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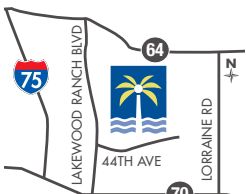


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# Dear LWR

Times like these we discover what is truly important. Worries that we may have had seem so small in comparison to our challenges today. The health of our family, our community, our world, becomes most vital. Over the past months, we have seen great acts of heroism, strength, care, and love - right here in Lakewood Ranch.

You delivered groceries to those at risk, you donated masks, food, and artwork to LWR Medical Center, you painted your driveways and sidewalks, you supported LWR restaurants and businesses, you homeschooled your children, and you stayed home to help flatten the curve.

Thank you for helping make this time a little easier for our community. Never have I been more proud to chant **#WEARELWR**.

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Director, Community Relations



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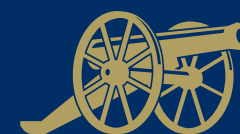
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# LWRLIFE

LAKEWOOD RANCH AREA'S COMMUNITY, NATURE, STYLE

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## Preserving a Mission



Big Cat Habitat & Gulf Coast Sanctuary uses up-close experiences with animals to educate visitors on conservation.

When it comes to guilty pleasures, I admit it: The TV I watch is among the guiltiest. Whether it's "Real Housewives" of wherever, the relaunch of "Unsolved Mysteries" or rewatching the "Sex and the City" series for the 1,000th time, I can't get enough.

And if you think quarantining just made it worse, you're exactly right. So when "Tiger King" graced Netflix with its presence in March, I was all-in.

The eight-episode documentary that follows Joe Exotic (aka the Tiger King) through his tumultuous and bizarre life of raising and showing tigers topped the kooky cake of trash TV for me. Because Netflix automatically advanced each next episode, who was I to stop it and go to bed at a reasonable hour?

It had everything — jilted lovers, drugs, big cats and even a local tie in the longtime feud Joe Exotic had with archnemesis Tampa Big Cat Rescue Owner Carole Baskin, which ultimately (spoiler alert!) landed Joe in jail.

It was sensational the way a NASCAR crash or a twisted love triangle story is (which it had the latter, by the way). You couldn't stop watching it. At least I couldn't.

But as this show rose like a pop culture phoenix, I started wondering where its ashes would fall, particularly for one local organization dedicated to big cat preservation.

It was bad enough that the name of our local organization south of Lakewood Ranch — Big Cat Habitat & Gulf Coast Sanctuary — was so similar to Big Cat Rescue the show featured in Tampa. Even worse, the documentary aired allegations of the mistreatment and exploitation of animals at the Tampa facility for monetary gain.

With the popularity came scrutiny, even for those not involved in the story.

For Kay Rosaire, founder of Big Cat Habitat, it's the classic case of a few bad actors ruining it for everyone else.

"It's a shame when you have one bad person it brings negative publicity to everyone, even the ones who do good work," Rosaire told contributor

Brynn Mechem.

That good work — of saving and preserving big cat species and other animals by providing educational, in-person experiences with them — is what Rosaire has devoted her life to.

Mechem's story (Page 54), shows that work in action, along with the struggle and dedication necessary to do it.

Since March, there have been a lot of organizations struggling, and Big Cat Habitat is no exception. But, Rosaire and her family hope, every day is one day closer to the end of breeding and captivity of these magnificent animals.

And despite bad actors, maybe people will understand that part of the "Tiger King" story and what people like Rosaire are trying to do to stop it from happening again.

Who knows — maybe that trash TV could end up having a little value after all.

Kat Hughes  
Executive Editor

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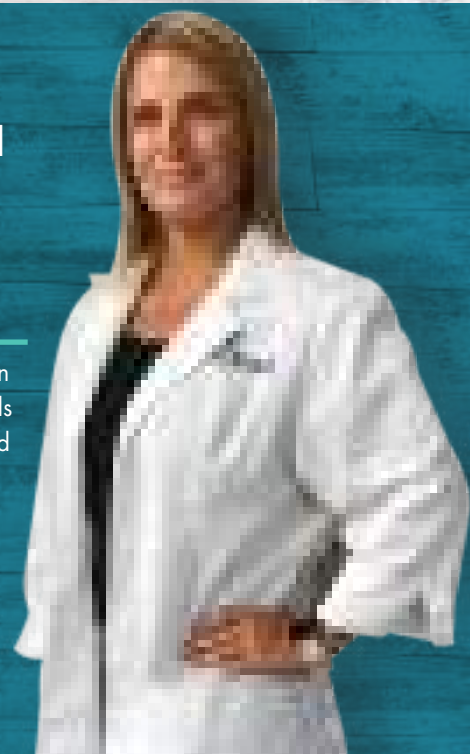
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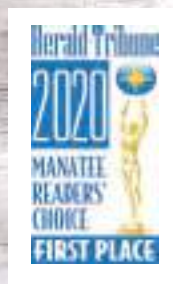
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# BUZZ

NEWS, HAPPENINGS AND PEOPLE

First Watch toasts to its growth with a new offering.  
**PAGE 28**



# FOR STARTERS



Courtesy Images

BY LWR LIFE STAFF

## 1 HERE, FISHY FISHY...

In 2023, a new \$130 million aquarium for all kinds of marine animals is slated to land on the shores at Nathan Benderson Park.

Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium recently announced its Science Education Aquarium (SEA — get it?) is preparing to break ground on the 110,000-square-foot project in September. The aquarium will include a four-story structure that will contain more

than 1 million gallons of water for sea critters' habitat.

Although funding from Sarasota County, which plans to sell Mote the 12 acres of land for the project for \$100, remains just a pledge, the organization has raised \$75 million and is moving forward. Or, in the words of CEO Michael Crosby: "Hell yes, ... we're going to do this."

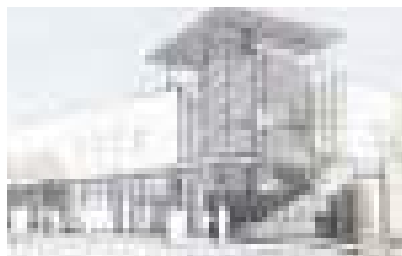
When completed, Mote estimates the aquarium will attract more than 700,000 visitors a year.

## 2 THE NEXT CHAPTER

When East County's new library is completed next year, residents can expect a lot more than just a place to find books.

Over the summer, Manatee County announced it is 30% through the design phase of the new library, which will be on 2 acres north of the Premier Sports campus.

Those designs include a café with a volunteer bookstore, multipurpose space that can accommodate up to 80



people, a youth area that will feature children's performance space, a secure outdoor children's play area and plenty

## 3 IT'S A DOG'S LIFE

Remember Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego? Well, replace the world with Lakewood Ranch, and Carmen with a few adorable pups, and you have "Find Finny," a new video series to help you get acquainted with all things LWR.

The videos, posted every month on the Lakewood Ranch Community Activities' Facebook page, follow three canine bachelor buds — Finnegan, Moose and Riley — as they sniff and pant their way through local locales.

In their debut, the pooch pals head to Lakewood Ranch Main Street where they enjoy some pampering, a little mini golf and home shopping at the Information Center.

It's a mystery where the pups will pop up next (after all, now that they're famous they must avoid the pup-arazzi), but clues posted to the Facebook page give careful viewers the head's up. New episodes air monthly on Fridays, so stay tuned.



of nooks to settle in and enjoy your latest find.

In a nod to creating community space for gatherings, the library will also have a shush-free partially covered rooftop terrace with views of the area. Even cooler? The design includes a treehouse-style staircase to get there (there's also an elevator).

The county solicited feedback from residents on the plans this summer and now it will move forward solidifying the design of the spaces and features.



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# Better with Bacon

Breakfast and brunch is a tasty, and big, business. A national leader in the industry has called the region home for nearly 35 years — and now it’s growing at a rapid-fire rate.

BY MARK GORDON | CONTRIBUTOR

In national restaurant circles, First Watch is a rock star. The latest accolade: Nation’s Restaurant News named the company — credited with popularizing the concept of being open only for breakfast and lunch — the second-fastest growing restaurant chain nationwide, ranked by sales growth. The top 10 includes Chick-fil-A, Tropical Smoothie Café and the No. 1 chain, Shake Shack. First Watch grew sales 48.55% in 2019, from \$354 million in 2018 to \$525.8 million.

More praise: In a survey from employee engagement company Glassdoor, First Watch made the top 10 among all brands nationally in three categories: percentage of employees who would recommend their job to a friend, percentage of employees with a positive business outlook and CEO approval ratings.

Yet First Watch, on a corporate level at least, is often anonymous in its hometown — east Manatee County.

Now in a headquarters in a University Park office complex, off Cooper Creek Boulevard, First Watch was previously located in an office in a Lakewood Ranch corporate park. It’s been based in the area since 1986, soon after co-founders Ken Pendery and John Sullivan opened the first First Watch, in California, in 1983. Some 150 people work in the corporate office,

*Continued on Page 30*

## BY THE NUMBERS

### First Watch Restaurants

Year	Revenue	Growth
2016	\$243 million	—
2017	\$288 million	18.5%
2018	\$354 million	22.9%
2019	\$525.8 million	48.5%



Mark Wemple

Chris Tomasso was named First Watch CEO in early 2018 and has been an executive with the company since 2006.

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lending support to the company’s 395 First Watch locations spread through nearly 30 states.

“I meet people around here all the time who have no idea how big we are or that we even have our headquarters here,” says First Watch President and CEO Chris Tomasso, a Sarasota native who has been with the company since 2006. That’s not necessarily a bad thing, Tomasso adds, given the company’s ethos aren’t flashy but instead based on the golden rule principle and the motto “You first.”

First Watch is on the cusp of getting more local notoriety with a new headquarters project. Under construction now behind its current space, the company’s new home office is planned as a two-story, 39,000-square-foot complex. It will include a workout center with locker rooms, a test kitchen and classroom facilities for the company’s management center. The company, Tomasso says, is planning to move into it at the end of the year, and the entire project “further entrenches us in the market here.”

Company officials also say the project will lead to at least 85 new jobs, with an expected average annual salary of \$82,000. Manatee County commissioners, in return for the jobs, approved a performance-based package of incentives and impact fee reductions for First Watch worth about \$390,000. The value of having a national brand with a corporate headquarters in town is high, Bradenton Area Economic Development Corp. CEO Sharon Hillstrom says, and comes with a lot of intangibles. “When you land or have a headquarters, that’s like the golden egg,” Hillstrom says. “They could go anywhere they want, but they chose to stay here. That really helps our cause as a business destination.”

TOAST TO GROWTH

First Watch grew into its industry leadership role slowly at first and then, over the past decade, like a comet. When Tomasso joined the company 14 years ago, after marketing stints at the Hard Rock Café and Cracker Barrel, it had 60 restaurants in nine states and \$60 million a year in sales. It took 20 years to get to that level. Since then, fueled by investments from private equity firms that led to acquisitions,



Courtesy photo  
First Watch introduced some alcoholic drinks in June at some Sarasota-area locations.

First Watch has grown its restaurant count more than fivefold.

The recipe behind First Watch’s sustained success, executives say, includes two separate but equally important ingredients: a menu that changes to adapt to and stay ahead of trends and an entrepreneurial culture where employees, particularly store managers, are trusted to make decisions.

On food and drinks, a big change took place in June, when First Watch debuted alcohol, from traditional mimosas to a Million Dollar Bloody Mary. The latter includes gluten-free vodka, house-made bloody mary mix and a strip of First Watch’s Million Dollar Bacon. In recent years, First Watch has also added recently popularized items to the menu, such as quinoa power bowls and avocado toast, while keeping traditional favorites, such as pancakes and omelets.

On culture, meanwhile, the turbulent spring and summer has been a time for First Watch to shine in the face

of some difficult coronavirus pandemic challenges. The pandemic, including a temporary closure of its 309 nonfranchised locations, was a rough patch, but the company took a forward-thinking approach on other issues. Notably, on social media, it supported the Black Lives Matter movement with multiple posts, including one on Facebook that had more than 700 combined comments and shares. Yet beyond buzz, Tomasso says it was just as important to him that First Watch’s employees, more than 8,000 people, know the company supports them.

“You want your employees to be proud of the company they work for,” he says. “A lot of the positions we are taking have to do with being a good person — it’s really hard to argue with the ideas of equality and diversity.

“One of the things we’ve been saying around here is we have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. That allows us to see and hear places where we can improve.”

Courtesy rendering  
First Watch is expected to move into its new headquarters, visible from Interstate 75 between State Road 70 and University Parkway, at the end of 2020.

GOOD COMPANY

Three companies in the Lakewood Ranch area have annual revenue of more than \$500 million, with First Watch, at \$525.8 million in 2019, the latest to join the club. The others are FCCI Insurance Group, which had \$930.16 million in 2109 revenue, and Roper Technologies, a publicly traded software and engineering conglomerate with \$5.37 billion in revenue last year.



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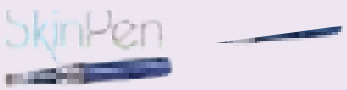
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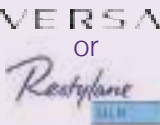
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MVP Sports and Social Co-Founder Chris McComas putts at Esplanade at Azario Lakewood Ranch. The golf league is among MVP's new offerings.

Photos by Ryan Kohn

# Play On

After going virtual during the pandemic, MVP Sports seeks out new — and safe — opportunities to get people engaging in activities in-person again.

BY RYAN KOHN | CONTRIBUTOR

Chris McComas mishits his second shot on the No. 2 hole at Esplanade at Azario Lakewood Ranch's golf course. "Ah, come on," McComas says. It's July 17, and he's talking through the neck gaiter he's using as a mask. "The pressure got to me. I was having my picture taken."

His excuse does not go over well with the rest of his foursome, who simply laugh and tell him to do better. He does: McComas finishes the hole in five strokes. Then it's off to the next. For McComas, co-founder of MVP Sports and Social, a recreational sports league that serves Lakewood Ranch and its surrounding area, this is the beauty of being outside. There's

nothing like getting checked by your friends in person.

MVP is back hosting outside leagues after taking a three-month break. McComas says the decision to transition back from MVP's "Quarantine Cup" — a series of online trivia contests and other games the league played in the early days of the pandemic — to outdoor leagues was not simple to make.

"We knew it would happen eventually," McComas says. "We knew that Florida was going to open back up and that there was going to be demand from people to get back playing outside, even though COVID-19 is not gone. For us, it was about balancing

*Continued on Page 34*



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Continued from Page 32

those two sides. Our biggest goal with the reopening was putting measures in place to keep people healthy while still playing.”

McComas says MVP knew it couldn’t go completely back to normal. The organization’s biggest leagues in terms of players, kickball and softball, were a no-go. There were too many people on the field at once, McComas says, and no practical way of keeping them safely distanced. MVP ultimately decided to open registration for four leagues: a cornhole league hosted at the Sarasota Polo Club, a disc golf league hosted at Bob Gardner Park, a four-versus-four sand volleyball league at Caddy’s Bradenton/Tom Bennett Park and a golf league played at Esplanade at Azario Lakewood Ranch. The golf league was the first of its kind attempted by MVP Sports. McComas says it came together in five days thanks to the cooperation of Lakewood Ranch Communities and the Esplanade at Azario Lakewood Ranch golf crew, who helped them find the resources and the location to host such a league.

In fact, McComas says the other three leagues also came together in less than a week. That flexibility to adjust to customers’ wants and needs is something that makes him proud, he says.

MVP’s customers give the love right back. Check the comments on any post from MVP’s Facebook page — the organization’s main distributor for league news and notes — and you will see a community rallying together. During that July 17 golf match, Kevin Mueller sank a hole-in-one on the No. 8 hole. The league posted as much, with a photo of Mueller posing next to the hole. Within a day, seven people had posted their congratulations, McComas among them. Another post, featuring a photo of the four-versus-four volleyball league, was captioned, “Volleyball and friendships, the winning combo!” It received 33 reactions. McComas says this camaraderie and MVP’s focus on the social aspect as much as the sports aspect is what makes the league special.

MVP has also had an impact on the mental health of its participants, something McComas takes seriously. It was an impetus for the league starting the Quarantine Cup and something



MVP Sports and Social co-Founder Chris McComas believes people have benefited from being able to see and talk with other people outside, even from a distance.

“

*Our biggest goal with the reopening was putting measures in place to keep people healthy while still playing.*

**CHRIS MCCOMAS, MVP SPORTS AND SOCIAL CO-FOUNDER**

McComas did not want to abandon as it transitioned outside again. McComas says the organization never set out to be a mental health salve, but after listening to countless customers tell them how much the leagues help them feel connected, it became a focus of the company.

“Companionship and friendship can be great for your mental health,” McComas says. “We know that not feeling welcomed or wanted can be a slippery slope of depression. Being around people will make you happier, even if you don’t realize it. Getting involved with a community is one of the greatest things you can do for yourself.”

All four leagues were full within 24 hours of registration being posted. Despite their popularity, McComas

says there are no plans to add more leagues for the foreseeable future. The ones currently running are the ones he feels they can run safely, he says. McComas says people are welcome to reach out with ideas, though. He loves hearing feedback and says he can work with people to find the right league for them or perhaps create one if the right league doesn’t yet exist.

Right now, though, he’s happy with what he has.

“I think these leagues have surpassed all our expectations,” McComas says. “People are excited to get back to normal. You know, the Quarantine Cup did a great job of connecting people when that was the only option, but it is nice to get to see people in person again, even from a distance.”

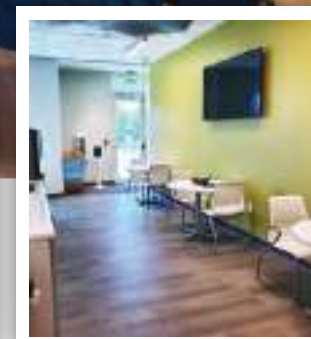
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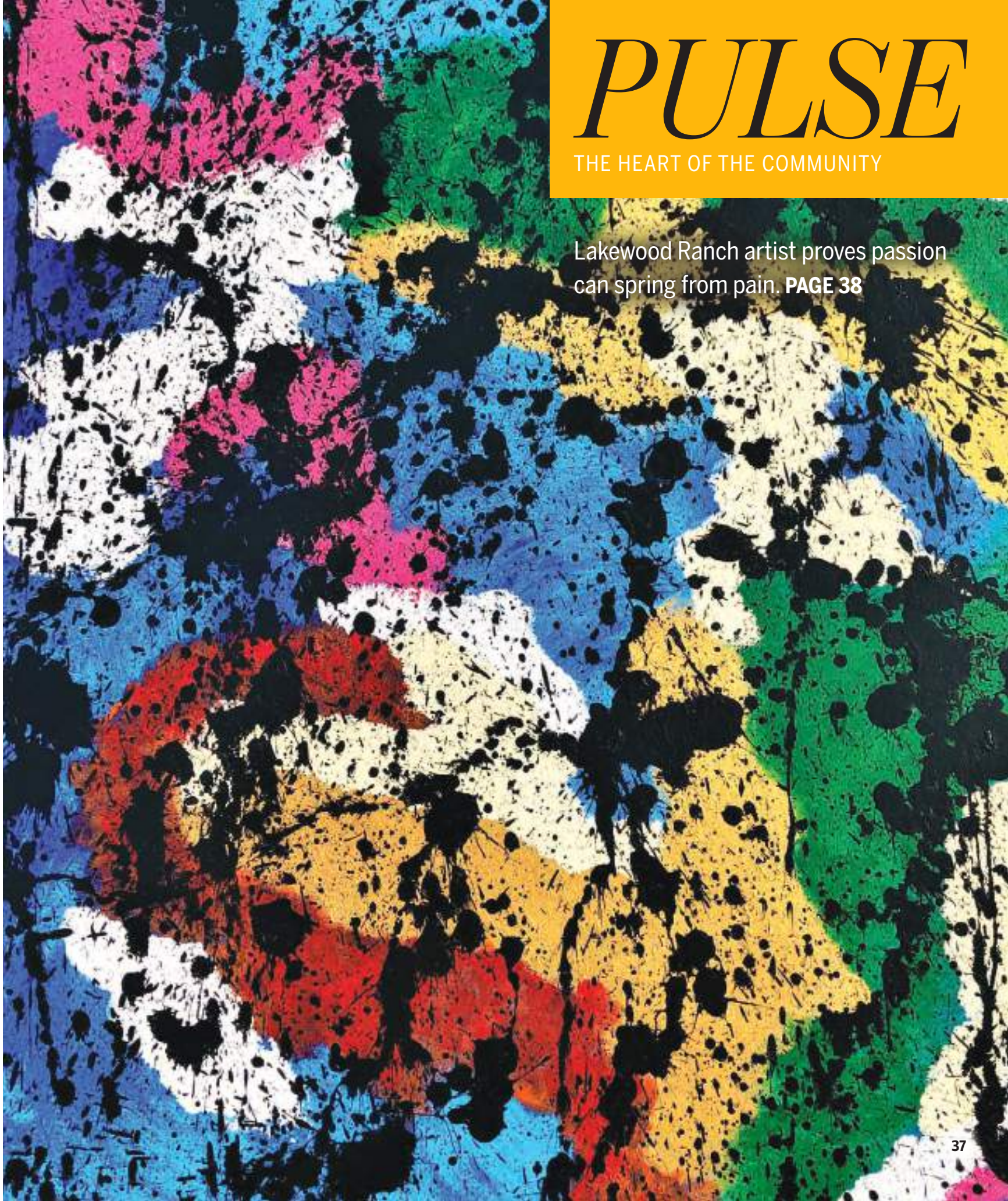


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# *PULSE*

THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

Lakewood Ranch artist proves passion  
can spring from pain. **PAGE 38**







Photos by Jay Heater

# Artist of Note

Lakewood Ranch painter lets smooth blues and jazz inspire his abstract work.

BY JAY HEATER | CONTRIBUTOR

Reggie, the yellow Labrador, was seemingly stuck under a glass coffee table at the Lakewood Ranch home of Elliot DeBear. Or perhaps the dog, who was peering upward through the glass, just wanted a different view of his surroundings, which are populated by DeBear's many abstract paintings. DeBear looks down unconcerned. Reggie will find a way out, just like DeBear has. During the past three years, Reggie has seen DeBear embrace a new passion with painting, move to a new home in Lakewood Ranch, start a relationship and adapt to the loss of his left leg. That last one doesn't get discussed much on DeBear's turf because he isn't about to be defined as the man with

one leg. Then again, it's hard not to notice as DeBear, 70, moves around his home dressed in a tropical-themed shirt and shorts, looking a lot like Jimmy Buffett with a paintbrush. His full head of silver hair presents that distinguished look and hints that buried underneath this newly formed beach dude is a former New York advertising executive, which he was until he moved to Florida four years ago. In 2017, DeBear developed a complication from peripheral artery disease, which is plaque building up in the arteries and interfering with blood being transported to the limbs. A year later, he had undergone several surgeries, and doctors told him he needed to de-

Elliot DeBear says he always liked art but didn't pursue it until 2018, when he could no longer play golf after a leg amputation.

*Continued on Page 40*

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Continued from Page 38

cide whether they should amputate. He said yes, so he could get on with his life.

That decision led to some changes, and being an avid golfer, he realized a major one immediately.

"I couldn't play, and I was a single handicap golfer," he says. "I had to find something else to do."

So DeBear walked into a Michaels art supply store in 2018 and started buying brushes and paint. He had always liked art but never had the urge to chase it. In his new art world, he understood mobility wasn't going to be an issue, so he took his materials, went home and started to experiment with styles, shapes and colors.

Living in Sarasota at the time, he also felt he needed a new environment as he ventured into artistic places unknown.

"I looked at Reggie, and we jumped in the car and drove around until we found this place," he says of his new home at Esplanade at Lakewood Ranch. "It was time for a change."

His first painting after coming home from the Michaels store didn't click so well. He painted what he calls a wild landscape.

"It was not good — it was too thick, too exaggerated," he said. "It was too much of everything. I learned less is more."

He continued to paint everything from flowers to sunsets before moving into abstract painting, which he describes as learning how to use negative space while creating motion over it.

A key ingredient to finding that motion? Music.

Now, a day doesn't pass without the sounds of musical artists, such as Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis or Spyro Gyra, filling DeBear's space. When it comes to art, it influences his mood, his movement and his flow.

He began to name his paintings after his favorite musicians.

He's got a "Dizzy Gillespie," a "Miles Davis" and a "Sonny Landreth" painting inspired by Mojo Boogie.

"The music gets my juices going," he says. "I don't know what you call it, but it's emotion, moving stuff around."

He talks about Miles Davis' genius in producing fusion music, or the combination of different styles. He had Davis playing while painting one day, and he



broke his paint brush. But Davis continued with his smooth sound in the background, so DeBear did too. He painted most of his "Miles Davis" after throwing away the broken brush and using the stump of wood to spread the paint. The work remains one of his personal favorites.

In April 2018, he was invited to exhibit his work at the West Palm Beach Open Show, and things grew from there. His art has been accepted into 11 art shows, including The Big Show National Juried Exhibition at Art Center Sarasota, which was held in July and August.

And it was at Art Center Sarasota that he was reunited with his current partner, Pat Culbertson, whom he had attended junior high with in Livingston, N.J. After seeing his painting in Sarasota, Culbertson looked him up, and they have reconnected over the past year.

"We just jell with our life philosophies, the things we have in common," she says. "He is a loving, wonderful man who is very kind. I've never seen him annoyed, except with his physical pain. Art has been a great outlet for him."

Culbertson, a retired art teacher who now is creating her own niche in stone sculpture, said she'll provide the occasional critique to DeBear, who accepts them graciously, but she tries not to interrupt his own creativity.

"People who are formally trained can get into a rut because they know too much, and they overthink things,"



she says. "There is a creativity about the way he pushes things. ... He has no fear at all. None."

In this next chapter of his life, defining what he does isn't important to DeBear. It also isn't important to him that critics find his work exciting or that he even sells any of his paintings. For him, this chapter is about the creation and the enjoyment it brings.

"I never paint to make other people happy," he says. "Everyone has different experiences, different tastes, different motivations. I don't know if it is even possible to paint what people like. I look at it more like, 'Does it make me happy?'"

"It has been an avenue to reestablish myself. It has given me purpose, something to work on."

**Clockwise, from top:** Elliot DeBear began painting in 2018 by experimenting with styles, shapes and colors. DeBear with his partner, Pat Culbertson. Reggie, DeBear's yellow Labrador, stares up at him through a glass coffee table. DeBear uses music as inspiration for his paintings, this one named "Dizzy Gillespie" for the jazz bandleader.

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Rebecca Blitz, who became SMART's executive director in April, says restricted funding is currently one of the nonprofit's biggest challenges.

Photos by Randi Donahue

# Bridling the Challenge

SMART's new executive director took the reins with a clear plan for the organization. Then the pandemic hit.

BY RANDI DONAHUE | CONTRIBUTOR

An interaction with a tenacious and cheery Rebecca Blitz makes it abundantly clear how she has quickly risen to leadership positions with several nonprofits in the area throughout the past decade, including the local chapter of the Make-A-Wish Foundation and The Haven. Her latest role, however, combines her knack for fundraising with a life-long passion for horses. Blitz became

the executive director of the Sarasota-Manatee Association for Riding Therapy on April 1. The next day, the organization, which offers therapeutic riding programs for children with special needs and veterans, among others, shut down programming due to COVID-19. Despite what could have been a catastrophic hurdle for Blitz, she strapped

*Continued on Page 44*



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Continued from Page 42

into the SMART saddle and corralled her team of volunteers to continue the work. Since taking the role, she’s been busy cleaning and updating facilities, caring for the horses that live on the 23-acre facility and dreaming up unique fundraising opportunities to expand programming. We spoke to Blitz about her transition and what she sees ahead.

**How did you get into nonprofit work?**  
I had a great group of individuals that mentored me and took me under their reins and taught me. But, you know, it was really Jaymie Klauber who got me into development. After that I just didn’t have a choice. I never went back. Fundraising just happened organically for me, if you will.

**Where does your love of horses come from?**  
I have had one since I was in kindergarten, so it’s my passion. There is this connection between horses and me. When we moved to Colorado, my parents (both Air Force veterans) sold my horse, and it was the worst day of my life. Then after we moved to Colorado, I got back into horses. When I transferred to Kansas State University, one of my electives was horseback riding.

**How did you discover SMART?**  
I went out to volunteer with my daughter because she really, really loves horses — I think it’s in her DNA or something. I absolutely loved everything this organization stands for. During the tour, they told me all the nonprofits they worked with and partnered with, and something happened in me. I was like, “Whoa, you mean to tell me all the nonprofits I am passionate about, you’re already working with?” I can’t describe it, but when I put my feet down on the ground, it’s just a really great place. The energy, the people, the volunteers — we are completely volunteer-driven, and it is a powerhouse of amazing individuals that just want to give back.

**What drew you to this job?**  
There are so many great nonprofits in Sarasota, and I want to work with all of them. SMART gives me a chance to do that. For example, we work with sex-trafficking victims. And we work

with military groups through a program called Warriors in Transition. They come from the VA hospital in St. Petersburg, and they are dealing with [post-traumatic stress disorder]. Some of them have struggles like having lost a limb or being wheelchair-bound, and this is a place where they can be themselves. And we work with the Mark Wandall Foundation for children dealing with the loss of a sibling or parent. We don’t ride with them, but it’s more emotional support, and each child is partnered with a horse. There is a connection that a horse has, and it just brings out the best in you. You may come out sad, but you leave feeling happier.

**What challenges do you face?**  
SMART has been around a long time, but it somehow got lost along the way. We are just trying to bring it back to where it needs to be and also actively take it to a new level with new programs. We can do so much out here. But right now, I am just trying to get funds in to feed our horses. We’ve had to cut back on things and had to review everything — our electric bills, our water bills, our phone bills — to know how we are doing; we are asking what can we cut and what can we change.

**How do you fundraise during a pandemic?**  
As a whole, people are still passionate about giving, but it’s also a struggle because you don’t know what the future holds. People have lost their jobs, and we’ve been very respectful of that. I am trying to work my way in these challenging times. These are uncharted waters. And because of COVID-19, I can’t have an event. Even though we follow the CDC guidelines and make sure that everything stays clean, and we stay at our social distance, I don’t want to have an event and put anybody in harm’s way. I am planning a virtual fundraiser ... I am also looking at more virtual programs like sponsoring a horse. People could pick a horse and give \$20 a month, \$50 or even \$100, just to help out.

**What do you think nonprofits need most right now?**  
For nonprofits across the board, I think it would be unrestricted funds. Things pop up. Like for me, all of a sudden, I have a fence that a horse went



Raising funds to feed and care for SMART’s horses remains a challenge for new Executive Director Rebecca Blitz.

through, and I need to fix it, or our AC units are down — we have to fix it. And when you have restricted funds, you’re stuck. You can’t move the funds without having to contact the foundation. Everybody has to find what is important in their world. For some people, it’s animals; others, it’s feeding the hungry. Find what you are passionate about, and give to them because in these challenging times, they are so grateful, and it’s so needed because we can’t have events and talk about why we what we do is good and important.

**So what’s ahead for SMART?**  
I’d like to create awareness about the wonderful things we do and the programs we offer. Our logo just says SMART, and many people thought it was a literacy program. I’d like to create more programs, help more people and raise more funds. Many of my friends are CEOs of nonprofits, and we can start working together and partnering and helping each other out — especially in these times.

# Vanessa

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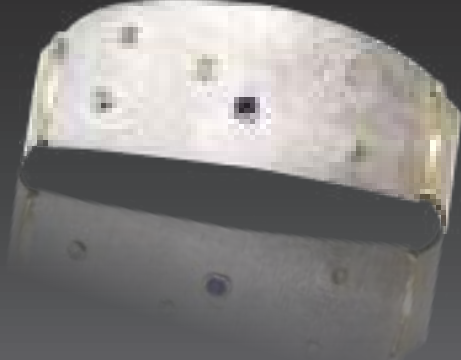


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# calendar fall 2020



File photo  
Bruce Day, of  
Siesta Key, paddles  
his paddleboard back  
to the shore during  
the 2019 SUP and Run  
event. This year's race  
is Sept. 12.

## SEPTEMBER

### SEPT. 1-30 GRAN FONDO VIRTUAL BIKE-A-THON

Team Tony's former two-day race has been reconfigured into a virtual bike-a-thon event for which participants can bicycle in any format — on the road, Zwift or Peloton, for example — and log miles from Sept. 1-30 to raise funds and fight cancer.  
■ Visit [TeamTony.org/gran-fondo-sarasota](https://TeamTony.org/gran-fondo-sarasota).

### SEPT. 10 LWR 101: NEW RESIDENT ORIENTATION

This event introduces you to Lake-wood Ranch's history, clubs, govern-ance and other features of the com-munity. It will be held virtually from

6-7:30 p.m. Also takes place Nov. 12.  
■ Visit [myLWR.com](https://myLWR.com).

**SEPT. 12  
SUP & RUN 5K**  
Participants can run, paddleboard or do both during this unique 5K event at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota. Races start at 8 a.m.  
■ Visit [SUPAndRun.com](https://SUPAndRun.com).

**SEPT. 12  
TREAT YOURSELF LIKE  
A QUEEN WOMEN EXPO**  
This health expo by Simply Events will be held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at The Mall at University Town Center, 140 University Town Center Drive, Sarasota. This event is for women of all ages and all backgrounds. Women can en-joy free beauty treatments from mall

retailers, an exclusive VIP Experience, a mother-daughter look-alike contest, raffle prizes and more. More than 50 women-focused businesses will be on hand. Admission is free. Guests must pre-register for VIP experience.  
■ Visit [SimplyEventsFL.com](https://SimplyEventsFL.com).

**SEPT. 26  
CENTERSTONE LIFE;STORY RUN/  
WALK (VIRTUAL ONLY)**  
Run or walk in Centerstone's 18th annu-al 5K/10K to raise awareness of depres-sion, share that suicide is preventable and erase the stigma around seeking help for mental illness. This year's event is virtual only. Participants can walk anytime from Friday, Sept. 18 to noon Sept. 26. Life;Story program and awards will be held online at noon Sept. 26.  
■ Visit [Centerstone.org](https://Centerstone.org).

*Continued on Page 48*

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File photo

Continued from Page 46

## OCTOBER

### OCT. 17 COMMUNITY BIKE RIDE

Join Lakewood Ranch Ambassador Greg Spring for a 10-mile, one-hour casual bike ride through Lakewood Ranch, starting at the fountains at Main Street. Bring your own bike and helmet. Also takes place Nov. 21. Event is tentative depending on current health conditions.

■ Email [Greg.Spring@LakewoodRanch.com](mailto:Greg.Spring@LakewoodRanch.com), or call 941-907-6000.

### OCT. 10-25 PUMPKIN FESTIVAL

Hunsader Farms hosts its yearly pumpkin festival from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 10-11, Oct. 17-18 and Oct. 24-25 at 5500 County Road 675, Bradenton. In addition to pumpkins, the festival features crafts, live music, hayrides, food and displays. Admission is \$10 for adults and free for children 10 and under. Parking costs \$5.

■ Call 941-322-2168.

### OCT. 26 MANATEE PAL GOLF CLASSIC AND LARGE MOUTH BASS FISHING TOURNAMENT

This fundraising event for the Police Athletic League starts at 7 a.m. at The Ritz-Carlton Members Golf Club, 15150 70th Terrace E., Bradenton. This fundraiser includes fishing and golf tournaments, raffles, silent and live auctions, and an awards ceremony with a buffet dinner.

■ For tickets, visit [ManateePAL.org](http://ManateePAL.org).

### OCT. 30 TRICK OR TREAT

The Mall at University Town Center, located at 140 University Town Center Drive, Sarasota, will host a safe Trick or Treat event. Details are to be announced.

■ Visit [MallAtUTC.com/events](http://MallAtUTC.com/events).

## NOVEMBER

### NOV. 1 FARMERS MARKET

The Market at Lakewood Ranch, featuring fresh vegetables, produce,

baked goods, honey, guacamole, pastas and more, along with ready-to-eat foods like empanadas, fresh bagels, donuts, barbecue, and hot and cold coffee from local vendors. Hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, 8330 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. Continues every Sunday through the end of April. Market schedule is tentative, based on current health protocols.

■ Visit [TheMarketLWR.com](http://TheMarketLWR.com).

### NOV. 13 EMPTY BOWLS

Come to Lakewood Ranch Main Street to enjoy delicious soup from area restaurants while raising money for the Food Bank of Manatee. This year will be a drive-thru fundraiser. Attendees of the event, which runs from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., will get to enjoy a selection of soups, fresh-baked bread, dessert and take home a hand-painted ceramic bowl. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 the day of the event.

■ Visit [MealsOnWheelsPLUS.org](http://MealsOnWheelsPLUS.org).

**Left:** Eight-month-old Monroe Supple, of Mill Creek, spends time in the pumpkin patch as her mom, Katie, snaps photos at the Hunsader Farms Pumpkin Festival. **Right:** Schroeder-Manatee Ranch's Tamara Harris found a bowl that matches ones she already has at home at the Empty Bowls luncheon

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# style

# Keeping It Cool

Fall in Florida is a far cry from leaves and crisp temperatures. Use these insulated drinkware options to keep your beverages — and yourself — cool and sweat-free.

BY HARRY SAYER | CONTRIBUTOR

Yes, fall is upon us. Unfortunately, that doesn't mean the escape from summer it means up north. (You can't have it all, OK? Just remind yourself of how much you'll be able to gloat in February and March.)

Whether it's picking pumpkins or doing the new favorite activity you discovered since this madness all began, you will still be besieged by the Florida sun and the heat it brings with it.

Luckily, drink containers have come a long way from your Target tumblers. So there's no need for a warm drink, be it water or something more exciting. Check out these fun options that allow you to express you — without breaking a sweat.



## Environeers

5373 Fruitville Road, Sarasota  
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Environeers.com

### Hydroflask Pacific Tumbler, \$30 (right)

A classic insulated tumbler, it also has an add-on option of a press-in lid straw for easy drinkability.

### Hydroflask wine tumbler, \$30 (below)

Perfect for the pool, Hydroflask's unique matte finish is great for grip and sip.

## Crowder's

2401 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., Lakewood Ranch  
941-744-2442, CrowdersGifts.com

### Brumate Champagne Flute, \$23

With polo season right around the corner, this is just the thing to keep your bubbly bubbling. Its flip-top lid ensures you won't spill a drop, and there are enough colors to coordinate with any outfit.

### Swig Life Rainbow Can Cooler, \$28

Goodbye to limp, soggy koozies, and hello to colorful can coolers. This option fits a can right inside for insulation without the drippy mess of a neoprene sleeve. It's like tie-dye for your can, man.

### S'well Rainbow Container, \$45

At 25 ounces, this bad boy can almost swallow a whole bottle of wine. A perfect to-go option where glass isn't welcome.

### S'well Wood Design, \$34

Go au naturel with this option to express your more modern, refined self.





**Crowder's** (continued)

**Swiglife Insulated Tumbler, \$40**

If it's time to party, this larger insulated tumbler can keep your cocktail cool well into the night.



**Corkicle Sport Canteen, \$35**

A larger container for a longer day out, the sport canteen comes with a wide mouth to fit ice cubes, a built-in straw in the lid and a folding metal handle on top for easy take along. It seems they've thought of everything.



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**Swig Life Shimmer Bottle Rose Gold, \$32**

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# CLAWING FOR CONSERVATION

A local big cat sanctuary is providing homes for animals in need while bringing awareness to exotic predation.

BY BRYNN MECHEM | CONTRIBUTOR

**O**n a sweltering July afternoon, children of all ages seek shelter in a small arena. As the seats begin to fill, “Hakuna Matata” filters in on the stereo. Slowly, the audience begins picking up the tune, creating a robust chorus. What the children lack in tone they make up for in gusto.

Although the kids are busting out a Disney favorite, they’re not waiting for a costume-clad show. No, they wait for something much more exciting.

As the crowd reaches an ear-shattering volume, a man in a simple black polo steps into the center of the arena. Clayton Rosaire flashes a smile at the crowd. Children, elbows akimbo, jockey for a better position as their parents ready their phones.

*Continued on Page 56*



Photos by Brynn Mechem  
Big Cat Habitat and Gulf Coast  
Sanctuary is home to 55 big cats  
in need. Through tours, shows and  
educational events, the sanctuary  
owners hope to bring awareness to  
the predation of wild big cats.





Ella, Kay and Clayton Rosaire make up three generations that care for animals at Big Cat Habitat and Gulf Coast Sanctuary. Kay Rosaire started the habitat 1987, and now Clayton cares for the animals while Ella gives tours to kids her age.

*Continued from page 54*

Just when it seems the room is out of oxygen, in struts Mia, a nearly 1,000-pound liger — a mix of a lion and a tiger. Although many in the crowd watch from behind their hands, Rosaire holds his smile. For him, it's just another Friday.

For him, tigers are a family affair. That is, if family affairs include keeping a large-animal rescue afloat through a pandemic and negative publicity from a Netflix documentary on similar animal habits. Oh, and don't forget feeding 55 big cats daily.

Rosaire works as the vice president of Big Cat Habitat & Gulf Coast Sanctuary, which was started by his mother, Kay.

What began as a small operation with a goal of bringing awareness to endangered big cats has now grown into a sprawling sanctuary for more than 150 animals.

### CIRCUS ROOTS

As Kay Rosaire drives around her property in a golf cart decked out to look like a tiger, she talks about her childhood. She grew up in an English circus family, learning to care for animals from a young age. In 1961, her family moved to Waterford, Penn., where Kay started her own horse riding academy and taught kids and adults horsemanship with a team of 50 horses.

It wasn't until Rosaire cared for Clarence, the cross-eyed lion, however, that her love for big cats began.

"We had always had animals in our life. It was what we did," she says. "It was our way of living, and then at some point, I realized how endangered tigers are, and I started saying: 'We've got to do something. We've got to help.'"

Rosaire began giving educational tours with big cats to bring awareness to their predation. Tigers have long been hunted for trophies or medicinal uses and are listed as endangered by

the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List. Today, there are fewer than 3,200 mature tigers living in the wild.

After several years caring for animals in the snowy winters in Pennsylvania, Rosaire headed for sun. In 1974, she purchased land on Palmer Boulevard, and her family began using it as winter quarters.

One day, Rosaire received a call from a man hoping to take a tiger to another country. He asked if Rosaire would take care of it while he got the necessary documents in order.

He never came back. "Word kind of got around that we had taken that tiger in, and then other people called saying: 'I've got a tiger that needs a home. It's going to be euthanized if not,'" Rosaire says. "I just couldn't say no. At one time I actually took in seven lions to stop that."

*Continued on page 58*



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In addition to 55 big cats, the sanctuary is home to many other animals, such as tortoises, zebras and exotic birds, many of which have been forfeited as a result of improper care, deaths or owners who no longer want the animals.

“*I don’t say no. If I can’t take it, I find somebody that can. There’s no reason to kill healthy animals.*” **KAY ROSAIRE, FOUNDER, BIG CAT HABITAT & GULF COAST SANCTUARY**

*Continued from page 56*

At the same time, Rosaire’s brother, Derrick, began rescuing bears. They took in three from the Kissimmee Zoo when it closed, but unbeknownst to them, one of the bears was pregnant, so they wound up with six.

“He built up the bear cages, and I built the cats, and after a while, people wanted to come here and see what we were doing,” Rosaire says. “I thought, ‘Well, I can’t afford this.’ I had no money. I was paying for everything myself.”

So they decided to open the park on the weekends for a donation entry.

### STARTING A NONPROFIT

As the park’s popularity grew, so did the property. A flood of animals from farm foreclosures, the dissolution of local nonprofits and people’s deaths were added. About that time, Rosaire began the process of turning the sanctuary into a nonprofit.

Although the park was founded in 1987, it did not receive its nonprofit status until 2005, when it became a full sanctuary. It now is home to more than 150 animals including monkeys, birds, alligators and zebras.

“I don’t say no,” Rosaire says as she stops the golf cart to pick up a baby

bird that has fallen from its nest. “If I can’t take it, I find somebody that can. There’s no reason to kill healthy animals. They may not look so good, but they feel fine.”

Even after the park received its nonprofit status, life wasn’t easy for Rosaire. She put every penny she made back into the park, opting to live out of a trailer and drive an old, beat-up car to make sure the animals were cared for.

“It’s been a struggle,” she says. “Six years ago, I had \$800 in the bank. Up until two years ago, I had never lived

*Continued on page 60*



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Clayton Rosaire steps into the show ring with a liger and a white tiger daily to teach guests about the predation of big cats.

*Continued from page 58*

in a house without wheels because I didn't want to build a house for \$100,000 when I could build habitats for the animals."

The park has 55 big cats, which all eat about 15 pounds of meat a day. That equates to approximately \$4,200 a day just to feed the cats.

After the park gained animals, Rosaire needed help running it, so Clayton Rosaire stepped in. Following his mother's footsteps, Clayton began working with the animals through the positive reward method. He bonds with the animals through enrichment techniques. When he calls the animals by name, they come.

It is this bond, he says, that allows him to safely enter the ring with them each day.

"They fall in love with us because we're the ones that care for them," Clayton says as he bonds with a tiger. "It's like a baby falling in love with its mom. We're there for them every day, and we bring them treats and try to think of new ideas to play with them."

He uses his time in the ring each day to teach the public about the big cats. All the park animals have been born in captivity, which makes them good ambassadors for the wild ones. It's important, he says, to educate the younger generations on animal predation because they have the ability to break the cycle.

"The younger voices are the ones

that are going to change things," Clayton says. "Right now, the world really needs change, for a better environment and for better relationships. There's a lot of uncertainty around animal sanctuaries, but they can be so beneficial."

### CLAWING OUT OF UNCERTAINTY

Much of the recent uncertainty can be attributed to the Netflix documentary series "Tiger King," which features several big cat zoos through a less-than-positive light.

In the past few months, many have confused Rosaire's Big Cat Habitat & Gulf Coast Sanctuary with Big Cat Rescue in Tampa, which was featured on the series. Kay Rosaire says that although she hasn't seen much backlash for her sanctuary specifically, habitats all over the U.S. are now facing scrutiny, which brings attention away from the main goal: raising awareness for endangered species.

"I wish they would have shown a more positive side to this world because it's important stuff," Kay Rosaire says. "It helps people bond with animals, and it's been proven that if people can connect with an animal, they're much more likely to want to save it."

Although she acknowledged there are some ill-managed properties, she says not all of them are bad and should continue to bring care for animals that need it.

"It's a shame when you have one bad person, it makes everybody look bad,"

she says. "I don't think it hurts us too much. We have a pretty big following, and people come here, and they see what it is and how much we care and how healthy our animals look."

One such visitor was Alexa Giovanis, who traveled from Charlotte, N.C., to see the tigers, her favorite animal. As she snaps a picture with a tiger, she says it has been her lifelong dream to see the animals up close.

"I was nervous to come after seeing 'Tiger King,' but it's clear these animals are loved," Giovanis says. "They seem so happy and healthy."

At the same time the series was released, Rosaire had to close the property during its busiest season of the year due to the pandemic. Now that it's back open, she hopes they can begin making up their lost funds. In the near future she hopes to build an educational center on the property, so school children can learn about the animals they're seeing.

As Rosaire looks around from the seat of her golf cart, she begins to tear up.

"We have a wonderful life," she says. "It's not big financial rewards — none of us are wealthy — but we are rich in love and caring, and to me, that's all that matters."

Asked about the future of the sanctuary, she smiles and points to a girl standing in front of the monkeys. It's her 11-year-old granddaughter, Ella, giving a tour of the sanctuary.

"That's my future," she says.



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# Relentless — with Heart

Lakewood Ranch's Charlie Hunsicker has been pushing for better Manatee County parks and natural resources for more than 40 years.

BY JAY HEATER | CONTRIBUTOR

**P**at Neal was chair of the Natural Resources and the Senate Appropriations committees in the 1980s when he was “bouncing around” Tallahassee with a young Charlie Hunsicker.

Hunsicker at the time was deputy director of planning for the Manatee County Utilities Department. Hired by the county in 1977, Hunsicker already had a reputation for getting things done when it came to building legislative support for one of his environmental projects or securing state or federal dollars.

Years later, Neal can still remember following Hunsicker from one office to another.

“He already was known as a very popular, active person,” says Neal, who left politics to become one of Florida’s premier residential builders. “All of a sudden, he was working these miracles. He knew everyone, and we would bounce from office to office be-

fore ending up at the governor’s office. People would say no, but pretty soon, they would say yes. He was relentless. He was Blue-Eyed Charlie.”

Now after 40 years with Manatee County, Blue-Eyed Charlie might have transformed into Silver-Haired Charlie, but he still is relentless, much in the same manner as he was when he was hired as a planner by the county in 1977. His current title, his seventh with Manatee County, is director of the Parks and Natural Resources Department, but no matter what his job, he has tried to find ways to preserve environmentally significant land.

*Continued on Page 64*







Photos by Jay Heater  
Charlie Hunsicker has worked on a variety of environmental projects for Manatee County, including overseeing the parks department since 2014.  
**Previous page:** Hunsicker has been working for Manatee County since 1977.

Continued from Page 62

Besides securing that land, Hunsicker has seen his responsibilities increase over the years, including the duty of overseeing the parks department beginning in 2014. That's important to those living in Lakewood Ranch as the county tries to increase the availability of parks for an ever-growing population.

At 67, Country Club's Hunsicker is spending more time working in the Lakewood Ranch area where he lives. The rapid growth of the area has left a gap in parks services.

To that end, Manatee County spent \$5.2 million to purchase the 127-acre Premier Sports Campus in 2017 and then in 2018 bought another 75 acres just north of Premier for \$4.6 million. The idea is to build a park to rival G.T. Bray, the crown jewel of Manatee County's parks program in West Bradenton that includes athletic fields, administration offices, an amphitheater, basketball courts, a dog park, fitness center, racket courts, playgrounds, picnic areas and an Olympic-sized swimming pool.

Although the new Premier regional park is still in the planning stages, Hunsicker says it could include all those things and more. The park, which is expected to be completed

over 10 years for approximately \$25 million, will be a community focal point. Besides day-to-day recreational opportunities, Hunsicker says the park will offer championship-level facilities that can host tournaments and stimulate sports tourism.

An avid golfer and kayaker, Hunsicker knows firsthand that building parks in Lakewood Ranch, which he calls "the new frontier," takes serious thought. If it seems the county has been slow to react to East County's growth in terms of parks, Hunsicker says people should understand the builders have been providing recreational opportunities for residents.

"Developing parks in Lakewood Ranch brings challenges," he says. "Developers build better golf courses, pools, fitness centers to get the customers they want. It's a full-out competition between them, an arms race. It certainly affects our approach to what we need to serve those areas. We don't need to build a pool next to a pool. Look at Greenbrook [Adventure] Park, which is far superior to ours. Look at Heritage Harbour and what they are doing."

Neal agrees.

"The Ranch and individual developers created their own amenities," Neal says. "We wanted them right now. It's not easy to provide additional facilities."

#### AT A GLANCE

**Who:** Charlie Hunsicker

**Grew up:** Merrill, Wisc.

**Lives:** Country Club since 2017; River Club 2000-2017; Braden Woods 1993-2000

**Job:** Department head of Manatee County Parks and Natural Resources

**Years employed by Manatee County:** 40

**Age:** 67

**Family:** Wife, Susan; daughters Kate (31) and Krista (27)

Still, the Premier site will give the area an identity and presents an opportunity to provide recreation opportunities available to everyone.

"It's a bubble diagram right now," Hunsicker says of the park's planning stage. "We've got 450 projects in the county going on, and we are on a moving escalator. We have a \$123 million capital budget over the next 10 years. We are spending \$25 million in that one specific area. I am proud and excited about what we are doing."

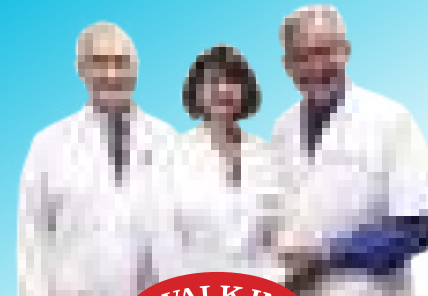
"But I am careful not to unbalance expenditures for any community. East County is getting its share."

Continued on Page 66

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Continued from Page 64

## THE POWER OF CHARLIE

When it comes to finding a steward of East County parks and preserves, Neal says the area is in good hands with Hunsicker. “He is smart, and he knows the rules,” Neal says. “He is in contact with everyone. He is well liked in environmental circles. He has a lot of institutional memory you can’t replace.”

But that doesn’t mean it’s always easy. Spending money on environmental projects — or proposing the public purchase of environmentally sensitive land — isn’t always a simple sell to a county commission that has one lone democrat. It requires knowledge, negotiation and the power to persuade.

Manatee County Commissioner Vanessa Baugh insists she is a member of the Charlie Hunsicker fan club, even if they don’t always see eye-to-eye on how the county should spend its money.

“Charlie is the longest [tenured] employee in Manatee County, and he could have retired, but he loves what he does,” she says. “He loves the environment.”

Hunsicker’s environmental projects aren’t always well received because of cost, but both Neal and Baugh say he accomplishes the lion’s share of what he seeks, especially when it comes to securing funds for projects.

“  
*My philosophy remains that it is going to take us longer to get there, but we are no less determined to arrive.*

CHARLIE HUNSICKER

“It’s just his years of experience,” Baugh says. “He has it down pat. He knows the people in Tallahassee and Washington. I have seen it time and time again. I’ve been to Tallahassee and to D.C. on projects with Charlie. He is relentless. If he sees a conflict, he smooths it. He maneuvers until he gets it done. He never runs out of energy, and he never lets an argument stand in his way. He will back away and say, ‘Let’s talk about this again.’ He will eat crow if necessary. [He’ll say]: ‘I was wrong ... How can we get this done?’”

The relentless part can cause some problems. Baugh says Hunsicker called her at 1 a.m. last year to talk about trying to get rid of contaminated water at Piney Point. She didn’t answer.

“He’s got a wonderful wife, Susan, and two great daughters (31-year-old Kate and 27-year-old Krista), but his work is a big part of his life,” Baugh says. “His mind always is going.”

Hunsicker insists he never has called Baugh at 1 a.m., but he also admits that “like anyone else, I have unfinished business, and I think of things at weird times. I do try to make sure I’m home each day to see ‘Jeopardy!’”

That tenacity is nothing new; it’s the passion behind the long list of career successes. He smiles when he recalls one of his proudest wins: In 1982, he fought — and won — a federal court case that forced the Environmental Protection Agency to move the dumping of toxic dredge spoils from a site 9.5 miles off Anna Maria Island to a site 27 miles from shore.

A former Boy Scout growing up in Merrill, Wisc., Hunsicker admits he can push those around him to their limits, even when he is trying to be nice “all the time.”

Manatee County Administrator Cheri Coryea, who has worked for the county for 31 years, says when she officially took over her position in March 2019, Hunsicker had booked an appointment on her first Monday, to make sure his projects were her first items of concern.

“He had me out at Robinson Preserve,” she says. “I tried to tell him: ‘We only have so much money. You have to be realistic.’ Then he says his favorite line: ‘I can save you a lot of money.’”

A year and a half later, she says they

Continued on Page 68

## MILESTONES

Five projects Hunsicker is most proud of:

### 1982

Hunsicker acted as the Manatee County Commission’s liaison during the county’s court case against the Army Corps of Engineers and Environmental Protection Agency to change the location of ocean dumping of toxic dredge spoils in the Gulf of Mexico. Manatee County objected to the existing offshore site 9.5 miles off Anna Maria Island, and the court ordered the EPA to find an alternative ocean disposal site approximately 27 miles offshore. The case helped develop a new federal policy for future ocean dumping.

### 1986 and 1988

The County Commission requested voter approval by referendum ballot to purchase lands vacated by the Becker Phosphate Corp. and the negotiated purchase from W.R. Grace Phosphates and Estech Chemical Cos. After a voter education effort led by Hunsicker and several other staff members, the referendum overwhelmingly passed to acquire more than 21,000 acres upstream of Lake Manatee, the county’s drinking water source.

### 1985–1987

Hunsicker served as the lead project manager for the Manatee County Utility System to secure \$51.2 million in federal aid with EPA grants, along with addition of approximately \$10 million in federal aid added through 1989 to create wastewater collection systems for south and north county homes. These grants increased wastewater treatment capacity to allow for future growth and protect the environment by taking 20,000 septic systems offline.

### 1984–2011

Hunsicker secured government funding to construct the Wares Creek Stormwater Improvement Project, which, at more than \$50 million, represents the largest federal, state and local investment for stormwater improvement in Manatee County’s history.

### 1996–present

Hunsicker led initiatives to successfully obtain protection of an additional 6,000 acres of environmentally sensitive lands otherwise slated for development. He then led the management and reconstruction of land at 12 locations along Manatee County coastline and interior, the most significant of which encompass Emerson Point, Robinson Preserve, Perico Preserve and Neal Preserve.

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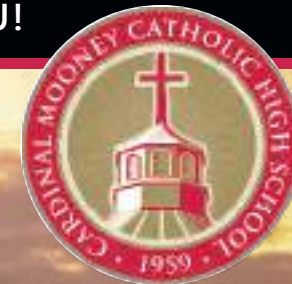
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Continued from Page 66

are working hard on prioritizing his projects. She says he has done a good job of understanding.

Hunsicker doesn't just work to get items checked off his list, though. Instead, he inspires everyone in his department to come up with the best solutions, not just the ones that are planned.

Last year, Manatee County had decided to upgrade all the basketball courts at Lakewood Ranch Park. Matt Porter, the Recreation division manager for Manatee County, noticed that fewer than half of the courts were being used on a regular basis.

Hunsicker says the plan was to upgrade the basketball courts to make them "the best ever," but after listening to Porter's feedback and checking out the site for himself, the county decided on another plan: eliminating three of the basketball courts and replacing them with a five-court pickleball complex.

"It is a joy working with Charlie," Porter says. "He doesn't restrain your

creativity. That's good because I am a way-outside-the-box kind of guy."

Porter says it's hard not to catch Hunsicker's enthusiasm. In July, Porter and Hunsicker went to lunch, and Hunsicker suggested they go check out the tree canopy the county is building for kids at Robinson Preserve.

"We ended up climbing all over it," Porter says.

### STILL WORKING

In the future, Hunsicker hopes county residents become more invested in their parks. Manatee County's investment in the area has been "less than robust" compared to counties of similar size in the state, Hunsicker says. He would like to see that change.

"Our recreation always had been in the reactive, catch-up mode," he says. "But our elected officials have moved from reactive to proactive. That's symbolized in Premier."

He says Sarasota County's penny sales tax for parks makes a huge difference. "They spent \$67 million for one little stretch of trail," he says. "Can you imagine what we could do with \$67

million?

Hunsicker's department has an \$11 million operating budget per year. Its capital investments budget is \$125 million over the next 10 years.

"My philosophy remains that it is going to take us longer to get there, but we are no less determined to arrive."

Meanwhile, his parks department continues to grow. He has 91 employees and averages about one new position a year. That's not enough, though, if the county builds 20 new pickleball courts. He says it takes four to five people to maintain them.

Asked how he finds the energy to deal with everything at age 67, Hunsicker turns on his car radio, and classic rock comes blasting out.

"Led Zeppelin just seems to energize me," he says with a laugh.

Meanwhile, he is starting to get asked how long he plans to stick around.

"I look in the mirror, and I guess I can see why people ask how much longer I will keep working," Hunsicker says. "But living in Lakewood Ranch, I always say you never grow old here."



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# BRUNCH!

Feeling stressed lately? Pandemic'd out?  
Rest easy — there's nothing a good  
brunch can't make you feel better about.

BY SHELLIE TERRY | CONTRIBUTOR



Photos by Harry Sayer  
Station 400 offers a smoked  
salmon eggs Benedict that's  
finished with pickled onions and  
fried capers.

Just a few years ago, brunch made a spectacular return to favor as the weekend's celebratory ode to mommy me-time. Those bottomless mimosas were served all around for the hard-working ladies. Soon enough, the brunch craze rippled to the rest of the social circles because if there's one thing we can all agree on, it's that bacon — and bloody marys — make everything better. We rounded up a bunch of East County brunches tailor-made for whomever you're willing to share your favorite mid-morning weekend meal with.



What could be more romantic than strolling hand-in-hand down Main Street and happening upon the sweet French-infused Paris Bistrot? Plenty of wrought iron tables for two line the sidewalk for al fresco dining, or slip inside for a warm and cozy meal paired with ever-pleasant service from the charming Jean Christophe and Alexandra Nebra, who opened Paris Bistrot in 2010. The breakfast-style menu is served daily with morning standards that include a croissant stuffed with scrambled eggs and mozzarella, eggs Benedict or a generous serving of “Pain Perdu” (that’s French for French toast). And you mustn’t leave without a must-have sweet or savory crepe. No matter what you choose, it’s all perfect paired with a flute of bubbly rose from, you guessed it, France. Where else?



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# Brunch with the Girls

Grab your girls for a weekend morning getaway that they're sure to love: On Sundays, Grove (sister restaurant of Pier 22, which took over the facility in late 2018) hosts Yoga & Mimosas. Karissa Karma Yoga leads a not-too-challenging, hourlong Hatha-style yoga class at 10 a.m. (\$20) in the Grove ballroom, and class members receive one free mimosa and 10% off their meal. You'll want to nama-stay for the fluffiest omelets of all time. (Try the veggie-packed option or shaved prime rib.) You could go healthy with a fruit and yogurt parfait or splurge with biscuits and gravy — go ahead, you've earned it. The menu rounds out with lunch-style items of flatbreads, salads, pasta options and some great girl bonding.



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# Sweet Sanctuary

A traditional home in The Lake Club shines during nontraditional times.

BY ROBERT PLUNKET | CONTRIBUTOR



Graceful columns and a symmetrical facade preview the elegant interior of this 6,500-square-foot home in The Lake Club. Built in 2008, it contains five bedrooms and offers an infinitely adaptable floor plan.





The entrance hall soars two stories high and features a grand staircase.



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In style and appearance, this lavish residence in The Lake Club summons visions of stately homes and neoclassical architecture. You can almost picture days gone by in the antebellum South or the aristocratic watering holes of Newport and the Hudson Valley. Its symmetrical facade and its Grecian columns make it stand out among the sprawling Mediterranean homes for which The Lake Club is famous.

One would expect an equally staid lifestyle being lived inside. So it comes as a surprise that this is the home of an energetic young family. The traditional elements are still there, but they've been redefined in new ways that complement the way families live today in a world full of change.

*Continued on Page 84*



In the finely proportioned formal living room, a stone fireplace provides a dramatic focal point.



Continued from Page 82

The pandemic was a moment of truth for so many homes. The sought-after open concept plan, considered so necessary for the modern family, suddenly wasn't so great anymore. Privacy is the new luxury, along with multiuse spaces. With people spending more and more time at home, away from the distractions and outside activities that have dominated our lives, a home is more important than ever. It has become, almost overnight, a place to work, to study and to do business.

For the Hermann family, their home has turned out to be an ideal refuge. Each of the four children — Makenna, Weston, Charleston LeRoux and Grayson — has his or her own bedroom plus a separate work/study station located elsewhere in the home and adequately separated from siblings. It's an ideal set-up for online learning.

And dad Jared Hermann has the greatest luxury of all, a dedicated home office. It's tucked away all by itself, a spacious room with a peaceful



Continued on Page 86 The master bedroom, located on the ground floor, serves as a quiet couple's retreat, complete with a sitting area.



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Continued from Page 84

view of one of the interconnected lakes that give The Lake Club its name. If there is any spare time during the day, Jared can, and does, sneak away for an hour or so for some bass fishing. Not many offices can offer this perk.

Still, for all the family friendliness, the home retains a rather formal layout. There is an impressive room-sized entry hall with a ceiling that soars 25 feet high. Directly ahead is the formal living room. It boasts perfect proportions, a tray ceiling and a stone fireplace. Adjacent is the formal dining room, bright, spacious and currently doing double duty as a study hall.

In fact, multiuse spaces abound. There is an open loft area at the top of the dramatic staircase that is perfect for teenagers and TV. Then there's a playroom, with windows on three sides, located over the semi-detached garage. It's accessed via a second floor "bridge" that creates a treehouse feeling. The motor court itself has proven to be an ideal play space, with plenty



A stand-alone tub in the sunny master bath offers a spa-like atmosphere.

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The home's secondary bedrooms are more informal, featuring muted colors and fine architectural detailing.

*Continued from Page 86*

of room for games, bikes and even a basketball hoop.

Much of the family life still takes place in the family room, though. It is the home's most casual space, with a beamed ceiling and an informal eating area. There's also an elaborate outdoor living area that blends seamlessly with its indoor counterpart, thanks to glass doors that slide back and disappear completely. Here, you can find cooking facilities, a dining area, a TV and a fire pit surrounded by comfortable chairs.

For such an active family home, the Hermann residence has a surprisingly sophisticated style. The credit here goes to Aimee Hermann, with some help from her friend, interior designer Melissa Long. What's remarkable about the decor is how well it matches up with the home's highly refined architecture. Lines are straight and crisp, and there's a symmetry to the furniture and the way it is arranged. Cabinets in the kitchen and bathrooms are custom furniture grade. Colors are subtle. And, unusual for a large family home, every room is finished. The children's bedrooms have the same attention to detail and custom finishes as the master.

The most outstanding room in the home is probably the master bedroom, where a palette of grays and creams suggests a luxury hotel suite. A low credenza of dark wood warms the room up, but it remains an exercise in understated elegance. One of the daughters' rooms comes in a close



A daughter's room, pretty in a dusty pink, sparkles in the sunlight, with elegant furnishings and a tray ceiling.

second. It's a pale dusty pink accented with the palest shades of white and cream. A delicate chandelier hangs from the ceiling and sparkles in the mirror-accented furniture.

The Hermanns are originally from Tampa and moved to Sarasota in connection with Jared's position as a

first vice president of Morgan Stanley Wealth Management. "We knew we wanted to live in the Ranch," Jared explains, and when they came across this model by builder Lee Wetherington, they knew it was the one. He and Aimee bought it in 2008 and have raised their family in it.

The Hermanns' lifestyle illustrates the way young families live in The Lake Club. With each child in a different school, there is always plenty of activity in the various areas of the home, including the pool and spa. Outside the front door is a Lake Club landmark, a large communal park that's perfect for impromptu ball games and walking Lilah, the family's rambunctious French bulldog.

But the facilities at the newly renovated clubhouse, just a short stroll away, are also a major draw. There is a special pool just for children, and activities, such as tennis lessons, are offered. Parents enjoy the expanded fitness center, the various bars and dining rooms, and the resort-style pool. "It feels like a vacation," Jared says.

But life goes on even as the world changes. The Hermanns are putting their home on the market and plan to build a new one, also in Lakewood Ranch, incorporating the lessons they've learned from their well-loved home on Clearlake Avenue. After all, it has proven a surprisingly adaptable refuge in a world that is rapidly changing.



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# art and about Over the Bridge

Just a short drive away, St. Petersburg offers a plethora of cultural institutions, from various art museums featuring mixed media to the newly opened St. Pete Pier.



SU BYRON  
CONTRIBUTOR

St. Petersburg and Sarasota share an artful vibe. But the city across Sunshine Skyway Bridge takes it to the next level. St. Pete's downtown core is packed with museums, galleries and cultural attractions. Within a few short blocks, visitors can explore the Salvador Dalí Museum, Chihuly Collection at the Morean Arts Center, Museum of Fine Arts, Florida CraftArt Gallery and many more galleries, art spaces, artsy boutiques, bookstores and plenty of restaurants, bars and cafes. Health and social distancing guidelines are still in effect — and a few venues might be online only. Please call or check websites before you go. But it's worth the trip. And what a trip it is.

Dalí explored the murky intersection of science, religion, alchemy, mysticism and mythology. **Dalí's Sacred Science: Religion and Mysticism** reveals those explorations in a compelling exhibit at the **Dalí Museum**. The exhibit comprises 54 prints and mixed-media pieces from five projects. "Mythology" showcases the gods and heroes of the Greek pantheon. "Don Quixote" honors the Romantic quest of Miguel de Cervantes' tragic knight. "Aliyah" celebrates the creation of Israel with scenes of battle and beauty. "Moses and Monotheism" offers the ultimate origin story with a portrait of Moses in silver. "The Alchemy of the Philosophers" draws arcane portraits of history's transformative minds. Dalí's quest is a series of questions, not an ideology. Your head will be full of questions after seeing his enigmatic art. *Through Nov. 1 at The Dalí Museum, 1 Dalí Blvd., St. Petersburg; 727-823-3767; TheDali.org.*



Courtesy photo  
Rob Stern's "Wall Star" at Duncan McClellan Gallery

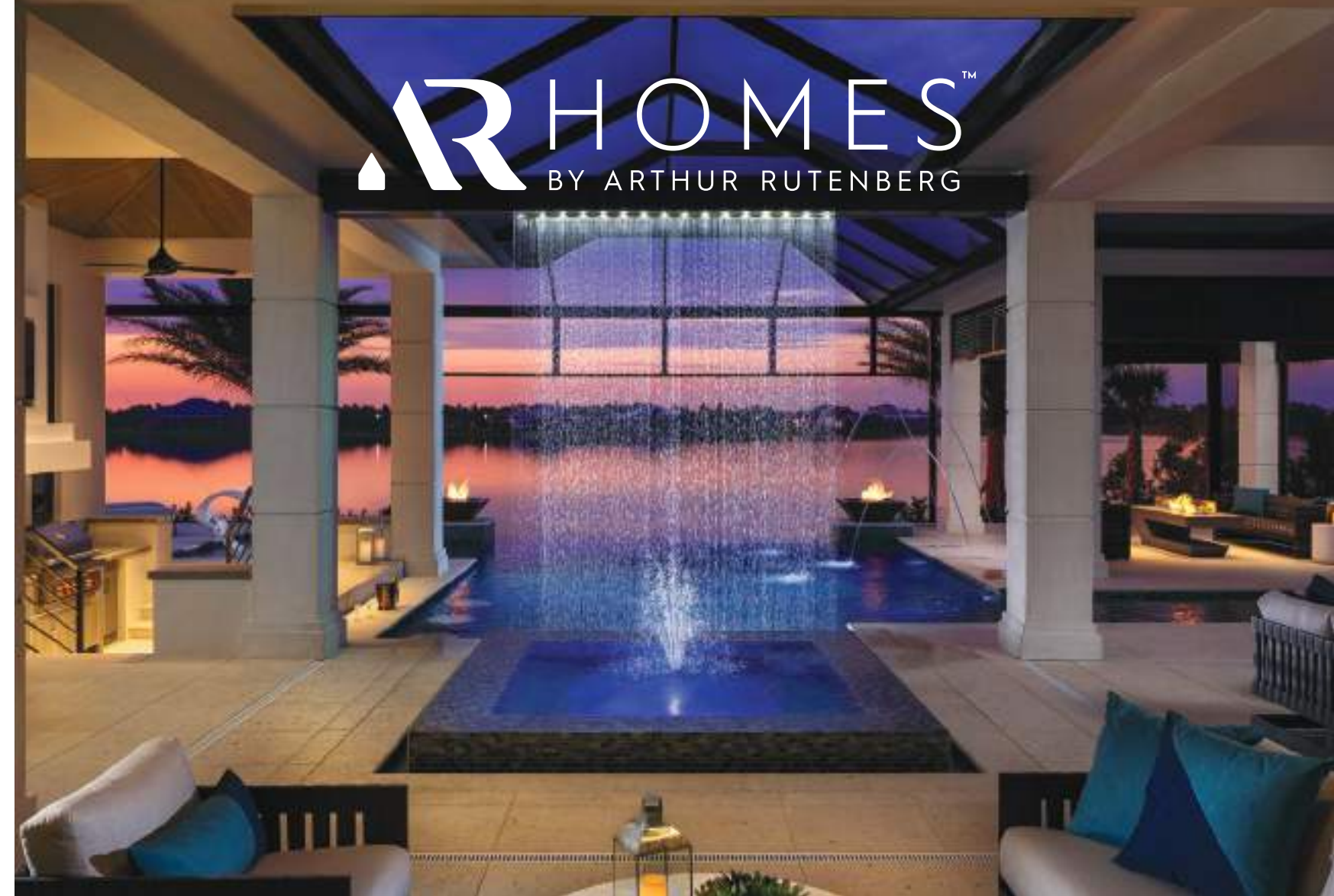
**"Finding Your Way"** showcases Rob Stern's recent art at **Duncan McClellan Gallery**. Stern's work has a fluid, organic quality. His hot-glass sculptural creations evoke the beauty of earth and sky. Stern's work can be monumental. Here, you'll see some of his more intimate creations. His "Cane Leaves" installation captures the variegated forms of sugarcane and blossoms with vibrant color. His blue-hued "Wall Star" glows with inner light — and connects the cosmic glory of a nebula with a sea-dweller's starfish form. *By appointment only. Oct. 9 through Dec. 11 at Duncan McClellan Gallery, 2342 Emerson Ave. S., St. Petersburg; 855-436-4527; DMGlass.com.*

**"Derrick Adams: Buoyant"** deflates racial stereotypes and celebrates the Black experience at the **Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg**. Black people and their desire and ability to

partake in swimming and water activities has long been seen through an incorrect and stereotypical lens. The truth is that misconception is a fossilized attitude from the days of segregation when the finest swimming pools and beaches were "white only." Adams changes the conversation in this vibrantly colorful mixed-media series. Here, Black Americans enjoy the floating world in normalized images of leisure, joy and love. The series draws from Adams' own experience and a 1967 feature in Ebony magazine showing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. enjoying a time of leisure with his family in Jamaica. Adams' images are a vacation for the mind. They will leave you wondering why such images are so rare, even in contemporary American culture. As of this writing, the museum is scheduled to reopen in September with limited attendance and health and social distancing requirements. You can stay connected to the museum with #MFAFromHome. *Sept. 12 through Nov. 29 at Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, 255 Beach Drive NE, St. Petersburg; 727-896-2667; MFAStPete.org.*

The **Chihuly Collection** at the **Morean Arts Center** is exclusively devoted to the mind-blowing, blown-glass artistry of Dale Chihuly. Its permanent collection boasts many stunning pieces. The "Blue Neon Tumbleweed" chandelier resembles an illuminated sea anemone comprising countless writhing blue filaments. The "Ruby Red Icicle" chandelier is a hanging assemblage of more than 300 shards of crimson glass. "Float Boats" swamps a tiny wooden boat with spheres of iridescent color.

*Continued on Page 92*



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Continued from Page 90

The “Azul de Medianoche” chandelier is a cone of undulating, azure-colored snake-like forms. Chihuly’s work is bursting with life — more like exotic, aquatic life forms than something shaped by human hands. His glass sculpture reinvented the medium and inspired a new generation of artists to follow in his footsteps. A walk through this exhibit will show you why. *Morean Arts Center, 720 Central Ave., St. Petersburg; 727-896-4527; MoreanArtsCenter.org/chihuly.*

**Florida CraftArt** gallery thinks outside the fine art box with inspired, collectible creations in clay, fiber, glass, wood and other traditional craft mediums. Featured art includes William Kidd’s ceramic sculptures of the life aquatic, the archetypal forms of Eric Folsom’s brass jewelry and the colorful flora and fauna of Mariel Bass’ inventive glass sculpture. There’s no cookie-cutter art here, just a gorgeous range of individual expression. Expect to be mesmer-

ized. *501 Central Ave., St. Petersburg; 727-821-7391; FloridaCraftsmen.net.*

#### Other St. Pete Delights

The long wait is finally over! The 26-acre **St. Pete Pier and Pier District** opened in July. The complex includes five restaurants, a marketplace with outdoor vendors, spectacular works of public art, the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center, a playground, fishing deck, the St. Pete Museum of History

and tree-lined walkways along the bay. Parking is available at surrounding lots for \$2 an hour. Masks and social distancing recommended. *800 Second Ave. NE, St. Petersburg; 727-822-PIER; StPetePier.org.*

**The Vinoy Park Hotel** is a grand old Mediterranean Revival Hotel built in 1925. It’s been restored to its former glory and rechristened **The Vinoy Renaissance Resort and Golf Club**. Sip a Campari and soda or another refreshing beverage on the veranda, and watch the world float by at the marina across the street. *501 5th Ave. NE, St. Petersburg; 727-894-1000; Marriott.com*

**Haslam’s Book Store** is bursting with more than 300,000 titles and a staff of devoted literati who will find the title you seek. The stacks are stacked with classic literature, history, horror, romance, sci-fi and enough coffee table books to shatter your coffee table. *2025 Central Ave., St. Petersburg; 727-822-8616; Haslams.com.*



William Kidd’s ceramic sculptures are featured at Florida CraftArt.

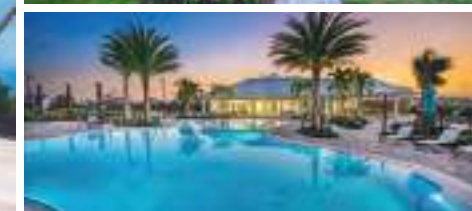


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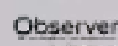
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*back at the ranch*

# The new back-to-school blues

How to turn back-to-school anxiety into something more productive.



JESS MCINTYRE  
GREENBROOK RESIDENT AND WORKING  
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COVID-19. Pandemic. Social distancing. Masks. Herd immunity. If you're anything like me, you go to sleep each night simply praying that you will soon wake up to a day when these words aren't plastered across all news and social media outlets. Remember when scrolling through parenting platforms meant getting ideas for vacations, laughing about relatable struggles and connecting with others to make new friends and experience child-rearing together? Can we go back to that, please?

Unfortunately, as the weeks fly by with the ever-changing landscape of information on the coronavirus, case numbers skyrocketing and manda-

tory face mask requirements being implemented at the business, school, city and county level, parents are faced with one incredibly difficult decision: school.

No matter what side of the road you stand on, the decision must be made. Maybe you have your mind made up and are 100% confident in your choice, maybe you don't truly have a choice to begin with, and maybe you have options but feel paralyzed in making your choice.

The worst part is that once you make your decision, any decision, you will inevitably upset someone else. We have become a community of judges. We have evolved into an opinion-slinging, finger-pointing and decision-bashing

society. Everyone wants to weigh in on your family's plan.

But there is some silver lining. If you look closely, weeding through social media rants about irresponsibility and negative long-term impacts, there is a small light. A reminder to stop the bullying. A push to remember every parent is distraught right now and that no matter what decision is made, it isn't easy.

We need a perspective shift. We need to lift one another up. We need to brainstorm ideas that lead to success for every path. Here are a few:

## RETURN TO SCHOOL

■ **Support local businesses:** Etsy now has thousands of shops offering face masks and shields for kids and adults. Filter the location down to Lakewood Ranch, Sarasota or Bradenton. You might even be able to get a break on shipping by doing porch pick-up.

■ **Safe play:** Talk to your kids about ways to play with friends when they are at school. Remember four square? That encouraged social distancing before social distancing was popular. Games like red light, green light can also provide fun without risking getting close to one another.

■ **Handwashing and sanitizing:** Young children love sharing, as long as what they're sharing is germs. Before heading into the classroom, practice the best ways to both sanitize and wash hands. Hook sanitizers to your students' backpacks, lunchboxes, belt loops, braids — anywhere that might encourage them to have cleanliness within reach.

■ **Lanyards and custom water bottles:** Snag a couple lanyards to keep masks close (and also to deter trading and keep them off the ground) and custom water bottles for kids to stay hydrated without sharing germs. This is another area where Etsy can be an excellent source for supporting local businesses.

## E-LEARNING

■ **Connect with other families in your child's class:** Remember fly-

*Continued on Page 96*



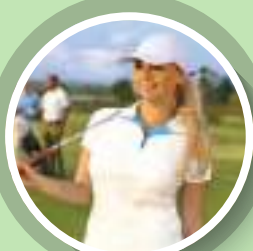
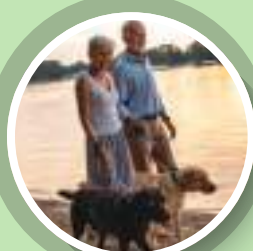


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Continued from Page 95

ing by the seat of your pants the last two-and-a-half months of the 2019-20 school year? Let's not do that again. Lean on other parents, combining affinities in certain subjects or backgrounds in education/psychology to help your children succeed. You're not a teacher for a reason, so don't be shy asking for help.

■ **Digital tutoring:** Have an older child struggling with a specific subject? A defiant kindergartner who just doesn't seem to connect with material? Search any of the parent groups on Facebook, and you'll find a plethora of recommendations for tutoring. The online platform Care.com also has a dedicated division for tutoring where you can find the perfect local fit for your family.

■ **Socialization:** You might be stuck inside with the kids, distanced for protection and inevitably losing your mind a little. Get creative! Have a FaceTime Lego-building play date with a friend, go on a socially distanced nature scavenger hunt at a local park with the neighbor kids, or hold group Zoom calls with classmates to normalize the at-home feel.

■ **Creative classroom:** Kids find it challenging enough to sit still at a desk during "live" instruction, so asking them to stay engaged watching a glorified Zoom conference call for hours poses a whole new challenge. Change up where they sit for class time — let them lie on a bean bag chair, stand to watch (putting their device on a counter) or blow up an exercise ball to allow for some wiggling while watching.

If you choose a hybrid method of learning in Manatee County, you can pick and choose from both categories. Socialize responsibly on days off, and mask up locally for days on-site.

The 2020-21 school year certainly doesn't look like any other school year we've known. We are all traveling down an unpaved road heading on a unique journey, but we will learn as we go.

And if we can say anything with absolute certainty, it's that we are a resilient community, and our kids will adapt, regardless of the situation.

Carry on, folks — we will get through this!



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# GRADUATES CELEBRATE

AFTER A TWO-MONTH DELAY, HIGH SCHOOLS CELEBRATE SENIOR CLASSES



Out-of-Door Academy grad Eugenia Kornacki shows off the cap she decorated.



Peter Prohl congratulates his stepson, James Fowler, on his graduation from Braden River with his mother, Amanda Miller. "It feels pretty good [to graduate] even though it was postponed," Fowler says.



Shamar Beatty points to his family in the stands while walking across the field with his diploma. His sash and mask have photos of memories from his time at Lakewood Ranch High School.

Photos by Liz Ramos

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# FIREWORKS ON THE LAKE

JULY 3, AT NATHAN BENDERSON PARK



Lakewood Ranch's Greg and Liz Krome, with their daughter, Kinsley, got a front-row spot for the fireworks show.



Photos by Pam Eubanks

**Above:** From left to right, Dan Eli, Jen DiPasquale, Ava DiPasquale, Izzy DiPasquale, Derek DiPasquale and Sandi Eli, all of Mill Creek. They play a dice game while waiting for the show to begin.

**Left:** George and Beth Wilson, of Sarasota, enjoy sparkling rose. "It's the right color, and it's bubbly like the fireworks," Beth Wilson said.

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# PLAYERS CENTRE SUMMER CAMP

JULY 7, AT BOB GARDNER PARK

Photos by Pam Eubanks

**Right:** Camper Ben Armstrong, of Sarasota, turns a pretend basketball into another object before passing it to another camper. The game taught the importance of eye contact and focus.



**Above:** Lakewood Ranch 9-year-old Cora Kovatch (right) pretends to bounce a basketball to another camper. **Left:** The Players Centre for Performing Arts Production Manager Alyssa Goudy says it is important for actors to pay attention to other performers on stage, to focus and to make eye contact with one another.



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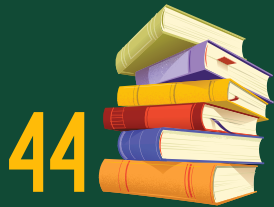
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GROVE specializes in contemporary American offerings and onsite event planning. The menu is elevated yet approachable and locally inspired. Overlooking the charming Main Street center, at Grove there's room for everyone at the table! Gathering spaces include a casual patio, a relaxing lounge, intimate private rooms and a lively, modern bar. We serve breakfast, brunch, lunch and dinner and offer direct delivery to the LWR area.

**10670 Boardwalk Loop, Lakewood Ranch**  
**941.893.4321 | www.GroveLWR.com**

328548-1



## HANA SUSHI LOUNGE

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

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

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

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

**8126 Lakewood Main St, Lakewood Ranch**  
**941.907.1290 | facebook.com/HanaSushiLounge**

338452-1



## MAIN STREET TRATTORIA

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

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

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

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Gordon Silver captured this shot of a woodpecker feed-  
ings its young on White Eagle  
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