



Around the Ranch

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THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER OF LAKEWOOD RANCH

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2022

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LAKEWOOD RANCH'S ANNUAL MINDFUL TRIATHLON returned to Waterside Nov. 12 and was met with great enthusiasm, fanfare, and participation. For more photos see pages 12-13.
Photo by Ryan Angell



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

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Thai Spice and Sushi: Small Place, Mighty Taste

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

Tucked away in a section of San Marco Plaza in Lakewood Ranch is a small restaurant called Thai Spice and Sushi.

The place has been there for a while, but seems at times to be a bit invisible, nestled as it is among some larger restaurants and other businesses which occupy bigger spaces at San Marco.

However, don't let the size of the place make you think that this isn't a good place to eat. On the contrary, I found it to be very good, on several fronts.

First, because it is smaller than some, it gives the staff a chance to give their customers a more personal and efficient brand of service.

Second, it is set up so that there is a casual, friendly atmosphere, yet there are hints of artistry in the layout. Some of their booth areas are not the "usual" square-to-the-wall setup. They're angled, so that those who are sitting in one of these booths are not just facing each other, but they're facing the middle of the restaurant. This layout provides a more open atmosphere, and somehow feels less regimented. Outside tables are also available.

The decor has a definitive Asian feeling to it, in a mixture of designs and styles. There is a wall hanging on the screen that separates the sushi bar from the rest of Thai Spice and Sushi. The background is a deep blue, and it is embroidered with pictures of elephants, done in gold and silver.

The dining tables have black tops that contain hints of metallic sparkle, and the cloth napkins are a nice shade of scarlet, which adds a colorful, festive touch. The flooring is a warm-toned tile that looks like wood, and adds to the warmth of the atmosphere here.

Now, to the main item – the food!

When you arrive at Thai Spice and Sushi, you'll be presented with more than one menu: one for the dinner dishes, and one for sushi.

On the evening we arrived at Thai Spice and Sushi, my wife and I were definitely hungry. She's not a big sushi fan, so after ordering an egg roll appetizer and some tea to get us by until our main course arrived, we perused the varied menu, and made our dinner choices from the Thai menu selections.

She chose the salmon in garlic sauce, and a bowl of chicken and mushroom soup. I went with crispy duck, with a bowl of wonton soup.

With the egg rolls by this time gone, our food soon arrived, and we dug into it with gusto. Our soup disappeared quickly – it was good and there was plenty of it – and we then proceeded to tackle our main courses.

Terri definitely liked her salmon, which was served on a bed of broccoli, along with slaw, and I heard very little conversation from her for the next few minutes, as she concentrated on consuming her meal. After completely devouring her salmon, she informed me that she really enjoyed her dinner.



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER

As for my duck, I have long been a duck fan; even when I was still a kid, I would brighten up at the prospect of a duck dinner. So, yes, I love duck, but I've found that not many restaurants are serving duck. Maybe it's because a lot of people are eating chicken instead because it arguably has less fat, but I like the fuller flavor of duck. Or, perhaps they just don't get much call for it.

But being a duck fan, I had to try it. Now, one issue which I've had on occasion is that in some cases, the restaurant may have a tendency to overcook the duck, making it overly dried out. This was NOT the case at Thai Spice and Sushi. The duck was, as advertised, crispy on the outside, but was nice and tender on the inside. I had myself a very tasty and delightful duck dinner, complete with a bed of broccoli and a small bowl of veggies in a ginger sauce.

If I have any criticism of my dinner, it would be that the broccoli was a little undercooked for my taste. Perhaps I'm bucking a trend, but I haven't succeeded in getting my taste buds wrapped around the idea of hard, crunchy, broccoli. (And I actually LIKED broccoli as a kid!)

Altogether, eating at Thai Spice and Sushi was a great experience. We'll be back.

For a change of pace in your dining habits, if you haven't already done so, give Thai Spice and Sushi a try. The food is good, the service efficient, and the menu varied.

Thai Spice and Sushi is located in the San Marco Plaza, at 8209 Nature's Way, Unit #111, in Lakewood Ranch. They are open for lunch from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday; and



for dinner from 4:30-8:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday; and on Friday and Saturday from 4:30 to 9 p.m. The restaurant is closed on Sundays. They also do carryout. Their phone number is (941)907-4747.

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Brain Health Matters and Being Thankful Makes a Difference

By Stephanie Peabody, PsyD,
HSP, Neuropsychologist
Executive Director, Brain Health
Initiative (BHI)



Each holiday season comes with high expectations for a cozy and festive time of year. However, for many this time of year is tinged with sadness, anxiety, or depression. Certainly, major depression or a severe anxiety disorder benefits most from professional help. But what about those who just feel lost or overwhelmed or down at this time of year? Research (and common sense) suggests that one aspect of the season can actually lift the spirits, and it's built right into the holiday — being grateful.

The holidays are a time each year to pause and share our gratitude for what we have. Gratitude encourages brain health and fights brain illness by amplifying the good in our lives. It is that feeling of appreciation, gratefulness, or graciousness. It involves taking time to recognize and express thanks and to give kindness in return. To be grateful is to be aware of and thankful for the good things that happen. It involves taking time to recognize and give thanks, acknowledging receipt of something of value — a smile, a hug, a gift, a favor, a blessing — to feel thankful for it and then to be inclined to give kindness in return.

In the neurobiology of positive psychology research, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.

While 2022 has thrown a lot of challenges our way, we still have so much for which to be thankful. For example, we may be grateful for the good in our relationships, our coping skills, or our overall health and well-being. We may also be grateful for surviving during a historical hurricane.

So, what do you need to do to protect your brain health and genuinely enjoy the holidays? How can you practice an attitude of gratitude throughout the holiday season, and into the coming year?

The first step toward a brain-healthy holiday: Good enough.

The first step toward a meaningful, brain-healthy holiday is acknowledging that it may be different than what you want, it may be hard, and/or not what you may want. Amid the hustle, try to pause and reflect on the meaning of the holidays. Instead of planning the perfect celebration, aim for “good enough.” Slow down, be present in the moment, and take time to actually enjoy your family(ies), friends, and traditions.

Second, what do you have to be grateful for?

It is just so easy to take everything for granted. And having a feast once a year will not be enough to increase your brain health and happiness.

How about being alive, for starters? That you can breathe deeply. That you have a mind for thinking and a body for doing. The sun freely gives you light, warmth, and the energy that makes your food. If you happen to watch the sunrise or the

sunset, that might be a good occasion to feel grateful. Do you have a roof over your head? Food in the fridge? A smile to share?

Third, recognize the benefits.

The third step of living a brain-healthy life of gratitude is to understand the physical, mental, and emotional benefits.

Living a brain-healthy life of appreciation and thankfulness has many life-healing benefits. In fact, some research has found that one of the greatest contributing factors to happiness is how much gratitude you show. When you focus on gratitude, you encourage many other brain-healthy behaviors. These habits help you cultivate brain and body health, increase happiness, and your overall well-being for yourself and those around you. When you carry yourself with positive, grateful energy it has a ripple effect on those around you who are then able to share that positivity onward and outward to the next person and the next. A BHI friend recently described this as “a herd effect.” Creating a brain-healthy “herd” begins with you.

How does gratitude help you lead a brain-healthy life? Science shows being grateful has many benefits:

- Reduces selfishness
- Reduces envy and jealousy
- Decreases pain
- Decreases depression and anxiety
- Improve physical and emotional health and well-being
- Strengthens friendships
- Encourages humility
- Increases fulfillment
- Boosts stress resilience
- Increases empathy
- Strengthens self-esteem
- Improves sleep
- Increases happiness

Fourth, change your perspective.

The fourth point of practicing both feeling and expressing gratitude is to change your perspective. “Gratitude is an attitude” may be a platitude, but it happens to be true: by becoming aware of what you have to be grateful for, you will find more and more to be grateful for. You will become less pessimistic and more optimistic, and learn to see the glass as half full rather than half empty. This change in attitude and perspective supports brain health and fights brain illness, opens you up to greater happiness, health, and well-being. We all have the ability and opportunity, and maybe even responsibility, to cultivate a grateful herd.

Fifth, express and practice a lifestyle of gratitude.

People feel and express gratitude in multiple ways. They can apply it to the past (retrieving positive memories and being thankful for elements of childhood or past blessings), the present (not taking good fortune for granted as it comes), and the future (maintaining a hopeful and optimistic attitude). Regardless of the inherent or current level of

someone's gratitude, it's a quality that individuals can successfully cultivate further.

Sixth, remember, gratitude can be cultivated.

Gratitude is a way for people to appreciate what they have instead of always reaching for something new, in the hopes it will make them happier, or thinking they can't feel satisfied until every physical and material need is met.

Gratitude helps people refocus on what they have instead of what they lack. And, although it may feel contrived at first, this mental state grows stronger with use and practice.

Here are some suggestions from the BHI for finding your gratitude during this holiday season.

• Acknowledge and manage expectations.

• **Reach out.** If you can't celebrate with others in person, celebrate virtually. Reach out to friends and family via phone or video conference.

• **Say ‘thank you.’** Expressing your appreciation for the impact someone has had on you can make you happier and nurture your relationship with that person. Try telling someone thank you at least once a week with a note or a phone call. If you don't have time to send a thank you note, thank them mentally. Think about what that person has done to make your life better and send them a mental high-five. And don't forget to thank yourself!

• **Write a thank-you note.** You can make yourself happier and nurture your relationship with another person by writing a thank-you letter or email expressing your enjoyment and appreciation of that person's impact on your life. Send it, or better yet, deliver and read it in person if possible. Make a habit of sending at least one gratitude letter a month. Once in a while, write one to yourself.

• **Look for opportunities.** Look for opportunities to gather, share stories, and practice gratitude for those in your life.

• **Volunteer.** Try to find ways to make the holidays more positive. Plan something that gives meaning to the day, such as volunteering to serve or deliver meals to those who are less fortunate. Helping those in need can boost your spirits and help you see the positive things happening in your own life.

• **Keep a gratitude journal.** Take a few minutes every day to write down the gifts you received that day. Share your gratitude by sharing those gifts with your loved ones.

• **Count your blessings.** Try picking three to five things for which you are grateful every week and write them in your gratitude journal. Be specific and think about how you felt when something good happened to you.

• **Pray.** People who are religious can use prayer to cultivate gratitude.

• **Gratitude visit.** The expression of gratitude may be particularly effective when done directly — via phone, letter, or face-to-face with another person.

• **Meditate.** Mindful meditation requires focusing on the now without judgment. Instead of focusing on a word or phrase during your meditation, try focusing on things for which you are grateful — the warmth of the sun, the sound of your child laughing, a hug from your partner, or the taste of

a good cup of coffee. If you are religious, you can include a prayer to cultivate your gratitude.

• **Gratitude meditations** can help you remember the small blessings you may take for granted in your day-to-day life.

First, find a comfortable position to rest in, either in a chair or on a comfortable flat surface.

Take a moment to center yourself. Turn off the ringer on your phone to ensure you won't be disturbed. If you're able, close the door to your room.

Now, take a deep breath through your nose. Fill your lungs entirely with air. Let your breath out through your mouth.

Take a few more deep breaths this way. In through the nose, filling the lungs with air, and out through the mouth.

Now, practice a gratitude mantra. The mantra might be: *I am grateful for _____*.

Sounds pretty simple, right? All you need to do is fill in the blank with something you're grateful for. Repeat this mantra 10 times. Each time you repeat the mantra, try to come up with something different that you're thankful for. If you're having trouble coming up with things, start small, focusing on your immediate environment.

• **Listen to music and share a song or create a playlist with another**

• Watch films

Watch these films selected by the BHI Brain Health Scholars that demonstrate gratitude:

Mr. Holland's Opus (1995). A lifetime of educating others at the expense of your own dreams can lead to riches of the soul

It Could Happen To You (1994). If you appreciate and give to other people more than yourself, you will receive riches far beyond lottery winnings

It's A Wonderful Life (1946). Open your eyes and appreciate what an impact your life has on the lives of others.

From all of us at the BHI, may you make, experience, and benefit from a meaning-filled holiday season, and may that be carried throughout the new year.

For more information about the Brain Health Initiative or to learn more about how you can become involved in Schools for Brain Health, brain health programming, participate in the Brain Health Legacy Study, nominate a Brain Health Scholar, or live a brain-healthy lifestyle, please visit brainhealthinitiative.org.

About the Brain Health Initiative (www.brainhealthinitiative.org)

The Brain Health Initiative, Inc. (BHI), a 501(c)(3) global non-profit, uses a cutting-edge approach to protecting brain health, promoting brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI is building brain-healthy communities, cultures that promote brain-healthy lifestyles, foster protective factors, and address risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes, while addressing disparities at the individual, family, and community level. BHI activates the next generation of brain health advocates and is a leader in brain health engagement, research, innovation, and education. Brain Health Matters and Lifestyle Makes a Difference.

O&A Coffee Opens at Waterside Place

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

Apparently, to a number of well-known monarchs, coffee was the fuel of revolution.

The coffee house craze began in the old Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans had established an empire that stretched from Eastern Europe to what is now Saudi Arabia, and from Egypt to the eastern portions of the Middle East.

Since the Ottoman empire was Muslim by faith, drinking alcohol was forbidden, and when coffee made its appearance, it became an instant hit, with coffee houses sprouting up all over the empire. In order to socialize, one didn't need a bar. One simply went to the local coffee house, where people could indulge in their passion for coffee at a nominal price, and in the process, mingle with those of other classes.

Now, if you're the leader of a rigid class-driven society as was the Ottoman Empire, you might begin to think that this "mingling of the classes" was not necessarily a good thing. Hanging around in coffee houses with people from other classes of society could promote the

exchange of ideas, which might lead to undermining the rule of the sultan.

Also, having experienced the assassinations of his brother and uncle by a particular group of soldiers, many of whose colleagues were known to frequent coffee houses ... well, Sultan Murad IV was not amused, and declared in 1633 that patronizing such places was a capital offense. Of course, that policy didn't last all that long.

Coffee drinking and coffee houses began to spread quickly around Europe. The first coffee house in England opened in 1652, and, by around 1700, there were over 500 such establishments in London. So much of London's business was being conducted in coffeehouses that both the London Stock Exchange and Lloyd's of London were founded in ... you guessed it ... coffeehouses.

King Charles II of England, armed with the understanding that his father, King Charles I, had been beheaded by a bunch of revolutionaries – people with "new ideas," – just the sort of people who hung around in coffeehouses, also got on the "ban coffeehouses" bandwagon, but given the number of coffeehouses in London,



PHOTO BY ERNIE SOLLER

more popular, and was considered much more patriotic. Boston's Green Dragon Tavern became known for its coffee – and its revolutionary activities.

With the knowledge of the success of the American Revolution, those French coffeehouse maven, stoked by coffee and talk of the Enlightenment and the Rights of Man, started talking more about having their own revolution ... and King Louis lost his head.

Going "back to the future," in Lakewood Ranch you no longer have to think of yourself as a revolutionary to enjoy coffee. As a matter of fact, there is a new coffeehouse that opened recently at Waterside Place, O&A Coffee, which will stoke your love for coffee without requiring that you start publishing anti-government tracts.

Actually, the tight quarters of O&A Coffee kind of dictate that you take your coffee outside and refrain from discussing dangerous political activity inside the premises!

O&A Coffee takes up a very small space at the end of the building that houses the Good Liquid Brewing Company facilities. It consists

SEE COFFEE, PAGE 22

and the great number of citizens who loved coffee, that ban only lasted a whole 11 days!

Heading on across the pond to the colonies, after the Boston Tea Party, the drinking of tea became linked to supporting the British establishment, and coffee drinking became much

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LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

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Wow, 2022 has flown by – which means it's time to celebrate the end of the year and new beginnings as we near 2023! Pick out your New Year's resolution and then join us for New Year's Eve at Waterside Place and the "New Year, New You" Health & Wellness Expo at UTC Mall this January!



Aliye Presley
Events & Marketing
Manager

NEW YEAR'S EVE AT WATERSIDE PLACE

New event alert! Join us this year for a New Year's Eve celebration and a countdown to 2023 at the Waterside Place Town Center. DJ Truth will keep the vibe going with music throughout the night and a countdown to midnight. We'll be ringing in the New Year from 6 p.m. until midnight on Dec. 31st!

Food will be available for purchase from Good Liquid Brewing Co., Korê Steakhouse, and participating food trucks. Beer will also be available for purchase as well as beverages from Waterside Place tenants currently participating in the BITS (Beverages in the Street) program.

For available sponsorship opportunities or general inquiries, please email us directly at info@lwrca.org.



"NEW YEAR, NEW YOU" HEALTH & WELLNESS EXPO AT UTC MALL

The "New Year, New You" Health & Wellness Expo, in partnership with the Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, returns to the Mall at University Town Center on Jan. 7, 2023! Complete with more than 50+ vendors, a packed speaker series, and more! Browse the vendor booths and learn all about health and wellbeing from local experts. Meet the people and businesses that want to make your overall health and wellness a top priority. The event will take place from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Do you own a business under the broad scope of health and wellness? We would love to work with you! To purchase a booth or view our available event sponsorship opportunities, go to lwrhealthexpo.org. Members of the Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance receive a special rate for booth purchases available at the same link. For questions, please email us directly at info@lwrca.org.



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PHOTOS BY RYAN ANGELL



“TRI” LAKEWOOD RANCH ON FOR SIZE!

The annual Lakewood Ranch Mindful Triathlon took place Nov. 12, starting at Waterside Place town center and winding around Waterside's Shoreview neighborhood. The community-wide event featured a “triathlon” format with a unique health and wellness twist: a 5K

run/walk, followed by yoga, and concluding with meditation sessions. Event partners Fit 2 Run and Yoga Shack helped make the event a zen, yet invigorating, experience! For more information on upcoming Lakewood Ranch events, visit lakewoodranch.com.



2022 Rotary Club Food And Wine Fest

Twenty Years of Fun And Good Taste!

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

The Rotary Club of Lakewood Ranch's Food and Wine Fest has, over 20 years, become the place to be in early November. The tickets are only sold in advance, and the event is always a sell-out. Why?

Over the years, the Rotarians have created a winning combination of food, wine, and just plain classy adult fun.

After all, if you're lucky enough to have gotten yourself a ticket, you won't need to hop a plane to Napa, or Rioja, or Oregon, or Argentina, Australia, Germany, South Africa, or anywhere in between where the grapes hang on their vines, ready for an experienced vintner to craft them into that very ancient libation – good wine. All you have to do is to get your friends together, make sure that they have their tickets, and attend the Rotary's Food and Wine Fest.

This year, the day was warm and sunny, with the opening of the event at high noon for VIP ticket holders and 1 p.m. for all others. At about 11:40 a.m., there was already a fairly long line of eager participants waiting at the entrance gate at the Premier Sports Campus.

The gates were opened, and the folks rushed in. A little champagne, a little bit of song from Tanya McCormick, a little bite of this, a little bite of that; delightful!

Strolling around the grounds, Food and Wine Fest-goers could sample all sorts of wine from around the globe, and, if wine were not your favorite drink, the Fest did provide an opportunity for beer drinkers to feel less left-out,

Fundraiser Enables Serious Charitable Donations



and there was plenty of bottled water for those who just got a little hot and thirsty.

As for some of the food offerings, here were just a few (and there were many): JPan Sushi offered ... sushi, of course. The Capital Grille came with cauliflower au gratin, The Beach Bistro produced pork tenderloin filets. Truman's Tap and Grill provided a bourbon chicken stir fry. The Urban Taco brought pulled pork



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER

tacos. Gecko's, celebrating their 30th anniversary, came with fans to help keep fest-goers cool, along with a nacho appetizer. Perhaps the largest set of food offerings came from the culinary students at Manatee Technical College. Their baking and culinary arts students put out the most varied offerings at the Food and Wine Fest, year after year. Meats, cheeses, breads, desserts ... etc.!

The Kettle of Fish band was on hand to entertain, and there were lots of great-looking new cars to drool over from Suncoast Porsche and Audi of Sarasota.

Every year, Rotary of Lakewood Ranch has raised thousands of dollars through the Food and Wine Fest. This fund-raising activity has made possible the tremendous amount of help that rotary of Lakewood Ranch has given not only to the Greater Lakewood Ranch community, but to various national Rotary causes, such as the Clean Water Project they fund in Peru, helping local small communities there install and maintain clean drinking water facilities. They have also helped to fund heart surgeries for underprivileged kids through their Gift of Life program.

Locally, they have been responsible for putting over 100,000 books in the hands of local elementary students, and have helped to build wheelchair ramps for those who needed them. Over the years, they've contributed over \$100,000 to help Meals on Wheels Plus of Manatee feed families.

This year, recognizing the damage left by Hurricane Ian, the Rotarians are aiming at giving relief where it is needed in helping those who suffered great loss as a result of that storm.

There was a sign at the Food and Wine Fest which noted that Lakewood Ranch Rotarians put in over 20,000 hours of work in order to pull off this annual extravaganza. We've heard the saying that "It Takes a Village." In the case of Rotary of Lakewood Ranch, they've put together a BIG village.



Lakewood Ranch CDD Board Meetings Came with a Warning

Executive Director Gives Supervisors the Word on Rising Costs

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

It happened at every individual Lakewood Ranch Community Development District meeting in November: Executive Director Steve Zielinski made emphatic comments in warning supervisors that, even though their districts may have had a monetary surplus at the end of fiscal year 2022, much higher costs for services were on their way.

With district budget hearings starting in just a few weeks, beginning in March of 2023, district supervisors will be forced to tackle challenging contractual price increases from their vendors.

For example, District 1 is currently blessed with a monetary surplus from fiscal year 2022. This is primarily due to reduced costs for irrigation usage in the District, and this usage could stay low, or go up, depending on how residents decide to make use of their landscape irrigation. In addition, it is expected that Braden River Utilities, the supplier of reclaimed water for Lakewood Ranch's landscape irrigation system, is expected to increase their charges in the near future.

As purchasing manager Johnathan Styles pointed out, when the landscaping contract was last bid (less than a year and a half ago), the price was \$556,000. Although 90 companies were sent requests for proposals, only five responded. The new contract, with CEPRA landscaping, which was the lowest bidder, will cost the district \$627,608. Other bids were as high as \$778,000!

The new contract is for three years, with a one-year renewal clause.

In addition, the costs for cleaning up the remnants of damage done by Hurricane Ian are continuing to mount. Executive Director Zielinski estimated that Ian will cost Lakewood Ranch between \$550,000 and \$700,000. The cleanup is continuing, with Manatee County estimating at the time of the meetings that they would be able to re-

move the remaining piles of debris by the end of November. (Areas served by Sarasota County may be on a different schedule.) Supervisors were asked to contact Zielinski if piles of debris were not being picked up.

Not alone among the damages done by Ian is a section of the bank of Lake Uihlein, which was washed out by the storm.

Much, but not necessarily all, of the clean-up costs are expected to be reimbursed by FEMA.

As the tax assessments for the current fiscal year are already set, districts will no doubt have to dip into reserves during fiscal year 2023 in order to deal with increased costs for services. That makes it imperative that districts keep a tight rein on any non-essential spending, in order to avoid having to amend the current year's budgets.

Residents should be aware that the assessments for the 2024 fiscal year will most probably be considerably higher than those for the current year, again due to increased costs for services, plus the possible need to replenish reserves that may have been used to pay the current year's bills.

The alternative could very well be the reduction in the level of services to residents, and supervisors expressed hesitation to cut the level of services, as this goes to a "quality of life" consideration for their districts. If residents want to decrease the amount of possible fiscal year 2024 assessment increases, they may be well advised to notify their supervisors as to just what services they may be willing to have curtailed or eliminated.

As supervisor Tom Green of District 2 observed, vendors seem to be using the inflation excuse to raise their prices.

GOLF CARTS

After comments were made regarding kids misusing golf carts, Attorney Chris Van Hise, who represents District 1, noted that if minors are misusing golf carts, their parents

SEE CDD, PAGE 19



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Your LWR Story

By Maggie Milne

Meet Jon and Laura Jelinek! Jon is an executive with a firm that connects creative and digital marketing professionals with career opportunities. He is now able to work remotely (a result of the pandemic), with employees nationwide and physical offices in Chicago and New York. Laura works full-time at home overseeing all the details of raising their children and managing their new home.

Prior to moving to Lakewood Ranch, Jon and Laura enjoyed seven years in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Chicago. Their Chicago lifestyle included a welcoming neighborhood vibe, easy access to dining and the amenities of downtown Chicago. With a view toward their future lifestyle needs, Jon and Laura then moved to Wheaton, Ill. in 2017. Wheaton was a welcome change, involving home renovation projects, and community renewal. But Jon and Laura were a younger couple in their multi-gen neighborhood; expecting their first child, they noticed how few children were on their street. Wanting playmates for their newborn as he grew up, they considered another move. Although they loved the Midwest and the four seasons, winter limited the family fun and activities Jon and Laura wanted. The arrival of the COVID pandemic provided an opportunity for them to rethink the lifestyle, cost of living, and the ideal environment for their family. When their first child, James, turned four and their second child, Owen, was born, Jon and Laura seriously considered Florida for their future home.

Both Jon and Laura were familiar with the west coast of Florida; Jon even grew up vacationing in Clearwater. They both welcomed a warmer climate, one which would allow for year-round outdoor activities. Through their research about Florida and communities in the west coast region, they found Lakewood Ranch. Jon saw regular posts on a friend's social media that featured Siesta Key Beach and other beautiful locations nearby. He contacted his friend to learn more about the area. That is when Jon and Laura first heard about Lakewood Ranch – Jon's friend lived in Lakewood Ranch and shared his enthusiasm about it.

Jon and Laura combed through the Lakewood Ranch website to learn more. Jon researched "master-planned communities" and loved the concept. Lakewood Ranch was a perfect fit for their family. Jon and Laura visited Lakewood Ranch to explore resale and new construction options. "Lakewood Ranch immediately felt like home," Jon said during their visit. They saw children, young professionals, and families of all types and ages during their visit. Jon and Laura imagined raising their children in Lakewood Ranch, and spending their life – well into their future years, retirement, and beyond – with all The Ranch offers. During their visit they explored a variety of Lakewood Ranch villages, both resale options and new construction homes. They also discovered what they could look forward to, such as the Sarasota Polo Club, top-rated schools, an active lifestyle, easy access to beaches and neighboring Tampa, outdoor living, and the overall conveniences Lakewood Ranch offers. Although they considered other states and different master planned communities, their first and last exploratory trip was to Lakewood Ranch – their future home.



PHOTO BY SCOTT SIKORA PHOTOGRAPHY

Through social media connections, Laura became friends with a resident of Lakewood Ranch living in Mallory Park. As if according to a "grand plan," Jon and Laura found and bought a Mallory Park home. They made the move to Lakewood Ranch in June of 2022. On the first day of their new Lakewood Ranch life, they met neighbors – now friends. "The people are so friendly," they said. For them, Mallory Park was a perfect mix of families with children of all ages, playgroups, and village events, which helped them mingle with their new neighbors. After noticing

the comradery among Mallory Park residents, Jon, a member of the board of directors for Bear Necessities Pediatric Cancer Foundation, believed hosting a fundraising event for the foundation in their new Mallory Park community would be well received.

Jon's 18-year-old nephew, Blake, died after battling cancer throughout his teenage years. Through Bear Necessities Pediatric Cancer Foundation, Blake received support and encouragement while he lived with cancer. In Blake's memory, Jon wanted to host a local fundraising walk for the foundation. With approval from their HOA, Laura and Jon organized "Walk For The Bear," held in October. Mallory Park residents responded to the event with overwhelming enthusiasm. More than 100 people took part in the walk, and families helped with event preparations and throughout the event. Participants, and Mallory Park neighbors dressed in the colors gold and purple; gold for fighting pediatric cancer and purple for Bear Necessities Pediatric Cancer Foundation. The Walk For The Bear event raised \$4,300 – a tremendous success! Jon and Laura felt the positive power of their new community coming together for an incredible cause and for each other. Jon, Laura, and their two sons love their Mallory Park/Lakewood Ranch life.

Jon and Laura know they plan to stay in Lakewood Ranch. They cannot imagine leaving. Having only lived in Lakewood Ranch for six months, they know there is so much of Lakewood Ranch they have yet to explore. They look forward to spending time on the local beaches and their children have just begun activities like T-ball, golf, and basketball. With year-round sun, warm temperatures, and a never-ending range of activities, they will never be bored. Jon and Laura are grateful their children are growing up and establishing roots in Lakewood Ranch. They look forward to all that awaits them around The Ranch.

You can contact Jon and Laura to learn more about Bear Necessities Pediatric Cancer Foundation and Walk For The Bear at jonjelinek06@gmail.com or 630-294-2028.

Monkee's Celebrates Grand Opening at Waterside Place

Monkee's, an upscale ladies' boutique specializing in shoes, clothing and accessories, has opened its location in Waterside Place at 1561 Lakefront Drive, Ste. 104. Monkee's provides the ultimate personal, private and multi-shopping experience for its customers.

Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, and closed on Monday. For more information visit monkeesoflakewoodranch.com or call 941.358.8868.

PHOTO BY RYAN ANGELL



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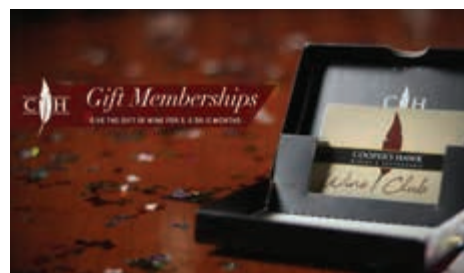


Christmas and New Year's Gift Ideas

Christmas time is a time for giving, and New Year's is a time for hope. Now that our holiday season has arrived, it is time to tell that good friend how much they mean to you, and what better way but with a wine-related gift. This month's issue is dedicated to wine gifts for Christmas or as we welcome the New Year.

I'm Vigo, your Unassuming Wine Bro (UWB). I'm a regular guy who loves everything about wine, including writing about it. I aim to explore the nuances of wine, share my adventures with you, and have a little fun along the way.

Whenever wine is served, it's a special time during the holidays. Most gift-givers thoughts are, "how can I make this gift for my wine lover even more special?" With this in mind, here are some UWB suggestions for a gift for your wine lover:



COOPER'S HAWK WINERY AND RESTAURANT WINE CLUB MEMBERSHIP, STARTING AT \$21.99

What better way of keeping it local and celebrating the holiday season than with a wine club membership to Cooper's Hawk Winery and Restaurant? The membership, which starts at \$21.99/month, includes an exclusive Wine Club bottle each month, tasting room privileges, discounts on wine and carryout orders, and access to special offers for Wine Club members. If that loved one is really special to you, 6- and 12-month gift memberships are also available.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON WINE MAKING KIT, UNCOMMONGOODS.COM, \$65.00

If you're a loyal UWB reader, you have endured my monthly bemoaning of some wine-makers not giving their all when producing wine. If you're at the point where you want to take matters into your own hands, uncommongoods.com has the answer: make your own



wine. The Cabernet Sauvignon Wine Making Kit comes with everything you need to be your own winemaker, including naturally produced grape juice from Napa Valley. The kit makes one gallon (approximately five 750ml bottles) of robust cabernet sauvignon. If cabernet isn't your bag, uncommongoods.com also has merlot and pinot grigio kits. If Santa reads this article, I want him to know I want this under my tree this year.

WINE CHILLING WANDS, WILLIAMS SONOMA, \$49.95

If you ever gasped at the sight of your loved one putting ice in your rosé glass, Williams Sonoma has created a product that will counter the ice-in-wine faux pas ... wine-chilling wands. The teardrop-shaped wine-chilling wands can chill a single glass at its ideal temperature 20 times faster than your refrigerator can cool an entire bottle of wine. The wine wands are polished stainless steel and fit wine glasses and most Champagne flutes. The wine



wands are designed to be stored in your freezer, and it takes three hours in the freezer for the wine wands to get to their optimum use temperature. So instead of drinking your rosé trashed, the wine wands from Williams Sonoma can turn your warm wine emergency back to classy.

ELECTRIC WINE AERATOR, AERVANA.COM, \$99.00

A few years back, Coravin wine-saving systems were all the rage. I even got caught up in the fad and requested Mrs. Claus (aka. my wife) to purchase one for me, and I enjoyed it but didn't use it as it was designed. My Coravin was a glorified wine dispenser, and I continued to be perplexed, thinking "there's got to be a better way." Well, Aervana (Aervana.com) has devised a solution to my problem: an electric wine aerator. This product should be placed in the same pantheon alongside the creation of the light bulb and sliced bread, for wine lovers. First, aerating wine can be a bit of a pain. You must either pour your wine into a special apparatus or attach a particular gadget to your bottle to push oxygen into your wine. The Aervana electric wine aerator takes care of that and dispenses your wine like it's on tap. The Aervana electric wine aerator is a fun and helpful product for any wine lover and another item I'll be putting on my list for Santa.

As we welcome Christmas and the new



year, we all can reflect on how lucky we are to live in the little piece of heaven we call Lakewood Ranch. We've made it through another COVID outbreak, economic ups and downs, and a hurricane that could have been catastrophic if it had continued its original path through our area. We are all blessed to live in a community that has such pride and that also cares so much for each other. Writing about the beverage I love was a pleasure, and I hope to continue to write and enlighten you in 2023.

Let me know whether you agree, disagree, or prefer other gift ideas. I'd love to hear your input and suggestions and are always thrilled to receive your feedback, information, and opinions. I can be reached at vigoloveswine@gmail.com.

TRADITIONAL MULLED WINE

For a treat during the holiday season, I include Vigo's Famous Glühwein (German Glow Wine) recipe for all lovers of warm mulled wine.

- 1 Bottle Red Blend Wine
- ¾ Cup Water
- ¾ Cup Sugar
- 1 Cinnamon Stick
- 5 Whole Cloves
- 5 Star Anise
- 1 Fresh Orange

If you want to kick it up a notch, add a shot of brandy, bourbon, or cognac

Add all ingredients to a medium saucepan and heat at a low simmer. Continue to stir till you see steam rising from the wine. Once hot and steaming, strain out all the spices and serve in a heat-resistant mug. Enjoy, but drink slowly.



December 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, unless otherwise noted.

Talmud Classes

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

At the Chabad House and via 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, 6:30 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 House and on Zoom

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

Ladies Torah & Tea

Tuesday, Dec. 27, 11 a.m.

At the home of Chanie Bukiet and via Zoom

Join Chanie Bukiet for a dose of delicious tea and refreshments and discussion on the 12 principles of energized living, which has empowered thousands of women to activate transformational goodness in their lives. Admission is free. Sponsor a class in someone's memory or honor for \$36.

Parade of Lights

Wednesday, Dec. 21, 6 p.m.

Leaving from the Chabad House parking lot, 5712 Lorraine Road

Join Chabad to spread the warmth and light of Chanukah throughout

Manatee County, with its third annual Parade of Lights, featuring overflowing Jewish pride, optional menorah for your car, community menorah lighting stops, fire juggler, and Chanukah swag. To join the parade or for more information, visit chabadofbradenton.com/parade or call (941)752-3030.

Chanukah in Ellenton

Thursday, Dec. 22, 6 p.m.

The Ellenton Outlets, 5461 Factory Shops Blvd.

Join us for the miracle and magic of Chanukah at the Ellenton Outlets, featuring fun activities such as magic shows, raffles, music, Chanukah art, dinner, latkes and doughnuts. All welcome. Free. Nominal food fees. Sponsor this event for \$180.

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

CDD FROM PAGE 15

can be sued if they cause injury or damage. This comment came after a supervisor mentioned an incident in which a small child was injured by a young person carelessly driving a golf cart.

PROPOSED PROPERTY SALE

A resident of District 6 is proposing to purchase a pie-shaped parcel of land adjacent to their lot. The previous owner of their residence did some improvement on that parcel of land – possibly without permission. The area has been kept mowed, and irrigation and landscape lighting had been installed by the previous owner. The issue is complicated because the small parcel is actually located in District 2, and there are possible easement issues regarding access to the nearby pond. This matter will need to be visited by the District 6 board, as well as the District 2 board, at a later date, after additional information is gathered.

ROUNABOUT

The possibility of Manatee County constructing a roundabout at the intersection of Players Drive and Lorraine Road will be

discussed at the Dec. 6 Manatee County Commission meeting. Residents wishing to express their opinions for or against are encouraged to attend this meeting.

FOOD BANK

The Lakewood Ranch Town Hall is collecting non-perishable food items for Hurricane Ian relief. Please bring these food items – especially high protein food items – along with cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, etc., to the Town Hall and put them in the big yellow barrel.

GATE ISSUES

There are apparently still ongoing issues related to gate access into the Country Club, notably related to the use of remotely located guards.

SECURITY SERVICES

A new security services contract has been reached with First Coast Security for the IDA and districts 2, 4, and 6. The service will commence as of Jan. 1, 2023. Executive Director Zielinski noted that the security costs have gone up by several dollars/hour, and that this new contract may be revised upward by the contractor.

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LAKEWOOD RANCH



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ASK THE DOCTOR

Defusing Holiday Stress

Put self-care at the top of the season's to-do list

By Kelly Bell, APRN

The holidays are among the most joyous dates of the year, but also the most hectic. Taking time to take care of yourself can often be forgotten amid the long to-do lists surrounding festivities. However, taking time to deal with stress in healthy ways can make these dates more enjoyable.

Kelly Bell, APRN, family medicine nurse practitioner with Lakewood Ranch Medical Group, offers some helpful advice on stress reduction as we usher in the new year.



- Journaling (writing down whatever comes to mind)
- Laugh more, as it lightens the mental load

HOW CAN PHYSICAL HEALTH PLAY A FACTOR?

When you take care of your body, your mental health improves. Being active boosts your feel-good endorphins, while an anti-inflammatory diet can lower the stress hormone cortisol. By exercising regularly and eating foods high in vitamin B, protein and magnesium, you are effectively helping your brain cope with stress. Additionally, try to avoid alcohol and drugs. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the use of drugs or alcohol in itself can negatively impact your ability to manage stress.

WHAT TO REMEMBER

Managing stress can be a difficult task. Being kind and compassionate towards yourself can be the first step towards mental well-being.

You don't have to do it alone. Reach out for help.

Seek professional care if you feel overwhelmed, worry excessively, or if you are having difficulty in your normal routine.

To make an appointment with family medicine, call 866-515-9777 or schedule online at lakewoodranchmedicalgroup.com/appt.

HOW DOES STRESS AFFECT YOU?

The demands and obligations of the season can make it hard to notice when stress is affecting you mentally and physically. Common signs that you're stressed include:

- Headaches
- Change in sleeping pattern
- Back pain or neck stiffness
- Change in appetite
- Mood swings
- Difficulty concentrating

WHAT CAN YOU CHANGE?

Make rest and self-care a priority. Taking a breather can make a big difference. The American Psychological Association reports that regularly detaching from your long to-do list can restore energy and help you be more resilient when difficulties arise.

As you deal with stressful times, consider:

- Aromatherapy (candles or lotions)
- Listening to music (5-8 songs uninterrupted)
- Meditate, in a quiet environment, using visualization

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- Open to Boys & Girls - Ages: 4 - 14
- Practices Begin: Beginning of February
- Games Begin: End-February
- Saturday Morning Games
- Games are played from February - April
- Training days: Mondays or Wednesdays
- Cost includes complete uniforms (shirts, shorts & socks)

Program Cost:

U5-U7: \$145

U8-U13: \$155

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THE (PET) DOCTOR IS IN!

By Erin Siems, DVM



Holiday travel is stressful! For our pets, it is a major disruption of their routine and can be a huge sensory overload. Traveling by car requires sitting or lying in one position for an extended period of time with radio noise and car vibrations, interrupted by a quick potty or meal break, then being shuffled back to the car. Flying can be even more stressful, with all the hustle and bustle of people, noise and smells.

One of the biggest requests we veterinarians get around the holidays is for sedatives for travel. Unfortunately, there is not a magic pill that works for everyone, and sometimes a sedative will have the opposite effect and put them more on guard.

To combat travel woes, I advise people to try to prepare in advance. While medications can help some pets, desensitization goes a long way. I am often amazed at how many people are planning to travel with pets but have never put them in a carrier before. Of course being in a small confined space can add to anxiety if they are not used to it. I always recommend making the carrier a positive place with treats or toys with short sessions of confinement prior to the big trip. Taking car rides to simulate the drive and

monitoring for any motion sickness or anxiety triggers is a great way to prepare.

Other considerations for the day of travel are feeding arrangements (we don't want to starve but we also don't want to get the bubble guts midflight) and any routine medications that will need to be given. Timely potty breaks are also important, whether it is rest stops on a long car trip or seeking out pet potty stations in airports. Know (and respect) your pet's personality. While some dogs want all the attention and are calmed by strangers loving on them, it is ok to ask people not to pet your nervous or fearful pet if it will put them more on edge. And remember, no matter how tempting it is to share your airport burger or ice cream, now is not the time to add new things to the diet.

Holiday traveling can be a lot on us and our fur babies. Try to plan ahead and anticipate your and your pet's needs. And, once you get there, remember to relax and have fun!

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.

COFFEE FROM PAGE 9

of a counter, a case full of delicious goodies to consume with your coffee, and a selection of hats, T-shirts, and various coffee containers – the usual stuff of coffee houses.

But if you thought that you'd hold a political rally within the walls of O&A Coffee, you're out of luck, because there's only one table, and it sits in a tight corner.

So, here's the nice part about O&A Coffee: Since there isn't enough room for a rally or even a large group discussion within the confines of the establishment, you are sort of forced to take your delicious O&A Coffee – along with your favorite pastry – outside, where you'll find lots of tables, some in the shade and some out in the Florida sunshine. You can then sit, stretch out, enjoy your snack and your coffee. Wouldn't that be great?!

There you'll be ... sitting out in the sun, soaking up some early winter rays, gazing out at the water, and just having a great time.

The last time we visited O&A Coffee, my wife and I took our drinks and snacks to an outside table and did just that. We sat there and talked with each other, and watched a couple of little girls, dressed in their Disney princess outfits, being entertained by a lady wearing a "grown-up" Disney princess dress. They were having a great time, and we were, too!

O&A Coffee and Supply is located at 1570 Lakefront Drive, Ste.102, in Waterside Place, and is open from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Pick up an O&A "lion mug," some tasty goodies, and a cup of stuff and enjoy!



PHOTO BY ERNIE SOLLER

We really want a home for the Holidays!
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Julie
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Frisky
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HOLLYWOOD Stars
WALK OF FAME

Saturday, February 25, 2023 • 6 - 10 p.m.

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HONORARY CHAIRS:
Blessy Jacob, MD & Andres Soriano, MD
Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute

TICKET PRICES
\$250 per person | \$2,250 per table of 10

Proceeds Benefit
FLORIDA CANCER
SPECIALISTS
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The Florida Cancer Specialists Foundation
provides financial support to cancer
patients for essential living expenses.

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