



To educate and inspire the community by preserving
and sharing the rich history of Estero

Newsletter

April 2023

A 501 (C) (3) Non-Profit Organization



From The President



***EHS President
Gail Langner***

It has been an exciting few months as we were given the rights to the 1916 Alvarez/Smith home from the Village of Estero. It is located on the north side of the property the Village purchased in the “original Estero” on Highlands Avenue. As you may recall, the cottage and schoolhouse we have now both originally were moved from this same street. We are in the process of trying to firm up a location to which it can be moved, then will begin to raise the money necessary to move and restore this sweet 27 x 27 home. We will most certainly keep you all informed, as time goes on and the plans unfold. And we’ll let you all know how you can help.

We were proud to host the Estero Chamber of Commerce Leadership Class in March, where we provided breakfast and gave them some background information and a tour of both of our buildings. They then went to visit the Alvarez/Smith home before traveling on to other locations for the day.

We will be having a ramp appreciation on Saturday, April 15th at 12:30 to celebrate the completion of the necessary reconstruction of our handicap ramp. We’d love to have you come to this ribbon cutting. Then, at 1:00 we will be unveiling the Tamiami Trailblazers exhibit marking the 100th anniversary of their cross-state trek through the Everglades. This exhibit was made possible by partnering with the Southwest Florida Historical Society and by two of our FGCU student volunteers who researched for countless hours – Joe Esckilsen and Kayleigh Oliver. Thank you, Joe, and Kayleigh!

April 22nd at 9:30 am will be the last of our Speaker Series until fall. Local historian, Jacob Winge will present Outlaws, Highwaymen and Villains of Florida at Country Creek. \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. See below for a link to RSVP.

Our last event for April will be on April 29th from 10 am to noon. A jewelry making class taught by Cheri Dunlap at the cottage. \$25 members and \$30 non-members. Cheri's beautiful work is currently for sale in our museum shop. Again, read below for more information.

I would like to thank George Zalucki for serving on our Board of Directors until he took a seat on the Village of Estero council. He was such a blessing to us and will be missed. However, our loss is certainly the Village of Estero's gain. Our community will be the beneficiary of his necessary resignation. Thanks for everything, George!

Thank you for your support,

Gail Langner

EHS Board President

In This Issue

- Estero Forever Foundation
- Did You Know?
- April EHS Speaker Series
- Jewelry Making Class
- April EHS Board Meeting
- EHS New Ramp Dedication
- The Questers
- Our Sincere Thanks
- Estero Village Council
- The River/Dauray House
- Chamber Breakfast
- History - Article
- Chamber Leadership Class
- Tamiami Trail Blazers
- Annual Essay Contest
- We Need YOU!
- Out & About Events
- Business Supporters

Estero Forever Foundation Insights

The Driving Range Connection Back in June of 2022, the Village of Estero closed on the land purchase of the Golf Coast Driving Range and the adjacent 10-acre parcel located at 9000 Williams Road. At that time, an agreement was reached with the Village of Estero and the Estero Forever Foundation in a public / private partnership that would directly benefit the Estero Community. In this agreement, the EFF would operate the Golf Coast Driving Range with a combination of paid ...

READ MORE

Did You Know?



1928 — The Tamiami Trail, so named because it connected Tampa to Miami, officially opened on April 26, 1928. It cost \$8 million and needed 2.6 million sticks of dynamite for its construction, a process which lasted 13 years.

EHS April Speaker Series



Outlaws, Highway Men & Villains of Florida

Mark Your Calendars!

April 22nd at 9:30am - 11:00am

What a fascinating and exciting topic! The history of outlaws and villains is always intriguing, and we are sure Jacob will have some captivating stories to share about our local Florida Highwaymen and other notorious figures from the past. We are sure attendees will enjoy the presentation and learn something new about our local SW Florida's history.

Register at
esterohistoricalsociety.com

\$ 10.00 member \$ 15.00 non-member

Presented at:

Villages of Country Creek Clubhouse
21180 Country Creek Drive, Estero, FL
33928



Jacob Winge
Historian

Jewelry Making Class

Saturday, April 29th 10:00 am—Noon Estero Historical Society
Cottage Museum 9285 Corkscrew Palms Blvd., Estero

Create your own bracelet!

All Gems, Supplies and Continental Breakfast are included

\$25 Members

\$30 Non-Members

Your instructor, Cheri Dunlap will teach bead- stringing using two
strands of gemstone rounds and one two-strand magnetic clasp.

Examples of her beau- tiful work are on display and for sale in our
Gift Shop.

Register before March 29th EsteroHistoricalSociety.com or at the
Gift Shop Saturdays from 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm Questions?
rdunlap2@comcast.net



**The next EHS Board meeting will be
held on Friday April 21st at 12:00
noon. Anyone who would like to attend
is always welcome.**

Villages of Country Creek Clubhouse 21180 Country Creek Drive, Estero, FL
33928

You Are Invited To The EHS Ramp Ribbon Cutting & Dedication

Saturday April 15th at 12:30pm



The Estero Historical Society's board of directors is proud to announce that our new replacement ramp has been completed after numerous delays due to hurricane Ian. Please join us for this event, meet the board and tour the museum and schoolhouse. Visitors can learn more about the rich history of Estero and appreciate the efforts taken by the society to preserve and promote it.

Cottage Museum 9285 Corkscrew Palms Blvd., Estero FL 33928

THE QUESTERS



Our very own Peg Bennington, EHS head docent, led a private lecture for the Questers who reached out to learn more about the history of Estero.

This specific group were with us representing the local chapter. However, many are seasonal residents and belong not only here but also northern chapters.

THE QUESTERS members each belong to a local Chapter that meets at least once a month and usually from September through May. State and Provincial Chapters come together to form their State/Provincial Quester organization and are part of the International Quester organization. The focus of chapter meetings is a planned program highlighting a collection, historic story or historic site presented by a Quester member, local collector or other expert. Meetings may take place in a Quester home, public venue, or historical site like a museum. State/provincial meetings focus on a theme in a larger accessible venue, sometimes at a historical venue. The annual Quester International Convention in the spring enhances the experience for members with tours, speakers, and mini lyceums. During these Conventions, tours highlight the convention hosts unique history and historical sites, along with emphasis on local Quester preservation and restoration projects. A virtual Chapter is in the planning.

A Very Special

Thank you 

We would like to give a special thank you to **Trish Leonard** for her very generous donation to the Estero Historical Society. We are so grateful and honored by your generosity.

A Very Special

Thank you 

We would also like to give a special thank you shout out to **Jacob Winge** for always giving us so much of his personal time to help the EHS with special events and our speaker series. Thank You!



Thank You George Zalucki

The EHS Board wanted to take a moment to express our sincere appreciation for all that you have done as a member of our board. Your dedication, commitment, and hard work have not gone unnoticed. It is evident that you possess exceptional qualities and skills, which make you an invaluable asset to our community.

Your outstanding abilities in thought, word, and deed have contributed significantly to the growth and development of our historical society. Your presence on our board has been a true honor, and we will miss you dearly. However, we are comforted by the fact that our loss is a much larger gain for our community.

As you move forward, we wish you all the best as a new council member for the Village of Estero, and we are confident that you will continue to excel in all your future endeavors. Once again, thank you for your contributions.



Village Connection- Meet the new Estero Village Council Members

On April 5, 2023, four Estero Village Council members will be sworn in to serve four-year terms as three of the original council members step down after serving eight years.

[**Click Here to Meet The
New Council Members**](#)

The River House or The Charles Dauray House

The meeting with Village Manager Steve Sarkozy regarding 8801 Corkscrew Road, known as the River House or as the Charles Dauray House. The village wants to tear it down, we had an independent contractor look it over to determine what it would take to be saved. A construction engineer went in the house to access and noted it needs a new roof, made ADA compliant, improved sewer and water, needs a two land driveway among other issues. It has been determined to demolish the house after historic items ie beams, doors, stained glass windows are removed. Gail Langner went before the Village Council to advise the Historical Society is on board with the home being demolished.



The Estero Chamber of Commerce Breakfast

The Estero Historical Society recently had the pleasure of hosting the March Estero Chamber of Commerce breakfast on Friday 3/17. Fortunately, the weather was beautiful, allowing the event to take place on the EHS cottage deck located between the cottage and school house. It was a delightful morning, with members from both organizations mingling and enjoying the lovely surroundings. The EHS was proud to be able to provide a unique and memorable setting for the event, and we look forward to future collaborations with the Estero Chamber of Commerce.



March 23, 2023
By Jacob Winge
Past President, Friends of Collier County Museums

BONITA SPRINGS
FLORIDA WEEKLY
IN THE KNOW. IN THE NOW.

History - Our Story Is Worth Saving



Just like pieces of stained glass or poetry create beautiful art and mosaics, with colors representing a different part of the story, so does the landscape of Southwest Florida show what a special place this is to call home. My mother's family came originally to Sarasota County in the early 1900s and then

later moved to Naples in 1928. My father's family started in DeLand in the 1890s, eventually opening a boarding house on the East Coast. Their stories have all led to mine — and all of ours.

No famous person ever slept here. It's no Appomattox or Monticello. It was built in 1916 by Joaquin "King" Alvarez and his wife Anna. King came from Spain and Anna from Portugal. They met in 1907 on Mound Key. All of Highlands Avenue was the original Estero. And this particular house ended up being the hub. The Alvarez-Smith family grew a sprawling citrus orchard and sold citrus on the site — a memory of an industry that like others built this state, and plays second fiddle to tourism. Old homes meet new growth every day, especially here in Southwest Florida. But saving those memories of the past, those mosaic tiles are what makes us a special place to live. Alongside the cottage and Estero Schoolhouse that the Estero of Society owns, the Alvarez-Smith House would add pages to the story that is part of all of us here in Estero and throughout Southwest Florida.

It will take a village. More than just the Village of Estero and more than the Estero Historical Society. It will take our community, our mosaic, to come together. Prior to the Alvarez-Smith home coming up, another home and piece of history was lost. Finances and timing were too far gone. However, this is different. If businesses, other nonprofits, and community leaders rally with Estero Historical Society and work with the Village to create a partnership to help fund the move and refurbishment of the Alvarez Smith Home it could inspire future generations to come. Like most I'm a fiscal conservative. But that doesn't always mean picking the cheapest fix to a problem. Some say it could cost three or four times less to tear down the home than move and restore it. But is that the best use of taxpayer funds? When the dust settles, is a one-time check, cut and spent in less than an hour the highest use of dollars for our community? Is there any benefit to the Village of Estero by tearing the home down? If you ask yourself that, I'm sure you'll agree those questions all lead to the same answer. No.

Wouldn't it be better if the Village utilized what funds they would use to tear down the home to help restore it? With EHS and others — such as Florida Gulf Coast University, businesses, and various Estero Communities — funds could be raised and leveraged for the long-term preservation of the home and perhaps its utilization as a Welcome Center with benefits to the community, tourism, and commerce in perpetuity.

It's up to all of us to preserve our story here in Southwest Florida. When my mom attended Seagate Elementary School, she raised pennies to save Rookery Bay, the gateway to the Ten Thousand Islands and part of billions of dollars in fishing, marine, boating, eco-tourism, and recreation industries over the years. Through the last half century we've come together to save the Wonder Gardens in Bonita Springs, Mound Key, the Naples Cottage, Lover's Key on Fort Myers Beach and so many other amazing treasures that make up our mosaic. Now is the moment to come together again or explain to future generations how we yielded. I'm not a fan of the latter, it's not an option for me at all and I hope it's not an option for you.



EHS Hosted the Estero Chamber Leadership Class



The Estero Historical Society was proud to host the Estero Chamber Leadership class.

"I am speaking for the entire Charter Leadership class when I say that our visit with the Historical Society was the perfect beginning to an awesome day. What we expected were some pastries...what you served us was a feast. And the feast was not just our breakfast, but the entire experience!"

Learning about our wonderful history, and exploring the buildings and the grounds gave everyone a sense of awe. Very few in our class had a clue. There wasn't one person who didn't fully understand the cause by the time they took a ride to see the Highland House.

By the responses in our class survey, we believe that we must expose our next class to this precious part of our heritage, and hopefully, many classes after that. Thumbs up all around!

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for hanging in there with us. - Sharon Van Rite"

Tamiami Trail Blazers Exhibit Opens April 15 at Estero Historical Society



Developed in collaboration with the Southwest Florida Historical Society, the Estero Historical Society will host an exhibit of artifacts on the Tamiami Trail Blazers from April 15 through May 27.

The Estero Historical Society is located at 9285 Corkscrew Palms Blvd. in Estero Park, and is open from 1:00 to 4:00 pm every Saturday. Joe Eskilsen, a freshman at Gulf Coast University and

University and volunteer at EHS is coordinating the exhibit.

Who were the Tamiami Trail Blazers? We all owe them a debt of gratitude for the expedition they took in April of 1923 to publicize the need for a cross-state highway through the Everglades. The Trail Blazers consisted of 21 business men and community leaders from the west coast of Florida utilizing one commissary truck, seven Model-T's and an Elcar for transportation as well as an Indian guide and local Everglades expert. They followed unpaved Indian trails to go from Fort Myers to Miami. They thought the trip would take three days, but when they failed to show up on the date announced they were presumed lost or dead. Their disappearance became a national news story.

But after 17 days, when they finally arrived in Miami they were hailed as heroes and their efforts worked! Funding was obtained and a paved road opened through the Everglades four years later.

Learn all about this brave expedition and the men involved by touring the Exhibit which opens April 15 at the Estero Historical Society. In addition to the 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Saturday open houses, private tours can also be arranged for groups of up to 6 persons on Tuesdays and Thursdays by appointment only. Log on to <http://esterohistoricalsociety.com> and see the section called “Touring Estero History” for details.



Annual Essay CONTEST

The essay judging will begin March 16, 2023. The Society donates \$1000 along with the Greater Estero Chamber and Engage Estero (formerly ECCL) to winners of the essay contest from Estero High School. The essays and awards are presented in three categories: Government, History and Business – all pertaining to Estero. Roslyn, Gail Langner, Nancy and Joann Ribble will be the judges for the Society.



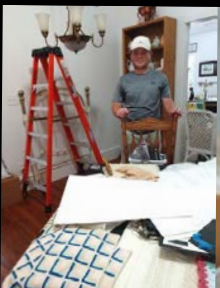
We Need You!

**The Estero Historical Society
is currently looking
to fill several volunteer positions.**

- Chutney / Jam Makers
- Maintenance Coordinator
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Gift Shop Volunteer (Saturdays 1pm to 4pm)

If you or someone that you might know would be interested in helping, please email us at:

esterohistoricalsociety@gmail.com



Out & About Spotlight

Hertz Arena



April 27 / 7pm

please visit: www.hertzaarena.com

Hertz Arena



April 13 / 7pm

ON STAGE

KidzAct Productions



April 27 - April 30

Sugden Community Theatre



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**BARBARA B. MANN
PERFORMING ARTS HALL**



APRIL 23



SAT
APR 22
7:30 PM

Masterworks 4
Radu Paponiu, conductor | Ying Li, guest pianist

April 22



Upcoming Happenings in the Estero Park and Center:

9200 Corkscrew Palms Blvd., Estero FL 33928

Estero Park and Recreation Center:

Please Visit

<https://www.leegov.com/parks/Pages/FacilitySP.aspx?UrlSuffix=estero>



**2023 BBQ
Bands & Brew
April 15th**

Southwest Florida's top pit masters compete for the title of "Best BBQ in Town" with live music, cold drinks and fun-filled activities for all ages

Caloosa Sound
Amphitheater
2101 Edwards Dr, Ft.

Every
Sunday

Farmers Market

8AM To
1PM



Every Sunday, the Koreshan State Park Historic Settlement hosts a farmers market with vendors providing a variety of fresh, local food and produce and unique arts and crafts. Fresh produce, honey, fresh guacamole and salsas, street food, sea glass, handmade jewelry, clothing, arts & crafts and more on sale! Pet-friendly.

Art Gallery Exhibitions

For up-to-date event information please visit:
FGCU.EDU/ARTGALLERIES

Art & Design Special Events

For up-to-date event information please visit:
FGCU.EDU/ARTEVENTS

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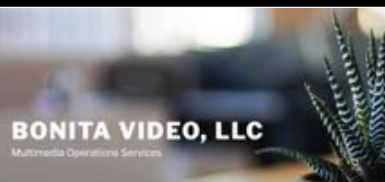
Student Ensemble Concert Series

For up-to-date event information please visit:
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Theatre Performances

For up-to-date event information please visit: **FGCU.EDU/THEATRELAB**

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