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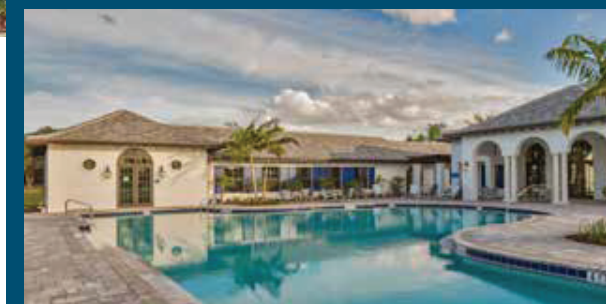
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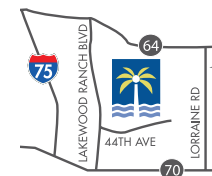


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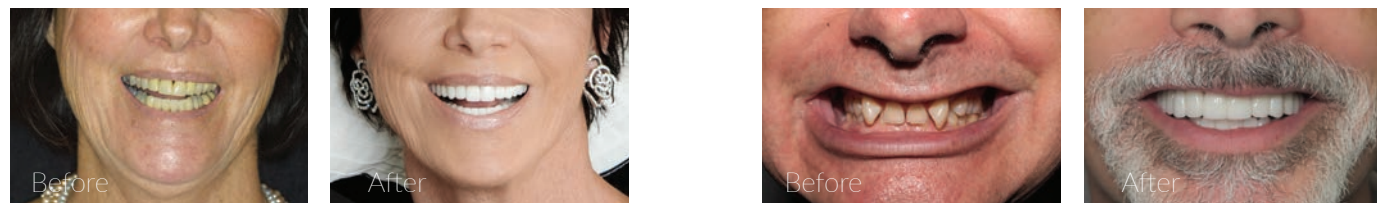
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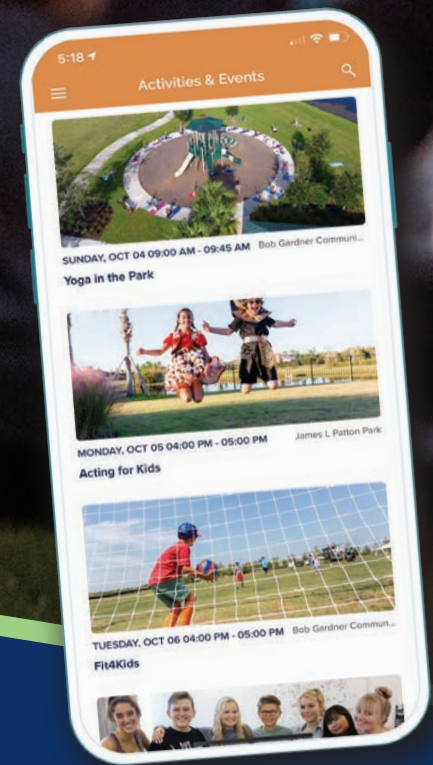
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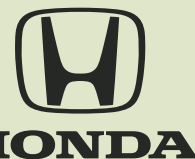
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# LWR LIFE

LAKWOOD RANCH AREA'S COMMUNITY, NATURE, STYLE

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# The heartbeat of community



Tidwell Hospice volunteer Antoinette Muirhead greets, signs in and screens visitors at the nonprofit's Hospice House in Lakewood Ranch.

Well, I've said it before, and here I am, saying it again: We are pretty darn lucky to live in this place.

But not just because of the great weather, or the proximity to the beach or the beautiful natural surroundings. Not even for the low taxes or great restaurants, although no one's complaining.



Nope, we are so lucky because we have a community that has amazing nonprofit organizations that work in a multitude of ways to make our area a better place to live — about 800 in our four-county region, to be exact.

And the lifeblood of these organizations are volunteers — and that's where the real luck comes in.

Thousands of residents support these organizations with their leadership, their dollars and, very importantly, with their time.

We can't even tally all the things that happen around here for which volunteers are responsible. Like the Books for Kids program that relies on Lake-

wood Ranch Rotary Club members to gather and distribute backpacks each month to local students. All volunteers.

Or the tireless drivers for Meals on Wheels Plus of Manatee, who go all over ensuring seniors and homebound individuals get the nutritious food they need to stay healthy.

Or even the two major golf events that recently graced our area, made possible by ... you guessed it, volunteers!

The thing about volunteers is, they tend to be retirees who have the time and means necessary to be so generous with both.

So you can imagine how, when the pandemic hit about a year ago, everything sort of came to a halt in these organizations that rely so heavily on volunteer support.

Remember what it was like a year ago? Back when we were scrubbing the outside of our cereal boxes? Not only were the organizations afraid to endanger any of their volunteers, but no one knew how to move forward safely.

Luckily, since then, nonprofits have

navigated ways to call back their volunteer corps, even if their duties look a little different. In our story on page 74, you'll see all the ways organizations worked their way through the volunteer conundrum.

Some had to adjust protocols and volunteer roles to keep everyone safe, while others found new ways of operating, like Florida Cancer Specialists. Staff there discovered they could utilize volunteers to do administrative tasks remotely to keep them involved. That has led to a whole new pool of people willing to help out from wherever they happen to be.

No matter what the mission, nonprofits are starting to welcome back volunteers with masked smiles and open arms, and as the vaccine distribution continues, it will only get better. And when they put out the call, organizations have found their volunteers ready and willing to help, as always.

And that's more than luck.

*Kat Hughes*  
Executive Editor

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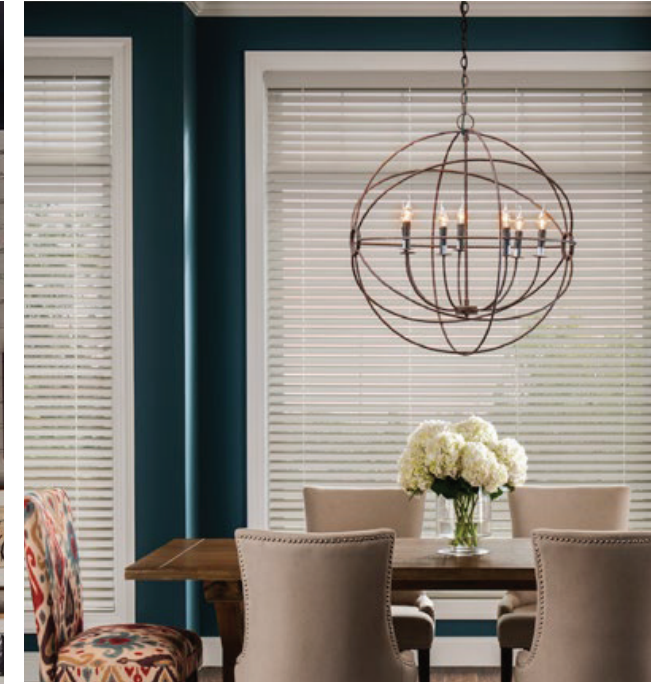
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**BUZZ**  
NEWS, HAPPENINGS AND PEOPLE



# FOR STARTERS



Courtesy Images

BY LWR LIFE STAFF

## 1 STILL TOP OF THE CHARTS

They say it's lonely at the top, but not in this case. Lakewood Ranch was ranked as the No. 1 selling multigenerational master-planned community in the country for the third year in a row by two real estate consulting firms, John Burns and RCLCO.

Although 2020 wasn't a great year for most of us, it was a record year for new home sales in the Ranch, logging 2,149 to be exact, a 30% increase over 2019.

Even more impressive, many of these home sales were purchased sight unseen because of pandemic-related restrictions. Interactive chats, virtual community presentations and the Lakewood Ranch community map online made all of this easier.

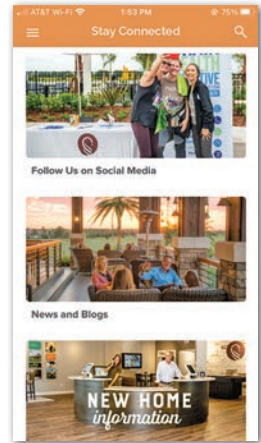
Turns out, there's nothing like a pandemic to make you want to improve your surroundings — and what better way to do so than buying a nice new home in Lakewood Ranch? It's not lonely at all.

## 3 THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

Looking for things to do in Lakewood Ranch? A plethora of options are a tap away with the new Lakewood Ranch app. Whether it's discovering virtual programming, learning about local businesses or keeping up to date with the latest events, the app provides several avenues for staying connected to the community.

See what events are going on both in-person and virtually, RSVP for them, and catch up on previously streamed virtual events from home. Or if it's time to get out, you can use the app's handy list of all of Lakewood Ranch's parks and even download a parks, trails and bike map to make the most out of the great outdoors.

Available in your phone's app store, it can also help you shop locally with a marketplace feature that will soon include a directory of all LWR businesses. Plus, sign up for updates, discounts, promotions and more, all possible with your very own customizable user profile. So download today and get doing!



## 2 WATERSIDE PLANS SOFT OPENING

The much-anticipated opening of Waterside Place is nearing, as Schroeder-Manatee Ranch works with its contractors to finish construction on the \$31.6 million dining and entertainment hub.

Although the pandemic has slowed its progress a bit, Kirk Boylston, the president of Lakewood Ranch Commercial Realty, says the



130,000-square-foot center will open with a good number of tenants, including a half-dozen restaurants.

Aside from bringing new retail options to Lakewood Ranch in the new Waterside development, located between Fruitville Road and University Parkway, Waterside Place will also become home to many activities, including The Market at Lakewood Ranch. That move is also tentatively planned for May.

Of course, there will still be lots of tenants left to announce in the coming year, paving the way for a grand opening in late 2021. Stay tuned.



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Photos by Lori Sax

Shelter Manatee Chair Pam Freni partnered with Banyan Coffee co-owners Abbey and Josh Schmitt on Kitty Koffee.

# Coffee with a Cause

Kitty Koffee pairs cute cats and delicious coffee for a buzz-worthy fundraiser benefiting the new Shelter Manatee.

BY JOE BARDI | CONTRIBUTOR

What if your morning cup came with support for building a new animal shelter? That's the basic idea behind Kitty Koffee, a specialty brand created by Bradenton's Banyan

Coffee Co. in partnership with Shelter Manatee. Proceeds from every sale of Banyan's Kitty-branded bag of brew support the construction of a brand-new Manatee County animal shelter.

"A year ago we had beer can dogs," says Pam Freni, the chair of Shelter Manatee and president of its parent organization, Animal Network Inc. She's talking about the partnership between Motorworks Brewing and county animal services that put pictures and descriptions of adoptable dogs on cans of Motorworks beer. "We wanted to take a product that was popular, to make sure it got out into the community. And it paid off because the

cans went viral internationally."

After the success of the Motorworks campaign, Freni, the driving force behind the shelter fundraising campaign, was in need of a follow-up. "Being the cat-lover that I am, my friends were like, 'What are we going to do for the cats?'" she says. "No one felt beer was a good fit."

Instead, Freni partnered with Banyan Coffee co-owners Abbey and Josh Schmitt on Kitty Koffee — high-quality, locally produced coffee with adorable, adoptable cats on the package. Cat owners themselves, the Schmitts were

*Continued on Page 34*

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immediately receptive to the idea. “They help me support it and do an enormous amount of work,” Freni says.

“Pam approached us about doing something with coffee,” says Josh Schmitt, who does most of the coffee roasting. “Our cat was adopted from a rescue, and that was a connection that we shared. There’s so many other animals that need a home.”

The Schmitts had been looking for ways to give back to the community without locking their entire product line into a single charity. Josh Schmitt points to other coffee brands that donate proceeds from every bag to one specific charity. There’s nothing wrong with that, of course, but the Schmitts were more interested in doing multiple product lines that support different charities.

“Pam came in, did some sample runs and tasting, and she came out to the Bradenton farmers market and did some sampling,” Josh says. “She picked which ones she liked, which were our most popular coffees anyway.”

The sale of each bag of Kitty Koffee directly contributes to the building of the new shelter. You can find the coffee online at [BanyanCoffeeCompany.com](http://BanyanCoffeeCompany.com) (it delivers locally), or in person at REInspired Boutique in Bradenton and Ginny’s and Jane E’s Café on Anna Maria. There are also plans to bring Kitty Koffee to The Market at Lakewood Ranch beginning the last week-end of February.

The tireless Freni still has plenty of hard work in front of her. In 2019, Manatee County commissioners approved \$8 million in taxpayer funds to pay for the development of a new shelter building. The current facility was built in Palmetto in the 1940s and then rebuilt in the mid-1980s. Because of its age, it made more sense to build a new building, which is planned to be located on State Route 64. The goal is to open the new facility by 2023.

As part of the deal for public funding, Shelter Manatee agreed to raise an additional \$2 million toward the completion of the project. The campaign has thus far collected about \$350,000 in donations and pledges, with Freni pointing to a number of major donations that have yet to be announced publicly.

“We’re very excited because we’ve



Kitty Koffee is sold online and, by the end of February, it will be available at The Market at Lakewood Ranch.



Proceeds from every sale of Kitty Koffee support the construction of a new Manatee County animal shelter.

had a couple of transformational donations,” Freni says. “These leaders stepped in and said they were going to lead in donations, which basically said: ‘The water’s fine. Come in.’” She also says that, in addition to the deep-pocketed contributors, the campaign is seeing plenty of grassroots support in the form of smaller donations.

With the first \$4 million of taxpayer funds unlocking in October, time is of the essence for Freni and Shelter Manatee. “We can make [the \$350,000] immediately available. We’re working

with the county on design money. Do they need design money? They have \$100,000, and I have \$350,000 pledged and can help with that. We are fully open and available for what they need in terms of timing for the money.”

Freni almost gets wistful when discussing the new facility, which has been years in the making. “It’s a dream we haven’t been able to bring to life until the last few years,” she says. “You will find great animals here. It’s going to be a win-win for everyone.”

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Carlos E. Haile Middle School AVID students work on a presentation for class and practice their speeches.

Courtesy photo

# Progress Push

Doing well in college requires organization and study skills. The AVID program ensures students have what it takes to succeed.

BY LIZ RAMOS | CONTRIBUTOR

**D**elaine Puelston, an eighth grader at Carlos E. Haile Middle School, used to throw all the papers she would receive in class into her backpack.

Her backpack would become a mish-mash of assignments, worksheets and papers from all her classes. Finding anything she needed when she got home was a challenge.

“She’s a very unorganized person, super scattered,” says Delaine’s mother, Shyla. “I’d ask her what her homework was, and she’d say, ‘I don’t know.’ She never wrote anything down. It was just always kind of a guessing game to figure out what was coming next with her.”

To help Puelston achieve the next level academically, her teachers thought all she needed was a little push — which came in the form of a pro-

gram called AVID: the Advancement Via Individual Determination.

As an elective, the AVID programs at Haile Middle and Braden River High School have been preparing students to get into college and succeed, mostly by focusing on improving students’ organization and study skills.

“AVID is traditionally for the person in the middle, so the one that doesn’t want to stand out, they don’t want to raise their hand,” says Rebecca Rouse, the AVID coordinator and teacher at Braden River High School. “They don’t want to put tons and tons of effort in it. I take those students and push them. It broadens everything for them in their education ... AVID is definitely for anyone who wants to push themselves to achieve the best they can achieve.”

Students start in the program by identifying their specific learning

*Continued on Page 38*



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style, so they can discern the best note-taking and study techniques for them.

Each student is required to keep a binder that assists in organization. The teachers have binder checks once per week to ensure students stay organized.

Twice per week, students meet in groups to do tutorials, when students can share a problem they are having in any subject, and their classmates can guide them through how to get the answer.

Grade checks are conducted almost every week, so students know where they stand in a class and understand why they have a certain grade.

"It's awesome to see them change and how much they change from the first day of school to even the 90th day of school," Rouse says.

Since choosing to take AVID as an elective in seventh grade, Puelston has seen herself become more organized, confident and willing to push herself in school.

She has a folder for each subject that goes into a binder, so she never loses an assignment. She's developed note-taking skills and study habits that prepare her for the advanced courses she's enrolled in this year.

Puelston's grades went from B's and C's with a few A's to mostly A's with the occasional B or C. Unlike in the past, she's not afraid to ask her teachers for help.

After this year, Puelston will be enrolled at Lakewood Ranch High School or Parrish Community High School. Neither has an AVID program, so she hopes what she's learned in her two years as an AVID student at Haile will carry through to high school.

Rouse and Angela Ballard, the AVID coordinator at Haile Middle, have each worked to develop a family atmosphere in their AVID classes, so students feel comfortable going to one another for assistance and support.

The family atmosphere of the classes were crucial last March when Gov. Ron DeSantis required all school districts to move to online learning as the COVID-19 pandemic started sweeping across the state.

The environment the students and staff of the program created gave everyone a virtual support group to go to when they were anxious about the un-



Photo by Liz Ramos

Kaylee Cooper, a senior at Braden River High School, has been in the AVID program since she was in seventh grade.



Courtesy photo

Delainey Puelston, an eighth grader at Carlos E. Haile Middle School, works on an assignment at home while quarantining. The AVID program has provided her a support group when she's had to move to e-learning.

certainty of the rest of the school year and what was happening around them. They were there to motivate one another to press on with their assignments and stay on top of their school work.

Rouse described this year's program as chaotic. She had to fight for the program at the beginning of the year to ensure the school would still provide the elective, even if it meant she would have to teach students who were on campus full time, on the hybrid schedule or at home doing e-learning.

"I said: 'I'll do whatever I can. I will take over anything I can. Just let me keep teaching these kids because this is an amazing program,'" Rouse says. "It really is because it benefits them in the long run because they learn writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading. They do it to the level that they're at, but then I push them to go even further. All of them are doing college-level writing and reading."

With the support of the school's administration, Rouse was able to have 56 students enroll in the elective this year, a decrease from 120-130 students in past years.

Although Kaylee Cooper, a senior at Braden River High, is at home for e-learning, she wanted to remain in the AVID program through her final semester of high school.

The program, which she joined in

sixth grade and continued through middle and high school, has helped her learn time management and how to set an agenda for herself. She struggled with juggling her academics and her participation in school clubs and playing soccer.

Now that she's learning at home, her agenda has become critical to ensuring she keeps organized and on top of her assignments and exams.

The program also has students explore their post-secondary education options by conducting research about scholarships and financial aid and learning about what different colleges have to offer.

As Cooper prepares for college next year, the AVID program has helped her with college applications and learning about various colleges and universities.

Due to the pandemic, Cooper hasn't been able to go to college campuses for tours but has done virtual tours.

"It takes off a little bit of stress that I feel like I would have if I wasn't in AVID because I feel like it opens your mind to so many more colleges and schools you might have never thought to look at or never thought you could go to," Cooper says. "It helps give you more encouragement and motivation once you find a school or you see more options you never thought you would have."

#### ABOUT AVID

AVID, or Advancement Via Individual Determination, is a college-preparatory elective that works to "close the opportunity gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society," according to the program's website.

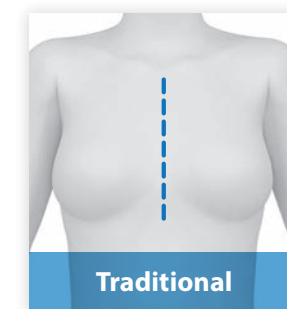
AVID has been implemented in more than 7,000 elementary, secondary and higher-education schools, including Carlos E. Haile Middle School and Braden River High School, in 47 states across the country since its inception in 1980 in California.

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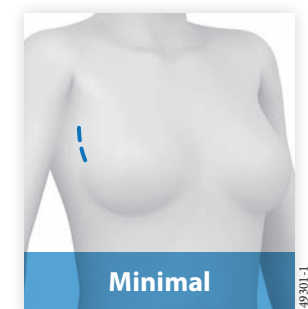


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Working to raise \$30 million amidst a pandemic? It's just one of many tasks for The Players' new CEO. **PAGE 46**



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Photos by Lori Sax

Carole Cowan donated to Lakewood Ranch Medical Center Foundation's scholarships, of which Mary Weems was a recipient last year.

# STRONG FOUNDATION

Long dormant, the Lakewood Ranch Medical Center Auxiliary has been reanimated, and renamed, as it works to provide nursing scholarships in a high-profile time for the profession.

BY ERIC SNIDER | CONTRIBUTOR

Until the pandemic began its rampage last year, nurses didn't occupy much space in the public consciousness.

That's changed, huh? These scrubs-clad, PPE-cloaked women

and men have come to the forefront as tireless, over-stressed and courageous front-line workers. Heroes, if you like.

Carole Cowan knows all too well the vital role that nurses play in the health care infrastructure, and how — pre-pandemic — their profession was

often taken for granted. She served for 25 years as president of Middlesex Community College in Massachusetts, known for its robust nursing education program. After retiring, she moved to Lakewood Ranch in 2017.

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Not looking to while away the hours playing canasta at the clubhouse, she spearheaded the revitalization of the long-dormant Lakewood Ranch Medical Center Auxiliary, which raises money and awards \$1,000 scholarships to nursing students. In fact, as the organization's president, she helped pull it into the 21st century in October by renaming it the Lakewood Ranch Medical Center Foundation.

"Being a foundation enhances our ability to raise money and for people to make contributions," Cowan explains. "An auxiliary is more involved in a lot of activities. Foundation better defines our primary objective — raising funds to create scholarships for nursing students — and our broader mission to make sure the workforce is there for the future."

Since coming back to life, the auxiliary-cum-foundation has generated modest but nonetheless valued results, issuing five scholarships in 2019 and eight in 2020. Ten awards are slated for 2021. Cowan says that no master plan exists to transform the organization into a fundraising juggernaut. "Sure, we'd like to have large donations," she says. "But for now we're comfortable with where we are, and [we] will take opportunities as they arise."

Last year, the foundation granted scholarships to all of the students who applied.

Largely due to the pandemic, the nonprofit altered its fundraising approach in 2020. For the first two years, the bulk of scholarship money came from the Jingle 5K race, which exclusively benefits the auxiliary. In 2020, the event was conducted virtually, with participants receiving a bib and a chip that timed their individual run. The virtual race took place over several days in late December.

Not surprisingly, the virtual 5K did not generate as many dollars as a live one, so the foundation shifted its focus to promoting individual name scholarships sponsored by businesses, individuals and families. Cox Chevrolet and Grove restaurant have committed to scholarships this year. Cowan her-



Carole Cowan led the revitalization of the Lakewood Ranch Medical Center Auxiliary.



Mary Weems says public recognition of nurses at the beginning of the pandemic helped keep spirits high.

self contributed \$1,000 for the Cowan Family Scholarship.

Mary Weems was one of last year's recipients. She works as a licensed practical nurse at the Lakewood Ranch Medical Center and is currently taking classes at State College of Florida to become a registered nurse, which she's on track to earn in December. "The scholarship has been very helpful," Weems says. "It's money I don't have to pay off in school loans over the years."

Weems, a married mother of an 11-year-old, juggles three 12-hour shifts a week at the hospital, mixes in classes and has one day off. She has witnessed up close the stress that the COVID-19 pandemic has put on the hospital, and nurses in particular. Early on, Weems says, several of them contracted the disease and had to quarantine, stretching the staff. A few quit for fear of working under such risky circumstances.

Nurses designated for COVID-19 rooms have to heavily gear up with personal protective equipment. "When we put on gowns, gloves, masks, respirators, face shields and the rest, we know we won't take them off until we're done treating the patients," Weems explains. "That means you can't eat or drink or go to the bathroom. I've seen some nurses work like that from 7 a.m. to 4 in the afternoon. It's hot — they come out drenched in sweat. Those pictures of lines imprinted on nurses' faces are real."

Regarding nurses being hailed as heroes during the pandemic, she says, "In the first three or four months, that recognition helped our spirits as we tried to get through all the changes. But as time wore on, I feel like we've come back down to earth. We do still need to feel like people need us."

None of these issues has dampened Weems' desire to become an RN. "When you sign up for this, you know you'll be in sketchy situations," she says. "I know the job isn't easy, but it makes me feel like I'm making a difference in the world. Every person you care for lifts your spirits. It's grueling, but you come home at the end of the day knowing you did good work and helped people."

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“Those pictures of lines imprinted on nurses' faces are real.” **MARY WEEMS**

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# New Player in Town

The Players CEO William Skaggs shares the real-life drama of shepherding Sarasota's longest-running theater company during COVID-19.

BY JOE BARDI | CONTRIBUTOR

As 2021 begins, The Players Centre for Performing Arts is looking forward. Building on the success of the December production of "Dickens," at temporary home The Bazaar at Apricot and Lime in Sarasota, the company plans for outdoor productions at multiple sites around Sarasota County. This "road show" approach will be the norm this year, as the company awaits construction on its new theater — a \$30 million performing arts complex that will anchor the near-complete Waterside Place in Lakewood Ranch. We spoke with Williams Skaggs, the CEO of The Players, on relocating with his family to the area, moving forward with a new facility and what it's like to helm a 90-year-old Sarasota arts institution during a global pandemic.

**You joined The Players last September, after leaving the Southern Kentucky Performing Arts Center in Bowling Green. Were you a lifelong Kentucky resident before this?**

I was. I grew up in eastern Kentucky, went to Bowling Green (Kentucky) for college at Western Kentucky University, and then I stuck around.



Photos by Heidi Kurpiela

William Skaggs became CEO of The Players Centre for Performing Arts in September.

*Continued on Page 48*



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**Were you totally new to the Sarasota area and to Lakewood Ranch?**

I would say I'd known a little about the area. I have a little bit of family that now lives in St. Petersburg, so I had some familiarity. I became very interested and impressed with the entire Sarasota-Manatee county region and what the arts and culture mean to this community and how it's valued. That immediately caught my eye in a very big way.

**You're married with three children (wife Jenny, 13-year-old Ben, 11-year-old Madeline and 8-year-old Julianne). How are they adapting to the Florida lifestyle?**

The Bowling Green area is what my children have known. When you do things like have dinner outside on Christmas Eve and go to the beach on New Year's Day, then yeah, that's a little different for a kid from Kentucky.

**You have inherited a large fundraising campaign to pay for the construction of a new theater complex at Waterside Place. It has only been four months, but how is it going?**

The most important piece of that, and really more broadly with The Players, has been to further get to know the organization. You have your donors, your sponsors, and you have others in the community that are looking forward to this new project. You have these many different lenses through which people know The Players. It's been interesting, fun and important for me to get to know what all of those different lenses might look like.

**How has COVID-19 affected your fundraising strategy? Has the pandemic caused you to pivot in your planning for 2021?**

As a brand-new person not only to The Players but to the community, I would say it has in some ways slowed us down in that process. When you mentioned pivoting, it also means you find other ways to do it. Sometimes that's a Zoom call; other times it's a phone conversation that prior to the pandemic was probably a coffee. It's about relationships, it's about people, it's about listening. So pandemic or not, that's still the reality we live in.

In the end, people don't give to a

“

*In the end, people don't give to a building. They give to other people that are involved with organizations they believe in.*

**WILLIAM SKAGGS, THE PLAYERS CENTRE FOR PERFORMING ARTS CEO**



William Skaggs says The Players is planning to break ground on its new location in Waterside Place no later than spring 2023.

building. They give to other people that are involved with organizations they believe in — people that share the same passions and share many of the same values as it relates to how we provide for our community. So we've still got to do a lot of the same work, and we are. But back to your comment about pivoting, we're finding additional ways to do the work we've always done.

**Waterside Place is nearing the end of construction. How does that impact your fundraising?**

Ultimately, it's an asset. Waterside beginning to move to an initial completion and starting to open up is extremely exciting because it's going to give everyone an opportunity to be there and say: "Oh, this is what's been talked about. This is where The Players is going to be." They don't have to imagine the shops and restaurants down the street or the people who live nearby. It's right there.

**Speaking of construction of a new facility: Any updates on a timeline? Is it still over the horizon?**

I wouldn't say it's quite over the horizon. We can see it. When the pandemic struck, it caused the organization to have to look internally to move forward in a responsible way from an operations perspective. The campaign and the new facility really had to be set aside for a while. What I can say when it comes to ground-breaking is that we will be looking at no later than spring of 2023. My hope is we can break ground more quickly than that, but it's not something I would want to promise anyone.

**How is the creative staff handling all the uncertainty and upheaval?**

You know, it's challenging while sometimes maddening and certainly invigorating ... all at the same time.



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File photos

River Club residents Tai and Charlyn Gauthier enjoy a wood sculpture fountain at the Fine Arts Festival in March 2020.

## MARCH

### MARCH 3 NBP REC DAYS

Runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota. The public is invited to visit Nathan Benderson Park on NBP Rec Day and experience paddleboarding, kayaking, canoes and fishing. Rides on a 15-foot sailboat will also be available. The event costs \$10 for ages 7-18. Parents who attend with their children are free. Anyone age 16 and older who goes fishing needs a freshwater fishing license. Event continues March 7 and 17.

■ For information, visit [NathanBendersonPark.org/programming/nbp-rec-days.html](http://NathanBendersonPark.org/programming/nbp-rec-days.html).

### RANCH NITE WEDNESDAYS

In collaboration with Sarasota Polo Club and MVP Sports and Social and sponsored by The Market at Lakewood Ranch, this mid-week community "Ranch Nite" event features food trucks, cornhole, music and cocktails from 5-8 p.m. at the Sarasota Polo Club, 8201 Polo Club Lane, Sarasota. Continues every Wednesday through April 28.

■ For information, visit [LakewoodRanch.com](http://LakewoodRanch.com).

### CLASSIC CAR SHOW

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

on year, make or model. Continues April 7 and May 5.

■ For information, call 941-371-1061, or email at [Lance@CollectorCarsTV.com](mailto:Lance@CollectorCarsTV.com).

### MARCH 6 GUIDE DOG WALKATHON

Enjoy a day out with your pooch at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota, for Southeastern Guide Dogs' biggest fundraiser of the year. Two- and four-legged friends and neighbors are invited to participate and raise funds for a 3K walk. Registration starts at 9 a.m., and the 3K begins at 10 a.m. The Waggin' Tails Festival includes live music, food, vendors and a raffle, with

*Continued on Page 52*

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the drawing at noon.  
 ■ For information, visit [GuideDogsWalkathon.org](http://GuideDogsWalkathon.org).

**YOGA**

Youth are invited to Bob Gardner Community Park, 2710 White Eagle Blvd., Lakewood Ranch, to join a yoga session. Yoga for kids aged 5-11 is 10-11 a.m., and yoga for teens aged 12-17 is 11 a.m. to noon. The classes are set to music and include storytelling, art and games.  
 ■ For information, visit [LakewoodRanch.com](http://LakewoodRanch.com).

**MARCH 7  
 THE MARKET**

Far from the typical farmers market, The Market at Lakewood Ranch is a curated gathering of the best flavors in the region. Visitors can purchase produce, meat, seafood, breads, pasta and other prepared foods from more than 60 vendors from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, 8330 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. Event runs Sundays through April.  
 ■ For information, visit [TheMarketLWR.com](http://TheMarketLWR.com).

**SARASOTA POLO**

Come out to enjoy an afternoon of tailgating and polo. Gates open at 10 a.m., and matches start at 1 p.m. at the Sarasota Polo Club, 8201 Polo Club Lane, Lakewood Ranch. General admission costs \$15 for adults, and children 12 and under are free. Polo matches will be held every Sunday through April 25.  
 ■ For more information, visit [SarasotaPolo.com](http://SarasotaPolo.com).

**MARCH 9  
 WALKING GROUP**

The Lakewood Ranch Parks team leads a casual walk from 9-10 a.m. around Bob Gardner Park, 2710 White Eagle Blvd., Lakewood Ranch. The walk begins from Bob Gardner Community Park east picnic pavilion. Advance registration required.  
 ■ For information, visit [LakewoodRanch.com](http://LakewoodRanch.com).

**MARCH 11  
 LWR 101: RESIDENT ORIENTATION**

New to the area or just want to get more involved? Join this resident orientation virtually at [FB.com/LWRCommunityActivities](https://www.facebook.com/LWRCommunityActivities). It's a great chance to learn about the community. Continues April 8 and May 13. Check

website for start times.

■ For information, visit [LakewoodRanch.com](http://LakewoodRanch.com).

**MARCH 11  
 NEWCOMERS MEETUP**

From 10-11 a.m. at Summerfield Community Park Pavilion, 6402 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., Lakewood Ranch, learn about the Lakewood Ranch community, its parks and its events with other new residents. Free; nonresidents \$10.  
 ■ For information, visit [LakewoodRanch.com](http://LakewoodRanch.com).

**MARCH 13  
 FINE ART FESTIVAL**

Runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 13 and 14 at Main Street at Lakewood Ranch. Shop an outdoor gallery of handmade fine arts and crafts as the Lakewood Ranch Winter Fine Art Festival returns for its annual event. Admission is free.  
 ■ For information, visit [ParagonArtEvents.com](http://ParagonArtEvents.com).

**NATURE WALK**

Join Lakewood Ranch Ambassador Greg Spring for a 2-mile, one-hour nature walk through some of Lakewood

Lakewood Ranch's 11-year-old Dylan and Matt Jensen take a closer look at a 1932 Ford at the December Classic Car show. "There's nice weather, cool cars, and we're out with friends," Matt Jensen says.

Continued on Page 54

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Continued from Page 52

Ranch's trails. Participants will meet at 8 a.m. at Greenbrook Adventure Park, 13400 Adventure Place, Lakewood Ranch.

■ For information, call 941-907-6000.

**MARCH 20  
LEARN TO FISH**

Attendees can learn the basics of fishing with the help of the Lakewood Ranch Angler's Club, including casting, being a good angler and knot-tying. Session is 10-11 a.m. at James L. Patton Park, 5725 White Eagle Blvd., Lakewood Ranch, and registration is required.

■ For information, visit LWRCAC.com.

**BIKE RIDE**

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

■ For information, call 941-907-6000.

**MARCH 27  
MY HOMETOWN FEST**

This regional sampling event at Nathan Benderson Park features food, craft beer, children's activities, vendor booths, exhibits and live music. Gates are open from noon to 5 p.m. General admission (food, music, and craft beer and spirits samples) is \$35, and food-and-music-only tickets are \$25. Children under 12 enter for free. Parking is \$5. Proceeds benefit Sertoma Club of Greater Sarasota and Sertoma Kids.

■ For information, visit MyHometownFest.org.

**MARCH 29  
ARTS ALIVE**

Connect with the Manatee arts community at Manatee Arts Education Council's celebration. A reception from 5-6:30 p.m. will feature hors d'oeuvres and an open bar, a silent auction of student artwork and live student entertainment. The awards and performance program will follow the reception. Valet parking will be available.

■ For information, visit Our.Show/manatee-arts-education-council/1435.

**MAY**

**MAY 1  
SUP & RUN 5K**

Dine and drink rum in a libation lounge after this SUP and Run 5K event benefiting veterans group Operation Second Chance. There are three races from which to choose — a 5K run or walk, a 5K stand-up paddleboard race or a combination of both — at Nathan Benderson Park. All races start at 8 a.m.

■ For information, visit SUPAndRun.com.

**MAY 23  
JDRF ONE WALK**

This walk hosted by JDRF is a healthy way to show your support for those living with Type 1 diabetes while also raising funds for the organization. This year's walk will be virtual; register at JDRF.org.

■ For information, call 727-344-2873.

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style

# Gray & Yellow

The Pantone colors of 2021 are a surprising change-up, like most things this past year. See what Lakewood Ranch-area shops carry items to help you coordinate with the new year.

BY HARRY SAYER | CONTRIBUTOR

As the seasons change, so too do the local styles and fashions. It's 2021, and what better way to kiss 2020 a not-so-friendly goodbye than trying out some new fashions and colors? Gray and yellow tones are particularly popular at the moment (as denoted by their selection as Pantone colors of 2021), and there are plenty of Lakewood Ranch boutiques and shops selling clothing and accessories for you to embrace the moment.

## Wish on Main

**8141 Lakewood Main St.**  
The Wish on Main boutique has a series of gray and yellow clothing arrangements, from yellow blouses and pants to gray tops and jeans. They have a striking look together, so be sure to pick up both if you're looking to come off in a new light.



Gray top: \$84

Clara Sunwoo yellow blouse: \$70

Clara Sunwoo gray pants: \$60

Marble yellow jeans: \$128

## Crowder's

**2401 Lakewood Ranch Blvd.**  
Crowder's Gifts and Gadgets has plenty of colorful accessories to choose from if you're looking to color-coordinate. There's the gray or yellow handbags that can add a splash of color to an ensemble and the bright yellow Brumate Hopsulator that can help keep your drinks cold. It also has a few earrings that are a cheery yellow and even have some gray tassels.



Emmez beaded pom beanie: \$48

## Scout & Molly's Lakewood Ranch

**5275 University Parkway, suite 132**  
Scout & Molly's has winter wear for when the mercury drops. That includes gray beanies with attached pearls for when you want to stand out while on a cool winter trip.

Caroline Hill bag: \$57

Avenue 9 bag: \$17

Joy Susan bag: \$37

Brumate Hopsulator Slim: \$25

Jane Marie yellow earrings: \$14

Jane Marie yellow/gray earrings: \$14

Continued on Page 58



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Gray Kumi stretch: \$18



Amber stretch: \$20

### Knot Awl Beads

8111 Lakewood Main St.

Knot Awl Beads specializes in beads and bracelets, and it has a few yellow, gray and amber additions you might enjoy. The silky lace jewelry in particular has a lovely yellow sheen.



Silky lace: \$45



### Bows and Arrows Boutique

5275 University Parkway, suite 133

The Bows and Arrows Boutique is currently selling a white midi dress with a cheerful yellow flower design, which could be fun to wear in the warmer days of spring and summer.

Arcadia midi dress: \$118



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# Life of Luxury

WheelBase Premium Garage Condos offers car enthusiasts not only a secure place to store their vehicles but also a community.

BY BRYNN MECHEM | CONTRIBUTOR

Sitting just on the outskirts of Lakewood Ranch is a gated community complete with Wi-Fi, concierge services and a clubhouse. Hidden behind bright yellow doors are condominiums that range in size from 674 to 2,480 square feet. The smallest unit can be bought for \$164,500, and the largest will set the owner back a half million. But while driving through the complex, one will easily see it's not for living.

Think of it as The Ritz-Carlton for your Bentley.

WheelBase Premium Garage Condos, located at 1600 Sarasota Center Blvd., Sarasota, offers a selection of 46 garage condos that are climate controlled and 150 mph impact-rated. The units, completed in September, act as a mecca to some of the area's greatest car enthusiasts.

At the helm of the company are Hans Schmeits and Dennis Brozak, like-minded businessmen and car enthusiasts. Both men have too many cars for their home garages, so they began brainstorming ways they could safely work on and store their cars.

"We thought, 'Everyone needs a third space,'" Brozak says. "You have your home space, your workspace, and you need a hobby space. If you don't belong to a country club, and you're not a golf



Hans Schmeits and Dennis Brozak

enthusiast, where do you go to hang out? Where do you go to enjoy your cars?"

After coming up with a concrete plan, they began a permitting journey for a 54,000-square-foot facility that confused many Sarasota County officials. The 5-acre site sits in an industrial park, but the project wasn't for business or residential use. It also wasn't strictly storage units or a typical condominium complex.

"They did a good job of trying to understand the project," Brozak says. "It's always hard to be the first, especially when it doesn't fit into a specific category."

Everything in each unit is customizable, from the mezzanine size and style down to the type of ceiling fan. Each condo has its own high-speed internet, HVAC split systems, 14-foot insulated overhead doors, half bathrooms and utility sinks.

"We really want to make sure that what we built was created for people to be comfortable and fit all of their needs," Schmeits says. "We tried to think about every scenario a car enthusiast would run across in our design."

A 2,000-square-foot clubhouse at the front of the property features a kitchen, a bar, a laundry facility, a lounge area, showers, a conference room and an 800-square-foot outdoor party space. A car wash station sits just behind the front gate, and security cameras line the entire property.

"It's all about making sure the owners feel safe," Brozak says. "If you're seasonal, and you're going up north for a few months, you know your cars are safer from both a weather and security perspective."

Since opening, 25 units have been sold. Already they've been filled with some of the most spectacular cars the world has to offer — a race-driven 1960 Porsche 356 B Super 90 Roadster, a 2020 C8 Corvette and a 1997 Land Rover Defender, to name a few. Artists, entrepreneurs and craftspeople also use the space for studios and workstations.

But for many of the owners, WheelBase has offered something even greater than a secure place to store their cars: a coterie of like-minded enthusiasts, which has more value to them than any 1963 Ferrari 250 GTO.

*Continued on Page 64*



# Don and Tara Olsen, Country Club East

Since he was young, Don Olsen has loved cars — but not just any cars. Jaguars. Something about the fast and sophisticated sports car has always drawn him in.

In 1985, at age 35, Olsen bought his first Jaguar. There was just one problem: His home had a two-car garage.

“The problem I had was I would fall in love with a new car that I’d see, and I’d want to buy it, but I had no place to put it,” he says. “So anytime I bought a new one, I had to sell a car.”

Throughout the years, Olsen has owned about 15 Jaguars. So when he found out about WheelBase, he knew he had a permanent spot for his collection, which currently consists of five Jaguars. His 1,700-square-foot unit could hold up to 10 cars, though.

Although some garage owners take pride in rebuilding their cars, Olsen’s satisfaction comes from something else: cleanliness. It takes him about a year after purchasing to get his cars in top-notch condition. And although he has drip pans beneath his cars, they’re spotless.

“I only look for cars that are in absolutely top-notch condition, the best of the best I can find,” Olsen says. “I clean them up, and I call these cars garage candy because I don’t drive them much. I just look at them.”

And while the downstairs is Don’s domain, the upstairs mezzanine is a haven for Tara, where she can work on her embroidery business, 15 Needles.

It’s stuffed full of fabrics, embroidery floss and a TV to keep Don entertained while she works.

“It’s a hobby and a business, but it’s something I enjoy doing,” Tara Olsen says. “I don’t do it to make money. I do it to further my enjoyment and hopefully make a few dollars.”

Tara Olsen says she has several more items to move into her mezzanine before she gets her business up and running. As for Don, he just sold one of his Jaguars, so he has a space to fill.

“Don’t laugh now, but I’m thinking of getting a GTO,” he says with a chuckle.

## IN THE UNIT:

**1:** The first of Don Olsen’s 1991 XJS Jaguar is a convertible. Both cars have the same interior and exterior. “Everything’s the same,” Olsen says. “It took me quite a few years to find the exact two that I wanted.”

**2:** A neon sign that reads “Don’s Den” was a gift from Tara Olsen.

**3:** A 500-square-foot mezzanine is home to Tara Olsen’s embroidery business, 15 Needles.



**4:** The second of Don Olsen’s two 1991 XJS Jaguars is a coupe, complete with its original car phone. “They’re like brother and sister cars, but this one’s rare because it’s a coupe. Jaguar quickly moved over to the convertibles,” he says.

**5:** An antique Mobilgas Special gas pump was a gift from Tara Olsen for his birthday. “We saw some in a museum one day, and

she could tell I was interested, so she arranged that, and it was a total surprise,” he says.

**6:** The 2003 XKR is Olsen’s youngest car, with 9,000 miles. He’s currently working on cleaning it up, so he can show it in the annual car show on St. Armands.

**7:** Olsen’s four-door car is a 1987 Vanden Plas Jaguar with 30,000 miles. Jaguar stopped making the Vanden

Plas in 1987, so Olsen knew he had to have one from that year for his collection. **8:** The 1974 Jaguar E-Type is Olsen’s most prized possession. “I remember seeing the E-type when I was in college and falling in love with it,” he says. The car has 24,000 miles and a 12-cylinder engine. It’s the one car he says he’ll never sell. He likes to joke that the original owner still drives it.

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# Terrence Williams, Country Club East

Williams stumbled across WheelBase after he and his wife decided to retire to Lakewood Ranch and couldn't find a lot big enough to build a garage to accommodate his car hobby. After doing some Google searches, Williams came across an article about WheelBase and immediately purchased a unit.

"It was literally just dirt at that point, but I knew I was going to want one," Williams says. "It was a space that would accommodate my cars but also be something that would allow us to hang out, watch football and relax."

Like a lot of young boys, Williams says his early interests were shaped by those of his father. His father is a Steelers fan, so he's a Steelers fan. His father's a car person, so he's a car person. There's just one area they disagree. His father is a Ford person, but Williams is a Chevrolet person.

For Williams, there is one car that is above all the rest: the Corvette.

"When I was a little boy, just the sleek styling of the body, the shapes, the curves, everything about the Corvette, I always just fall in love with," he says.

His 1,250-square-foot unit is an exact replica of the detached garage he has at his home in Ohio. The unit currently houses five cars while the others remain up north for now.

Although he doesn't do complete overhauls, Williams says he enjoys doing minor fixes himself. A lot of his cars also fit the restomod style — where a car looks like the original make with a completely new engine, transmission and suspension — because he enjoys racing.

"I enjoy speed," Williams says. "There's a track up in Ohio called Mid-Ohio, and they have a couple days a year where they let guys like me come down and get on the track."

But for Williams, who was so used to working by himself in his garage in Ohio, WheelBase has offered a community.

"My garage in Ohio, it's just me," Williams says. "But now we get to have cars and coffee events, walk around to our neighbors' garages, help each other out and see what everyone is interested in."

## IN THE UNIT:

**1:** The 2003 Corvette is one that Williams has raced before. All of his cars have unique license plates. "My wife, Carla, picks on me because all my license plates are kind of funny," Williams says. "One says 'R U Fast 2,' another says 'Y Try Me,' so she always jokes that I'm like a teenage boy."

**2:** Williams' 1969 Chevy Chevelle is a restomod with its original body and chas-

sis. "That's about where it ends," Williams says.

"Everything else under this car is new. It has a rumble that's unbelievable."

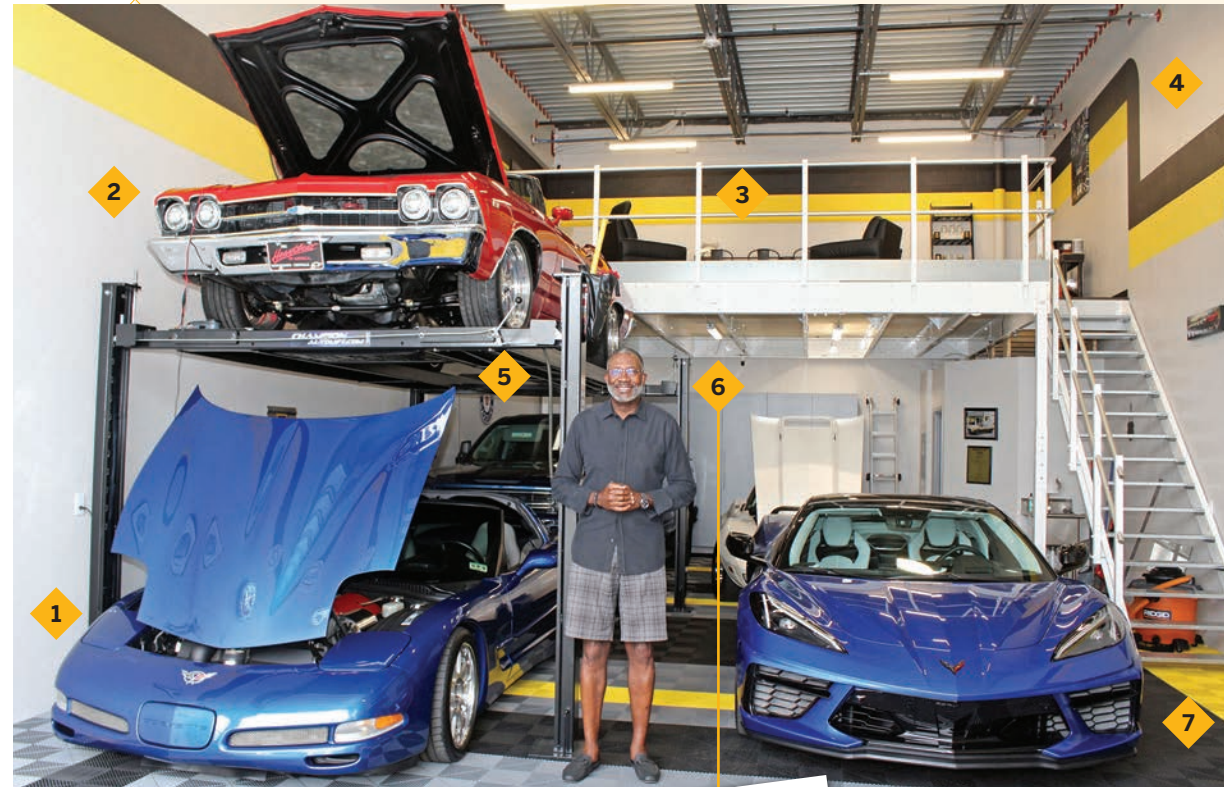
**3:** The mezzanine is decked out for optimum sports viewing with lounge chairs, two flat-screen TVs and a bar. It also features sports memorabilia including signed helmets and photos of Williams with some of his favorite players.

**4:** Williams' unit is outlined with a yellow and black

stripes in support of his favorite NFL team, the Pittsburgh Steelers.

**5:** A GMC truck is Williams' daily driver. On the weekends he trades it in for one of his sports cars.

**6:** Williams' 1973 Corvette Stingray is another of his restomod projects. Everything in the LSX454 engine is new, and it has about 600 horsepower. It also features wider tires than normal, so it can handle the horse-



**7:** The 2020 C8 Corvette is the first-ever mid-engine Corvette, which means the engine is located behind the seats. Since the first model in 1953, the engine has always been located in the front of the car.

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# Bob Bailey, Siesta Key

As a child, Bob Bailey's father would take him to the race track. When he was around 10 years old, his father took him to Sebring International Raceway, where he got to meet Stirling Moss, a British Formula One driver.

"That day changed my life," Bailey says. "I really got the bug for racing and began racing when I was 18 years old."

At the time, people had to be 21 years old to race in the U.S., so Bailey went to Canada for three years. His career spanned 15 years, with his biggest win at the 24 Hours of Daytona in 1971. He finished first in the GT class and seventh overall.

His love of racing evolved into a business called Racemark International, which started out making racing safety equipment. Eventually, he began collecting race cars of his own, each with its own story. Some of his cars have personal connection while others, such as his 1954 Jaguar XK-120-M, are linked to people like Elton John's business manager.

Before WheelBase, Bailey had to store his cars below his beachfront home on Siesta Key. During hurricane evacuations, he would have to move all of his cars off the barrier island. So he decided to move his cars into a 1,600-square-foot unit in July 2020, and he says it's "been a blast."

"This facility is just over the top with quality and workmanship," Bailey says. "They just put the whole package together to get a group of car guys together in a location that is fantastic to exercise these cars in."

## IN THE UNIT:

**1:** The 1968 Porsche 911 Lightweight was the first of six prepared specifically for the Trans-Am series in 1968. Bailey raced the car in the 12 Hours of Sebring and the 24 Hours of Daytona. Around 10 years ago, a movie producer fully restored the car and contacted Bailey to tell him that he was going sell it at auction. "How could you pass that up?" he says.



**2:** Bailey's walls are decked out with old racing posters of some of his favorite cars throughout the years. Some posters even feature photos of him during his racing years.

**3:** Bailey displays the original engine out of the 1968 Porsche 911 Lightweight.



and they have a great racing history," Bailey says.

**5:** Bailey also owns a 1962 Fiat Abarth 850 TC. A decal on the back reads "piccolo bastardo" in Italian, or "the little bastard."

**6:** Bailey's mezzanine is set up with lounging furniture, an office space, a refrigerator and a bar.



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# Clark Prosperi, Heritage Oaks Golf & Country Club

Unlike most of the condo owners, Clark Prosperi is not a car guy. He's an artist. While most of his neighbors toil away with an engine, Clark is perfecting colors to paint a jellyfish.

Prosperi has been painting since he was a kid growing up in São Paulo, Brazil, and his first career was as an art director for a major advertising company.

"At the time, there were a lot of artists working in advertising because there weren't computers," Prosperi says. "Everyone knew how to draw, and everybody was pretty much an artist, so it was phenomenal."

While living in New York City, Prosperi rented a studio and started taking commissions. He fell in love with the work and decided he would be a professional painter. He studied with artists including Joseph McGurl and Mark Carder. Since then, he's painted for dignitaries, athletes, cruise ships and famous people.

All the while, Prosperi says he has never stopped studying everything — from art history to the way light hits a person's hair. He describes his style as pop or contemporary realism, and although he works in all mediums, his favorite is oil.

"Painting with oil is like cooking [with] the best stove and knife in the whole world," Prosperi says.

He draws inspiration from the world around him, and any time he gets an idea, he immediately stops what he's doing to write down the idea, the mood he hopes to emit and how he wants the final image to look.

Prosperi tries to paint in his studio every day, even if he's not feeling a certain inspiration. He also teaches students how to paint — from lines and shading to what he calls the most important trick, color matching — from his unit.

Although he's not a car guy, he is still enjoying the community at Wheel-Base. He is even working on a painting of a car for his neighbor, Don Olsen.

## IN THE UNIT:

**1:** A model of how Prosperi wants his unit to look when it's finished. He plans to create a mezzanine with an office space, a series of bridges and a wooden tunnel for meditation.

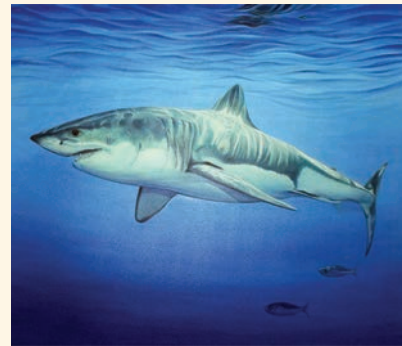
**2:** Prosperi painted a series of perfume bottles, including Chanel No. 19 and the famous Chanel No. 5.

**3:** One of Prosperi's favorite things to paint is sea life.

"It's often so colorful and full of movement," he says. In his unit, he displays a painting of a shark, right, a goldfish and a mandarin fish.

**4:** Prosperi also does work with other mediums. Here, he created an elephant out of silver leaf.

**5:** Prosperi often takes commissions of people's



pets. He just finished one of a client's two dogs.

**6:** Prosperi uses a lighting fixture with a black drop cloth while painting to make sure there are no shadows on his canvas. "When you get a glare, it's your enemy," he says. "Especially when you're trying to do color, so everything behind you has to be black."



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# The Turner Family, Lakewood Ranch

For a family that likes to stay close, there is no better way to enjoy a hobby than together. The Turner family, which runs the family business, Liberty Port, also spends time at their shared 1,700-square foot unit.

The family is James Turner III and Toni Turner; their two sons and two daughters-in-law, Garrett and Priscilla and Parker and Tori; and Parker and Tori's son, James V.

They use the condo to store their collective three luxury cars or antique cars and their Mercedes-Benz Sprinter Van. Three more cars are stored at their family farm in Tennessee.

The family uses the space for relaxation and a place to bring clients that's out of the

office. For the family, who all lead busy lives, the condo has been a way to reconnect.

"As a family, we're very close. We all live very close," Parker Turner says. "But I think it's fair to say we're passing ships because we travel a lot for work. But this has been a way to spend time together."

Although the family members all use the garage, they say James Turner III has been the champion of keeping it and the vehicles stored there clean.

"I think Parker and Garrett like having the unit because their dad is getting close to retirement, and he will come over and keep everything clean," Toni Turner says with a laugh.



## IN THE UNIT:

**1:** Parker Turner uses the garage to store his 2013 Bentley Continental GT throughout the week. "I have a practical car during the week, but on a nice weekend or for special events, I'll park my truck here and take the

Bentley out for the weekend," he says.

**2:** Parker Turner also stores his 2005 BMW M3 in the garage.

**3:** Garrett Turner stores his 1997 Land Rover Defender in

the garage. The limited edition vehicle features safari seats in the back.

**4:** The family company, Liberty Port, sponsored a NASCAR driven by Kerry Earnhardt. The hood of the car now hangs in their unit.

**5:** James III and Toni Turner primarily use their 2014 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter to travel between Sarasota and their farm in Tennessee. "Especially since COVID-19, this has been our main mode of transportation whenever we travel anywhere," James Turner III said.

**6:** James Turner V has a Bentley stroller to match father Parker's Bentley. "Like father, like son," Tori Turner says with a laugh. "It's the most important thing in the entire unit. He's very proud of it."

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# Volunteering in the Age of COVID-19

The pandemic forced dozens of nonprofits to bench hundreds of senior volunteers. Some organizations in Sarasota and Manatee counties are still struggling to fill the void one year later.

BY HEIDI KURPIELA | CONTRIBUTOR

Photos by Heidi Kurpiela  
Nate's Honor volunteer Sue Defeo (right) greets Bradenton newcomer Sydney Depano with her new puppy.





**N**early every Friday for 10 years, Sandy Mongiello was the first face people saw when they arrived at Nate's Honor Animal Rescue. As a volunteer greeter, the 66-year-old Heritage Harbour resident was responsible for holding down the welcome center at the front of the 8-acre Lorraine Road campus.

Chatty, newly retired and gaga for dogs, Mongiello was a natural concierge. She fielded giddy questions from adoptive families in search of the perfect pooch and offered resources and a sympathetic ear to families struggling with loss and other heartbreak. Sometimes she'd walk the dogs and help tend to incoming puppies, but most of her six-hour shift was spent behind the sign-in desk. She felt useful there. Plus, she says, she inexplicably liked the "wet-dog smell" perfuming the inside of the 300-square-foot building.

"I did it for the animals," Mongiello says. "Some of them would come in shaking, scared to death with their tails between their legs ... and you'd know a special person would come in and see past the fear and the things people think are homely — the snaggleteeth and buggy eyes. You'd get the follow-up pictures and emails, and you'd see how an animal can blossom with the right person."

The grandmother of four, whose previous health issues and business trips made it difficult to adopt a dog of her own, also developed an affection for her fellow volunteers — a quirky, motley crew of dog and cat people that she jokingly describes as "a wonder-



Nate's Honor volunteers Mary Lou Snider and Martha McKlveen in the cat trailer

fully dysfunctional family with a common goal."

Had the spread of COVID-19 not forced Nate's directors, Dari and Rob Oglesby, to pull their 200-plus volunteers off the schedule, Mongiello would still be signing in visitors, straining under her mask to get a whiff of her second favorite smell: puppy breath.

"We all thought we'd go back in a couple months," Mongiello says. "We're going on a year now, and we still don't really see an end. The fact that we're not there to help with the workload has created a sense of guilt because we know how small the staff

is. I miss that feeling of doing something valuable. ... I didn't realize how important it was to me until I didn't have it anymore."

### THE KINDEST CUT

Although the Oglesbys made a prudent choice, they still feel like they benched their most valuable players in the fourth quarter.

With more people working from home and traveling less, pet adoptions are soaring across the U.S. This uptick, Mongiello says, comes as no sur-

*Continued on Page 78*

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Continued from Page 78

Meals on Wheels Plus of Manatee issued a halt to all volunteer work for people 65 and up just as the demand for home deliveries spiked by 60% in the county. The nonprofit's flagship program, which provides hot meals to elderly and disabled residents across Manatee County, was nearly destroyed by the directive. (Nearly all of its 64 routes were covered by senior drivers.)

Fortunately, widespread business and school closures in the early weeks of the pandemic made it possible for an influx of younger, less-at-risk individuals to help pick up the slack. "It's been a bit harder to find volunteers since things opened up more," Vice President of Development Amy Towery says.

Meals on Wheels Plus has just 50 employees spread across several large programs. In addition to delivering meals and running The Food Bank of Manatee, it also operates the Day-break Adult Day Center in Lakewood Ranch and three Friendship Dining Centers that have since been closed due to COVID-19.

"The number of people we're serving has skyrocketed," Towery says. "We're having to do more without the people we were used to leaning on."

Many of these sidelined drivers are eager to get back on the road. Some of them drove two or three days a week. Clients were used to them.

"We've tried to come up with ways they can still help from home — sending clients greeting cards or making reassuring phone calls — but COVID-19 has really modified a lot of the opportunities available," Towery says. "It's been a tough adjustment for all of us."

### THE NEW NORMAL

Some organizations are starting to ease volunteers back into brick-and-mortar roles.

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Mischa Kirby, the vice president of strategy and communications at the Community Foundation of Sarasota



Tidewell Hospice leaders regularly meet with their virtual volunteer team on Zoom.

County, says plenty of local organizations are still actively seeking volunteers. Whenever people ask how they can help, Kirby directs them to the Community Foundation's searchable database, TheGivingPartner.org,

Continued on Page 82



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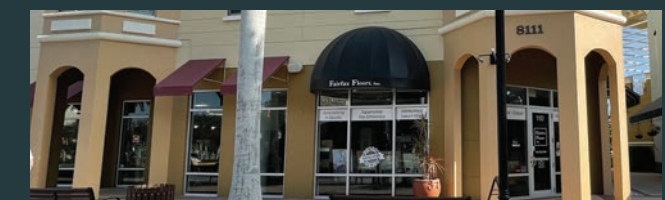
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Continued from Page 80

where 60 different agencies are currently looking for the donation of time.

“Charitable giving [of time and money] is in our community DNA,” Kirby says. “There are still opportunities for people who are looking.”

Even major health care nonprofits are easing off on restrictions. In August, Tidewell Hospice reopened its volunteer-run thrift store and allowed some of its 1,200 daily volunteers back into facilities — barely. Greeters wearing face masks and shields are now permitted to answer doors, screen and sign in visitors, and run temperature checks at some hospice houses.

Antoinette Muirhead, who volunteered at Tidewell’s Lakewood Ranch Hospice House for three years, says that her responsibilities look nothing like they did before COVID-19, but that’s OK.

“It used to be if you saw someone having a hard time, you could say, ‘Can I give you a hug?’ Now you say, ‘I’m giving you a hug in my heart.’” Muirhead says.

An oncology massage therapist and ceramic artist, Muirhead was working at Florida Cancer Specialists and volunteering at Tidewell and Daybreak Adult Day Center when the pandemic hit. At Daybreak, she helped with arts and crafts projects, and at Tidewell, she gave patients foot massages.

Last March, she lost all three of these posts in one fell swoop, including the place where she sold her pottery, Bok Tower Gardens in Polk County, until Tidewell called her back at the end of the summer.

The Parrish resident says she’s thrilled to be of service again in whatever capacity she’s needed.

“Sure, it’s different now or a new normal, as we’re calling it,” Muirhead says. “But it’s not about me. The nurses are so busy. If what I do for a couple hours makes their lives easier, I’m there.”

Mongiello says she feels exactly the same way about having to wait for her position to open back up at Nate’s.

“As a volunteer, you start to selfishly think: ‘Oh, no! They forgot about me.’ But there’s so much more to consider than your small role,” Mongiello says. “Dari and Rob have continued the mission through all of this. They’re saving dogs and cats, and that’s what matters most.”

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# GREAT OLD FLORIDA ESCAPES

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Although travel is still a no-go, there are plenty of staycation spots that can make you feel like you have gone somewhere. In this case, it's back in time.

BY SU BYRON | CONTRIBUTOR

**L**ike Brigadoon and Bali Hai, the earthly paradise of Old Florida seems more like legend than reality. That magic land of palm trees and unspoiled beaches seems long-gone, especially if you're in a day-tripping mood. Generic chain hotels abound, with cookie-cutter personalities, each identical to the last. But take heart. Rumors of the death of Old Florida accommodations have been greatly exaggerated. Here's a peek at four authentic vacation options. Each is 100% pure Florida. And there's nothing generic about it.

Right: Turtle Beach Resort on Siesta Key. Read more about this escape on Page 92.





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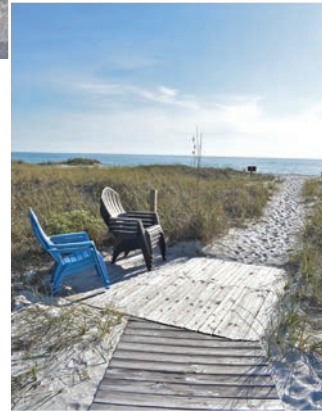
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# HAVEN

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The woods meet the water in Lakewood Ranch's newest community. **PAGE 96**

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A completely equipped summer kitchen highlights the home's lavish outdoor living area.



# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

This show-stopping home embodies high

style in the new Waterside community. BY ROBERT PLUNKET | CONTRIBUTOR

The living area looks out over a nature preserve. Among the smart house features are speakers hidden in the wall on either side of the wall-mounted TV.





## WATERSIDE IS HAVING ITS MOMENT.

That brand-new community just to our south, with its lakes and water views and what promises to be a sensational commercial center, is filling up fast. It seems that every day several new homes — priced up to well more than a million — begin construction.

Human nature being what it is, people are wondering what it's like inside their impressive British Colonial style front doors. Models are there for the touring, but to fully understand Waterside's appeal, it's best to visit some new residents and see how these new homes fit into the Lakewood Ranch lifestyle. What makes them different? What clues to the future do they hold?

Dale and Lori Baker moved into

their Lighthouse Cove home in May 2020. It's a Nautica model by Lee Wetherington, embellished with numerous tweaks and upgrades. The exterior style is the aforementioned British Colonial, which finds its origins in the manor houses of the great plantations of the West Indies. It's a blend of aristocratic English formality, strong and solid, yet lightened by easy tropical touches and colors.

The interior of the Baker home is a little unexpected. It is crisp, sharp and modern. Flooded with light and air, it's part resort, part family home. The decor hints of coastal, but classic contemporary better describes the atmosphere. Lori Baker did the furnish-

ing and decorating herself, using an off-white color scheme with occasional pops of coral and greenery.

But it is what's outside that immediately grabs your attention. Many homes in the community face the water, but the Baker house takes a different approach. A nature preserve provides a calm and extraordinarily private view. "It feels so open when you walk in the front door," Lori says. "That's what we love most about the home."

No other homes are in sight, and the "open view" screening around the pool provides an uninterrupted look at Florida nature in all its glory. "We've

*Continued on Page 100*

The home, a Nautica model by Lee Wetherington, overlooks a manicured park and has a three-car garage.

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Continued from Page 98

seen deer and a family of hawks,” Dale says. “And the spring wildflowers are amazing.”

At first glance, the main living area appears to be an open concept plan. But on further examination, you can see how the open concept idea has been carefully refined and rethought. There are discrete spaces throughout, each with its own appeal and use.

The living room itself is rather grand, with 17-foot vaulted ceilings. Next to it is a dining area, which could be used formally or informally depending on who’s coming to dinner. The kitchen, white with wood flat-door cabinets and high-end Wolf and Sub Zero appliances, is totally in sync with the home’s simple lines. A bonus room is adjacent; it could be used as a den, an office, a family room or even a fourth bedroom.



Perhaps the biggest innovation of the Bakers’ house is the way the outdoor living area has been rethought and perfected. Slide the glass doors back, and there’s a large seating area that extends the one indoors. Just to

the left is a complete summer kitchen and dining area.

Indeed, if there is a takeaway from the new homes at Waterside — Light-

Continued on Page 102

The outdoor living area adjoins the pool and spa. With the sliding glass doors pulled back, it merges seamlessly with its indoor counterpart, creating a perfect setting for Florida living.

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Continued from Page 100

house Cove and Shoreview are its two communities currently in operation — it is the triumph of the outdoor living area. It's been a feature since the beginning of Lakewood Ranch, but now it's blossomed to become the focal point of the home, perfectly integrated with the interior but with its own atmosphere of sun and soft tropical air.

Also innovative are the home's many "smart house" features. Simply by using his phone, Dale can control and adjust all the lighting, indoors and outdoors. He can also control the lighting and temperature of the pool (it's heated) and the audio-visual aspects of the home, including the built-in speakers. There is even a tech closet to house the electronic equipment.

Still, for the first-time visitor, the real wow factor in the Baker home is

Continued on Page 104

In the generously sized master bath, floating vanities create a spa-like atmosphere. A "wet room" at one end contains a soaking tub and a shower area with three shower heads, the center one hand-held.

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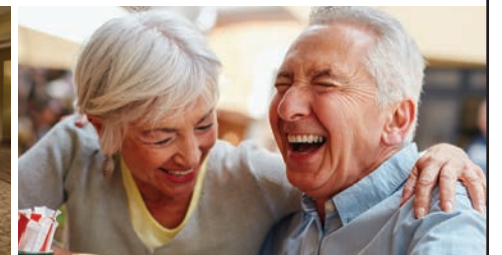
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the master bath. True, master baths in the Ranch are famous for their size and opulence, but here there really is something new. One end of the space has been designed as a “wet room” with a stand-alone soaking tub and a spacious shower area containing three shower heads: two overhead and one hand-held. Matching vanities that “float,” backlit mirrors and a remarkable lighting fixture that turns into a ceiling fan at the touch of a button complete the luxurious, spalike atmosphere.

The Bakers are recent arrivals from Fort Lauderdale, where the traffic and frenetic activity finally became too much. They toured the state looking for the ideal location for a new home, but nothing seemed right — until they found Waterside. “We wanted peace and tranquility,” Lori says, and their new home gave them exactly that.

The amenities offered by their new community were also a powerful attraction. Lighthouse Cove provides yard maintenance. “It really is care-free living,” Dale says. “We’re free to

travel and spend our time enjoying our home.” There is a clubhouse just a short stroll away, and other features include a doggie park for Piper, the couple’s wheaten terrier.

But it’s the quiet, contemplative atmosphere of their secluded living area that means the most. In the distance

a weeping willow can be seen, Spanish moss swaying in the gentle breeze. The bird feeder is busy with a cheerful crowd of feathered friends. It’s a lazy sunny afternoon as the Bakers, and Lakewood Ranch, look forward to a future full of new ideas.

Solid wood cabinets add elegance to the kitchen. Countertops are quartz, and the appliances are Wolf and Sub Zero.



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# art and about

## Sounds of the Season

Slowly but surely, the vaccine is being distributed. In the meantime, area arts and cultural organizations are finding ways to keep audiences virtually engaged. Here's a quick peek at four inspired music programs.



SU BYRON  
CONTRIBUTOR

### FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE

**Carole J. Bufford** is a rising star in the New York cabaret and jazz scene. To quote Stephen Holden of *The New York Times*: "She's the real thing: You know it when you see it. The way her voice, with its blues inflections, cut a swath, leaving nothing standing, tempts me to describe her with groveling hyperbole as an earthier, more acerbic 21st-century Barbra Streisand." Bufford is bringing her earthy vocals back to Florida Studio Theatre, in "**Vintage POP!**" a revue exploring the evolution of popular music from the 1920s to the 1980s. Bufford puts her own spin on vintage songs by the likes of Janis Joplin, Sting, Barbra Streisand, Sophie Tucker, Ethel Merman, Judy Garland, Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra and others. Bufford says the FST engagement is one of her first since the pandemic hit. "I'm so happy that my first series of performances will be at FST. It feels like coming home," she says. *March 24 to April 18; FloridaStudioTheatre.org.*



Courtesy photos

Carole J. Bufford will perform in "Vintage POP!" at Florida Studio Theatre.

### SARASOTA CONCERT ASSOCIATION

Like so many presenting organizations around the region and nation, the **Sarasota Concert Association** had to pivot quickly to keep its subscribers engaged. After canceling its six-concert 2021 Great Performers Series season, newly appointed Executive Director Linda Moxley designed a virtual series called **Musically Speaking**. This three-part program features concerts by preeminent musicians followed by informal artistic conversations. World-



Academy of St. Martin in the Fields will perform in the Sarasota Concert Association's virtual series called Musically Speaking.

*Continued on Page 108*

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George Nickson and Samantha Bennett will perform in the Sarasota Concert Association's virtual series called Musically Speaking.

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acclaimed pianists **Garrick Ohlsson** and **Kirill Gerstein** launched the series in February. Violinist **Samantha Bennett** and percussionist **George Nickson** will share their magic March 11. **Academy of St. Martin in the Fields** concludes the series March 25. The series is free, but registration is required. Each link will be viewable for seven days. *For more information and to register, visit [SCASarasota.org](http://SCASarasota.org).*

### NEW MUSIC NEW COLLEGE

Pianist **Vicky Chow**, called “one of our era’s most brilliant pianists,” is celebrated for her nuanced interpretations of contemporary compositions. **New Music New College** presents Chow in concert April 24. Steve Reich’s minimalist “Piano Counterpoint” is the program’s highlight, in an arrangement created by Vincent Corver. Reich’s piece revolves around a relentless eight-beat rhythm. Chow will play in counterpoint to a recording of four other pianists following this beat. As the composition progresses, the recording’s accompanying rhythm



Vicky Chow will perform at New Music New College.

pattern gradually shifts out of phase. As you listen, you’re forced to pay closer attention. You finally find yourself absorbed in Chow’s playing — defiantly keeping her own beat in the river of music flowing around her. “Vicky has been a champion of new and creative approaches to the piano,” NMNC Director Mark Dancigers says. “This concert promises to abound in discoveries and offer a window into the work of a fearless and gripping performer.” *Artistic Conversation: 5 p.m. April 22. Concert: 8 p.m. April 24. (Pre-concert talk is 7:30 p.m.) Locations and formats TBD; visit [NewMusicNewCollege.org](http://NewMusicNewCollege.org).*

### PERLMAN MUSIC PROGRAM SUNCOAST


The **Perlman Music Program Suncoast** cultivates audiences of all ages through classical music performances and education outreach programs, including hosting the PMP Winter Residency and presenting “PMP Alumni: Around Town” and “PMP Alumni: In Schools” performances. For this season of social distancing, Perlman Suncoast created “PMP Alumni: At Home,” a series of free virtual concerts by PMP graduates. Here’s the lineup: **Stella Chen**, violin, March 11; **Michelle Cann**, piano, April 15; **Ilya Gringolts**, violin, May 6. *Learn more about the artists and to view at [PerlmanSuncoast.org](http://PerlmanSuncoast.org).*



“Melantropics” by Janaina Tschäpe at the Sarasota Art Museum

### AND A FEAST FOR THE EYES: SARASOTA ART MUSEUM

The multitalented **Janaina Tschäpe** sends out a range of messages in a variety of mediums, including drawing, installation, painting, photography, performance, sculpture and video. **Sarasota Art Museum’s “Between the Sky and the Water”** offers a mid-career retrospective of her work in an exhibition curated by Anne-Marie Russell, the museum’s executive director. That title nicely conveys the ambiguous spaces of her mind’s eye. Tschäpe specializes in terra incognita and unmapped territories. “Where am I?” is the eternal question. Her art replies, “You are here,” but it’s not a final answer. Both identity and location are in constant flux in Tschäpe’s art. From a woman’s claim to the territory of her own body, to Kafkaesque metamorphoses, that change is the only constant in her work. That perpetual change applies to both her inner and outer worlds. There is no final answer — except for the beauty of Tschäpe’s art. That’s answer enough. *Through May 2. 1001 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota; 941-309-7662; [SarasotaArtMuseum.org](http://SarasotaArtMuseum.org).*

  
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*back at the ranch*

# Courting During COVID-19: Date Nights Reimagined

Need help kindling a little romance? Luckily, the area provides a plethora of pandemic-approved activities to enjoy a night together.



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Remember when the awkwardness of dating was purely rooted in uncomfortable moments with someone you just met at a bar, in hopes of maybe, possibly, hopefully creating a long-lasting relationship? Of course, the dating scene naturally adapted to a fast-paced environment where swiping left or right helped narrow down and eliminate unnecessary conversations with dead-end prospects. In-person dates were reduced to a handful of highly eligible individuals based on engaging digital conversations.

Then 2020 happened. A global pandemic put a complete halt on the dating scene. Whether looking for a serious relationship or casual dating, married or single, kids or not, date nights became a thing of the past. For months on end, the entire world has found itself in some form of isolation holding pattern.

## WHAT NOW?

Almost a full year later, the community is still reeling. Taking time with a significant other or to scout new friendships needs to evolve to meet the landscape of our current society.

This begs the question: How does one date during a pandemic, when physical distancing and face masks are part of daily practices?



File photo

*Continued on Page 112* Set up a first-date picnic at one of Sarasota's five-star beaches with a five-star meal to-go.



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Continued from Page 110

### CAPITALIZE ON CARRYOUT OR DELIVERY

Dining in no longer means relying on takeout pizza or the contents of your fridge. Some of the most upscale restaurants have begun to offer five-star meals in to-go containers. You can now enjoy delicious meals from the comfort of your couch or set up a first-date picnic waterside at Nathan Benderson Park or one of Sarasota's five-star beaches.

**Michael's On East** in downtown Sarasota boasts a regularly changing menu of taste bud pleasing plates from around the globe. It'll even deliver if you live in the surrounding area (63.4 square miles of coverage, to be exact!). So go ahead and dim the lights, add a candle, and pair it with a perfect bottle of wine from the wine cellar. You've got yourself the perfect in-home ambiance.

Looking for day-dates? Offering takeout or delivery, skim the brunch menu at **Grove** in Lakewood Ranch to discover a wide array of choices for

every craving. And with locations in both Lakewood Ranch and Sarasota, **Libby's Neighborhood Brasserie** offers curbside pickup for a variety of menu items and price points to please any palate and budget.

And always remember, when you don't feel like picking it up or are outside the delivery radius, Uber Eats and Door Dash are available to save the day.

### EMBRACE THE ESCAPE (ROOM)

Ready to get out of the house but not yet ready to be around hordes of people? Recently popularized in the entertainment industry are escape rooms. Typically involving a group of friends, co-workers or family members, escape rooms have adapted their business model to offer private (two-person) experiences. If the thought of being trapped with your partner for hours doesn't scare you, go visit **Lokey's Escape**

**Rooms** or **Escape Room Sarasota** for a fun-filled night of problem-solving.

### FUN FOR THE FAMILY

What about a family night? If you're looking for some intentional time spent with everyone together, but the kids roll their eyes at the thought of another evening lost to a game of Monopoly, try some to-go pottery painting kits. With these convenient little "take and paint" crafts from both **Arts A Blaze** and **The Artful Giraffe**, all family members can put down their phones and pick up a paint brush to explore their creativity.



### DATES AREN'T DEAD!

As the entertainment industry continues to adapt to our current culture, keep your eyes peeled for additional unique at-home or private date ideas. Just know, date nights aren't a lost art. You can and will find great alternatives while keeping yourself and your family safe.

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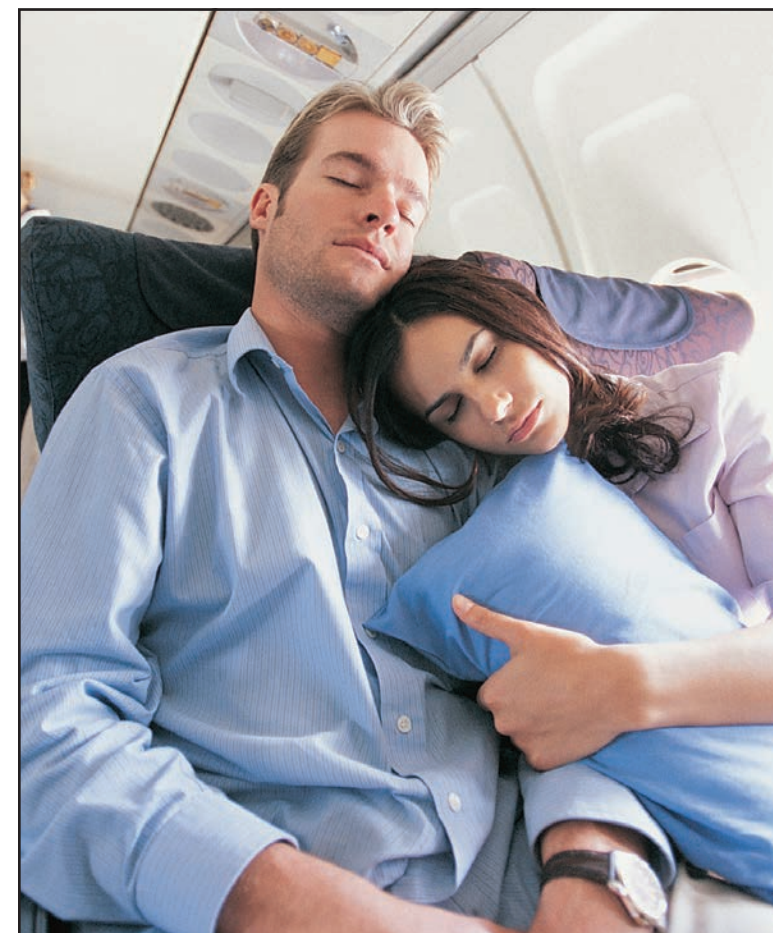
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Of all the exotic places you've dreamt of visiting, an out-of-town cancer center probably isn't one of them.

A diagnosis of cancer is bad enough. Spending hours on a plane to get care makes it worse. No one should have to leave home for cancer treatment—and soon you won't have to. Comprehensive cancer care is coming to Sarasota. So you can stop fighting your way through strange airports and start fighting your cancer here at home.

*You have the power to give hope. Please consider a gift to help support the Brian D. Jellison Cancer Institute.*



Hope comes home. Give today.  
941.917.1286 | [smhf.org](http://smhf.org)

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342P1P.1

## VEGAS COMES TO THE RANCH

SISTERHOOD FOR GOOD, AT SARASOTA POLO CLUB  
JAN. 15



Photos by Harry Sayer

**Above:** David and Mary Pardi with Mike Talerico

**Left:** Co-chairwomen Peggy Kronus and Lori Ruth helped put together the event with fellow co-chair Angela Massaro-Fain, the nonprofit's founder.

**Below:** Charlotte de Jesus and Jennifer Mumford go all in.



## Turner Pest Control welcomes Hobson's Termite and Pest Solutions to the Family!

Turner Pest Control, an Anticimex company, has been providing comprehensive pest control services to residential and commercial clients in Florida and South Georgia for 50 years.

“Hobson's Termite and Pest Solutions is a first-class addition to the Turner team. They've made it a priority to provide exceptional customer service from a highly trained staff and customized programs for their customers. We are committed to making sure Hobson's customers continue to receive the same high level of service and attention.”

— BILL TALON, PRESIDENT TURNER PEST CONTROL

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Mediation allows a couple to “self-determine” the outcome, ensuring it is fair and reasonable; it protects your assets and relationships, providing a brighter future for all parties.



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350480-1



# MANATEE COUNTY FAIR

JAN. 16-24 IN PALMETTO



Photos by Liz Ramos

Camryn Shear, a seventh grade Carlos E. Haile Middle School student and a Future Farmers of America member, shows the school's chapter steer, Titan, at the fair. Titan went for \$5 per pound at the sale.



Ellenton's Lucy Teav, 4, jumps as high as she can on the trampoline.



Palmetto's Jeremy Heere shows off the bear won after a squirt gun contest against Palmetto's Jenna Belle.



Parrish's Aurora Porcher, 5, picks out the face paint to match with her mother, Rachael.

Stay Curious.  
Stay Connected.



## DON'T MISS THESE UPCOMING ZOOM EVENTS!

### ALZHEIMER'S TALKS



FRIDAY, MAR. 12 & FRIDAY, MAR. 19 • 10 AM-12 PM

This two-part series includes the topics "10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's," "Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body," and much more

**Speakers:** Louise Gallagher, life coach, educator, retired psychotherapist; Bernice J. Pelea, Alzheimer's Association program manager; Stefanie Wardlow, Florida Gulf Coast Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association senior program manager



**LECTURE:**  
World War II in Florida

THURSDAY, MAR. 18 • 3-4:30 PM

**Speaker:** Gary R. Mormino, professor emeritus in history at the University of South Florida and scholar in residence at the Florida Humanities Council



**LECTURE:**  
Only Hope: My Mother and the Holocaust Brought to Light

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 24 • 3-4:30 PM

**Speaker:** Irving Lubliner, professor emeritus at Southern Oregon University and OLLI instructor



**EINSTEIN'S CIRCLE:**  
From Public Health to Public Enemy: What Happens When Public Sentiment Obstructs Public Health

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 31 • 3-4:30 PM

**Speaker:** Victoria Kasdan, RN, BSN, MPH, and CEO of Mission Made Possible

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# Points of Pride

47

SSES students named National Merit Scholar finalists since 2005

18

State championships won by Falcons sports teams.

\$6 MILLION

Merit-based aid offered by colleges to graduates of the class of 2020

700 total enrollment

Pre-K-3 through grade 12

55%

Faculty with master's/doctorate degrees

13

Universities ranked among the 25 most selective by U.S. News and World Report that SSES grads have matriculated to since 2013



700 total enrollment

Pre-K-3 through grade 12

55%

Faculty with master's/doctorate degrees



20+ Different nationalities represented in our student body

NUMBER ONE

Niche.com has ranked Saint Stephen's the No. 1 private K-12 school in the Sarasota/Manatee area since it began publishing rankings in 2017.

9:1

Student/Teacher ratio



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@ Lakewood Ranch

1251 Global Court, Sarasota, FL 34240



Opening  
Fall 2021

## Home of Sarasota's Only Dedicated Indoor Pickleball Facility

- Twelve indoor pickleball courts
- No weather-related interruptions
- Comfortable HEPA & air-conditioned facility
- Reserved courts - no wait times
- Club membership amenities
- Extensive professional instructional programs
- Leagues & tournaments
- Experienced management team

Register for our newsletter and enter our monthly Pickleball Sweepstakes.

Become part of the future of Sarasota pickleball - Investment opportunities available for accredited investors.

Register at [www.thepickleballclub.us](http://www.thepickleballclub.us)



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**INTERMISSION IS FINALLY OVER!**

**Vintage POP!**  
Created by Carole J. Bufford  
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**Three Pianos**  
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and Sarah Durham with arrangements  
by Jim Prosser  
March 31 - April 25

**Plus!** Florida Studio Theatre will  
return to FULL production in June  
with a three-show Summer Mainstage  
and a three-show Cabaret Season.

*FST will operate within compliance of all CDC guidelines.*

**florida studio theatre**  
Richard Hopkins  
Producing Artistic Director  
350379-1

**941.366.9000**  
[floridastudiotheatre.org](http://floridastudiotheatre.org)  
1241 N. Palm Avenue, Downtown Sarasota

Photo by Peter Carrier

**3 Natives**  
ACAI AND JUICERY

**HEALTHY + EASY + FAST**

350839-1

**3NATIVES**

3Natives - Acai & Juicery takes a healthy twist on the "fast food" mindset by serving healthy and convenient food at an affordable price. This healthy lifestyle cafe is well-known for its fresh and flavorful acai bowls, smoothies, salads, wraps, cold-pressed juices, and more! With over 17 locations across Florida, the Lakewood Ranch location is the first and only location to break ground on the west coast of Florida. Each 3Natives is locally owned and operated and with the New Year here, this healthy lifestyle cafe is one you must check out!

Open Daily

**11577 E State Rd 70, Lakewood Ranch**  
**941.751.1119 | [www.3Natives.com](http://www.3Natives.com)**

**Daruma**  
JAPANESE STEAKHOUSE & SUSHI LOUNGE

350371-1

**DARUMA**

Enjoy superb Japanese cuisine that is fun, fascinating and delicious. Choose between our Traditional dining or Hibachi table-side cooking by classically trained chefs. Select from our Traditional Japanese favorites and innovative combinations such as Shrimp Teriyaki, Tempura, Sesame Chicken, Filet Mignon, Seafood and much more. Our Sushi lounge has freshly prepared selections made to your order. Savor Japanese delights like sashimi, sushi and makimono. Relax with a craft signature cocktail or enjoy an after dinner drink in our friendly piano lounge. Visit Daruma tonight for an elegant dining experience!

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**EAST COUNTY Observer**  
Lakewood Ranch's weekly newspaper since 1998

**YOUR TOWN**

**CANOPY CONUNDRUM**  
Some are unhappy with county's removal of hundreds of trees in Summerfield and Irvanek. **SEE PAGE 3A**

**Calling all pets!**  
Go through the camera roll of your phone and find pictures of your four-legged family members. Help bring a pet who has been lost or abandoned home to its family. Meet your neighbors and share your stories. For more information, visit [www.youobserver.com](http://www.youobserver.com) or call 941-366-9000.

**Save the entrance won't**

350476-1

**ED'S TAVERN**  
SPORTS BAR AND RESTAURANT  
EST. 1935

350460-1

**ED'S TAVERN**

A Jersey Joint in Lakewood Ranch, Ed's Tavern is the perfect blend of local neighborhood sports bar and family friendly restaurant right in the heart of Main Street (next to the movie theater). We're the only lakefront dining in Lakewood Ranch! The menu has something for everyone, from Southern favorites like pulled pork and fried pickles to our authentic New Jersey classics like open-faced sandwiches and disco fries. Our newly remodeled full-service bar now includes 26 ice cold draft selections plus over 26 flat screen TVs.

Daily Specials, Trivia every Wednesday and Thursday. Live Music every Friday & Saturday night. Mon - Thur 11am - 12am, Fri - Sat 11am - 2am, Sun 11am - 11pm.

**10719 Rodeo Dr, Lakewood Ranch**  
**941.907.0400 | [facebook.com/edstavernlwr](https://facebook.com/edstavernlwr)**





### GROVE - RESTAURANT, PATIO & BALLROOM

GROVE specializes in contemporary American offerings and onsite event planning. The menu is elevated yet approachable and locally inspired. Overlooking the charming Main Street center, at Grove there's room for everyone at the table! Gathering spaces include a casual patio, a relaxing lounge, intimate private rooms and a lively, modern bar. We serve breakfast, brunch, lunch and dinner and offer direct delivery to the LWR area.

**10670 Boardwalk Loop, Lakewood Ranch**  
**941.893.4321 | www.GroveLWR.com**

350151-1



### MCGRATH'S IRISH ALE HOUSE

Experience a taste of Ireland in Lakewood Ranch; where our community is family. Enjoy a mix of family inspired Irish offerings, as well as everyone's favorites like a Chopped Salad, a Pub style BLT, Traditional Shepherd's Pie, and Fish & Chips. Alongside dinner, enjoy a Kilkenny, Guinness, or choose from our wide range of whiskeys and cocktails that will transport you to the heart of Ireland, all from Lakewood Ranch Main Street. At McGrath's, we believe that no dish can be better than its ingredients.

Mon - Thur 11am - 10pm, Fri - Sat 11am- 12am,  
 Sun 9am - 10pm

**8110 Lakewood Main St, Lakewood Ranch**  
**941.210.4398 | www.mcgrathsirish.com**

349822-1



### HANA SUSHI LOUNGE

Combining art with traditional Asian cuisine and service to create a unique culinary experience in Lakewood Ranch is what we at Hana Sushi Lounge strive for each day.

With a fusion of artful sushi, inspired kitchen items and handcrafted cocktails, there is always something for everyone to enjoy.

No matter the occasion, our friendly and knowledgeable staff look forward to making your visit special every time.

Happy Hour Every Sun - Thurs, 4pm - 7pm.

**8126 Lakewood Main St, Lakewood Ranch**  
**941.907.1290 | facebook.com/HanaSushiLounge**

344025-1



### PINO'S

Pino's is back in a NEW location! Sarasota's favorite, Chef Pino, formerly of Pino's Italian Dining, is now offering a private dining experience. Looking for the perfect night out? Chef Pino will be serving up his signature specials such as grilled octopus, ossobuco, homemade pasta, 16 oz. veal chops, fresh seafood, choices along with an a la carte menu.

Larger parties can enjoy the private wine room that seats up to 18 guests. Call to make your private party reservations now & ask about our At-Home Catering. Come visit us at our NEW location inside of Appizza a pizza. Near Detweiler's at the intersection of Lockwood & University. Visit our website for private dining menu.

**6392 N Lockwood Ridge Rd, Sarasota**  
**941.203.8467 | www.appizzaapizza.com**

350342-1



### LOBSTER POUND

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**941.755.FISH (3474) | www.lobster-pound.com**

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# PARTING GLANCE

Gordon Silver captured this photo of a sunset over boaters on the Manatee River.

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*- Scott & Susan, Sellers & Buyers in Lakewood Ranch*



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