FREE **VOL. VI, NO. 44**

NOVEMBER 13, 2025 ECOMMUNIT



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Local

GIDDY-UP

TO THE 1ST ANNUAL AAFSC WESTERN ROUNDUP



The Arcadia All-Florida Saddle Club won the "best horse unit" award in the Independence Day parade on July 4, 2023. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.



CAROL MAHLER Independent Contractor carolmahler22acl@gmail.com Photos provided

The Arcadia All-Florida Saddle Club invites you to the first annual Western Roundup from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Nov. 15, at the historic Saddle Club arena, 1299 S.E. Hargrave St. in Arcadia. Fun for the whole family includes the Sheriff Posse; Amanda Pennino and Ermes Zamerla performing trick riding; petting zoo with cows, donkeys, therapy horses, and other animals; roping instructions for kids; food trucks and vendors; silent auction, raffles, and more. The Wandering Hours will entertain with their music.

Admission is \$20.00 for a family of four or \$10.00 per person. Parking is free. All funds raised will contribute to the revitalization of the property and the Club.

The Club is probably most well-known for innovating and performing the quadrille, a kind of square dance

for horses, first performed in 1947 for the Arcadia All-Florida Championship Rodeo. Club members showed off the quadrille at the 12th Annual Arcadia Fall Rodeo on Oct. 18 and 19, and they always ride in the rodeo and Independence Day parades as well. The Club will perform the quadrille at the Nov. 15 event.

President Karen Anderson said that the Club acquired the property about 80 years ago and built the club house and arena. A pavilion built some time later lost its roof in one of the hurricanes that also wiped out half of the

Many of our surrounding counties no longer have riding arenas or arenas the size of the one in Arcadia, she said, so many people who live outside DeSoto County sign up for practice times, especially horse-

SEE ROUNDUP PAGE 8 >>

DESOTO COUNTY SPORTS PAGE 4 **STEVE KNAPP**



GOVERNMENT MEETING SCHEDULE

CITY OF ARCADIA

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS OCCUR THE **1ST AND 3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED**

Margaret Way Building 23 N. Polk Ave., Arcadia, FL 34266

CITY OF ARCADIA

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

THUR

Margaret Way Building 23 N. Polk Ave. Arcadia, FL 34266

DESOTO COUNTY

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266

DESOTO CITY & COUNTY

CITY & COUNTY OFFICES CLOSED

In observance of Thanksgiving

Active dates and times are subject to change. County: http://desotobocc.com/calendar City: https://arcadia-fl.gov/events/







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CITY HOLDS HPC WORKSHOP



CAROL MAHLER

Independent Contractor carolmahler22acl@gmail.com Photos provided

On Nov. 3, the Council held a workshop to discuss the City's Historic Preservation (HPC) Commission, established in 2016, of volunteer members appointed by the Council. Although the ordinance lists 10 "powers and duties" for the HPC, the workshop focused on the public hearings held by the HPC to approve or deny certificates of appropriatenes. In particular, the Council discussed the HPC's recent denial of applications for demolition of historic homes in disrepair brought forward by contractors participating in Rebuild Florida, a program of Florida Commerce funded by the Federal **Emergency Management Agency** (FEMA).

Mayor Judy Wertz-Strickland felt that demolishing a historic home worth only \$80,000.00 and allowing a new one to be built that will be worth \$200,000.00 to \$250,000.00 would increase the tax base of the City.

Deputy Mayor Luis Velasco said he agreed and wanted to remind HPC members to "be mindful of the needs of residents." He also wanted the HPC to make it easier for residents to repair their homes.

Council Member Dee Washington felt that home owners should be able to have a second opinion and not rely solely on the assessments given by one contractor, especially those offered in the Rebuild Florida program.

Council Member Keith Keene suggested training for the HPC members a year as is done in Sebring. so that they have a "decision tree" to follow based on the evidence presented. He wants the HPC to be "more effective



HPC Vice-chairperson Connie Bateman told the Council that when the Commission makes decisions, they try to follow the ordinance. She noted that the Rebuild Florida program has a "built-in failure" for historic homes because they often require repairs that cost more than the allowable limit. "We want to protect the historic district," she said. We have an asset that not many other communities have."

and efficient." He also wants the City "to know what we have" and suggested an update of the historic district survey.

Council Member Bob Heine said that he was also in favor of saving the HPC, but he wanted members to "get over the idea that everyone of these houses is savable."

Attorney T. J. Wohl said that the Council may redo the ordinance so that the City has more oversight of the HPC and/or that more changes which are "same for same" could be administratively approved. For the most recent demolitions, he felt that the letters from the State saying that the demolitions would not affect the Arcadia Historic District should have convinced the HPC to approve them. He noted that the HPC has more duties than approving or denying certificates of appropriateness, and he also suggested that the HPC could meet only four times

Wertz-Strickland reminded everyone that the City does not want to lose the HPC because when the City applies for



Karen Smoke recalled the 1905 fire that burned downtown Arcadia to the ground, and asked the Council for the same courage that it required to make new building use brick or block even though wood may have been less expensive. She urged the City to work with code enforcement so that the repairs to historic homes are "addressed before they become fatal."





HPC Member Gioia DeCarlo discussed the recent demolition requests especially the engineer's reports about repairing the foundation piers that seemed "bogus" to her as those repairs could be accomplished with a "floor jack and a bucket of cement." She also thanked the Council for taking the time to discuss historic preservation in the City.



Akos Jankura of Coldwell Banker Sunstar Realty opined that the HPC had a "public relations problem." He noted that he had negotiated sales of historic properties. He discussed how buyers are notified that they are purchasing a property in the **Arcadia Historic District.**



grant funding, it receives "extra points" for having the HPC. She said said that she, HPC Member Linda Williams, and Arcadia Main Street Director Pam Ames had just completed a training session offered by Florida Main Street in Bartow.

Ames said that the \$50,000.00 grant that Main Street received from the Division of Historical Resources to resurvey the District only covered downtown and some of the homes.

historic structures.

The Council agreed to find out how to complete the recent Arcadia Historic District re-survey, so they know what they have. Wertz-Strickland thanked everyone for attending the workshop.

YOU'RE INVITED TO THANKFUL FEST III



CAROL MAHLER

Independent Contractor carolmahler22acl@amail.com Photos provided

The Arcadia Garden Club (AGC) invites everyone to Thankful Fest III, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., on Nov. 15, at the Arcadia Garden Club Center, 1005 W. Magnolia St., in Arcadia. The Club will have a sale of native, and rare plants, houseplants, succulents, and vegetable plants. Also available are vendors, food and refreshments, a bouncy house by Splash N Blast, and

AGC President Maria Pace said, "Thankful Fest is our annual event to show our gratitude and appreciation for our community which has given us such positive support."

Free activities inside and outside of the building include the following: hands-on nature sensory table, games to win plants and other prizes, origami (Japanese paper folding), face painting, bouncy house by Splash N Blast, and instructions on planting seeds and succulents.

The "Grow Getters Club" at Nocatee Elementary School will also be selling plants and doing an activity for children.

"The plethora of plants for purchase were all grown by members and specialty



AGC Members Spring Pace and Kelly Forbes showed off one of the beautiful flower arrangements offered at last year's Thankful Fest.

BIG T TIRES OPENS IN ARCADIA



If you've driven U.S. Highway 17 south of downtown, you may have noticed the "Big T Tires" sign at Newberry Performance Automotive, Inc., 505 S. Brevard Ave., owned and operated for more than two decades by Calvin Newberry. He recently sold the business to Kenny Futch, but Newberry still works there part time. His former employees also labor for Big T Tire with the addition of Will Abbott.

"We offer the same services with the same crew," Bill Gallagher said. "But now we also sell tires." He manages the day-to-day operations at the shop.

The crew at Big T Tires in Arcadia will do alignments, diagnostics, oil changes, and all mechanical repairs for a vehicle

except for "internal transmission or engine work." They service all makes and models.

With stores in Avon Park, Lake Plaid, and Arcadia, Big T Tires is a Toyo and Cooper tires dealer. However, Abbott said, "We can get almost anything." He manages tire sales for the Arcadia location, and they are delivered twice a day, so customers will receive the "same day or next day" service.

Both Abbott and Gallagher agree that the goal is customer satisfaction. "Not many places can beat us on customer service," Abbott said.

Call 863-491-8500 or online at bigttire.net.



from left, Will Abbott, Evan Vohs, Sean Beardsworth, Brandon Vohs, Justin Glynn, and Bill Gallagher.



In the office of Big T Tires, Bill Gallagher, left, manages repairs and other mechanical work, Evan Vohs is one of the crew, and Will Abbott handles tire sales.

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

The DeSoto County Chamber of Commerce's Early Bird was held November 6th & was hosted by Recovery Solutions. The following students were recognized as Students of the Month. (not all are pictured)



JUAN BARRERA-RINCON 9[™] GRADE

GABRIEL RESENDIZ-DIAZ 10[™] GRADE

> KINZLEY MAULDIN 11[™] GRADE

VALENCIA PEREZ-PEREZ 12[™] GRADE



ROWDY AIKEN 6[™] GRADE

JIMMY ADKINS 7[™] GRADE

MYLES PRIMUS 8[™] GRADE



- DESOTO COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD (PRS)
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LADY BULLDOGS

LOSE TO PALMETTO



STEVE KNAPP

Sports Writer sports@peacerivershopper.com

The Desoto Bulldogs soccer team played a very good Palmetto team and was shutout 8-0 at home last week. Keeper Jana Hannon stopped the first 7 shots on goal on some very well kicked balls, but then three quick goals and an "own" goal opened the floodgates to a game shortened 8-0 loss.

The loss dropped the team to 0-3 as they go through a rugged early season schedule. They have shown a lot of progress over the early part of the season that should pay off as the season goes on.



Michelle Garcia gets a free ball and works it up field against Palmetto.



 ${\bf Clara\ Martinez\ and\ Nariah\ Wiley\ battle\ with\ two\ Palmetto\ players\ for\ a\ free\ ball.}$



takes the shot.



Senior Anna Hernandez drills the ball against Palmetto



Captains Clara Martinez, Rhadassa Caldas and Karen Mejia meet with the referees and opponents before the game.



Clara Martinez forces the Palmetto player back inside in the loss to Palmetto.

DESOTO COUNTY ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

Sponsored by: Mosaic

GIRLS GOLF TEAD

FIRST EVER TO REACH REGIONAL TOUR



STEVE KNAPP

Sports Writer sports@peacerivershopper.com

Last season senior Emiley Cline was the first DeSoto County female golfer to reach the regional level of the state tournament. This season the whole team advanced with strong play through the district tournament. The Lady Bulldogs finished 6th in Region 2A and are taking the right steps to become known as a force in local golf.

One golfer, Izzy Morris, shot well enough to advance to the state tournament level next week. Morris is the first female golfer to advance to the state tournament and the great thing is, she is just a freshman.



Anva Morales, who was named after a Russian dancer that her parents saw on TV and liked the name, she may not be a dancer but she is one of the freshmen on the DeSoto golf team.



Bella Skinner is one of the freshmen on the team with a bright future.



Freshman Izzy Morris will represent Desoto



Emiley Cline was the first female DeSoto County golfer ever to reach the regional level last season.



Golfers are Izzy Morris, Bella Skinner, Adeline **Howard, Anya Morales** and Emiley Cline.

DeSoto coach Fabio Colon stands with his team as they begin their run through the regional tournament.

Southpaw Adeline Howard drives the ball down the fairway.

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GAME OF THE WEEK



LOPEZ AND BOYS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM ADVANCE TO REGIONALS



STEVE KNAPP

Sports Writer sports@peacerivershopper.com

Josselyn Lopez wasn't happy with her time in the district tournament last Saturday finishing in 28th place with a time of 23:34.3. It was 56 seconds slower than her personal best of 22:38 which she set at North Port. She will have the opportunity to get a new personal best as she runs in the regional competition this Saturday which just so happens to be held at North Port.

The girls team finished 10 out of 15 schools. Behind Lopez was Ruby Barajas in 54th place and then Stefani Contreras in third place for the Bulldogs.

The boys team all advanced to run at

North Port as they finished 6th out of 15 schools with 175 points. It was the Shine brothers leading the way with JeZyan ("Z") coming in 16th with a time of 19:06.6. Brother JeTryin ("T") was 20th just 14 seconds behind. Trace Barrera was a close third finishing in 21st place 1.6 seconds behind T Shine.

The boys cross country team all advanced to regionals based on a 6th place finish.



The DeSoto girls cross country team wait in the starting lane for their race at Lemon Bay last week.



Josselyn Lopez enters the stadium with the finish line in sight. Lopez finished 28th and was the only girl to qualify for the regional meet at North Port Saturday.

The two Shine brothers along with Trace Barrera were the top 3 runners for Desoto with Z Shine coming in 16th, brother T in 20th place and Barrera close behind in 21st place.



JeZyan and JeTryin Shine enjoy their post race drinks after finishing first and second for the Bulldogs.

JV GIRLS SOCCER LOSSES TO PALMETTO 8-0









STEVE KNAPP

Sports Writer

With just girls golf, cross country and Miss DeSoto softball left from the fall sports lineup, we begin to look at the winter sports.

Soccer has kicked off with the ladies opening the winter sports with a loss to Sebring. They scored a goal against Lake Placid, but it wasn't enough as they fell 6-1. They opened their season with a third straight strong opponent and lost 8-0 to Palmetto. Both varsity and junior varsity teams have shown improvement over last season and should be getting a few wins this season. They will be at Babcock next Monday.

The boys soccer team won their opener 8-0 behind Josue Hernandez' hat trick at Babcock. They went back on the road three days later to Okeechobee and were shutout 2-0. After a home game this past Monday, they are back on the road to Lake Placid tonight.

Read the Athletes of the Week column for information about the DeSoto County girls golf team and what they achieved for the first time in school history. There is a story about the cross country team and their district meet at Lemon Bay also in this issue.

The varsity and junior varsity boys basketball season starts at home next Tuesday as they host Okeechobee. Tipoff is 6pm with the varsity starting at 7:30.

The middle school basketball season started this week with a game at Lake Placid and both the boys and girls will host Hardee tonight starting at 6pm.



The Desoto boys cross country team takes their final warmup before the district race at Lemon Bay. The entire boys team qualified for regionals this Saturday.



The girls varsity soccer team has a rough schedule but are showing signs of improvement over last season.



The girls golf team did well in the regional tournament and Izzy Morris advanced to the state meet to be held next week.



The girls show their rings as the 6U Keith team won the tricounty EOS tournament and remained undefeated for the entire season.

The EOS (end of season) Miss DeSoto tournaments are finishing up this weekend in North Port and Venice. The 10U and 12U teams will be playing this weekend in North Port while the 14-16U team will travel to Venice for their chance to continue their outstanding two year run.

Last week at Port Charlotte there was a possibility of an All DeSoto finals. The 8U Nancy team beat Venice 7-4 to reach

the semifinals where they ran into the undefeated Port Charlotte team and were Keith team had to sneak by the Punta beaten 12-8. Nancy said, "they played their hearts out and had great fielding and hitting. I am proud of the girls." The 8U Kenny team also got to the semifinals before bowing out of the tournament with a loss.

In Desoto, the 6U tournament turned into an all DeSoto championship contest between the undefeated Keith team

against the scrappy Jos team. The 6U Gorda team 18-17 to reach the finals and then scored another 18 runs to get past Jos team 18-12. That capped off a perfect season for the team. Keith said "the growth of the team especially in defensive decisions showed great progress for the players. They had strong hitting and aggressive base running throughout the season".













ROUNDUP

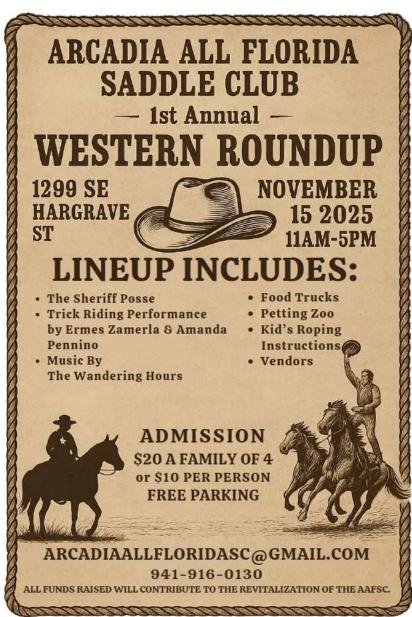
FROM PAGE 1 >>

riding trainers and their students. County residents also enjoy club membership and time in the arena, plus an end-ofyear banquet with awards.

"I hope people will enjoy our event and support our club," Anderson said. "It's such a great family environment."



From left, Quitmon Brown (1925-2011), who served as county tax collector, and his wife Adell Brown carried the banner of the Arcadia All-Florida Saddle Club in a rodeo parade. Photograph courtesy of the DeSoto **County Historical Society.**



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FEST

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vendors," Pace said. "Members also made lovely seasonal wreaths to raise money for our scholarships."Local honey, crystal gems, and homemade baked good will also be available.

AGC's next meeting will be open to

the public, with a potluck meal at noon, and a speaker at 1:00 p.m., on Dec. 8, at the Club. President of the Sarasota Bromeliad Society Jason Mellica will speak about bromeliads.

For more information or to rent the Club building for your event, contact Pace at 863-354-0808 or arcadiagardenclub2022@gmail.com.



At Thankful Fest II, members of the Arcadia Garden Club (AGC) had a huge variety of plants for sale including native and rare, houseplants, succulents and vegetable plants.



At last year's Thankful Fest, vendors were available both inside and outside the Arcadia Garden Club Center.



1005 W. MAGNOLIA STREET, ARCADIA, FL 34266 CONTACT: MARIA PACE 863-354-0808

EMAIL: ARCADIAGARDENCLUB2022@GMAIL.COM



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SEMCO TO IMPROVE MCSWAIN PARK



CAROL MAHLER

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At the Nov. 4 meeting, the Council approved the agreement with Semco Construction, Inc., for improvements in McSwain Park for \$348,078.45, funded with a Florida Dept. of Environment Protection (FDEP) Florida Recreation **Development Assistance Program** (FRDAP) grant of \$200,000.00 plus City funds of \$148,078.45. They also approved Amendment No. 1 reducing the scope of work for the FRDAP McSwain Park Improvements Grant.

The project will include irrigation, landscaping, Playcraft playground system and a 14' octagonal pavilion. Deputy Mayor Luis Velasco thanked Jennifer Hall of Semco for the company's excellent work at selecting the items most important to the project. For the County, Semco recently completed the Mills Complex renovation, remodeling of the third-floor courthouse, and remediation of Fire Station #1. Semco was praised for excellent work on all three projects.

IN OTHER BUSINESS

On first reading, the Council approved the Police/Fire Pension Amendment Ordinance No. 1112 to provide a one-time cost-of-living increase of \$1,000.00 to each retiree, joint pensioner, and beneficiary, in pay status on Oct. 1, 2025.

The Council also ratified the purchase for Public Works of two new 2026 Ford F-150 pick-up trucks with four-wheel drive, 122" wheel base XL 6.5' bed as included in the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget. They will replace a 2014 F-150 and 1996 F-250 trucks.

Council declared as surplus the following items: Dixie Chopper and two Gravely mowers, 2009 Ford F-350 XL Super Duty pick-up truck, one homemade and one military surplus trailer, Kohler/Jon Deere generator, plus a Lanier 5518 printer. All will be sent to auction except the printer will be discarded.

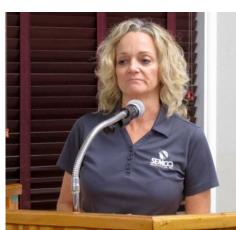
COMMENTS FROM DEPTS.

Assistant Marshal Gary Evans reviewed the police dept. report for October 2025: nine felony, one juvenile, 16 misdemeanor, seven traffic, and four warrant arrests; 27 accident reports; 32 traffic and 11 warning citations; response to 593 complaints; and two criminal cases closed.

Airport Director Shelley Peacock reported that 85 aircraft visited during Taco Tuesday featuring food trucks offering BBQ, ice cream, seafood, and tacos. She is pleased that all the construction is complete, and the visiting planes filled the ramp twice as well as using the overflow parking. Even though the credit card reader at the fuel pump was broken, she still managed



Semco Construction Co. worked with the City to reduce the scope of work for the McSwain Park improvements, so that the project could bed one. Image provided.



Jennifer Hall of SEMCO construction said that her company was "ready to get started" on the improvements for McSwain Park. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.



Connie Bateman said that Saturday Night Lights is happy to partner with the City and run the games during the Christmas Tree lighting on Dec. 5. She said, "We are your volunteers, and we want to continue to serve you." Photograph courtesy of

to sell more than 1,000 gallons. In addition, despite the 50-degree temperature at 7:00 a.m. last Sat., the pancake breakfast was successful and raised about \$340.00 for the Young Eagles program that will now be held on the second Sat. of the month.

Golf Course Operations Manager Anne Applegate reported that both Director Jeff Gibson and Assistant Director Fabio Colon were in Tampa with the high school golf team: Austin Henning and Izzy Morris were competing individually, and the girls team is an alternate. On Oct. 27, the front nine greens, and this week, the back nine greens, were over-seeded. Soon all 18 will be open, and winter rates will start. In addition, income is up 150% from last



When Saturday Night Lights (SNL) first started in 2015, more than 500 people attended the first movie; however, attendance has been very modest since COVID-19. Image provided.



Troy Hughes accepted the **Veterans Appreciation** Week Proclamation from **Mayor Judy Wertz-**Strickland. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.

City Administrator Beth Carsten said that although seven companies attended the pre-bid conference for the wetlands project, the City only received one bid of \$6.2 million even though the engineers had estimated \$4 million. Two projects have started on Gibson St.: Phase 2B water and sewer as well as the Florida Dept. of Transportation (FDOT) Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) for stormwater, widening, and paving. Also, 12th Ave. passed its FDOT inspection and is open.

As discussed at Mon.'s Historic Preservation Commission workshop, the City wants to complete the re-survey of the Arcadia Historic District that Arcadia Main Street started; however, the City currently has two grants with the Division of Historical Resources for City

Hall and the Speer Center, so it is not eligible to apply for a survey grant. She will contact the vendor who did the work about the cost and time-frame to finish the survey.

She also reminded the Council of the Veterans Day parade at 10:00 a.m. on Nov. 11 as well as the next Council meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Nov. 13.

CONSENT AGENDA

Under the Consent Agenda, the City approved the following special event permits: Saturday Night Lights to offer games and a movie from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Sat., Jan. 24, 2025; and Phantom Fireworks Eastern Region, LLC, will have a fireworks sale from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., from Dec. 26 to Dec. 31, 2025, at 1701 E. Oak St., in Arcadia.

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BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES:

LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER (JAMES 5:19-20 NLT)

PASTOR ABDIEL FUENTES

First Christian Church of Arcadia DeSoto County Ministerial Association

Unlike Paul, who often ends his letters with a warm benediction. James closes with a call to action: "If someone among you wanders from the truth..." (James 5:19). This is a spiritual alarm bell, and one that still rings true for the church today. Let's be honest, spiritual drift is real. We've all felt it-those seasons when intimacy with God fades and the pull of the world grows stronger. Sometimes it's slow: bitterness, distraction, compromise, spiritual slumber. Other times it's fast: trauma, loss, anger, burnout. However, it happens, it's dangerous, and it's more common than we care to admit.

James isn't talking about outsiders here. He's talking about insidersbelievers like you and me. People who prayed beside us, served faithfully, and walked in truth, but now they're

drifting. And while we may be tempted to read our theological framework into this passage, the plain text is clear: someone who once walked in truth has wandered. James wrote to Christian Jews in exile-believers separated from the daily closeness of the church community in Jerusalem. Although vulnerable to compromise, temptation, and assimilation into a pagan world, they were also steeped in covenantal thinking. They understood that spiritual accountability wasn't optional, and church community was everything to them-you really were your brother's keeper. So, James' words would remind them of Leviticus 19:17-18: "Confront people directly so you will not be held guilty for their sin... Love your neighbor as yourself." Therefore, James' message hit home: If someone strays, go after them. That's the heartbeat of this passage. If someone strays, go after them. And that message is just as urgent today.

In our culture, the church lives in a kind of exile, surrounded by a world that promotes compromise and moral relativism. When sin arises, even within the church, the mantra is simple: "Stay in your lane." Don't confront. Don't ask questions. Don't get involved. It's not your business. But Scripture says the opposite: It is your business. Go after them. Don't think the rescue mission is reserved for pastors only—it's the responsibility of every believer. James doesn't ask for your theological opinion. He doesn't say, "Figure out if they were truly saved so you don't waste your time." He says, "They've wandered. Go get them." Don't you see, this is a pastoral mandate. God uses people to reach people-that's how you first learned about Jesus. Someone shared the Gospel with you. It's that simple. You're the lifeline.

And the stakes couldn't be higher; this act "saves from death." Whether physical or eternal, the warning is clear:

"Sin, when full-grown, gives birth to death" (James 1:15). For those who persist in rebellion, only judgment remains (Hebrews 10:26-27). Then James adds a phrase soaked in grace: "and bring about the forgiveness of many sins." That echoes Proverbs 10:12 and 1 Peter 4:8: "Love covers a multitude of sins." This isn't about ignoring sin. It's about healing itrestoration through truth and grace. So here's the challenge: Watch for warning signs: isolation, compromise, bitterness, silence. Don't wait for a crisis. Act early. Be bold. Be gentle. Be relentless. Be the lifeline. Reach out. Confront with courage. Love with persistence. Pray with urgency. And find hope in knowing that the Christian life was never meant to be lived alone. So, here's your takeaway: faith isn't a solo venture; God calls us to look out for one another.

GULF COAST DONORS RAISE \$233,000 IN TWO DAYS TO SUPPORT ALL FAITHS FOOD BANK

NEW \$150,000 COMMUNITY MATCH LAUNCHED TO FIGHT HUNGER ACROSS THE REGION

GULF COAST COMMUNITY **FOUNDATION**



VENICE, FL (November 10, 2025) -In an inspiring show of compassion and community spirit, Gulf Coast Community Foundation donors contributed \$233,000 in just two days to support All Faiths Food Bank following recent cuts to SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits.

The rapid outpouring of support began on Tuesday when Gulf Coast announced a special \$50,000 challenge match from two donor families, Gary and Barbara Rodkin and the Strohl Family Foundation, to provide immediate relief to families facing food insecurity. Soon after, Bob and Lin Williams stepped forward to double the match to \$100,000, igniting a powerful wave of generosity across the Gulf Coast donor community.

"Once again, our donors demonstrated the extraordinary impact that happens when our community comes together," said Phillip Lanham, President | CEO of Gulf Coast Community Foundation. "In just 36

hours, their collective generosity turned a challenge into life-changing support for families who need it most."

Because of this community-wide effort, seniors, children and neighbors across the region will have access to nutritious meals, hope, and comfort during an especially difficult

Building on this momentum, Gulf Coast is now launching a new challenge match of up to \$150,000 for its Area of Greatest Need Fund, thanks to the generosity of three Gulf Coast donor families (two anonymous and the Strohl Family Foundation). Every dollar contributed

through November 30 will be matched to connecting with a Philanthropic Advisor. help nonprofit partners combat hunger and food insecurity across the region.

"This next match gives everyone in our community the opportunity to make a difference," Lanham added. "Together, we can continue to meet the greatest needs of our neighbors - today and in the months ahead."

Community members can join the effort by making a gift to Gulf Coast's Area of Greatest Need Fund online (www.gulfcoastcf.org/give-area-need), through their donor advised fund, or by



ABOUT GULF COAST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Since 1995, Gulf Coast Community Foundation has powered bold philanthropy and collaborative leadership to drive meaningful change across our region. Guided by values of authenticity, curiosity, collaboration, grit, and a trailblazing spirit, we work side-by-side with donors, partners, and community members to tackle our region's biggest challenges and unlock its greatest opportunities. Together

with our donors, we've invested more than \$610 million in health and human services, education, civic & economic development, arts & culture, and the environment. Headquartered in Venice, with a second office in downtown Sarasota, Gulf Coast is nationally recognized for excellence, earning multiple "Best Nonprofits to Work For" honors and accreditation from Community Foundations National Standards®. Learn more at GulfCoastCF.org and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Realtor Showcase











Florida Power & Light Company is grateful to serve the DeSoto County community.

We were honored to take part in the National Night Out event hosted by the DeSoto County Sheriff's Office, celebrating community and connection.

This season, we're thankful for the partnerships that keep our communities safe, bright and strong.



OBITUARIES

MARVIN PETE JOHNSON



Marvin Pete Johnson, known as Pete, passed away on Thursday, October 9, 2025 in Eustis, FL. He was born on July 3, 1949 in Appalachia, VA, to Milford and Virginia Johnson. He was 1 of 9 children.

Pete was a Veteran in the US Army, and served in the Vietnam War. After his department of the Army, he began his career at Central Maloney Transformer Plant, where he was a supervisor until the plant closed. He then went to the Peace River Citrus Plant, where he retired.

Pete is survived by his daughters,

Michelle (Steve) Griffin, Arcadia, FL, Melissa (Jesus) Esparza, Kissimmee, FL, and son Marvin Pete Johnson, Jr., Arcadia, FL. His grandchildren are Emily (Steven) McCormick, Bethany Griffin, Zander Johnson, Abigail Esparza, Dylan Johnson, Adabella Esparza, and a great grandson, Caden McCormick. He is also survived by three brothers, Clifford Johnson, Holley Johnson, Johnny Johnson, and many nieces and nephews.

If you knew Pete, you knew he loved the mountains. After retirement, not only did he live in

Eustis, FL, he had property in VA, high up on a mountain. He loved sending pictures to his family of bears being on his property, or where'd they had been in his trash. He loved it. His pride and joy was his wood booger (bigfoot/sasquatch) he bought to put in his front yard in VA to greet his guest. Hillbilly Pete would be perfectly fine living off the grid.

The family plans a private "Celebration of Life" at a later date & time.





Jerry Allen Holder, 72, passed away peacefully in his home on November 3, 2025. Born in Fort Myers, Florida on January 31 1953 to the late Edward and Alberta Ford Holder. Jerry loved camping, building airboats and muscle cars as well as watch television. He was of Baptist faith.

He is survived by his wife; Vickey Holder, children; Tammy Veague, Shannon Hash (Fredrick Adam), Joni Truman, and Daniel Sott, brothers; Roy Holder, Calvin Holder, and

Jimmy Holder, Grandchildren; John Deluca Jr., Kaitlin Hash, Ashlyn Harman, Miranda Barnes, and Larry Veague Jr., Great-Grandchildren; Trace Deluca, Barrett Harman, Chloe Harman, and Paisley Harman.

Online condolences may be made at: www.pongerkaysgrady.com **Ponger-Kays-Grady Funeral Homes & Cremation Services**

have been entrusted with the arrangements.





DeSoto County Ahead Resource Fair & Community Update

REGISTER **NOW FOR**

The DeSoto County Ahead Resource Fair & Community Update is a free, one-of-a-kind event hosted by The Patterson Foundation.

The update will:

- Showcase local organizations
- Highlight valuable community resources
- Feature presentations from changemakers
- Offer actionable ideas to drive positive change

Whether you're a nonprofit, business, or community group, or an interested citizen, this is your chance to connect, collaborate, and help build a stronger DeSoto County. Scan the QR code to attend, be an exhibitor, or to volunteer.



What: A Community Update Dinner

Date: Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Time: 4:00p – 8:00p

Location: Turner Agri-Civic Center

Arcadia, FL 34266



REGISTER HERE qrs.ly/j6h2h50











Organizations

Communities

DESOTO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



 $ARREST\ REPORT\ |$ 10/31/25 - 111/6/25

Bajero, Antonio Hernandez:

Fraud-Imperson - False Id Given To Leo

Crites, Randy Scott:

Larc - Other Theft

Davis, Devonte Dequane:

Aggrav Asslt - Weapon - W Deadly Weapon Without Intent To Kill, Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend Revocation Equiv Status, Resist Officer -Obstruct Wo Violence

Dominguez, Adam:

Battery - Touch Or Strike

Dominguez, Juan Carlos:

Sex Asslt - Sex Bat 18 Yr Or Older By Prsn 18 Yr Or Old

Estes, Brandon Lynn:

Obscene Material-Possess - Poss Control View Depiction Child Pornography (X84)

Farabee, Michael David:

Trespassing - Trespass Fail To Leave Prop On Order Of Owner (X2)

Fry, Brandi:

Simple AssIt - Intent Threat To Do Violence, Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence

Gammage, Patrick Duncan:

Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence, Out-Of-County Warrant - Out-Of-County Warrant

Garcia, Corey Nicho:

Out-Of-County Warrant - Out-Of-County Warrant

Godinez-Morales, Delmar:

Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid Lic 1St Conv

Harllee, Angela Darlene:

Out-Of-County Warrant - Out-Of-County Warrant

Hawkins, Lindsey Cherie:

Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription, Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use, Prob Violation - Prob Violation

Hope, Wallace D:

Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription, Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use, Prob Violation - Prob Violation

Knutson, Margie Luann:

Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription, Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use, Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Langer, Joseph Aaron:

Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription, Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use

Lopez-Lopez, Rodolfo Mateo:

Trespassing - Trespass Fail To Leave Prop On Order Of Owner, Disorderly Intox - Disorder Intox Public Place Cause Disturbance

Lopez, Almaidra Vargas:

Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid Lic 1St Conv

Lott, Brittany Nicole:

Disorderly Conduct - Brawling Fighting Corrupt Public Moral Decency

Matthews, Whitney Elizabeth:

Possession Of Weapon - Or Ammo By Convicted Fla Felon

Medina-Granja, Gonzalo:

Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid Lic 1St Conv

Miller, Megan Elizabeth:

Aggrav Battery - Aggrav Battery Cause **Bodily Harm Or Disability**

Morris, Kenya Nakia:

Prob Violation - Prob Violation

Nelson, Casey Brandon:

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Padilla, Lawrence:

Larc - Other Theft

Perez, Everildo Joachia:

Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence, Marijuana-Possess - Possess Less Than 20 Grams Cannabis

Ramirez, Alberto Delgado:

Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid Lic 1St Conv

Roberts, Samantha Leigh:

Moving Traffic Viol - Drive While Lic Susp Habitual Offender

Rodriguez Rodriguez, Ricardo:

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Rydzinski, Melissa Marie:

Out-Of-County Warrant - Out-Of-County Warrant

Summersett, Martravious Juwan:

Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence, Trespassing - Trespass Fail To Leave Prop On Order Of Owner

Taylor, Kylan Keon:

Prob Violation - Prob Violation

Walck, Sakryan Larae:

Larc - Other Theft

Ward, Jevon BT:

Battery - Battery On Specified Personnel

Williams, Naquaron Lanigil:

Out-Of-County Warrant - Out-Of-County Warrant

Zamudio, Juan Antonio:

Battery - Cause Bodily Harm, Fraud-Imperson - False Id Given To Leo

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Dr. Christina Pepper



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UPCOMING

PUNTA GORDA NOV 22ND & 23RD SOUTH COUNTY REGIONAL PARK REC CENTER 670 COOPER ST.

SAT 9AM-5PM & SUN 9AM-3PM

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