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THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER OF LAKEWOOD RANCH

WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2022



**EGGSTRAVAGANZA RETURNS! SAME GREAT EVENT, AWESOME NEW VENUE** – After a COVID hiatus, the annual Lakewood Ranch Eggstravaganza returned, showcasing the beautiful lakeside park at Waterside Place. For more pictures and information, see pages 12-13. Photo by Ernie Soller

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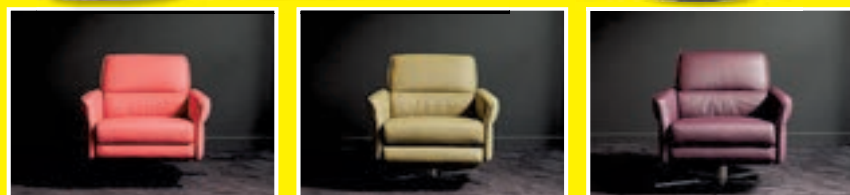
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# Brain Health Initiative Featured in NEJM Catalyst, Will Launch Phase 2 of Brain Health Legacy Study in Fall 2022

As the Brain Health Initiative prepares to launch Phase 2 of its Pilot Brain Health Legacy Study, the esteemed New England Journal of Medicine *Catalyst* has recognized BHI for its innovative approach to promoting brain health on the Suncoast.

A commentary in *Catalyst*, authored by faculty at Massachusetts General Hospital's Integrated Brain Health Clinical and Research Program, touted initiatives that are taking a comprehensive and proactive approach to brain health. The commentary proposes redefining brain health as "the promotion of health and well-being across the lifespan."

The brain is the central organ of the body. It is the "central station" that organizes and controls everything that happens in the body, from sensory experiences to decision making. As the main control system, our brains regulate our energy, productivity, emotions, creativity, social relationships and above all, health, performance, and overall well-being. Our brains work nonstop — 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for our entire lives.

According to the *Catalyst* commentary, the large majority of brain study focuses on the treatment of already existing neurological and psychiatric illnesses. "For over 3 decades," the commentary says, "biomedical science has dominated our understanding of the brain — focusing on the treatment of neurological and psychiatric illnesses. Scientists wait for the illness to emerge, determine the neurobiological cause, and develop pharmacological or surgical treatments. Despite advances in medical technology and medications, this approach is insufficient."

Neurological and psychiatric illnesses impact more than 100 million Americans and are among the leading causes of disability and death worldwide. Costs to the U.S. healthcare system run more than \$800 billion annually. The proliferation of dietary supplements and medical interventions that purport to promote brain health and long-term gains in cognition also indicate the time has come for a new approach to brain health, the commentary said.

Andy Guz, CEO of the Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, agrees. "The medical community is built on the foundations of solid research," Guz said. This initiative represents continued advancement of our understanding of brain health and will have implications the world over."

The *Catalyst* praised several ongoing programs at the Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, including the BHI, headquartered in Lakewood Ranch, for enhancing the understanding of brain health throughout life. The Brain

Health Before Birth study is identifying factors that affect maternal and child brain health. The Henry and Allison McCance Center for Brain Health is undertaking the improvement in preventing brain disease in primary-care settings through lifestyle modification and measures of brain health.

"This recognition is another example of the importance of the Brain Health Initiative as a valuable health and wellness asset in our community," said Jennifer Bencie, MD, MSA, County Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in Manatee County.

BHI encourages prevention and optimal brain performance through brain healthy lifestyles across the lifespan. BHI aims to establish partnerships between interdisciplinary researchers and the multi-generational Suncoast region to engage in brain health promotion, performance optimization, and reducing risk of brain illness. Through the Brain Health Legacy Study, as an example, the initiative is collecting longitudinal data on a comprehensive set of risk and protective factors to optimize these approaches.

"The Brain Health Initiative Legacy Study is designed to follow Suncoast residents,

students, visitors, and workforce for decades in order to identify risk and protective factors associated with brain health, illness, and performance at every stage of life," said Stephanie Peabody, PsyD, HSPP, neuropsychologist, and the founder and director of BHI.

## THE BHI BRAIN HEALTH STUDY AIMS TO:

Identify the risk and protective factors that help and harm brain health, including: genes, lifestyle, and the environment.

Understand how certain interventions promote brain health and reduce the risk of brain-related diseases.

Target these interventions to key stages of life, when they will have significant and long-lasting impacts on brain health.

Phase I of the pilot study wrapped up in 2021 with 480 randomly selected adult Lakewood Ranch residents (ages 21-88) participating in a web-based survey. Phase II of the pilot will be open to volunteer participation, and BHI will begin recruiting participants in fall of 2022.

"Most of us have been touched — either directly or indirectly — by someone impacted with a brain health issue. As the No. 1 multigenerational community in the country, Lakewood Ranch is already known nationally as a forward-thinking, best-in-class community," said David Fink, president of the Lakewood Ranch Community Fund. "This Brain Health Initiative has the potential to let Lakewood Ranch make its mark in a much different way — the community that provided the platform for residents anywhere in the world to optimize their brain health and performance. It is an exciting time to be a resident of Lakewood Ranch!"

Those who would like to participate in Phase 2 of the Pilot Brain Health Legacy Study may send their name to [admin@brainhealthinitiative.org](mailto:admin@brainhealthinitiative.org).

*The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is a cutting-edge, new approach to protecting brain health, optimizing brain performance, and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI is a collaborative effort with Massachusetts General Hospital, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital, to build brain healthy communities through education, collaboration, research, innovation, and action, with a specific focus on brain health promotion, prevention, early detection, evidence-based intervention, and optimization of performance. The BHI is creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the Be Brain Healthy movement, because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference.*



## ASK THE DOCTOR



## GERD and Understanding Your Treatment Options

By David Dexter, MD, FACS,  
Board-Certified General Surgeon

### WHAT IS GERD? HOW IS THE CONDITION DIAGNOSED?

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), or acid reflux, is a common condition where acid from the stomach backwashes into the esophagus. Common symptoms include heartburn, indigestion, sensitivity to acidic foods or drinks, regurgitation, and atypical chest pain. Most patients are diagnosed initially by their primary care provider due to complaints of heartburn or excessive belching. A dentist or otolaryngologist may also suspect GERD due to acid exposure on the patient's teeth or vocal cords. The most common diagnostic test for GERD is an upper endoscopy. Other tests can directly monitor pH or demonstrate reflux on X-ray.

### HOW IS GERD TREATED? SURGERY VS MEDICATION:

Patients generally achieve some degree of relief using medication (antacids, H2 blockers, or proton pump inhibitors). Many, however, achieve only temporary relief or require increasing doses of medication due to worsening symptoms. In these instances, surgical therapy should be considered. Others may consider surgery if diagnosed with a large hiatal hernia or Barrett's esophagus.

In my practice, I routinely perform laparoscopic Nissen fundoplication, a minimally invasive surgical technique, which can help to



cure reflux. The procedure has been in existence for many decades, has shown consistent positive patient outcomes, and remains the most commonly performed and best tolerated procedure.

Postoperative patients often tell me how much better their life is following surgery. They had not previously appreciated how significantly they altered their lifestyle due to their symptoms.

It should be noted, however, that patients with a body mass index over 40 may be better served by undergoing gastric bypass, which addresses the weight and is curative for GERD.

### WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL APPROACH TO PATIENT CARE?

My goal with every patient is to help them feel comfortable with me, answer their questions, and ease their concerns. I use photos and drawings to describe anatomy and surgical procedures. I want patients to leave my office feeling informed and comfortable with their choices. Any individual who allows a surgeon to operate is forever a part of that surgeon's soul. I want my patients to do well and look back at their surgery as a positive experience in their lives.

*Dr. Dexter performs all aspects of general surgery and has a particular interest in minimally invasive and daVinci robotic surgery. To schedule an appointment or for more information, call (941) 254-6767 or visit [Lakewoodranchmedical-group.com](http://Lakewoodranchmedical-group.com).*

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# BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

## It's The Lakewood Ranch Data Dump!

By Ernie Soller,  
Community Correspondent

If at the end of April you were driving past the Lakewood Ranch Main Street parking lot, you may have seen a large pile of stretch-wrapped pallets – each of them loaded up with all sorts of metal boxes. These pallets and the boxes they contained were the result of a unique Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance event – the Data Dump.

Now, if that term doesn't really give you a warm and fuzzy feeling, here's the deal: Residents were informed that they could bring old electronic items to the Main Street parking lot for recycling – legal recycling.

Those folks who took advantage of the program brought all sorts of electronic devices: monitors, laptops, desktops, keyboards, tablets, phones and various computer peripherals. About the only items which were not accepted were televisions, batteries, and cathode ray tube monitors.

Once there, a friendly representative from Quicksilver Recycling of Tampa, or a staff member of the Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance or Lakewood Ranch Community Activities, or a representative from South Tech (now known as Thrive) – another sponsor – would take the electronic item you wanted scrapped out, and carry it over to a table where in full view of anyone present, your laptop (for example) would be dismantled, its components placed in specific bins for recycling, and its hard drive taken over to another work station where it would have been placed on a large heavy-duty press, and subsequently reduced to bits of scrap. No more hard drive! No more danger of anyone being able to access your old data! So, why is this event important?

For starters, it isn't always legal to do away with electronic items by simply tossing them into the waste bin with household or business trash. Electronic equipment contains numerous toxic items, such as beryllium, cadmium, chromium, lead (in the solder used to connect the elements of the equipment), mercury (which can be found in flat-panel screens), nickel, and zinc. These are items that you really don't want in your local landfill, as over time, they can leach out, polluting the groundwater and causing health problems. The idea gets very scary very fast.

Word got out about Data Dump Day and cars began to line up even before the scheduled 9 a.m. start of the event. One guy must have cleaned out his office's storeroom, as he arrived in a large SUV, the back end of which was crammed with bits and pieces of electronic junk. It took several guys about five minutes just to get all that stuff out of his vehicle. And in a few minutes, it was reduced to metal boxes piled up on pallets and the rest, including any hard drives, broken up and/or recycled.

I returned to the area just before the scheduled closing time of 1 p.m. and found that cars were STILL lined up to "Do the Dump"!

As for those shrink-wrapped pallets, all the metal boxes will be melted down and recycled into what might just become new



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER

boxes for newer equipment.

Once the event was over, the entire area was cleaned up, and that end of the parking lot became just another place for folks to park their cars.

So considering the volume of traffic, and the large amount of equipment that was recycled, the event was a big success. Thanks to the Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance, Thrive, and Quicksilver Recycling for a terrific, unique event.

Now, some of our residents may be wondering what happened to Lakewood Ranch's "shred day"? The now-traditional event, which enables residents to bring all their old paper records down to the town hall to be reduced to bits of confetti, has been postponed to October of this year, after which it will be returning to its previous late April time frame. So get your old paper records packed up, because you'll be able to get them shredded – just a little later this year.

# LWR Community Activities Promotes Keith Pandeloglou

The board of directors of Lakewood Ranch Community Activities (LWRCA) recently announced that Executive Director Keith Pandeloglou has been promoted to president and chief executive officer.

Pandeloglou was awarded the new title in consideration of his accomplishments over the past five years as executive director, including oversight and leading the expansion of the organization's parks and recreation programming. The Parks and Recreation program was formed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to offer residents a way to stay active and connected to their community – safely – by attending instructor-led fitness and special interest classes in Lakewood Ranch parks. This program catapulted LWRCA from previously coordinating seven events per year, to over 600 annually today.

With the addition of Chris McComas as park activities director, Pandeloglou has further grown the LWRCA team with Alexandra Presley, a full-time communications coordinator who manages brand image, public relations initiatives, communications strategies and online presence; as well Mykenzie Johnson, an event coordinator who oversees event planning, establishes and manages vendor relationships, and executes day-of strategy.



McComas is the owner of local business MVP Sports and Social, where he curates co-ed adult sports leagues including the largest cornhole league in the United States. McComas' ability to bring people together over casual sports and instruct engaging classes for both children and adults brings a fun-loving edge to the parks and recreation programs he hosts.

Presley comes from a background in mass communication and graphic design, holds a certificate in digital design from Suncoast Technical College, and is a recent graduate of the University of South Florida.

Johnson, the team's most recent addition, is a current graduate student at the University of Florida with a background in events, tourism, student leadership and lifestyle management.

Monaca Onstad, chair of the LWRCA board of directors, said Pandeloglou's guidance has been invaluable in growing the organization.

"I couldn't be happier to welcome Keith into his new position as president and CEO," Onstad said. "He is an exceptional leader who has been instrumental in the growth of Community Activities and has proven to be an untiring advocate for Lakewood Ranch residents. It has been my privilege to work alongside someone as dedicated as Keith and he could not be more deserving of this promotion."

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# LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

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Happy May, Lakewood Ranch! Just between April and now, Lakewood Ranch Community Activities has put on more than 20 different programs and events, amounting to dozens of individual sessions. Needless to say, we've been busy!



Keith Pandeloglou  
President and CEO  
of LWRCA

We love to bring back fan favorites while mixing in new ideas to give Lakewood Ranch residents variety and great experiences. Our first ever Concert in the Park took place April 23 at Greenbrook Adventure Park, featuring beloved local reggae band Jah Movement. It was a great day to enjoy the beautiful park while getting to jam out to good music and sip on an ice-cold drink, surrounded by neighbors and friends. Thank you to all who joined us!

We also kicked off some of our classic park programs such as "Strength + Mobility + Balance," "Cornhole 4 Adults," and "Bingo 4 All"! Strength + Mobility + Balance is a wonderful opportunity for adults over the age of 55 to focus on these three core areas of health and fitness. This class is a progressive six-week program taught by a local personal trainer. At Cornhole 4 Adults, anyone over the age of 18 is welcome to join, even if you've never played! Though considered a sport, cornhole can be played in a leisurely setting and does not re-



quire strenuous activity. Last but not least, Bingo 4 All! Open to all ages, Bingo 4 All is a fun way for families to play an interactive game under the park pavilion with other Lakewood Ranch residents, and you can even win a prize.

While we can't believe that 2022 is nearly halfway over already, it means we are that much closer to one of our biggest and most anticipated events of the year: The Tribute to Heroes Parade. The parade is set to take place May 22 from 6 to 8 p.m. on Lakewood Main Street. Join us as we honor local veterans and heroes, as well as those who are no longer with us today. All proceeds from this event will go to local veterans' groups and organizations. Thank you to all who participate and strive to give back to our community! For inquiries on how to make a donation, please email us at [info@lwrca.org](mailto:info@lwrca.org).



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PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER



# “EGGSTRAVAGANZA” RETURNS at New Venue In Waterside For 2022

By Ernie Soller,  
*Community Correspondent*

Once upon a time, in a cold northern land, a young boy would wake up on Easter morning and find that the Easter Bunny had left a trail of jellybeans starting at the front door of his family’s home. By following the trail, he’d come to a hidden spot where he would find an Easter basket full of goodies – lots more jellybeans and, of course, at least one big chocolate bunny.

This year, that same boy – a mite older now – found himself on the morning of April 9 on a different trail, from the parking lot in Waterside Place to Waterside Park, to experience the 2022 edition of “Eggstravaganza”!

With most COVID fears a not-too-distant memory around The Ranch, the Lakewood Ranch Community Activities folks decided to move what had been the annual Easter-themed party for kids – the “Eggstravaganza” – to a new venue: Waterside Park in Lakewood Ranch’s newest town center, Waterside Place.

At the old venue – Greenbrook’s Adventure Park – the really little kids were contained in the hockey rink, while the somewhat older kids got to chase down as many eggs as they could on one of the Adventure Park’s soccer fields.

This year, at Waterside Park, the little kids got to “play in the sand,” wandering around the beach volleyball courts at Waterside Park, while the larger kids were relegated to a grassy field next to the courts.

It was great fun watching families arrive – moms, dads, and kids, and in many cases, grandparents, too. The littlest of the kids sometimes needed help in deciding just what to do with all those colored eggs they saw on the ground. That sand was lots of fun to play in!

Not only were there eggs to gather, but the Community Activities team had arranged for a lot of other things for families and kids to enjoy. There was a face painting booth, a food truck, a DJ spinning tunes, Kona Ice wagon, photo booth, bounce house, and even a Sarasota County fire truck for the kids to check out. One family managed to get a picture of their big white dog, complete with rabbit ears, posed in front of the fire truck.

And, lest I forget ... there was the Easter Bunny, a tall, floppy-eared “wabbit” in a fancy suit, posing with kids, running around having fun, and generally making things Easter-happy.

When it was time to get down and grab eggs, Mom, Dad, or Grandpa and Grandma sometimes needed to give the wee ones a hand – at least by pointing them in the right direction and telling them that it was perfectly acceptable to pick up as many of the eggs as they could stuff into their baskets.

As for the older kids, at times their frantic gathering of eggs took on the aspect of a hockey game, with more than a cou-

ple of body checks. After all, this gathering of eggs was serious business, especially since some of the eggs contained coupons for some pretty great prizes.

Not only did the eggs contain candy, but some eggs had coupons in them for great prizes, including two kid-sized bikes to give away. A group from Michael Saunders Real Estate had a whole big table full of good prizes – good even for adults!

And speaking of candy, let’s give a hand to Suitcase Sweets, of Lakewood Ranch Main Street, for coming up with lots of candy for the event!

There were a lot of volunteers who helped put this event on as part of Lakewood Ranch Community Activities. At the Eggstravaganza I met three ladies from Canada – snowbirds who volunteered their time to fill a huge pile of plastic eggs with candy and coupons. These ladies, who called themselves the “Canadian Contingent,” wore rabbit ears for the occasion, told me that they had spent the entire day on April 8 packing all those eggs. Thank you, ladies from Canada!

As I made my way back to my car in the parking lot, I passed a dad loading one of the prize bikes into the back of his SUV. Congratulations!



# Your LWR Story

By Maggie Milne

Meet Courtenay Smith, Lakewood Ranch resident and Lakewood Ranch business owner. Courtenay's life before Lakewood Ranch created a seamless segue to her current and future life in Lakewood Ranch.

While working as manager at the Lululemon Athletica showroom in Sarasota from 2010-'15, Courtenay became well-acquainted with the local yoga community and studio owners as part of her business outreach. She began taking yoga classes and soon realized she wanted to earn a certification to be an instructor.

At the same time she was opening the new Lululemon showroom at UTC Mall, she instructed yoga classes in her free time at one of the local studios. She opened her first studio, The Yoga Shack, on Lemon Avenue in downtown Sarasota with a friend; a tiny "shack-like" space (hence the name). Her current studio, located in Sarasota's Rosemary District, was her bridge from retail to business owner. She committed fulltime to her new career as both co-owner of The Yoga Shack and instructor. Through that venture, Courtenay met her current Yoga Shack co-owner, Nikka Colorado, and together they are opening the second The Yoga Shack studio at Lakewood Ranch's Waterside Place.

In 2016, while living in downtown Sarasota, Courtenay's daughter was born. It became clear rather quickly that her new family was better suited for a different kind of community. Courtenay and her family were drawn to Lakewood Ranch by the number of families, children, and the lifestyle and conveniences available. In 2018 they began their search, and in 2019 made their home purchase.

Courtenay and her Yoga Shack business partner opened a studio in Lakewood Ranch just prior to her home purchase, so the work-life balance she wanted was attainable as well. Although the COVID-19 shutdown did impact the momentum of her initial Lakewood Ranch studio and ultimately required it to close, Courtenay and Nikka were able to establish a client base and offer an alternative to indoor classes by offering instruction in the lovely outdoor setting of Lakewood Ranch's Bob Gardner Park. It was the beginning of a winning partnership between The Yoga Shack and the Lakewood Ranch community.

Courtenay and her family celebrated the recent arrival of her newborn son, brother to her now five-year-old daughter, who will begin kindergarten this fall. Courtenay said she loves the proximity to local schools – she can walk her daughter to school, or travel by neighbor's golf cart to pick them up – and living in a community with neighbors/friends who are similar in age and stage of life, navigating the fun and learning that comes with creating family. Proximity to parks and trails keeps life fun for



Courtenay and the kids, she said; their village's playground and splash pad or Greenbrook Adventure Park make for a great day outside. Courtenay also appreciates all the options throughout the year, especially at holidays such as the Easter egg hunts in her village and at Waterside Park.

Courtenay pointed to the ease of travel in both directions, whether north to Tampa or south to the beaches of Siesta Key. Another close-to-home favorite for Courtenay and her family is walking the trails of Robinson Nature Preserve in northwest Bradenton.

Courtenay stays busy with her family, neighbors and friends, as well as with her Sarasota Yoga Shack studio. She enthusiastically anticipates being even more busy with the opening of the new Yoga Shack studio at Waterside Place, as the community knows her class experience through "Yoga in the Park," a partnership with Lakewood Ranch Community Activities. Courtenay is excited about welcoming newcomers, be it for their first

yoga class ever or first yoga class with The Yoga Shack at Waterside Place. She described the future second-floor studio as a simple, welcoming space, with a fresh atmosphere. It also has a balcony with a view of Kingfisher Lake, providing class participants a place to lounge, relax, and visit before or after a yoga class. They plan to open in fall of 2022.

Courtenay reflected on the perfect balance she has found for her personal and professional life. She described her life as fluid, a nice symmetry for both aspects of her Lakewood Ranch life.

For more information about The Yoga Shack visit [yogashack.com](http://yogashack.com), or email [hi@theyogashack.com](mailto:hi@theyogashack.com).

*We would like to share Your LWR Story! Include who you are, why you chose Lakewood Ranch, your Lakewood Ranch life now, and what excites you about your Lakewood Ranch future. Send Your LWR Story and photos to [yourlwrstory@lakewoodranch.com](mailto:yourlwrstory@lakewoodranch.com).*

# Loved Those Old Candy Bars? Taste 'Em Again at Suitcase Sweets

By Ernie Soller,  
Community Correspondent

“You don’t have to travel the world to taste it!” One of the memories of my childhood revolves around a nerdy comic named Arnold Stang. Stang was a pretty popular guy back in the 1950s. With his nasal and attitude-packed East Coast accent, his voice was immediately recognizable. After television became a big hit, he not only did TV shows, but lots of commercials.

It was one of those commercials that came to mind when I paid a visit to one of Lakewood Ranch Main Street’s newest shops – Suitcase Sweets.

Here’s the thing – when I walked into Suitcase Sweets, I found a candy brand that I’d remembered from my childhood – one that had been advertised for years by Stang – Chunky chocolate bars. I still remember his classic nasal voice proclaiming: “Chunky ... What a Chunk a’Choclit!” Chunky candy bars were different from the more standard-sized Hershey and Nestle bars in that they were made with more than just milk chocolate. Chunky bars were made with cashews, raisins, and Brazil nuts – and were made shorter and considerably thicker. Extra thick for extra flavor, so the commercials went.

I had thought that Chunky bars were no longer available, since the last time I saw them in a store had to be at least 20 years ago. But there they were, on the shelf at Suitcase Sweets.

Not only did I find Chunky bars, but when was the last time you saw rolls of Necco Wafers, both the chocolate-only variety and the multi-flavor kind. Here again, I hadn’t seen these goodies since I was a kid (and that was a long time ago!).

So, how did a place like Suitcase Sweets come to be?

Justin Fyffe and his wife, Holly, loved to travel, and when they traveled, they made a point of taking their kids to visit candy stores and toy stores in the countries they visited. They fell in love with the different flavors available in these countries, along with the various toy offerings that were not easy to find back home in the United States.

Justin had become an environmental engineer, working at his trade for several years, and even did some teaching in his area of expertise. Holly was into history and education. One Christmas, as they were enjoying some German-made candy from a Christmas stocking, they came up with an idea: why not start a store that would offer all sorts of exotic and international candies, in addition to hard-to-find toy items?

So they opened a store in the Chillicothe, Ohio area in 2019, and subsequently decided to bring their concept to Lakewood Ranch, where the new Suitcase Sweets opened in early February of this year.

If you’ve been to Europe, you become aware that most every

## International and Historic Candy and Toy Market Opens in Lakewood Ranch



region or country has its own love affair with a particular type of candy, be it Belgian chocolate, German marzipan, or the myriad types of Mozart candy to be found in Salzburg, Austria.

Talk about a city in love with candy and sweets; Salzburg has found unlimited ways of capitalizing on the name of their most famous son, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. You can find his picture gracing everything from fine chocolate to kitchen towels, and everything in between! Well, now you can find “Mozart” products in Lakewood Ranch – at Suitcase Sweets.

And you’ll soon be able to take advantage of special events at Suitcase Sweets. Justin and Holly are planning several monthly activities at Suitcase Sweets. For starters, there will be a “Space Month” with an appearance by a real

astronaut. Then, after that, look for the “Harry Potter” month specials, and so on. The special guests will be on hand to sign books, pose for pictures with the kids, and do autographs also.

But let’s talk more about the candy. Where else around the Greater Lakewood Ranch area can you find candy boxed with a picture of the imperial palace of Schoenbrunn in Vienna, along with candy born in a beer hall?!

For Valentine’s Day, Justin prepared several Valentine’s Day bouquets, made of candy, of course. He also carries Hershey bars, but these are not the usual commercial Hershey bars, these are made from the original recipe of Milton Hershey, and don’t contain all the various chemicals and preservatives found in today’s mass-market offerings.

Have you ever had a real, old-fashioned rock candy treat? Well, if you haven’t, get down to Suitcase Sweets, because they DO have them. They also have bags of giant M&M-type candy from Germany. How about some jalapeno gummies, or salt water taffy? Candies from Maxim’s, anyone? Dubble Bubble bubblegum? Or, if your child or grandchild is maybe getting “candy overload,” how about a good children’s book? The Suitcase Sweets shop has those, too! You could even learn to play Tiddlywinks with a game set from Suitcase Sweets.

Suitcase Sweets had so many types of candy, from the almost forgotten brands of our childhoods, to modern treats from around the world. They stock merchandise from over 50 countries right now, and their vendor list exceeds 150.

So, get down there and check it out, already! Suitcase Sweets is located at 8111 Lakewood Ranch Main Street, Suite J102, right next to the flower shop.

Maybe you will be the next customer to send a large box of goodies to your friends up north!



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER



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## THE UNASSUMING WINE BROS.




# Ruby Red Cabernet Sauvignon in the Evergreen State

Starbucks, The Space Needle, and grunge music are three things for which Washington State is commonly known. However, over the last 30 years an explosion of quality wines from Washington's Columbia Valley have also put Washington on the map as a quality wine producing region.

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

This month the UWB tackle affordable Columbia Valley, Wash., cabernet sauvignons. So hop on the wine article version of Interstate 90 and explore them with us!

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

## 2019 CHATEAU STE MICHELLE “CANOE RIDGE” CABERNET SAUVIGNON;

Horse Heaven Hills, WA; 14.8% ABV; \$29.99

**Vigo:** After we sampled Passing Time (Red Mountain Washington State) in our MVP Wines issue in November 2021, I had high hopes for all wines selected this month. The Chateau Ste Michelle “Canoe Ride” Cabernet Sauvignon, although it was no Passing Time, did deliver. In the glass it presents a beautiful ruby red color with purple, pink blush on the edges. The 2019 Chateau Ste Michelle Canoe Ridge’s aroma is light with ripe cherries, dark currants, and freshly cut roses. On the palate, this wine is light-bodied, with low acidity and tannins. The flavor profile is ripe cherries, blackberries, and a hint of vanilla. This cabernet was well-balanced and smooth as a Sunday morning and a great representation of a great Washington State cabernet sauvignon.

**Vigo’s rating:** 

**Patrick:** In full disclosure I’m not a winemaker or sommelier, but I have a pretty good sense of taste and smell and am a focused student of the wines I drink. I mention this because I sampled this wine twice over the course of two days then studied the writing on the bottle and found that it drinks exactly as described on the back of the bottle’s label – which from my experience is not always the case. I describe it in more detail as follows: elegant drinking, medium bodied, flavorful with notes of red cherry, blackberry, mild coffee, and cola, nice balance, a delightful and smooth transition from fruit to subtle oak characteristics, and silky tannins. Easy drinking and delicious.

**Patrick’s rating:** 

## 2019 BROWNE SITE SERIES CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Horse Heaven Hills, WA; 13.9% ABV; \$29.99

**Vigo:** Ugh, the saying “it’s all downhill from here” describes my impressions of our next two Columbia Valley, Wash. cabernets. The 2019 Browne Site Series Cabernet Sauvignon had the same color and aroma of most cabernets, so we were off to a good start. On the palate, it was very smooth – like, too smooth. I believe cabernet sauvignons should be as complicated as a Stanley Kubrick film. I want action, twists and turns, and a deep



2019 Chateau Ste Michelle “Canoe Ridge”



Browne Site Series Cabernet Sauvignon



Canvasback Cabernet Sauvignon

ponderance at the finish. The 2019 Browne Horse Site Series demonstrated none of these characteristics. The wine was more Rip Van Winkle (asleep for 20 years) than Stanley Kubrick film, but it did have a sweet finish, like a Disney movie.

**Vigo’s rating:** 

**Patrick:** Once again, Vigo is wrong! This Horse Heaven Hills beauty was my favorite of this month’s selections. Fruity and easy drinking with pronounced red fruit characteristics (cherry and berry), excellent structure, acidity, and a long, cedar finish. This wine was more fruit focused and less complexly flavored than the other wines – which is always my personal preference – and allows for this wine’s acidity and finish to shine through. I will definitely be drinking this one again soon.

**Patrick’s rating:** 

## 2017 CANVASBACK CABERNET SAUVIGNON

(84% cabernet sauvignon, 11% merlot, 2% mourvèdre, 2% petit verdot, 1% syrah); Red Mountain, WA; 14.7% ABV; \$29.99

**Vigo:** The 2017 Canvasback Cabernet Sauvignon was both my most anticipated selection this month and also the one I was most disappointed with after sampling them. Red Mountain, Washington produces some superstar wines, so coming from that area, I was expecting a knock-out. The color and aroma of the 2017 Canvasback were on point for a cabernet sauvignon. This wine starts smooth and then bombards your palate with a lot of acidity and tannins. The flavor profile was dark cherries, currants, and vanilla, but there was no balance. Acidity and tannins were cranked up, and the flavor profiles were dialed down. After letting the 2018 Canvasback breathe for 30 minutes, the wine started to find its balance. So, decanting might be the answer for this wine.

**Vigo’s rating:** 

**Patrick:** There is a lot going on with this wine. Big, bold, and full-bodied, yet still juicy, savory, and flavorfully complex at the

same time. This wine was great on the nose with pronounced aromas of red cherry and licorice.

It opened with plum, red cherry, and some cinnamon and finished with cedar and chocolate. This was the most flavorful and complex of this month’s selections and you could taste stereotypical components of each grape in its composition with each sip.

**Patrick’s rating:** 

**Vigo’s overall impressions:** I have a personal connection with Washington State. I was stationed in Ft. Lewis (just south of Tacoma) from 1994 through 1997 and spent a lot of time in the woods, being soaked to the skin and miserable in the Cascade Mountains and hot and dust-covered in the high desert area. The saying goes in Washington State, “you don’t tan, you rust here,” so although it could be miserable and dusty, it also has some great memories for me. The 2019 Chateau Ste Michelle Cabernet Sauvignon best represented what Washington State cabernet sauvignon can be. Tasty, balanced, and smooth, this was what I expected from Washington State wines. Though I wasn’t overly impressed with the Browne site series or the Canvasback offerings, both wines did find a semblance of balance when given time to open.

**Patrick’s overall impressions:** All three of these wines were smooth, flavorful and showed pronounced oak aging characteristics. Although I have never been to the Columbia Valley area, I enjoyed exploring this region’s wines and recommend each of these bottles without hesitation.

### Fans and Readers:

Like our Facebook page “The Unassuming Wine Bros,” follow us on Instagram @theunassumingwinebros, or email us at vigo-andpatrick@gmail.com. Let us know what you think about this article, these bottles, or suggestions for upcoming articles.

# New Waterside neighborhood on the way

Neal Signature Homes recently broke ground on The Alcove at Waterside, a new neighborhood in Lakewood Ranch's Waterside village. It is planned to open in early 2023.

The 33-acre property will include 47 homesites in close proximity to shopping, restaurants and entertainment venues, as well as Waterside's marina and water taxi services.

The Alcove at Waterside will feature lakeside homes with floor plans inspired by British West Indies and coastal architecture, with a range of options for customization. Spacious, private homesites will have expansive water views of Blue Heron Lake from any angle. The five floor plans available in the community will range from 2,393 to 3,156 square feet.

Situated near the new Waterside Park, The Alcove will provide residents with easy access to a splash park, trails, volleyball courts, an event lawn, and boardwalk, as well as Waterside's town center, Waterside Place.

"We are excited to have broken ground on this luxurious new Neal Signature Homes neighborhood within the desirable Waterside Village in Lakewood Ranch," said Pat Neal, founder and chairman of Neal Signature Homes and Neal Communities. "We look forward to having homes available in The Alcove early next year."

For more information, visit [www.NealSignatureHomes.com](http://www.NealSignatureHomes.com).



From left: Mark Evans, vice president of land development; Ben Renner, director of construction; Pat Neal, founder and chairman; Leisa Weintraub, vice president marketing; and Laura Cole, senior vice president at LWR Communities, LLC, at the site of The Alcove at Waterside.



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## May Programs at Chabad of Bradenton & Lakewood Ranch

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

### Talmud Classes

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

*At the Chabad House and on Zoom*

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

### Torah Studies

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

*At the Chabad House*

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

### Weekly Shabbat Services

**Friday nights, 7 p.m.; Saturday mornings at 9:30 a.m., Shabbat Kiddush at noon**

*At the Chabad House*

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

### Tanya Class

**Thursdays, 9-9:30 a.m.**

*At the Chabad and on Zoom*

Delve into the secrets of the soul with Rabbi Mendy at this weekly Tanya class. Admission is free.

### Torah & Tea

**Tuesdays, May 24 and 31, 11 a.m.**

*At the home of Chanie Bukiet and on Zoom*

Join Chanie Bukiet for a weekly dose of delicious tea and refreshments spiced with lessons on the classical and timeless work authored by the eleventh-century Spanish scholar Rabbeinu Bachya ibn Pekuda, *The Gates of Trust*. *Gates of Trust* takes us on a transformational journey towards genuine trust, building us to a state of tranquil reliance on the all-powerful and compassionate God. Studying this vital work shows us how to confront and even transform unpredictable and challenging events by exercising and implementing the messages of genuine unyielding trust in God. Admission is free. Sponsor a class in someone's memory or honor for \$25.

### JLI - Meditation from Sinai

**Wednesdays, May 18 and 25, 7:30 p.m.**

*At the Chabad House and Zoom*

Judaism places great emphasis on action. As a result, many Jews are unaware of another important facet of the Jewish tradition: deeply meaningful teachings about mindfulness, spirituality, and meditative practices. This six-week course advances the uniquely Jewish approaches to these fascinating topics. This course will both inspire and practically guide you so that you can reap the benefits of a more spiritual and mindful life. Fee: \$75 (textbook included).

### Lag Ba'Omer Bonfire Bash

**Thursday, May 19 at 6 p.m.**

*At the Chabad property*

Join us for a grand bonfire, music, falafel with Yoav, kosher BBQ, marshmallow roasting, moon bounces, bungee jumping and more! Free admission. Nominal food fees apply. Sponsor this event for \$250.

### Ohel Trip

**Sunday, May 22, all day**

Experience the trip of a lifetime! Join Rabbi Mendy Bukiet for this inspiring and educational trip to visit the Rebbe's Ohel, tour Chabad headquarters, and the Crown Heights Jewish community, and shop and eat N.Y.-style!

### CTeen Friday Night Dinner

**Friday, May 27 at 7 p.m.**

*At The Chabad House*

Join CTeen LWR at the home of Rabbi Mendy and Chanie Bukiet for a Shabbat meal filled with delicious food, games, discussion, and song! Cost: \$18 and free for CTeen members. CTeen annual membership is \$180.

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



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## FALL 2022 RECREATION PROGRAM

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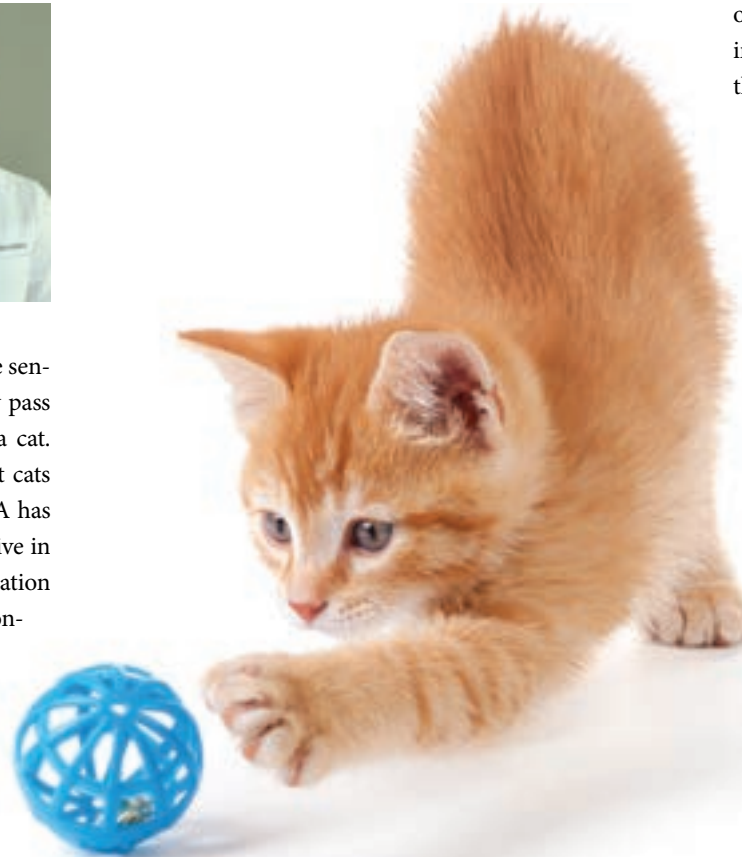
## THE (PET) DOCTOR IS IN!

By Erin Siems, DVM

Cats are not small dogs. This is something they teach us from day one in vet school and is pretty obvious but something we need reminded of when it comes to their care.

Like dogs, cats like to chew on anything from plastic bags to grass/plants. However, cats' systems are much smaller and more sensitive. Things like hair ties and grocery bags that usually pass through a dog's system can become an obstruction in a cat. Many plants – including ornamental house plants – that cats find oh-so-tasty can be toxic to their system. The ASPCA has an extensive list of toxic plants. Cats are also more sensitive in general to many medications. Never give your cat medication prescribed to your dog or intended for people without consulting your veterinarian.

By nature, cats tend to be solitary species. While they can be very (or not at all) affectionate with their family, most cats become stressed in new environments or with changes to their environment. Cats are typically more reserved with their emotions and



often show stress by hiding or “acting out” such as urinating in inappropriate places. While these seem like “bad cat” behaviors they are actually a cry for help. You can help your cat adjust to changes by providing them a quiet environment with multiple safe spaces to hide, including high and low spaces, using pheromone diffusers such as Feliway, and discussing the behavior with your veterinarian to make sure there is not an underlying medical cause.

The important lesson is that while both species make great family members, we need to understand and respect their unique needs in order to give them the best life possible.

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

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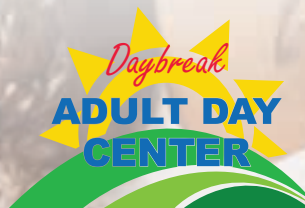
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