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The art of retiring well



The Blue Pelicans formed three years ago after finding one another in the Indigo community. They've been jamming together ever since.

For some of us, this day is a ways away. For others, it's approaching. And no doubt many of you have already taken the leap of saying sayonara to your working years and hello to not ever having a boss or a time card again. Yes, I'm talking about retirement.



It's something that sounds relatively easy for the uninitiated: Cut the celebratory cake, bid your coworkers goodbye, move to (where else?) Florida, and spend the rest of your days doing whatever you damn well please. After all, you've earned it.

But those of you who have gone through this transition know it's not always that easy.

There's a lot of change to swallow in a short amount of time. You go from a packed schedule with lots of responsibilities to few duties and vast chasms of time to fill. From having a ready-made support network of coworkers and friends to being the new kid on the block. Some people find themselves struggling to find meaning in

their newly unemployed state. Some even decide to go back to work.

My father, who lives full time in Esplanade after retiring two years ago, is proud of successfully exiting his business after 42 years of 70-hour workweeks. He likes to share what he believes are the keys to life after work, which go something like this: 1.) Ease into it. Taper your work hours near retirement, so you can acclimate and begin filling the time gradually; 2.) Get involved. He's the book captain of the Rotary Club of Lakewood Ranch's Books for Kids program, which keeps him busy and engaged; and 3.) Budget. It can be hard drawing on wealth rather than creating it, so a budget can put you at ease.

There's one thing he fails to mention that I think was a huge factor in his happiness: Choose a place to live that is invested in your retirement success. Lakewood Ranch is a place for people of all ages, which means there's no shortage of things to do or places to go or people to meet. And to make

sure you know all about these opportunities, Lakewood Ranch Communities holds new-resident orientations, a diverse array of events and even bus tours (see Page 36) to make sure you're living your best Lakewood Ranch life.

In addition, neighborhoods here are developed with community in mind. There are common spaces to find people who, well, have things in common. That's how members of Indigo's resident band, The Blue Pelicans (Page 80) found one another. It started with a flyer in the Indigo clubhouse calling for fellow musicians who were ready to jam. Now that same clubhouse is home to rehearsals for their gigs, which they play regularly around town.

They don't do it for money, and they don't do it for fame (though I'm sure they're a hit wherever they play). They do it because they're retired, and they get to spend their time doing what they love. And, as one band member pointed out, it certainly beats working.

Kat Hughes
Executive Editor

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If You Build It

The first Women's Sports Museum is warming up with a sneak peek at the project through the creation of a preview center in The Mall at UTC.

BY BRENDAN LAVELL | CONTRIBUTOR

Would you believe me if I told you there isn't a single museum in the world dedicated to women in sports? Sure, there are a few museums dedicated to women in one particular sport, such as the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in Knoxville, Tenn. But there isn't a single museum dedicated to women throughout the sports world — from athletes to referees to executives.

Some determined locals have a big plan to change that.

The Women's Sports Museum (WSM), now in its fifth year of existence, is entering its second of three phases, on the path to establishing a permanent home in Sarasota. Phase two will take the form of a 2,000-square-foot preview center, located upstairs by Dillard's, in The Mall at University Town Center. Although the museum is an estimated three to five years from fruition, WSM board President Beth Green anticipates the preview center will open by the fall.

After years of fundraising and building name recognition, museum CEO Christina Unkel says this preview cen-

ter is a big step for the organization.

"It's a huge milestone for us because it's our first brick and mortar," Unkel says, echoing the museum's mission to provide inspiration to future generations of athletes and honor those who have gone before them. "You can tell someone they can be somebody or do something, but [they need to see] someone who looks like them to truly grasp and understand that. 'Hey, that person looks like me. That person comes from the same gender, race, ethnicity, background, environment that I do. And if they did it, I can do it too.'"

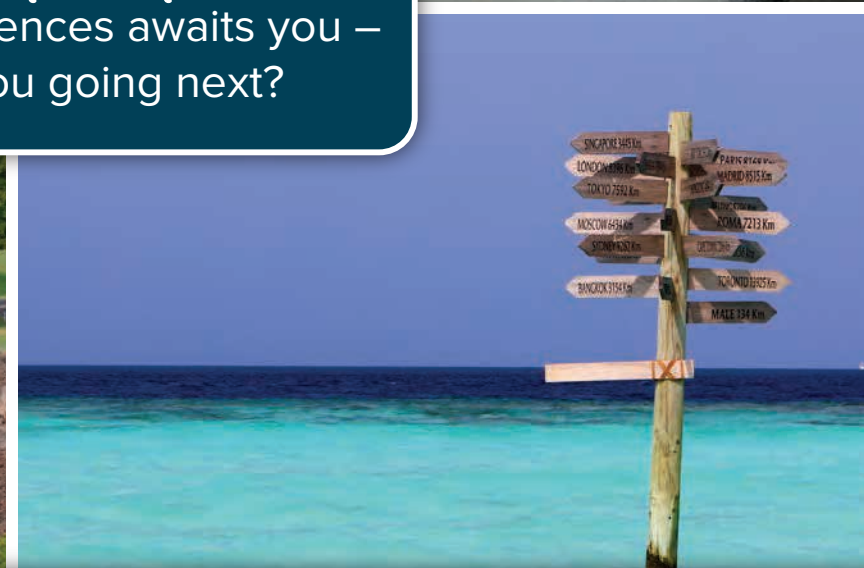
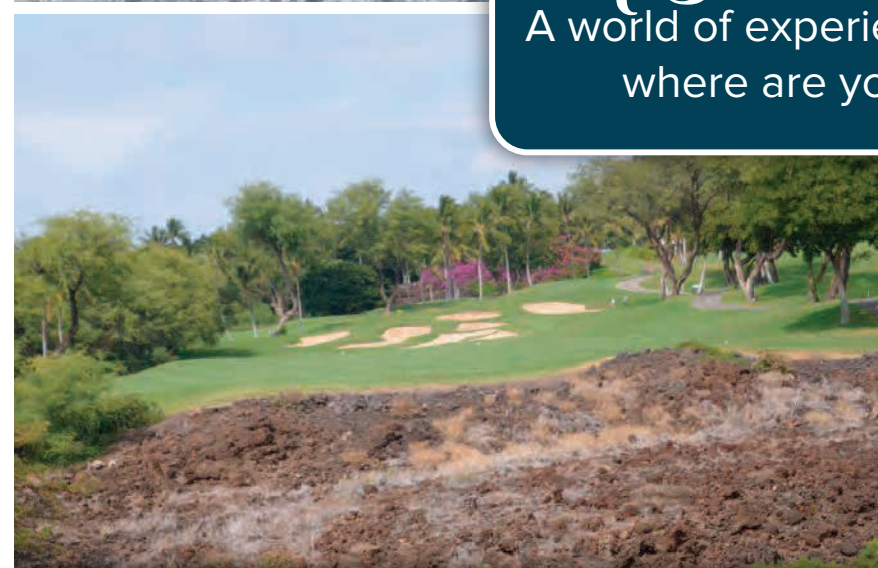
WSM board member Chris Gallagher, an architect behind the project, calls the preview center a pitch of sorts by making the intangible museum concept a living, breathing institution. As a representation of the future museum

Courtesy renderings
Executives at the Women's Sports Museum believe the preview center, which they expect to open at The Mall at University Town Center in the fall, will be a springboard to launching the actual museum, renderings of which are shown here, in three to five years.

Continued on Page 30



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Lori Ann Marinaccio

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featuring informative exhibits and interactive experiences, the center provides opportunity to gain potential donors and get the public excited about what's to come. Current plans also call for room for events and presentations. Unkel sees potential for the space to be used to host youth sports teams or women's sports trailblazers who could come in and speak to small, public and private groups.

A few women, such as Manon Rhéaume, who played goalie for the NHL's Tampa Bay Lightning in two exhibition games, and Kathrine Switzer, the first registered woman to run an official marathon, are on the preview center's roster, ready to share their stories once it's up and running.

In addition to the preview center, the organization will continue to build name recognition through interactive events. For example, Green says she likes the idea of allowing girls and boys to test their skills against real athletes, such as hitting against softball player Jennie Finch.

"The title is Women's Sports Museum," Green says. "But I want to make sure that we communicate the message that it's for everybody. It's not just for women."

There are also plans to host female sports figures too, but those would likely need to be hosted elsewhere because of the limited space in the preview center. Fortunately, Unkel says partners of the WSM, such as the Benderson Development Co. and the IMG Academy, have offered help with such accommodations.

Green says the museum is important now more than ever, so the stories behind these trailblazing female athletes can be memorialized before they are forgotten.

In fact, the museum was born from this very concept in fall 2016. Earlier that year, the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, which competed while men fought in World War II and inspired the 1992 movie "A League of Their Own," had held its annual reunion in Sarasota. It was during the reunion that one of the members came up with the idea of a museum for the league to capture the players' groundbreaking stories.

"[They were] saying, 'Wow, we keep coming to this every year, and less and



less people are showing up because they're all passing away," Unkel recounts. "Remembering our stories and what we went through and everything that we did, and it's only staying here between us — how are our stories going to be preserved? How are they going to be told? How is the next generation going to understand and learn and build upon what we've done?"

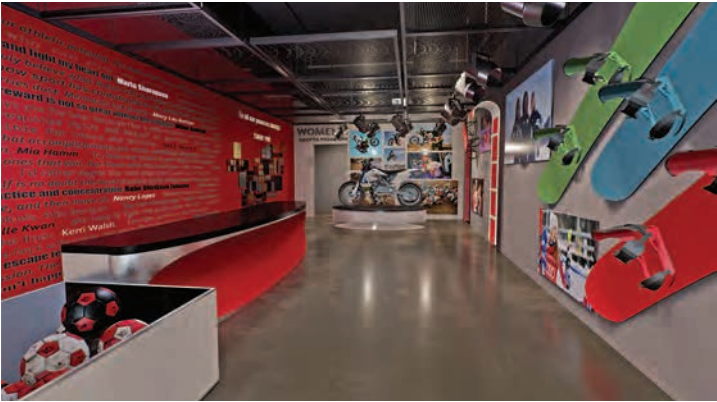
The league player decided to take her museum idea to Gallagher and a couple of the other WSM founding board members. After doing a little research, they realized there weren't any museums dedicated to women's sports as a whole, which gave way to the museum idea's evolution to what it is today.

"But why Sarasota?" Unkel and Green are often asked.

Their response: "Why not?"

Many visitors spend time at the beach, but necessary respite from the sun and inclement weather means they also look to the area's strong foundation of arts and sports. What do you do here when it rains or dips below 60 degrees outside? Hopefully, the WSM can provide a resounding answer.

"It's kind of do or die at this point," Green says. "We are either going to get the support from the community to say, 'This is something that we think, one, we're interested in, and two, we think is viable.' Or [we're] not. Everything right now points to the success of something like this."



Top: In addition to standard exhibits, the Women's Sports Museum preview center will include interactive experiences and space for events, presentations and speakers. **Above:** The Women's Sports Museum preview center will be representative of the future museum in that it will showcase informative exhibits and interactive experiences, some permanent and some rotating.

“You can tell someone they can be somebody or do something, but [they need to see] someone who looks like them to truly grasp and understand that.”

MUSEUM CEO CHRISTINA UNKEL

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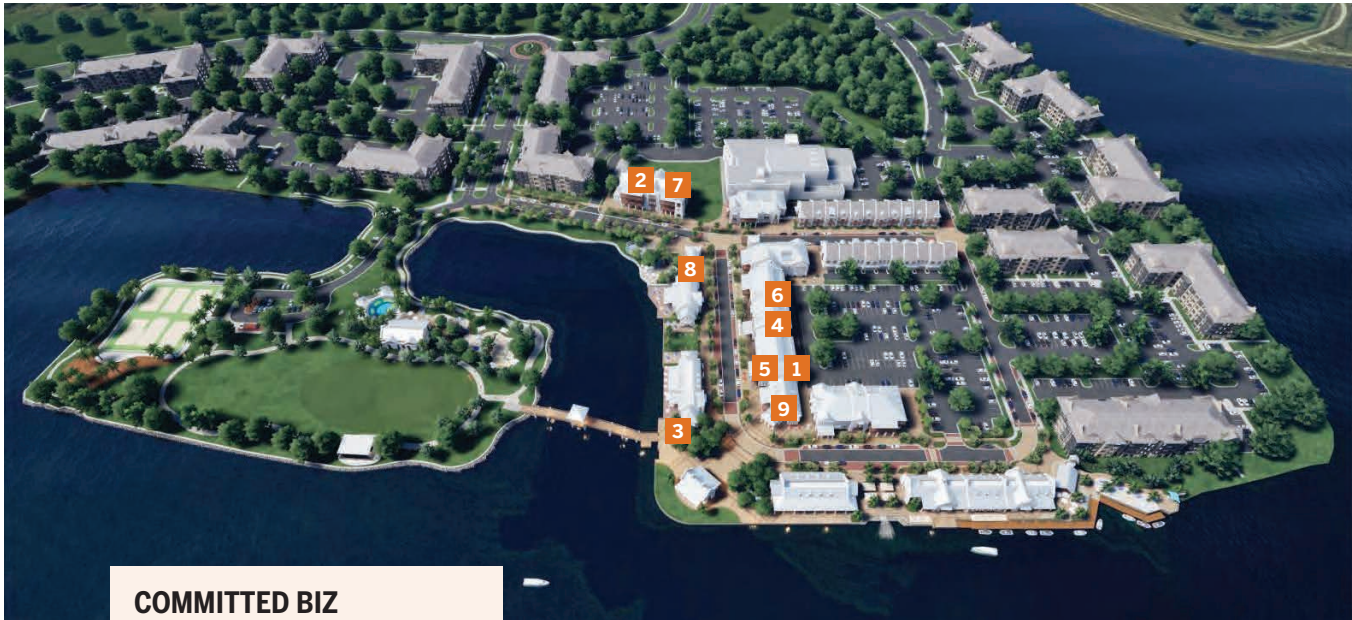
As Waterside Place takes shape, the true nature of Lakewood Ranch’s next town center is revealed through a mix of strategically placed, vibrant tenants.

BY RANDI DONAHUE | MANAGING EDITOR

Waterside Place is growing up. Literally. “We’ve completed all of the site work,” says Kirk Boylston, president of Lakewood Ranch Commercial. “We are doing vertical construction on the buildings, so [residents] will see all of the buildings coming out of the ground.” Construction on the project, which broke ground in October 2018, is scheduled for completion by the end of this year. With tenant buildouts quickly to follow, residents could be

enjoying lake views while dining or doing yoga in early 2021. “We don’t see any delivery date issues at this point,” Boylston says. In addition to the commercial structures, apartments are also being constructed this year on the development, located south of University Parkway. The 22 townhomes, which are attached to the commercial buildings, will break ground before the end of March.

Continued on Page 34



Renderings courtesy of Lakewood Ranch Commercial

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- SoFresh ⁵
- Paint Nail Bar ⁶
- SmithLaw Attorneys
- Atria Bread + Cafe ⁷
- CROP Juice ⁸
- Kore ⁹

At the time of publication, there were additional tenant commitments in the works.

Check LWRWaterside.com for the latest information.



A 3D rendering of one of the freestanding waterfront restaurant spaces that will be present.

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FIRST ACT

The new Players Centre for Performing Arts might be officially on the Waterside Place map, but the construction of the 4.5-acre campus won't break ground until spring 2021. According to Kirk Boylston, as contractor Willis Smith wraps up the main Waterside Place buildings, it will shift resources toward the construction of the new theater campus, which currently calls for a 480-seat main stage auditorium, 125-seat black box theater, a 100-seat cabaret theater and The Arnold Simonsen Players Studio, home of the organization's education programming. In the meantime, the organization continues fundraising through its Centre Stage Campaign, steadily climbing toward the \$50 million needed to complete the project and programming.

"Our first goal is to hit the \$16 million to \$18 million mark in the next year, so we can start to build," says Jeffery Kin, interim CEO and managing artistic director. "Once we start digging, we plan to go full speed ahead."

Solid fiscal footing, Kin says, is an integral part of the plan. The additional \$33 million to \$35 million of the campaign raised throughout construction will support future programming.

"We want to make sure the organization is strong and steady, so it can thrive," Kin says.

In its 90th season, the theater is asking for steadfast support from the community throughout its transition to Lakewood Ranch. The Players sold its downtown Sarasota building to fund research, design and a portion of the new construction, but it will remain at that location through April 2021. Supporters wanting to leave a lasting mark on the expansion can still do so via major donations, which include building naming opportunities.

"These can be true legacy gifts," says Kin. "We plan to be there for at least another 90 years."

Kin says with the move to Waterside Place, it will broaden the theater's reach north and south to engage a much larger community.

"We're excited to be able to share what's to come and will be available for all of Sarasota and beyond," he says. "This little community theater will become an epicenter for the arts."

Continued from Page 32

"Once it is done, we want it to be done," Boylston says. That includes the 8-acre island park that has street access but also a footbridge. The park will include six sand volleyball courts and a large splash pad area that Boylston says has a lot of really cool features for kids.

"It's a beautiful setting that you just don't get anywhere else in the Southeast," Boylston says.

Located on a 36-acre peninsula of Kingfisher Lake, the unique location promises tenants something that hasn't been obtainable in the region for quite some time.

"We've taken great pains to ensure all of the buildings are either on the water or have views of the water and that everything is oriented in that direction," Boylston says. "We are getting tenants that are going to enjoy each other as well as enjoy their location. And we are excited about the mix and the quality of tenants we've gotten so far."

In addition to the promise of a unique waterfront location, the Lakewood Ranch Commercial team, which includes LWR Commercial Leasing Agent Tom Johnson, has used a detailed 3D model of the completed town center via virtual reality to draw business and create what Johnson calls a synergistic tenant mix.

"We are focused on tenants that bring a sense of community," Johnson says. "Something about business owners that are passionate about their business allows for a way of slowing time down and fostering relationships."

Boylston and Johnson both say they have targeted a mix of local and regional restaurant and service vendors to create that old-school main street feel, a place where everyone wants to support and promote one another's success. Spoiler alert: It won't include any national chains.

Johnson, a third-generation Sarasotan who grew up in the retail business and has traveled extensively, compares Waterside Place to other regions around the world where town centers remain the hub of the community for both young and old and will match the multigenerational demographics of the area to offer an aspect for everyone.

Courtenay Smith, co-owner of The Yoga Shack, a yoga studio that will be



Randi Donahue
Lakewood Ranch Commercial leasing agent Tom Johnson walks prospective tenants through a detailed 3D model.

located on the second floor in Waterside Place, was drawn to the overall mission: a one-stop hub for mental and physical wellness no matter your demographic.

"We have clients as young as early 20s and up into their 70s practicing with us," Smith says. "Waterside Place will be cool and hip with all amenities in one place."

Smith also praises its "Zen" water views and spectacular sunsets.

Space for four to five freestanding restaurants on the water with lakeside seating is planned along with a "deconstructed food hall/food truck concept" taking advantage of 500-square-foot freestanding pods placed on the end of buildings.

"We are putting small retailers in those throughout the project, so whether it's a coffee shop or a donut place or a juice place, we are going to have these scattered throughout," Boylston says.

With plenty of ways to get to Waterside Place, including ample parking, walkability from outlying neighborhoods and even a water taxi that will take the residents of Lakehouse Cove straight to the Waterside Place marina, accessibility will not be an issue.

"At the end of the day, the goal is to create a consumer experience and relationship," Johnson says. "Places like this will combat the Amazon effect. We are creating that space where we all want to go when we are not at work or home."



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Continued from Page 36

ing to those with low HOAs.

When you are interested in buying a home or moving to Lakewood Ranch, with all it has to offer, it could easily become downright overwhelming. The information center team, which also includes Greg Spring and host of guides, was created to facilitate comfort and clarity, which it has done for years. Now these tours offer a way to streamline the process and help more people.

"We drove around here once before, six or eight months ago, and we kind of got lost," says Mike Mullaly from Chicago, who's on the tour with his wife, Barb. "We went and looked at a specific home that was for sale. It was nice, but I had no idea what all was available here and how big this place is."

When it comes to home sales, the tours are clearly an asset.

"We've had tremendous success in the short time that we've had our bus," Verdel says after the tour. And although he could not offer hard numbers, he referenced a lady who had taken the tour two weeks prior and was buying in Waterside.

As we set off on the last hour of our tour after a quick pit stop at James L. Patton park, there are questions from the rows about flood zones, taxes, neighborhood security and state roads. Verdel answers each question while continuing to offer points most would put in the "plus" column: centralized mailboxes to promote community interaction and underground power lines that are aesthetically pleasing and hold up better in inclement weather. And, of course, that Lakewood Ranch has its own post office.

On the way back to the visitor center, Verdel highlights points of interest, such as doctors' offices, grocery plazas and even a local brewery and distillery. Some passengers are vocal with their "Ah-ha, that's where that is" moments, while others furiously write notes on the villages that piqued their interest — and heed Verdel's advice to cross

THE WHEELS ON THE BUS

Although the bus was purchased to host the LWR community tours, which had become wildly popular, the Lakewood Ranch Communities team didn't want it to sit idle between tours.

"Collectively, we came together to figure out how best to use it," says Monaca Onstad, the director of community relations for Lakewood Ranch Communities.

Idle it is not. The bus is now being used to go beyond The Ranch, hosting regular regional destination trips and tours.

"Maybe you just moved here," Onstad says. "It becomes an opportunity to take you somewhere you have never been. You just get on the bus, and you are there. It's all planned for you."

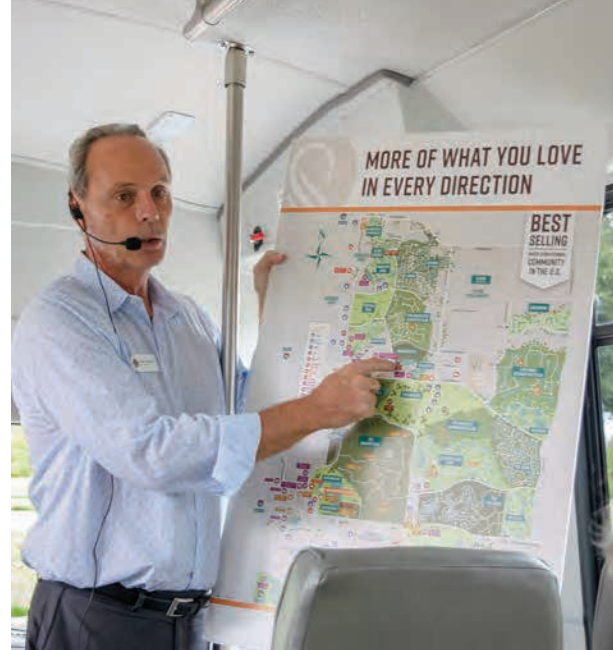
In January, following the LWR Talks lecture on famous glass artist Dale Chihuly, the bus took passengers to the Chihuly exhibit at the Morean Art Center in St. Petersburg. The post-lecture adventure, which came at an additional cost, included admission, a guided tour and lunch. In early February, the "Off the Ranch" activity was a day trip to the Ringling Museum. On March 20, the bus will cart residents to Ed Smith Stadium in Sarasota to watch the Baltimore Orioles take on the Boston Red Sox during spring training.

"It's a nice way to get together with people from other neighborhoods and meet people as well as going outside The Ranch," Onstad says.

Visit MyLWR.com for the schedule of upcoming trips.

out the ones that didn't make the cut.

"Lakewood Ranch is a melting pot of people from all over," Verdel says.



Passengers on today's tour hail from Naples, Marco Island, Chicago and Maryland. A few are Lakewood Ranch residents.

"We get a lot of residents, and not only do they want to know the lay of the land themselves, but they want to know everything else that Lakewood Ranch has to offer for their friends," Verdel says.

Until today's tour, Leslie Forsythe, my seat mate who works at the Naples Soap Co. on Main Street, had narrowly ventured outside her work-to-home boundaries since she moved to Lakewood Ranch two years ago.

"I think every current resident should [take the tour], just so they know what is coming up," she says. "What the future of Lakewood Ranch looks like."

A couple behind us has owned a home in Country Club for three years but spend part of their year in Maryland. They were hoping to get a better grasp of the area. With her mother visiting, the tour was a way for them to both learn about the area.

Turns out the buses do way more than help prospective buyers choose a 'hood. As people disembark, Verdel says they are thus anointed in the ways of the Ranch.

Nine-year resident and Lakewood Ranch Ambassador Frank Verdel acts as tour guide on the bus.

BY THE NUMBERS

4

assisted living facilities available in LWR

41,000

and growing... estimated current population

2,000

acres on Heritage Ranch Preserve

1,400

head of cattle a year raised by SMR

2

state roads that intersect LWR

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All donations are tax deductible as allowed by law. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll free 1.800.435.7352 within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state. Registration number CH0475. 327393-1

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PULSE

THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

Puppy raisers
take on a big job
that starts small.

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Photo by Dex Honea
Patti Katter started “Wake Up with Patti” in November 2019. The podcast, which she records from her home in Lakewood Ranch, broadcasts inspirational interviews to listeners in more than 34 states and 13 countries.

Sounds of Success

Instead of getting down when life got tough, Patti Katter chose to use her voice to push on toward success and inspire others to do the same.

BY ABBY WEINGARTEN | CONTRIBUTOR

No matter what life’s circumstances present, Patti Katter sticks to her philosophy to find strength amid strife. “I want people to understand that we have all trials in life, but we can overcome them,” says Katter, Lakewood Ranch resident, military wife and mother of three (grown) kids. It is a message that resonates with her podcast audience worldwide. Katter is the host of a weekly podcast,

“Wake Up with Patti,” which after just four months of its inception now broadcasts inspirational interviews to listeners in more than 34 states and 13 countries. “She’s a very positive, uplifting person,” says recent podcast guest Maria Crider, a fellow military wife. “You know how people start the beginning of the year with the ‘new year, new me’ idea?”

Continued on Page 44

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Continued from Page 42

Well, that's Patti all year. She's constantly doing things to help others improve themselves."

Katter's personal journey, however, has been an arduous one. Although she would never bring it up in casual conversation, Patti has been caregiver to her husband, Ken, a combat veteran, for the past 13 years.

"I try not to focus on being a caregiver because I am lot more than that to [him]," she says.

When Patti met Ken, he was transitioning from the Marine Corps to work as a Michigan police officer. The married couple settled in Bridgeport Township, Mich., where Ken was an honored police officer. But in 2005, Ken felt called to reenter the military, enlist in the Army and relocate the family to Fort Bragg, N.C. Less than a year into a 15-month deployment to Iraq, which started in 2006, Ken was wounded when his armored vehicle ran over an explosive device and left him with brain trauma.

"We knew a little bit about his wounds, at first," Patti says. "He stayed in Iraq with his unit after the injury because so many of the guys had been killed and lost limbs, and they needed as many men there as they could get. There were over 100 in his unit injured, and 23 were killed."

Upon his return to Fort Bragg, Patti encouraged Ken to see a doctor about short-term memory loss and seizures. At the end of 2007, Ken was diagnosed with a moderate-to-severe brain injury and told by a military neurologist that his condition would worsen over time. In 2010, Ken was medically retired from the army, but so far, through continued occupational therapy and medication, Ken's condition has defied the odds.

"The goal is to keep him stable," says Patti, who accompanies her husband to doctors' appointments and long distance therapy retreats as well as manages his medications and the household.

Patti has not just embraced her role as a wife and care partner, but she's also taken it to the next level. For more than 10 years now, she has been actively helping veterans with recovery and advocating for veteran caregiver benefits on a local and national level.

"During the Obama administra-

tion, the Wounded Warrior Project (a charity and veterans' service organization) sent me to D.C., and I went to the White House," Patti says. "There are over 5.5 million military caregivers in the U.S., and our main goal was to influence leaders to accommodate military caregivers more."

Patti's advocacy means she played a big part in a successful outcome — legislation offering a caregiver stipend to those responsible for the continued care for veterans, something that did not exist prior to 2009.

Building on that momentum, in 2015 Patti applied for and won the Elizabeth Dole Fellowship, a campaign to help military families. She held that fellowship through 2016 as well. Patti says it took a few years, but within the past year, the stipend was opened to pre-9/11 caregivers, as well.

Patti is not new to podcasting either. She's been podcasting for military nonprofits for 12 years and is the co-host of "The Decision Hour," a podcast dedicated to highlighting everyday heroes, which she's been doing for two years. Last year, however, she decided it was time to expand her outreach.

"I wanted to start interviewing civilians and doing my own show, using my podcast to bridge the huge gap between military nonprofits and regular people." "Wake Up with Patti" has already grown beyond her expectations.

"It's unbelievable," she says. "I've literally been able to help hundreds, maybe thousands, of veterans. I don't

want my experiences to be for nothing. I believe that when you go through a really crappy time in your life, it can be turned around for the good."

And if that isn't enough, she's actively fundraising for nonprofit Camp Comeback through a dedicated campaign to raise money to purchase a boat for veteran Vladik Zalevskiy to run deep sea fishing expeditions for veterans as a means to help them cope with post-traumatic stress disorder.

"Nowhere else will you find a more authentic, results-oriented person with the energy and drive to move people or an organization toward successful outcomes," says Dan Dwyer, a retired Army veteran and Patti's business mentor. "She is beautiful inside and out."

For more information on Patti Katter, visit PattiKatter.com.

To donate to Camp Comeback, visit CampComeback.org.



Courtesy photos

Top: Patti Katter with her husband, Ken, and their children, Savanna, Hunter and Ashlay.

Above: Patti Katter is constantly looking for ways she can help veterans. While living in Michigan, she arranged for a group of veterans to go to a Red Wings hockey game.

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THE MALL AT
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Photos by Randi Donahue
Pups-in-training SIS and Liberty were neighbors growing up. Having support groups for puppy raisers is one reason the program is so successful.

Pup Posterity

Lakewood Ranch residents take multigeneration to the next level by raising puppies bound for important guide dog work across the country.

BY RANDI DONAHUE | MANAGING EDITOR

When 11-week-old yellow lab Liberty entered Lakewood Ranch resident Gina Hagopian's home in October, the pup stole her heart. Hardly straying from Hagopian's side since, Liberty has accompanied her to grocery stores, restaurants and even brunch. Although the pair's story has a happy ending, it is not traditional. Hagopian is a puppy raiser for Southwestern Guide Dogs (SEGD); Liberty is her first puppy-in-training, or PIT. When Liberty turns a year old, she'll return to the SEGDCampus to prepare

for her career as a guide dog. "Our puppy raisers teach the foundational skills service dogs and guide dogs will need," says Leslie Shepard, director of puppy raising services. "Crate training, housebreaking, making them trustworthy within the home. They are exposing them to the outside world." As a top-notch guide dog program, beyond stellar genetics and professional training, a SEGDCampus puppy's care is an essential part of the organization's end goal. PITs are destined to become part of a symbiotic team, their ultimate counterpart a seeing-impaired individual, a veteran or possibly a child on the autism spectrum. Puppy raisers know this from the outset. "I look at this dog like she is not my pet," says Hagopian, who also has a 1-year-old Airedale terrier named

Continued on Page 48

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Continued from Page 46

Stella. “The goal is to make [Liberty] a seeing eye dog for somebody. I love her. She’s so sweet. But I’m helping to train her to be a guide dog.”

Southeastern Guide Dogs supports 320 puppies each year. Each one needs TLC and basic training. Guide dogs ideally reach their career goal within two years, and even with a network of 500 raisers, due to the overlap of litters, there is a constant need for more raisers.

“The puppy raising program is the foundation of our program,” says Shepard, who has raised seven puppies to date. “If we didn’t have puppy raisers, our program couldn’t exist.”

Continued support is a major component of the program, and although it is not a requirement to have raised a dog before, puppy raisers must live near a local puppy raising group.

“People may have raised a puppy before or had dogs in their lives, but raising a puppy to be a guide dog or service dog is very different,” Shepard says. “There are specific protocols and commands that we’ll teach you.”

Qualifying entails a background check, a home visit and attending a few group meetings as an observer. The application process on average takes six to eight weeks. Raisers and their PITs must attend the local group

meetings two times a month.

“The hook is there, and [the puppies] win because everyone in the group and everyone you meet is amazing and so supportive of anybody or anything,” says Alex Jeanroy, a volunteer co-coordinator for the Lakewood Ranch group. “There is a wealth of information out there.”

In addition to the area coordinators, SEG D staff oversee the local groups to also facilitate puppy raising success.

“If anyone has a problem with the puppy — if there is a problem child, so to speak — we address it at a meeting, and sometimes a trainer will say, ‘Give her to me for a few days,’” Jeanroy says.

Puppy raisers can be single, married with kids, have other pets, working or retired. Even high school and college students are encouraged to apply. It’s also possible to co-raise a puppy, such as in the case of Kim Anderman and her daughter, Camryn Brielmann. A few years ago, Brielmann had asked to add a puppy to the family. Anderman was not ready for the commitment, knowing her daughter was college-bound before long. But then a radio ad about the program piqued their interest. They waited to apply until Brielmann, a sophomore at the time but now a senior, was 16 — the minimum age requirement to be a co-raiser. The mother-daughter duo received SIS last year when she was 13 weeks old.

“It is a big commitment, and it’s been challenging,” Brielmann says. “But the people of Southeastern have been so supportive throughout the entire process. It seems like anybody could do it with the support they provide.”

On Jan. 11, Anderman and Brielmann said their goodbyes as they dropped SIS off at “canine college.” Puppies that have reached that one-year mark return to the campus with their raisers in a string of pups to attend a group freshman orientation. During the half-day event, SEG D brings in a graduated speaker and goes over the details of a semester of guide-dog training.

“It’s a bittersweet day, but we make it celebratory and try to focus on the fact that what they are doing is life-changing,” Shepard says.

“A few tears were shed,



Gina Hagopian and guide dog pup in training Liberty. Raisers teach pups basic commands, such as how to sit before walking through any door.

and it was very emotional,” Alderman says. “However, SEG D made the day special and helped to make it seem less about giving the dog up and more about her potential future as a service or guide dog, which is an exciting prospect. We left feeling a little empty-handed but also proud of our accomplishment and grateful to have been a part of such a wonderful program.”

Raisers can keep tabs on their pup via Instagram, and at the end of the training phase, if the dog is matched in a guide or service position, the raiser is invited back to the campus to meet the recipient. That person will decide if he or she wants to keep in contact with a puppy raiser from there.

“Our organization has a lifetime commitment to any team that we put out,” Shepherd says. “We have alumni advisers that visit teams every year, and we can give puppy raisers an update even if they can’t have contact.”

About 70% of puppies find a career with SEG D, but the 30% that don’t go on to loving homes, and raisers have the first option to adopt them.

In addition to the longer-term commitment of raising, there are other opportunities. Puppy starters are needed when a puppy is ready but there is not a raiser ready just yet. Puppy sitters help with a puppy for two to three weeks. Finishers are needed when a raiser endures an unexpected life change and cannot complete the raising.

“We have something for everyone,” Shepard says. “It truly is altruism at its best. Our raisers give so much, but then they tell us what they have received.”

CAN I PET YOUR PUPPY?

When you see a dog with its guide dog coat on, it is generally not OK to engage. But pups-in-training are eager to receive a stranger’s attention, and it is warmly welcomed up until about 10 months old.

“We want them to be socialized not only to the environment but also to people when they are young,” says Leslie Shepard, of Southeastern Guide Dogs. “We want the puppy to learn self-control when they greet people, so it’s great practice.”

GET INVOLVED...

2020 SEG D Walk-A-Thon

What: A free, family event that includes a 3K walk followed by a Waggin’ Tails Festival

When: March 7

Where: Nathan

Benderson Park

Register: Day-of registration starts at 9 a.m.; walk starts at 10 a.m. Sign up at GuideDogsWalk-athon.org.

Learn more: GuideDogs.org/volunteer/raise-a-puppy

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Courtesy of Southeastern Guide Dog

Kim Anderman and her daughter, Camryn Brielmann, with PIT SIS at her freshman orientation. At more than a year old, SIS is ready to move on to formal guide dog training on the SEG D Campus.

calendar spring 2020

MARCH

MARCH 1

TAKE STOCK IN CHILDREN 10K/5K

Take Stock in Children of Manatee County's annual 10K/5K will start and finish at Lakewood Ranch Main Street. The 10K and 5K are scheduled to begin at 8 and 8:05 a.m., respectively, and a kids fun run starts at 7:30 a.m. The post-race party will feature food, entertainment, raffles, age group awards and kids' activities.

■ For information, visit TakeStockInChildren.org.

THE MARKET

Far from the typical farmers market, The Market at Lakewood Ranch is a curated gathering of the best flavors in the region, cooking demonstrations, morning yoga and more. Visitors can purchase produce, meat, poultry, seafood, breads, pasta and other prepared foods from more than 60 vendors from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, 8330 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. Event runs Sundays through April.

■ For information, visit TheMarketLWR.com.

SUNDAY YOGA

During the Lakewood Ranch farmers market, The Yoga Shack will provide an hourlong complimentary yoga class from 10:30-11:30 a.m. at the market lawn in front of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, 8330 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. Event runs Sundays through April.

■ For information, visit LakewoodRanch.com.

SARASOTA POLO

Come out to enjoy an afternoon of tailgating and polo. Gates open at 10 a.m., and matches start at 1 p.m. at the Sarasota Polo Club, 8201 Polo Club Lane, Lakewood Ranch. General admission costs \$15 for adults, and children 12 and under are free. Polo matches will be held every Sunday through April 12.

■ For more information, visit SarasotaPolo.com.



File photo

MARCH 4

CLASSIC CAR SHOW

Come to Lakewood Ranch Main Street from 5-8 p.m. for a car show celebrating the "classics." All are welcome to participate for just \$10 per vehicle, and there are no restrictions on year, make or model. Runs the first Wednesday of the month through May.

■ For information, call 941-371-1061, or email at Lance@CollectorCarsTV.com.

MARCH 6

MUSIC ON MAIN

Come to Lakewood Ranch Main Street from 6-9 p.m. for a free concert featuring the Whiskey Blind band. Proceeds from the event will benefit SUGAR Volunteers.

■ For information, visit MyLWR.com/421/Main-Street

MARCH 7

GUIDE DOG WALKATHON

Enjoy a day out with your pooch at Nathan Benderson Park for South-eastern Guide Dogs' biggest fundraiser of the year. Two- and four-legged friends and neighbors are invited to participate and raise funds for a 3K walk. The walkathon will have a variety of attractions for the family, including food, music and shopping.

Registration starts at 9 a.m., and the 3K begins at 10 a.m. The Waggin' Tails Festival with live music, a beer garden, food trucks and kids activities runs from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

■ For information, visit GuideDogsWalkathon.org.

IRISH CELTIC FESTIVAL & LUCKY DOG PARADE

For those of Irish Celtic descent or those who just want to be Irish for the day, this event features the luck of the Irish with traditional food, craft beers, hard ciders, live music and dance performances at Greenbrook Adventure Park, 13010 Adventure Place, Bradenton. For the lads and lasses, there's a relay race, and for the kids, there is a "Pot of Gold" scavenger hunt, face painting, spud-head decorating and more. Awards will be given for dogs that are most Irish, cutest and dog-owner look-a-likes. Free admission and parking on-site.

■ For information, visit LWRAC.com.

MARCH 8

TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING WATCH PARTY

Come to Lakewood Ranch Main Street from 5-9 p.m. to watch a live broadcast

Shoppers had plenty of fresh produce to choose from at The Market.

Continued on Page 52

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Continued from Page 50

of the Tampa Bay Lightning as they battle the Detroit Red Wings. Arrive early to catch local youth in a street hockey tournament, and visit with Thunderbug and the Lightning Girls. ■ For information, visit LakewoodRanch.com.

MARCH 12
LWR 101: RESIDENT ORIENTATION
New to the area or just want to get more involved? Come to this resident orientation from 4-5:30 p.m. at Lakewood Ranch Golf and Country Club, 7650 Legacy Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. It's a great chance to learn about the community. ■ For information, visit LakewoodRanch.com.

MARCH 14
NATURE WALK
Join Lakewood Ranch Ambassador Greg Spring for a 2-mile, one-hour nature walk through some of Lakewood Ranch's trails. Participants will meet at 8 a.m. at Greenbrook Adventure Park, 13400 Adventure Place, Lakewood Ranch. ■ For information, call 941-907-6000.

MARCH 16
BRAIN HEALTH MATTERS!
The Brain Health Initiative, an effort to promote brain health and complete a decades-long study of brain health, is educating the public with a lecture series. Hear from Dr. Uma Naidoo, a psychiatry instructor at Harvard Medical School and the director of Nutritional and Lifestyle Psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital, on the integration of food, mental health and medicine. Time and location is to be announced. ■ For information, visit BrainHealthInitiative.org/events.

MARCH 20
OFF THE RANCH RIDES: SPRING TRAINING
Join fellow Lakewood Ranch residents for this spring training game of the Baltimore Orioles against the Boston Red Sox at Ed Smith Stadium, in Sarasota. Registration is required. The bus will depart at 4:45 p.m. from the information center at Main Street at Lakewood Ranch to arrive in time for the 6:05 p.m. game. Cost is \$30 and



includes transportation to the game. ■ For information, call 941-747-1530, or email Info@LWRCA.org.

MARCH 21
BIKE RIDE
Join Lakewood Ranch Ambassador Greg Spring for a 10-mile, one-hour casual bike ride through Lakewood Ranch. Participants will leave Main Street at Lakewood Ranch at 8 a.m. ■ For information, call 941-907-6000.

MARCH 24
LWR TALKS
Expand your knowledge by attending this special speaker series, from 10-11:30 a.m. at Gold Coast Eagle Distributing, 7051 Wireless Court, Sarasota. This talk will be about Historic Spanish Point in nearby Osprey. John McCarthy, its executive director and a local historian, will share about one of the last remaining protected coastal properties that is open to the public. Cost is \$10 per session. ■ For information, visit LWRCAC.com.

MARCH 28
BEER BELLY 5K
Enjoy a variety of craft beers at stops throughout this race starting on

Health Parkway in front of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center. Participants receive a race medal and a T-shirt, and a post-race party at Main Street at Lakewood Ranch includes vendors, giveaways and beer for individuals 21 and up. Walkers are welcome. The race starts at 9 a.m. Tickets cost \$42. A portion of proceeds benefits Meals on Wheels Plus of Manatee. ■ Register at Beer-Belly5K.com.

MY HOMETOWN FEST
This regional food and craft beer sampling event at Nathan Benderson Park features food, beer, children's activities, vendor booths, exhibits and live music. Free stand-up paddleboard, rowing and remote-control sailing demonstrations will also be ongoing. Gates are open from noon to 5 p.m. General admission (food, music and craft beer samples) costs \$35, and food-and-music-only tickets cost \$25. Children 12 and younger enter for free. Parking is \$5. Proceeds benefit Sertoma Club of Greater Sarasota and Sertoma Kids. ■ For information, visit MyHometownFest.org.

File photo
One Night Rodeo lead singer Duane Allison keeps the crowd engaged during a 2019 Music on Main.

Continued on Page 54

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Continued from Page 52

TROPICAL NIGHTS

Come dressed as a flapper, or come as you are for this Tropical Nights Roaring '20s in 2020 fundraiser benefiting Meals on Wheels Plus of Manatee. Guests will enjoy live and silent auctions, gourmet cuisine, cocktails and dancing. The fun starts at 7 p.m. in the ballroom of Grove, 10670 Boardwalk Loop. Tickets cost \$200. ■ For information, visit MealsOnWheelsPlus.org.

APRIL

APRIL 3
MUSIC ON MAIN

The Daisy Dukes Band will fill the air with good times and hot country tunes. Come from 6-9 p.m. at Main Street at Lakewood Ranch. Proceeds from the event will benefit Manatee Children's Services. ■ For information, call 941-907-9243.

APRIL 4
EGGSTRAVAGANZA!

Bring your baskets and kids to Lakewood Ranch's longest-running egg hunt, which takes place from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Greenbrook Adventure Park, 13010 Adventure Place, Lakewood Ranch. More than 25,000 eggs will be spread across the field and separated by age to maximize the excitement. The event is for children ages 2-13 and is \$5 to participate. Registration is required. ■ For information, visit LWRCAC.com.

APRIL 28
BRAIN HEALTH MATTERS!

The Brain Health Initiative's lecture series continues with psychologist Dr. Rick Hanson, who will talk about emotional well-being. Time and location are to be announced. ■ For information, visit BrainHealthInitiative.org/events.

MAY

MAY 1
MUSIC ON MAIN

The Midnight Mama band performs rock/soul and dance music, and the DJ will keep you dancing with today's



File photo
Kids flood Greenbrook Adventure Park to gather eggs during Eggstravaganza!

top 100 hits during this free concert at Main Street at Lakewood Ranch. The event runs from 6-9 p.m. Proceeds benefit Selah Freedom. ■ For information, call 941-907-9243.

MAY 2
JDRF ONE WALK

This walk hosted by JDRF is a healthy way to show your support for those living with Type 1 diabetes while also raising funds for the organization. Registration starts at 8 a.m., and the walk begins at 9:30 a.m. at regatta island at Nathan Benderson Park. ■ For information, call 941-376-0350.

MAY 14
LWR 101: RESIDENT ORIENTATION
New to the area or just want to get more involved? Come to this resident orientation from 6-7:30 p.m. at Lakewood Ranch Golf and Country Club, 7650 Legacy Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. It's a great chance to learn about Lakewood Ranch's history, local businesses, parks and trails, clubs for residents and more. ■ For information, visit LakewoodRanch.com.

MAY 24
MEMORIAL DAY 'TRIBUTE TO HEROES' PARADE
Each year, thousands of spectators line the street along Main Street at Lakewood Ranch to honor local veterans, active duty and fallen heroes. The pre-block party starts at 6 p.m., and the parade kicks off at 7 p.m. Floats, marching bands, ponies and a patriotic bicycle-decorating contest will be part of the parade festivities. Proceeds benefit VFW Post 12055. ■ For information or to register for the parade, visit LWRCAC.com.

MAY 30
SUP & RUN 5K
Dine and drink rum in a libation lounge after this Sup and Run 5K event benefiting veterans group Operation Second Chance. There are three races from which to choose — a 5K run or walk, a 5K stand-up paddleboard race or a combination of both — at Nathan Benderson Park. All races start at 8 a.m. ■ For information, visit SUPAndRun.com.



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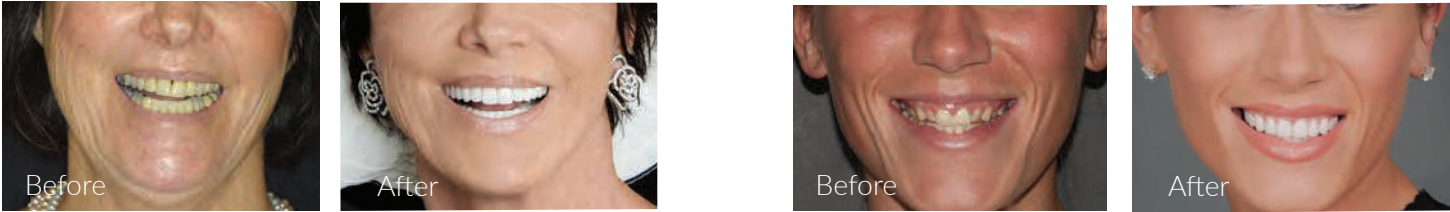
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style Never Go Without Them

Looking to spice up your look? Give your lobes some love with these earring picks.

BY HARRY SAYER | CONTRIBUTOR

Wearing the proper jewelry can quickly and easily punch up your style, which is why it's always important to have the right earrings for the right occasion. Some can accentuate a color scheme, some can give off a breezy vibe, and others can make a downright statement.

We've asked several Lakewood Ranch area boutiques and shops for their recommendations on which earrings are in right now and which are a fashion staple for any season.

BOWS & ARROWS BOUTIQUE 5275 University Parkway, Suite 133

Bows & Arrows Boutique owner Chelsea Sluicer has a number of different earrings to match a number of different settings. Some tasseled earrings are for more relaxed settings while there are other dressier pieces of jewelry for when people are going for a night out.

"The [beaded earrings] have been popular before fall," Sluicer said. "They're fun because they come in multiple colors, are super lightweight and are just different with the beaded shape that can transition for different seasons."

"The [mixed metal earrings] are great to dress up an outfit for date night and are neutral colors, so you can still wear them with every outfit."



KNOT AWL BEADS 8111 Lakewood Main St.

Knot Awl Beads has plenty of earrings, but owner Renee Towns finds the most classic picks to be the most popular.

"Pearls are classic, always in style," Towns said. "Tassels are very popular, and geometric sterling are very stylish and seem to never [go out of style]."

Tired of heavy hardware that weighs down your lobes? Stud earrings are back en vogue and are perfect for a more minimalistic approach.



WISH ON MAIN
8141 Lakewood Main St.

Wish On Main's earring selection mostly belongs to the Uno De 50 brand, a particular favorite of store owner Jan Nicolson. The earrings range from silver to gold, with the classic pearls being a highlight.

"They're very artistic; they're all made in Spain," Nicolson said. "[I've] been selling them for about four years. It's very versatile. Some of their stuff is traditional while other pieces are more modern. They do about four releases a year and keep changing it up."



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BY ABBY WEINGARTEN AND RANDI DONAHUE

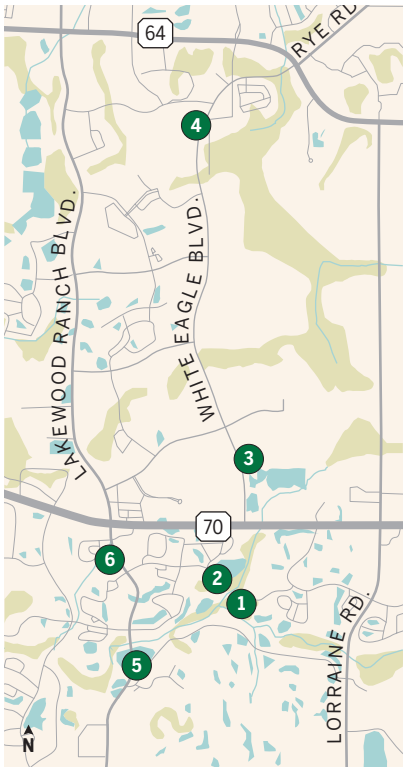
TRAIL TALK

Fresh-air fitness is beneficial for the mind, body and soul. Period.

Spending time outdoors has numerous health benefits. According to a 2018 study from England's University of East Anglia, for example, it can reduce the risk of adult-onset diabetes, stress and high blood pressure. Thankfully, more than 40% of this master-planned community is dedicated green space, which makes open-air enrichment one of the many perks of living in Lakewood Ranch. Beyond the area's 10,000 acres of lakes, preserves and parks, the community is home to 150 miles of multisurface trails and signature sidewalks ripe for activity by all ages.

"We have 6- to 8-foot-wide sidewalks for the casual biker, as well as for walkers and joggers, that connect everything in the Ranch — from our villages to our schools, Main Street, shopping plazas and our six community parks," Lakewood Ranch Ambassador Greg Spring says.

Although pedestrian connectivity is available pretty much anywhere you go on the Ranch, the hard and soft surface trails throughout the community parks offer the best avenue to exercise among nature. So if you've yet to experience how nature nurtures, grab a friend, your kids or your pup to hike, jog, stroll or pedal among the tamer Florida wilderness that makes the Ranch so gorgeously green. Or feel free to go solo and marvel at great the blue herons, sandhill cranes, egrets and an-



Visit [MyLWR.com](#) for a map of all the parks and trails of Lakewood Ranch.

hinga (those funny birds that always seem to be drying their wings) that you see along the way. It's a stunning day in the neighborhood, and here's our insight on some of the multisurface nature trails and paths among the parks of Lakewood Ranch.



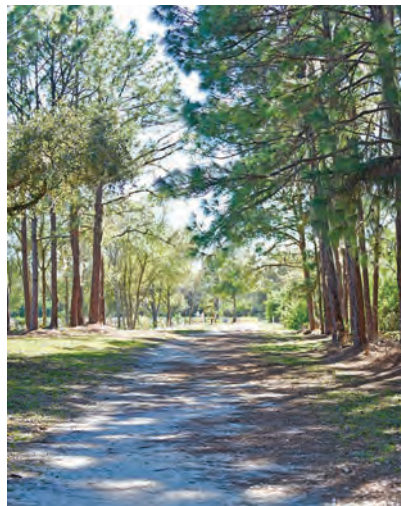
Photos by Heidi Kurpiela

1 GREENBROOK ADVENTURE PARK TRAILS

13010 Adventure Place, Bradenton

Start here if you simply want to explore Lakewood Ranch's green spaces sans tour or specific plan. The Greenbrook trail is about a mile-long shell trail going from the park pavilion to Lorraine Road. It winds by small ponds and behind some of the homes in Greenbrook. The ponds in Greenbrook are often visited by egrets and herons, and a short part of the trail winds through a

wooded area with oak trees, palmettos and a wooden bridge over a wetland. If the kids want to ride scooters while the parents stroll behind, this is the trail for that. Take advantage of the 6-foot-wide sidewalk that goes through Heron's Nest and connects Summerfield with Greenbrook. Enter on the Summerfield side by way of Summerfield Parkway to Summerfield Lake.



Photos by Heidi Kurpiela

TOUR DE NATURE

Lakewood Ranch Ambassador Greg Spring has found his niche among nature.

"I've always been active and love to bike ride and walk trails, so I started the guided trail walks," Spring says.

The second Saturday of each month, January through March, he leads groups of people on a 2- to 3-mile-long trail walk in Heron's Nest Nature Park to share his knowledge of local nature.

"Our job is to teach everyone all there is to know about living in Lakewood Ranch," Spring says. "I've been doing this for 10 years, and it never gets old."

Many of the community nature walk participants hail from the northern parts of the country and are therefore a bit unfamiliar with the Florida landscape and wildlife. Spring is there to facilitate that introduction. He's been quite successful.

"Greg gives a great talk along the nature walk, explaining the flora and fauna to all the hikers," says regular Richie Raymond, a retired optometrist who moved to Lakewood Ranch from New York. "It's a really great nature walk," Raymond says. "We're lucky in Lakewood Ranch that this area is set aside for the enjoyment of all its residents."

Walks start at 8 a.m. at the Greenbrook Adventure Park pavilion.

"It's just good to get out of the house or work and enjoy nature," Spring says.

Find more info at MyLWR.com.

2 HERON'S NEST NATURE PARK TRAILS

By way of Greenbrook Adventure Park

If you are looking for a varied, vast and scenic trail experience, Heron's Nest is the place to be. Located south of Summerfield Lake off Adventure Place, the park has some of the most pristine trails in Lakewood Ranch, some of which have even played host to weddings. There are two approximately 20-acre lakes and an old oak tree standing between with connecting trails. One of the lakes has a small island that is basically a ginormous

bird's nest. Birds are especially visible early morning and late afternoon. Heron's Nest trails are ideal for dog-walking and sunset-watching. On hot days, the shadiest trail is through the old oak stand just south of Summerfield Lake. Look for the majestic oak with a pine tree growing right in the middle of it. Those who require frequent respites should head to Heron's Nest Lake, a half-mile trail with three benches along the way.



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Photos by Heidi Kurpiela

3 JAMES L. PATTON PARK TRAILS

5725 White Eagle Blvd., Bradenton

Located across from Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church, off White Eagle Boulevard, Patton Park offers serene, quiet waterview trails. Lakewood Ranch's newest and largest park, Patton was designed around four lakes. The sunny paved pedestrian path around Patton Lake is water-centric and offers vast views of reflections over calm lake water at every turn and over every bridge. There is also a natural surface trail to venture farther around the lakes. Here you are bound to see ample birdlife hanging out on the bridges fishing the lake. If you are interested in a water-walk combo, bring your kayak or canoe because this park offers a launch point to take advantage of the water as well. Oh, and don't forget your sunscreen; there is little shade along the main path.

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Photos by Randi Donahue

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A lesser-known spot, the Braden River Nature Park contains 2 miles of trails that are a bit off the beaten path. Located on the west side of Lakewood Ranch Boulevard between Riverwalk and Summerfield, trails go around Trophy (a bass-fishing locale) and Otter lakes. Walkers and bikers have

created the trails over the years, and as a result, there are plenty of little paths that wind off the main trail into the woods. Trek with caution because these trails are fairly wild and often contain thick forests. The trails eventually connect to the tamer Heron's Nest in Summerfield.



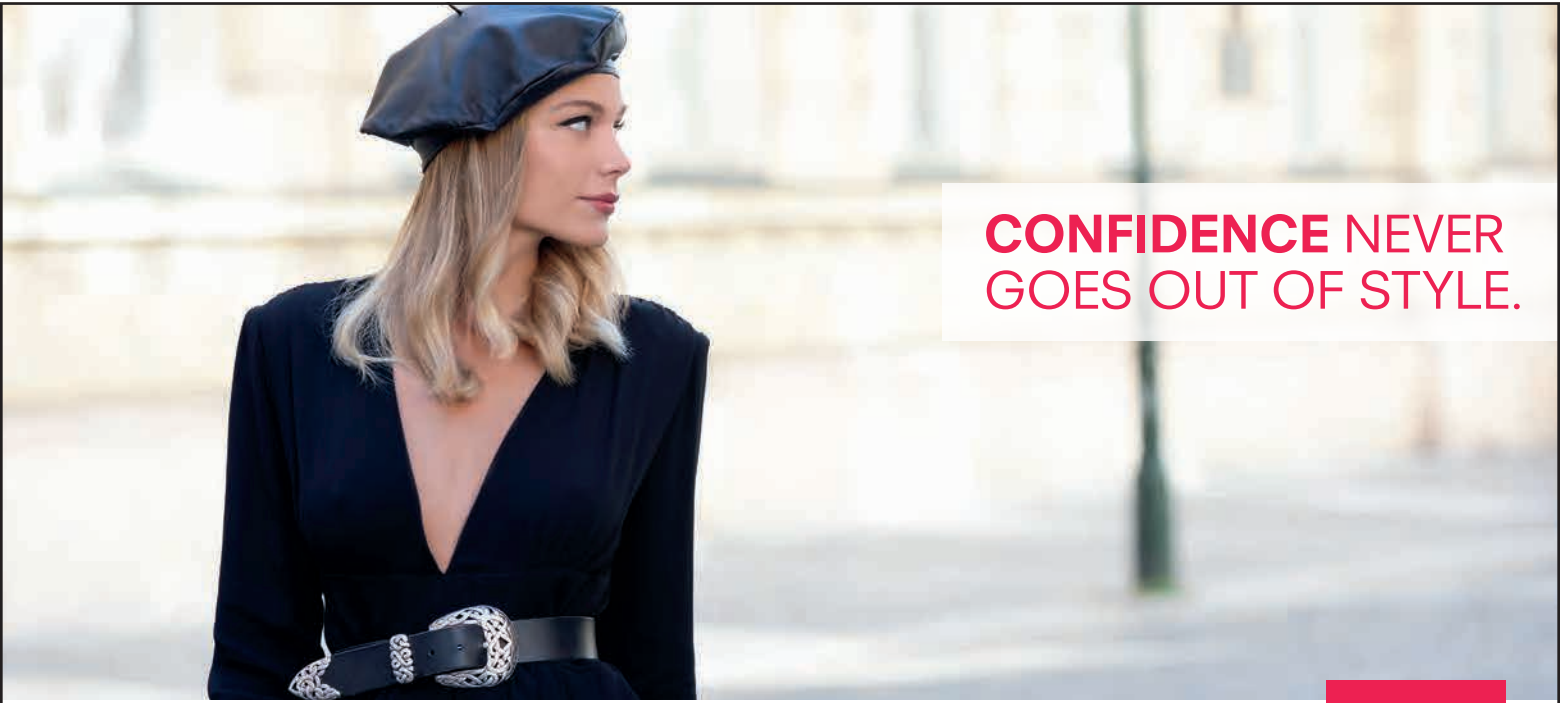
6 SUMMERFIELD PARK
6402 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., Bradenton

If you need a place to walk or jog that mixes nature and buzzing community activity, Summerfield Park, next to Town Hall North, contains a short paved path that loops around all the

sports fields, courts and playgrounds, which creates the perfect opportunity to let older kids play while you get your outdoor exercise on.



Photos by Randi Donahue



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Bill Irvan, guitar and vocals



Anil Warriar, drums



Bob Sharak, keys



Tom Perillo, guitar and vocals



Ken Combs, guitar and vocals

Rock of Ages

Forget going quietly into retirement. The members of Lakewood Ranch's Blue Pelicans are ready to rock their golden years.

BY JOE BARDI | CONTRIBUTOR

It's a beautiful January afternoon in Lakewood Ranch, and Van Morrison's "Wild Night" is pumping out of the sunny clubhouse just past the open gates of Indigo. Behind the mic, a 60-something sporting a trim white beard and Woodstock tee belts out the lyrics, which unspool before him on an iPad.

"The wild night is calling / C'mon out and dance," he sings, as the drummer pounds out the rhythm below a familiar jangle of twin guitars, keyboards and soaring sax.

It's been said that you have to put off being young until after retirement, a point well illustrated by the members of The Blue Pelicans. As Lakewood Ranch's rising troubadours of feel-good classic rock, these five retirees — all expats from the corporate world — have managed to pull off the ultimate second act: starting a rock band after 50.

They did this by mixing good old-fashioned work ethics with boyish exuberance and just the right amount of devil-may-care confidence to crush Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode" in front of a bar crowd.

In just three years, The Blue Pelicans (Ken Combs, Bill Irvan and Tom Perillo on guitar and vocals; Bob Sharak on keys; and Anil Warriar on drums) have cultivated a loyal following around a crisp sound and crowd-pleasing lineup of The Beatles, Eagles and Van Morrison hits. Maybe you've caught one of their gigs. They regularly play private parties and barbecues around town, in addition to the Naughty Monk, where last August they threw down a three-hour Woodstock set in front of nearly 150 people in honor of the festival's 50th anniversary.

"People showed up in their tie-dyed shirts and all their peace, love and music paraphernalia," Irvan says. "That was a rush."

LIVING ROOM ROOTS

The Pelicans began in typical Lakewood Ranch fashion: with a sign posted to a community bulletin board.

Perillo, 60, was the first to make a move. A native New Yorker, the hobby guitarist spent 25 years managing financial systems for Barnes & Noble before retiring to Indigo four years ago. Hoping to snag a few jam buddies, he hung a "Musicians Wanted" sign



Photos by Heidi Kurpiela

Birds of Play: The Blue Pelicans' Ken Combs, Bob Sharak, Bill Irvan, Anil Warriar and Tom Perillo evolved from a loose two-man jam session into a full-blown cover band.

Continued on Page 76

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Continued from Page 74

in the clubhouse by the pool, which grabbed the attention of Combs, a retired Sarasota CFO who briefly played with a band in Port Charlotte. Irvan entered the picture soon thereafter.

A retired engineer, Irvan, 66, cut his teeth performing John Denver and Jim Croce tunes at coffeehouses when he was a student at the University of Kentucky. Although he sidelined the hobby years ago to focus on his career, he never lost interest in playing — or singing. “Bill’s voice changed things for us,” Perillo says. “It pretty much allowed us to do any song we wanted at that point.”

With permission from the community, they moved their jam sessions out of Combs’ living room and into Indigo’s clubhouse, to the delight of nearby poolgoers.

When Warriar moved into the neighborhood in 2017, he couldn’t help but notice the group was missing a drummer. A musical neophyte, the 59-year-old had never even considered playing the drums during his 32 years working in supply chain management at Colgate-Palmolive. After listening to Perillo, Combs and Irvan each week, however, the new retiree decided to make a bold move. He signed up for lessons to become the band’s drummer.

“The first lesson I took, I said, ‘There’s no way I’m doing this,’” Warriar recalls. “My teacher (Garrett Dawson at The Drum Studio) said, ‘No, you can do it,’ and he got me going.”

What kept him going was watching Perillo, Combs and Irvan rock out. Novice or not, he wanted in.

“The end of the story is Anil’s really good!” Perillo says with a laugh. “He’s been a real surprise.”

The band started gigging as a four-piece on New Year’s Eve 2017 with Warriar on his old electronic drum kit. A few months later, the group met Sharak, a longtime Lakewood Ranch resident and regular at Lakewood Ranch Town Hall’s Pro-Jam sessions.

“I played a couple of songs, did an audition,” Sharak says. “They liked the way I played the solos to all The Beatles songs, and that was it.”

Of all the Pelicans, Sharak has the wildest backstory. The 72-year-old army veteran-turned-CPA played the accordion as a child. By 10th grade, he

Continued on Page 78



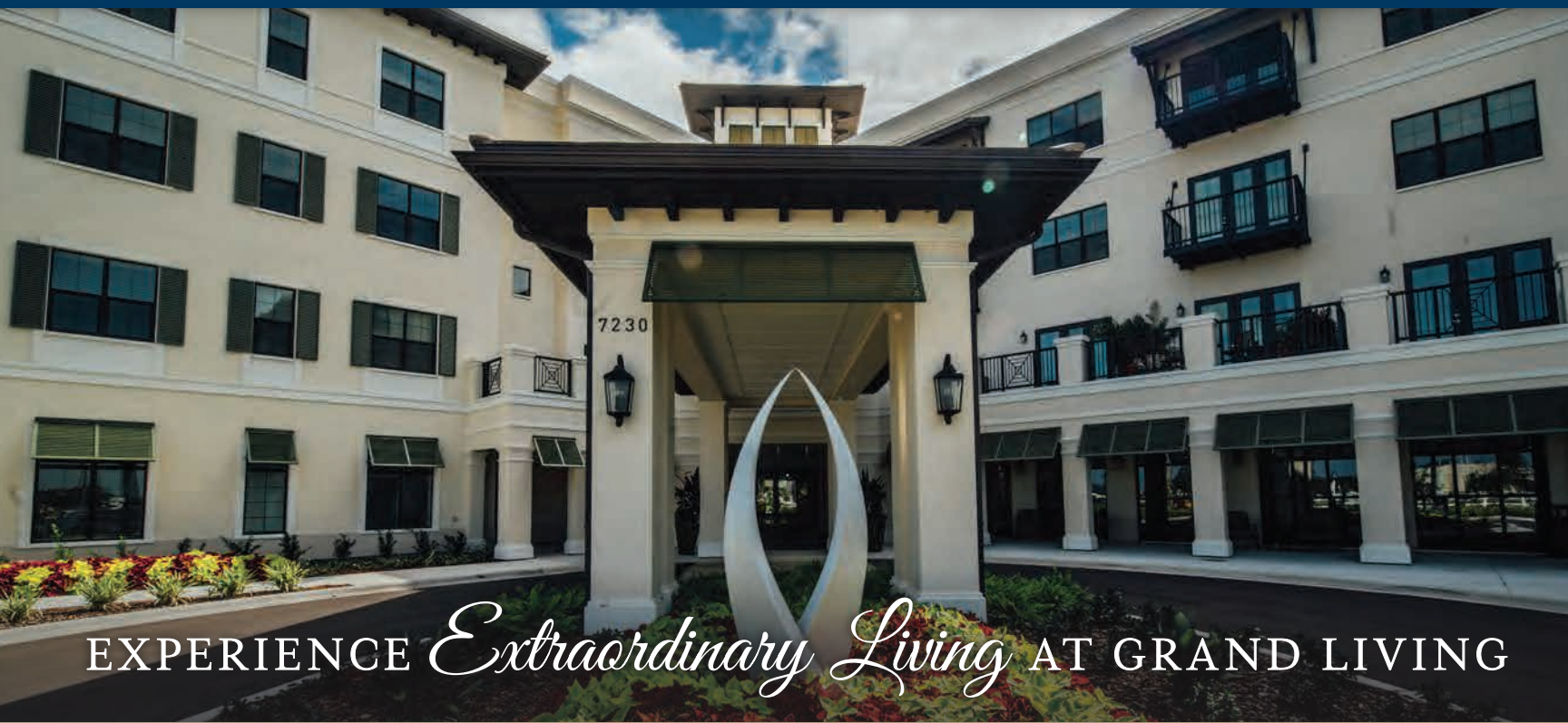
Photo by Joe Bardi

“
*I don’t know of any
other community
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Ranch that has a
band. ... Residents
will come to the
pool just to hear
them practice.”*

**TAMI PRINCE,
INDIGO LIFESTYLE DIRECTOR**



“I just thought it would be fun to get together with someone, play the guitar and sing some songs,” says retired CFO Ken Combs, one of the two original Pelicans, pictured here on guitar. “You always kind of hope your jam sessions might turn into a band, but it’s not something you expect.”



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Continued from Page 76

was in a wedding band and by college a nine-piece soul band. Sharak even played bass guitar on a riverboat in Pittsburgh before pushing aside music for a 32-year career as a financial executive at Johnson & Johnson.

"I said to myself, 'I have to earn some money,' and music wasn't the way I was going to do it," says Sharak, whose first Pelicans gig was in mid-2018. "Thirty-two years later, I'm done with the corporate world and getting back into music."

FULL BAND RISING

The Pelicans are as polished and harmonious as any seasoned cover band. They rock and roll without overwhelming the listener or grating on the ears. Their sound is tight, and their love of playing is palpable. In fact, the group vibes so well together that people assume they're listening to a veteran ensemble.

"I don't know of any other community in Lakewood Ranch that has a band," says Indigo Lifestyle Director Tami Prince, whose office is located in the clubhouse where the band rehearses each week. "I've heard them play the same songs over and over, and they just keep getting better and better. It's created a really cool atmosphere at Indigo. Residents will come to the pool just to hear them practice. I see people dancing and singing along. It's exciting."

One of the band's favorite local sing-alongs is its monthly happy hour slot at The Sheridan at Lakewood Ranch. "It's a little bit of giving back to the community," Irvan says. "You can tell [the residents] are having a blast, which makes it even more fun."

Fun is a word that comes up often when talking to the Pelicans. It's like the old Dick Van Dyke quote: "Retirement means doing what you have fun doing," a tag line that could double as the motto for the band.

Perillo says that forming a band as older, wiser guys has worked to their advantage. There's less squabbling. More compromise. A better understanding of not having everything go your way. And best of all, larger chunks of free time.

"There isn't a better hobby when you retire than getting together with other guys and playing music," Combs says. "That's the best retirement thing you could ever do, I think."

Sharak agrees — with one caveat. "As long as it doesn't become a job," he says with a chuckle.

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Photos by Dex Honea. Historical photos courtesy of Manatee County Public Library

Above: Walt (Tink) and Ralph Fulford mending fish nets in Cortez, circa 1954.

Right: John "Lightnin" Campbell is a fifth-generation Cortezian who has been fishing and stone crabbing Cortez waters most of his life.

Cortez Village

YESTERDAY AND TODAY

BY SU BYRON | CONTRIBUTOR

To the proud residents of Cortez Village, history is a family affair.

You don't need a time machine to experience Old Florida. Just a car and directions to Cortez Village, an unspoiled slice of the Sunshine State that time (and developers) forgot. The village is a 10-block enclave bordering

north Sarasota Bay. Great view. But no mega-mansions, condos or luxe hotels to block it. Just lazy streets lined with cracker cottages, seasoned fishing boats and dockside fish markets and restaurants. It's a bustling Florida fishing village, not a Disney World simulation. No kidding. It's the real deal, so be polite. The folks you'll meet aren't actors. They live and work here — and they didn't get here yesterday. Many local families can even

trace their roots to the 1920s. Some to the 1880s.

THE IMPROBABLE HISTORY OF CORTEZ, FLORIDA

Once upon a time in the late 1800s, some hardworking North Carolina fishing families were sick of Mother Nature's mood swings. After a series of hurricanes slammed the Grand Banks,

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they found a new port of harbor. A little town called Hunter's Point on the west coast of Florida.

The new site was sheltered by barrier islands — but not bottled up. Nearby passes offered access to north Sarasota Bay, Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. And more fish than anyone could count. The world was hungry. The seafaring settlers were happy to meet the need.

The fishermen got back to work. They barely noticed when the U.S. Post Office arrived in 1896. After consulting with bigwigs, they gave the settlement an official name: Cortez. Once the fishermen noticed, a few were less than pleased. Some of their descendants still are, including historian, author and activist Mary Fulford Green, a granddaughter of the first residents of the village. She's also the co-author of "Cortez: Then and Now."

"We should never have chosen that name," Green says. "Cortez was an evil man, and that's not who we are."

But most of the fishermen shrugged it off. New name, same attitude. The sons and grandsons of the original settlers kept fishing. Life was good. Except when it wasn't.

The barrier islands didn't stop the hurricane of 1921. Its 100-mph winds trashed the village. But the fishermen weren't going anywhere. Neither were the fish. Why should they?

They rebuilt and resumed fishing — even in hard times. Why?

"You can call us stubborn or crazy," laughs Karen Bell, a third-generation Cortez native and the owner of Star Fish Restaurant and the A.P. Bell Fish Co. "Maybe a little of both."

That true grit paid off.

During the Great Depression, Cortez was one of the few American communities that scorned federal aid. Its fishermen still went out to sea, even when Florida farmers couldn't pay for their catch. No money? No problem. They traded fish for fresh produce — and nobody starved.

That way of life endured. Tropical depressions and economic depressions didn't stop them. Politics almost did. In 1994, Florida voters approved a gill net ban, and it became law in 1995. The hard work of commercial fishing

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Above: Mary Fulford Green, 94, holding the book she co-authored about the history of Cortez. As a direct descendant of one of the settling families and a longtime resident, Green is considered a true historian of the village.

Left: Albion Inn, a hotel and store, was the only building in Cortez besides the museum that survived the hurricane of 1921. The unnamed Category 3 storm ravaged the coast with 100 mph winds.



Right: The first schoolhouse was built about 1896. It was a one-room school built of heart of pine wood in board and batten style. The photograph shows one of the earliest photos of school children circa 1900.



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just got a lot harder.

“The net ban is a bad law based on a lie,” Green recalls. “The amendment supporters accused us of making a ‘mullet stink.’ They called us ‘the vacuum cleaners of the sea.’ There wasn’t one word of truth in it. We could never have caught all the fish in the water. But Florida voters bought the lie, and our fishermen had to adapt.”

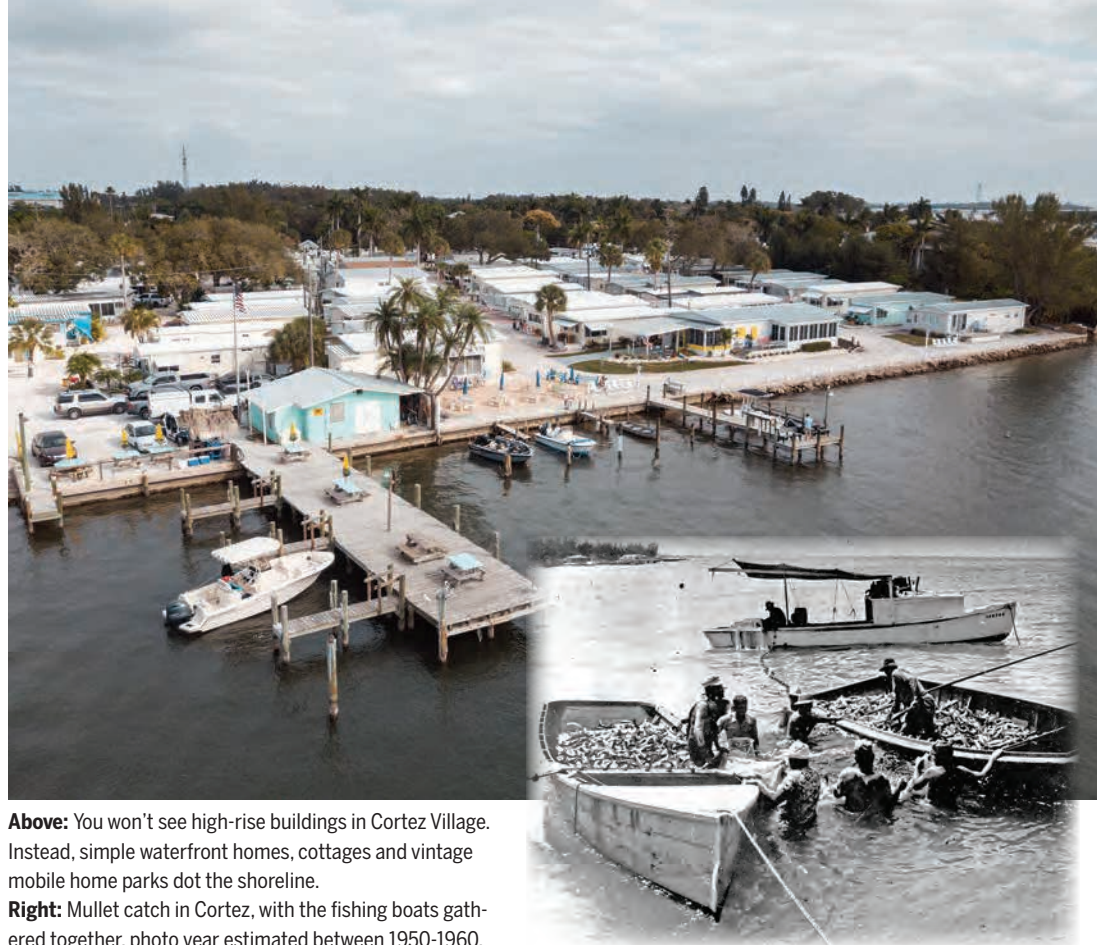
They did just that. Most of them, anyway.

Cortez’s die-hard fishermen went farther out in the Gulf and worked longer hours. But some hung up their nets for good. Others turned to drug running. Today, those outlaws are long gone. The village’s law-abiding fishing families remain. If you know Cortez, you’ll know their names.

The Guthries, the Bells, the Taylors and the Fulfords — to name a few.

Tough people. When life knocks them down, they get back up. They’ve bounced back from a long list of threats,

Continued on Page 86



Above: You won’t see high-rise buildings in Cortez Village. Instead, simple waterfront homes, cottages and vintage mobile home parks dot the shoreline.

Right: Mullet catch in Cortez, with the fishing boats gathered together, photo year estimated between 1950-1960.



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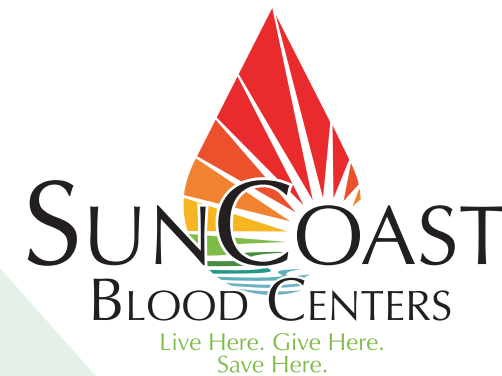


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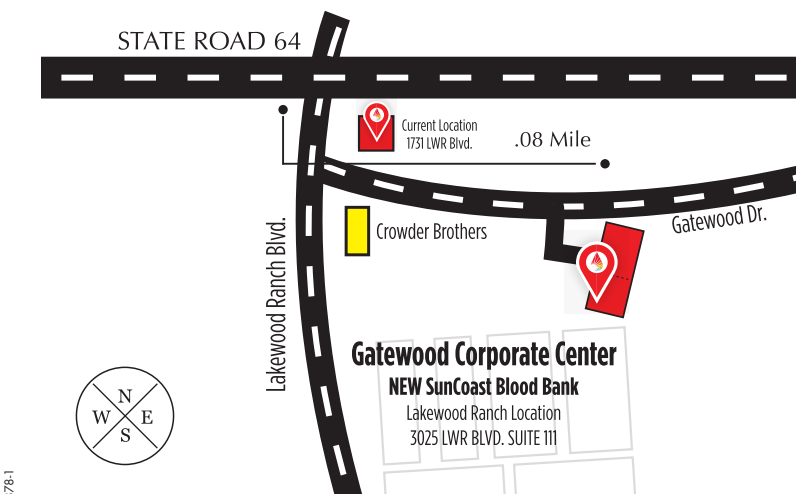
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Continued from Page 84

including red tide, depressions (both tropical and economic) and the net ban. But the greatest threat isn't going away. The iron law of supply and demand. The Cortezians love their village. The land it sits on is valuable. And why shouldn't it be? As Florida locations go, it's the finest kind. Only a mile from the sugar white sands along the Gulf of Mexico! A view to die for!

Interests with deep pockets would love that land, and they're willing to pay for it.

If these villagers hadn't put up a fight, their laid-back village could look like every other waterfront location in Florida. But fight they did. Over the years, they've fended off development of high-rise condos, upscale rezoning, deep-water marinas, creeping gentrification and various proposals for a fixed-span bridge. They're fighting their latest bridge battle now.

Why does Cortez keep fighting when other Florida villages tapped out? To

Continued on Page 88



“
You can call us stubborn or
crazy. Maybe a little of both.”

KAREN BELL, left, a third-generation Cortez native and the owner of A.P. Bell Fish Co., which operates 13 fishing boats. A.P. Bell ships seafood internationally and supplies it to several local restaurants, including her own Bell's Star Fish Co. Market & Restaurant in Cortez.



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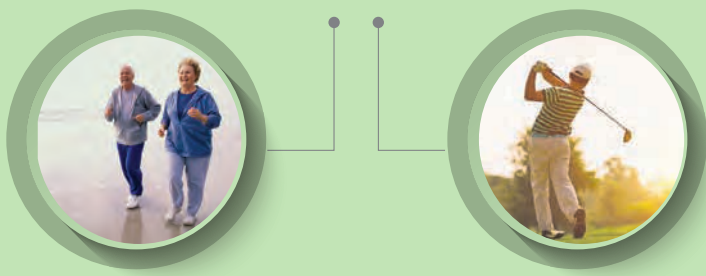


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Continued from Page 86

Bell, the answer is simple: because it's a real community, not an artificial construct. Because Cortez has something to fight for.

"What we have here is more than buildings," Bell says. "Cortez is a real fishing village. Our families might feud occasionally. But we have each other, and that's why we're still here. We're here to stay — even if we have to fight."

What will Cortez village look like 25 years in the future? Without a time machine, we can't answer. We can report it's still a great place to be.

THE NEWS FROM CORTEZ

Cortez's fishing industry still thrives. A.P. Bell Fish Co. is still going strong, and the fishing boats aren't props. But most of today's fishermen are either commuters or renters. Out on the bay, the scores of picturesque stilt houses are down to three. On land, the cracker cottages get neater and prettier every year. Cortez's core families still own most of the cottages. Most families don't make a living from the sea, either. Hungry, sleepy tourists are the new catch of the day.

According to Bell, that's life. And life is change. Adapting to change is the secret. This village of survivors is good at many things. That's one of them.

Cortezians might cherish the past, but they don't live in it.

"We're resilient, and we go with the flow," Bell says. "Hey, if we survived the net ban, we can deal with anything. A lot of people are up in arms, but I'm not worried about the bridge; I'm not worried about gentrification. Whatever happens, we'll think of something."

Above: Cortez Village can be just as charming by water as it is by land. Despite growth in surrounding areas, many of the homes are still owned by the settling families.



Above: Even though many of the homes in Cortez have been modernized, most have maintained their simple, beachy village charm.



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Feel like a walking tour? Start at the **Florida Maritime Museum** in the original 1912 Cortez Schoolhouse. The experts within know the history and will set you on the right path. 4415 119th St. W., Cortez; 941-708-6120; FloridaMaritimeMuseum.org.

If you're fishing for more history, check out **The Cortez Cultural Center**, just a few steps away. It's the home base of the Cortez Village Historical Society and packed with photos, documents and living memories. 11655 Cortez Road W., Cortez; CortezVillageHistoricalSociety.org.

FISH AND OTHER FEASTS

Star Fish Company & Restaurant.

Pull up a picnic bench for picture-postcard views and vintage Florida fixings, including flopping fresh fish and cornmeal hush puppies bursting with sweet cornmeal delight. Get your grub at the take-out window, and bring cash; that's all they accept. 12306 46th Ave. W., Cortez; 941-794-1243; StarfishCompany.com.

Cortez Kitchen. Live music from local guitar heroes, a full bar, hefty menu (there's even sushi!), a dockside point of view and friendly faces everywhere. 4528 119th St. W., Cortez; 941-798-9404; TheCortezKitchen.com.

Swordfish Grill. More Florida funky ambiance and another killer view. Inside dining with TVs blaring for hardcore sports fans and al fresco deck seating for the rest of us. Live music and a Tiki bar get things heated up while the sun goes down. Don't miss "All You Can Eat" snow crab boil every Sunday. 4628 119th St. W., Cortez; 941-798-2035; SwordfishGrillCortez.com.

Tide Tables. Another waterside winner with fresh seafood, craft beers and fresh seafood caught and cleaned steps away. 12507 Cortez Road, Cortez; 941-567-6206; TideTablesCortez.com.



Annie's Bait & Tackle. If fish isn't your dish, sink your teeth into Annie's fantastic Cuban sandwiches. If you want to work up an appetite, you can also rent a kayak, purchase bait and tackle, and charter fishing tours in the bay and Gulf. 4334 127th St. W., Cortez; 941-794-3580; AnniesBait-AndTackle.com.

Cortez Fish Market. Want to stock up on fish? You've come to the right place. The fish here are so fresh that they might whistle as you walk by. Stock up on Florida clams, smoked mullet, red snapper, grouper, stone crabs, swordfish — it's all here. 12110 Cortez Road, Cortez; 941-794-1547; CortezBaitAndSeafood.com/about

SWAG

The Sea Hagg offers delightful sensory overload. You can feast your eyes for free on anchors, nets, crab traps and other seafaring decor. Delights for sale include watercolor and oil paintings, glass creations and jewelry by Florida artists. 12304 Cortez Road W., Cortez; 941-795-5756; SeaHagg.com.

EXCURSIONS

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Captain Kathe runs excursions from the Star Fish Co. dock that take visitors out to explore the water and share stories of the local fishermen.

BOOKS AND SUCH

"Cortez: Then and Now" by Mary Fulford Green and Linda Molto (1997)

"Finest Kind: A Celebration of a Florida Fishing Village" by Ben Green (2005)

"Cortez Village" by J. B. Crawford (2016)

HOW TO GET THERE

If you're coming from Bradenton, head west on Cortez Road, and turn left at 119th Street West. If you're coming from Bradenton Beach, head east on Cortez Bridge, and turn right at 119th Street West. Simple, huh?



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HAVEN

SPOTLIGHTING LIFE ON THE RANCH



Details make all the difference in a lavish custom-designed home in The Lake Club. **PAGE 94**

Architect Clifford Scholz creates the perfect home for a Lakewood Ranch couple.

Custom-made



Most homeowners in the ultra-deluxe Lake Club of Lakewood Ranch know their way around real estate. Chances are they've built, bought and sold many high-end homes over the years. Take Donnie and Debbie Thompson. They've built homes in South Carolina, where they live half the year, and when they started spending time in Florida, they built a house in The Lake Club.

As nice as it was, it was still a builder's model. It was a house they had to fit into, not a house that fit them. They knew they could do better. That's when they discovered Sarasota architect Clifford Scholz and set into motion the creation of a new house, one of the most distinctive in the Ranch.

"We were looking for an architect, doing research, looking online," Donnie explains. "We knew Cliff was the one."

Scholz, one of Florida's most prominent architects, is renowned for his classic style. It follows the principles of great architecture, particularly the Palladian and Georgian periods, and updates them for the way people live today. Yet it never forgets the proper scale and attention to detail that ultimately make a home exciting. Scholz's most famous work is the trio of waterfront homes he designed for fashion designer Adrienne Vittadini on Lido Key.

Continued on Page 96

◀◀◀ The spacious great room has a coastal feeling, with French doors opening onto the pool area. The stairway at left leads to two guest bedrooms, each with an en suite bath.



Continued from Page 95

The Thompsons' home is Scholz's first in the Ranch. At first glance it blends quite well with its neighbors. But look carefully, and the art emerges.

It's British West Indian in style, a timeless look that also happens to be the latest thing. The Mediterranean decor of the Ranch is quickly being replaced by a much lighter look, and the Thompson house is at the peak of this trend.

The Thompsons were lucky to find the perfect lot. It's a good size — about two-thirds of an acre — and faces a nature preserve on one side, with water views from practically all of the major rooms.

The home breaks a couple rules. You enter into a great room, with an adjacent open kitchen. There is no formal living room, no formal dining room. There is a single dining area that is part of the kitchen (though there is stool seating at one of two kitchen islands). The effect is one of open space and tropical sun streaming in.

One of Scholz's trademarks is his impressive

Continued on Page 98



Cabinetry and kitchen islands were built to resemble furniture. A round dining table overlooks the pool, and to the left, a wall of built-ins provides extra storage.



Wooden floors add warmth and showcase the home's West Indian inspiration. Here, a hallway connects the master bedroom with an office and exercise room.

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KOLTER



Continued from Page 96

ceilings. Look up in almost any room, and you are in for a treat. You'll see coffers and trays and beams and paneling. Each has its own unique character and scale, its own degree of formality or informality.

In the Thompson house, informality usually wins. It's a barefoot kind of house, with room after room of beautiful wood floors. Yet it's designed to follow the tenets of classical architecture. The three arched windows that look out on the pool are a time-honored motif of Palladian architecture.

Both of the Thompsons cook, with Donnie turning out the Cajun recipes he learned from his mother in Louisiana. The couple's kitchen is an understated workspace, with the cabinetry, some of it with glass doors for display, set slightly raised above the floor like furniture. There's a triple sink, plus another prep sink, and an office area is right around the corner.

The master wing can be found at the opposite side of the house. Here things get a little

Continued on Page 100



The master bedroom is subdued and elegant. Decorator Holly Dennis worked with the owners to create an atmosphere that merges traditional and contemporary design.



The understated master bath features a walk-in shower for two, plus his and her vanities and room-sized dual closets.



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Continued from Page 98

more formal — and elegant. The beautifully proportioned bedroom has 12-foot ceilings with carefully detailed trim and 9-inch baseboards. There's even a little velvet bed for Oliver, the 15-year-old, long-haired dachshund that greets you at the front door. The master bath is suitably grand and continues the muted color scheme that takes its inspiration from the colors seen just outside the window — the sages and muted greens, the sands and shell colors, the occasional pop of something bright.

Near the bedroom is an exercise room with a mirrored wall and an office for Donnie, which he admits doesn't get much use since he sold his company — he manufactured and distributed industrial film — and retired several years ago. (Debbie used to teach fourth grade.)

Guests have several options at the Thompson home. Up a stairway in the entrance hall are two more bedrooms. But the guest room of choice is definitely the “casita.” Tucked away off the elaborate outdoor living area, it's a self-contained suite, with bath and small kitchen.

“We designed this house for the way we live,” Debbie says, and she credits decorator Holly



~ ~ ~
The owners opted to leave the pool and spa unscreened and uncluttered, which highlights the home's architectural detailing and the views of the adjacent nature preserve.

Continued on Page 102

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Continued from Page 100


Dennis for much of the home’s calming atmosphere. Furnishings are high-end contemporary, with pieces by well-known designers, such as Barclay Butera and Jonathan Adler. Most outstanding, though, is some of the custom work, particularly the table tops in the outdoor living area: concrete with insets of metal and sea glass by local craftsman Jake Brady.

The home, which was built by Nutter Construction, has other unique touches. There’s a room-sized air-conditioned closet in the garage area, and misters are placed throughout the garden that periodically release an organic pesticide. And a daybed swing near the pool offers an extra bit of luxury as well as the perfect place to enjoy the sunset and a margarita or two.

Their Lake Club home has been a big success, but the Thompsons are on the move. “We want to travel more,” Debbie explains, so they have put the house on the market. Future plans might involve a move to Arizona, where their daughter lives, or perhaps a condo in downtown Sarasota. The home is now for sale with the furniture included. The new owner will be getting something special — not only a large, comfortable, luxurious home but an outstanding architectural statement as well.



~ ~ ~
The outdoor living area contains everything you need for Florida living: a kitchen, fireplace, bar and television. The door at center leads to the guest casita.




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art and about Where the Art Is

Sarasota made its mark as an arts colony in the mid-20th century. Its homegrown art is still world-class. Opportunities abound, but here are four outstanding arts spaces to view and buy works created by regional artists.

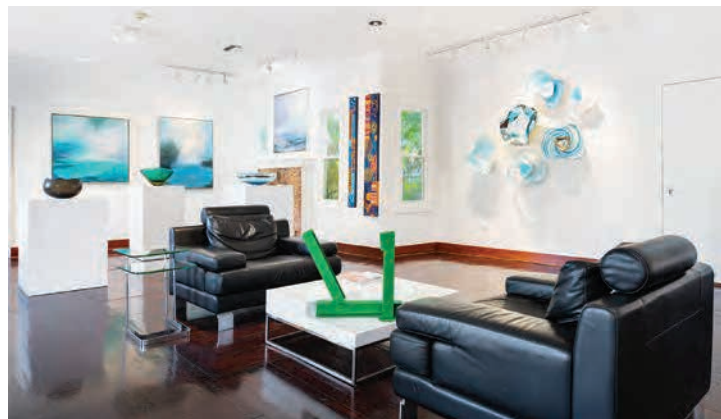


SU BYRON
CONTRIBUTOR

Talk about homegrown art. **Madeby Gallery**, located smack on the Ringling College campus, offers artwork by the college's students, faculty and alumni. The eclectic selection ranges from fine art to functional. You'll find paintings, sculpture and pottery, along with screen-printed wearables, jewelry, glass art, posters and greeting cards. Madeby also features inventive changing exhibits. "WOA-H! (Women of Age - Ha!)" demolishes the stereotypes confronting older female artists (Feb. 28 to March 21). The Spring Student and Alumni Show showcases original work, prints and fine crafts by the college's up-and-coming talents alongside the more seasoned veterans. *March 27 through May 1 at 2700 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota; 941-822-0442; MadebyGallery.com.*

Jewelry is basically a form of wearable sculpture. For proof, feast your eyes on Nikki Sedacca and Montana Taplinger's exquisite jewelry designs at **530 Burns Gallery**, their shared exhibition space. Their creations shine alongside a dazzling array of paintings, sculpture and glass art by more than 35 artists. Be sure to experience Sarasota

530 Burns Gallery is a shared exhibition space located in Burns Court, downtown Sarasota.



artist Andrea Dasha Reich's latest series of exuberant resin paintings (opening Feb. 28). Abstract work, but hardly flat. Spaces of interwoven color, lucid, translucent and joyful. Each painting draws you into its hypnotic depths. Other don't-miss creations include Katie Cassidy's ethereal, transformative oil paintings; Bettina Sego's colorful mixed-media pieces; and Laura Varich's abstract, floral landscapes. *530 Burns Gallery, 530 Burns Lane, Sarasota; 941-951-0620; 530BurnsGallery.com.*

Art Center Sarasota lives up to its name. This thriving art hub offers ongoing curated and juried exhibitions and educational programming — all designed to put our region on America's artistic map. Sounds serious, but its new opening reception "Garden Parties" initiative is all about food trucks, craft beer, mingling and, well, plain party fun. "ASALH: Black Muse 2020" boasts the artistry of the Manasota chapter of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (through March 7); "Off the Wall" showcases off-the-wall postcards created by regional and national artists (opens March 13); "The Razor's Edge" offers the whimsical, cut-paper creations of Philomena Marano (March 19 to April 18); "Serverus" showcases the cultural code-shifting of this Miami-based group of Cuban-American artists (March 19 to April 18). *707 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota; 941-365-2032; ArtSarasota.org.*

After a 16-year renovation, the original Sarasota High School building is now the **Sarasota Art Museum** — and it's been worth the wait. Ringling College's new 21st century museum comprises 15,000 square feet of exhibition space,



"Picture of a Man" by Todd Berrien at Art Center Sarasota's "ASALH: Black Muse 2020" exhibition.

areas for site-specific art, a Great Lawn for sculpture installations and performances, a 110-seat auditorium, a cafe and a retail shop. All that, and art too, of course. "The Worker Project" features Barbara Banks' black and white portraits of the workers responsible for the renovation. "Vik Muniz" offers a 25-year retrospective of the Brazilian-American artist's transformative imagery. This eye-catching display includes Muniz's large-scale photographic prints (which often re-create and deconstruct famous masterpieces) and subversive sculpture (including a full-scale recreation of a toy car). "Color. Theory. & B/W" is a group exhibition. Although it showcases many talents, it revolves around Sheila Hicks' "Questioning Column" — a massive textile installation, interwoven from threads of blue and green. Installations on the grounds outside include Jean Shin's "Celadon Landscape" and J. Patrick Walsh III's "Zen Jail." *1001 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota; 941-309-7662; Ringling.edu/museum.*

DON'T MISS THIS!

Here are a few great reasons to get out of the house this spring!

'Picasso to Hockney: Modern Art on Stage'

Live theater has depended on visual artists since the days of the ancient Greeks. "Picasso to Hockney: Modern Art on Stage" explores more recent theatrical collaborations at The Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg.

Continued on Page 106

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Continued from Page 104

This exhibition comprises 100 scenic, costume, stage and program designs created by noted artists from the 1800s to the present. You'll see Pablo Picasso's cubist sets and costumes for the Ballet Russes, including his 1920 scenic design for "Pulcinella." There's also a re-creation of David Hockney's 1981 set and costume design for the ballet "Parade." Work by Henri Matisse, Natalia Goncharova, Robert Indiana and Lesley Dill is also on display. This stunning traveling exhibit draws from the Tobin Collection of Theatre Arts. *Through May 10. 255 Beach Drive N.E., St. Petersburg; 727-896-2667; MFASTPete.org.*

'Romeo & Juliet' in the Gardens

This year marks the fourth since the FSU/Asolo Conservatory has been staging Shakespeare plays outdoors at Selby Gardens. What's playing? That sad tale of two lovers in 12th century Verona, Italy. In "Romeo & Juliet," directed by Shakespeare scholar Jonathan Epstein, the lovers' love for each other is just right — but their feuding families make it all wrong. The result is a thrill-ride of life, passion, laughter, tears, swordplay and timeless love poetry. Expect no balconies but plenty of beauty. *April 8-25 at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, 811 S. Palm Ave, Sarasota; 941-351-8000; AsoloRep.org/conservatory.*

Listen to the Earth: Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day

Jane Alexander, a Tony Award winner, two-time Emmy Award winner and former director of the National Endowment for the Arts, will be the featured speaker for Choral Artists of Sarasota's "Listen to the Earth" ecological initiative in April. The program commemorates the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and includes a panel discussion led by Dr. Terry Root, the environmentalist who shared a Nobel Prize with Al Gore for her contributions to "An Inconvenient Truth." The initiative's capstone is the world-premiere performance of Sarasota resident James Grant's cantata, "Listen to the Earth," which draws its inspiration from the words of astronauts, poets and environmental philosopher John Muir, at 7 p.m. April 19 at the Sarasota Opera House. Grant composed this 30-minute work for baritone soloist, mixed chorus, children's chorus and chamber orchestra. *ChoralArtistsSarasota.org.*

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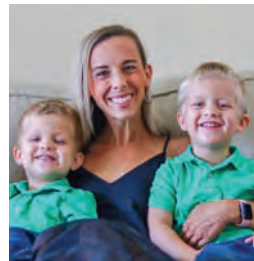
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back at the ranch

New Year, New You (Again)

Thrust into the new year already feeling the need for a refresh? Check out Back at the Ranch's suggestions for some much-deserved self-care.



JESS MCINTYRE
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5, AND JACKSON, 4

It happened again. Another year flew by. You missed it. I missed it. Yet somehow, we have all been thrust into not just a new year but a new decade. That concept feels so much harsher and has left a lot of moms I know feeling like they need to do better and make some lifestyle changes to prevent burnout. How are you going to do this? How can you focus on you when the tiny humans need you as much as they ever have for snacks and school projects or to drive them places? When husbands still need reminding where their socks live, when appointments are and why it is important to close drawers?

The good news is that we all live in a community that surrounds one another and lifts everyone up. No matter what your goals, there are local businesses here to help you achieve them. The extra good news is that while the community rallies around you, you are rallying around your community and boosting local business success.

Self-care, a vague concept of taking care of oneself and turning focus and

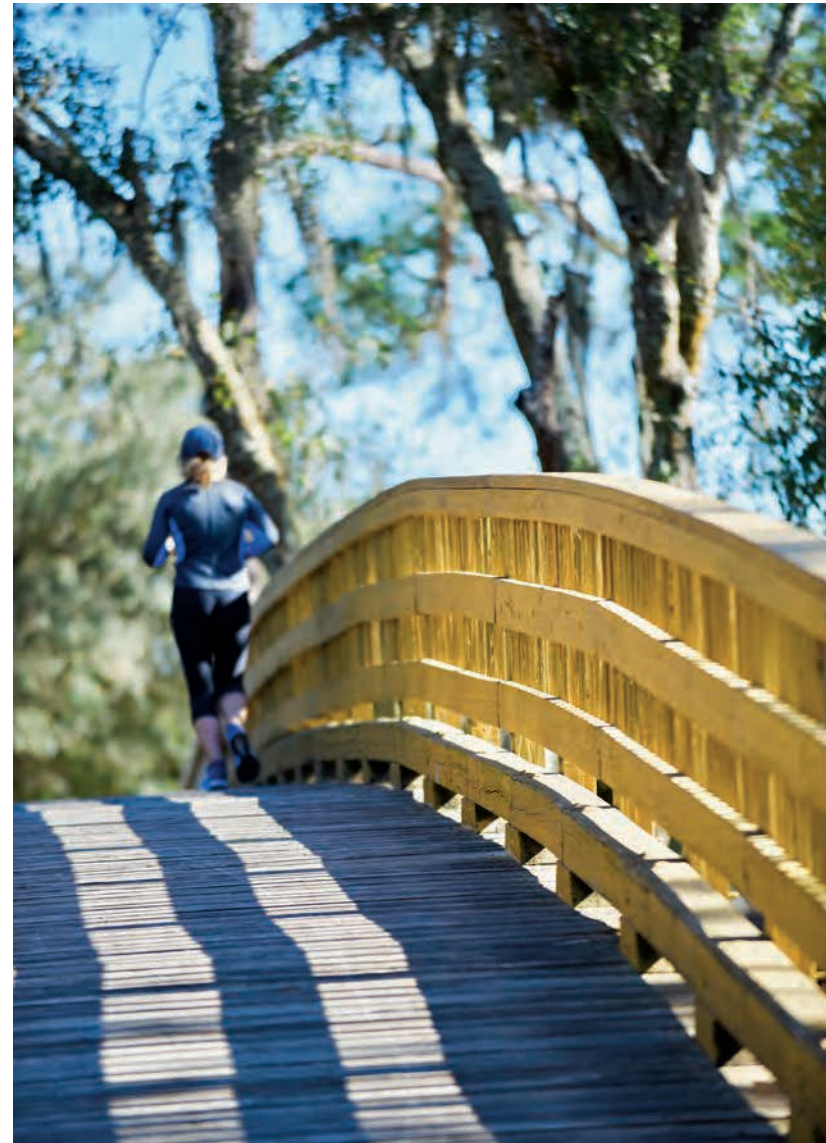


Photo by Heidi Kurpiela

Reenergize your body at any one of the area parks.

energy inward, is nothing new. There are articles all over the internet pushing and motivating women and men to engage in self-care. But as so often happens, you read things, get empowered and then don't know where to start, so ... you just don't. Lucky for you, Lakewood Ranch has endless self-care possibilities.

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sage and facial appointment, enjoy a refreshment, put on noise-canceling headphones, and engage in guided meditation all while sitting in a 360-degree massage chair. No time for full service? Sirius Day Spa offers a membership to simply come to enjoy the serenity lounge at your convenience. Drop those kids at practice for two hours, and head to escape your stresses.

STRENGTHEN YOUR BODY

More than ever before, niche gyms are

Continued on Page 110



Of all the exotic places you've dreamt of visiting, an out-of-town cancer center probably isn't one of them.

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Continued from Page 108

popping up and catering to whatever area of exercise calls you most. Gone are the days of feeling like you have to run on a treadmill or figure out how to use complicated machines. If you like circuit training, having someone yell at you for motivation or working out in groups, then places like Orangetheory or Burn Boot Camp are absolutely for you. If you want a great cardio workout but need to go easy on your joints, try Cyclebar. If you need to focus on toning and strength, head to Purebarre or Barre3. And if you are like me and prefer a stretching, meditating and calm environment (but don't mind sweating half your body weight out), try yoga. ThaVma and The Yoga Shack both have fabulous studios in Lakewood Ranch offering a variety of weekly classes. All studios offer flexible schedules to accommodate even the busiest of moms.

BRUNCH IT UP

Between Sea Star Café, The Granary, Keke's, Libby's and Station 400, you will find a great spot to catch up with friends and enjoy a mimosa or two. Self-care isn't always about making healthy choices for your body (though you certainly can at these restaurants!); it also means taking time to make the right choices for your mental health. Grabbing a meal with friends and simply spending time in one another's presence can be liberating. Don't be afraid to go it alone, either. A good book, a cup of hot coffee and a muffin might be just what you need to clear your head.

FEED YOUR SOUL

And save your wallet. For those not interested in another membership, day drinking or sitting in a spa, don't forget the amazing world around us. Go for a morning/evening walk in one of Lakewood Ranch's many parks to re-energize your body (see this month's feature on trails). Go by yourself, go in a group, or even put in headphones, load the humans up with snacks, and push the stroller. Plus, each of these areas has great playgrounds to reward the kiddos afterward.

Parenting ain't easy, and remembering to focus on yourself from time to time is even harder. But it is so important, not just for you but also for your family, so you can be the best you can be.

Get out of the box. Get into the Circle.



Upcoming Events:

MAY 2

**Classic Corvette
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MAY 25

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Brenda McGowan, Keith Pandeloglou, Tracy Gorman, Kathleen Scotti, Chairwoman Sandra Shahinian, Kate O'Driscoll and Caitlyn Coyle



Photos by Harry Sayer
Bob Rose and Virginia Everett



LeeAnn Anderson and Cindy Osmond



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RANCH NITE WEDNESDAY

JAN. 8 AT THE SARASOTA POLO CLUB



Photos by Liz Ramos

Lakewood Ranch's Dee Rager spends time with granddaughter Lola Rossi at Ranch Nite Wednesday.



Above: Lakewood Ranch's Josh and Marissa Lee and Jason and Melissa Huese

Left: Lakewood Ranch's Madison Rivera, Lexi Truxton, Tyler Truxton and Colton Ross eat ice cream from Carousel's and American Honey Creamery food trucks.



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DOGGIES FOR DUCHENNE

FEB. 1 ON PAYLOR LANE

Lakewood Ranch's Bo Bush and his mom, Lindsay are ready to run with their dog, Tomy.



Photos by Liz Ramos

Above: Lakewood Ranch's Pattie and Chris LeBanc walk in the 5K with their dog, Abby.



Left: Irwin, a 1-year-old beagle cur, becomes friends with Tomy, who is 10 years old. Irwin is up for adoption at the Humane Society at Lakewood Ranch.

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POLO SEASON OPENING DAY

DEC. 20 AT SARASOTA POLO CLUB



Mason Wroe of La Estampida/Hillcroft reaches as far as he can for a shot.



Photos by
Jay Heater

As always at halftime, the Clydesdales were in full swing, pulling children around the field.



Robin Zimmermaker, daughter Kristen Zimmermaker and grandson Aiden Frappier join Mike and Megan Abeigon at opening day.

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Gordon Silver took this photo of a white peacock butterfly in Greyhawk Landing.



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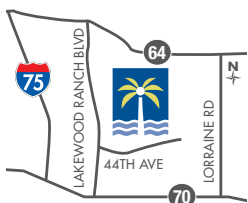
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