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THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER OF LAKEWOOD RANCH

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2020



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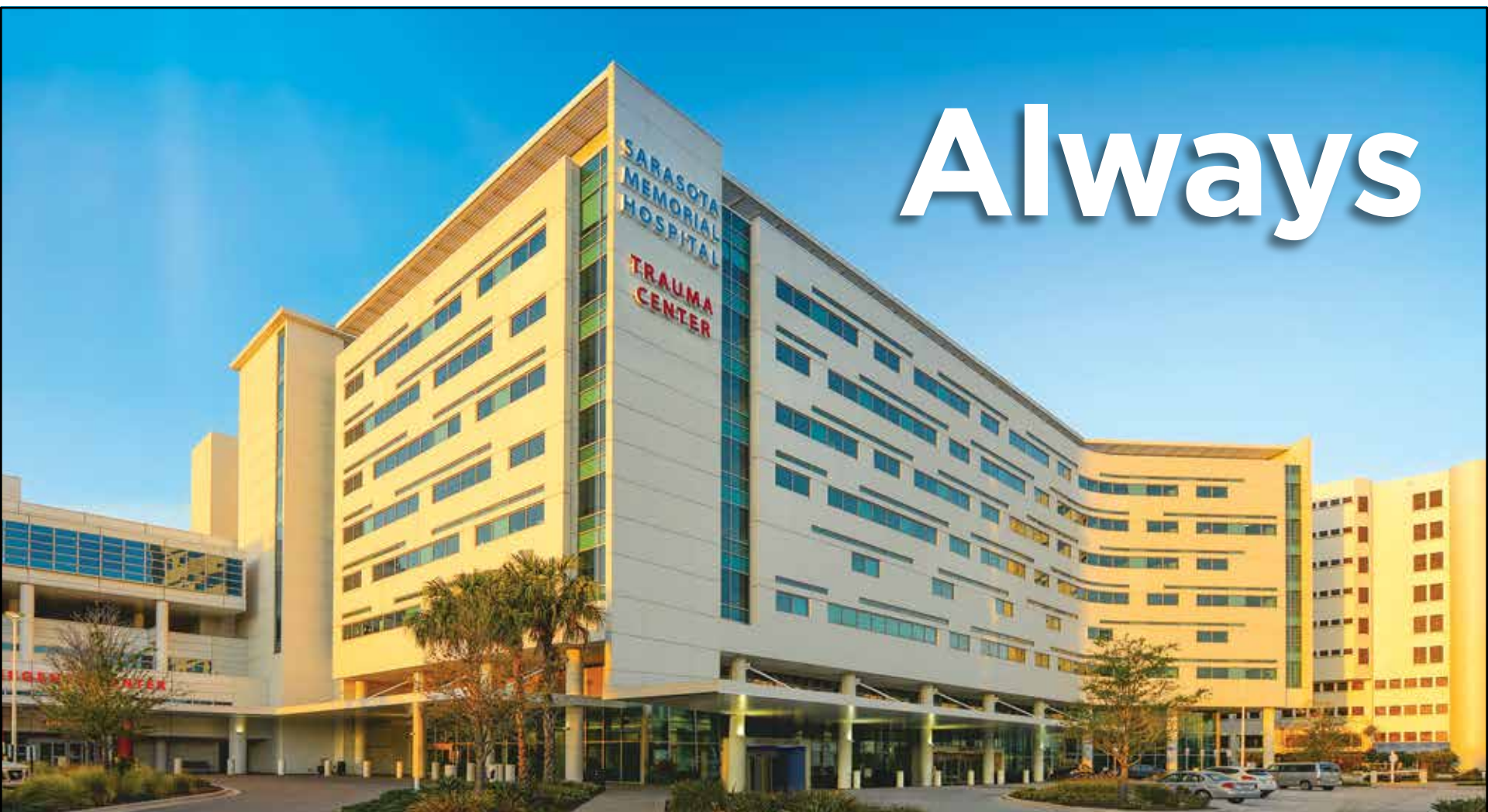
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Presto Change-O: From Popi's to Pizza

BY ERNIE SOLLER,
Community Correspondent

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a lot of changes to our lives.

We had the temporary shutdown of almost all businesses, except for those deemed to be “necessary,” such as gas stations, grocery stores, and drug stores.

And even some of those businesses underwent a great many changes. For example, it used to be perfectly normal to hop in your car and go grocery shopping. If you forgot something, you just got back into your car and tooted off back to the grocery, got what you needed, and then returned home.

With the arrival of COVID-19, going to the grocery store, especially for those folks who were considered to be in a “high risk” category, became a daunting prospect, especially in the early days of the crisis, when masks were not all that readily available, and less was known as to how the virus was transmitted from person to person. Enter the era of “call ahead and get delivery” grocery shopping.

Grocery stores found ways to sell to their customers without those customers having to leave their homes. In some cases, the stores themselves handled the “call/email/go to our website – and get it delivered” sales themselves. In other cases, services such as Instacart took over the chore of shopping for a client’s groceries, and promptly delivered those items right to the customer’s door.

The customer never had to go to the store. Of course, there were a few glitches, such as perhaps getting a bunch of bananas which might have been a tad overripe for your particular taste, or the temporary inability to get toilet paper or disinfectant wipes, but the convenience factor, coupled with the peace of mind which came from such opportunities, far outweighed the alternatives.

Even car dealers got into the act. You need a new car and can’t wait? Call or email us, and we’ll deliver your new vehicle right to your door!

When the virus hit, restaurants were told to shut down for in-house dining. Some closed totally, while many went to offering “curbside pick-up.” Some restaurants even offered curbside pick-up of cocktails or beer!

Suddenly, pick-up and delivery became instantly mainstream. But here’s an interesting fact:

Recently, I ordered a pizza to go from my neighborhood Italian restaurant. When I put on my mask and went to pick it up, I asked the manager as to how his business had been impacted by the virus.

To my surprise, he told me that COVID-19 had actually been very good for his business, since although his in-house dining had gone to zero until the restrictions began to be lifted, his to-go and delivery business had gone way up, and that his store was doing extremely well.

Now, apparently this restaurant is not the only one that realized that if you can’t sell food in the restaurant, or have to go with a minimalized amount of occupied tables, go to a program that is



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER



more geared to a take-away or delivery operation.

Case in point: My friend, Alex, and I have dined frequently at Popi’s on the Ranch, located in the Wal-Mart shopping plaza on State Road 70, east of I-75.

We mainly went there for a late breakfast—usually bacon and eggs, an omelet, or pancakes, but the restaurant had also offered lunch and dinner, a number of Greek specialties and dessert, as well as beer and wine.

Well, right after my last breakfast with my friend, I left town for about 12 days, and, upon my return, found out that “Popi’s

on the Ranch” was no longer, but had been replaced by “CB’s Pizza.”

There was a large sign on the outside of the building stating that they were still serving breakfast, so I went there for a late morning meal right after getting home and found that yes, indeed, they were still serving breakfast, albeit from a somewhat “shorter” breakfast menu.

The breakfast was good, however, and I decided to have a conversation with the owner(s) of the new CB’s Pizza and Grill, to find out just what had transpired since I had gone out of town.

Bill Chaltis, his son, Philip, and son-in-law Chris Babroski are the guys running CB’s, as they had prior to the changeover from the Popi’s name.

The new menu, as I expected, has been set up to better reflect the way the restaurant business has evolved over the last several months – namely a trend toward pick-up and delivery. And, per Bill Chaltis, he and his crew are constantly revising the menu to reflect their customer’s preferences. Bill felt that by going to a pizza-centered menu, along with other menu items that were easy to convert to either a dine-in or take-away mode, they were putting themselves in a better position to serve their customers, maintain their staff, and stay in business.

The same folks who waited on you when the place was Popi’s are still there, so you’ll see friendly faces if you decide to dine-in. The tables are set up for social distancing, and the staff members are all wearing masks.

And as for the pizza, I saw a couple enjoying a CB’s pizza when I stopped in to talk to Bill, and they were leaving at the same time as I was so I asked them about how good the pizza was, and they replied that it was really good. (They took some home with them!)

Now, with all this talk about pizza, you might think that that was the only menu item worth ordering. Not so!

Bill noted that CB’s half-pound burgers are fantastic (there are seven different burger choices), as is the chicken caprese, etc. They serve BLTs, French dip sandwiches, lots of different salads, wings, and some cool appetizers, such as stuffed portabella mushrooms, mozzarella cheese sticks, and garlic knots (gotta love ‘em).

But, getting back to pizza, I ordered a large deluxe pizza, with pepperoni, sausage, green peppers, onions, and mushrooms – for pick-up.

The pizza was hot and ready when picked up and upon arrival at my home, it was quickly consumed, as I found that CB’s Pizza is pretty darn good pizza.

There were good-sized pieces of pepperoni, sausage, onion and green peppers – not little tiny bits, but larger pieces that you could actually bite into and taste – and it tasted good. The only criticism I may have had was that it seemed to be a tad thin when it came to the sauce – an individual taste, and a factor easily remedied.

So check it out!

CB’s Pizza and Grill is located at 5820 Ranch Lake Blvd.; call (941)777-7674 or visit cbspizzaandgrill.com.



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THE UNASSUMING WINE BROS.

Summertime Wines

BY VIGO ONSTAD (U.S. ARMY, RET.)
AND PATRICK DUGGAN, ESQ

It's summertime in Florida, and that means it's HOT! We're talking "full-on cancel your plans to avoid leaving the house, so you don't sweat through your shirt the second you leave the A/C" hot! Overcoming this type of heat is not for the timid or unprepared – it requires a game plan and a steady arsenal of fermented grapes. Don't worry, we're here to help!

Let's be realistic – when it comes to staying cool during the Florida dog days, the last thing you're probably thinking is "let's open a full-bodied bottle of Cab to cool off after cutting the grass." Instead, if you're like us, you want to drink something cool and refreshing while getting your "tan on" and beating the heat.

When it comes to getting and staying cool, we're not just content this summer to beat the Florida heat ... our goal is to help you – our readers – defeat it too, by finding the perfect quenching wine to keep your temperature down and your buzz up.

To do so, we needed to develop a plan. That's where the strategic thinking of an Army veteran and the practicing lawyer comes in handy. To accomplish this mission, we created this month's ground rules: select two refreshing and relatively affordable white wines (after all, we are The Unassuming Wine Bros – not The Pretentious Wine Bros) for a final head-to-head tasting showdown to crown the winner. Then we planned to mix in something crisp and sparkling to create the perfect alternative recommendations for you to stay cool. Sounds easy, but because we are busy professionals, our plan required the division of labor. To accomplish the mission, here is what each of us did, how it went down, and, of course what we thought of the wines we encountered along the way.

THE WHITE WINE SHOWDOWN

Vigo: My task was selecting the wines for the summer white wine tasting showdown. I knew selecting just two wines would be a challenge, so I needed to find a spot that had a little bit of everything. I knew just the place, and headed to The Lodge at The Lakewood Ranch Golf & Country Club. The Lodge is one of the private club's two clubhouses, located in the Country Club East village in Lakewood Ranch. The architecture is beautiful, the sunset views are amazing, and the food and staff are simply the best. Ryan Glenn, the director of The Lodge, graciously aided us by serving up a sampling of some of The Lodge's most popular selections.

They had the perfect wine selection for what we needed. With more than 35 wines on the menu, ranging from \$5 happy hour glasses to \$185 bottles, The Lodge's wine selection has a little something for everyone. Ryan lent me some of his stash and expertise to help narrow down my search. He poured me six different wines: a German riesling, two California chardonnays, an Italian pinot grigio, and two sauvignon blancs – one from California, the other from New Zealand. In other words, I was the day's big winner! To save time and print space, in a shocking surprise given my typical wine tastes, my two favorites were the two sauvignon blancs. I had my two finalists and was ready for the showdown.

The first of the two finalists was the 2018 Mason sauvignon blanc [\$19/bottle (retail); 13.9% alcohol; 90 Points - James Suckling]. It is the pride of Mason Cellars in Napa Valley. It is cool fermentation, stainless steel process, and frequent swirling helps accentuate this wine's classic California style. The other finalist was the 2019 The Ned sauvignon blanc [\$14/bottle (retail); 13% alcohol; 88 Points - Wine Spectator] and hails from Marisco Vineyards in Marlborough, New Zealand. The Ned's character is captured through its 100% field destemming, gentle pressing in stainless steel tanks, and cool fermentation. For those scoring at home, same grape, different regions, similar yet distinct methods, both delicious.

Ahead of the showdown, our wives ordered takeout from Lucky Pelican Bistro with super



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fresh peel-and-eat shrimp constituting a great food pairing with the sauvignon blancs. When we finally plunged into each bottle, neither the Mason nor The Ned disappointed – or lasted long. Here is what we thought:

Vigo: I felt that the Mason sauvignon blanc had a longer finish on the palate, but what I enjoyed was the not-so-grapefruit-forward taste that most sauvignon blancs possess. The Ned was balanced, clean, and refreshing. I noted The Ned's tartness (acidity) and the lack of grapefruit forwardness. I thought both bottles were solid choices and I will gladly consume each again.

Patrick: I enjoyed the Mason's subtle hints of grapefruit, but more than anything, its long, zesty, lingering finish. I felt it was crisp, yet creamy at the same time. The Ned was great too, although it drank a little more like a typical sauvignon blanc with tart, citrus notes. I thought both wines were refreshing and will definitely consume both again.

It's great to like lots of wines but we had a mission to select the most refreshing summer white wine and that required us to be decisive. When forced to pick, we both gave the edge to the 2018 Mason sauvignon blanc. It is a dynamic summer wine with an awesome finish. A perfect wine for the hot Florida summer.

THE REFRESHING, CHANGE-OF-PACE SPARKLING OPTION

Patrick: My assignment was to find an affordable and refreshing sparkling wine to serve as a complementary, change of pace recommendation for our readers. I am a big fan of champagne, but I knew this would not be practical because when trying to stay in an affordable price range, other options tend to bring more bang for your buck. I received a big break when someone with very similar wine tastes to mine mentioned that a South African sparkling wine she had previously enjoyed was sold at Michael's Wine Cellar in Sarasota – a boutique wine shop that sells every type of wine imaginable at all price points from around the world. Within minutes – through the extremely user-friendly Michael's Wine Cellar website – I had located the bottle she had recommended – Graham Beck Brut NV – and at \$18/bottle, I knew it was right in my desired price range.

Although I had never previously heard of Graham Beck Brut NV, had never tasted a South African sparkling wine, and had no clue how it was bottled, after doing basic research on it, I knew this would be an interesting selection. Affectionally known as the "President's Choice," the Graham Beck Brut NV [\$18/bottle (retail); 11.85 % alcohol; 90 Points – Wine Advocate] was served at both Nelson Mandela's inauguration and in the aftermath of Barack Obama's electoral victory in 2008. In light of this interesting tidbit and regardless of politics, at this price point, how could I possibly not try this bottle? Further, this Cape Town brut, comprised of South African chardonnay and pinot noir grapes, is made in South Africa's Methode Cap Classique, the same secondary fermentation method used to bottle my favorite – champagne. I was intrigued.

Later that evening we sampled the Graham Beck Brut NV. It was an instant winner!

Patrick: The Graham Beck Brut NV was delicious from the outset and got even better as it opened up. The pinot noir grapes dominated the chardonnays (57% pinot noir vs. 43% chardonnay) making for a dry, non-sweet, and very interesting finish. This bottle delivered with creamy, citrus notes. If you enjoy sparkling wines, at this price point I highly recommend giving Graham Beck Brut NV a try. I know I will be doing so again!

Vigo: I agree, I thought this bottle was great. Normally I would not consider a sparkling wine unless it was for a special night out or a holiday. The Graham Beck Brut NV completely changed my mind about sparkling wines. Its effervescent, dry, but not acidic on your palate and presented beautiful citrus notes and a hint of apple pie on its finish. This sparkling

Big Paws Animal Hospital:

FOUR-LEGGED CARE AT UNIVERSITY CORNER

BY ERNIE SOLLER,
Community Correspondent

University Corner is one of Lakewood Ranch's newest shopping centers – and one that has garnered a lot of attention from the public.

The Publix store at this location is one of the largest and most up-to-date facilities in the area. But if you wander to the eastern end of the center, you'll find a rather unique place in the parking lot.

Now, like many parking lots in Lakewood Ranch, the one at University Corner has a number of curbed, grassed-in areas to make the lot look a little less like a total "pave-over." But there's one near the east end of the center that is equipped not with grass, but with turf – like the turf on professional football fields, and this one also has a pet poop station planted in the turf. (After all, what does your dog do as soon as he hops out of the car at the vet's office or the groomer?) Then, if you look up toward the building behind the doggie comfort station, you'll see the reason for this special island – the Big Paws Animal Hospital.

Big Paws Animal Hospital is the creation of Dr. Erin Siems.

When she was a kid back in Virginia, Erin loved to play with her girlfriends, who would always be playing with their dolls. After all, little girls have played with dolls forever, creating tea parties for their dolls, walking them around in miniature strollers, etc. But Erin didn't want to play with the human-type dolls. She wanted to play with the dolls' pets – and tend to their ailments and hurts! At that early age, she was attracted to a career in caring for animals. Her attitude was "bring me your dolls' pets and I'll fix them up." She refers to herself as a classic case of someone who always wanted to become a veterinarian!

From a school perspective, Erin was a science and math girl all the way, and after finishing her undergrad work, spent some time working in a human operating room as a laparoscopic technician, helping to maintain the equipment and helping the doctors in using the then-comparatively new method of laparoscopy in a surgical situation.

However, after a couple of years of this, she says that she essentially "ran back to veterinary medicine."

Erin had also worked at the veterinary clinic at Virginia Tech, and after comparing human medicine with veterinary medicine, she finally made the leap, enrolling at Ross University on the island of St. Kitts in the West Indies, where she remained for 3-1/2 years as a student, coming back to Virginia Tech to finish her work.

She still has lots of friends on St. Kitts, and is a frequent visitor.



PHOTO BY ERNIE SOLLER

After finishing her studies at Virginia Tech, Dr. Siems moved to Wytheville, in southwestern Virginia for a couple of years work at a community veterinary practice. Following that, she moved to St. Petersburg for two years at an animal emergency clinic, before moving to our area, where she's worked for the last seven years.

When Erin Siems finally decided to take the big leap and open her own private veterinary practice, she brought along her friend and colleague Lindsey, with whom she worked for seven years.

Lindsey grew up in Florida, in a family which raised Labrador retrievers, and has been working in the veterinary clinic business for many years. She's the person, according to Dr. Siems, who takes care of the "business end" of the practice so that Siems can focus on her patients.

A while back, I noticed a large billboard in southern Georgia along I-75. It pointed out that a family has more than one "family doctor" and that the "other family doctor" is your family's veterinarian.

It became very clear, in talking with Dr. Siems, that she loves her job – and her patients. She loves being that "other family doctor," who's there for her community.

She loves the challenge of being able to diagnose an animal's ailment even though, like human babies, her patients don't have the ability to communicate their symptoms to her. She also loves the idea that, being a vet, she can cuddle her patients.

Dr. Siems has two dogs of her own: a boxer named Shaka and Arnold, a Boerboel mastiff – think 150 pounds of giant South African dog! And, I have it on good authority that she's also great with cats.

And here's something for our readers to look forward to: Dr. Siems will soon be writing a pet column for *Around the Ranch*.

Big Paws Animal Hospital is located at 7341 University Parkway, in the University Corner shopping center, at the corner of University Parkway and Lorraine Road, in Lakewood Ranch. For more information call (941)300-0142 or visit bigpawsanimalhospital.com.

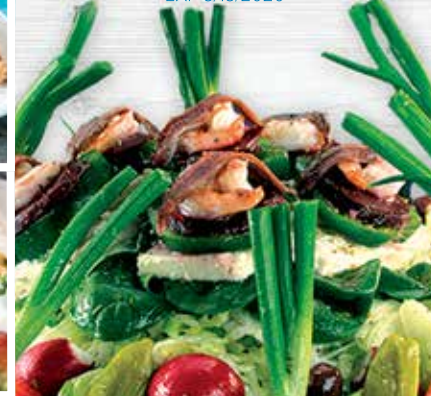


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LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

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Even in the midst of trying times, we make it our mission to give back to our community – to those who do so much for each other. In the past few months alone, Community Activities has donated over \$5,000 to fund five different scholarships for Lakewood Ranch students. This includes two \$1,000 scholarships for the Lakewood Ranch High School JROTC program, which were donated as proceeds from our virtual Tribute to Heroes parade in May.

In addition, we were able to award two \$1,000 scholarships to the Lakewood Ranch Medical Center Auxiliary nursing scholarship program with proceeds from our drive-by parade at the Lakewood Ranch Medical Center. Finally, there will be a \$1,000 scholarship that will be given in recognition of our community volunteer program, in conjunction with Lakewood Ranch High School Key Club. These are just some small



Keith Pandeloglou
Director of LWRCAC



ways in which we are able to reinvest in our community.

Every Sunday morning through the end of August, we are helping you with of your self care! Join us for Barre in the Park on Sunday, July 19, and Yoga in the Park on Sunday, July 26. We will alternate between yoga and barre each Sunday thru the end of August. Led by instructors from the Yoga Shack (coming to Waterside Place in 2021) and Barre3 on Main Street in Lakewood Ranch, these complimentary classes are a great way to get out and enjoy the morning sunlight and the wonderful setting that is Bob Gardner Park, off of White Eagle Boulevard.



Did you know the Players Centre for Performing Arts is coming to Waterside Place in Lakewood Ranch? In preparation for their eventual move, we're starting a program called Players in the Park. Youth ages 8-14 are welcome to join for some performing arts fun in the sun through August 4 from 10-11 a.m.! Amazing instructors from The Players Studio will be spending an hour on Tuesday and Thursday mornings teaching acting and dance in Bob Gardner Community Park, completely FREE! If you're looking for a way to stay active and get your fill of performing, join us! Please register in advance at myLWR.com.

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Social media sources for LWR Community Activities: www.lwrca.org • facebook.com/LWRCommunityActivities

Dear LWR

Times like these we discover what is truly important. Worries that we may have had seem so small in comparison to our challenges today. The health of our family, our community, our world, becomes most vital. Over the past months, we have seen great acts of heroism, strength, care, and love - right here in Lakewood Ranch.

You delivered groceries to those at risk, you donated masks, food, and artwork to LWR Medical Center, you painted your driveways and sidewalks, you supported LWR restaurants and businesses, you homeschooled your children, and you stayed home to help flatten the curve.

Thank you for helping make this time a little easier for our community. Never have I been more proud to chant **#WEARELWR**.

With much love,

Monaca Onstad
Director, Community Relations



**YOUR ONLINE COMMUNITY HUB.
CHECK OUT OUR COMMUNITY
CALENDAR FOR VIRTUAL EVENTS**



AROUND THE RANCH



Enjoy the Outdoors and Social Distancing at Bob Gardner Community Park

Nestled between wetland preserves and conservation areas, Bob Gardner Community Park features walking paths and soft trails, sports courts, a frisbee disc golf course, recreation pavilions, a gravity rail, playground, shaded picnic tables, and dog parks.

The 40-acre, mile-long linear park is ideal for pushing strollers, working out, or walking dogs. There's even outdoor yoga every other Sunday ... check myLWR.com for the schedule!

Or, if you prefer something more passive, enjoy the abundant nature and some bird watching! Enjoy your beautiful Lakewood Ranch park, but please be safe and healthy.



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BY ERNIE SOLLER,
Community Correspondent

The arrival of the COVID-19 coronavirus in the U.S. has triggered any number of bizarre – or just plain different – happenings around the country. There have been large protests aimed at the regulations promulgated by public officials to help in stemming the spread of the disease, and some of these protests have gotten more than a little scary.

Things have happened that most of us thought would never happen in our lifetimes, such as the wholesale closings of schools, bars and restaurants, and public buildings. And who would have expected to see a large portion of Americans walking the streets of their communities wearing masks? After all, in some areas, it was deemed illegal to wear a mask in public (Halloween excepted).

Yes, things have gotten quite a bit different from “usual” in our country and, back in the early part of March, before everything was closed down by government decree, Steve Milligan, owner of Lakewood Ranch’s Load-

Steve Milligan: Hand Sanitizer King of Lakewood Ranch



PHOTO BY ERNIE SOLLER

ed Cannon Distillery, was having dinner at a restaurant with his wife one night. The subject of the virus and what havoc it could play in our country came up in the conversation. As the discussion progressed, Steve got to thinking what he and his company could do to help.

The answer? Make hand sanitizer instead of booze. After all, he had the proper equipment to do it – high-grade distilling equipment – and knew the technique needed to do the job right. After all, Steve is a chemical engineer with lots of years of experience!

There was one small kink in his plans, though. At the time, federal regulations did not allow companies like Loaded Cannon to produce hand sanitizer, which severely limited availability. And the need for sanitizer became well-known very quickly. So, given the expectation that the government would relax the prohibition on sanitizer production, Steve went out and purchased a stockpile of the ingredients he needed, in order to make sure that he had them on hand if and when the ban was lifted.

And, sure enough, once the dwindling supply of hand sanitizer became better known to the folks in Washington, the approval came pretty swiftly, and Steve was in the sanitizer business at Loaded Cannon!

Steve made the decision that this wasn’t going to be just a for-profit enterprise. He wanted to make sure that the people of the Lakewood Ranch community and the surrounding areas had access to this suddenly, very necessary healthcare item. So, he made up his mind to give away hand sanitizer, at least in small amounts, so that people who needed it could get it even if

grocery store shelves were empty. A lot of store shelves got emptied out very quickly, once people realized how dangerous COVID-19 would become. Stores began to put limits on quantities of certain items customers could buy – items such as toilet paper, paper towels, bleach, anti-septic wipes – as well as hand sanitizer.

Once the word got out that Loaded Cannon Distillery was making hand sanitizer, the reaction was swift and large. People lined up at the door of the distillery to get their bottles of hand sanitizer. The tasting room and the distillery tours were closed down, but the sanitizer flowed freely!

How many bottles of sanitizer did Loaded Cannon give away? How about a nice round figure of around 10,000!

Loaded Cannon still has plenty of its sanitizer on hand for purchase. Steve can come up with not only the small individual bottles, but he’s also got 10- and 15-ounce bottles, one-gallon jugs and, if you want to try to sanitize all your friends, a five-gallon container.

As for other “wish list” items Steve would like to see implemented so as to enhance Loaded Cannon’s business outlook, one would be a repeal of the “six bottle” limit. At present, a customer can only purchase a maximum of six bottles of a particular brand or type of spirits legally at the distillery. If he wants to buy a whole case of, say, “White Dog Corn Whiskey,” he’s out of luck. Second, Steve would like to see the prohibition on selling cocktails made on site from the distillery’s spirits also lifted. You currently can purchase a bottle of Loaded Cannon’s product at the distillery, but you can’t walk up to the bar in their tasting room and get a crafted cocktail made from that product.

And, speaking of “White Dog Corn Whiskey,” AKA moonshine, Steve tells me that it is the smoothest moonshine around.

Loaded Cannon has also added to its stock of products with items such as spirit-scented candles, and pimento ginger chili tonic. And ... Steve offers recipes for how you can make cocktails from his offerings at home, one being the Jalapeno Lakewood Ranch Mule, made from Loaded Cannon’s “Anney’s Blade” jalapeno vodka.

So, stay sanitized and stay healthy. Loaded Cannon can come up with the goods.

For more information visit loadedcannon-distillery.com

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LWRBA

LAKEWOOD RANCH BUSINESS ALLIANCE

The Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance (LWRBA) is a business organization committed to connecting, educating, and strengthening the business community in the Lakewood Ranch region. The LWRBA's 750+ member businesses reflect a wide variety of small and large businesses across all industries in and around Lakewood Ranch. More information is available online at www.LWRBA.org

WELCOME NEW ALLIANCE MEMBERS

Please help us in welcoming the newest additions to our family of businesses. For a complete list of LWRBA members, visit LWRBA.org/MemberDirectory.

- Amaryllis Marketing Inc./A Vernon Company
- BSWANKY
- Fine Wine & Tastings on Main
- Heartland Payment Systems
- SRQ Media
- Wells Insurance Agency

FREE ALLIANCE PROGRAMMING AVAILABLE ONLINE

While the LWRBA has paused on hosting in-person events during these past few months, our team has been working hard to support local businesses with resources and educational programs through our electronic channels.

Past topics in our Alliance LEADS Online series include "The New Normal Workplace: Tips for Returning to the Office," "State of the State with FL Senate President Galvano," "Navigating

a Pandemic: Non-Profits," "Your Vote. Your Voice. With Manatee and Sarasota Supervisors of Elections," and more.

If you missed any of these, full recordings of select webinars can be viewed anytime on our YouTube channel at YouTube.com/LWRBA.

To stay up-to-date on upcoming events and programs, visit our calendar LWRBA.org/events.

CONNECT YOUR BUSINESS: MEMBERSHIP FEES NOW PRORATED THROUGH 2020

The LWRBA has exciting news! In an effort to support our local business needs and increase their presence in the LWR region, the Alliance is offering prorated membership fees through the rest of 2020. There is no better time to join our 650+ business member organization!

The Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance has been working to keep the businesses of LWR connected. Throughout these past few months, we have been committed to the power of connection, by informing the business community of news and available resources, showcasing members through our digital channels, and hosting virtual events such as networking opportunities and educational webinars. Of course, in-person events are in the works and will return when it is safe to do so.

If you have any questions on joining the LWRBA or how membership can help grow your business, please give us a call. If you are ready to take advantage of the Alliance pro-rated membership, visit LWRBA.org/Join or call our office at 941-757-1664.

FROM PAGE 8

wine delivers, and at least two bottles should be chilling in your wine fridge for a visit by a special friend.

To cool off this summer, go out and try all of these great choices. Then let us know whether you agree, disagree, or whether you prefer others more.

FROM THE MAIL BAG: We received several emails from our last article with some really good tips. Please keep the emails coming. Thank you for helping us discover the best wine and the best wine menus around!

Karen N. suggested we check out Capital Grill's wine events and sample some of their wine selections. She said that "Wine to Buy"

on Gulf Gate Drive in Sarasota is a great place to purchase wine. Thanks for the tips Karen, keep sipping with your Sisters of the Vine!

Doug R. wrote regarding a great deal at our local Pubixes. Doug recommended the Sterling Vintners' Collection Dark Red Blend. At \$8.99 a bottle, we are intrigued and it may find a spot in a future Wine Bros' wine adventure.

We are The Unassuming Wine Bros – Patrick and Vigo – two regular guys who love everything about wine, including writing about it. Our goal is to explore the nuances of wine in an interesting way, share our adventures with you, and have a little fun along the way. We'd love to hear your input and suggestions and were thrilled to receive your responses last month. Drop us a line: VigoandPatrick@gmail.com.



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Esplanade at Azario Lakewood Ranch Debuts 18-Hole Championship Golf Course

Taylor Morrison unveiled its new 18-hole championship golf course within the Esplanade at Azario Lakewood Ranch in May. Designed by golf course architect Chris Wilczynski, the course is open to the public with special introductory prices.

"Esplanade at Azario Lakewood Ranch is an exciting new addition to Lakewood Ranch, a highly desired location for new housing in Manatee County," said Joseph Fontana, division president of Taylor Morrison Sarasota. "We were excited to work with Chris again to build a golf course that residents will enjoy for many years to come. Chris understands the vision of our Esplanade brand and helped us develop a golf course that complements its signature lifestyle."

The golf course sits within the approximately 1,000-acre Azario community. Five of the holes will be played along and through mature oaks and pines. Wilczynski's signature of building within mature trees is visible throughout. With six sets of tees that play from 3,500 to more than 7,000 yards, the layout features wide fairways, randomly placed strategic bunkering and 18 masterfully designed greens.

"It was an honor to partner with Taylor Morrison again to create another state-of-the-art golf course that reflects their vision of the Esplanade brand and will provide Azario residents and the Lakewood Ranch community with an exceptional golf experience," said Wilczynski. "Our goal was to create a course that's visually dynamic and fun for players of all abilities. I'm excited for people to experience it."

Working with a flat canvas, the team turned challenges into solutions, officials said. To add dimension to the otherwise flat land, Wilczynski and his team dug several large man-made lakes and used the soil from the excavation to construct the golf course, residential lot pads and roads.

"The extensive earthmoving and detailed landscape that we created for each hole brings a dramatic transformation to the property not found elsewhere," said Wilczynski.

The course, which will ultimately be a resident-only private golf venue, provides a scenic tour through 18 holes of rolling grounds with the Esplanade at Azario Lakewood Ranch community, where new homes are now selling. Residents of Esplanade at Azario will have access to the golf course, in addition to an array of planned resort amenities including a wellness center, culinary center, resort-style pool, Bahama bar, sports courts, state-of-the-art fitness center, fire pits, and a fulltime lifestyle manager located on site to plan special events, parties and more for the residents.

For more information about Esplanade at Azario Lakewood Ranch, visit AzarioLakewoodRanch.com or call (866)495-6006. To schedule a tee time call (941)253-2901.



HEALTH OF WEALTH

5 Tips to Help Improve Your Finances Immediately

BY HULDAH MATHIS

Provided by Huldah Mathis, CFP®, RICP®, Northwestern Mutual

While juggling the demands of everyday life, it's easy to put your financial planning on the back burner. Between working, home repairs, caring for your pets or children – it can be hard to find time for anything else. But when you make your financial health a priority, you can rest easy knowing that you'll be building a brighter future for yourself and your loved ones.



Whether your goal is to get out of debt or save for the things you want today – achieving your goals starts with a comprehensive financial plan. This plan will be one of your keys to preparing for potential financial risks, saving for the future and planning for retirement. Get on track with these five easy tips:

1. Know where you stand. Before you know where you're going, you must know where you are today. Review your current assets, debts, expenses, and income sources. Get a clear view of your financial situation by:

- Tracking your spending to see where your money is going.
- Checking your credit profile.
- Reviewing past financial successes and failures.
- Making sure your finances are adequately protected.

- Calculating your net worth.

2. Create detailed and personal goals. When setting goals, it's important to make them specific and relatable. For example, "saving for vacation" isn't as motivating as saving \$5,000 by January for a vacation to Hawaii. Making sure your goals are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and have a Timeline – will help propel you to achieve them.

3. Partner to create a plan. Partnering with a trusted financial representative will help you to map out strategies that can get you to your goals and set a time frame for reaching them. A financial professional can help you build a personalized plan to meet your short- and long-term goals – no matter how big or small. With some expert help, you can easily crunch the numbers, weigh options and map out a saving and investing strategy that's right for you.

4. Take control. Not all financial priorities are based on big life milestones. Sometimes achieving a seemingly small financial feat can be just what you need to get on the right track. Unsure of where to begin? Here are some items to consider putting on your financial to-do list:

- Set a budget and stick to it.
- Build an emergency fund—aiming to have six months of living expenses socked away.
- Manage debt wisely (pay off high-interest and non-deductible debt first).

- Be strategic in your investment and saving decisions.

- Build your credit score
- Save for retirement—and take full advantage of your employer's retirement plan.
- Protect your assets and your income.
- Update your estate planning documents.

5. Review your plan regularly. Life is filled with changes, both personal and financial. Milestones like a new job or a new family member will impact your strategy. Make sure to meet with your financial representative before one of these milestones and at least annually to ensure your mix of investments, budget and insurance options are current and accurately reflect your goals and risk tolerance. To help you remember, plan to review your financial plan around the same time each year; the start of the new year or your birthday often work well.

As you strive to get your financial house in order, be sure to stay focused on the big picture. Keep in mind that financial planning isn't a once-in-a-lifetime activity, it takes a strategic, steady effort to arrive at your destination. With a little thought, effort and planning, you may confidently achieve your financial goals.

Huldah C. Mathis is an agent of NM and registered representative of the NMIS based in Sarasota. To contact her, please call (941) 957-4518, email huldah.mathis@nm.com, or visit huldahmathis.nm.com.



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Lakewood Ranch Announces New Waterside Place Tenants

Three new tenants will open in Lakewood Ranch's new, 36-acre Waterside Place town center.

Atria Café, CROPjuice and Duck Donuts are set to join previously announced tenants: Korè, Derek The Salon, PAINT Nail Bar, SmithLaw, Foundation Coffee Co., The Yoga Shack, SoFresh and Kilwins.

Waterside Place construction is underway and scheduled to open in spring of 2021. When complete, Waterside Place will serve as the heart of Waterside, Lakewood Ranch's first Sarasota County village. The retail hub will blend arts and entertainment destinations with 115,000 square feet of unique in-line and freestanding commercial, retail and office space; diverse dining options;



an eight-acre park; and miles of nature trails.

Atria Café, an artisan-focused eatery, boasts a menu of aromatic coffees, teas and specialty drinks, and a full menu of freshly baked breads, breakfast dishes, sandwiches, and salads, plus a toast bar. The café partners with local food purveyors to source the finest quality produce and ingredients. The Waterside Place location will be Atria Café's second in Lakewood Ranch, following the planned eatery on Lakewood Ranch Boulevard, between state roads 64 and 70.

"Our new Atria Café at Waterside Place will offer locals and visitors a cozy place to enjoy our artisan baked goods and locally-sourced ingredients, as well as our seasonally-focused menu," said Jim Angus, co-owner of Atria Café.

Visitors to Waterside Place will have their pick of hand-crafted organic juices made from fruits and vegetables at CROPjuice. This will be the fourth location for co-owners Karen Odierna and Keith Campbell. This is the first location within Lakewood Ranch.

Duck Donuts is a family company offering fresh, delicious, and made-to-order donuts in a

variety of flavors. The brand, which originated on the sandy beaches of Duck, N.C., believes in giving back to the communities where its team members live and work. This will be the first location within Lakewood Ranch, as well as the first in the region.

Waterside Place will be more easily accessible to customers due to the completion of Lakewood Ranch Boulevard, which now extends south to Fruitville Road. The completion of this project improves the transportation network for Sarasota County and Manatee County residents, alleviating congestion on I-75.

"We're thrilled to welcome these new tenants to Waterside Place's already exceptional lineup

of retailers," said Kirk Boylston, president of LWR Commercial. "We look forward to fostering more relationships with businesses in our community and offering residents and their visitors exciting new dining options."

Situated on a 36-acre peninsula overlooking the mile-wide Kingfisher Lake, Waterside Place includes numerous unique communal parks and "pop-out" spaces, which will inspire gathering and interaction among visitors and businesses. The town center will further activate the dynamic area by hosting festivals, farmers' markets, and more.

In total, Waterside will feature more than 5,000 homes in up to 12 neighborhoods, which will be connected to Waterside Place via trails and water taxis. More than 300 homes in the area have already been sold ahead of the town center's anticipated opening later this year.

Other future amenities at Waterside include the relocation of the Players Centre for Performing Arts into an expanded, 70,000-square-foot performing arts center.

For more information about Waterside and Waterside Place, visit lwrwaterside.com.

Lakewood Ranch Medical Center is Expecting Renovation of Women's Center to be Delivered in Early 2021

Lakewood Ranch Medical Center (LWRMC) began construction in June on a \$3 million renovation of its Women's Center. The project is intended to give the Women's Center a more spa-like atmosphere and expand access to high-quality maternity care in the Lakewood Ranch community. The first renovated rooms will be available in September, and the project is expected to be completed by early 2021.

Modern hospitality design has moved away from the clinical settings of the past to offer spaces more relaxing for the people who will occupy them. Keeping with current design trends for labor and delivery spaces, LWRMC's vision for the Women's Center focuses on the comfort of patients, both mother and newborn, and families.

The envisioned Women's Center will provide a peaceful environment for women at every stage of labor, from admission to delivery and postpartum. The lobby will be modernized to offer a welcoming atmosphere to expectant mothers as they arrive. To emphasize hospitality, the new reception and waiting areas will feature a backlit reception desk. Corridors will be updated with artwork, warmer finishes and new lighting to avoid the often-sterile atmosphere of hospitals. Further departing from the hospital feel, entryways to each room will be enhanced with decorative soffits, new lighting and custom signage.

Every labor and delivery room will receive new finishes and



amenities, including personalized lighting control for expectant mothers giving a unique birthing experience, added space for family members and new equipment to assist with delivery. To aid with recovery after the baby's birth, patient rooms will have the feel of a hotel room, with upgraded headwall finishes and furniture, large televisions and the option to hide or disguise clinical aspects of the room.

This renovation project will expand the Women Center's capacity to 14 labor, delivery, recovery and postpartum rooms, ensuring mothers and babies stay together in the same room

throughout their stay. There are also plans for significant improvements to the staff areas of the Women's Center, including a redesign of the nurses' station for improved functionality and efficiency.

"After our completion of the \$28.5 million dollar expansion project, we are excited to start the Women's Center Renovation," said Andy Guz, Lakewood Ranch Medical Center's CEO. "It is our goal to always improve our patient care and experience at Lakewood Ranch Medical Center."

Lakewood Ranch Women's Center's birth designer, Chrissy Coney, added that having a baby can be exciting but also very stressful for expecting parents. "By providing them with a calm, serene environment, we can help to make them more relaxed and comfortable," Coney said. "The look and feel of the new Women's Center will create a peaceful, warm environment, in which families can feel more like they are at home than in a hospital. The Birth Designer program gives them the education and support they need to feel at ease when coming in for their delivery and I believe the renovations will enhance this by providing a spa-like environment to go along with the amenities we offer, such as aromatherapy and music."

For more information on the LWRMC Women's Center visit lakewoodranchmedicalcenter.com/services/womens-services.



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