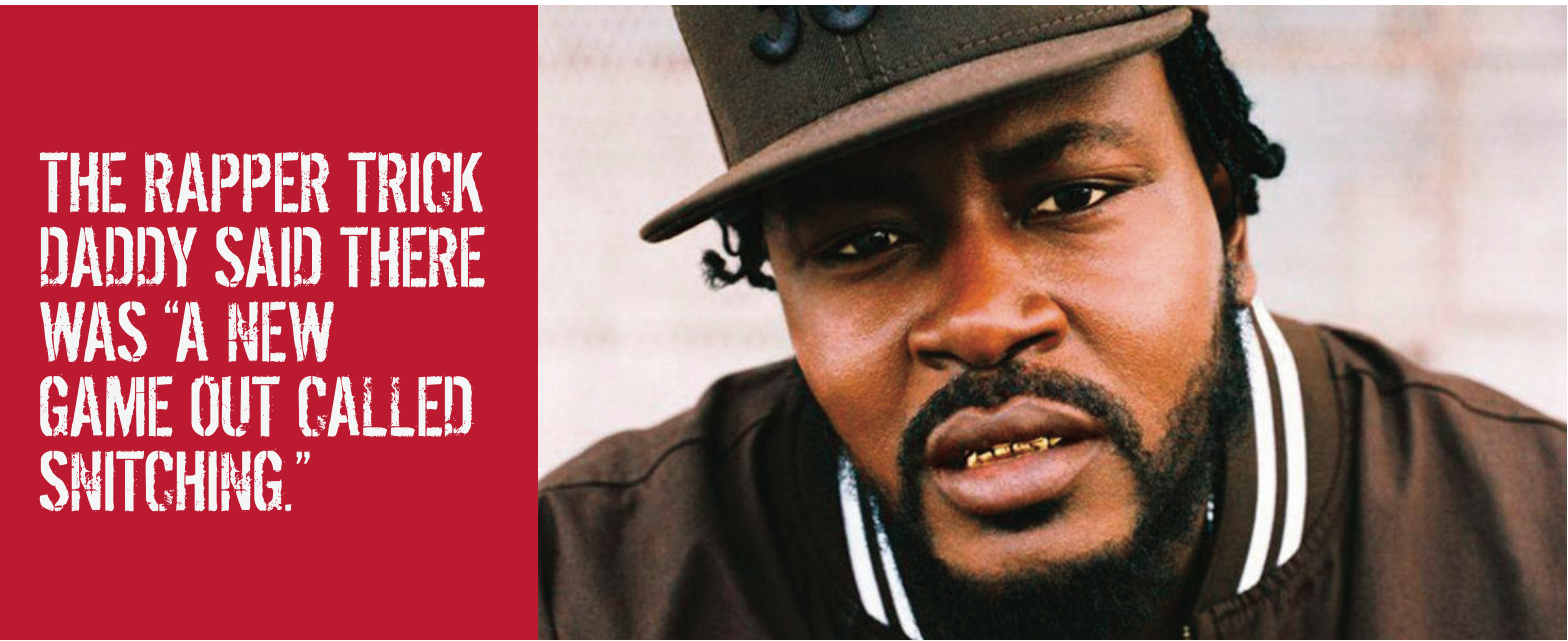
Let's keep the momentum going.

Stay loud. Stay active. Stay proud to be Republican.

Joshua
D. MOLANDES



If you’re reading this, you already know how fast things can spiral out of control in your world. Pressure, violence, the constant threat of being arrested—it’s a brutal cycle, and the fear is real. But what if I told you there’s a way for you to step off that path, stay safe, and walk away with cash in your pocket—all without giving your name or sacrificing your freedom?



That’s where **Southwest Florida Crime Stoppers (SWFL Crime Stoppers)** comes in. It’s designed for people like you—folks who know things others don’t and who want to protect themselves, not expose themselves... Plus you can get paid.

HOW SWFL CRIME STOPPERS PROTECTS YOU

- **100% anonymous:** When you call, they don’t ask for your name, record your voice, track your number, or collect your call data.
- You’ll be given a **Tip ID number and password**—no names, no personal info.
- Tipsters never get contacted by police—they only follow up using their Tip ID and password.

That means you can share serious information—like who planned that burglary, where the stash is, or details about pending charges—without exposing yourself. You can be in control, from start to finish.

CASH REWARDS THAT CAN BE YOURS

- Crime Stoppers doesn’t just promise privacy—they’re paying for tips that matter:
- **Up to \$3,000** for any information leading to arrest or recovery of stolen property, weapons, or drugs.
- For **cold cases**, tipsters could see up to **\$5,000**.
- The organization is funded with donations, grants, and even a portion of criminal fines—so when tips lead to arrests, that money comes back to the community,

Imagine: a few sentences about a heist plan or a stash house could mean thousands of dollars—enough to change your life or give you a fresh start.

WHY INFORMING THROUGH CRIME STOPPERS BEATS SNITCHING TO THE POLICE

Maybe you’ve thought about going to the cops. Don’t do that. Here’s why:

1. **Direct confession problems:** If you confess or even speak with an officer, your words can be used as admissions. You lose anonymity.
2. **Fear of retaliation:** Informants are often exposed—by mistake or design. That can lead to violence, vendettas, and serious danger.
3. **Crime Stoppers keeps you behind the curtain:** You give them the tip; they pass the information without revealing you. You stay invisible.

This isn’t “snitching” in the traditional sense—it’s strategic cooperation. You’re still in the shadows.

REAL-WORLD SUCCESS-PEOPLE WHO DID IT

There’s real proof this works:

- Someone reported a thief and got **\$350** in cash – picked up via a local business participating in Crime Stoppers.
- Another submitted a tip about a fugitive sighting and earned **\$350** for their effort.

These aren’t police plants—they’re real people earning real money, safely and anonymously.

HERE’S WHAT YOU CAN DO-STEP BY STEP

1. Grab your phone, tablet, or laptop.
2. **Call them at 1-800-780-TIPS (8477)**—24/7, toll-free. Or use the **P3 Tips app** or their website.
3. When the operator picks up, don’t give your name or location.

- 4. Provide concise, relevant details—who, what, where, when.
- 5. Take note of your **Tip ID and password**.
- 6. Wait to see if your tip leads to an arrest or recovery.
- 7. Follow up anonymously and receive your cash reward at a local pickup point.

WHY THIS IS SMART—WHAT YOU GAIN

- **Safer than outing yourself to police:** No confession, no testimony required.
- **Money in hand:** No court waits, no hassle—just cash for valuable intel.
- **Minimal exposure:** You're not entering evidence or files—just handing off data at arms' length.
- **Clean slate potential:** That cash can help you pay bills, start new, or even erase debts.
- **Moral advantage:** Getting information out helps reduce crime—maybe even save lives.

WHAT IF I'M STILL HESITANT?

A few questions may come up:

- **What about retaliation or being found out?**
There's no record of who called or what number. Tips go through a third-party call center. Your personal footprint stays invisible.
- **Will they trace my IP or phone?**
No call tracking, no caller ID, no trace—ever.
- **What if the tip doesn't lead to arrest?**
Then there's no reward—but you've lost nothing and stayed anonymous. Only effective arrest-leading intel gets paid.

THE PAYOFF

A quality, actionable tip can net you **\$3,000–5,000**—no questions asked.

That's fast, clean money for telling what you know.

It's not betrayal—it's a calculated move for self-preservation.

YOU'VE GOT OPTIONS.

You don't have to stick around and wait for disaster to strike. You don't have to get caught, confess, or risk it all to law enforcement. And you definitely don't have to give up your identity.

SWFL Crime Stoppers offers money, anonymity, and protection—for intel that matters. When you're ready to walk away—from the lifestyle, the danger, or just want cash in your pocket—you're not snitching.

YOU'RE STRATEGICALLY CHOOSING SURVIVAL.

Think it through. If you know something—*anything*—that could help law enforcement, make the smart move. You've got the info. You've got the power. And now, you've got the channel.

**CALL 1-800-780-TIPS OR GO TO
SOUTHWESTFLORIDACRIMESTOPPERS.COM
OR DOWNLOAD P3 TIPS.**

Stay safe. Be smart. And use what you know—for money, for freedom, for your future.

*Sincerely,
A fellow realist who wants you out of the game alive—
and maybe a bit ahead.*

SWFL CRIME STOPPERS

CRIME DOESN'T PAY, BUT WE DO

CALL US WITH YOUR TIP. ANONYMOUS • CASH REWARDS

1-800 780-TIPS (8477)

PD BY CSTF

Teddy Bridgewater's Recent Suspension is Why Many Coaches are Leaving Public Athletics



This past high school football season in Florida, NFL quarterback turned high school head coach Teddy Bridgewater, did what many of us coaches at heart could only dream! In his first season as the head coach for his alma mater, Miami Northwestern (MNHS), ‘coach’ Bridgewater led his team to the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) Class 3A state championship. Unfortunately, the fairy-tale start to Coach Bridgewater’s tenure at the helm of the Bull’s football program appears to be over following a suspension by MNHS over a potential FHSAA violation regarding impermissible benefits. While requesting donations for his football program on social media, Coach Bridgewater, a multi-millionaire, disclosed that he has contributed money to pay for the following needs of his players: meals, uber rides, team gear, painting the field, and other essentials to make his program one of the best in the state.

FHSAA 36.2.3 “An “impermissible benefit” is any arrangement, assistance or benefit that is not offered or generally made available to all students and/or their families who apply to or attend a school, or that otherwise is prohibited by FHSAA rules...”

Coach Bridgewater’s reportable violation was ‘feeding his players’ and ‘making sure they had rides either to or from school and/or practice.’ What an egregious monster right? Wrong! In most cases, I know of coaches who have reached in their own underpaid pockets to feed a player because the player’s parent could not afford to give them meal money to eat after a game, and I know of underpaid coaches who have used their gas to drive players home because the player had no one to pick them up after practice and/or a game.

Reporting Myself

Years ago, I was an assistant high school basketball coach in Virginia, and one of the first players I ever coached was a fifteen-year-old kid named Bryce. At the time, Bryce was a single parent of a two-year old daughter and had the responsibility of primarily caring for a child; imagine seeing a ‘baby’ with the full responsibility of raising a baby! Bryce would sometimes come to practice late, or leave practice early, because Bryce also worked a part-time job in fast food so he could take care of his daughter.

The first couple of times I met Bryce, I assumed he was an adopted son of the head basketball coach because they usually arrived or left together. Soon thereafter I learned that our head coach sacrificed time with his own family to pick up Bryce, sometimes even with Bryce’s child (when he had no one to watch her) and bring him/them to and from practice. I can even recall a few times putting a car seat in the back of my old Nissan Sentra to give Bryce and his daughter a ride home a few times.

When I took on the role as a head coach, I can remember reaching in my underpaid pockets to take out cash to feed a few players when we stopped to eat after games. I did not feed players as a recruitment tool, I did it because I can remember being a player, after a game, hungry with no money, and my coach reached in his underpaid pockets to feed me. As a head coach, I was guilty of burning my gas to give players a ride home, not because I wanted to impress the player, but because I remember being twelve and walking home on a rainy night because no one picked me up after practice. So here is my confession and I will gladly await execution at dawn; however, before anyone signs my death warrant for violating the code for ‘impermissible benefits,’ I ask ‘what real high school coach hasn’t made either of these sacrifices for their players?’

The Double Standard of Florida High School Sports

Miami Northwestern High School is a lower socio-economic, secondary public high school and too often coaches at schools, like a Miami Northwestern, are the targets of these type of reporting violations. Recently I read a local report of one private catholic high school in the area enrolling several highly ranked football players for the up-and-coming 2025 season. Several of the players, who are now enrolled in this catholic school, transferred from a neighboring private Baptist high school; however, it is not suspiciously reportable that high school players are out here changing religious denominations to play for certain programs.

In most cases, private schools do a much better job at protecting each other than public high schools here in the state of Florida. A few years ago, a public high school coach was reported to the FHSAA by another public high school coach for giving

To think that a millionaire coach is a villain for only wanting what is best for his program, not only is wrong, but also, it is the reason that fewer and fewer professional athletes return home to coach ...

a player a ride home after a game. I can speak on several other cases where public high school coaches have tried to disqualify other public high school coaches through petty technicalities; all the while, many of these reporting public high school coaches sit in silence as private schools take their players each year.

Let me be clear, I have stated my concerns with school choice's impact on public high school athletics here in Florida. I have seen a student-athlete transfer to five schools in four years, only to not graduate from high school. However, still as a coach at heart, I could never feel comfortable forcing a player to stay in my program who didn't want to play for my program. My main point is if a head coach is going to put on the cape of being 'super reporter,' then he or she must stop treating private schools as kryptonite.

I Got Some Questions for Miami Northwestern High School

1. If Coach Bridgewater, as he stated in response to his suspension, is an "unpaid volunteer," then where did the head football coaching stipend go for the school year?
2. If Coach Bridgewater had to pay such an exorbitant amount for Uber rides, why did the school not provide transportation and/or wasn't aware of attendance issues with these students?
3. Since Coach Bridgewater, who never coached high school sports previously, was hired by the school to lead a sports program, then is it not the responsibility of the school leadership to give him proper guidance on how to fundraise?
4. Why did Coach Bridgewater have to pay for the field to be painted?

It is possible that the school administration was aware of the gifts that Coach Bridgewater had been doing for his program. I make that conclusion not in judgment of any malicious intent of the school leadership, but because if the field was specially painted, then the question from school leadership should have been 'who paid to have the field painted?' If the players are walking around in new track suits, then the question from school leadership should have been 'who paid for the new track suits?'

The most unfortunate point of the Teddy Bridgewater coaching debacle is this, 'if Coach Bridgewater just gave a blank check to the school district for the same amount of money, no one would have even cared!' To think that a millionaire coach is a villain for only wanting what is best for his program, not only is wrong, but also, it is the reason that fewer and fewer professional athletes return home to coach and/or donate to their alma mater once their playing days are over. If feeding and giving rides to players in need is a violation, then I close in saying a lot of coaches over time have given 'impermissible benefits.'

**AWAKEN
CHURCH**



**AWAKEN
CHURCH**

GENEROSITY | RELEVANCE | AUTHENTICITY | COMPASSION | EXHUBERANCE

SERVICE TIMES | SUN 8:30AM, 10:00AM, 11:30AM

3990 FLAMINGO BLVD, PORT CHARLOTTE, FL 33954 | MYAWAKEN.CHURCH



Diana Giraldo Snubs The Dunbar Community with “NO VOTE.”



McCollum Hall

Dunbar residents are still angry that Diana Giraldo “gave the Dunbar Community her butt to kiss” even after Pastor Givens of Mt. Olive AME Church stated directly to her that “You owe us your vote” on the McCollum Hall project.

The Reverend James C. Givens, pastor of Mount Olive AME Zion Church, directly addressed Councilmember Diana Giraldo before she cast her “NO” vote: “I say to the Councilwoman, who I’ve never met, in Ward 2, you owe us your support. For the people behind us, behind me, supported your candidacy. Now it’s time for you to cash in the check. Give to the Dunbar community what it deserves.”

Mayor Kevin Anderson clarified exactly what the approval means:

“This is a commitment on the part of the city to work with the CRA to see this building project get completed. This is NOT giving the current developer 4.2 million for him to complete it, right? But that’s our commitment to you, that we are going to work to get this project done.”

Now the ball is clearly in the court of the City of Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency.

Unfortunately, the candidates who grew up in Dunbar couldn’t agree among themselves who would be the best candidate and split the vote which led to Diana’s ascent to the dias. Too bad the community leaders couldn’t sit down with the two candidates and do the numbers as to who had the better chance of winning Ward 2 and protecting the interest of Dunbar.

It didn’t help that you had asinine contradictory statements from people who donated to Diana’s campaign financially and simultaneously say they were Pro-Dunbar. That’s BS.

There is an old adage; If you want to hide something from a _____ put it in writing, because a _____ is NOT going to read. *The SWFL Chronicle* simply outlined exactly what the outcome of the Ward 2 race was going to be if someone didn’t drop out or “The Daughters of Dunbar” didn’t choose one to



represent them. Unfortunately, the reply was; “We are running together in Unity.” I don’t know what math they were using, because if more than one person from Dunbar was running then the votes would be split....and they were.

This is what happens when you have retiring community leaders who do not identify future leaders, groom them, pass the baton, and guide and direct them from the shadows.

For example, Linda Doggett passed the torch to Kevin Karnes for Clerk of Court. Ray Sandelli passed the torch to David Mulika for County Commissioner.

Who is Johnny Streets, Teresa Watkins Brown, or Terolyn Watson Grooming to represent Dunbar in the Future?

This is an opportune time for Martin Byrd to sit at the feet of Johnny Streets and soak up years of wisdom, knowledge, and simply how to play the game.

Regardless if someone is groomed for future leadership in Dunbar or not. The Dunbar Community is still ticked off that Diana Giraldo allegedly gave the Dunbar Community her butt to kiss when she voted NO on the McCollum Hall project. Thank God Mayor Anderson supported the deal and gave clarity on what the yes vote actually meant.



Photos from top left: Reverend James C. Givens, Mayor Kevin Anderson, Linda Doggett, Kevin Karnes, Ray Sandelli, David Mulika, Terolyn Watson, Teresa Watkins Brown, Johnny Streets, Martin Byrd

The Power is Within

There's is truth in the phrase, "The Power that made the body, can heal the body." Our bodies are intelligent systems designed not only to function, but to recover, adapt, and thrive.

Our bodies are made to fight off infections even without our conscious involvement. Bones mend to repair itself. And the most profound, is that the mind plays a powerful role in that healing process.

Modern science is now increasingly validating what ancient traditions and intuitive wisdom have long believed: which is the connection between mind and body is real, and it matters.

YOUR THOUGHTS MATTERS

What you think and feel within your mind, your beliefs, your emotional state, can profoundly influence your physical health.

This is why it's extremely important to constantly focus your thoughts on positive, healthy outcomes rather than negative outcome.

Research for instance, shows that thoughts can affect the nervous, endocrine, and immune systems. Stressful thinking can suppress immunity, while positive mental states can support recovery.

YOUR FAITH

People who always have hope, which I'd like to call FAITH, optimism, and a strong belief in their ability to heal often experience better

THE INNATE CIRCLE

by Monique Wooley



outcomes, even when facing serious illnesses.

By no means am I insinuating, you can "think your way out" of serious diagnosis, but this is about recognizing that the mind and body are not separate. They're partners, a team.

MINDSET

Your mindset can shape how your body responds to health challenges, it can influences how you recover, and even determines how you experience symptoms.

So, take care of your thoughts as much as your physical body. Practice mindfulness. Cultivate positive environments. I've suggested in previous articles, how important it is to surround yourself with the support of positive, like minded individuals.

SUGGESTIONS

Practice yoga, meditation, go for scenic walks and quiet the space around you for just a hour each day to focus your thoughts on the positives.

BREATH DEEPLY.

And remember: the same power that created your body also gave you the ability to heal the body from the inside out.

**Schedule a tour of "The Bodies Exhibit,"
Luxor Hotel, Las Vegas, NV.*

DIVE INTO A WICKED

YOU DESERVE TO FEAST ON SEAFOOD EVERYDAY

It's Not Perfect, But It's Wicked Good Since 2013!

Fresh Seafood Market

Homemade Chowdas

Succulent Lobster Rolls

Delectable Desserts

Order Now >

Visit Our Website www.dougsseafoodfl.com

For More Information 239-319-5702

Our Address 3411 Bonita Bch. Rd. Bonita Springs

From Intercourse to Outercourse: *Embracing Intimacy* as Seniors

BY VERNON BROWN THE
DUNBAR SHADE TREE PHD.



As we age, many conversations remain unspoken—quiet corners of the human experience that go overlooked, misunderstood, or worse, ignored entirely.

One of the most significant among them is the changing nature of intimacy and sexuality in older adulthood. It is a subject both deeply personal and profoundly universal, as nearly all couples—at some point—encounter the gradual shift from intercourse-centered sex to a more expansive, affectionate, and creative form of lovemaking commonly referred to as “outercourse.” This is a subject that needs to be discussed delicately, because most people simply ignore it. Moreover most men are in denial that they are no longer the stud muffin they once were.

There is no shame in acknowledging that as we age, our bodies change. Men go from having a six pack, to a four pack, to a one pack or even a keg for a stomach. Additionally, most women are the victim of the force of gravity. Our desires evolve, and so do the ways we connect physically with our partners. Far from signaling the end of eroticism, these changes can instead mark the beginning of something deeper, more nuanced, and surprisingly fulfilling.

One study, in alignment with decades of earlier research, has reinforced what many older adults have long known: sex remains an important part of life well into our later years. Contrary to outdated cultural narratives that portray older people as asexual or uninterested, the truth is far more vibrant. The desire for closeness, sensuality, and even passion does not simply fade away with age—it merely transforms.

However, the reality for most couples is that the role of intercourse within their sex lives often begins to diminish, especially beyond the age of 60 or 70. This transition is not a failure, nor is it a lack of love. It is a natural progression informed by both physical and emotional shifts.

There are two primary physiological reasons that intercourse tends to become less central in older couples’ sexual relationships. For men, the most common challenge is erectile dysfunction or erection difficulty. The inability to reliably maintain an erection can be frustrating, disheartening, and in many cases, deeply tied to a man’s sense of identity or worth. These feelings, while understandable, can inhibit intimacy and create unnecessary pressure in the bedroom.

For women, the shift is often due to postmenopausal changes in the body. Vaginal dryness, thinning of the vaginal walls (atrophy), and increased sensitivity can make intercourse uncomfortable or even painful. While lubricants and hormone therapies offer some relief, many women find that intercourse is simply not enjoyable anymore—and that's okay.

As a result, many older adults—sometimes reluctantly at first—begin to move away from intercourse. But this shift, rather than signaling the end of their sexual lives, can open the door to a whole new world of physical connection: outercourse.

Outercourse is a term that captures the full breadth of non-penetrative sexual activities. It includes kissing, hugging, touching, mutual massage, oral sex, manual stimulation, erotic play, and long cuddling sessions. It can mean a shared bath, lying naked together while stroking and caressing, or simply falling asleep skin-to-skin. These acts, often dismissed or overlooked in our younger years as “foreplay,” can become central to our expression of intimacy.

Older adults who embrace outercourse often find themselves reconnecting with their partners in beautiful, unexpected ways. When the goal is no longer focused on performance or penetration, the pressure fades. The room is made for slow, tender, mindful connection. There is more time to explore, more attention paid to sensation and emotion, and more opportunities for meaningful communication.

That said, the transition isn't always easy. Especially for men, there can be a psychological barrier to overcome. For decades, society has taught us that “real sex” equals intercourse and orgasm. Anything else is secondary, incomplete, or even failure. These cultural scripts are deeply embedded, and undoing them requires patience, vulnerability, and open dialogue.

Many older men struggle with the idea that their sexuality might need to adapt. They may feel ashamed of needing assistance to get or maintain an erection, or discouraged by the fact that their partner no longer enjoys intercourse. Some feel lost without intercourse as the focal point of intimacy. These emotions are valid, but they don't have to define the rest of a couple's romantic life.

Sex therapists and intimacy coaches nearly unanimously encourage older couples to embrace this shift. They know that letting go of rigid definitions of sex can actually be liberating. They remind us that sex is not a race to orgasm or a checklist of acts, but a conversation between bodies—a way to say, “I see you, I cherish you, I want to feel close to you.”

The English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) backs this up. In this large-scale survey, most older adults—well into their

60s, 70s, and even 80s—reported that regular lovemaking, with or without intercourse, played a significant role in their overall happiness and relationship satisfaction. While the frequency and type of sexual activity varied, the desire for physical intimacy remained strong.

What was most telling in the findings was that those who had embraced forms of intimacy beyond intercourse reported the highest levels of fulfillment. They were more likely to describe their sexual experiences as loving, relaxing, and emotionally connected. These couples weren't clinging to the past—they were redefining their future.

And that's what outercourse offers: a chance to rewrite the script. A new chapter where intimacy is not about chasing lost youth, but about deepening love in the here and now. It is a quiet revolution, one unfolding in bedrooms across the world—not just among older adults, but increasingly among people of all ages who are seeking richer, more meaningful connections.

For couples who are navigating this transition, communication is key. Talk honestly about what feels good, what doesn't, and what you miss. Share your fears and fantasies. Laugh together. Be gentle—with yourself and with each other. Exploring new ways of connecting doesn't need to be awkward or clinical. It can be playful, sacred, exciting, and fun.

Use your hands, your breath, your voice. Try massaging each other with oils. Take time to explore each other's skin, not rushing toward any particular goal. Discover how sensual a simple kiss can be when it's given time to bloom. Lie together and let your bodies speak their own language—sometimes that language is whisper-soft and slow, other times bold and spontaneous.

And don't be afraid to seek support. A skilled sex therapist can be invaluable in helping couples navigate these transitions. They can offer techniques, tools, and emotional guidance that can make all the difference. Therapy isn't only for times of crisis—it's also for times of growth.

It's important, too, to reflect on what intimacy means in the broadest sense. Physical touch is powerful, but emotional connection is just as vital. Holding hands while watching a movie, cooking a meal together, giving each other a meaningful compliment—these are also acts of intimacy. The more we expand our definition of what it means to be close, the richer our relationships become.

In conclusion, the shift from intercourse to outercourse is not a loss—it's a transition. And for many couples, it's a deeply rewarding one. It asks us to shed old expectations, to be vulnerable, and to explore the kind of love that only years of shared life can create. Intimacy in later life is not about what we can't do anymore; it's about discovering what we still can, and often with greater depth and clarity than ever before.

We owe it to ourselves and each other to continue cultivating love, touch, and pleasure—not in spite of age, but because of the wisdom and tenderness that age brings. Whether you're in your 60s, 70s, 80s, or beyond, your erotic life still matters. Your body is still worthy of pleasure. And your heart still longs to be held—not just metaphorically, but literally.

Here's to honoring the beautiful truth that loving touch, in all its forms, is timeless.



The North Law Firm, P.A.

Accident and Injury Cases

For over 30 years, we have been representing clients in Accident and Injury cases.



Attorney Joe North

Attorney Joseph North

Car & Truck Accidents
Motorcycle Accidents
Drunk Driving Accidents
Serious Injury Cases
Family Law
Custody & Support Cases
Hurricane Property Damage Claims
Paralysis Cases
Apartment Shootings
Gun Violence Cases
Courtroom Trials
Workers Compensation
Wrongful Death Cases
Pedestrian Accidents
Bicycle Accidents
Dog Bite Cases
Slip & Fall Accidents
Negligent Security Cases
Settlements

(239) 337-1191
TheNorthLawFirm.com

5220 Summerlin Commons Blvd., Suite 300 | Fort Myers, Florida 33907