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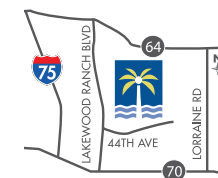
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**Joel Hallam, DO, FACOG**  
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Engagement  
Wedding  
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# LWR LIFE

LAKWOOD RANCH AREA'S COMMUNITY, NATURE, STYLE

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# The return to 'normal'



Brynn Mechem

Carol Lucas, Erin Gennocro and Bob Haskin tap paddles after a round of pickleball at Lakewood Ranch High School.

Sorry to bring this up, but ... remember a year ago? Closures? Uncertainty? Fear? Ugh.

It was a lot for everyone, including the straining buttons on my poor pants. (Pandemic 10, anyone?)

Now look where we are today. Hope. The beginnings of normalcy — and maybe just a bit more work to do before we contemplate a bathing suit again.

When you look around our area, there are still the lingering signs of the pandemic — like a bad hangover from the world's worst party — but we made it, people. And now it's time to move forward, like we always do. In this issue, you'll find many signs of exactly that: life going on.

If you need a sign of how normal things can be, stop by the pickleball courts at Lakewood Ranch High School on a Saturday morning. Dozens

of players (whose pants probably do fit again) are out on the courts playing, shouting and laughing.

As contributor Brynn Mechem discovered (Page 58), it's more than the Ranch's fastest growing sport. It's a community. And best of all, they're happy to welcome you into their fold.

In our surf and turf feature on Page 76, we dive into how this classic dish has evolved in a variety of ways at local restaurants. (Remember restaurants and eating, inside? How normal is that!)

Although this certainly won't help with the pant-fitting, there are several delicious dishes to try. And for those of you who are new to the area, our local seafood primer will help you always order what's fresh.

Last but not least, graduation season is upon us. Thousands of high school seniors will be graduating after a tough year, and some of them have

their sights set on big things ahead. Starting on Page 66, we highlight six graduates who have left their mark on the Lakewood Ranch community to see what they have planned next.

When I was graduating high school, I was more worried about what to pack to attend football games than how to change the world, so I think you'll be impressed. Whether it's focusing on increasing corporate sustainability to protect the environment or learning how to build the country's smarter, next generation of infrastructure, these young adults want to make the world a better place.

It's the kind of thing that fills you with pride and hope and a feeling that the future is in good hands.

Yep. Things are definitely looking up.

*Kat Hughes*  
Executive Editor

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# BUZZ

NEWS, HAPPENINGS AND PEOPLE

PGA Tournament proves a big win  
for the Lakewood Ranch area. **PAGE 32**





# FOR STARTERS

BY LWR LIFE STAFF

## 1 GET OUT AND PLAY

We all know there are tons of ways to stay active in Lakewood Ranch, but now there's a guide to prove it. Whether it's a round of disc golf or a Barre in the Park class, see all the area has to offer with the new Parks and Rec Guide from Lakewood Ranch Community Activities. Available at MyLWR.com, you can learn about sports leagues, community events and more. As always, there's something for everyone (cornhole, anyone?), so check it out.



## 3 BROKEN GROUND

For those noticing development south of University Parkway, just west of Lakewood Ranch Boulevard, the 50-acre spot will be home to the new Center Point at Lakewood Ranch.

The new center will feature the much-anticipated second location

of Owen's Fish Camp, as well as Olivia's restaurant and a third restaurant to be named. It also will have a 30,000-square-foot specialty grocery store, a 77,000-square-foot medical office building and 250,000 square feet of shopping. After weather delayed the ground breaking, completion is slated for late 2022, so stay tuned.



Courtesy Images

## 2 MARKET UPDATE

What started as a chick has now grown into a full-fledged hen. The Farmers' Market at Lakewood Ranch is now open year-round, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Sunday in the Lakewood Ranch Medical Center parking lot. And, for those of you haven't heard

(and where have you been?), The Market is moving this later this summer. The exact moving date is TBD, but it will relocate to Waterside Place, Lakewood Ranch's new town center. Don't worry, it will still pack all the fresh goodness of its current offerings. Follow the market on Facebook to get the latest updates.



File photo

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Photos by Brendan Lavell

Suncoast Nature Center Associates President and CEO Tomás Herrera-Mishler says he hopes to create a masterpiece of landscape architecture that people can admire for 100 years or more.

# Just Keep Rowing

Nearly one year into the job, SANCA CEO Tomás Herrera-Mishler shares what he's learned and what changes are coming to Nathan Benderson Park.

BY BRENDAN LAVELL | CONTRIBUTOR

Imagine moving across the country to take the helm of a nonprofit — in the midst of a pandemic. That's exactly what Tomás Herrera-Mishler did when he became the president and CEO of Suncoast Aquatic Nature Center Associates, the nonprofit that manages Nathan Benderson Park, on Aug. 3, 2020.

Prior to the that, Herrera-Mishler had recently resigned after five years leading the Balboa Park Conservancy, an organization that includes the San Diego Zoo, 17 museums and 20 public gardens. But the Mexico native is no stranger to Florida — his first job

after graduating from the University of Michigan was as a landscape architect in Coral Gables. He is also familiar with the area, having worked on master plans for the Ringling Museum and Sarasota's Civic Center during that time.

When he arrived, he said his first task was to collect information from the community about what it wants from the park. Nine months later, we spoke with him to hear what he has learned, what he is most excited about and what his biggest challenge will be.

*Continued on Page 30*

# Vanessa

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Continued from Page 28

**What have you learned about this community since you moved here?**

One is the extraordinary access to nature that we enjoy. I can go out to Myakka River State Park and be surrounded by so much literally untouched, original Florida landscape.

Most importantly, I've found love and kindness. It's unusual for people to come from all over the country and beyond and embrace a place as much as people embrace Sarasota. There's something about this place that makes it feel like home faster than other places I've lived. Maybe it's because for so long people have been coming from other places to settle here, and we're all eager to connect with each other. Even in the midst of the pandemic, I found people really open, willing, even eager to make that connection with me.



SANCA President and CEO Tomás Herrera-Mishler says the people in the Sarasota-Bradenton area have made him feel at home quicker than other places he has lived.

**What have you learned about Nathan Benderson Park?**

Particularly in the context of the pandemic, this has become everybody's park. When you come to the park, any day, anytime, it's packed with people who are running, biking, jogging, strolling, pushing a stroller, skating, you name it. People are using this park to get fit, to get some fresh air, to be outside with friends.

The park itself is unfinished, and there's so much potential for the future. I did not know that Mote was going to build their aquarium here. This state-of-the-art, 500,000-gallon aquarium is going to become one of our great resources in our region. Not just tourism, which is great, but I think it's this opportunity for our region to connect to the ocean in a very special and intimate way that's not readily available right now. Not all of us can throw on scuba gear and jump in the ocean and see these creatures, and yet it's such a vital part of our community.

**How has your first almost-year on the job been?**

It's been really exciting. A silver lining to our COVID cloud has been meeting the needs of our performing arts community by providing them with a venue that is so adaptable to hosting their performances. I think entertainment, music and the arts is going to be a very important service

we provide to our community. For example, the Barancik Foundation gave us a grant to host Embracing Our Differences. In May, you're going to see 50 canvases going up in the park, and the visual impact of these enormous canvases is really something. But the messaging of diversity itself, celebrating diversity and differences, I think it's a powerful message these days.

**What has been your biggest victory so far as CEO?**

Figuring out how to really partner with both Manatee County and Sarasota County. If you put on your future lenses and think about what Sarasota and Bradenton are going to look like in 10 years, more and more, this is going to become the Central Park of our region: very centrally located, very accessible to everyone. It's really important to keep in mind as we develop this park, what are the needs of future generations? If we can't predict those needs, let's be sure we leave a little flexibility, and let's preserve as much open space as we can.

**What is the biggest challenge you'll have to tackle in the coming years?**

SANCA before I was hired was just an operating organization and not charged with fundraising. The organization needs to develop a fundraising strategy. We need to hire fundraising staff. And we need to, most

importantly, create relationships that are meaningful with donors.

I'm excited about it. I love connecting people with people who have a passion for what we're doing, people who want to help us connect with underserved communities, people that want to help us expand our educational programming, expand our arts and culture programming, improve the landscape, create gardens and restore native landscapes. I've spent most of my life taking care of masterpieces of landscape architecture that were designed 100 years ago or more.

This is an opportunity for me to work with people, donors, the board and their partners at the counties to create a legacy for the future. Maybe in 100 years, someone will look back at what we did with admiration.

**What do you see coming up that people should be excited about?**

In October, we're going to have the club crew races competition for dragon boats. It is so exciting and fun. You've got 20 people paddling like mad across this lake. Look for things like improvements to the playground. It's going to be more fun and bigger. Look for a lot more trees and plants. I'm hoping to partner with people who are crazy about native plants and create a native plant block. We've got lots of fun stuff on the horizon because it's, in a way, a blank canvas.



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# In the (Golf) Spotlight



Photo by Ryan Kohn

Collin Morikawa won the 2021 World Golf Championships-Workday Championship at The Concession, which was held at Bradenton's The Concession Golf Club. The event was a boon to the area's worldwide recognition.

When a PGA tournament switched venues at the last minute, the Lakewood Ranch area rallied to ensure it made the most from the national TV exposure.

BY RYAN KOHN | CONTRIBUTOR

When Collin Morikawa sank his final putt on the No. 18 hole at The Concession Golf Club on Feb. 28 to win the World Golf Championships-Workday Championship, it signaled the end of a historic week — not just for Morikawa but for the Lakewood Ranch region as well.

Planning the tournament, which was moved to The Concession from Mexico City out of COVID-19 concerns, was a 46-day race for the region to prove itself a capable partner for the PGA Tour. It required a lot of people from different organizations to work together, and the crunch of it all might not have been worth the effort if it weren't such a rare opportunity to get the region's brand in the mainstream consciousness with a national TV audience.

Now that the results of the region's work are coming back, everyone on all sides of the tournament seems to agree: The effort was worth it.

Lisa Barnott, the director of marketing for Lakewood Ranch developer Schroeder-Manatee Ranch, says an additional 3,796 new users came to the Lakewood Ranch website Feb. 18-28 via the golf-related campaign SMR ran on Google. Those same users are

*Continued on Page 34*

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Continued from Page 32

responsible for generating 1,337 conversions during that period, mostly in the form of chat sessions.

Additionally, Barnott says, 13,500 new users came to the website during this period via a direct channel, an increase of 15% over the previous 10-day period. Barnott says she believes many of these users were responding to Lakewood Ranch's golf-focused print advertisements.

Referral traffic to the Lakewood Ranch Golf and Country Club website also went up 29.4% during the 10-day window spanning both tournaments, generating 203 visits to the membership page, an increase of 27.67%, according to Barnott's data.

"I think we were satisfied from the beginning," says Monaca Onstad, the director of community activities for SMR. "The World Golf Championship put the area on the map for events like that. And from a resident standpoint, it was prideful to have that in our backyard. I had many people from outside the area reach out to say how cool it was. I have friends and family looking to buy in Florida telling me they can't believe stuff like that happens in the Lakewood Ranch area. It's about the cool factor of it all."

Onstad says that the event also showed the company how to be an even better partner the next time an event of this size comes to the area — which she believes will happen.

Elliott Falcione, Bradenton Area Convention and Visitors Bureau's executive director, says the tournament was a boon to the county, permeating the thoughts of golf fans.

According to the CVB's analysis, the tournament was broadcast to more than 100 million homes in the U.S. and 800 million homes worldwide.

In print, online and broadcast media, there were 5,700 mentions of "Bradenton" in conjunction with either "Concession" or "World Golf Championships." Articles containing those mentions were shared approximately 23,000 times on social media sites. According to the bureau's data, the estimated economic impact of those shares adds up to \$21 million worth of marketing.

"We got what we needed right there, based on our investment," Falcione says.



File photo

### COMMUNITY IMPACT

The good news stemming from the WGC-Workday Championship does not end with marketing. It includes immediate impact, too.

On April 15, the WGC announced that the tournament raised \$400,000 in charitable funds for the area. Those funds went to organizations including the First Tee of Sarasota/Manatee, which teaches children the fundamentals of golf while instilling values including honesty and integrity. The funds also went to the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine Student Scholarship Fund. LECOM has a campus in Lakewood Ranch.

Falcione says the tournament also helped diversify the region's brand. Usually, he says, the area brings soccer and lacrosse tournaments to town at places such as Lakewood Ranch's Premier Sports Campus or rowing events at Nathan Benderson Park. But you bring a PGA Tour event to town, and

suddenly, you brand yourself as a place where professional golf can be played. That is beneficial for hosting future events but also for reeling in people who might want to visit or move to a golf-heavy area.

The feelings on the tournament's success go both ways. Meghan Costello, who served as the tournament director for the Workday Championship, says everyone in the area made her job as simple as possible despite the shorter-than-usual lead-up to the event. And Falcione says the PGA was impressed with the region's operations meetings. To only have 46 days to pull off the event and do it like the region did left a great impression.

Falcione says he believes he will soon be working with The Concession again to secure another event of similar scale, though, hopefully, this time the event will be able to have general admission tickets and not just limited guest passes.

And when it comes — it does seem to be "when," not "if" — everyone will once again be ready to show off everything the Lakewood Ranch region has to offer.

Bradenton Area Convention and Visitors Bureau Executive Director Elliott Falcione says he believes the Workday Championship did a lot for the area, and he's looking forward to working on events of a similar scale in the future — hopefully next time with spectators.



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Resilient Retreat provides an oasis of healing for those in need. **PAGE 38**



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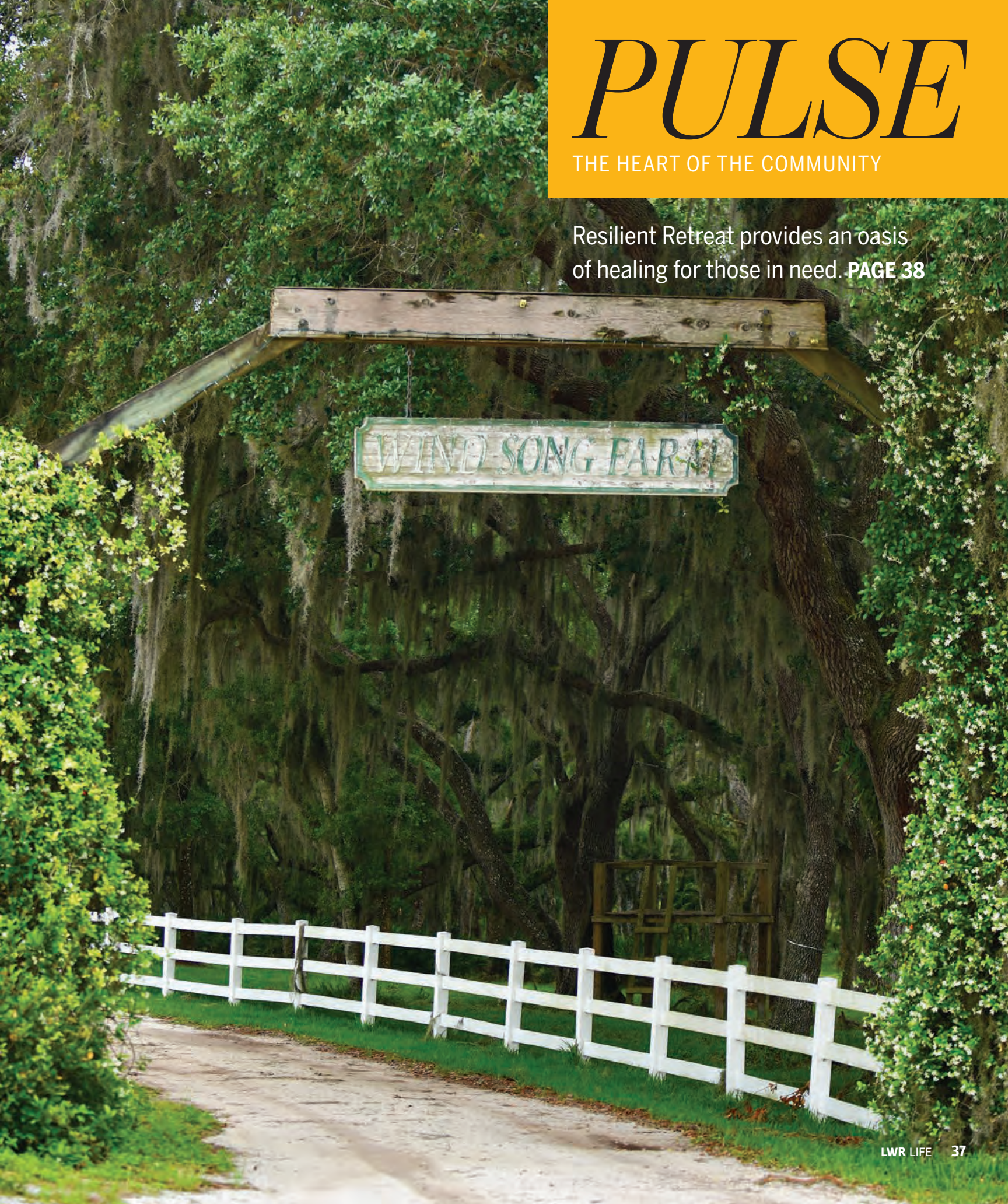
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# charity snapshot



Photos by Heidi Kurpiela

Executive Director Lisa Intagliata and founder and board Chair Sidney Turner stand on the site of their future Resilient Retreat property in East Sarasota County.

# Rescue Mission

Resilient Retreat, currently under construction, is a project founded by psychologist Sidney Turner to treat trauma survivors.

BY ERIC SNIDER | CONTRIBUTOR

**S**idney Turner had the aha! moment that would determine the course of her professional life while sitting in a 10th grade psychology class at Palo Verde High School in Las Vegas. “I was listening to the instructor and thought, “This is what I’m meant to do with my life,” she says.

Turner has never wavered. She earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of San Diego, then a master’s and doctorate in psychology from University of New Hampshire (plus a master’s in justice studies for good measure). Just 32, she is closing in on her dream: a facility that offers free treatment programs to adult abuse and trauma survivors, first responders and helping professionals. Called Resilient Retreat, it’s under construction on 84 acres of donated

conservation land on Fruitville Road 8 miles east of I-75 in Sarasota.

Resilient Retreat is scheduled to open for three- and five-day live-in retreats in December 2022 and in the meantime is offering day programs online as well as on the property. It also operates a telephone help line Monday through Friday. The nonprofit’s menu of programs includes, or will include, neurofeedback, nature walks, meditation, yoga, massage, exercise, journaling, poetry, nutrition, art and equine and canine therapy. All are informed by an evidence-based focus on trauma.

“We don’t do much on the counseling side of things because it’s so widely available,” Turner says. “The support we provide is mostly through group activities, and much of the value is

*Continued on Page 40*



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that people in the group have similar problems and can help each other. I didn't want to get involved in insurance eligibility and claims and all that. It's always been my plan to offer our services for free."

The charity is also looking to fill another treatment gap. "There are a lot of organizations that deal with initial emergencies," says Executive Director Lisa Intagliata, whose primary role at the moment is fundraising. "But there's a shortage of ways that people who have experienced trauma can get care long term."

Our collective mental health has certainly spiked to crisis levels over the past year and change, with COVID-19 drastically altering life as we know it and with violence and civil strife erupting at every turn. Trauma victims are likely to still be hemmed into highly stressful, even perilous, circumstances. Helping professionals — teachers, counselors, nurses, doctors and the like — have seen the demands of their work rise dramatically, which has caused what is called compassion fatigue. First responders are responding nonstop.

The need for a refuge like Resilient Retreat is obvious — and also measurable. Intagliata says that the number of people the organization has served rose 196% from 2019 to 2020.

This stress-everywhere environment has helped the charity, which is less than 3 years old, raise awareness and contributions. It was blessed with a fortunate start when an anonymous entity bestowed the parcel of land. Rather than knock on the doors of wealthy landholders, the nonprofit used the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast to seek out tracts that owners were looking to preserve. Intagliata says the land is worth \$2 million.

"Even if Resilient Retreat is gone tomorrow, that land is protected," Turner says. "We have agreed to maintain it, which is fine because nature is such a big part of healing trauma and a big part of our programming."

The charity needs roughly \$6 million more to finish the brick-and-mortar part of its mission, Turner says. When completed, the retreat will include an 18,000-square-foot main building that will sleep up to 30 participants, plus a kitchen and other common areas and a



A local polo club is temporarily keeping horses on parts of the massive property, though the nonprofit will provide on-site equine therapy for trauma survivors once its retreat opens next year.

separate 5,000-square-foot community center for day programs and events. The building will sit well off Fruitville Road to enhance privacy, peace and a sense of getting away from it all.

Resilient Retreat has a planned \$8 million capital campaign that's in what Intagliata calls its "quiet phase" — laying the groundwork, establishing a steering committee and other run-up activities. The organization currently has a paid staff of five and roughly 150 volunteers.

Turner knew before graduate school that she wanted to found a retreat-style facility. Uninterested in becoming a practicing therapist, her education was based in research. "It can take 20 years for university research to translate research to actual practice," she says. "So I found the academic world a little bit frustrating. We tend to write papers, which we publish and then share with each other. Although that's valuable, I was meant to get into direct service work."

Turner chose Florida for her project because she'd spent considerable time visiting relatives on both coasts, and "the state is not known for being so great at providing mental health services." In 2016, shortly after completing her doctorate, she and her husband, Troy, got in their car and scouted a number of areas. Sarasota/Manatee proved to be the best fit: It's not too big, not too small; it has a robust philanthropic community; and, compared to a place like Naples, its population is relatively diverse.

When the center opens, Resilient Retreat plans to start by offering one retreat a month. That's a beautiful thing, but the guests then return to what might still be very trying circumstances. What then? "They'll walk away with a curated, customized [treatment] menu that focuses on the modalities that worked for them," Intagliata says. "Plus, we'll always be available to them through our regular daytime programs."

*"I didn't want to get involved in insurance eligibility and claims and all that. It's always been my plan to offer our services for free."*

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Photos by Heidi Kurpiela

With unflappable positivity and 12 years under his belt, Ken Zidlick has become a fixture at the Publix at Lakewood Walk.

# A Good Day's Work

Ken Zidlick bored of retirement decades ago. At 90, the East County resident is still punching a clock at Publix — pandemic and age be damned.

BY HEIDI KURPIELA | CONTRIBUTOR

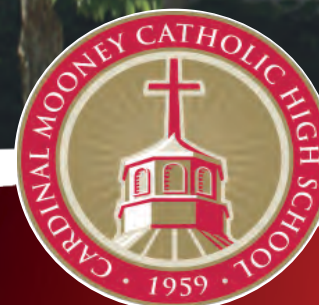
**K**en Zidlick doesn't dwell in the past, grouse about the changing times, kids today or advances in technology. He leaves that sort of kvetching to other 90-year-olds.

The Panther Ridge resident has more pressing matters on his mind, such as, when will cruise ships start sailing again? Did he remember to dump fish food in the pond before leaving the house? Did he refill the pie tin of

cracked corn he keeps out for grazing deer? How will he spend his downtime once he finishes his latest 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle? And has it really been an hour since he sat down for his lunch break at an umbrella table outside of the Publix at Lakewood Walk — the supermarket where he's worked for 12 years? And if so, he better suck down what's left in his smoothie and get back

*Continued on Page 44*

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Continued from Page 42

to his register.

“Eh, I shouldn’t get in too much trouble,” Zidlick says, his blue eyes twinkling at the thought of being reprimanded by one of his superiors, all of whom are younger than him by a generation or three. “This is my first week back, you know. I had surgery on my neck in March, got some skin cancer chopped off, had to take a few weeks off.”

The sprightly cashier is a fixture at the Lakewood Ranch Publix. He even celebrated his 90th birthday at the store earlier this year, when employees surprised him with a photo collage, a signed banner and a custom cake designed to look like a puzzle, his favorite brain teaser.

“Everybody loves him,” says Assistant Customer Service Manager Deutch Dorisca, who at 24 is almost a decade younger than Zidlick’s oldest great-granddaughter. “Some customers come here just for him. And he knows every one of them by name.”

Prior to his neck surgery, Zidlick, who has five children, 10 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren, logged 20 to 30 hours a week and rarely called in sick. When he requested time off in March to recuperate from surgery, shoppers got worried. Some of them came by just to see if the clerk was back — a gesture Zidlick found as touching as his coworkers’ unexpected birthday fanfare.

“I was surprised by how many people looked for me,” Zidlick says of his absence. “That’s what makes any job interesting. The people. They give you purpose.”

At a time when the general public seems steeped in anxiety, Zidlick’s unflappable positivity and come-what-may attitude feel especially reassuring. His vim and vigor flies in the face of all the usual stereotypes about the elderly. Says Dorisca: “Basically, Ken is like a 60-year-old man. He doesn’t want you to go easy on him. He wants more hours. He’ll come in on his days off, and I’ll be like, ‘What are you doing here?’ And he’ll laugh and say, ‘I’ve got nothing else to do.’ I think some of the young guys see him and realize they’ve got no excuse to complain. Personally, he’s an inspiration.”

Zidlick doesn’t see it that way.

Not one to self-aggrandize, Zidlick says he’s just doing what he’s always

done: taking things “with a grain of salt, one day at a time.” In fact, of all the to-dos, to-don’ts, appointments and puttering on his daily docket, only one seems to register as a minor nuisance: idle time.

“Retirement is not what it’s cracked up to be,” Zidlick says, his green Publix-issued mask balled up in his hands. “There’s only so much sitting around you can do. I tried it. It’s boring.”

A New Jersey native, Zidlick was raised during the Great Depression. An only child, he later walked the traditional career path for a family man in the 1950s and 1960s, working for 30 years as a salesperson in the textile trade industry, a job that sent him traveling up and down the East Coast to textile factories run by companies including Hanes and DuPont. (The job still lights a spark in Zidlick, even after all these years. “You should see how fast they can make hosiery! One pair of pantyhose in 90 seconds,” he muses.)

At 65, he retired and moved with his late wife to the requisite 55-and-up community in Bradenton, where he quickly grew restless and took a job as a golf starter at University Park Country Club in exchange for free course time. He left the post 12 years later, after his wife was diagnosed with cancer, and built a small house on his daughter’s quiet, 10-acre property in Panther Ridge.

“I tell everybody if I’d have known I was going to last this long, I’d have taken better care of myself,” Zidlick says, finishing his smoothie — a protein-packed concoction his doctor suggested he drink to help keep his weight up.

As if on cue, a customer breezes by catching Zidlick’s attention.

“Watch out!” Zidlick calls to the woman, a playful smirk lighting up his eyes again. The woman — 77-year-old Kellie Sorley — spins to greet him, relief washing over her face.

“You’re back!” Sorley cries.

“I’m back,” Zidlick says. “Just a little skin cancer.”

They enjoy a short repartee in the last five minutes of Zidlick’s break. Before Sorley turns to leave, she leans in closer to say one last thing, as if to ensure her words won’t fade into the din of high-speed traffic along State Road 70.

“Ken is amazing,” she says. “You can write that down in capital letters with an exclamation point. We always pick



his register. If we have to wait in line, we wait for him.”

She skips off into the parking lot chirping, “See ya next week,” an exclamation that blends in with the cacophony of birds squawking in the parking lot.

“See ya next week,” Zidlick replies.

He rises from the umbrella table, unballs the mask in his hands and slips it over his face before heading back into the store.

“An old German woman I worked with back in New Jersey used to say ‘I won’t be here for a long time, but I’m here for a good time,’” Zidlick says.

“That’s how I feel right now. I consider myself fortunate to be able to get up each day, go to work and meet people. It’s how I get my enjoyment. The rest of it is just stuff.”

“*There’s only so much sitting around you can do. I tried it. It’s boring.*”

KEN ZIDLICK





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■ For information, visit MyLWR.com.

### NBP REC DAYS

Runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota. The public is invited to visit Nathan Benderson Park on NBP Rec Day and experience paddleboarding, kayaking, canoes and fishing. Rides on a 15-foot sailboat will also be available. The event costs \$10 for ages 7-18. Parents who attend with their children are free. Anyone age 16 and older who goes fishing needs a freshwater fishing license. Event continues June 9; July 3, 17 and 31; and Aug. 14 and 28.

■ For information, visit NathanBendersonPark.org.

### YOUTH YOGA

Youth are invited to Bob Gardner Community Park, 2710 White Eagle Blvd., Lakewood Ranch, to join a yoga session. Yoga for kids aged 5-11 is 10-11 a.m., and yoga for teens aged 12-17 is 11 a.m. to noon. The classes are set to music and include storytelling, art and games.

■ For information, visit MyLWR.com.



File photo

Sixty coaches and about 380 students honed rowing skills during the USRowing Youth Regional Challenge Training Camp at Nathan Benderson Park in 2019.

### JUNE 6

#### BARRE IN THE PARK

Begins at 9 a.m. at Bob Gardner Park, 2710 White Eagle Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. The public is invited to participate in a free barre workout at Bob Gardner Park. The event is hosted by Barre3. Bring your own mat and water bottle. Mats must be placed 6 feet apart. All participants are asked to follow social distancing guidelines. Event continues June 20, July 4 and 18, and Aug. 8 and 22.

■ For information, visit MyLWR.com.

### JUNE 8

#### WALKING GROUP

The Lakewood Ranch Parks team leads a casual walk from 9-10 a.m. around Bob Gardner Park. The walk begins from Bob Gardner Community Park east picnic pavilion. Advance registration required.

■ For information, visit MyLWR.com.

### JUNE 10

#### LWR 101: RESIDENT ORIENTATION

New to the area or just want to get more involved? Join this resident orientation virtually at 6:30 p.m. at FB.com/LWRCommunityActivities. It's a great chance to learn about the community. Continues July 8 and Aug. 12.

■ For information, visit MyLWR.com.

### USROWING YOUTH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

USRowing will host its Youth National Championship regatta from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily through June 13 at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota, where spectators can watch a top-level rowing competition.

■ For information, visit NathanBendersonPark.org.

Continued on Page 48

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



Contact our office manager, Colleen Monaghan, to schedule your consult with one of our experts!

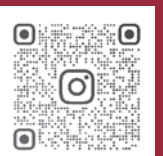
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Continued from Page 46

### JUNE 11 NEWCOMERS MEETUP

Begins at 10 a.m. at Bob Gardner Park, 2710 White Eagle Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. The Community Activities team leads the event for new residents to learn about the community, parks and events.

■ For information or to register for the event, go to MyLWR.com.

### JUNE 13 YOGA IN THE PARK

Begins at 9 a.m. at Bob Gardner Park, 2710 White Eagle Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. The public is invited to participate in a free yoga workout at Bob Gardner Park. The event is hosted by Yoga Shack and sponsored by the Brain Health Initiative. Bring your own mat and water bottle. Mats must be placed 6 feet apart. All participants are asked to follow social distancing guidelines. Event continues June 27, July 11 and 25, and Aug. 8 and 22.

■ For information, visit MyLWR.com.

### JUNE 16 SUNCOAST BLOOD CENTERS BLOOD DRIVE

From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, 8330 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., hosts a blood drive through SunCoast Blood Centers. Donors will receive a free T-shirt and will be screened for COVID-19 antibodies. Event continues Aug. 18.

■ For information, visit LakewoodRanchMedicalCenter.com.

### JUNE 19 FISHING SATURDAYS

Begins at 10 a.m. at James Patton Park, 5725 White Eagle Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. The Lakewood Ranch Anglers Club and Lakewood Ranch Community Activities provide basic lessons on fishing, such as casting and knot-tying.

■ For information, visit MyLWR.com.

### SUNCOAST BLOOD CENTERS MOBILE BLOOD DRIVE

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

Continued on Page 50



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Continued from Page 48

Grove gift card, a 10% discount on a meal that day and a free wellness checkup that includes blood pressure, temperature, iron count, pulse and cholesterol screening. All blood donations will also be screened for COVID-19 antibodies. Event continues July 17 and Aug. 21.  
■ For information, visit SunCoastBlood.org.

**JUNE 26 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. Event continues July 24 and Aug. 28.  
■ For information, visit Mixon.com.

**MIXED ABILITY DANCE AND MOVEMENT**

Youth ages 18 and younger of all abilities are invited to this dance and movement class. Event is 10-11 a.m. at Greenbrook Adventure Park, 13400 Adventure Place, Lakewood Ranch. Free for residents; \$10 for

nonresidents.  
■ For information, visit MyLWR.com.

**SUMMER INDIE MARKETS**

From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Mall at University Town Center, 140 University Town Center Drive, Sarasota, browse a variety of independent crafters and entrepreneurs. The event features food trucks and more than 80 vendors. Event is free, and pets are welcome in the outdoor market. Event continues June 27.  
■ For information, visit FB.com/MallAtUTC.

**JULY**

**JULY 3 FIREWORKS 4-MILER**

The Fireworks 4-Miler race begins at 7 p.m., at Nathan Benderson Park, after the kids' dash begins at 6:30 p.m. The race will provide a race shirt, a medal and glow gear for all participants, and the top 100 male and female finishers will receive a commemorative prize. The after party will have food and drinks. Fireworks explode over the lake beginning at 9 p.m. Race registration

is \$30-\$40. For the virtual race option, registration is \$40, and time submissions will be open July 1-3.  
■ For more information, visit RaceRoster.com.

**FIREWORKS ON THE LAKE**

Take part in this firework show with festivities beginning at 4 p.m. at Nathan Benderson Park. The fireworks will begin over the lake when the sun goes down, around 9 p.m. Details to come.  
■ For information, call 941-358-7275.

**JULY 17 CORNHOLE AND COCKTAILS FESTIVAL**

From 2-6 p.m. Manatee Sunrise Kiwanis Club hosts its second annual Cornhole and Cocktails Festival at Manatee County Fair Grounds, 1402 14th Ave. W., Palmetto. Enjoy an indoor cornhole tournament, music, food, drinks and raffles. Admission is \$35; parking is free. Guests must be 21 or older to attend.  
■ For more information, visit FB.com/ManateeSunriseKiwanis.



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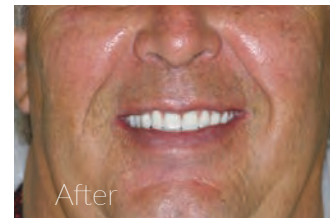
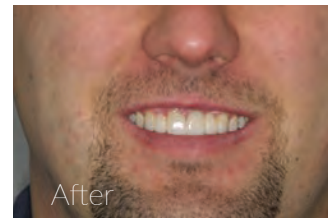
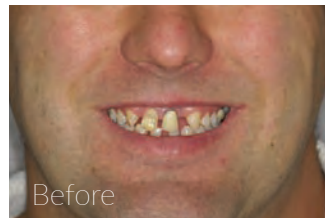
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# Made in the Shade

Embrace the outdoors and protect your eyes this summer with some stylish sunglasses.

BY HARRY SAYER | CONTRIBUTOR

Summer will soon rear its head again in the Sunshine State, and some proper sunglasses are a must to properly enjoy it.

But beyond just keeping yourself protected and clear-sighted, sunglasses can be a powerful fashion statement as well. Some people want to have several looks for different occasions, others need just the one new pair, and even more are looking for sporty options while braving the outdoors.

Luckily, our local stores have ample options for every use and taste.



Waterwoman sunglasses at Crowder's Ace Hardware: \$259

## Crowder's Ace Hardware

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CrowderBros.com

Crowder's Ace Hardware sports a wide selection of sunglasses from the Costa Del Mar brand. Said sunglasses range from cool to polarized to sporty and much more. Particularly popular right now is the Waterwoman sunglass type, polarized with a narrow fit for women that is perfect for the outdoors.



Egret: \$219

Rafael: \$179



Loreto: \$289



Tifosi Amok: \$69



Oakley Sutro FGT: \$166



Oakley Flight Jacket: \$226



Tifosi Clarion: \$80

## Ryder Bikes

5275 University Parkway, Suite 135  
941-351-0000  
RyderBikes.com

Ryder Bikes has plenty of bike gear to choose from but also can help you gear up the right sunglasses to go with it. The store primarily sells Tifosi and Oakley sunglasses, fashioned for men and women, that give a sporty look for the cyclist on the go.

Continued on Page 56



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The Wish On Main boutique has a series of Peepers reading glasses, and that includes a side selection of sunglasses for when you're out and about. The Peepers sunglasses are available in polarized form and offer UV400 protection in case you decide a day trip or a walk on the beach is how you want to spend your day.



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# Community on ●

# the Court

Lakewood Ranch Pickleball Club serves as a community for those interested in the sport.

BY BRYNN MECHEM | CONTRIBUTOR

Photos by Brynn Mechem  
Carol Lucas and Bob Haskin started the Lakewood Ranch Pickleball Club three years ago.



**A**s groggy parents lug their camping chairs to various sidelines at Lakewood Ranch High School on a Saturday morning, they are met with a distinct sound.

Pop, pop, pop.

“What is that?” one parent questions. As they get nearer the fields, the sound becomes a little louder.

Pop, pop, pop.

“Oh, nice shot,” a voice rings out. “I don’t like it, but nice shot.”

Pop, pop, pop.

It’s been said that you can’t help getting older, but you don’t have to get old, a point well illustrated by the members of the Lakewood Ranch Pickleball Club who spend their Saturday mornings on the courts.

Several men sporting silver hair and name-brand hats battle on one court while couples of more than 20 years duke it out on another. Although they aren’t professionals, many members maintain the physical prowess to out-score players half their age.

In just three years, the Lakewood Ranch residents have managed to pull off the unthinkable: starting and maintaining a club devoted to pickleball in an area that as recent as five years ago didn’t have a single dedicated pickleball court. The organization has grown from about 40 unsure volunteers to a sprawling club that boasts more than 515 members.

How did it manage the seemingly insurmountable task? With a winning recipe: a dash of competitive play, a sprinkle of determination and a heaping serving of community-minded individuals.

**‘WHAT ARE YOU DOING?’**

When President Bob Haskin first moved to Lakewood Ranch from St. George, Utah, the first thing he did was search for pickleball courts.

Upon finding very few, Haskin decided to gauge public interest. So he and Vice President Carol Lucas put a



In three years, Vice President Carol Lucas and President Bob Haskin turned Lakewood Ranch Pickleball Club’s 40 volunteers into more than 515 members.

**WANT TO JOIN?**

Lakewood Ranch Pickleball Club President Bob Haskin, who is a certified instructor, holds a free beginner’s clinic at 8:30 a.m. on the first Saturday of every month.

Haskin teaches people the rules of the game and introduces them to the pickleball club. He also has paddles and balls for those who do not own any to use.

booth together for a Lakewood Ranch Community Activities club night.

“We signed up 40 people, but we didn’t have a court to play on,” Haskin says with a laugh. “We didn’t know where to go. I had just moved here, and my wife’s going, ‘What are you doing?’”

Pickleball got its start on Bainbridge Island, near Seattle, about 50 years ago and is now one of the fastest-growing sports in the U.S. In 2020, the sport grew 21% nationally, and since 2013, USA Pickleball Association membership has grown from 4,000 to 40,000, a 1,000% increase.

Because it is so fast growing, there often aren’t many places to play. There are about 15,000 documented courts in the U.S., with about 110 new loca-

tions being built per month, according to the USAPA.

Luckily, the local interest opened up communication with various clubs and residential communities that had courts or were building them. Over the course of six months, club leaders were able to build a network of people from different Lakewood Ranch communities, such as Del Webb, Esplanade and Lakewood National Golf Club, who were looking to form teams and play.

Club leaders set to work pairing interested parties to form six teams in the first year. The next year, the club grew to include eight teams with more than 200 players. In its second year,

*Continued on Page 62*

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Continued from Page 60

the club hosted a tournament called the Sandhill Classic, which continued into the third year.

Now there are more than 515 members in the club. Lucas attributes the game's success to the ease of play on the body and the minimal time commitment to learn the rules.

"There aren't very many rules, and within an hour you can get people playing," Lucas says. "Once they realize it's easy to pick up this sport, people realize how fun it is."

The club's success, however, she attributes to the community players feel while on the court.

### BUILDING A COMMUNITY

Country Club East resident Don Croce began playing pickleball three years ago after searching for a sport that would be less intense on his body than tennis. He joined a team and, because of his tennis background, thought he would be a natural.

"I'm whacking the ball, and I'd get put in games with much better players because I have 'the look,' and I would swing really hard, and they would take all the power off the ball and tap it over," Croce says. "I'd be playing guys I thought I could beat, and then I'd get killed. It was infuriating at first."

But after sticking with it, his new club members helped him learn the tricks of the game. The community that was so willing to share its secrets is what kept him coming back.

Club member Harris Williams agrees. He says he's never met a friendlier group of people.

"I'm pretty extroverted, but I've made more friends in the last year playing pickleball than I have in the last 35 years in Sarasota combined," Williams says.

On Saturday mornings, varying levels of play are often spread among the courts. Beginners start on one end and work through levels of difficulty down the line. However, Haskin says anybody can play with anyone they choose.

"You can have 90-year-olds playing with 9-year-olds and guys and gals playing together. You can have all different abilities on the court because you can have a nice, fun exchange,

Continued on Page 64



Many club members meet on Saturday mornings for friendly and competitive matches.



Don Croce and Susie Cherry say they joined the club to be a part of the community it offers.

## TENNIS VS. PICKLEBALL: TALES OF THE TAPE

	TENNIS	PICKLEBALL
<b>Court size</b>	78'x27' for singles; 78'x36' for doubles	20'x44'
<b>Volley zone</b>	Anywhere	7' back from the net, also referred to as "the kitchen"
<b>Net height</b>	36" in the middle	34" in the middle
<b>Ball</b>	2.7" in diameter and 2 oz.; covered in fibrous felt	3" in diameter and 1 oz.; made of plastic
<b>Rackets</b>	Made of wood, fiberglass and graphite with a woven striking surface	Smaller than tennis rackets and often made with composite; they have a solid striking surface.
<b>Scoring</b>	Can score on any serve; the winner usually is the first to win two sets, which can often take up to an hour.	Can only score when serving; the winner is first to reach 11 but must be up by 2 points. The game often takes 15-20 minutes.
<b>Strokes</b>	Tend to be longer and faster; more prone to shoulder injuries	Often remain below the waist
<b>Court material</b>	Often clay and grass, which is easier on the ankles, knees and back. It also absorbs heat.	Typically a hard material, such as asphalt or concrete, which exacerbates heat and puts strain on joints
<b>Serving</b>	Overhand and underhand	Only underhand allowed

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Continued from Page 62

which is nice because you can't do that with too many other sports," he says.

A player often found mixing it up with varying levels of play is Susie Cherry. She and her husband used to play tennis every day, but after two knee replacements, they had to search for a new game. After making the switch three years ago, the couple now plays with club members four or five times a week.

"The people are a lot of fun," Cherry says. "It's so social, and you get fresh air and exercise while you're making friends. What's not to love?"

The club does not have a reservation system for courts, so new members can come and mingle with other players. Haskin says it takes the pressure off single people who are interested in playing.

### THE FUTURE OF MANATEE COUNTY PICKLEBALL

Because the pickleball courts are run by Manatee County Parks and Recreation, the club has to abide by its rules.

The county turned an old basketball court into five pickleball courts last year, but Haskin says the condition of the courts is already starting to break down.

The club funded the addition of fencing, windscreens and paddle holders at the courts. A member also donated court rollers and squeegees to dry off water from the court.

Future planning laid out by the Lakewood Ranch Park Master Plan includes the remodeling of handball and tennis courts into several more pickleball courts, but the timeline has yet to be decided.

In the past year, club leaders have petitioned to have pickleball courts added to the Premier Sports Campus. A proposal for the campus expansion includes 24 new pickleball courts, some of which will be covered and have seating. Should those be added, Haskin says the club would have the capacity to host regional tournaments.

"It would be such a revenue generator," Haskin says. "Once you put it in, there's very little maintenance and multiple revenue-generating streams."

### COST TO PLAY

Lakewood Ranch Pickleball Club Vice President Carol Lucas says pickleball is one of the cheapest sports to get into.

A quality beginner paddle will run anywhere between \$70 to \$150, while a 12-pack of balls runs about \$30. Aside from that, players only need a pair of sneakers and a hat or visor to keep the sun out of their eyes.

The cost to join the club is \$15. Those looking to join can do so at [LWRPickleballClub.com](http://LWRPickleballClub.com).

No matter where the courts are added, Lucas says it needs to happen sooner rather than later to keep the sport thriving in Manatee County.

"When we have big teams across communities, there tends to be a wall that builds up between them, and they're all isolated," she says. "But when we have a common space to come and play, you're bringing people in from different places and building a true community."

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# Ready for

These graduates made their mark as extraordinary community leaders at their

BY LIZ RAMOS | CONTRIBUTOR

**H**igh school graduation is a time of hope, of promise, of fun and of one chapter ending while another begins.

It's easy to wax poetic or be sentimental about this rite of passage, but it also means something else to our community: the transition of many young people who contributed to our area moving on to hopefully do even bigger and better things in the future.

To celebrate the occasion, we're highlighting six seniors graduating from area high schools who have left their mark locally and who we think you'll want to keep an eye on to see what they do next. We never know what the future

will hold, but with these youngsters in it, we know it will be a better place through their efforts.

## REECE WHATMORE

When Reece Whatmore was a junior at The Out-of-Door Academy, she saw the impact red tide had on the local community and knew she wanted to do something about it.

Whatmore and her classmate Supawadee Surattanont decided to build oyster reefs as one solution to red tide.

Whatmore says she's always loved nature as well as math and engineering, so why not put all her passions to use in a project to solve real-life issues?

"Growing up in Florida, you can see the direct impact of climate change and the plastic crisis in the ocean," Whatmore says. "It's there. You can't

ignore it once you see it."

Besides building oyster reefs to tackle red tide, for the past three years Whatmore has been involved in STEMania, an organization that exposes children to science, technology, engineering and math education. She started as an assistant and later became a teacher and has helped develop lessons for middle school students.

When she sees a girl in any of her STEMania classes, Whatmore tells her to not be discouraged. If it weren't for a girl in one of her freshman engineering classes who did the same for her, Whatmore says she isn't sure she would have stayed with it.

"It's important to understand that even if you don't see someone out there who might look like you, you can still do it," she says. "You can be the first,

# Launch

high schools. But what they have planned next is just as exciting.

Photos by Liz Ramos

and that's OK."

After graduation, Whatmore will continue working with EarthEcho International, a nonprofit that strives to inspire youth to take steps toward a sustainable future. She'll help the nonprofit research and redesign water monitoring kits to be more effective.

She has been serving as a Water Challenge ambassador her senior year, educating children about sustainability and conducting water testing.

Whatmore will be attending Carnegie Mellon University in the fall and wants to major in material science and engineering to learn about what materials are made of and how they function while finding ways to redesign them to make them better.

Still not impressed? She also plans

to swim on the varsity team at Carnegie Mellon.

Although she hasn't decided what kind of job she would like to have after graduation, Whatmore says she's interested in becoming a chief sustainability officer for a company with the goal of helping it do business in environmentally friendly ways.

"The way our society is structured, these large corporations have such a massive impact on the environment and affect every one of us," she says. "If we can make changes at that level, then the trickle-down effect is huge."

No matter where her future takes her, Whatmore says her goal will remain the same: to help society become more sustainable.

## ARTHUR WANG

At least once per month, Arthur Wang, a senior at The Out-of-Door Academy, drives to St. Armands Circle or downtown Sarasota, plops his things on the sidewalk and plays his violin — all just to put a smile on people's faces.

"I want to use my music to inspire people not to give up and to be the best they can be," Wang says. "I love to spread my positive energy to the society around me."

Wang has been playing violin since he was 5 years old. He says his grandmother, Yanmei Zhao, took him to lessons each week and inspired him to continue playing as he grew up.

"My mom and grandmother always

*Continued on Page 68*



Continued from Page 67

told me that nothing is impossible if you put your heart into it," Wang says.

His dedication to the instrument has led him to be a member of the Advanced Chamber Orchestra at school and a member of the Sarasota Youth Orchestra. He's also a Gold Award winner from the Forte International Competition at Carnegie Hall in 2019 and has placed second in the Vivo In-

Wang wants to use music and art to meet more people and share how the arts can make a difference in someone and in the community.

"I want to provide as much as I can to help make the community around me a better place, no matter where I go," Wang says.

### GARRETT ANDREWS

Sometimes it's amazing what can happen over four years. When Garrett Andrews was a freshman at Lakewood Ranch High School, he was a shy student. Physically smaller than his peers, he was afraid to talk to anyone, instead preferring to sit in solitude.

After being a member of the school's junior ROTC program for four years, he's now a leader as a senior.

"I'm more outgoing and have a lot more friends," Andrews says. "I feel like I've grown socially, mentally and physically."

When he was a freshman and sophomore, Andrews looked up to the leaders of the program and is proud to see that he has become that person for younger cadets.

"I've seen kids come in freshman year that are classic troublemakers that goof off and try to get everybody's attention," Andrews says. "Then by the end of the year, they're like: 'This is something I can do. This is something I can put my mind to and get through high school and figure out what to do.'"

As a member of JROTC, Andrews helped develop a recycling program at the school when he was a sophomore.

Andrews and other cadets noticed items weren't being properly recycled, so they would collect recyclables from classrooms every Friday and rolled them out to the recycling bins outside.

"We've created presentations to teach the rest of the JROTC kids about the importance of recycling," Andrews says. "Looking at the numbers, we've created a spreadsheet of all the cubic yards we've recycled, and the amount just really makes an impact."

After receiving a four-year ROTC National Merit scholarship, Andrews is heading to the University of Florida to major in civil engineering. He plans to then commission as a second lieutenant in the Army Corps of Engineers for civil engineering.

"After college, I want to make sure I take care of the people around me the best I can," Andrews says. "Civil

engineering itself is important and helpful. It's making bridges, making sure water runoff doesn't get into our ponds, lakes, anything like that. I think I would probably lean more toward making sure water runoff is properly taken care of, so everyone can drink clean water."

Continued on Page 70

“After college, I want to make sure I take care of the people around me the best I can.”

### GARRETT ANDREWS



Garrett Andrews, a senior at Lakewood Ranch High School, says the JROTC program has helped him become a leader. He will be in the University of Florida's ROTC program in the fall.

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Courtesy photo

Arthur Wang, a senior at The Out-of-Door Academy, has been playing violin since he was 5 years old and wants to use music to make a difference in his community.

ternational Music Competition in 2019 and the National Music Competition of China in 2014.

In addition to spending time playing, he has used his talents to teach middle schoolers how to play violin.

"I feel like when you're teaching the middle school students, you're teaching yourself because you build this experience, and you are getting better and better at teaching," Wang says.

Besides playing the violin, Wang taught himself to play piano and guitar and was on the school's varsity golf team. He has also participated in numerous service events and organizations including the Sarasota Circus Arts Conservatory, Relay for Life and the school's Magic Club.

His love for the arts also includes a passion for drawing and painting. His grandfather, Xiaoshen Wang, is a professional painter in China. Wang's favorite style of painting is watercolor because his grandfather created watercolors on rice paper in China.

Wang's top choice for college is Berklee College of Music in Boston, so he can continue with his passion for music.



Continued from Page 68

### JESSICA THOMPSON

When it comes to racking up service hours, Jessica Thompson is an all-star. The Lakewood Ranch High senior has completed more than 350 service hours by participating in hundreds of service events and projects, but the project that she'll always remember



Jessica Thompson, a senior at Lakewood Ranch High School, hopes to become a lawyer, so she can make a difference in other people's lives.

is Project Manatee.

With Project Manatee, Thompson went to Manatee Elementary School around the holidays to give students gifts, decorate cookies, play games and spend time with the children.

"Seeing the kids' smiles makes it all worth it, especially planning the event," she says. "It's exciting just to have that moment."

Thompson has been a member in three service organizations throughout high school: Lakewood Leaders, National Honor Society and Girl Up. She has coordinated food drives, passed out bottles of water at cancer walks, spent time with children, raised money for nonprofits and much more.

"I hope people my age realize you don't have to wait until you grow up to try and put yourself out there and do things for other people," she says.

With her friend Emma Tullio, Thompson started Girl Up, a club affiliated with the national Girl Up organization to ensure girls across the world have access to education. Thompson started the club after learning about the rights people lack in different countries and thought the club would

be an opportunity to spread awareness at Lakewood Ranch High about global gender issues.

Thompson and Tullio organized fundraisers for the national organization, coordinated community walks to create awareness and created petitions to have the government release data on the progress different national acts were making.

Through her service, Thompson says she has become a better learner and listener.

"I've grown as a person getting to talk to different people and hear different people's stories," she says. "I've been able to be appreciative of everything I have and everything I have access to."

After graduation, Thompson plans to pursue a law degree, so she can continue to make a difference in the community. Human rights is one area of law that interests her.

"I want to help people be treated more equally and have the same opportunities, regardless of who you are, what you look like or where you were born," Thompson says.

Continued on Page 72

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### TRISHA PITCHALA

Trisha Pitchala, a senior at Braden River High School, remembers sitting in her seventh grade science class with a frog in front of her and a scalpel in hand.

While other students were grossed out as they sliced open the frog, Pitchala was fascinated because she saw the similarities between the frog's system and humans. She was hooked and joined the Health Occupations Students of America club at school to learn more about health and medicine.

Her eventual goal? To become a doctor.

"I need to protect the ones I care about most, and I get to do that while I'm doing something I'm passionate about," she says. "It's a perfect equation."

During the pandemic, she has written letters to doctors, nurses and other health care workers in the community to show her support for them.

"Me as a future doctor seeing them struggling to do their job, struggling to see that many patients in one day,

it made my journey more worthwhile," Pitchala says. "I think it's cliché that every high school senior will be saying this, but I do want to make a difference. I think it's this level of responsibility that I found in the doctors that I didn't really see before."

Pitchala's service has made a difference not only at home but also internationally. She started Students for Rohingya Aid with classmate Gabriel McDerment her freshman year, and they raised more than \$1,300 to give to UNICEF to help refugees in Myanmar.

This year, as the president of the National Honor Society, she and other NHS members have raised close to \$1,000 for To Zim, With Love, a project through Bayside Community Church that feeds families in Zimbabwe.

"Superman always says, 'With great power comes great responsibility,'" Pitchala says. "I think the leaders of our school, especially the class of 2021, definitely take that to heart and try to make a difference in our organizations and our school."

Pitchala wants to continue making a difference by returning to her home country of India after she becomes a

doctor to build a hospital, which has been a goal of hers since she was a child.

"I've grown up in India; it's where I consider my home," Pitchala says. "One of the most significant moments of my life would be going back home to India for vacation for a couple months and that moment when the plane lands, and you know you're physically standing back where you started in this full-circle moment."

### GABRIEL MCDERMONT

As the pandemic continues, Braden River High School senior Gabriel McDerment will be working with PPE4ALL, a nonprofit that provides personal protective equipment to hospitals, schools and other organizations throughout the U.S., as the nonprofit's national media director.

"It's another opportunity to work directly in the lives of people," McDerment says. "With these opportunities, it's another chance to make people safer, to make people healthier and to use the passions that I have in music, video, art and service to impact one person."

Continued on Page 74



Courtesy photo Trisha Pitchala, a senior at Braden River High School, wins a medal at a Health Occupations Students of America competition. She hopes to become a doctor.

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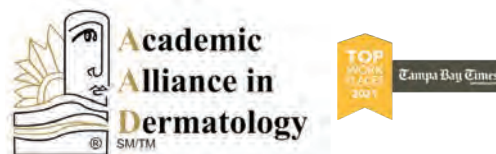


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Continued from Page 72

McDerment's religious background has inspired him to get involved in the numerous events with the Key Club at Braden River as well as national organizations with goals to improve the environment or mental health.

"Jesus says go love your neighbor," McDerment says. "That's what I do. I started my first work within that kind of sector when I was in fifth grade, and from then on just one thing led to another. As I felt God tell me to do things, I just did them in successive order, and that led me to great success."

As a senior, McDerment worked with Superbands, a nonprofit based out of Philadelphia dedicated to building hope through combining mental health and music. McDerment used his 12 years of experience playing piano and researched how music can help with mental health and encourage people to respond emotionally to music to help them get through difficult times.

"I figured out early on that the music that helps people is more than the lyrics," he says. "Yes, lyrics are powerful, and lyrics can lead people to great places, but the melodies, the tunes in the harmonies can help move people."

McDerment has also been involved with Harvard University's Center for Climate, Health and Global Environment producing videos that shared the actionable steps people can take to make the world more environmentally friendly.

In the fall, McDerment will attend New York University to major in binocular psychophysics and sonic ethnography. He will be able to design his own major based on music, neuroscience and anthropology.

After graduating college, McDerment says he could see himself going into civil rights or constitutional law and using his background in science, anthropology and history to advance equality and environmentalism.

"Whatever it is, hopefully I'll be right on the front lines making change for someone directly, making change for society as a whole and making change the new normal," he says.

Courtesy photo  
 Gabriel McDerment, a senior at Braden River High School, wants to see community service become normalized.



*“Whatever it is, hopefully I’ll be right on the front lines making change for someone directly, making change for society as a whole and making change the new normal.”*

GABRIEL MCDERMENT

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# WHERE THE SUREF MEETS THE TURF

This combination is a classic for a reason. These restaurants have updated takes on an old-time favorite.

BY EMILY LEINFUSS | CONTRIBUTOR

**O**ld-fashioned? Maybe. But surf and turf so perfectly describes a dish that pairs steak and seafood that it's lasted for more than half a century – and isn't going away any time soon.

Some say the festive combination made its debut at the restaurant atop the Seattle Space Needle in 1962. Others claim it first made the scene in the Boston area circa 1966. Here, on the Gulf Coast of Florida, Lakewood Ranch restaurants have no beef with authentically offering their own versions of surf and turf – even when it goes by another name.

## Inkawasi Peruvian Restaurant

The country of Peru has coastline, mountains, and jungle – making surf and turf a natural part of the food. So naturally the menu at Inkawasi has Peruvian takes on the classic pairing.

One example is surf and turf grill (found under “las parrilas del Inka” on the menu), which has tenderloin, chicken and shellfish topped with homemade antichucho sauce.

“Antichucho is made with aji panca, or chile pepper, garlic, vinegar, salt, pepper and Peruvian herbs,” explains Jimmy Arias, who co-owns this Peruvian fusion-style restaurant with his wife, Reina Pavon.

Taypa is another choice that boasts a land and sea combination with chicken, beef and shrimp. Found on the chifa section of the menu, the name means “well-served or full,” says Arias, who explains that chifa are fried rice dishes that emerged because of Chinese immigration (in the mid-1800s and starting again in 1971), when Cantonese and Peruvian flavors intermingled and formed a new fusion cuisine.

Arias feels that the Lakewood Ranch area is ideal for Inkawasi because the community is open to trying diverse culinary options. “In this small area we find restaurants from different parts of the world and they are all well received. I am incredibly pleased when people tell me they've visited Peru and that they know Machu Picchu and have eaten (traditional Peruvian dishes like) ceviche, causa or lomo saltado,” he says.

### **Inkawasi Peruvian Restaurant**

10667 Boardwalk Loop  
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InkawasiRestaurant.com

Photo by Emily Leinfuss  
Homemade antichucho  
sauce makes this  
surf and turf dish at  
Inkawasi an authentic  
Peruvian chef-d'oeuvre.







Libby's center cut tenderloin, topped with an add-on of shrimp scampi, is a perfect pairing.



The salmon shrimp combo at Libby's features fresh, cold water Chilean salmon and Key West pinks.

Courtesy photos

## Libby's Neighborhood Brasserie

There are many ways to enjoy surf and turf at Libby's Neighborhood Brasserie, says Joe Guli, CEO of its parent company, Tableside Restaurant Group.

While you won't find that exact term on the menu, except for holiday specials, Guli assures that he still uses it to refer to Libby's pairings. "We use different techniques and ingredients," he explains (as compared to a classic lobster tail and steak combo). But (surf and turf) applies to what we do."

Specifically, when diners order a "from the grill" selection, such as a filet or sirloin, it's easy to tag on an add-on choice of shrimp scampi or crab cake. Alternatively, appetizers such as dynamite shrimp, or even tuna tataki will do the trick.

"From my perspective as a chef, seafood is typically sweet (to the palate) and pairs beautifully with a flavorful steak," says Guli, as the reason for surf and turf's long-lasting appeal. As for preparation, "I'm a proponent of letting the ingredients speak for themselves."

To that end, Libby's partners with Day Boat Seafood of West Palm Beach to provide a same-day catch of local fish and seafood from Atlantic and Gulf waters. The restaurant is also meticulous about steak preparation. After an in-house, 40-day seasoning and aging process, "our wood grill locks in the flavors," says Guli.

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## FEASTING FROM LOCAL WATERS

As the saying goes, there are many fish in the sea ... but which ones come from nearby? Use this seafood primer to can ensure your next menu selection is a local.



**Grouper:** With its sweet flaky flavor, grouper is great grilled or blackened (which typically means it's dipped in a butter wash, coated with spices and cooked on a hot skillet to seal in the seasonings) and is a classic choice for a grouper sandwich. Fries with that?



**Mahi Mahi:** This thick, firm fish is terrific blackened, or have it grilled in a savory fish taco.



**Snapper:** A lighter, flakier fish, snapper's delicate flavor is revealed when pan-seared with lemon butter sauce. Locally you'll find a few different varieties, such as mangrove, yellowtail or the most popular, red.



**Kingfish:** A type of migrating mackerel, seasonal supply and demand makes this sweet, steak-like fish more of a rarity on local menus: Grab it when you can.



**Tripletail:** This somewhat flat fish offers up a thin filet of flaky white meat, best prepared with a pan sear because of its delicate nature.



**Stone crab claws:** Another seasonal delight, from October to May, stone crab claws offer a sweeter and softer meat than coldwater crabs. And, because trappers only take one claw and throw the crab back, it's a sustainable choice — especially considering the claw will grow back.



**Blue crab:** Known as Florida's other crab, blue crabs are often steamed or boiled and served up in what we call a low-country boil, along with potatoes, corn, clams, mussels, scallops and shrimp, all of which can also be found locally.



**Key West shrimp:** Speaking of shrimp, pink Key West shrimp are a sweeter, more tender treat compared to other shrimp, and delicious any way you like 'em.



**Spiny lobster:** This species of lobster, found around Key West primarily, has one important difference from its Maine brethren — no claws! But their tails are every bit as delicious served steamed or grilled with a side of butter and lemon.

## Grove Restaurant

With Grove Restaurant's emphasis on contemporary international cuisine, Chef Greg Campbell is disinclined to use the term surf and turf. "We typically don't use catchy terms for our food, which is made with fresh seasonal ingredients in a 100% scratch kitchen," says the executive chef and director of operations for Grove and its sister restaurant, Pier 22.

"We describe our food simply," he explains, according to "what the center of the plate ingredients actually are."

In fact, the simplest way to dine on ingredients from the sea and the land at Grove is to order the filet Oscar. The dish includes a 6 oz., hand-cut beef tenderloin with jumbo lump blue crab, bearnaise and demi glaze with mashed potatoes and asparagus.

However, "the sky is the limit on how many different options our guests have to mix seafood and land food together for a meal," says Campbell. "The best way to incorporate the blend of the two is to order seafood as an appetizer and land food as an entrée or vice versa."

**Grove Restaurant**  
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Photo by Emily Leinfuss

Adding seared skirt steak to Grove's house salad makes a delicious lunch or dinner.

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Courtesy photos

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"Surf and turf is a very retro term that can span from meaning old-school broiled filet (mignon) and lobster tail in shell, to any number of other combination of menu items," says Capital Grille Executive Chef Michael LaDuke.

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In keeping with the restaurant's penchant for offering menu classics alongside "twists" on appetizers and sides, the combination that LaDuke most recommends is pairing one of the Capital Grille's hand-cut, dry-aged steaks with the lobster

mac 'n' cheese. "Made with Havarti, mascarpone and grana Padano cheeses, with a generous serving of Maine lobster, it is the ultimate luxury side," he says.

If mac 'n' cheese isn't your thing, there are plenty of other surf starters to meet your turf, including fresh oysters on the half shell, lobster and crab cakes and pan-fried calamari.

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# HAVEN

SPOTLIGHTING LIFE ON THE RANCH

An elegant remodel transforms a Country Club East condo. **PAGE 86**

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A stand-alone tub discovered on Wayfair makes a dramatic statement in the master bath.



# GOING FOR THE GLAMOUR

A smallish condo gets a major makeover, turning a builder's model into a customized luxury getaway.

BY ROBERT PLUNKET | CONTRIBUTOR



The living area features multiple seating and dining choices, brought together by a strong black and white color scheme.





The home offers two guest rooms for visiting friends and family. Both offer a crisp, modern look.

For most people, remodeling a home is a stressful ordeal. Things go wrong with the plumbing. The contractor vanishes for days at a time. It turns out you don't like that very expensive farmhouse sink as much as you thought you would. It's enough to dampen the enthusiasm of any homeowner.

And then there are those lucky few for whom remodeling is an adventure. They are the fearless ones who look upon the process as an exciting challenge. They educate themselves online, visit all the stores and showrooms, consult with experts when necessary but still manage to keep the vision uniquely their own.

Mary anne Morrison is one of the adventurers. Over the years she's discovered how to do it. Her secret is something she was born with — a sure sense of taste — but she admits it's more than that.

"I love the hunt," she says with a gleam in her eye. She pores over all the websites, both high and low. And if she finds the best product at Home Depot, such as the blackout shades in the bedrooms, then Home Depot gets the business.

Morrison's skills are on view in a condo in Clubside in Country Club East. She and her husband, Dave, purchased it as a replacement for their 3,600-square-foot home in The Lake Club. A change in lifestyle meant they would be spending more time at their home in Canada and their condo in Mexico. Clearly, a smaller Florida home was in order.

The couple found the perfect place: a three-bedroom, ground-floor unit of just more than 1,700 square feet overlooking a peaceful water view. The interior was suitably solid and conventional. But Morrison didn't want conventional and thus began her latest adventure: transforming a builder's model into a sensational getaway home full of luxury and a heavy dose of glamour.

*Continued on Page 90*

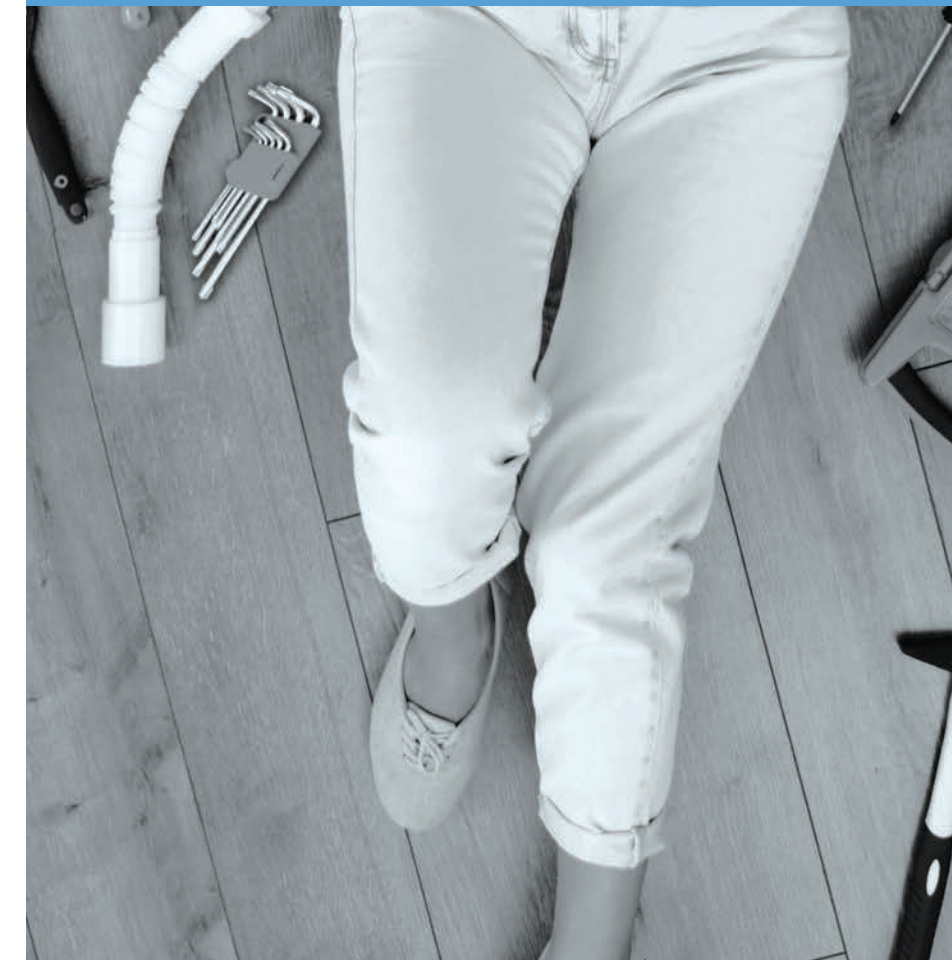
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The inspiration for the new home's makeover came from an extraordinary piece of granite and quartz Morrison found at The Granite Place on U.S. 301. Its color scheme — white and black with subtle streaks of gold — provided just the right amount of drama to transform the main living area.

The Morrisons reconfigured the space to customize it for the entertaining for which they are well known. Dinner parties for eight or 10 friends are their specialty. "People call me 'Julie the Cruise Director,'" Morrison says, adding, "If you come to one of my parties, you're going to play games and dance." Her secret? "Prepare everything in advance. It's all about being ready."

The kitchen has a high-style European look, accentuated by the Bertazzoni appliances Morrison came across on Wayfair. Italian Interiors, a local custom cabinetry firm, helped her put together the sleek assembly of handleless, lacquered cabinets and carefully thought-out storage.

The living area, an open plan of kitchen, formal dining, informal dining and formal "living room," has a crisp, modern style, with black and white predominating. There is abundant seating for guests, and the several dining options not only include a large round table and a smaller table adjacent to the kitchen, but through a sliding glass door you'll also find a screened lanai, chicly outfitted in gray patio furniture.

Most of the furniture in the living area come from Restoration Hardware, Morrison's favorite store. She shops both online and in person and found several key pieces, including the large mirrors that amplify the space surrounding the dining table, at the company's outlet store in Clearwater.

The home is full of unexpected touches. The air conditioning outlets are covered with minimalist vents, the handiwork of local Mennonite crafters. And shiplap is everywhere, looking, in this case, like urban sophistication rather than anything vintage or rustic. It is subtly employed to define areas and add visual interest. Much of it is painted a deep onyx black, a daring touch with a big payoff. The dark hue changes and shifts tone with the light.

Another unexpected element comes from the extensive use of wallpaper. Most rooms are covered with either



wallpaper or wall covering, and the technique brings a highly effective texture to the spaces. Even the laundry room has a glamorous look thanks to the slightly iridescent coverings. It didn't hurt that a good friend of the Morrisons owns JF Fabrics and sup-

plied his products at cost. Morrison is fussy about every detail, and that includes price.

A tour of the home discloses two guest bedrooms, one serene and one a

Continued on Page 92

### MASTER SUITE

**Above:** Looking out on a private water view, the sleeping area provides a luxurious retreat.

**Left:** A 6-foot-square shower, enclosed in glass, adjoins the sleeping area. A curtain provides privacy.

**Bottom:** The vanity from Restoration Hardware completes the bath's glamorous new design.



### LIVING AREA

**Top left:** The stove, by Bertazzoni via Wayfair, is surrounded by the stone that inspired the home's new look. **Bottom left:** Shiplap, painted a deep black, adds drama to the living area. The new entrance to the master suite is barely visible at left. **Right:** The formal dining area, with furniture and accessories from Restoration Hardware, adjoins the entrance hall where fixtures from Hydrologic bracket a painting.



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Continued from Page 90

little cuter for visting granddaughters. But the master suite is nowhere to be seen — until you learn the secret. It seems that as originally configured, the entrance to the master suite was taking up important space in the living area. Norman Stoehr, an architect with Westwater Construction who served as contractor for the renovation, came up with a most unorthodox solution. He transferred the door to the far cor-

ner of the living room but made it so unobtrusive that it reads as panel in the wall. There isn't even a doorknob. The surprise entrance reveals an even bigger surprise. The master bedroom and master bath have merged in an unusual way. A glass wall separates them, but they remain one large space, a glamorized Zen version of spa and sleeping. Here, the wallpaper, in a stylized art deco pattern, unites the space and provides a dramatic backdrop for the black stand-alone tub and the 6-foot-

square shower, with porcelain tile that mimics marble. The double vanity was another Restoration Hardware find. The Morrisons love their “tiny townhouse,” but the realities of a post-pandemic world have made their three-country lifestyle no longer feasible. They are putting their Clubside condo on the market, giving a lucky new owner the chance to enjoy the extraordinary fruits of Morrison's taste and talent, with every detail adding up to a jewel box ambiance of luxury and glamour.

**Left:** The color palette switches to gray for the outdoor living area, complete with comfortable furniture and a dining table.  
**Right:** Even the laundry room has a touch of glamour: The wall covering is by JF Fabrics.



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art and about

# Let the Sunshine In!

The pandemic dealt a blow to the region's arts community, but it's coming back strong. These arts happenings will definitely put a sunny smile on your face during the summer sizzle.



SU BYRON  
CONTRIBUTOR

**Spend an afternoon at The Ringling:** There's plenty to see at The Ringling this summer, including these two outstanding exhibits. **"Saito Kiyoshi: Graphic Awakening"** explores the work of a game-changing Japanese printmaker who was part of Japan's modernist "creative print" movement in the mid-20th century. Saito created images of sinuous cats, brooding women, haunting winter scenes of his hometown and vignettes of contemporary and historical Japan. Although he was originally a frustrated painter, Saito fully exploited the possibilities of woodblock printmaking. Following in the footsteps of Edvard Munch, Saito incorporated wood-grain patterns in the textures and backgrounds of his prints and celebrated the serendipitous accidents of the printing process itself. The result is stark beauty, bold compositions and emotional power. *Through August 15.*

To get a closer view of the heavens, check out James Turrell's hypnotic **"Joseph's Coat: Skyspace"** at The Ringling. Turrell's art is simplicity itself: a 24-foot oculus in the ceiling. That opening is both a window on the sky and a "camera obscura," projecting the sky's ever-changing drama on the floor below. This permanent installation deepens your perception of the sky with artful technology. When the sun goes down, a state-of-the-art LED system changes the color of the viewing area. Your sense of spatial distance subtly changes. Sun and sky seem close enough to touch. *5401 Bay Shore Road, Sarasota; 941-359-5700; Ringling.org.*

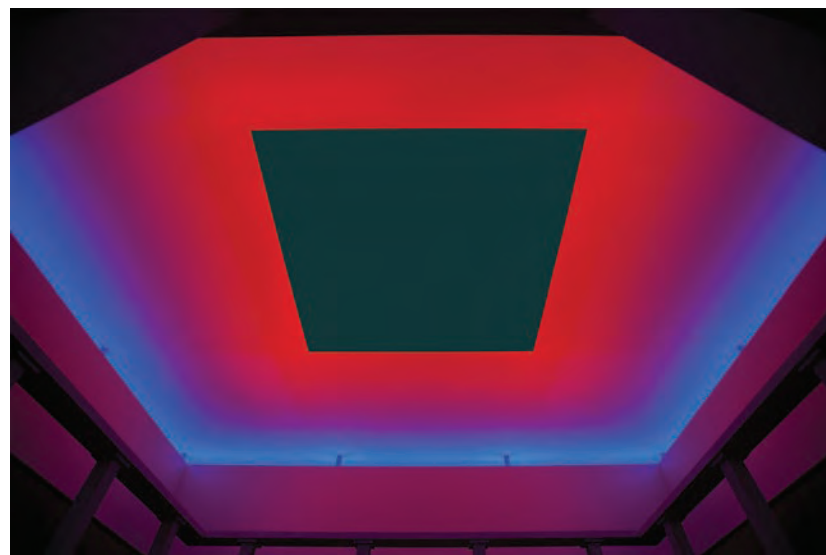


Photo by Giovanni Lunardi

James Turrell's "Joseph's Coat" is on permanent display at The Ringling.

**Life is a Cabaret at FST:** Celebrate summer with three sizzling performances at Florida Studio Theatre. Jerry Lee Lewis burned up the keyboard — sometimes literally. In June, **"Great Balls of Fire"** lights up the FST stage in his honor. Led by Jason Cohen (who has channeled Lewis across North America), this tribute band always brings down the house. The hit parade includes "Good Golly, Miss Molly," "Shake, Rattle, and Roll" and "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On." This bad boy's music never gets old.

In July, **"Shades of Bubl : A Three-Man Tribute to Michael Bubl "** offers a homage to the original Mr. Smooth. This three-man band gets into Bubl 's smooth groove with such songs as "Come Fly With Me," "Everything,"

"Feeling Good," "Home," "Moondance" and "Save the Last Dance for Me." Expect to feel good. The 20th century was a gold mine of musical genres.

In August, **"The Swingaroos: Jukebox"** celebrates that musical legacy in this jazzy, jukebox review. The swinging hits include "Get Your Kicks on Route 66," "Heart and Soul" and "There's No Business Like Show Business." This high-energy territory band will deliver the musical goods as only they can. (Check website for dates and times.) *1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota; 941-366-9000; FloridaStudioTheatre.org.*

The **Sarasota Music Festival** has been a regional treasure since 1965, when

*Continued on Page 96*




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it was launched as a one-week event with seven guest mentors. Over time, it grew to three weeks, drawing students and teachers from around the world. In 1984, the Florida Legislature designated it the "Official Teaching and Performing Festival of the State of Florida." The reimagined 2021 Sarasota Music Festival, June 12-19, returns to the original one-week format and features SMF Artistic Director Jeffrey Kahane, along with Robert Levin, Clive Greensmith, SMF alumnus Angie Zhang and the Calidore Quartet. "We are determined to keep the festival's spark and spirit alive and well," Kahane says. "Our intention is to offer live events that serve as a celebration of the musical values that the festival has always stood for: musical integrity of the highest order allied with a consuming passion to communicate the magnificence of the chamber repertoire." *SMF's 2021 live events are in Holley Hall; tickets will be limited. For tickets and info, visit [SarasotaOrchestra.org/festival](http://SarasotaOrchestra.org/festival).*

**Kids do art!** Young folk age 13-18 can do a deep dive into musical theater at Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe's five-week **Stage of Discovery Summer Camp**, June 14-18. WBTT professionals will immerse them in acting, singing, dancing and improvisation. The best thing? The five-week program will culminate with a live performance. Oh, and it's free. *To register, email Myllanna McKinnon at [MMcKinnon@WestcoastBlackTheatre.org](mailto:MMcKinnon@WestcoastBlackTheatre.org), or call 941-366-1505.*

Join the circus! The **Circus Arts Conservatory** is offering classes, camps and workshops that promote physical, athletic and mental training. Young campers learn such circus arts disciplines as triple and single trapeze, globes, silks, hula-hoop, low wire, clowning, flying trapeze, juggling and more. And while they're having all of this fun, they're also increasing coordination through acrobatics, testing their balance on the low wire and learning about courage on the flying trapeze. Whatever they do, they'll be having the time of their lives. *One- and two-week sessions run June 14 to Aug. 6. Visit [CircusArts.org](http://CircusArts.org).*

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# Back to the (dreaded) beach

When living in a place like Lakewood Ranch, it can be easy to take things for granted. But taking the beach for granted is a special Floridian privilege.



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

Our house came with a pool. We weren't really looking for a house with a pool, but it seems like it's harder to find a house without a pool in Lakewood Ranch than one without a useless palm tree or a glass front door. Because who doesn't love making awkward eye contact with the Amazon delivery driver twice a day while roaming the house disheveled? And yes, I realize the palm tree is there by regulation — to make our friends up north feel bad about their life choices — but there are many better ways of doing that while also having a tree that provides shade or fruit or doing literally anything besides being a maintenance nightmare.

In any case, we ended up with a pool, though, much like the palm tree, it is also mostly there for spite. It's not long enough to swim laps in, deep enough to dive into or warm enough to use most of the year — and it certainly also is a maintenance nightmare. But there is one thing it actually turned out to be good for, and that is to burn the kids' copious energy reserves in the summer, in a way that doesn't involve us all melting into the asphalt.

It's still a lot more work than just letting them play in the yard or even going to the playground. You have to dig up swimsuits; apply sunscreen; inflate a dozen things per kid; keep the toddler from eating the pool noodles and guzzling pool water; put on, take off, tighten or loosen goggles every 10 minutes; entertain empty promises of



really cool water tricks; replace broken pool toys; rinse the pool water off at the end; and then spend 20 minutes fishing all the stuff out of the water and putting it all back in the bin.

Right now you might be thinking, "Didn't he say it turned out to be good?" Very perceptive, intrepid

reader! Because as much work as all of that is, it's still much, much preferable to the dreaded beach day.

Most of us who have grown up in Florida think of the beach the way New Yorkers think of the Statue of Liberty:

*Continued on Page 100*



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Continued from Page 98

It's something we take visitors from far away to see because we've been a thousand times, we still see it more than you need to, and it's a whole thing to get there. The problem is that, as a parent to small kids, I actually live with those far-away visitors. They haven't grown up here yet, they think the floury white sand and gentle waves are the coolest things in the world, and they want to go any time the subject comes up. Inexplicably, so does their mother, who has literally spent her entire life in Florida and basically grew up at the beach.

And so it came to pass that a majority of our family — the faction not responsible for logistics — has passed a binding resolution to make a pilgrimage to Siesta Key not less than once a month, for the entire duration of the off-season. At first, it started out simple: bringing a couple towels and toys and water bottles in a bag, staying for a while and coming home. And then spending the next week getting the sand out of the car and all manner of other surprising places. But

the beach is — contrary to some real estate agents' claims — an astonishing 40 minutes from the Ranch. It is literally faster to get to downtown St. Petersburg than it is to Siesta, and Lido and Anna Maria aren't any faster — and certainly not better.

It then follows that a calculus was made to see what length stay would make that magnitude of round trip worth it, and the consensus was at least two hours. But you can't spend that much time there with just some toys and water. The excursion has graduated to a whole other level. You need shade and sunscreen and more toys and a cooler filled with juice and snacks. We bought a Sport-brella, which actually is really cool and makes for a neat half-tent kind of thing, but it is big. For a while, I was loaded up like a pack animal from the parking lot to the water, umbrella strapped to my chest, some cumbersome water contraption in one hand, a couple bags on the shoulder, a cooler in the other hand, feet sinking from the weight on the long trek across the dunes.

Then I wised up and started cramming the kids' Radio Flyer into the

trunk, so I could put all the stuff in it — and it was an improvement for sure, but boy, do those wheels not turn in the fine white sand. The next summer, I saw someone with a wagon that was actually made for the beach, with all-terrain wheels and collapsible to actually fit in the trunk easily. I ordered one as soon as I got home, and I still remember my tears of joy seeing the delivery driver through the glass door when it arrived.

Since then, I've also realized that none of us really lies on the beach towels or under the umbrella because all the kids want to do is swim or play at the water's edge, so I started bringing foldable beach chairs instead, all packed neatly in the beach wagon with the cooler and toys and goggles and nets and boards. It takes awhile to load and unload it all twice, and I get home at noon thoroughly exhausted, but it's all worth it knowing that someday, not too far in the future, my kids will also take the beach for granted.



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# CAR SHOW & VENDOR FAIR

APRIL 10 | LAKEWOOD RANCH ELKS LODGE



Country Club resident Steve Edwards saw this 1963 Ford Thunderbird for sale online during the COVID-19 pandemic. The car was located in Ontario, but luckily, he had a mutual friend 10 minutes away to facilitate the transaction.



Lakewood Ranch resident John Calkins has owned this 1932 Ford Woody for two-and-a-half years. He says it is a one-of-a-kind vehicle that was built "from the ground up."



Tara resident Gene Fadely has owned this 2015 Porsche Boxster for two-and-a-half years. His favorite thing about the car is its handling and drivability. "You can feel the road," Fadely says.

Photos by Brendan Lavell



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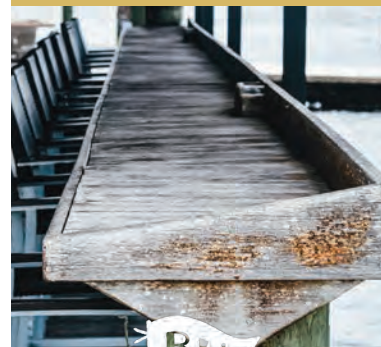
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10719 Rodeo Dr, Lakewood Ranch  
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