

PRESS RELEASE

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Caption: Images available upon request

Deadly 1928 hurricane topic of ‘Ding’ Darling lecture

The deadly hurricane of 1928 claimed 2,500 lives, among them 700 black Floridian men, women, and children who were buried in an unmarked West Palm Beach ditch. Native Floridian Eliot Kleinberg tells their heroic tales of survival and loss in his book *Black Cloud* during two free presentations at J.N. ‘Ding’ Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island on Friday, March 20, at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., part of the 2020 ‘Ding’ Darling Friday Lecture series.

Kleinberg, a Florida newspaper reporter and columnist of 40 years, has written 10 fiction and nonfiction books about his home state. He penned *Black Cloud: The Deadly Hurricane of 1928* from dozens of interviews with survivors, diary entries, accounts from newspapers, government documents, and reports from the National Weather Service and Red Cross.

The book chronicles the disastrous flooding of Lake Okeechobee that resulted from the hurricane and inspired the classic novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Floridian Harlem Renaissance author Zora Neale Hurston.

The author will sign copies of his books, available in the Refuge Nature Store, following the two lectures. Profits from Nature Store sales directly benefit refuge education and research.

HighTower/Thomas & Swartz Wealth Management and Sanibel Carts co-sponsor the free 12-lecture series with support from the ‘Ding’ Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS). The free lectures take place every Friday at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Seating is limited and available on a first-come basis. Early arrivals can save their seat and one

extra with personal items and then can explore the Visitor & Education Center or Indigo Trail before the lecture starts. Saved seats must be filled 15 minutes before lecture time or risk being reassigned. This year, DDWS will be filming most lectures and broadcasting them on Facebook Live at www.facebook.com/dingdarling.

As usual, Wildlife Drive closes on Friday, but visitors are welcome to enjoy the Visitor & Education Center, Indigo Trail, Bailey Tract, and recreational opportunities at Tarpon Bay Explorers, the refuge's official recreation concession located at its Tarpon Bay Recreation Area.

Note: Opinions expressed in guest lectures do not necessarily reflect the views of refuge and DDWS management, staff, and board of directors.

The season's remaining schedule is listed below. Book signings follow all starred (*) lectures. For more information, call 239-472-1100 ext. 241 or log on to dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/lecture-and-film-series.

*March 20 – Author Eliot Kleinberg, *Black Cloud: The Great Hurricane of 1928*

*March 27 – Author Jack Davis, “All About Eagles and Other Florida Eco-Topics”

*April 3 – Jeri Magg, *Remarkable Women of Sanibel & Captiva*

*starred lecture indicates book signing to follow

ABOUT DDWS

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, DDWS works to support J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge's mission of conservation, wildlife and habitat protection, research, and public education through charitable donations and Refuge Nature Shop profits.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4, or dingdarlingsociety@gmail.com.

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