

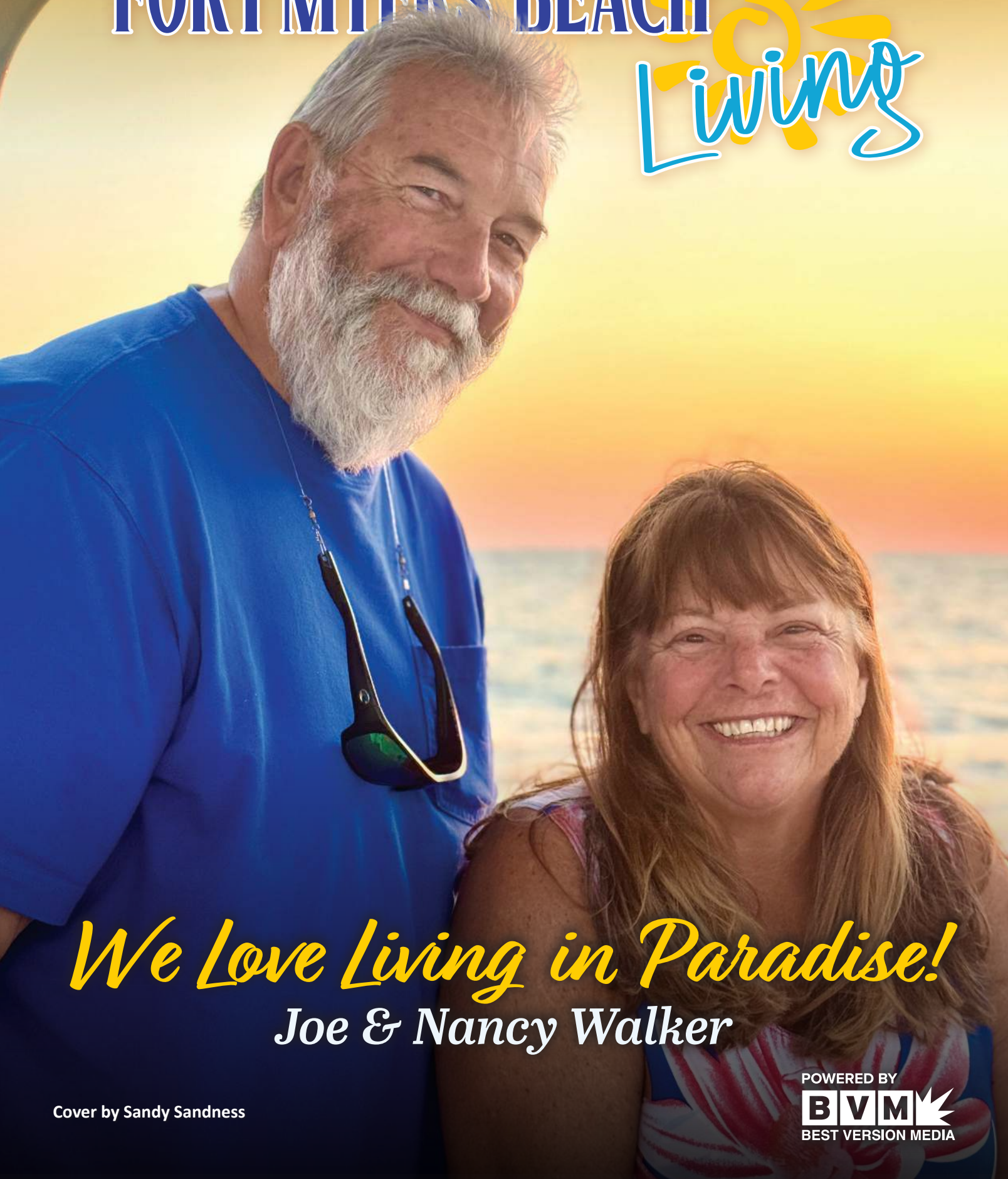
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An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Fort Myers Beach

June 2026

FORT MYERS BEACH

Living



We Love Living in Paradise!

Joe & Nancy Walker

Cover by Sandy Sandness

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FORT MYERS BEACH

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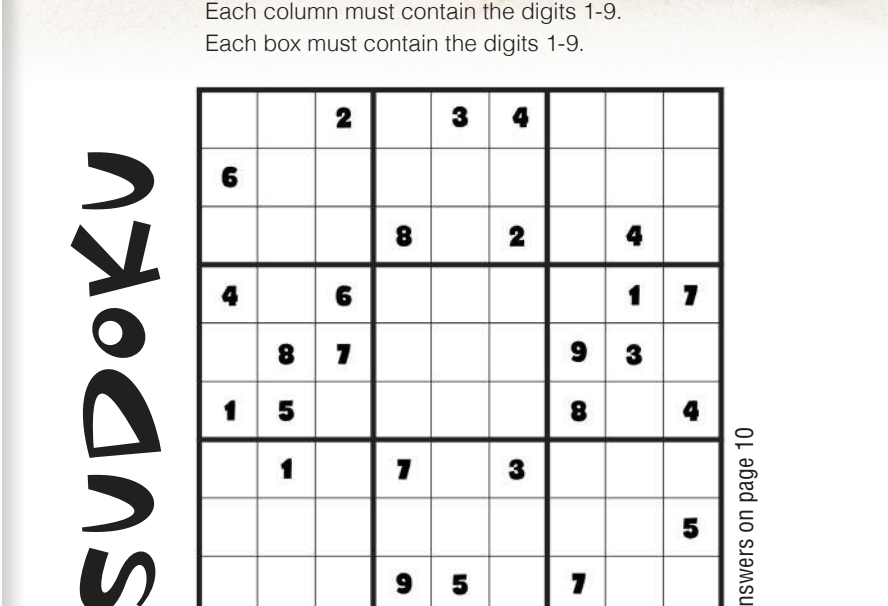
FEEDBACK / IDEAS / SUBMISSIONS

Have feedback, ideas or submissions? We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the 20th of each month, 6 weeks in advance of publication. Email your thoughts, ideas and photographs to ssandness@bestversionmedia.com. Submissions must be original and exclusive to Fort Myers Beach LIVING, at a maximum of 500 words. Fort Myers Beach LIVING reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, space limitations and spelling.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

- Emergency: 911
- Lee County Sheriff's Office: 239-477-1000
- FMB Fire Department: 239-590-4200
- FMB Town Hall: 239-765-0202
- FMB Public Library: 239-765-8162
- Lee County Parks & Recreation: 239-533-7275
- Beach Elementary School: 239-463-6356
- FMB Water Department: 239-463-9914
- Trash Collection: 239-334-1224
- Florida Power & Light (FPL): 1-800-226-5885
- CenturyLink: 239-335-3111
- Comcast Cable Company: 239-432-9277
- FMB Chamber of Commerce: 239-454-7500

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- By Gary Mooney -

SUDOKU RULES:

- Each row must contain the digits 1-9.
- Each column must contain the digits 1-9.
- Each box must contain the digits 1-9.

SUDOKU

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Answers on page 10



*We've weathered the storms with you.
We will be building back on the beach soon.
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Hello Friends & Neighbors!

June 21st marks two special occasions: Father's Day and the 1st day of Summer! Remember that on Dad's Special Day, restaurants and bars, shops and stores are open up-&-down FMB, for you to celebrate with the anchor of so many of our families. After all, there is no better place to make new lifetime memories than on Fort Myers Beach. As for Summer, let's all hope and pray that it is as Hurricane-Free as 2025!

You will LOVE the feature article on our Cover Couple, Nancy & Joe Walker. Their free-wheeling and "Groovy" lifestyle perfectly epitomizes what life on FMB is all about! Like Nancy says, "The best parts of FMB are its natural beauty, its people and its funky vibe! There is no cooler place to live than on FMB, where 'Old Hippies' go to retire!"

While I know this is our June issue, we are giving you a "sneak peek" into early July, with The Fourth of July activities to celebrate our nation's 250th Birthday. The 4th kicks off with the traditional Holiday Parade down Estero Boulevard at 10 a.m., then the day ends with a bang with a spectacular fireworks display at dusk. Congratulations and Thanks to the new island 501c3 organization, "What's Up FMB," for spearheading the fundraising campaign to pay for the fireworks, as the Town of FMB cannot afford the expense, as its budget still remains tight due to ongoing Hurricane Ian restoration efforts.

I recently attended a spectacular presentation at the Historic Mound House that marked the 1st anniversary of its Artifact Preservation Center. The event brought together some of the Mound House's closest supporters for an evening that highlighted both the site's rich history and its promising future. Breanna Vaccaro, the

Mound House's Museum Registrar, gave a wonderful presentation that underscored the importance of the Artifact Preservation Center, the only facility of its kind in Southwest Florida, and detailed the ongoing efforts to preserve and study the region's cultural heritage.

I cannot mention FMB history without noting the passing of a true FMB "Grand Dame," the legendary Fran Santini, who we treasured for 94 years. A founding member of the Estero Island Historic Society, Fran was widely regarded as an important link to FMB's early 20th-century history. The Estero Island Historic Society put it best in their release announcing Fran's passing by saying that she offered "steady leadership, dedication and a genuine love for preserving the history of our island." Personally, I will not only miss our conversations but her homemade, scrumptious "Rum Balls!" We lost a true FMB treasure.

Speaking of true FMB treasures, please support our advertisers because we cannot bring *Fort Myers Beach LIVING Magazine* to you free of charge without them. When you do visit, please let them know that you saw their ad in our magazine so we can continue to provide you with this community-oriented original entertainment each month.

Have An Awesome Beach Day!



Sandy Sandness

Publisher

Fort Myers Beach LIVING

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Mound House Celebrates One Year of Artifact Preservation

- By Sandy Sandness, Photo by Sandy Sandness -

On Saturday, April 26, the Mound House marked a meaningful milestone with the first anniversary celebration of its Artifact Preservation Center. The event brought together some of the Mound House's closest supporters—its "Friends"—for an evening that highlighted both the site's rich history and its promising future.

Guests were treated to live music, hors d'oeuvres, and an informative presentation by Breanna Vaccaro, the Museum Registrar. Her remarks underscored the importance of the Artifact Preservation Center, the only facility of its kind in Southwest Florida, and detailed the ongoing efforts to preserve and study the region's cultural heritage.

For those familiar with the Mound House, it is no ordinary landmark. Built atop a Calusa Indian shell mound, the site holds the distinction of being the highest natural elevation on Fort Myers Beach at 13 feet above sea level. Its location is no accident—this area has long been a focal point of human activity, making it a treasure trove of historical artifacts.

For years, many of these artifacts were stored in unmarked boxes, relocated multiple times without proper cataloging. That changed with the establishment of the Artifact Preservation Center in the former bathroom at the Mound House. With dedicated staff now in place, these items are being carefully researched, documented, and preserved—ensuring that the stories they tell are not lost to time.



Breanna Vaccaro, the Mound House Museum Registrar, underscored the importance of the Artifact Preservation Center, the only facility of its kind in Southwest Florida.

The anniversary celebration offered attendees a firsthand look at this important work and a deeper appreciation for the role the Mound House plays in protecting local history. Community members interested in supporting the Mound House can become members for \$35 per year. The museum is located at 451 Connecticut Street on Fort Myers Beach. For more information, visit www.moundhouse.org. ■



We Love Living in Paradise!

*Joe & Nancy Walker
Love FMB*

- By Gary Mooney -

Joe and Nancy Walker are from southern New Jersey, just outside Philadelphia. “We were high school sweethearts,” Nancy recalls fondly. “I first saw Nancy in Chemistry class,” adds Joe. “It was love at first sight for me, as she was the most beautiful girl in the entire school!” “Joe was tall, dark and handsome, so I too had an attraction,” Nancy offers, “but I already had another boyfriend who was kind-of a skinny kid. He did eventually make something of himself, however – Bruce Willis!” “Romantically, Nancy made the right decision,” laughs Joe, “but financially, not so much!”

They attended college together at The University of Maryland and eventually married in New Jersey on March 22, 1975, so

they recently celebrated their 51st anniversary. Joe became a pharmacist after graduating from the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy & Science, and then, after they raised their kids, attained his Doctor of Pharmacy from Temple University. Nancy earned her Adult Nurse Practitioner degree from the New Jersey University of Medicine & Dentistry. They have three children: Nicole, who is married to Dan; Bernie, whose wife is Rachel; and Chris and spouse Samantha. Nicole and Dan are parents to 21-year-old Anna, 19-year-old Ava, and Thomas who is 17. Bernie and Rachel have 18-year-old Lea and Joe who is 15. Chris and Samantha have Lynda who is 18, 16-year-old Annie and Sarah who is 14.

“That Will Be Us Someday”

As for FMB, it was definitely “love at first sight!” “We vacated here in 1982, at the old Holiday Inn,” recalls Nancy. “I took one look at that beautiful beach and amazing Gulf and that was it for me!” “I immediately loved FMB, too,” Joe states, “but Nancy was completely smitten. From that first trip through all our subsequent visits, she would begin crying the day before we would leave. I knew from that first day that FMB was our future.”

That future however had to wait, as the Walkers were raising three youngsters, but that future eventually evolved in January 2001. “The kids were getting older and being ‘empty nesters’ was coming into view,” Joe explains, “so we purchased our Ibis Street home.” “Our home was meant to be,” Nancy explains. “On many of our visits, when going to the beach for sunset, we often saw this lovely older couple several times a year doing the same thing and we would say to one-another, ‘that will be us someday.’ When we bought our home, we learned that the previous owners both passed away, and a neighbor explained to us that they were the couple we saw at those sunsets!” Nancy and Joe permanently moved to FMB in 2006, when their last child married and moved out.

“We Were Pros By Then!”

Their Ibis Street home is a 1950s-style cottage, “with fabulous beams across the ceiling,” describes Nancy. “We are several homes from the beach and on a canal, as we love boating.” “Fortunately, we were luckier than most when it came to the hurricanes,” Joe explains. “We evacuated for Ian but returned the next day to assess our damage. There had been six feet of water in our home but our house remained structurally sound. Since we were retired, we immediately began to strip the inside down to the studs and hired an electrician.”

“Not only were we retired but the kids came down and pitched in,” Nancy says “Fortunately, friends let us stay in their condominium,” relates Joe. “We worked 10 hours a day, every day, then went back for a shower, dinner and straight to bed, as we did it all over again the next day. Through all of that diligence, we were back home in May 2023, so much quicker than most. Two years later, we were lucky with Helene but Milton deposited nine inches of water



"Our 'real' hobby is our family – we love to visit with the kids and grandkids!"



Nancy & Joe, in front of the Town's beloved Poinsettia Christmas Tree

in our living area, but that limited damage to just our floors and baseboards. After all we did after Ian, those repairs were easy; we were pros by then!"

Before their respective retirements, Joe was a pharmacist, including being a hospital Director of Pharmacy. "When we moved to Florida, I was a hospital Director of Pharmacy, then a Division Director of Pharmacy Operations for a large hospital corporation that required me to travel back-&-forth from here to Florida's east coast several days a week." Nancy was a Nurse-Practitioner as well as a Critical Care Nurse who retired in 2011. Joe eventually retired in 2017, "so we could spend more time together," recalls Nancy. "That became our 'Retirement Plan!' We are very blessed to be where we are now in life."

"What Else Could You Want?"

Now fully retired, Nancy and Joe love to boat, fish, and listen to music at various FMB venues. She enjoys genealogy and thrifting: "My ultimate goal is to be on the 'Antique Road Show' with a nicknack that I paid \$10 for only to learn that it is worth \$9,000! My real passion however is shelling and there is no better area on the entire planet to shell than Southwest Florida, and now Joe enjoys it, too. I am an FMB Community Foundation member and we both attend the Estero Island Historic Society. But our 'real' hobby is our family – we love to visit with the kids and grandkids, as we have one family each in Florida, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. Given the grandchildren's ages, we expect to attend at least one high school or college graduation a year for the next decade!"

Nancy and Joe envision FMB in five years. "We are at a precipice," Nancy predicts. "I think the next year will dictate the Town's future because the decisions we make now will determine if we honor or disregard the Comprehensive Plan. We are not totally against the larger redevelopments and acknowledge that the beachfront properties will have large-scale resorts and private mansions, but we hope our sidestreets remain primarily residential homes, at much higher elevations, of course."

"I agree with Nancy," Joe relates, "but no matter the height or style of redevelopment, I predict that FMB will retain its funky vibe and family-oriented mindset. I believe that our population realignment following especially Ian is over and that those who live here now are our new permanent neighbors. If you stayed through all three hurricanes, there is nothing that will make you leave FMB, and if you bought since Ian, this is where you chose to live. Personally, I am amazed at the rapid pace of our rebuild – it is much faster than other hurricane-devasted Florida communities like Mexico Beach."

To Nancy, the best part of FMB is "its natural beauty, its people and its funky vibe! For all the reasons we originally moved here, those remain the same reasons why we stay. There is no cooler place to live than on FMB, where 'Old Hippies' go to retire!" "The beach and Gulf," says Joe, "along with our small island charm. If I could go back in time, I would move here all over again! I dreamed of moving here on our first visit and that dream came true. We are blessed; we live in Paradise – what else could you want?" ■



"My real passion is shelling," says Nancy, "and there is no better area on the entire planet to shell than Southwest Florida, and now Joe enjoys it, too."

Your Neighborhood Market Update

ADDRESS	BEDS / BATHS	SQ FT	SOLD PRICE	CONDOS	BEDS BATHS	SQ FT	SOLD PRICE
19 SUNVIEW BLVD	3 BED/2(1)	1,503	\$540,000	7390 ESTERO BLVD #103B	1 BED/1(0)	525	\$215,000
125 GULFVIEW AVE	3 BED/2(1)	1,443	\$640,000	200 ESTERO BLVD #507	1 BED/1(0)	843	\$312,500
25 FAIRVIEW BLVD	3 BED/2(0)	1,788	\$950,000	6665 ESTERO BLVD #226	2 BED/2(0)	934	\$327,500
210 PEARL ST	3 BED/2(0)	1,225	\$1,075,000	6895 ESTERO BLVD #552	2 BED/2(0)	778	\$335,000
21188 NODDY TERN DR	3+DEN/3(0)	2,293	\$1,150,000	8701 ESTERO BLVD #602	1 BED/1(0)	518	\$340,000
25 PALMVIEW BLVD	4 BED/3(0)	1,758	\$1,500,000	4491 BAY BEACH LN #111	3 BED/2(0)	1,197	\$365,000
13 BAYVIEW BLVD	3+DEN/2(1)	2,379	\$1,525,000	6897 ESTERO BLVD #132	2 BED/2(0)	778	\$370,000
4841 ESTERO BLVD	3 BED/2(1)	1,452	\$1,759,000	8300 ESTERO BLVD #204	2 BED/1(1)	732	\$380,000
5230 ESTERO BLVD #6	3 BED/3(1)	2,526	\$2,300,000	6897 ESTERO BLVD #163	2 BED/2(0)	778	\$387,500
				7330 ESTERO BLVD #502	1 BED/1(0)	517	\$425,000
				8771 ESTERO BLVD #1002	1 BED/1(0)	586	\$435,000
				8350 ESTERO BLVD #523	2 BED/2(0)	933	\$460,000
				7330 ESTERO BLVD #1004	1 BED/1(0)	517	\$465,000
				200 ESTERO BLVD #708	2 BED/2(0)	1,238	\$470,000
				7401 BELLA LAGO DR #533	2+DEN/2(0)	1,363	\$505,000
				7650 ESTERO BLVD #202	2 BED/2(0)	889	\$540,000
				4182 BAY BEACH LN #773	2 BED/2(0)	1,390	\$555,000
				8350 ESTERO BLVD #231	2 BED/2(0)	1,025	\$562,000
				8350 ESTERO BLVD #126	2 BED/2(0)	1,025	\$565,000
				4745 ESTERO BLVD #1204	2 BED/2(0)	1,318	\$670,000
				2810 ESTERO BLVD #411	2 BED/2(0)	1,350	\$710,000
				4753 ESTERO BLVD #1602	2 BED/2(0)	1,318	\$825,000
				4192 BAY BEACH LN #892	3 BED/2(1)	2,045	\$1,035,000
LOTS		ACRE	SOLD PRICE				
49 DOUBLOON WAY		0.072	\$65,000				
63 EMILY LN		0.062	\$290,000				
101-103 ANDRE MAR DR		0.156	\$530,000				
2101 ESTERO BLVD		0.113	\$550,000				
225 TROPICAL SHORE WAY		0.175	\$800,000				

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“Red, White & Beach!”



FMB Celebrates America’s 250th Birthday on July 4th

- By Gary Mooney -

“There will be fireworks on Fort Myers Beach to ring in the 250th anniversary of the birth of the United States,” beams Karen Woodson, Vice President of “What’s Up FMB.” “The fireworks extravaganza is Saturday, The Fourth of July, at Dusk, as the culmination of a terrific national holiday. The day begins with the traditional Fourth of July Parade down Estero Boulevard at 10 a.m., so the Holiday offers two tremendous family events from morning through night.”

Karen explains that The Fourth of July activities are a partnership between the Town of Fort Myers Beach and the new community 501c3 organization, “What’s Up FMB.” “There was a time, before Hurricane Ian, when the Town could sponsor fireworks as a community celebration. Since Ian, however, the Town operates under an extraordinarily tight budget, so ‘What’s Up FMB’ stepped up to partner with them to make fireworks happen. The Town handles all of the logistics, like permitting, as well as partnering with the Lee County Sheriffs Office and Park Rangers for security and crowd control. ‘What’s Up FMB’ is managing the fundraising through a coordinated effort with businesses and individuals.”

The fireworks fundraising goal is \$130,000 and “What’s Up FMB” as of press time is just \$10,000 from that amount. “That cost is not just for fireworks but everything else necessary to make fireworks happen,” says Karen. “The Town previously launched fireworks from the old FMB Pier but Ian obviously ruined that. We now require a barge for fireworks and that alone costs \$40,000. If you are reading this article and thinking, ‘well, they are almost to their goal so there is no need for me to contribute,’ know that the fireworks partnership between the Town and ‘What’s Up FMB’ will continue to provide New Year’s Eve fireworks to ring in 2027. That means that anything we raise now over that mark will go into the coffers for the New Year’s Eve fireworks.”

Fireworks fundraising comes in amounts large and small, Karen reports. “Mike Miller kicked everything off with a \$25,000 contribution for all the necessary downpayments, then doubled down with an additional \$20,000 matching amount. Then there are island businesses who have promotions that raise funds a dollar or two at a time. ‘Detroit Dawgs’ for instance is contributing \$1 from every hot dog sale and that is now over \$500. ‘The Whale’ offers a ‘Mark-up Program,’ where you can round up your check an extra dollar or two, with that going to the fireworks fund. If you prefer a more traditional contribution, go to the ‘What’s Up FMB’ website at www.whatsupfmb.com, see ‘Red, White & Beach’ under ‘Events,’ and click on that link to contribute.”

FMB Fireworks are traditionally at Times Square, “but as of right now, we will probably position the barge a little further to the south of the island.” Karen explains. “Times Square remains a work in progress and replacing the pier is not yet underway, so that area at this time is not optimal for a large crowd. Additionally, the beach there can be quite narrow. By moving the barge just slightly more to the south, the beach is much wider and can accommodate more people. If you know anything about FMB fireworks, however, you know that you can see and even feel them all up and down the island! With fireworks set to go off between Dusk to 9 p.m., make sure that you are already on the island, as authorities will close the Matanzas Pass Bridge from 8 until roughly 11 p.m.”

Fourth of July Parade

Before fireworks light up the Holiday night, The Fourth of July Parade kicks off at 10 a.m., taking the traditional route from the Bay Oaks Recreational Center down Estero Boulevard to the base of the Matanzas Pass Bridge. “The Town is solely sponsoring the Holiday Parade,” Karen explains, “so for registration information and details, contact them directly at 239-765-0865 or see www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov. Because the Parade takes the same Estero Boulevard route as that

continued on page 11

June

**Monday Through Friday
Bay Oaks Recreational Center**

@Bay Oaks Recreational Center
The Bay Oaks Recreational Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. FMB residents \$7 with all others \$10, with memberships available. For information see www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov.

**Monday through Friday
June 8 Through August 7
Bay Oaks Summer Camps 2026**

@Bay Oaks Recreational Center
Kids ages 5 through 12 enjoy the beach, pool, fishing, field trips, crafts, games, movies & more Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.! Registration is per week and not daily; \$125-per-week for "Beach Kids" and \$175 for all others. To register go to www.fmbgov.com/youth-programs.



**Monday through Friday
in JUNE & JULY
Lovers Key Summer Camps 2026**

@Lovers Key State Park
Experience the Real Florida as you explore the beach and mangrove estuaries of Lovers Key, while learning about the local ecology and environmental stewardship along the way! \$300-per-session, register in advance at <http://LoversKey.Eventbrite.com>.

**Daily Through August
"Island Charm Crawl"**

@FMB Businesses
Hosted by "What's Up FMB," the "Island Charm Crawl" turns FMB into a playful islandwide scavenger

hunt! Participants collect unique charms from participating bars, shops and businesses, adding a new piece at each stop. Those who complete the "Crawl" earn a final charm. "Crawl Kits" are \$30; to register or for more details, see www.whatsupfmb.com.

**Mondays, June 1 & 15
FMB Town Council Meetings**

@Town Hall
The FMB Town Council continues its work to rebuild FMB in the new Town Hall at 6231 Estero Boulevard at 9 a.m.; see www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov.



**Wednesday, June 3
& EVERY WEDNESDAY
THROUGH SATURDAY
The Historic Mound House Museum,
Grounds & Store**

@The Historic Mound House
Built in 1921, the Mound House is the oldest standing structure on FMB. It is a multi-level museum that displays Calusa artifacts, interactive exhibits and the one-of-a-kind 1,600-year-old underground shell mound attraction. Wednesdays through Saturdays 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with Grounds daily from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Adults \$15, Students \$8, Kids 6 to 12 \$5, & 5 & under free; Grounds free. See www.moundhouse.org.

**Thursday, June 4
FMB Chamber
"Coffee Connection"**

@Fifth-Third Bank
Start your day with your FMB Chamber friends for networking with complimentary coffee and tasty breakfast items at the Fifth-Third Bank at 11550 Majestic Palms Boulevard in Fort Myers. The FREE "Coffee Connection" is from 8 to 9:30 a.m.; see www.fortmyersbeach.org.

**Thursday, June 4
FMB Town Council Management
& Planning Session**

@Town Hall
The FMB Town Council continues its work to rebuild FMB in the new Town Hall at 6231 Estero Boulevard at 9 a.m.; see www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov.

**Sunday, June 7
AND EVERY SUNDAY
Bayside Park Concert Series**

@Bayside Veterans Park
Relax while listening to fantastic tunes from local musicians at these FREE weekly outdoor concerts, weather permitting, from 4 to 7 p.m. For the list of Concert performers, see www.fortmyersbeach.org.

**Sunday, June 7
AND EVERY SUNDAY
Reggae Party**

@Lighthouse Island Resort Tiki Bar
After you enjoy Sunday's "Bayside Park Concert Series," boogie on over to the nearby Lighthouse Island Resort Tiki Bar to get your Reggae on from 6 to 9 p.m. Dreadlocks optional! See www.lighthouseislandresort.com.

**Monday, June 8
& EVERY MONDAY THROUGH
FRIDAY**

CROW Campus Tours
@Center for the Rehabilitation Of Wildlife
An in-depth look at what the animal patients experience, from intake to release, including the hospital and treatment process. The 90-minute tour is Monday through Friday at 11 a.m.; \$25-per-person with advance registration and payment necessary at 239-472-3644, x-229 or reservations@crowclinic.org.

**Tuesday, June 9
FMB Local Planning Agency Meeting**

@Town Hall
The FMB LPA, appointed by Town Council, continues its work to rebuild FMB in the new Town Hall at 6231 Estero Boulevard at 9 a.m.; see www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov.

**Wednesday, June 10
& EVERY WEDNESDAY &
SATURDAY**

"Archaeology & Archives Tour"
@The Historic Mound House
Discover the science of archaeology and the tools of the trade while exploring the ancient Calusa shell midden. Then step inside the Artifact Preservation Center to see the artifacts unearthed during those excavations EVERY Wednesday & Saturday from 11 a.m. to Noon. \$5 per person plus MH admission; see www.moundhouse.org.

**Thursday, June 11
FMB Chamber
Membership Luncheon**

@Pink Shell Beach Resort
Join your FMB Chamber friends at the Pink Shell Beach Resort to savor a scrumptious luncheon as well as enjoying a presentation from Madeline Erickson from "The Sensory Safe Solution" from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$32 members & \$42 prospective members; see www.fortmyersbeach.org.

**Thursday, June 11
FMB Art Association
Summer Exhibit**

"Beach Bliss"
@FMBAA Gallery
The FMBAA's Summer Show, "Beach Bliss," runs through Saturday, July 18, at its new Gallery at 13451 McGregor Boulevard, Unit #1, in Cypress Square in Fort Myers, near the Prawnbroker Restaurant & Fish Market. FREE admission from Thursday through Saturday from Noon to 6 p.m. See www.fortmyersbeachart.com.

Answers from page 3

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

Friday, June 12

Welcome & Discovery Center

@Lovers Key State Park

The Welcome & Discovery Center educates and informs visitors about Lovers Key habitats through interactive displays Wednesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The W&DC is FREE with the Park entry fee; see www.friendsofloversonkey.org.

Friday, June 12

Fort Myers Mighty Mussels

v. Dunedin Blue Jays

@Hammond Stadium, Lee Health Sports Complex

The Mighty Mussels, the Low A affiliate of the Minnesota Twins, take on the Dunedin Blue Jays of the Toronto Blue Jays organization at 7:05 p.m.! Following the game, stay for the spectacular fireworks display that the Mussels host after every Friday home game. The Mussels & Blue Jays play Tuesday through Friday at 7:05 p.m.; Saturday at 6:05 p.m.; and Sunday at 12:05 p.m. Tickets are \$12 to \$17; for details see www.mightymussels.com.



Thursday, June 18

FMB Woman's Club Monthly Social

@Legno Italian Kitchen

Hang out with your FMB Woman's Club members, with all others invited to join us! Savor the great food & atmosphere at this fabulous South End restaurant in the Santini Marina Plaza at 5:30 p.m. To join the best club on the entire island, see www.fmb-wc.org.

Saturday, June 20

"Coastal Cars & Coffee"

@Santini Marina Plaza

Classic cars gather at Santini Marina Plaza from 9 to 11 a.m., before heading to Norm's Beach Parking at 1397 Estero Boulevard for lunch at "Detroit Dawgs." There will be additional "Coastal Cars & Coffee" shows on July 18, August 15 and September 19. For information, see www.whatsupfmb.com.

Sunday, June 21

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!

FMB restaurants & bars, shops and stores are open up-&-down the island to celebrate Dad's Big Day!



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of the 'Shrimp Festival,' the Town will close the Matanzas Pass Bridge from 9 a.m. until roughly Noon."

While the Parade and Fireworks are the only two "official" Fourth of July events, Karen suspects that island bars, restaurants and related establishments "will offer their own kind of specials all throughout the day and maybe even for the entire Holiday weekend, especially since the United States of America is celebrating its milestone 250th birthday, with communities all across the nation joining in on this once-in-a-lifetime commemoration."

What's Up FMB

Karen finds it astounding that "What's Up FMB" is partnering with the Town to sponsor FMB fireworks for The Fourth of July 2026, "because on The Fourth of July 2025, 'What's Up FMB' did not exist! 'What's Up FMB' became a 501c3 on October 25, 2025. We formed 'What's Up FMB' for one simple reason – to provide fun and innovative programs to drive people to our beach businesses during the offseason. 'What's Up FMB' represents our business community, through our three-tier membership structure of businesses, individuals and other 501c3 Non-Profits. Memberships are quite reasonable, with Individuals at \$25-per-year, Non-Profits at \$100 and Businesses at \$200."

"What's Up FMB" does not plan to sponsor many events in the December through April timeframe, Karen explains, "because that is the heart of Season, with beach businesses, bars and restaurants often bursting at the seams, but we turn it on from May through November, when our establishments really need customers to drive over our bridges onto FMB. For example, we recently hosted the 'Glow By The Gulf' yoga and wellness fair on the beach and at Santini Marina Plaza, where 'What's Up FMB' gained 100 new members. The 'island Charm Crawl' is underway through August and our initial 2025 event, 'Mullet Madness,' returns for its 2nd year on Saturday, July 25. We are already working on Fall programs, like the 'Illuminations Parade' on November 7 that will be three times larger than last year's, going directly down Estero Boulevard rather than on the beach. To see our entire calendar, go to www.whatsupfmb.com. Even though the organization is less than a year old, we have over 3,000 Facebook followers!"

It gives Karen great satisfaction to be a "What's Up FMB" member and she encourages others to join. "You will always know what is going on around our island, you get to attend and volunteer at some really fun and wacky events, and you will experience the joy of seeing our beach community pull together. That feeling of community; of giving back and really supporting our beach business when they most need our help, is heartwarming."

Family; Family; Family!

"There is no better place anywhere to spend your Fourth of July Holiday than on Fort Myers Beach," raves Karen! "When you see families and children lining the parade route in the morning, through spending the day together on our beautiful beach, straight through everyone 'Oohing-&-Aahing' at the magnificent fireworks, that is true Norman Rockwell Americana, so get here early and stay into the evening. After all, Fort Myers Beach is all about family; family; family – young and old alike!" ■



It's Turtle Time!

Nest Monitoring Continues Through October 31.

– By Gary Mooney, Photos provided by Sandy Sandness –

The all-volunteer non-profit Turtle Time, Inc., begun by Eve Haverfield in 1989, begins its 38th consecutive season of monitoring marine turtles on FMB as well as Big Hickory Island and Bonita and Bunche Beaches. Florida's nesting sea turtle season is May 1 through October 31, though Turtle Time in recent years starts their monitoring on April 15 because turtles can nest as soon as the Gulf waters reach 80 degrees. FMB is the almost-exclusive domain of Loggerheads (*Caretta caretta*), though Turtle Time found its first documented FMB Green (*Chelonia mydas*) nest in 2019.

The primary bane to nesting turtles and their hatchlings is visible artificial light from beach properties. Turtles for millennia had quiet dark beaches to themselves, but now they must compete with businesses and coastal residents. These lights can prevent females from coming ashore or they choose an inferior nesting location from which few hatchlings survive. Lights disorient hatchlings, causing them to move toward that source and away from the Gulf, resulting in their death from dehydration, exhaustion, or automobiles.

“Immense Pride!”

“Loggerheads nest every other year, so we look to 2024 for an historic clue for 2026,” explains Eve. “FMB had 109 sea turtle nests in 2024, so we expect something in that vicinity. There are a few reasons to be optimistic about this year. The Town will not do a large-scale beach renourishment, there is new dune vegetation the Town planted, as well as the construction of the new berm, and those things make for a more turtle nesting-friendly environment as well as enhanced storm surge

protection for residents and businesses. There is talk the Town may do some minor beach construction in 2026, but it is my understanding that it will not be a major project.”

Eve's primary concern remains beach lighting. “The worst offenders are those people and businesses that use white LED lights, because that is a piercing white light, even when emanating from indoors – any lights visible from the beach are problematic for sea turtles. Residents think they are complying because they have tinted windows, but unfortunately most tints are not strong enough, meaning they must still close their drapes. In 2025, we set a record number of disoriented nests on FMB with 29, and that cost us thousands of hatchlings that we scraped off Estero Boulevard, found dead due to dehydration, or that were attacked by fire ants. All of these deaths are preventable.”

She endorses a simple solution: “Amber LED Lighting! People still have the misconception that Amber LED lights are not bright enough, but that is not true. Amber LED lighting is beautiful and as safe for humans as for turtles; we would never endorse a product that would potentially place anyone in danger. Another misconception is that Amber LED lights cost more. They do cost a bit more with the initial purchase, but they last so long that they are overall very cost-effective.”

The news is not all gloom-&-doom, Eve opines. “Estero Boulevard streetlights are now all Amber LED and that is a tremendous achievement by the Town, as is the Town's efforts to get beach residents into greater lighting compliance through proactive ways. I recently learned that not only are all of the new

FMB Fire Station #31 lights at 2545 Estero Boulevard turtle-friendly, but that FMB Fire Chief Scott Wirth proclaimed that with ‘immense pride!’ That is so encouraging!”

Work Together; Win Together

If you accidentally hook or catch a sea turtle, or find one in distress or dead, immediately contact Turtle Time at 239-481-5566, the FWC Hotline at 888-404-3922, or the Town of FMB at 239-765-4222. “Contact Turtle Time first,” stresses Eve. “We can respond the quickest, because when you are dealing with, for instance, a disoriented hatchling or a distressed turtle, every minute matters.”

Turtle Time has a core group of roughly 120 volunteers. “I cannot even guess how many thousands of hours they contribute every season,” reflects Eve. “We always welcome new volunteers so if you have an interest, please contact me at 239-481-5566 or www.turtletime.org.”

In addition to her volunteers, Eve appreciates “all the good people on FMB who help us protect our local nesting sea turtles. They fill in holes dug in the sand; they value the new beach plantings and dunes; they maintain their beach in a natural state rather than raking it; and they have Amber LED lights. That tells me that we are on the right track, because when we all work together, we all win together, people and sea turtles alike!” ■



FMB Community Foundation Awards Grants, Scholarships in Annual Celebration

The Fort Myers Beach Community Foundation celebrated another successful year of giving at its annual Awards Program on Tuesday, May 5, held at St. Raphael’s Episcopal Church Parish Hall.

Co-Presidents Jane McCloskey and Amy Gillette announced that the Foundation awarded \$75,000 in grants to 17 nonprofit organizations, along with scholarships to 19

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LIVE A CRAZY GOOD DAY



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local students. Additional contributions supported the Florida SouthWestern State College Passthrough Program and the Foundation's endowment fund which will begin disbursing 2 scholarships this coming 2026-2027 academic year.

Grant recipients reflected the diverse needs of the island community and surrounding area, including Bay Oaks Recreational Center, Beach Kids Foundation, Estero Bay Buddies, Estero Island Historical Society, FMB Art Association, Friends of Lovers Key, Keep Lee County Beautiful, Mound House, Ostego Bay Summer Camps, Support for Sailing, FMB Chamber Water Foundation, Friends of the Library, Ronald McDonald House Charities, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3009, FMB Elementary PTO and CROW.

The Foundation's continued success is driven by the dedication of its members, volunteers, and community partners. Fundraising efforts this year included a fashion show that raised \$16,000 and a casino-themed event that brought in \$20,000. A new Halloween Pub Crawl fundraiser was also introduced, adding to a growing list of creative community events. Additional revenue came from participation in the annual Putt & Pub Crawl, parking partnerships during the American Sand Sculpting Championship and annual Pickleball Tournament.

Looking ahead, the Foundation announced its 2026–2027 leadership team. Amy Gillette will serve as President, with Annie Lump as Treasurer and Patti Coleman as Secretary. The new board includes Kathy Nash, Ellen Vaughn, Heidi Jungwirth and new board members Kathy Dollins, Fran Grier, and Janet Shobe.

As summer arrives, the Foundation will take a brief hiatus before resuming board meetings in late summer and membership meetings in October, typically held on the third Wednesday of each month. Upcoming events and details will be posted on the Foundation's website and the local Women's Club calendar.

The organization also extended special thanks to the King Family Foundation and the Alex King Group and its many dedicated members for their ongoing support.

Community members interested in getting involved are encouraged to attend a meeting this fall or visit www.fmbcommunityfoundation.com. With a simple mission—"we make money to give money away"—the FMB Community Foundation continues to make a meaningful impact across Fort Myers Beach. ■

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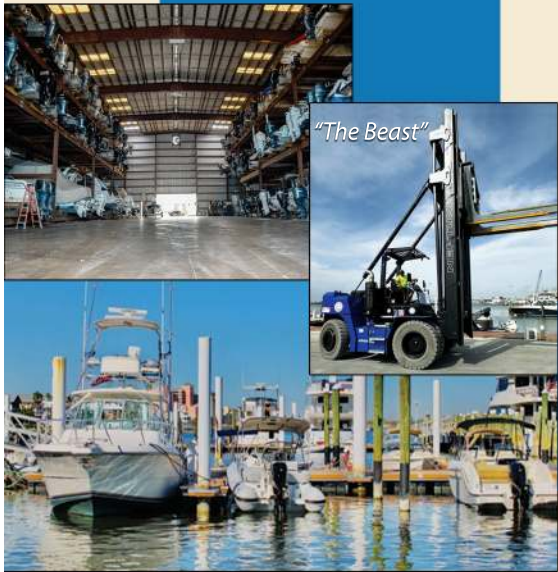
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