

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel  
sparkle during holidays in this island sanctuary**  
*Music, entertainment, luminary trails, theater and more!*

**LEE COUNTY, FL** –The holiday season is one of the most beautiful times to visit The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel in southwest Florida. This year, visitors have many opportunities to celebrate the season in this unspoiled island sanctuary with special events for everyone. And many are free!

**Holiday Nights at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers**

Dates: From 5:30 to 9 p.m. Dec. 11 through Jan. 2.

Admission: Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$1 for children (6-12).

Information: 239-334-7419 or visit [www.efwefla.org](http://www.efwefla.org).

One of the area highlights of the holiday season! Enjoyed by more than 33,000 visitors each year from all over the world, this 34-year Lee County tradition offers a chance to spend the holidays with southwest Florida's first "snowbirds," the Edison and Ford families. This year events include artist and craftsmen exhibits and appearances in the "Creative Cottage" as well as book signings and demonstrations located in the Edison Caretaker's House; nightly entertainment by local school and community groups; Santa visits; and a "Children's Tree Trail" with lighted trees showcasing handmade ornaments from Lee County students. Holiday items will be available to purchase in the "Creative Cottage," Museum Store, Garden Shoppe and the historic Ford Cottage Shoppe. The Estates Museum and Edison's Lab will be open nightly as well as Banyan Cafe for refreshments.

**Christmas Luminary Trail and Open House on Sanibel and Captiva islands**                      Dates:

5:30 to 9 p.m. Dec. 4 on Sanibel Island and Dec. 5 on Captiva Island.

Admission: Free.

Information: 239-472-1080 or visit [www.sanibel-captiva.org](http://www.sanibel-captiva.org).

An island tradition in its 25<sup>th</sup> year, this event draws visitors from all over the world as they join local residents to celebrate the season. Three miles of luminary candles line Periwinkle Way and area businesses are decorated for the holidays with candles illuminating the island pathways, storefronts and homes. Free trolley service will be

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available on Sanibel and Santa will visit the Sanibel Community Center with candy for the kids.

### **Holidays in Boca Grande on Gasparilla Island**

Dates: Nov. 28-Dec. 12

Admission to all events: Free

Information: Call 941-964-0568 or [www.bocagrandechamber.com](http://www.bocagrandechamber.com).

Nov. 28: **Boca Grande Christmas Walk**, 5 p.m. The first in a month-long series of events sets the stage for a unique holiday on the Island of Gasparilla. Carolers walk among the shops, restaurants and galleries adorned in festive decoration along luminary-lit streets in the Village of Boca Grande. Holiday treats for children and a visit from Santa Claus, riding into town on the local fire truck.

Dec. 5: Luminary Holiday Festival, scavenger hunt, Santa visit and golf cart parade, 3-7 p.m

Dec. 6: Christmas caroling and tree lighting, 5 p.m.

Dec. 8: Holiday Boat Parade, 5:30 p.m.

Dec. 12: Annual lighting of the historic Port Boca Grande Lighthouse, 6 p.m. Enjoy a party with caroling, wine and holiday treats.

### **Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre, Fort Myers**

*A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens.*

Dates: Tuesday through Sunday evenings with selected matinees, Nov. 19-Dec. 26.

Admission: \$27 to \$53.

Information: Call 239-278-4422 or [www.BroadwayPalm.com](http://www.BroadwayPalm.com).

The musical version of the classic Christmas tale.

### *The Winter Wonderettes.*

Dates: Tuesday through Sunday evenings with selected matinees, Nov. 5-Dec. 26.

Admission: \$25-\$44

It's 1968 and the Marvelous Wonderettes are the entertainers at the Harper's Hardware holiday party. You'll be dancing in the aisles to holiday classic **The Schoolhouse**

### **Theater on Sanibel Island**

*Every Christmas Story Ever Told.*

Dates: Dec. 15-31.

Admission: Call for details.

Information: Call 239-472-6862 or [www.theschoolhousetheater.com](http://www.theschoolhousetheater.com)

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**The Southwest Florida Symphony, Fort Myers and Cape Coral**

Dates: Dec. 11-19.

Admission: Call for details.

Information: Call 239-418-1500 or [www.swflso.org](http://www.swflso.org).

The Symphony Youth Orchestra will perform *Holiday Under the Stars* at 7 p.m. on Dec. 11 at Bell Tower in Fort Myers. Free.

The Christmas portion of Handel's "*Messiah*" will be performed at Faith Baptist Church in Cape Coral, 4 p.m. on Dec. 13; at Village Church at Shell Point on Dec. 15 at 7:30 p.m. Featuring the Symphony Chamber Orchestra, Symphony Chorus, Chamber Orchestra and guest soloists.

"*A Very Merry Pops*" will be performed at 8 p.m. Dec. 18 and 19 at Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall in Fort Myers. Enjoy music from beloved characters including Charlie Brown, the Grinch and Rudolph!

**22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fort Myers Beach Christmas Boat Parade**

Dates: 6:10 p.m. on Dec. 5.

Admission: Free.

Information: 239-454-7500 or [www.fortmyersbeach.org](http://www.fortmyersbeach.org).

Boats decked out in festive holiday decorations may be viewed from Snug Harbor, Matanzas Inn, Bonita Bills and Pink Shell Marina.

**Imaginarium Hands-on Museum, Fort Myers**

Dates: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Dec.12.

Admission: Call for details.

Information: 239-321-7420 or [www.imaginariumfortmyers.com](http://www.imaginariumfortmyers.com).

Kids enjoy visits and photos with Santa, printing holiday T-shirts, decorating holiday cookies, face painting, shrinky-dink ornaments and other activities exploring winter holidays around the world.

**Seminole Gulf Railway, Fort Myers**

Dates: Nov. 25-Dec. 31.

Admission: Call for times and prices.

Information: Call (800) SEM-GULF (736-4853) or [www.semgulf.com](http://www.semgulf.com).

Holiday-themed activities: **Christmas rail/boat trips** on **Dec. 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, and 22** include a holiday train to Punta Gorda for the sights and sounds of Christmas as well as a five-course dinner and a Christmas lights canal tour. Train leaves at 3 p.m. and returns at 9:30 p.m. **The Jingle Bell special** on **Nov. 25 and Dec. 27** includes stories, games, crafts, singing, reading of the *Polar Express*, punch and cookies. The railway's **Holiday Murder Mystery** is scheduled for **Nov. 26-Dec. 25** and has a holiday twist. The adventure includes a five-course dinner and is available for parties. On **New Year's Eve**, ring in the New Year on the **Murder Mystery Train** with a five-course dinner and live whodunit show from 7:30 p.m.-1 a.m.

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For more information on special holiday events and packages or for planning a vacation to The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, visit [www.FortMyersSanibel.com](http://www.FortMyersSanibel.com). Be sure to check out “Great Deals” for the latest special rates.

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**Editors’ Note:** *The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel include: Sanibel Island & Captiva Island, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Boca Grande & outer islands, North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres.*