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ER FROM THE EDITOR

Share the four-legged love



Nate's Honor Animal Rescue's expansion will allow it to save even more animals each year.

Harry Sayer



ook at that face. Even if handful of dogs. you're not an animal-lover, you have to admit: Your heart melts just a little when vou see that cute nose and those sweet eyes.

And that's just what Nate's Honor Animal Rescue is banking on. In fact, it was an adorable photo much like the one above that led to my adoption of Bailey, my sweet black Lab mix, back

in 2015. I was scrolling through Facebook, and wham! Her big, brown eyes melted my heart. I was a goner.

All it took was one photo and the next day I was on my way to Nate's, which is a completely different experience from most animal shelters.

Instead of a long cement corridor lined with runs and cages, a volunteer took me from cute, colorful cottage to cute, colorful cottage, each with just a

They also had a large, grassy outdoor area where you could meet the dogs and see how they played. The experience was one of lightness and discovery, not of heaviness and sympathy.

Don't get me wrong — I'm in full support of any organization that saves potential pets from being euthanized or treated inhumanely. But if you've been to Nate's, you know there's something special about it.

Which is probably why, as area shelters go, it is one of the most successful in terms of adopting out pets. Last year, it found forever homes for 1.347 animals.

And, as you'll read on Page 34, that was the whole vision for Nate's: To provide a family-friendly place that changes people's perceptions of shelters. And now Nate's is bigger and better than ever. For the past four years,

they have been working on raising \$12 million to expand their Lorraine Road campus. They're about \$2.8 million away from completing that goal.

In addition to those cute little cottages, they have a training center to help reduce behavior problems that can cause owners to return an animal. They also have a veterinary clinic to offer care, a pup pool for our four-legged friends to swim and they're even developing a space to hold events.

After delays from both supply chain issues and the hurricane, the expansion is scheduled to be completed this summer.

So stop by, check it out and support all our local shelters. Just beware of those sweet faces - you too might end up taking one home.

> Kat Wingert Executive Editor



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Nate's Animal Honor Rescue unveils its expanded forever home. PAGE 34











A Posh Pickleball Playground

The new state-of-the-art Pickleball Club is the first indoor, pickleball-only club in the Sarasota-Bradenton area.

BY ERIC SNIDER | CONTRIBUTOR

In the fastest growing sport in America due in no small part to its welcoming, egalitarian culture, is getting the country club treatment. A new private facility, aptly named The Pickleball Club, is slated to open this spring in Sarasota just south of Lakewood Ranch.

The 33,000-square-foot center on 2.4 acres will have 12 indoor courts (and two outdoor ones that are covered) made of the same material as those found at the U.S. Open Tennis Championships: 20-foot acoustical panels to mitigate the thwacks of paddles smacking perforated plastic balls; state-of-the-sport lighting that's 70% reflective to cut down on glare; and cameras covering every court for coaching and analysis. Add a cafe that sells sandwiches, snacks, beer and wine, a pro shop, locker rooms, on-site coaches and other amenities, and you've got a pickleball playground the likes of which has not been seen in these parts.

"We're absolutely the first indoor, pickleball-only club in the Sarasota-Bradenton area," says founder and CEO Brian McCarthy. "And I'm all but certain we're the only one in the state of Florida."

Most pickleballers are accustomed to showing up at public outdoor courts and joining in pickup games (called

Continued on Page 32



Brian and Valerie McCarthy foresaw pickleball's boom about five years ago.

Photos by Harry Sayer



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Continued from Page 30

"open play") for free. By contrast, The Pickleball Club costs roughly \$1,000 to join, then \$100 a month in dues, plus additional fees for perks. McCarthy has good reason to believe that people will overcome any sticker shock. His evidence? A list of 1,900 people who've signed up in advance, plus 200 pre-paid members, as well as a raft of new homes being built in nearby Lakewood Ranch.

Robert Haskin, president of the 930-member Lakewood Ranch Pickleball Club, was one of those who got in early. "I'm intrigued by the private club atmosphere," he says. "It will open up different circles of people for me, different levels of competition." Haskin has played almost exclusively outdoors at Lakewood Ranch High School — for free.

As McCarthy sees it, the most important benefit The Pickleball Club provides is its most basic: indoor play. During Southwest Florida's extended summer months, the oppressive heat, humidity and exposure to the sun exact a heavy toll on players - especially seniors, who make up the sport's largest demographic. Rainstorms stop games and soak surfaces. A lack of lighted courts for night play is another local shortcoming. Plus, "the outdoor surfaces, which are usually asphalt or concrete, are really hard on the joints," says McCarthy, who is 77.

He and his wife, Valerie (who is the club's president and COO), foresaw pickleball's boom about five years ago. "I called Matt Gordon, my business partner (and the club's CFO) and told him there was opportunity to get in early in an industry that was starting to take off - pickleball," McCarthy recalls with a chuckle. "He said, 'What's pickleball?' Brian, you're nuts.""

Undeterred, McCarthy, a real estate developer who retired from the Navy as a rear admiral and has an MBA from Harvard, forged on with market research, part of which was an email survey of 4,000 pickleball players in the Sarasota-Manatee area. "The number one issue was that people wanted to play indoors at least a third to 50% of the year," he says.

McCarthy and Gordon incorporated The Pickleball Club on Oct. 24, 2019. Five months later, COVID-19 shut down the world. "We were concerned, of course," says McCarthy. "But, not



Brian McCarthy, a real estate developer who retired from the Navy as a rear admiral and has an MBA from Harvard, says the most important benefit The Pickleball Club provides is its most basic: indoor play.

CELEBRITIES WHO PLAY PICKLEBALL

- Bill Gates Leonardi DiCaprio
- Stephen Colbert
- Ellen DeGeneres
- Kim Kardashian
- George and Amal Clooney
- Andre Agassi

to be insensitive, it was the best thing that ever happened to us."

Pickleball became the pandemic's go-to social distancing sport. Unlike tennis or golf, newcomers can learn to play and compete in games the first time out. According to a 2022 report from the Sports & Fitness Industry Association, pickleball grew nearly 40% in two years, nearing 5 million players and officially becoming the country's fastest growing sport.

Along with that has come growing pains. Wait times at public courts can be frustratingly long. Open play routinely pairs advanced players with beginners, causing tension. The Pickleball Club aims to cure those ills with software that groups together players of similar skill and allows advance scheduling to reduce wait times. Unlike the handful of local rec centers 4444 or visit TPCLWR.us.

and YMCAs that offer indoor pickleball two or three mornings a week (and halt them in the summer when children's programming is in session), The Pickleball Club will be open from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day. McCarthy couldn't say for certain what the cap on membership would be - he estimated 1,000 to 1,200 — but promises that member experience will always win out over sheer numbers.

The Pickleball Club is the first salvo in what the owners hope will become an indoor pickleball empire. The company has acquired land in Port St. Lucie, Bonita Springs and Fort Myers, and plans to open locations there this year. That's just part of a first phase that aims to raise \$180 million in capital and establish 15 clubs in Florida.

Some pickleball enthusiasts may lament that their beloved sport, so prized for its inclusivity and loose vibe, is starting to go snooty. Not Haskin, who heads a club that costs \$15 a year. "I just look at The Pickleball Club as a natural progression, a new way to expand your pickleball universe," he says. "And the public courts are still there, with new ones coming online. The Pickleball Club membership could help ease bottlenecks on those courts."

For more information, call (941) 271-

PICKLEBALL PRIMER

For those of you who have been living under a lean-to in Madagascar for the last couple of years, here's a quick pickleball primer: The sport has often been called a mashup of tennis, racquetball, ping-pong and badminton. It's played indoors or outdoors on a court that's about half the size of a tennis court. It can be played in a singles or doubles format, but most games are doubles. Players use paddles to hit perforated plastic balls about the size of a baseball back and forth across a net, similar to tennis. Only the serving team (or player) can score points. Games go to 11, win by two. There are, of course, other rules specific to the sport, and keeping score is a tad tricky. But these are the basics.

FUN FACTS

Pickleball was invented in 1965 by Joel Pritchard, Bill Bell, and Barney McCallum because their children were bored with their usual summertime activities.

■ The origin of the game's name varies. According to Joel Pritchard's wife, Joan, she started calling the game pickleball because "the combination of different sports reminded me of the pickle boat in crew, where oarsmen were chosen from the leftovers of other boats." However, according to Barney McCallum, the game was officially named after the Pritchards' dog, Pickles, who would chase the ball and run off with it. According to McCallum, "The Pritchards had a dog named Pickles, and you're having fun at a party, right? So, anyways, what the hell, let's just call it pickleball."

> Source: USA Pickleball: USAPickleball.org

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Nate's 'Journey Home' Nears Completion

The \$12 million project will transform a pet rescue center into a world-class haven for dogs and cats.

BY MARK GORDON | CONTRIBUTOR

Rob and Dari Oglesby have long loved dogs. The couple has had dogs and volunteered at dog shelters for years. Their daughter took a photography class when she was 10 years old.

Her muse for her photos?

Dogs.

The Oglesbys are also leading advocates for the safe adoption of dogs and cats in East County through their role overseeing Nate's Honor Animal Rescue. Rob is the development and fundraising director, while Dari is executive director of the nonprofit, which says its goal is to "provide a loving haven for rescued dogs and cats on their way to finding their forever homes." The organization had net assets of \$4.3 million in its most recent fiscal year, according to public tax filings.

"Our overall mission is to change people's views on shelter animals, one family at a time," Rob Oglesby says. "It's not something that has to be horrible or negative. It can be fun."

That mission, Oglesby and Nate's board of fellow animal lovers believe, requires a larger, reimagined space that, in turn, requires a significant investment. That's why Oglesby is at the helm of a \$12 million transformation of Nate's. The expansion — it will double the facility's capacity, to 117 dogs and 60 cats — has a variety of components, most of which stick to a family-friendly,

Continued on Page 36



Nate's Development and Fundraising Director Rob Oglesby with Rory.

Photos by Harry Sayer



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For our patients, that means having access to the expertise they need and the high-touch care they deserve. It means staying close to family when they need it most. And it means always having the most important medicine of all:

Hope.



Continued from Page 34

whimsical theme. Some of the features came from trips Rob Oglesby has taken to other shelters nationwide. Austin Pets Alive! in Texas was one of the best places, he says, to get ideas.

The \$12 million capital campaign, dubbed "Journey Home," is entering its final stages in 2023, with about \$2.8 million to go to reach its overall goal as of late December. Mary Dougherty, Gulf Coast Builders Exchange's executive director and a longtime board member and supporter of Nate's, says the expansion project is long overdue. Like Oglesby, she recalls some flooding and less-than-stellar conditions of the earlier facility on the same 8-acre site. "This will be state of the art and world class," Dougherty says.

Nate's dates to 2008, when a small group of volunteers with a passion for helping animals in need of rescue banded together. They worked from garages, and sometimes a dirt floor barn, to save the lives of homeless and at-risk animals. Benderson Development Co. founder Nate Benderson, then in his late 80s, joined the group, providing financial support and business leadership. Benderson died in 2012, and the East County-based company's support of the rescue nonprofit that bears his name has continued. That includes serving as lead builder for the current expansion project.

The expansion project was announced in 2018 and broke ground in 2019.

Some of the project has been completed, including the 4,300-square-foot training center and 5,000-square-foot intake building. The training center, say Nate's officials, is a key component of the project because that's where staff will train dogs and cats on becoming home-based pets.

The last phase of construction, currently ongoing, is a 23,000-square-foot welcome and education center. That phase includes nine new dog cottages, which come with solar-powered fans inside and cupolas to circulate air. There's also a new cat habitat in the works, which will provide felines indoor and outdoor access.

The welcome center has many other highlights. The list includes a veterinary clinic; parvo and maternity ward; an education and community center that can host birthday parties and even



Stella, the white Lab, cools off in the dog pool.



Adorable puppies wait to find their forever homes at Nate's.



When the expansion is complete, the facility will be able to house 60 cats.

weddings; and a waffle cafe and ice cream shop. The events side is important, say both Oglesby and Dougherty, because it provides ongoing revenue streams. "How great would that be," asks Dougherty, "to have a wedding surrounded by kittens and puppies?"

There will be a two-bedroom apartment on the second level of the center for students on a veterinary externship and possibly an employee. There will also be an end-of-life room for pet owners to avoid the lobby, when preparing to have their pet euthanized.

The fundraising goal to cover all this was initially \$10 million, but that went up by \$2 million to account for supply chain and other issues. While the Benderson family is a big supporter, and there are some other major do-



Hannah the husky smiles for the camera.



Molly, a black Lab, is one of the happy canine denizens at Nate's.

nors, for the most part, Oglesby says, "we've gotten a bunch of small donors" to fuel the campaign.

The welcome center is scheduled to be open by June, though Oglesby, taking a visitor on a tour in late 2022, says he's prepared for more delays. Oglesby counts off some of the delays one by one: air conditioning units were more than a year behind, doors for kennels were 20 weeks behind schedule and cabinets were four to six months late.

"It's taking forever," Oglesby says. "But it's going to be amazing."

If You Go: 4951 Lorraine Road, Bradenton; (941) 747-4900; NatesHonorAnimalRescue.org.

BY THE NUMBERS: NATE'S HONOR ANIMAL RESCUE

1,310

Number of animals saved in 2021

8

Acres of total property for the facility

¹/₄ mile

Distance around the pond for volunteers to walk the dogs

120

Number of parking spots after construction

23.000

Square feet of welcome and adoption center

4,000

Square feet of training center

5,000

Square feet of intake building

117

Dogs Nate's can house after the project

60

Cats Nate's can house after the project
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Photos by Jay Heater

James and Misdee Miller continually try to find upgrades for the Sarasota Polo Club. On Jan. 1, they opened the season by checking out the top floor of "The Hemingway," a double decker London bus that has been transformed into a bar on the first floor and hosts VIP seating and special events on the top floor.

A Passion for Polo

The game of polo has evolved over 2,500 years. Thanks to James and Misdee Miller, the sport lives on at the Sarasota Polo Club.

BY JAY HEATER | CONTRIBUTOR

hen the Sarasota Polo Club was established in 1991, Lakewood Ranch was still an outlandish idea conceived by Schroeder-Manatee Ranch to build communities in an area where only cows, coyotes and birds thrived.

But, as the master-planned community began to grow, and development exploded all around the 158 acres of polo fields, it only seemed a matter of time before a developer would scoop up that land and build more houses. Fortunately for polo fans, that didn't happen. Instead, James and Misdee Miller stepped forward to buy the Sarasota Polo Club in 2018. They wanted to preserve it as a polo facility for years to come. the former president of the Lexington (Kentucky) Polo Club, and Misdee, a fourth-generation horsewoman who competes in combined driving, coaching, and American Saddlebred competitions throughout the world, have put their love of the sport and their financial resources behind making the Sarasota Polo Club one of the top facilities in the United States.

As the 2023 season was about to begin, James and Misdee talked about their cherished facility and its future.

Would you have moved to Lakewood Ranchifthe Sarasota Polo Club wasn't here? James: Probably not. A friend had

James, an avid, two-goal player and

Continued on Page 40



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told me about it and I specifically came down to see the club in 2003. In 2004, I played a tournament. The next season, I came back for a full season. We had been playing at the Villages.

Misdee: I was thinking that we had a perfectly good farm in Lexington. But James knew just how to do it. He brought me here in the dead of winter and I was staying at the Ritz.

What was it like in 2006?

James: Main Street at Lakewood Ranch was still quiet then. In 2006, the market was hot. Then everything hit the skids in 2007. That time was tough on Lakewood Ranch. Everyone lost their home values. The Polo Club went through tough times, too.

When did you begin to worry the Sarasota Polo Club might be lost?

James: Around 2015. The rumors were out there. Robin Uihlein had sold his managing ownership back to SMR. The writing was on the wall. We knew if that message (that the Polo Club might be sold and developed) got out to the community, it would make it hard to recruit new members. It was written into the covenants of the HOA that there could be a time in which the club could be shut down.

That was a justified worry, right?

James: Everyone who wanted to buy it wanted to develop it. So, I asked Misdee, "If you love Sarasota and Lakewood Ranch, we have the means to purchase it. Is this where we want to spend the rest of our lives?"

Misdee: I realized this was the place we love and a lifestyle we love. All right, here we go!

It was a tough start to your ownership, wasn't it?

James: Saving it was a relief to everyone, but when COVID hit, it was a gut punch. We're still suffering from it now with supply chain problems. All our costs have gone up.

But didn't you invest a lot of money into the club during those tough times?

James: Yes. It was important for the players to see. We got the turf improved; they could see how we irrigate the fields and how we built a safer exercise track (more than \$1 million by



itself). They saw improvements we wouldn't have been doing if we weren't committed to maintaining the club.

It seems you add something every year. This year it's "The Hemingway," a doubledecker bus you imported from England.

James: The Brits spread polo around the world, so there was a connection. The bus arrived from England this summer at the port in Jacksonville. It was supposed to be in top running condition, but it wasn't. A couple of my friends who are mechanics fixed it and we drove it down here.

Misdee: I thought, what has he done now? But it's great.

You have gone through millions in upgrades. Going into your fifth season, should people be concerned that having a polo club on this property just isn't viable?

James: We've been doing better than breaking even operationally. The first season I was concerned, for sure. Of I would like to think so.

course, you put capital in, and no, you don't get the money you spend for capital improvements back. But Misdee and I do improvements incrementally.

Can we expect a restaurant?

Misdee: That's where I put my foot down. We can't go into the restaurant business.

What do you foresee for the future? Can the Sarasota Polo Club survive after the Millers?

James: The Uihlein family built this 30 years ago. It was the handing off of the baton. We're young enough that we have a lot of years left in us. It is unique to have a polo club entrenched in a thriving community and we had an opportunity to preserve something. We can give new life to it, a new meaning. So far, so good.

Misdee: I love it. It was something that needed to happen. Is there another James and Misdee Miller out there? I would like to think so.

IF YOU GO

An estimated 50,000 spectators will be on hand during the 2023 Sarasota Polo season. which runs every Sunday through April 30. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit SarasotaPolo. com.

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Area children get a head start thanks to local philanthropists. **PAGE 44**

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class act

Great Beginnings

Sandy Humenik's life's journey had a great beginning. She now helps Florida Center for Early Childhood offer the same opportunities to area children and their families.

BY AMY BENTLEY | CONTRIBUTOR

he secret is in the beginning." Sandy Humenik takes that saying to heart. She understands that early childhood experiences provide the foundation for future learning and wellbeing. That's why the Florida Center for Early Childhood is so important to her. "Early childhood is a crucial stage in human development," Humenik says. "It lays the foundation for your adult self. That's why early support makes all the difference — and that's just what the Florida Center provides."

Humenik's passion for the Florida Center is clear. What forged that passion? Let's go back to the beginning.

In 2014, Humenik and her husband, Mike, were part-time residents of Lakewood Ranch. The couple led busy lives in Maryland — both working in executive positions for General Electric. Sandy was invited to attend the Florida Center's annual Winter Gala. At the event, she learned a little more about the Florida Center — but just the broad outlines. That changed when Sandy's good friend, the late Sylvia Zimmerman, took her on a tour of the center, including its Starfish Academy, a nationally accredited childhood edu-



Continued on Page 46

Sandy Humenik understands that enriching experiences in early childhood are vital for a child's healthy development.

Photo by Lori Sax



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cation program, where highly trained therapists and educators work with children up to 5 years old.

Humenik saw the powerful synergy between the children and their mentors. Her eyes and heart were opened. And her undying passion for the Florida Center was born.

"Seeing the children interacting with the teachers was such an aha moment for me," she recalls. "I knew I wanted to be a part of it."

And that's just what Humenik did. In the years that followed, she devoted more and more time to the Florida Center. In 2017, Sandy and Mike became yearlong Ranchers. After that, her involvement intensified.

Humenik began serving on various Winter Gala committees and served as co-chair of the event this past December. To help raise awareness of the center to fellow Ranchers, she invited nearly 40 of her neighbors to join the celebration.

"We're all very fortunate to live in a beautiful community like Lakewood Ranch," Humenik says. "I think we should recognize the tremendous need in our own backyard."

Humenik's gala responsibilities go far beyond neighborly invitations. She also secures the gala's live and silent auction items. For the last four years, she and her husband have provided a child's electric car to kick off the live auction festivities. Thanks to these and many other creative acts of generosity, the center recognized Humenik as its Volunteer Champion for Children in 2020.

Kristen Theisen is Florida Center's chief development officer. She's seen Humenik's tireless commitment firsthand.

"Sandy's been so helpful in spreading awareness about Florida Center's programs and the need for them," Theisen says. "She is a force to be reckoned with. When she sets her sights on something, she'll do whatever she can to make it happen."

What drives Humenik to be such a force for good? Once again, the secret is in the beginning.

Humenik grew up in a small town in Wisconsin. Money was tight in her parents' blue-collar household. But their love and encouragement flowed abundantly. And her mother's commitment to education made all the difference.



Kristen Theisen, Florida Center's chief development officer, Sandy Humenik, and Kristie Skoglund, Florida Center's CEO.

"My mother had only a sixth-grade education," Humenik says. "But she wanted us to go beyond her. She constantly taught us the value of education. More than that: she taught us that perseverance is key. Learning new things can be tough — but never give up."

Learn all you can. Work hard, strive for excellence and don't ever sell yourself short.

Those were her mother's lessons. Humenik learned them well as a child and put them into practice when she graduated from high school. Since her parents couldn't afford to send her to college, Humenik applied for a secretarial job at GE Medical Systems (now GE Healthcare). She saw it as a first step, not as a dead end. Thanks to her drive and her parents' encouragement, Humenik advanced to better positions at GE and finally went on to college with GE's support. Although she was still working fulltime, she earned a bachelor's degree in management studies.

Humenik's life took off from there. "Success" has many definitions. Today, this Rancher qualifies for all of them. But she's grateful, not boastful. She may have "arrived." Humenik knows she didn't get there on her own.

Her journey of life had a great beginning.

"My mother was always there for me and she let me know she always would be," Humenik recalls. "She instilled the value of discipline. She coached me, encouraged, and nurtured me. That early support made me who I am today. I count myself lucky."

Humenik adds that many children in our region aren't so lucky. For a host of reasons, their parents can't provide the early support they need. The Florida Center does. That's why she supports them. It's as simple as that.

"Florida Center stands in the gap for these children," she says. "They give them and their families the help they need — at the time in their lives when they need it the most. I was lucky enough to have that kind of support at home. Helping Florida Center is a great way to pass it on."

How can interested Ranchers get more involved with the Florida Center?

Humenik answers without hesitation: "Join me on a tour!"

The Florida Center for Early Childhood helps more than 3,500 children and families annually with early education. preschool, mental health counseling and therapeutic services for those with developmental delays or disorders, disabilities and emotional trauma. The center provides these services to people who live in Sarasota, Manatee. Charlotte. Hardee and DeSoto counties. Visit: TheFloridaCenter.org.

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charity snapshot



Photos by Lori Sax

Sue Ann Miller grew up in Philadelphia and recalls her mother taking her and her sister to the historic Chestnut Hill Library.

Long Story Short

The Friends of Lakewood Ranch Library, with Sue Ann Miller at the helm, moves forward in its fundraising efforts to fill the shelves of the new Lakewood Ranch Library.

BY ERIC SNIDER | CONTRIBUTOR

ast summer, with the construction of the new Lakewood Ranch Library well underway, Tammy Parrott, Manatee County's library services manager, made a discovery that posed what at first seemed an insurmountable challenge.

The shelves had room for more 21,000 more books than had been budgeted. She was going to need more money to fill those shelves — \$410,000 more. Parrott knew the county government would not increase the \$580,000 it had committed

for books. She didn't panic, though. The library would simply have to open with empty shelf space — no crime there and it would get filled up over time.

Enter the Friends of Lakewood Ranch Library, a nonprofit formed in 2017 when it appeared that the community would finally get the library for which it had long pushed.

One day last August, Parrott was in her office talking with the Friends'

Continued on Page 50











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president, Sue Ann Miller, when she offhandedly mentioned that she needed about \$400,000 to cover the books shortfall. "I could see right away from the look on her face that she saw that as a challenge," Parrott recalls. "I didn't even have to ask her."

"The number was a bit of a shock," Miller says. "We had originally planned to raise \$65,000 by the time the library opened. But I told her, 'I'm positive we can do this."

Miller consulted with several board members, who said they were up to the task. In September, the Friends launched a campaign called Fill the Shelves. Shortly after came a big win: The Manatee Library Foundation committed \$200,000. But the contribution came with a catch: It was a matching grant, so the Friends would need to raise an additional \$200,000 to get it.

During an interview in December, Miller said that her group had reached the halfway point of that goal and fully expected to meet it by the April 27 target date. At the time, nearly all the money had come via grants: \$50,000 from the Bishop-Parker Foundation, \$20,000 each from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and the Friends group itself, among others. The nonprofit also planned to take its appeal to residents by sending out a letter to select ZIP codes seeking contributions.

The \$410,000 is earmarked for children's books, multicultural and bilingual books, and large-print materials.

In many respects, Sue Ann Miller is uniquely suited to leading the Friends of Lakewood Ranch Library, which has more than 100 members. She grew up in Philadelphia and recalls her mother taking her and her sister to the historic Chestnut Hill Library. Miller earned a doctorate in reading education from Lehigh University. She had a long career as an educator, starting as a classroom teacher, and ending up as a supervisor of reading for several school districts in the Philadelphia suburbs.

Miller retired and moved to Lakewood Ranch in 2016, because "it's warmer here," she says. "I had a heart transplant in 2002 and my cardiologist said that transplanted organs don't like cold weather. I visited several friends on the west coast of Florida and thought Lakewood Ranch was a good place to be."



Sue Ann Miller with Tammy Parrott, Manatee County's library services manager, and Lyn Begraft, assistant library services assistant manager.

Eager to volunteer, she attended a few civic meetings and got interested in an organization that was forming to support and advocate for the new library. (Each of the seven Manatee libraries has its own Friends group.) Miller didn't set out to become president. "Nobody else wanted the position," she says. "Basically, it came down to if I wanted to see this happen, I had to take on the presidency"

Miller had extensive skills as an educator and administrator, but no experience in leading a nonprofit, let alone fundraising. "I still have the book 'How to Form a Nonprofit Corporation' on my bookshelf," she says. In 2021, when the Manatee County Commission was wavering on the cost of building the library, the Friends started an advocacy initiative, sending out emails to residents urging them to contact their commissioners and convey support for the project.

It worked. "On the day of the groundbreaking we had tears in our eyes," Miller says of the day in December 2021 when ceremonial shovels met dirt.

Then came the \$410,000 challenge. Miller called upon three Friends' board members — Rhonda Leiberick, Melissa Rice and Janet Allen — to run Fill the Shelves. They received invaluable consulting help from Sue Seiter, the retired executive director of the Library Foundation for Sarasota County.

When the Lakewood Ranch Library opens, it will encompass 25,000 square feet on one floor. The building's second floor will be finished later; its use has yet to be determined. The library will have a dedicated quiet room; a maker space where people can use 3D printers, learn how to sew and do other hands-on endeavors; a sound room where people can record podcasts; a drive-up window to pick up books (the first in the county); and a used bookstore.

Oh - and its shelves will be filled with books.

Visit FriendsOfLakewoodRanchLibrary.org for information.

Interested in helping a library grow? The Friends of Lakewood Ranch is holding a fundraising event on April 27 called Cocktails With Friends at the Robert Toale & Sons Celebration of Life Center. Ticket prices and other details will be announced later in the year.

If you're wondering what a gift to the Healthcare Foundation can do, Ask a critical care patient.

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calendar spring 2023

MARCH

THROUGH MARCH 5

CIRCUS SARASOTA

Circus Sarasota will present "Legacy: 25th Anniversary." Come see awardwinning international artists perform under an iconic red and white Big Top at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota. Visit CircusArts.org.

MARCH 1

RANCH NITE WEDNESDAYS In collaboration with Sarasota Polo Club and MVP Sports and Social and sponsored by The Market at Lakewood Ranch, this mid-week community Ranch Nite event features food trucks, cornholes, live music and cocktails from 6-9 p.m. at Waterside Place, 1561 Lakefront Drive, Sarasota. Continues every Wednesday through May 31. Visit LakewoodRanch.com.

CLASSIC CAR SHOW

Come to Lakewood Ranch Main Street from 5-8 p.m. for a car show celebrating the "classics." All are welcome to participate for just \$10 per vehicle, and there are no restrictions on year, make or model. Continues April 5 and May 3.

Visit CollectorCarsTV.com.

MARCH 3

MUSIC ON MAIN

This monthly event returns on Lakewood Ranch's Main Street from 6-9 p.m. Enjoy a free concert by Jack'd Up, food vendors, beer trucks and kids activities. Proceeds will benefit Friends of the Lakewood Ranch Library Inc.

Visit LakewoodRanch.com.

MARCH 4

MAIN STREET MARKET From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Lakewood Ranch Main Street, more than 75 small and local businesses will be out with gifts, candles, baked goods, hand-crafted jewelry and more at the boutique market, hosted by Main Street Market LWR. Continues April 1. Visit MainStreetMarketLWR.com.



GUIDE DOG WALKATHON

Enjoy a day out with your pooch at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota, for Southeastern Guide Dogs' biggest fundraiser of the year. Two- and four-legged friends and neighbors are invited to participate and raise funds for a 3K walk, which begins at 10 a.m. The Waggin' Tails Festival includes live music, food, vendors, live music and a raffle, with the drawing at 11:30 a.m. Visit GuideDogsWalkathon.org.

MARCH 5

YOGA IN THE PARK

Join a gentle yoga session from 9-10 a.m. at Waterside Park, 7301 Island Cove Terrace, Sarasota. Continues every Sunday.

■ Visit LakewoodRanch.com.

FARMERS MARKET

Far from the typical farmers market, The Farmers Market at Lakewood Ranch is a curated gathering of the best flavors in the region, cooking demonstrations and more. Visitors can purchase produce, meat, poultry, seafood, breads, pasta and other prepared foods from more than 60 vendors from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Waterside Place, 1561 Lakefront Drive, Sarasota. Event runs every Sunday. Visit LakewoodRanch.com.

SARASOTA POLO

Come out to enjoy an afternoon of tailgating and polo. Gates open at 10 a.m., and matches start at 1 p.m. at the Sarasota Polo Club, 8201 Polo Club Lane, Lakewood Ranch. General admission costs \$15 for adults, and children 12 and under are free. Polo matches will be held every Sunday through April 30. Visit SarasotaPolo.com.

MARCH 6

PURIM MASQUERADE PARTY Celebrate Purim with Chabad of Bradenton & Lakewood Ranch at a masquerade party starting at 7 p.m. at the Chabad House, 5712 Lorraine Road, Lakewood Ranch. Enjoy Megil-

Continued on Page 54

File photo

International circus star Bello Nock performed a daredevil stunt in the Wheel of Destiny at the 2022 Circus Sarasota.

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lah readings, drinks, music and a masquerade. Admission is free. ■ Visit ChabadOfBradenton.com.

MARCH 9

LWR 101: RESIDENT ORIENTATION New to the area or just want to get more involved? Join this resident orientation virtually at Facebook.com/ LWRCommunityActivities. It's a great chance to learn about the community. Begins at 6 p.m. and continues April 13 and May 11. Visit MyLWR.com.

MARCH 10-12

SARASOTA-BRADENTON TRIATHLON Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota, hosts a weekend of triathlons. Races include the Elite (Pro) Draft Legal Triathlon, Junior (16-19) Draft Legal Triathlon and Youth Draft Legal Triathlon on Saturday and the Paratriathlon and Age Group Triathlon Sunday. Registration is \$110.

■ Visit SRQTriFest.com.

MARCH 11

NATURE WALK

Join Lakewood Ranch Ambassador Greg Spring for a 2-mile, one-hour nature walk through some of Lakewood Ranch's trails. Participants will meet at 8 a.m. at the pavilion at Greenbrook Adventure Park, 13010 Adventure Place, Lakewood Ranch. Visit LakewoodRanch.com.

IRISH CELTIC FESTIVAL

For those of Irish Celtic descent or those who just want to be Irish for the day, this event features the luck of the Irish with traditional food, craft beers, hard ciders, live music and dance performances at Greenbrook Adventure Park, 13010 Adventure Place, Bradenton. Details to come. Visit MyLWR.com.

MARCH 11-12

FINE ART FESTIVAL

Runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 11 and 12 at Main Street at Lakewood Ranch. Shop an outdoor gallery of handmade fine arts and crafts as the Lakewood Ranch Winter Fine Art Festival returns for its annual event. Admission is free.

Visit ParagonArtEvents.com.

MARCH 14-18

SARASOTA JAZZ FESTIVAL

The Jazz Club of Sarasota's weeklong festival returns at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota. The festival kicks off with a Jazz Trolley Pub Crawl from 5:30-9:30 March 14 at UTC Mall. Featured performers throughout the week include Lizz Wright, Marcus Miller and Paquito D'Rivera. Ticket prices vary by event.

■ Visit JazzClubSarasota.org.

MARCH 14

NEWCOMERS MEETUP From 10-11 a.m. at Bob Gardner Community Park, 2710 White Eagle Blvd., Lakewood Ranch, learn about the Lakewood Ranch community, its parks and its events with other new residents. Free for residents; \$10 for nonresidents. Continues April 18 and May 16.

Visit LakewoodRanch.com.

MARCH 16

SUNSET POLO HAPPY HOUR Come out to enjoy an evening of tailgating and polo at Sarasota Polo Club, 8201 Polo Club Lane, Lakewood Ranch. Gates open at 5 p.m., and the match begins at 5:30 p.m. General admission costs \$15 for adults, and children 12 and under are free. Runs Thursdays through April 6. Visit SarasotaPolo.com.

MARCH 17

ST. PATRICK'S DAY AT MAIN STREET

Come celebrate St. Patrick's Day with McGrath's Irish Ale House and Ed's Tavern on Lakewood Ranch Main Street. There will be Irish food and beer, live music, and games and entertainment for the kids. 1-9 p.m. Visit LakewoodRanch.com

MARCH 18

LUCKY LEPRECHAUN 5K Get on your green and run with the titular Lucky Leprechaun in this 5K at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota. The top 100 male and female finishers will receive a commemorative prize, and all runners will receive an event medal and T-shirt. There will also be age-group rainbow dashes of various lengths for kids to run. Once you finish, enjoy the St. Patrick's Day-



themed festival featuring live music, a costume contest, food and, of course, celebratory green beer. Registration is \$35, \$40 starting March 15, \$20 for kids and \$40 for virtual.

SPRING ART SHOW AND SALE Creative Arts Association of Lakewood Ranch presents its annual Spring Art Show and Sale from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Lakewood Ranch Town Hall, 8175 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. Browse art from a variety of mediums including acrylics, jewelry, ceramic and mixed media. Admission and parking are free.

BIKE RIDE

Join Lakewood Ranch Ambassador Greg Spring for a 10-mile, one-hour casual bike ride through Lakewood Ranch. Participants will leave at 8 a.m. from the fountain at Main Street at Lakewood Ranch. Visit LakewoodRanch.com.

YOUTH FISHING SEMINAR

Children can learn the basics of fishing with the help of the Lakewood Ranch Angler's Club in preparation for the Youth Fishing Tournament. The seminar will be held at Summerfield Park, 6402 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. Details to come.

Continued on Page 56

Alejandro Arenas and Mark Feinman turn up the heat during La Lucha's performance on the final day of the 2022 Sarasota Jazz Festival.

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MARCH 25

YOUTH FISHING TOURNAMENT Cast those lines, and reel in the fish! Youth ages 5 to 15 can test their fishing skills and compete for prizes during Lakewood Ranch's annual Youth Fishing Tournament 9 a.m. to noon at Lake Uihlein, behind Lakewood Ranch Town Hall, 8175 Lakewood Ranch Blvd. Don't forget to bring your rod, reel, chair and sunscreen. Bait will be supplied, but participants can bring their own. Visit MyLWR.com.

MY HOMETOWN FEST

This regional food and craft beer sampling event at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota, features food, beer, children's activities, vendor booths, exhibits and live music. Gates are open from noon to 5 p.m. Ticket information to come. Proceeds benefit Sertoma Club of Greater Sarasota and Sertoma Kids. Visit MyHometownFest.com.

TROPICAL NIGHTS

Come dressed fit for the king and queen — or as the king and queen for this Tropical Nights Goes Hollywood fundraiser benefiting Meals on Wheels Plus of Manatee. Guests will enjoy live and silent auctions, gourmet cuisine, cocktails and dancing. The fun starts at 6 p.m. at The Grove Ballroom, 10670 Boardwalk Loop, Lakewood Ranch.

■ Visit MealsOnWheelsPlus.org.

MARCH 26

ON THE ROAD WITH SARASOTA ORCHESTRA The Sarasota Orchestra continues its free outdoor concert series. The Sarasota Brass Quintet will perform an hour of favorites at the Nathan Benderson Park pavilion, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota. Bring a chair or blanket. The concert is free, but registration is required. Visit SarasotaOrchestra.org.

VISIt SarasotaOrchestra.org

APRIL 1

EGGSTRAVAGANZA

Bring your baskets and kids to Lakewood Ranch's longest-running egg hunt at Waterside Park, 7301 Island Cove Terrace, Lakewood Ranch. More than



25,000 eggs will be spread across the field and separated by age to maximize the excitement. Details to come. Visit MyLWR.com.

APRIL 7

MUSIC ON MAIN

This monthly event returns on Lakewood Ranch's Main Street from 6-9 p.m. Enjoy a free concert by Kettle of Fish, food vendors, beer trucks and kids activities. Proceeds will benefit Friends of the Florida Cancer Specialists Foundation.

Visit LakewoodRanch.com.

APRIL 20-23

LECOM SUNCOAST CLASSIC Begins at 8 a.m. each day at Lakewood National Golf Club, 17605 Lakewood National Parkway, Lakewood Ranch, The Korn Ferry Tour's LECOM Suncoast Classic offers golf fans an opportunity to see future PGA Tour stars. Enjoy Lakewood National Golf Club's views and watch some of the world's best golfers compete for a first-place payoff of more than \$100,000. Activities, food trucks and vendors will be on site throughout the weekend. Volunteer opportunities will be available, and ticket information is TBA. Visit LECOMSuncoastClassic.com.

APRIL 22

FISHING SATURDAYS From 10-11 a.m. at James Patton Park, 5725 White Eagle Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. Lakewood Ranch Community Activities hosts the free event that offers casting and knot-tying instruction followed by fishing on Lake Patton. Continues May 20. Visit LakewoodRanch.com.

MAY

MAY 5

MUSIC ON MAIN This monthly event returns on Lakewood Ranch's Main Street from 6-9 p.m. Enjoy a free concert by Memphis Rub Band, food vendors, beer trucks and kids activities. Proceeds will benefit Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County. Visit LakewoodRanch.com.

MAY 6

SUP & RUN 5K

Dine and drink rum in a libation lounge after this SUP and Run 5K event benefiting veterans group Operation Second Chance. Admission for the 5K run or walk, the 5K standup paddleboard race or the combination is \$40; veterans receive half off admission. Paddleboards are available for a \$50 rental fee. The handcycle and wheelchair division is free admission. All races start at 8 a.m. at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota.

MAY 28

TRIBUTE TO HEROES PARADE Each year, thousands of spectators line the street along Main Street at Lakewood Ranch to honor local veterans, active duty and fallen heroes. Floats, marching bands, ponies and a patriotic bicycle-decorating contest will be part of the parade festivities. Residents are encouraged to decorate their strollers, bikes and golf carts. Proceeds benefit VFW Post 12055. Details to come. ■ Visit MyLWR.com. Byeong Hun An, who was later crowned champion, hits out of a sand trap on the No. 18 hole during the final round of the 2022 LECOM Suncoast Classic at Lakewood National Golf Club.

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To Market, To Market

The Lakewood Ranch Main Street Market features 70 innovative creators and retailers.

BY KELLY FORES | CONTRIBUTOR

style

he Lakewood Ranch Main Street Market is a shopper's paradise with everything from clothing and jewelry to candles, plants, home décor, pet products, bath and beauty, edibles (not THAT kind ...), and so much more. The vendors change monthly, so make sure to check out

> who will be at the last two markets of the season on March 4 and April 1 at MainStreetMarketLWR.com. Here are a few recent market finds.

Blake and Rae

Out of This World Zippy: \$32

BlakeAndRaeCo.com

Blake and Rae, created by two registered nurses turned stay-at-home moms, offers an array of buttery soft, custom-milled bamboo baby pajamas. These chemical-free, one-piece footies come in five sizes, from newborn to 12 to 18 months, and have features like fold-over mittens and cuffs, and double zippers to make diaper changing a breeze.

Butterfly Effect Zippy: \$30



Continued from Page 59



Longboat Key Half-moon — Resin Necklace: \$29.99

driftheory

Driftheory.com

Danielle Ferrantino's driftheory jewelry is inspired by and made from nature's bounty, preserved for a lifetime in resin. Each hand-gathered, hand-crafted, unique piece includes bits of Florida's Gulf Coast within, including shells, coral, flowers, sand, and sometimes coffee beans and even honeybees. Workshops are offered so you can try your hand at creating something special.



Lido Key Aquamarine Resin Seashell Necklace: \$39.99 Stargazing Candle: \$44

Lucette+Mo

LucetteAndMo.com Who wouldn't want a candle based on a real love story? Inspired by the founders' grandparents, Lucette and Maurice (Mo), every scent reflects their love and adventures. You can experience their journey through the smells of these handpoured luxury candles, including Lovestruck, Daydream, Stargazing, Escape, Adrift, Hideaway, Silver Lining, and more.

Daydream Candle: \$44









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Stop

Photos by Nancy Guth In early 2001, Sarasota Audubon began conducting bird surveys at the Celery Fields. To date, 246 species have been recorded.

and Smell the Roses



Hurrying through life is a great way to miss it. Lakewood Ranch is packed with beautiful reasons to slow down.

BY EMILY LEINFUSS | CONTRIBUTOR

o, we're not joking. "Stop and smell the roses?" Yes, the saying is as old as time. But it's still good advice. The meaning is crystal clear: Slow down. Let go. Take time out of your busy day to please your senses. Close encounters with nature are healthy interruptions of your stress-packed schedule. Our advice? Take a break in your hectic routine and savor the beauty right in front of you. Lakewood Ranch is filled with great opportunities. Here's a short list to get you started.

Continued on Page 66

HAPPY TRAILS

Greenbrook Adventure Park and Heron's Nest Nature Park

A tranquil nature walk is a perfect start for your journey of the senses. Greenbrook Adventure Park, in Lakewood Ranch, is close to civilization. But its canopied walking path reveals wild Florida in all its untamed beauty. It winds through marshlands, alongside ponds and around wild woods. After a mile on the trail, you'll reach another path that leads to Heron's Nest Nature Park. This 110-acre refuge boasts two lakes - Heron Lake and Summerfield Lake. (If fishing is your Zen thing, you've found your happy place.) The Heron's Nest trail is short but scenic. While it's just shy of a mile, it offers abundant opportunities to spot birds, beasts and other wildlife. Canine companions are welcome — but must be on leash.

IF YOU GO: Visit LakewoodRanch.com/ life-on-the-ranch/parks-trails/

MOVEABLE FEASTS

To quote W. Somerset Maugham, "There are few things so pleasant as a picnic eaten in perfect comfort." When the weather is good, al fresco dining is sublime. Pack a basket with your favorite picnic fare, a refreshing beverage, a blanket to spread, and head for a park near you. To help narrow the playing field, Keith Pandeloglou, the president and CEO of Lakewood Ranch Community Activities, supplied a short list of some pleasant picnic spots:

Bob Gardner Community Park

This mile-long community park is nestled between wetland preserves and conservation areas. Picnic tables are scattered throughout its unspoiled, wild beauty — but you can always find your own private corner to create your perfect picnic landscape.

IF YOU GO: 2710 White Eagle Blvd., Lakewood Ranch; (941) 727-1505.

Greenbrook Adventure Park

Looking for a moving experience? This park offers plenty of options. Greenbrook's inline skating track, sports fields, paw parks and trails will get your heart pumping. After all that activity, it's time to spread your picnic. The park has

a quiet side of rolling green fields and picnic pavilions with grills where you can cook up sizzling feasts.

IF YOU GO: 13010 Adventure Place, Lakewood Ranch; 907-0202; MyLWR.com/870/ Greenbrook-Adventure-Park.

Heron's Nest Nature Park

Heron's Nest's picnic pavilion is an outstanding outdoor dining command center. Tables in a covered dining area? Check. Central location? Check. Outdoor picnic tables strategically positioned in scenic spots? Easy access to nature trails for that postprandial promenade? Doublecheck. All you need to supply is the bread, some beverages, and that special someone you call "thou." Bon appétit!

IF YOU GO: 6399 Tupelo Trail, Lakewood Ranch; MyLWR.com/959/Herons-Nest-Nature-Park

STRESS-FREE ZONE Nathan Benderson Park

This 600-acre park is all about having fun ... naturally. Hundreds of people flock here every day to bike, rollerblade, walk dogs, run, row and paddle.

Stephen V. Rodriguez is the president of the Nathan Benderson Park Conservatory. How does he describe this athletic paradise?

"All of our community programming has a health and wellness theme while also emphasizing the unique attributes of the park," he says. "The aquatic side is especially important." Rodriguez adds that Benderson Park offers plenty of stressbusters. Here are a few of his favorites:

■ Walking, running, biking, and skating around the popular Bill Robinson Lakeside Loop. This 3.5-mile paved walkway encircles calm waters (no motor vessels permitted).

■ Walking or biking along a shell trail with a separate loop that meanders through stands of trees.

■ Lazing on the dock of the 400-acre lake. If you're lucky, you may be there on a day when members of the Sarasota Model Yacht Club race their sailboats across the waters.

■ Bird watching. Several water mitigation areas harbor thriving bird

Continued on Page 68



Bring your canine companion to explore Greenbrook's paw parks.



Reconnect with nature at Heron's Nest Nature Preserve.



Calah and Charles Parker and their children, Case, Coast and Cypress enjoy the great outdoors at **Bob Gardner Community Park.**



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populations. The overgrown island beside the main regatta island is a sanctuary for many bird species.

■ Relaxing on shaded benches at the children's playground while your young'uns burn off energy. There's even free yoga for the parents on the last Sunday of every month.

What's Rodriguez' favorite stress-free zone? "The spot by the canal — where the lake flows into Cooper Creek," he says. "It's right next to the finish line of the main rowing racecourse. It's a great location with some beautiful native trees and picnic tables in the shade." Sounds delightful.

IF YOU GO: 5851 Nathan Benderson Park Circle, Sarasota; 358-7275; NathanBendersonPark.org.

A WALK IN THE PARK Sunday at Waterside Park

This 8-acre park is on the shores of Kingfisher Lake. Sunday's a swell day to visit. Start with a free, one-hour yoga class at 9 a.m., and then saunter across the footbridge to the bustling farmers market at Waterside Place.

IF YOU GO: 7500 Island Cove Terrace, Lakewood Ranch; WatersidePlace.com

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

Peaceful Path, Labyrinth and Sound Garden at Peace Presbyterian Church

You'll find this ¼-mile stretch of nature, art and sound about six miles east of Lakewood Ranch Blvd. What will you find? The sign at the path entrance says it all: "All are welcome. Walk, meditate, rest and pray."

Jamie Reagan and Toni Muirhead created this path a few years back. For them, it was both a labor of love and an act of faith. Building a community of peace is their church's mission. They saw the Peaceful Path as a step in that direction.

According to Reagan, this path is good for both body and soul.

"People are searching for a safe, quiet place to relax and think, and breathe," says Reagan. "Walking in nature increases your health and psychological wellbeing."

Muirhead notes that the Peaceful

Path is constantly evolving — like nature itself. "We were originally only going to have natural artwork," she says. "But after someone deposited a giant porpoise statue, we had a major philosophical change." She adds that hundreds of painted "kindness" rocks soon joined Flipper. Who painted them? "The artist is still a mystery," she says.

The Path's evolution didn't stop with these new arrivals. Thanks to grants, a children's outdoor sensory musical environment boasting a giant xylophone and five outdoor musical flowers were also added. Most recently, the co-directors, working with the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, completed a plant identification project, and a "happiness trail," designed to evoke laughter, is being planned. The first female Eagle Scouts of Manatee County also created the small labyrinth at the trail's end.

IF YOU GO: Peace Presbyterian Church, 12705 State Road 64, Lakewood Ranch; PeacePCUsa.com.

FOR THE BIRDS

Sarasota Audubon Nature Center at the Celery Fields The Sarasota Audubon Nature

Center is a haven for birds and heaven for bird-lovers. This ornithological oasis is located on one acre of the Celery Fields, a 400-acre site that's part of the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail. The Nature Center is an all-volunteer teaching environment staffed with "bird naturalists" (aka docents). You can join them on guided birding trips, family fun days, and a host of conservation projects. Or you can sit and enjoy the view. Jeanne Dubi, Sarasota Audubon's president recommends the gazebo in the bird-feeding area. "If you sit there patiently, you'll see painted buntings, parakeets, and other birds come to feed," she says. Depending on the time of year, bird naturalists are stationed each day on the two boardwalks by the Celery Fields, equipped with telescopes and answers to birding questions. As the boardwalks overlook the wetlands, expect to see herons, egrets, ibis and the brilliantly colored purple gallinule. According to Dubi, more birds will be flocking here in the future. That's no accident. Thanks

Continued on Page 70



Enjoy watching members of Sarasota Model Yacht Club race their sailboats across North Lake at **Benderson Park**.



Join bird naturalists on guided birding trips, family fun days and a host of conservation projects at **Celery Fields.**



A children's outdoor sensory musical environment with a giant xylophone is part of the **Peaceful Path, Labyrinth and Sound Garden.**



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The Goddess Kali in the cremation ground (detail), Northern India, Pahari region, ca. 1850. Opaque pigments with gold on paper, $10 1/4 \times 7 3/16$ in. The John and Mable Ringling

to a partnership between the Sarasota Audubon Society and the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, a 27-acre woodland habitat will be developed to attract cardinals, woodpeckers, and many more "backyard" birds.

IF YOU GO: 999 Center Road, Sarasota; 312-6533; SarasotaAudubon.org.

BEYOND THE MAT Heartwood Yoga Institute

The yoga retreat on this 7-acre property offers a full spectrum of yoga and meditation classes, therapy, teacher training programs, workshops and spiritual retreats. Its treasure trove of meditative and spiritual environments also includes a chakra garden, meditation gazebo, medicine wheel and an 11-circuit labyrinth. It's all designed to provide a deeper yogic experience to students.

IF YOU GO: 17507 Waterline Road, Bradenton; 745-5719; HeartWoodYogaInstitute.com.

GOOD VIBRATIONS The Yoga Barre

This one-stop wellness center, founded by Janette Brown, lets you practice many forms of yoga (including Himalayan!), learn about healing botanicals, create art from objects found in nature, and attend spiritual and healing workshops. Zooey Seraphine Ibarra's Full Moon Sound Bath uses power of sonic vibration to release stress, quiet the mind, and send the listener on an inner meditative and healing journey.

IF YOU GO: 4124 Lakewood Ranch Blvd. Lakewood Ranch; (941) 867-0812; LWRYogaBarre.com.

TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE "EcoWalks" Guided Nature Tours

Dr. Katherine Clements is a natural resources educator and nature lover. Clements developed her "EcoWalks" to share that love. According to Clements, "They're interpretive, guided walks

Continued on Page 72



Courtesy photo

Janette Brown, owner of **The Yoga Barre**, says that yoga opens the door to physical, mental, and spiritual unity.



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"QUARTET FOR THE END OF TIME" Olivier Messiaen's WWII prisoner-of-war camp composition featuring Lincoln Trio with Bharat Chandra, clarinet February 28 • 7:30 pm • Historic Asolo Theater French composer Olivier Messiaen was captured in the early days of WWII. He wrote this piece in a prisoner camp in Görlitz, Germany for fellow prisoners to perform. The Grammy-nominated Lincoln Trio and Sarasota Orchestra's Bharat Chandra perform this unique piece of musical history.



MICHELLE CANN, piano March 7 • 7:30 pm

Historic Asolo Theater

Winner of the 2022 Sphinx Medal of Excellence recognizing extraordinary classical Black and Latinx musicians, Michelle Cann made her orchestral debut at age 14. Her program includes repertoire by Florence Price, whose music Cann has championed.



SAMANTHA BENNETT, violin March 23

11 am performance followed by lunch Sarasota Yacht Club

Principal second violin of Sarasota Orchestra and co-artistic director of ensembleNEWSRQ, Samantha Bennett will perform a program of music that has inspired her career, leading us on a journey through the centuries including works by Prokofiev and Berio, as well as perhaps the most famous unaccompanied violin piece of all, the *Chaconne* of JS Bach.

This project is supported in part by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council of Arts and Culture and the State of Florida (Section 286 25 Florida Statutes); The Exchange; Gulf Coast Community Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts, Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenues; and the Virginia B. Coultimir Foundation.



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Zen forest meditation is an all-natural antidote to the daily grind. "Sit in nature for 20 minutes a day. If you're busy, sit for an hour." That simple prescription sounds like a paradox. But modern science backs it up. A host of rigorous, doubleblind studies have tested the effects of ecological immersion. Their conclusion? Spending 120 minutes per week in a natural environment will:

- Restore energy
- Decrease mental fatigue
- Improve concentration and focus
- Lower blood pressure
 - Boost executive function

Continued from Page 70

through Sarasota County's various preserves and natural areas." Most Eco-Tours explore the plants and animals of our regional ecosystems. These ecological encounters are grounded in science and stress the connection between a healthy natural environment and individual health. Clements "Meditations in the Parks" are grounded in the Japanese meditative practice of "shinrinyoku" or forest bathing. EcoWalks are always free, whatever form they take.

IF YOU GO: scgov.net/Home/ Components/Calendar/Event/16221/. For questions, call 861-5000 or email Sarasota@ifas.ufl.edu.

A ROSE IS A ROSE

Did you know you can eat a rose? In fact, they're healthy. Roses contain antioxidants and are high in vitamin C and vitamin A and rose petals make a sweetly fragrant tea. How about brightening your life with a beautiful bouquet? Fantasy Flowers of Lakewood Ranch can make your rose fantasies come true.

IF YOU GO: 8111 Lakewood Ranch Main St., Bldg. J, Ste 101, Lakewood Ranch; 500-1000; FantasyFlowersLWR.com. Don't forget to stop and smell the roses. Take a break in your hectic routine and savor the beauty right in front of you.




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Chuck Oonojue, Ray Bohn, and Jane and Herm Hipson get their happy on at the Grove bar.



Come On, Get Happy!

Lakewood Ranch is filled with happy hours. Here are seven of the happiest.

BY SU BYRON AND MARTY FUGATE | CONTRIBUTORS

he day is done and it's pushing five o'clock. You could catch up on yard work, write thank you notes, organize your sock drawer or vacuum out your car. Or ... you could put your responsibilities on hold and adjust your attitude at one of Lakewood Ranch's abundant happy hour opportunities. Studies have shown that periodic relaxation leads to — ah, forget the excuses. You've worked hard and you deserve to get happy. These options are guaranteed to put a smile on your face.

seven happy places **1.** Grove

Ranchers head to Grove for many good reasons. These include its diverse menu of global fusion fare curated by Greg Campbell, the award-wining chef and restaurateur; its modern, spacious vibe; and its generous happy hour offerings. Sit inside at the bustling bar and meet new friends or perch outside on the expansive, covered patio overlooking Main Street. This is the place to see and be seen. From 20-somethings to octogenarians - everyone is feeling good and getting their happy on. Grove is famed for its inventive craft cocktails (the Ranch Water is a tempting elixir of grapefruit-infused Tito's vodka with lime juice, agave and Ruby Red Ice) and its hearty happy hour menu, which includes small plates (try the beer-battered Thai cauliflower, the ahi tuna nachos and the creamy grouper artichoke gratin on toasted pita). This is a hip, happening spot - and the word is out. If you want to grab a seat, arrive early. Happy hour starts at 3 p.m. and the joint is jumping by 4.

Happy hours: 3-7 p.m., daily.
Late night: 10 p.m.-midnight, Friday-Saturday
Libations: Wine: \$2 off. Craft cocktails and infusions: \$6-\$12. Call liquor: \$6. Veuve Clicquot: \$15 a glass. Draft beers: \$4-\$7.
Fun feasts: Small plates: \$6 to \$15. Sushi: \$6-\$7.
If you go: 10670 Boardwalk Loop, Lakewood Ranch; 893-4321; GroveLWR.com.

> Photos by Lori Sax **Right:** Grove bartender Billy Sapadith is a pro at keeping happy hour happy. **Far right, from top:** One of the appetizing appetizers at Grove is the ahi tuna nachos with

wakame and avocado. **Middle:** Emily and Austen Wagoner take time from their hectic day to wind down at Grove. **Bottom:** Grove is famed for its inventive craft cocktails, including the Ranch Water, a tempting elixir of grapefruit-infused Tito's vodka with lime juice, agave and Ruby Red Ice.

Continued on Page 76









2. Bourbon & Bones Chophouse and Market

Forget the cornball, cowboy cliché. Bourbon & Bones Chophouse (aka B&B Chophouse) is a 21st century take on the great American steakhouse with an eclectic décor and menu. (Steak-lovers will not be disappointed.) Aficionados of craft beer, fine wine and top-shelf spirits will also be pleased. The indoor bar is a lively watering hole with plenty of cheer. B&B's secret sauce? Bourbon — with 120 selections. (If you're a bourbon newbie, try the "Intro to Bourbon" flight and choose four of seven offerings for only \$7.) While you're sipping, fill up on the happy hour "Bar Bites" menu, which includes bourbon-lacquered bacon; a charcuterie board with cheeses, bacon and grilled flatbread; and spicy buttermilk chicken bites sparked with Cajun aioli sauce. About 50 people can belly up to the bar — and there's outside seating, too.





Photos by Lori Sax

Happy hours: 3-6 p.m., Monday-Friday Libations: Bourbon and rye: 20% off. Classic cocktails: 20% off. Craft beers: \$4. House wine: \$5. Fun feasts: Beef sliders: \$8. Island calamari: \$10. Bourbon-lacquered bacon: \$8 Charcuterie board: \$9. If you go: 8205 Natures Way, Suite 119, Lakewood Ranch; (941) 893-5403; BandBChophouse.com.



Chophouse, including the Island Calamari, which comes with a dipping sauce of orange, mango and sweet chili sauce.

Above: B&B Chophouse's bar is a lively watering hole with plenty of cheer. **Top-right:** The Blueberry and Bones gimlet at B&B Chophouse is a swell way to greet the evening. **Right:** While you're sipping, fill up on the happy hour "Bar Bites" menu at B&B

3. Remy's on Main Street

Remy's on Main Street is an artful mix of earthy details and cool geometry. Its comfort-food menu combines American classics with a few Korean delicacies. Take a seat at the sleek, French curved bar, which might start to resemble an acoustic guitar after a happy drink or two. The savvy bartenders will happily direct you to try their signature cocktails, which include the Remy's Classic (Tito's handmade vodka or Aviation gin, shaken and served straight up with olives or a twist) and the Knob Creek Old Fashioned (Knob Creek bourbon or rye with filthy cherries, orange and Angostura bitters). What goes great with that sip? You can't go wrong with the Bulgogi Nachos — a Korean twist on the plain old nacho with wonton chips, bulgogi-style beef, chopped kimchi, jack cheese, pico de gallo, gochujang aioli, and guacamole. Our favorite décor detail is a wall of faux grass, emblazoned with golden, cursive letters: "You're Just Where You're Meant to Be." We couldn't agree more.

Happy hours: 3-6 p.m., Tuesday-Friday Libations: Draft beers: \$1 off. CK Mondavi wines: \$2 off. Cocktails: \$2 off. Well drinks: \$5. Fun feasts: Whatever's on the menu! **Entertainment:** Live music. 3-6 p.m., Tues.-Fri. If you go: 8138 Lakewood Main St.; 355-9391; RemysOnMain.



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Happy hours: 4-7 p.m., Sun.-Thurs. Libations: Draft beers: \$2 off. Wines: \$4 off. Hot saki: \$3 off. Signature cocktails: \$3 off. Fun feasts: Classic sushi rolls: \$6. Harumaki, shrimp shumai, and other treats: \$7. If you go: 8126 Lakewood Main St., Unit 102, Lakewood Ranch; 907-1290; HanaSushiLoungeLWR.com.

Photo by Su Byron **Above:** Thanks to the vision of owner Jane Dokko, Hana Sushi Lounge has a welcoming vibe and a modern, airy ambiance.



Courtesy photo Enjoy a tranquil atmosphere and refreshing cocktails at Hana Sushi

4. Hana Sushi Lounge

Thanks to the vision of owner Jane Dokko, Hana Sushi Lounge has a welcoming vibe and a modern, airy ambiance. The light wood tables, dark walls and exceedingly cool art set the stage for a tranquil night on the town. Grab a seat at the dark wood bar, feast your eyes on the backsplash of gleaming copper tiles and breathe in the Zen. What's the best-loved cocktail? Dokko says it's the Jalap Slap — a perky mix of pineapple/jalapeño-infused tequila, triple sec, fresh lime juice, agave and muddled jalapeños. If you're in the mood for saki, Dokko recommends the Bunraku Dress Bottle, a full-bodied, dry saki that tastes best when chilled. The happy hour menu is packed with tasty treats. For \$6, you can choose from a selection of sushi rolls. For a buck more, your choices include tuna and salmon nachos, harumaki, shrimp shumai and more.

Continued on Page 80

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5. Ed's Tavern

Ed's Tavern looks like NASA's version of a sports bar. The 20 massive, high-res TV screens are tuned to bouts and games across the planet. Football, soccer, tennis, 43-Man Squamish, chess ... whatever! If it's playing somewhere, you can probably watch it. (They'll also provide an app so you can listen to the gameplay on your phone.) Happy hour is fun, rowdy, noisy - and usually jampacked. It's also cheap: three bucks for domestic beers; four bucks for Mondovi wine; and \$4 or \$5 for decent booze brands, including Grev Goose, Tito's and Maker's Mark. You can chow down on \$6 apps; these being the usual suspects like nachos, popcorn shrimp, corndogs, quesadillas and there's even bacon, mac and cheese eggrolls. Look for a bevy of special events, including "Tacos and Tequila" night on Tuesdays, classic car shows on Wednesdays, and poker and trivia nights. At Ed's, fun is always the name of the game.



Happy hours: 4-7 p.m., daily. Libations: Domestic draft beers: \$3. Mondovi wine: \$4. Most liquors: \$4 and \$5. Fun feasts: Appetizing appetizers: \$6. If you go: 10719 Rodeo Drive, Lakewood Ranch; 907-0400; EdsLakewoodRanch.com.





Photos by Lori Sax

Clockwise, from top: Ali Pereira, a server at Ed's Tavern, keeps guests free from thirst. Kristen Hickey and Brendon Clouse enjoy good times. Chow down on all-American grub. Happy hour at Ed's Tavern is fun, busy — and cheap.

6. McGrath's Irish Ale House

Green is the signature color of this warm, family-friendly, slice of Ireland. (We imagine you're not surprised.) It's always busy, but they've always got time for you. McGrath's offers abundant indoor and outdoor seating and the menu's packed with authentic Irish fare, including a version of shepherd's pie that handed down from owner Bruce Mahnke's great-grandmother. The Irish beer and spirits brands share in that authenticity. Sure, and you'll find all the usual suspects, including Guinness, Harp's, Jameson, Teeling — and many more. Happy hour chow (bang bang chicken, Scotch eggs, chunky chips and Brussels sprouts) is \$5. The restaurant bills itself as a "place of tall tales and cocktails" and happy hour is the ideal time to dive into the fun. In "Finnegans Wake," McGrath was a mysterious villain who wanted to put a wheel around the sky. These folks just want to put a smile on your face. They succeed.

Happy hours: 3-6 p.m., daily Libations: Irish whiskey: \$5. All drafts: 1/2 price; House cocktails: \$4. Specialty cocktails: \$2 off. House wine: \$3. All wine bottles: ½ off. Fun feasts: Irish-style appetizers: \$5. If you go: 8110 Lakewood Main St., Lakewood Ranch; (941) 210-4398; McGrathsIrish.com.

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7. Good Liquid Brewing Co.

Good vibrations come in liquid form in this picture-perfect, lakeside location at Waterside Place. While drinking in the waterfront view, you can slake your thirst with a stunning selection of local and national craft beer crowd-pleasers. Although there's no specific happy hour menu, this beneficent brewpub boasts at least 18 outstanding taps, including two ciders. (Try the Coconut Key Lime Sour; it was a silver medalist in the Best Florida Sour Beer category.) The menu's packed with pub grub, includ-

ing sandwiches, hearty burgers (both meat and veggie), woodgrilled "brewzettas" (aka pizza), and other faves. After filling up, you can work off the pounds with a brisk game of cornhole just outside.

If you go: 1570 Lakefront Drive, Lakewood Ranch; (941) 238-6466; GoodLiquidBrewingCompany.com.



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Photo by Lori Sax Andy Guz leads by shining the light on staff and not on himself.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Andy Guz, the CEO of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, empowers his staff by providing what they need to do their best.

BY MARK GORDON | CONTRIBUTOR



ne morning in early December 2021, just as another wave of COVID-19 was blanketing the country, Andrew "Andy" Guz quietly waited in a side room at the Grove restaurant in Lakewood Ranch.

The CEO of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center (LWRMC). Guz was waiting with a dozen or so nurses and other hospital staffers. They were at the Grove for a feel-good moment: the Lakewood Ranch Community Fund had named the entire hospital staff Humanitarian of the Year for its exemplary COVID-19 care protocol. They were there for a celebratory luncheon. Yet despite his stature and title, Guz mostly tried to stay out of the limelight. He didn't want to take the focus away from the nurses, physician assistants and other staff members whom he considers to be the true heroes.

That can particularly be seen in one of the photos taken that day: Guz is in the background, behind the team. He's smiling widely, yet barely visible. That's vintage Guz, say several people who have known and worked with him, including Kevin DiLallo, group vice president of the Florida Region for Universal Health Services, which owns LWRMC. DiLallo, former CEO and Group VP for the Manatee Healthcare System at UHS, recruited Guz to be CEO in 2016. "He really has endeared himself to the staff," DiLallo says. "They see him as one of them, and they are always very appreciative of him."

That leaders-eat-last mindset that guides Guz, 41, has been a key tactic in his successfully overseeing six years of expansive and rapid growth at LWRMC — with more to come in 2023. "I listen to employees and get them what they need," is one of his mantras.

One telling example: Guz attended a Saturday meeting during a peak moment in the pandemic, during which a

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The 120-bed hospital provides a full array of medical services, including surgical, maternity and obstetrical care, intensive care and emergency services.

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staff member suggested putting baby monitors in rooms. This way, staff entering rooms wouldn't have to keep putting on and discarding personal protective equipment. It would make a difference in how much PPE would be used. Guz heard the staff person loud and clear. He drove, that day, to Target where he purchased 12 baby monitors. He understood that keeping flexible was a key logistic in navigating the pandemic — and essential to any company's success and survival.

BOOM TIME

Just off Main Street at Lakewood Ranch, LWRMC opened in 2004. The 120-bed hospital provides a full array of medical services, including cardiovascular, surgical and orthopedics services, stroke, maternity and obstetrical care, and intensive care and emergency services. The hospital

recently announced that it plans to build a \$120 million, five-story, 60-bed patient tower on its main campus. Expected to take several years, the first phase, in addition to the 60 patient beds, includes expansion of key ancillary departments such as pharmacy, laboratory, education, pre-admission testing and food and nutrition services. The 170,000-square-foot tower will include shell space for an additional 60 patient beds, the ability to add two more floors and expansion of other areas.

The project, say hospital officials, will lead to some 100 new jobs. Preconstruction work is scheduled to begin this year and the first phase is expected to be completed in 2025.

The latest expansion announcement comes some 3.5 years after another expansion. That one, completed in summer 2019, was a 14-month, \$28.5 million project that included two additional operating rooms; shell space

announced expansion will add a 170,000-square-foot tower. Beds: 120. Expansion will take it to 180, with room for 240. Patients seen a year: 100,000 in ER, general admission, surgery and outpatient. Employees: Around 1,500. Some 700 are physicians and advanced practice providers. Women's center: 14 labor.

delivery, recovery and postpartum suites.

Source: Lakewood Ranch Medical Center

for two more operating rooms; an additional heart catheterization lab; a new advanced MRI system; a new location for the Breast Health Center; and new administrative office space.

While excited about the potential to serve more people, Guz maintains the idea isn't to grow for growth's sake, but to serve the booming population of East County and Lakewood Ranch. "We have more people who need medical services, so we want to provide those services," he says.

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Photo by Lori Sax

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SIZE MATTERS

Even at 180 beds after the new expansion, LWRMC will be smaller than the pair of other leading medical facilities in the region. Manatee Memorial, in downtown Bradenton, is owned by Universal Health Services Inc., and has 295 beds, while Sarasota Memorial, a nonprofit community-operated facility, has 901 beds. Guz says LWRMC could be at 240 beds within five years — double its current size.

Size matters in hospitals — in everything from economies of scale with vendors and suppliers to attracting doctors

and specialties to government reimbursements. Size matters, too, in branding for the public. When Guz was named CEO in 2016, even though LWRMC had been in existence for 12 years, he says "my first goal was to put this hospital on the map."

He vividly recalls the disconnect in the community back then. At events and meeting new people around town he would field a lot of "do you?" questions. Do you do surgeries there? Do you deliver babies there? "I spent an inordinate amount of time answering questions," he says. "It didn't help that we didn't have 'hospital' in our name and it also didn't help that we looked like a hotel, not a hospital."

Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance CEO Brittany Lamont met Guz soon after he came to town, when Lamont was with

the Sarasota Chamber of Commerce. She's seen him grow into the role and was there the day the LWRMC team won the Humanitarian Award. Lamont says she's most impressed with Guz's calm demeanor. "He leads with logic over emotion," she says. "I'm sure it happens, but I've never seen him get riled up. If he does, he never lets it show."

Guz credits his family, to a large part, for his calm demeanor and friendly disposition. He grew up in Weirton, West Virginia, west of the Pennsyl-

Continued on Page 90





Courtesy photos Top: Surgeons at Lakewood Ranch Medical Center use the da Vinci surgical system, an advanced robotic platform. Left: The Women's Center at Lakewood Ranch Medical Center offers comprehensive services, including childbirth and parenting education classes, maternity services and labor/ delivery rooms. Bottom: The cardiac catheterization lab at Lakewood Ranch Medical Center.



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Continued from Page 88

vania border and Pittsburgh. His dad worked in steel mills and his mom was a nurse who spent most of her career teaching nursing. Guz knew he didn't want to work in the mills, and he also didn't want to be in the allied health side, delivering health care to patients.

But the business side of running a hospital? That became Guz's passion early on, first at Marshall University in West Virginia, and later at Cornell, where he earned a master's in health care administration. "There's a lot of other things that go into running a giant (health care) organization," he says. "There's a lot of things going on behind the scenes that nobody sees."

After a brief stint in Polk County, at Bartow Regional Medical Center, Guz went on to work for hospitals in Washington state and Indiana. He was CEO of Jennersville Regional Hospital in West Grove, Pennsylvania, south of Philadelphia, when DiLallo called him about the opening in Lakewood Ranch. "He's very growth oriented," DiLallo says, "and was a perfect fit for this hospital."

Like many others, Guz and his family had vacationed on Siesta Key. And moving back to Florida was a longrange, back-of-the-mind goal. Closing in on seven years in the CEO role, he remains excited for both the longrange growth and day-to-day.

"It's hard to be stuck in a rut in this job," he says. "There's just so many different things happening every day." Photo by Lori Sax The CEO of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center is currently overseeing a plan to significantly expand the hospital.

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A graceful estate in The Lake Club embraces the natural world just beyond. **PAGE 96**

Photos courtesy of Holly Pascarella, Pascarella Shanahan Luxury Group, Coldwell Banker Green lawns and a sparkling pool beckon from the entrance hall of this lavish home overlooking a lake. It was built in 2013 and offers over 4,300 square feet of living space.

AT HOME NATURE

The Zabels' home is a tranquil waterfront retreat in The Lake Club.

BY ROBERT PLUNKET | CONTRIBUTOR

The home faces a tiny bay in one of the lakes that give the Lake Club its name.

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-



The primary bedroom faces the garden. Below, the same room as seen from the outside.

've written about homes in Lakewood Ranch for more than 10 years now, and from the very beginning I've noticed a curious thing. The families with the most beautiful homes, the ones you want to live in yourself, were invariably people who had lived in many different places, in
all sorts of houses, and under all sorts of circumstances.

By the time they move to, say, The Lake Club, they have acquired a great deal of wisdom about all the little details that makes a house special and unique for their needs. But not often is the result so successful as Ron and Pat Zabel's home in The Lake Club overlooking a panorama of flowers, olive trees and a peaceful lake.

The Zabels have lived in 19 different places around country, during which time they raised four children and Ron became something of a business guru. His specialty was taking unsuccessful companies and turning them around and, no, it wasn't about increasing

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The entrance hall, at far left, boasts a groin vault ceiling, while in the adjacent dining room the ceiling is beamed. The office, below, is topped by an intricate wooden vault. Bottom, the terrace outside the living room features a pergola to diffuse the strong Florida sunlight.

Continued from Page 98

profits. It was all about empowering the employees and creating a business culture of trust.

This problem-solving mindset can be seen all over the home the Zabels built with Westwater Construction in 2013. Attention to detail is everywhere, with seemingly small elements creating a luxurious atmosphere. While many homes claim to be at one with nature, the Zabels' delivers the goods. Each bedroom opens onto a flowered terrace through gracious French doors. Even the doors themselves are special, made in Italy and finished in a striking chocolate brown by the same company that paints Ferraris.

And look carefully at the ceilings. "Ceilings add character to a house," Ron says, and indeed, each one in

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66 Ceilings add character to a house. RON ZABEL





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CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA RICCARDO MUTI, MUSIC DIRECTOR



March 1, 7:30 pm | Van Wezel In his final season as Music Director, Riccardo Muti conducts Beethoven's Symphony No. 8 and Mussorgsky's Pictures from an Exhibition.

ENGLISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA JOSÉ SEREBRIER, CONDUCTOR



March 12, 7:30 pm | Van Wezel The most recorded chamber orchestra in the world, the London-based English Chamber Orchestra performs a program of Mozart, Haydn and Tchaikovsky.

BUFFALO PHILHARMONIC JOANN FALLETTA, MUSIC DIRECTOR

March 27, 7:30 pm | Van Wezel

Music Director JoAnn Falletta leads the Grammy Awardwinning Buffalo Philharmonic in Dvořák's Symphony No. 7 and Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto.



SCAsarasota.org | 941-966-6161



The expansive family room illustrates how texture and pattern can bring a room to life. The color scheme may be muted but the room hums with energy. A wall of rock complements the subtle patterns provided by the rug and furniture.

Continued from Page 100

the home is special. The entrance hall gallery soars 20 feet to a vaulted groin, and the adjacent dining room features wooden beams. The office ceiling maybe the most noteworthy, a wooden vault that spans the 16- by 18-foot room. Even the outdoor areas have ceilings of a sort; both the great room and the primary bedroom open to pergolas that diffuse the strong Florida sunlight.

This is the third home the Zabels have built in the Ranch, and they knew what they wanted. More space, certainly. But, as Ron puts it, "We wanted a home to fulfill our dream."

Most importantly, they wanted a family home. "The most important thing in our lives is our family," Pat explains. "We wanted the children and grandkids to come." So, the home they created is a very social one. There are plenty of private spaces but even more places to hang out informally, with all the grandkids having the time of their lives — all 11 of them.

Continued on Page 104



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The chef's kitchen offers three different places to enjoy a meal or just a snack. There are stools at the marble-covered island, plus a nearby table and chairs.

Continued from Page 102

Most activity centers around the spacious great room, with three different dining areas, including one a step away on an outdoor patio. And that's not counting the expansive outdoor living area with a complete kitchen of its own and screens that lower at the touch of a button — or is it a phone app? The pool is a classic rectangle surrounded by nature and unobstructed by a pool cage. There's also a spa and, with over an acre of land, there's plenty of room for outdoor play. Sleeping quarters consist of four guest rooms, each one different in décor but all stylish and practical. Each bedroom - and most of the other rooms - open onto patios embraced by flowers.

The Zabels have a wing to themselves, with the bedroom lined with windows overlooking the garden and the lake. The ceiling is 12 feet high, and the walls are hand-painted and handtextured plastered. There are two linen closets and two separate vanities in the bath, along with a garden

Continued on Page 106

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Continued from Page 104

tub and a walk-in shower. The mood in the suite is quiet and contemplative, greatly enhanced by careful attention to texture and color.

Pat had the help of a decorator when putting the house together. As is appropriate in the Italian-themed Lake Club, the chosen palette is natural and organic — many shades of green and brown, set against neutrals of cream and grey and silver. The art on the walls is figurative, with many paintings of hill towns and olive groves, reinforcing The Lake Club's signature Tuscan look. Accents tend to be wood. But the most important decorative elements are what you see through the many windows - the gardens and greenery, the blue of the lake and the even brighter blue green of the pool.

The home has the understated selfconfidence of a successful businessman and his family. Although it's an expensive property, there's nothing flashy or flamboyant about it, and many of the

Continued on Page 108



The spacious outdoor living area adjoins the family room and offers every convenience, including a complete kitchen, TV, and screens that lower at the touch of a button.

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Continued from Page 106

details that make it so special are not obvious at first. The garage doors, for instance, are 12 feet wide, not the standard nine feet. Many of these improvements are the results of Pat's career: raising a family. Or as she puts it, "I was holding the corporate ladder while Ron climbed it." It was a hectic, adventurous life with many unusual twists and turns. She recalls back in the 1990s when Ron was president of L'Eggs pantyhose, which famously came in a plastic egg, and revolutionized women's hosiery. "He was always running off to a focus group about pantyhose," she remembers with a bemused smile.

The Zabels have decided to downsize and have chosen a nearby condo. They definitely want to stay in the Ranch. It turned out to be the perfect spot for them.

"We love the vibe and the convenience," Ron says. "Everybody is so welcoming," Pat adds. Their dream home, built with so much care and attention to detail is now on the market, ready for a new family to dazzle and delight.



At sunset, the view from the terrace is the perfect backdrop for a moment of quiet reflection.

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DO YOU KNOW What's in your water?

art and about Art and About

Spring has sprung. Plays, exhibitions and concerts are blossoming across the area. It's a great time for an artistic pilgrimage. Here are four great places to start.



SU BYRON CONTRIBUTOR

Catching the Truth of the World

Photographer Richard Benson gave his students a precisely defined mission: "Go out into the world with the camera and find out that the world is smarter than you are." That simple assignment summed up photography's essence: recording objective reality - the world out there, not the image in your mind's eye. Benson did in his own photography. This exhibition, at Sarasota Art Museum, surveys nearly 50 years of his work with more than 100 prints. Each separate image is powerful; they add up to an evolutionary timeline of Benson's photographic oeuvre. They're also a form of co-evolution. Benson's photography was in constant feedback with the evolution of printing and media technology - and education as well. As an author and professor and dean at Yale University, he made his mark on three decades of students and creators. Benson's camera never lied. He tried to capture the objective truth of the world. But that truth is a constantly moving target. To catch it, you have to keep running. Benson did. And he encouraged his students to do the same. Through May 7 at Sarasota Art Museum of Ringling College, 1001 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota; SarasotaArtMuseum.org.

The Music and the Man

Thanks to the leadership of renowned conductor Riccardo Muti, the internationally acclaimed Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) has solidified its status as one of the world's top five orchestras. Under his guidance, Muti deepened CSO's engagement with the Chicago community, supported emerging musicians and collaborated with visionary artists. This year marks



"Puerto Rico Landscape" by Richard Benson.



Photo by Todd Rosenberg Riccardo Muti conducts the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Muti's final season as CSO's music director, and area residents will have a final chance of watching the maestro in his glory. The concert's soaring program includes Beethoven's Symphony No. 8 and Mussorgsky's "Pictures from an Exhibition." The experience honors both the music and the man. Don't miss it. 7:30 p.m., March 1, at the Van Wezel; ScaSarasota.org; 966-6161.

Don't Touch That Dial

In his days as FCC chairman, Newton Minow once described the landscape of network television as "a vast wasteland." In his blistering, satiric screenplay for "Network," Paddy Chayefsky



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Courtesy photos Sheffield Chastain plays the lead anchorman in FST's "Network."



FST's producing artistic director, Richard Hopkins, directs "Network."

Continued from Page 110

imagined a voice crying in that wilderness — Howard Beale, an anchorman who snaps and becomes the "mad prophet of the airways." Thanks to Lee Hall's adaptation, Beale's thundering voice is now ringing out on the Florida Studio Theatre stage in a production directed by Richard Hopkins. In the world of this play, prophecy makes for great ratings, but displeases the network's major corporate sponsors. The network cancels Beale's show - and Beale, as well. Chayefsky's dark satire imagined a future of global village idiots. The modern media landscape is slightly different. But it's closer than we'd like to think. Through March 19; FloridaStudioTheatre.org; 366-9000.



Stunning glass art by Richard Royal in "Circles + Spheres" at the Basch Gallery at Ringling College.

Heart of Glass

"Circles + Spheres" explores the possibilities of geometry in Ringling College's 14th annual exhibition of glass art drawn from the collection of Richard and Barbara Basch. These orbs and cylindrical glass creations spring from a range of glass art tech-

niques. Some pieces were blown; others cast in kilns: others worked with flame; others fused. All evoke a sense of inner flame. The master artists featured in this show include Martin Blank, Dale Chihuly, Richard Royal, Livio Seguso and Lino Tagliapi- RinglingCollege.Gallery.

etra. Starting with simple geometry, they've created a vast array of expressive permutations. That vast diversity flows from a common source; the fire of artistic imagination. Through March 24, Basch Gallery at Ringling College;





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POLO SEASON KICKS OFF

JAN. 1 AT SARASOTA POLO CLUB



Photos by Jay Heater

Claire Dornak of North South Wealth Management/Ranch Hand tries to pass the ball down the field as Barefield/Hawkwood's Vasco Iriate challenges her.



Lakewood Ranch's Irene Kosse and Helen Kosse





Above: Before the horses take the playing field at the Sarasota Polo Club, fans are allowed to enjoy the field. Lakewood Ranch 4-year-old Caspian Reeves tries to outrun his mom, Ashley McLeod.

Left: Placida's Richard and Patricia Bossey were the first patrons to reserve a spot in the new Hemingway English bus. They had a great view on the bus's upper deck.



Photos by lan Swaby River Club's Mary Ryan, Parrish's Nancy Styrk, and Tara's Sherry Swarts continue their tradition of visiting Music on Main together.

MUSIC ON MAIN JAN. 6 AT MAIN STREET AT LAKEWOOD RANCH



Above: Lakewood Ranch's 16-year-old Brooke Evangelho meets Ollie, who belongs to Lakewood Ranch's Bob and Marta Katz.

Right: Friends Sapphire Point's Carolyn Tovell and Lakewood National's Kevin Lowerre are pleased with the drinks they found at Craft Growlers to Go.



Palmetto's Tom Harvey meets a new friend, Lakewood Ranch's Arlene Menatt, who, like him, is also from Iowa, and shares his love of the Iowa Hawkeyes.







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Herald-Tribune LOCALIC WEDU OPBS



table talk Barb and Larry Remington of Remy's On Main

Their family recipe for success? Serving up all-American comfort food with a Korean flare in a thoroughly modern ambiance.

BY MARTY FUGATE | CONTRIBUTOR

Remy's on Main is the brainchild of Larry and Barb Remington with a lot of help from their son, daughter-in-law and son-in-law. The husband-and-wife restaurateurs know what they're doing. In Michigan, their restaurants enjoyed 42 years of success - until the pandemic shut them down. But the couple bounced back — and came back strong in Lakewood Ranch. They describe Remy's as, "a family-owned, family-friendly restaurant and bar." That's true — but with its sleek, upscale décor and thoroughly modern bar stocked with top-shelf wines and liquors, it's also sophisticated and urbane. Remy's menu serves up a mix of all-American crowd-pleasers with a few Korean classics that Barb, who was born in Korea, carefully curates. Simply put, this family-friendly restaurant is friendly to everybody. Including nosy writers with notebooks and lots of questions. Here are their friendly answers ...

When we left Michigan, we never thought that we'd...

Larry: Open a restaurant in Lakewood Ranch. Barb: And we're so glad we did.

We chose Lakewood Ranch for Remy's because...



Larry: We love the Main Street community and the friendly people who stop by. We also love their canine companions. I'm a dog-lover — and all the dogs who come to Remy's know it. Barb: Larry feeds them all!

To me, comfort food means...

Larry: To me, it means homemade dishes that ... Barb: ... make you happy.

Remy's Korean-inspired foods, include...

Barb: Bulgogi nachos, bibimbap. And my homemade kimchi is very popular.

Remy's down-home American comfort food includes...

Larry: Where to begin? Blueberry bubble waffles, homemade biscuits and gravy, our double-decker Remy burger, short ribs, our pan-fried fish — the list is endless.

My absolute favorite comfort food is...

Larry: Mine is the Reuben sandwich —lean, deli-style corned beef and sauerkraut that are marinated together on the hot grill on a marble rye. Just thinking about it makes me hungry! Barb: Bibimbap — it's got everything I love in one bowl.

Don't leave Remy's without trying...

Continued on Page 118

Photo by Mary Fugate Larry and Barb Remington met when they were both teenagers and have spent their lives doing what they love best — offering classic American and Korean comfort foods in a family-friendly ambiance.



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Continued from Page 116

Larry: Our fabulous baby back ribs. We cook and sauté them to perfection.

My guilty food pleasure is...

Barb: You know what I love? I've been eating fried calamari every night. Larry: Yeah. Our fresh calamari is a great appetizer.

Barb: It's hand battered. It's so good.

Our favorite customers are ...

Larry: Repeat customers who appreciate our food and try new things. Barb: We have so many regulars. Some come back four or five times a week. We know them all on a firstname basis.

When I'm not working, I love ...

Barb: Messing around in my garden at home.

Larry: That's hard to answer. I'm here from opening to closing. When am I not working? I guess that's when I'm sleeping. So, getting a good night's sleep!

My original culinary heroes were...

Barb: My mom! She was a fabulous cook; she taught me so much about Korean cuisine. And I really loved Julia Child. She used so much butter. Whenever I use butter. I remember her.

My new sources of culinary inspiration are

Barb: I admire so many Korean chefs and read many Korean cookbooks to keep up with new trends.

Larry: For me, that would have to be our children. They're constantly inventing original recipes and aweing us with their talents.

Barb: Yes! Our children are so creative. Larry: The older you get, the more you get used to the old ways. The young generation is always cooking up new ideas and approaches to food. Back in the day, we taught them. Now it's their turn to teach us. I love it.

If You Go: Remy's on Main: 8138 Lakewood Main St., Lakewood Ranch; 941-355-9391; RemysOnMain.com



Photo by Lori Sax Barb's Korean-inspired bulgogi nachos tempt with won ton chips, bulgogi steak, chopped kimchee, jack cheese, pico de gallo, scallions and gochujang aioli served with guacamole.



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Robert Baker took this photo of a lotus about to bloom.

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