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Evening with the Authors March 17

Annual Reading Festival March 18

More than two dozen nationally acclaimed authors plan to meet their fans and talk about their books at the 18th annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival on Saturday, March 18 at Centennial Park in the Fort Myers River District.

The festival is a free, day-long event filled with sensational author talks, the latest library technology, contests, book-sellers, book signings, activities for teens and children, a free book for every child and teen and the Reading Rocks! Teen Battle of the Bands. The festival draws an average of 18,000 people annually. The Reading Festival is the largest one-day reading festival in Florida and runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., rain or shine.

"Authors come from all over the country and many genres are represented," said Margie Byers, festival coordinator. "Most are award winners, a couple are coauthors with Tom Clancy and James Patterson and all are very popular with their readers. It is a pleasure to meet these creative and interesting people who write these amazing novels and keep track of all the details."

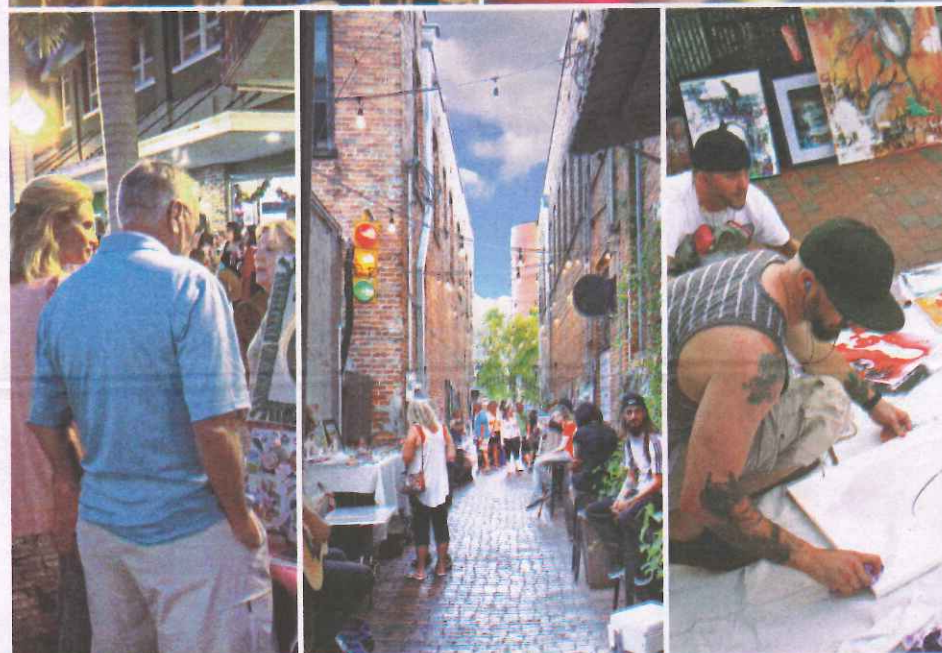
The festival starts Friday evening,

March 17, at the Marina at Edison & Ford with the Evening with the Authors. The event provides the opportunity for fans to meet, mingle and dine with authors. Tickets to the dinner and reception can be purchased at www.Readfest.org.

A few of the award-winning authors scheduled to attend both events include adult authors: Shelley Shepard Gray, James Grippando, Gregg Hurwitz, Mark Greaney, Susan Wiggs, Lori Wilde; teen authors include: Sara Shepard, Kami Garcia and S.J. Kincaid; and children's authors: Chris Grabenstein, Salina Yoon and Candace Fleming. The complete list of authors can be found at www.readfest.org.

The Reading Festival, presented by the Lee County Library System is free and 100 percent community supported through generous donations, sponsorships and grants. To help ensure the continuation of this free community event visit www.readfest.org to make a secure online donation. Author information, dates of partner events, directions to the event and more, is available for your convenience 24 hours a day at www.readfest.org or call 239-479-4636.

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