

Love of the Land and of animals

Early images as Swamp Cabbage festival and County Fair gear up



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Growing, borrowing fresh, remorse

BY NEVIN McLERAN

This picture opportunity (above) cultivated the second episode of remembrance for me this afternoon.

I lived about a hundred yards behind this post office when I was very young. Low single digits to high single digits. David was just a baby, but Bo and I, well we considered this our backyard.

I seriously doubt, that in the decade we lived in Big Cypress, there is any 50 year old man, whom has fished as much in his entire life as we did in that single decade.

In my early teens we returned and lived off Birdon rd. Zager Ave. At that age you'd consider this a hindrance to your social life, bein stuck in the middle of a swamp, closest friends were a fairly good piece away, and I did.

Now that I look back, what an incredible childhood. What kid, who loves the outdoors, loves to fish, loves to hunt, loves the woods, unlimited 3-wheeler time, what kid wouldn't?

Even with the roadblocks I've experienced in life, and there have been some right good ones I've had to overcome, even considering those, I would not want to live any other life, nor the life I've had, any differently.

Everyone thinks it's crazy how either Bo or I will catch up a Rattlesnake or Moccasin, wont even mention the big lizards. We started that at about 6 years of age. When you live in the middle of a swamp, there's gonna be some peculiar pastimes. And anybody could catch a black snake or a rat snake. Show up to show mom the moccasin. Sheeit. She made a really big fuss about it.

And then there were the pet gators. Or their momma's. Al-

ways messin' with somethin we shouldn't have been. There used to be a bustling industry surrounding that little building, now you can't even tell that there were so many lives lived all around this little post office over the last 100 years, or at least the building, I think the Post Office ended up here in the 50's, after a hurricane or something destroyed or closed down the main one.

Incredible how far one travels in life, the number of experiences, the people encountered, and if you're lucky, a positive outcome in the game of life as you near the other end.

We were on the edge of being poor. It was hard to get mom or anybody else to spring for fishin worms. We'd get them from the old lady, who sat all day under a palm tree, right on the side of Tamiami Trail. Later, that ole woman lost an arm to a gator while washing her dinner plates in the canal. Probably one of the biggest surprises that we had back in them days, next to the Friday night snook fishin trip's all along the canals that run alongside to 41 or 29.

And then there were the days gettin to fish Turner River rd., usually a Saturday afternoon. But right there with the fishin, was when we got a RC cola and a snickers bar from Watson's store. It was always a big time for us that the miner bird cussed like a sailor. It sure taught me to never say the f word within earshot of my momma.

The first memory that came to me, a brief feeling of melancholy, as I was leaving the Seafood Festival. The memories of friends and family, so many great times and so many great adventures that used affairs such as this one, as



Public care for wildlands

By MIKE ELFENBEIN

On Saturday February 10, 2018 members from the Florida Sportsmen's Conservation Association participated in the Everglades Coordinating Council event on Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge to improving habitats by thinning cabbage palms.

Sabal palmetto, or cabbage palm, is not only native to Southwest Florida but was also named the official state tree in 1953. However, Florida's altered hydrology has drastically favored cabbage palms over the typically grassy understory of our South Florida slash pine flatwoods.

Historically, water flowed slowly across Southwest Florida in an annual cycle. This higher level of water would prohibit the germination and sprouting of seedling cabbage palm. With the advent of the canal system, water flow across the landscape was slowed, altered, or completely removed in some instances. This reduction in water levels has allowed cabbage palm to survive in far greater numbers than likely would if the natural hydrologic system were functioning.

Historical data from the Refuge indicates that approximately 12 cabbage palms were once found in a hectare of land. Today some areas of the Refuge are comprised of nearly 2,200 cabbage palms per hectare. Despite cabbage palm being a native species, in such great

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