



Around the Ranch

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THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER OF LAKEWOOD RANCH

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020



PEACE OUT, 2020 – The second annual Mindful Triathlon was held last month at Bob Gardner Park in Lakewood Ranch. The reimaged event benefited the Brain Health Initiative and drew some 60 attendees. For more photos see pages 12-13. Photo by Eric Nalpas

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Advertising Sales/Circulation: Around the Ranch is published by Lakewood Ranch Media which is solely responsible for its content. The Herald-Tribune is responsible for the printing, distribution and sales production of this newspaper. The articles and editorial viewpoints contained in this publication are written solely by Lakewood Ranch Media with the assistance of the Community Services Office and other offices in Lakewood Ranch, none of which are associated with the Herald-Tribune.

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Lakewood Ranch Town Hall Is Open

Town Hall is currently open for governance meetings and scheduled appointments; however, it is still requested and encouraged that everyone use phone and email as the primary way to conduct business with Town Hall. Transponders, dog park memberships, and reservations will continue to be conducted through the website and scheduled appointments. Anyone wanting to access Town Hall will need to wear a face covering and have their temperature checked. Those unable to wear face coverings will need to conduct business over the phone or email. The lobby area will be limited to four people in line. Additional people will need to wait on the front porch.

Board meetings, committee meetings, and club meetings will need to comply with the following:

- Setups are limited to predefined socially distanced layouts (generally 11 - person max per salon).
- Meeting organizer will need to regulate

their own reservations for the limited seats/participants that will be available.

- Access to a projector and screen will be provided if possible. Any additional equipment needed for virtual (Zoom-type) meetings are the responsibility of the meeting organizer. Town Hall will not supply additional equipment or technology assistance.

- No food events are allowed at this time.
- No exercise classes are allowed at this time.
- No card or mahjong events are allowed at this time.

- Saturday and Sunday events are not allowed at this time.

- Groups that do not comply with the conditions above may lose use privilege of Town Hall facilities.

Town Hall North: Town Hall North is also open to the general public. However, given the size of the Town Hall North building, the meeting rooms will not be available to the general public or clubs.



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A Brain Healthy Approach to the Most Wonderful Time of the Year

By Dr. Stephanie Peabody,
PSYC, HSSP, Neuropsychologist, Executive Director



The signs are all there: colorful decorations appearing before Halloween, non-stop ads proclaiming this is the most wonderful time of the year, multiple cable channels broadcasting happily-ever-after movies, and high stress levels. Yes, it's the holiday season. But just like most of 2020, the holidays look and feel different this year.

The holidays are often a time to celebrate together with family and friends, but they can also be a time of stress and anxiety. Our brain health has taken a lot of hits in 2020. Many of us are approaching the holidays feeling exhausted and unfulfilled, and now we will try to live up to unrealistic expectations of planning the perfect holiday. For those of us away from our loved ones, or without close connections, the holidays may amplify our loneliness. Then we add the COVID-19 pandemic to all of this, and it seems that 2020 is tossing us a year-end triple play.

What can we do to protect our brain health and truly enjoy the holidays? The BHI looks at these three threats to our happy holidays and talks about some strategies for protecting our brain health and fighting brain illness.

HOLIDAY STRESS. For many people, the holidays bring as much stress as they do joy. Just like Clark Griswold in "Christmas Vacation," we set unrealistic expectations for the perfect holiday. But unlike the movies, hilarity does not ensue as a result of our efforts.

Instead of being holiday over-achievers, we can try taking time to pause and reflect amid the hustle of the holiday season. We can accept that things will not be perfect and aim for good enough. When something is stressing us out, we need to stop and ask how this person/place/thing fits into the grand scheme of things. Slowing down, being present in the moment, and not losing sight of what really counts — enjoying our families and traditions — can help bring the joy back to our holidays.

LONELINESS. We have spent the better part of this year apart from our friends and loved ones and it has provided us with a better understanding of loneliness. Loneliness isn't about being alone, it's about lacking those connections to others that make us happy, healthy, and productive. Remembering past holidays filled with fun and family, or seeing others enjoy their "perfect" family holiday, can make this time of year seem even more isolating for people who are alone.

There are ways to avoid being alone during the holidays. Remember, while we are practicing physical distancing, it doesn't have to include distancing ourselves socially. Try looking for ways to connect with others. Reach out to friends, community groups, churches or organizations in need. We can acknowledge our feelings by reaching out to others who may feel the same way. Taking care of ourselves and asking for what we need can make our holidays a special experience. There are plenty of ways to volunteer virtually, such as providing online administrative support to non-profit organizations or donating much-needed food or funds.

COVID-19. The news is not good when it comes to COVID-19.



The numbers are escalating for people testing positive in all 50 states, including here on Florida's Suncoast. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) point to small household gatherings as a major contributor to the rise in COVID-19 cases.

Physical distancing is critical in preventing the spread of COVID-19, according to Mark Pasternack, MD, chief of pediatric infectious disease at Mass General Hospital. "I think the notion of that beautifully set table with china and crystal and everyone sitting elbow-to-elbow isn't a good idea," Pasternack said.

The CDC recommends we forego the large family gathering this year and limit holiday gatherings to members of our own households — anyone who currently lives and shares common spaces in our home. If you do plan to attend or host a holiday gathering, remember that outdoors is safer than indoors. Living in Florida, our beautiful weather makes an outdoor celebration

possible. CDC guidelines for attending and hosting holiday events and holiday travel can be found on the CDC website.

In a recent Facebook Live event Karestan Koenen, PhD, a professor of psychiatric epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, said the first step toward a meaningful holiday season is acknowledging that the holidays will be hard this year. She suggests trying to find ways to make this holiday season during the pandemic more positive. We may not be able to spend the day with family, but we can reach out to them via phone or videoconference. Zoom is suspending its 40-minute time limit on holidays, so our family celebrations won't be cut short. A meal over Zoom may not be our idea of holiday dinner, but it does give us a chance to gather, share stories, and practice gratitude for those in our life.

Dr. Koenen also suggests finding an activity that gives more meaning to the holiday, such as delivering meals to those less fortunate, remembering to wear a mask and gloves, maintaining a safe distance of six feet from others, and carrying antibacterial wipes or hand sanitizer.

Despite the challenges of 2020, we have the tools we need to turn this year's holiday triple-play into a brain healthy home run.

The Brain Health Initiative needs your participation!

There's still time to participate in the Brain Health Initiative Pilot Study. If you received one of the invitations sent to randomly selected adult residents from Lakewood Ranch, we encourage you to complete the online survey. The pilot study examines the ways you function mentally, socially, cognitively, and overall, as well as the factors in your life that present risk or promote resilience in brain health and performance. Community participation is critical to the study's success.

To learn more about the Brain Health Initiative and to become a Brain Health Champion, visit brainhealthinitiative.org.

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is a cutting-edge approach to protecting brain health, optimizing brain performance, and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI is creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the brain health movement, because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference.

Lakewood Ranch CERT Wraps up 2020 Storm Season

The 2020 hurricane season is officially in the books. While it officially ended Nov. 30, NOAA reminds us that tropical storms may still form in December ... and it seems like anything can happen in 2020. This year brought a record-breaking 30 named storms to the Atlantic. Twelve of the storms made landfall in the continental U.S. This was the fifth consecutive year with above-normal activity in the Atlantic.

LWR CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) completed a successful activation for Tropical Storm Eta. Sixteen teams activated (114 members) and provided damage assessment information for their neighborhoods. While Eta turned out to be a minor storm for us, the activation was a good exercise. CERT plans to make some refinements for next year, which will help position them to better assist Ranch residents in 2021.

The team is planning many activities for 2021, hoping that the

pandemic will subside enough to let them complete training and public events safely. Among the 2020 highlights for the group:

- New YouTube channel
- New training videos
- New website with extensive member section
- New standard operating procedures
- New basic training course with final exam
- New email system implemented
- New Google Meet technology implementation
- New logo

Upcoming events: radio communications committee video call, 7 p.m. Dec. 16; member meeting, 7 p.m. Jan. 13; and virtual public event, "COVID-19 Scams," 7 pm. Jan. 25.

For more information visit lwrCERT.org, email cert@lwrCERT.org, or call (941)404-8606.



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Is Dog Perfect the Perfect Store for your Dog?

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

Do you have a perfect dog? Is your dog the cutest, the most well-trained, the healthiest dog in your neighborhood? Do your neighbors envy your dog's looks, and make comments on how cute your dog is?

Is your dog absolutely the cleanest dog in the neighborhood? When your dog runs across a field, does he look like the principal character in a commercial for a highly advertised dog food, or do his looks make you want to throw a blanket over him and hide him from the neighbors?

If your dog is the manifestation of dog perfection, then that's great.

On the other hand, if your dog needs "a little help" here and there, whether it be in training, grooming, food selection, etc., you might want to consider a trip to the DOGPerfect location in the center of The Green shopping center, conveniently located at the northeast corner of Lakewood Ranch Boulevard and State Road 70, right across from the Sirius Day Spa.

So, how did I arrive at the idea of taking my pet to DOGPerfect?

Well, my dog, Bo, is a West Highland White Terrier. Note the word "white." Several weeks ago, my wife and I took a little trip to visit friends out of state. When we go out of town, Bo also takes a short trip ... to our friend Don's house. Don also has a "Westie," and the two dogs get along very well. But, for some reason, when Bo goes to visit Uncle Donald he comes home – shall I say – less than white.

Even after I had given Bo a comb-out, and tried to clean him up, he still looked a little down-at-the-heels, as far as cleanliness was concerned.

But then I caught sight of a flyer in the Sunday paper advertising this place called DOGPerfect, and there was a coupon deal offering 20% off grooming services. Since Bo also could have used a good haircut, this looked like a perfect opportunity to achieve a little "dog perfection." I called the DOGPerfect location in Lakewood Ranch, and made an appointment for Bo's grooming.

When I went to check Bo in at DOGPerfect, I met the store manager, Megan Boston-Wood, who filled me in on all sorts of other things that make DOGPerfect special.

For one thing, not only does DOGPerfect offer in-house professional grooming, they have this fantastic "do it yourself" self-serve dog washing machine. This machine, which is made in the Netherlands, operates on tokens. The dog owner brings his or her dog in, and places the dog into the machine, puts a token into the slot, and the fun begins. The machine dispenses water, shampoo, etc. and, once your dog is clean and dry, you're on your way. Megan told me that this gizmo is a favorite of dog owners who take their pets to the dog park, where they sometimes get really dirty and/or muddy. The owner brings their pet to DOGPerfect, runs the dog through the cycles of the machine, and presto! A clean dog to take home!



DOGPerfect also offers training classes, so that you can have the pleasure of a well-behaved pet, a dog that will be a joy not only for you and your family, but will be mannerly when company comes. No one likes to visit a home and be greeted by a dog who jumps all over them. And considering that many Florida residents are of the "senior citizen" variety, this is even more important.

Being a "total service" place, DOGPerfect carries many lines of food and treats, and, note this: NONE of the food sold at dog perfect comes from China. And since rawhide treats are not all that good for dogs, DOGPerfect does not stock rawhide items.

They have all varieties of food and treats, including freeze-dried meat items – just moisten, heat, and serve – as well as fresh-frozen food items, just like you'd buy for your human family at the grocery store. And of course, they carry a wide variety of dry and canned food. If you don't see the specialty food item you're looking for, DOGPerfect can special order the item for you, as long as it is available from their distributor. Proper nutrition is important for your dog, and a change in food may make for an improvement in your dog's health. DOGPerfect offers free nutrition counseling to assist you in finding the right food for your pet. You can sign up for this service at: DOGPerfect.com/nutritionconsult.

DOGPerfect will deliver items to your home, if you aren't able to come into the store, and they also offer curbside pickup.

And to save their customers dollars, DOGPerfect has a "Per-



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER



fect Club." Perfect Club members get unlimited use of the self-serve dog wash, a free birthday toy for their pet, unlimited nail trims, a discount of 20% on professional grooming, a full bag of bulk treats for the price of a half bag, one free training lesson, and a 15% discount on dog and cat food for the entire year of membership, which costs \$99/year. The discount is good for ALL your family's dogs and cats.

As for toys – they've got 'em – in large quantities and all types.

DOGPerfect is a locally owned private business that lists as it values the importance of good pet nutrition, behavior, wellness, and play in the life of your pet. DOGPerfect also contributes to the community in that they ask their patrons to "round-up" their bills, and in doing so, DOGPerfect is able to donate over \$1,000 a month to shelters in our area, as well as charitable organizations, like Southeast Guide Dogs, which train Service animals.

So, if you'd like to see a "perfect dog" in your home, check out DOGPerfect.

The address is 11605 S.R. 70 E. Hours are 9 a.m. to 7 pm. Monday through Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. Visit dogperfect.com, or call (941)803-4496.

December Programs at Chabad of Bradenton & Lakewood Ranch

Please note that all events will take place at the Chabad tent (outside Chabad at 5712 Lorraine Road) or at the virtual Chabad House at [chabadofbradenton.com/zoom](http://chabadofbradenton.com/), unless otherwise written.

Torah Studies

Mondays, 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

At the virtual Chabad House

Explore the Talmud and its laws in its original text. No prior knowledge of the Talmud or Hebrew is necessary. Book fee: \$45.

Torah Studies

Saturday mornings, 9 - 9:30 a.m.

At the Chabad tent

Participate in a fascinating class on the Torah portion of the week. Discover the mystical meanings and lessons behind ancient stories. Admission is free.

Weekly Shabbat Services

At the Chabad tent

Friday nights, one half-hour after candle lighting time; **Saturday mornings** at 9:30 a.m., Shabbat Kiddush at 11 a.m.

Enjoy warm, family friendly services at The Chabad House. Saturday morning services are followed by a delicious buffet Kiddush.

Torah & Tea

At the virtual Chabad or at the Chabad tent

Dec. 22 and 29 - 11 a.m.

Join Chanie Bukiet through for a weekly dose of

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Chabad Hebrew School of the Arts

At the virtual Chabad House or at the Chabad tent

Dec. 20 - from 9:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

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RCS - The Code to Joy

At the Virtual Chabad House or the Chabad tent

Dec. 17, from noon - 1:15 p.m.

Code to Joy is a monthly course which explores some of the underlying ideas and beliefs that sustain a truly happy life. Fusing classic Jewish concepts with the panoramic perspective of Chassidic thought, along with a sprinkling of insights and research from modern psychology, you'll learn how to find self-acceptance without complacency, to confront the past without being burdened by it, to be comforted by faith without being confined by it, to give to others and gain even more, and so much more. Course fee: \$70 JWC members / \$75 non JWC members, or \$18 per class.

For more information on any of the ongoing events or to reserve, call Rabbi Mendy Bukiet at (941)752-3030, email rabbim@chabadofbradenton.com, or visit the Chabad website at chabadofbradenton.com.

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LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Building a true sense of community, through memorable events and social clubs.



With over 60 community groups and clubs to choose from, there's no shortage of options to find your tribe here in Lakewood Ranch. Even during an incredibly tough year for everyone, our groups and clubs came out in full force to continue their missions, and to find ways to give back to our community.

November marked the opening of the Lakewood Ranch Art League Exhibition at the ComCenter in Lakewood Ranch, showcasing a new collection of paintings and drawings by talented local artists. This is the Art League's first exhibition since the start of the pandemic. The ComCenter provides a safe and lovely setting to display beautiful works of art. Most of the LWR Art League's original artworks are on display until April 2021, and are available for purchase by the public at very reasonable prices.

The artwork at the ComCenter represents various media, including watercolor, acrylic, oil paintings and charcoal drawings, as well as a variety of styles and sizes. This showing is an excellent opportunity for those wanting to view and/or acquire original art by outstanding local artists. The LWR Art



Can't mask the talent: LWR Art League Artists display their work at the ComCenter in Lakewood Ranch. Pictured, front row, from left: Mary Ellen Slenker (LWR Art League president) and Bill Perry. Back row: Monika Templeman, Marge Williamson, Lydia Kaeyer, Ellen Buccellato, and Arline Stein.

League periodically displays their work in local venues and galleries and several of the artists also donate their work for philanthropic purposes. For example, LWR Art League partners with the LWR Women's Club to help support their local 501(c)(3) adopted charities: HOPE Family Services, SMART Riding Therapy, SOLVE Maternity Homes and Children's Guardian Fund.

Our Lakewood Ranch Rotary Club has stepped up in an effort to give back to our community via a variety of methods. Over the past few months, they have created projects to support many of our community's not-for-profits, including the Tidewell Hospice Blue Butterfly program, Books for Kids, Camelot Community Care, and many more. For their most recent Giving Tuesday project, they collected more items to benefit Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee, just in time to help



provide food for the Thanksgiving holiday. Thanks so much to the Rotarians who have helped unload items and also to those who made the trip in person to make a donation. This was made easier via their partnership with Grove restaurant, which has been a great place for the community to drop off donations for many worthy causes.

In November, SUGAR Volunteers held the Be a HERO Project. The "HERO" stands for "Homeless Empowerment Reach Out." SUGAR and the School District of Manatee County joined forces to sprinkle some SUGAR on homeless students enrolled within the school district. Thank you to all of the volunteers who took their time to show up and pay it forward! Together, 250 backpacks were filled with novelty toys, gifts, and snacks and prepared for the homeless students in the School District of Manatee County from VPK through second grade.

If you have an idea for a new community group or club, we want to hear from you! Send us a note at info@lwrca.org and we'll be glad to help get you started.

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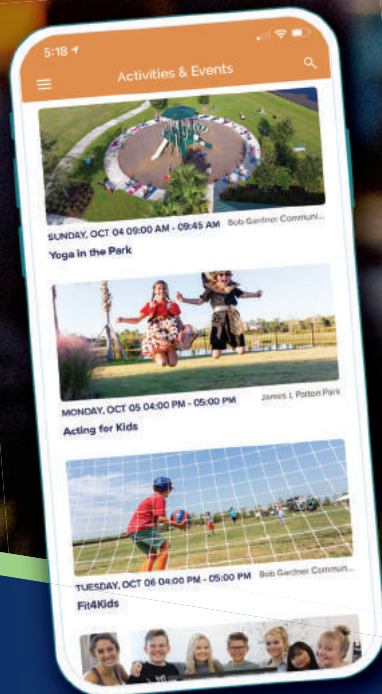
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AROUND THE RANCH



PHOTOS BY ERIC NALPAS



Mindful Triathlon Debuts Different Format for 2020 Event

The second annual "reimagined" Mindful Triathlon was held Nov. 14 at Bob Gardner Park in Lakewood Ranch. Benefitting the Brain Health Initiative, the event had attendees finish a virtual 5K prior to the "mindful morning" of a yoga

session, followed by a guided meditation by The Yoga Shack. The more than 60 participants were socially distanced, and received a T-shirt and medal, as well as the opportunity for some yummy snacks from local food trucks.



Dueling Grocery Carts in Lakewood Ranch

PUBLIX, WINN-DIXIE OPEN NEW STORES WITHIN DAYS OF EACH OTHER

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

Once upon a time, way back during the ancient history of Lakewood Ranch, there were a few houses built in areas such as Summerfield, Riverwalk, and the Lakewood Ranch Country Club. And, with great foresight, Schroeder-Manatee Ranch, the developer of Lakewood Ranch, planned in advance – not only for new homes, but for the construction of shopping centers to service these new neighborhoods. And the grocery chain that garnered most of the prime commercial locations in Lakewood Ranch was Publix.

The Lakeland-based Publix chain was founded by George Washington Jenkins, who came to Florida in the 1920s, and, after working for another grocery chain opened his own first store in Winter Haven in 1930. Success followed, and Jenkins became an innovator in the grocery business when he opened his first Publix Super Market in November of 1940. The new store, described as a “food palace,” had major innovations for its day, such as air conditioning, electric eye doors, fluorescent lighting, etc. Jenkins later purchased more stores, and changed them into what we now know as “supermarkets.”

Gone was the idea of “mom and pop” small neighborhood grocery stores. Customers wanted new and improved.

The Publix chain has grown into a mega chain of over 1,100 supermarkets (814 stores in Florida alone!), and it has also become the largest employee-owned business in the United States, with over 225,000 employees.

Likewise, the Winn-Dixie chain had its beginnings in Florida in the 1920s.

William Davis moved from Idaho to Florida in 1925, figuring on cashing in on the Florida land boom, and purchased the Rockmoor Grocery Store in Miami for \$10,000. The family had been in business in Idaho, and one of the lessons William Davis learned from his Idaho experience was to sell for cash only – no credit. Traditionally, small grocers extended credit to their customers, but when the economy slowed, and customers could not pay their bills, the grocers lost big time. So, cash became king in the grocery business, and Williams began buying up other grocery stores, renaming his chain Table Supply, and giving his competitors fierce competition.

The Davis family continued to buy up competing chains and, by the late 1950s, the Table Supply chain was renamed Winn-Dixie. The stores’ logo featured the line: “The Beef People,” a nod to the fact that the chain had made retail headway by selling beef at lower prices than those found in other stores, but also because meat departments were a major feature in Winn-Dixie stores. Winn-Dixie may not be as large as Publix, but they have over 280 stores in Florida alone.

Advance in time to the first half of November 2020: In Lakewood Ranch, the two big chains both opened new stores in our community.

Publix got a few days’ head start, opening a new store at Lorraine Road and State Road 70 on November 5. The Publix store



was built from the ground up as part of a new shopping center with Publix as the main anchor.

Winn-Dixie followed with a veteran-themed grand opening of their new store at The Green shopping center on Nov. 11 – Veterans Day. The location was formerly occupied by an Earth Fare store. Earth Fare ceased operations earlier this year, and the location had been vacant for a while before being taken over by Winn-Dixie.

The two stores offer similar grocery items, but there are some differences.

At the Publix store, there is a “counter-in-the-round” area where customers can get sushi and have their deli subs made from scratch. There is also a bulk food section, where customers can get nuts, sunflower seeds, steel cut oats, dried mango slices, dried pineapple slices and, of course, candy. Gummy bears, anyone? And, of course, there’s the Publix bakery area.

At Winn-Dixie, once you get past the red and white banners and grand opening pennants – and the big red and white wall sign welcoming customers to the new Lakewood Ranch Winn-Dixie – you’ll find that the produce area is very close to the front door, which makes it very convenient for someone who just wants to dash in and grab a couple of veggie items for the night’s dinner. Not only that, but Winn-Dixie has a pre-sliced veggie department, called “no-prep veggies,” where the customer can select from freshly pre-cut broccoli, cauliflower, various peppers, squash, etc. You can go in, pick out what you want in your salad, and take your selections home where your salad will practically make itself in a couple of minutes. Perhaps you’ll try



Winn-Dixie's selection of “no-prep veggies”
PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER

Winn-Dixie’s “cheese of the month” to accent your salad. You say you want steak? Remember: this is the place of the “Beef People.”

The Winn-Dixie store, since it was fit into an already-built location, is definitely smaller than the new Publix, but the aisles are packed with shelves and attention has been paid to making sure that there is plenty of merchandise. You should have no trouble finding what you want here. And, seeing as this store is smaller, you might be able to do your shopping in less time!

So, there you have it ... a monumental “clash of the titans” in the grocery business – right here in Lakewood Ranch. So rev up your shopping carts and see what some competition can do for your grocery buying dollar!

THE PET DOC

By Erin Siems, DVM

The grand finale of the holiday season is here! The flurry of Christmas and Hanukkah followed by the last celebration (or first depending on if you look forward or backward) of the year

– The Big Ball Drop. These are meant to be joyous, fun-filled times – unless you're leery of strange new plants, decorations invading your space, things that flash, things that go boom ... you know, all those things that can be scary to our non-human family members.

These holidays typically come with many decorations that can be hazardous to our pet's health. Several holiday plants including poinsettias, holly and mistletoes can be toxic to our pet. Consider keeping them in a pet safe area or going plastic (you can blame me if someone finds out they are fake). Trees can be confused for indoor "rest stops," climbing poles and watering holes. Consider gating off your tree if your pets think you put it there for their enjoyment. Candles always pose a threat for our



counter-surfer kitties and pup. Never leave them unattended. And, of course, do not pre-wrap any food gifts and leave them to be prematurely found by the wrong recipient.

New Year's Eve is that exciting shedding of

the past year (we all need that right now!) and starting fresh. Of course, many dogs and some cats have noise phobias and this can be a tough evening for them. In their eyes, people are acting silly, staying up late and there are a LOT of loud noises. Always keep pets away from alcohol. Even a small amount can be toxic to some pets. Be aware that your pets may not appreciate the fireworks as much as you do. If they are nervous, consider closing the curtain and playing soothing music. If your pet tends to get very distressed, talk to your veterinarian to find out if there is an appropriate medication to help them stay calm.

Let's end the holiday season right – be aware of potential dangers and be cognizant of other's feeling no matter how many legs they have.

Dr. Erin Siems graduated from Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine in 2010, and has enjoyed working in both general practice and emergency care. She has been practicing in the Lakewood Ranch/Bradenton area for the past seven years. She enjoys general practice because it gives her the ability to build relationships with her patients and their families. Dr. Siems opened her own practice, Big Paws Animal Hospital in Lakewood Ranch, in May 2020. Email pet questions to reception@BigPaws-AnimalHospital.com.

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New at University Corner: Sushi!

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

The new-a-short-time-ago Publix at University Corner has some competition – at least in one area ... sushi.

While Publix does sell sushi, there is now a restaurant in the same shopping center that serves it up with style.

The restaurant is called U-Yee Sushi and Grill; a Japanese grill and sushi bar, and it is located at 7349 University Parkway, at the east end of the University Corner center.

Before we arrived at U-Yee Sushi and Grill, we had figured that by arriving a bit late in the day for dinner the place would not be all that crowded. We were incorrect in that assumption. Apparently the word has gotten around that U-Yee is the new “happening place” in that part of Lakewood Ranch!

We were, however, able to get a table right away, and that was very good news, since it had been a while since we’d eaten, and once that “I’m hungry!” factor sets in, getting fed in a relatively rapid fashion is much to be desired.

My wife and I were seated at one of the eight stand-alone tables in the main part of the restaurant. There are also eight booths, arranged on each of the side walls, and there is seating at a small counter. The counter is a bit entertaining in that if you are seated there, you’re right in front of the person who prepares the sushi, and can get a close-up view of the creative process. The side walls are done in glass panels, which are lit with blue lighting around the edges, giving a clean, yet modern look. There is a single, small TV in one corner for those who’d rather watch TV than engage in conversation.

Our waitress, Jade, came and took our drink order. My wife ordered a glass of pinot grigio and I, after asking the waitress to tell me which of the beers served at U-Yee was the darkest, took her recommendation and ordered a Sapporo – a Japanese beer which, according to the label, was brewed in ... Canada. I guess that there were actually no dark beers served at U-Yee, since the Sapporo was anything but dark. However, it had a good flavor, and may have been a better choice than the dark beers that I normally go with when I dine out. Dark beer goes well with German food and pizza. With sushi – maybe not.

We ordered appetizers: my wife ordered fried calamari, a dish that she loves. She pronounced her calamari as being very good. I ordered fried spring rolls, which came artfully presented on a small ceramic tray and were quite tasty.

As for our main courses, my wife ordered hibachi-grilled shrimp, and I ordered sushi – after all, this restaurant advertises itself as a sushi bar. The sushi I ordered was called the “U-Yee Roll,” and one of the reasons why I ordered this particular item was that, on the menu, two of the ingredients listed were salmon and cheese – as in cream cheese.

Now, the combination of cream cheese and salmon has been a favorite of mine since I was a kid, so I just HAD to try this



particular sushi. In addition to the salmon and cream cheese, the U-Yee roll featured avocado, spicy tuna, tempura, and crunchy fish eggs. Again, the U-Yee roll was served up very elegantly on a small ceramic platter, complete with an orchid blossom.

I totally enjoyed the U-Yee roll, and am looking forward to my next trip to U-Yee Sushi and Grill.

Now, speaking of the artistic way that the food at U-Yee is prepared and served, I had the opportunity to observe one family partaking of a large bowl of food, which was crowned with a sprig of purple flowers.

But then I noticed that the guy preparing the sushi behind the counter was engaged in what might be referred to a sushi shipbuilding project. He was preparing what U-Yee refers to as a “Love Boat”!

For the uninitiated, this creation is, literally, a boat. The boat is about 2-1/2 feet long and is “rigged” with masts and festooned with nets. But the big thing is the cargo: 12 pieces of sushi, 11 pieces of sashimi, one special roll, one California roll, and one salmon roll, all sailing onto your table. There were three people at the table with the “Love Boat,” and I’m sure that they were well-fed after devouring all that cargo!

And, yes, my wife and I felt well-fed – and quite content – with our dinner at U-Yee Sushi and Grill.

Hours are 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday; and noon to 9:30 p.m. on Sunday. They offer carryout and delivery, as well. For more information visit uyeesushigrill.com or call (941)358-3996.





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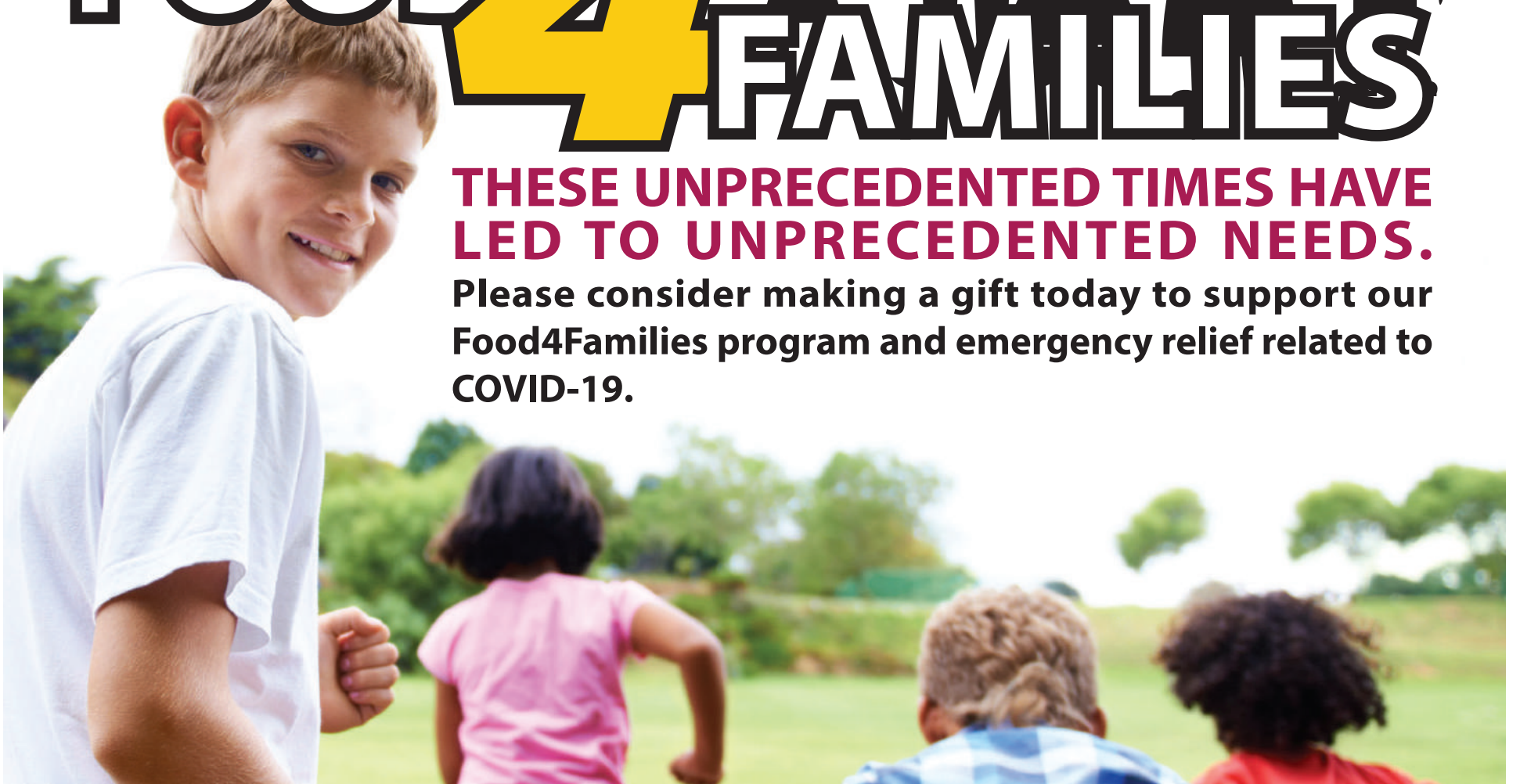
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THE UNASSUMING WINE BROS.



2020 Holiday and New Year's Gift Ideas

The holidays are a time for giving and the approaching New Year is a time for new beginnings. This holiday season, there is no better way to treat your favorite wine aficionado than with a wine-related gift.

We are The Unassuming Wine Bros (UWB) – Patrick and Vigo – two regular guys who love everything about wine, including writing about it. Our goal is to explore the nuances of wine, share our adventures with you, and have a little fun along the way.

Here are the UWB's 2020 official holiday wine-related gifts recommendations:

WINE SUBSCRIPTION

What better way to tell your favorite wine drinker that the holidays can come more than once a year, than through a wine subscription? With prices ranging from very reasonable to “Wow,” this is a great holiday gift that can last throughout the year. The two that we especially like are:

California Wine Club, www.cawineclub.com

If you have a California wine lover in your life, this is the gift idea for you. The membership calls for three shipments (you can go up to 12) throughout the year of two bottles of delicious small vineyard wines with packages beginning at \$40.95 per shipment. Along with the delicious wines, you also receive a winery guide with the winemaker's details and tasting notes and access to the club's wine consultant, who can answer wine storage and serving questions. The membership also provides that if you don't like the selection received, you can contact the club and receive another bottle that suits your palate. This is the perfect gift for any California wine lover.



Winc, www.winc.com

Winc seems like the perfect wine club for millennials, but you can be a boomer and still enjoy its selections. The monthly subscription is around \$13 per bottle, and you receive three bottles of wine selected through your palate profile. Yes, much like a dating site, Winc is the match.com of wines. Unlike California Wine Club, Winc selects wines from throughout the world, so it's not surprising to have a California, Portuguese, and Italian selection all in one box. Winc is a fun and easy way to give your favorite wine lover a wine adventure every month.

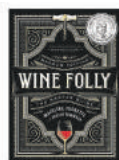


BOOKS

Nothing annoyed us more when we were kids than when our grandparents gave us books for Christmas. We would have literally preferred a pair of Christmas pajamas. However, as time has gone by, we have learned that books are an excellent gift. Here are two great wine books that we enjoy:

Wine Folly: Magnum Edition

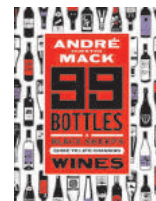
We both own “Wine Folly” and each of us routinely uses it. If you're new to wine, it's a great learning tool. If you're an intermediate or expert wine drinker, it's an excellent reference tool. Well-written with lots of practical illustrations, it's an extremely



useful book that won't just be used as a drink coaster. As an added bonus, you can pick up a copy and support a local Lakewood Ranch wine business at the same time at Fine Wine and Tastings on Main, on Lakewood Ranch's Main Street.

99 Bottles: A Black Sheep's Guide to Life-Changing Wines (Amazon, \$25)

As a former professional soldier, Vigo likes nothing more than sharing stories of his life's adventures: 99 Bottles takes the same slant by having legendary sommelier Andre' Hueston Mack share his stories about 99 wines that changed his life. Mack discusses wines that are both accessible to the everyday wine lover and that are esoteric and rare. If you are looking for a book with fascinating wine stories, this book is perfect.



WINE GLASSES

Here are our suggestions for white and red wine glasses as a gift:

White wine glass, Spiegelau Vino Grande white wine glasses (Set of 4, Amazon \$51)

The standard white wine glass is shaped like a tulip and tends to be smaller than a typical red wine glass because white wines do not require as much aeration. And because white wines should be served and consumed at a much cooler temperature than red wines, a smaller glass is generally used for white wines.



Red wine glasses, Spiegelau Vino Grande Burgundy wines glasses (Set of 4, Amazon, \$46)

Unlike the tulip-shaped white wine glass, the red (Burgundy) wine glass is shaped like an upside-down mushroom. This bowl shape with a thin rim assists in the aerations of the red wine. The more aeration of the wine's esters and aldehydes, the better the wine tastes and smells (bouquet).



MAIL BAG:

Donna F. from Lakewood Ranch wrote: “Your pork chop pairing was of particular interest to me. You chose two wines I would have never considered and have made me want to try a chardonnay with grilled pork. I'm familiar with Grgich, used to belong to their wine club, have been to the winery, and met Mike Grgich many years ago. They make great wine. I would not have considered the pinot for the reasons you stated, too light. I would have gone for a bigger red with the pork, maybe a syrah or red blend. However, one of my favorite meals is grilled salmon with an Oregon pinot noir (Elk Cove, Archery Summit, Cooper Mtn, or Montinore). By the way, the Oregon pinot gris (especially Elk Cove) is pretty wonderful. Always enjoy your columns; keep them coming. It sounds like you have a lot of fun doing the ‘research’ for your column.”

UWB: Donna F., we are always glad to know that our wine ideas are enjoyed by everyone in our community. In regards to your love of Oregon wines – as emphasized in some of our articles, I'm a huge California wine fan, and Patrick is a European wine aficionado with particular emphasis on Italian wines. Oregon, in this case, has been overlooked by both of us, and Patrick is busy making selections from the Oregon region for our upcoming article. Our hopes are we find some wine gems from Oregon we can share with all our readers.

Lola N. from Lakewood Ranch wrote: “Hi guys! During the holiday season, I hear a lot about ‘mulled wine.’ Can you tell me what, exactly, it is, and do you have a recipe for how to make it?”

UWB: Mulled wine, which the Germans call Gluhwein (translation “glow wine”), is a spiced wine beverage usually made with red wine and various mulling spices and sometimes raisins. It is served hot or warm and is alcoholic, although there are non-alcoholic versions of it. It is a traditional drink during winter, especially around Christmas. As I have consumed my fair share of mulled wine while stationed in Europe, I know it's a beverage that needs to be enjoyed with caution, because warm wine passes through your stomach wall faster than cold wine. Mulled wine is available in pre-bottled form, but making it on your own, I've noticed, always tasted better. The following is my favorite mulled wine recipe:

1 bottle red blend wine

¾ cup water

¾ cup sugar

1 cinnamon stick

5 whole cloves

5 star anise

1 fresh orange

*If you want to kick it up a notch, add a shot of brandy, bourbon, or cognac

Add all ingredients to a medium saucepan and heat at a low simmer. Continue to stir till you see steam rising from the wine. Once hot and steaming, strain out all the spices and serve in a heat-resistant mug. Enjoy, but drink slowly!

As we welcome Christmas and the New Year, we all can be honest that we're all thankful to see 2020 go and harken in 2021. It's been rough on all of us, and I'm sure we'll use 2020 as the benchmark of things that could be worse: “Yeah, it's bad, but it's no 2020” I'm sure will be used in our verbal lexicons for years to come. Patrick and I would like to thank you all for reading our wine muses and look forward to a New Year and new wine adventures.

Let us know whether you agree, disagree, or whether you prefer other gift ideas. We'd love to hear your input and suggestions and are always thrilled to receive your feedback, information, and opinions. We can be reached at VigoandPatrick@gmail.com.



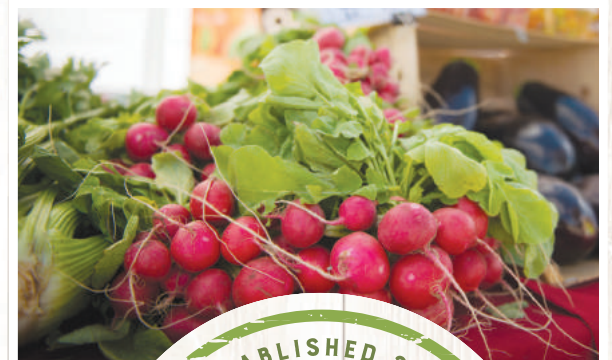
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