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Brain Health and Social Emotional Learning: A Challenge to Social Media

By **Stephanie Peabody, PsyD, HSPP**
Neuropsychologist, Founder and
Executive Director, Brain Health Initiative

Peer pressure has always existed for kids, but social media continues to take things to a new level. Have you heard about the latest TikTok challenge? The new trend, called devious licks, encourages students to break or steal items from their school and post the photos or videos online.



According to a Sept. 15 article in USA Today, school restrooms are primary targets for the challenge with soap dispensers, mirrors, sinks, urinals, ceiling tiles, and even doors among the items being damaged or stolen and displayed in videos on the social video site. Schools right here on Florida's Suncoast and from across the country are asking for help from parents and the community to stop the vandalism and theft that is occurring as part of this challenge.

At the Brain Health Initiative (BHI), we are concerned parents as well as community influencers. We have talked to our own teens about the serious consequences of these challenges — reminding them about a 15-year-old in nearby Pasco County who was recently arrested for vandalizing a bathroom. But we also see this as an opportunity to promote teaching brain healthy prosocial behaviors.

Educators around the country are focusing on social emotional learning (SEL). As defined by the Collaborative for Social Emotional and Academic Learning (CASEL), SEL is “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.”

These behaviors are all developed and managed in the brain and through reinforcement (for better or worse) by the environment in which children are engaged. In other words, if their primary influencers — parents, caregivers, schools — consistently support prosocial

behavior, then prosocial values, morals, and behaviors are developed as opposed to the alternative. It is essential to teach your children right from wrong and reinforce their prosocial behavior.

SEL includes those core values that you see in your school's mission statement, addressing the behavioral expectations of its students. The skills acquired through SEL provide students with the ability to control their behavior, understand the impact their behavior has on those around them, and enable them to empathize and collaborate with others.

According to the Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning Laboratory at Harvard, the framework for supporting brain development related to SEL is built on five core competencies developed by CASEL:

SELF-AWARENESS: The ability to reflect on your feelings and thoughts and understand how they affect behavior.

SELF-MANAGEMENT: Also referred to as self-control, the ability to control your emotions, actions, and thoughts.

SOCIAL AWARENESS: Your ability to empathize with others, understand and adhere to social cues, and adapt appropriate behaviors in a given social situation.

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS: Communicating with your peers, making friends, managing disagreements, managing appropriate and inappropriate peer pressure, and cooperating with a diverse range of people.

RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING: Making healthy choices about your behavior while weighing consequences, safety, ethics, and the well-being of the group.

Chances are that SEL is being taught in your



BRAIN HEALTH FROM PAGE 6

child's classroom. And after a year of distance learning, the ongoing turmoil of masks versus no masks, and the need to relearn basic skills, social learning must take a front seat right now. You can help support your child and your school by promoting SEL activities at home. The BHI recommends these activities for children of all ages, and you may even recognize many of them as things happening in your child's school, classroom, and youth development programming.

READ TOGETHER. While reading, talk about the characters and how they may think and feel to help your child understand the emotions and thoughts of others.

HOLD FAMILY MEETINGS. This is an opportunity for your kids to be heard when there are problems to be solved and in planning family activities and events together.

CREATE AND EXPERIENCE THE ARTS. The arts are a powerful way to develop self-awareness as well as positive coping strategies for building resilience to stress.

PRACTICE POSITIVE SELF-TALK. That little voice in their head should be reassuring



and encouraging them. Many of the things on social media, including TikTok challenges, are negative. Encourage positive automatic thoughts (PATS) as the primary self-talk — I can do it! If I try hard, I will succeed! It's OK to make mistakes! — and make sure you practice it yourself.

MANAGE EMOTIONS. Be open with kids about how to manage their emotions and offer strategies. If your child is nervous about a test, use PATS and remind them to tell themselves: "You've got this!"

ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITIES. Giving your kids jobs and responsibilities helps build their

sense of self-worth and sends the message that they are important to the family's success.

BECOME A BRAIN HEALTH SCHOLAR.

Students 16 and older are invited to apply for the BHI Brain Health Scholar program. Scholars work with the BHI in its effort to promote and protect brain health, prevent and fight brain illness, and improve performance for all ages. Specifically, Scholars will help carry out the BHI's community engagement, research, and innovation agenda to better understand and take action on the brain health and well-being concerns, values, priorities, and attitudes of both youth and adults.

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is a cutting-edge approach to protecting brain health, promoting brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI is creating brain healthy communities, cultures that foster brain health protective factors and address risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the BE BRAIN HEALTHY movement, because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference.

For more information about the Brain Health Initiative or to learn more about how you can become involved in brain health programming, be a Brain Health Scholar, or live a brain healthy lifestyle, please visit brainhealthinitiative.org.

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Potholes? Nah ... Florida Pavement Challenges

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

At a recent meeting of one of one Lakewood Ranch Community Development District's board of supervisors, one supervisor made the statement that he'd been getting some calls from residents about the condition of the pavement on surrounding roads.

I decided to learn a bit more about why pavement on such roads here in Florida breaks down.

Most of us who have moved to Florida from "up north" no doubt remember pothole season – that time of year, especially in early spring, when it seemed that almost every road we drove over contained huge potholes, which only seemed to get larger with each passing day.

In the north, the deterioration of pavement during the spring is primarily due to what is referred to as the "freeze/thaw cycle."

During the day, especially if it was sunny and warm, water from melting ice and snow would flow into the cracks in the pavement, and would then freeze come nightfall, as the air got colder. And as most of us know, when water freezes, it expands within those pavement cracks, thereby causing the breakup of the road surface. Big potholes form, and the road repair crews get to play catchup for weeks as they work to patch all those holes.

But why does pavement in Florida go bad?

We don't usually even get close to freezing temperatures, so there's no "freeze-thaw cycle" here. On the other hand, there are several factors that contribute to pavement damage, even here in the Sunshine State.



As we all know, Florida has a monsoonal climate with a "dry season" in the winter months, and a "wet season" during the summer. It is not uncommon to have rain almost every afternoon, as the east coast seabreeze meets up with the west coast seabreeze, resulting in thunderstorms at that juncture – storms which unleash large amounts of water.

In Florida, rainwater may seep into cracks in the pavement, flowing down into the base material. When this happens, eventually the base material underneath the asphalt may weaken, with the result being that the asphalt layer on top may get pushed down into an area that has become, in essence, "washed away." This would be especially true if the subgrade of the pavement was not sufficient to prevent collapse of the layers above it.

How do we get pavement cracks in Florida in the first place?

Remember that Florida is called the Sunshine State. We have LOTS of sunshine here, and the intensity of the sun here in Flori-

da is very high. Think about the "UV index" ratings given by our weather broadcasters. It doesn't take a lot of exposure to the sun to give a person a big-time sunburn.

Well, the same sun that fries your skin also fries our asphalt/pavement. If you get too much sun over a period of time, your skin becomes dried-out and appears perhaps even a bit lizard-like. The same sun also fries the pavement, contributing to the formation of cracks, and making it easier for water to seep into the area below the pavement.

Another factor in pavement deterioration is the weight of the vehicles that pass over it. You may have noticed, especially during orange harvesting season, large trucks full of fruit parked at the side of the road, especially along state roads 64 and 70. They may have a car parked behind them with the words "State Officer" emblazoned on the side of the car. If you look, you might see that state official place an object under the wheels of the trailer.

That official is the "weighmaster," and his job is to use a portable scale in order to determine whether the trucks hauling all those oranges are within the legal weight limit for their use. If the truck is overweight, the pounding of that truck's tires on the pavement may result in more cracking of the pavement, more erosion of the base, and more potholes.

Going back to that supervisor's comments about the concerns he'd received, he suggested that those residents who felt that repaving should take place should individually call the County and register their complaints, the idea being that a deluge of calls may get the County to actually get to work on the project. As the saying goes: "The squeaky wheel gets the grease!"

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HEALTH OF WEALTH

Stability for Challenging Times

THE BENEFITS OF PERMANENT LIFE INSURANCE



By Huldah Mathis
Northwestern Mutual

In volatile economic times like the ones we've seen recently, it's not surprising that people want something they can count on – a stable financial asset that will be there to help them meet important financial needs, no matter what. For many, that vehicle is permanent life insurance.

Permanent life insurance (sometimes referred to as whole life insurance) is a unique financial tool. That's because it can provide a foundation of protection for your entire life, no matter how long you live (assuming that premiums are paid to keep the policy in force). In contrast, term life, another popular type of insurance, provides coverage for a specific period of time, such as 10, 20 or 30 years. This means a term life policy might end long before your need for it does.

KEEPING PACE WITH CHANGING NEEDS

The ability to provide protection for your family throughout your life can be a vital benefit, especially given the fact that life expectancies are on the rise in America. Today, it's not uncommon for someone to live two or more decades into retirement. And, where once expenses tended to fall as people aged, that's not necessarily the case these days: You may be retired, but that doesn't mean your mortgage or other expenses are retired too. Similarly, you may have a pension plan, but those benefits may pass away when you do, leaving your spouse without a financial safety net after you die.

Permanent life insurance lasts for the rest of your life; it's there when you need it. And because permanent life provides a guaranteed payout, you don't have to worry about becoming uninsurable later in life. Regardless of your health, your family or your business is protected.

PLANNING FLEXIBILITY TODAY ... AND TOMORROW

Equally important, permanent life insurance also provides cash value that is guaranteed to grow each year, tax deferred, regardless of what's going on in the market. This amount can be used in the future for any purpose you wish.

For example, you can borrow against your policy's cash value, generally on a tax-free basis, and use that money for a down payment on a home, to help pay for your child's college education or to supplement your income in retirement. Keep in mind that any loans you take will accrue interest and decrease the cash value and death benefit of the policy if you die before paying them off. However, if you decide to stop paying premiums and surrender or cancel your policy, the accumulated policy values, less any loans and interest, are yours.

A COST EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE

Many permanent life insurance policies also are eligible for dividends, which can add to your death benefit and any cash value, which grows tax deferred.

These dividends, which are not guaranteed, can be used to pay all or part of your premiums, helping to reduce or even eliminate your out-of-pocket cost for coverage. They can also be used to increase your total death benefit over time without increasing your premiums.

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

While cost is an important factor when considering any type of insurance, it's important to look at more than just the premium. You'll want to also consider the financial strength of the insurance company, including its claims-paying ability and track record of paying dividends. After all, you want a company that is likely to be there for you when you need it.

You'll also want to understand what you're buying. This is where a trained financial representative can help. A good financial representative will help you evaluate your goals and objectives, and help identify which products offer the most appropriate solution for your unique circumstances. And, equally important, a trusted financial representative will review your insurance policies with you every year to ensure it continues to meet your changing needs.

Huldah C. Mathis is an agent of NM and registered representative of the NMIS based in Sarasota. To contact her, please call (941) 957-4518, email huldah.mathis@nm.com, or visit huldahmathis.nm.com.

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LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

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What started off as a few occasional programs has blossomed into a full-blown year-round schedule. Our Parks and Recreation team has worked hard to bring a diverse selection of programming to our residents. Seeing the community come together over shared interests – as well as the desire to learn new skills – has been the best part of it all!



Keith Pandeloglou
Director of LWRCAC

While still offering a wide range of fitness classes, there have also been a number of skills-based classes that have been introduced this year, and even just this last quarter! Two of our most popular opening days thus far have been for "Intro to Gardening" as well as "Aloha Ukulele." Intro to Gardening taught both children and their parents about vegetable gardening in Florida and how you can grow your own food right in your own backyard or in a community garden.

The latter, "Aloha Ukulele," started late September and will continue to run through October 20. Attendees enjoy learning how to play the instrument, read music and harmonize with others. The sense of camaraderie that comes with play-



ing music amongst a group of people was not lost on this batch, as many can't wait to get to class again the following week. If you can't get enough of playing the ukulele, check out the Lakewood Ranch App and head to the Community Groups section to see how you can join Ranch Ukulele!

In addition to new programs, there are, of course, the fan favorites! "BollyX" is yet again bringing together neighbors and keeping them active with smiles on their faces. Taking



place at the brand-new Waterside Park, BollyX is inspired by Indian film, music, and dancing. This quarter, the kids got their first chance to experience this fun dance-fitness class. The first-ever "BollyX Kids" took place directly after the October session of this popular program.

Speaking of kids, there are multiple community groups and programs designed for mothers and their babies! Between the "Waterside Mom's Group," "Mom's Group," and "Mommy & Me" program, there are so many opportunities for parents to meet and mingle while their little ones get to make friends too. With a community full of families, it is important to give them the opportunity to connect with one another! Check out the myLWR.com website to see the full list of programs and community groups; come find your tribe!

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AROUND THE RANCH

LAKEWOOD RANCH REMEMBERS 9/11, 20 Years Later



Rare are the particular events that we remember as a turning point in a generation. These events mark us for life, and our memories are filled with thoughts of where we were when we heard about the event, or what our initial reaction was to the news, or what changes happened in our lives in the days and months after as a result.

For many of our parents and grandparents, it was the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, which brought America instantly into World War II.

For those of us "Baby Boomers," it was the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963. No sitting American president had been killed in office since 1901.

And then came the morning of September 11, 2001. Four airliners were hijacked and two flown into the towers of New York's World Trade Center. Another was crashed into the Pentagon, and the fourth ended up in a Pennsylvania field.

Almost 3,000 were killed on that day, and more would die as a result of their work to rescue what survivors there were, or recover those who perished.

As for me, I was working in my company's Detroit office when someone called and told us that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. We turned on the TV in our conference room, which by this time was showing footage of the initial crash. Then we saw another plane hit the other tower, and we knew that this crash was no accident. Then came the news from Virginia and Pennsylvania. And the world was no longer the same.

The first reaction was shock – how had this happened? Why would people do such a thing? It would take a while for the answers to these questions to come out.

But in the meantime, America had changed. We no longer felt safe. The oceans which had kept our cities intact during World War II hadn't protected us this time. For that matter, it was determined that no country had attacked us, but a small, militant Middle Eastern group.

Those attacks spawned two wars, in Iraq and Afghanistan, resulting in the loss of many of our military service members, a "war on terror," and permanent changes in the way we go about our lives. A new government department was created: Homeland Security. Its most obvious presence we see every time we fly. We have to remove our shoes. We're subjected to searches of ourselves and our luggage, and yet there's still this notion that someone on any flight might be there to do us harm.

But, here we are, 20 years later, in a community that was in its infancy in 2001 – Lakewood Ranch.

On September 11, 2021, citizens of Lakewood Ranch gathered on Main Street to remember.

A Remembrance Cube, designed by Fawley-Bryant Architects and built by Willis Smith construction, was set up as a focal point of the morning's activities. At the top of the cube was a representation of the New York skyline, against a gray background, with the Statue of Liberty in the center. Behind the statue were stripes signifying the Twin Towers, one in blue with white stars, and the other in red with white stripes, signifying the towers of the World Trade Center. Residents were encouraged to sign the cube, or write comments on it.

In the center of Main Street was a ladder truck from East Manatee Fire/Rescue, with its ladder raised, and on the ladder hung a giant American flag.

The remembrance program, presided over by Lori Ruth, associate publisher of the East County Observer, began with music provided by the Out-of-Door Academy Orchestra, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The flag was carried on horseback, and the Pledge was followed by the singing of the Star-Spangled Banner.

Retired New York firefighter and Lakewood Ranch resident Steve Lubrino told of his experiences at the Trade Center on that day in 2001. He heard the multiple alarms, called his wife to let her know where he was going, and didn't see her until the following evening. At one point, he



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER



remembered, a group of firefighters came out of the building, some going in one direction and some in another. Those who went in the direction opposite that of Steve and his group didn't survive. He moved to Lakewood Ranch after his retirement from the Fire department in 2014, and commented that he never wanted to shovel snow ever again!

Steve's comments were followed by the singing of "God Bless America," after which pipers played "Amazing Grace."

Pastor Chris of Grace Church gave the closing prayer, asking that Americans be a people who seek to bring the Peace of God to all the Earth.

The Remembrance Cube had written on it a quote from the Roman poet Virgil: "No day shall erase you from the memory of time."





Lakewood Ranch is More Than a Dot on the Wine Lover's Map!

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

There are lots of wine lovers in Lakewood Ranch. There's even a Lakewood Ranch Wine Club. And there have been a number of wine stores in our community, along with a couple of nice places to come in, do a little tasting, have a glass and a small snack, and go home with a bottle ... or two ... or perhaps a case ... or two.

However, only recently has the Lakewood Ranch area become home to an entirely different sort of wine experience.

In June of this year, Cooper's Hawk Winery and Restaurant opened in the Fruitville Commons shopping center, located off Fruitville Road, just east of I-75.

For those who are not familiar with the compa-

ny, Cooper's Hawk is headquartered in Illinois, and has grown into a chain of locations that boast not only tasting rooms where patrons can sip away to their heart's content on a huge selection of wines, but their locations also contain good casual dining restaurants, and bar areas where customers can watch their favorite sports on television while grabbing a good burger (and, of course something to drink with that burger, be it a glass of red wine, a craft beer, or just a soft drink).

I've become a fan of Cooper's Hawk since my bride, an Illinois native, introduced me to the experience when we visited family in the Chicago area over a year ago. She loves good wine, and actually worked for another winery for a short period of time. Since then, we've been to the Cooper's Hawk location in Tampa, which is close to the airport and



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER

the International Mall, on numerous occasions.

You may ask as to why we frequent Cooper's Hawk establishments. Well, for one thing, Cooper's Hawk has a wine club, to which my wife belongs. Her membership in the wine club brings with it discounts not only on the wine, of course, but on dining also. Being a member of the wine club makes going to Cooper's Hawk a win-win experience. And being a member of the wine club is not expensive: The fee to join is only \$19.99.

What can a wine lover experience at the new Lakewood Ranch-area location of Cooper's Hawk?

To find out exactly what to expect, we ventured forth to the new winery/restaurant recently. We took the Fruitville exit off southbound I-75, and drove east, finding the Cooper's Hawk Winery just a short distance from the freeway. Note: You'll need to turn north off Fruitville onto Coburn Road, which borders Cooper's Hawk on the east, since there is no direct driveway connection from Fruitville Road. Parking is available both on the Fruitville Road side and behind the building.

When we walked into the building, we were quite surprised at how many people were there. The tasting room area was practically "standing room only," and we were concerned as to whether we'd be able to get a table for lunch in the restaurant. The bar area was also crowded, with folks eating and drinking and watching games on the bar TVs. No problem, though, the hostess got us seated in a matter of a minute or two, and we were greeted immediately by our smiling waiter, Chris.

We were presented with large food menus, and an equally large drink menu, both of which had a long list of inviting items. I should point out that the drink menu contains not only wine, as might be expected, but specialty cocktails (including, but not limited to several different types of martinis alone) and over 20 selections of beers. Cooper's Hawk has four different varieties of sangria cocktails. Interesting.

As for the ingredients in their cocktails, I noted that their Manhattan recipe included Knob Creek bourbon, and Amarena cherries. Guess they don't use the "cheap stuff" here!

But, back to our lunch.

After perusing the menu, I chose the lunch por-

tion of their pork chop meal, which consisted of a very nicely done pork chop basted with a bourbon sauce, and topped with a French-fried onion ring. This was served with what Cooper's Hawk calls "chipotle mashed potatoes," and a side of braised kale. The pork chop was terrific – tender and cooked just right. The chipotle potatoes were very good. As for the kale ... a good try, but still rather bitter. Since this is a wine place, I ordered a glass of Cooper's Hawk's wine of the month, "Cal-Rosso," a light red blend that Cooper's Hawk notes is perfect for "leisurely dinners, long conversations, and making memories with family and friends." I liked it – and we brought a bottle home with us.

My wife ordered a prime rib sandwich, which came with a small attractive salad, au jus, a horseradish sauce, and a pickle spear. She liked her choice, too.

After looking at the dessert menu, we decided to split a plate of "Cooper's Hawk Berry Crisp." This was a great choice. Take a large oatmeal cookie, crumble it up, add several spoons full of fresh blackberries and strawberries, top that with a warm berry sauce, add a scoop of vanilla ice cream, and your taste buds will prepare to sing arias!

As for the ambiance at Cooper's Hawk, you'll find a modern, welcoming place. The booths in the dining room are decorated in dark teal or dark pumpkin colored upholstery, the tables are light wood, and the chandeliers have a "Mid-Century Modern" look to them. The utensils are heavy-weight, and not the "cheap stamped stainless" ware found at a lot of restaurants these days. The overall look is one of warmth and hospitality.

The tasting room is large, with all sorts of wines on display – and available for tasting – and purchase, of course. Offerings range from "classic" varieties to the more exotic, such as rhubarb wine and ice wine. There are also lots of gift items, from wines to glasses to gadgets.

You may go there for the food, or for the wine, or both, but do go. Cooper's Hawk Winery and Restaurant is an experience worth checking out.

Cooper's Hawk is located at 3130 Fruitville Commons Blvd., 34240. Hours are 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Sunday. For more information visit chwinery.com or call (941)263-8100.

IDA Hires Search Firm to Vet Executive Director Candidates

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

While there normally aren't a whole lot of critical items on the agenda of the Lakewood Ranch Inter-District Authority board of supervisors, the September meeting brought action with regard to the replacement of departed Executive Director Anne Ross.

The IDA board voted to hire the search firm of Colin Baenziger to select a group of candidates for the job. Colin Baenziger specializes in executive searches for municipal and community management positions. They assisted the IDA board in the selection of Ross's predecessor, Eva Rey.

It is expected that results of the firm's search will be available to the IDA board by approximately the end of October, after which those candidates who make the "short list" will be interviewed by supervisors and a new executive director will be hired, presumably by the end of the calendar year.

ENGINEERING CONTRACT

All of the Lakewood Ranch Phase 1 boards have established new three-year contracts with Dewberry Engineers for civil engineering services.

IRRIGATION EXPENDITURES

Finance Director Steve Zielinski reported that with the large amount of rainfall that Lakewood Ranch received over the last few weeks, irrigation water usage has fallen sharply, which will result in less cost for the reclaimed water that the community purchases from Braden River Utilities (BRU). This will have a positive effect on district finances.

BRU is implementing a rate increase on reclaimed irrigation water provided to Lakewood Ranch effective Jan. 1, 2022. The rate will increase from \$1.25/1,000 gallons to \$1.28/1,000 gallons.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Masks and social distancing are required at Town Hall. There are currently no staff members who are quarantined either at Town Hall or in Operations.

Per the order from Florida Gov. DeSantis, Town Hall and Operations employees may be asked to get themselves vaccinated, but cannot be mandated to do so.

Interim Executive Director/Finance Director Zielinski reported that there have been some vendor COVID-related issues.

CERT

Lakewood Ranch's Community Emergency

Response Team (CERT) has recently conducted a successful radio communication test with the Operations Department.

COUNTRY CLUB GATES

The supervisors of districts 2, 5, and 6 will meet at 9 a.m. Nov. 18 to iron out gate-related issues.

DISTRICT 1

Manatee County has requested the transfer of a small piece of district property at the corner of Lakewood Ranch Boulevard and Clubhouse Drive for the purpose of the County's installation of a traffic signal at that intersection. The District 1 board agreed to the transfer.

Operations Director Paul Chetlain reported that there are about a dozen irrigation valves in the district that need repair or replacement. This is an ongoing project.

Chetlain also reported on an issue relating to Hurricane Elsa. There was a leak in a water line on Lakewood Ranch Boulevard in the Summerfield neighborhood. During the repair process, a resident's water line was punctured, resulting in debris in the resident's control valve, which had to be replaced at district expense.

BLUFFS NEIGHBORHOOD RIVERBANK ISSUE

The engineering firm of Kimley-Horne has finished a study of the possible remedies for the Braden River erosion problem in the Bluffs neighborhood. The report will be presented to the district board at its October meeting.

Some residents of the Bluffs neighborhood, whose properties extend to the bank of the Braden River, have complained that during periods of heavy rain, the river flow is eroding the land at the rear of their lots, and they fear what might happen of this is allowed to continue.

Attorney Chris van Hise noted that a determination will have to be made as to whether any remedy for this situation, if paid for by the district, constitutes a "special benefit" to only a few residents, or whether it benefits the district as a whole.

DISTRICT 2

District 2 expects to see a surplus in the neighborhood of \$100,000 to \$125,000 in its fiscal 2021 budget, due to the large amount of rainfall in the past few weeks which, along with the use of soil moisture sensors, resulted in a dramatic lessening of irrigation water usage. The district got between 12.2 inches and 16.2 inches of rain in August alone!



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Has LWR Rotary Got a Deal for You! Suncoast Food & Wine Fest Is Back!

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

After the event was cancelled during the “pandemic year” of 2020, the Rotary Club of Lakewood Ranch’s famous Suncoast Food and Wine Fest is returning to its place as the signature event of the fall season, from 1-4 p.m. Nov. 13, at the Premier Sports Campus in Lakewood Ranch.

The Suncoast Food and Wine Fest is the Rotary Club of Lakewood Ranch’s main fundraiser. The Rotary Club has raised close to \$1.9 million for its charitable efforts over the last few years from this great event, and the Rotarians do a bang-up job of making sure that everyone who attends has a fantastic afternoon.

So, let’s just crank up our imaginations and consider what happens during an afternoon at the Suncoast Food and Wine Fest.

First of all, you’ll want to get your tickets, which are \$95 per person, and are available on Eventbrite.com. Your ticket price includes all

food samplings and all wine tastings. Considering that ONE wine tasting at a first-class winery in Napa can cost upwards of \$40, this is a bargain!

Then, tickets in hand, you will drive over to the Premier Sports Campus (Located on Post Road, north of State Road 70 and east of Lorraine Road) and proceed to the fun.

After parking your vehicle, you’ll hand in your tickets at the entrance tent, and the Rotarians manning that station will give you an armband and hand you a bag.

That bag contains a bottle of water, a guide to the various stations at the Food and Wine Fest, a pad of paper so that you can jot down notes on the wines you find to your taste and, last but not least ... a plastic plate and wine glass. The plate, of course, is to hold those scrumptious food items that you decide to taste-test, and the wine glass enables you to taste all sorts of the fine wines from the world’s greatest vineyard regions.

Of course, there are plenty of California wines, along with American wines from other regions, such as the Pacific north coast, New York, and Florida (yes, Florida!). No Food and Wine Fest would be complete without French, Italian, Spanish and German wines, and there will be plenty of those, along with wines from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, etc.

Attendees can browse their way through several tents containing tables at which the various wineries, distributors, and even local wine shops will pour you samples of their finest pressings. You can sample to your heart’s delight, and make notes as you go so that you can remember to put in an order for a case or two of your favorites. You may arrive in a vehicle that sports a “Life is a Cabernet” license plate frame from the Silver Oak Winery in Napa, but you may find that you have found a “new friend” in a New Zealand sauvignon blanc, and you just purchased a case!

And now, back to that plate in your bag – checking out the



PHOTO BY MARK ODELL

food offerings is a must-do thing at the Suncoast Food and Wine Fest. After all, this IS an afternoon activity, and wine + food has always been an excellent combination. So to the food we will go, perhaps starting with a fantastic spread of cheeses, combined with artisanal breads, offered with bunches of ripe grapes, or tiny little gourmet burgers, cooked by a master chef.

Perhaps you’ll try some Indian curry, or Jamaican jerk chicken, or sauteed salmon, or small slices of tantalizing pizza – the kind with a crust that doesn’t taste like cardboard!

And, speaking of pizza, traditionally there is another beverage that tends to go well with pizza ... beer. If you like wine but have a real hankering for a craft beer, yes, you can find that at the Suncoast Food and Wine Fest. Local craft breweries will be there with their finest, along with more mainstream offerings.

After you’ve eaten a bit and had a few samples of fine wines, it may be time to take a load off your feet, and check out cooking demonstrations by well-known local chefs. Chef James Hendry from Publix Aprons Cooking School will be there, as well as Chef Chris Covelli from the Sage Restaurant, and students from the ever-popular Manatee Technical College Professional Culinary Arts and Hospitality program. These students put on one terrific feast – both for the eyes and the palate!

The Food and Wine Fest has a “demonstration kitchen,” set up just like those you see on the

Food Channel, complete with a mirrored cooking area so that you can see just what the chef is doing to create his or her culinary masterpiece. Carmen Spagnola, well-known in Lakewood Ranch wine circles, will be doing wine pairings with the dishes prepared by the celebrity chefs.

If you aren’t in the mood for a cooking demo, you could stop for a while to listen to the live band, or you could inspect the new vehicles that will be displayed by Suncoast Porsche.

As was mentioned, the Suncoast Food and Wine Fest is the Rotary Club of Lakewood Ranch’s prime fundraising event of the year. The money that is raised is given out in grants, some to fund Rotary local initiatives such as Books for Kids, which aims at giving local kids a better chance at reading; to local nonprofit organizations such as Southeast Guide Dogs; to Teen Court, which works with juvenile offenders; to Tidewell Hospice, which assists individuals with end-of-life issues, and so on. Some of the dollars go to Rotary International’s efforts to make the world a better place, such as the Rotary Clean Water Initiative, which supports the construction of sustainable clean water systems in rural South America.

The success of the Rotary Club of Lakewood Ranch’s efforts to raise funds will determine the level of assistance that our Rotarians can provide to charitable efforts both at home and abroad. So come on down, have a great time, and know that you’re part of a great fund-raising effort.

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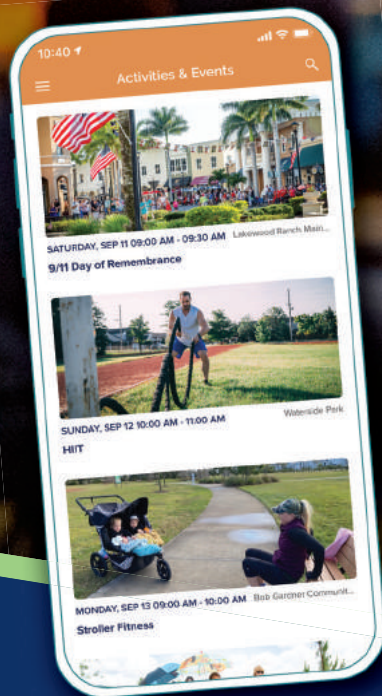
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THE UNASSUMING WINE BROS.



“Roll Out the Barrel”... for Bourbon Barrel Aged California Red Wines

Although we are relatively easygoing in our wine approach at our core, some trends make us raise our eyebrows and wonder, “Why?” Lately, we have observed a growing trend of winemakers utilizing different aging techniques to create new wine flavor profiles. One of these movements – bourbon barrel aging – reminds us of the lyrics of Elton John’s 1972 hit, Honky Cat, “It’s like trying to drink whiskey, from a bottle of wine.” Such aging techniques have us wondering whether winemakers have created something special.

We are The Unassuming Wine Bros (UWB) – Patrick and Vigo – two regular guys who love everything about wine, including writing about it. Our goal is to explore the nuances of wine, share our adventures with you, and have a little fun along the way.

To fully evaluate this new trend, we take on affordable California bourbon barrel-aged red wines this month.

Rating system: UWB symbol – ratings are given on a 1-5 scale, with five being the highest

2019 PASO RANCHES BOURBON BARREL AGED ZINFANDEL (BOURBON BARREL-AGED 3 MONTHS)

Paso Robles, California; \$22 U.S.; ABV 16.8%.

Vigo: If you have been reading our articles for a while, you know I don’t enjoy zinfandels. They are too sweet and jammy for my taste. My opinion has somewhat changed with the 2019 Paso Ranches Bourbon Barrel Aged Zinfandel. It has an eye-catching violet color, and its aroma is blueberries, red cherries, spices, and smoke. Unlike most zinfandels, the Paso Ranches zinfandel is full-bodied and has an abundance of acidity and tannins on the palate. This wine is blueberry forward, with red cherries, baking spice, caramel, and smokiness. It finishes with a bite, most likely from its high ABV and acidity. If you’re looking for a zinfandel that is more biting than jammy, the 2019 Paso Ranches Bourbon Barrel Aged Zinfandel might be something to try. This wine will pair nicely with barbecue meats or a rich piece of roasted pork.

Vigo’s rating:

Patrick: The 2019 Paso Ranches Bourbon Barrel Aged Zinfandel is medium-bodied and surprisingly ripe, red, juicy, and fruity, with red cherry the primary fruit feature. It showed some richness and spice but without the typical jamminess that is the hallmark of many zinfan-



2019 Paso Ranches



2017 The Federalist



2019 Agitator

dels. However, the predominant feature of this wine was not its fruit or secondary flavor as characteristics, but instead its surprisingly nice balance with acidity that carried the wine from its fruit through the finish, which made for a pleasant, velvety, and easy-drinking selection.

Patrick’s rating:

2017 THE FEDERALIST BOURBON BARREL AGED RED BLEND (BOURBON BARREL-AGED 6 MONTHS)

Mendocino County (Anderson Valley), California; \$22 U.S.; ABV 15%

Vigo: Okay, The Federalist brand isn’t a small producer, and you can find it almost everywhere, but dang it, they do a great job making sturdy wines. The 2017 The Federalist Bourbon Barrel Aged Red Blend has a beautiful purple/violet color with the aroma of raspberries, black cherries, spices, and campfire smoke. When you draw the 2017 The Federalist Bourbon Barrel Aged Red Blend into your palate, you first notice the acidity, which is somewhat biting, but it smooths out with the flavors of raspberries, black cherries, smoke, and leather. This wine is full-bodied with some jammy hints that open beautifully. Pair it with rich barbeque meats or hearty Italian dishes.

Vigo’s rating:

Patrick: The 2017 The Federalist Bourbon Barrel Aged Red Blend (76% merlot; 20% cabernet sauvignon; 4% Carignane) is medium- to full-bodied, smooth, and flavorful yet complex tasting at the same time. The fruit consisted of raspberry with red cherry, and the wine had a rich, oaky, baking spice, and smokey texture.

The finish was distinctly vanilla, which gave this wine a pronounced creaminess and slightly sweet warmth at the end. Think cherry cream pie with a slightly toasted crust that you enjoy more and more with each bite (sip). I tend to prefer smaller batch productions, but this more mass-produced bottle was pretty good.

Patrick’s rating:

2019 AGITATOR BOURBON BARREL RED BLEND (BOURBON BARREL-AGED 3 MONTHS)

Parlier, California; \$20 U.S.; ABV 15.9%

Vigo: WOW, this wine packs a punch on your nose and your palate. The 2019 Agitator Red Blend is purple and violet with the aroma of rich black cherries, blackberries, baking spice, and smoke. As the saying goes, “where there is smoke, there is fire.” With an ABV of 15.9%, the Agitator Red Blend has a lot of fire-power with every sip. As you draw in the Agitator, it feels smooth and full-bodied with low acidity and medium tannins. Its flavor is black cherry forward with blackberries, baking spice, and leather. When this aggressive wine opens, the high alcohol punchiness notes are more prevalent. This big-flavored wine pairs nicely with baked ham, meatloaf, or lasagna. The Agitator isn’t the type of wine to be poured to the rim of the wine glass.

Vigo rating:

Patrick: The 2019 Agitator Bourbon Barrel Red Blend is full-bodied, big, and dense. Its pronounced smoky, caramel, molasses, and baking spice notes give it a distinct, decadent, and almost fortified, dessert-like sweetness that

prevented any fruit characteristics from having a meaningful presence. This wine did not match my palate – it instead fittingly almost agitated it. If you are looking for big and sweet, try this bottle. It was much closer in density and flavor to an aged bourbon than a smooth, slightly smoky red blend. If you like bourbon and a cigar, this bottle will be your jam.

Patrick’s rating:

Vigo’s overall impression: I’m still on the fence about bourbon barrel-aged wines. It’s a flavor profile that those who like their reds on the lighter side will not enjoy. The high ABV, the rich flavor, and of course, the hint of smoke are not for everyone. The aged bourbon barrel wines are for you if you like bold, acidic, elevated alcohol, and smokiness. Of all the selections, I would select the Federalist Red Blend to start your bourbon barrel wine adventure.

Patrick’s overall impressions: These wines opened up nicely after letting them breathe for about an hour, and I recommend doing the same when you try them. My favorite selection this month was the 2017 The Federalist Bourbon Barrel Aged Red Blend, as its vanilla finish rounded out a deliciously complex yet smooth bottle. I also enjoyed the acidity of the 2019 Paso Ranches Bourbon Barrel Aged Zinfandel. It drank much brighter than your typical zinfandel, but its balance made it relatively easy drinking and enjoyable. The 2019 Agitator Bourbon Barrel Aged Red Blend was a bit too full-bodied and sweet for my pallet. In fairness, I did not pair it with anything, and it is probably better with meats smothered in smoky BBQ sauces or a cigar. If you try either of these particular combos or the other bottles, we would love to hear from you regarding how you liked them.

All three of these wines were very different, suggesting bourbon barrel-aged wines are not “one-size fits all.” Overall, I think the genius of them is more bottle-specific than an across-the-board slam dunk. Give this month’s selections a try and let us know what you think.

FANS AND READERS:

Like our Facebook page, “The Unassuming Wine Bros,” follow us on Instagram @theunassumingwinebros, or email us at vigoandpatrick@gmail.com. Let us know what you think about this article, these bottles, or suggestions for upcoming articles.

THE (PET) DOCTOR IS IN!

By Erin Siems, DVM



It's that time of year again. The license plates are changing colors as the snowbirds return. We are finally getting a break from the humidity and settling into the holiday season. As Halloween approaches, there are some things to keep in mind for our furry friends.

Candy can cause anything from an upset tummy to toxicity in dogs and cats. Most people know that chocolate is bad for dogs but did you know that too much chocolate can be deadly? In general, the darker the chocolate, the more toxic it is for the pet. Chocolate is not the only problem though. There are other candy pitfalls that can be less known. These include raisins, some nuts and "sugar free" candies and mints that contain xylitol. Plastic/goodie bags also pose a potential choking or obstruction hazard.

Costumes for dogs and cats can be fun and adorable for some of us. While some pets enjoy getting dressed up, others can get very stressed. Always monitor your pet's reaction to the costume and try it out before the big day. Be cautious of costumes that are restrictive, avoid masks that will affect their vision or breathing and be aware of small pieces that can be eaten. Remember, sometimes the best costume is a birthday suit (four-legged family members only, please)!

In general Halloween can be a scary and stressful for



our fur friends. The constant ringing of door bells, shadows seen out the front door or windows and spooky music around the neighborhood can be difficult for some pets to deal with. You may want to consider sitting outside (with some bug spray) if you are giving out candy. Bring friendly dogs with you if they will enjoy the scene. Let the shyer ones stay inside and not be bothered. Always keep kitties inside around Halloween time for their safety. With a few considerations, we can make sure everyone enjoys the holiday.

Dr. Erin Siems graduated from Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine in 2010, and has enjoyed working in both general practice and emergency care. She has been practicing in the Lakewood Ranch/Bradenton area for the past seven years. She enjoys general practice because it gives her the ability to build relationships with her patients and their families. Dr. Siems opened her own practice, Big Paws Animal Hospital in Lakewood Ranch, in May 2020. Email pet questions to reception@BigPawsAnimalHospital.com.

IDA FROM PAGE 15

DISTRICT 4

There were no significant issues brought up during the District 4 board meeting.

DISTRICT 5

Roadway repairs within the district are largely complete. Work on Players will be pushed back to October due to above-average rainfall and contractor COVID-related issues.

Operations director Chetlain noted that heavy rain from Hurricane Elsa delayed completion of the berm project in the Riviera neighborhood. The rain washed out an area before sod could be put down, and that area will need to be re-worked before it can be properly sodded.

The district will be putting in additional irrigation equipment to cover an area at the end of Blythefield Terrace. The grass in that area currently is not irrigated, and turns brown in the dry season, presenting an eyesore situation.

DISTRICT 6

The district will be moving ahead with paving projects in fiscal year 2022. There will be no large increases in resident assessments, since a reserve has been built up over the last several years to cover such expenditures. The traffic signal installation at Balmoral and Lakewood Ranch boulevards is expected to be installed as soon as the County can get it done, possibly by the end of the year.

District 6 has contracted with West Coast Landscaping for common area services for the district for the next three years, at a favorable price. This means that both the HOA-provided residential landscaping services and the district-provided common-area services are now under the responsibility of one vendor.

The District 6 board voted to install a turnaround lane behind the Balmoral gatehouse.



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DOH-Manatee Offers No-Cost COVID-19 Vaccinations at Downtown Clinic

The Florida Department of Health in Manatee County (DOH-Manatee) continues to give no-cost COVID-19 vaccinations at its clinic on Sixth Avenue East in Bradenton.

DOH-Manatee offers the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.

All vaccinations are by appointment only. Appointments are available between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. on weekdays. Call (941) 242-6646 to book an appointment.

Anyone who books an appointment for a vaccination is asked to download and complete a vaccination consent form. The form can be accessed at manatee.floridahealth.gov. Click on “Events” in the toolbar and the system will take you to the page with the form.

Anyone under age 18 who would like to be vaccinated must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

The clinic is located at 410 Sixth Ave. E. in Bradenton.

VACCINE EFFECTIVENESS

Anyone who qualifies for a COVID-19 vaccination who has yet to get vaccinated — whether they’ve already had COVID-19 or not — is strongly encouraged to get vaccinated.

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and have proven effective in preventing illness and death due to the virus.

If you are seeking a second dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, please be sure to bring your vaccination card and the completed consent form to the clinic.

ADDITIONAL DOSES

The CDC recommends that people with moderately to severely compromised immune systems receive an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine at least 28 days after a second dose

of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.

The CDC explains: “This additional dose, intended to improve immunocompromised people’s response to their initial vaccine series, is not the same as a booster dose, given to people when the immune response to a primary vaccine series is likely to have waned over time.”

For more information on who qualifies for a third dose of COVID-19 vaccine at this time, visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/immunocompromised-patients.html.

At vaccination time, the individual will be asked to present the completed consent form and his/her vaccination card once appointment time has been confirmed with a DOH-Manatee attendant.

TESTING

COVID-19 testing continues to be offered outdoors at the Bradenton Area Convention Center from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day (weather permitting). The site offers both PCR and rapid testing.

Additional vaccination and testing sites in Manatee County can be found at www.FloridaHealthCOVID19.gov.

For additional information on COVID-19 vaccinations, visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/immuno.html.

The Florida Department of Health in Manatee County remains dedicated to the Florida Department of Health’s mission of protecting, promoting and improving the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts, as well as its vision of Florida being the healthiest state in the nation.

October Programs at Chabad of Bradenton & Lakewood Ranch

Please note that all events will take place at the Chabad House or tent (outside Chabad at 5712 Lorraine Road) or at the virtual Chabad House at chabadofbradenton.com/zoom, unless otherwise written.

Talmud Classes

Mondays, 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

At the Chabad House and on Zoom

Explore the Talmud and its laws in its original text. No prior knowledge of the Talmud or Hebrew is necessary. Book fee: \$45.

Torah Studies

Saturday mornings, 9 - 9:30 a.m.

At the Chabad House

Participate in a fascinating class on the Torah portion of the week. Discover the mystical meanings and lessons behind ancient stories. Admission is free.

Weekly Shabbat Services

Friday nights, 7 p.m.; Saturday mornings at 9:30 a.m.,

Shabbat Kiddush at noon

At the Chabad House

Enjoy warm, family friendly services at The Chabad House. Saturday morning services are followed by a delicious buffet Kiddush.

Tanya Class

Thursdays, 9-9:30 a.m.

At the virtual Chabad House

Delve into the secrets of the soul with Rabbi Mendy at this weekly Tanya class. Admission is free.

Chabad Hebrew School of the Arts

Sunday, Oct. 24, 9:30 a.m.-noon

At the virtual Chabad House and at the Chabad tent

Give your child the experience of a lifetime at CHS featuring an outstanding curriculum, professional and warm teachers, hands-on lessons, CKids motivational system and an innovative Hebrew reading Aleph Champ program. Virtual and in-person tracks available.

JLI – Outsmarting Antisemitism

Wednesdays, Oct. 20 and 27, 7:30 p.m.

At the Chabad House and on Zoom

Through illuminating source texts and captivating case studies, this course considers the sources of this ancient scourge, along with the appropriate strategies for overcoming it. It’s time to find the confidence to fight hate with hope and to stand tall against antisemitism with positivity, purpose, and plenty of Jewish pride! Fee: \$75 (textbook included).

CKids Shabbat

Friday, Oct. 22, 6:30 p.m.

Join together and celebrate Shabbat with CHS of the Arts! Kids take center stage in this Shabbat dinner with prayers, Torah stories, games, and delicious food! Cost: \$5 per person for CHS families; \$10 per person for non CHS families. Sponsor this event for \$180.

For more information on any of the ongoing events or to reserve, call Rabbi Mendy Bukiet at (941)752-3030, email rabbim@chabadofbradenton.com, or visit the Chabad website at chabadofbradenton.com.

Fast Facts: COVID-19 Vaccines

Go to MyVaccine.FL.gov to pre-register for vaccine at state-supported sites in your area.



The U.S. vaccine safety system makes sure that all vaccines are as safe as possible: COVID-19 vaccines have gone through the same safety standards as other vaccines.



COVID-19 vaccine teaches your body how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. The vaccine:

- Doesn't give you COVID-19.
- Can keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19.



Florida's COVID-19
Call Center:
1-866-779-6121,
press 3

After vaccination, you might have some side effects—they will go away in a few days. Side effects are normal signs your body is building protection. Side effects include:

- Pain and swelling on the arm with the shot.
- Fever, chills, tiredness and headache.

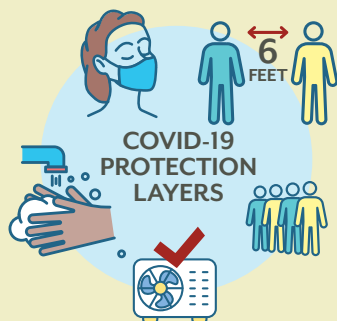
If you're worried about certain side effects, call:

- Your health care provider.
- The COVID-19 Call Center at 1-866-779-6121, and press 3 to talk to a medical professional (the call center is open 24/7).



You're fully vaccinated when your body has built up protection against the virus. That's two weeks after:

- The second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines.
- The single-dose of Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.



Until you're fully vaccinated, keep using the COVID-19 protection layers: wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart from others, avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces, and wash your hands often.

**Florida
HEALTH**

COVID-19 vaccine is free of charge to people living in the U.S. Learn more at [CDC.gov/Coronavirus/2019-nCoV/Vaccines/KeyThingsToKnow.html](https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus/2019-nCoV/Vaccines/KeyThingsToKnow.html).

Want to Save Water in Your Landscape?

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- ◆ Improving the health of your landscape
- ◆ Learning how to plant the right plant in the right place
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- ◆ Learning what rebates are available to qualified properties

For more information or to schedule your one time evaluation, visit: manatee.ifas.ufl.edu or call 941-722-4524, Ext. 1828.



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TO BENEFIT:



Meals on Wheels PLUS
OF MANATEE



EMPTY BOWLS

HELP FIGHT HUNGER IN MANATEE COUNTY!

Your support of Empty Bowls will help children, families, and seniors in need, right here in our community. All proceeds benefit The Food Bank of Manatee, a PLUS program of Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee. Now, more than ever, we need the support of the community. Guests who attend Empty Bowls select a beautiful, handcrafted bowl to keep and enjoy soup donated by local restaurants. There will also be dessert and entertainment.

TICKETS

\$30

General Admission

\$50

V.I.P. (Early) Admission

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Where You Live Matters



Thursday, November 4th • 11am-1pm

Manatee Performing Arts Center

502 3rd Ave. W • Bradenton, FL 34205

Friday, November 5th • 11am-1pm

Lakewood Ranch Main Street

8131 Main St • Lakewood Ranch, FL 34202

For Tickets, Visit

MealsOnWheelsPLUS.org/EmptyBowls

The Florida Registration number for Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee is #CH1420. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free (800-435-7352) or at www.800helpfla.com within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.



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