



Around the Ranch

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THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER OF LAKEWOOD RANCH

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2024



LAKEWOOD RANCH BOOKS IT TO THE LIBRARY – At long last, the Manatee County Library System's newest branch is open. Located at 16410 Rangeland Parkway, the Lakewood Ranch Library is open 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and is closed Sunday. For more information and pictures, see pages 12-13. Photo by Ernie Soller

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Senior Transport Services – A Better Ride?

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

As we grow older, it may become obvious that some of the things we did as a matter of course when we were younger may not be advisable or perhaps even possible any longer. We may find that we can no longer stay up until all hours of the night partying, for instance, and then after three hours of sleep, function without missing a beat in the morning. We may find that the athletic prowess that was a part of our lives “back when” has turned into “I’ve become a klutz!”

Perhaps the scariest thing for seniors is the idea that they may need to stop getting behind the wheel of a car, and leave the driving to someone else. They lose the sense of independence that driving their own car has given them since they were teenagers.

Some folks take this move in stride, realizing that with their advanced age they can no longer function properly in piloting a vehicle. Others may need some sort of a “push” to get them off the road.

An elderly relative lived with our family for several years, continued driving until she was about 90, and would proudly tell anyone that she spent the years of World War II driving trucks for the U. S. Army. One day, she gave a ride to school to our son, who’d missed the school bus. On the way home she bumped the car in front of her. A local policeman happened by, took note that there was no damage, but apparently felt that she had some limitations. A couple of weeks later, she got a letter from the state ordering her to get a physical exam, and informing her that if she failed to pass, her license would be revoked.

The doctor came out and informed me that there was no way that this lady should be on the road. He said age had made her reflexes very poor, and that some of the medication she was on could make her dizzy. If she should get into an accident, the other party could very well sue her – and they would most probably win.

She was very unhappy, but she sold her car and never drove again. We took over driving her around.

There are lots of other reasons why many folks can’t or should not drive – vision issues, physical limitations, and so on.

So, what can such an individual do to get around? One solution in Sarasota and Manatee counties is Senior Transport Services, Inc.

Senior Transport Services is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. It functions under the umbrella of ITN (The Independent Transportation Network) and ITN Country, which provides IT services to its member organizations, among other assistance. ITN was founded in 1995 by Katherine Freund, whose young son was run over by an 84-year-old driver who apparently thought the boy was a dog. She made it her crusade to provide transportation for people who were too old to drive or, for some other reason, could not drive themselves.

It was founded locally in 2021 by Don Deibert, who served as chairman until his death in May of 2023, and Bill Kaser, who is currently operating the organization locally in Sarasota and Manatee counties.

The task of Senior Transport Services is to get you – the individual who doesn’t drive – to doctor appointments, the grocery



Photo by Ernie Soller

store, the beauty shop, etc. Bill told me that one person gets rides to their gym!

They pick you up and take you home, and they operate 5 days a week, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Here’s how it works: The person needing rides can fill out an online application with Senior Transport Services. If they don’t have access to a computer, they can call Senior Transport Services, and someone will assist them in filling out the application.

They then pay an annual membership fee of \$50, along with establishing a Personal Transportation Account (PTA) in the suggested amount of \$50. The PTA can be set up with other amounts, up to and including the donation of a car from a client who will no longer be driving! That would, of course, pay for a lot of rides.

The individual pays a charge of \$2.15 per mile, plus a pickup fee of \$2, and a minimum charge per ride of \$5. There is an extra stop fee for any stops other than point-to-point. For example, the rider has a doctor’s appointment, but wants to stop at a grocery store on the way home. Rides after normal hours carry a \$4 pickup fee. Note that there is special discount for eye care patients.

Rides are scheduled to prioritize medical appointments, and early scheduling is a good idea.

Shortly after its inception, Senior Transport Services provided eight rides in March of 2022. In July of 2023, they provided

over 175 rides.

There’s another side of the story. This service doesn’t happen without volunteer drivers. In order to provide more rides, Senior Transport Services needs more drivers.

If you’d like to volunteer your time and vehicle, here’s what will happen after you contact STS: You will fill out a volunteer application, and STS will do a background check to assure their riders that the volunteer who is driving them doesn’t have any red flags in their background. You provide STS with copies of your driver license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance, along with the names of three references.

And, hopefully, you are strong enough to be able to lift 50 pounds (in case you may need to secure a client’s wheelchair in your vehicle). Also, you may need to assist your client to and from your vehicle.

Volunteers can ask for a reimbursement of \$.33 per mile, or they can donate their reimbursement back to the organization. They should be available at least two-three days per week, since some of the rides are on a continuous schedule.

We all know that transportation in Sarasota and Manatee counties can be a problem. Senior Transport Services, Inc. can be your solution, whether you need a ride or want to volunteer some of your time.

Contact Senior Transport Services at (941)220-5168. Their web site is found at: www.seniortransport.org.



By Brittany Lamont

Love is in the air, and it goes without saying, we love helping our members' businesses grow! Join us in showing some of that love to our newest Alliance members who joined last month. These businesses made the choice to join our nearly 750 members, and our mission toward success of our members through unparalleled access to business connections, resources, and advocacy.



Humane Society of Lakewood Ranch
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Looking to network with other business professionals? Here are some upcoming opportunities:

2024 Annual Luncheon: Friday, February 23rd, 11:30 am to 1:15 pm, The Ballroom at Grove. Members \$75; non-members \$85.

Young Leaders Alliance Networking at Waterside Place: Wednesday, March 20, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Members are free; non-members are \$15.

For more information on how you can join our mission and grow your business this year, please visit our website: www.LWRBA.org

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February Programs at Chabad of Bradenton & Lakewood Ranch

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

Talmud Classes

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

At the Chabad House and on Zoom

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

Torah Studies

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

At the Chabad House

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

Weekly Shabbat Services

Friday nights, 6:30 p.m.; Saturday mornings at 9:30 a.m., Shabbat Kiddush at noon
At the Chabad House

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

Ladies Torah & Tea

Tuesday, Feb. 27, 11 a.m. to noon

At the home of Chanie Bukiet and on Zoom

Join Chanie Bukiet for a weekly dose of de-

licious tea and Torah learning. The class topics will be "The Heart of the Matter," finding personal meaning in eight powerful prayers. Admission is free. Sponsor a class in someone's memory or honor for \$36.

Chabad Hebrew School of the Arts

Sunday, Feb. 25, 9:30 a.m. to noon

At the Chabad House

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

JLI - Advice for Life

Wednesdays, Feb. 21 & 28, 7:30 p.m.

At the Chabad House and on Zoom

The Rebbe's spiritual leadership is the force behind the modern Chabad movement. Join us for a multimedia journey, with a six-week course, through the Rebbe's practical wisdom on work, family, health, and well-being. Discover how the Rebbe applied Jewish values to serve as a guide for finding deeper meaning in everyday life. Fee: \$90 (textbook included).

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

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Your LWR Story

By Maggie Milne

Meet Dr. Nadia Falah, a resident of Lakewood Ranch. Nadia was born and raised in Tripoli, Libya, where she completed medical school and also met her husband. The couple moved to the United States to further their education, attending Vanderbilt University, University of Miami, and Duke University. Dr. Falah is trained in medical genetics, subspecializing in medical biochemical genetics.

Following their medical residencies, she and her husband spent years in West Virginia. Despite being grateful for their career opportunities up north, they desired a warmer climate. In October of 2023, Nadia and her family relocated to Lakewood Ranch. She works at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg, while her husband works at Sarasota Memorial Hospital.

Lakewood Ranch, situated midway for their commutes, perfectly suited their needs. Nadia and her family adore the Gulf Coast of Florida. When considering their children's educational options, Lakewood Ranch stood out, offering top-rated public schools.

The community's all-ages concept, coupled with its amenities, proximity to shops, schools, and housing choices, convinced Nadia and her family to call it home. Choosing to rent a home in Woodleaf Hammock while exploring new housing options, Nadia and her husband plan to find their future home based on such priorities as proximity to their children's schools, lifestyle offerings within the residential village, a potential water view, and a family-friendly atmosphere. They envision settling into their new home by October of 2024.

During their leisure time, the family enjoys events at the Main Street and Waterside Place town centers. Recently, they participated in the annual Jingle Bell Run. Nadia plays tennis, while her children play volleyball – a family dedicated to both activities and work. Nadia relies in part on the Community Activities Parks and Recreation Guide to plan engaging and educational family activities, like CPR for Kids. Sundays often find them at the Farmers' Market, or taking drives to the beaches. With so much to explore in and around Lakewood Ranch, Nadia eagerly anticipates the coming years.

As a geneticist specializing in medical and biochemical genetics, Dr. Falah is passionate about caring for newborns and children with genetic and metabolic conditions, aiding families in diagnoses. She has experience in cancer genetics, which extends to helping patients understand their cancer risk and providing preventive measures. Dr. Falah is also interested in and provides education about

genetics, offering counseling, and improving understanding of genetic disorders and testing. Dr. Falah is preparing to see patients at two clinics via Johns Hopkins All Children's locations in Sarasota and Lakewood Ranch, contributing to the alleviation of limited availability of geneticists in the region, thereby striving to bridge the gap in accessibility to specialized genetic care for individuals and families in need.

With all the exciting prospects on the horizon for the family, Nadia cannot imagine living anywhere else. Community service is a big part of her passion. She looks forward to giving back to her Lakewood Ranch community and young, aspiring medical professionals, connecting with children who want to be doctors when they grow up. She is grateful for their healthy future ahead and all that the Lakewood Ranch community has to offer. To contact Dr. Falah, email falahnadia@gmail.com.



We would like to share Your LWR Story!

Include who you are, why you chose Lakewood Ranch, your Lakewood Ranch life now, and what excites you about your Lakewood Ranch future.

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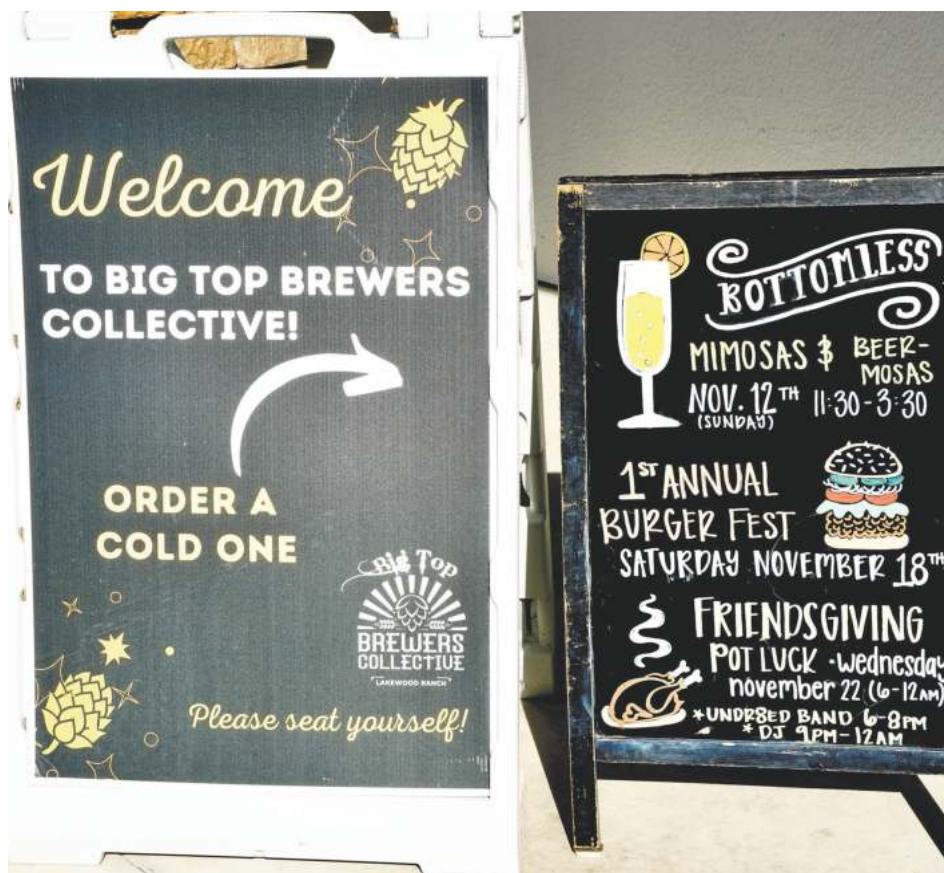


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PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER



Can You Get a Good Craft Beer in LWR? Absolutely!

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

If you go to many of the sports bars or an average restaurant in the Lakewood Ranch area and ask your bartender or waitperson about a beer list, most will rattle off something like this: Bud, Bud Light, Miller Lite, Coors Lite, Michelob Light ... and maybe they'll add something like Heineken (never the dark variety) or Guinness.

There are a few exceptions – places that have made room on their beer list for some of the local craft beers that are getting more popular on the Suncoast, but for the most part, the selections are pretty standard ... and some would say, kind of boring.

If all you are looking for is something that's

wet and reasonably cold, then maybe one of those beers will suffice, but if you're looking for great flavor, there's a place in Lakewood Ranch that has gained a reputation for producing some of the best craft beers around.

Joe and Diana Eibler of Sarasota started brewing their own beer in their garage in 2013, after visiting Orlando and getting a taste of the craft beer scene there. They got together with Eric and Judy Keller, and soon, the Naughty Monk Brewery was born in that garage.

The Eiblers kept on trying new recipes, and in 2015, Naughty Monk won a bronze medal at the Florida Beer Championships in Tampa. Naughty Monk beer now had a place on the "beer map" of Florida.

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Hoping to build their brewery business, the folks behind Naughty Monk opened a full-scale brewery in Lakewood Ranch in late 2016. The logo of Naughty Monk Brewery was a slyly grinning monk holding a brewer's paddle, and the slogan of Naughty Monk was "Keep Calm and Naughty On."

Business was good – until the Covid pandemic forced most businesses to close, and the Naughty Monk Brewery, since it operated as a bar, was not allowed to re-open to 100% of capacity until September of 2020.

Unfortunately, by this time, Diana Eibler, a long-time orthopedic nurse turned "presiding brewmistress," had passed away.

Eventually, Naughty Monk was taken over by Sarasota's Big Top Brewery, so named to invoke the circus history of Sarasota. Big Top has two nearby locations: one on Cattlemen and the former Naughty Monk location on Lakewood Ranch Boulevard near The Granary and Ace Hardware.

The Big Top Brewer's Collective in Lakewood Ranch still brews some of the historically notable Naughty Monk recipes, including "Summer in Bruges" – a Belgian-style pale blonde brew; Tropical Albus – an IPA; Trecouche – a Belgian-style strong dark ale, and The Holy Blood – a wheat beer.

Big Top won a medal at the Best of Florida Beer Fest in February of 2023 with a beer called "Hazy Skywire," a New England IPA.

As far as being a brewpub, what is now the Big Top Brewer's Collective on Lakewood Ranch Boulevard doesn't exactly qualify as such.

Why, you say? It's because this location doesn't serve food like a restaurant. However, they make up for not having a functional kitchen by having a selection of food trucks that offer numerous and varied menus. You buy your food from the truck, and then take it inside to consume it – with a great beer, of course.

Every two months, there is a food truck showdown, pitting one food truck operation against others.

The Big Top Collective in Lakewood Ranch also has a slew of varied fun evenings on tap. On Tuesdays, there is a trivia night. On Wednesday nights – free pool, along with a "text for a BOGO" for a free beer.

Every other Wednesday, local painters bring their easels and paint at the brewery. On Thursdays, there's open mic night. Fridays and Saturdays feature live music, and every second Sunday arrives with bottomless mimosas.

Big Top Brewery Collective is also continuing the Naughty Monk tradition of community support.

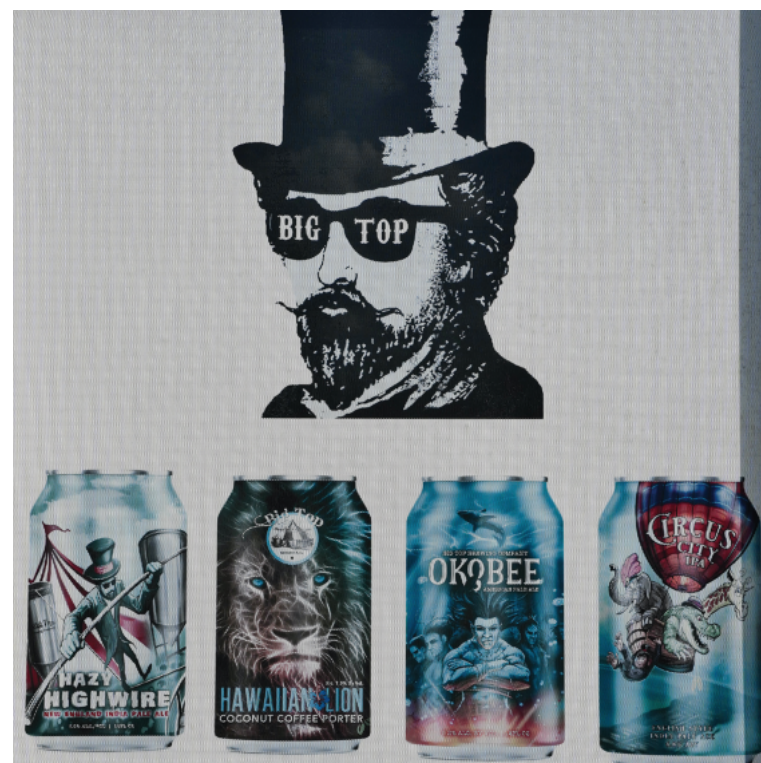
The Big Top Brewery Collective has recently consolidated some of its holdings, closing locations in Gainesville and the panhandle. But they are expanding locally by opening the biggest beergarten in Florida in east Sarasota.

As for what beers I had to try, after I told bartender Lauren that I tended to like dark beers – especially the Belgian "abbey" beers – served up a glass of Naughty Monk Trecouche, in a traditional tulip-shaped glass. Very good. I then sampled a pint of Intercoastal Amber – also very good.

I had to agree with Lauren that this time of year is possibly the best time for dark beer lovers, what with winter signaling the advent of the stouts, porters, etc.

So get down to the brewery and lift a glass before the rest of south-west Florida finds out about this place. After all, there are lots of taps to be found – and each one offers a different brew experience.

Keep calm and naughty on!



LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Building a true sense of community, through memorable events and social clubs.



By Danielle Bugel

As we journey through 2024, Lakewood Ranch Community Activities continues to provide an array of exciting events and activities for our residents and the community. This year has already been packed with wonderful experiences, and we are thrilled to announce the upcoming Lakewood Ranch Community Campout, which promises to be yet another unforgettable community gathering. Let's dive into the details!

From 3 p.m. to 9 a.m. on February 24-25, we will transform Greenbrook Adventure Park into a magical campsite for our highly anticipated sixth annual Lakewood Ranch Community Campout! This family-friendly event has been a consistent hit in the past, and this year will be no exception.

The Lakewood Ranch Community Campout aims to offer an array of engaging activities perfect for all ages! From live music by popular local musician Justin Layman, to a delicious food truck dinner provided by Go STUFF Urself, the day and evening will be a blast! SWEET POP will be selling their gourmet popcorn for dessert, there will be a guided nature walk, star gazing into the night sky through telescopes provided by Sidewalk Science Center, a family-friendly movie showing, a large campfire to set the perfect camping vibe, and complimentary coffee and donuts for breakfast!

Without the help of our amazing sponsors, events this cool would not be possible! We would like to extend our deepest

appreciation to Tommy's Express Car Wash, our presenting sponsor, for their generous support, along with Grace Community Church for their sponsorship!

Due to the popularity of the Lakewood Ranch Community Campout, spaces for this event are limited. To secure your spot, visit LWRCA.org for ticket availability.

Beyond the Campout, Lakewood Ranch Community Activities has two more Signature Events coming up soon. Mark your calendars for March 9 and March 23, because you're in for some FUN!

Our annual Irish Celtic Festival will take place from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 9 at Greenbrook Adventure Park. We'll spend the day indulging in a variety of Irish-themed food and treats, from Killik's Kitchen, Impasto St. Pete, Go STUFF Urself, and Kona Ice of Manatee County; Irish beer & whiskey, Irish stage performances by Paddy O'Furniture, Lion Rampant Pipe & Drum, Celtic Conundrum, and Blue Skye Pipes & Drums; Kidz Korner sponsored by Tropical Thrills, our annual Lucky Dog Parade organized by Satchel's Last Resort Animal Shelter/Sanctuary, MVP Sports and Social's 21+ Relay Race, and Liam the Leprechaun!

No registration needed; just meet us at Greenbrook Adventure Park on March 9 for some good ol' Irish fun!

On March 23rd, join us at Waterside Park for our annual EGGstravaganza event presented by Grace Community Church. We host the longest-running egg hunt in Lakewood Ranch, and we can't wait to see you and your kiddos there! Make sure to get your tickets at LakewoodRanch.com because you won't want to miss this!

From 9:30 a.m. to noon, we'll be hosting egg hunts for chil-



dren ages 5 and under + children with disabilities; and children ages 6 and up, hanging out with the Easter bunny, enjoying face painting, and more! Crisp Waffle Company will be selling delicious gourmet waffles and more for breakfast and Kona Ice of N. Sarasota will be selling some sweet treats.

Secure your children's tickets for EGGstravaganza today at LakewoodRanch.com and we'll see you on March 23!

Did you know? Lakewood Ranch Community Activities offers 60+ groups and clubs for residents to partake in! Engage with like-minded individuals, make new friends, and create lasting memories by joining any of our varied clubs. Whether you have a passion for sports, crafts, or community service, we have something for everyone. Visit LWRCA.org to explore the range of groups and clubs available for you to join today.

At Lakewood Ranch Community Activities, we value your input and strive to tailor our activities to meet your preferences. If there's a specific park activity or program you desire that we don't offer, we encourage you to suggest it to us. Reach out to us at info@lwrca.org, and let us know your ideas. We are committed to keeping our residents and the community thriving, ensuring that everyone can live their best lives!

We're off to a fantastic start in 2024, and the Lakewood Ranch Community Campout is ready to continue the momentum! Join us at Greenbrook Adventure Park on February 24-25 for an unforgettable evening of family-friendly fun. Remember, spots are limited, so secure your place today at LWRCA.org. Let's make lasting memories together and keep fostering a strong, vibrant community that we're proud to call home! See you around The Ranch!

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AROUND THE RANCH



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER



Lakewood Ranch Library – Open At Last!

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

The new Lakewood Ranch Library, part of the Manatee County Library System, opened Jan. 12, an event that has been on the wish list of east county residents for years.

The Boy Scouts of Troop 89 raised the flag, and Commissioner George Kruse introduced some of those responsible for the library, its design and construction, and its operation, such as Lyn Begraft, assistant Library Services manager; Amanda Ballard, District 2 County Commissioner; and Ray Turner, District 5 County Commissioner, who commented that the new library was “epic.”

David Sessions, CEO of Willis Smith Construction, talked about the two-year planning that went into the final product, emphasizing the locally based subcontractors who were involved in the construction. Sue Ann Miller, president of the Friends of the Lakewood Ranch Library, pushed her organization to raise \$400,000 to provide money for books and materials for the new library, above and beyond what Manatee County had budgeted, to make sure that it got started as a first-class operation. Sue Seiter, Library Foundation board member, called herself a “lifelong library lover.”

It could be said that the beginnings of the Manatee County Library System came about as a result of the philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie was a poor boy from Scotland who, on selling the steel empire he had built for \$480 million in 1901, became the richest man in America.

With all that money, Carnegie decided that he should do good with it and his favorite way of giving it away was to build libraries as places where even the poor could learn. He built over 2,500 of them, and the old Central Library in Bradenton, built in 1918, was one of those Carnegie libraries. Carnegie built his libraries to last, and our Carnegie Library still stands today on Fourth Avenue in downtown Bradenton as the Manatee Historical Records Center. It was placed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 1987.

Residents of the Lakewood Ranch area kept pressing the



County to build a library in Lakewood Ranch; the location is situated well for the expected continued growth “out east.”

This library has features that no one would have dreamed of back when my mom introduced me to our local public library when I was a kid. At the Lakewood Ranch Library, you can go online and reserve a book, and pick it up later at a drive-up window. There’s also a drive-up book return. Our new library has classrooms, meeting areas, and even a catering kitchen. You can also check out materials at an automated check-out station. There is a special area for kids, which has space both indoors and out. There’s even a “Little Discovery Center” for kids ages 2-5.

The adult reading area has cozy little nooks that patrons can use to curl up and read their books. There are work room areas, too. On the day the new library opened, a group of quilters were there, using sewing machines to enhance their fabric creations. Could you make use of a recording studio to record podcasts? Check out the studio at the Lakewood Ranch Library.

The Lakewood Ranch Library has a lot of what in some areas is hard to find – parking spaces! Not only does it have parking spaces, it has a charging station for your electric car.

And here’s a first: our new Lakewood Ranch Library has a rooftop meeting area! How about that?

If the number of folks who showed up on a slightly rainy morning to check out the new Library is any indication, this place has been long awaited and will be wildly popular. Welcome to our new Lakewood Ranch Library!



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Your Best Health and BMI

With Dr. Ryan Jones

You may have heard the term BMI. But what does it mean, and how does it help your healthcare provider make recommendations for your best health?



“The Body Mass Index (BMI) is a measure that uses height and weight to determine an individual’s ideal weight, mostly trying to determine how much of our weight is fat,” says Ryan Jones, MD, of Lakewood Ranch Medical Group Primary Care. “Having an understanding of a patient’s BMI can be a helpful predictor of future serious health conditions, including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, arthritis, sleep apnea, certain types of cancer and other conditions linked to excess weight,” he said. “Likewise, being underweight places individuals at risk for a different set of health issues, including hair loss, anemia, vitamin deficiency, irregular menstrual periods and bone loss, to name a few.”

ASSESSING BMI

To arrive at your BMI measurement, you’ll probably need a calculator. The formula involves dividing your weight (in pounds) by height (in inches) squared and multiplying that result by a conversion factor of 703. For most adults, an ideal BMI is in the 18.5 to 24.9 range, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“Assessing an individual’s BMI can be helpful information for both doctor and patient, but it’s important to use the measure carefully,” said Dr. Jones. “For example, since muscle weighs

more than fat, BMI is not always a helpful assessment for athletes who have a high muscle mass.”

Additionally, women may have more body fat than men, as may certain ethnic groups and older individuals, according to the CDC. It’s important to talk to your healthcare provider about the appropriate health assessments for you.

PERSONALIZED SCREENINGS

In addition to BMI, health screening assessments, individualized for each patient, help to guide recommendations by the primary care physicians at Lakewood Ranch Medical Group. These include tests for fasting blood glucose levels to identify patients who might be prediabetic or diabetic, and yearly screenings for elevated cholesterol. Having high blood pressure and snoring can also be symptoms of a patient having a weight that is out of range, according to Dr. Jones.

DIET AND EXERCISE

“First and foremost, weight loss is often achieved by controlling our diet,” Dr. Jones said. “The DASH diet [Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension] can be helpful. This entails limiting sugar-sweetened beverages, foods high in saturated fat and full-fat dairy products. The diet focuses on nutrition goals more than specific foods, so it can be tailored to most people. I also recommend the Keto diet, where appropriate, which includes eating mostly meat and vegetables, specifically lean meats, such as turkey, chicken and fish.

“For exercise, I recommend starting small.

Drastic changes usually do not last,” said Dr. Jones. “Anything that increases the heart rate and can be practiced consistently is advisable. For some, it may be walking a mile every day with their pet. For others, who have arthritis, water aerobics can be a great fit. More ideas include yoga, biking and jogging, which can be practiced at a slower pace. Finding an exercise routine that you really enjoy can often help the most with making it stick.” Consult your healthcare provider before beginning any diet or exercise program.

Physicians are on the medical staff of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, but, with limited exceptions are independent practitioners who are not employees or agents of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center. The hospital shall not be liable for actions or treatments provided by physicians. To schedule an appointment, call 800-816-4145 or visit doctors.lakewoodranchmedicalcenter.com.





THIRD ANNUAL POLO FOR PARKINSON'S SET FOR MARCH 24

The third annual Polo for Parkinson's fundraiser will be held at the Sarasota Polo Club at Lakewood Ranch on March 24. This annual fundraising event, presented by Parkinson Place, raises awareness for Parkinson Place Center, where community members with Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders, as well as their caregivers, can come together for support and participate in over 85 classes and activities.

"People are being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in record numbers in the United States, including the state of Florida," said Founder and Chairman, Larry Hoffheimer. "By supporting Polo for Parkinson's 2024 fundraising event, you will be helping thousands of

members and their caregivers to fight these debilitating diseases with fitness classes, education and access to support in one location. All classes and activities are offered free of charge because of our generous donors."

Companies, organizations and individuals have the opportunity to participate in this luau-themed event. Both sponsorships and individual tickets are available. Parkinson Place Center will welcome you to the Polo Pavilion at 11 a.m. Lunch will be catered at noon, with the polo match starting at 1 p.m.

For more information about tickets and sponsorship opportunities call Suzanne Hudson-Smith at 941-210-6275 or email shudson-smith@parkinsonplace.org.

Lakewood Ranch Medical Center's ER at Fruitville Receives 2023 Press Ganey Human Experience Guardian of Excellence Award

Lakewood Ranch Medical Center's (LWRMC) free-standing, full-service ER at Fruitville has been named a 2023 Human Experience (HX) Guardian of Excellence Award winner by Press Ganey, a healthcare experience solutions and services company. The award is part of Press Ganey's annual ranking of the top hospitals and health systems in the country, according to performance in patient experience. This is the second consecutive year the ER has achieved this award.

As a winner of the Press Ganey HX Guardian of Excellence Award, the ER at Fruitville is in the top 5% of healthcare providers in delivering patient experience in the past year. Press Ganey works with more than 41,000 healthcare facilities in its mission to reduce patient suffering and enhance caregiver resilience to improve the overall safety, quality and experience of care.

"I am grateful for the commitment of our physicians, clinicians and staff as they work to provide the highest standards in patient experience," said LWRMC Chief Executive Officer, Andy Guz. "From the minute a patient enters our facility, to the time they leave, we strive to provide a compassionate, connected, high quality patient experience."

Patrick T. Ryan, CEO and chairman at Press Ganey, said the award symbolizes Lakewood Ranch Medical Center's commitment to raising the bar for healthcare standards, inspiring a culture of continuous improvement and innovation across the human experience. "It underscores the importance of placing patients, healthcare professionals, and industry partners at the core of our work," Ryan said, "fostering a future where exceptional healthcare experiences are not just goals, but tangible achievements."



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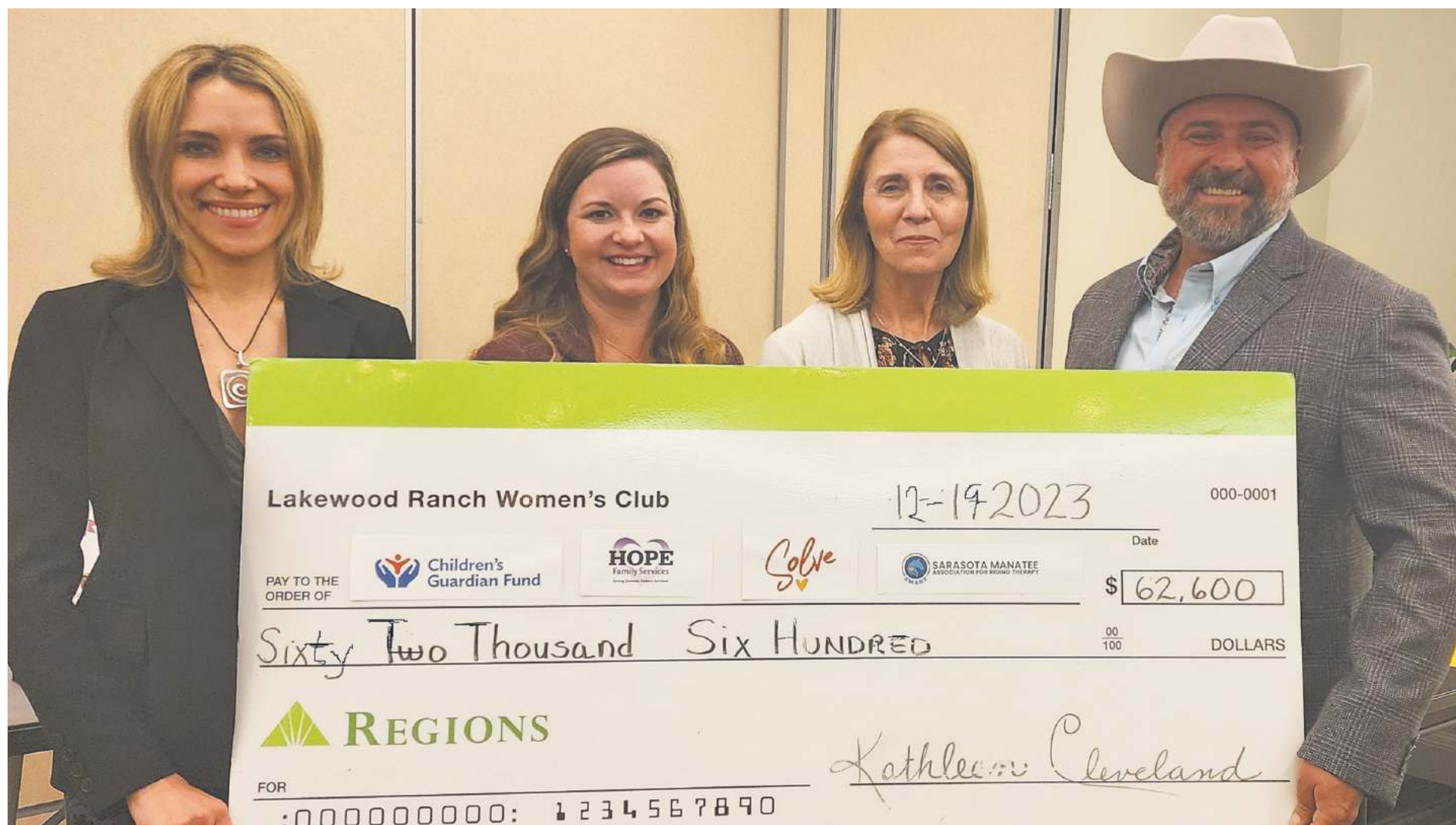
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SCAN ME

Celebrating
25 Years of Real Progress by Reel Women

Through Women's Eyes is an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to gender equality and women's rights. Net festival proceeds support gender equality organizations.



LWRWC donates \$62,600 in cash to its adopted charities. From left: Svetlana Ivashchenko, executive director, Children's Guardian Fund; Kayla Terrel, director of development, HOPE Family Services; Peggy Kerwin, executive director, Solve Maternity Homes; and Mark Williams, SMART board president.

Lakewood Ranch Women's Club Donates over \$82K to its Adopted Charities

In January, Lakewood Ranch Women's Club (LWRWC) presented a giant check representing its donation of \$62,600 in cash to its four 501(c)(3) adopted charities at the annual "Checks to Charities and Courageous Speakers" general meeting held at Lakewood Ranch Townhall. All the LWRWC adopted charities gave moving presentations highlighting the positive impact that the Women's Club's support had on the lives of the people they serve, and collectively thanked the club.

In addition to the cash raised from three major fundraisers in 2023, the LWRWC was also responsible for in-kind donations valued at over \$20,000. The meeting featured presentations by the executive directors (or their designees) from each charity and their "Courageous Speaker."

The first speakers were Kayla Terrel, HOPE Family Services director of development and Jennifer, an inspiring and very successful survivor of domestic abuse who credits HOPE with transforming her life. Svetlana Ivashchenko, CEO of Children's Guardian Fund (CGF) was the next presenter. CGF is dedicated to providing funding for the immediate and ongoing needs of children removed from abusive or neglectful homes in Florida's 12th Judicial Circuit. Svetlana showed a video featuring the inspirational story of a teenage boy with autism who was misdiagnosed with violent tendencies while in a group home. His Guardian Ad Litem eventually adopted the boy and with the aid of CGF, helped him to exceed all expectations. Next was Peggy Kerwin, CEO of Solve Maternity Homes and their speaker, Ray, accompanied

by Hope, her one-year-old baby. Ray came to Solve as a frightened, homeless young pregnant woman who was subjected to abuse. She credits Solve with changing her life, teaching her to be a good mother and saving her future. In 2023, Solve housed 44 new moms plus four moms in long-term housing in the "Evolve Program," (including Ray), who are pursuing a higher education. Solve has been helping at-risk pregnant women and their babies for over 47 years. Mark Williams, Sarasota Manatee Association of Riding Therapy (SMART) board president and Dan, SMART's speaker, were the final presenters. Dan, a SMART client, is training in dressage despite being physically challenged from a stroke many years ago that cost him use of his left side. The LWRWC members were inspired by Dan's courageous spirit and his goal

to compete in the next Paralympics. SMART is dedicated to enhancing the physical, emotional, and cognitive growth of children and adults with special needs through riding therapy.

The LWRWC charitable donations marked the culmination of a banner year of charity fundraising. To date, LWRWC has donated well over \$500,000 to its adopted charities and LWRWC Blankets 4 Babies Committee (B4B) donated over 600 handmade blankets and quilts to charity. In 2023, LWRWC won three philanthropic awards including the prestigious "Spirit of Manatee Award." In January of 2024, LWRWC was awarded a "Making a Difference Award" for sponsoring the Little Free Library. "Fun, Friendship, and Community Service" is more than the LWRWC motto; it is who they are! To learn more, please visit www.lwrwc.org.

Lakewood Ranch IDA, District Boards, Pass “Decorum Policy”

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

Several months ago, there was a rather nasty verbal set-to between a couple of supervisors during a district board meeting. Some of the language got pretty crude. After this happened, a number of district supervisors requested that their attorneys draw up a “decorum policy” to govern conduct during district and Inter District Authority (IDA) board meetings.

This new policy has been reviewed by the attorneys, and adopted by the IDA and the various Lakewood Ranch Community Development District (CDD) boards at their December, 2023 and January, 2024 board meetings.

Main points of the new policy, which governs not only board members but those residents who wish to address the various boards, are these:

For individuals addressing a board:

- Wait to be recognized prior to speaking.
- Show respect – no anger, profanity, threats or name calling. Be factual in your comments, and adhere to a three-minute time limit.
- If you cannot adhere to these guidelines, you will be asked to stand down and return to your seat. If you refuse, you will be asked to leave the meeting. If you persist, law enforcement may be called.

For board members:

- Board members shall be respectful of other board members and residents.

Note: Individuals desiring to talk to a single board member should contact the member via e-mail or arrange a meeting through Town Hall staff. Individuals should never go to a board member’s home about a district or IDA concern unless invited.

Basically, the guidelines are there to provide for respectful communication.

CHECKING AND INVESTMENT ACCOUNT AUTHORIZATIONS

Executive director Steve Zielinski has proposed a policy of specifically authorizing, in writing, certain staff members and board members to sign off on checking accounts and investment business. This policy will clarify just who has the right to sign off on such documents, along with specific procedures relating to changes due to resignations, retirements or termination of the designated individuals, and will make it easier for those individuals to deal with these matters and the financial institutions with which they need to interact.

The boards approved this policy move.

BUDGETS AND PAVING

The budgetary process will begin soon for fiscal year 2025. The IDA budget will be put together first, since the various district budgets will need to take the IDA budget into account when establishing their own district budgets. One large recent IDA expenditure was a much-needed bucket truck for the Operations Department, which cost Lakewood Ranch over \$150,000.

Executive Director Zielinski reminded the boards (especially districts 2, 5, and 6, which maintain their own roads) that paving costs were going to be hugely higher – approaching DOUBLE – than they had been in the past. Zielinski had previously also noted that the number of available paving contractors in our area has apparently decreased, making for more competition among contractors, hence increasing costs.

He also noted that he has been in touch with Manatee County District 5 Commissioner, Ray Turner, regarding the pothole-intensive and patched-over-patches condition of the county-maintained roads in Lakewood Ranch. He noted that Turner had indicated to him that Lakewood Ranch’s roads should be in much better shape than they are currently.

Lakewood Ranch is looking to have a professional pavement assessment done to determine what paving projects should be made a priority, and which could be pushed back, in order to maximize paving dollars in the Country Club area.

Zielinski also noted that Lakewood Ranch accounts for 30% of Manatee County’s tax revenue, and has urged the County to return more of our tax dollars back into Lakewood Ranch.

Another area of large cost increases is that of IT services. The IT companies, per Zielinski, are trending toward forcing their customers to enter into subscription contracts, rather than one-time charges for specific services. This is expected to increase Lakewood Ranch’s IT costs by around 30%.

RAINFALL

Operations Director Tom Merrell reported that the December rainfall totals in Lakewood Ranch were, on average, between 3 and 4 inches, slightly above average, but overall our area remained far below average for 2023.

GREENBROOK ADVENTURE PARK PAVILION

The debris from the accidental fire that destroyed the pavilion structure on July 4, 2023, has been cleared away, and the replacement is currently in the design phase.

Regarding the insurance on the destroyed structure, the insurance carrier has determined that the structure was underinsured, and has tacked what is called a “coinsurance penalty” on to the claim, in addition to a depreciation amount, both of which significantly reduced the amount that the carrier will pay out.

The District 4 board is looking at the idea of using non-combustible materials in the rebuild, which will, of course, increase the replacement cost.

The cost using more standard materials is expected to be around \$200,000, while the cost using non-combustible materials is expected to be around \$300,000.

CDD 6 LANDSCAPE CONTRACT CANCELLATION

CDD 6 has been contracting with West Coast Landscaping for the District’s needs. However, West Coast was sold recently to a company called Sunrise, owned by a venture capital group. This company has been buying up medium-sized landscaping companies and, recently, the District was informed by West Coast/Sunrise that their landscaping costs were going to be increased by around 20%.

The District 6 Board has elected to legally cancel the remaining portion of their contract with West Coast, effective Feb. 29, 2024, and enter into a new contract with Crown Landscaping, some of whose managers are former West Coast people. The new contract costs will be largely unchanged.

LAKEWOOD RANCH GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

It has been announced that there is a sale pending of the Lakewood Ranch Golf and Country Club. Some small parcels of land (such as portions of cart paths) owned by the Country Club districts will need to be conveyed to the club prior to the settlement of the sale.

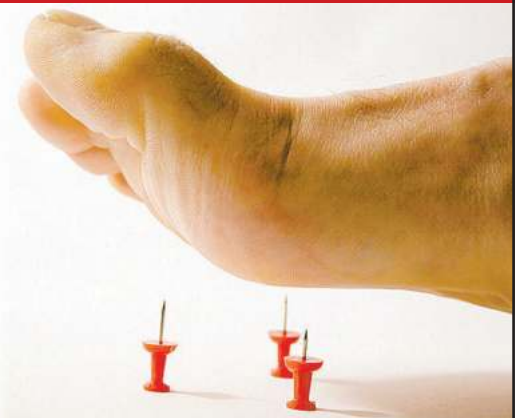
FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

A new state law requires certain public officials to submit a “Form 6,” listing in detail their financial holdings. This law does not apply – at least for now – to CDD board members, who are required to submit a “Form 1.”

A number of municipal officials have resigned their positions in Florida, rather than submit the Form 6, a detailed accounting of their assets.

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THE UNASSUMING WINE BRO.



Sarasota Forks and Corks 2024

For those who have missed my monthly article ... I'm back and ready to drink! To kick off my 2024 return, what better way to do it than the Super Bowl of food and wine festivals in our area, The Sarasota Forks and Corks food and wine festival.

I'm Vigo, The Unassuming Wine Bro (UWB) – a regular guy who loves everything about wine, including writing about it. I aim to explore the nuances of wine, share my adventures with you, and have a little fun along the way.

As with every year of the festival, the location is the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. Suppose you have yet to visit the Ringling Museum of Art; even without food and wine, it's worth the trip. The grounds are beautiful, which enhances the experience of the event.

What I enjoyed this year was the scheduling of the event at the end of January, instead of April. The cooler and sunny conditions made eating expertly prepared food less taxing, along with rich, full-bodied red wines (red wine and hot sunny days pairs the same as a Hershey chocolate bar and a Bordeaux). So ... well-rested, hungry, and ready to drink, I enter the Ringling Museum grounds, ready for a lovely day of food and wine. With hundreds of wines available for tasting (that's not an overestimate), the following three were my favorites of the event.

Rating system: Ratings are given on a 1-5 scale, with five being the highest.

2019 CHATEAU LA TOUR CARNET, GRAND CRU CLASSE' EN 1855 (RED)

Bordeaux region, France, \$80 U.S., 14% ABV

Okay, we'll have to put our "unassuming" taste buds aside because this is "big boy" wine drinking when you're attending the Forks and Corks festival. After partaking in some subpar selections at the beginning, I happened by the festival area where many French wines had been positioned. Still wondering why I drank that Paso Robles red blend, I threw caution to the wind and tasted the Chateau La Tour Carnet, Grand Cru Classes en 1855, red Bordeaux. After tasting this selection, my first thought returned to my unassuming ways: WOW!

The Chateau La Tour Carnet, Grand Cru Classé en 1855 is a Bordeaux red that epitomizes the rich heritage and elegance of the renowned Haut-Médoc appellation. This distinguished estate, classified as a Grand Cru Classé during the historic 1855 Classification, has consistently delivered wines of exceptional quality and character.

The 2019 Chateau La Tour Carnet opens with a deep, inky hue that hints at the wine's concentration and depth. It unveils a symphony of aromas on the nose, with black currants and blackberries taking center stage. The bouquet is further enriched by subtle notes of cedar, tobacco, and a touch of graphite, showcasing the classic characteristics of a well-crafted Bordeaux blend.

In the mouth, this wine is a true expression of its terroir. The palate is greeted by a robust structure, with firm yet velvety tannins providing a solid backbone to the wine. A perfect balance between the ripe fruit flavors and the savory elements creates a harmonious and complex profile. Dark chocolate and hints of leather add layers of depth, enhancing the overall drinking experience.

Chateau La Tour Carnet's 2019 vintage exhibits a remarkable sense of restraint and finesse, showcasing the winemaker's skill in crafting a wine that seamlessly integrates power with refinement.

The finish is enduring, leaving a lingering impression of dark fruit and subtle spice that invites contemplation.

Vigo's rating:

2019 CHATEAU BERNARD MARGEZ, SAINT-ESTEPHE (RED)

Bordeaux region, France, \$40 U.S., 14% ABV

As the saying goes, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." This never rang so true as when I asked the winery presenter about the 2019 Chateau Bernard Margez, Saint-Estephe (red), which I tasted just after sampling the 2019 Chateau La Tour Carnet. She said in a very inviting French accent, "If you like the Chateau La Tour Carnet, you'll love the Chateau Bernard Margez." Refusing to be incanted by her French accent and recommendation, I purged my wine glass and prepared to experience the wine without outside influences. "Dang it, this is lovely," I exclaimed, discounting the accent and recommendation.

Chateau Bernard Magrez, Saint-Estephe, 2019, presents a captivating expression of the esteemed Saint-Estephe appellation in Bordeaux. This wine, crafted by the winemaker Bernard Magrez, showcases the distinct terroir and the exceptional quality of the 2019 vintage.

The deep ruby-red hue of the wine immediately hints at its concentration and vitality. On the nose, an inviting bouquet unfolds, revealing a tapestry of dark fruit aromas. Blackberries, cassis, and ripe plums dominate, accompanied by subtle nuances of cedar, tobacco, and a hint of violet. The aromatic complexity reflects the meticulous blending and careful aging that define the craftsmanship behind Chateau Bernard Magrez. The wine displays a harmonious interplay between structure and finesse on the palate. The tannins are well-integrated, providing a firm yet velvety texture. Generous layers of black fruit flavors unfold, with black cherries and currants taking center stage. The overall profile has a pronounced mineral character, adding depth and a sense of terroir-driven authenticity.

The 2019 vintage of Chateau Bernard Magrez demonstrates a perfect balance between well-ripened fruit and the savory elements derived from well-planned oak aging. A touch of vanilla and baking spices complements the fruit, contributing to a well-rounded and engaging palate.

Vigo's rating:

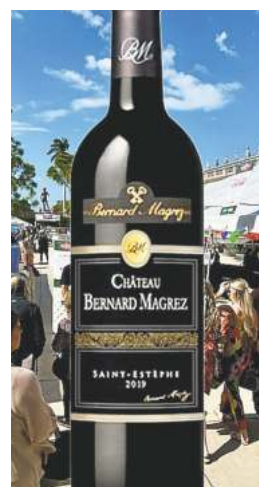
2018 MERNET RESERVE, KEENAN WINERY

Napa Valley, Calif., USA, \$119 U.S., 14.4% ABV

After two hours of eating and wine tasting, I began to lose confidence – had the U.S. lost a step in winemaking? Has France once again reigned supreme in the red wine category? Should I take my taste buds and go home? Thankfully, Keenan



2019 Chateau La Tour Carnet



2019 Chateau Bernard Magrez



2018 Mernet Reserve, Keenan Winery

Winery out of Napa Valley came to my rescue by presenting a red wine that stood up to its French big brothers.

The 2018 Mernet Reserve from Keenan Winery, situated in the illustrious Napa Valley's Spring Mountain District, is a captivating expression of the region's terroir and the winery's dedication to producing exceptional Bordeaux-style blends. This wine seamlessly marries the finesse of merlot with the robust character of cabernet sauvignon, resulting in a harmonious and memorable vintage.

The wine exhibits a deep, garnet-red color in the glass, hinting at its concentration and maturity. The aromatic symphony begins with enticing notes of blackberry and cassis, followed by nuances of dark cherry, plum, and a touch of dried herbs. Oak aging imparts a subtle but well-integrated layer of vanilla, cedar, and a hint of baking spices, contributing to the wine's complexity.

The 2018 Mernet Reserve is a testament to balance and structure on the palate. The velvety texture of merlot provides an initial softness, while the cabernet sauvignon's backbone lends a solid framework. Rich flavors of ripe black fruits, including black currant and black cherry, are complemented by subtle hints of chocolate and espresso, creating a luxurious and multi-dimensional experience.

The tannins are refined and well-managed, offering a pleasing grip without overshadowing the wine's overall elegance. As the wine evolves in the glass, layers of complexity unfold, revealing a touch of minerality and a lingering finish that leaves a memorable impression.

The 2018 vintage of Keenan's Mernet Reserve is a prime example of the winery's commitment to quality and precision winemaking. This wine has the potential for graceful aging, allowing enthusiasts to witness its continued evolution and refinement.

Vigo's rating:

Vigo's overall impressions:

The hottest ticket in Sarasota delivered again with its atmosphere, diversity of food, and wine selections. Though this is a hot ticket (even some celebrity sightings were made; thanks, Mr. Thomas), the end of January made this event much more appealing than the beginning of spring. Note to Sarasota: keep this in January.

Attention Fans and Readers:

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



Waterside Park Honored

At the end of January, the Sarasota Garden Club Civic Beautification Committee awarded 20 local organizations, not for profits, businesses and parks with its landscaping awards. Properties in both Manatee and Sarasota counties were recipients, and were acknowledged at the Club's annual luncheon celebrating its credo of "Good Landscaping is Good Business." The properties honored consistently maintained outstanding landscaping with curb appeal during 2023. Waterside Park received an award in the civic beautification category! Congratulations to the Lakewood Ranch Stewardship District employees for all their hard work!

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LAKEWOOD RANCH



WATERSIDE
PLACE

THE (PET) DOCTOR IS IN!

By Erin Siems, DVM

Everyone knows that February 14 is Valentine’s Day. It is typically a day of expressing love through chocolates and other candies. What a sad day for our companion animal who can’t participant in these potentially toxic goodies. However, there is hope around the corner for them. The lesser known National Dog Biscuit Day falls on February 23 this year. Now we’re talking!

National Dog Biscuit Day is meant to celebrate our relationship with our furry friends. What that celebration looks like can vary widely. The literal “give your dog a doggie biscuit” (or treat ... or cookie ... or snack, whatever your little buddy calls them) is the most obvious way to celebrate. If you want to step it up a notch, you can make your own dog friendly biscuits to share with your best friend. There are plenty of simple recipes online. For more interaction, you could make a fun game out of it and play scavenger hunt for pre-placed biscuits or teach them a new trick with biscuit rewards.

Of course, a “biscuit” can also mean a multitude of things. While some dogs (like some people) have an iron stomach and can tolerate just about anything, others can have very sensitive stomachs. We also want to keep in mind any food sensitivities or medical conditions which can limit what we can give as we don’t want our good intentions causing more harm than good. And then there are our chunky kids who would benefit from a lower calorie treat. For our special-diet-needs kids, sometimes we use their own food or fresh veggies in place of higher calorie treats. Remember, the idea is to celebrate our relationship with them. The interaction is much more valuable than the actual biscuit.

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



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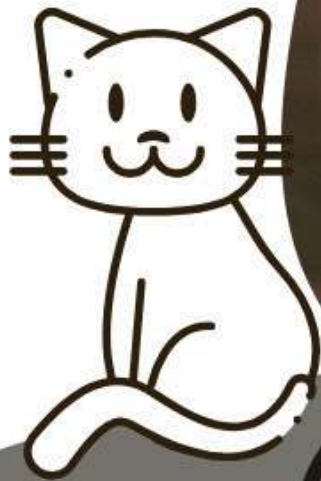
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Check out all of the events happening around The Ranch!

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SPRING BREAK CAMP: March 25 - March 29, 2024 * Time: 9AM - 1PM
SUMMER SOCCER CAMP #1: June 3 - June 7, 2024 * Time: 9AM - 1PM
SUMMER SOCCER CAMP #2: June 24 - June 27, 2024 * Time: 9AM - 1PM
SUMMER SOCCER CAMP #3: July 8 - July 12, 2024 * Time: 9AM - 1PM
Cost: \$180 (includes a tshirt)

COMPETITIVE PLAYERS CAMP

Open ONLY to Competitive Players - Guest Coach from ITALY
July 22- July 26, 2024 * Time: TWO Sessions (check website)
To get more information and to register visit our website:
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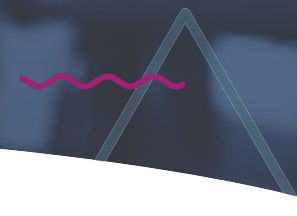
Website Design



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Page Layout



Tropical Nights

A Pirate's Life

a swashbuckling evening benefiting



Meals on Wheels PLUS
OF MANATEE

The 30th Annual Tropical Nights: A Pirate's Life, an event benefiting Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee, will take place on Saturday, March 23, 2024! Join us for an exciting and entertaining evening in support of our life-saving programs!

All aboard our **Tropical Nights 2024: A Pirate's Life** adventure will enjoy a fantastic evening of *grub* and *grog* provided by SRQ Magazines Best of SRQ 2023 award-winner, **Grove Ballroom**. Live and silent auctions and interactive entertainment will add to the pirate experience! Live music will also be provided by **Tropical Ave Band**, so practice your *sailor's jig* and get ready for an unforgettable evening benefiting Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee.

- Purchase your tickets and/or sponsorship today... or Walk the Plank!
- Plan now to donate items from your treasure chest to our online and live auctions. Tickets to sporting events, vacation rentals, art pieces, experience packages, gift baskets, and gift cards are needed!
- Mark your calendars for noon on Friday, March 15th for the start of the Tropical Nights 2024: A Pirate's Life online auction! The auction is open to everyone, so please tell your family and friends!

For tickets and more information, visit:
MealsOnWheelsPLUS.org/TropicalNights



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