



Important dates

All activities are open to the public

- ◆ March 9: Alva Inc. general membership meeting, 7 p.m., Alva Community Center. Topic: Land development code
- ◆ March 17: Alva Garden Club & Museum, 2 p.m. at the museum on Pearl Street
- ◆ March 17: Lee County to collect public input on definition of "Overriding Public Necessity," 6 p.m. Olga Community Center

Inside buzz

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Newsletter Information

The Alva Inc. newsletter is published monthly.

Get the newsletter by email. Send your address to Alva Inc. President Ruby Daniels at:

rubydaniels@embarqmail.com

Readers of the condensed printed version can read the full newsletter online at Alvafl.org.

Send news and photos to editor Don Ruane at:

ruanedon@aol.com

Join Alva Inc. by completing the membership form on Alvafl.org.

Charleston Park recalls its history, feeds the needy

Nearly 7,000 pounds of food were distributed Feb. 28 as Charleston Park celebrated its own contribution to Black History Month.

Harry Chapin Food trucks loaded with meat, fruits and vegetables donated by Florida farmers distributed the food while past and present residents of the community shared stories of their life and times.

Rejoyce Baskins led off the personal testimony to growing up there.

"The best thing I

can remember about the Charleston Park neighborhood was the feeling of being loved and safe," Baskins said. She went on to become a teacher in Lee County Public Schools, where she has worked for 32 years.

Charleston Park was first populated by former sharecroppers who found freedom in owning their own land. They were able to buy a lot for \$10, according to Baskins.

"Our mom made each of her chil-

dren buy a lot," said Baskins, who still returns to the neighborhood weekly to attend church and visit.

The celebration also included health evaluations by Florida Health, crime prevention information from the Lee County Sheriff's Office and a chance to learn about community gardens from ECHO workers.

ECHO started an internship program about four years ago to help community groups, schools and churches, said



Rejoyce Baskins, grew up in Charleston Park.

ECHO's Brad Ward. A small garden is tended next to Charleston Park Community Center.

"We should be good neighbors. This program is putting our foot in the pool," Ward said.



Families registered and collected food Feb. 28 at Charleston Park's Black History event.

Harns Marsh for bird lovers

A short ride from Alva into Lehigh Acres, Harns Marsh is home to about 166 different kinds of birds including the roseate spoonbill at right.

The East County Water Control District manages the marsh. Its purpose is to filter stormwater from Lehigh before it flows into the Orange River.

The marsh is open to the public daily from dawn to dusk. Birdwatching, hiking, fishing and bicycling are permitted. Access and parking are free.



Historic Alva

Museum takes you back in time to early Alva

Today's medical and dental exam chairs and equipment look plush compared to what early 20th Century patients used.

This equipment is on display at the Alva Museum at 21420 E. Pearl St.

You don't need a time machine to travel back to the olden days of Alva. Just an hour or so on a Saturday afternoon spent at the museum, 21420 E. Pearl Street, will do the trick. It's open 2-4 p.m. each Saturday from October through May. The quaint building was Lee County's first public library. Today it houses artifacts and memorabilia related to Alva and life in Southwest Florida.

If you have a story about early Alva or a historical picture to share send them to newsletter editor Don Ruane at ruanedon@aol.com. Space is limited so keep the length reasonable.



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Fire District postpones dinner

A chicken dinner scheduled for March 15 to raise money for the Alva Fire and Rescue District has been postponed, according to Chief Joey Tiner.

Proceeds were to be used to buy equipment for the firefighters.

The district is trying to reschedule the event, Tiner said.



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The Alva Museum

Open every Saturday Oct—May
2 pm. — 4 p.m.

Courtesy of the Alva Garden Club
Meetings the third Tuesday of the month
2 p. m. — 4 p. m.

Information: 239-728-3180 or 239-728-6543

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SCHOOL NEWS

Blue ribbon effort wins

Sixth graders from The Alva School nailed down first place at the Southwest Florida Fair with their display about the school and its role in education through the years. Students put the booth together under the direction of teacher



Alice Weatherford, who also was named as one of the finalists for the district's Golden Apple award honoring outstanding Lee County teachers.

Area reporters help students fall in love with reading

The Alva School celebrated Read Across America day on Feb. 27 with help from some local journalists.

Roger Williams, columnist for Florida Weekly, read to some kindergarten students.

The News-Press staff writers Amy Bennett Williams (Roger's wife) and Laura Ruane (wife of newsletter editor Don



Ruane) also read to students and quizzed them about the stories. Teacher Erica Smith,



coordinated the celebration, which also recalls the birth of the Dr. Seuss books author.

2015 Legislature

Caldwell bill gives Lehigh Acres more self control

State Rep. Matt Caldwell plans to introduce a bill that could lead to more self determination for Lehigh Acres when it comes to building sidewalks and repairing streets.

The bill transfers those powers from the Lee County Commission to Lehigh Acres, which like Alva, is an unincorporated community.



Caldwell

Lee County commissioners would have to agree to the transfer of the powers if the bill becomes law.

Caldwell has discussed a similar move for the Alva area, but he has not yet proposed any bill to do that.

The bill pertaining to Lehigh Acres expands the powers of the East County Water Control District, which manages the drainage for Lehigh Acres.

The Legislature began its 60-

day 2015 session on March 3. To follow bills as they move through the process, go to this web address:

www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Bills/bills.aspx

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