



# Around the Ranch

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THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER OF LAKEWOOD RANCH

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2020



**SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BOOFEST GIVES 2020 SOME NORMALCY** – One of Lakewood Ranch Community Activities' most beloved events, BooFest, took place in a smaller capacity, and in a socially distanced way at Premier Sports Campus. For more photos, see pages 12-13. Photo by Mackenzie Straley.

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Advertising Sales/Circulation: Around the Ranch is published by Lakewood Ranch Media which is solely responsible for its content. The Herald-Tribune is responsible for the printing, distribution and sales production of this newspaper. The articles and editorial viewpoints contained in this publication are written solely by Lakewood Ranch Media with the assistance of the Community Services Office and other offices in Lakewood Ranch, none of which are associated with the Herald-Tribune.

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# Atria Bread and Coffee Open - And Worth The Wait!

BY ERNIE SOLLER  
Community Correspondent

Initially, Atria was scheduled to open in March. But then the whole COVID-19 thing hit, and the opening got pushed back. Things seemed to be on hold forever, but, finally, Atria Bread and Coffee is open in Lakewood Ranch, and I think you'll agree that the wait was worth it.

So, where can you go for quality artisan coffee and made-on-site baked goodies in Lakewood Ranch? Until now, about the only "coffee house"-type establishments in Lakewood Ranch were chain locations. Chain facilities have one particular advantage: They are usually pretty consistent. After all, a Big Mac at McDonald's in Lakewood Ranch should taste the same as a Big Mac in Seattle. And, this consistency was a big reason why people – and especially travelers – at one time flocked to fast food and in-and-out coffee houses.

However, what chain restaurants make up for in consistency and speed, they often lose in the uniqueness and quality of their offerings.

That's where Weyli and Jim Angus come in. Both from the Northeast – Weyli originally from Boston, and Jim from New Jersey – they have a history of restaurant involvement. Weyli's family was in the restaurant business in Boston, and Jim attended culinary school in Rhode Island, becoming a chef at a number of fine restaurants and country clubs. They both ended up in Florida. Weyli played a lot of tennis at IMG, and Jim finally moved here after getting just a little tired of cold Northeastern winters. They met after Jim moved to Florida in 2009, and married here eight years ago.

Eventually, they decided that they really wanted to open a restaurant that would serve great coffee, super delicious breads, and offer breakfast and lunch patrons better, more flavorful choices than the chain places. Weyli calls her husband the visionary in their partnership.

Jim Angus had been experimenting at baking sourdough bread for about 10 years. And he says his earlier tries were pretty disastrous, until one day he found a book that opened up to him some of the secrets of baking great sourdough bread. "It completely changed the game!" Jim said. After that, it was no turning back, and, together with Weyli, they decided to create Atria Bread and Coffee.

As Weyli informed me, their aim was to create a place not just for a dash-in-and-dash-out experience, but a place for the neighborhood, for high quality coffee, tea, and baked goods, along with, in the very near future, a selection of unique and tasty menu items such as breakfast sandwiches, French toast, gourmet salads at lunch, and so on. The sourdough process became the basis for their baking. They use freshly milled flour, the dough is naturally leavened, and allowed to ferment for 24 hours prior to baking. As Weyli pointed out, fermenting the dough makes it more digestible, and the results are worth it. It took 10 years to perfect this dough, so check it out!

One future menu item that Jim has planned is a Caesar sal-



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER



ad made with black garlic and truffle oil. Sounds great just talking about it!

On my first trip to Atria, I chose a large blueberry muffin, which came wrapped in paper and served on an attractive black dish. I also chose a cup of Atria's dark roast coffee, deciding to try the dark roast instead of the light roast. I figured that if the dark roast was good, then I would not be disappointed with the lighter roast ... and I wasn't disappointed. The coffee was good. Strong and full-bodied, but not bitter.

My bride, Terri, chose a large chocolate chip cookie. And I do mean large, as this cookie was about the size of a large pancake in diameter, and loaded with chocolate chunks. It was so big that she didn't finish it at Atria, but took about half home for a later snack.

As for a beverage, she chose tea, which was served in a "French press," with a glass. Terri pronounced the tea good. (She actually had a second helping.)

The Atria Bread and Coffee Café is a warm, inviting place, with dark benches along one wall, light-colored tables, and an area with "easy chairs" for those of us who have the time and

inclination to rest easy and savor the coffee and the food. There's also outside seating available. If you'd like, you can watch the baking magic take place, since the baking area is separated from the rest of the café by a glass wall. They also planned another unique feature – the inside air at Atria isn't "recirculated" inside air, it comes in directly from the outside.

The Atria Bread and Coffee Café is located at 4120 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., between 44th Ave. E. and State Road 64. Visit atria.cafe or call (941)751-1016. They are ready to accommodate your "to go" or catering orders, as well.

There's been a lot of thought and planning put into Atria Bread and Coffee Café. It took a long time to bring the concept to reality, so check it out.

"It's not just about the food. It's about the community."



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# Motivating Our Children Builds Brain Healthier Communities

The Lakewood Ranch community is rich with active, engaged citizens who support our public well-being. A healthy community, like Lakewood Ranch, depends on motivation: the motivation of its residents to achieve to the best of their potential, as well as help the next generation of residents to thrive.

As the Brain Health Initiative works with Lakewood Ranch to build a brain healthy culture that proudly promotes and protects brain health, its success will depend, in part, on motivation: The motivation of residents and the greater region to increase brain health outcomes, and to work together to achieve the goals of increasing brain health protective factors, fighting brain illness, and optimizing brain performance across the lifespan.

Residents also need to be motivated to work together as a community at the best of their potential in order to help the next generation of residents. They need to be motivated so they may flourish in lives where brainspan and lifespan are congruent, and where striving for well-being and living a brain healthy lifestyle is considered the norm.

This motivation to move the community forward is housed in the brain and in the mind. It is a complex set of intertwined social and biological factors that influence people to participate actively and productively in all aspects of their lives and to persevere in the face of challenges and the unknown. The mechanism in the brain that supports these factors begins to develop during childhood, building the foundation for the later, lifelong motivation.

Certain actions trigger the release of the chemicals to regions of the brain that connect emotions, memory, and the sensations of pleasure and reward or avoidance and fear. The pathways for those chemicals are established very early in development. As infants, we are quick to link those actions that bring rewards, and we are motivated to repeat those behaviors.

“In understanding motivation, as parents and caregivers, we



PHOTO BY ERIC NALPAS

can support our children by assisting them in building the brain architecture that nurtures optimal development, learning, brain health, life achievement and community participation,” said neuropsychologist Dr. Stephanie Peabody, founder and executive director of the Brain Health Initiative. “We can encourage their motivation and help them experience the rewards of their actions.”

Here are suggestions for setting children on the path that leads to being internally motivated and to becoming a strong supporter of living a brain healthy lifestyle and promoting their community and family values as an adult:

- **Let baby take the lead.** Babies are naturally drawn to things that are new. Notice what they pay attention to and engage with them around their interests.
- **Encourage curiosity.** Give babies plenty of opportunities to interact with new objects –and let them lead and learn through all of their senses!
- **Support playtime.** Playing with other children is motivating.

It represents novel experiences and learning from others. It requires active engagement, and it can strengthen social bonds and reduce stress.

• **Make social interaction a priority.** Studies show babies learn more when face-to-face with a teacher or caregiver than when watching a video. Apps can't replace real-life social interactions.

• **Model living a brain healthy lifestyle.** Children learn by observing behaviors, words, actions, and values of those they trust. Guide them by demonstrating the value you place on living a healthy lifestyle. Explicitly and implicitly make brain healthy living known as a core family priority.

## 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](http://brainhealthinitiative.org).

*The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is a cutting-edge, new 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. Join the brain health movement, because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference.*

## THE PET DOC

### The (Pet) Doctor is In!

BY ERIN SIEMS, DVM

Yes, full-fledged “fall”!! It's finally pleasant outside, maybe even chilly for some of us. One of my personal favorites, Thanksgiving, is right around the corner. In my house, it's a day spent relaxing, cooking and watching football. My poor dogs aren't as thrilled. For them, it's a day of delicious smells with little reward.

Of course, we want our fur kids to have fun too ... and who can resist those big sad eyes, but many Thanksgiving delights can cause gastro-intestinal problems. As vets, we commonly see diarrhea from overindulgence and pan-



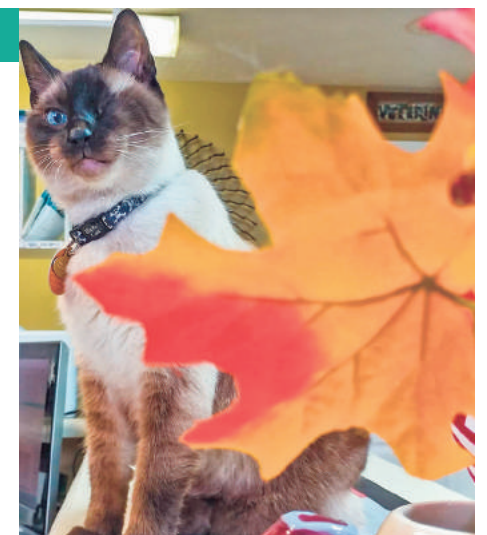
creatitis from rich fatty foods. Please skip the bones too – those can cause impactions and obstructions. My “kids” will be getting a few baby carrots and a few pieces of apple but THAT'S IT. Maybe I'm a mean Mom, but at least they will not be getting a trip to the hospital.

Foods aren't the only holiday hazard. Curiosity can get the best of our four-legged friends when it comes to decorations too. Pine cones, acorns and dried corns can all become potential obstructions. Floral centerpieces can contain toxic plants. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ([aspca.org](http://aspca.org)) has a great website dedicated to helping you know what is dangerous and what is not.

Social gatherings can also be stressful for some pets. It is a good idea to have identifying

tags and collars on your pets in case they slip away in all the commotion. If you are having people over, be sure that your pets have a safe place to get away from it all and relax. Remind guests of your food policy and that we don't want an added trip to the vet. Let's continue the holiday season in the right way – keep having fun, be smart and be willing to protect others from their poor decisions, no matter how many legs they have.

*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).*



# Lakewood Ranch CDD Boards to Resume In-Person Meetings

BY ERNIE SOLLER  
Community Correspondent

The Lakewood Ranch Community Development District (CDD) boards of supervisors are set to resume regular in-person meetings this month. They had been doing virtual meetings since in-person meetings were shut down due to COVID-19.

Per Alan Roth, chairman of the District 1 board, after the end of October the boards will no longer have permission from the State to do virtual meetings, and are required to return to the in-person public meeting format. There must be a quorum present in order for the respective boards to conduct business.

Here are some of the highlights from the proceedings of the Lakewood Ranch CDD boards for the last few weeks:

## GENERAL

The various boards approved a change in the leasing agreement between Down To Earth Landscaping and Lakewood Ranch, for Down To Earth's lease of a portion of the land adjacent to the Lakewood Ranch Operations Facility Building, located on 59th Avenue East, across from the Lakewood Ranch branch of the U.S. Post Office.

Down to Earth had requested an increase in the amount of space it leases, as well as permission to bring in their own office trailer, and this

was agreed to.

The boards also agreed to renew Down To Earth's landscaping and irrigation contract for another year.

Discussions are underway in the Country Club aimed at allowing non-resident vehicles to exit the Country Club via the unmanned gates, rather than forcing the drivers of those vehicles to, in many cases, backtrack to a manned gate. The idea is to reduce overall traffic in the Country Club.

## DISTRICT 1

The District 1 board reported that at the end of the last fiscal year, it had a slightly larger surplus of funds than originally expected. This surplus will be returned to residents in the form of lower assessments.

## DISTRICT 2

The major focus for the District 2 board continues to be the revision of gatehouse procedures. The plan, which the Country Club districts have been working on, is to begin a gradual changeover to a "12-hour manned" gate period (for service during peak hours), and a "12-hour unmanned" period procedure. The gatehouse selected to be the initial trial gate will be the Edgewater gate, with the other main gates (Legacy and Balmoral) to follow. Lakewood Ranch staffers have been working

with the contractor to accomplish this change.

Per Pete Bokach, chairman of the District 2 board, road repairs will be high on the agenda for next year.

## DISTRICT 4

There have been numerous issues with sidewalk flooding along Greenbrook Boulevard, at times making it impossible for kids on their way to or from school to use the sidewalks. This is the result of low spots that collect water after a heavy rain. At times the kids have had to walk in the street to avoid getting their shoes soaked with water.

The district has sent out requests for bids on mitigating the situation, and had received two bids as of mid-October. The bids were to be analyzed and contracts for the work to correct the situation awarded in late October or early November.

## DISTRICT 5

The biggest news of the October District 5 CDD board meeting was the resignation of longtime supervisor Glenda Robertson, who has served on the District 5 board for 17 years.

Robertson is leaving the board because she is moving to a part of The Ranch that is not in District 5 and, as such, can no longer remain on the District 5 board.

Work is expected to begin in the not-too-dis-

tant future on the project to alleviate flooding in the Presidio neighborhood of the district. Bid requests, based on engineering studies, have been issued, and as soon as they are in and have been evaluated, the project will commence.

Supervisor Alan Silverglat requested that engineer Richard Ellis prepare a list of district road improvements and drainage repairs that will be needed over the next year.

## DISTRICT 6

The District 6 board was informed by finance director Steve Zielinski that their district's reserves now total well over \$1.5 million.

Per District 6 chairman Jim Rogoze, this money will enable the district to pay for needed improvements – such as repaving some of the district's roads – without having to go to the residents for a huge assessment increase.

Rogoze also noted that the district has been exploring ways of saving money in its gate operations with the goal of providing improved service at a lower cost.

## INTER-DISTRICT AUTHORITY

The IDA reported that employee health care costs actually went down by 2% in the past year, and that Lakewood Ranch had received a rebate from BlueCross/Blue Shield. No changes are planned for the employee health plan at this time.



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# LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

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We're so thankful for the hundreds that joined us at BooFest this year! The Premier Sports Campus hosted our sold-out event and provided a suitable venue where we were able to ensure social distancing, while still providing a fun time for our residents and children.



Keith Pandeloglou  
Director of LWRCAC

Attendees were able to witness the Art & Soul Performing Arts stage, with performances from our local LWR dance groups, a ventriloquist act, and Spheres Bubble Show, as seen on America's Got Talent. While 2020 has been anything but how we would have imagined, it was great to see our children be able to be outdoors, celebrating a holiday we all know and love, and doing so in a masked up, safe manner. This gives us hope that as we progress into our new normal, there is a way to do



so safely, while still being able to create the sense of community that we have aspired to do for the past 20 years in Lakewood Ranch.

We were also so excited to be able to welcome back The Farmers' Market at Lakewood Ranch, which began on Nov. 1 and will continue each Sunday through April 25! We're so thankful to our more than 50 local market vendors who joined us on opening day. We were live on Facebook with Tracy Guida, from Forking Around Town. Tracy loves to fork and shares her eating adventures around Tampa Bay and beyond. A San Francisco Bay Area native, Tracy currently resides in South Tampa with her two kids, large weenie dog, and five cats. She is obsessed with pizza and wine,

and is known for her fork (and pizza slice) tattoo. Tracy was with us the entire opening day, and met with many of our market vendors, and LWR team members to learn more about everything The Farmers' Market at LWR has to offer. Be sure to join us next Sunday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Lakewood Ranch Medical Center parking lot, and stock up on fresh produce, veggies, food and other treats from our 50+ vendors.

Our Parks and Rec program is in full swing, as we recently completed our first sessions of Acting 101, Fit4Kids, and Mommy and Me Music. These events have brought dozens of all ages – starting as young as one year old – out to our local LWR parks! We're excited



to keep adding additional programming as we enter 2021, and we want to hear from you! Send us a note with your suggestions at [info@lwrca.org](mailto:info@lwrca.org).

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# AROUND THE RANCH



PHOTOS BY MACKENZIE STRALEY

## Socially Responsible “Fright” at BooFest

BooFest, one of Lakewood Ranch Community Activities’ most beloved events, happened this year, but in a smaller capacity, and organized in a socially distanced way. Revelers also experienced a change of venue: The event was held Halloween Day at the Premier Sports Campus (PSC), instead of its usual home at Lakewood Main Street.

The crowds that usually come with BooFest were smaller as well – the attendance was capped at 250 people, and the size of PSC allowed organizers to provide a large area to ensure social distancing, one entrance/exit to restrict the number of

attendees, and by having it in the daylight instead of at night, reduce the chances of crowding and extra interaction.

All attendees were screened upon entry, and masks were encouraged. The field in front of the Performing Arts stage had pre-drawn “circles” for groups to congregate in a safe way, separate from other attendees.

The Art & Soul Performing Arts stage provided some continuity from last year’s event, and those performers were joined by a ventriloquist act, and the Spheres Bubble Show, as seen on America’s Got Talent, among other fun BOO activities.



# The Goldfish Swim School at San Marco Plaza

BY ERNIE SOLLER  
Community Correspondent

San Marco Plaza, located on Nature's Way between the Lakewood Ranch Town Hall and the Market Street commercial area, has hosted a number of unique businesses, from Thai food to home decorating to an upscale resale shop.

Now, however, San Marco boasts possibly the most unusual business it has seen.

When the plaza was imagined, the original idea for its largest space – more than 8,000 square feet – centered on the concept of a dinner theater. That never came to pass, and the location sat empty for years, with no owner willing to plunk down capital to turn it into something viable. The outside walls were there, but nothing else. The floor was dirt – nothing more.

Enter Toby and George Loukmas and Bret and Anne Edwards. They had studied the idea of opening a swimming school that would cater primarily to parents of young children. They decided that Lakewood Ranch was the ideal area to locate their franchise business, which is affiliated with the Goldfish Swim School organization, founded in Birmingham, Mich. in 2006. The Lakewood Ranch location was number 100! The Goldfish Swim School teaches swimming to over 100,000 kids in America every week.

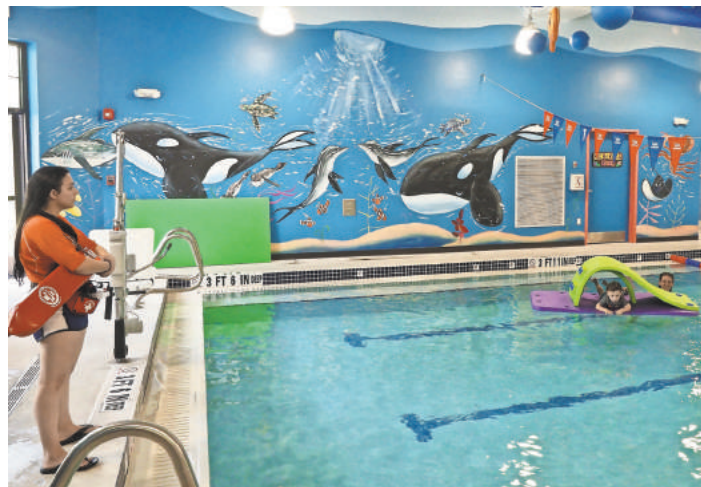
They considered leasing a space, but, then, they happened upon the old dinner theater location, and decided that this would make an ideal spot, since it offered the opportunity to own the space and, after purchasing it in early 2019, they commenced building the pool and the rest of their facility in June of 2019.

The results of their investment and planning are most evident.

There is a REALLY big swimming pool now at San Marco Plaza, and not only is there a big pool, but all the other things that make up a well-equipped swim school are in place.

There are small, colorful changing rooms – designed to look a lot like those found on the beaches in England or Australia.

There is a “Treasure Island Pro Shop” that has available for sale all sorts of items that your child may need for his or her early-life swimming experience, from swim trunks and girl's bathing suits to ... swim diapers! And, speaking of early life, The Goldfish Swim School will start to get your child “in the swim” at as young as four months!



Now, of course, not all the kids who will be heading for the Goldfish Swim School are in the four-month stage, so here's the deal ... The Goldfish Swim School teaches swimming to kids from four months to 12 years.

They offer group lessons (four students to one instructor). They also offer free water safety programs for members of the community for kids from three to six years old.

Safety is a big item at Goldfish. Let's face it – swimming is one of the only sports that teaches kids skills that can help them stay alive. And drowning is a top cause of death for small children.

Now, about that big pool: The pool at Goldfish Swim School is really large. It seems almost impossible, looking at San Marco Plaza from the outside, where such a big pool could be hidden. But there it is. The water in the Goldfish Swim School pool is kept at a steady 90 degrees, and the walls around the pool are decorated with some really cool aquatic murals.

For those who hate to jump out of a pool and have to fuss with getting their hair dried, the Goldfish Swim School of Lakewood Ranch provides a “hair dryer bar,” equipped with blow dryers, enabling students to “dry and run.”

In order to be a successful swim school, you need people who are experienced in training swimmers. The Goldfish Swim School's general manager, Dan Yonko, has 30 years of experience teaching aquatics, as well as management experience. His assistant general manager, Jesse Stigsell, has 10 years of experience.

So, if you have kids who need to learn to swim, or if they have expressed an interest in improving their techniques, bring them down to the Goldfish Swim School – the surprising place you didn't know existed – right in the heart of San Marco Plaza in Lakewood Ranch.

For more information visit [goldfishswimschool.com](http://goldfishswimschool.com) or call (941)304-5213.



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER

## Lakewood Ranch Town Hall Reopens

BY ANNE ROSS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Lakewood Ranch Inter-District Authority

Town Hall is currently open for governance meetings and scheduled appointments. As of Nov. 4, Town Hall moved to the next phase in opening status. This status is planned through the next six months (April 2021). We will be scheduling club meetings and opening the lobby up to general public access. However, **we still request and encourage 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.

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

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

**Town Hall North:** Town Hall North will also reopen 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.

We appreciate everyone's patience as we work towards a balanced approach to opening activities.

## HEALTH OF WEALTH

# Five Tips to Help Improve Your Finances Immediately

BY HULDAH MATHIS  
Northwestern Mutual



While juggling the demands of everyday life, it's easy to put your financial planning on the back burner. Between working, home repairs, caring for your pets or children – it can be hard to find time for anything else. But when you make your financial health a priority, you can rest easy knowing that you'll be building a brighter future for yourself and your loved ones.

Whether your goal is to get out of debt or save for the things you want today – achieving your goals starts with a comprehensive financial plan. This plan will be one of your keys to preparing for potential financial risks, saving for the future and planning for retirement. Get on track with these five easy tips:

**1. Know where you stand.** Before you know where you're going, you must know where you are today. Review your current assets, debts, expenses, and income sources. Get a clear view of your financial situation by:

- Tracking your spending to see where your money is going.
- Checking your credit profile.
- Reviewing past financial successes and failures.
- Making sure your finances are adequately protected.
- Calculating your net worth.

**2. Create detailed and personal goals.** When setting goals, it's important to make them

specific and relatable. For example, "saving for vacation" isn't as motivating as "saving \$5,000 by January for a vacation to Hawaii." Making sure your goals are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and have a Timeline – will help propel you to achieve them.

**3. Partner to create a plan.** Partnering with a trusted financial representative will help you to map out strategies that can get you to your goals and set a time frame for reaching them. A financial professional can help you build a personalized plan to meet your short- and long-term goals – no matter how big or small. With some expert help, you can easily crunch the numbers, weigh options and map out a saving and investing strategy that's right for you.

**4. Take control.** Not all financial priorities are based on big life milestones. Sometimes achieving a seemingly small financial feat can be just what you need to get on the right track. Unsure of where to begin? Here are some items to consider putting on your financial to-do list:

- Set a budget and stick to it.
- Build an emergency fund – aiming to have six months of living expenses socked away.
- Manage debt wisely (pay off high-interest and non-deductible debt first).
- Be strategic in your investment and saving decisions.
- Build your credit score.
- Save for retirement – and take full advantage of your employer's retirement plan.
- Protect your assets and your income.
- Update your estate planning documents.

**5. Review your plan regularly.** Life is filled

with changes, both personal and financial. Milestones like a new job or a new family member will impact your strategy. Make sure to meet with your financial representative before one of these milestones and at least annually to ensure your mix of investments, budget and insurance options are current and accurately reflect your goals and risk tolerance. To help you remember, plan to review your financial plan around the same time each year; the start of the new year or your birthday often work well.

As you strive to get your financial house in order, be sure to stay focused on the big picture. Keep in mind that financial planning isn't a once-in-a-lifetime activity, it takes a strategic, steady effort to arrive at your destination. With a little thought, effort and planning, you may confidently achieve your financial goals.

*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).*

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## Toys for Tots Holiday Bike Drive!

The Lakewood Ranch Golf and Country Club is again teaming up with the local Marines' Toys for Tots organization. Toys for Tots and the Marines appreciate the overwhelming response every year from Lakewood Ranch residents, and are hoping for Ranchers' continued generous support this year.

These donations benefit the less fortunate children at the local level. All donations stay in the community. Last year, more than 150 bicycles were donated, as well as an enormous number of toys.



"Help us to once again fill our lobby to capacity with as many bicycles as we can, knowing that your efforts will put smiles on the faces of very deserving children," said Wayne Piazza, general manager of Lakewood Ranch Golf and Country Club. "You may

drop your donations off at the Main Clubhouse, The Lodge, or the Tennis or Fitness centers."

Donated bikes need to be brand new, and toys should be unwrapped, so they can be sorted by age. The deadline for toys to be dropped off is Dec. 14.

For more information, call (941)907-4700.

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## LWR Community Fund Releases Grant Totals

The Lakewood Ranch Community Fund has awarded \$76,900 in grants to support organizations in COVID-19 relief and recovery, and \$15,000 to support the Brain Health Initiative, bringing the total amount granted in 2020 to \$165,000.

The most recent grants, which range in size from \$1,200 to \$8,150, will assist 18 local nonprofits in adapting operations and in meeting the enhanced needs of the community as a result of the pandemic. The funding addresses a wide range of community issues, including therapy for children with disabilities, healthy food for vulnerable families, tutoring for children in foster care, childcare for parents with challenging financial situations, and services for families impacted by epilepsy.

“For the past 20 years, the Lakewood Ranch Community Fund has been proud to invest in organizations that make life better for those who live and work in the east county and Lakewood Ranch area,” said David Fink, chairman of the board of advisors.

“This year, we had a special respon-

sibility to improve outcomes related to COVID-19 recovery and relief. Knowing the difference our grants will make inspires us to feel good about our community’s ability to help our friends and neighbors during challenging times like these.”

The Lakewood Ranch Community Fund is built by individuals and businesses who care about the health and well-being of the community and who make tax-deductible donations to address the greatest needs of the community.

The \$15,000 grant awarded to the Brain Health Initiative is the second year in a three-year funding commitment from the Fund. “We are in a unique position to invest in research and education that builds health and wellness, and this directly improves the lives of residents in our region,” said Fink.

To learn more about the Lakewood Ranch Community Fund, or to make a donation, visit [LWRFund.org](http://LWRFund.org). The Lakewood Ranch Community Fund is a component fund of Manatee Community Foundation.

## November 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](http://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, 7 p.m.; Saturday mornings, 9:30 a.m.; Shabbat Kiddush, noon**

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**

**Tuesday, November 24 - 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.

### JLI - Secrets of the Bible

**At the virtual Chabad House**

**Wednesdays, November 18 and 25 - from 7:30 - 9 p.m.**

JLI presents a new six-session course on how major Jewish ideas have become universal values. An analysis of Jewish contributions past and present allows us to define ways in which Judaism can continue serving as a beacon of light and wisdom for all humanity. Cost for the course is \$75, textbooks included.

### Chabad Hebrew School of the Arts

**At the virtual Chabad House or at the Chabad tent**

**Sunday, November 22 - from 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.

### RCS - The Code to Joy

**At the Virtual Chabad House or the Chabad tent**

**Thursday, November 19, from noon - 1:15 p.m.**

Code to Joy is a monthly course which explores some of the underlying ideas and beliefs that sustain a truly happy life. Fusing classic Jewish concepts with the panoramic perspective of Chassidic thought, along with a sprinkling of insights and research from modern psychology, you’ll learn how to find self-acceptance without complacency, to confront the past without being burdened by it, to be comforted by faith without being confined by it, to give to others and gain even more, and so much more. Course fee: \$70 JWC members / \$75 non JWC members, or \$18 per class.

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



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# Local Knights Hold Charity Car Show

BY ERNIE SOLLER  
Community Correspondent

To say that my friend, Alex, is a “car guy” might be a slight understatement. Alex is a retired automotive engineer from Detroit.

Working for car companies used to bring with it a number of perks, not the least of which was the ability to try out – and purchase at a favorable cost – the kinds of cars that some folks only dream about. Al’s driven Corvettes, Cadillacs, high-performance Pontiac Firebirds, and a Chevelle Super Sport “muscle car” with a big block engine, just to name a few. His current “ride” is a 2018 Dodge Challenger Hellcat ... 700 horsepower. The color? “Plum Crazy.” He likes power, the squeal of tires on pavement, and the noise of a rumbling exhaust. And, in that area, he’s not alone in Lakewood Ranch.

To capitalize on the love of cars to be found in Lakewood Ranch, Knights of Columbus Council 13341, which meets at Our Lady of the Angels Church at State Road 70 and White Eagle Boulevard, held its second annual “Car Show Cookout” in October in the church parking lot. The goal was twofold: raise some dollars for charity, and give Lakewood Ranch car guys (and gals) and their friends a chance to show off their prized automobiles. And, Alex was there.

The Knights charitable activities include providing winter coats or jackets for underprivileged kids, supporting Special Olympics, donating wheelchairs for veterans and victims of disasters, and contributing funds to help rebuild communities (such as the towns hit by the recent hurricanes which struck the Louisiana coast).

The primary recipient of funds from the Car Show Cookout event this year is Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital, which is the designated regional pediatric referral center for Florida’s West Coast. Over half of the hospital’s 259 beds are devoted to intensive care patients.

In order to show their vehicles, their owners paid a \$20 entry fee. Ballots for those who wanted to vote for their favorite car of the show cost \$5, and raffle tickets were sold, too. The Knights lined up a large list of sponsors for the event, and the DJ made sure that lots of 50’s and 60’s car songs got their share of airtime. The Knights cooked up a storm – if you went home hungry, it was your own fault.

Now, on to the cars. This year’s show had a distinctly international look, with a number of European vehicles mixed in with the Big Three entries. France was represented by a unique trio: a Citroen fire truck; a sleek, limo-like mid 80s Citroen sedan, and a postwar Panhard convertible, boasting a two-cylinder engine which produced between 40 and 50 horsepower. This car was made during a period in which the French were recovering from World War II, and almost no one could afford a big, fancy car.

The British Invasion of the 1960s was exemplified by a couple of classic British sports cars – a 1960 Triumph TR3 roadster, and a maroon “E-Type” 4.2 Litre Jaguar XKE. A bright red Morgan sports car also made an appearance ... very cool.

As for German iron, along with a Mercedes and a ‘Beemer or two, there was a 1986 Porsche 928S, shown by the original owner. This Porsche was built at a time when the company was trending away from the rear-engined four- and six-cylinder cars that had made the name Porsche synonymous with “German



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER

sports car.” As if to make a good comparison, there actually was a vintage Porsche Speedster at the show, too, along with a couple of newer Audis.

As for Detroit iron, there was a lot of it, including a lineup of hot rods created from vintage 30s’ Fords, including a “woody” station wagon. Lots of work had gone into the interiors of some of the hot rods. Swapping parts of other cars was, and still is, a way for car owners to change the looks of their car. I pointed out to my wife a mid-century Mercury that sported a DeSoto grille.

Station wagons may be out of style now, but they were very popular in the 50s and 60s. Some of the more unique wagons from that era were the Ford Country Squire and the Chevrolet Nomad. The Nomad was a two-door wagon that was built to be much more sleek-looking than the standard Chevy wagon. It had sliding rear windows, and a steeply raked tailgate, which was decorated with bright chrome strips. The Knights’ show had examples of both wagon styles.

One of the more unique and now rare examples of 1950’s American cars that became a favorite of hot rodders was also at

the show: a genuine Kaiser-Frazer “Henry J,” named after the guy whose company set records in building “Liberty Ships” during World War II. The car was small, underpowered (even for the early 50s) and generally considered to be very ugly. But hot rodders loved them because they were small, could be bought cheaply, and the engines swapped out for big V-8s. The end result was a car that could be expected to win big at the drag strip, and the small car/big engine trend is still around. We have a saying in Detroit: “There’s no substitute for cubic inches.”

And, speaking of big V-8s, one of the highlights of the show was a 2017 Corvette Grand Sport, with a 460 horsepower V-8 and a sticker that landed in the stratospheric range. The owner had a letter from Chevrolet verifying that his car, with the particular options on it, was the only one of its kind!

While most hot rodders like to do a lot of mechanical changes to their cars to make them unique or faster, and classic car enthusiasts want to make sure that theirs are authentic, some folks just want to dress theirs up to fit their tastes. One example was a late-model Mustang GT convertible painted metallic pink. That’s right ... a pink Mustang, tastefully covered in “bling.” You may have heard of the “Rhinestone Cowboy”? Well, this was the “Rhinestone Mustang.” There were crystals on the dash, instrument panel, the rearview mirrors, the Mustang symbol on the grille, and the “GT” logo on the sides. The people at the Swarovski crystal factory must have gotten a big order. But, even with all the bling, this was a cool Mustang!

As for the winning cars, first place in the voting went to the ’60 Triumph TR3, owned by snowbird Carlos Melo, of Bradenton and Massachusetts. Second place was captured by the light metallic blue and white ’59 Corvette, owned by Ed and Evelyn Jolly, of Parrish, and third place went to Lakewood Rancher Ted Camphouse’s 551 horsepower ’66 Mustang convertible.



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## THE UNASSUMING WINE BROS.



# Holiday Wines

The 2020 holiday season will undoubtedly cause myriad stressors and anxieties – from navigating the frequent opinions of a visiting relative to choosing wisely at a socially distanced “white elephant” gift exchange, to decisively showing out with the neighborhood’s best holiday decorations, to overcoming an election hangover after your preferred candidate lost – to name a few. But don’t fret! We are here to lighten your load while keeping your wallet full by helping you select the perfect, affordable, and locally available wines for your holiday festivities. And much like the banter at many holiday tables, we did not always agree on this month’s wines – and that’s okay!

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:** Unlike most months where Patrick makes the selections, and I sit back, taste them, and critique his choices, this month we both attempted to select wines that follow a typical theme of a holiday get-together, which normally plays out as:

- Wines that you serve when guests arrive;
- Wines that you serve during the meal; and
- Wines that you serve during or after dessert.

**Patrick:** With this in mind, our tasting started with sparkling wines, moved into wines that we thought would pair nicely with traditional holiday dishes, and finished by tasting wines that we thought might help you wash down traditional holiday pies. In all, we sampled seven different wines – all under \$20 and available for purchase in the Lakewood Ranch area. As always, at this price point, we kissed a few unmentionable frogs, but in the end, we found four delicious but reasonably priced wines for you to enjoy while you navigate the holidays.

#### RATING SYSTEM:

**Vigo:** Retired US Army Sgt. First Class (Humvees 🚙) / **Patrick:** practicing local attorney (Scales of Justice ⚖️). Ratings are given on a 1-5 scale, with five being the highest.

#### ARRIVAL WINE:

##### 2018 ANNE DE K CREMANT D’ALSACE BRUT ROSE:

91 – *Wine Enthusiast*; \$19.99 Total Wine; 12.0 Alc. by Vol.

**Patrick:** I selected this Cremant d’Alsace sparkling brut rose – an affordable but still great tasting northeast France sparkling wine made in the traditional Champagne method – and was glad I did. It was light, dry, not overly effervescent, but pleasantly easy to drink, featuring light strawberry and cherry notes and a mild creaminess, with minerality. This selection had great balance, with neither its dryness nor light fruit dominating the other. This is a solid celebratory starter wine to serve when the guest arrives with light holiday bites such as mild creamy cheeses and strawberries and is sure to add a little cheer to the party.

**Patrick’s Rating:** ⚖️⚖️⚖️⚖️⚖️

**Vigo:** This sparkling rose deserves to be served in a fluted glass. Beautifully pink in color, this wine showed tight bubbles with notes of creamy apples. It’s the taste of the holidays in a glass. As bruts go, it’s dry, but being a brut rose, it’s not so dry that you don’t feel refreshed. At \$20 bucks a bottle, its great value for a bottle of sparkling French wine, and it delivers. You will get a



2018 Anne De K Cremant d’Alsace Brut Rose



2019 Famille Bougrier “V” Chenin Blanc



2018 Double Black Zinfandel



2017 Bogle Old Vine Zinfandel

complimentary raised glass from your guests when you serve this.

**Vigo’s Rating:** 🚙🚙🚙🚙🚙

#### MEALTIME WINE:

##### 2019 FAMILLE BOUGRIER “V” CHENIN BLANC:

89 – *Wine Community*; \$14.99 Total Wine; 11.5% Alc. by Vol.

**Patrick:** This was Vigo’s selection, and I was pleasantly surprised by it. It is light- to medium-bodied and flavorful. If you enjoy a buttery, oaky, or heavy white wine, this is not the wine for you. The wine exhibited an interesting blend of citrus and mild peach flavors with refreshing minerality and is a perfect choice to serve with turkey or other light meats. At this price point, you can confidently fill everyone’s glass – then do so again – knowing everyone at the table will be pleased with it.

**Patrick’s Rating:** ⚖️⚖️⚖️⚖️⚖️

**Vigo:** This selection was a total shot in the dark. Chenin blanc grapes generally pair well with this type of meal, but I had little personal familiarity with them, the region they are grown, or this specific wine. Our selection is slightly sweet but not in the range with a Riesling or gewürztraminer. As we sampled the wine, we tasted it with a slice of roasted turkey breast, and it was phenomenal. After just this small sample, there is no doubt it will pair nicely with another lighter, savory holiday offerings – such as turkey or ham – and cranberries.

**Vigo’s Rating:** 🚙🚙🚙🚙🚙

#### WINES WITH DESSERT:

##### 2018 DOUBLE BLACK ZINFANDEL

92 – *Beverage Dynamics*; \$13.99 Total Wine; 14.5% Alc. by Vol.

**Patrick:** The next two zinfandels might be Vigo and I’s biggest points of wine disagreement yet. I found this Paso Robles zinfandel drinkable but very average. Think fun-to-date, but not marriage material. It was smooth with raspberry fruit jam and a mildly earthy finish but left me generally underwhelmed.

**Patrick’s Rating:** ⚖️⚖️⚖️

**Vigo:** I’ll say this, I’ve never been a fan of zinfandels. Sweet, thick as jam, with spice notes, has never been in my palette wheelhouse. However, the 2018 Double Black Zinfandel may have changed my opinion. Spicy but smooth on the palate, this wine did not drink like a zinfandel; it tasted more like a pinot noir. As my confusion grew, I asked Patrick where this originated; his answer then made sense: Paso Robles, California. I have traveled through and toured many wineries in Paso Robles or, as the locals call it, “Paso.” Double Black Zinfandel is an excellent representation of Paso wine. I have also spent a lot of money on Paso wines, and I can say that this is a fantastic wine for its price and is suited more for the main course than a dessert.

**Vigo’s Rating:** 🚙🚙🚙🚙🚙

##### 2017 BOGLE OLD VINE ZINFANDEL

91 – *Wine Enthusiast* (*Wine Enthusiast’s* #13 Top 100 Best Buy of 2020); \$14.99; 14% Alc. by Vol.

**Patrick:** I picked up this bottle at Publix and was very happy with it. This Lodi, California zinfandel was full-bodied, had aromas of vanilla, and was a zesty and complex blend of raspberry, plum, cinnamon, mild pepper, and baking spice with an interesting and satisfying finish. This was a much more dynamic zinfandel and is a perfect wine to serve with any baked pie with vanilla ice cream. Great way to finish a holiday football watching night!

**Patrick’s Rating:** ⚖️⚖️⚖️⚖️⚖️

**Vigo:** The 2017 Bogle Zinfandel Old Vine is classic zinfandel. Full-bodied raspberry jam with a hint of black licorice flavor. The Bogle Zinfandel Old Vine is what every zinfandel lover looks for, which I can accept, but cannot understand as a pinot noir/cabernet sauvignon lover. After we pulled out the apple pie as a pairing, I can say that this wasn’t as bad as I initially thought. This wine is great to drink with a sweet dessert at the end of the meal, but I wouldn’t pair it with the main course.

**Vigo’s Rating:** 🚙🚙🚙🚙🚙 (When paired with a sweet dessert).

#### MAIL BAG

Robert S. from Bradenton wrote: “Unassuming Wine Bros, do you have an online presence?”

**UWB:** We’re in the works of starting an Instagram site and also in the process of creating a podcast so our readers can have easier access to our wine musings. As of right now, *Around the Ranch* is the exclusive home of the UWB. We will continue to write about wine as long as you are enjoying reading about it. Thanks for reaching out.

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).

# Early Voting at the Hottest Spot in Town

BY ERNIE SOLLER

Community Correspondent

Over the last couple of election cycles, the Lakewood Ranch Town Hall has established itself as one of the busiest of the early voting locations in Manatee County.

Other early voting locations this year were the Palmetto Library, the Rocky Bluff Library in Ellenton, the Florida DOT Administration Office on East State Road 64, and the Manatee County Utilities Administrative Office on the far west side of Bradenton.

This year, because of COVID-19, the only people allowed into the Town Hall were voters and polling place workers. Other than that, the building was closed to visitors.

However, that did not deter droves of voters from again making the Lakewood Ranch Town Hall the “in place” to vote early. Not only were voters coming out in large numbers, but candidates for office and political volunteers of various parties were out in force to push for votes. On October 28th, at least three local candidates were there in person.

In addition to the presence of candidates, the entire area around the Town Hall was practically covered with signs of all sorts, encouraging voters to vote for various proposals on the ballot – and those that asked for votes against those proposals.

And, of course, there were all sorts of signs asking for votes for the presidential candidates.

The two primary political parties had tents set up, staffed by



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER

volunteers, who were ready to tout their party's candidates, both local and, of course, in the race for the presidency.

And, so went another day at the busiest early voting place in Manatee County – the Lakewood Ranch Town Hall.



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