



SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER

5 MUSEUMS TO VISIT

**Collier Museum
at Government Center**
3331 Tamiami Trail East
Naples, FL 34112
(239) 252-8476

Naples Depot Museum
1051 Fifth Avenue South
Naples, FL 34102
(239) 252-8419

**Marco Island
Historical Museum**
180 South Heathwood Drive
Marco Island, FL 34145
(239) 252-1440

**Immokalee Pioneer Museum
at Roberts Ranch**
1215 Roberts Avenue West
Immokalee, FL 34142
(239) 252-2611

Museum of the Everglades
105 West Broadway
Everglades City, FL 34139
(239) 252-5026

All museums are open
Tuesday – Saturday
9 am – 4 pm

**All Collier County Museums
offer FREE admission.**

For more information,
visit CollierMuseums.com.

SAY HELLO TO HI5TORY



NOTES FROM OUR MUSEUM DIRECTOR

AMANDA TOWNSEND

Hello and welcome to Summer! By now you know that steamy season is my favorite time of year. There's so little traffic you could play disc golf on US41, and the other Gulf is similarly becalmed—flawless for a dip on a scorching day.

This year we celebrate our nation's 250th Birthday. We're engaging the citizens who will shape the next century of the democratic experiment in expressing the meaning of America in two exhibits: **Drawn Together: SWFL celebrates America 250** at Collier Museum at Government Center is a collaboration with Southwest Florida Family Magazine and **American Spirit, American Dream** is a similar effort with Everglades City School at Museum of the Everglades. We know you'll be wowed at the talent of tomorrow's leaders. We're highlighting America on the grandest scale with Clyde Butcher's **America the Beautiful**, photographs of our national parks at Marco Island Historical Museum, and on an individual level with **Self Documented**, artists' response to the immigrant experience at Immokalee Pioneer Museum at Roberts Ranch. Be sure also to catch "Founding Mothers," a captivating original play presented by the Marco Island chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Marco Island Reenactors.



Summertime is family time, and we have wholesome activities day and night. Pirate Day on Marco has become a summer staple, as has Mango Fest in Immokalee. We add to our usual lineup of themed Family Days at Government Center and preschool programs an opportunity for evening entertainment with monthly Retro Game Nights at Naples Depot Museum. Come join the fun! Don't forget School's Out, Museums are In!—our annual drop-in activity program that gets you and the kids out and about to all five locations.

I am plagued with pangs of loss as I relate that this will be my last Director's Letter. I have thoroughly enjoyed my ten years as the Director of the Collier County Museums and my twenty-five years in service to Collier County, but it's time to move on. I am certain that the amazing museum staff will continue to deliver experiences, exhibits, and programs that will engage you and your family and friends. Your support is an essential part of our formula for success, so please let the team (and their bosses—hint, hint) know how much you appreciate our service. I know they all will be as delighted as I always have been to . . . see you at the Museums!

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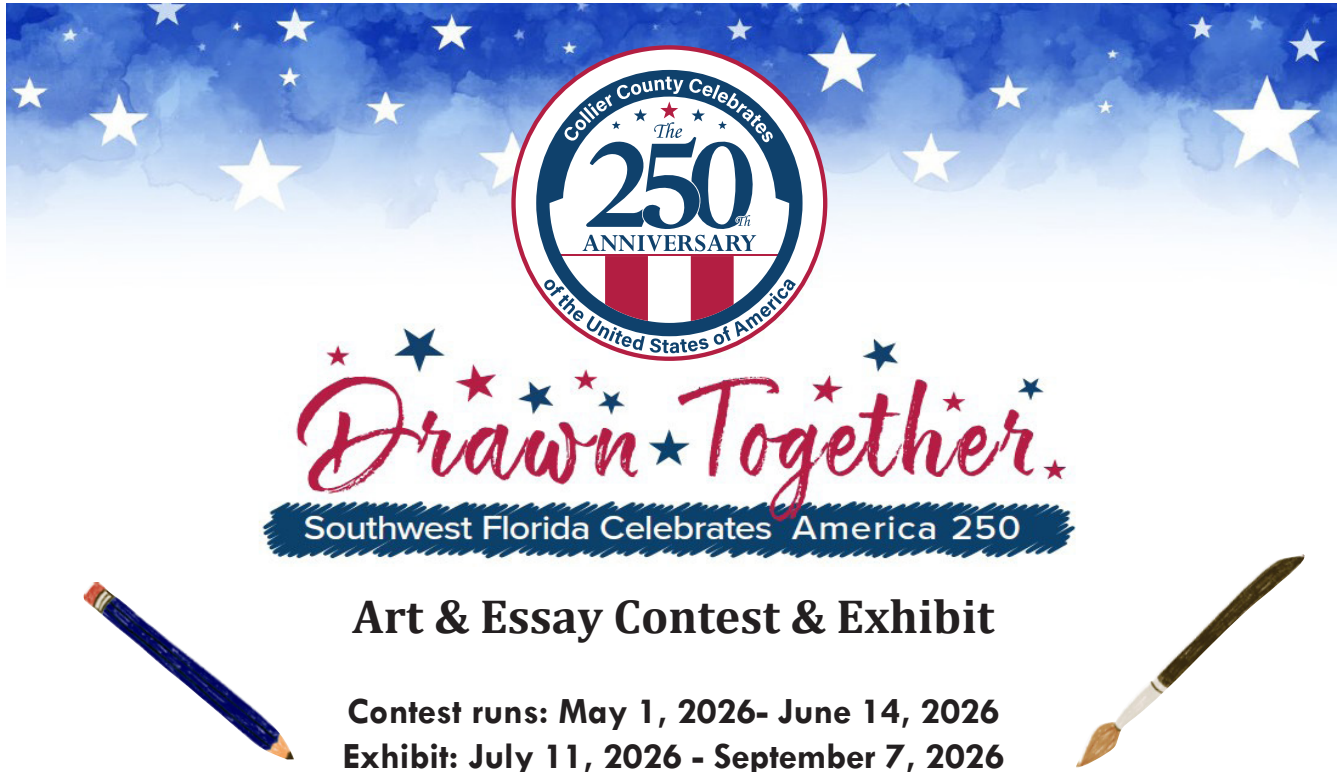
105 West Broadway Avenue, Everglades City, FL 34139

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EXHIBIT

COLLIER MUSEUM AT GOVERNMENT CENTER



Art & Essay Contest & Exhibit

Contest runs: May 1, 2026- June 14, 2026
Exhibit: July 11, 2026 - September 7, 2026

Exhibit reception and family day event will be July 11, 2026 at 11:00am.

Celebrate America's 250th anniversary through art, history, and your own Southwest Florida story. From family roots and community pride to creativity, courage, and culture, young artists across Southwest Florida are invited to share what America at 250 means to them.

Drawn Together: SWFL Celebrates America 250 is an Art & Essay contest for students in grades K-12, presented by Collier County Museums and Southwest Florida Family. The exhibit will showcase the contest winners along with a curated selection of submissions chosen by judges across each category.

For contest details visit www.colliermuseums.com

COLLIER MUSEUM AT GOVERNMENT CENTER



The Collier Museum at Government Center showcases the full panorama of the area's history. Meet the people who shaped Collier County, from the Calusa Indians to Spanish Conquistadors to brave pioneer families. Stalk prehistoric mastodons. Explore unique artifacts like a steam engine, a swamp buggy, restored cottages, and more.

Open Tuesdays - Saturdays from 9am-4pm.
Admission is Free!

EVENTS

COLLIER MUSEUM AT GOVERNMENT CENTER

FLORIDA FARMING FAMILY DAY



Florida Farming Family Day

May 16, 2026 | 11am -2pm

From the annual Farm City BBQ, going on its 69th year, to Lipman Family Farms that has been family owned and operated for over 75 years, farming has long been a way of life either through necessity, through family heritage or the simple desire to grow and sustain food wholly and naturally while connecting with nature. We will have some down-on-the-farm fun including a game of “corralling the pigs,” planting mini-gardens, learning how to build a compost bin, and other fun crafts and activities!

Image: Collier County Don Lander standing in a cornfield, circa 1950's. Accession #2015.26.11.14



Ice Cream Social: Star Spangled Style

June 20, 2026 | 11am -2pm

The dog days of summer are here! One of America's favorite pastimes is enjoying ICE CREAM!

Stroll on by and make an ice cream cup loaded with toppings from our deluxe sundae bar!

Or would you prefer an old-

fashioned ice cream float? Play a game of checkers or cards, try twirling a hula-hoop, or simply practice the art of porch sitting! For a small donation, we'll even have a watermelon eating contest! More details to come!

Freedom & Fun

Family Day

July 11, 2026 | 11am -2pm

Join us for a special Family Day celebrating America's past, present, and future. In honor of the nation's 250th anniversary, enjoy hands-on activities, creative crafts, and experiences inspired by American history, culture, and innovation.

This event will showcase the Drawn Together contest winners along with a curated selection of submissions at the E. George Rogers Studio.



Al Fresco Art Family Day

August 22, 2026 | 11am -2pm

Put on your creative cap and join us for Al Fresco Art Family Day! We'll provide all the brushes, paints, canvases, and tools you need to create a take-home masterpiece while enjoying the fresh air.

Be inspired by the work of E. George Rogers, a key figure in Naples since the 1950s. He helped establish the Naples Art Association, taught art for free in Collier County schools, and served as the first president of the Mental Health Association of Collier County. We will have prints of his art available to spark your creativity.

Image: Art by E. George Rogers



The Battle of the Paddle: The Great Dock Canoe Race

May 9, 2026- August 29, 2026

Opening Reception: Friday May 8, 2026 | 5:00pm - 7:00pm

What started as a celebration of the “end of season” transformed into an almost fifty-year-old tradition to pay homage to the locals of Naples, Florida. Explore the many themes and awards that captivated participants and onlookers of the Great Dock Canoe Races. Also learn how and where the races operate today!

NAPLES DEPOT MUSEUM



Set in Naples' restored Seaboard Air Line Railway passenger station, the Naples Depot Museum welcomes visitors back to the railroading boom days of the Roaring Twenties and explains how generations of Southwest Floridians used technology and transportation to conquer a vast and seemingly impenetrable frontier. The museum is listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Open Tuesdays - Saturdays from 9am-4pm.
Admission is Free!

EVENTS

NAPLES DEPOT MUSEUM

A colorful illustration for a 'Retro Game Night' poster. It shows a family of four (a man, a woman, and two children) sitting around a table in a museum setting, playing a board game. The board game is titled 'HISTORICAL TRANSPORTATION ADVENTURE'. In the background, various museum exhibits are visible, including a train, a car, and a boat. The text on the poster reads: 'RETRO GAME NIGHT', 'At The NAPLES DEPOT MUSEUM', 'A FUN-FILLED EVENING FOR ALL AGES!', 'MAY 22 | JUNE 26 | JULY 24 | AUGUST 28', '5PM to 8PM', 'FREE!', and 'Naples Depot Museum 1051 5th Avenue S. Naples, FL 34102 239-252-8419'. There is also a small illustration of playing cards.

RETRO GAME NIGHT
At The
NAPLES DEPOT MUSEUM
A FUN-FILLED EVENING FOR ALL AGES!

MAY 22 | JUNE 26 | JULY 24 | AUGUST 28
5PM to 8PM
FREE!

Naples Depot Museum
1051 5th Avenue S.
Naples, FL 34102
239-252-8419

Another Friday night in?

Get a change of scenery with Retro Game Night at the Naples Depot Museum!

It's a new take on the classic family game night tradition! Bring your own blanket and revisit your childhood game closet with the following retro games: Twister, Monopoly, Trouble, Sorry!, Uno, Simon, Yahtzee, Chutes & Ladders, Battleship, Operation, Clue, Candy Land, Guess Who?, and The Game of Life.

Have a favorite game that is not listed? You're always welcome to bring it to add to the fun! Play games and enjoy the ice cream sundae bar, provided by Dairy Queen of Downtown Naples, all free! All ages are welcome.

Bring friends and family and join us on the last Friday of each month from 5:00pm to 8:00pm at Naples Depot Museum.

Dates:

May 22, 2026

June 26, 2026

July 24, 2026

August 28, 2026

ANCHORS AWEIGH! PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

July 22, 2026 | 10:00am - 11:00am

Ahoy! Your preschooler will gain their sea-legs after learning all about boats in this hands-on program! Through experiments they will discover what objects stay afloat and why other objects sink, and even make a "sponge" boat to race!





AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL *by* Clyde Butcher

March 31, 2026- July 11, 2026

As part of the America250 celebration, we are proud to exhibit Clyde Butcher's America the Beautiful. Known for his powerful black-and-white, large-scale photography, Butcher captures the awe-inspiring landscapes of America's National Parks—some of our nation's greatest natural treasures. His work invites viewers to experience the majesty, serenity, and enduring significance of these iconic places.



UNDERWATER WORLD The Beauty Beneath July 21, 2026- November 1, 2026

Opening Reception: July 23, 2026
3:00pm - 5:00pm

Come dive in! **Artist Inez Hudson** will exhibit paintings based on underwater photographs. Inez loves to explore themes of South Florida nature in these realistic images. She presents fascinating facts and stories around the flora and fauna painted.

The paintings will be for sale with 10% of proceeds going to the Marco Island Historical Society.





UNDERWATER WORLD The Beauty Beneath Opening Reception

July 23, 2026 | 3:00pm - 5:00pm
Artist Talk: 3:00pm

Come dive in! **Artist Inez Hudson** will exhibit paintings based on underwater photographs. Inez loves to explore themes

of South Florida nature in these realistic images. She presents fascinating facts and stories around the flora and fauna painted.

The paintings will be for sale with 10% of proceeds going to the Marco Island Historical Society. Reservations are encouraged at www.themihs.org.

PIRATE DAY

June 19, 2026 | 10:00am - 1:00pm

Aargh, ye mateys! It be Pirate Day again! Come enjoy crafts and games, amass coins, and earn ye treasure. Pirate garb encouraged. We will learn about the pirate and pioneers of Marco Island.



MARCO ISLAND HISTORICAL MUSEUM



Renowned for exploring the Pepper-Hearst Archaeological dig - one of the most famous wet site locations full of wooden artifacts, most famously the Key Marco Cat - the Marco Island Historical Museum explores Southwest Florida's Calusa Indians and brings this vanished civilization to life with informative displays and an exciting recreated village scene.

Open Tuesdays - Saturdays from 9am-4pm.
Admission is Free!

EXHIBITS

IMMOKALEE PIONEER MUSEUM



RESTAURANTS : The best tasting business around March 24, 2026- June 27, 2026

A survey of Immokalee's oldest restaurants as well as the modern offerings that serve our community and tastes. From Raynor's Seafood to Lozano's Mexican Restaurant, Immokalee has been serving up local flavor for decades.

SELF DOCUMENTED : Community Memory & Lived Experience Art Exhibition July 7, 2026- October 24, 2026

Opening Reception:

Saturday, July 11, 2026

10:00am - 12:00pm

A community exhibition centered on storytelling, memory, and lived experiences within the immigrant community of Immokalee and neighboring communities.



IMMOKALEE PIONEER MUSEUM



Originally home to cattleman Robert Roberts and his family, this 13-acre historic site and museum (the longest running ranch in South Florida) provides visitors with a rare opportunity to experience daily working life on a Southwest Florida pioneer homestead and citrus grove from the early 1900s. The Immokalee Pioneer Museum at Roberts Ranch is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Open Tuesdays - Saturdays from 9am-4pm.
Admission is Free!

EVENTS

IMMOKALEE PIONEER MUSEUM



Garden & Grove at the Immokalee Pioneer Museum Grand Opening Ceremony & Celebration May 9, 2026 | 10:00am

Join us as we celebrate the Grand Opening of the recreated historic garden and citrus grove at our Immokalee Pioneer Museum at Roberts Ranch. One-half acre of production and community gardens and 140 citrus trees have been added to the Ranch to tell the history of Immokalee agriculture and help feed the community.



Cultivating for Ourselves/ Cultivando Para Nosotros Community Event

May 16, 2026 | 9am -1pm

“Root” for the Dragon Squad and join us for a fun-filled celebration of food, gardening, and community! Students will present their community food maps and lead a cooking demonstration, while handing out free plants and recipe cards. Enjoy outdoor plant-themed games, a local food vendor, a performance by Balet Folklorico dancers and connecting with community members and organizations. This event is open to everyone who likes food and wants to learn more about plants and our community.



Summer Mango Fest

June 27, 2026 | 10am -1pm

Get ready to peel back the layers of mango history and taste the sweetest part of Florida at this family-friendly event! Having originated in South and Southeast Asia, mangos find an easy home in South Florida where many of the world's current commercial cultivars originated.

Sample some of these cultivars, including the influential “Haden” variety first bred in the 1910s in a backyard in Coconut Grove, and take home your own bag of mangos from the museum's bounty. Plus learn the secrets of growing mango trees from the experts, you'll leave with a whole new appreciation for mangos!



SELF DOCUMENTED : Community Memory & Lived Experience Exhibit Opening Reception

July 11, 2026 | 10am -12pm

Join us for a community exhibition centered on storytelling, memory, and lived experiences within the immigrant community of Immokalee and neighboring communities. Local artists will be on site to discuss their work, and light bites and refreshments will be provided.

EVENTS

IMMOKALEE PIONEER MUSEUM



Candle Making Workshop for Beginners

August 15, 2026 | 10am -12pm

Step back in time and learn about the art and functionality of candle making! In this fun, hands-on workshop, we'll show you how candles were made before electricity—using wax, wicks, and matches. Discover how candles were once essential for light and warmth and are now a way to add cozy charm to any space or enhance scents in your home.

LECTURES

MUSEUM OF THE EVERGLADES

THIRD THURSDAY LECTURE SERIES:

Visit the Museum of the Everglades every third Thursday for a local history lecture.

Museum of the Everglades | 2:00 – 3:00 PM



Her Unyielding Resolve: a Brief History of Women Who Saved the Everglades

May 21, 2026 | 2:00pm -3:00pm

Inspired by some of the less-represented voices connected with Museum of the Everglades' current temporary exhibit: Growing Obsession – the Enchanting Story of Orchids in the Everglades, this just-after-Mother's Day talk will celebrate some of the truly determined and tenacious women who worked to protect and preserve the only Everglades in the world.

Museum Manager Thomas Lockyear will share the stories of some of our region's most outspoken environmental advocates – some well-known like Marjorie Stoneman Douglas and others all-but-invisible in our written histories - to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude.

THIRD THURSDAY LECTURE SERIES:

Visit the Museum of the Everglades every third Thursday for a local history lecture.

Museum of the Everglades | 2:00 – 3:00 PM



Faith on the Frontier: a Brief History of Churches in the Everglades Area

June 18, 2026 | 2:00pm -3:00pm

Museum Assistant Mathew Anderson, who also serves as a Deacon at the First Baptist Church of Everglades City, will explore the origins of the area's many congregations and the places they meet to pray – dating back to the turn of the last century. For many early settlers in the region where Collier County began, their faith was the foundation of pioneer life and erecting a rustic chapel often took precedence over opening a school.

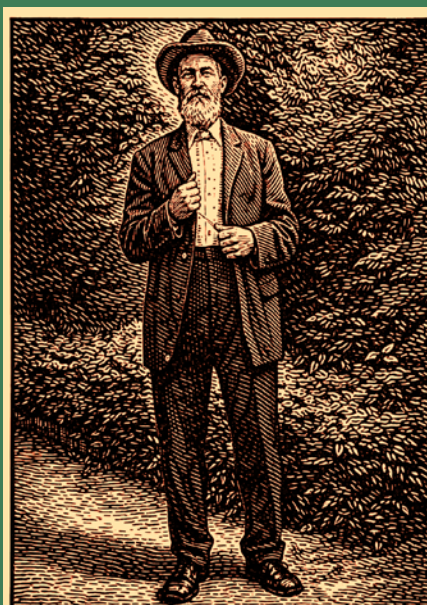
Despite its small size, the community has long been a veritable melting pot of many faiths and Mr. Anderson will share stories of how even the museum itself once hosted Catholic masses and how county founder Barron Giff Collier ensured that people of all denominations would always be welcome to worship in Everglades City.



America 250: Spirit of the Everglades

July 16, 2026 | 2:00pm -3:00pm

In this companion lecture to the current temporary exhibit at Museum of the Everglades, American Spirit, American Dream, Museum Manager Thomas Lockyear will discuss the indomitable spirit of the individuals who have called the Everglades area their home – from the region's indigenous people to early pioneer settlers to the modern-day entrepreneurs. Presented in the context of the America 250 celebration, Mr. Lockyear will share stories of the courage, resourcefulness, fortitude, ingenuity and vision of those personalities who have lived and written chapters of this nation's history in and around the Everglades for two and a half centuries.



C.G. McKinney

The Man Who Put The 'Chuckle' In Chokoloskee

The Wit & Wisdom of C.G. McKinney Sage of Chokoloskee

August 20, 2026

2:00pm -3:00pm

In this fun and feel-good presentation, Museum Manager Thomas Lockyear will celebrate the life and work of one of the earliest pioneer settlers in the region of Southwest Florida known as the Chokoloskee Bay Country: Charles Greenleigh McKinney. A Civil War Veteran who spent time making moonshine

(which he called "Low Bush Lightning") before making the 10,000 Islands his home, McKinney opened a trading post and established the area's first post office he would later hand over to Ted Smallwood. The postal address bore the ironic name "Comfort" – a reference to the profound lack of it caused by the abundant "Swamp Angels": mosquitos.

McKinney, a registered midwife who delivered dozens of babies and acted as the area's de facto dentist, also wrote a regular column for the American Eagle newspaper published in nearby Estero. Reporting local happenings with what would be today known as a Will Rogers-style wit, his wry observations about pioneer life and freely shared folk wisdom earned him the honorific moniker of "Sage of Chokoloskee".

American Spirit, American Dream (America 250) Exhibit

June 27, 2026- October 17, 2026

Every year Museum of the Everglades collaborates with our local school – one of the last two K-12 public schools on a single campus in the state of Florida – to create an exhibit that celebrates a specific aspect of this unique community. Students submit artwork, photos, videos, stories, interviews and more to help us share a part of the character and history of the area with visitors from around the world. A contest with cash prizes is held with a variety of categories open to currently enrolled students of all ages.

This year we have invited them to join us in celebrating America 250 by sharing what the American Spirit means to them and how their lives and those of their families and friends connect them to the two and a half century-long tradition of pursuing the American Dream.

The exhibit will be augmented with historic information and established traditional stories that provide context for the creative responses the students have submitted.



MUSEUM OF THE EVERGLADES

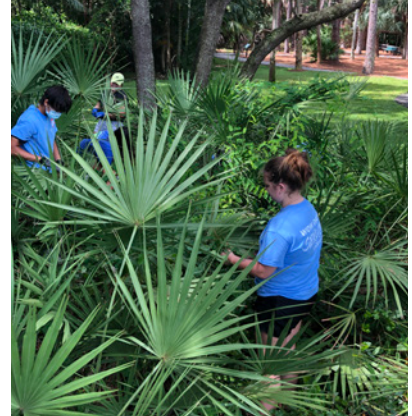


First opened in 1927 as a commercial laundry, the building that now houses Museum of the Everglades is one of several historic structures still standing as a testament to Everglades City's beginnings as Barron Gift Collier's bustling center of business and the region's first county seat. The museum's exhibits provide visitors with an engaging look at over 2,000 years of human history, sharing the stories of those adventurous (and tenacious) enough to make "Florida's Last Frontier" their home. The museum is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Open Tuesdays - Saturdays from 9am-4pm.
Admission is Free!

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Volunteers are an integral part of the Collier County Museums. They assist in enhancing the quality of our guests' experiences and provide their creativity and the dedication needed to assist in planning and implementing programs and special activities.



Volunteer Opportunities

- Tour Guide
- Greeter
- Gardener
- Education Assistant
- Maintenance
- Special Events
- Special Skills & Talents

What You Will Gain

- Compassionate Heart
- Sense of Purpose
- New Friendships
- Creativity
- Confidence
- Staying Active
- Knowledge of History
- Recognition & Appreciation



CONTACT KAREN CONNETTA

For more information on how you can volunteer with Collier County Museums, please call (239) 525-8722 or email at Karen.Connetta@Collier.gov

EDUCATION PROGRAMING

The Collier County Museums offer an exciting, curriculum-based learning experience that will introduce your students to the rich history of Southwest Florida. Grade level appropriate guided tours and activities bring the basics of local history down to size and will keep your students coming back to explore more on their own for years to come. Activities and special programs can also be customized to fit your specific curriculum needs and are available for public & private school groups, home school groups and summer camps.

If you have any questions concerning a program and/or field trip, please contact Elaina Gyure, Curator of Education, at (239) 252-8242 or her email at museums@collier.gov.



Little Farmers Preschool Program

When: May 20, 2026

Time: 10am -11am

Where: Collier Museum at Government Center

Hay there! Lettuce show you how farming can be so much fun! Little farmers will learn the germination process through story time and planting seeds of their own to take home.

We'll explore which animals live on the farm and the sounds they make and then have fun making a corny craft!

image credit: NY Public Library



Anchors Aweigh! Preschool Program

When: July 22, 2026

Time: 10am -11am

Where: Naples Depot Museum

Ahoy! Your preschooler will gain their sea-legs after learning all about boats in this hands-on program!

Through experiments they will discover what objects stay afloat and why other objects sink and even make a "sponge" boat to race!

image credit: Jorge Brito



Stars, Stripes & Smiles Preschool Program

When: June 24, 2026

Time: 10am -11am

Where: Collier Museum at Government Center

Little ones will be counting stars and stripes as we explore the meaning of the American flag, who made the first flag, and what the colors mean.

We will make a fun flag to take home! Smiles will spread while practicing fine motor skills while making red, white, and blue beaded necklaces too!

image credit: Janay Peters



Mini Monets Preschool Program

When: August 26, 2026

Time: 10am - 11am

Where: Collier Museum at Government Center

Pablo Picasso said, "Every child is an artist."

Bring in your mini-Monet to create a mini-masterpiece using watercolors and the inspiring works of Monet or local artists who have long used the Florida landscape for inspiration.

Learning basic paint brush strokes will encourage fine motor skills. We'll develop visual perception skills identifying shapes and primary and secondary colors!

image credit: Bruce Warrin

PARTNERS

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!

Thank you to our partner organizations for their support of our Collier County Museums! Visit their websites to learn more about ways you can support them and their missions to provide stewardship of our region's history.



www.themihs.org

Friends of the
**COLLIER COUNTY
MUSEUMS**

www.foccm.org



*Friends of the
Museum of the Everglades*

www.FMOEverglades.com

Thank you to our sponsor organizations for their continued support of our Immokalee Cattle Drive & Jamboree. You help make this annual event possible and we appreciate your dedication and positive impact. This year we had a total of 474 volunteer hours contributed by the Collier County Museums volunteers and the community.



Friends of the
**COLLIER COUNTY
MUSEUMS**

BEHIND THE MUSEUM

Meet the minds behind your favorite museums! Each season, Collier County Museums will highlight the people who make it all possible. Uncover their journey, their inspirations and how they curate our communities unique history in each of our 5 local museums.



Rebecca Mazeroski, Museum Manager
Marco Island Historical Museum

Experience Journey: Like many people in the field, my path and time in the field has not been linear. I have been continuously working full-time in Museums in Florida for the last 13 years. However, I started in 2002 as art intern then preparator at my undergraduate school until 2004. From 2004 to 2009 I did freelance work while working full-time at Barnes and Noble. In 2009 I entered graduate school for Museum Exhibition Planning and Design, a program that required fellowships / internships at local museums and design firms.

What inspired you to pursue a career as a museum curator/historian? As undergraduate art student I was required to hang my own art. When I started as the intern for the Art department a great deal of the job was installing other artist's work. When the preparator at the college museum was leaving he told me to apply for his job. That was when it dawned on me a career around the exhibition side of museum was an option.

What is your area of historical specialization and subject you most enjoy curating? I am a bit omnivorous with history. Part of the enjoyment of developing an exhibit is taking a deep dive and learning about topics and eras I previously knew little about. The topic that comes back around a lot for me is the concept of community and how they develop. Over and over there are often very specific people and particular circumstances that make communities thrive and great events happen. Those are the stories that intrigue me the most.

How do you approach selecting artifacts or exhibits for your museum? The exhibit process here involves a committee with the MIHS staff. Heather Otis, their Curator, and I split curatorial duties. This location typically hosts four exhibits a year. Two of them are 'in-house' – one for each of us to develop, write, design, and lead the installation. The other organization provides assistance, installation hours, and other talents. The other two exhibits are a combination of traveling exhibitions and local artists. We strive for all of our exhibitions to connect back with Marco Island. Even with our traveling exhibitions we seek out a connection to our community. A recent tennis fashion exhibit was supplemented with tennis clothing, marketing, and information from Marco Island. Other times we are looking ecologically, like Clyde Butcher's Everglades images or Inez Hudsons' birds series. Our in-house exhibitions must rest on a three-legged stool of objects/ images to tell the story, the information to support the story, and the time/money to tell the story as it should be told. Often we think about the appeal of the story – sure an exhibit on golf on Marco Island was sure to be a hit with golfers, but what about everyone else? For that exhibit, the previous curator, Austin Bell, added elements of interactivity with 3 mini-putts and also focused on the celebrities playing golf, especially in 1960s and 1970s.

What is one artifact or exhibit in your museum that you believe everyone should see, and why? My current favorite is the Saloma Old's diary – a fourteen year old girl receiving a 'classic education' by her mom while having to kill bobcats to keep them from eating the chickens

What skills do you believe are essential for success as a Museum Manager? You need to know at least a little about a lot. And you need to know when to delegate. Many people assume my job is about reading 'dusty tomes' and saying hello to people all day. As both a manager and a curator, it is vital I know how my HVAC system works, where the units are, where the sewer and electrical run in the building, what the alarm system consists of. I also need to deliver tours, develop programs, understand the basics of childhood educational theories on top of interpretation theories for adults. There is a budget, and processes, and forms. The exhibits need to look good but that doesn't matter much if the toilets are not working or the lights won't come on. An additional layer to my work is coordination with a partner organization, the Marco Island Historical Society, which requires an understanding of their goals, processes, and key shareholders on top of my own. There is a ton of communication in my job.

What is your vision for the future of museums and historical preservation? My answer is a bit roundabout. About 25-30 years ago there was this big existential crisis about the role of Libraries in communities as the internet, kindles/nook book readers became popular. "That the end of libraries, blah de blah." Except, in many places, libraries are stronger than ever. They embraced the internet and made it accessible, they added subscriptions, like Libby, to make borrowing ebooks possible with a library card. They expanded their roles as a community gathering location with lecture halls and support groups. In short, libraries pivoted towards their potential 'enemy' and embraced them. Museums have, to a lesser extent, done that too. Sure, the internet can bring all the information to your fingertips, but can you see the real thing? And people have come to feel overwhelmed by the amount of sifting through information it takes to get a reliable answer. The algorithms have also prioritized some stories over others, for good and ill. Museums have become a place where information is distilled and trusted* (* multiple studies in the last 30 years, done by AAM and by non-museum surveyors, consistently rank Museums as the one of the most trusted sources of information.) TL;DR Museums are a trusted source of information with the cool 'stuff' of artifacts. We can continue to embrace new technologies and ways of showing information, but the classic purpose of museums still retains strength.

How do you hope your work impacts future generations? I truly believe if we want a better future we need to know about our past. It is the foundation we build our house on as a culture. I hope my work supports that goal. And I am part of team of people who work towards those goals all our lives.

If you could curate an exhibit on any topic (without limitations), what would it be? Right now, I want to create an exhibit around William David "Captain Bill" Collier's life.

What book, film, or resource would you recommend to someone interested in history? What brings history most alive for me are everyday people's journals and recollections. History feels personal at that level. Saloma Olds describing the causes of what becomes WWI in a letter to a family member illustrates both her worldly intelligence and the personal sense of what the events felt like. History stops being a laundry list of facts in this instance.

The Collier County Museums are home to a passionate group of museum professionals who possess extensive knowledge on a variety of topics about our region's history and culture. Rebecca is part of our Speakers Bureau, if you are interested in booking her for a lecture please visit www.colliermuseums.com/Education/Speakers Bureau