

# Connections

Newsletter for Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve

JANUARY 2011

## NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVES

By Jean L. Scholz

The Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve are all about connections: from the boardwalk that leads us on a safe path through our Gothic swamp, where we can see and smell and hear a wealth of species other than our own; through guided walks, guest lectures, and the Interpretive Center displays and resource room; to the advocacy agenda that links us to the broader human community, we connect with the natural world and with each other. Membership in our organization has grown to just over 200 individuals, families, and corporations, but we are always looking for new people to join our network. With this in mind, we are offering these new incentives to new and renewing Friends:

- The opportunity to obtain a Lee County Parks & Recreation parking decal, which allows free parking at seventeen parks, preserves, and boat ramps in the Ft. Myers area (Associate, Sustaining, Corporate Sponsor, and Patron membership levels);
- Choice of a volunteer-guided wet walk or full-moon walk at the Slough for ten guests – in addition to the parking decal (Sustaining, Corporate Sponsor, and Patron levels);
- Patrons also have the option to name a bench or rocking chair, to be located in the garden area of the Slough parking lot -- with furniture made from recycled materials;
- Last but not least, everyone who renews at any membership level will receive a coupon for a 10% discount on items in Friends' Corner in the Interpretive Center.

So complete the form on the back of this newsletter and **connect** with the Friends as we pursue our goals to educate and inspire!

## FIRST POTLUCK AT CENTER DRAWS 40 FRIENDS



Photo Carolyn Babb

“And a good time was had by all.” The Friends’ first potluck at the Interpretive Center on December 14, 2011 was a roaring success. Food was great, company was even better and in spite of Mother Nature’s best effort to freeze everyone to the bone, more than 40 of the Friends gathered for a good time. Entertainment was a sneak preview of a video of happenings on the boardwalk at the Slough by Slough volunteer and Friends member, Arne Rosen. (This video will soon be for sale in Friends Corner thanks to Arne. It contains antics by otters, pileated woodpeckers, snakes and numerous birds, all captured by Arne in his daily visits to the boardwalk.) Lee County Commissioner Ray Judah stopped by to thank the Friends for our continued efforts in the preserving, protecting and promoting of the Slough. Commissioner Judah has always been a staunch supporter of the Friends and our efforts. See Page Four for more photos of the event from Carolyn Babb and Nancy Johnson.

## CEREMONY ON FEBRUARY 5 HONORS PHOTO WINNERS

Judging of the second Friends photo contest has been completed. The awards reception is scheduled for 12:00 pm, Saturday, February 5, 2011 at the Interpretive Center at the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve. This year there were 36 photographers and 134 entries. There are four categories of pictures: Plants, Animals, Other Category and Altered Photographs. There was also a special category for staff and board members. Winners in the first four categories will receive a Lee County Parking Pass good at 17 Lee County facilities, second and third place winners will receive gift certificates for the Friends Corner Store. Winners have been notified. All entries will be on display at the Interpretive Center. Friends, guests and visitors are invited to the reception for the announcement of the winners. There will be a presentation by the judges detailing the criteria used for selecting the winning photographs.



Photo Contest Judges Geoff Coe, Jim Matheson and Charles O'Connor at work.

Photo Carolyn Babb

# Natural Wonders of the Slough Event!

**Saturday**  
**January 15th**  
**10 am—2 pm**

## On-Going Activities and Tables

Calusa Nature Center—Live Animals  
C.R.E.W.  
Aquatic Critters  
Animal Skulls  
Eco Living Center  
Spotting Scopes with Interpreters at Ponds  
Meet the Artists: Entrance Mural and Great Blue Heron Picnic Pavilion  
Nature Crafts and more

## Scheduled Programs and Demonstrations

11 am - Alligator Detectives Program  
12 noon - Solar Oven Cooking Demo  
1 pm - Reptiles of Florida Program  
with live animals



*This family event  
highlights the plants  
and animals that  
live in the Six Mile  
Cypress  
Slough Preserve.*

**Overflow parking will be  
at Hammond Stadium.  
Shuttles will be running  
during the event.**

Event Co-sponsored by the Friends of Six  
Mile Cypress Slough Preserve



# SPEAKERS FOR THE 2011 FRIENDS PROGRAMS

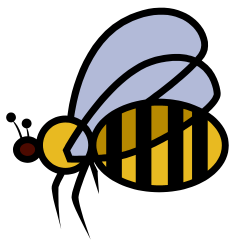
Tuesday, January 25, 2011—*Bats!*

**Allyson L. Webb**, Resource Manager, Panther Island, Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, was introduced to the Florida Bat Conservancy ([www.floridabats.org](http://www.floridabats.org)) and through that organization the Southeastern Bat Diversity Network ([www.sbdn.org](http://www.sbdn.org)). “The first time I actually worked with bats I fell in love with the animals, and I haven’t looked back.” Allyson was born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas. Allyson attended Texas A&M University and received a BA in biology with a minor in chemistry in Dec 2000. Allyson then served in the Peace Corps in Haiti from Sept 2001 until Nov 2003 and moved here immediately after Peace Corps for family. Allyson was introduced to the idea of working with bats in grad school at FGCU where she is currently pursuing an MS in environmental science.



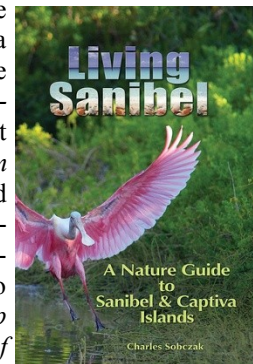
Tuesday, February 22, 2011—*Where have all the Honeybee Colonies Gone?*

**Jamie Ellis**, Professor of Entomology, University of Florida, has a bachelor’s degree in biology from the University of Georgia (UGA). In 2004, Jamie was awarded his PhD in Entomology from Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. In 2006, Jamie joined the Entomology and Nematology faculty at the University of Florida (UF) as an Assistant Professor. Jamie has responsibilities in extension, instruction and research. Regarding his extension work, Jamie created the AFBEE program (African Bee Extension and Education Program), the UF Bee College, and the UF Master Beekeeper Program. As an instructor, Jamie currently supervises 2 PhD and 2 masters students. Jamie’s research interests are diverse. Currently, Jamie conducts research on pollination ecology of honey bees, varroa mite control, small hive beetle behavior/control, nosema, honey bee nutrition, bumble bees, honey bee chemical ecology, sublethal effects of chemicals on bees, biological control, sociobiology, and general honey bee behavior/ecology. Jamie is also a bivocational youth minister at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in High Springs, FL. Jamie and his wife Amanda are the proud parents of Mathias James Ellis and Analy Kate Ellis.



Tuesday, March 22, 2011—*Author Charles Sobczak*

Charles Sobczak is an award-winning author and real estate agent who lives and writes on Sanibel Island. Charles has two sons, Logan and Blake, and is happily married to Molly Heuer. They live very close to the Sanibel Gardens Preserve and the Bailey Tract of J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge, where they enjoy their evening walks enjoying wildlife. His first book, published in 1999, was a short novel called *Six Mornings on Sanibel*. Currently in its sixth printing, it is one of the best-selling books on Sanibel and Captiva. His second novel, *Way Under Contract, a Florida Story*, won the Patrick D. Smith Award in 2001 for the best work of Florida fiction that year. It is presently out of print. Following his second novel, Sobczak published *Rhythm of the Tides*, a collection of his most popular poetry, short stories and essays. His third novel, *A Choice of Angels*, was a departure from his previous books. Set in Atlanta, Georgia and Istanbul, Turkey, it told the story of a forbidden romance between the son of a Baptist minister and the daughter of an Islamic family from Turkey. Sobczak then turned to nonfiction with *Alligators, Sharks and Panthers: Deadly Encounters with Florida’s Top Predator—Man*. It won several awards and is still in print. His next novel was *Chain of Fools*, set in northern Minnesota and based on his father’s dysfunctional family. His new title, due out in February, is *The Living Gulf Coast—A Nature Guide to Southwest Florida*. It is the companion to *Living Sanibel—A Nature Guide to Sanibel & Captiva Islands*, published in January of 2010.



Tuesday, April 26, 2011—*State of the Slough*

**Robert Repenning**, Land Stewardship Coordinator for Lee County Parks and Recreation, received a Bachelor’s of Science Degree from Stockton State College in New Jersey and a Master’s of Forest Resources and Conservation from the University of Florida. He has studied human impact on wildlife communities and worked for the State of Florida as a land manager for 20 years. He was the manager of the Charlotte Harbor Aquatic and State Buffer Preserves managing lands in Sarasota, Charlotte and Lee Counties. His duties included the preparation and review of land acquisition projects, land management of acquired lands, and aquatic preserves. He has planned and overseen the construction of trail systems and public access facilities to natural areas. He is currently the Land Stewardship Coordinator for Six Mile Cypress Preserve and Lakes Park in Lee County.



## *Along the Boardwalk.....The Winter's Open Vista ...By Dotty Brown*

The pruning of encroaching vegetation, the dropping of the canopy leaves and the baring of the Cypress branches has exposed new vistas of preserve activity. The position of the winter sun and the open canopy allows energizing sun rays to penetrate the understory. Look for the fresh young fiddleheads on the ferns. Note the Ibis flocks dabbling in the shrinking puddles. Catch a vision of the Limpkin stalking its Apple Snail menu. The deep purple Beauty Bush bundles of fruit, the red Dahoon Holly berries and the white Mistletoe jewels give holiday decorations to their host plants and the preserve's stage. Quietly, with stealth steps, set the binoculars to catch sight of the many colorful warblers that visit the preserve. Enjoy the drama that unfolds on the winter's stage!!



## **Roads, Roads and More Roads**

**By Bob Repenning, Land Stewardship Coordinator, Lee County Parks and Recreation**

You may have noticed that it is harder and harder driving to the Six Mile this year. The last ten years have seen a lot of development around the Slough. New residential communities, new shopping centers, a new airport concourse, and new roads have all sprung up around the slough. During the last three years much of the new development has come to a screeching halt except for the roads. Currently, I-75, Ben C. Pratt/Six Mile Cypress Parkway, Colonial Blvd., and State Road 82 are being widened through and next to the Slough. A new road the Metro Parkway Extension, is being built on the southwestern boundary of the Slough. Many of these road projects are being funded through federal economic incentive programs. Some are using the transportation impact fees paid by the new developments of the past ten years. In the long run, these road projects should improve traffic flow. In the short term, we have to be patient with the construction delays.

Are all these new wider roads a bad thing for the slough? In part, they take up more area and therefore reduce the size of habitat adjacent to the slough. Though in return for the Metro Parkway crossing, the Penzance Boulevard crossing was removed and restored, reducing this loss. A valuable component of these new projects is that they all must come under the latest water management rules. On the new roads and retrofitted older roads the runoff from rains carries oils and other pollutants from the road surface. In the past these flowed off the road into the adjacent ditches ending up in the Slough. Under the new rules this runoff will now be diverted to retention ponds designed so the impurities settle out - releasing cleaner water to flow into adjacent areas such as the Slough. By widening the older roads, they will now be retrofitted to do this an improvement over existing conditions.

In addition to having the runoff treated, both the SR 82 and the Metro Parkway Extension projects are including wildlife crossings under the road. Daniels Blvd and Colonial already have them. On State Road 82 this will provide a wildlife connection between the new County 20/20 preserves to the north to the existing Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve to the south. So will these new projects impact the slough? Maybe not, the newer roads are designed with upgraded runoff treatment to clean the waters entering the Slough and wildlife crossings both improvements that will help the Slough.

## **Thank You to the Friends From Mary Rude**

Thank you to the Friends for another great year! Your support of our educational programming, land stewardship and all that we do is outstanding.

The Friends financial support in these tough economical times has been invaluable. Lee County Parks and Recreation is very pleased with their partnership with the Friends and is grateful for all the hands-on support.

Last fiscal year (October to September), we had 140,000 visitors to the Slough. That is an increase from 133,000 the previous year. The people who visit here fall in love with the Slough and come back to share their new-found treasure with friends and family.

Many people tell me how inspired they are by the volunteers who interact with them at the Slough. Not surprising, inspiration carries beyond our borders. Below is an e-mail to me about former president Joyce Sanders who was a presenter at a weekend workshop. How wonderful to know that our experiences serve to charge up others to pursue their dreams.

*"Met Joyce Sanders who spoke on your LEED Building project. What a dynamo! Gave us inspiration that we can pull off our BoardWalk Project."* Tom Maish, President, Friends of Fakahatchee

Our current president Carolyn Babb is also a dedicated and hard worker for the Slough. Carolyn logged in over 700 hours of volunteer time during this last year! It doesn't matter if she is ordering books for the library, looking through a spotting scope or telling you about her adventure wading through the Slough, there is always a sparkle in her eyes. CB, we really appreciate all you do for us!

Thank you also to the whole Friends board for all their time and efforts. They all share so much of their precious time attending meetings, leading programs, helping with events and a myriad of other tasks. The staff at the Slough are grateful for all your contributions.

Thank you to all the Friends members for showing us your support by being a part of all of our endeavors at the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve. In the coming year we hope to continue our efforts educating visitors about this incredibly special place and all it has to offer.



# FRIENDS IN 2010

To all the members and supporters of the Friends—here is a list of some of the accomplishments and activities in the past year. May our next year be just as wonderful and our mission of supporting the Slough and furthering education about the Slough continue successfully.

Thank you, to all of you, for all you do, every single day. CB

- Friends first Photo Contest attracted 35 entrants with 135 photographs
- Added books and video materials identified by Slough staff to the Blake Cadkin Resource Center
- Provided summer camp scholarships for 13 campers
- Funded camping supplies and games needed for the campers enrichment and learning experience, including a Solar oven
- Funded signage throughout the Slough, including the Great Blue Heron Pavilion and Pop Ash Pond
- Special Events Crew attended and manned the Friends exhibit at the Charlotte Harbor Nature Festival, the Burrowing Owl Festival in Cape Coral, the CREW Wildflower Festival and the Koreshan Earth Day
- Supported Lee County in the addition of over 1200 acres to the Slough
- Sponsored Wet Walks in June, August and September
- Adopt a Road volunteers picked up trash every third Saturday of each month of the year
- Friends Corner volunteers manned the store for at least 20 hours each week
- Four “Gatherings of Friends” with educational and informative speakers
- Participated in Environmental Education Day in May
- Participated in research projects with Florida Gulf Coast University
- Produced four issues of *Connections*, the Friends newsletter
- Friends volunteers manned the Front Desk at the Interpretive Center



# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

**Renewing Members: Thank you for your continued support!!**

Jill Augustine **C**  
Ronald R. Benz  
Kelly Bishop  
Beverly Brazill **C**  
Tom & Bev Brown  
Patricia Coppins **C**  
Frankie Crain **C**  
Shirley Fox **C**  
Robin Gardner  
Judy Haar  
Barbara Hayes **C**  
Katrina Hayes  
Bryan & Linda Hefty  
Richard & Andrea Houle  
Ron & Sherry Inge  
Sue Johnson **C**  
Wilma Keidel **C**  
Flo Kornman **C**  
Marty & Alice Krebs  
Billie MacNeill  
Alan McTeague  
Molly Meadows  
Garn Mennell **C**  
John & Sue Miller **C**  
Eileen & Dale Mitchell  
Gretchen Monti  
Corinne Murphy **C**  
Kristen Nelson  
Carol Newcomb-Jones  
Carolyn Nieset  
Jan & Mary Ellen Nyland  
Peggy Oldham  
Wendy Rex  
Walter & Kathy Sedlacek **C**  
Mark & Kathleen Smith  
Jeff Zasadny

**“C” denotes Charter Member (persons who comprised the first year’s membership of Friends)**

**Welcome New Members !!**

Erik Carlson  
Michael & Nancy Frazier

## Janet Bunch and Mary Murray to Lead Friends Excursions to 20/20 Preserves

Janet and Mary have been exploring the Lee County 20/20 Preserves and would like to share a couple of their favorites with Friends who might be interested.

### February 18 - Pop Ash Creek Preserve



**Pop Ash Creek Preserve:** 9451 Nalle Grade Rd North Fort Myers, Florida 33917. Pop Ash Creek Preserve is a 307 acre parcel that was acquired in 2003. The Preserve consists of both human-altered and natural plant communities, mostly wet or mesic flatwoods and a portion of a blackwater stream (Popash Creek). There is easy, dry hiking there around a pond. Janet and Mary saw wading birds, warblers, woodpeckers and a nice assortment of frogs and toads in our late winter visit.

### March 8 – Hickory Swamp Preserve

**Hickory Swamp Preserve:** 13320 Peace Road Fort Myers, Florida 33905 Hickory Swamp Preserve is 66.5 acres in size and was acquired in 1999. The primary natural plant communities found at the Preserve are mesic and hydric hammocks and mesic flatwoods. There are also two depression marshes and several disturbed areas including improved pasture which provide quite a bit of diversity in this preserve. Red Headed Woodpeckers, many warblers, a Red Tailed Hawk and more were spotted during a Fall visit.



Meet at 9:00 am at the Preserve. A list of participants will be emailed to all participants in advance of the walk for ride sharing. Each preserve has a small parking lot.

Reservations are needed - Limit 12 participants each walk. Bring water and a snack. Contact Janet or Mary for reservations or further information Janet Bunch [janet-bunch@yahoo.com](mailto:janet-bunch@yahoo.com) 239-567-7919, Mary Murray [marydmurray@comcast.net](mailto:marydmurray@comcast.net) 239-574-9147.

For more information on 20/20 parcels see [www.conservation2020.org](http://www.conservation2020.org).

### Additional Donations Gratefully Received From:

Jill Augustine  
Tom & Bev Brown  
Katrina Hayes  
Sue Johnson  
Garn Mennell  
John & Sue Miller  
Jan & Mary Ellen Nyland  
Walter & Kathy Sedlacek  
Mark & Kathleen Smith

### FRIENDS MEETINGS AND GATHERINGS

IF YOU PLAN ON ATTENDING ANY OF THE FRIENDS TUESDAY GATHERINGS THAT ARE LISTED ON PAGE THREE EMAIL CAROLYN BABB

**[carolyn\\_babb08@comcast.net](mailto:carolyn_babb08@comcast.net)**

OR

CALL THE FRIENDS AT THE INTERPRETIVE CENTER 239-533-7557 and LEAVE A MESSAGE THANK YOU!

### Advisory Board

Jacquelin Cadkin  
Cadkin Foundation

Carolyn Delizia Swift

Dr. William Hammond  
Florida Gulf Coast University

Carol Newcomb-Jones

Wiley M Parker, A.I.A.  
Parker/Mudgett/Smith  
Architects, Inc.

Clyde Dabbs

### Board of Directors

Carolyn Babb  
President

Charles O'Connor  
Vice President

Nancy Johnson  
Secretary

Frank Murray  
Treasurer

Jeff Key

Molly Meadows

Joyce Sanders

Jean Labriola Scholz

Steve Tutko

### Membership Chair

Jean Labriola Scholz

Mary Murray

### Parks and Recreation Liaison

Mary Rude, Supervisor  
Six Mile Cypress Slough  
Preserve

## GINNY WIDRICK A GREAT FRIEND RETIRES!



Over the last several years, I was afforded the honor of volunteering with Ginny Widrick. We met during Meanders and training and we became buddies on Sunday mornings bright and early volunteering to lead Guided Walks.

We would usually meet at the Slough around 7:30am on Sundays waiting on the gate to open our door to Heaven... cold – wet – warm – whatever the weather was. She was always there with a smile on her face and eager to see what experiences awaited us inside.

We shared many delightful early morning events from the serene atmosphere at the Slough—baby owls, otters, white tailed deer, snakes, baby gators and many birds. Sometimes we'd split up and go different directions prior to the Guided Walk and see what we could find to share later with our guests.

Ginny traveled many wonderful places to view birds and wildlife. Her stories from the Galapagos Islands and all her birding adventures were always full of new sightings and would make me feel like I was there. An excellent birder – she taught me many ways to identify birds.

Her dedication and enthusiasm for Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve is evident whenever she talks and wherever she goes.

She is a treasured friend, I for one, miss very much.

Thanks Ginny for a wonderful experience and your thoughtfulness in all you've done to Promote, Protect and Preserve the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve.

Your Friend, Nancy Johnson

**And from the rest of your Friends at the Slough—You will be missed Ginny! Thank you for your enthusiasm, your knowledge and your wonderful sense of humor.**

**Carolyn Babb**

## PRESIDENT'S NOTES



Hi to all of the Friends!

I was preparing for the December Full Moon walk when I saw a young girl lowering a plastic bucket over the railing at Ibis Marsh. I was curious. She was with her father, and I recognized him as a frequent visitor. She explained to me that she was working on a science fair project on water quality, and the Slough was one of the places that she was using to test water for contaminants from different sources. Then she went on to thank the Friends for her scholarship to camp this previous summer. She told me her name and I recognized her from summer camp. How proud I was at that moment and so glad to be a member of our organization. Who knows what she may go on to accomplish. Hopefully she will apply in 2011 and we can again send her to camp.

On my daily walk on Fort Myers Beach a fellow walker asked me what I was looking at so intently on the sand. I told him I was looking at the pattern in the sand left by a critter from the low tide. The daily walkers hadn't noticed that different critters make tracks after they are out of the water—starfish, clams, coquinas and anything else that may be left when the tide is low. He said "You are quite the observer. I'll watch for that now."



I'm a better observer because of the Slough, and I look at things differently now because of the Slough. Folks will say "What are you looking at?" It is fun to start someone on the road to finding out something new and exciting that they didn't even realize was there!

Enough of my ramblings—Please join us at the **Natural Wonders of the Slough** event on January 15, 2011. The staff has some great activities scheduled, and it will be fun for the entire family. See you at the Slough. CB



See if you can find the newest project at the Slough. This photo is a hint.

## Connections Staff

Editor/ Lay-out/ Design Carolyn Babb  
Copy Editor Bruce Bunch  
Printing Lee County Parks and Rec Facilities  
Terry Park

## JOIN FRIENDS TODAY!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

In addition I would like to contribute

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for exhibits and displays for the Interpretive Center.

TOTAL\$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Level (Please Check One)

- Student (\$10)
- Individual (\$20)
- Contributing (\$50)
- Supporting (\$100)
- Associate (\$250) - 1
- Sustaining (\$500) - 1, 2
- Corporate Sponsor (\$500) - 1, 2
- Patron (\$1,000) - 1, 2, 3

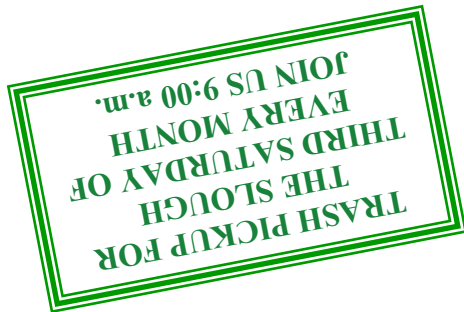
- 1- includes parking pass for 17 Lee Co. facilities
- 2 - includes choice of wet walk or moon walk for ten guests
- 3 - includes bench or rocking chair naming opportunity

**HOW CAN YOU HELP WITH YOUR TIME?  
I AM INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH:**

Mail to Friends of the Six Mile Cypress Slough, 7791 Penzance Blvd, Fort Myers. FL 33966

Friends web site: [www.sloughpreserve.org](http://www.sloughpreserve.org) Phone 239-533-7557

Special thanks go to the Lee County Department of Parks and Recreations for its generous support in producing this newsletter. Thanks to Lee County also for providing meeting space at the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve Interpretive Center.



**Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve**  
**7791 Penzance Blvd.**  
**Fort Myers, Florida 33966**



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED