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Southwest Florida Reading Festival kicks off early in Lee County Libraries

Tickets for An Evening with the Authors fundraiser also available through Jan. 30 or until sold out

Fort Myers, FL, Jan. 9, 2025 – Avid readers and fans won't have to wait for the Southwest Florida Reading Festival to enjoy author visits, books signings and other book-focused events. Pre-festival programs to celebrate the power of reading begin in late January and will be held throughout the Lee County Library System.

Authors visiting library branches ahead of the festival include Jennifer Coburn, Libby Fischer Hellmann, Jean Kwok and Terrie Farley Moran.

In addition:

- Readers can participate in festival-themed book discussions.
- Budding writers can join a live, virtual event on working with a literary agent.
- Children can join local artist Carolyn Gora who will present her picture books with a drawing lesson.
- And much more.

These special events, like all programs happening in the library branches, are free and open to the public. Visit leelibrary.net/events to explore and register for these programs or get more information about other activities offered at Lee County libraries, including our virtual author events.

The Southwest Florida Reading Festival will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 1, at the Fort Myers Regional Library, 2450 First St. This free event draws thousands of booklovers annually to meet dozens of internationally recognized authors of books for adults, teens and children. Every child and teen in attendance can choose a free book at the event. Ongoing entertainment will include author talks and book signings, library resource demos, youth writing awards, crafts, food and merchandise for purchase. Festivalgoers can plan their perfect day using the mobile app "SWFL Reads" to see the full schedule of authors, book signings and more.

"There is a lot of variety in the featured author line-up, with powerhouse writers like Debbie Macomber and Reed Farrel Coleman that will be a big draw for attendees this year," said festival coordinator Melissa Baker.

Many featured authors are participating in the Name a Character Raffle, a special festival fundraiser where fans can enter for a chance to name a character in an author's upcoming book. More information is available at the festival website, readfest.org.

An Evening with the Authors, the reading festival's premier fundraiser, takes place Friday evening, Feb. 28. This ticketed event gives attendees a chance to meet and mingle with the authors as part of an unforgettable dining experience at the Burroughs Home and Gardens. The evening includes a silent auction with proceeds supporting the festival and gives guests the chance to snag spring training baseball game tickets, weekend getaway hotel packages and more. Tickets are available on the festival website through midnight Thursday, Jan. 30 or until the event sells out.

The Southwest Florida Reading Festival is presented by the Lee County Library System, which has 13 branches to serve Lee County residents. For more information about other library services and programs offered, visit www.leelibrary.net or call 239-479-4636.

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