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THINK DEEP The Deep Sky Observers share the wonders of outer space locally.

**WORK IT OUT** Tone up that bod and get your sweat on at these fun local gyms.

**PLACE IN HISTORY** Leon Harris Jr. shares his tales from the diamond.

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LAKEWOOD RANCH AREA'S COMMUNITY, NATURE, STYLE

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LWR Life is a quarterly publication of the Observer Media Group published in February, May, August and November in partnership with Schroeder-Manatee Ranch.

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#### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## To infinity and beyond!



Andy Harrell

The NGC 2264 nebula identifies two astronomical objects as a single object: the Cone nebula and the Christmas Tree cluster.

hen I was a kid, one of my favorite things to do was to go outside, lay a blanket down on the grass (or crawl out onto the roof, not my mom's favorite), lie on my back and look up.

No matter how many times I've done this, I'm always amazed. Just thinking about everything in that night sky and knowing how massive it is and how far away it is, I can never quite wrap my head around it.

For example, most of us know that the light from the sun takes

about eight minutes to get to Earth. Now think about this: The light you are seeing from those stars has been traveling way longer than any of us have been alive to get here. Some of those light photons started traveling toward us when dinosaurs walked the Earth. Dinosaurs! They are so far away that some of them have burned out and no longer emit any light. Yet we still won't

know for millions of years.

How crazy is that?!?!?!

Or how about this: Out of all the matter present in our universe, we can only see about 5% of it. The bulk of it — some 70% — is what scientists call dark energy. We only made this discover in 1998, according to the BBC's Sky at Night magazine, and we don't even really know what dark energy is! Mind blown.

If you're still not impressed, maybe seeing is believing. Luckily, the Local Group of Deep Sky Observers is here to help you do just that. These amateur astronomers set up equipment and go stargazing from nearby places with less light pollution.

And, oh, the things they capture. Check out the images from astrophotographer Andy Harrell starting on Page 62. Amazing clouds of dust and gas shining brilliantly from so, so far away. Pockets of stormy gases showing the creation of stars so far away we

could never get there in our lifetime, even traveling at the speed of light.

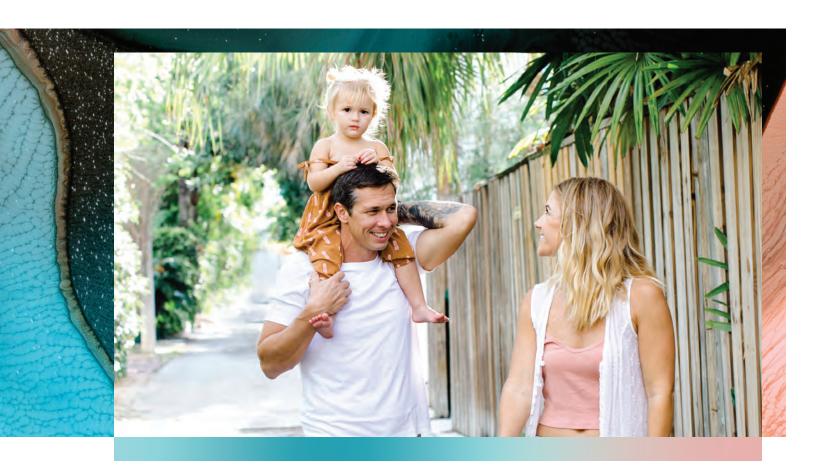
And getting these images is not easy. Just calibrating that large telescope to precisely find things in the sky can take hours. Not to mention lugging it around and setting all of it up, which the group does for its Sidewalk Astronomy events so the public can participate in the discovery.

But when you're peering through that telescope, as club member Harrell says, it shows a person how big the galaxy is.

Conversely, you could say, it shows us how small we really are. There are about 100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 stars in the universe, and even more planets than stars. It's humbling. Sometimes that's not the worst reminder in the world, either. And all we have to do is look up.

Kat Hughes Executive Editor

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# FOR STARTERS

BY LWR LIFE STAFF

WE'RE NO. 1!!!

For years, Lakewood Ranch has been one of the top-ranked communities, and for years, it has been ranked as the No. 1 multigenerational master-planned community.

But now we can drop the qualifiers. According to the latest ranking of real estate consultant RCLCO in July, Lakewood Ranch is *the* top-selling community in the country.

With 1,535 home sales through the first six months of 2021, it sold 25% more homes than the community in second place, its perennial contender, The Villages, according to RCLCO's estimates.

Then again, they're not telling us anything we don't already know.





#### **CLUB ENVY**

When the Cresswind community gave a sneak preview of designs for its new clubhouse and amenity center in February, it was enough to make the poshest of club members jealous.

Whether it's lounging in a resortstyle pool, playing with Fido at the dog park or hitting your heart out on a pickleball court, the new facilities, which opened in July, have something for everyone.

The 55-and-over community offers so many classes and facilities for an active lifestyle that it's enough to make young'uns want to be 55 — or at least make a friend at Cresswind who is.

#### **NEW TENANTS ANNOUNCED**

As Waterside Place prepares for a fall opening, it continues to grow its offerings, including three new tenants.

Bella Vita at Waterside restaurant, Bay Area Aesthetics and Lakewood Ranch Medical Group's primary care facility are the newest businesses announced at Waterside and will join previously announced tenants Good Liquid Brewing Co., 3 Form Fitness, ManCave for Men, O&A Coffee Sup-

ply, Crop Juice, Duck Donuts, Korê, Paint Nail Bar, SmithLaw, The Yoga Shack and Kilwins.

In addition to that full slate of tenants, The Market at Lakewood Ranch also plans a fall move to the center, which also marks the first village community on the Sarasota side of Lakewood Ranch.

So you can find inner peace, break a sweat, sip a latte, pamper yourself or relax with a beer, Waterside Place will be the place to be this fall.



Michael Demarski starts moving 3 Form Fitness into its space.

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# Deep Dive

Mote's Aquaculture Research Park is helping save the world, one fish at a time.

BY ERIC SNIDER | CONTRIBUTOR

hile crowds are admiring the sharks, manatees, Molly the Giant Squid and other creatures at Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium, a dedicated team of people works at another Mote facility to help feed the world.

It's called Mote Aquaculture Research Park, one of the organization's four satellite locations and one of two that's dedicated solely to research. (The other is in the Florida Keys.) MAP is located on Fruitville Road, 7 miles east of Interstate 75 in Sarasota, and is not open to the public.

The 200-acre, 20-year-old facility has roughly 40 scientists and other specialists working to develop sustainable technology to improve aquaculture practices, restock depleted species and play a role in developing a viable aquaculture industry in the U.S.

In other words, helping to sustainably feed the world.

A key component of aquaculture is fish farming, which has earned something of a bad reputation through the overuse of antibiotics, overcrowded facilities, dumping wastewater into the environment and other wrongdoings.

Kevan Main, Mote's associate vice president for research who heads up MAP, says some of the criticism is valid, but she's seeing a trend toward more responsible practices.

MAP's work comes at a crucial time. Over the past 60 years, global demand for fish meat has doubled while supply has dropped. Nearly 60% of the Earth's fisheries are being fished to their capacity, and 34% are overfished, according to Mote's website. "There's no more sustainable protein that's produced than through fish farming," Main says. In 10 years, fish farms are expected to supply nearly two-thirds of fish meat around the world. And the hope is that the techniques developed at Mote become commonplace.

Continued on Page 30



Photos by Heidi Kurpiela

Kevan Main, the director of Mote's 200-acre aquaculture research station, stands in the middle of a greenhouse teeming with sea purslane, one of her favorite edible sea plants.



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#### Continued from Page 28

To that end, MAP operates as a small commercial fish farm, which sells redfish and pompano to wholesalers and directly to local restaurants including Indigenous in Sarasota, Mar Vista on Longboat Key and The Sandbar on Anna Maria Island. How's that for fish to table? However, Main says the "goal is not to be a working fish farm but to test the processes and provide the technology and information to show that it can be done safely and sustainably."

One of the key components of that aim is a three-stage water filtration system, developed fully in house, that allows 100% recycling of salt water. MAP is one of the few totally recirculating fish farms in the world. Full saltwater reuse is rare in commercial fish farming, but MAP is working to make it cost efficient. As coastlines get more developed, and land prices continue to go up, it's important to move fisheries farther inland.

One of MAP's long-standing initiatives involves snook, a much-desired and protected sport fish that is not available commercially. The facility is able to spawn, mature and release the fish into nearby creeks and rivers so they'll find their way into the Gulf.

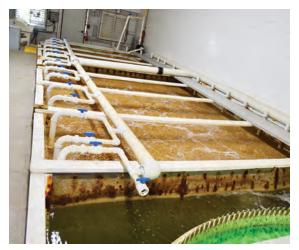
It wasn't always so. Early on, Main and her team had to catch wild snook in Sarasota Bay amid their natural spawning cycle — during new and full moons from May to December — and bring them back to the compound to harvest the eggs and sperm to birth and raise more fish. "We were catching fish and dodging lightning bolts," Main says.

That changed in 2006 when MAP developed a system that takes snook through their full life cycle. Main estimates that, depending on the year, MAP releases 8,000 to 15,000 snook into the wild.

Another, more recent, MAP innovation is the integration of fish and plant production. Fish wastewater moves through mangrove houses, which help cleanse the water for its return to the fishery. The animal/plant cycle also includes the growing of sea vegetables, specifically purslane, a coastal plant that's a relative of spinach. This, too, serves to clean the water before its return to the fish. The same local restaurants that purchase MAP fish are buying and integrating purslane into



Mote has been hydroponically farming sea purslane for seven years. The salty sea crop is one of Main's favorite edible plants.



The research park generates zero discharge. "Everything is returned back to the fish," Main says.



A tank filled with almaco jack eager to be fed

their menus, Main says.

Late last year, MAP expanded to confront a problem that's very much in the news: red tide. In a new, 29,000-square-foot building, scientists are "studying how to deal with red tide, which is a naturally occurring event," Main says, "how to diminish its impact on the environment and researching its impacts on different species."

Red tide mitigation research has been going on at the main Mote campus for many years. Another MAP endeavor, also new, is the International Coral Gene Bank, "where we are maintaining colonies of corals from a whole range of different species from Florida waters," Main says. "We're creating repositories for corals so that we can provide them for restoration."

So you might say that the team at MAP is not only helping to feed the world, but it's helping to save the world, too.



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# Movin' on Up

Why has the number of homes sold for more than \$1 million kept climbing since the pandemic started? Turns out, the trend has multiple causes, Realtors explain.

BY BRENDAN LAVELL | CONTRIBUTOR

he Lakewood Ranch luxury housing market was already on the rise when the CO-VID-19 pandemic hit Florida and the rest of the U.S. in March 2020.

A year and a half later, Realtors say it is exploding, and the numbers back them up.

In 2018, 35 homes were sold in Lakewood Ranch for \$1 million or more. Through June 21, the number of homes sold for more than \$1 million in 2021 had already reached 61, putting Lakewood Ranch on pace for 129 sales in that range by the end of the year.

Michael Saunders & Co.'s Tina Ciaccio says Lakewood Ranch homes have been undervalued for years, even as recently as 2018. As more people started moving to Florida, Lakewood Ranch has become a better-known community. She doesn't expect prices to dip back down.

"We're seeing people come here from Chicago, San Francisco, and they think our pricing is just so low," Ciaccio says.

Laura Stavola, from Premier Sotheby's, says the luxury market didn't truly take off until the COVID-19 pandemic hit. After years of people downsizing, suddenly they wanted a second office or a Zoom room to work from home. Compared to crowded urban real estate, Lakewood Ranch offered more buying power.

"They're moving from a multimillion-dollar apartment, and you can turn around and purchase a 5,000-square-foot home for less money," Stavola says.

Some people found their employers were willing to let them relocate anywhere in the U.S. and work remotely. Florida has been a popular choice because of the weather and the lack of state income tax, according to Stavola.

"I think it's made people really start to appreciate where they live," Stavola says. "If they're going to invest that much time in their home, they're will-

Continued on Page 34

This Lake Club home at 16006 Foremast Place sold for \$3.6 million in June, the highest price any Lakewood Ranch home has sold for in 2021.

# Renée Dedio Preininger



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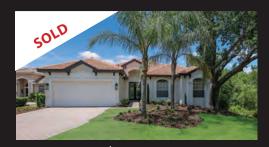




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ing to make a larger investment on the property itself."

Coldwell Banker Realty's Roger Pettingell says that when the pandemic started, more people became interested in making Florida their full-time home, rather than traveling to and from the north every winter. Not only has this resulted in more buyers but also buyers who are willing to spend more because they are more invested in their home when staying there all year-round.

Lakewood Ranch Realty's Kevin Bryceland says there has been an increase in luxury real estate sales partly because people realized they could buy a bigger, nicer home in Lakewood Ranch for the same amount of money compared to more mature markets, such as Tampa-St. Petersburg and Naples. Plus, they would still have access to visit those two areas as well as renowned beaches including Siesta Kev.

But getting more house for their buck is just one part of the equation. On the construction side, builders have remained in tune with buyers' needs at that price point.

Ciaccio says homebuilders have been responding to buyers' desire for luxury amenities: beautiful lanais; in-home refuge spaces, such as voga dens; oversized kitchen space for hosting people; and more. She also says more people are buying multigenerational homes, which is another factor behind the increase in homes sold for more than \$1 million.

As homebuilders have constructed more homes with luxury amenities, Ciaccio says current homeowners who want to sell have shown an increased willingness to make improvements to their own homes to better compete with new construction.

Another piece of the equation comes directly from your economics 101 class: supply and demand.

Donna Soda of The Soda Group says a decrease in homes on the market is behind the sharp rise in homes sold for more than \$1 million. For one, developers are running out of land for custom lots. Supply shortages have also limited the number of houses developers can build. Relatedly, she says homeowners who aren't moving the recent surge as out of state aren't selling their homes because there are few places to go in unsustainable rise.



Courtesy photos Laura Stavola of Premier Sotheby's says after years of downsizing, the COVID-19 pandemic made people want larger houses again.

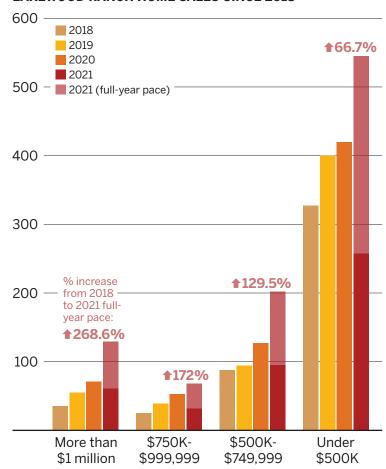


Roger Pettingell of Coldwell Banker Realty says more people have become interested in making Florida their full-time home, rather than just part time, since the COVID-19 pandemic.



Tina Ciaccio of Michael Saunders & Co. says the Lakewood Ranch real estate market has been undervalued for years. She views a correction, not an

#### **LAKEWOOD RANCH HOME SALES SINCE 2018**



Realtor Association of Sarasota and Manatee

Florida right now. Most luxury homes are being sold within one to five days of hitting the market, she says.

"The ones that are selling, they're taking advantage of the market," Soda says. "They know they can get their number or maybe more."

Another reason the luxury real estate market has heated up so quickly, Pettingell says, is because people have become wealthier by investing in the stock market, which has largely continued to rise since the 2008 recession. More people than ever before are willing to pay for expensive homes in cash, which is appealing to sellers.

"On the other hand, it's a way to protect that wealth," Pettingell says. "At some point, the stock market's going to correct or not go up forever. Then you'll have these losses in paper instruments and not something tangible like a home in Florida. It gives you a chance to diversify some of those earnings."

Stavola says people have realized they can find many of the amenities

they're used to in the big city — arts and culture, shopping, restaurants while combining it with a resortlike lifestyle, with golf courses, beaches and polo matches.

Bryceland says Lakewood Ranch earning the No. 1 ranking among master-planned, multigenerational communities nationwide has helped put Lakewood Ranch firmly on the map over the past few years. Recently, the community dropped the "multigenerational" qualifier to that distinction. when real estate consultant RCLCO announced Lakewood Ranch is the top-selling master-planned community in the country.

"Retirees or people who just want to move to Florida, I don't think they know where to move to in Florida," Bryceland says. "So when you start doing searches, where's No. 1? Or if you're doing a Google search and saying, 'Where's the best place to live in Florida?' Lakewood Ranch, it just keeps popping up for people."





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Photos by Ryan Kohn

Yoga in the Park was the first class Lakewood Ranch Community Activities offered.

# All fun and games

What started as a way to bring people together during the pandemic has grown into a full-fledged recreation program.

BY RYAN KOHN | CONTRIBUTOR

In creating a Summer 2021 Parks and Rec Guide, Lakewood Ranch Community Activities wants to help people relax. It's why the first class offered was Yoga in the Park.

It's also appropriate because the organization has been bending over backwards to bring the guide to the community.

Community Relations Director Monaca Onstad, 46, says she first conceived of the idea three years ago, based on an experience she had when she lived out west.

"I moved to Pleasanton, California, out of college," Onstad says. "I didn't know anyone and wanted a way to meet new people, so I joined a tennis class through the city's parks and rec program. Through that class, I got into a group of people."

Onstad knew the community needed more things to do outside, but there always seemed to be another idea taking precedent. During the onset of the pandemic, Onstad says, she and the rest of her team finally had a chance to sit back and take a bird's-eye view of Lakewood Ranch's programming. They realized their parks programming was lacking, especially then, when people were wary to gather in-

Continued on Page 38



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doors. The time had finally come to revamp Lakewood Ranch's offerings.

Onstad says the organization decided to start small. Yoga in the Park was the first class offered, with the idea of the class acting as a stress reliever. Outdoor barre classes were added next, then Fit4Kids classes because children had to do something during the day.

From there, things took off. Onstad credits Keith Pandeloglou, the Lakewood Ranch Community Activities executive director, with putting together the majority of the programming. That means not only thinking of classes and hiring instructors but also getting local businesses to sponsor the classes, therefore cutting the costs for participants. In the 2021 Summer guide, 12 of the 15 a la carte classes are free to Lakewood Ranch residents.

"We have approximately 20 different partners helping to put these events on," Pandeloglou says. "We want people getting outside and learning whenever possible. We do have to pass some of the costs on (to participants), but not a ton."

Almost all of the classes Community Activities has tried have been hits, Onstad says, and the ones that didn't generate much interest are not necessarily failures. That's because the team has figured out the secret ingredient to making an offering work: timing. For example, the Fit4Kids class was initially set for right after school, and it was a hit, but once the region began opening up, kids went back to the activities they were doing pre-pandemic. Onstad says the solution was moving the class to a different time. Onstad says her team has asked Lakewood Ranch parents what times would work best for their children, a practice they have carried to other classes. In the Summer 2021 guide, the Fit4Kids class is back to being offered in the afternoons — 4-5 p.m. — but it will likely be different in the next guide.

Yes, there will be a next guide. Onstad says Community Activities plans on putting out three guides a year, though the permanent timing of those guides has yet to be decided. The next guide will span the rest of 2021, beginning in August. Although the summer guide's offerings were fairly standard, with activities including volleyball, cornhole and kickball alongside a



Lakewood Ranch Community Activities began offering Fit4Kids classes to help keep children busy and active during the day.

66

We have approximately 20 different partners helping to put these events on. We want people getting outside and learning whenever possible.

KEITH PANDELOGLOU, LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

handful of wellness classes, the next one promises to be a bit more out there. Onstad says she's particularly excited for a ukulele class, but there will also be things like Grilling 101 and a salsa dancing class.

These more niche classes largely stem from requests, Pandeloglou says. Residents (and partners) can ask for specific classes, and Community Activities will listen. There's no guarantee that a requested class will be created, but anything is possible if it has enough support. Pandeloglou says the team plans on building out its offerings slowly. Community Activities doesn't want to overwhelm its parks, he says, so it's making sure there are still open days at each park for residents to use for birthday parties or impromptu flag football games if they wish.

Pandeloglou urges residents inter-

ested in using the guide to download the Lakewood Ranch app. Sometimes classes are added after the guide is completed, he says, or times are changed. The events calendar on the app is continually updated, so there's never any fear of missing out.

Both Pandeloglou and Onstad have tried classes themselves — Pandeloglou likes midday volleyball and fishing Saturdays, while Onstad has tried yoga, barre and disc golf. Onstad says she sometimes gets too inside her own head while at events, worrying about others having a good time and forgetting about herself. Once she lets that go, though, she's a fan like everyone else.

"Sometimes I stop and think, 'Oh, my gosh, I live here," Onstad says.

The Community Activities team wants residents to have the same thought.









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### charity snapshot

## Full Circle

Sisterhood For Good, which began as a women's giving circle, has far eclipsed its origins.

BY ERIC SNIDER | CONTRIBUTOR

n spring 2011, 25 or so well-heeled women sat in a living room sipping wine, eating hors d'oeuvres and trying to come up with a name for their newly minted giving circle. "We were brainstorming ideas for a name," recalls Angela Massaro-Fain, the group's founding member and current president. "My daughter, who was around 15 at the time, blurts out, 'How about Sisterhood for Good?' And everyone thought it was great."

Today her daughter, Maria-Francesca Massaro-Guglielmo, now 25, is one of 177 sisters doing plenty of good in the Sarasota-Manatee community. SFG is one of six women's giving circles that are part of the Lakewood Ranch Community Fund.

SFG's core concept is simple: Each member commits to contributing annual membership dues of \$200 (plus a \$25 organization fee) for five years. That money accrues and is then distributed to local charities, with each member getting an equal say regarding the allocations. Members are free to leave the group at any time, but most stay on beyond their five years.

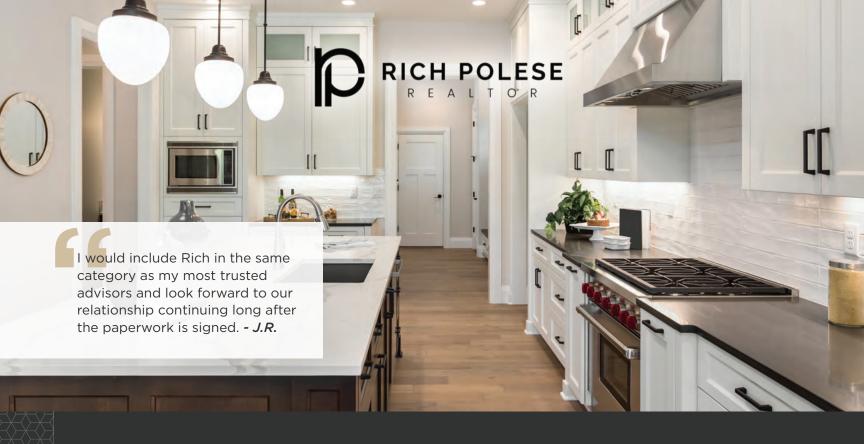
Sisterhood For Good has far transcended its giving-circle beginnings, though. The organization now holds periodic happy hours and a few lively fundraisers per year. Designer Handbag Bingo in 2019, for instance, cost the Sisters \$1,500 out of pocket and brought in \$15,832. Last year's Spring Sensations Fashion Show, held just days before the COVID-19 shutdown, cost about \$12,000 to produce and generated \$32,000. In January of this year, Vegas Comes to the Ranch, held at the Sarasota Polo Club, raised \$25,000.

"Our revenue stream is basically two-fold: membership dues and fund-



Sisterhood for Good President and founding donor Angela Massaro-Fain

Photo by Heidi Kurpiela



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5220 Paylor Lane Lakewood Ranch, FL 34240 raisers, although we do get the occasional donation," Massaro-Fain says. "One hundred percent of our net revenue goes to charity. Not one person is paid — no salaries or stipends."

Additionally, Massaro-Fain wrote a cookbook, "Baccio di Cucina," from which all proceeds go to the organization.

Along with the giving, Sisterhood For Good engages in other charitable activities. It ran a food drive for Meals on Wheels during the month of July.

In 2018, Sisterhood For Good incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

Each member gets an equal vote on what nonprofits receive grants, which generally range from \$1,000 to \$3,500. Organizations submit applications on the SFG website, asking for a specific amount of money and explaining what it will be used for — which must be a program, not a capital project. The grant committee narrows the pool down to qualified applicants. This year there were 78.

Through a multistage online voting process, the members choose the recipients, with each charity receiving the specific amount it requested. This year, 20 nonprofits got money from a pot of \$44,500. They include Feeding Empty Little Tummies Inc., Resilient Retreat, Sarasota County Teen Court, The Players Inc., Southeastern Guide Dogs, Girls Inc. of Sarasota County and the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office.

Massaro-Fain, 62, grew up in an Italian family in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and started in marketing/advertising at age 18. She founded and ran an agency in Montreal for 10 years, building it to the point where she sold it to a publicly traded company. After her three-year buyout agreement ended, Massaro-Fain tried retirement at age 42 — and failed.

She moved to Lakewood Ranch in 1998, met and married John Fain, and together they established Grapevine Communications in early 2002. They grew it into one of the largest full-service advertising, marketing and public relations firms in the Sarasota-Bradenton region. In 2017, the Massaro-Fains sold Grapevine Communications to one of their media partners. Angela and John decided to retire. This time it stuck.

Massaro-Fain has brought her busi-



The organization's sisters gathered for a group shot at its 10-year celebration earlier this year.

Courtesy of Angela Massaro-Fain

ness experience to Sisterhood For Good, including goal-setting. Aiming for 100 members by year 10, the group reached that milestone in eight. The original goal was to give away \$10,000 in year five. SFG reached \$12,000 by year two.

"Like any business, we are one of growth and expansion," she says. "While we are a nonprofit, we have to make money. We need to make money in order to give it away."

SFG has a sophisticated organizational matrix, with a board of directors — chaired by Amy Gorman, a very hands-on member — an advisory board and several committees. Only three members are retirees.

"We have women in their mid-20s up into their 40s and 50s," Massaro-Fain says. "Like any other organization, we want to attract a younger demographic, so as we grow older, younger people will continue to bring enthusiasm to the organization."

Members range in involvement, from those who write an annual check and attend an event or two to a handful of diehards who spend considerable time and effort on the nonprofit. They include Peggy Kronus, chair of fundraising events; Graceann Frederico,

#### IF YOU GO

Sisterhood For Good's exclusive fall event, Italy Under the Stars, will be Oct. 22 at a private home. Tickets will be limited to 60, and the soiree will feature recipes from Massaro-Fain's cookbook. Check the Sisterhood's Facebook page for updates.

board secretary; Tracy Wolfe, board vice chair; and Kathy Collums, chair of finance.

Although Sisterhood For Good is an all-woman organization, it is secular and apolitical. Spouses and significant others are welcome to lend a hand and attend events. "We're very happy to have them," Massaro-Fain says. "It's not that we don't like men." After a pause, she quips, "I guess I should speak for myself."

Sisterhood for Good has virtually no rules, but there is one that's vitally important: "We don't permit drama," Massaro-Fains says. "In any organization, when gossiping and infighting take over, it can ruin things. We don't allow it. If you're going to do that, please stop, or please resign. We don't want anything to get in the way of our mission of group philanthropy."

Massaro-Fain says the organization has never needed to invite a member to leave for stirring drama, but there has been a handful of minor interventions.

"We're very fortunate that as a group we are very focused," she adds. "But one of the side benefits of all this is that we've made lifelong friends."

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#### class act



File photo

Brett Hutchens, the president and managing partner of Casto Southeast, says Center Point will fill community needs.

## From the Ground Up

Casto President Brett Hutchens strongly feels the pulse of the Lakewood Ranch community. After all, he has been part of its growth since nearly the beginning.

BY KEVIN MCQUAID | CONTRIBUTOR

decade ago, Brett Hutchens' major airport. dealings in Lakewood Ranch were limited to the masterplanned community's successful Main Street, which his development firm had completed.

But in 2012, Hutchens' Casto Southeast Realty Services relocated its headquarters from Sarasota to an office building on Energy Court in the master-planned community, in part to be closer to highways and Tampa's

Three years later, Hutchens moved his personal residence to the 31,000-acre community as well, after realizing that his social and professional center had shifted.

When he's not working, for instance, Hutchens often can be found on the links at The Concession Golf Club nearby in Manatee County, where he's

Continued on Page 48



















been a member for many years.

"Developing Main Street with (master developer) Schroeder-Manatee Ranch really gave me a unique insight into Lakewood Ranch," says Hutchens, Casto Southeast's president and managing partner.

"We could feel the pulse of it. There's a real community here, and it's been done meticulously, which is compelling," adds Hutchens, 74. "It's a relaxed lifestyle.

"Our company has projects all over the country and in Fort Myers, Orlando and Tampa, so proximity to Interstate 75 is critical for me and our property management, leasing and development folks," says Hutchens, who moved to Sarasota in the mid-1990s because his grandparents had vacationed there.

In addition to his business endeavors, Hutchens' philanthropic efforts often require the former Cincinnati corporate lawyer to travel extensively.

Chief among them is the Children's Miracle Network, which Hutchens became involved with in the early 1980s at its inception, when he was a top executive of an Ohio-based restaurant chain.

The charity, led by singer Marie Osmond, actor John Schneider and NFL football star-turned-actor Merlin Olsen, has since raised \$8 billion and benefits more than 170 children's hospitals in North America.

Hutchens has been on the group's board for 37 years — the longest tenure of any of its members.

"It's been an amazing success," he says of the Children's Miracle Network. "Helping children is really something that resonates with me, and to see the tangible benefits has been a great thing."

Closer to home, Hutchens also is a board member of the All Star Children's Foundation, a charity spearheaded by Dennis and Graci McGillicuddy that benefits children in foster care.

Though he enjoys traveling, hiking and spending time with family, Hutchens and his wife, Fabienne, recently cemented their ties to the Ranch when they acquired a condominium that better fits their active lifestyle.

The couple is just a 10-minute walk away from Main Street.



Courtesy

Roper Technologies will be located in a 42,000-square-foot office building in Center Point.

"The way the community is managed is very predictable, and that gives me a lot of comfort," Hutchens says. "And we like feeling like we're part of a larger community."

Casto Southeast has helped build communities nationwide for decades, through the revival of flagging retail projects and ground-up developments that transformed cities and suburbs alike.

In Sarasota, Casto Southeast developed the Whole Foods Market Centre and adjacent condos; in Winter Park, it converted an old shopping mall into the \$60 million Winter Park Village; and in Raleigh, North Carolina, the company developed a 100-acre, mixeduse center with apartments and retail space.

Its best-known project, however, may be the redevelopment of the Randhurst Mall — Illinois' oldest enclosed shopping center — where it turned an aging retail hub into a \$150 million lifestyle center with residences and retail space.

"He has immense integrity, he's extremely likeable, very creative and a good communicator," Sheryl Crosland, a former J.P. Morgan & Co. executive who worked with Hutchens on the Randhurst Mall conversion, says of him.

#### CASTO SOUTHEAST'S CENTER POINT

**Size:** 50 acres, 250,000 square feet of office, retail and restaurant space

**Location** University Parkway and Lakewood Ranch Boulevard

Offices: Roper Technologies, Sarasota Interventional Radiology, surgery center, imaging center

**Retail:** Chamberlin's grocery, Fifth Third Bank, TD Bank, 7-Eleven, gas station, McDonald's, Woodie's Wash Shack

**Restaurants (to date):** Owen's Fish Camp, Olivia

Anticipated completion:

Second half of 2022

Hutchens' contribution to Lakewood Ranch will grow in the next year, too, when Casto Southeast completes a 50-acre, mixed-use development at the intersection of University Parkway and Lakewood Ranch Boulevard.

Center Point will feature a threestory medical office building and a new 42,000-square-foot office building for Roper Technologies Inc. But the project's heart will be retail and restaurant space.

Sarasota's Owen's Fish Camp is expected to open within Center Point, and Tampa Italian eatery Olivia has signed on as well.

Largely organic Chamberlin's grocery, Woodies Wash Shack car wash, McDonald's, 7-Eleven, Fifth Third Bank and TD Bank have also signed on.

Casto Southeast plans to complete the entire 250,000-square-foot project by the end of 2022.

"Lakewood Ranch is so attractive from a variety of perspectives," Hutchens says. "And the stewardship of the property is really unusual. The expectations on you as a developer are high, but we're comfortable with that, and as a resident, that's part of what makes this such a special place."



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## calendar fall 2021

#### **SEPTEMBER**

#### SEPT. 4

**NBP REC DAYS** 

Runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota. The public is invited to visit Nathan Benderson Park on NBP Rec Day and experience paddleboarding, kayaking, canoeing and fishing. Rides on a 15-foot sailboat will also be available. The event costs \$10 for ages 7-18. Parents who attend with their children are free. Anyone age 16 and older who goes fishing needs a freshwater fishing license. Event continues Sept. 8, 18 and 22. ■ For information, visit NathanBendersonPark.org/ programming/nbp-rec-days.html.

#### SEPT. 5

#### THE MARKET AT LAKEWOOD RANCH

The Market at Lakewood Ranch features fresh vegetables, produce, baked goods, honey, guacamole, pastas and more, along with ready-toeat foods including empanadas, fresh bagels, donuts, barbecue, and hot and cold coffee from local vendors. Hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center. 8340 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. Continues every Sunday. ■ Visit TheMarketLWR.com.

#### SEPT. 9

#### **LWR 101: NEW RESIDENT ORIENTATION**

This event introduces you to Lakewood Ranch's history, clubs, governance and other features of the community. It will be held virtually on the Lakewood Ranch Community Activities Facebook page from 6-6:30 p.m. Also takes place Oct. 14 and Nov. 11. ■ Visit MyLWR.com.

#### **SUNCOAST BLOOD CENTERS** MOBILE BLOOD DRIVE

From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Grove, 10670 Boardwalk Loop, Lakewood Ranch, Suncoast Blood Centers is holding a blood drive. Donors will receive a \$10 Grove gift card, a 10% discount on



a meal that day and a free wellness checkup that includes blood pressure, temperature, iron count, pulse and cholesterol screening. All blood donations will also be screened for COVID-19 antibodies. Event continues Oct. 16 and Nov. 20.

■ Visit SuncoastBlood.org.

#### SEPT. 11

THE 9/11 DAY OF REMEMBRANCE The commemorative ceremony begins at 9 a.m. on Main Street at Lakewood Ranch. The Out-of-Door Academy orchestra will perform and tribute. Guest speakers will include former New York City firefighter Steve Lubrino, other local residents who were on the scene of the World Trade Center and Commissioner Vanessa Baugh. A 6-by-4-foot monument will be placed by the Main Street fountain across from McGrath's from Sept. 2-11. Anyone can write memories and thoughts about 9/11 on it. ■ Visit LakewoodRanch.com.

#### **SEPT. 25**

#### **CENTERSTONE LIFE** STORY RUN/WALK

Run or walk in Centerstone's 17th annual 5K/10K at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota, to raise awareness of depression, share that suicide is preventable and erase the stigma around seeking help for mental illness. The run is also available virtually. On-site registration begins at 5:30 a.m. The 10K run starts at 7:45 a.m., and the 5K run and walk starts at 7:55 a.m. ■ Visit Centerstone.org/about/lifestory.

#### **CRAFT FAIR**

Visitors to Mixon Fruit Farms can peruse booths from more than 20 vendors offering jewelry, pottery and other handmade items from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the farm, 2525 27th St. E., Bradenton.

■ Call 941-748-5829.

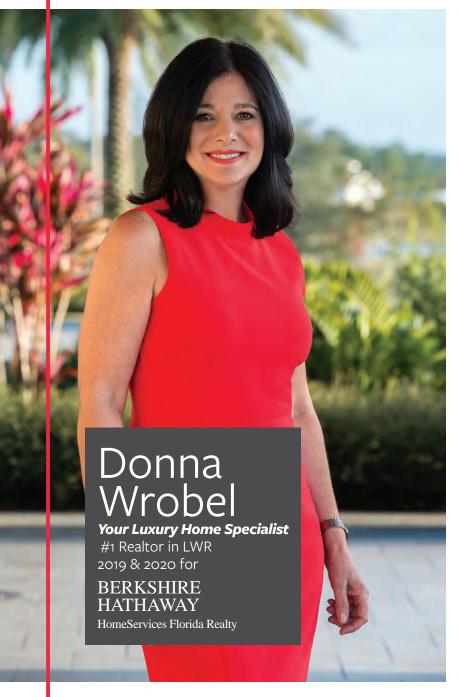
Continued on Page 52

File photos

At Hunsader's 2020 pumpkin festival, Domania Hutton. who is 9 months old; Cyla Finklea, 2; Kadin Dodge, 1; and Adelynn Dodge, 3, have fun in the pumpkin patch.

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#### REAL MEN WEAR PINK FASHION SHOW

The Mall at University Town Center will unveil its Real Mean Wear Pink of Sarasota and Manatee candidates during this high-energy fashion show benefiting the fight against breast cancer. The event is from 5-6:30 p.m. at The Mall at University Town Center, 140 University Town Center Drive, Sarasota, and is \$30.

Visit MallAtUTC.com/events.

#### **OCTOBER**

#### **OCT. 10**

#### **GRAN FONDO RACE**

At Team Tony's one-day bike race around Nathan Benderson Park, cyclists can choose a 30-, 60- or 100-mile ride. A virtual bike-a-thon will take place Sept. 1-30; there are no registration fees or fundraising minimums for the virtual event. Registration for the Oct. 10 event will be posted online. The races supports people with cancer and their caregivers.

■ Visit TeamTony.org/gran-fondo-sarasota.

#### **OCT. 16**

#### HUNSADER FARMS PUMPKIN FESTIVAL

Hunsader Farms hosts its 30th annual pumpkin festival from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 16, 17, 23, 24, 30 and 31 at 5500 County Road 675, Bradenton. In addition to pumpkins, the festival features crafts, live music, hayrides, food, displays and more. Admission is \$12 for adults and free for children 10 and under. Parking costs \$5.

Call 941-322-2168.

#### FLORIDA INLINE SKATING MARATHON AND 5K RUN

Run941 and Bont Skates host an Associated World Inline Cup race at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota. Skaters of all ages and levels can choose from a marathon, a half-marathon, a 10K and a 5K, with a purse up to \$24,000. Prices vary by race type and registration date. Proceeds benefit BeTriForUs, a nonprofit that supports athletes with disabilities.

FloridalnlineSkatingMarathon.com.



#### **OCT. 17**

#### **STUFF THE BUS**

A food drive, hosted by Meals on Wheels Plus of Manatee, will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at all 18 Publix locations across Manatee County. Donations of nonperishable food items — such as canned fruits and vegetables, macaroni and cheese, peanut butter, and boxed rice and pasta — are accepted. All proceeds and food collected will stay in Manatee County.

Visit MealsOnWheelsPlus.org/events/stuff-the-bus.

#### OCT. 20

#### SUNCOAST BLOOD CENTERS BLOOD DRIVE

From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, 8330 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., hosts a blood drive through SunCoast Blood Centers. Do-

nors will receive a free T-shirt and will be screened for COVID-19 antibodies. For information, visit LakewoodRanchMedicalCenter.com.

#### **OCT. 30**

#### **BOO RUN**

The Lakewood Ranch Running Club hosts the 18th annual Boo Run at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota. Entry for the family-friendly race, which starts at 8 a.m. and has a spooky village and costume contest, includes a bib, a finisher's medal and a race shirt. A virtual option will be Oct. 25-31. The 5K run or walk is \$35 or \$40 after Oct. 15, and the virtual race is \$40. The race benefits Another Day for Gray.

Visit RaceRoster.com.

Continued on Page 54

Monaka Oberer, Grayson Tullio and Jennifer Tullio get ready to kick off the 2020 Boo Run.

■ For information, visit

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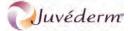
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Niki Blend Theiler, Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC), joined our team January 2020, and is now accepting new patients as part of our ongoing behavioral medicine program. With nearly 15 years of experience, Niki specializes in assisting with behavioral problems (ADHD, ODD, anxiety, depression, etc.) among children of all ages, including early development, as well as family counseling. Niki utilizes developmentally-appropriate activities to observe child behavior because they are comfortable expressing themselves in a home-like environment. Parents play an important role in Niki's ability to effectively transform behavior because she provides goals and recommendations to help them

stay involved in their child's treatment as well as generalize skills and teach appropriate verbiage. In addition, she is uniquely trained to treat children with comorbid mental health disorders, including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).



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#### **NOVEMBER**

#### NOV. 5

#### **EMPTY BOWLS**

Come to Lakewood Ranch Main Street to enjoy delicious soup from area restaurants while raising money for the Food Bank of Manatee. Attendees of the event, which runs from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., will get to enjoy a selection of soups, fresh-baked bread and desserts and take home a hand-painted ceramic bowl. Tickets are \$30. ■ Visit FoodBankOfManatee.org.

#### **MUSIC ON MAIN**

This monthly event returns on Lakewood Ranch's Main Street from 6-9 p.m. Enjoy a free concert by Rebel Heart, food vendors, beer trucks and kids activities. Proceeds will benefit the Lakewood Ranch Community Fund. ■ Call 941-907-9243.

#### NOV.7

#### **GULF COAST CYCLEFEST**

The Sarasota Manatee Bicycle Club offers this family-friendly ride, not a race, and riders can choose fully supported routes of 24, 36, 50 or 75 miles. Registration opens at 7 a.m. on Main Street in Lakewood Ranch. Advance registration is required. Cost is \$50 or \$55 after Sept. 30. ■ Visit SMBC.us.

#### **NOV. 13**

#### **NATURE WALK**

Join your Lakewood Ranch ambassador, Greg Spring, for a 2-mile, one-hour nature walk on some of the trails in Lakewood Ranch. Participants will meet 8 a.m. at the pavilion at the Greenbrook Adventure Park. 13010 Adventure Place, Bradenton,

■ For information, email Greg.Spring@LakewoodRanch.com, or call 941-907-6000.

#### **SUNCOAST FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL**

The Rotary Club of Lakewood Ranch hosts the 19th annual edition of this event, from 1-4 p.m. at Premier Sports Campus, 5895 Post Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. An \$85 ticket includes a sampling of wine and food from dozens of the area's finest restaurants, as well as live music, cooking demonstrations show that benefits Take Stock in Chil-



and vendor booths. Parking is free. Proceeds to benefit charity through a grant process.

■ Visit SuncoastFoodAndWineFest.com.

#### **NOV. 20**

#### **COMMUNITY BIKE RIDE**

Join Lakewood Ranch Ambassador Greg Spring for a 10-mile, one-hour casual bike ride through Lakewood Ranch, starting at 8 a.m. at the fountains at Main Street. Bring your own bike and helmet.

■ For information, email Greg.Spring@LakewoodRanch.com, or call 941-907-6000.

#### **NOV. 21**

PONIES UNDER THE PALMS **MUSTANG AND FORD SHOW** The Mustang Club of West Central Florida presents its 29th annual car dren and Southeastern Guide Dogs. The show takes place 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Main Street at Lakewood Ranch. This show is open to all models of Fords. Preregistration is \$25; registration is \$30.

■ Call 921-944-8137.

#### NOV. 25

#### **TURKEY TROT**

Spend your Thanksgiving Day morning burning prefeast calories while raising funds for Big Bill Foundation and Suncoast Aquatic Nature Center Associates, the nonprofit that operates Nathan Benderson Park, This 5K run/walk will be held at Nathan Benderson Park starting at 8 a.m. and include kids dashes prior to the main event. Participants will receive a race shirt, a race bib and a finisher's medal.

■ Visit RaceRoster.com.

Fran Schoepfer, a sales manager for Vine Importers, gives a sample of Midnight Estate wine to Sarasota residents Lindsey Meshberger and Shannon Lynch at the 2019 Suncoast Food and Wine Fest.



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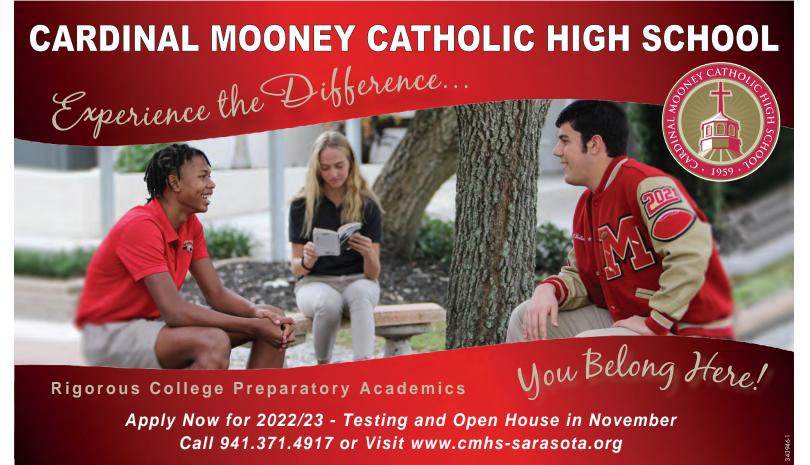
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- Fellow of International Congress of Oral Implantologists
- Fellow of the American Academy of Dental Facial Esthetics
- Member of American Academy of Implant Dentistry
- Post Doctoral Instructor of Full Mouth Reconstruction



Cameron Johnson, DMD

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- Member of the American Orthodontic Society
- Member of the International Association of Orthodontics
- Member of American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine
- International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology

style

# Back to Events, With Style

French Kande pearl necklace at Wish Boutique, \$374

Not sure what to wear this coming event season? Local boutiques and jewelers have some ideas.

BY HARRY SAYER | CONTRIBUTOR

s the promise of fall looms ahead of us, unlike last year, it brings a full schedule of events and get-togethers to look forward to. It's been some time since we've really had the opportunity to dress up nice beyond wearing half



a suit or fancy getup during a Zoom call, so no judgement here if you've forgotten exactly what to wear for this fall season. Fortunately, local boutiques and jewelers have ideas on what looks and accessories to incorporate in the coming months.

Carolina bag at Wish Boutique, \$136











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## EXPLORING 11H SKIES

The Local Group of Deep Sky
Observers brings together
astronomy lovers and amateurs
to explore the wonders found
through the lens of a telescope.

BY BRYNN MECHEM | CONTRIBUTOR

Photo courtesy Andy Harrell

The Andromeda Galaxy is the farthest thing the human eye can see without any magnification.

Imagine you are in a dark room, and you turn on a flashlight.
Instantly, a dim glow will fill the room.

That is because the photons from the flashlight are moving from the lightbulb at the speed of light to your retina. When the photons hit your retina, your brain perceives it as light.

If you were to stand across a football field at night and again turn the flashlight on, the same process would happen, but because the light has to travel farther, it would take the light about one second to reach you.

So what happens when you look through a telescope at a galaxy that is 3 million light-years away? To view the Andromeda galaxy, which is 2.5 million light-years away, photons have been traveling for 2.5 million years until they are filtered through the telescope and into your eye.

That means the photons from that galaxy have been traveling since before the Ice Age to reach you.

"That's the freak-out point for a lot of people," says Jonathan Sabin, an avid astronomer and the president of the Local Group of Deep Sky Observers.

But Sabin, who regularly exposes residents to the wonders of the galaxy, is used to the freak out. In fact, he welcomes it.

Sabin and his fellow club members regularly haul their 100-pound telescope gear to local deep-sky viewing sites hoping to share their passion for the skies.

#### **ARE CONSTELLATIONS REAL?**

Growing up in New York City, Sabin used to wonder if constellations really existed. He remembers seeing a few scattered stars, but the city lights were too bright to see any formations.

However, his fixation with astronomy grew at 5 years old when his parents took him to The Hayden Planetarium in New York City. He was transfixed by everything, and now at age 60, he still owns the children's book his parents bought for him that day.

"I remember I would read that book from cover to cover for ages," he says. "The surface of the moon, the surface of Mercury, it was all artwork to me."

As Sabin got older, he began to get frustrated by the fact that he couldn't see the stars he was studying. However, when he was 15, his family moved to Florida, and he finally got his chance.

While driving to their new home in Manatee County, Sabin noticed The Bishop Museum of Science and Nature had a planetarium. He began volunteering on the weekends and eventually joined the staff, where he was able to use the telescope and grow his passion.

In 1983, he got a call to join the Local Group of Deep Sky Observers, of

which he has been the president for the past six years.

#### EXPLORING GALAXIES NEAR AND FAR

LGDSO, which meets several times a month, is a haven for astronomy lovers. The club meets at a site located at the Crowley Museum & Nature center, where members can view the sky without light pollution.

The three major types of deep sky objects are star clusters, galaxies and nebulae, or a cloud of gas and dust in space. However, club members also view moons and planets when conditions allow.

Club members try to meet on the Saturday around the last quarter moon and the Saturday prior to the new moon because that's when the skies are darkest, allowing ideal viewing conditions. The optimal observing season is typically autumn through

Continued on Page 66

Photo courtesy Andy Harrell Left: Andy Harrell says he enjoys taking photos of deep sky objects because it shows a person how big the galaxy is.

Photo by Brynn Mechem **Below:**Jonathan Sabin, the president of the Local Group of Deep Sky Observers, regularly takes his telescope to public events to encourage others to look at the skies.





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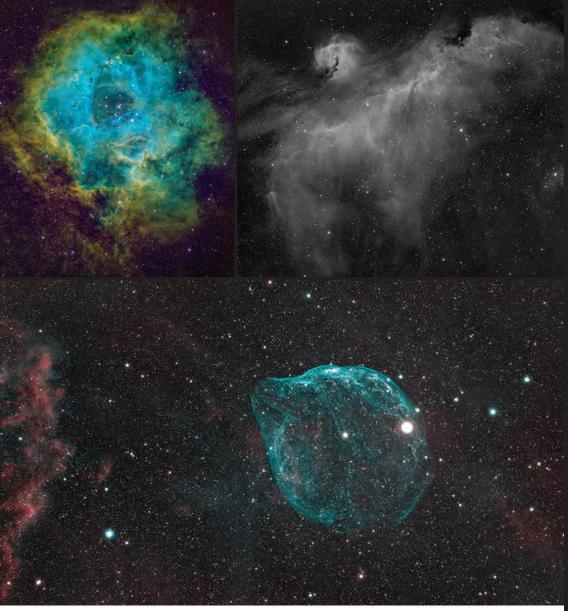
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Photos courtesy Andy Harrell

**Top left:** A nebula is an interstellar cloud of dust, hydrogen, helium and other ionized gases. **Top right:** IC 2177, or the Seagull nebula, lies between the constellations Monoceros and Canis Major. **Bottom:** Sh2-308 is an interstellar atomic hydrogen region located near the center of the constellation Canis Major.

#### Continued from Page 64

spring.

"The club is great because we get people who have different passions within astronomy who can teach others about their findings," Sabin says.

The club draws members who have a variety of interests including charting the spectrography of stars, cosmology and astrophotography.

One such member is Andy Harrell, who joined LGDSO in 2019 but began astrophotography about 10 years ago after seeing images people had taken of Saturn and Jupiter with webcams. After learning how to align the telescope with the North Pole and keeping dew from accumulating on the lens, he says he became obsessed with the hobby.

"I have such fun taking images of the deep-sky objects — nebulas in particular," Harrell says. "There are these enormous structures out there that look so small at the distance we sit from them, but with astrophotography, we can determine they are light-

Continued on Page 68

#### COMMON QUESTIONS?

How far can you see?
From a clear dark sky site, the human eye can see about 2.5 million light-years, which is about as far as the Andromeda galaxy. Granted, the collection of stars might look like pinpoints or a blob of light.

Can you see the moon landing with a telescope?
Although telescopes allow people to see craters in the moon that are 2-3 miles across, they do not have a large enough magnification to see the lunar landing site. In fact, the Hubble Space Telescope's maximum magnification will afford a 25-mile away view, which is still too

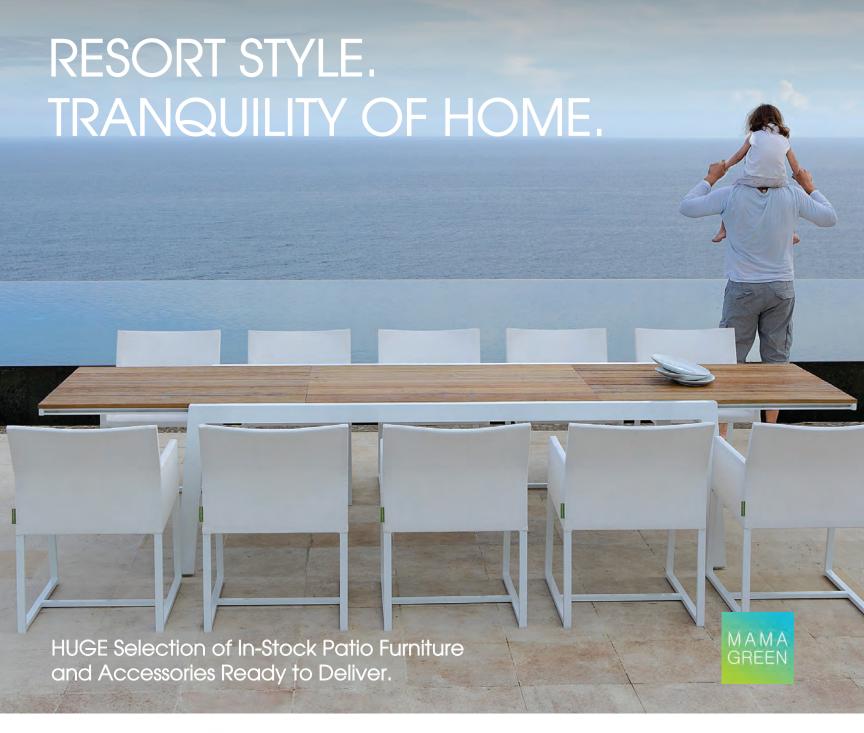
far to see any footprints or flags

left behind.

What is a black hole? Every object with mass creates its own gravitational field. A black hole is a portion of space where the force of gravity is so strong that nothing can escape its pull, not even the speed of light.

How far is the closest star? The closest star is one that we see every day: the sun, which is about 93 million miles from Earth. Aside from the sun, the nearest star is Alpha Centauri, three stars bound together by gravity, about 4.37 light-years away.

Should I wear my glasses to look through a telescope? If you are near- or far-sighted with no other eye problems, shed your glasses. After tweaking the focus of the lens, you'll see objects as clearly as if you had 20:20 vision. Taking off the glasses also helps avoid tunnel vision, which occurs when your eye is too far from the eyepiece. If you have astigmatism, it's best to keep them on.





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#### Continued from Page 66

years across."

Sean McDonald has shared Harrell's passion for astrophotography since family gifted him a telescope for Christmas seven years ago. Although his family was "mildly amused," McDonald was so excited when he first saw the Orion nebula that the hairs on his arms stood up.

His introductory telescope was swiftly replaced with a 16-inch Newtonian, but McDonald still wasn't impressed with the fuzzy resolution of the deep space objects he was looking at.

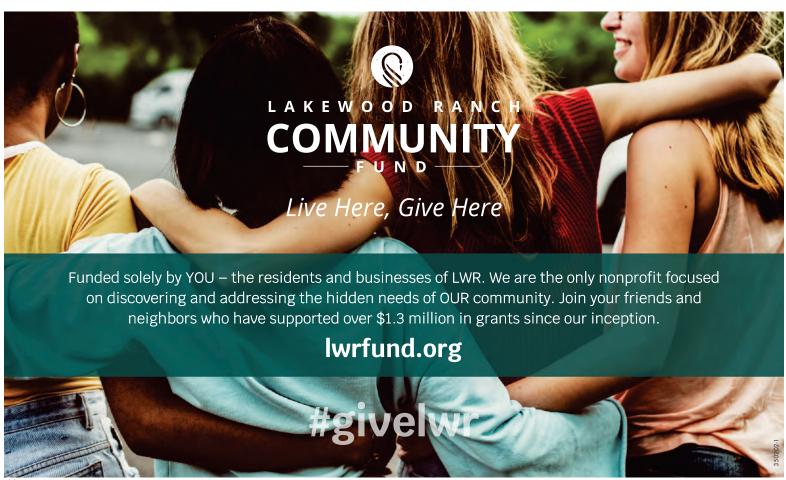
"One night, I put my DSLR camera into the eyepiece holder, and bam, the fuzzy gray globs I'd studied in my eyepieces became color-rich spiral arms of galaxies or pinpoint starts in a globular cluster," McDonald says. "All the nearly invisible nebulae I had hoped to see but couldn't were vibrant and amazing."

He's spent a lot of money and time — neither of which come easy for him,



Photo courtesy Andy Harrell

Herbig-Haro objects such as this one are small-scale regions that signify an area where stars are forming.





he says — to invest in quality astrophotography equipment. Although it's easy for him to get lost in the quest for equipment, he never loses site of why he got into the hobby in the first place.

"The real reason to take on all the challenges that come with astrophotography is to explore the amazing things in the immense space around our tiny little world," McDonald says.

#### **READY FOR EXPLORATION?**

Although it's easy for club members to get lost in their own galaxies, LGDSO members want everyone to know that astronomy isn't just for the self-proclaimed science geeks. The club, for the past 20 years, has put on Sidewalk Astronomy sessions once a month where club members set up telescopes for the general public when weather permits. Those sessions typically rotate between the Celery Fields. Robinson Preserve in West Bradenton and Riverview High School.

Typically, the events draw about 24 telescope-wielding club members and anywhere from 100 to 200 members of the public. Sabin says the sidewalk sessions allow astronomy, which can be an expensive hobby, to become accessible to everyone.

"Of all of the sciences, astronomy is probably one of the most approachable sciences for people," Sabin says. "You know, there's not too many microscopy groups out there doing cheek swabs and showing you what's living in your mouth. So most people that come try it are often blown away at how accessible it is."

Sidewalk astronomy sessions have been canceled since 2020 due to CO-VID-19, but Sabin hopes to restart them in the fall. Until then, Sabin hopes everyone will take a moment to appreciate the skies, whether it's with a high-powered telescope or a pair of old binoculars lying about.

"It's awe-inspiring," he says. "Here we are on this little planet in the Milky Way galaxy, which is just one of the 100 billion known galaxies in the universe. It kind of makes you feel insignificant, but also it's amazing to know that we are a part of that."



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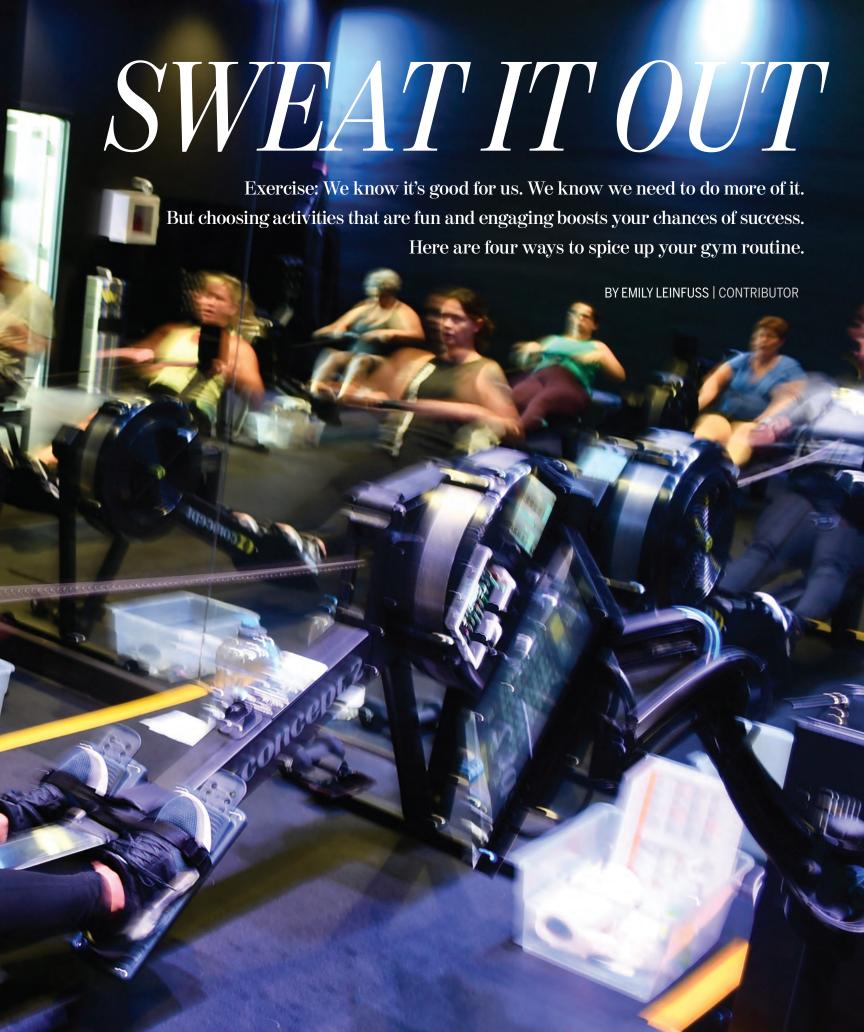


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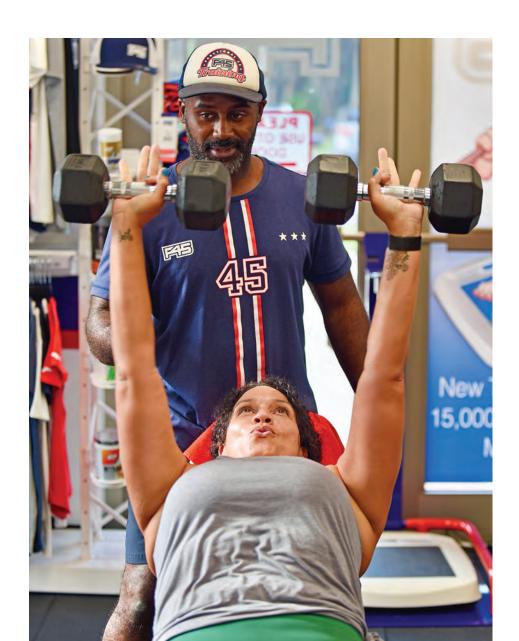




hether it's taking the stairs instead of the elevator, dancing in the living room (like no one's watching), attending a group exercise class or completing a fitness circuit, our bodies need to move.

Experts all agree that regular physical activity "is one of the most important things you can do for your health" (Centers for Disease Control) and is "good for just about everyone" (National Institute on Aging).

Then why is it so difficult to get off one's derrière and get going? We have good excuses reasons. Not enough time. Exercise is boring. We're too tired, we don't think we can rock workout fashion, and so on. But if the hitch is not knowing what to do or where to go, then consider one of these four local choices.



#### **AUSSIE INSPIRED**

As a freelance software developer, Lamar Miller could work anywhere in the world, so in 2016 he decided to travel down under. Once situated in Sydney, he discovered F45 Training.

"I've always been active and athletic but never was consistent at the gym," Miller says. That changed at F45: "I'd show up, and everything was planned out for me. It was a quick 45 minutes in and out, and it was social and friendly."

Miller particularly liked that every day was different. "You never do the same class twice.

"They (F45 training professionals, athlete and exercise scientists) have developed a database of more than 5,000 different exercises and are always inventing more." he says.

Also, F45 classes, anywhere in the world, are coordinated by day of the week to ensure that members can access the right blend of today's ontrend fitness cocktail of high-intensity interval training-style cardio (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) and resistance training (Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday). Saturday classes have a mix of both and might also feature a DJ or other fun elements.

Miller fell in love with his F45 workouts, and because he was already of a mind to start a "second-act" business, he visited its Sydney headquarters to learn about franchise possibilities. Once back in the States, Miller became a full-fledged franchise owner in February 2017. But it wasn't until January 2018 that he launched his first F45 Training in downtown Sarasota. By August 2019, he'd opened F45 Training Sarasota UTC on Honore Avenue.

If you're wondering about the name, Miller explains that the F stands for functional and that all classes last a consistent 45 minutes. "Functional exercises are designed to use body weight in a way that mimics everyday life. They strengthen muscles you need for playing with your kids, unloading groceries from your car or getting up from the floor," he says.

#### F45 Training Sarasota UTC

8405 Honore Ave. 941-900-4599 F45Training.com/sarasotautc/home F45 Training Owner Chris Miller

Left: F45 Training client Holly Hulsman with coach Sam Curry





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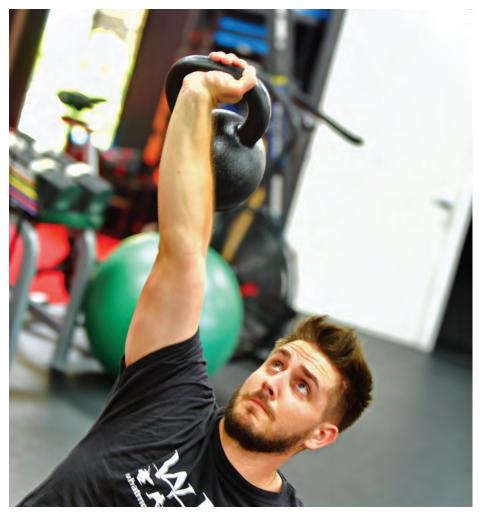
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**Above:** James Whatmore works with 19-year-old Victor Marcano, an Out-of-Door Academy graduate who went on to play college soccer in England. **Below:** Strength coach Michael Salerno works and trains at Whatmore Performance Training in Lakewood Ranch.



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Originally from the U.K., Whatmore was a professional European golfer when, in 2008, he recognized that he preferred, and had an affinity for, helping other athletes meet their full potential. "Even when I was pro, my competitors came to me with questions about how to improve a certain movement," Whatmore says. "I'd been through (this kind of) training process myself, and I understood the science behind it."

Before he left the U.K. for Florida, where he first worked at The Concession and then opened WPT in 2010, Whatmore boosted his training credentials, earning certifications from Titus Human Performance Institute, the National Academy of Sports Medicine and more.

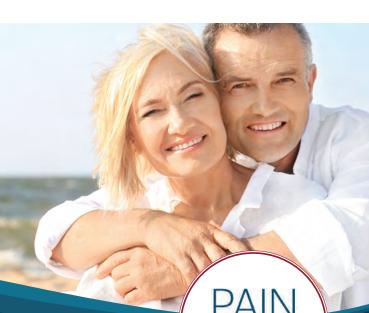
WPT is open to all ages, with clients that range from 8 to 90 years old. They are professional athletes, high-level amateurs and recreational players of golf, baseball and even soccer.

"Some come because they are getting hurt or injured when playing, some because they are not as powerful as they would like, and some come for technical reasons like they can't quite do a certain technique," Whatmore says. Whatever the goal, every athlete goes through a fully comprehensive assessment process before training.

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### PART OF THE CREW It had been 20 years since the launch

of Sarasota Crew and four years since the World Rowing Championships were held at Nathan Benderson Park when, in May 2020, Roberta and Ruben Baker opened The Row House UTC. "Yes, we are those crazy people who opened up a fitness business during the pandemic," Ruben jokes.

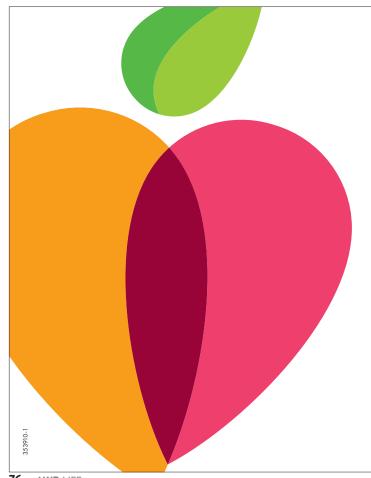
In fact, the Bakers traded out one of their original franchise licenses, which were for Tampa and St. Petersburg, so that they could open here. "The Lakewood Ranch area is so attractive, and we wanted to be part of the area's rowing community," Roberta says.

A few years earlier, when the couple was about five years away from retiring, they decided to invest in a business that would be fun to run. Once they discovered The Row House, the Bakers were all in. "We loved everything about rowing, and the way The Row House was set up," Roberta says.

Ruben explained that, depending on which one of the six class types (some are more cardio-focused, others emphasize strength and stretching),



Karima Habity gave up hot yoga for fitness rowing two months ago.



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participants will spend a portion of class time on a state-of-the-art rowing machine and the rest on the floor do-

> ing strength training exercises. Proper rowing technique is also a priority, which is the focus of the "stroke" class.

> > "Rowing is an extremely high energyburning and muscle-building but. low-impact exercise. It can (build) posture and strengthen your body from head to toe," Ruben says.

"Beyond that, classes are a fun and friendly 45 minutes. There's great music and lighting, so they go by really fast." And yes, there is reciprocity with the professional rowing community that includes taking groups out on the Nathan Benderson Park lake.

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### **MOVE & BE STILL**

Janette Brown opened The Yoga Barre on Lakewood Ranch Boulevard in the beginning of April, but she is no newcomer to the fitness trade. She's certified in spin, HIIT, barre, boom, chisel, Pilates and more and has taught at Crunch, Burn Bootcamp and Around the Clock Fitness.

But it was only after completing yoga teacher training that she knew what she wanted the focus of her own studio to be. "I think everyone should try yoga, so I set out to offer as many classes — as well as different instructors and class times — as I could in hopes that someone finds one that they love," Brown says.

Classes at The Yoga Barre include gentle hatha, vinyasa, power, mobility flow, barrelates, restorative, aerial restorative and kids' yoga, with more on the way. Buti yoga is once a month, and belly dancing and Zumba are offered as special events.

Although all Yoga Barre classes are open to teens and up, except for kids yoga (4– to 12-year-olds), Brown explained that some — hatha yoga,

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Gentle Hatha is one of The Yoga Barre's best-attended classes.



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for example — are more appropriate for beginners. Others, such as power yoga, require a certain level of athleticism from participants, regardless of yoga experience, she explains.

Brown is quick to add that she is always willing to chat. "People will usually contact me if they are wondering where they should start according to their fitness level, injuries and need," she said.

The benefits of prac-

The benefits of practicing yoga go beyond physical fitness, Brown noted. "I set out to create a comfortable place that offers a sense of com-

munity and a respite from the noise of day-to-day living." Because, she adds, "it is so important to move but also to be still."

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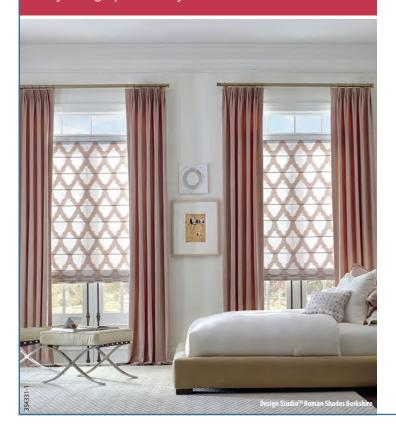
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Although their teams drew crowds in the tens of thousands, traveling the country to play America's pastime, many of their experiences were never recorded. Lakewood Ranch resident Leon Harris Jr. remembers his time in the Negro Leagues as one of many anonymous players left

# INTHE SHADOWS of history.

BY JAY HEATER | CONTRIBUTOR



t was the only evidence Lakewood Ranch's Leon Harris Jr. played professional baseball. A brief listing in Baseball-Reference.com gives his name as having played with the Kansas City Monarchs during the 1953 and 1954 seasons.

The rest of the listing:

■ Position: Pitcher

■ Bats: Unknown

■ Throws: Unknown

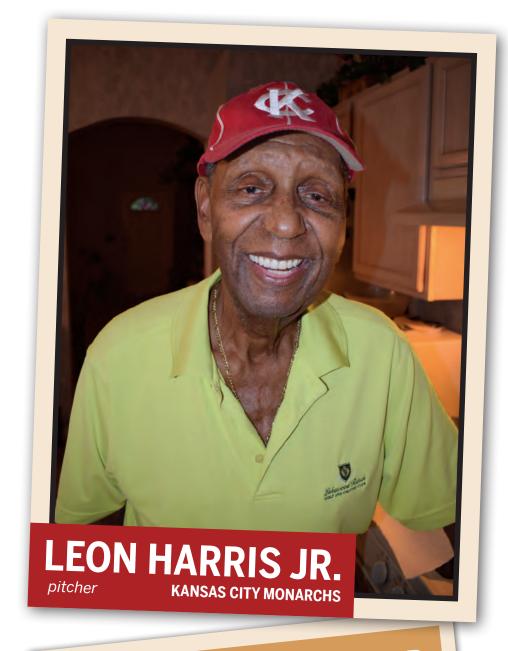
Harris was not alone in anonymity. That lack of recognition was shared by many other Black players in that era.

In June, Baseball-Reference.com, a site used by media organizations and broadcasters who cover Major League Baseball, made the following announcement.

"We have dramatically expanded our coverage of the Negro Leagues and historical Black major league players. Major Negro Leagues (from 1920-1948) are now listed with the National League and American League as major leagues. We are not bestowing a new status on these players or their accomplishments. The Negro Leagues have always been major leagues. We are changing our site's presentation to properly recognize this fact."

When Jackie Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947, it created a void for Black players who still weren't given the same opportunities and remained on Negro Leagues teams. Black players began to trickle into the major leagues, but teams like the Monarchs had plenty of talented players who were denied the opportunity to play MLB. The Kansas City Monarchs played in the Negro Ameri-

Continued on Page 84





Born: May 6, 1930

Lives: Summerfield, Lakewood Ranch

Hometown: Nyack, New York

Wife: Laura

Children: Seven

Did you know? Harris was a right-handed pitcher for the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro American

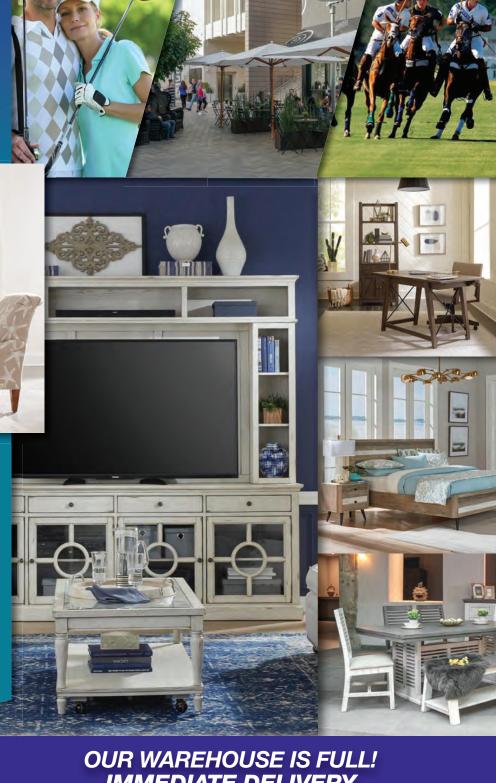
League during the 1953-54 seasons.

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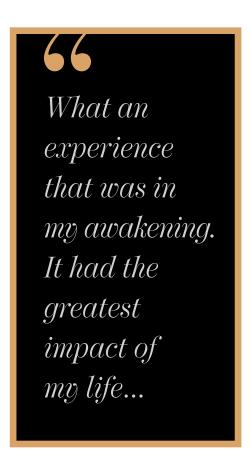
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Continued from Page 82

can League, but competing teams in that league, the Monarchs included, also barnstormed around the country, making it hard to keep statistics.

So the proudest moment of Harris' professional baseball career won't be read about in the history books.

### TRACES OF THE ATHLETE

Traces of 91-year-old Harris' athleticism remain despite his advancing age. His long frame makes it apparent he once dominated at several sports. It is not surprising to learn that besides professional baseball, he played football, basketball and track at Hampton University in Virginia.

When stationary, he has the look of a much younger man who could still be a force on any golf course. But when he moves around his Summerfield home, he is somewhat bent over as his back betrays him. He hasn't hit a golf ball, one of his favorite pastimes and a prime reason he moved to Lakewood Ranch in 1997, for more than 15 years.

But ask him about his favorite mo-

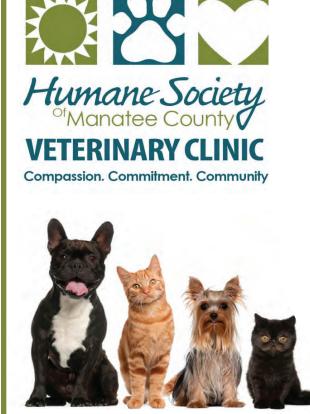
ment with the Monarchs, and his face lights up. He thinks back to his effort at Briggs Stadium in Detroit during the 1953 season.

Legendary Negro Leagues player and manager Buck O'Neil, who grew up in Sarasota, turned to Harris with the Monarchs trailing the Indianapolis Clowns 4-1 in the seventh inning of an American Negro League game. Harris was a right-handed pitcher, a big, strapping, 6-foot-3 kid that O'Neil called his "stopper."

The Monarchs couldn't afford to allow any more runs on this day. Harris needed to be perfect.

The scene itself was perfect for Harris. This wasn't some tiny stadium in the Midwest where the Monarchs would visit for one day before moving to the next town. When the Monarchs traveled to the Motor City, they often played in the cavernous Briggs Stadium, which seated 52,416 and was home of the Detroit Tigers.

Briggs Stadium was nicknamed "The Corner" because of its location at the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Trumbull Avenue, and it was the







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site where the Yankees' Lou Gehrig pulled himself out of the lineup May 2, 1939, ending what then was MLB's longest consecutive games streak at 2,130. Tigers outfielder Ty Cobb used to roam the field when it was known as Navin Field, eventually becoming Briggs Stadium in 1938 and later Tiger Stadium in 1961. On July 13, 1934, at the stadium, Babe Ruth hit his 700th career home run off Tigers' pitcher Tommy Bridges.

Harris knows the history from what he called the "Sanctioned League" because he said any league that wouldn't allow Black players and limited access to Latin players couldn't be called "Major League Baseball."

To Harris, this was a major moment, though, as he strode to the mound with all eyes on him. About 25,000 fans attended that day.

"I remember it so well," Harris says, poking the air with his finger as if he were selecting a moment in time. "It was important to me because my buddy Damon White, from (his hometown of Nyack, New York), was there in the stands. He lived just outside of Detroit at the time.

"That first inning, I struck out the side. Then I came back the next inning, and I struck out the side again, ... six in a row. We were the home team in that game. (Harris explained the Monarchs were like the Harlem Globetrotters and often were the home team in other cities). And in the ninth I got the three straight outs. Six strikeouts, no hits."

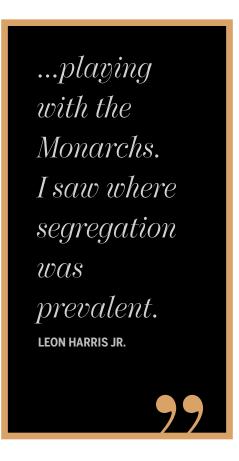
Pancho Herrera, who eventually played MLB for the Philadelphia Phillies, hit a grand slam in the bottom of the ninth as the Monarchs won 5-4.

"Unbelievable," Harris says, shaking his head. "I felt I was great that day."

#### **LOTS TO LEARN**

In that first season of professional baseball in 1953, Harris learned more about racism and its effect on people. Growing up in the village of Nyack, New York, which had a population of about 1,000 at the time and which Harris says was pretty much half white and half Black, Harris says people had learned to get along. Although he couldn't join them at the Y or with the white Boy Scout

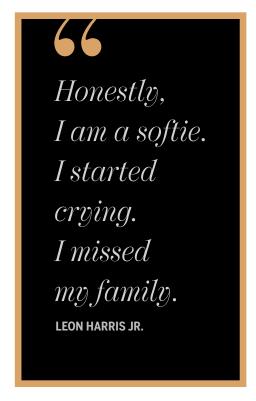
Continued on Page 86







Laura and Leon Harris Jr. still stay active, often playing "Feather Your Nest" at the Lakewood Ranch Elks Club.



Continued from Page 85

troop, where Black kids were not allowed, many of his friends were white.

In Nyack, he says he was part of an "elite" Black family because his father, Leon Sr., had become the first Black police officer in Rockland County in 1935 and later worked for charitable foundations. His father was well liked, and people would come from all around to watch him play pool. Harris remembers his father was so good looking that people in town called him "the Dark Clark Gable."

His mom, Ruth, cleaned houses for \$4-\$5 a week.

"We didn't have money," Harris says.
"I always worked during the summers when I was young."

Harris' talent on the athletic fields was apparent as he headed to high school, and his father cautioned him about the future.

"He always called me Junior. He would say, 'Junior, in order to compete,

you have to be three times better than the white man.' He emphasized that, and I found out that was true."

After a couple years of college, Harris married his first wife, Nancy (who died in 2020 at 92), and moved to East Providence, Rhode Island. It was there playing baseball with the Riverside Merchants that a St. Louis Cardinals scout saw Harris pitch. He signed for \$4,999 and was sent to the minor leagues, where he soon injured his pitching arm. The Cardinals recommended that he play with the Monarchs to develop.

When he joined the Monarchs, he found many of his teammates were from the South, and they had seen racism at its worst. It was far worse than anything he had seen growing up in the Northeast, he says.

Fortunately, O'Neil, who became MLB's first Black coach in 1962 with the Cubs, took charge on every Monarchs' road trip, knowing the places where his players would be welcome and knowing which places to avoid.

The Monarchs were paid in cash, and O'Neil took care of their money. He was a baseball legend, a father figure, an accountant and a friend. Harris learned a lot from O'Neil about baseball and even more about navigating a difficult world.

"What an experience that was in my awakening," he says. "It had the greatest impact of my life, playing with the Monarchs. I saw where segregation was prevalent. I saw the signs, 'White Here,' 'Colored Here.' But Buck handled men, and we were boys becoming men. He took care of it all, and he had charisma."

#### **NO MORE GAMES**

Eventually, after a year and half playing with the Monarchs, Harris was on a road trip while Providence was getting hammered by a heavy storm. Harris called home to make sure his family was all right, and his youngest child, 3-year-old Yvonne, spoke to him, telling him how much she missed him and that the storm frightened her.

"Honestly, I am a softie," he says. "I started crying. I missed my family."

Harris decided it was time to come home.

Back in Rhode Island, he took a civil service test and an athletics director job in 1955 at the Rhode Island Training School for Boys.

But he remembers back when he was 15, his first "big" job was at the Sanitary Diaper factory in Nyack. He earned 85 cents an hour, and he saw the women who worked there under awful conditions. He also noticed the truck drivers were in a union and had better conditions. He talked to the women about joining a union, and a year after he left, they did.

Later in high school, he worked for Robert Gair Paper Co. as a sorter, making cereal boxes.

"You would shuffle them like cards, then they would go into a machine," he says. "But you would see people who had their arms cut off. It was a sweatshop, and it was dangerous."

In 1954, Harris went to Brown University to hear A. Phillip Randolph speak. Randolph was a labor unionist, civil rights activist and socialist politician. He eventually was head of the March on Washington, D.C., in which Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech.

"I was so impressed," Harris says. "It was such an influence on my life."

He landed a job as the international

representative for the American Federation for State, County and Municipal Employees and later served as president of the Greenwich Village NAACP chapter after moving to New York City and was president of the Inner City Labor Alliance.

After vacationing for several years in Florida, he made the decision to retire in Lakewood Ranch. He loved golf, the weather and spring training.

In retirement, Harris didn't stop being involved and was one of the original members of the Kiwanis Club that met at Woodland Community Church. He was head of the Manatee/Sarasota Democratic Black Caucus for 10 years.

After all the years, Harris believes the U.S. still has a lot of work to do to progress as a society.

"You still have the darker-skinned people doing the menial jobs," he says. "In 2075, that might be changed, but it's going to take a long time. There have been gains, but they mostly have been gestures with no money attached." For example, Harris suggests that the Social Security system could provide payments earlier for Blacks to reflect differences in life expectancies. "Our life expectancy is not expected to be as long as white males and females," he says. "It might sound weird, but it can be done."

In 2002, former MLB Commissioner Fay Vincent made his own attempt at reparations for as many Negro League players as possible. In writing his book, 'The Last Commissioner: A Baseball Valentine," Vincent sent out checks to former Negro League players based on sales of his book. Harris received a check for \$214.64.

Harris keeps a copy of the check and figures he never will see another. He says that's OK, though, because every day of playing with the Monarchs was glorious. He doesn't expect anyone to ever find his statistics or records.

It does give him some solace that some understand the injustice done to the Negro League players.

"Ted Williams spoke at Howard University," Harry says. "He was giving a commencement address. He said, 'I love baseball, but if I had been Black, you never would have heard of me."

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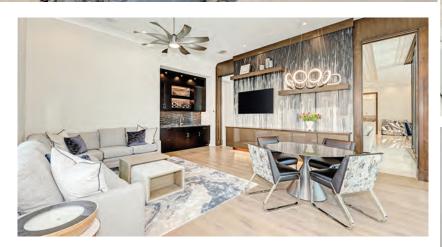








### **Clockwise from** left: The home's open-concept living area includes formal seating, formal dining and a state-of-the-art kitchen. The front entrance, at right, turns opaque at the touch of a button. The kitchen features custom cabinetry and a large center island. In the family room, an accent mural complements the subdued color palette.



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The owners of the tech showplace are Charlie and Kerry Desfosses. This is their third home in the Ranch. Each was a little bigger than the one before, and the lessons the couple learned have all been incorporated into a brand new home that fits their lifestyle perfectly and offers them exactly what

Continued on Page 94

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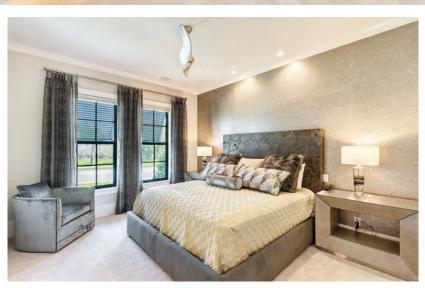


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Clockwise from left: The spacious master bath features a modernistic soaking tub. The adjacent marbleclad shower room provides two separate shower areas. each controlled by a wall-mounted electronic pad. One of the home's four bedrooms is decorated in restful shades of gray and brown.



Continued from Page 92

they want. There's even a brand new Ferrari in the garage.

The Ferrari (an F 8 model) is parked next to a silver Bentley, and the job of protecting these beauties has given the house a state-of-the-art security system. There are 23 exterior security cameras, plus numerous motion and body-heat detectors. Anyone or anything encroaching on the property is immediately lit and recorded. Fortunately, the only intruders sighted so far have been several raccoons and a deer from the nature preserve across

the street.

The home does more than protect, though. It happily performs a long list of tasks and chores, never complaining and always up to the challenge. It raises and lowers the shades in the master bedroom at exactly the right time. It turns on the pool lights and can program them in an endless variety of colors and patterns. Same with the pool jets, which are gracefully over the water. The mosquito misters in the garden regularly spray a burst of organic repellent. The 38-kilowatt generator kicks in automatically if needed. Even the front door, 10 feet high with

thick glass and wood, turns opaque in the evening for extra privacy.

The home is an Arthur Rutenberg model, constructed by Derek Nelson Builders with a number of tweaks and special features. Because the lot itself is so large, a second garage was added, separated from the main house by a motor court. The extra land also allowed for a spacious lawn and garden, which slope down gracefully to the edge of a large lake.

In spite of its tech mindset, the home has an elegant traditional look.

Continued on Page 96







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### Clockwise from left: A sun shelf at one end of the pool provides a perfect place for watching sunsets over the lake. The view from the living room is all water: spa, pool and lake. The outdoor kitchen and dining area is complete with a cypress ceiling.





Continued from Page 94

Fabrics are soft and textured; colors are subtle and subdued. Blues, grays and off-whites predominate. Accents are used judiciously and with imagination. Wood trim warms certain rooms. In others the glint of silver and chrome make the atmosphere sparkle. You'll see several wall murals adding color and substance. The one in the family room was hand painted while the one in the master bedroom was computer-generated.

Nelson has a decorating team that helped Charlie and Kerry furnish the home. "They gave us a lot of choices,"

Charlie says. The results give the home's outdoor living area is a prized house an easy flow from room to room. Elements don't so much match as complement one another. There are four bedrooms in all, plus a dedicated office just off the entrance hall. It is lined with shelves, behind which is a hidden secret door. "In case the tax man drops by," Charlie says with a laugh.

Charlie and Kerry are not exactly snowbirds. They travel back and forth between the Ranch and their New Hampshire home but on no set schedule. Visiting family and friends is an important part of their lives - they have four children and eight grandkids — and for these visitors the

amenity. It's a vast space, screened in such a way to allow uninterrupted long views of the lake. There's an outdoor kitchen, plus a pool and an infinity spa — of course, all programed as to temperature — and a "sun shelf," a corner of the pool just inches deep, with lounge chairs and sun umbrellas so you can sip your margarita half in and half out of the water.

The home's master bedroom is cool and elegant, with a separate space that could be another office or exercise room. And in the elaborate master

Continued on Page 98



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#### Continued from Page 96

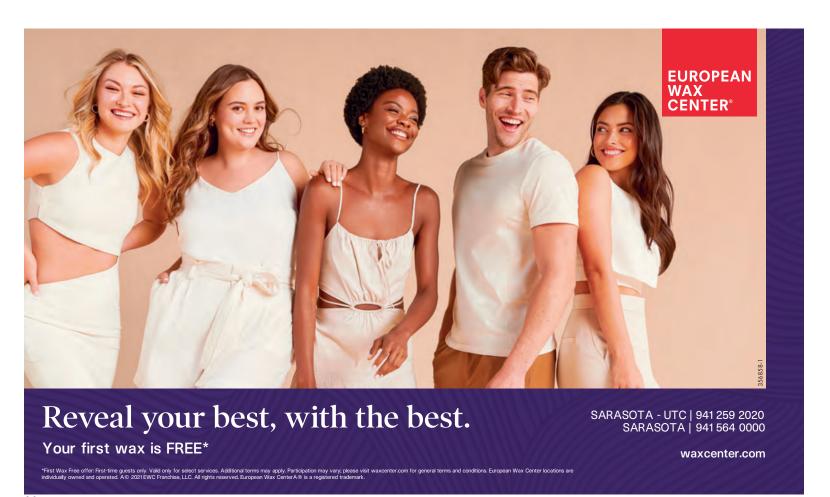
bath, you'll find that your home is also your shower buddy. The lights come on automatically as you enter. There is a large 8-foot-by-12-foot marble lined shower room; each end has its own rain forest shower head, plus a handheld unit. An electronic pad on the wall greets you by name and immediately delivers your preferred temperature and spray options. The morning news is heard through speakers, with myriad options for lighting and music.

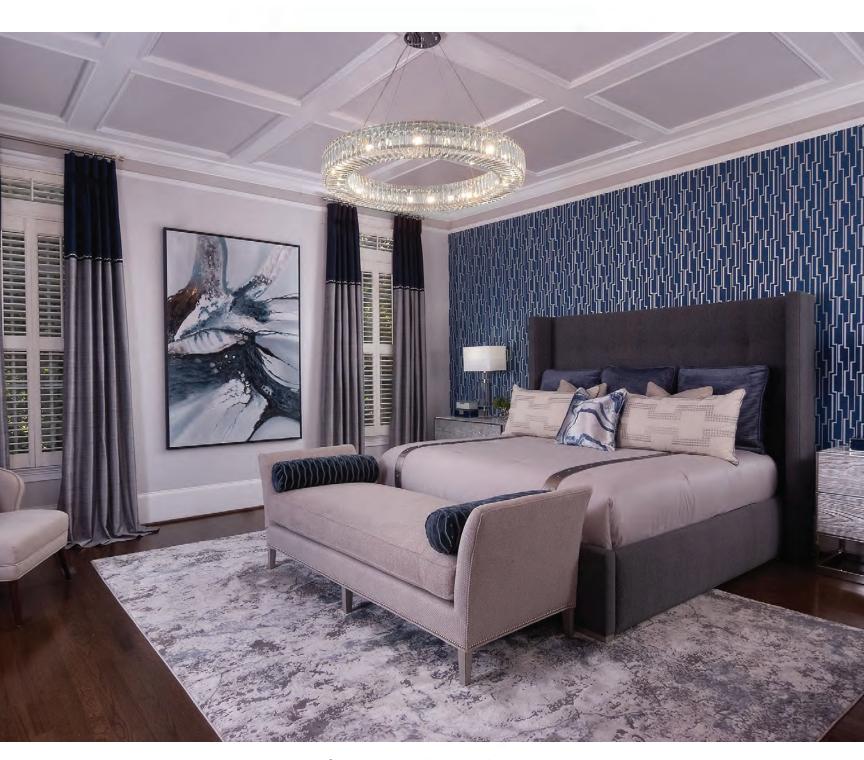
Just like a family member, the home's computer system has its own room. A large walk-in closet actually, it contains the necessary servers and controls, all designed and maintained by Telephone Network Technology. It might seem complicated, but as Charlie says, "Once it's programmed, it's simple."

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### art and about

## The Arts Scene is Back!

It's fall, but it feels like spring. The once-dormant area art scene is finally making a comeback. Here's a glimpse of what's happening.



SU BYRON CONTRIBUTOR

Bringing it back home. Eubie Blake had a knack for the piano. In his teens, he made a good living playing in dives and houses of ill repute. He grew up to be the godfather of ragtime. In 1921, Blake also crossed the color line with "Shuffle Along," the first hit Broadway musical written, directed and performed by Black talents. "Eubie" honors Blake's legacy with a revue of 20 of his classic tunes, including "I'm Just Wild About Harry," of course. This was the first show staged by Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe in its first full season in 2002-03, and WBTT is bringing it back home this year with Jim Weaver directing. We'd like to think that Blake is smiling up in ragtime heaven. Oct. 6 to Nov. 21; Westcoast Black Theatre, 1012 N. Orange Ave., Sarasota; 941-366-1505; WestCoast-BlackTheatre.org.

#### Saviors, suitors and scamps — oh my!

One of Gioachino Rossini's first commercial successes and his sixth opera (written when he was 20), "La scala di seta" ("The Silken Ladder"), is based on a libretto by poet Giuseppe Foppa thatwas based on a French play. The scoop? Dorvil is secretly married to Giulia, who lives in her guardian's villa. Said guardian has secretly promised her hand to a man who is secretly in love with another woman. The ladder in question? It's silk and employed by Dorvil for his nightly conjugal visits. (Nudge, nudge, wink wink.) Rossini's frenetic farce is filled with comic turns, plot twists, charming interludes, great music and, of course, a happy ending. It's one of Rossini's most sparkling creations — and it never gets old. Six performances, Oct. 29 to Nov. 13; Sarasota Opera, 61 N. Pineapple Ave., Sarasota; 941-328-1300; SarasotaOpera.org.



Photo by Sorcha Augustine

Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe's Syreeta Banks

#### Inconvenient truths. Impolite painter.

"Art and Race Matters: The Career of Robert Colescott" at Sarasota Art Museum investigates the legacy of one of America's most significant Black artists. The late artist had an unflinching eye for the racist subtext of pop culture imagery — and combined that high-powered perception with precisely aimed satire. Colescott's laserlike vision burned through the hypocrisy of Hollywood and the whites-only hero worship of Western art. Colescott's "Shirley Temple Black and Bill Robinson White" swaps the skin colors of the child star and the adult dancer. His "1919" turns America's larger-thanlife story of "How the West Was Won" into the intimate story of his family's migration to California. Some of Colescott's paintings will make you laugh;

Continued on Page 102



Heather Rasmussen Robert Colescott's "Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet," 1968



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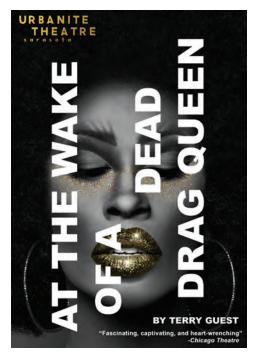


#### Continued from Page 100

others will make you cry. After leaving this exhibit, you'll see the images of American art and advertising with entirely different eyes. Through Oct. 31; Sarasota Art Museum, 1001 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota; 941-309-4300; SarasotaArtMuseum.org.

A drag of a party. Urbanite Theatre opens its long-delayed season of live theater with a funeral, but feel free not to wear black and leave your hanky at home. Terry Guest's provocative "At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen" celebrates Blackness, queerness, sarcasm and the fine arts of glitz, glam and drag. Guest's one-act play is all about life, not death. That said, his play revolves around a dead person — Courtney Berringers, a queer, 20-something Black American who recently died from AIDS. Clever storyteller that he is, Guest unfolds Berringers' life story via a series of flashbacks steeped in drama and drag. The result is a clever investigation of identity, gender, illness and our self-constructed narratives. This "Dead Man's Party" aims straight for your funny bone — when it doesn't pluck your heartstrings. On second thought, better bring that hanky just in case. Oct. 29 to Dec. 12; Urbanite Theatre, 1487 Second St., Sarasota, 941-321-1397; UrbaniteTheatre.com.

Metafictional mania. Until The Players Centre for Performing Arts moves to its swanky new home in Lakewood Ranch, it'll be staging productions in Studio 1130, a theater space inside a former Banana Republic in a Sarasota mall. The season opens with a snappy, one-act musical comedy called "[Title of Show]." The show follows two newbie writers as they race to finish writing a musical, not to mention casting it, for a theater festival that's only weeks away. The metafictional mania includes close encounters of the backstage artistic process and all its ego-fueled Sturm und Drang. For an extra meta twist, composer Jeff Bowen and writer Hunter Bell first staged this musical about writing a musical at the New York Musical Theatre Festival in 2004. In 2008, they got to see it staged on Broadway.



Talk about life imitating art! 7:30 p.m. Oct. 6-9, 12-16 and 2 p.m. Oct. 10, 16-17; Studio 1130, The Crossings at Siesta Key, 3501 S. Tamiami Trail, Suite 1130, Sarasota; 941-365-2494; ThePlayers.org.





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### back at the ranch

# Combating COVID Fatigue

After this prolonged period of stress, one thing remains paramount: taking care of yourself.



JESS MCINTYRE GREENBROOK RESIDENT AND WORKING MOM TO SONS GAVIN, JACKSON AND HUDSON



Braden River Nature Park is a great place to enjoy nature and get some exercise to shift your perspective.

File photos

emember when our nation's favorite slogan was "14 days to flatten the curve"? Although it feels like just yesterday, the reality is that thought went out the window a year and a half ago. Forget 14 days. It has been no less than 18 long months where not a single moment has gone by without COVID-19 invading daily considerations.

And now here we are, starting another pandemic-impacted school year. Families are still reeling from the mental drain of last year and shocked that the already-short summer is coming

to a rapid end. The positive news is we are a people of resilience. Months of change have settled into a new sense of normal. Schooling has adapted, workplaces have shifted, and shopping and dining now accommodate patrons in a new way. But it is unrealistic to ignore the long-term impact this strain and stress has caused for overall health. Regardless of what side of the road you sit on, this has been an unexpected and lengthy bump in society's historical track record of smooth sailing. So how can we combat the slump? What can we do to encourage positive reframing and ensure healthier bodies, minds and spirits?

#### PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Whether you prefer organized classes, indoor gym settings or simply taking advantage of living in the Sunshine State, Lakewood Ranch offers every option. For the "I won't exercise unless someone tells me what to do" crowd, try Cyclebar, Purebarre, Barre3, Orangetheory, Crossfit Lena or Burn Bootcamp. If you're a weightlifting and treadmill/ elliptical junky, LA Fitness or Crunch might be right for you. Prefer to embrace the outdoors and breathe in the sunshine? Explore Braden River Nature Park, Celery Fields or Greenbrook Adventure Park. It doesn't matter what you do, just grab your shoes and get moving!

#### SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT

Physical movement is great for your (physical) body, but often necessity dictates that one channel a little deeper into the psyche. This is where slower, more intentional movements can prove beneficial. Studios including The Yogabarre, ThaVma and Yogashack can provide a serene and safe space to open your mind, body and spirit to the benefits of movement through voga.

Food is also the way to many hearts, but it is also the way to happiness. Sometimes that looks like clean eating with acai bowls, fresh juices or organic power salads at such places as 3Natives, Crop or So Fresh. And other times that means delicious, finger-lickin' splurges — try Farmhouse, Shipley and Five-O Donut Co. the next time you crave sugary, hole-y deliciousness or Big Olaf's and Jeni's for mouth-watering ice cream. (Don't forget the waffle cone!)

### **MENTAL HEALTH**

Being healthy includes more than just your spirit and physical self. It goes beyond eating yummy or nutritious food

and moving your body (though these things definitely help). The third pillar in overall health is, well, mental. Taking care of thoughts and emotions is equally paramount and arguably the most important component in your complete well-being. Everyone has gone through some incredibly unprecedented time, and the need to normalize the experience is real. Don't be afraid to lean into available options for counseling, therapy or even just talking with a close friend. Kahwa and Atria both offer laid-back and comfortable environments to grab coffee or tea and unwind.

If you prefer to disclose concerns or struggles with a professional in an unbiased setting, there are a plethora of licensed counselors and therapists in the greater LWR area. Still unsure about talking through your thoughts? If you have insurance, the availability of virtual therapy in the pandemic-era is abundant. You can stay in the privacy of your own home, porch or even car and access a professional to chat with.

Stay safe, stay healthy, and keep chugging along. Brighter days are ahead!



Big Olaf's banana split





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### COFFEE AND CARS

JULY 10 AT UNIVERSITY TOWN CENTER





Photos by Liz Ramos **Above:** Lakewood

Ranch's Tom Balistreri
shares his 1965

Corvette that he's
owned since 1983.

Balistreri says driving
the car "makes you
feel special."

Left: Lakewood Ranch's Ella Hoy enjoys seeing her 7-year-old son, Enzo, and husband, Matt, who are car fanatics, marvel over the various cars at Coffee and Cars.



Left: Lakewood Ranchers Robin and Rick Brown enjoy Coffee and Cars. Rick Brown says he's been going to car shows for 50 years.

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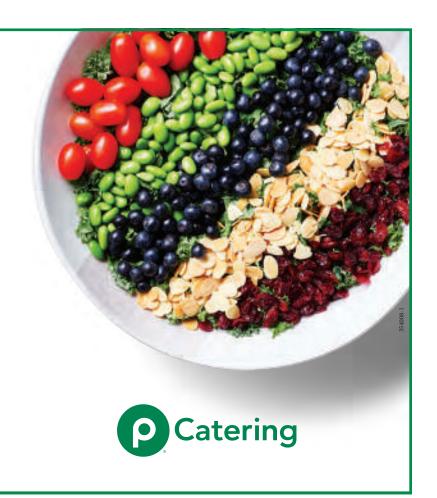
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### ROTARY CLUB OF LAKEWOOD RANCH INSTALLS OFFICERS

JUNE 24 AT LAKEWOOD RANCH GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

Photos by Brendan Lavell Christi Villalobos receives the Stephen Garber Award from club President Laura Adcock. Villalobos also received the Rotarian of the Year award.



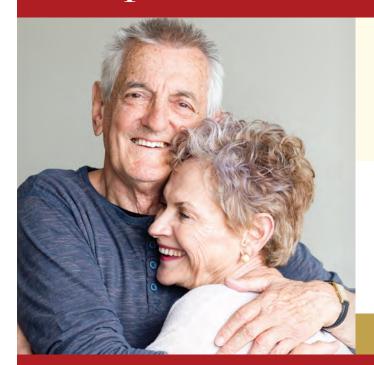


Dorothy Bodenburg, Jim Wingert and JoAnn Shakon say they were excited to hear the review of the Rotary Club's 2020-21 year and then put the COVID-19 pandemic behind them and enjoy spending time together.



Maureen Burke and Bobbie Bordes say they hadn't been to any Rotary Club events since the pandemic started and were excited to see all their club friends in person again.

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### FIREWORKS ON THE LAKE

JULY 3 AT NATHAN BENDERSON PARK



Country Meadows residents Aaron Westrip; Holly Westrip; Michael Westrip; Elizabeth Westrip; Charlie Westrip; and Chuck Westrip ran the 4-mile race around the park's lake before the fireworks show.



Photos by Brendan Lavell **Above:** Greenbrook's Adelynn Harris; Greg Harris; Aubrey Harris; Justin Harris; Aurora Harris; Amelia Harris; Amayah Hayden; Kelly Harris; and Mary Harris buy flowers from Sweet B's Flower Truck.

**Left:** Nathan Benderson Park's fireworks show lasted for 15 minutes.









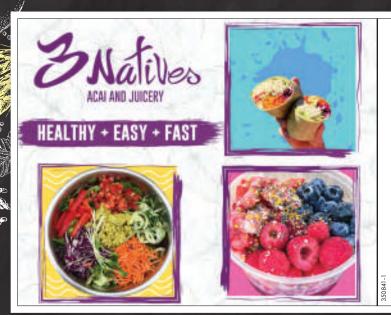


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