

MICA*wave*

FALL 2026

ELECTION EDITION



www.marcocivic.com

A Periodic Publication of the Marco Island Civic Association

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by Ron McClay, President, Marco Island Civic Association

Dear MICA Members and Staff,

Welcome back to all of our seasonal members, new members, and wonderful staff! It is fantastic to have everyone back together for what promises to be a spectacular season.

As many of you know, we are navigating a period of reorganization following the departure of Ruth and Dennis McCann. We are deeply grateful for their many contributions to MICA and wish them the very best.

We are actively interviewing candidates for the Executive Director position to ensure our club continues to operate seamlessly. In the interim, I want to extend my sincere thanks to our entire staff. Your hard work, resilience, and unwavering dedication to our members has been nothing short of incredible.



MARCO ISLAND CIVIC ASSOCIATION
1770 SAN MARCO ROAD,
SUITE 204,
MARCO ISLAND, FL 34145

Phone: 239-642-7778
www.marcocivic.com

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Cover Photo: Marco Island's favorite residents putting on a show, photo taken by Lynn Nathanson

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You will also notice some fresh updates around the property. We are updating the beach buildings, freshening up paint, and beautifying the grounds. A special thank you to John Quinlan, who has stepped up to lead our grounds and Beach Staff. Thank you, John, for your leadership and hard work.

We have been fortunate to have a quiet storm season so far, and we hope that continues.

Finally, thank you to each of you for being part of our community and for enjoying what we believe is the most beautiful beach club on Marco Island. We have some fantastic entertainment lined up, including Rock Republic and the Shane Duncan Band. Please watch for dates and additional announcements coming soon.

Wishing you a sunny, healthy, and glorious season ahead. Come early and come often!

Tropical regards,
Ron McClay
President, MICA

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MEMO TO READERS: WHAT MARCO ISLAND IS REALLY THINKING

From the Board of Directors - MICA 2026 Community Priorities & Governance Survey

When the Marco Island Civic Association asked, the island answered - loudly.

In just 9 days, September 11-19, 2026, 2,217 MICA members completed the full survey and 525 added anonymous written comments. Twenty-one questions covering everything from canals to City Hall. The results are in, and they are remarkably clear.

The full, interactive report is 28 pages of charts and breakdowns. Scan the QR code on the opposite page to read every question, every percentage, and the complete methodology.

The Big Six: Where 80% of the Island Agrees

These are the consensus issues — where four out of five of your neighbors point in the same direction.

1. Apply the rules to everyone - 91.3% Important. The single strongest response in the entire survey. Members say City ordinances and procedures must be applied consistently to residents, applicants, City officials, and the City itself. 74.3% called it “Very Important.”
2. Show us the math first - 88.0% Important. Before approving major capital projects, the City should publicly compare repair, replacement, and lower-cost alternatives.
3. Keep our police, but make them efficient - 86.3% Retain. 44.9% want to retain the current department as-is, 41.4% want to retain it with a public efficiency and staffing review. Only 3.7% support transferring functions to the Sheriff.
4. Tighten the belt before raising taxes - 85.3% Spending Restraint. When revenues are insufficient, members favor reducing or deferring lower-priority spending (40.8%) or combining restraint with limited tax increases (44.5%). Only 5.5% support raising taxes as needed.

5. Cap property taxes - 81.4% Support. A clear majority would support a statewide constitutional limit on property taxes on the 2026 ballot.
6. Is our form of government still the right one? - 79.3% Support studying whether council-manager continues to best serve Marco.

The Second Wave: 70%+ Consensus

Just below that top tier, six more strong signals emerged:

1. Water quality is personal - 78.2% Concerned about canal and near-shore water quality. 53.5% are very concerned.
2. Let voters decide on an elected mayor - 77.5% Support giving voters the chance to choose mayor-council over council-manager.
3. No \$12M parking lot on Collier Blvd - 74.5% Oppose the City purchasing a parking property for \$12 million. 51.1% strongly oppose.
4. Seasonal traffic is a real problem - 73.2% say it's a moderate or serious problem.
5. No Hilton expansion rezoning - 72.7% Oppose substantial expansion on S. Collier Blvd.
6. Don't dissolve the City - 69.9% Oppose a formal study of dissolving Marco Island and transferring functions to Collier County.

The Supporting Context

The rest of the survey fills in the mood:

- Direction of the Island: Split but leaning right - 57.1% say Marco is headed somewhat or strongly in the right direction; 43% say wrong direction.
- Short-term rentals - 64.2% Concerned, 38% very concerned.
- Deferred maintenance worry - 68.1% Concerned that budgeting has deferred needed maintenance and infrastructure.

- City Hall turnover - 58.5% Concerned about senior staff turnover and loss of institutional knowledge.
- Tourism impact - 55.3% say tourism-related activity and promotion negatively affects quality of life a moderate amount or a great deal.
- Infrastructure bond (\$23M) - 57.1% Support we saw this with the 1 vote margin.
- Confidence in City Council - 50.3% report little or no confidence. Only 4% have a great deal of confidence, while 45.7% have some confidence.
- District elections - 61.6% Support letting voters consider Councilors be elected by geographic districts/precincts instead of all at-large.

So What Should MICA Do Next?

When asked to pick MICA's top three priorities for the next 12 months, members were unambiguous:

- Water quality and environmental protection (56.4%)
- Fiscal oversight and capital spending (47.0%)
- Neighborhood quality of life and short-term rentals (41.5%)
- Development, zoning, and density (40.6%)
- Infrastructure and traffic (31.4%) rounded out the top five

Want the details behind the numbers?

This memo is the cover story. The data is the book. The final report includes consensus gauges, response profiles for every question, and the full methodology.

Scan the QR code below for the complete MICA Community Priorities and Governance Survey 2026 - Final Report (28 pages).

All results are reported in aggregate. Written comments (525 total) are provided separately without member identity.

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2026 MARCO ISLAND CITY COUNCIL ELECTION

The Marco Island City Council General Election will be held on **Tuesday, November 3, 2026.**

Early Voting will be held **October 22 through October 31**, 9:00am - 6:00pm

Marco Island Library, 210 S. Heathwood Drive, Marco Island,

- Six candidates are competing for three at-large seats on the Marco Island City Council this election: Jason Bailey, Dennis Bartolucci, Darrin Palumbo, Chris Ricci, Teri Sommerfeld, and Rick Woodworth.
- Darrin Palumbo, current council chairman, is seeking a second term; the other five are newcomers.
- The race is nonpartisan; all registered Marco Island voters may vote for three candidates in the race.
- The three candidates who receive the most votes will each serve a four-year term on the seven-member council.

We encourage you to read the pages ahead containing these candidates' backgrounds, priorities, campaign endorsements, and directly from the candidates themselves with their responses to our seven question questionnaire to help you prepare to cast your ballots.

WHAT CAN I BUY FOR \$200?

- Rent a pontoon boat? **NOPE!** *Cost is approximately \$500 + gas for 8 hours*
- Play a round of 18 holes of golf? **NOPE!** *Rates range from \$180 to \$500 per person*
- Dinner at a moderately priced restaurant on Marco? **MAYBE!**

Possibly dinner for four with no alcoholic drinks or dessert

- Groceries for two for a week? **NOPE!** (not these days!!)

Average cost of groceries for two is \$220.82 per week

- How about an Everglades Airboat Ride? **NOPE!**

Cost is approximately \$220 for two people for a 50-minute ride

- **MARCO ISLAND CIVIC ASSOCIATION CLUB MEMBERSHIP? YES!**

The \$200 annual membership fee allows you to go to the Club for 365 days, from 6 a.m. until sunset! It also offers umbrella chickees on the beach, sand rinse-off showers, picnic chickees, grills, playground, restrooms, Paradise Grill, concerts on the green, the Discount Program and the smiling faces of our friendly staff, to name a few amenities!



2026 MARCO ISLAND CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHIES



JASON BAILEY

My name is Jason Bailey and I'm excited to be running for Marco Island City Council!

I grew up in suburban Detroit and I've lived here full time since I moved to Florida in December of 1996. My wife Lisa and I have raised 4 children here. Our children are in college and beyond now, but we do our best to get them home to Marco or visit with them as much as we can. Lisa and I are fortunate to have parents who still live here on Marco and in Naples. We're now empty nesters except for our Frenchie Ophelia.

I've owned, started, and/or operated several businesses in the area. I'm currently the majority owner of FCI Homes, which has been building homes locally for 30 plus years. My business ownership and work experience here has allowed me to build relationships with countless full time residents, business owners and seasonal residents over the last 30 years.

I've served our community on the Parking Solutions Committee. I'm currently in my eighth year of service on our Planning Board, my fifth as the Chair. Serving on the Planning Board has given me the opportunity to gain valuable experience serving our community in a public role. I've also gained a great deal of knowledge of our City's Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code and City processes.

I love Marco Island and I want it to remain the special place that my family and the families of countless others continue to call home.



DENNIS BARTOLUCCI

- BA in Political Science, University of Connecticut
- Masters degree in Public Administration, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University.
- Equivalent college credits of an Accounting major.
- PricewaterhouseCoopers 32 years, 20 of which as a Partner.
- Public Accounting 1981 - 2001; Consulting 2001 - 2013.
- CPA, licensed in Massachusetts, Ohio and Illinois, until retirement in 2013. Public Utility Regulatory Commission in Connecticut; 4 years performing management audits of electric, gas, telephone and water utilities with progressive responsibility.

I believe the voters deserve good choices and the residents should have elected officials who listen to them, understand their concerns and reflect this in how they fulfill this governance role. Unlike a few current candidates, I believe the

Council and the City should follow the law. If there is an ordinance that needs revising, we can do that. Ignoring the law is not good governance and I reject that approach.

I am committed to finding and securing new revenue sources. We should restore our waterways to health by reducing the pollution caused by our own city for 20 years with reuse water. We should re-do the water and sewer rates and

Candidate Biographies, continued on page 8

BARTOLUCCI *continued*

structure to reflect fairness to residents. I support strengthening the Comprehensive Plan to reduce any loopholes, and look at other cities to use best practices.

Noise in our residential neighborhoods from inconsiderate guests and neglectful property managers should be eliminated.

I hold a Residents First approach to public policy.



DARRIN PALUMBO

Darrin is a 28-year resident of Marco Island. He has been married to his wife Suzanne for 28 years. Their two children, Jenna and Ryan, were born and raised on Marco Island and both have graduated from Marco Island Academy. Jenna, age 24, is a graduate of FGCU and is currently attending her 3rd year of law school at Barry University. Ryan, age 21, just graduated from UCF and is currently working in the field of mechanical engineering.

Darrin's family has two rescue dogs, Milo and Duke.

Background/Professional:

- 4-year Marco Island City Council Member, currently serving as the City Council Chairman.
- Currently serving on the Collier County Tourist Development Council (TDC) as the appointed Marco Island City Council Member.
- Former Member of Marco Island Waterways Advisory Committee

- Local small business owner.
- Real estate agent for 36 years.
- Formerly licensed as SEC security broker, mortgage broker, insurance broker.
- Safe Boater and U.S. Auxiliary course graduate.

Education:

- Graduated South Plainfield High School, South Plainfield, NJ.
- Studied at Middlesex County College and Rutgers University.
- Attended New Jersey Realty & Bert Rogers Real Estate School.

Volunteer/Community Work

- 4-year high school soccer coach.
- 10-year Optimist Club soccer coach.
- 2-year high school cross country coach.
- 2-year high school track and field coach.
- Raised over \$210,000 for the Marco Island Academy academic and sports programs.
- Big Brother mentor for over 24 years.
- Assistant Boy Scout Troop Leader (2004 to 2007).
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes coach and mentor.
- St. Jude's Hospital Certificate of Appreciation recipient



CHRIS RICCI

Chris Ricci is a Marco Island businessman, attorney, engineer and inventor with more than 35 years of experience as an entrepreneur and senior executive. His career has included leadership roles with companies including NCR, Avaya, Flex and NIO, spanning technology, automotive and other industries. He holds more than 150 issued U.S. patents and has formal education in business, law, electrical engineering and software engineering.

Mr. Ricci is a full-time Marco Island resident and has been active in civic and

community service. He currently chairs the City of Marco Island Beach & Coastal Resources Advisory Committee and previously served on the City's Audit Advisory Committee. He is a former Commander of the Marco Island Sail & Power Squadron and a former columnist for the Coastal Breeze. Earlier in his career, he also served in elected municipal office in Braintree, Massachusetts.

Mr. Ricci and his wife, Debora, live on Marco Island with two of their three sons. His professional background combines business management, law and engineering, while his local service has included work on coastal resources, municipal finances and community issues.



TERI SOMMERFELD

Teri Sommerfeld is running for Marco Island City Council because she believes residents should come first. Her number one priority is protecting the exceptional quality of life of the people who call Marco Island home through clean water, safe neighborhoods, reliable infrastructure and responsible growth.

Teri brings more than 40 years of experience as a nurse and healthcare executive at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. She directed rehabilitation, stroke and allied health services; managed multimillion-dollar budgets; and led initiatives in emergency management, regulatory compliance and quality improvement. She also coordinated grants involving multiple hospitals and helped establish Rush's first hospice center. These roles required her to weigh complex information, plan for the future and make decisions with lasting consequences for the people she served.

Teri holds a master's degree in health administration, maintains an active Florida nursing license and is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives. On Marco Island, she serves on the City's Audit Advisory Committee, reviewing financial information and advocating for transparency and responsible use of taxpayer dollars. She has also worked to improve access to Residents' Beach for members with disabilities.

After a lifetime spent caring for people in healthcare, Teri is eager to serve the people of Marco Island and protect the community for all who call it home.



RICK WOODWORTH

Rick Woodworth has been a full-time Marco Island resident since 2017, with more than 50 years of experience in business, real estate, finance and civic service. As President, Managing Director and Partner of The Habitat Company in Chicago, he helped grow the firm from 3,000 residential units to more than 32,000, with assets valued at more than \$5 billion, and has served more than 40 years as a trustee of fully funded health and pension funds with assets over \$350 million.

On Marco Island, he has served multiple terms on the Waterways Advisory Committee, including as chairman, and on the City's Audit Advisory Committee. As a founding managing member of Clean Marco Waters, LLC, he has been a leading advocate for Advanced Wastewater Treatment and protecting Marco Island's waterways.

He holds a bachelor's degree in history and pre-law from Illinois Wesleyan University and is running for City Council with a focus on clean water, fiscal

discipline, infrastructure planning, responsible growth and transparent government.

His number one goal is protecting an exceptional quality of life for all who call Marco Island home.

2026 MICA QUESTIONS OF MARCO ISLAND CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

QUESTION I VISION

MICA's member survey identified significant concerns and priorities involving quality of life, water quality, fiscal oversight, development, traffic and government accountability. What is your vision for Marco Island ten years from now, and what changes or priorities would you pursue to achieve that vision?

Bailey: My vision for Marco Island in 10 years is a community where people of all ages continue to live, work, vacation, and enjoy paradise. My vision includes:

- a sense of balance restored amongst our residents so that we are more united than we are divided through consistent enforcement of our codes relative to quality of life issues
- noticeable improvements in water quality and clarity through implementation of Advanced Wastewater Treatment (AWT), swale maintenance programs, septic to sewer conversions in neighboring communities and implementation of other concepts
- water/sewer bonds paid in full and we remain on solid financial footing because of fiscal discipline, thoughtful leadership, and locating funding sources to help our City act on its priorities
- build-out and redevelopment being managed, enabling a balanced community where full-time and seasonal residents, tourists, and businesses enjoy paradise together
- Council has established solid processes such that our residents have renewed trust in our leadership and our government
- continued growth in our wildlife populations, such as burrowing owls, tortoises, eagles, endangered bird populations and more through additional acquisition of conservation lands and ongoing education

As a City, we must define our priorities for the next decade and commit to funding these priorities to realize our goals.

Bartolucci: A vision over a ten year horizon must be built on a strong foundation. The culture of Marco Island government has to be the starting point of any vision. That culture must reflect the highest standards and quality, with self improvement, mentoring, and succession planning.

We then must have a transparent government that we can trust, and is capable of producing timely, accurate , and regular financial reporting at a level of detail that is meaningful. And, no hidden agendas.

Our waterways must be restored to full health in the next several years.

Our revenue must be diversified, as it is in nearly every peer city in Florida, currently.

Negligent property managers must be handled such that they no longer disturb their neighborhoods.

In ten years we are widely known to be a well run city with talented employees who are prized for their work ethic and skills. We are known as a talent generator, not a late career retirement landing spot.

We are residential community that hosts tourism, but not to the degree that we lose the small town residential charm we covet.

Importantly, we live in harmony, with the 2026 mistrust, bitterness and factional characteristics just a distant memory. In this vision of the future, our devotion to Quality of Life is evident in our playgrounds, sports fields, and amenities for residents to enjoy life. We manage our finances to accomplish this.

Our infrastructure is sound and properly maintained.

Within this ten year vision, in the State of Florida, we are the best city to live in and that is widely known.

Palumbo: Ten years from now, as Marco matures and continues to age, I would love the vision of a beautiful, new, modernized, hurricane-resistant, and fortified Marco, that still holds the theme and charm of our small-town beach and coastal community feel. To get there, this would require responsible redevelopment (not over-development), simply redeveloping a better version of what we already have. An updated citizen survey has been prepared by city council to best understand the direction the community would like to move in. I am happy to say that this survey is now available on the City's website. We can use these findings and additional resident input to update our strategic plan, which will be the start of a blueprint that maps out the modernization of some of Marco's older buildings. However, it is imperative that this revitalization keep the style, feel, and character that makes Marco such a special community.

Ricci: Ten years from now, I want Marco Island to still feel like Marco Island - but with cleaner canals, well-maintained infrastructure, responsible redevelopment, strong public safety and a City government residents trust.

We are largely built out, so our challenge is managing reinvestment while protecting the character and quality of life that brought us here. Aging hotels, condominiums, commercial properties and public infrastructure will need modernization. We should welcome responsible reinvestment, but projects must be consistent with our Comprehensive Plan and judged by their actual impacts on traffic, neighborhoods, infrastructure and the environment.

Water quality must remain a long-term priority. Advanced Wastewater Treatment is an important step, but we also need science-driven solutions addressing canal sediment, circulation and other nutrient sources. Financially, we need to move from year-to-year budgeting toward long-range capital planning. Keeping taxes low matters, but repeatedly deferring maintenance only makes tomorrow's bill larger.

Finally, residents deserve a government that is transparent, predictable and accountable. My approach is straightforward: establish measurable goals, make decisions based on facts, explain those decisions publicly and measure whether they worked.

The goal is not to change Marco Island. It is to make the investments and decisions necessary to preserve what makes it special for the next generation.

Sommerfeld:

My vision is that, ten years from now, Marco Island remains a beautiful, safe and welcoming community known for its small-town charm, peaceful neighborhoods, healthy waterways and exceptional quality of life. Residents and businesses should thrive together, united by a shared commitment to protecting the island we all love.

Our Comprehensive Plan is the City's constitution. It provides both a long-term vision and a framework for making responsible decisions today. I would insist that new development be consistent with that plan, supported by accurate density information and carefully evaluated for its effects on traffic, infrastructure, the environment and residents' quality of life.

Protecting our future also requires completing the Advanced Wastewater Treatment upgrade, monitoring and planning for potable water demand, and studying the environmental effects of large commercial cruise vessels. We

must strengthen and consistently enforce the noise ordinance, responsibly manage short-term rentals, and maintain our roads, bridges, stormwater systems and public facilities.

I also want a stronger partnership between the City, MICA, residents and the business community. Residents need meaningful opportunities to ask questions, receive answers and contribute before major decisions are made. Through interactive town halls, accessible financial information and open communication, we can build greater trust and unity.

If we honor our Comprehensive Plan, protect our natural resources and put residents' quality of life at the center of decision-making, Marco Island can remain the special community we cherish for generations to come.

Woodworth: My vision for Marco Island in 2036 is the same vision residents already wrote into the 2019-2034 Strategic Plan: a great residential community with small town charm, a world-class beach and natural environment, healthy waterways, convenient coastal living, and genuine pride in our community. That vision was built through real public outreach, and it remains the right one. The problem is not the vision. It is that the City's regulatory document, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, does not fully carry that vision into enforceable policy. Four of the seven Strategic Plan principles, waterways, water quality, convenient coastal living, and community character, have the weakest regulatory teeth in the Comprehensive Plan. There is no dedicated waterways objective, no numeric water quality targets or commitment to advanced wastewater treatment, no addressing of parking and seasonal congestion, and no Community Character element, despite the City's own 2020 Assessment Report recommending one.

The first thing I would change is to close that gap. I would direct the next Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle, or the next state-mandated evaluation, to add measurable water quality and waterways policies, adopt the Community Character element the 2020 Assessment Report recommended, and tie the Capital Improvements Element to the seven Strategic Plan principles so funding decisions are made against defined community priorities rather than competing for general fund dollars without a framework.

QUESTION 2

SHORT-TERM RENTALS

67% of Marco residents are concerned about short-term rentals, and 74% say consistent enforcement of City ordinances is very important. When property rental rights and the promotion of safe and peaceful neighborhoods appear to conflict, which should take precedence? What actions would you take to address the residents' concerns about short-term rentals?

Bailey: This recent survey by MICA, as well as the 2022 POV Survey done by the City of Marco Island both rank short term rentals as a serious concern. Bad behavior by renters in short term rentals is a quality of life issue that nearly all residents, including myself want resolved. I don't think there has to be a conflict between property rights and quality of life concerns. I live in a quiet neighborhood with a rental next door and another across the street. For several years, I tried to engage the owners of the property next door to be better neighbors and to have their tenants respect our noise ordinance with limited success and a fair amount of frustration. I've been very encouraged recently with increased enforcement of our codes by the Police Department. I'm hopeful that more consistent enforcement of our noise ordinance, parking regulations and trash regulations will help to minimize the negative impacts of short term rentals across our Island. I would hope that most responsible rental owners are in favor of a registration program for rentals and I'm supportive of that as well. I'd also look to discuss other ideas within the limitations of our restrictive State law on this issue with Council including the ability to levy fines against both renters and property owners. Finally, let's discuss options we might have to escalate fines for violations beyond what they are now to help encourage compliance and to help our neighbors peacefully enjoy their properties.

Bartolucci: I support our capitalist economy and the rights of property owners to earn money from their property within the limits of the law. However, when one property owner makes money by interfering with the peaceful enjoyment of their neighbors, that is a form of theft and must be eliminated.

I oppose daily rentals which I see as a major source of our problems with neighborhood noise. Our limits for noise should mirror our neighboring communities. I support Councilor Gray's proposals in this regard and will help to make them law as soon as possible. I support consistent and vigorous enforcement of our noise laws and the severest penalties for violators possible under the law, period.

I support a City Attorney who works with us to achieve these objectives, not one who impedes our progress and is an obstacle to the will of the people.

Palumbo: I have always supported a short-term rental (STR) ordinance. During my first council meeting in December 2022, I advocated for a strong STR ordinance that was defensible and enforceable. Unfortunately, I could not convince all my co-councilors to align the noise portion of the ordinance so that it was equally applied to all residents. I felt this was necessary to make the ordinance legally defensible, and I was later proven correct by multiple attorneys. Once the state moratorium on short-term rental ordinances is lifted, I will attempt to keep a 2022 campaign promise and champion a short-term rental ordinance that is legally defensible, enforceable, and most importantly, that protects our neighborhoods. Enforcement is the key. Without an enforcement mechanism, the ordinance is simply words on paper. I agree with the residents and feel that the enforcement portion is of the utmost importance. I am happy to have worked directly with our police chief and city staff regarding the enforcement of noise complaints because we do not currently have an STR ordinance in place. Because of this I also advocated to my co-councilors that we reduce the decibels and enforcement distance of our current noise ordinance. I am pleased to report that many residents feel things are getting better regarding STR and noise concerns and moving in the right direction, however, there is still work to be done.

Ricci: Residents have a right to expect safe, peaceful neighborhoods, and when short-term rentals create recurring problems involving noise, parking, trash, overcrowding or other impacts, the City should respond firmly and consistently.

At the same time, Florida law places real limits on what Marco Island can do. Section 509.032(7)(b), Florida Statutes, provides that local governments may not prohibit vacation rentals or regulate their duration or frequency, subject to limited grandfathered exceptions. Within the authority the City retains, I support reasonable regulation and meaningful enforcement.

If state law permits Marco to maintain or reinstate a local registration program, I would support a simple registration requirement so the City and Police Department have current information identifying the owner or responsible contact for each STR. A reasonable fee could help offset administrative and enforcement costs. Enforcement should focus on actual impacts and accountability. Owners should receive clear notice when problems occur but repeated or ignored violations should have meaningful consequences. I would also review complaint and enforcement data to determine where problems are occurring, whether current rules are working, and whether additional lawful measures are warranted.

My goal is to protect Marco's residential quality of life while respecting property rights and operating within the authority Florida law gives the City. I do not think those objectives are mutually exclusive.

Sommerfeld: Marco Island's short-term rental properties are in a different place today than they were several years ago. Property managers have become more sophisticated, and many are responsible operators. Technology has also improved. However, improvement is not the same as resolution. Individual properties continue to create repeated problems for surrounding residents, and a poorly managed vacation rental can dramatically affect several neighboring homes.

I believe Marco Island needs an inventory of every property operating as a short-term rental. I support a registration system that provides the City with accurate information about operating vacation rentals, responsible parties, state licensing, complaint histories and their economic contribution.

As a councilor, I would recommend establishing a temporary Short-Term Rental Advisory Committee specifically charged with developing recommendations for a registration program. It should include equal and meaningful representation from STR property owners, property managers, real estate professionals, residents living near vacation rentals, condominium representatives and citizens who have experienced documented STR-related problems.

Every registered rental should have an owner or designated responsible party immediately available to respond when police or code enforcement receive a legitimate complaint. Responsible managers already do this.

Property owners should be able to exercise their lawful rights, and residents should reasonably expect that repeatedly disruptive commercial rental activity next door will be addressed. Those interests are not mutually exclusive. I believe in bringing together the people who actually live with this issue and asking them to build a solution that works.

Woodworth: Property rights matter, but they do not override a neighbor's right to a safe and peaceful home and the quiet enjoyment of their property. Where an unregistered or poorly managed short-term rental is generating noise, parking, and safety complaints, enforcement of neighborhood standards should take precedence. Florida's 2024 preemption law, Chapter 2023-304 (SB 250), limits what cities can regulate about short-term rentals, but it preserves local authority to require registration, collect contact information for a responsible local party, and enforce noise, parking, trash, and occupancy standards that apply to every property regardless of use.

I support a rental registration program modeled on Sarasota's approach. A \$500 registration fee applied to an estimated 3,500 rental single-family homes and condominiums could generate approximately \$1.75 million in the first year, with ongoing revenue after that, and that funding should go directly to code enforcement staffing rather than the general fund. Consistent enforcement, which residents say matters more than the rules on paper, requires the City to actually fund and staff it. I would also push for a public dashboard tracking registrations, complaints, and citations so residents can see enforcement is real.

QUESTION 3

INFRASTRUCTURE, TOURISM, AND DEVELOPMENT

75% say too much traffic is a moderate or serious issue, and 73% oppose the Hilton expansion on South Collier. Should roads, evacuation concerns and tourism impacts limit development? Where do you stand on the Hilton expansion and the Rose Marina redevelopment plans?

Bailey: All development/redevelopment should comply with our Comprehensive Plan and our Land Development Code, along with Building Codes, Floodplain regulations, etc. The City needs to make sure we have current and up to date information relative to adopted Level of Service standards, which includes items such as roads, traffic, and more. The City needs to complete a revised Level of Service study, complete the Density Audit in progress and also complete a 2026 Traffic Study to account for construction that closed the Barfield and Collier intersection. That closure impacted traffic patterns on Yellowbird, Bald Eagle and other roads. This data is important when discussing proposed projects on our Island. Gathering this information has started but needs to be completed.

As Chair of the Planning Board, I voted NOT to recommend the Hilton project for approval because I don't believe the proposed project is consistent with our Comprehensive Plan. Regarding the Rose Marina project, I voted to approve the Site Development Plan and the Conditional Use Petition. This is a 60 year old property; going through the Site Development Amendment process helps to ensure redevelopment moves things closer to current codes. I voted NOT to recommend the variances for approval because I felt the applicant could do more to come into compliance with our codes. Without approval of the variances by Council, the project would not move forward. I also emailed Council prior to their hearing about concerns I had about the off-site parking agreement not being discussed openly by Council.

Bartolucci: The folklore on Marco Island, which has been fed to the voters for years, has been that tourism is a major financial benefit to the city. This is not true. Our residential property owners pay 96% of the property taxes and that revenue supports the significant costs of hosting visitors.

There is a limit to the volume of tourism our little barrier island can withstand without destroying our small town charm. We are either at that limit or very close. This is a reality and we need to break through the misinformation voters have been fed historically by those who profit from tourism.

Rose Marina is converting from an amenity benefiting local boaters to a cruise terminal with floating hotels. We can regulate this, and if elected I will work to do this. It is not hard, but it will not be achieved by the “status quo” leadership we currently have. They clearly are supporting any new commercial profit venture, regardless of the impact on our community.

I will assess the Hilton matter, if elected, in a fair and balanced way. I agree with the City Staff that a revision of the Comprehensive Plan is required if the Hilton expansion is to proceed. I support revising the Comprehensive Plan to strengthen it, not weaken it. I don’t support waiving the existing density standards in the Plan. Based on the current public record related to the Hilton, I would reject the proposed zoning change.

Palumbo: Development with vested property rights should not be limited. For instance, if you own a single-family vacant lot, would you want to be told that you cannot develop it because some feel there is too much traffic? To me, the real question would be, “Should property owners have the right to overdevelop beyond their vested property rights?” For that, I would say on a regular basis, no. There may be a special exception every now and then, but as a general guideline, we must not allow Marco to be overdeveloped.

Regarding the Hilton expansion, having just heard their proposal a few nights ago, I would have voted against the expansion if not for the fact that the petitioner decided to withdraw their request at this time.

Having voted on the Rose Marina, I supported it because once you get past the misinformation and rumors, prior to our vote, the marina had the right to have unlimited large boats in the Magnolia basin. After our vote, they are now limited to two large boats in the basin. Also, prior to our vote, the American Patriot cruise ship and other similar large boats had the right to stay overnight in the marina, possibly effecting the quality of life in the adjacent neighborhoods. After our vote, overnight stays are no longer allowed. Since what I was voting on had nothing to do with adding additional cruise ships, I considered the concessions we received as a monumental win for the citizens of Marco Island.

Ricci: Yes. Roads, evacuation capacity, infrastructure and tourism impacts should be important considerations, but projects should be judged individually on their actual impacts and consistency with our Comprehensive Plan.

I support redevelopment of the Hilton. Marco is largely built out, and aging properties need the opportunity to modernize and remain competitive. Given the scale of the investment and a shutdown of roughly two years, the project also has to make economic sense for Hilton.

The challenge is density. Hilton proposes increasing from 310 to 626 rooms, roughly doubling its current density through a PUD. City staff believes the Comprehensive Plan does not permit that density; Hilton disagrees. I support the decision to continue the matter while both sides explore a compromise. I hope they can find a solution that makes redevelopment economically viable while addressing legitimate concerns about density, traffic, infrastructure and compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan. I want to see Hilton reinvest in Marco, but the final proposal also has to make sense for the community.

Rose Marina is materially different. I supported its redevelopment, and the approval process produced meaningful operating limits. My remaining concern was narrow: the off-site parking across Bald Eagle Drive. Staff said the numerical parking requirement was met, but also said the off-site lot required Council approval. I would have wanted that determination made expressly on the record.

Responsible redevelopment and protecting Marco’s quality of life are not mutually exclusive.

Sommerfeld: Common sense demands that our roads, evacuation capacity, infrastructure limitations and tourism impacts must place meaningful limits on development. Marco Island is a small barrier island with limited access, finite resources and environmentally sensitive waterways. We cannot approve greater density and intensity first and address the consequences later.

Before a major project moves forward, the City must determine whether our roads, bridges, evacuation routes, drinking water supply, wastewater systems, public safety services and environment can support it. The combined effects of existing and proposed development must also be considered. Traffic data show a steady increase in vehicles crossing the Jolly Bridge, while the City's recent potable water presentation raised concerns about meeting future demand. Until these questions are answered, approving projects that add substantial pressure to the island is not responsible planning.

The Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code establish the limits intended to protect Marco Island. They must be applied consistently.

I oppose the proposed Hilton expansion and support City staff's recommendation of denial. Its density and intensity conflict with the Comprehensive Plan, and rezoning the property as a Planned Unit Development should not be used to avoid established limits.

I also opposed approving key elements of the Rose Marina redevelopment while significant questions remained about traffic, parking, noise, environmental effects and the impact on nearby neighborhoods.

Development should proceed only when it respects our plans, remains within the island's capacity and does not diminish residents' well-being or quality of life.

Woodworth: Yes. Roads, hurricane evacuation capacity, and tourism-driven traffic should be hard constraints on new development, not secondary considerations weighed after the fact. Marco Island is a barrier island with one main evacuation route, and density decisions should be tested against evacuation clearance times and current peak-season traffic, not concurrency standards calculated years ago. That said, road capacity is not my top concern with either of these two proposals.

The Hilton expansion, as presented, does not comply with our Comprehensive Plan. I have gone through the density calculation in detail: Policy 3.1.5 and Table 1 are inconsistent on how density is measured, and the project relies on a fractional density approach that pushes the unit count above what a plain reading of the 16 du/acre cap would allow. Any Comprehensive Plan amendment allowing that level of development should go to voters, and I would not support it.

I also would not support the Rose Marina proposal as currently formulated. Cruise-ship docking may not be a permitted use, its environmental effects have not been studied, and bussing in passengers would defeat the parking limits used to control intensity, which would set a dangerous precedent for unchecked intensity across the island. Residents who have reviewed hundreds of pages of the site plan application have also identified parking matrix discrepancies and zoning questions that remain unanswered.

QUESTION 4

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

68% of Marco residents are concerned about deferred maintenance and 90% say comparing repair, replacement and lower-cost alternatives before major projects is moderately or very important. How should Council prioritize projects when needs exceed resources? Did you support the \$12M Collier parking purchase and the \$23M bond that passed by one vote; why or why not?

Bailey: My approach to budget decisions would be similar to an approach I follow in my home or business. We need to establish the cost to “keep the lights on” in other words, what does it cost us to operate. We can add costs for maintenance and upkeep and we should also have reserves set aside for ongoing replacement needs. We also have to ascertain the level of service that citizens desire. If the cost to meet that level of service exceeds our budget, we need to have thoughtful conversations about how to meet the residents desires or where do we cut services.

I was not supportive of the parking lot project as presented, although I appreciate staff willingness to think outside the box for revenue opportunities. I don’t think the numbers made financial sense as presented. However, this concept could be an ideal ask for TDC funds to help purchase and fund a project of this nature and allow the City to generate revenue from the parking structure. That might make the project worth pursuing.

I am supportive of the bond that passed because I believe we need funding alternatives to improve infrastructure. I believe our Council will maintain a transparent process when it comes to identifying the specific bridges and other projects, the bids for those projects and funding them at the appropriate time with bond funds.

Bartolucci: The notion of buying and operating a tourist parking lot for beachgoers is terrible and shows the limit of creativity currently in attempting to diversify revenue. At \$12 million, there clearly was no business savvy in that proposal. Yet, one of the candidates, an incumbent, thought the parking lot was a good idea.

The bond referendum was a permission slip for borrowing money. Now that it has been approved, the real question is: Who Do You Trust With Your Money? If we can manage to make necessary repairs or replacements without drawing on a bond, I would prefer to have the approved bond money be a safety valve for the city.

To avoid drawing on the bond, we must diversify and expand our revenue sources. This is very possible, but it takes leadership with relevant skills. I have those skills.

I am a fiscal conservative. I believe in spending money wisely and getting good value for money. Our procurement / bidding practices need to be reformed.

The tourists pay nothing to the city treasury. They pay sales tax, and this goes to the State of Florida only. The “bed tax” of 5% goes entirely to the Tourist Development Council (TDC). We get nothing from the TDC to support our costs of hosting visitors or for maintaining the infrastructure we all use. They occasionally contribute some beach sand.

The only other beneficiary of tourism is the commercial investor who keeps their profits among themselves. A few business owners have been generous to the local charities, and I respect their generosity.

Palumbo: I did not support or advocate against what you call the “Collier parking purchase.” I believe this refers to the Turtle Parking Lot. For this, there was nothing to support. However, I did support our City Manager doing her job (at City Council’s request) and exploring alternative sources of income. Since it was already an existing parking lot and nothing was going to change (except for the City being a more profitable owner of the existing parking lot due to our tax-exempt status), I was supportive of our City Manager exploring the idea. An appraisal of the property was obtained to further explore this possibility. However, because the appraisal came in far below the owner’s asking price, this matter went no further. With that said, I will continue to support our City Manager in following the directions that seven councilors unanimously give her to explore alternative sources of income to lessen the burden of property taxation on you the residents.

Ricci: Council’s first responsibility is to distinguish needs from wants. Public safety, maintaining existing infrastructure and protecting essential services come first. For major capital projects, residents should see the alternatives, lifecycle costs, funding sources and consequences of deferring the work before Council votes.

On the approximately \$12 million Collier Boulevard parking acquisition, I supported evaluating the idea. Council was considering more than parking; it was exploring whether ownership of a commercial asset could create a recurring revenue stream and help diversify City revenues. Creative ideas deserve a fair review. But before committing \$12

million, I would require a complete business analysis: projected revenues and expenses, financing and management costs, risks, alternative uses of the funds and realistic return on investment. Without a compelling business case, I would not support the purchase.

I supported the \$23 million infrastructure bond because aging bridges and other transportation assets eventually have to be addressed. Deferral often raises the ultimate cost. But borrowing cannot substitute for long-term planning. Repeated millage reductions have reduced budget flexibility while deferred maintenance has continued to accumulate.

I want a ten-year capital plan that ranks projects by necessity, risk and return; compares repair versus replacement; identifies grants and alternative funding; and shows residents what we can afford before emergencies make the decisions for us.

Sommerfeld: Deferred maintenance is the result of poor decisions by previous City Councils that postponed necessary work without adequately planning for future costs. When needs exceed available resources, Council must first prioritize public safety and essential infrastructure, then consider urgency, long-term costs and the consequences of further delay.

I would require a comprehensive infrastructure master plan that identifies every major project, its condition, estimated cost, funding source and timeline. Council and residents should receive regular, easy-to-understand progress reports so everyone can see what is being completed, what is falling behind and why.

I opposed the \$12 million Collier Boulevard parking lot purchase because I did not believe its limited and delayed financial return justified the cost.

I also had serious concerns about the \$23 million bond and how it was presented to voters. The Caxambas Bridge replacement was emphasized as an urgent reason to approve the referendum, even though funding for that project had already been identified. The City should have communicated that clearly. A measure that passed by one vote shows how closely divided the community was and underscores the need for complete, straightforward information. Residents should not have to wonder whether the City understands its priorities or is telling them the full story. Fiscal responsibility requires honest communication, long-term planning and disciplined project management.

Woodworth: Deferred maintenance should be scored and funded through a prioritized, financially responsible Asset Management Plan, not funded ad hoc after new discretionary projects. Right now the Capital Improvements Element is not prioritized against the seven Strategic Plan principles; water quality, multimodal, and historic preservation projects all compete for the same general fund dollars without a scoring framework. I would put every capital request, new and deferred, through a common framework tied to those principles, with life-safety and infrastructure-failure risk (water, sewer, stormwater) weighted above amenity projects.

I did not support the \$12 million Collier parking lot purchase, and that purchase was later abandoned. On the \$23M bond, I agreed the City needed the funding it would provide, but I did not believe City staff or the current Council would spend it wisely, so I voted against it. Deferred maintenance is a real problem, but borrowing to solve it only works if residents can trust how the money will be spent, and I did not have that confidence in the leadership overseeing it.

QUESTION 5

WATER QUALITY

54% say water quality is a top priority and 79% are moderately or very concerned about canal and near-shore water quality. What should the City do to protect it, and how does the cost of potential remedies factor into your decision?

Bailey: Water quality has been a topic of conversation for years. I don't believe enough resources have been devoted to this. Although the City has authorized Advanced Wastewater Treatment (AWT) to move forward based on residents' desire to place the item on the ballot, its implementation status and schedule is unclear. I support AWT and will work to make sure it's implemented without unnecessary delays. Although AWT is an important part of the conversation, we need to talk about other ways to help improve the water quality around our Island. Some of these are:

1. Swale maintenance/improvements – Our swales are a critical part of our water quality infrastructure. Newer swales are focused on retention, which is great. Older swales may be in need of maintenance or upgrades and many of our swales are designed more for conveyance. We have outfalls that are too low. The City needs to have a plan for annual maintenance and improvements to our swales.
2. Septic to Sewer conversions for Isles of Capri and Goodland – these neighboring communities are still on septic and they influence our water quality. We need to continue pushing Collier County to move these concepts forward for the benefit of our entire area.

The cost of these will factor into any decision made by Council. We as a City MUST decide how important water quality is and how far we're willing to go to make it a priority. That will include annual expenditures to make measurable improvements and we must accept that.

Bartolucci: Who in their right mind says I am willing to pollute the environment I live in because the cost to stop polluting is more than I want to pay? No one. As we consider the means to restore our waterways to health, my belief is that this is not an optional "luxury" as one current Councilor said. This is a must do. Since commencing central sewage collection, our city has dumped over 10 billion gallons of polluted reuse water on our island.

I approach problem solving by first addressing the root cause, and then treating the symptoms. The root cause of our decaying waterways is too much Nitrogen and Phosphorus seeping into the canals. The only known source of phosphorus is the "reuse water" (toilet water). This comes from our city sewage treatment practices. Installing Advanced Wastewater Treatment technology is the solution. I am committed to doing this as soon as practically possible.

Nitrogen also comes from the reuse water, and lawn debris dumped in the canals, and too much lawn fertilizer. These are all things we can control and manage.

Paying for AWT will come from the Water & Sewer Department, specifically from all the incremental money coming in from the new water meters, reserves accumulated in the department funds, and if needed, bonds issued by the our water utility.

Other remedies may be needed, and I will address those based on facts and sound judgement.

Palumbo: Water quality should be one of our number one concerns. I was proud, as the council chairman, to put the approval of Advanced Wastewater Treatment (AWT) on multiple agendas, work with my co-councilors to encourage support, and second the motion to get AWT passed. However, there may be other initiatives needed to restore full health to our canals and waterways, such as tidal flushing, aeration, and fertilizer alternatives. Although it may be controversial to some, we must not be afraid to also look into dredging options to remove the years of pollution that has built up in our canals. However, water quality does not stop there. We should also open dialog with our neighbors in Isles of Capri and Goodland to help them transition from septic to sewer, should they desire. Lastly, I am proud to have received re-election endorsements from outside of our borders from John Dailey, the Mayor of Tallahassee, Sarah Baxter, the Mayor of Palm Beach County, Yvette Bennaroch, Florida House District 81 Representative, and Bill "Coach" Kramer, Naples City Council Member. Although this is just a small portion of endorsements I have received, these were specifically related to my previous campaign promise to reach across our borders and work with our neighbors on a local and state level regarding water quality and other initiatives.

Ricci: Water quality is one of my highest priorities. Our waterways are fundamental to Marco's environment, property values and quality of life.

I support Advanced Wastewater Treatment. Reducing nitrogen and phosphorus in reclaimed water addresses one source of nutrients entering our system. But AWT alone will not solve our canal problems. We also need to investigate nutrients already stored in canal sediments, poor circulation in dead-end canals, stormwater and other sources. I favor targeted pilot projects - particularly for sediment removal - so we can measure water-quality improvement and cost before committing tens of millions of dollars Island-wide. Cost absolutely matters. Environmental spending should be subjected to the same discipline as every other major investment. I would ask: What measurable improvement will this produce? Is there a less expensive way to achieve it? Can grants or state/federal programs offset the cost? Can we test it before scaling it? My objective isn't simply to spend money on water quality. It is to produce cleaner water: less algae, better clarity, healthier marine life and measurable improvement in our canals. We should establish those goals, test solutions scientifically and invest where the evidence shows they work.

Sommerfeld: Marco Island was built around its water. Our canals are central to our environment, economy, property values and identity, yet they continue to face excessive nutrient loading and other water-quality challenges.

The City's Category 4e classification recognizes that a pollutant-reduction plan is in place, allowing Marco Island to avoid being placed on the state's list of impaired waters while that plan is implemented. We should not allow that designation to create a false sense of reassurance or become an excuse for doing too little. A plan on paper does not mean our canals are healthy.

The City must move forward with Advanced Wastewater Treatment. I would require a transparent implementation schedule covering engineering, permitting, financing, construction and operation. Residents should be able to track progress and understand the reason for any delay.

AWT is essential, but it cannot be our entire strategy. I would strengthen education and enforcement, encourage retailers to voluntarily remove or relocate fertilizer products during the restricted season, and explore using the City's code enforcement boat to identify canal-related problems. I would also create a public Canal Water Quality Scorecard and refocus the Waterways Advisory Committee on evaluating and recommending evidence-based solutions.

Before undertaking major dredging, the City should map and sample canal sediment to determine the likely benefits, risks and nutrient reduction.

Cost matters, but so do the long-term costs of inaction. We should invest in targeted, measurable solutions that provide the greatest improvement in water quality for every public dollar spent.

Woodworth: Water quality is the issue I have spent the most time on outside my Council candidacy, as a co-founder of Clean Marco Waters, and I have strongly supported Advanced Wastewater Treatment for years. The City's Comprehensive Plan addresses water quality procedurally, through monitoring and coordination language, but sets no numeric nutrient targets. That is a real gap between what residents say they want and what the regulatory document actually requires.

Council voted for an AWT facility in May 2026, using the process recommended in the City's Black & Veatch engineering study. Funding should combine available cash reserves, a comprehensive rate-structure study, especially for reuse-water customers, and possibly modest residential rate increases, with the balance coming from a dedicated bond issue, which does not require a referendum.

The City should also address canal bottom sediments through targeted suction dredging, beginning with a demonstration project to measure cost and effectiveness before committing to island-wide cleanup. In the meantime, we must enforce codes against illicit discharges and landscape debris and promote Florida-friendly landscaping. Clean Marco Waters has also filed a formal objection with FDEP over nutrient exceedances in the water body covering Marco's waters, because the current monitoring and enforcement record does not match the

water quality residents are being told they have. On cost, I do not think the City can treat AWT or sediment cleanup as optional and wait for it to become cheaper later; deferred water quality investment compounds, the same way deferred maintenance does.

QUESTION 6

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

80% of residents support reviewing our City Council-City Manager form of government, 76% want a public vote on switching to a Mayor-City Council structure, and 61% support considering district representation. Do you support a formal study of these ideas and a public vote? What do you think about electing some or all Council members from geographic districts?

Bailey: At the very least, I would be willing to discuss these ideas at the Council level, if a Councilor presented a white paper on any of them. Based on both MICA and the City of Marco POV surveys, there are some concerns our residents have about the lack of confidence in our City government. Part of any conversation about these ideas would include asking the following questions:

1. Would any of these changes increase the level of confidence that our residents have in our local government?
2. Would any of these changes create more efficient and effective government?
3. Would any of these changes increase our ability to obtain additional funding from the County, State, Federal Government or other entities?
4. Would any of these changes help to improve/repair/strengthen relationships our City has with our governmental entities
5. What would the costs be to do this initially and ongoing and would the benefits outweigh the costs?
6. Would a majority of residents support these changes, as I believe these changes would require amending our City Charter during an election?

Bartolucci: I do not favor a plan to have candidates for Council represent their neighborhood, and elected on that basis. That is a bad idea. We are a very small city. We aren't New York or Chicago. We don't need to water down the candidate pool for Council seats by sub dividing our city into even smaller slices. All district representation does is diminish the overall talent pool to lead the city.

We can consider a different form of government, with an elected mayor, but that is the "shiny object". If we have the wrong people in leadership, the form of government doesn't matter.

We have numerous problems to solve, and we can do this with our current form of government...so long as we elect the right people to the Council. The form of government is not the root cause of our problems. Having the wrong people in leadership has always been the root cause of our problems. Put the right people in place, those with real skills and experience, and the problems go away.

Let's not get distracted by the form of government. If some of the recent Council Chairman were the Mayor with stronger individual power, we would be worse off today.

Palumbo: I have always been supportive of allowing our residents to vote on a Mayor-City Council structure, as I did in 2024 when my previous co-councilors and I unanimously put a slightly different version of this question to referendum. Unfortunately, the referendum did not pass at that time. It failed, the residents voted 2,136 no votes to 1,556 yes votes. However, if the sentiment of the residents has changed, I will once again support this initiative. Regarding geographic elections versus at large, Marco seems geographically small to me. For this reason, I prefer the at large elections we currently have. However, if it is the desire of our residents to move towards geographic districts instead of at large, I would have no problem supporting the will of the residents.

Ricci: I support an informed public discussion, but I am not convinced Marco needs an expensive, open-ended study before we can identify the basic tradeoffs. Our current Council-Manager system gives policy authority to seven councilors elected at large and day-to-day administration to a professional City Manager. That structure fits a small community reasonably well.

I am skeptical that an Island with roughly 14,000 registered voters needs geographic districts. Every councilor is currently accountable to every voter and should represent Marco as one community. Before creating districts, proponents should identify the specific representation problem they are trying to solve and explain why district politics would improve it.

I am also cautious about moving to a strong elected-mayor system. Concentrating executive authority in one elected official can provide clear accountability, but it can also produce sharper policy swings when control changes. In a community where residents often have strongly different visions for Marco, continuity and professional administration have real value.

In 2024, Marco voters rejected even the much narrower proposal to rename the Council Chair and Vice-Chair as Mayor and Vice-Mayor, 54% to 46%; that proposal would not have created a strong mayor. If residents want to revisit a genuinely different structure, Council should first define the alternatives clearly, hold public workshops and then let voters decide any Charter change.

Sommerfeld: I support a formal study of the Council-Manager form of government to clarify lines of authority, responsibility and accountability and ensure that our government structure meets the community's expectations. Residents must have a meaningful role in that process. After the public is fully informed about the advantages and disadvantages of each option, I would support placing any proposed change before voters in a referendum.

I also support exploring the election of City Council members by geographic districts. District representation could give residents a council member who is directly accountable to their area. However, I am concerned that there may not currently be enough interested candidates in each district to ensure effective representation.

The City Charter should also be thoroughly reviewed. Any recommended revisions should be clearly explained to the public and presented to voters for approval, ensuring that the Charter reflects Marco Island's current needs and priorities.

Woodworth: Yes. When 80% of residents support reviewing our current form of government, City Council should listen. I support a formal, independent study comparing our current Council-Manager system with a Mayor-Council system. The study should clearly explain how each system would affect accountability, daily City operations, decision-making, and cost. Once residents have that information, I support allowing them to decide the issue through a public vote.

I also support studying whether some or all Council members should be elected by geographic district. Districts could give individual neighborhoods a stronger voice, but they could also divide the island and encourage Council members to focus on one area rather than the needs of the entire community. Before taking a final position, I want residents to understand the advantages and disadvantages and have the opportunity to decide whether a district system should be placed on the ballot.

QUESTION 7

RESIDENTS' VOICE

How would you ensure residents are meaningfully heard before major decisions?

Bailey: There are many major decisions made by Boards and Committees and by Council. Many of these are tied to land use matters, while others include budget hearings, proposed ordinance changes, hiring/firing of our City Manager and City Attorney and charter amendments. The opportunities for resident involvement and input vary.

Over the last several months, I have heard from residents who feel as though they are not being heard with respect to land use matters coming in front of the City. I'd suggest complex projects come in front of Council on meetings with a light agenda or are perhaps moved to their own meetings to allow citizens more opportunity to effectively convey their thoughts and questions.

Other important topics, such as budget hearings, hiring/firing of our City Manager or City Attorney or charter amendments require citizen input before final actions are taken. Process improvements to allow for more resident input could include the following:

1. Additional notice requirements
2. Agenda changes to ensure agendas are not content heavy and allow adequate time for citizen input
3. Discuss change in process to summarize major decisions for easier comprehension and bullets for key points, cost impacts,

I'd be open to any other suggestions about a change in process to improve communication between residents and Boards/Committees/Council to ensure their input is heard prior to major decisions.

Bartolucci: We need to consider new ways for residents to communicate with Councilors. Currently, residents can attend Council meetings, write or call the Councilors, get appointed to a Council sub-committee, or write letters to the editor. We can leverage technology to easily allow voters to communicate with City leadership real time, all the time. With technology, we can create a simple and cost effective platform to allow every voter to raise issues, articulate solutions and learn what other community members think about the topics being brought forward.

That is the "How". But, in the end, the voters must elect Councilors who listen to voters with an open mind, with no bias's, and with no IOU's to their financial backers. We need Councilors who commit to being the Peoples' representative. I am such a candidate.

Palumbo: During my last 4 years on City Council, having personally returned over 7,371 e-mails, thousands of texts, and too many phone calls to count, I personally ensure that every single resident's voice is heard before making not only major decisions, but all council decisions. Regarding this matter, it saddens me that on a regular basis, I receive correspondence from our residents stating that I am the only councilor to have responded to them. While I am proud to have kept my promise to respond to all residents, I would like to see every councilor do the same and as the council chairman I will continue to encourage my co-councilors to do so.

Ricci: Listening has to happen before a decision is effectively made, not only at the microphone five minutes before Council votes.

For significant issues, residents should have understandable information early enough to participate meaningfully: What is being proposed? What will it cost? What alternatives were considered? What are the benefits and risks? Staff reports and supporting materials should be readily available and written so an interested resident can understand the choices without being an engineer, lawyer or accountant.

I support workshops for major policy and capital decisions before final votes. I would also make greater use of online surveys, email input and other methods that allow seasonal residents and people who cannot attend meetings to participate. On Marco, meaningful public engagement cannot depend entirely on who happens to be in town and able to spend several hours at City Hall.

Advisory committees are another valuable resource. I have served on both the Audit Advisory Committee and the Beach & Coastal Resources Advisory Committee, which I currently chair. Council should use that expertise rather than treat committees as procedural stops.

I believe good leadership starts with listening. Residents may not always agree with my decisions, but they should always know that I heard their concerns, considered their perspectives and will be transparent about why I made a decision. Every resident deserves to feel that their voice matters.

Sommerfeld: Residents deserve meaningful opportunities to ask questions, receive answers and provide input before major decisions are made. Public comment at City Council meetings does not allow for dialogue, and emails are not always the best way to address complex concerns.

I would establish regularly scheduled town halls where residents, councilors and City staff could discuss important issues through informative, interactive conversation. These meetings should be recorded and broadcast so seasonal residents and others who are not on the island can watch and participate. I would also support topic-specific workshops, councilor office hours and accessible online surveys to gather broader community input.

Resident feedback should be summarized, shared publicly and addressed as part of the decision-making process so people can see how their concerns were considered.

I would also review the City's advisory committees to evaluate their effectiveness. Where appropriate, I would revise, consolidate or expand their responsibilities so they provide meaningful opportunities for residents to contribute their expertise and help shape City policy.

Woodworth: The Comprehensive Plan requires public participation for plan amendments and rezonings, but that is a minimum requirement and often occurs after key decisions have already been shaped. I would seek resident input earlier in the process, not just at the final public hearing.

Staff analyses, engineering reports, and financial models should be published well before a Council vote. Advisory committees should provide meaningful technical review, and the City should respond directly to well-supported resident questions and research.

I would also support a regular community forum where residents could ask questions and receive direct answers from Council members and City staff. Unlike public comment at Council meetings, this would allow for meaningful back-and-forth discussion. For major decisions, staff reports should summarize residents' concerns, explain how they affected the recommendation, and address why concerns were or were not incorporated. Council should resolve significant unanswered questions before voting.

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A GENEROUS GIFT TO MAKE OUR BEACHES MORE ACCESSIBLE

The Marco Island Civic Association extends its sincere appreciation to Beach Bum Equipment Rentals for their generous donation of three mobility beach wheelchairs to MICA.

With this generous donation, MICA now has five beach wheelchairs available for guests who need them. The wheelchairs are available for use for the entire time a guest is enjoying the beach, providing greater freedom and independence to experience the sand, water, and natural beauty of Marco Island.

This donation is a wonderful example of how local businesses can make a meaningful difference in our

community. By helping improve beach accessibility, Beach Bum Equipment Rentals is helping ensure that more residents and visitors can enjoy one of Marco Island's greatest treasures — our beautiful beaches.

MICA is truly grateful for their generosity and commitment to our community.

Thank you, Beach Bum Equipment Rentals, for helping make our beaches more accessible and enjoyable for everyone!



WHERE DID ALL THE STRAY CATS GO?

by Abby Gunderson, Marketing Manager, For the Love of Cats, Inc.

How almost two decades of work changed the future for cats on Marco Island

If you have lived on Marco Island for a while, you may remember a very different time for the island's community cats.

Large colonies of free-roaming cats once lived throughout the community. Kittens were regularly born outdoors, continuing a cycle of overpopulation, illness and suffering.

Today, it is increasingly rare to see a stray cat on Marco Island. That change did not happen on its own. It is the result of almost two decades of work that began right here with For the Love of Cats.

It All Started on Marco Island

When Jan and Jim Rich moved to Marco Island, they were struck by the number of feral and abandoned cats they saw by every restaurant, condo building and shopping center. By 2002, the island's feral cat population was estimated at nearly 2,000.

Believing there had to be a humane way to stop the cycle, they founded For the Love of Cats and began an intensive Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) effort. Community cats were humanely trapped, spayed or neutered, vaccinated, ear-tipped and returned to their familiar territory, while kittens young enough



Jan and Jim Rich, founders of For the Love of Cats

to be socialized were rescued and placed on a path toward adoption.

The idea behind TNR is simple: stop reproduction and the population can decline naturally over time. But success requires consistency, because even a small number of unsterilized cats can begin the cycle again.

During the organization's first five years, volunteers trapped and rescued over 1,300 cats and kittens on Marco Island, Goodland and Isles of Capri. Over 1,000 of those rescues were kittens that were adopted into loving homes with weekend adoption events at the PetSmart on Pine Ridge Rd. in Naples. Their work very quickly expanded throughout Collier County, with over 8,000 cats sterilized, and kittens rescued as of 2025.

From Marco Island to Collier County

What began on Marco Island has grown into a much larger commitment to community cats throughout Collier County.

Today, For the Love of Cats combines TNR with kitten rescue and foster care, emergency veterinary assistance for low-income families through our LifeLine Urgent Care Program, food support for community cat caregivers and partnerships with veterinarians, shelters and other animal welfare organizations.



Cats, continued on page 27

OUR DAILY BREAD FOOD PANTRY

by Evelyn Rossetti-Ryan, EdD Executive Director, Our Daily Bread Food Pantry

This summer has been especially meaningful as Our Daily Bread Food Pantry continues celebrating our 10-year anniversary, a year-long milestone that began in January and honors a decade of nourishing our neighbors with dignity and compassion. In the midst of this celebration, we also marked the one-year anniversary in our permanent home at 1818 San Marco Road.

We were honored to welcome several groups for summer service days, including the Naples Children & Education Foundation, Florida Blue, Naples Newcomers Club South, and Wesley United Methodist Church. Their teamwork helped support pantry operations, prepare distributions, and ensure families received the nutritious food they rely on.

A key partnership this season was with the YMCA of Collier County, where ODBFP provided breakfast, snacks, and weekend backpack meals to YMCA summer campers. These meals offered consistent nourishment throughout the week, supporting learning, play, and healthy growth.

In July, our collaboration with NCH brought neighbors together for a successful Pints and Pantries food and blood drive—furthering our shared commitment to health, wellness, and hunger relief.

As we continue celebrating a decade of service, we remain deeply grateful for the volunteers, partners, and supporters who make this work possible. Together, we look ahead with hope and determination as we address food insecurity across Marco Island and greater Collier County. To learn more about Our Daily Bread Food Pantry, visit, www.ourdailybreadfoodpantry.org.



Our Daily Bread Food Pantry can be reached at 239-259-5188 and <https://ourdailybreadfoodpantry.org/>

Cats, continued from page 26

In 2026, our team continues to intervene for over 1,000 community cats and kittens across Collier County, and the need is growing at an alarming rate with an estimated 50,000 community cats in the Naples area alone.

Marco Island is proof of what can happen when a community commits to a humane solution for the long term.

More than two decades ago, residents could see the problem in parking lots, neighborhoods and colonies of cats living outdoors. Today, they can see the result in what is largely no longer there.

A Legacy Worth Protecting

Marco Island will always be a huge part of the For the Love of Cats story. It is where we learned

that lasting change comes from addressing overpopulation at its source, caring for the few community cats remaining and staying committed year after year with community support.

But maintaining that progress still requires vigilance. Cats and kittens can be dumped on the island, pets can be abandoned, and a small number of unsterilized cats can quickly become an overpopulation crisis once again.

If you see a stray or unfamiliar cat on Marco Island, please contact For the Love of Cats at 239-642-8674. To learn more about our work throughout Collier County, visit forthe love of cats fl.com or follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

GET TO KNOW THE MARCO ISLAND CIVIC ASSOCIATION STAFF



LAURA McLAUGHLIN

Laura moved to Marco Island in 2004. She visited Marco Island many times over the years and knew this is where she wanted to call home. Laura enjoys working at MICA and has been at the MICA office for four years. This is a very special group of colleagues.... we're like family. It's also nice to meet so many of our MICA members.

In her spare time, Laura enjoys our beautiful beach. She is a crossword puzzle aficionado and also enjoys creating Hardanger embroidery which is a beautiful form of Scandinavian embroidery.

Laura is very passionate about her involvement with the Marco Island Fire Rescue Foundation in her roles as a Director, Secretary to the Board, and Chair of the Scholarship Committee.



RINA LAZO

Rina moved to Marco Island from Miami in 1999 and came straight to the MICA office, and her husband also worked as a gate attendant for about six years. Together they have seen a lot of changes, but still think Marco is paradise! Rina loves MARCO!!!!



ELAINE

Hello! My name is Elaine, and I've worked at MICA for the past 15 years. Most days, you'll find me at the front desk, ready to greet you when you visit our office. I assist with processing applications, help you activate our Marco Island Civic Association app, and providing guest passes for when your family comes to town.

Outside of work, I enjoy volunteering in our church's kids ministry, helping out at the Venture Mobile Market, and tending to my collection of plants.

MICA PUTS MEMBER SAFETY FIRST: NEW AEDS AT MARCO ISLAND CIVIC ASSOCIATION CLUB (RESIDENTS' BEACH), SARAZEN PARK & MICA OFFICES

At MICA, the safety and well-being of our members, families, and guests is our top priority.

We are pleased to announce the placement of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) at MICA's Club, Sarazen Park – two of our most beloved community gathering places and our office. This investment ensures rapid response capability where our members enjoy the beach, Paradise Grill, playgrounds, picnics under the chickee, and family time.

To support this initiative, our community partner, the Marco Island Sail & Power Squadron - America's Boating Club - Marco Island, will provide FREE hands-on CPR/AED and First Aid training for MICA team members.

Training for MICA Employees:

Wednesday, October 21, 2026 at 9:00 AM

Location: Squadron's Learning Center, 2nd Floor,
1114 N. Collier Blvd.

This practical, life-saving training includes: CPR, proper AED use, drowning response, adult & pediatric first aid, severe-bleeding control, and epinephrine auto-injector administration.

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Learn more:

marcoboatingclub.org/boating-courses/

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A SEASON OF NEW BEGINNINGS: SEA TURTLES AND SHOREBIRDS NEST ACROSS ROOKERY BAY

More than 15,000 baby sea turtles have emerged from nests monitored by Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve this year, marking a dramatic turnaround from a nesting season that got off to an unusually slow start.

At the same time, several of Rookery Bay's threatened and endangered beach-nesting birds are returning to sites where they have not nested in years, making 2026 a season of encouraging developments for wildlife along the Reserve's coast.

From May through October, Rookery Bay's sea turtle team monitors the remote Reserve beaches of Cape Romano, Sea Oat Island, Cannon Island and the Ten Thousand Islands. Each morning during nesting season, staff and interns look for tracks left overnight by female sea turtles, identify and document new nests, and install protective cages where needed to reduce disturbance from predators such as raccoons.

While this year's season began with fewer nests than usual, activity increased dramatically in early June.

Loggerhead sea turtles are the predominate nesting sea turtles in the Reserve, but this year the sea turtle team came across a green sea turtle nest, a rare occurrence. Biologists can often identify the species without ever seeing the turtle itself. Green sea turtles move both front flippers at the same time as they crawl, leaving behind distinctive symmetrical tracks with parallel flipper marks in the sand.

The discovery was one of many memorable moments for the three sea turtle interns who spent the summer monitoring Rookery Bay's coastline. Their work was supported by the Friends of Rookery Bay's Adopt-a-Sea-Turtle-Nest-Program. This year proceeds from 96 adopted nests helped fund the three interns as well as resources and supplies used for nest monitoring and protection. The program has become an important source of support for Rookery Bay's sea turtle conservation efforts.

Although thousands of young sea turtles have already made their way toward the Gulf, the 2026



Loggerhead Sea Turtle Close Up 2026: More than 15,000 baby sea turtles have hatched on Rookery Bay's beaches as of mid-September, with hatching expected to continue into October



2026 Sea Turtle Interns with nest cage: Friends of Rookery Bay's Adopt-a-Sea-Turtle-Nest Program funded three interns and supplies to help monitor and protect sea turtles throughout the summer

nesting season is not over yet. Rookery Bay staff will continue monitoring nests and documenting hatchling emergence into the fall.

Shorebirds Return to Historic Nesting Sites

Sea turtles are not the only coastal species giving Rookery Bay biologists reasons for optimism this year. For the first time in approximately a decade, least terns have nested on Morgan Beach. Black skimmers have also returned to nest on Sand Dollar Island for the first time in three years.

Both species depend on relatively undisturbed stretches of open beach and sand for nesting, making their return to these sites an encouraging development for Rookery Bay's avian monitoring and management efforts.

Throughout nesting season, Rookery Bay staff conduct weekly surveys of shorebird colonies from northern Keewaydin Island south to Second Chance Critical Wildlife Area. Staff record the locations of colonies along with nest and hatchling numbers. The resulting data helps researchers, land managers, conservationists and permit reviewers identify important nesting areas and make informed decisions about their protection.

Another closely watched species is the American oystercatcher. Successful American oystercatcher nesting is rare in Collier County, but for the past two years, Rookery Bay avian ecologists have observed a pair attempting to nest within the Reserve. Their nests have not yet produced fledglings due in part to predation from coyotes and fish crows, but their

continued attempts offer another promising sign.

For shorebirds, successfully laying eggs is only the beginning. Many beach-nesting birds lay their eggs directly on open sand, where their natural camouflage helps protect them from predators. That same camouflage, however, can make nests nearly invisible to beachgoers. Human disturbance can also cause adult birds to leave their nests or chicks behind. In Florida's summer heat, even a relatively short period without protection from a parent can put eggs and young birds at risk.



American Oystercatcher and warning sign: For two years, avian biologists at Rookery Bay have observed a pair of American Oystercatchers attempting to nest in the Reserve, a hopeful sign of recovery for the species

Visitors can help by following posted signs and seasonal beach closures, keeping dogs leashed and away from bird colonies, and giving groups of resting or nesting birds plenty of space. Rookery Bay recommends staying at least 500 feet from large concentrations of birds whenever possible and changing course if birds begin reacting to your presence.

As Rookery Bay's 2026 nesting season continues, thousands of sea turtle hatchlings have already reached the water, while least terns, black skimmers and American oystercatchers are attempting to raise the next generation along the Reserve's beaches.

For the scientists and interns monitoring those shores, each track in the sand, newly discovered nest and fledgling represents another piece of the larger picture of how wildlife is using and responding to Rookery Bay's protected coastal habitats.

To learn more about Rookery Bay's research and conservation efforts, visit <https://rookerybay.org/>.

UPDATE FROM FRIENDS OF TIGERTAIL

by Allie Delventhal, Friends of Tigertail

Friends of Tigertail held two “Breakfast and Birds” presentations at Tigertail Park during the season, sponsored students at the Rookery Bay summer program with the Ken Kubat scholarships, and on September 19 participated in the International Coastal Clean-up, their third beach clean-up of the year. Sponsored by the county, Keep Collier Beautiful, and groups at local and worldwide shore locations, the International Coastal Clean-up involves volunteers collecting and tabulating the types of trash retrieved, sending results to the Ocean Conservancy, who then publishes world-wide statistics. At the September event 66 volunteers collected 144 pounds of trash at Tigertail, with students from three area schools participating along with adults and families.

The final 2026 quarterly beach clean-up at Tigertail will be on Saturday, December 5.

Join Us for the final 2026
Quarterly Beach Clean-up
at
Tigertail Beach
on
Saturday, December 5th



*Coastal Clean-up event,
sponsored by Keep Collier Beautiful*



*Friends of Tigertail “Breakfast and Birds”
presentations at Tigertail Park*

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MAC STONE “CYPRESS” EXHIBIT ON VIEW AT CORKSCREW SWAMP SANCTUARY

Audubon’s Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary is set to host a new photography exhibit by Mac Stone from October 27, 2026, through March 31, 2027.

Set beneath the living canopy of Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary’s ancient cypress forest, this outdoor exhibit brings large-format photography into the landscape that inspired it. Featuring 50 to 60 prints mounted along the sanctuary’s iconic boardwalk, the exhibition transforms a traditional gallery experience into an immersive walk through one of America’s last great old-growth cypress swamps.

The work explores the rare wetland forests that remain after centuries of logging and development, revealing their scale, complexity, and quiet power. Through images of towering cypress trees, flooded

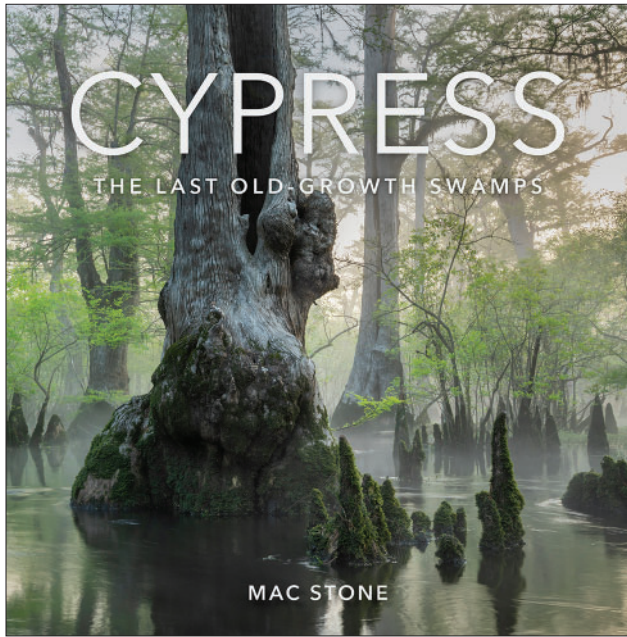
forests, wildlife, reflections, textures, and hidden ecological relationships, visitors are invited to see these swamps not as dark or empty places, but as living cathedrals—ancient, fragile, and full of life.

The exhibition follows the release of Mac Stone’s latest book, *Cypress: The Last Old-Growth Swamps*, published by University Press of Florida. Many of the photographs in this collection have been recognized in international competitions and published by outlets including National Geographic, Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, bioGraphic, and others.

Mac Stone is a National Geographic photographer and explorer whose work focuses on raising awareness for threatened landscapes, wildlife, and wilderness areas around the world. In this exhibit, his photographs



photos by Mac Stone Photography



Mac Stone's latest book,
Cypress: The Last Old-Growth Swamps

celebrate the beauty and ecological importance of old-growth cypress swamps while asking visitors to consider what remains, what has been lost, and what is still worth protecting.

Home to the largest old-growth bald cypress forest in North America, Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary offers visitors a rare chance to experience Florida's wild beauty up close. Audubon's Blair Visitor Center, Spurlino Foundation Discovery Center, and boardwalk, located at 375 Sanctuary Road W. in Naples, are open daily at 8 a.m., with last admission at 1 p.m. during the summer/fall season. Hours extend for the winter/spring season (December 1 through April 30) with the last admission at 3 p.m. The Center also features a Nature Store stocked with locally made gifts, plus snacks and beverages for purchase. Regular admission is \$17 for adults, \$6 for children ages 6-14, and free for children under 6 and Sanctuary members. Guests are encouraged to obtain admission tickets online at Audubon.org/corkscrew/visit.



MARCO ISLAND WOMAN'S CLUB CELEBRATES 60-YEAR DIAMOND JUBILEE

by Maureen Chodaba, MIWC Publicity Chair

When women come together, amazing things happen! That fact is clearly evident in the Marco Island Woman's Club (MIWC). We are a network of women united in service to our community through volunteerism, philanthropy, and friendship. We live by our motto: "Why you were born and why you are living depends on what you are getting out of this world and what you are giving." This year we are celebrating our 60-year Diamond Jubilee, and what a year it will be!

In 1966, the Marco Island Woman's Club (MIWC) was chartered by a group of sixteen women who shared a vision of transforming what was then an incipient community into a flourishing populace. Their earliest accomplishments included the founding of our library, funding of the gazebo at the Historical Museum, initiating the movement for the beautification of our island, establishing a youth center which became the present YMCA, restoring the Marco Island Historical Cemetery, and supporting NCH.

What began as a small gathering of dedicated women grew into a respected organization committed to service, friendship, and civic engagement. Today we have more than 150 members! We continue to support all of the original causes in many capacities, along with many more, including Meals of Hope, Marco Island Academy, MI Center for the Arts, MI Dementia Respite, Our Daily Bread Food Pantry, American Cancer Society, Little Pink Houses of Hope, Camp Able, The Shelter for Abused Women and Children, Avow, Marco Island Youth Baseball, City of Marco Island Beach Cleanup, Laces of Love, and Habitat for Humanity.

Our most important project is our focus on education for local high school students who are looking to attend college or accredited vocation schools. They are our future, and the future looks bright! The MIWC Education Foundation was established in 1988 through a generous \$100,000 gift from member Signe Gleich, creating a



MIWC Past Presidents Sharyn Kampmeyer, Maureen Chodaba, and Sue Purvis with 2026-27 President Tammy Barstow at the new NCH Urgent Care Center

powerful tradition of giving. This legacy has been strengthened over the years by extraordinary contributions, including a significant educational gift from Verne Cabooris (2011), a generous estate bequest from Past President Evelyn McDowell (2022), a generous estate bequest that created the Linda and Edward Greer Memorial Scholarship (2026), and funds raised through our MIWC Charitable Foundation. Since 1989, MIWC has awarded more than \$945,000 in scholarships, empowering more than 270 deserving students.

We are grateful for the opportunity to have served this community in so many ways, for so many years! We are going to celebrate! Naples Lakes Country Club will be the place to be November 4, 2026, for "A Diamond Jubilee High Tea – Celebrating 60 Years of Elegance & Legacy". One of the original sixteen members, Sheila Howard, will be our guest speaker sharing her memories of the early days of Marco Island and of our club. In 1966, Sheila was a young bride from Boston who arrived on Marco Island with her husband who at the time was an employee of the Deltona Corporation. At that time, there was no incorporated City of Marco Island. Back then,



2026-27 MIWC Executive Board – Anna Hutchings, Corresponding Secretary; Tiffany Mercer, Recording Secretary; Karen Burlage, Assistant Treasurer; Roxana Rascoe, Treasurer; Vice-President Karen Caster, and President Tammy Barstow

Marco Island was an unincorporated body of land that included what is now the present-day City of Marco Island and Goodland. Imagine Sheila's culture shock of arriving here from the metropolis of Boston as they crossed the swing bridge in Goodland! Sheila's presentation will surely take us on a heartfelt journey through our rich history, traditions, and the incredible women who built the foundation we cherish today. It will be an enchanting afternoon as we honor our cherished legacy. This special High Tea Luncheon will be abundant with elegance and charm, complete with a delightful tea experience, sparkling touches, and unforgettable moments. We plan to embrace the spirit of the day by wearing our finest High Tea attire—elegant hats, dresses, and timeless style. We even had a “pre-tea training session” with Hats to Di For, our September luncheon that featured a fascinating presentation by professional milliner Diane Shagott.

To continue our positive impact here in our community, we will forge on with our fundraising. “Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend”, our annual Fashion Show fundraiser will be held February 22, 2027, at Naples Lakes Country Club. This will be

a milestone event of elegance and style. All funds raised will be given back to our community in scholarships and donations to charitable causes. Sponsorship opportunities are available. A gift to the Marco Island Woman's Club is a gift to our entire community, truly an investment in this

Marco Island Woman's Club, continued on page 38



2026 MIWC Scholarship recipients



Sue Purvis, Joyce Frame, Debbie Silvestri, Karen Caster, Barbara Lialios, and Tammy Barstow

Marco Island Woman's Club, continued from page 37

amazing place that we are blessed to call our home. To learn more, please visit marcowomansclub.com

The Marco Island Woman's Club cordially invites all women who live on Marco Island and Goodland to join us in membership. In addition to our community service, we also have fun while learning all that we can about our amazing locale. Our upcoming programs include A Diamond Tribute

to Strength and Survival with ACS, Neighbors Helping Neighbors with St. Matthew's House, Brain Health with the Alzheimer's Association, Sharing Your Legacy, and Timeless Treasures Through History with MIWC Past President Barbara Malta. Our special interest groups include a stitching club, cards and games, book clubs, a theater group, and even a travel club. Please visit <https://marcowomansclub.com> to learn more.



Getting ready for High Tea – Linda Ann Ventura, professional milliner Diane Shagott, Anne Marchetti, Carol Ann Anzalone, and Gwyn Steiner



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MARCO ISLAND SHELL CLUB PREPARES FOR 2027 SEASON

by Cindy Konney, Marco Island Shell Club Member

The Marco Island Shell Club is preparing for its 2027 season with workshops, educational seminars, member excursions and shell art sales for residents and visitors interested in shells, mollusks and the coastal environment.

Scholarship and grant applications are available at www.marcoislandshellclub.com. The club awarded five scholarships

last year to students studying marine sciences and plans to offer additional scholarships this year.

Weekly shell art workshops also remain a central part of the season, with proceeds from artwork sales supporting scholarships, grants and educational programs. The club's first sale of the season, a holiday sale, is scheduled for Nov. 27 at New Life Community Church.

Free public seminars are scheduled for January, February and March at the Marco Island Library. Additional information about the Marco Island Shell Club and its programs is available on the club's website.



*Check us out on our website at www.marcoislandshellclub.com,
and on Facebook (MarcoIsland_ShellClub) or Instagram (@marcoislandshellclub)*

2026 CHRISTMAS ISLAND STYLE

SANTA'S ARRIVAL

Friday, November 27th

ANNUAL TREE LIGHTING AND COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Saturday, December 5th

ANNUAL STREET PARADE

Saturday, December 12th

San Marco Road between Balfour and South Barfield

ANNUAL BOAT PARADE

Saturday, December 19th



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NEW LEADERSHIP TAKES THE HELM AT THE MARCO ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Marco Island Police Department has entered a new chapter of leadership in 2026, with two experienced members of the department stepping into key roles.

Chief Joseph Belardo and Lieutenant Andrew Smith bring decades of combined law enforcement experience to their positions, including careers that extend well beyond Marco Island. Both have also spent the past several years serving the island and working alongside the officers they now help lead.

Their promotions represent a period of transition for MIPD, but also continuity, with both positions filled by leaders already familiar with the department and the community it serves.

Chief Joseph Belardo

Joseph Belardo was appointed Chief of Police in August 2026 after serving as Interim Chief beginning in May.

Belardo's law enforcement career began in New York, where he served with the Schodack Police Department. During his career there, he worked his way through the ranks and ultimately served as the department's Chief of Police before retiring in 2020.

Retirement did not last long.

Belardo relocated to Southwest Florida and joined the Marco Island Police Department later that year, beginning a second chapter of his law enforcement career. Over the next several years, he steadily advanced through MIPD's ranks, earning promotion to Sergeant in 2023 and Lieutenant in 2025.

Following the retirement of former Police Chief Tracy Frazzano in May, Belardo was selected to serve as Interim Chief while the City conducted its search for the department's next leader.

After a competitive selection process, City Manager Dr. Casey Lucius selected Belardo to permanently lead the department. He officially took the oath of office as Marco Island's Chief of Police in August.

Belardo brings not only decades of law enforcement experience to the position, but an



established understanding of Marco Island and the department's operations. His time with MIPD has allowed him to serve alongside the same officers and civilian employees he now leads while developing relationships throughout the community.

He also brings an extensive educational background to the position, including two master's degrees.

As Chief, Belardo oversees the department's law enforcement, community policing, investigative and support functions while helping guide MIPD as Marco Island continues to grow and evolve.

For Belardo and his family, that connection to Marco Island extends beyond the police department. His family has established roots in the community, including through Blue Wave Swim School, which focused on youth swimming and water safety.

Lieutenant Andrew Smith

Another familiar face also recently stepped into a larger leadership role at MIPD.

Andrew Smith was officially promoted and sworn in as Lieutenant on September 3 after serving as Acting Lieutenant since May 27.

Smith brings an extensive and varied background to the position.

Before entering law enforcement, Smith served three years in the United States Army. His law enforcement career began in corrections before eventually taking him into patrol, investigations, narcotics enforcement and command-level assignments.

Smith spent portions of his career serving communities throughout Southwest Florida, including East Naples and Immokalee. He also served with the Hendry County Sheriff's Office, where his responsibilities included serving as East District commander.

He later returned to the Collier County Sheriff's Office, where he built a lengthy career that included patrol assignments in Immokalee and more than two decades of experience involving narcotics enforcement.

His leadership responsibilities grew throughout his career and included overseeing street crimes and major crimes operations. Smith also served as commander of NETFORCE, providing him experience coordinating complex investigations and working with law enforcement partners at the local, state and federal levels.

After retiring from CCSO in 2021, Smith joined the Marco Island Police Department in 2022.

Like Belardo, Smith quickly became part of MIPD's leadership structure. He was promoted to Sergeant in 2025 before being selected to serve as Acting Lieutenant in May 2026.

When Smith's promotion to Lieutenant became official in September, Chief Belardo highlighted Smith's experience, knowledge and established relationships with law enforcement partners, describing him as an "indispensable asset" to the department.

Smith said following his promotion that he looked forward to the challenges of his new position and the opportunity to continue serving both MIPD's officers and the Marco Island community.

Experience From Within

The paths Belardo and Smith have taken to their current positions share an interesting parallel.

In 2025, Belardo was promoted to Lieutenant while Smith was promoted to Sergeant. Just over a year later, Belardo now serves as Chief of Police and Smith as Lieutenant.

While both brought significant experience to Marco Island from previous agencies, each has also had the opportunity to learn the unique needs of policing an island community before assuming their newest responsibilities.

That institutional knowledge is particularly



important as Marco Island continues to change. The department is responsible for serving not only the island's year-round population, but the significant number of seasonal residents and visitors who arrive throughout the year.

The result is a community that can change considerably from one season to another and a police department whose responsibilities extend far beyond responding to calls for service. Traffic safety, marine enforcement, criminal investigations, community policing, special events and partnerships with other local, state and federal agencies are all part of MIPD's daily operations.

Belardo and Smith now help lead the officers responsible for meeting those demands.

Looking Ahead

New titles may be appearing on office doors and uniforms, but the mission of the Marco Island Police Department remains unchanged.

For MIPD, the transition provides an opportunity to build upon the department's existing relationship with residents while preparing for the public safety needs of Marco Island's future.

Residents can expect to see both Chief Belardo and Lieutenant Smith throughout the community, whether during major incidents, community events, neighborhood meetings or the everyday interactions that are an important part of policing on Marco Island.

With decades of experience behind them and several years of service to Marco Island already completed, both leaders begin their new roles with something particularly valuable: an understanding of the department they are leading and the community they have been entrusted to serve.

'TIS THE SEASON, THIS FALL AT THE UF IFAS COLLIER EXTENSION

by Collier Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Mary Jane Cary



Have you wondered when our Southwest Florida Fall season begins? After all, our sub-tropical environment is the reason we do Fall differently from our northern neighbors. But ask any local family, and they'll offer these signs of the season: Spending time outdoors is more enjoyable as our 90 degree days, humidity and summer rains subside; Waves of brilliant reds and oranges appear in evening sunsets! As the sun crosses the sky in a southward-shifting arc, atmospheric particles like Saharan dust scatter the light into ever-changing vibrant displays;

Bright yellow school buses and colorful license plates from northern destinations appear on our roadways; and The UF IFAS Collier Extension Yard and Garden Show bursts into a weekend-long bloom as SWFL nurseries and community partners offer family fun, sage advice and treasures to fill and thrill your yards and gardens.



This year's show will be on **Saturday October 24 & Sunday 25th, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** Since the show offers something engaging for everyone, and kids of all ages attend for free, bring the whole family! Our resident chickens want to greet

your kids as you stroll through our fruit tree orchard. There's free face-paintings in our educational Fairy Garden while at the nearby gazebo, Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) host hands-on lessons in topics like orchid/epiphyte mounting, herb gardening and fairy gardening as horticultural therapy. Visit our vendors' wide selection of orchids, tropicals, palms, native plants, fruit trees, butterfly plants, garden art, and much more. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just getting started, you'll find inspiration and everything you need to transform your yard or garden. Our enthusiastic 4-H students are delighted to assist with plant transport, because you can never have too many plants.



Our MGV-led gazebo talks take place at 10 – 11 – 12 pm daily, while Extension staff and volunteers carry on our traditions of offering plant-give-away raffles and Florida-Friendly plant care recommendations. There are shady spots to enjoy food and drinks as you ponder the plantings that will transform your yard from common to captivating. But should you have ailing plants, bring good photos of them to our MGV's Urgent Care Plant Clinic.

UF IFAS Collier Extension is located at
14700 Immokalee Road, Naples, FL 34120.
The event cost is \$5 at the door or online through
Eventbrite <https://tinyurl.com/yng2026>.

All proceeds go toward
Extension educational programming.
Call 239-252-4800 for more information.
See you this Fall!

JOIN THE FRIENDS OF MARCO ISLAND LIBRARY FOR THEIR ANNUAL BOOKS & BREWS EVENT FEATURING GUEST SPEAKER MERSHON NIESNER



Date:

Thursday, February 18, 2027

Time:

*Doors will open at 10:00am
for meet and greet.*

The program will start at 10:30am

Location:

*Collier County Public Library,
Marco Island Branch,
in Rose Auditorium located at
210 S. Heathwood Dr.,
Marco Island, Florida, 34145*

Registration is NOT required and everyone is welcome!

Mershon Niesner is an author and Certified Life Coach whose work spans historical fiction, cozy mystery, and self-help. She's written multiple books inspired by family history, personal loss, and her fascination with aging well. Her stories often center on strong, reflective women and the wisdom gained through lived experience.

The author published her first book on her 75th birthday. Now, in her 80's she's still going strong. Between them, Mershon and her husband have six children, 19 grands, and 12 great-grands.

Books by Mershon:

Mom's Gone, Now What - Ten Steps To Help Daughters Move Forward After Loss

The Bootmaker's Wife

Angie, The Bee Lady

It's (Mostly) Good To Be Martha - Martyn Manor Mystery #1

Murder (Maybe) At Martyn Manor - Martyn Manor Mystery #2

Winter's In The Wind - Martyn Manor Mystery #3

ROOKERY BAY EVENTS

Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center, 300 Tower Rd., Naples, FL 34113 RookeryBay.org

The attraction at 300 Tower Road in Naples features aquariums, touch tanks with marine critters, natural history, environmental and wildlife exhibits, an art gallery, picnic area, guided walking trails, butterfly garden and a scenic overlook bridge. Special events and activities for all ages are held year-round including watercolor and photography classes, gallery nights, presentations about wildlife and conservation, birding field trips, marine science camps and more! The hours are 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. Tuesday – Saturday. Admission is \$10 for adults, and \$5 for children ages 4-12 and 3 and under are free.

Rookery Bay Boat and Kayak Eco-Tours

Rookery Bay Research Reserve also offers guided boat tours or kayak adventures into the tranquil waters of Rookery Bay Reserve. Guests can choose from a variety of tours including shelling trips to deserted white sand islands, sunset tours or bird rookery excursions. Visit RookeryBay.org or call 239-530-5972 for more information.

Science Saturdays at Rookery Bay

Every Saturday beginning in October,
9a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center
www.rookerybay.org/events
FREE with Admission to Environmental Learning Center

Discover the wonders of nature every Saturday at Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center! Science Saturdays make it easy and fun for kids and adults to get hands on and learn more about the wildlife, habitats and environment of coastal Southwest Florida.

Each Saturday features a nature or science theme with fun, self-guided activities, crafts, puzzles and activity sheets as well as additional science-based experiences using microscopes, doing nature experiments and making scientific discoveries. Themes range from fabulous fish and mangroves to marine debris, native and invasive wildlife and other topics inspired by the natural world and the research happening at Rookery Bay Research Reserve. There is something for all ages to discover and enjoy!



On the second Saturday of each month, when admission to the Environmental Learning Center is free, an expanded variety of Science Saturday activities and crafts will be available.

Watercolors & Wildlife: Painting with Jan

November 5, December 3, January 7

9:30a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center
RookeryBay.org \$85, (including all materials)

Registration is required www.rookerybay.org/events

Get creative with watercolor while celebrating the “Spirit Animals of Rookery Bay”! These fun, no-stress classes are perfect for both beginners and experienced artists. With all supplies provided and friendly guidance from local artist Jan, you’ll explore color, technique and wildlife inspiration, without the pressure. Each session ends with a beautiful, matted painting to take home. All supplies included.

Volunteer Orientation at Rookery Bay

November 5

10:00-11:30 a.m.

Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center
RookeryBay.org FREE

Application Form is required at www.rookerybay.org/make-a-difference/volunteer

Looking for a meaningful way to give back, meet new people, and connect with nature? Join us for a Volunteer Orientation and discover how you can become part of a welcoming community dedicated to protecting Southwest Florida’s coastal environment. No experience is necessary to volunteer. Rookery Bay has a robust training program for any department of interest.

Meet staff and current volunteers, tour the Environmental Learning Center, and learn about volunteer opportunities in education, research, conservation, facilities, visitor services, special events, and the Pollinator Garden and grounds keeping. Whether you’re interested in working with people, wildlife, or behind the scenes, there’s a volunteer opportunity for almost every interest and schedule. Volunteer work in the Pollinator Garden is especially needed this time of year.

As a Rookery Bay volunteer, you’ll become part of a close-knit community and enjoy exclusive

opportunities, including volunteer appreciation celebrations, Noontime Knowledge presentations with guest speakers and special behind-the-scenes experiences.

To register, complete a volunteer application at www.rookerybay.org/make-a-difference/volunteer and select an upcoming orientation date, or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@rookerybay.org.

Birding with Biologists

November 6, December 12, January 29

8 a.m.-11 a.m.

Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center
RookeryBay.org \$30

Registration is required www.rookerybay.org/events

Enjoy this fun and informative class designed to help you identify birds around you. Oriented toward the beginning birder, this workshop explores how to use birds’ plumage, shape, behavior and habitat to recognize various species. Practice using your binoculars and field guides as you tour the paved paths of Donna Fiala Eagle Lakes Community Park, led by local expert biologists from Audubon Florida and Rookery Bay Research Reserve.

Free Saturdays for Collier Residents

November 14, December 12, January 9

9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center
RookeryBay.org \$25

No registration is required

Must show drivers’ license or proof of address

Enjoy the Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center for free on the second Saturday of the month. Everything on this day is free to experience including aquariums, touch tanks with marine critters, natural history, environmental and wildlife exhibits, art gallery, picnic area, guided walking trails, butterfly garden and a scenic overlook bridge.

Through the Light of the Estuary Exhibit

May 9 – October 29

The show features 18 works by 11 artists in media that include acrylic, oil, pastel, watercolor, mixed media, digital print, monotype print, photograph printed on aluminum panel, digital collage, and

continued on page 46

continued from page 45

acrylic, fiber paste, ink and varnish on canvas. The participating artists are Lisa Absher, HL Shepherd Baker, Paul Bussmann, Lisa Cunningham, Megan Hoolihan Dalziel, Kimberly Doerseln, Karen McDaniel, Anne McLaughlin, Adorable Monique, Vicky Tesmer, and Misoon Whang.

Fitness with the Fishes

November 3, 4-5 p.m.

Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center

RookeryBay.org \$20

Registration is required www.rookerybay.org/events

Set against the backdrop of the picturesque mangrove forests of Rookery Bay, this indoor slow-flow yoga class is designed to deepen your connection with your body. Instructor Jen Wyatt takes inspiration from nature-rooted places to create sacred practices that awaken your physical senses, aliveness, and authentic expression. Open to all levels, this class leaves you feeling more open, balanced, and grounded, with strength and flexibility arriving as natural gifts along the way. Just as the serene estuaries of Rookery Bay provide refuge for the fish who call it home, Jen invites attendees to explore the meditative spaces you find when you return to the wild.

Essentials of Digital Photography Workshop

November 21, December 19, January 23

9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center

RookeryBay.org \$55

Registration is required www.rookerybay.org/events

If you want to get the best pictures possible, and truly understand your camera's features, this workshop is for you. This class covers the essentials of your digital camera to help you capture and display the Reason, Emotion and Vision, why you decided to capture the image in the first place. You will learn how to use your camera's shutter, aperture, ISO control, and the drive modes to create images with impact and creativity. Sonny Saunders has over 35 years of experience in photography and instruction and is renowned for his ability to communicate to a wide variety of students. No previous camera or photography experience is necessary, just a desire to learn.

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TO DETAIL AND A TOUCH OF MARCO ISLAND MAGIC.**





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Forest Bathing Wellness Walk

November 7, December 5, January 2

9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center

RookeryBay.org \$50

Registration is required www.rookerybay.org/events

Enjoy a slow, quiet, guided-sensory and meditative experience in nature at Rookery Bay Research Reserve. A Certified Forest Bathing Guide will conduct a guided-meditation session and offer a series of invitations to use your curiosity and senses to connect with nature and yourself. Look, listen, smell and feel what the forest is offering you.

8th Annual Rookery Bay Classic Car Show

Presented by Carter Fence

November 14

9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Florida Southwestern State College

7505 Grand Lely Drive, Naples

\$10 Adults, \$5 Children ages 4-12, Free Children under 3

Car enthusiasts, mark your calendars! The 8th Annual Rookery Bay Classic Car Show returns this November with an impressive display of more than 100 antique, classic, muscle, exotic and high-performance cars. Presented by Carter Fence in support of Friends of Rookery Bay, this popular Naples tradition also features more than 20 vendors, entertainment and family- and dog-friendly activities throughout the day. Admission also includes same-day entry to the Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center.

The Friends of Rookery Bay is Florida's largest Citizen Support Organization (CSO) among Florida Aquatic Preserves and National Estuarine Research Reserves and provides financial support to Rookery Bay Research Reserve's conservation, education and research work

Moon Walk: Nights in Nature

November 24, December 23, January 22

5:15-6:45 p.m.

Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center

RookeryBay.org \$25

Registration is required www.rookerybay.org/events

Experience Rookery Bay Research Reserve like never before, this time under the moonlight! Join

Rookery Bay biologists for magical evening walks beneath the full moon, where the wild world comes to life after dark. As the sun sets, explore the trails (Pactor Raised Platform Boardwalk or the ELC Snail Trail) and tune in to the sounds of birds settling down and night creatures waking up. From flying bats to croaking frogs and unusual nocturnal insects, you never know what might be seen under the stars and moonlight. Perfect for nature lovers, night owls and the curious of all ages. This monthly moonlit adventure only happens from October through May, don't miss out! Register now!

Holiday Hootenanny

December 5

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center

RookeryBay.org FREE to shop the Nature Store

Presentation is included with admission to the Environmental Learning Center

Pre-Register to save \$1 at www.rookerybay.org/events

The festive sip-and-shop event features holiday activities, special one-day-only sales at Rookery Bay's Nature Store, and guest signing and official book launch from local children's author: Susan Levine.

From 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Susan Levine will be signing and presenting her new book *Rookery Rescue: Giving Wild Birds a Second Chance*, as her official book launch. The children's book, illustrated by Irene Bofill, shares the true story of nesting wading birds as they navigate threats and are helped by wildlife rehabilitators. Inspired by Naples' beautiful wildlife and wild spaces, Levine aims to teach what she has learned as a Florida Master Naturalist to children and be a resource of information for parents.

Special sales from 20 – 50% off select items will take place all day during the event, in-person only. Rookery Bay's store features nature-themed gifts for women, men and children as well as jewelry, art, games, toys, UV-protective clothing, and local brands such as Tunaskin, Jabebo and 4Ocean. Items such as prints and postcards from the renowned photographer Clyde Butcher and An Artist's Journal by the legendary local artist Paul Aresenault will also be available for purchase.

MARCO ISLAND CENTER FOR THE ARTS AND ARTS CENTER THEATRE

Life Beneath the Ruins

(Marco Island Center for the Arts-Gallery Exhibition)
Featuring photographer James Pryor, and 3D clay artists Judy Becker, Jean Camposano, Nancy Norman, and stone artists Joel Shapses, and Dick James (audio tour available for exhibition)

Black and White photography series classified as a quiet meditation on solitude and grace, and the quiet rituals of survival beneath New York City.

La Petite Galerie artist Vera Ripley (Nov. 2-22)

October 5 - November 24, 2026

Gallery Receptions on

October 13 and November 10, 2026 5:30pm-7pm

Musical Interludes featuring Leslie Cartaya

(Marco Island Center for the Arts)

November 12, 2026 at 5:30 PM

<https://www.marcoislandart.org/musical-interludes/>

Musical Interludes presents Country Christmas with Martin & Kelly

(Marco Island Center for the Arts)

December 2, 2026 at 5:30 PM

A Country Christmas musical performance

<https://www.marcoislandart.org/musical-interludes/>

Mud and Mistletoe

(Marco Island Center for the Arts-Gallery Exhibition)

December 7, 2026-January 5, 2027

Annual Holiday Clay Guild Exhibition

La Petite Galerie – Hannah Ineson

Gallery Reception *December 8, 2026 5:30 PM-7 PM*

Empowering Women

(Marco Island Center for the Arts – Gallery Exhibition)

January 11, 2027-February 23, 2027

Featuring Jodi Palmieri, Crocifissa Kristina Grillo, Ann Vreeland, Diana Calleja, Patricia Perrotti, Muffy Clark Gill, Barbara Parisi, Myriam Kriel, Judith Carlin, Diane Reed Eiler, Mary Limont, and Jassica Wajoli

La Petite Galerie:

Joe Parisi - *January 11, 2027 – January 26, 2027*

Tara O'Neill - *February 1, 2027 – February 23, 2027*

Gallery Receptions *January 12, 2027 and February 9, 2027 5:30pm-7pm*

Musical Interludes features Comedy and Tragedy

(Marco Island Center for the Arts)

January 21, 2027 at 5:30 PM

<https://www.marcoislandart.org/musical-interludes/>

Musical Interludes features Julie Patchouli and Landscape of Guitar

(Marco Island Center for the Arts)

January 28, 2027 at 5:30 PM

<https://www.marcoislandart.org/musical-interludes/>

ARTS CENTER THEATRE EVENTS

Packing up Polly by Leslie Kimbell and

Directed by Hyla Crane

(Arts Center Theatre – Staged Production)

1089 N. Collier Blvd in Marco Town Center

November 5-22, 2026

Polly Porter, famous 1970's gospel singer of the group POLLY PORTER & THE PRAISE HIS NAME SINGERS, has gone on up to heaven. Her daughter, Caroline, has come home to Savannah, Georgia, to pack up Miss Polly's house but there is just one little problem (or two or three): Miss Polly was an extreme hoarder of epic proportions, Caroline's useless siblings are totally MIA, and her three best friends from high school, former co-cheerleaders, have all shown up...UNANNOUNCED! Lizzy now owns the Miss Georgia Belle Pageantry system, Donna Jo is the local community theatre diva, and Becca is having a late in life geriatric pregnancy with baby girl number five. The gospel music plays and the margaritas pour as the four ladies laugh, cry, scream, and COME

TOGETHER to pack up Miss Polly's house, heal old wounds, and make new plans for their future. Tickets available by calling box office 239-784-1186 or visit <https://www.marcoislandart.org/packing-up-polly-november-5-november-22-2026/>

FLOAT by Patricia Kane and

Directed by Amy Saad
(Arts Center Theatre)

1089 N. Collier Blvd in Marco Town Center
December 9-20, 2026

The industrious members of the Budapest Women's Club come together for an annual tradition: the crafting of the holiday parade float. But under the surface of this pleasant gathering, the women find themselves grappling with sexuality, betrayal, and their own hard and fast notions of right and wrong. In this ode to the complicated undercurrents of Midwestern morality, you'll meet Marty, Luce, Char, Arletta, and Doodee — five women who face the tests life presents to them with laughter, love, and a lot of fake snow. Tickets Available by calling the box office at 239-784-1186 or visit <https://www.marcoislandart.org/float-december-9-december-20-2026/>

Death Trap by Ira Levin and

Directed by Paula Keenan
(Arts Center Theatre)

1089 N. Collier Blvd in Marco Town Center
January 7-24, 2027

Seemingly comfortable in his charming Connecticut home, Sidney Bruhl, a successful writer of Broadway thrillers, is struggling to overcome a string of recent failures and a shortage of funds. When a student in his writing seminar sends him a new script – a thriller that Sidney recognizes immediately as a potential Broadway hit – Sidney sees an opportunity. With his wife's help, he devises a plan to “collaborate” with the student, an idea which the younger man quickly accepts. Suspense mounts steadily as the plot begins to twist and turn with devilish cleverness that builds to a still-startling finale.

Tickets Available by calling the box office at 239-784-1186 or visit <https://www.marcoislandart.org/death-trap-january-7-january-24-2027/>

A vertical poster for the 2026 Naples Yard and Garden Show. The top and bottom are decorated with a border of pink and yellow plumeria flowers. The poster features logos for UF IFAS Extension, Collier County, and the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program. The main title is "2026 Naples Yard and Garden Show" in large, bold, dark blue letters. Below the title, it says "Saturday & Sunday, October 24-25, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m." and "14700 Immokalee Rd. Naples, FL 34120". A red circular badge on the right says "Adults \$5 Kids FREE!". A yellow banner with red text says "HUGE PLANT SALE" followed by a list: "Orchids, Tropicals, Palms, Fruit trees, Native plants, Butterfly plants, Garden art, and much more!". At the bottom, there are social media handles "@collier_ufifas" and "FB@CollierCountyExtension", a QR code, and a note about cash payments. A small line at the bottom reads "An Equal Opportunity Institution." data-bbox="524 64 915 731"/>

UF IFAS Extension UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA Collier County FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER

UF/IFAS Extension Collier County
Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program

**2026 Naples
Yard and Garden
Show**

**Adults \$5
Kids FREE!**

**Saturday & Sunday,
October 24-25
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

**14700 Immokalee Rd.
Naples, FL 34120**

HUGE PLANT SALE

Orchids, Tropicals,
Palms, Fruit trees, Native plants,
Butterfly plants, Garden art, and
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AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS ESSENTIAL TO THE FUTURE OF MARCO ISLAND

by Jessica Grybek, Director of Marketing & PR, Habitat for Humanity of Collier County

For Marco Island, affordable housing is both a community responsibility and an economic necessity.

When we talk about affordable housing, we often focus on the families struggling to find it. And we should. But the shortage affects all of us.

On Marco Island, the connection is especially easy to see. Restaurants, hotels, medical offices, construction companies and countless other local businesses depend on people who need to be able to afford to live within a reasonable distance of their jobs. When they can't, employers struggle to hire and keep workers, services become harder to provide and the effects ripple throughout the community.

These are the people residents count on every day. They care for older adults, staff restaurants and hotels, maintain properties, repair homes, work in construction, stock stores and support public safety. Yet many of these jobs simply do not pay enough to keep pace with the cost of housing in Collier County.

County data shows that 58 percent of local jobs pay less than \$45,000 a year. At the same time, 60 percent of renters are considered cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

For local businesses, that gap has real consequences. It can make it harder for a restaurant to fully staff a shift, a medical office to hire support staff or a contractor to build a dependable crew. The result can be reduced hours, longer waits for services, higher costs and greater employee turnover.

Employers can raise wages and improve benefits, but there is a limit to how much any one business can do when housing costs are far beyond what much of the local workforce can afford.

For many workers, the only option is to live farther away. More than 52,000 people commute into Collier County for work each day. For someone working on Marco Island, that can mean a long drive before and after an already full workday. It costs more in gas, takes time away from family and makes it harder to stay in a

job long term. It also puts more cars on already busy roads.

We should start thinking about affordable housing as part of the infrastructure that keeps a community working. Roads, utilities and public safety all help support a healthy local economy, but so does having enough housing within reach of the people that economy depends on. Businesses need employees who can show up reliably, gain experience and stay. Residents need dependable access to the services they use every day. And families need housing costs that leave room in the budget for groceries, transportation, health care and everything else life brings.

There is no single solution to Collier County's housing shortage. We need rental housing, more attainable homes for purchase, employer-supported housing and thoughtful development that puts housing within reach of the people who make our community work. Not every solution needs to be located on Marco Island. Housing throughout Collier County can help, especially when it is reasonably connected to jobs and major transportation routes.

Affordable homeownership is one important piece of that puzzle.

At Habitat Collier, we see what that can mean for a family. Qualified buyers purchase their homes with affordable mortgages after completing financial and homeownership education and investing sweat equity. Instead of facing rising rents or another move, mortgage payments are structured to remain affordable, helping families build stability while putting resources back into the local community.

The results show that this model works: Habitat Collier homeowners have maintained a foreclosure rate of less than 1 percent.

Still, demand continues to outpace supply. For every home Habitat Collier funds and builds, approximately 22 families inquire about the program. They are local working families looking for what most

of us want: a safe place to live, manageable monthly expenses and the opportunity to build a future in the community they call home.

Marco Island residents can help move this issue from concern to action. They can support organizations building and preserving affordable housing, encourage employers to participate in housing partnerships, and advocate for thoughtful countywide policies that increase supply.

Just as important is how we talk about the issue. Affordable housing is not about changing what people value about their community. It is about making sure the people who serve that community have a reasonable opportunity to be part of it.

If we want Marco Island to remain a place where businesses can succeed and residents can count on the services they need, housing has to be part of the conversation. The people who make our community work should have the opportunity to build their lives here, too.

Affordable housing is good for families, good for local businesses and good for the long-term health of our community.

See affordable homeownership in action.

You're invited to join Habitat Collier for a Key Passing on **Thursday, October 29, 2026, at 3 p.m. at Las Palmas**, our newest neighborhood at 4170 Broken Back Road in Naples. Come celebrate with local families as they close on the homes they have worked hard to purchase and begin a new chapter as homeowners. All are welcome. For more information, contact Jenn Pash at 239-775-0036 or jpash@habitatcollier.org.

Since 1978, Habitat for Humanity of Collier County has partnered with more than 2,800 local families to build pathways to affordable homeownership. As one of the oldest and most successful Habitat affiliates in the nation, Habitat Collier works alongside families, volunteers, donors and community partners to build and sell quality homes with affordable mortgages, helping ensure that hardworking families can afford to live and thrive in the community they call home. For more information, visit HabitatCollier.org. To donate, volunteer or learn more about Habitat for Humanity of Collier County, visit www.HabitatCollier.org or call 239-775-0036

THE COLLIER COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR HAS OPENED A TEMPORARY MARCO ISLAND OFFICE LOCATION AT 650 E. ELKCAM CIRCLE (OPERATING IN A PORTION OF FIFTH THIRD BANK BUILDING)

This temporary office space will allow Marco Island residents to access Tax Collector services directly on the island. Office hours are Monday thru Friday, 8 am to 5 pm. Services offered include:

- Florida Identification Cards
- Partial Florida Driver License Service (no testing)
- Property Tax
- Vessel title and registration
- Motor Vehicle title and registration
- Hunting & Fishing licensing
- Florida Birth Certificate



The Collier County Tax Collector's office located on Winterberry Drive was severely damaged during Hurricane Ian. The Marco Island office is in the process of being Rebuilt.

For more information, visit colliertaxcollector.com.

NEW EXHIBIT OPENS NOVEMBER 10 AT MARCO ISLAND HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Thrift Style: a touring exhibit that presents American ingenuity through the hardest of times

The Marco Island Historical Society (MIHS) presents Thrift Style, a touring exhibit that demonstrates how American homemakers made ends meet during one of the most challenging periods in history. The exhibit opens at the Marco Island Historical Museum (MIHM) November 10, 2026 and continues through March 14, 2027. An opening reception on Thursday, November 12, 2026, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. is free and open to the public. The Thrift Style exhibit is sponsored by Linda Cassens.

Thrift Style provides a nostalgic view into American ingenuity, sensibility, and optimism and a snapshot into domestic life during the Great Depression and World War II. This period was a time of rationing and hardship. Homemakers had to stretch and repurpose the limited resources available to them to make

clothing and other household items. They turned to the readily available cloth sacks that were used at the time to package feed, flour and sugar to make dresses, aprons and other items for the family. The businesses that used the cloth bags soon caught on to this and manufacturers began producing and marketing patterned and colored sacks and “how to” pamphlets to provide more interesting options to choose from. This mutually beneficial solution represents one of the best examples of upcycling in our nation’s history and are an inspiration to recycling and repurposing efforts to support sustainability today.

Many of the items made during that time are included in the exhibit. They range from children’s dresses to aprons and coverlets. Thrift Style was organized by the Historic Costume and Textile



Thrift Style: Unidentified maker, Child's Dress, 1935; feed sack cotton, 34 1/2 x 35 inches; Courtesy of Kansas State University Historic Costume and Textile Museum.



Thrift Style: Unidentified maker, Child's Dress, c. 1935; feed sack cotton, 36 x 33 inches; Courtesy of Kansas State University Historic Costume and Textile Museum.



Thrift Style: Seviella Smith Frischer (1893-1969), Apron, c. 1940; feed sack cotton and bias tape, 37 1/2 x 28 inches; Courtesy of Kansas State University Historic Costume and Textile Museum.



Thrift Style: Unidentified manufacturer, Feed Sack for Ellis Paramore, Delphos, KS, c. 1940; feed sack cotton, 37 1/2 x 22 inches; Courtesy of Kansas State University Historic Costume and Textile Museum.

Museum and Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art and is being toured by ExhibitsUSA, the national touring exhibition program of Mid-America Arts Alliance.

Museum visitors also can experience award-winning permanent exhibits that provide an immersive and colorful view of the island's past from the early Calusa people to modern day Marco Island that engages all ages. Temporary exhibits, concerts, lectures and other entertaining and enlightening programs and special events take place throughout the year, and the Museum Gift Shop is a great source for unique gift items, children's books, artisan jewelry and more.

The Marco Island Historical Museum is located at 180 S. Heathwood Drive.

The Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Admission is free and the site is fully ADA compliant and accessible to all visitors. For information call (239) 389-6447 or visit www.themihs.org.

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LIVE BEARWISE® AND REDUCE CONFLICTS WITH BEARS THIS FALL

As fall approaches, Florida black bears are packing on the calories to prepare for the upcoming winter. You can help protect both people and bears by securing garbage and other items that could attract these animals to where you live and work.

This time of year, the search for food keeps bears busy up to 20 hours a day as they are looking to increase their body fat for cooler months. Easy meals in neighborhoods are often more convenient for bears than foraging in the woods, which encourages them to stay in the area. However, if food attractants such as garbage, birdfeeders and pet food are not available, bears have no reason to linger, and they typically leave on their own.

By following BearWise tips, you can help reduce conflicts with bears in your neighborhood:

- Secure household garbage in a sturdy shed, garage or a wildlife-resistant container.
- Put household garbage out on the morning of pickup rather than the night before.
- Secure commercial garbage in bear-resistant dumpsters.
- Protect gardens, bee yards, compost and livestock with electric fencing.
- Encourage your homeowner's association or local government to institute ordinances to require trash be secured from bears.
- Feed pets indoors or bring the dishes in after feeding.
- Be aware when walking your dog and use a non-retractable leash.
- Clean grills and store them in a secure place.
- Pick ripe fruit from trees and remove fallen fruit from the ground.
- Remove wildlife and bird feeders or make them bear-resistant.

See how-to videos and information on securing attractants in the "Brochures and Videos" section at MyFWC.com/Bear.

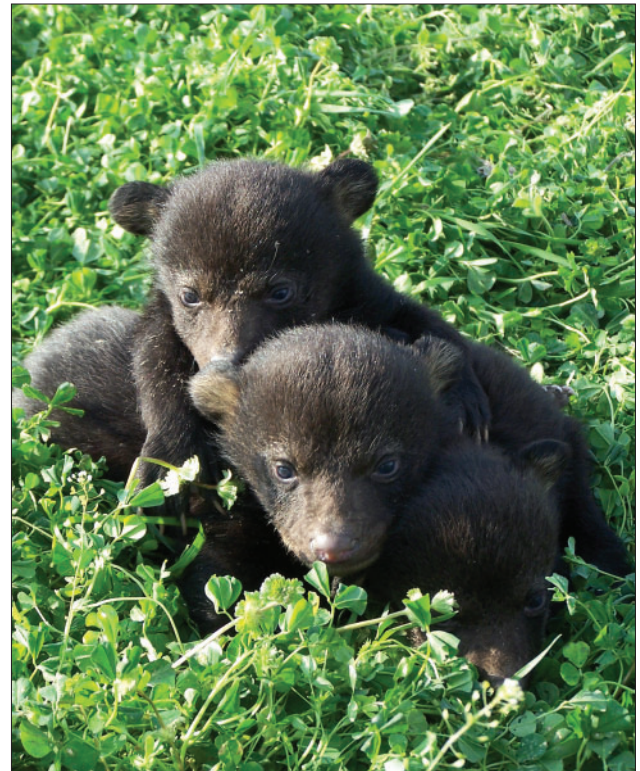


*Bear-resistant garbage container.
The FWC's Bear Management Program held a press event at the Tallahassee Museum to demonstrate the use of bear-resistant garbage containers.
photo: Tim Donovan/FWCd*

It is illegal in Florida to intentionally feed bears or to leave out food or garbage that will attract bears and cause human-bear conflicts. If you see or suspect that someone is feeding or attracting bears, please call the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 1-888-404-FWCC (3922).

Be aware of your surroundings this time of year as you drive in bear country, especially during

dusk and dawn, and when there is forest on both sides of the road. If you see a bear crossing sign, pay close attention as these areas have frequent vehicle-bear collisions. To learn more about how to keep people and bears safe on Florida roadways, see the “Vehicle Collisions with Bears” video at the “Brochures and Videos” section of MyFWC.com/Bear. To learn more about living in bear country, go to BearWise.com.



The Florida black bear is a conservation success story, increasing from a population estimated as low as 300 bears in the 1970's to over 4,000 bears statewide today. photo: Tim Donovan/FWC

Residential Curbside Collection

Service include:

- Twice-a-week Household Waste curbside collection.
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Call (239) 252-2380 to schedule collection of appliances, electronics, standard vehicle tires, or vehicle batteries.



Cart Out By 6 a.m.

on collection day & removed by 6 a.m. the following day. Pick-up can occur any time from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Space Carts & Materials

3ft apart from each other, mailboxes, and other obstacles.



Cart Repairs/Replacement

call (239) 252-2380 and follow prompts.

There will be **no curbside services** on Fourth of July, Thanksgiving Day, or Christmas Day.

There are **no make-up days**. If your collection falls on one of these holidays, your trash, recycling, bulky items and yard waste will be collected on your next scheduled day.



Bring batteries, polystyrene foam, paint, and other household hazardous waste to a County drop-off center for proper disposal.



Visit colliercountyfl.gov/collection for more information

9/11 MEMORIAL DEDICATED AT FIRE STATION 50

Twenty-five years after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Marco Island community now has a permanent place to remember the lives lost, honor the first responders who answered the call and ensure future generations understand the significance of that day.

On September 11, 2026, the City of Marco Island, in partnership with the Marco Island Fire Rescue Foundation, officially dedicated and unveiled a new 9/11 Memorial at Fire Station 50.

The dedication brought together residents, first responders, City officials and members of the community to reflect on a day that forever changed our nation.

For Marco Island, however, the connection to September 11 is also deeply personal.

Members of our community, including current and former public safety personnel, were among those who responded in New York following the attacks. Some served with the New York City Police Department, while others served with the New York City Fire Department and other agencies.

During the dedication, those individuals were recognized for the roles they played during one of the most difficult moments in our nation's history.

Their experiences serve as a reminder that although Marco Island is more than 1,000 miles from New York City, the events of September 11 and the extraordinary response that followed are part of our community's story as well.

A Permanent Place to Remember

The memorial at Fire Station 50 provides residents and visitors with a dedicated place for reflection and remembrance.

More than two decades have passed since the attacks, and an entire generation has now grown up without a firsthand memory of September 11. Memorials such as this one help ensure the stories of those who were lost, those who responded and those whose lives were forever changed continue to be told.

For our first responders, the memorial also carries a special significance.

On September 11, 2001, 343 members of the New York City Fire Department, 23 members of the New York City Police Department and 37 members of the Port Authority Police Department were among those killed while responding to the attacks.

Their sacrifice remains deeply ingrained in the traditions of the fire service and law enforcement. Each year, departments across the country continue to



honor their memory and the commitment to service they demonstrated that morning.

Marco Island is now home to another place where that promise to remember can continue.

A Community Commitment to Never Forget

The dedication of the memorial was not simply about looking back at history. It was also about ensuring that remembrance continues.

As the years pass, fewer people will have personal memories of where they were on September 11, 2001. Younger members of our community will know the events primarily through photographs, videos, classrooms and the stories shared by those who experienced them.

That makes the responsibility to preserve those stories even more important.

The memorial at Fire Station 50 gives Marco Island a place where parents can bring their children, where first responders can remember those who came before them and where residents can take a quiet moment to reflect on the lives lost and the remarkable acts of courage, service and unity that followed.

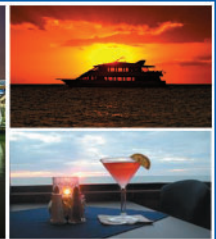


The City of Marco Island and Marco Island Fire Rescue extend their appreciation to the Marco Island Fire Rescue Foundation and everyone who helped make the memorial possible.

We also extend our gratitude to the members of our own community who responded following the attacks and who continue to share their experiences so future generations understand what happened that day.

Twenty-five years later, the promise remains the same. We will never forget.





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