



Around the Ranch

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THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER OF LAKEWOOD RANCH

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021



COME TO THE GREEN BEACH! Polo is a tradition at the Sarasota Polo Club at Lakewood Ranch. Matches are held every Sunday at 1 p.m. through April 25. Gates open at 10 a.m. For more pictures and information, see pages 12 and 13. Photo by Eric Nalpas.

INSIDE:

**PARENTING IN A
DIGITAL WORLD**

Page 8

**COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**

Page 10

**PARKS DEMO
DAY**

Page 18

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Lakewood Ranch Town Hall Hours

Town Hall is currently open for governance meetings and scheduled appointments; however, it is still requested and encouraged that everyone use phone and email as the primary way to conduct business with Town Hall. Transponders, dog park memberships, and reservations will continue to be conducted through the website and scheduled appointments. Anyone wanting to access Town Hall will need to wear a face covering and have their temperature checked. Those unable to wear face coverings will need to conduct business over the phone or email. The lobby area will be limited to four people in line. Additional people will need to wait on the front porch.

All facilities and parks are open at this time. We ask that visitors use caution and abide by CDC and Florida Health Department guidelines.

Board meetings, committee meetings, and club meetings will need to comply with the following:

- Setups are limited to predefined socially distanced layouts (generally 11- person max per salon).
- Meeting organizer will need to regulate their own reservations for the limited seats/participants that will be available.
- Access to a projector and screen will be provided if possible. Any additional equipment needed for virtual (Zoom-type) meetings are the responsibility of the meeting organizer. Town Hall will not supply additional equipment or technology assistance.
- No food events are allowed at this time.
- No exercise classes are allowed at this time.
- No card or mahjong events are allowed at this time.
- Saturday and Sunday events are not allowed at this time.
- Groups that do not comply with the conditions above may lose use privilege of Town Hall facilities.

Town Hall North: Town Hall North is also open to the general public. However, given the size of the Town Hall North building, the meeting rooms will not be available to the general public or clubs.



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Ranch Engages Residents, Businesses Via Virtual Community Mobile App

Lakewood Ranch continues to enhance the way it connects with and engages its 42,000+ residents and more than 1,600 businesses through a variety of digital lifestyle programming and platforms. Among them: Lakewood Ranch's namesake community-focused app, developed by residential experience platform Alosant.

Community pride and engagement have always been strong pillars of the Lakewood Ranch residential experience, with residents ranking community clubs, social events, parks and trails, shopping and dining among their most beloved amenities. Therefore, in the wake of COVID-19, community directors transitioned to virtual programming and communication tools via social media, the myLWR.com site, and the new Lakewood Ranch mobile app, which allows community members to easily connect and engage with their favorite features.

In March of 2020, Lakewood Ranch launched a digital version of its award-winning lifestyle programming, in which residents could enjoy virtual "Ranch Nites Live" events with performances by local and national musicians, fitness and wellness instructors, as well as dedicated family nights, happy hours, and more. When the app launched in November, users gained the ability to join in on the programming on the app, RSVP to events, personalize their profiles based on interest, and more.

"Our app and virtual programming streamline the way residents enjoy the numerous opportunities to remain active, entertained and connected within Lakewood Ranch, all while prioritizing their health and well-being," said Monaca Onstad, director of community relations for Lakewood Ranch.

The app is also used to promote health and wellness, a pillar of the community lifestyle, by encouraging outdoor recreation. Included in the app is a listing of all Lakewood Ranch parks and a downloadable parks, trails, and bike map.

Lakewood Ranch Medical Center is one of the five main sponsors of myLWR.com and the app. "Engaging in community events plays a vital role in mental and physical health, which is especially important during this time," said Andy Guz, CEO of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center. "We are proud to be a part of Lakewood Ranch communities' digital, virtual and outdoor activities – delivered in a socially distanced manner and with masks – to keep everyone safe and healthy."

Additionally, the Lakewood Ranch app supports community businesses by engaging potential customers. The app will soon debut a new marketplace feature that includes a directory of all Lakewood Ranch businesses. Business owners can choose to upgrade for expanded profiles that highlight additional information such as their offerings, videos and photos, social channels, and more. Push notifications alert opt-in followers of important updates, hours of operation, discounts, promotions and more.

"Having an easy-to-access way to find and support fellow businesses here on The Ranch has been a great benefit of the new app," said Lakewood Ranch resident and local CoWork business owner, Keith Pandeloglou. "The ease of registering for an event or activity makes this a must-download. Access to the community's great virtual programming, is ever so needed during challenging times like these."

Currently, the Lakewood Ranch app has more than 5,000

users, with the adoption rate expected to rise significantly in the coming months. It's also drawing non-resident users, as many prospective home buyers and business owners seek more information about the community's offerings.

The Lakewood Ranch app was developed by Alosant, which powers branded native apps for many of the nation's most innovative and fastest-growing communities. April LaMon, CEO and co-founder of Alosant, said that apps have become essential for master-planned communities, especially during this socially distanced time.

"The app allows developers, residents and businesses to share resources, updates and information all in one place, and on the device no one can live without: their smart phone. I'm not surprised that in-app usage among our clients has tripled in recent months," LaMon said.

Download the app from the Apple iOS or Google Play stores.

For more information on the Lakewood Ranch app contact Monaca Onstad at 941-757-1544.



Esplanade Residents Donate Lunches to Medical Center Workers

Esplanade Golf and Country Club in Lakewood Ranch has created "Esplanade Gives Back," a program through which residents can help local charities and organizations, and hold fundraisers.

Their first major fundraiser was for Lakewood Ranch Medical Center (LWRMC). People had the opportunity to donate \$15 for a box lunch; by the end of December, they had donated enough for more than 900 boxed lunches, which were delivered to LWRMC staff on Dec. 29.

Leaders of the "Esplanade Gives Back" program were joined by the village's lifestyle director and other community residents to deliver the lunches to the workers.



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Parenting in a Digital World

By Dr. Stephanie Peabody,
PSYC, HSSP, Neuropsychologist, Executive Director



As a parent, you worry about the amount of time your kids spend on their digital devices. Studies show that between social media, gaming and online learning, teenagers are spending an average of nine hours a day online.

In their recent book, “The Connected Parent: An Expert Guide to Parenting in a Digital World,” authors Urs Gasser and John Palfrey recommend that you embrace the concept of “connected parenting” to make the most of digital technology and keep your kids safe in the digital world.

Gasser, professor of practice at Harvard Law School and executive director of the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard; and Palfrey, president of the MacArthur Foundation, have been researching technology concerns for more than a decade. In a recent interview with The Harvard Gazette, they recommend making sure your kids know they can talk to you about — and ask about — anything. That means you need to be familiar with the apps they are using and the games they are playing.

“The connected parent has to learn new things all the time to keep track of technological developments and understand how their children are using technology, with its risks and possible benefits,” Gasser says in the article. “The very rapid pace of change creates a challenge for us parents because we have to make parental decisions without having the benefit of years of experience or advice from grandparents or evidence from researchers.”

The authors recommend letting data, not fear, drive our parenting. Your worries about the dangers of cyberspace can prevent you from being open to the positives of the digital world. Young people are learning and connecting to one another through these technologies. In addition to remote learning, they are connecting and engaging online about topics such as civic activism and climate activism — two areas of interest to young people across the country and around the world.

Palfrey says engaging with your kids about technology is “literally necessary.” For your kids, there is no longer a difference between their online life and their offline life, it is just life. And when it comes to screen time, the researchers emphasize the importance of quality over quantity. The amount of time your kids spend online is less of a concern than the types of activities in which they are engaging.

COVID-19 restrictions and remote learning have changed the debate over screen time, leaving students connected to each other almost exclusively through their devices. Gasser and Palfrey said their studies suggest that moderate use of technology can have a positive impact on the social and emotional well-being of young people. Right now, this is one of the safest ways for them to be socially connected.

When determining the right amount of screen time for your kids, you need to consider their age and how they are using the technology. Spending hours gaming (and making sure you know what types of games they are playing) is different from



communicating with friends, doing homework, or engaging in online communities and becoming active in social causes. Gasser and Palfrey say all of these types of activities can have a different impact on the well-being and development of your kids.

When it comes to brain health, the amount of time our kids spend in front of a screen is not nearly as important as what is happening in their brains as a response to that screen time. Pediatrician Michael Rich, MD, MPH, director of the Center on Media and Child Health at Boston Children’s Hospital, says a young person’s brain lacks a fully developed self-control system. That self-control system is what tells us that we have had enough of any activity that activates the reward circuitry in our brain’s — the very premise of most video games and social media activities. Rich suggests children need a variety of online and offline experiences, including time to daydream, to support their brain health and development.

Many of you also worry about social media and screen time increasing the risk of depression and anxiety among young people. The authors said there seems to be increasing levels of stress, anxiety and depression in young people in general, but they don’t necessarily see a causal link between these issues and screen time. They suggest that while screen time is not a cause, it can exacerbate these conditions in young people who have them.

The good news, the authors said, is that good parenting strategies will still be successful in this new digital world. Here are some suggested strategies for being a connected parent:

- **Maintain an open line of communication.** Be open and willing to have a conversation with your kids about digital issues, and anything else.
- **Embrace the technology.** Learn about the apps and games they are playing. You don’t have to spend your day on TikTok but be positive about new technology and build your skills so you can help mitigate risks.
- **Seek balance.** Be supportive but allow your kids some independence.
- **Don’t fear new technologies.**
- **Engage with the technology yourself.** To be credible and model good behavior, you need to engage. You may feel like you are constantly learning and readjusting, but it will help you support and empower your kids.
- **Create a family technology plan.** Technology should work for you and within your family values and parenting style. Don’t let it replace important activities such as face-to-face interaction, family-time, outdoor-play, exercise, unplugged downtime and sleep.
- **Treat technology like other activities.** Know what your kids are doing online. Set limits. Know who their friends are. Know what apps they are using and what sites they are visiting.
- **Engage with your kids online.** Screen time doesn’t have to be alone time. Play a game with your kids or watch a video with them.
- **Create tech-free zones.** Designate certain times and areas as screen-free times, such as no phones at mealtime or bedrooms are screen-free.
- **Teach your kids about privacy.** Make sure they understand that once they share something online it can’t be deleted.
- **Be forgiving.** Kids will make mistakes so try to be understanding and treat mistakes as teachable moments.

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

THE BRAIN HEALTH INITIATIVE NEEDS YOUR PARTICIPATION!



There’s still time to participate in the Brain Health Initiative Pilot Study. If you received one of the invitations sent to randomly selected adult residents from Lakewood Ranch, we encourage you to complete the online survey. The pilot study examines the ways you function mentally, socially, cognitively, and overall, as well as the factors in your life that present risk or promote resilience in brain health and performance. Community participation is critical to the study’s success. To learn more about the Brain Health Initiative and to become a Brain Health Champion, visit brainhealthinitiative.org.

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We're so happy to see our residents getting outside, staying safe, and meeting new friends at all of our new Parks and Rec programs! The newest edition of our Parks and Rec guide will launch in early March, and offers programs thru the end of May! Many of our first session programs are continuing and can be found on our website at myLWR.com.

Free yoga continues in the beautiful setting of Bob Gardner Community Park just off of White Eagle Boulevard, continuing on Feb. 21 and every other Sunday following.

Did someone say **Barre**? Join us for free barre class in Bob Gardner Community Park, just off of White Eagle Boulevard, continuing on Feb. 28 and every other Sunday following.

Calling all youth yogis on March 6! Join us for a mindful morning filled with movement! **Yoga** instructor Jessica will lead this dynamic yoga series designed just for kids. Yoga flows will be infused with music, storytelling, arts, and more. This is held the first Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. at Bob Gardner Park. We even offer a special class at 11 a.m. for teens! They will be guided through a variety of postures and breathing exercises to keep them actively interested, engaged, and challenged. They'll have fun getting fit, improving strength,



balance, flexibility and endurance. In addition to this, they will learn strategies to build self-esteem, regulate emotions, strengthen concentration, and cope with stress.

The Walking Group meets on the second Tuesday of the month, and our next meeting is March 9. Get out and learn all there is to enjoy at Bob Gardner Community Park in a casual walk around the park, led by our Parks team.

Looking to play some **cornhole** out in the park? Meet new friends over a casual game of cornhole at Bob Gardner Park on Thursdays, continuing until March 11.

Newcomers Group on March 12 is a great way to learn more about our community, parks, and events led by our Community Activities team!

Community **Bingo** is the best kept secret in LWR! Join your friends and make new ones on Wednesdays through March 17 at Adventure Park in Greenbrook.

Fishing Saturdays takes on a new twist in its return on the third Saturday of the month, March 20! At this session,



attendees will learn the art of casting, being a good angler, and knot tying. This session is sponsored by Fish Florida, and all youth in attendance who complete all of the sessions will receive a free rod and reel! There will be time for practice immediately after in beautiful Lake Patton.

All programs require pre-registration at myLWR.com, and attendance is limited to comply with social distancing and keeping our community safe.

If you have an idea for a new parks program, we want to hear from you! Send us a note at info@lwrca.org and we'll be glad to help. We love working with our LWR-based businesses! We are open to applications for the upcoming session of our Parks and Recreation program. If interested, submit our Park Partner Application. For a link to the application, send us a note at info@lwrca.org.

After applying, you are welcome to join us for Monthly Office Hours, the fourth Monday of the month, from 2 – 3 p.m. Contact us at info@lwrca.org to schedule an in-person, socially-distanced pitch, or meet the LWRCA Parks team via Zoom.

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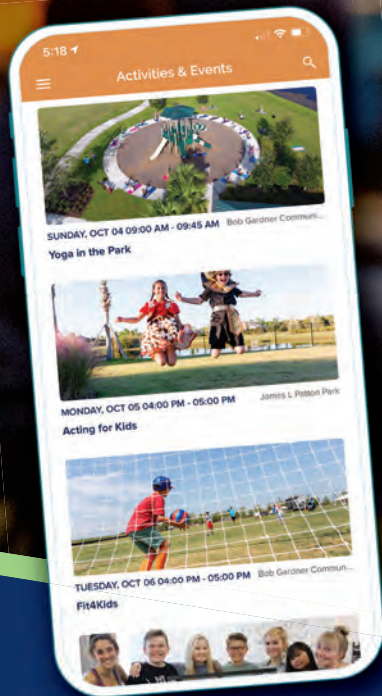


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AROUND THE RANCH



PHOTOS BY ERIC NALPAS



Fastest Game on Four Feet!

Polo isn't just a sport with a rich history, it's a community. The Sarasota Polo Club is one of the largest, most dedicated, and enthusiastic polo communities in the world. An estimated 45,000 polo spectators will be on hand during this year's 30th anniversary polo season.

Matches are open to the public every Sunday at 1p.m. through April 25, at the Sarasota Polo Club at Lakewood Ranch. Gates open at 10 a.m. Field-side general admission

tailgating, reserved tailgating, reserved midfield seating or VIP boxes are available. Children 12 & under are free. Come out and enjoy exciting polo action, opening parade, live national anthem, theme weeks, half-time entertainment, food, drinks & divot-stomping. Dress comfortably & for the weather. Remember, you will be walking on grass. Well socialized dogs are welcome on a leash. For more information visit sarasotapolo.com or call (941)907-0000.



THE (PET) DOCTOR IS IN!

By Erin Siems, DVM

We're smart people. We have been taught all aspects of nutrition, how those nutrients interact with the body and different medical conditions, but we stay quiet because we assume you have already consulted the internet and the person at the pet store. We know that you trust these sources and we don't want to contradict what they say, then have to defend ourselves. So we stay quiet, you continue to look for information where you can get it and we are left scratching our heads wondering why there are so many quirky diet trends.

Just like with human diets, everyone has a different opinion on food. Even vets can't agree on the "best" diet. We know homemade diets sound like the best way to go but we worry about them having all the necessary nutrients



that your pet needs and time it takes to make them properly. I personally advocate against raw diets because of the contamination in the food chain (human and animal) and the concern for them passing bacteria on to people, especially immune compromised people.

Most of us are not offended by ingredients like corn or wheat because we know that, when processed properly, they can be full of nutrients. We also know that it is more common for

animals to be allergic to a protein than a grain and that grain-free diets are linked to heart disease. We know all of this, but we stay quiet, so we don't offend anyone.

I do miss the simplicity of the "good old days" when you went to the store and there was the red bag and the green bag to choose from. However, science has advanced nutrition, and we should too. I encourage you to ask your vet about food, ask why, bring up any concerns with their information then truly listen to their explanation. Together we can make the best choices for every individual.

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@BigPaws-AnimalHospital.com.

HEALTH OF WEALTH

Retirement Success

BY HULDAH MATHIS

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

Here we are, one month in to 2021! We opened the year with some questions to help you consider what exactly money means to you. Given the number of conversations around this particular topic I had in January alone, let's focus that thought to something even more specific: retirement.

Almost every client I have guided through this transition has defined retirement somewhat differently. Some wouldn't even choose the term "retirement," since it has traditionally meant stopping work altogether. For so many, the goal isn't so much to stop working but to reach a point of working by choice rather than out of necessity. Much of my role in guiding clients through this transition is helping to first define "success" in this season of life.

Whether this is a new reality for you or whether it is two years or even two decades away for you, here are some helpful questions to ask yourself:

- What are you most excited about when you think about the word "retirement"?
- What about that word scares you?
- What do you want to do more of when you retire?
- What do you want to stop doing once you retire?
- Who do you know that has retired "successfully" by your definition?
- How has your thinking about retirement changed from even five years ago?



- What is your biggest financial priority in retirement?
- What is your biggest financial concern in retirement?

Even for those who have been very successful in accumulating, it can be overwhelming to know what to do next once that paycheck stops. Partner with a professional you trust and take the time to lay out both a vision and a financial "game plan" that won't require your constant attention as you actually enter retirement. Once you have confidence in your next steps, you will have the mental freedom to enjoy all that you have worked so hard to create!

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

February Programs at Chabad of Bradenton & Lakewood Ranch

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

Talmud Classes

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

At the virtual Chabad House

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 tent

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

At the Chabad tent

Friday nights, one half-hour after candle lighting time; **Saturday mornings** at 9:30 a.m., Shabbat Kiddush at 11 a.m.

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

Torah & Tea

At the virtual Chabad or at the Chabad tent

February 23, 11 a.m.

Join Chanie Bukiet through for a weekly dose of delicious tea and refreshments spiced with lessons on the weekly Torah portion and round the table discussions. Admission is free. Sponsor a class in someone's memory or honor for \$25.

Chabad Hebrew School of the Arts

At the virtual Chabad House or at the Chabad tent

February 21 and 28, 9:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

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

JLI - Journey of the Soul

At the Chabad tent

February 17 and 24, 7:30 - 9 p.m.

At once practical and powerful, reflective and relatable, Journey of the Soul teaches a Jewish perspective on life that begins before birth and lasts well after a person's passing. Fee: \$75 (textbook included).

CKids - Purim Laughter Lab

At the Chabad tent

February 21, 11 a.m.

Get ready to laugh out loud at the wackiest Purim lab you've ever seen, learning about the Purim mitzvot (good deeds) with cool new tricks and funny science experiments. Masks required until seated. Admission: \$10/Hebrew school families free.

CTeen Purim Party

At the Chabad tent

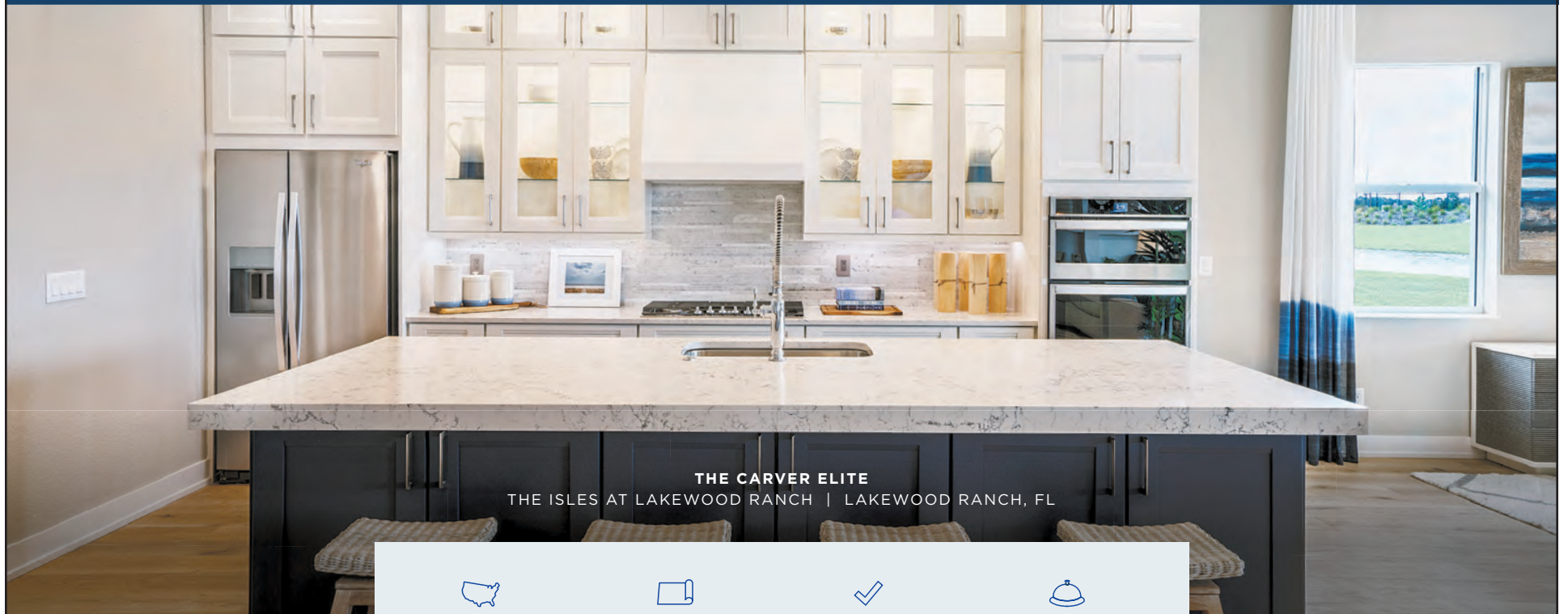
February 23

Join CTeen LWR for a pre-Purim party including dinner, Purim activities, and games. Masks required until seated. Suggested donation of \$10/sponsor event for \$180.

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

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Come Out and Play Parks Demo Day

The parks' demo day was held at the beginning of January at Bob Gardner Community Park in Lakewood Ranch. Over the span of the three-hour event, some 500 people attended, and were able to try out some of the Parks & Rec program's activities with its park partners, including The Yoga Shack, barre3, MVP Sports & Social, and the Sarasota Polo Club.

Some of the activities included Couch to 5K, Fit4Kids, adult yoga, Stroller Strides, Kids' yoga, stretching, teen yoga, adult barre, casual cornhole, field bocce, disc golf and horses 101.

The current and complete Parks & Rec guide, with parks and trails map, can be downloaded and/or printed from mylwr.com/934/LWR-Parks-Rec-Activities-Guide.

PHOTOS BY ERIC NALPAS



Lakewood Ranch Best-Selling Multi-Gen Community In The Nation

Lakewood Ranch has been recognized as the best-selling, master-planned multi-generational community in the country by John Burns and RCLCO (two independent real estate consulting firms) for the third year in a row.

Lakewood Ranch saw 2,149 new home sales in 2020, up from 1,648 in 2019 – a 30 percent increase year-over-year and the best sales year on record for The Ranch.

The pandemic-era desire for floorplans with independent offices, separate entertainment rooms, technology packages, and pools and increased outdoor living space helped drive sales, as did the demand for multi-generational floorplans to accommodate family members – both seniors and adult children. Low interest rates and a dwindling inventory of resale homes also helped spur sales.

Laura Cole, senior vice president of Lakewood Ranch, said that while COVID-19 has driven some buyers to act, there are longer term trends at play as well. “The pandemic caused an acceleration of purchase decisions for some buyers already in the market, especially young families seeking their first home and people nearing retirement,” Cole said. “A strong desire to upgrade one’s quality of life through home and place was a powerful motivator to purchase a home this year.

“Many buyers said that COVID-19 has created a need to reestablish roots in an environment that affords a more connected and active lifestyle, while offering ample open space and tranquility,” Cole continued. “Lakewood Ranch’s vast green space and amenities – including space for walking, hiking, and biking – were very attractive to those seeking to escape urban centers and increase their ability to socialize outside while observing social distancing requirements.”

Even with restrictions in place, buyers have been purchasing homes – in many cases, sight unseen – with the help of interactive chats and virtual community presentations from the Lakewood Ranch Information Center, an easily navigable Lakewood Ranch website with a 3D interactive map, and builders’ virtual tours.

The Ranch continues to be successful at market segmentation, filling multiple market niches with homes available with price points from the \$200s to more than \$1 million. There are more than 20 unique villages from which to choose, with more than 20 different builders, including four new villages that opened in 2020: Taylor Morrison’s Esplanade at Azario, Lennar’s Lorraine Lakes, Neal Communities’ Windward, and Pulte’s Sapphire Point.

Although sales at all price points have been strong, the luxury market continues to per-

form extremely well, Cole said. “The community was prepared to meet increased demand from the millennial buyer while still accommodating move-up families, empty-nesters, retirees, and seniors,” Cole said. “Our strength continues to come from the diversity of our neighborhoods and homes, abundance of shopping, dining, and services, job base, and exceptional lifestyle offerings.”

Lakewood Ranch’s award-winning lifestyle program transitioned from completely in-person events, to virtual offerings, and then to a hybrid of both formats. A new Lakewood Ranch app was launched to complement the myLWR.com community website, which is a one-stop-shop for “everything Lakewood Ranch,” including a community calendar, bike and trail map, business directory, and service requests, among other things.

Popular amongst residents – and prospective buyers – are miles of trails and paths, parks offering a disc golf course, watercraft launches, and dog parks for socially distanced, outdoor activity; and nationally recognized sports venues like the Premier Sports Campus and the Sarasota Polo Club. The Ranch is also home to A-rated schools, 10 institutions of higher learning, and the nationally recognized Lakewood Ranch Medical Center. The Ranch has been recognized by ideal-LIVING magazine as a “best health and fitness” and “best wellness” community.

Waterside Place, one of three town centers in Lakewood Ranch, has drawn widespread attention as it nears a second quarter of 2021 completion. Located on the southern edge of The Ranch in Sarasota County, it will be a blend of arts and entertainment, with diverse dining options, commercial, retail and office space, and an eight-acre park, which will be the eventual home of the Farmers’ Market at Lakewood Ranch.

Also attractive to buyers is Lakewood Ranch’s status as a major job center, with more than four million square feet of commercial real estate in place and entitlements for up to 14 million. There are more than 1,350 businesses in diverse sectors such as biomedical, technology, insurance, and education.

Not to be overlooked is Lakewood Ranch’s proximity to the beaches, and cultural and sports offerings that allow residents to experience a higher quality of life without sacrificing big-city conveniences.

RCLCO has been ranking master-planned communities since 1994; for more information, visit www.rclco.com. This is the 12th year that John Burns Real Estate Consulting has ranked top-selling U.S. master-planned communities; for more information, visit www.realestateconsulting.com.

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THE UNASSUMING WINE BROS.



Organic Wines

It's a new year, which – if you are like the Bros – means not only implementing resolutions but also accounting for 2020's many indulgences. With 2021's new beginnings and a necessarily more healthy approach in mind, the UWBs ventured into an area that we never thought we would go: organic wines.

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.

Knowing almost nothing about organic wines, we called an independent wine consultant with Scout & Cellar to walk us through what makes organic wines appealing. They explained that Scout & Cellar is an independent wine distributor that sources “clean-crafted” wines, which are:

- Grown naturally with no synthetic pesticides;
- Sustainable, using organic or biodynamic farming methods;
- Made with no added sugar;
- Grown without added chemicals such as ferrocyanide, ammonium phosphate, copper sulfate, mega purple; and
- Low in sulfites (most less than 50 parts per million (PPM) with a standard of less than 100 PPM). These standards are a product of Scout & Cellar's close relationship with its growers and how the sourced grapes are produced.

We sampled three “clean-crafted” selections. Here are our thoughts:

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

2020 SCOUT & CELLAR BOOKBINDER'S APPRENTICE 1ST EDITION WHITE WINE (CALIFORNIA):

\$16 via Scout & Cellar Independent Distributors; 12.5 % Alc. by Vol.; Sugar 0.05 g/L

Vigo: If you like your organic white wines tart with a clean finish on the palate, then I have a wine for you: the Scout & Cellar Bookbinder's Apprentice. Green apple, honeydew, and peach flavors are pleasing, but the tartness was a bit surprising. The tartness of this wine pairs well with a creamy cheese selection. This wine reminded me of a Jennifer Aniston movie; on her own, meh, but with an excellent supporting cast, fantastic! So have that cheese plate ready when serving this wine.

Vigo's Rating:

Patrick: This light California-sourced white comprised of 100% Colombard grapes literally left me feeling healthier after drinking it. It drank tart with minerality and exhibited apple, peach, and citrus flavors. Its steel aging gave it a crisp cleanliness. It was not the most complex wine I have ever tasted, but overall, I thought it was flavorful and refreshing.

Patrick's Rating:



Bookbinder's Apprentice



Dove Hunt Dog Rose



Fieldhouse Pinot Noir

2020 SCOUT & CELLAR DOVE HUNT DOG ROSE (CALIFORNIA):

\$19 via Scout & Cellar Independent Distributors; 12.5% Alc. by Vol.; Sugar 0.03 g/L

Vigo: I'm not ashamed to say this: I love rosé. When made well, rosé is fun and enjoyable, and the Scout & Cellar Dove Hunt Dog rosé is no exception. Beautifully pink in color with refreshing watermelon, strawberry, and orange flavors swimming around your palate, you can close your eyes and think of a sunny day at the beach when drinking this wine. Once again, along with all the beautiful fruit favor, the wine finishes very cleanly on the palate, most likely because it is aged in stainless steel. If you want a treat, pair this rosé with BBQ chicken; you'll thank me for it.

Vigo's Rating:

Patrick: Scout & Cellar 2020 Dove Hunt Dog rosé was my favorite wine of the three wines we sampled. This Healdsburg, Calif. rosé was light-bodied, with a mild dryness and a lingering finish. This easy-drinking low sugar wine tasted just like unsweetened watermelon. Try this one in the summer, poolside, or as a healthier option after a workout.

Patrick's Rating:

2018 SCOUT & CELLAR FIELDHOUSE PINOT NOIR (CALIFORNIA):

\$22 via Scout & Cellar Independent Distributors; 13.4 % Alc. by Vol.; Sugar 1.5 g/L

Vigo: Of all the selections, the 2018 Scout & Cellar Fieldhouse pinot noir was the most perplexing. The Fieldhouse pinot noir has a beautiful burgundy color with fast legs, which wasn't surprising based on its alcohol content. What surprised me was its taste. Though labeled a pinot noir, the Fieldhouse pinot noir tasted more like a merlot. My confusion might stem from the earthiness this wine had on my palate, which I'm not accustomed to. During this tasting, I was constantly checking with Patrick to see if the bottle was labeled correctly. In his typical attorney fashion,

Patrick responded, “Yes, it's a pinot noir, it's right there on the bottle, Vigo.” After receiving Patrick's confirmation, I got down to the task of making palate observations. The bottom line is, it is a good wine, but not a great wine. It pairs well with poultry and cheese and stands on its own when left to open a bit. The organic process can give those who love red wine the ability to drink and enjoy without worrying about pesticides, chemicals, or sulfites. However, if you are a traditional pinot noir drinker, this wine may not be for you.

Vigo Rating:

Patrick: I liked Scout & Cellar's 2018 Fieldhouse pinot noir more than Vigo did. The lack of added sugar and steel aging was immediately apparent. This wine shows more earthiness and much less fruit forwardness, oak, and baking spice than the typical California pinot noir. The wine was light-bodied, with medium cherry notes and very mild spice and pepper finish. It drank like an Old World, light-bodied red wine.

Patrick's Rating:

Patrick's overall impressions: I went into this tasting not knowing what to expect, and these three “clean-crafted” selections ended up exceeding my expectations. None were particularly complex. All were lighter-bodied than their traditional counterparts. None would win a blind taste at an international wine tasting event. That being said, each of these selections was flavorful, refreshing, and easy to drink. You could do worse than these wines. For health-conscious wine drinkers looking for relatively affordable, organic, and lighter options, these Scout & Cellar selections are solid choices.

Vigo's overall impressions: This is the second time I've sampled organic “clean-crafted” wines, and though more impressed this time than the last, I was still not a convert to organic wines yet. For those with sensitivity to the standard chemicals currently used in most wines as a preservative, this is a great alternative. Scout & Cellar provides an excellent selection of different types of wine at a very reasonable price, an anomaly for organic products.

Scout & Cellar “clean-crafted” wine selections are not available in stores. They can be ordered at scoutandcellar.com.

ATTENTION FANS AND READERS!

After months of old-fashioned print musings, the UWBs have entered the digital age. For those who prefer reading our articles via computer or smartphone, visit www.unassumingwinebros.com to read all our current and past articles from the *Around the Ranch* publication. Leave a comment, observation, critique, recommendation, or just say hello. Also, follow us out on Instagram @theunassumingwinebros and Facebook – The Unassuming Wine Bros – for more wine adventures, observations, pairings, and recommendations. We'd love to hear your input and suggestions. We can be reached via email at VigoandPatrick@gmail.com.

Lakewood Ranch "Anchor" Restaurant Crosses The Irish Sea

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

Once upon a time there was a young Scottish couple who came to America and opened a Scottish-themed restaurant called McAllisters on Lakewood Ranch's Main Street. After several years, Malcolm and Karen Ronney sold their Scottish restaurant, and opened a breakfast-and-lunch restaurant, The Granary, near the Crowder's Hardware's Lakewood Ranch location, just south of State Road 64 on Lakewood Ranch Boulevard.

The new owners continued the Scottish tradition of McAllisters, but in 2020, it closed for good.

Enter Bruce Mahnke and his partners: Bob Bender, Albert Myara, and Adam Myara. They inquired about leasing the restaurant and found that the landlord wanted a hands-on operation for that space. They fit the bill perfectly. And, they were able to keep some of the former McAllisters employees.

Among them, the partners have many years of experience owning and operating restaurants, such as one of Lakewood Ranch's favorite sports bars – Ed's Tavern – and 60 East, an Italian-themed restaurant in Ellenton, to mention just a couple.

Mahnke and his people have successfully transformed the former McAllisters from a Scottish-themed place with dark woodwork and walls featuring a "rough-cut stone" look, to a much brighter, casual Irish place. McGrath's has also increased their outdoor seating – they can seat close to 100 patrons outside.

McGrath's Irish Ale House is the result, and it seems to be working out just fine.

Now, if you've been to Ireland – and I have – you have come to the understanding that the local pub/ale house is a center of community life. It would not be unusual for a family to attend church on a Sunday morning, and later gather at the local pub for lunch. You will note that I used the term "family," as the local pub is truly a family gathering place, and not a just a place for drinkers only.

Now, of course, being a proper Irish ale house, McGrath's features a large list of Irish whiskeys – 30 varieties, to be accurate. So, whether your taste runs to Jameson's or Bushmill's, or whether you've explored some of the lesser known Irish libations, you'll find lots of choices at McGrath's Irish Ale house. I was a little surprised to find a whiskey called "The Quiet Man" at McGrath's. One of these days I'll have to try that one.

For those not familiar with the title "The Quiet Man," it refers to a book and a subse-



PHOTO BY ERNIE SOLLER

quent movie made in 1952 in the town of Cong, in County Mayo, Ireland, which starred John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara. The story revolves around an American boxer of Irish descent who leaves America after a disaster in the ring to settle in his family's place in Ireland.

The movie kind of put Cong on the map (The town didn't get electricity until around 1950!), and today there are still references to it around the town. One of the most visited tourist attractions in Cong is the "Quiet Man Bridge," a picturesque stone bridge spanning a small creek, where one of the major scenes in the movie was filmed. Hence ... "Quiet Man Whiskey"

For those who may prefer a pint or two of ale, beer, or for that matter, a staple of Irish pubs – hard cider – McGrath's has 15 different drafts on tap, plus bottles and cans of other brands. Of course you'll find Guinness, and one of my favorites, Smithwick's, but here again, you might want to experiment with some of the lesser known brews.

Now, no Irish pub or ale house that intends to stay in business for a long time would ignore the other main factor in such an endeavor: FOOD!

Food in an Irish pub is not just "bar food." A beer and a bag of chips isn't enough to keep such a place open. And, what with Mahnke growing up in a traditional Irish family, some of his family's recipes are now available on McGrath's menu.

Take the shepherd's pie, for example. This recipe came down to Mahnke from his great-grandmother, who came from Waterford. I dined at McGrath's recently, and overheard two other patrons discussing this menu item, talking about just how good it was! Here's one reason: McGrath's uses lamb in it's shepherd's pie, not beef, and they try to source their food locally as much as possible, too. McGrath's food is scratch-made in-house from locally sourced ingredients.

The food section of McGrath's menu has a number of items that have a little green shamrock symbol next to the listing. That shamrock

tells the diner that the indicated item is based on an authentic Irish recipe handed down through the generations.

I happened to be in the Main Street area several days ago, and my wife and I decided to stop in at McGrath's for a bite. We started off with an appetizer, the "French Onion Shire Dip" ... fresh veggies and potato chips for dipping in a French onion dip – quite good. Then since neither of us was super hungry, we split a "Main Street Salt Beef" sandwich, which is corned beef, gruyere cheese, coleslaw, and a dill pickle on marble rye bread. Very tasty, indeed!

McGrath's has signature cocktails, as well as wine – lots of choices here, too – both by the bottle or by the glass.

McGrath's has a daily happy hour between 3 and 6 p.m. This features \$4 beer flights, \$2 off craft cocktails, and a \$10 charcuterie board.

So come on down to the new McGrath's on Lakewood Ranch Main Street, and cross the Irish Sea to a new dining and drinking experience.

For more information call (941)210-4398 or visit mcgrathsirish.com.

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