



# Around the Ranch

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THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER OF LAKEWOOD RANCH

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2020



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Photo by Ernie Soller.

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# LWR Women's Club's Charity Backpack Challenge Raises over \$3000 for HOPE Family Services

In August, the Lakewood Ranch Women's Club (LWRWC) donated approximately \$3,000 in cash and in-kind donations – including 35 backpacks filled with essential school supplies and a check for \$1,800 – to HOPE Family Services (HOPE) in Manatee County. From mid-July through Aug. 5, LWRWC held a Backpack Challenge for HOPE to provide children at the domestic violence shelter with backpacks stuffed with all needed school supplies. Donors could drop-off filled backpacks at designated homes, and were also given the option of sending monetary contributions. The response was heartwarming and the LWRWC members scored an A+ for community service and generosity.

The donations were delivered to the shelter by a small group from the Women's Club, including LWRWC philanthropy co-chair Trish Newman with her "ambassador" dog Wrigley, and LWRWC co-presidents Helene Levin and Cheryl Breining. Stacy McKee, development director at HOPE, who is in charge of logistics, accepted the donations and expressed her sincere gratitude on behalf of HOPE Family Services. There were 24 children at the shelter at the time who were going to start school. Their backpacks have a whole new meaning because in some cases, they serve as their virtual desks! With a donation of 35 backpacks, the shelter has plenty in reserve for kids coming to HOPE over the next few months. In addition to pro-



Trish Newman, LWRWC philanthropy co-chair with her "ambassador" dog Wrigley, and Helene Levin and Cheryl Breining, LWRWC co-presidents, delivering back-to-school backpacks and a donation check to HOPE Family Services.

viding school supplies, the LWRWC donation will also fund critically needed food and cleaning supplies to ensure a healthy and safe environment for families at HOPE.

HOPE, one of the Women's Club's "beloved"

501(c)(3) adopted charities, has been answering the call for those whose lives have been affected by domestic violence since 1979. HOPE is considered a "blue ribbon" program, offering victims and survivors of domestic violence



Stacy McKee, development director of HOPE Family Services accepts back-to-school backpacks for the children at the shelter and a donation check from LWRWC.

exemplary services including emergency safe shelter, advocacy, counseling, children's services, and specialized programs.

For more information about HOPE visit [www.hopefamilyservice.org](http://www.hopefamilyservice.org). To learn more about LWRWC and the charitable organizations they support, visit [www.lwrwc.org](http://www.lwrwc.org).

## Literacy Council of Sarasota Offers Online September Tutor Training

Local adults need tutors! The Literacy Council of Sarasota (LCS) is offering online tutor training workshops in September 2020, for volunteers who want to help other adults improve their basic English communication and literacy skills using distance learning (i.e. online/internet/webcam) techniques.

No previous experience required! Volunteers will receive 14 hours of interactive ProLiteracy-certified instruction and support over the course of five weekday sessions, which includes an initial orientation. Sessions will focus on teaching adult learners to read, write, comprehend, and/or speak better in English.

Using Zoom, the online tutor training sessions will be held from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

(with breaks) over the course of the week: Sept. 21, Sept. 22, Sept. 23, and Sept. 25. A follow-up online session will be held Oct. 12, 10 a.m. to noon.

Space is limited and pre-registration is required by calling Susan Bergstrom, the LCS program director, at (941)243-0722 or emailing [sbergstrom@sarasotaliteracy.org](mailto:sbergstrom@sarasotaliteracy.org).

All registrants will be required to have a Zoom account (see: [Zoom.com](https://zoom.us)) and assistance can be provided as needed in setting up a free online account.

Give the lasting gift of literacy in 2020. Join the Literacy Council's over 300 ProLiteracy-trained tutors who have been working to improve literacy in Sarasota for over 40 years.



## LAKEWOOD RANCH GOVERNANCE MEETINGS

Lakewood Ranch governance meetings (as of this printing) are being conducted virtually. For updated schedule and login information visit:

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# An Atypical Alliance: Naughty Monk Brewery and Atypical Kitchen

BY ERNIE SOLLER

Community Correspondent

Back in March of this year, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis issued an order closing bars in Florida, a decision resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, in early June, as part of the “reopening” move, he allowed bars to reopen, with some restrictions.

However, with the increase in coronavirus cases in the state, and a definite increase in virus cases among young adult Floridians, who flocked to the reopened bars in larger-than-safe numbers, the governor backed away from his bar-opening move of only a few weeks prior, again ordering the closing of bars.

Now, here’s the kicker: Places of business that sold beer, wine and liquor “only” were ordered closed. However, if your business also sold food – and the food sales accounted for a substantial amount of your sales – you could stay open, because then your business would be a restaurant that sold alcohol, and not just a bar!

What has resulted from this move on the part of business owners?

Well, if you are Joe Eibler, owner of the Naughty Monk Brewery, you moved quickly to make sure that your patrons could order food at your brewery!

The Naughty Monk has, for quite a while, encouraged the participation of food trucks in providing sustenance to their beer fans, and they’ve had involvement from Grub Hub and other food delivery services, as well as direct deliveries from long-time favorites such as Domino’s and The Granary, which are located only a few feet from the Naughty Monk.

But, now, with the threat of having to close without a steady supply of food that could be served “in-house,” the Naughty Monk needed to do some fast work to avoid having to shut down.

Enter Zach Zeller and the Atypical Kitchen.

Zeller had recently leased the space formerly occupied by the “Cleveland Kitchen,” which closed its doors after a relatively short run.

His original idea was to open a restaurant in that space, but then Zeller did have this 24-foot food truck, and the Naughty Monk needed a steady supply of food, so a new alliance was formed, to the benefit of both the brewery and Zeller’s fledgling enterprise, now known as the “Atypical Kitchen.”

Now, about Zeller and the Atypical Kitchen.

Zeller, an Indiana native, is a pilot, and until the 2008 financial crisis, owned an aviation charter company. After that, his business went south, and he started a mobile oil change business, at first going door-to-door looking for clients in Indianapolis. Well, door-to-door was not producing a whole lot of business, so Zeller hit on the idea of contracting with car rental companies to do their oil changes, and, having done his home-



PHOTO BY ERNIE SOLLER

work, he found that the largest rental car fleets are located in – wait for it – Florida!

To Florida he came, and his oil change business prospered, going nationwide, and employing several hundred people. The business became so successful that Zeller sold the company last year, although he stayed on as an advisor.

Having sold the oil change business, Zeller and his family decided to get into the restaurant scene in Lakewood Ranch, and hit on barbeque as a main feature for their new business. Zeller, since he’d travelled extensively, had enjoyed barbeque at many of the traditional barbeque centers of the country, such as Memphis, the Carolinas, and Texas. He had also studied the whole food delivery scene, and had concentrated on how he could better deliver food. He noted that no one likes half-cold French fries, soggy buns, or for that matter, any food delivered cold when a customer bases his order on the idea of something delivered hot. Changes in packaging were investigated, in order to be able to offer his customers a totally better touch-free food delivery service.

When Zeller’s Atypical Kitchen food arrives, he wants the quality to be there – every time!

New and different methods for preparing and packaging food, and fast delivery with dedicated delivery people to make sure that your food is exactly what you expected – that’s what



makes the Atypical Kitchen live up to its name.

OK, there’s also the idea that the menu at the Atypical Kitchen will continue to be changed, both to offer new and different dishes, and also to match offerings to customers’ changing tastes.

So, how does all this work?

Well, you can now go to the Naughty Monk Brewery, and order your food (as well as a good brew) right in the confines of the Brewery, which offers both inside and outside seating. You’ll get fast delivery on both counts, and be on your way to a good meal. You can also pick up your takeout at Naughty Monk, or you can have it delivered to your home.

To test this out, I visited the naughty Monk brewery recently, along with my favorite dining companion.

We walked in, ordered a beer for me (Naughty Monk’s “Lakewood Ranch Lager”) and a glass of wine for her, along with food from Atypical Kitchen. The food was delivered quickly, and the hot portions were hot, and the cold portions cold, just as it should be. She ordered the Smokehouse Beef Brisket, and I had the Pit Smoked Pulled Pork dinner. Both came with two sides and two kinds of sauce. She loved her brisket, and stated that her potato salad was the best non-homemade potato salad she’d ever had. I found the Atypical Street Corn fantastic. It is made with grilled corn, mayo, Cotija cheese and lime chili dust. The portion wasn’t tiny, but I could have eaten more – it was that good. We sampled a couple other menu items which were also delicious: jalapeno corn bread, hush puppies, dessert. All different, all good! A cool experience all around.

So, if you’re thirsty, and maybe also hungry, get on over to the Naughty Monk Brewery on the east side of Lakewood Ranch Boulevard, just south of Crowder’s Hardware. You’ll find lots of great beer choices (over 20 on tap!) and some darn fine food from Atypical Kitchen.

For more information visit [atypicalkitchen.com](http://atypicalkitchen.com), email [info@atypicalkitchen.com](mailto:info@atypicalkitchen.com), or call (941)744-0744.





## Lakewood Ranch Golf & Country Club's Golf Shop Ranked No. 1 Among Private Clubs

PGA magazine has named Lakewood Ranch Golf and Country Club's golf shop as best among private clubs.

"The 2020 season has been challenging for golf shop retailers," said Rick Summers, publisher and CEO of PGA Magazine. "At the same time, it has presented unique opportunities for facilities to move in a positive direction with creative merchandising, strong club logos and multi-functional apparel."

"Bryan McManis of Lakewood Ranch Golf and Country Club uses a combination of great amenities, a member-friendly pricing structure and a keen eye for trends to enhance his club's status as a premier private facility," Summers said.

McManis, who is the director of golf at Lakewood Ranch Golf and Country Club, has also been named the 2020 North Florida PGA Section Merchandiser of the Year for private facilities.

McManis said the members' 15-percent-over-cost pricing plan is one of the things that fosters an environment for purchasing.

"The programs and offerings we have are very member focused and have changed over the years as we continually react to trends, change in market conditions, and embrace technology in the golf business," McManis said.



One such market condition has been the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. Adjustments to the operation of the golf club and its amenities ensured that those who wanted to relax and recreate in a socially distant, responsible manner, could still do so at their club.

"The overall sentiment is that the members were thankful to have something to do during the pandemic that made them feel safe," McManis said.

In fact, members played more golf than ever; from May 1-July 31 of 2019, members and their guests played 12,240 rounds; over the same period this year, 15,413 rounds were played – members only – a 26% increase year-over-year.



PHOTOS BY BEN EYALIS



# LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

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



The sound of the bell can be heard around Lakewood Ranch as our youth have finally returned to school! With some students opting for a fully virtual schedule, others doing a hybrid in-person and virtual schedule, and some returning to full on-campus learning, there remains an opportunity to help both our parents and children alike with returning to their new normal.



*Keith Pandeloglou*  
Director of LWRCAC

At Community Activities, we felt this was a time where we could use the power of our community to help provide even more programming options for our residents, regardless of what type of school schedule they chose for this year.

We're excited to formally launch our new Parks and Recreation program, and are going to kick off the schedule at the end of September at beautiful Bob Gardner Park.

Our first program, Fit4Kids, is designed for children ages 5-10. It was created specifically for our youth in an effort



to make sure they are getting outside and keeping active, and interacting in a safe, socially distanced manner. Created by LWR resident and owner of Anchor Fitness and Performance, Graham Anderson, Fit4Kids will be a six-week progressive fitness program for the youth of Lakewood Ranch. The program will be rooted in FUN, with a warm-up and cool down sandwiching exercises, running, fundamental calisthenics, and fitness challenges! Fit4Kids will run on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 4-5 p.m. Class sizes will be limited to a maximum of 25 children, and all activities will

be held outdoors and designed to keep children spaced appropriately.

For a different type of outdoor experience, Acting 101 is coming to James L. Patton Park in October, hosted by The Players Centre for Performing Arts! After a successful first partnership with The Players in the summer, we're glad to have them return for this four-week program, starting on Oct. 5 and continuing for the following three Mondays. Designed for youth ages 7-11, The Players will be leading acting exercises that will highlight and explore basic acting techniques.

On Wednesdays, beginning Oct. 7, The Players will host Comedy Sportz, which will teach acting games and activities designed to highlight and further base level acting skills and expand improv skills. This class is designed for youth ages 12-17, and continues for the following three Wednesdays.

Both of these classes will also be held at Bob Gardner Park, fully outdoors, with staff masked and students socially distanced from 6 feet apart.

All staff will be masked during the program, and registration is now open while spots remain, at [myLWR.com](http://myLWR.com).

While we work to add more programming in our parks, we want to hear from you! Send us your ideas for fun, safe, and interesting programs to us at [info@lwrca.org](mailto:info@lwrca.org).

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# Dear LWR

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

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

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

With much love,

*Monaca Onstad*  
Director, Community Relations



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# AROUND THE RANCH



## If You Can't Get Into the Studio Go to the Park ... Barre in the Park!

BY ERNIE SOLLER,  
Community Correspondent

The COVID-19 virus has made for a whole raft of changes in the way things are done. It used to be that, if you wanted restaurant food, you simply walked, rode your bike, or drove to your favorite neighborhood restaurant, sat down, ordered your food, and had a nice discussion with friends or family, while you waited for the server to bring your food to the table.

Then the COVID thing arrived on the scene. Your neighborhood restaurant became a primarily take-away place, serving food easily packaged and readied for pickup or delivery. Restaurants like Outback had previously offered a carryout menu, but that menu became enhanced. Others, which had never offered a take-away menu, began to do so.

Those sorts of changes worked pretty well for a lot of restaurants, so other businesses began to change the way THEY did business.

One of those businesses that took a chance and tweaked their method of operation was Barre 3, located at 8141 Lakewood Main Street, in the heart of Lakewood Ranch.

Barre 3 is an exercise studio that uses ballet techniques to help its members to get into really good shape. Owner Nikki Roenicke, a Sarasota native, purchased the Lakewood Ranch franchise last November, after spending a lot of time enjoying the Barre 3 location in her previous home area in Colorado, where she first took classes, and then became an instructor herself. This mother of four (she was several months pregnant when she bought the Lakewood Ranch Barre3!) is a testament to her workouts – she's in fantastic shape.

After COVID arrived, it was necessary for to Roenicke to shut down for several weeks. Upon re-opening, changes had to be made. The number of clients in the studio was cut down to 10 per session, to enable the six-feet-apart social distancing, for example. But what else could they do to attract new clients, publicize the business, and enable clients to be able to participate in their classes?

Well, one thing which Roenicke and her staff have done is to go OUTSIDE the studio, to not only do something for a community starved for activities, but also to publicize Barre 3, and this is what happened this summer

at Bob Gardner Park.

I took notice of a blurb in the Lakewood Ranch Community Activities "What's Happening Around the Ranch" email that I'd received, telling the community that there would be a "Barre in the Park" session at Bob Gardner park on the morning of July 5 from 9 to 10 a.m. This I had to check out!

So, even though it appeared that there would be some rain falling in the area, I headed to Bob Gardner Park, located on White Eagle Boulevard north of 44th Avenue East.

When I got there, I found more than 30 people – mainly women, although there were a couple of guys – spread out on the walkway and grass areas in order to accomplish their social distancing, going through exercises, led by Roenicke, who instructed them by way of a head microphone and a portable speaker.

It appeared that everyone was having a great time, and Roenicke led the attendees, who came equipped with their exercise clothes, mats and water bottles, through a multitude of exercises until the session was cut short by the arrival of bunches of raindrops.

The aim of Barre 3 is to develop core body strength, and the strengthening of back muscles, in order to accomplish good fitness. It's strength and conditioning training with a touch of ballet moves.

The Barre 3 program is good for all ages and, although many of the participants are women, men are encouraged, and they also share in the fun of getting a full-body workout in a friendly, non-threatening, non-judgmental setting. Upcoming dates for Barre in the Park are Sept. 27, Oct. 11, and Oct. 25.

Classes at the Barre 3 studio run 45 to 60 minutes, and are scheduled at various times, seven days a week, ranging from 6:15 a.m. to 6 p.m., depending on the day.

So, if you want to get in better shape, and enhance your core strength and build strength in your back, you just might want to give Roenicke and her associates a call and set up a time to enjoy a Barre 3 class, or head out to Bob Gardner Park! Nikki and her staff are eager to get YOU in shape!

For more information on Barre in the Park, visit myLWR.com. For more information on Barre 3 on Lakewood Main Street, visit barre3.com or call (941) 800-1333.



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER AND KEITH PANDELOGLOU



# Here Comes the New Road – Heading Right for Lakewood Ranch!

BY ERNIE SOLLER,  
Community Correspondent

One of the chief “wants” of Manatee County residents continues to be new and improved roadways.

The level of traffic on east-west roadways on a daily basis is similar to what used to be seen in “season.” Manatee and Sarasota counties have been gaining full-time, permanent residents at a rapid rate, and those folks who move to Lakewood Ranch, and to Manatee County in general, bring with them not only their kids and their furniture, but also their cars, motorcycles, etc. In addition, many businesses and other institutions have moved to Lakewood Ranch, such as the LECOM medical, pharmacy, and dental schools, and their students and employees are driving the roads.

A project that began in 2013, however, is soon to bring Cortez Road/44th Street East all the way into Lakewood Ranch, where it will eventually hook up with that portion of 44th Street East that already exists from just west of Lakewood Ranch Boulevard east to the outer fringe of East County development.

The project, known as the “44th Avenue East Extension Project” started with work on the area immediately to the east of U.S. 41. The second portion pushed the improved road east past U.S. 301. The third portion involved improving 44th Avenue East from east of U.S. 301 to Lockwood Ridge, and the fourth section took up widening 45th Street East from State Road 70 to where it meets up with 44th Avenue East.

Now work has begun on Project #5 – pushing 44th Avenue East across the Braden River, extending and improving the traffic pattern in the Morgan Johnson/Caruso road intersection, and widening the road east to just west of I-75. Project 5 is estimated to cost \$68 million.

The main challenge in the building of the Project 5 stretch of road is the construction of a bridge across the Braden River.

The level of involvement of some really heavy equipment in the bridge construction is huge!

In order to build the bridge, pilings have to be sunk, abutments must be installed, and then the actual bridge sections can be put into place. This work involves using huge steel sectional structures, bolted together, on which very large wooden beams will rest. These beams are 12 inches by 12 inches, and are connected in sections, to provide a wide surface for the tracks of the cranes.

Then, when these are in place, the cranes that actually place the bridge sections in place will be able to move across the wooden beams (which are necessary to prevent the cranes from slipping sideways if they were to attempt to move the cranes directly over the steel), and place the bridge sections where they belong.

The intersection of Morgan Johnson and Caruso roads has, for a long time, been a sort of a “take your life into your hands” area as currently, northbound traffic from Caruso must make a left turn in order to go further north on Morgan Johnson. The presence of a lot of heavy, overgrown vegetation on the southeast corner of this intersection makes it extremely difficult to see on-



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER



coming traffic from the east. The changes involved in Project 5 will eliminate this issue, with the intersection of Morgan Johnson and 44th Avenue East turned into a more “normal” intersection, enabling traffic from Caruso to connect with Morgan Johnson and vice versa without the need for double turns.

So, when is this section of the connector scheduled to be finished? Not until early 2023.

The next phase, Project 6, which is currently in design, will be the last part of the puzzle. Project 6 will involve building another bridge – this one over I-75 – after which the 44th Avenue East Extension program, which has been on Manatee County’s Concept Development Plan since 1968, will be done.

The scheduled capacity for the 44th Avenue East Extension, once completed, is estimated at 36,000 vehicles per day, and is projected to contribute to a lessening of traffic on state roads 64 and 70 by more than 20,000 vehicles per day.



# Brain Health Initiative Welcomes Brain Health Scholars

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is pleased to welcome the inaugural class of Brain Health Scholars. The scholars are youth leaders over the age of 16 who have an interest in science, medicine and/or health and well-being. They represent some of BHI's collaborating schools, colleges, universities, and youth organizations from throughout the Suncoast region and beyond. The Brain Health Scholar program is supported by the Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation.

The scholars will work with scientists and clinicians from the BHI to promote and protect brain health, fight brain illness and improve brain performance for all ages throughout the Suncoast region. Specifically, the scholars will assist with the research agenda for BHI's Community Brain Health Prioritization Survey in Sarasota and Bradenton.

"We are proud to welcome our Brain Health Scholars," said BHI Executive Director Dr. Stephanie Peabody. "In order to better understand the brain health and well-being concerns, values, priorities, and attitudes of both youth and adults from the Suncoast region, we plan to survey residents, young and older, of our communities to determine what issues are important. Our scholars, perhaps future leading brain health scientists and clinicians, will help carry out this important research agenda."

The 69 Brain Health Scholars represent 19 schools and universities. They were nominated as youth thought leaders by their academic institutions, as well as community youth development organizations, including Booker High School, Boston University School of Medicine, Braden River High School, Bradenton Christian School, Duquesne University, Lakewood Ranch High School, Manatee High School, North Port High School, Out-of-Door Academy, Palmetto High School, Pine View School, Riverview High School, Rollins College, Sarasota High School, Sarasota Military Academy, Southeast High School, Saint Stephen's Episcopal School, University of Florida, University of South Florida, Boys and Girls Club of Sarasota, Lakewood Ranch Community Activities, Sarasota Sharks, Sarasota Teen Court, Take Stock in Children of Sarasota, UnidosNow, Inc., Manatee County Teen Health Coalition, and Neuro Challenge Foundation.

The BHI proudly congratulates the following inaugural 2020-2021 Brain Health Scholars:

- Stacey Balloch, Lakewood Ranch High School
- Max Banach, Pine View School
- Noelle Bencie, Saint Stephen's Episcopal School
- Deeya Bhatt, Southeast High School
- Jordan Blake, North Port High School
- Helen Cala, Riverview High School
- Emma Cecil, Lakewood Ranch High School
- Rosenna Chan, Pine View School
- Piper Chan, Saint Stephen's Episcopal School
- Elia Chatham, Saint Stephen's Episcopal School
- Nicholas Coehlo, Riverview High School
- Eriel Crispin, Manatee High School
- Gabrielle Devita, University of South Florida
- Will Diesel, Rollins College
- Caroline Diesel, Florida State University
- Megan Dowdell, Out-of-Door Academy
- Pheobe Duval, Lakewood Ranch High School-State College of Florida
- Liya Elan, Sarasota High School
- Anthony Fabyanic, Riverview High School
- Camila Fermin, Riverview High School
- Valerie Fiore, Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM Bradenton)
- Georgia Flint, Riverview High School
- Gabriela Gonzalez, Riverview High School
- Jorge Hernandez, Riverview High School
- Hilton Hudson, Out-of-Door Academy
- Lindsay Hyer, University of Florida
- Ziwei (Grace) Jiang, Pine View School
- Grace Johnson, Pine View School
- Matthew Konkol, Saint Stephen's Episcopal School
- Noah Kunkel, Pine View School
- Timothe Kuster, Sarasota High School
- Denny Lu, Manatee High School
- Barrett (Bear) Mancini, homeschool
- Blake Martini, Cohasset High School
- Keri McGahren, Elon University
- Kayla McGann, Riverview High School
- Jake Miele, Manatee High School
- Dana Molina, Riverview High School
- William Moragne, Riverview High School
- Erick Morales, Pine View School
- Ezequiel Mori, Booker High School
- Jonah Patterson, Braden River High School
- Ashley Pelton, Pine View School
- Jazmene Perez, Riverview High School
- Annabel Peterson, Boston University
- Juliana (Jules) Pung, Saint Stephen's Episcopal School
- Anton Rappold, Saint Stephen's Episcopal School
- Fiorella Recchioni, Braden River High School
- Jhons Richard Costa, Sarasota Military Academy
- Kaylen Rivers, Out-of-Door Academy
- Hillary Rouse, University of South Florida

SEE BRAIN, PAGE 22

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## THE UNASSUMING WINE BROS.



# Fire, Meat, and Wine

## THE RED WINES, RED MEAT EDITION

BY VIGO ONSTAD (U.S. ARMY, RET.)  
AND PATRICK DUGGAN, ESQ

Much like warm breezy weather and yacht rock, this month's article explores two things that are great together – delicious red wines and grilled red meats.

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

**Vigo:** (*Selecting the Meat*) My job was to procure different cuts of red meat. To do so, I sought the expertise and practical working knowledge of the butchers at the Butcher's Mark – a modern take on a traditional small-town butcher shop located next to the UTC's Total Wine.

Ben, the Butcher Mark's managing butcher, immediately knew which of his various cuts of red meat would pair perfectly with different types of red wine based on each cut's flavor profile and composition. While speaking with him, I got the sense that Ben was an enthusiastic master of his craft and was comfortable that his suggestions were spot on.

Ben suggested that cabernet sauvignon would pair nicely with ribeye because it would not be overpowered by a ribeye's bold meat-to-fat ratio, while at the same time indicating that pinot noir would pair much less well with it because it would not stand up to a ribeye's boldness. When asked what would pair well with a pinot noir, without missing a beat, Ben recommended both filet mignon, given its leanness, and alternatively thought flat iron steak would be great, as well.

Although I knew that filet mignon and pinot noir were an obvious match, my instant reaction to his other suggestion was, "flat iron steak, are you serious?" I know my way around a grill and have devoured countless steaks – including while deployed inside Baghdad's Green Zone – but I have never thought of flat iron steak as anything more than truck stop cuisine or stew meat. However, given Ben's strong endorsement that flat iron steak was on par with filet mignon's taste and tenderness, I knew I had to try it with our wines. Ben even made practical seasoning suggestions: "Just use kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper on both sides. The meat will do the rest." Appreciative of his insight, I decided to roll with all of his recommendations.

**Patrick:** (*Selecting the Wine*) The plan was to grill the meats and taste the red wines at the home of a friend of the Wine Bros – "Chris." Aware of Ben's insight and knowing Chris – a wine enthusiast in his own right – would be eager to add a few great bottles for us to sample from his collection, I sought to follow the script and select a pinot noir, cabernet sauvignon, and one additional reasonably priced bottle of red wine that would match our meats.

For the wines, I visited two of my favorite "go-to" wine spots.

The first was Fine Wine and Tastings on Main – Lakewood Ranch Main Street's boutique wine shop. There I selected The Dude 2018 Pinot Noir (4.0 Vivino; 14.1% Alc. By Vol.; \$29.99), a Russian River Valley (CA) pinot noir that is aged 15 months in French oak.

Knowing I wanted two other bottles of red wine, I shopped UTC's Total Wine. While conventional thinking indicates wines with higher tannins, like cabernet sauvignon, pair perfectly with meatier steaks, I have always preferred wines with a more red fruit profile than cabernet for this pairing. As a result, I opted for a cabernet-based red blend. I selected the 2015 Mascota Vineyards Unanime Gran Vino Tinto (94 James Suckling; 14% Alc. by Vol.) \$24.99 – a Bordeaux-style red blend from Mendoza Province, Argentina comprised of 60% cabernet sauvignon, 25% Malbec, and 15% cabernet franc that was aged in French oak for 20 months.

Intrigued by this highly rated red blend at a low price point – and given my love for the fruitiness and body of a great Malbec – I decided that my third selection would be yet another bottle aged in French oak from the same vineyard as the red blend: the 2016 Mascota Vineyards Unanime Malbec (93 James Suckling; 14% Alc. by Vol.; \$19.99).

When I explained to Chris the meats we planned to consume and the three bottles of wine I selected, he offered up two more bottles from his collection that he felt would perfectly complement them. The first was the 2016 Frank Family Vineyards cabernet sauvignon (90 Wine Advocate; 14.5% Alc. by Vol.; \$54) – a Napa Valley (CA) Cabernet-based blend comprised of 90% cabernet sauvignon, 9% merlot, and 1% cabernet franc.

Chris' second bottle was 2016 Justin Vineyards Isosceles (94 Wine Enthusiast; 15.5% Alc. by Vol.; \$60) – a Bordeaux-style blend from Paso Robles (CA) consisting of 86% cabernet sauvignon, 6% merlot, 4% cabernet franc, 3% Malbec, and 1% petit Verdot that was aged in French oak. While more expen-



sive than typical UWB bottles, I was grateful for Chris's added variety and generosity.

We decided another meatier steak was necessary based on the wine selections, so we added a Butcher's Mark New York strip to the meat lineup.

**Vigo:** (*Grilling the Meat*) To ensure even cooking throughout, I brought the steaks to room temperature before grilling them. I then followed Ben's seasoning instructions to help make sure each steak's flavor was maximized.

We grilled the steaks at approximately 500 degrees for proper searing to capture its taste and juiciness in its interior. Once the steaks had a good sear/char, since we were cooking on Chris' grill – an unfamiliar grilling surface – and each cut was a different thickness, we used a meat thermometer to make sure each cut was cooked to the group's desired temperature. When using a meat thermometer, standard internal steak temperatures are 130 to 135 degrees for rare, 140 degrees for medium-rare, and 150 degrees for medium. If you like your steaks well done, well, you do you. To further bring out each cut's tenderness and taste, we let the steaks rest for about 10 to 15 minutes after grilling but before serving them.

**RATING SYSTEM:** *Vigo (Humvees)/Patrick (Scales of Justice).*

*Ratings are given on a 1-5 scale, with five being highest.*

**Patrick:** (*The Pairings*)

We started with The Dude 2018 pinot noir and paired it with both the filet and the flat iron steak. The Dude was a deliciously smooth, easy-to-drink light to medium-bodied pinot noir. It was fruity with raspberry and cherry notes that finished with a subtle baking spice taste. Although it paired well, I liked it better on its own than with the meats.

The wine: 

The Dude 2018 pinot noir paired well with both the filet mignon and the flat iron steak. In light of this, which cut of meat paired better with The Dude was mainly a matter of meat flavor preference. The filet mignon was mildly flavored while the flat iron steak was a bit richer. Because I prefer more mild-flavored foods with lighter wines, I felt The Dude pinot noir paired better with the filet.

The meat/wine pairing: 

While we grilled the ribeye and New York strip, we drank Chris' 2016 Frank Family Vineyards cabernet blend. This wine was had a dark but fruity taste of plum, and black cherry was medium to full-bodied and finished nicely. The 2016 Frank Family Vineyards cabernet was a delicious wine.

The wine: 



# THE UNASSUMING WINE BROS.

We sampled the 2015 Mascota Vineyards Unanime Gran Vito Tinto red blend and the 2016 Mascota Vineyards Unanime Malbec with the ribeye and New York strip. Neither disappointed.

The 2015 Unanime Gran Vito Tinto red blend had a noticeably black licorice aroma and an excellent mouthfeel. This blend had the perfect combination of light and dark fruit tastes with dark cherry. It was full-bodied with a lingering jammy and slightly smokey finish. At this price point, this was fantastic and a superb value wine.

The wine: 

The 2016 Unanime Malbec was fruity, full-bodied, and packed with tannins. The 2016 Unanime is a delicious Argentinian Malbec. It is also an excellent value wine, and I would drink this bottle again.

The wine: 

Both Mascota Vineyard wines paired well with the New York strip and ribeye. The 2015 Unanime Gran Vito Tinto had a richness to it – likely from the cabernet franc – that made me prefer it with the New York strip. The ribeye aligned better with the tannins and fruit of the Malbec.

The meat/wine pairings: 

We finished our endeavor with Chris' 2016 Justin Vineyards Isosceles red blend. It was a rich, smooth, and full-bodied with notes of plum, cherry, chocolate, and licorice and an excellent finish. 2016 Justin Vineyards Isosceles was a fantastic bottle and was my overall favorite out of all of the wines we tried, even though cabernet sauvignon is typically not my first choice.

The wine: 

Overall, Ben's suggestions were spot on, the meat quality was excellent, all of our meat and wine pairings were great, and Chris' hospitality and wine made our day. Chris' two bottles were the most expensive but also the best overall wines we sampled. However, in typical UWB fashion, my overall favorite and best recommendation is the 2015 Mascota Vineyards Unanime Gran Vito Tinto red blend when considering value and quality. It was dynamic both on its own and when paired with the New York strip.

**Vigo:** (*The Pairings*) "The Dude" is perfectly named, and that's about all that is perfect about The Dude. The Dude is similar to a pleasant party guest that you forget about right after leaving the party. It's not a terrible wine, but it's more suited for pool drinking than with a nice meal.

The wine: 

If I had to compare, I would say The Dude is the Jennifer Aniston of pinot noir. Not so great on its own, but not bad with an excellent supporting cast. Though I thought The Dude was forgettable, it had a better showing with the flat iron steak. The flat iron was tender, juicy, and seasoned to perfection (great job by our host Chris), and The Dude brought its taste profile up a bit when paired with the meat.

The meat/wine pairing: 



Have you been to an event and a super attractive person (man or woman) comes in the room, and you say in your inner monologue, "who are they and who invited them?" That's how I felt about the 2016 Frank Family Vineyards cabernet blend. After the forgettable The Dude pinot noir, the Frank Family Vineyards cabernet blend strolled in the room like it was George Clooney. This cabernet is balanced, bold, and peppery with a beautiful bouquet. If you love cabernet, get this wine you will not be disappointed.

The wine: 

I'm in agreement with Patrick regarding the pairing of the ribeye and the Frank Vineyards cabernet blend. The steak, classic rib eye, fattening, juicy, meaty, the Frank Vineyards cabernet, balanced, bold, and peppery. A match made in steak and wine heaven.

The meat and wine pairing:



When done right, I compare red blends to an all-star team. They can be great on their own but put together correctly, incredible. The 2015 Unanime Gran Vito Tinto red blend is an excellent all-star team. All the varietals were playing with each other well. Dark fruit, firm body, nice finish on the palate. The 2015 Unanime Gran Vito Tinto red blend is a wine to have in your "good friends are coming over" section of your wine rack.

The wine: 

Hot and heavy was not a good friend to the 2016 Unanime Malbec. Grilling outside in 90-degree heat with a lot of red meat being consumed didn't do the 2016 Unanime Malbec any justice. Its dry, full-bodied richness didn't pair well with hot weather and grilled meat. This Malbec would be something I would uncork in January when the temperature is more relaxed. Good wine, but not for hot summer grilling.

The wine: 



The 2015 Unanime Grand Vito Tinto red blend was the clear choice for me when paired with the fatty ribeye. It wasn't overwhelmed by the ribeye richness but kept a light finish on the palate with the fatty steak. The 2016 Unanime Malbec was too heavy when it came to the hot grilling and the hot outdoor temperatures.

The meat/wine pairing: 

Anytime something is packaged in a pyramid-shaped box with gold lettering, I'm going to be intrigued. Chris once again pulled from his wine collection a superstar. As stated before, when done well, red blends are the equivalent of an all-star team. The 2016 Justin Vineyards Isosceles wine isn't an all-star team, it's the Dream Team. Every sip, legendary. The Isosceles was the most assuming of the unassuming selection, but sometimes you have to live a little.

The wine: 

Overall, The Butchers Mark did not disappoint regarding its quality of meats. All the meat selections were on par with any fine dining restaurant in the Tampa Bay/Sarasota area.

Of all the wines selected, the 2016 Frank Family Vineyards cabernet blend was the show's star. Though paired with red meat, this wine would pair well with almost anything, even a vegan burger.

## MAIL BAG:

Doug R. wrote: "*Hi Unassuming Wine Bros: I enjoyed your article on summertime wines. I'm a Sauvignon Blanc fan, especially those from New Zealand. I often go to a little Mom and Pop liquor store in the Publix shopping center on Lakewood Ranch Blvd. and S.R. 64. They have a decent wine selection, and their prices aren't bad. I was checking out some New Zealand SB one day when one of the owners suggested The Ned. I purchased it, and I was not disappointed. I returned and bought a second bottle, so it was interesting to see that The Ned was one of your favorite whites for summer. I would love to try the Mason Cellars SB, do you know where I can find it? Regarding the Graham Beck, Brut NV, ABC Fine Wine & Spirits has carried the Graham Beck wines for years. Have you tried the Graham Beck, Brut Rose NV? I think it's even better than the white.*"

UWB: Doug, thanks for being a loyal reader and emailing us for the last two articles (keep the emails and recommendations coming). The Mason Cellars Sauvignon Blanc, unfortunately, was an exclusive selection from the Lakewood Ranch Country Club's The Lodge. After doing some research, no grocery store or wine merchant in our area carries it. However, we will discuss some of our wine connections to see if they will bring it in the future. Since rosé has become my guilty summertime pleasure, I will take your advice and purchase Graham Beck Brut Rose' NV.

Let us know whether you agree, disagree, or whether you prefer other wines or pairings more. We'd love to hear your input and suggestions and are always thrilled to receive your feedback, information, and opinions. We can be reached at [VigoandPatrick@gmail.com](mailto:VigoandPatrick@gmail.com).



## HEALTH OF WEALTH

# Change is Life's Constant

BY HULDAH MATHIS

Provided by Huldah Mathis, CFP®, RICP®, Northwestern Mutual

As the saying goes, one of life's constants is change. Even good change can sometimes bring stress when it comes with a list of new questions and unknowns. Job transition is one of those occasions for many people. Whether you're starting a new job, finding yourself unexpectedly laid off or retiring altogether, let's talk about a few questions you should ask as you look ahead.

First, and often one of the biggest questions, what is next for health insurance? Does your new company offer a plan? Do you have a COBRA option from your old employer? Is Medicare now becoming your primary insurance? Are you aware of the enrollment timeframes for your various options?

Do you still have retirement money with your former employer's plan? Is it best to just leave it there? Does your new employer have a plan as well and is there a match? Should you seek some professional advice now?



Did you lose any benefits like group life or disability insurance that you may need to cover personally now? Do you understand your new employer's offering in these areas?

Do you have an income gap that is concerning? What expenses are discretionary and could be put on hold if they had to be? If you are retiring, is it time to begin social security benefits? Do you have a pension election to make?

How has your vacation policy changed? Though this doesn't apply to furlough or retirement situations, this can sometimes be costly to overlook.

This is not an exhaustive list. Many more questions could and should be raised depending upon individual circumstances. If any of these have been top of mind in your own life recently, visit a financial advisor who can help you navigate uncertainty, answer your questions about financial unknowns, and tailor a plan to your current situation.

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

## National Preparedness Month

BY LAKEWOOD RANCH CERT

September is National Preparedness Month, and the Lakewood Ranch Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) wants to remind residents that now is a great time to make a plan for your family, if you do not already have one. People get very frustrated when key supplies are out of stock hours before a storm makes landfall, CERT officials said. People also get concerned when I-75 becomes a parking lot, hours before landfall. They encourage everyone to visit [www.ready.gov/september](http://www.ready.gov/september).

According to weather.com, September is the peak month of hurricane season, and the most active day of the year falls around Sept. 10.

In August, LWR CERT started its activation process for Hurricane Laura, which ended up turning west before arriving in Florida. CERT's training committee has added new radio videos to the LWR CERT YouTube channel, and the communications committee has been updating its Facebook page, [facebook.com/LWRCERT](https://facebook.com/LWRCERT) to keep everyone informed on current storm activity in the Gulf.

The group continues to prepare for hurricane season amid the pandemic. They have added surgical masks and face shields to their team kits to provide additional safety measures if they need to activate. They want to remind all Lakewood Ranchers to "stay prepared - stay safe."

For more information visit [lwrcert.org](http://lwrcert.org).



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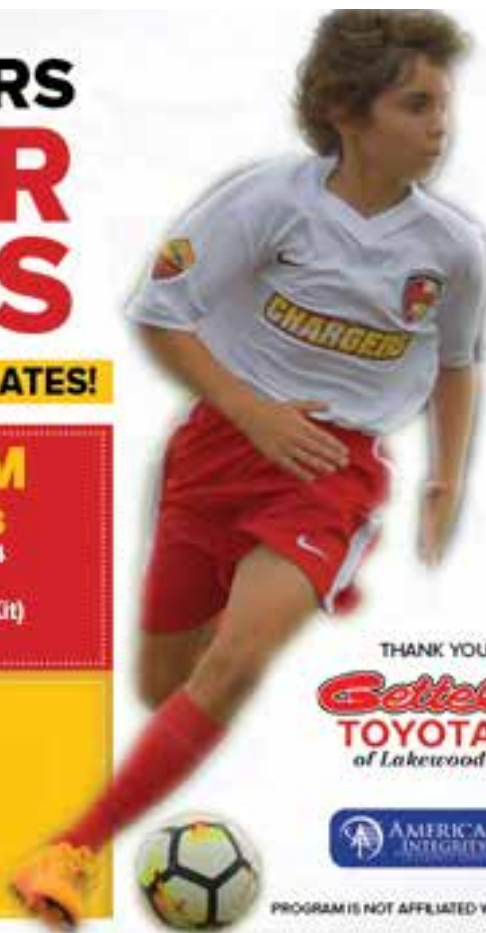
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FROM PAGE 15

- Diana Rudel, Riverview High School
- Vincent Scuteri, Florida State University
- Joshua Segebre, Riverview High School
- Gabriella Sgro, Southeast High School
- Edward Shen, Pine View School
- Olivia Sherry, Out-of-Door Academy
- Giovanni Simon, North Port High School
- Supawadee Surattanont, Out-of-Door Academy
- Victoria Thompson, Bradenton Christian School
- Megan Touchstone, State College of Florida Collegiate School
- Liam Tvenstrup, Braden River High School
- Reece Whatmore, Out-of-Door Academy
- Jonathan (Nathan) Widjaja, Pine View School
- Ariana Williams, Sarasota High School
- Ary Wolfe-Herman, Sarasota High School
- Janyla Woodie, Booker High School
- Tianyu (Danny) Zhang, Saint Stephen's Episcopal School
- Alexa Ziff, Riverview High School

Classes for the Brain Health Scholars got underway August 13 and will require about 20 hours of the scholars' time throughout the semester. All participants will receive a certificate documenting their service for assisting this community-wide research study conducted by the Brain Health Initiative and Massachusetts General Hospital, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital.

For information about the Brain Health Scholars program or how to become a Brain Health Champion, please visit [brainhealthinitiative.org](http://brainhealthinitiative.org).

## THE PET DOC

# The (Pet) Doctor is In!

BY ERIN SIEMS, DVM

I often get asked the question “Why are you giving my Chihuahua the same amount of vaccine that you give a Lab or Great Dane?” Some people are proud of their question. Others look sheepishly away and say “I know I’m not supposed to, but I was reading on the internet ...”

We’ll get to vaccines in a minute. First, and most importantly, do not be embarrassed by trying to educate yourself. Gone are the days of the Encyclopedia Britannica and the Dewey Decimal System, so we all use the internet (yes, even us vets!). Also gone are the days of fact checking and information verification, so read up, try to stick to verified medical sites versus blogs and come with an open mind ready for a discussion, not a fight. I promise we are all trying to do what we feel is best for your pet. (Whew! Let me step down from this soap box.)

As for vaccines, they do not work in the same way as medications. Vaccines work on this cool concept of antigenic or immune stimulation. The vaccine is formulated to be the minimum amount that will stimulate the immune system to create memory cells in case the body comes in contact with the bacteria or virus being vaccinated against. A Chihuahua’s immune system is not stronger or weaker than a Great Dane’s, which is why they get the same dose. If a Chihuahua’s immune system



was weaker because of its size, it would actually need a higher vaccine dose to protect it.

There are a lot of vaccines out there. While the rabies vaccine is required by law, other vaccines may or may not be appropriate based on your pet’s particular lifestyle and age. I encourage you to have a conversation with your vet about which vaccines and frequency of vaccinating are appropriate for your pet.

*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](mailto:reception@BigPawsAnimalHospital.com).*

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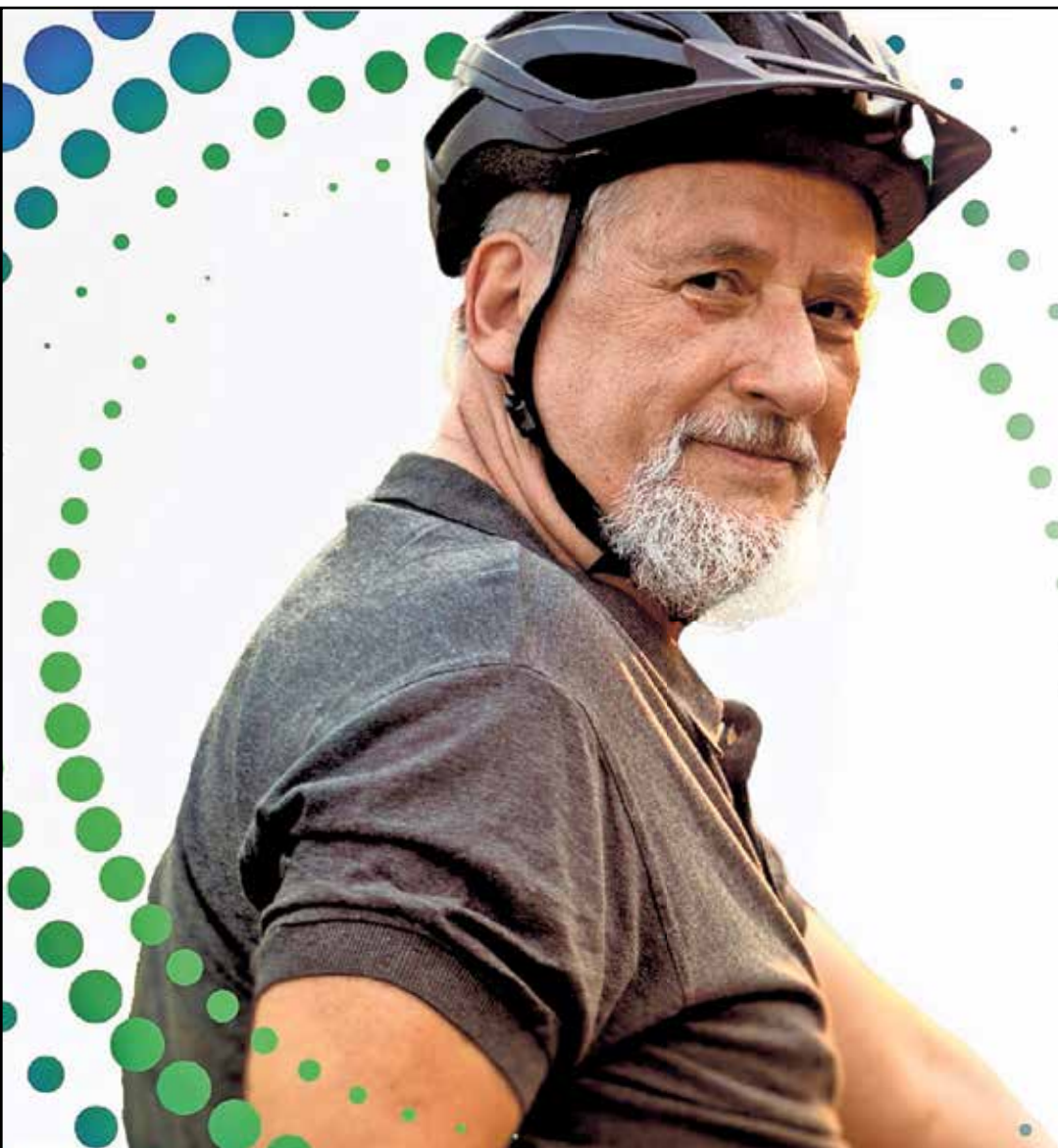
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