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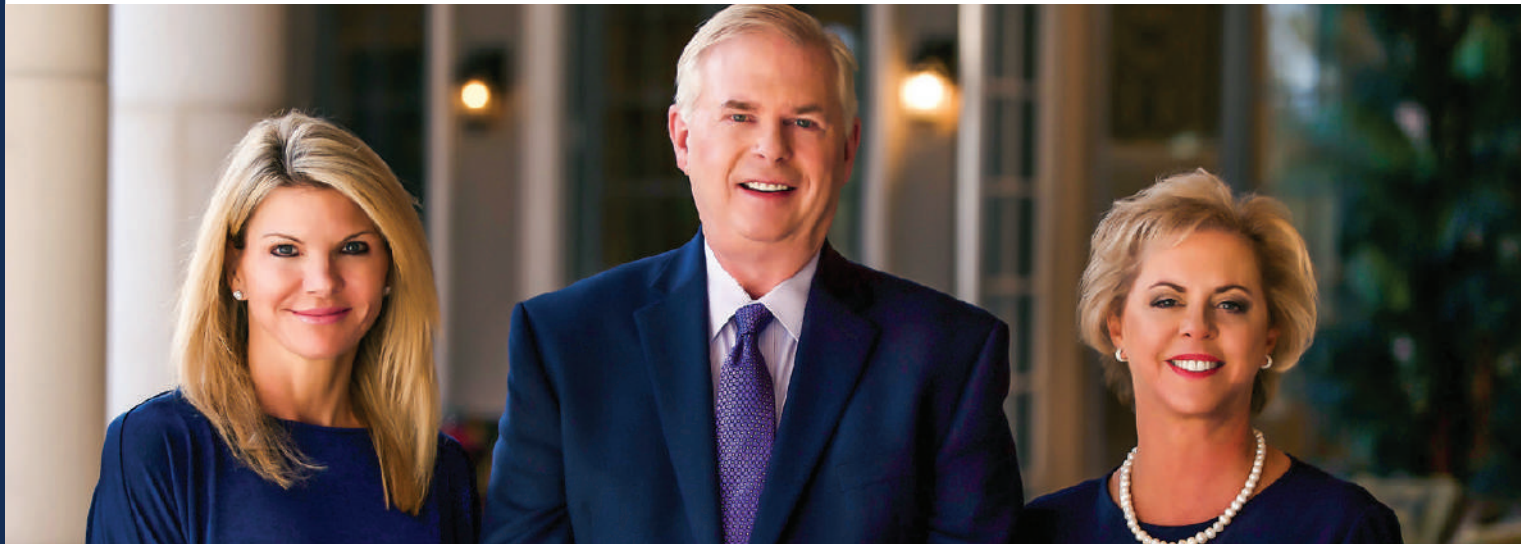
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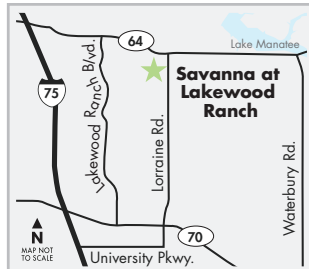
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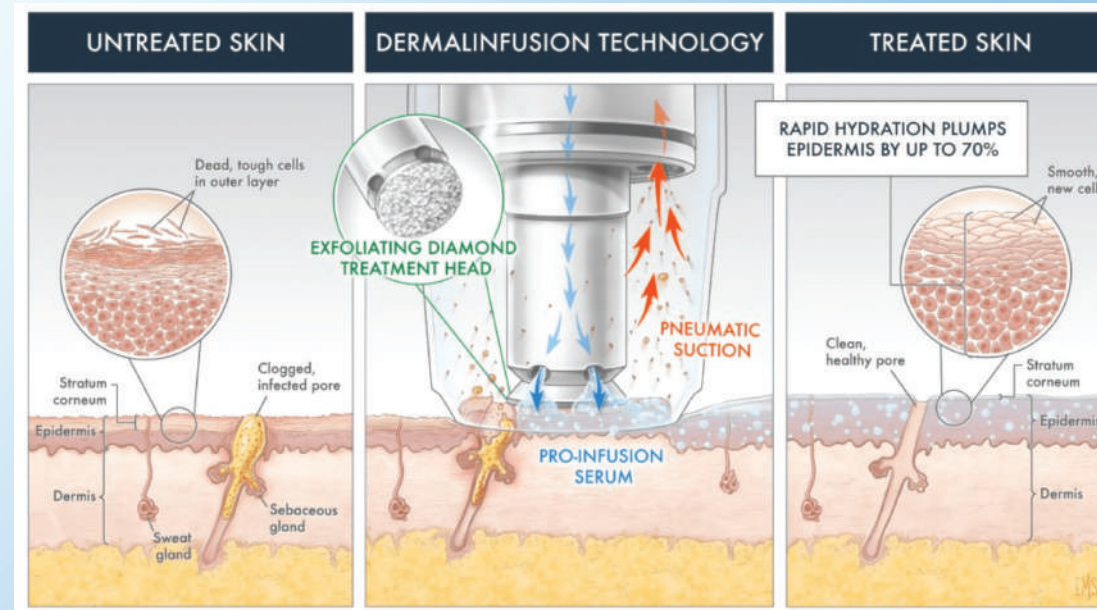
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(left to right) Dawn, Cynthia, Kathleen, Yvonne, Aleena, Julie and Amber



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LAKWOOD RANCH AREA'S COMMUNITY, NATURE, STYLE

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LWR Life is a quarterly publication of the Observer Media Group  
 published in May, August, November and February in partnership  
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# Getting their hands dirty



The Day 1 crew on the building site. Includes Stock Signature Homes and Lake Club volunteers as well as Habitat volunteers and staff.

In case you didn't notice, giving back is sort of a big deal around here. There are giving circles and galas, foundations and fundraisers galore. It's one of the things that makes this area vibrant, generous and community-oriented.



Yet in a place where giving back often means enjoying a few drinks and making a donation (and don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with that), we learned about a group that got to work helping others by doing just that — work.

A group of residents in The Lake Club (or TLC, as they refer to themselves) took on a big initiative recently: building two houses in Habitat for Humanity Sarasota's new development. The Hammock Place neighborhood in Sarasota is a first for the local Habitat organization. In ad-

dition to its usual infill projects, it is creating an affordable housing community of 40 single-family homes all made by Habitat and its volunteers.

When Lake Club resident Jay Traverso discovered the project, he got to work. First, he solicited sponsorships from builders. After getting Stock Signature Homes to commit, he turned to his neighbors for help. He literally went door to door to ask who would pitch in and come build the homes.

You'll find the tale of that effort on page 62. What we don't say in the story is what struck me as most remarkable: Here are residents from one of the ritziest developments in Lakewood Ranch, donning hard hats to build foundations and erect walls.

It would have been so much easier to write a check — and most of these people likely could afford to — but instead they gave what Habitat calls

“sweat equity” to the project, often working alongside the people who would eventually live in the homes, because a certain number of hours of “sweat equity” is required of the eventual homeowners as well.

How cool is that?

In addition to doing something good, the TLC residents talked about the new skills they learned while working on the project (like operating a jigsaw), the fun they had (like break times catered by other TLC neighbors) and the bonds they built with one another.

Their work on these two homes is finished, but now TLC neighbors are looking for more hands-on volunteer projects to do.

Who knew that working to build someone else's community could help strengthen your own?

*Kat Hughes  
Executive Editor*



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# BUZZ

NEWS, HAPPENINGS AND PEOPLE

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PAGE 36





# HIGH SPIRITS

A new distillery in Lakewood Ranch produces the full spectrum of spirits and features a pirate-themed tasting room.

BY ERIC SNIDER | CONTRIBUTOR

Standing in the cavernous warehouse that will soon be Loaded Cannon Distillery, Steve Milligan pats a gleaming metal contraption. “This is Annie,” he says. Named after famed 18th century pirate Anne Bonny, she’s a Minnetonka copper still, 500-gallon capacity, the star of a cast of equipment — fermenters, tanks, barrels, even a 30-foot corn silo out back — that within a few weeks will produce rum, vodka, gin, whiskey and moonshine.

Milligan is Loaded Cannon’s founder, president and master distiller — a compact guy dressed for hard work: blue golf shirt emblazoned with the company logo, baggy shorts, sneakers and a ball cap. His blue eyes peer through wire-rim glasses.

A long-time chemical engineer for Dow Chemical, the Michigan native ticks off the places he’s lived: Alabama (he graduated from high school in Huntsville and got his degree from University of Alabama), Arizona, California, Louisiana, Tennessee, Kuwait, Korea. Before retiring from Dow in 2017, he spent three years in Saudi Arabia.

It was there that he put his chemistry knowledge to good — some might say essential — use.

“We thought, ‘Someone needs to make some alcohol,’” Milligan says with a hint of Southern drawl. “It’s illegal in Saudi. Right in the supermarket aisles there were bottles, sugars, yeast, all you needed. I started distilling in my home. Had a few setbacks. One time, I was making a batch of mango brandy and it blew up, turned my bathroom orange.”

*Continued on Page 30*



Photos by Heidi Kurpiela

Chemical Engineer Steve Milligan, founder of Loaded Cannon Distillery, learned to make alcohol while living in Saudi Arabia, where spirits are not available for purchase or consumption.

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Continued from Page 28

While his home alcohol endeavor was technically a criminal activity, Milligan didn't worry. He lived with Carmen, his wife of seven years, in a compound mostly populated by Dow and Exxon employees. "Everyone looked the other way," he says.

Milligan has vastly improved his distilling expertise since the Middle Eastern mishaps and views his chemical background as essential.

"Making spirits is tricky stuff," he remarks. "There's so much flammability. I don't see how you can be a distiller and not be a chemist." But for him it goes beyond science. It's also passion. "Distillation is my blood," Milligan says.

Along with finishing Loaded Cannon's labyrinthine production line, Milligan — aided by his marketing director, Michelle Russell — is building out a tasting room with a Florida pirate theme. It will include netting, barrels with custom wood tops, crates, and a 10-foot replica of the Black Pearl, the ship from "Pirates of the Caribbean," hanging from the ceiling.

Dovetailing with the decidedly Sunshine State buccaneer concept is Loaded Cannon's commitment to sourcing as much as possible from Florida, be it raw materials, equipment or bottling supplies. All the corn and molasses come from the state. He gets the botanicals for gin from Sweet Bay Nursery in Parish, and his fruit flavors from Florida Worldwide Citrus in Bradenton.

Loaded Cannon Distillery occupies a 5,000-square-foot space in an industrial park facing Lakewood Ranch Boulevard. As of mid-April, Milligan was in negotiations to lease an adjacent space and turn it into an events venue, if he can clear related licensing and regulatory hurdles. He's encountered plenty of those — federal, state and local — laws that prohibit him from serving cocktails (he can only offer half-ounce samples), limit the number of bottles he can sell per person per year, and prevent him from shipping his product.

"It can, at times, seem like a lot of bureaucracy," he says. "But then you realize, most of them are in place to protect the consumer." (Although some of them, he says, are in place to protect the big distributors.)

He takes some heart in proposed Florida Senate Bill 220, which is designed to ease rules about how craft



distillers peddle their wares (a key provision would be allowing them to sell spirits by the glass).

Loaded Cannon's first product line includes Carlota's Revenge whiskey, Annie's Blade vodka, Pyrracy rum, Margoza gin and a select flavored rum. Milligan projects prices to range from \$19 vodka to \$39/\$49 for more unique whiskeys. Unlike a lot of operators in Florida's nascent distilling industry that focus on one type of hooch, Milligan has tackled the whole spectrum.

"I like making them all," he says. "To me, it's part of the adventure. I'm ultimately going to make what people want to drink, but doing the same thing over and over dulls your edge."

Milligan reaches into a low cabinet and pulls out a jar of honey-colored liquid. He pours Carlota's Revenge, still a work in progress, into a couple of chrome 2-ounce containers. I make no claim to be a whiskey connoisseur, but this stuff is nirvana in a tumbler. So smooth. The harshness that makes you wince is nowhere to be tasted.

The whiskey's got soul. And maybe that's because it's tinged with tragedy.

**For updates** on opening, hours and product availability check the Loaded Cannon Facebook page or visit the website at [loadedcannondistillery.com](http://loadedcannondistillery.com).

In May of last year, Milligan's daughter from his first marriage, Victoria, took her own life at age 21.

"If I can help one other family by highlighting the problem, to encourage them to watch their children closely, to talk openly," Milligan says. "Tori was living in Baton Rouge, and I would talk to her regularly. The last time I saw her, though, I recognized that there had been a change. I feel devastated that I didn't do something."

Milligan says he plans to earmark a certain amount of revenue toward suicide prevention. In the meantime, diving into the Loaded Cannon venture has been therapeutic.

"After we lost Tori, I just had this feeling that she'd want me to commit myself to something I enjoy," he says, "That's when I went into the project full force."

Milligan made a comfortable living as a top-level Dow engineer. He has sunk a considerable sum into the Loaded Cannon enterprise, and would like to make a few bucks, to not fret about keeping the doors open, and to someday distribute in Florida, Georgia and Alabama. But money is not his primary motivator.

"I own a little over 70% of the business and the rest is investors," he explains. "I want to strike a balance between enjoying myself and keeping my investors happy. You can't always do both, but you can sure have fun trying."

The Loaded Cannon team members show off their state-of-the-art equipment. Left to right: Dan Duvall, distiller, Justin Hertz, consulting partner, Michelle Russell, director of marketing, Steve Milligan, owner, and Lisa Lehnert, director of finance.

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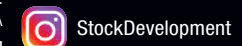
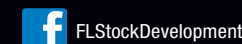
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# Brain Trust

A cutting-edge initiative aims to transform Lakewood Ranch into a global center for brain research and change lives around the world.

BY SU BYRON | CONTRIBUTOR

Retired U.S. Army Sergeant Eric Onstad, a Lakewood Ranch resident, knows a brain injury with a lifetime impact can happen in seconds.

In 2006, Onstad was stationed in Kabul, Iraq, when the base came under mortar attack. The first explosion knocked him unconscious. A buddy dragged him to cover when the second rocket hit — throwing them several feet. The impact was brutal. But he was alive and in one piece. He thought he was lucky — until the headaches and memory problems started.

“I tried to shake it off,” says Onstad. “But I couldn’t.”

In stoic military tradition, he kept it to himself — others had been killed in similar attacks.

“I figured I’d be OK in the days to come,” Onstad says.

But he wasn’t. The headaches and memory problems continued and didn’t stop when he returned to the United States in 2007. Despite what seemed like obvious symptoms, it took eight years before the Veterans Administration officially diagnosed Onstad with a traumatic brain injury (TBI). Unfortunately, that diagnosis hasn’t led to any

treatment because specific treatment for his variety of TBI doesn’t exist. At least not yet.

Onstad isn’t alone. The Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC) reports that 350,000 cases of TBI have been diagnosed in the United States military since 2000.

But brain problems aren’t limited to veterans.

The National Health Interview Survey estimates that 1.5 million Americans suffer traumatic brain injuries each year. The brain can also be compromised by drugs, alcohol, strokes, depression, and Alzheimer’s. Many of these conditions exacerbate other conditions, including depression, addiction, learning disabilities and Parkinson’s disease. The human brain is complicated—and medical understanding of how it works is still primitive. There are more questions than answers.

That’s where the Brain Health Initiative at Lakewood Ranch comes in. It’s currently conducting a ground-



Heidi Kurpiela (top); Courtesy (inset)

Through a long-term study, Stephanie Peabody and her team hope to discover ways to better treat those with brain disorders, like retired U.S. Army Sergeant Eric Onstad (pictured above right) stationed in Iraq) and educate others how to protect their brains.

*Continued on Page 34*

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ing research project on the health of the human brain. The initial phase of the study is unfolding with a sample population right here in Lakewood Ranch. Beyond that, the initiative plans to establish a state-of-the-art brain health center in the community.

This project represents a collaboration between Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), a Harvard Medical School teaching hospital, and the Academy for Brain Health and Performance (ABHP) in partnership with the community of Lakewood Ranch.

The ambitious initiative is the, er, brainchild of Stephanie Peabody, a neuropsychologist and the founder of the ABHP. The initiative follows the model of the Framingham Heart Study, a long-term, ongoing cardiovascular study that began in 1948. Much of the knowledge we take for granted regarding the heart flows from that study. Peabody hopes to accomplish the same goal with the human brain.

“Discovering the basis of brain health may be the most important medical challenge of our time,” says Peabody. “You can’t be healthy without a healthy brain. Yet, compared to the heart and other organs, we know so little about it.”

Erin Dunn, an epidemiologist and professor of psychology at MGH and assistant professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School, agrees, adding it could also flip the script on attitudes regarding mental challenges.

“Brain health-related conditions affect one out of every three people worldwide,” she says. “If we talk about this more openly, it would reduce the stigma that people with brain health challenges face.”

The initiative’s goal is revolutionary: develop new methods of diagnosing

and treating neurological conditions but also create a “brain healthy community” to better understand and prevent those conditions from happening in the first place. Last spring, after visiting more than 10 potential locations, the initiative chose Lakewood Ranch to be that community.

“It’s is an ideal microcosm,” says Peabody. “The population is multi-generational, with a broad range of living situations. The community also has diverse, on-site resources to support the health and well-being of its residents, and a strong business, educational, and arts and cultural infrastructure.”

Peabody adds her firsthand knowledge of the area stems from her parents, 35-year residents of the Gulf Coast region and enthusiastic proponents of Lakewood Ranch.

Peabody says the study will be longitudinal, following participants across their lifetimes and proceed in three phases. The completed Phase I gathered preliminary survey data and clarified research parameters.

“Previous brain studies have targeted specific areas of concern: ADHD, Alzheimer’s, traumatic brain injury and so on,” says Peabody. “This survey looks at the whole picture. That includes everything from sleep cycles, social life and workplace habits, to faith and spirituality, and even diet.”

Phase II will comprise a pilot study, gathering brain health data from participating Lakewood Ranch residents. Initial survey results will be incorporated in Phase III — a long-term study of brain health over multiple generations of Lakewood Ranch residents. The results will be studied by a team of scientists, physicians, innovators and entrepreneurs at a new Brain Health Innovation Lab, possibly located within the walls of Lakewood Ranch’s CORE development.

Along with data, the initiative depends on fundraising. It’s starting off with a short-term goal of \$1.6 million for the first three phases. Peabody is confident that this goal will be achieved and if so, the Brain Health Initiative will transform Lakewood Ranch into a global neurological research hub. In the process, it will make the community a model for the rest of the world to follow.

“I’m happy to say the community is responding,” she says. “We’re not there yet, and we need all the help we can get. But we’re off to a good start.”

“I’m happy to say the community is responding,” she says. “We’re not there yet, and we need all the help we can get. But we’re off to a good start.”

### BRAIN HEALTH TIPS

Thanks to neuroplasticity, we are constantly shaping the health of our brain. Below is Stephanie Peabody’s prescription for healthy brain living:

■ **Move.** One of the best ways to protect your brain health and to optimize the performance of your brain is to be physically active and exercise. Aim for at least 150 minutes per week (that’s about 21.5 minutes a day) of moderate-intensity exercise, such as brisk walking. Then, for the rest of the day, sit less and stand and move more. Exercising with a friend is even better.

■ **Increase stress resilience.** Stress stimulates the release of the hormone cortisol, which is helpful in small amounts. But high cortisol levels over the long-term lead to excess plaque in blood vessels, decreased oxygen to the brain, and brain damage. Be aware of your stress and adopt stress interventions to be more resilient to your daily stressors.

■ **Sleep well — and more.** Make sure to get seven to eight hours of sleep per day. Information is consolidated in the brain at a deeper level of understanding during sleep, and its restorative action cleanses your brain of some of the toxicity that has built up from stress or worry. Sleep is rejuvenating, helping you be more mentally energetic and productive. During sleep, the brain clears out waste material, including excess amyloid protein, which contributes to Alzheimer’s disease.

■ **Socially engage.** Socializing and maintaining friendships can protect against cognitive decline. A shared sense of positive social engagement is a powerful tool to support brain health. It’s not the number of friends you have but rather the quality and depth of your connections that is significant.

■ **Treat underlying conditions.** High blood pressure and high cholesterol impair blood flow to the brain. People with depression or hearing loss have a higher risk for developing dementia.

■ **Nourish.** The best diet for your brain is the one that’s good for your heart. That means lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; getting protein from fish and legumes; and choosing healthy unsaturated fats (olive oil, canola) over saturated fats (butter). Foods associated with slowing cognitive decline include fish with omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, mackerel); strawberries and blueberries; and dark, leafy greens (kale, spinach, broccoli).

### BRAIN HEALTH STUDY GOALS

- Identify factors that help and harm brain health, including genes, lifestyle, and the environment.
- Understand how certain interventions promote brain health and reduce the risk of brain-related diseases.
- Target these interventions to key stages of life, when they will have significant and long-lasting impacts on brain health.



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# SANDY SHORES



Photos by Randi Donahue

Along with the amenity center, which includes a pool, recreation lawn, an outdoor screened in bar and a full kitchen and gathering space, Shoreview residents have access to a white sand beach and view of Middle Teal Lake.

Construction within the Waterside community rumbles along, hitting a milestone with the opening of the first residential amenity center – part of the Shoreview neighborhood.

BY RANDI DONAHUE  
MANAGING EDITOR

Imagine a dip in the crystal blue pool before retreating to a nearby lounge chair nestled in the sand. A breeze drifts off the water while tropical music plays in the background. It could be a scene set at a resort in Mexico, or maybe even Siesta or Lido Beach. But this particular beach is different. It's located on Middle Teal Lake in Lakewood Ranch and is part of the decked-out amenity center in the Shoreview neighborhood.

Yes. There is now a white-sand beach 15 miles east of the two-time winner of America's No. 1 beach designation. The beach may be manmade, but its presence is a clear sign that progress in Schroeder-Manatee Ranch's latest innovative development — Waterside, located solely in Sarasota County — is well under way and that Lakewood Ranch, as planned, is expanding its borders south.

Shoreview is located two miles from Main Street Lakewood Ranch, just south of the Polo Club surrounding two, 70-acre lakes. It is one of 12 compact, walkable neighborhoods slated to give rise to a new dimension of living that has even current Lakewood

*Continued on Page 38*



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Ranch residents flocking to the south side for urbanist, waterfront living.

Lakewood Ranch residents William and Sue Parry started their Lakewood Ranch living in the Country Club neighborhood 10 years ago. Then they moved to Country Club East, but after purchasing home in Shoreview, the Parrys have settled in for the long haul.

“We feel like every part of Lakewood Ranch has beauty, but this location really was the best,” says William Parry. “[Shoreview] offered a view that was reminiscent of the low country in the Carolinas. It’s the only place in Lakewood Ranch to get a view.”

The Waterside community concept is the development of narrow tracts of land surrounding seven large lakes — making use of the byproduct of SMR’s shell-mining operation and offering 20 miles of shoreline. Once built out, the community will feature more than 5,000 residences, including single-family homes, apartments, condos and townhomes, all of which are brought together with a vibrant town center located on a peninsula of Kingfisher Lake.

As the first residential neighborhood to break ground in Waterside, Shoreview is set up for 246 single-family homes built by Pulte. As of mid-April, 71 homes had been sold and lead Shoreview Sales Agent Andrew Basco predicted they’d sell 75 or more before the end of the month.

Basco says he has sold to a range of buyers from those making a move from within the Lakewood Ranch borders, like the like the Parrys, to those who have historically flocked to Longboat and Lido keys but are ready for something different.

“People seem to be tired of the traffic, and there are concerns for rising sea levels,” says Basco.

Seventy-percent of the Shoreview neighborhood homes offer a lake view; 68 of those lots have easements for docks. Residents can use those lakes for recreation, including boats up to 18 feet long with no more than 4-horsepower electric motors (Sorry folks, they are keeping it classy as there are no pontoons allowed.)

Along with the beach, the Shoreview amenity center boasts a fitness center, tennis courts, a gathering room with a full kitchen, a large outdoor bar, and



The Shoreview amenity center, pool and beach opened for resident use in March.

a lakeside recreation lawn with gas grills.

“People that have a vision and want water views are getting in quick,” says Basco. The vision he is referring to is the much-anticipated completion of Waterside’s town center Waterside Place, which is merely a half-mile from the Shoreview entrance and is intended to be easily accessible via trails.

“Everybody on Lido can walk to St. Armands, everybody in Waterside will be able to walk to Waterside Place,” says Basco.

SMR is laying the groundwork for Waterside Place, with the vertical portion of the project expected to begin in August. During an April “State of the Ranch” speech, Rex Jensen, president and CEO of SMR, estimated the building cycle will take about 24 months. The community hub, which will be open to the public, is slated to include the new home for The Players Centre for Performing Arts, in addition to 800 urban-style apartments and townhomes; 120,000 square feet of commercial, retail and office space; plenty of dining options; an 8-acre park, nature trails and water recreation.

“It will be good for dinner, drinks and to see a show,” says Parry. “We just really feel like we saved the best

### LAKEHOUSE COVE

Shoreview isn’t the only neighborhood in Waterside making strides in home sales. Nearby LakeHouse Cove, which features three builders: Homes by Towne, Arthur Rutenberg and Lee Wetherington, was the second neighborhood to break ground in the Waterside community and has seen a cumulative sales total of 90 homes as of mid-April.

According to Homes by Towne Sales Associate Sarah Lowry, a large portion of 66 sales she and associates have made were to current Lakewood Ranch residents who have been vigilant as the Waterside concept has to come to fruition.

“They have been waiting for this and watching,” says Lowry. “With all the amenities and the waterfront living, this just hasn’t existed before.

This is a true destination.”

The 7-acre LakeHouse Cove amenity center campus is well underway, including the construction of a 5,000-square-foot fitness center and a small marina that contains a boathouse equipped to store up to a 20-foot sailboat or kayaks for residents and offers several docks. The campus, which also includes a sunset lawn, a lakeside pool and spa and cabanas, will be completed in various phases with most coming available for resident use by the end of the year.

The amenity campus shares Kingfisher Lake with Waterside Place and upon the town center’s completion and opening, residents will be able to catch a water taxi to Waterside Place and take advantage of its offerings.

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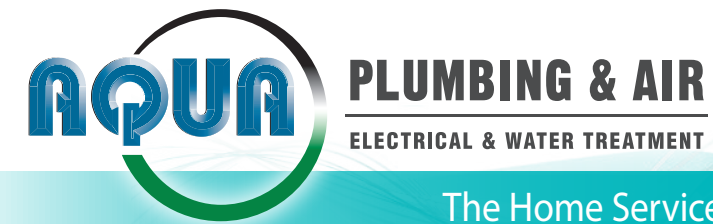
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# PULSE

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Juniors row into Nathan Benderson Park to compete for top national honors.

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Photo courtesy USRowing  
USRowing will host its Youth National Championship regatta June 5-9 at Nathan Benderson Park.



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# Watchful Eye

Lakewood Ranch becomes home to a Manatee County Sheriff substation and hub for its several tactical units. Meet Capt. Stanley Schaeffer – the man in charge.

BY ERIC SNIDER | CONTRIBUTOR

**T**here's a new sheriff's captain in town. On Jan. 18, the Manatee County Sheriff's Office opened a Lakewood Ranch substation at 14544 Arbor Green Trail, in a former Lennar Homes sales center. The man in charge is Capt. Stanley Schaeffer, a 24-year veteran of the department.

Schaeffer grew up in Cincinnati and in 1982 moved with his father to Sarasota. He's a Sarasota High School alum who, upon graduating, took stints working at Winn-Dixie and in landscaping before signing up for the police academy at Manatee Technical Institute.

"My father was an avid shooter and firearms instructor in the Army," Schaeffer recalls. "He belonged to a gun club and we'd go down there to shoot quite a bit. There was a lot of law enforcement [people] there. I had it in the back of my head that one day I'd seek law enforcement."

After getting certified, he spent a couple of years in the Bradenton Police Department but saw a better growth opportunity with the Sheriff's Office. He started with regular patrol

*Continued on Page 44*



Photo by Heidi Kurpiela

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and spent time with the Community-Oriented Policing Unit before earning a spot on the SWAT team. Schaeffer spent 19 years — four as commander — with SWAT, departing in 2015 after he was appointed captain.

Schaeffer then served as commander of the District 2 patrol until recently being named captain of the Selective Enforcement Division, which he now runs from the Lakewood Ranch substation.

*What operations are being run out of the substation under your command?*

Traffic, the aviation unit, the mounted unit, school resource officers, the marine unit, the canine unit — all the toys. Most of them are headquartered elsewhere, but we command out of this office.

*What's your favorite part of the job?*

This job is never boring. There's something different every day. Routine traffic stops aren't routine anymore. With this job, you cannot get out of bed and have your head dropped, with a "God-I-gotta-go-to-work" attitude and come to work and hate it. You have to enjoy coming to work.

*How about your least favorite?*

[Pauses] Dealing with personnel issues — like when someone has to be disciplined. It's not a fun part of the job, but it has to be done.

*People who live in Lakewood Ranch may think the substation is meant as a headquarters or policing Lakewood Ranch. Is that the case?*

Manatee County is organized into three [policing] districts. Lakewood Ranch is in District 3, so that responsibility mostly falls on District 3 personnel. Those deputies sometimes use our office here, although we don't encourage them to come off the street.

*Does the environment in the Lakewood Ranch substation suit you at this point in your career?*

Oh yeah. It's a lot quieter. I don't have to hear gunshots during the day. I do get out in the field, though. We get email complaints from citizens about the traffic unit. The sheriff will call me, and I'll go sit in a car for a couple of hours at that location and run the radar, so I can get some firsthand knowledge.

*Lakewood Ranch is not known for its mean streets. What are some crime trends that residents should be aware of?*

The really big issue right now is kids — age 16 into their 20s — showing up in a car, walking down the street from house to house checking if the doors are unlocked. If so, they go through your car and if there's valuables in it, they'll take them. Anything from loose change to firearms. And, this may be hard to believe, but a lot of people leave their keys in their car. So, they'll steal the car. A lot of times, perpetrators aren't from our county. They come down from Hillsborough or St. Pete in a stolen car, find another car, steal it and drive back where they came from.

*Any other areas that you're focusing on?*

Traffic is a huge problem, and that's countywide. Because of our population growth, there's a big burden on traffic enforcement. We have 10 deputies assigned to our traffic unit and one spends 90% of the day reviewing red light camera violations. The sheriff has asked the county for an increase in deputies, and we plan to assign more to the traffic unit.

*I would guess people don't think of traffic as a serious crime issue. They're probably more concerned about not getting a ticket. Can you describe the importance of traffic patrol?*

Traffic enforcement reduces the number of crashes and injuries, which affects insurance premiums and, of course, public health. When I was coming in today, there was a crash on State Road 70 that took up two lanes of traffic. The bottleneck backed up 70, so now people are delayed getting to their jobs. That's just an example.

*Are you a fundamentally different person as a law enforcement officer than you are away from the job?*

Of course. You can relax a little more. You're not as guarded. I tell everyone who starts on this job, "You walk outside this building, you're on videotape. Have your head on a swivel. Cops get attacked. Be alert to what's going on." When you're away, you get to decompress from that.

*Let's talk about leadership. There's not a lot of people who rise to the rank of captain. How did you find yourself on this track?*

“*With this job, you cannot get out of bed and have your head dropped, with a 'God-I-gotta-go-to-work' attitude and come to work and hate it. You have to enjoy coming to work.*”

**CAPT. STANLEY SCHAEFFER**

I spent some time as a field trainer, training new recruits. I realized that I was pretty good at it. When I'd see a deputy doing the job as a product of what I taught, I thought I could teach larger groups. You have to have five years of service in before you're eligible for promotion. I decided to take the test. I thought, "If I can teach one deputy, why not train or teach a squad?"

*Can you shed some light on your time in community-oriented policing?*

I did that from around 1998 to 2001. We had three units and I was in the one in a three-square-mile area that had the highest crime rate in the county — in the Oneco area. We didn't drive around in cars. We'd ride bikes or were on foot, most of the time interacting with street dealers. Those people don't view police in a favorable way. Our job was to arrest them when it was called for, of course, but also to create relationships. We'd strike up conversations, maybe toss the football around, goof around with them.

*What do you like to do in your down time?*

A few buddies and I have 119 acres in Alabama, where we go hunting and horseplay on four-wheelers in the woods. There's a cabin that was moved onto the property in the early '50s. We try to go during [deer] hunting season and any time we can get the heck out of here. We try to go at least once every two months. We're going this weekend, actually. It's not hunting season, so we'll work on stuff like taking care of trees that fall on the trails. We'll rebuild a bridge that crosses a creek.

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*This may be a little glib, but I gotta ask. We've all watched police captains on TV shows. Do you ever shout, "Smith, Jones — my office!"?*

[Chuckles] No. I don't lead like that. I'll say that none of our captains are like that. They're down to earth and like to get out there and go do it with the troops. We're pretty people-oriented. It works better that way. The troops have a tough enough job as it is.

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# charity snapshot



Photo by Randi Donahue

Founder Tara Bergstrom Merino with her children Michael and Natalie at The Market, where LWR SAVVY, in partnership with LWR and Little Geniuses, helps facilitate a free tent with activities such as binary letter writing, building marble mazes out of cardboard, and other STEM activities

## Precious Ed

Tara Bergstrom Merino saw a deficiency in STEM education. She opted to fix it herself by starting a nonprofit program called LWR SAVVY to help fill the gap.

BY ERIC SNIDER | CONTRIBUTOR

In high school, Tara Bergstrom had a boyfriend who gave her a book titled “The Art of Doing Nothing: Simple Ways to Make Time for Yourself.” Nearly two decades later, she’s never read it.

Tara Bergstrom-Merino is now 36 and holds a bachelor’s degree in computer engineering from Villanova University. The six-year resident of Lakewood Ranch works full time as the program manager of collateral technology for Bank of America Merrill Lynch, where she is a senior vice president. She married a tech guy, Iñigo Merino, the founder and CEO of the cybersecurity firm Cienaga Systems. The couple has an 11-year-old techie son, Michael, and an 8-year-old daughter, Natalie.

Last year, sensing an education gap in local elementary schools, Bergstrom-Merino started LWR SAVVY, an organization that exposes school-aged children to programs and competitions in science, technology, engineering and math, commonly known as STEM. Although she has people who help out, including Iñigo and other parents, LWR SAVVY is effectively her baby.

“I’ve always been the type of person who, when I see a problem, I don’t expect someone else to fix it,” she says. “I’m the person with my hand up.”

The current problem at hand, from her view: too little instruction and resources earmarked for STEM education in local schools, especially elementary level. She did not come this conclusion capriciously. For four years, she was on the board of the Parent Teacher Organization at Robert Willis Elementary School, where her chil

*Continued on Page 48*



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Courtesy photos  
**Left:** LWR SAVVY partnered with USF-St. Petersburg to host a Robotics Weekend during which students were able to program a robot to complete a maze.  
**Right:** LWR SAVVY team members hard at work on their "moon base" Lego model.

Continued from Page 46

dren attend. Bergstrom-Merino says she played a major role in amassing \$200,000 in contributions during the 2017-'18 school year. As a STEM advocate she had hoped — even expected — a fair amount of the money raised would go toward her priorities. Willis Elementary ended up allocating just \$2,000 for STEM supplies. So, she resigned from the PTO.

"I was frustrated by where the money was being spent," she says. "What matters to the district is ELA (English Language Arts). I support the ELA program in schools, but there needs to be a balance. ELA is how the schools get rated. And I wasn't there to help get the district an A rating."

Bergstrom-Merino had long been a go-to person for friends and neighbors on how to get youngsters interested in STEM — what toys to buy, how to introduce them to basic computer programming. Through Inigo, she learned of First Lego League, an international science program with a robotics competition. She discovered that Lakewood Ranch had no Lego League teams, so she put a feeler out on Facebook to see if she could start one.

"In two hours, I had 30 people wanting to be on the team," she says. "I thought, 'How am I going to pick [the kids]?' We decided to do two teams." She ended up with six.

After connecting with Monaca Onstad, director of community relations for Lakewood Ranch, about her role in the future of STEM education in the area, Bergstrom-Merino knew it was time to determine her next step.

"[Monaca] said, 'I'd love to help you with your mission,'" Bergstrom-Merino recalls. "I said, 'I really don't

have a mission.' I took the next week to think about what I wanted to do for Lakewood Ranch youth."

SAVVY (Student Advocates for Our Versatile and Vibrant Youth) was born in June 2018. The program quickly expanded beyond Lego League to include math competitions using 24Game, STEM weekends, speaker sessions, and even a school supply drive in conjunction with the Bradenton Kiwanis that benefited more than 500 children in the Manatee School District. Also, in partnership with Little Geniuses and The Market at Lakewood Ranch, LWR SAVVY hosted a weekly free STEM tent at The Market with activities such as building marble mazes out of cardboard.

One of SAVVY's charter members is Matthew Goldberg, a friend and fifth-grade classmate of Bergstrom-Merino's son Michael. The tandem — along with friends Owen, Porter, Kayden, Bryson and Ike — formed a Lego League team called LWR Bot Tanks. Matthew is the squad's head coder.

"We have a lot of sleepovers on weekends and hang out on weekdays doing robotics," Matthew says. "We've pulled a lot of all-nighters." Not your ordinary kid sleepovers. "Sometimes we'll be up until 7 a.m. working on stuff at Michael's house. He and I now have a five-plus-year project to build a life-size Lamborghini out of Legos."

Bergstrom-Merino is especially

For current events, follow LWR SAVVY on Facebook. The next LWR Robotics League launches in May. For those interested in joining or more information email [lwrstudentadvocacy@yahoo.com](mailto:lwrstudentadvocacy@yahoo.com)

pleased that youngsters like Michael, Matthew and the crew can get some recognition.

"In Lakewood Ranch, there is so much available for athletically gifted kids to shine," she says. "But how about the academically gifted child? Nobody knows you got straight A's. Those kids don't get to feel the same sense of pride in their accomplishments that the pitcher on the baseball team does. With SAVVY, if you're strong in math, you can win a trophy that says so."

Bergstrom-Merino gets out in the community to evangelize, build partnerships and gather contributions, but it's different from her PTO days.

"I hate going to businesses and asking them for a check," she says. "But I don't mind asking for places to sponsor us with a space, or to donate computers for the robotics league, or make T-shirts."

Bergstrom-Merino's short and long-term goals for SAVVY are anything but grandiose. First, she'd like to see some other adults take over programs — to run, organize and grow them so that she can broaden the organization's scope. More generally, she wants to continue to spark interest and activity in STEM learning throughout Manatee and Sarasota counties.

For her, down time effectively doesn't exist. "We go out to eat five days a week," Bergstrom-Merino says. "We have food delivered. I haven't exercised in I don't know how long. A cleaning lady comes in once a week. It would be great if I could put on an apron and make dinner seven nights a week, but I think, 'I can either do that, or I can go coach robotics.'"

And, just so you know, she has no plans to read "The Art of Doing Nothing." She doesn't have time.



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# calendar summer 2019



File photos Kennedy Cameron, 15, performs on Circus Day during Summer Fun Club at the Mall at UTC as a member of the Sailor Circus Academy.

## JUNE

### JUNE 1 SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER

Come boogie down for a great cause from 7-11 p.m. at Grove Restaurant, 10670 Boardwalk Loop, Lakewood Ranch. The Evolve Summer Social, hosted by Evolve Business Consulting, gives you an opportunity to sport your best disco attire while raising funds for the Children's Guardian Fund. All proceeds from the evening go to help the fund provide foster children with birthday presents. Tickets \$125. ■ For more information, visit [childrenguardianfund.org](http://childrenguardianfund.org).

### JUNE 5 CLASSIC CAR SHOW

Enjoy classic cars from 5-9 p.m. at Main Street at Lakewood Ranch.

Anyone with a classic car, truck or anything with wheels is welcome. ■ For more information, call 941-371-1061.

### JUNE 5-9 USROWING YOUTH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

USRowing will host its Youth National Championship regatta from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota, where spectators can watch top-level rowing competition. ■ For information, visit [nathanbendersonpark.org](http://nathanbendersonpark.org).

### JUNE 6 SUMMER FUN CLUB

The kids will love weekly themes at the Mall at University Town Center's Summer Fun Club from 10 a.m. to noon

Thursdays in June and July at The Mall at UTC, 140 University Town Center Drive, Sarasota. Themes include Luau Summer Kick-off with Moana, Mote Marine Aquarium Sea Exploration, Pirate Adventure with the Tampa Bay Bucs, Circus Day with Circus Sarasota and Sailor Circus and Princess Party. The club is free and open to the public. ■ For more information, visit [mallatutc.com/events](http://mallatutc.com/events).

### JUNE 7 MUSIC ON MAIN

Head over to Main Street at Lakewood Ranch from 6-9 p.m. for a free concert from La Lucha Band to benefit the Humane Society at Lakewood Ranch. Grace Church will present an area for children's activities. Guests

*Continued on Page 52*



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The rain couldn't keep a solid crowd from attending the fireworks show at Nathan Benderson Park in 2018.

*Continued from Page 50*

can bring chairs, but no coolers.

■ For more information, visit [lakewoodranch.com](http://lakewoodranch.com).

**JUNE 22  
CRAFT FAIR**

Shop for unique items from more than 20 vendors from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Mixon Fruit Farms craft fair held at 2525 27th St. E., Bradenton.

■ For more information, visit [mixon.com](http://mixon.com).

**JULY**

**JULY 3  
FIREWORKS ON THE LAKE**

Take part in this fireworks show with festivities beginning at 4 p.m. at Nathan Benderson Park. There will

be a 4-mile run, live music and food vendors. The fireworks will begin over the lake when the sun goes down, around 9 p.m.

■ For more information, call 941-358-7275.

**BRADENTON MARAUDERS INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION**

The game starts at 6:30 p.m. at LECOM Park, 1611 Ninth St. W., Bradenton, where the Marauders will take on the Jupiter Hammerheads. The event features a patriotic-themed baseball jersey auction and a free shirt giveaway to the first 1,500 fans to enter the stadium. A fireworks show will follow the game.

■ For more information, call 941-747-3031.

*Continued on Page 54*



Sarasota 2-year-old Josie Drost and dad, Jake. Drost take a selfie before the fireworks at Nathan Benderson Park.

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Continued from Page 52

**JULY 4  
PALMETTO FOURTH  
OF JULY FESTIVAL**

The festival, hosted by the Palmetto Community Redevelopment Agency, will feature an opening act, Rare Earth, then music by Mark Farner's American Band. Family-friendly activities will start around 11 a.m. at Sutton Park, 1036 Sixth St. W., Palmetto. Attendees can stay in their seats or walk down to the Manatee River for the fireworks show, which starts after the concert. Admission is free and there will be food and drink available for purchase. ■ For more information, call 941-723-4988.

**JULY 5  
MUSIC ON MAIN**

Head over to Main Street at Lakewood Ranch from 6-9 p.m. for a free concert from One Night Rodeo to benefit The Haven. Guests can bring chairs, but no coolers. ■ For more information, visit lakewoodranch.com.

**JULY 27  
CRAFT FAIR**

Shop for unique items from more than 20 vendors from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Mixon Fruit Farms craft fair held at 2525 27th St. E., Bradenton. ■ For more information, visit mixon.com.

**AUGUST**

**AUGUST 2  
MUSIC ON MAIN**

Enjoy a free concert from 6-9 p.m. at Lakewood Ranch Main Street. Patrons will enjoy live music by the funk rock band The Reality. Proceeds benefit a local charity. Guests can bring chairs, but no coolers. ■ For more information, call 941-907-9243.

**AUGUST 24  
BACK TO SCHOOL BASH**

Bring the whole family to a fun day at the Music Compound's Back to School Bash from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Music Compound, 1751 Cattlemen



Road. There will be live music, free music classes and other activities. ■ For more information, call 941-379-9100.

**AUGUST 24  
CRAFT FAIR**

Shop for unique items from more than 20 vendors from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Mixon Fruit Farms craft fair held at 2525 27th St. E., Bradenton. ■ For more information, visit mixon.com.

The fireworks show at Nathan Benderson Park for the Fourth of July celebration in 2018 lasted for 17 minutes.

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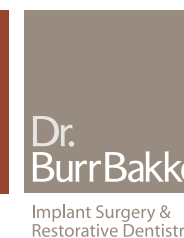
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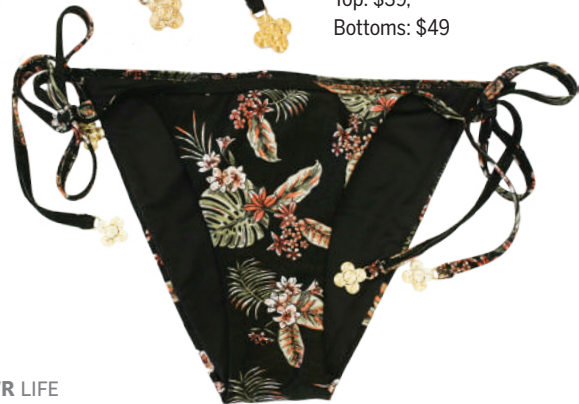
BY KAYLEIGH OMANG | CONTRIBUTOR

It's sweet summertime, which means sun, fun and no school. When the heat and humidity turn up the dial, thankfully we have the nearby beaches to help us cool off. Plus, if the kids are getting bored, spending the day at the beach can make everyone happy.

Before setting out, we shopped local boutiques to find the best places to get beachwear accessories so you're ready for the water.



Minkpink, Top: \$39, Bottoms: \$49



Minkpink, \$108



Minkpink, \$109

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Crowder's Gifts & Gadgets has adorable swim options for the kids. It offers multiple styles, colors and patterns, so not only are your little ones ready to swim, but looking stylish. And for the adults, Crowder's has a vast selection of Vera Bradley beach accessories. So many in fact, that you can match from head to toe (minus your swimsuit.) They also offer fun products to amp up your beach experience, such as hats, water bottles and beach towels.



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If you're having lunch on Lakewood Ranch Main Street, pop into Naples Soap Co. and browse its beachwear selection. You wouldn't think it would be a go-to for fun in the sun, but the store offers selections for both kids and adults when it comes to beach or pool day accessories. For the kids, a little game of "dress up" can happen with a towel that turns them into a shark or monster. Plus, browse the selection of multiuse sarongs and hair accessories with a fun boho vibe for your "salt hair, don't care" days.



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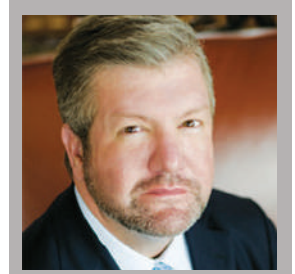


West Indies sarong, \$25



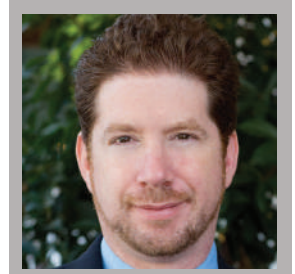
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# RIPPLE EFFECT

Lake Club neighbors and Stock Signature Homes team up to build homes for Habitat for Humanity Sarasota, garnering results that stretch beyond four walls.

BY RANDI DONAHUE | MANAGING EDITOR



Mike Harshman



Mary Jane Chamoy



Jay Traverso and Ruth Harshman



TLC = The Lake Club



**G**rowing up, good-natured Lake Club resident Jay Traverso was told he could do anything if he only had the right tools.

“I have tools I have only used once because I needed it for one job that I will probably never do again,” says Traverso, who says he can now do just about anything when it comes to home maintenance or improvement. “But without that unique tool, I could never have gotten that job done. My dad would tell me to get the tool and try it. He taught me a lot. But mostly he taught me to always try and do it yourself first.”

Five years ago, upon retiring and moving from Washington, D.C., to Lakewood Ranch with wife, Marybeth, those tools provided Traverso a clear path to Habitat for Humanity Sarasota. He’s now a regular volunteer as a project and team leader for the nonprofit, dedicating about 15 hours a week and up to 600 hours a year to the homebuilding efforts.

“With many of the charities, you don’t get to see who is getting money, but with Habitat you see those people day in and day out,” says Traverso. “It’s a good feeling to be out there helping those you meet.”

But some might say Traverso’s biggest role yet with Habitat Sarasota was his recent success organizing an unprecedented business/citizen partnership to build two homes in Hammock Place, a Sarasota neighborhood made up entirely of Habitat homes.

It started over breakfast.

Banking on what he says is a genuine care for the community, Traverso invited several Lakewood Ranch builders to a breakfast introducing Hammock Place and, of course, seeking sponsorship and funding for the project. Naples-based Stock Signature Homes came forward to help out.

“We are philanthropic as a company and we have always done a multitude of giving,” says Brian Stock, CEO of Stock Development, who is no stranger to Habitat for Humanity given its involvement in Naples. “We’ve been fortunate in our company to be able to give back. It’s important to me and our employees.”

To begin, Stock committed to sponsor two Hammock Place homes (it doesn’t intend to stop there). Along

with that sponsorship came the need for volunteer commitment on the sites. Although Stock had some dedicated staff to offer, it wasn’t exactly clear, at first, how it would meet the 400-hour volunteer (200 per home) requirement. Traverso found a new tool in the form of his Lake Club neighbors’ goodwill.

### HELPING HAND

He put the word out on NextDoor, a neighborhood communication app, and went door to door himself. The initial neighborhood response about a partnership with Stock was positive, and by the time the project was ready for the Lake Club team, 24 people had signed on to volunteer.

“I was surprised at how willing many of the neighbors were to try something new,” says Traverso. “In many cases, I knew it was something way out of their comfort zone.”

Many Lake Club residents who couldn’t help physically made financial donations, and some chose to deliver snacks and treats during workday break times.

“It was amazing how many people took time out to do it,” says volunteer Mary Jane Chamoy. “Everyone did whatever they could, and that is what it is all about.”

By the time the second work week came around in late March, the number of volunteers for the Stock/Lake Club partnership had almost doubled, including a few staff from Schroeder-Manatee Ranch, developer of Lakewood Ranch, as well.

“In the first three weeks alone, we built the walls for two houses using 40 unique neighbors, and spent a total of 550 [Lake Club] man hours,” says Traverso.

What started out as a neighborhood volunteer commitment grew into a communitywide effort and introduced many of those first-time volunteers to a nonprofit that relies on more than

Marybeth and Jay Traverso in front of one of two Hammock Place homes sponsored by Stock Signature Homes in partnership with the Lake Club residents.

A rendering of a completed Hammock Place home. The deed-restricted homes come with appliances and include amenities such as a two-car garage and screened-in lanai.



Day 1 of the Stock Signature Homes/Lake Club volunteer efforts. The team included Lake Club neighbors and Stock volunteers as well as Habitat volunteers and staff. By the end of the group effort, which was spread over a few weeks, the team had logged a total of 550 hours on the two homes.



**HAMMOCK PLACE**  
With its first neighborhood entirely made up of Habitat homes, Habitat for Humanity of Sarasota has a goal to assist 40 families, including more than 100 children. So far, the land the neighborhood sits on and a large part of the land infrastructure has been paid for through a partnership with the Kolter Group and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. As of April, the construction costs for 11 homes had been fully funded. “We need more community support to increase our ability to serve 29 additional families with newly constructed homes in Hammock Place,” says Renee Snyder, Habitat Sarasota’s CEO. For more information on how to make contributions to Habitat of Sarasota, visit [habitatsrq.org](http://habitatsrq.org).

Courtesy rendering Hammock Place has been planned to house 40 families. Stock Homes and Lake Club residents assisted in constructing homes 30 and 32 in the map above.

*Continued on Page 66*





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“

*It's all about the goodwill, but in this case it's the goodwill and also bringing the resources and manpower.”*

RENEE SNYDER, HABITAT OF SARASOTA CEO

*Continued from Page 64*

just financial support to thrive.

“It's all about the goodwill, but in this case it's the goodwill and also bringing the resources and manpower,” says Habitat of Sarasota CEO Renee Snyder. “What volunteer time does for the organization is allow us the ability to deliver a more affordable home to our families.”

### NEW START

Each Habitat home is intended to be a permanent and affordable housing solution.

Once awarded the home as part of the Habitat program, recipients are expected to make the monthly interest-free mortgage payment. Homes are matched to families who have put in the required time and other qualifications to meet program standards.

“People have a weird conception of who gets these homes,” says Traverso. “You find out that in many cases they are working their butts off and for whatever circumstance they can't seem to get ahead.”

Hammock Place, which will eventually contain 40 homes, is located off Hammock Place Road, just east of Beneva Road and across from the Bobby Jones Golf Course.

Location was key to shorten commutes and offer home recipients more time with their families. The deed-restricted homes come with appliances and include amenities such as a two-car garage, a screened-in lanai, and lawn service. The construction itself is high quality, using innovative products

*Continued on Page 68*

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Continued from Page 66

and materials in an effort to make each home energy efficient, and therefore more affordable.

The bulk of the Lake Club sweat equity was used during the installation of insulating concrete forms (ICFs) as the exterior walls of the two homes. ICFs, which are lightweight hollow foam blocks, go together like Legos and hardly seem sturdy. Once braced, reinforced with rebar, and filled with concrete, though, those same featherweight ICFs not only meet hurricane standards but are said to be five times quieter than a wood-framed house and much more energy efficient. The forms also allow volunteers to help with the installation no matter what their physical ability and skill level.

"I am not handy at all; I don't know how to do anything mechanical," says Lake Club resident Jim Buda. "But I learned how to use a riveting gun. And my wife was cutting rebar."

"Never in a million years did I imagine I'd know how to use a jigsaw," says Marybeth Traverso, who was also us-

ing a chapsaw by the end of the second day on the project.

The Lake Club volunteers learned from the guidance of both Habitat staff and experienced volunteers and on-site crew leaders like Mike Besselman, who volunteers for Habitat Sarasota three days a week.

"The Lake Club volunteers were willing to work and came out with the right spirit," says Besselman. "They learned well."

The neighborhood worked as a team not only to meet, but exceed the hours required for a Team Build. And even though there was little time for socializing, they either gained or reinforced respect for their neighbors.

"The neighbor bond grew stronger with the opportunity to help and stand back and say we did this," says Marybeth Traverso. "We are a tight-knit community, and the people who came out to help had a really good time."

"It opened my eyes to what Habitat does for people," says Tig Winsler, a first-time volunteer who had the chance to work on-site with a future home recipient. "The concept that the

homeowners are invested and able to achieve so much with just a little help is amazing."

Although technically the organized portion of the Lake Club commitment is over, most neighbors say they will continue to volunteer for Habitat Sarasota. This effort may have even opened a door for more Lake Club community-organized hands-on volunteer work. It certainly set an example for how a neighborhood can make an impact.

"These are not just retired people," says Jay Traverso referring to the Lake Club residents, himself included. "These people are just people, and they are willing to get out there and get dirty."

**For more information** on Team Build opportunities with Habitat Sarasota, contact Anna Wilson, resource development coordinator, at 941-487-5525. If you are interested in becoming an individual volunteer, go to the volunteer section of [habitatsrq.org](http://habitatsrq.org).

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# Time to CHILL

Ice cream maybe an iconic summer tradition, but to Floridians such refreshing indulgences are a year-round necessity. Good thing there are plenty of options.

BY RANDI DONAHUE | MANAGING EDITOR

I scream, you scream ... OK, OK, just kidding ... that line is way overplayed. It's more like ... any afternoon in Florida, especially May through October, you feel like screaming because it's as hot as the dickens. In theory, you could easily go for an ice bath, but realize having a cool treat makes a bit more sense. Lucky for you, there are some fantastic options to subdue your sweating, and they cater to just about every dietary need, from the simple sweet tooth to the keto fanatic. And while we can't stop you from overheating, we can help you chill out by directing you to one of these local shops. Go ahead, revel in some refreshment without being drenched — in ice water any way.



**The Miami**  
Vanilla ice cream topped with colorful marshmallows, rainbow sprinkles and a berry drizzle.

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The Mall at UTC,  
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## SLOW YOUR ROLL... KÜRTÓS CONES

With a Kürtös cone holding your ice cream, say goodbye to memories of bland cake cones of childhood past and say hello to a vessel that tastes just as good, if not better, than its contents. Kürtös owner Aniko Gulyas became somewhat of a local food celebrity when she introduced area farmers markets to a 300-year-old recipe for Hungarian chimney cakes, called Kürtöskalács, in honor of her culinary heritage. Made of raised dough, wrapped around a wooden dowel then quickly cooked at high temps, Kürtös cakes are soft and billowy on the inside, crunchy on the outside and traditionally topped with cinnamon and walnuts.

After great success at local farmers markets with her unique offerings (which include a wide range of toppings and even a savory version),

Gulyas jumped to the next level when she opened a brick-and-mortar at the Mall at UTC at the beginning of the year. Her new shop is the hub for making her kürtös fresh daily. It's also where they fill a cone-shaped version of cylindrical kürtös with house-made soft-serve vanilla ice cream and adorn the creamy inside with culinary novelties like Nutella. The Kurtos menu offers several signature cones like the Budapest — a chocolate wafer, walnuts and a drizzle of chocolate — but if none of the signature options strike your fancy, feel free to create your own.



**The Budapest**  
Vanilla ice cream, a chocolate wafer, walnuts and a drizzle of chocolate.



**Enter the Dragon**  
Pitaya, vanilla coconut milk, coconut water, pineapple, mango, banana and lime, topped with kiwicha bar, toasted coconut chips, goji berries, and a coconut nectar drizzle

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## CROP SUPERFOOD BOWLS

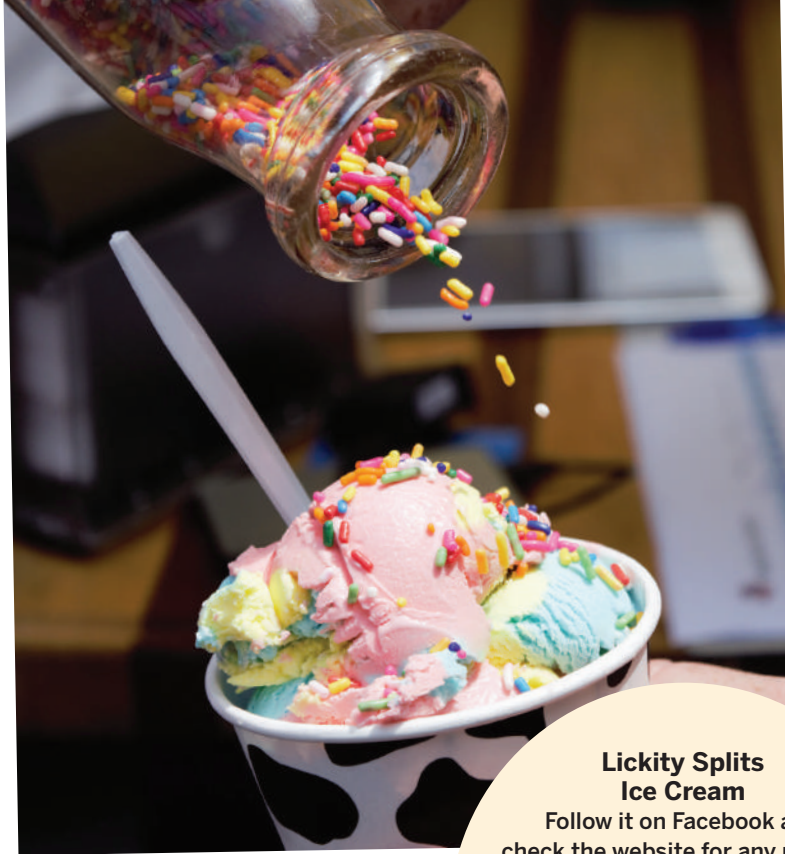
(vegan and some gluten free)

As much as we think of cool treats for the kids, this one might be perfect for adults. Superfood Bowls from Crop Juice might be the only option on our list that we recommend you partake in any time of day, even — no, especially — for breakfast. Crop Juice owner Karen Odierna, a former oncology nurse, started Crop as an ode to her “aha” moment with the benefits of juicing. But what is best known as a cold-pressed juice shop has evolved into a go-to place for local residents' healthy living routine. So much so that the Crop store selection now offers mylks, smoothies, overnight oats,

desserts, energy bites, vegan and veg meals and, of course, amazing superfood bowls.

Creamy and vibrant, these bowls are loaded with frozen fruit and vitamins, blended for smoothness and topped with a range of healthy toppings. They come free of any guilt and still feel like an indulgence. Take for example, the “Enter the Dragon” (above) — a slightly sweet and refreshing frozen concoction topped with goji berries, toasted coconut flakes and kiwicha chunks (ancient grain bars) and topped with a drizzle of coconut nectar. Best of all, it contains enough nutrition for it to be a complete meal. Looking for a pick-me-up? Order a “Cookies & Cold Brew” bowl, which contains a mix of local cold brew coffee, espresso, raw stoneground almond chocolate chip cookie dough butter, banana, cocoa powder, acai and more. It will make you feel like a kid again.





**Superman**  
Lemon,  
tutti frutti,  
and blue  
moon ice  
cream  
all mixed  
together

**Lickity Splits  
Ice Cream**

Follow it on Facebook and check the website for any upcoming events and the most current locations. At the time of publication, it's served at the Granary Lakewood Ranch, 2547 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., and the Siesta Key Rum Tasting room, 2212 Industrial Blvd. [lickitysplitsicecream.com](http://lickitysplitsicecream.com)

**EENY, MEENY, MINY...**

**LICKITY SPLITS  
ICE CREAM**

With flavors like the ever kid-popular Superman — a pastel but vibrant mix of lemon, tutti-frutti, and blue moon ice cream swirled together, a “uniquely Midwestern flavor” and Cherry Streusel — vanilla ice cream with a hint of cherry flavor, swirled with sweet cherry preserves and endowed with crunchy pieces of homemade streusel, Lakewood Ranch-based Lickity Splits Ice Cream has the specialty flavor market dialed in. What sets it apart is the use of local ingredients and natural oils as opposed to chemical flavor profiles to create its diverse ice cream palate.

Founder and owner Matt Eastman says whether it's toasting their own coconut or candying their own pecans, they forgo the fake and focus on the real deal when it comes to ingredients. Although Eastman came up with the original 30 core flavors himself, he

now collaborates with ice cream chefs (who knew there was such a career?) to come up with new and limited-release flavors, such as Guinness Dark Chocolate and Pumpkin Spice Cheesecake. And to ensure that each new flavor meets the top taste standards, Eastman and his wife, Jessica, turn to the official taste-testers: 11-year-old daughters Abigail and Sophia, for the sign off.

Although Lickity Splits does not have a stand-alone scoop shop, if you've been to any festivals or events of late (e.g. the Lightning Watch Party in April) you'll recognize the vintage-style farm cart and catchy cow logo. Look for it at select community events and more neighborhood scoop shops and venues.

**SPLITS FOR KICKS...**

**BIG OLAF  
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BANANA SPLITS**

Big Olaf Creamery ice cream is traditional in every sense of its origins, right down to being handmade by the Amish in the Pinecraft neighborhood of Sarasota. The claim to fame is that it's the high butter-fat content that makes this ice cream so, well, creamy. Big Olaf also seeks the freshest and highest quality dairy when making its frozen delight, which is made in small batches then delivered to ice cream shops throughout Florida up into the eastern seaboard as far north as Virginia. Sarasota is lucky to have several independently owned Big Olaf scoop shops, including the Big Olaf Creamery of Lakewood Ranch,

which has been owned and operated by Jeannet Romero and Gerardo Serrano for eight years. They are community oriented, even preferring to hire high school students from area schools to serve up your scoops. From sorbets to ice cream, they have just about any flavor to hit your sweet spot. And you can have it served any way you like, but we suggest a scoop in one of their hand-dipped chocolate waffle cones. Or if you are feeling adventurous, bring a friend and order up a Big Olaf Banana Split — traditionally made with a scoop of vanilla, chocolate and strawberry ice cream, flanked with two bananas and topped with caramel, chocolate and strawberry syrups before being finished off with whipped cream, peanuts and sprinkles (below). But please don't be boxed in by tradition on our behalf. The team at Big Olaf is happy to make it any way you like.

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**Big Olaf Banana Split**

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## D'LITES SHOPPE LUV NICE CREAM

(vegan, keto- friendly and gluten-free)

Truth be told, we don't all scream for ice cream. Some of us have food allergies. Or maybe your internal chemistry doesn't don't bode well with sugar. Heck, maybe you just choose not to eat dairy. Don't despair. Husband and wife team Zachary and Kirsten Mestancik, owners of D'Lites Shoppe, make it easy for those with dietary restrictions to partake in a cold, freshly made delight.

After a move to Lakewood Ranch in 2014, the young couple tapped into Kirsten's ice cream heritage as the granddaughter of best-selling Joy ice cream cone founder Albert George. But in pursuit of a satisfying a sweet tooth, it was also imperative they honor a dual passion for health and wellness.

D'Lites Shoppe was born and is a hub for all things sweet and health-driven. And while D'Lites offers a range of health products, the highlight of the shop is the cold treats it offers, from a low-calorie soft serve to a scoopable vegan, gluten-free ice cream made with coconut milk and sweetened with Sweet LUV — an organic Stevia-blend sugar substitute. But don't be fooled by all this health talk, the creamy texture and taste can compete with any cow's milk-based ice cream we've had. And with regular flavor offerings like CBD Chocolate in addition to a few rotating flavors like Chai Pistachio, we recommend trying it even if you have no restrictions.

Plus, psst...all of the D'Lites frozen treats are keto-friendly.

My Romeo  
Raspberry  
Luv Vegan  
Nice Cream



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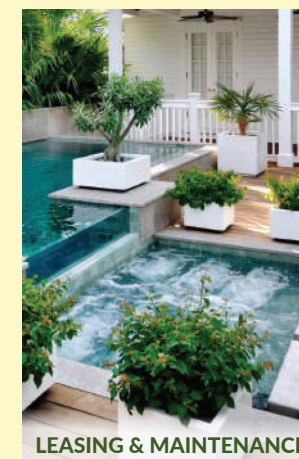
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Sue Ann Miller, president of the Friends of the East Manatee Library at Lakewood Ranch and Glenda Lammers, Manatee County's interim library services manager at the Central Library in

downtown Bradenton.

Photos by Dex Honea

# PLOT — ON —

The future of a Lakewood Ranch library is still uncertain, but that hasn't stopped residents from coming together to author the story of their ideal local branch.

BY SHELLIE TERRY | CONTRIBUTOR

**S**cattered on a table at a local community event in early spring are bright green post-it notes scrawled with ideas: “butterfly garden,” “3D printing,” “yoga,” “movie nights” and more. These may not seem like ideas that would fill a typical quiet-zone library, but they are the budding wish list for Manatee County's plans to erect a new branch on 2 acres at the Premier Sports Campus in Lakewood Ranch.

“What a lot of people remember are their experiences as children — it was very different back then,” says Glenda Lammers, library services manager at the Central Library in Downtown Bradenton. “It was a quiet place. You read your book. You didn't have computers or all these stimulating things that were also ways to learn. Libraries today are not like that any longer.”

That's exactly what the Friends of the East Manatee Library at Lakewood Ranch is hoping for — a noisy, interactive, state-of-the-art facil-

*Continued on Page 79*



# MORE THAN BOOKS

The Friends of the East Manatee Library at Lakewood Ranch is hoping to create a noisy, interactive, state-of-the-art facility that draws visitors of all ages and with all interests, mimicking the success of other area facilities shown here.

1. The Walsh family frequents the Braden River library at least once a week. As Lakewood Ranch residents they would love to see interactive boxes like the ones they enjoy here in a new branch a bit closer to home.

Photo by Randi Donahue

2. A bookstore is high on the Friends group's wish list because it provides a form of sustainable income and funding to supplement county-funded library programs.

3. With a push toward more STEAM education, a robotics section, such as the one in Area 52 featured here, would be a desired element of the new Lakewood Ranch branch.

4. Gone are the days constant shushing in a library setting. Today's libraries are interactive, even featuring music programs.

5. Area 52 in the Central branch features a 3D printer and facilitates STEAM education for local teens.

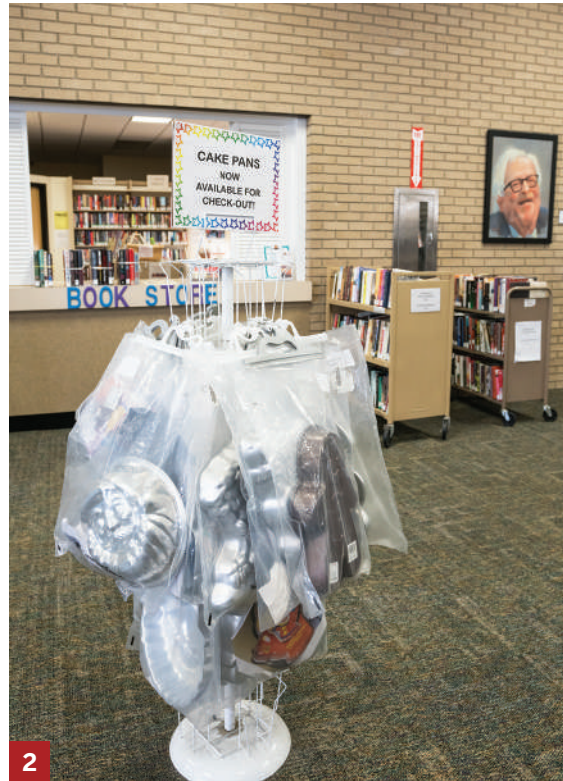
6. Scarlett Walsh, 5, plays on the interactive tablet center at the Braden River branch.

Photo by Randi Donahue

7. Area 52, considered a "makerspace for teens," features sewing machines. The library hosts a yearly Recycled Dreams Fashion Show to support fashion design workshops held there.



1



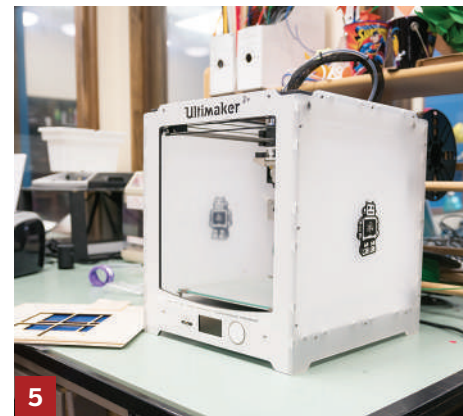
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3



4



5



6



7

Continued from Page 77

ity that draws visitors of all ages and with all interests. The Central Library branch, for example, is home to Area 52, a room filled with recording equipment, a 3D printer, sewing machines and even some power tools that celebrates hands-on teen learning, rather than shushing it.

With hopes to bring library access closer to home, the Lakewood Ranch-based Friends group formed in January 2018. The eight members have been attending County Commission meetings and gathering community input — like the post-it note table — to fine-tune the types of programs they could fund once the library is constructed.

"The libraries in this country are truly outstanding," says Sue Ann Miller, president of the Friends of the East Manatee Library at Lakewood Ranch. "The purpose of the Friends group is to support the library. The job is to do fundraising to be able to pay for programs above and beyond what the county can provide.

"We would love to have an Area 52 like they have [at the Central Library], with the music recording and the robotics and 3D printing and all those resources. The children in the eastern part of the county just don't have easy access to get there. The Friends would support those types of services."

And while the size, design, master plan and even the name for the new East County branch have yet to be determined, the Friends have their share of ideas for programs they'd like to fund and facilitate.

"The Friends are begging for a bookstore," Miller says. "It really provides sustainable funding. We've visited many libraries in the two-county area, and many that are new construction. We're drooling over the bookstores and the gift stores that they have."

And if the size of the facility won't accommodate a store, Miller sees plenty of fundraising opportunities with bi-annual book sale events. "Rocky Bluff Library makes about \$4,000 with each book sales event — they do two a year," she says.

While the use of the Friends' funds will be based on agreed-upon needs, Miller expects to use first-year funds for a summer reading program (\$2,500), library staff professional development



(\$1,000), creative aging programs (\$1,500) and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) programs for kids (\$3,000).

That is all music to Sonya Walsh's ears. The stay-at-home mom travels 9 miles to the Braden River Library once a week with her two daughters, which can take up to 20 minutes from their Polo Run home. The Premier location for the new branch is less than 2 miles from her home. "It's ridiculously close," she says.

"The Braden River branch is great, but it gets very busy and the kids need more space to roam," Walsh says. According to Lammers, that branch averages 100 visitors per hour.

Walsh's 5-year-old daughter, Scarlett, especially enjoys the activity boxes in the Braden River kid's area. "They're specially curated boxes based on a theme, like Egypt or the solar system," says Walsh, who likes that her girls can play with the toys and leave them there ... "so our house isn't a storage locker."

In the new branch, she'd like to see a dedicated space for moms' group meetings. "At the Rocky Bluff branch, they have a coffee shop and it's amaz-

ing." That branch is 15 miles from the Walshes' home.

Miller notes Walsh's closer branch in Braden River is stretched beyond its capacity, with items being checked out every 30 seconds and a new member receiving a library card every 30 minutes, she says.

"They're busy, No. 1, because they're excellent," Lammers says. "They do excellent programming and provide excellent service. Their story times are very well attended, with as many as 72 people in a session. The library is where it's happening."

While each of the libraries in the county has its own Friends group, the Lakewood Ranch-based group has its aspirations, yet Lammers notes that funding the new facility is still being determined. In April, commissioners approved devoting a larger portion of the county's infrastructure sales tax to the new library. That brings its total allocations to \$10 million: \$2.2 million from impact fees and \$7.8 million from the infrastructure sales tax.

Although the library will be the first facility built on the Premier property, it

Continued on Page 80



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Continued from Page 79

will have to wait for the Braden River Library branch expansion.

The Braden River branch expansion has been on the docket for several years, and is planned in phases, with priority No. 1: a 1,500-square-foot children's space. The county has applied for a state grant of \$500,000 for the \$1 million project for the last three years, but the last local library construction grant to be approved by the state was in 2016.

"The East County is continuing to grow," says Miller, who moved to Bridgewater at Lakewood Ranch from Pennsylvania three years ago, where she worked in education for 35 years. "The growth is going to continue for next 20 to 30 years. We want the new library to be capable of handling the increase in population. The commissioners all need to have a vision of the future and plan that way."

Lammers says that she's "planning big" for the East County branch, along with other library administration and county staff, and hopes to have a design concept and a master plan for the new branch by the end of 2019. Her priorities for the new branch include dedicated spaces for children and teens with STEAM labs, a dividable community room to accommodate multiple groups at one time, as well as books and other materials for residents to check out.

"I know what I want," Lammers says. "I don't know that it's going to be a reality. We can't finalize anything ... it's in the budget cycle right now."

As head of the Friends group, Miller remains hopeful and persistent that the group can raise enough funds to add meaningful services once the branch is built. The group's first official fundraising event is set for March 2020 with an author luncheon with Mary Walton, who wrote "A Woman's Crusade: Alice Paul and the Battle for the Ballot," in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote.

"Lakewood Ranch residents have been asking for their own library for a long time — going back 10 years," she says. "We want something comparable to [Central Library] in the eastern part of the county. We want equal access."



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# HAVEN

SPOTLIGHTING LIFE ON THE RANCH

Virtually every room in this lavish Lake Club home opens to a terrace for maximum enjoyment of outdoor living. **PAGE 84**



# Looking Toward the Future

With light, bright décor leading the way, a home in The Lake Club defines today's look in interior design.

BY BOB PLUNKET | CONTRIBUTOR



Photos courtesy of Premier Sotheby's International Realty  
Stately and traditional on the outside, the home features  
interiors that are both modern and timeless.





Oversized semi-circular couches provide plenty of seating in the great room, where the Morrisons often entertain. The party usually continues out to the terrace with a view of the pool and lake.

Lakewood Ranch is creating a whole new look for itself. Gone are the heavy furniture and grandiose spaces of the immediate past. They're being replaced by a much lighter touch — softer colors, trimmer shapes, and as for those heavy, fussy window treatments, they've been banished to welcome in the sun.

This home in The Lake Club was one of the first in this new style. Now 10 years old, it foreshadows what was to come and today seems absolutely "of the moment." The secret? A Canadian couple who knew what they wanted and worked enthusiastically with some top notch talent to get it.

Mary Anne and Dave Morrison are from Muskoka, Ontario, just north of Toronto. Dave is retired from the food business and Mary Anne works as a corporate coach. When they started looking for a home in Lakewood Ranch in 2008, during the height of the recession, no less, they had been filing away ideas for years. "There were two crucial things we wanted," Mary Anne

says. "Privacy and entertaining."

Along with architect Shawn Ambross and builder Mark Miller of Westwater Construction, the Morrisons came up with a plan perfectly suited for both. There is no formal living room, for example. That space, often so awkward in high-end homes, with its 20-foot ceiling and feeling of "look but don't touch," is just not there. Instead, we enter through a simple yet elegant foyer, past the formal dining room, into a large great room where living and entertaining are combined. A state-of-the-art kitchen opens to this convivial sitting area, boldly furnished with two giant curving sofas, perfect for party conversation.

And there is a lot of it. The Morrisons love to entertain, both for charity events and private dinner parties of 10 or 12. Food is important, and they're both good chefs. But they also include card games and dancing, which often flow outdoors to the adjoining terrace, where screens can be lowered at the touch of a button. To complete the outdoor living area there's a kitchen set against a smart stone wall, plus a television and a fireplace. "If it's still nippy I pass out fur blankets," Mary Anne says.

Privacy is maintained with a perfect 0.75-acre lot overlooking a lake and sheltered from the neighbors by

*Continued on Page 88*



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Continued from Page 86

Carefully planned landscaping. There are private spaces within the home as well. Two guest rooms in one wing offer contrasting atmospheres, one subdued and shady, one bright and sunny. For guests who might want even more privacy, there's another guest room with its own entrance plus a wet bar. Mary Anne currently has it adapted as her office. Clients can drop by for a meeting and not even enter the house proper.

What gives the house its star quality is the fact that every room opens to the outdoors. Or more properly, to a beautifully landscaped terrace, sometimes shaded, each one with a water feature. "The house has 13 exterior doors," Dave explains. It's a home that makes the most of Florida's wonderful winter weather.

The Morrisons enlisted the help of interior designer Mark Dalton, whose firm Mark Dalton Inc. is well known for sleek contemporary design. "Mark says we're the easiest clients he's ever had," Mary Anne says. "Everything was either a big yes or a big no." Mary Anne was also a hands-on client. She did prodigious research on features that might be right for the house, both online and in person. A fan of Restoration Hardware, she has made sure that many of the company's iconic pieces have ended up in the home, with the same style inspiring some of the numerous built-ins. All the linens were found online from a company called The Well Dressed Bed. And the ultra modern showerhead in one of the guest bathrooms comes from Costco. "We love the hunt," Mary Anne says.

But the solid maple counter top that dominates the kitchen island and sets the tone of the living area was Mark's idea. It was created by local craftsman Marvin Bowling. "It took six men to carry it," Dave reports. And it is so well-sealed that it still looks new.

Another of Dalton's touches: the chandeliers — two of them — in the master bath. They add a note of whimsical glamour to the spacious room, clad in white marble and looking out onto a terrace with flowering plants. A soaking tub is set in a bow window and there is also a walk-in shower. Campbell Cabinetry created the generous built-in storage. As Mary Anne puts it, "It's our Ritz-Carlton bathroom."

Continued on Page 90



**Above:** Wood warms up the kitchen with a paneled ceiling and a large island. A breakfast area is to the right, with an outdoor dining terrace through glass doors. **Left:** An abstract painting by Bill Reed overlooks the entrance foyer and formal dining room. **Below:** The outdoor living area contains all the comforts of the indoors, including a kitchen, fireplace and television. Screens can be lowered at the touch of a button.

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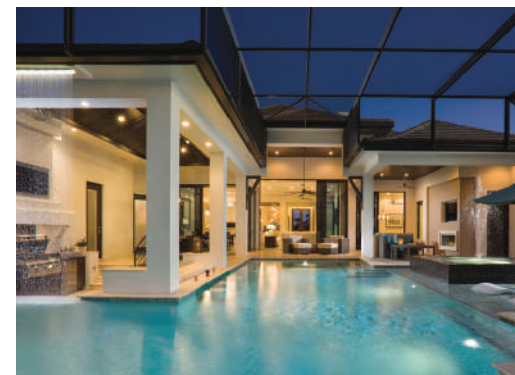
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Continued from Page 88

All through the home are subtle touches that set it apart. The exterior trim is painted black, an unusual choice that adds a crisp element to the contemporary design. Wood is used abundantly in the great room, with inlaid oak giving a warmth to the slate floor, while overhead a beamed ceiling adds to the effect.

The owners chose the art for their home carefully. Tropical beach-inspired prints by Peter Hales, acquired during a trip to Australia, add a cheerful note to several of the bedrooms, and throughout the home the works of Sarasota artist Bill Reed are on display.

The Morrisons have decided to downsize and are putting their dream home on the market. (The property is listed at \$1.65 million; the furniture and art can be acquired separately.) Their new winter home will be a townhouse in Country Club East, with renovations to be done by Westwater Construction. "We have adored living and entertaining in our beautiful home," Mary Anne says. "We do believe we were definitely ahead of our time when we designed it."



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# back at the ranch



Photo by Randi Donahue

On June 1 you can swing by Nathan Benderson Park for the Sunshine State Games in paddling. June 5 through June 9 stop by for the U.S. Rowing Youth National Championships.

## PARENT MENTAL HEALTH: The Summer Edition



JESS MCINTYRE  
GREENBROOK RESIDENT AND WORKING MOM TO SONS GAVIN, 3, AND JACKSON, 2

Remember when summer meant endless Popsicles, playing barefoot in the streets and staying out until you could hear your mom bellowing at you that it was bedtime? As a kid, summer symbolized a level of magical freedom achieved only by counting down never-ending school days until that final bell in May (or June if you lived up north). Those precious summer moments were filled with sunscreen and pools, bug spray and camps, s'mores and sleepovers.

But much like Fourth of July fireworks that hold your attention captive until they brilliantly fizzle out, when you become an adult responsible for keeping small versions of yourself alive, all those fond memories of summer are a distant fog. Your current understanding of summer is now nine bajillion expensive activities organized on a (less than) color coordinated chalkboard wall in the kitchen. The same one you used for six days in February during a meal-planning New Year's resolution.

Amidst packing swimsuits and towels and sunscreen and water shoes and snacks and bug spray for your tiny herd, you are barely keeping it together. Summer laundry is piling up (seriously, HOW do such small living beings create so much laundry?!?), there is never enough food in the house, and you can't even remember when you last saw your kids for more than 10 minutes without someone needing something.

*Continued on Page 94*



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Fear not, fellow brain-fried moms. There is a balance. You can cart your kids back and forth, keep up with your house, your jobs and still find a way to enjoy summer again.

Lakewood Ranch and Sarasota offer a plethora of family-friendly events or activities throughout the summer (and some throughout the whole year).

### LWR CLASSIC CAR SHOW

First Wednesday of every month from 5-9 p.m. on Lakewood Ranch Main Street

Go check out some amazing classic cars and listen to their engines roar. Grab a bite to eat, sit back and enjoy.

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### NATHAN BENDERSON PARK

Don't forget we have a world-renowned rowing center in our backyard! June 1 you can swing by for the Sunshine State Games in paddling. June 5 through June 9 stop by for the US Rowing Youth National Championship. And, for America's birthday (one day early, July 3), park your lawn chair and watch fireworks on the lake.

### SARASOTA FAIRGROUNDS

Every Saturday and Sunday, year round, head over to the fairgrounds to enjoy a swap meet. From food trucks to tools to homemade crafts and attire, this flea market and farmers market are sure to have at least one vendor that entices you.

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Pick pretty much any day of the week and you can find a baseball game to go to. Snag some popcorn, peanuts and play ball.

So, drop your piles of laundry (they'll still be there when you get home) and head out with the family to spend some quality time together, because, it's summer, y'all!

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# the jolly rancher



Photos by Gabriel Jiva  
Summertime is the best time of year to experience sunset over a drink and some bar food at one of the too-few waterfront bars around, like O'Leary's in downtown Sarasota.

## The Best Worst Season

The heat and humidity can be rough, but it's worth it to stick around for Lakewood Ranch summers — when the pace is slower and the traffic and dinner crowds are lighter.



BY GABRIEL JIVA  
RIVERWALK  
RESIDENT AND  
DAD TO SONS  
ALEXANDER  
(ABOVE) AND  
FREDERICK

Summer is definitely my least favorite part of Lakewood Ranch. But then again, it's also my favorite. Aside from the unbearable heat, the most uncomfortable part of summer is that it's largely a season of anticipation. It feels like a warm, sleepy waiting room out of an old movie, sunshine filtering in through slits in the Venetian blinds, everyone sinking into their chairs in a stupor, fanning themselves with postcards or straw hats trying to stay awake until they get called back. In this waiting room, I'm waiting for cooler weather, for school and football to start again, for most TV shows to come back, for pumpkin spice, arts and crafts festi-

vals, the opera, and the snowbirds. Wait, no... not the snowbirds. And therein lies the rub: As soon as we get called back from the waiting room of summer, all of the good things come with a lot of unpleasantness for us year-round residents, who have the slower pace of summer for comparison. The traffic picks back up, the waits at even the least exciting of restaurants on any given Tuesday skyrocket to half an hour, you have to get to happy hour at 4 p.m. if you want any chance of getting a seat at the bar, it takes an hour and a half to make it to University from Five Guys, and good luck trying to get to the beach. So, in that light, summer is definite-

ly my favorite season. It's the *hakuna matata* of seasons, because it means no worries for the rest of its months. You can pretty much go anywhere and do anything without much planning or allowing for the uncertainty of the crowds. The whole area gets back a small-town feel — like it had a generation ago. Even the businesses start catering to the locals. One of our favorite things about the summer is Savor Sarasota — the local version of Restaurant Week, which many cities organize — which takes place in the first two weeks of June. Sarasota County has the highest con-

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Continued from Page 96

of Zagat-rated restaurants in Florida, and many of them participate in the event, which offers fixed-price, three-course menus for both lunch (\$16) and dinner (\$32). It's a great deal for many of the nicer places, and a good way to explore some quality restaurants that you might not otherwise have a good reason to visit, like Euphemia Haye in Longboat Key, Cafe Gabbiano on Siesta Key, or Beulah in downtown Sarasota. The full listing of restaurants is available at savorsarasota.com, and even though the official end of the event is June 14, many of the participants continue offering the fixed price menu for the entire month and some, even the entire summer. If you happen to find yourself at a restaurant and aren't sure if it is participating, just ask the waiter: Some restaurants heavily advertise the special menu, while others just make it available upon request.

Summertime is also the best time of year to experience sunset over a drink and some bar food at one of the too-few waterfront bars around,

like O'Leary's in downtown Sarasota, Caddy's in Bradenton, or the Rod and Reel at the north tip of Anna Maria Island. They won't be nearly as busy as they are during season, and even during the hot months, sunset with the guaranteed breeze by the water is very enjoyable.

As for healthy activities, my favorite thing to do is cycling, again because of the guaranteed breeze: No matter how hot it is outside, riding a bicycle feels nice. Lakewood Ranch, of course, has lots of trails, plus bike lanes on all roads and for the more careful, ample sidewalks. The best route should probably include Hidden River Trail, which runs between Lakewood Ranch Boulevard and Lorraine Road, just north of the Country Club. (As the name suggests, it's not very visible, so you have to be looking for it.)

However, there are three other amazing places to bike in the area, if you're up for a drive beforehand. First, of course, is the Legacy Trail, which starts just south of Clark Road and goes for 11 miles into Venice, on what used to be a railroad. It's a beautiful

and easy ride, and definitely worth experiencing. Second would be Longboat Key, which is for the most part straight, and offers great views of the Gulf. Longboat is, well, pretty long — about 11 miles — and there are indeed boats around.

Third, and my personal favorite, is Myakka State Park. It's a lot shorter — about 6 miles from the north entrance by Fruitville to the south at Clark — but it's the most scenic of all, and there are lots of chances to see wildlife, from cranes and herons to deer and wild hogs. Just avoid sunrise and sunset, which is when many animals eat, and when I personally had a close encounter with a giant alligator crossing the road in front of me. It was almost dark and hard to see anything, so I almost had a heart attack when what seemed like a dragon was blocking the entire road: head at one side, tail at the other. It looked at me and kept walking and as soon as his tail got to the middle of the road, I sped past it, too scared to look back.

But scary things are part of adventure sometimes. Go find yours this summer.



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Photos by Pam Eubanks

Panther Ridge's Gary and Debbie Knoflick lent many of their old Halloween "Pirates of the Caribbean" props, including this one, to the event. Gary Knoflick told passers-by pirate jokes.



River Strand's Lisa and Craig Campbell sponsored the event with Craig's company, The CGC Group.

Lake Club residents Joy and Bob Stone say they enjoy the themes the foundation picks for each year's fundraiser.



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# SPRING SENSATIONS

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Photos by Jay Heater

Krystal Beall models fashions from Debbie Dannheisser Threads.



**Above:** Barb McSweeney shows off her jewelry line to Sisterhood for Good's Diane Brune.



**Left:** Personal stylist Becca Towery and Sisterhood for Good's Angela Massaro-Fain and Peggy Kronus had a chance to relax before the fashion show.



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## HANA SUSHI LOUNGE

Combining art with traditional Asian cuisine and service to create a unique culinary experience in Lakewood Ranch is what we at Hana Sushi Lounge strive for each day.

With a fusion of artful sushi, inspired kitchen items and handcrafted cocktails, there is always something for everyone to enjoy.

No matter the occasion, our friendly and knowledgeable staff look forward to making your visit special every time.

Happy Hour Every Sun - Thurs, 4pm - 7pm.

**8126 Lakewood Main St, Lakewood Ranch**  
**941.907.1290 | [facebook.com/HanaSushiLounge](https://www.facebook.com/HanaSushiLounge)**





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5405 University Parkway | Unit 104 | University Park, FL 34201 | kekes.com

**KEKE'S BREAKFAST CAFE**

Keke's Breakfast Cafe is a full-service restaurant dedicated to providing an outstanding breakfast and lunch experience; a meal where everything is handmade, using the best ingredients available, with fresh fruit, vegetables, bread and dairy products. Some favorite Keke's dishes are the Florida Pancakes, topped with fresh strawberries, banana, blueberries and powdered sugar; the Banana, Nut & Caramel Waffle, which features banana and pecans baked in the waffle, topped with more banana, pecans, caramel and powdered sugar; an extensive amount of omelet options such as Greek, Three Meat, and Hawaiian omelets, as well as a complete lunch menu. Additionally, a must-have at every Keke's visit is a serving of our fresh, hand cut, redskin potato home-fries.

**5405 University Pkwy #104, University Park**  
**941.388.8953 | kekes.com**



**MST**  
MAIN STREET TRATTORIA

**MAIN STREET TRATTORIA**

Opened in 2010 by owner Gary Fennessy, Main Street Trattoria in Lakewood Ranch features fresh Italian cuisine, including their signature bruschetta focaccia, chicken milanese and hand-tossed thin crust pizza. Make sure you save room for homemade tiramisu and cappuccino for dessert.

Mr. Fennessy has created a one-of-a-kind experience for friends and family to gather and dine together. Enjoy our inside/outside bar, including our outdoor dining area. You will find live music every Wednesday-Saturday 6-10pm and Sunday 4-8pm. Happy Hour Daily 2-7pm. Takeout and Kids menu also available.

**8131 Lakewood Main St #101, Lakewood Ranch**  
**941.907.1518 | mstrattoria.com**



**Linger LODGE**  
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**LINGER LODGE RESTAURANT**

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Daily Specials. Happy Hour M-F 4-6. Karaoke every Friday. Live Music every Saturday & Sunday Open Sun-Thu 11:30am-9pm, Fri & Sat 11am-10pm. Closed Mondays May-October  
**7205 85th St Ct E, Bradenton | lingerlodge.com**  
**941.755.2757 | facebook.com/LingerLodge**

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**SPEAKS CLAM BAR**

**SPEAKS CLAM BAR**

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**LAKWOOD RANCH**  
**8764 E State Rd 70, Bradenton**  
**941.232.7646**  
**ST ARMANDS CIRCLE**  
**29 N Blvd Of Presidents, Sarasota**  
**941.232.7633**



**MacAllisters**  
Grill & Tavern

**MACALLISTERS**

Enjoy our tavern atmosphere along with some traditional Scottish favorites: fish & chips and shepherd's pie. Of course, our bar includes a large selection of scotch and local craft brews on draft with daily happy hour! We are conveniently located on Lakewood Main Street with outdoor patio dining! Kids welcome! Open for lunch & dinner seven days a week. Sun - Thurs 11:30am - 10pm Fri - Sat 11:30am - 11pm.

**8110 Lakewood Main St, Lakewood Ranch**  
**941.359.2424 | macallisters.com**



**THE BIJOU CAFE**

**THE BIJOU CAFE**

This elegant restaurant is known for specialties such as their Rack of Lamb, Pepper Steak, Pommés Gratin Dauphinois and daily fresh seafood offerings. For more than 32 years, the Bijou sets the standard for enduring excellence in fine dining, with both locals & visitors flocking to enjoy their highly-rated & award winning cuisine influenced by owner Jean-Pierre Knaggs' South African & French heritage. Make sure you also try their new Happy Hour & Bar Bites menus from 5-6:30 pm. With an expansive wine list, sumptuous lunch & dinner specials & impeccable, friendly service, the Bijou Café remains a jewel in the heart of Sarasota's downtown Theatre & Arts District. Valet Parking Available.

**1287 1st St, Sarasota**  
**941.366.8111 | bijoucafe.net**



# PARTING GLANCE



Gordon Silver took this photo of two great horned owlets in Country Club East.



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