

# Around the Ranch

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THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER OF LAKEWOOD RANCH

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023



**ANNUAL COMMUNITY CAMPOUT FEATURED GREAT WEATHER!** The last weekend in February produced camaraderie and family fun for groups of campers. For more information and pictures, see pages 12-13. Photo by Ernie Soller

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IN GREAT SHAPE**

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Editor:

Lisa M. Barnott  
lisa.barnott@lakewoodranch.com

### Contributing Writer:

Ernie Soller  
efsoller@hotmail.com

### Proofreaders:

Sue Chaney  
Chris Westlake

### Community Programs:

Keith Pandeloglou  
keith@lwrcac.com

### Graphic Designer:

Kim Collister  
kcollister@localiq.com

### Editorial Board

Lisa M. Barnott, Rex Jensen, Sue Chaney

### Phone Numbers

**Community Services Town Hall:**  
941-907-0202

**LWR Common Area:**  
Maintenance Requests, 941-727-0899

**Lakewood Ranch Medical Center:**  
941-782-2100

**Manatee County Government:**  
941-748-4501

**Sarasota County Government:**  
941-861-5000

**Lakewood Ranch Post Office:**  
941-758-3537

**Community Website:**  
myLWR.com

Around the Ranch offices are at 14400 Covenant Way, Lakewood Ranch, FL, 34202. The editorial phone number is 941-757-1542. The e-mail address is aroundtheranch@lakewoodranch.com.

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- Brian Higgins, Owner, with son Kyle



# Florida Organic Strawberries & Blueberries Pack a Powerful Brain Health Punch

By Stephanie Peabody, PsyD,  
HSPP, Neuropsychologist



When it comes to foods that protect our brain health, Florida is an abundant producer of small strawberries and tiny blueberries. These great-tasting spring berries have a unique and important role in brain health. These antioxidants tend to fight off free radicals, which damage cells and can lead to memory loss and other brain difficulties. They are packed with flavonoids, the powerful antioxidants that give them rich color. Research shows the flavonoids in blueberries, for example, pack three times more antioxidant power than spinach, another healthy brain superfood.

## STRAWBERRIES, BLUEBERRIES AND OTHER BERRIES FOR MOOD AND THINKING-BOOSTING BENEFITS.

Blueberries and strawberries have some of the greatest amounts of antioxidants around. Berries also contain flavonoids, which have been shown to have mood and cognitive-boosting properties. “They’re lower on the glycemic index and a great option when adding fruit to your daily meal plan,” said Dr. Naidoo, BHI chief health officer and director of neuronutrition. “The bright colors of berries represent the polyphenols, which provide that antioxidant boost.”

The cells that make up our bodies, including our brain cells, rely on their energy-generating mitochondria to power the biochemical reactions that keep us healthy. A byproduct of this metabolic process is the production of free radicals — unstable atoms that bind to other atoms. Free radicals damage the cells they attach to and their mitochondria. Our bodies usually produce enough antioxidants to neutralize most of these free radicals but when there are more free radicals than antioxidants, we experience oxidative stress. Oxidative stress can cause damage to DNA, protein, and lipids, leading to such diseases as type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer’s disease, atherosclerosis, and cancer. Free radicals are also known to cause wrinkles and other signs of aging. The best source for supplementing antioxidant production is to include foods high in antioxidants — like organic Florida strawberries and blueberries — in your diet.

Research also shows flavonoids help improve

brain performance, including memory. One study found that women who consumed two or more servings of pigment-rich berries each week delayed memory decline by up to two-and-a-half years. Strawberries and blueberries also score well in nutritional value being low in calories, fat, and sodium, but high in vitamins C and A, and fiber.

For an added boost, choose wild blueberries. Research shows these smaller, tastier blue wonders contain more anthocyanins than any other commonly consumed berry in our diet, including ordinary blueberries. They can be found in the frozen food aisle of the grocery store throughout the year.

For a family adventure visit an organic berry farm and pick the berries yourself. Family farms are an excellent source of valuable organic fruit for you. Some local farms include:

Honeyside Farms (a vendor at The Market at Waterside Place), Albritton Fruit Farms, Gamble Creek Farms, and O’Brien Family Farms.

And don’t forget to BE BRAIN HEALTHY and adopt a lifestyle that includes thoughts, behaviors, emotions, responses, and language that promote brain health protective factors:

- Stress resilience
- Nutrition

- Physical activity
- Sleep
- Social connection
- Emotional wellbeing
- Meaning and Purpose
- Cognitive stimulation and creativity
- Engaging with nature
- General health
- Positive impacts



*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 on a mission to build 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 is activating the next generation of brain health advocates and is a leader in brain health engagement, research, innovation, and education. Join the Be Brain Healthy movement, because brain health matters and lifestyle makes a difference.*



## Brain Healthy Breakfast and Snack Blueberry, Strawberry, Kale, and Walnut Smoothie (Serves 1-2)

### Ingredients:

1 cup frozen blueberries  
1 cup frozen strawberries  
½ cup walnut pieces  
½ cup packed fresh baby kale  
¾ cup almond milk

### Instructions:

Measure all ingredients into a blender. Starting on low and working up to high, blend until completely smooth. Serve immediately.

## “Cream” of Blueberry and Strawberry Chilled Soup (Serves 6-8)

### Ingredients:

4 cups strawberries  
4 cups blueberries  
3 ½ cups water  
1 lemon, sliced in 8 wedges  
2 cinnamon sticks  
1 cup plain yogurt  
Sprigs of mint  
Organic whole milk Greek vanilla milk  
Fresh strawberries and blueberries  
Lemon wedge

### Instructions:

Combine berries, water, lemon, and cinnamon sticks in heavy saucepan and bring to a boil.

Lower heat and simmer for 15 minutes.

Transfer to a bowl and chill for 4 hours or overnight.

Discard lemon and cinnamon sticks.

Puree remaining ingredients

Pour in a bowl and whisk in yogurt.

Chill for several hours to meld flavors.

Place a serving of soup into individual serving bowls.

To the top, add a dollop of vanilla Greek yogurt and some fresh blueberries and strawberries with a sprig of mint before serving and a wedge of lemon.



# Lakewood Ranch Medical Center's ER at Fruitville Receives Excellence Award

Lakewood Ranch Medical Center's (LWRMC) full-service, free-standing emergency department, ER at Fruitville, has been named a 2022 Human Experience (HX) Guardian of Excellence Award winner by Press Ganey. The award is part of Press Ganey's annual ranking of the top hospitals and health systems in the country, according to performance in patient experience.

As a winner of the Press Ganey HX Guardian of Excellence Award, the ER at Fruitville is in the top 5% of healthcare providers in delivering patient experience in the last year. Press Ganey works with more than 41,000 healthcare facilities in its mission to reduce patient suffering and enhance caregiver resilience to improve the overall safety, quality, and experience of care.

"It is an honor to recognize our team of physicians, nurses, and support staff at the ER at Fruitville for achieving this honor,"



said Andy Guz, chief executive officer of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center. "We understand that a patient's experience is influenced by several touchpoints throughout their visit and every person the patient comes into contact with plays an important role in providing a high-quality, compassionate experience."

By putting its patients and workforce first each day, Lakewood Ranch Medical Center demonstrates its unwavering commitment to its employees and to the communities it serves, according to Patrick T. Ryan, chairman and chief executive officer of Press Ganey. "The caregivers at Lakewood Ranch Medical Center have inspired us with the compassion, empathy, and human connection they bring to the clinical healthcare setting. We are honored to partner with them as we celebrate their achievement," Ryan said.

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## Stock Development Announces Plans for Wild Blue at Waterside

Stock Development recently announced plans for Lakewood Ranch's newest community in Sarasota, Wild Blue at Waterside in Lakewood Ranch. Scheduled for release in spring of 2023, Wild Blue at Waterside will be located just south of University Parkway in the Waterside community.

Stock Development is utilizing its experience in creating master-planned communities to plan and design the 550-acre community. Wild Blue will be built on the mantra "it's only natural," officials said, and will take a nature-centric approach to luxury lakeside living. Over half of the property will be left to untouched spaces, creating a verdant community for residents to enjoy.

Wild Blue at Waterside's design will be crafted for an active lifestyle. The community will have natural surroundings, offering residents almost limitless opportunities for outdoor



ventures. Amenities such as a winding trail system, parks, and lakes will surround homesites. Residents will be able to enjoy a regular brisk walk or indulge in lakeside recreation. Wild Blue's designed features will include a 25,000-square-foot clubhouse and wellness center, plus a resort-style pool. Additionally, the Lakeside Café, an exclusive dining option for Wild Blue residents, will overlook the community's largest lake and will be steps away from the clubhouse.

Wild Blue will feature 500 single-family homes on a variety of estate-size homesites. Stock Development has identified a handful of select builders to join them in the development of the homes.

The Wild Blue at Waterside sales office is currently located at 8307 Lake Club Boulevard in Lakewood Ranch. To learn more, or to get on the VIP list, visit [www.WildBluelwr.com](http://www.WildBluelwr.com).



# Audit Reports are in, and LWR's Finances are in Great Shape

By Ernie Soller  
Community Correspondent

During February of every year, the annual audit reports covering the previous fiscal year's finances of the Lakewood Ranch Community Development Districts and the IDA are presented by the accounting firm tasked with reviewing these finances.

Tiffany Mangold, a director at Purvis Gray and Company, performed audits of each of the boards' finances, and reported that the audits were "clean," and were in accordance with government accounting standards as established by the U.S. Comptroller General's office, as well as Florida law, meaning that there were no issues found in the audits. Mangold commented that a "clean" audit or "unmodified opinion" marks the highest grade of performance on the part of Lakewood Ranch's financial professionals.

Audits of HOA finances are due for completion in March.

## FEMA CLAIMS

Executive Director Steve Zielinski commented that the final tally of the dollars spent by Lakewood Ranch in cleaning up after Hurricane Ian came to a total of between \$1.4 and \$1.7 million.

The community's final report to FEMA was due by Feb. 18, and it is expected that Lakewood Ranch will see reimbursement for the money spent in the cleanup after the storm.

Chief Financial Officer Susan Wiggins noted in her comments to the boards that Lakewood Ranch has finally received some checks from FEMA for damages due to Hurricane Irma in 2017! This means that Lakewood Ranch has been reimbursed for all but less than \$2,000 of the reported expenses from Irma, and, if that minimal balance is not paid by the end of the current fiscal year, it will be written off.

On a related item, the Operations Department has received components for the repair and/or replacement of the signs which were damaged by Ian, and the operations staff is busy working on completing repairs.

## "SUNSHINE LAW" SESSION

On Jan. 31, the Lakewood Ranch CDD board members, as well as HOA officers, participated in a joint special workshop presented by the attorneys for the IDA and the CDD boards on the subjects of the Florida Sunshine Law, public records, and ethics. Such meetings

are offered to explain changes in Florida statutes, as well as to enlighten board members (and especially new board members), as to their responsibilities in carrying out their duties as public officials.

## SHRED DAY

The annual Lakewood Ranch Shred Day is expected to take place on Saturday, April 22. Details are not yet complete. In previous years, Lakewood Ranch has partnered with Grow Financial, which arranged for a "shredding truck" to be on site to chew up resident's old records. This year, however, the company that had provided the use of the truck at no cost to the community was bought out, and the document destruction company's new owners have declined to provide the service on a gratis basis.

Discussion is taking place between the Town Hall and the Stewardship District to share in the cost, as the Shred Day program has become a favorite event here in Lakewood Ranch.

## REVISION TO LANDSCAPING CONTRACT

In District 1, the board voted to amend their landscaping contract to put it in sync with the duration of the fiscal year. The contract had originally been put in place as a "stopgap" measure to assure continued service to residents.

## DISTRICT 2

A presentation was put on for the District 2 board by representatives of the D.R. Horton Company, which is planning on building 52 attached townhomes (up from an initial amount of 48 homes) on what has been part of the Legacy Golf Course's driving range. Several residents spoke out on their concern about increased traffic in the area of Legacy Boulevard and University Parkway, which would result from this construction. Apparently this intersection has become an area of concern, due to numerous accidents in the area, which the residents feel will be exacerbated by the construction of the proposed townhomes.

District 2 Board Chairman Pete Bokach noted that the district needs more feedback in the form of a traffic study. Supervisor Tom Green said that there is already a huge amount of traffic on University, and this is causing a backup of vehicles trying to turn on to that road.

The District 2 board rejected a proposal

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# LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

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Spring is coming! As the winter season comes to a close, we are thrilled about what we have to reflect on, as well as what is to come.

The 5th annual Lakewood Ranch Community Campout was our largest ever! Thank you to all of the families that participated in this fun and unique event. Our Community Campout is a night of laughter, fun and memories under the stars. Attendees enjoyed a food-truck dinner, a showing of “Inside Out,” as well as nature-themed excursions and activities in Greenbrook Adventure Park. We can’t wait for next year!

We are officially three days away from our annual Fishing Seminar for Kids and 10 days out from the Youth & Teen Fishing Tournament! The seminar will be held at Summerfield Community Park and the tournament will take place at Lake Uihlein, which is right behind Lakewood Ranch Town Hall.

When registering for the free Fishing Seminar, you may choose between a 10 a.m. or 1 p.m. session. Every child that completes one of the two sessions on March 18 will receive a free rod and reel, courtesy of Fish Florida. Make sure to sign your child up for the seminar so they can get their free rod and reel to use the next Saturday at the tournament! The Fish-



Aliye Presley  
Events & Marketing  
Manager



ing Seminar is free to attend but does require pre-registration. The tournament is \$5 for Lakewood Ranch residents and \$10 for non-residents. Please go to MyLWR.com to register for the seminar as well as the tournament.



You won’t want to miss out on this year’s EGGstravaganza! Join us at Waterside Park on April 1 for Lakewood Ranch’s longest-running egg hunt. Thousands of eggs stuffed with goodies will be spread out for the kids to find, separated into two age categories, 3-5 and 6+. In addition to the highly-anticipated egg hunt, there will also be fun activities like a bounce house, face painting,

photo ops, a visit from the Easter Bunny and more! Limited tickets are remaining, get yours at MyLWR.com.

Want more information on our activities, events, or even our community groups? Head to MyLWR.com or the Lakewood Ranch App to browse what we have to offer. Reach out to us at [info@lwrca.org](mailto:info@lwrca.org) with any questions.

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# AROUND THE RANCH



Photos by Ernie Soller

## LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY CAMPOUT: More Fun on The Ranch!

By Ernie Soller  
Community Correspondent

True to its tradition of providing all sorts of fun activities for Lakewood Ranch residents, the Lakewood Ranch Community Activities crew yet again offered a fun way to spend a nice balmy winter weekend – the Lakewood Ranch Community Campout, held the last weekend of February, at Greenbrook Adventure Park.

In mid-afternoon of Saturday, campers arrived and began setting up their tents. There were all sorts of tents to be seen, ranging from what amounted to little “pup tents” to some that resembled a canvas house. It was certainly amazing just to see what accessories folks brought to the campout: portable fans, all sorts of cleaning and disinfecting supplies, snacks, snacks, and more snacks!

Parents, and in some cases grandparents, helped erect the away-from-home shelters, with Community Activities volunteers helping some puzzled parents put up their tents.

While parents were busy putting up the family’s temporary housing units, kids were doing what kids love to do – having fun. One group of kids was found playing with an interesting gizmo that would shoot projectiles into the air when a kid stepped on a pressure pad.

A couple of girls whose tent was already set up were taking advantage of the shade inside and were engaged in a card game. One young boy must have gotten very tired helping to put up a tent, since he was all but falling asleep in a hammock! Other parents and kids brought with them their own cornhole setups.

The Sidewalk Science Center brought some of their “heavy



equipment” out to the campout – things like a BIG telescope to check out planets and the moon. The Sidewalk Science Center can also be visited at the Ranch Nite Wednesday events at Waterside.

In the evening, families were treated to a campfire and were able to roast marshmallows and make s’mores. There was also acoustic musical entertainment. And the main event of the night – a showing of the Disney/Pixar animated film “Inside Out” that won an Academy Award in 2015 for best animated feature film. The movie tells the story of a young girl who has a hard time coping with the fact that her family moved from the midwestern town where they lived to the very different big city of San Francisco.

Perhaps one of the hallmarks of an event such as the Lakewood Ranch Campout might be the morning after. Sunday arrived after a night of no rain, but very heavy dew, which coated everything in moisture, meaning that packing up your tent before it dried out could result in some very moldy canvas. The morning also brought with it a goodly amount of ground fog, which gave Greenbrook Adventure Park an almost eerie appearance.

The Community Activities crew was all set for morning for both kids and parents. President and CEO Keith Pandeloglou and his associates brought in gallons of fresh coffee, along with lots of donuts. Volunteer and Community Activities board vice president Carlene Smith, who had been helping folks put up their tents on Saturday, was there on Sunday morning handing out donuts.

Even so, both kids and parents could be seen wandering around the campsite area in a sleep-deprived state. It was almost as if the Lakewood Ranch Community Campout had suddenly become a “pajama fashion show”. One trio of girls was



seen wearing unicorn PJs, a ski sweater PJ set, and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer pajamas. Some kids just put on shorts and a T-shirt and kept warm using blankets or beach towels. (It got a bit cooler than some campers expected overnight!)

The annual Lakewood Ranch Community Campout – just another great event here in Lakewood Ranch. Things just keep on getting more fun around here!





# Your LWR Story

By Maggie Milne

Meet Dr. Ibrahim Saad, resident of and professional in Lakewood Ranch. Ibrahim's story begins when he was 10 and living in Lebanon. When he was a boy, he co-managed an electronics supply business with his father after his day at school. When his father had to leave Lebanon for a month, Ibrahim continued with the responsibilities of both school and the electronics supply business by himself. This required him to travel outside their immediate community, selling supply orders to customers. Ibrahim credits his father for how he became the person and professional he is today, by giving him this early exposure to work, responsibility, and success.

He arrived in the United States when he was 15 years old, attending high school in Michigan. Soon after his family's arrival, Ibrahim's father became extremely ill, unable to work or support the family. Ibrahim took responsibility for the care and support of his family – his father, mother, sisters, and brother. After school, Ibrahim would work a job of some sort, including at a bakery, gas station, and pharmacy, and at landscaping. Eventually, Ibrahim received a promotion and raise at the pharmacy, working full-time in between his school days and academic responsibilities.

When he graduated high school, Ibrahim attended a local community college, then transferred to the University of Michigan. He paid his own way through college and continued to help his family financially. To use his time as efficiently as possible, he set up his own duct cleaning business, a flexible schedule for the academic demands of college. Ibrahim bought a low-budget van, secured a professional duct cleaning certificate, and began soliciting his neighborhood and local territory for business in the midst of very cold weather, through ice and snow. Soon, his duct cleaning business was thriving, and he successfully paid for college, helped his family financially, and graduated from the University of Michigan with high honors.

Ibrahim had his mind and vision set on success. He understood the value of education and arduous work. Following graduation from University of Michigan, Ibrahim attended The American University of Antigua's college of medicine on the Caribbean island of Antigua and Barbuda. He fulfilled his two years of clinical work back in Michigan, at St. Joseph Mercy Health System. Ibrahim was grateful to be near family again, and resumed his duct cleaning business. He was able to stay in Michigan to complete his required internal medicine residency. During this time, some of his family's land in Lebanon was sold. With the profits from that sale, Ibrahim invested in a local Dollar Store. The success of the Dollar Store provided financial support for his family, who was dealing with his father's ongoing health issues. Motivated by the success of the Dollar Store, Ibrahim opened a kitchen supply store in a local shopping center and partnered with his sister and her husband to manage the store. Ibrahim accomplished all of this while fulfilling the requirements of medical school and 80-hour work weeks of residency. His efforts and achievements were done to ensure he could pursue his own dreams, knowing his family would have sufficient financial and practical security without him nearby.



Ibrahim graduated from medical school as a doctor of internal medicine in 2012. He finished his internal medicine residency, and at age 30 he was a doctor, married, and a father to his first daughter. Although he considered working with a medical practice in New York, Ibrahim accepted interviews in various cities throughout Florida – Jacksonville, Fort Lauderdale, and the Tampa Bay area. “The drive across the Skyway bridge did it,” Ibrahim said. As he continued his travels toward the Sarasota area, he said he was sold on moving to and working in Southwest Florida. While looking for his forever home in the Sarasota area, he discovered Lakewood Ranch.

Ibrahim visited the Bridgewater village and found his forever home. He said he could see the potential Lakewood Ranch offered in terms of growth and prosperity. As a new, young doctor, he imagined his professional life would grow as the Lakewood Ranch community grew. He and his family moved into Lakewood Ranch in August of 2015, and his life has been exactly as he imagined ever since, he said.

Ibrahim began his medical profession with a local, private practice. The number of patients he was treating grew so rapidly, he decided to pursue an opportunity with Sarasota Memorial Hospital. Having proved himself in his field and to his colleagues, he became the associate director of the internal medicine residency program at the hospital, where he has been distinguished as a mentor and a great teacher. Although thoroughly satisfied with his life as a physician and his family life, Ibrahim dreamed of setting up a side business, something the Lakewood Ranch community wanted and needed.

In 2017 Ibrahim welcomed his second daughter. The public schools are a huge part of why he chose Lakewood Ranch and chooses to stay in Lakewood Ranch, he said. His daughters

attend a local elementary school around the corner from their Bridgewater home. He appreciates the Lakewood Ranch aesthetic, mutual hospitality shared with his neighbors, and the endless support he and his family share with the community. Ibrahim plans on staying in and growing with Lakewood Ranch. He wants this for himself professionally and personally, but also wants this for his family.

Following his enterprising spirit, Ibrahim decided to open an upscale barber shop, Man Cave. Ibrahim opened his first location in 2019 at The Mall at University Town Center in the midst of the COVID pandemic. Finding his rhythm with the management of a new business, being a fulltime physician, and having a family life, he bought Urban Shave in 2020, his second barber shop. While setting up Urban Shave, Ibrahim learned about Waterside Place Town Center, the newest town center in Lakewood Ranch. Understanding the location and plans for future retail, dining, business, and events, Ibrahim decided to open another Man Cave, his third barber shop. Man Cave at Waterside Place opened in 2022. Ibrahim also opened his first restaurant, Alforno, one month after opening the third barbershop, offering the first and only authentic Lebanese food eatery in the area.

Ibrahim's daughters are now ages five and eight, and enjoy activities such as swimming and dance. They also enjoy family activities, like boating and jet skiing off the Gulf shore, and community events at Main Street and Waterside town centers. In his free time, Ibrahim takes his girls to the Farmers' Market, Ranch Nite Wednesdays, and Music on Main. Now and then the family enjoys a trip to Disney; so close!

While his daughters grow up, finish their schooling and extracurricular activities in Lakewood Ranch, Ibrahim plans to maintain his current professional responsibilities and add more! To keep up with the ongoing growth and demand in Lakewood Ranch, Ibrahim plans to open a Barber Academy as a part of Urban Shave. He also intends to open three Alforno restaurants, bringing a taste of his old home to his new home. Ibrahim is committed to giving back to the community that has given so much to him and his family. He considers each new business venture as a way to support the local economy by offering goods, services, and jobs. Ibrahim wants to be a part of the ongoing growth Lakewood Ranch will experience in the next decade. He says he and his family are “living the Lakewood Ranch dream” – the dream he imagined when he discovered Lakewood Ranch in 2015. The Saads say “thank you from the bottom of our hearts” to Lakewood Ranch for the opportunities and life provided them.

If interested in contacting Dr. Ibrahim Saad you can email him at [isaad4748@gmail.com](mailto:isaad4748@gmail.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).*



## AUDIT FROM PAGE 9

from a District 6 resident to purchase a small parcel of District 2 land which abuts their property.

**DISTRICT 4**

Operations Director Tom Merrill noted that the painting of house numbers on curbs in District 4 will start as soon as the painting in District 1 has been finished.

The District 4 Board voted to approve the replacement of the adult fitness equipment at Adventure Park. The old equipment is in a deteriorated condition, and beyond normal repair. The cost will be \$57,343.93, not including a shade for the area, and this amount is within the District's budget. The old equipment will be declared surplus so that it can be disposed of.

Operations Director Merrill reported that his department is waiting on certain garden plot supplies so that the Community Garden can begin functioning for residents.

**DISTRICT 5**

It was noted during the District 5 Board meeting that Manatee County apparently still

is concentrating on the idea of a roundabout at the intersection of Players Drive and Lorraine Road. Executive Director Zielinski commented that he'd like to have County Commissioner Vanessa Baugh come to the town hall to discuss this issue, and also the condition of road pavement in our area on county roads.

**DISTRICT 6**

Supervisor Sandra Keenan commented that a gate guard at the Balmoral gate failed to show up for work on Feb. 13, and that a supervisory guard arrived to fill in.

Executive Director Zielinski noted that this was the day after the Superbowl, and that particular day has become known as the biggest day for employee no-shows in the entire year!

**SUPERVISOR MOVES**

During the February CDD board meetings, two long-serving supervisors announced their intention to move out of the community in the near future – District 5's Alan Silverglat, and District 6's Henry Hofeler. The timing of their resignations will depend on the sales of their homes and their moving dates, which have not yet been determined.

## March 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 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**

**Tuesdays, March 21 and 28, 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.

**Chabad Hebrew School of the Arts**

**Sundays, March 19 and 26, 9:30 a.m. to noon**

At the Chabad House  
Give your child the experience of a lifetime at CHS, featuring an outstanding curriculum, professional and warm teachers, hands-on lessons, CKIDS motivational system and an innovative Hebrew reading Aleph Champ program.

**CTeen Escape Room**

**Tuesday, March 21, 7 p.m.**

Meet at the Chabad House  
Join CTeen LWR for a Pass-over-themed trip to an escape room! Create comfort pillows for children in Israel! Cost: \$40 and free for CTeen members. CTeen annual membership is \$200.

**RCS – To Believe or Not to Believe in Yourself**

**Thursday, March 23, noon**

At The Chabad House and on Zoom  
The Rosh Chodesh Society course introduces the students to Tanya, a 225-year-old text whose portrayal of human psychology in general, and our inner spiritual composition in particular, remains as revolutionary – and as refreshing – as ever. This is the fifth class of a seven-class course and is entitled "Do Happy. Be Happy." Lunch will be served. Course fee: \$85; JWC members \$80, textbooks included, or \$20 per class.

**From Miniskirt to Hijab: A Girl in Revolutionary Iran**

**Sunday, March 26, 7:30 p.m.**

At the Chabad House  
A fascinating lecture by Jacqueline Saper, award-winning author, TEDx speaker, op-ed columnist, and translator. Get to the heart of Ms. Saper's story of "how extremist ideologies seized a Westernized, affluent country and transformed it into a fundamentalist Islamic society." Cost: \$20; sponsor \$360-\$1,800.

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

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PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER



## Wine Walk Wednesday – What A Capital Idea!

By Ernie Soller  
Community Correspondent

Almost six years ago, I walked into a then-new business on Lakewood Ranch Main Street, in a location that had been in its previous incarnation, an olive oil shop. The previous owner had decided to retire, and Scott Shortt and his family took advantage of the situation to introduce a concept rather unique in Lakewood Ranch: Fine Wine and Tastings on Main – a wine bar/wine shop.

This is a place that you can go to after a day at work, or for a nice break in a day of “power-shopping,” or simply a nice, warm, friendly place to stop with your best girl or good friends, to sit and sip, and maybe take home a bottle of that wine which turns your mouth up at the corners.

Fine Wines and Tastings has become, well, almost a tradition in Lakewood Ranch. It has become the destination for those who value the taste of good wine, and perhaps the opportunity to reminisce about that trip to Napa Valley, while enjoying the products of that region – and a whole lot of other wine-making centers of the world. After all, if you’re in Florida, you’re not exactly in Napa or Sonoma, or up the coast for that matter. But here at Fine Wines and Tastings, you can drop in, and taste the fruit of a Spanish vine, or maybe a South African blend. A shiraz from Australia, mate? Why not?

Fine Wines and Tastings is the sort of place to which you can bring friends from out of town – those folks who are considering becoming snowbirds or even full-time residents, but haven’t

taken the plunge just yet. You can sit and talk about all the great aspects of Lakewood Ranch.

But Scott Shortt has come up with another, slightly different means of getting his good wine message out to the public and in the process, enabling his fellow merchants to participate in a fun and tasty event.

It’s called Wine Walk Wednesday and, now that the pandemic is, for the most part, an unpleasant memory, Shortt has re-instituted the Fine Wines and Tastings Wine Walk Wednesday.

Here’s how it works: A limited number of tickets are sold, to be sure that the event stays fairly small and cordial. The bearer of a ticket gets a wrist band, which notifies participating merchants that the bearer has paid for a ticket and is entitled to tastings all over Lakewood Ranch Main Street. Wine Walkers also receive a small glass full of charcuterie items – a piece of flatbread, grapes, blueberries, several types of sausage, pieces of cheese – just to get the evening started on a good note.

Participating merchants who join the Wine Walk offer to host a representative in their store who will pour tastings of various wines, and the merchant usually also comes up with some tasty food item to complement the wine. For example, one of the participating merchants this time around was Vanessa Fine Jewelry. Those with a wrist band could walk into Vanessa’s, get a tasting of several wines, and a slice of pizza. If they chose to stop by the Raymond James offices, they could get a pita rollup, and

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





if dessert was on their mind, there was a tast- ing station at Suitcase Sweets, which offered, you guessed it ... chocolate.

Chocolate was also on the menu at Integri- ty Sound, which not only offered several types of fine chocolate, but enabled their visitors to check out those BIG screen TVs!

Participating merchants hosting tasting sta- tions also included Naples Soap and Fantasy Flowers.

Now, here's another great feature of the Wine Walk: deals on meals at Main Street restaurants!

For example, at Sofia's, if you were a Wine Walker, you could get 20% off your whole check. And at McGrath's Irish Ale house, you'd get a free appetizer with an entrée purchase. At Ed's Tavern, you could get a great Ed's Tav- ern burger for \$6! When was the last time you could score such a deal that wasn't fast food from BK or Mickey D's?

As for the star of the show – the wine, of course – the choices for tasting varied by the pouring venue. At Fantasy Flowers, the wines were all from Spain, at Fine Wines and Tast- ings, they were from Italy. At Vanessa Fine



Jewelry, you'd find a combination of California and Washington State wines – all with some very interesting names: Slo Jams Sauvignon Blanc, Send Nude Rose, and Sexual Chocolate. After all, red wine goes well with dark choco- late, doesn't it? At Suitcase Sweets, some names were equally different – such as a California wine called Eight Years in the Desert – with a label showing what appeared to be an ancient photograph of a Joshua tree in the desert. Suit- case Sweets also had samplings of the priciest wine on the list, called Papillon Bordeaux, which sells for almost \$70 dollars per bottle. The label on this wine showed the name of the wine spelled out in tattoos across the fingers of a hand. Amazing is the creativity of the artists who create wine labels. A wine called Juggernaut, poured at Naples Soap, had a rendering of



a great white shark churning up the ocean on the side of its packing case.

Wine Walkers took with them a chart of what wines were being tasted at each venue, along with a price list. If a Wine Walker wanted to purchase one of the featured wines, he or she would get a 10% discount on single bottles and a 15% discount on cases of a single wine, when

purchased during the walk from Fine Wines and Tastings.

A little food, a glass of wine, and a special someone to enjoy it with on a balmy Lakewood Ranch evening. Thanks, Fine Wines and Tast- ings, for a great evening.

For information on the next Wine Walk, visit [finewineandtastings.com](http://finewineandtastings.com).





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## Built To Honor Program Breaks Ground on Mortgage-Free Home In Lakewood Ranch For Hometown Hero

Local United States Army veteran Sergeant First Class Lucio Gaytan helped break ground on his mortgage-free home in Sapphire Point at Lakewood Ranch in February. The new home will be built through homebuilder PulteGroup's Built to Honor program, which provides the gift of a new home to deserving veterans and their families across the country.

The home will be donated in partnership with the Built to Honor program and non-profit veteran support organization, Building Homes for Heroes.

Launched in 2013, the Built to Honor

program has awarded more than 75 mortgage-free homes to veterans and their families across the country.

The ceremony included a special motorcade procession to welcome Sgt. Gaytan and his family. There were hundreds of guests in attendance, including Josh Graeve, Pulte Southwest Florida division president; Laura Cole, senior vice president of Lakewood Ranch Communities; Manatee County Commissioner Vanessa Baugh, Cody Brannon, of Building Homes for Heroes, and many community residents.

Army Sergeant First Class Lucio Gaytan

joined the military on Feb. 1, 1996. He was the first person in his family to serve in the military and said that there was no greater honor than to serve his country. After 22 years of service, he was honorably retired in February of 2018.

In 2005, SFC Gaytan was injured during a parachute jump while training for his deployment to Afghanistan. His sustained injuries from the severe landing fall include herniated discs, bulging discs, degenerative disk disease, a lumbar sacral injury from his L-1 down to his S-1, and spinal stenosis, all in conjunction with Ehlers-Danlos



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





Syndrome. Despite his injuries, he completed his deployment overseas and continued to serve until he was physically unable. He medically retired after being transferred to the Warrior Transition Battalion.

SFC Gaytan has undergone many medical procedures to help with his injuries, but still suffers from chronic pain and a traumatic brain injury (TBI), hearing loss, and tinnitus. Despite his injuries, SFC Gaytan is a participant in adaptive sports, such as wheelchair basketball, wheelchair football, and has even taken part in the Department of Defense (DoD) Warrior Games for Team SOCOM.

For his service to his country, SFC Gaytan has been award-

ed several military honors, including the Bronze Star Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal w/ 4 Campaign Stars, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal w/ Campaign Star, Master Parachutist Badge, and the Air Assault Badge.

PulteGroup's Built to Honor program recognizes and thanks returning military personnel who have been injured during their term of service by providing mortgage-free homes to veterans and their families. Built to Honor works in partnership with nonprofit organizations to identify veteran candidates. For more information about Built to Honor, go to [builttohonor.org](https://builttohonor.org).





## THE UNASSUMING WINE BRO



# Spring into Spring with Some Aromatic Viognier

Now that the temperatures in Florida have crossed over 80 degrees, it's time to leave our hardy red wines in the wine racks and start venturing out to our back lanai with some excellent, refreshing, and exciting white wines. But what to choose? German gewurztraminer, California chardonnay, Italian Malvasia, what to choose? Being that it's spring, let's try something different and less talked about, Viognier.

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.

Viognier (pronounced vee-on-yeah) grapes are produced prominently in the Rhône region of France (also grown throughout the world) and were introduced to the area by the Roman Emperor Probus, who brought (it was the Roman Empire, so "took" would be a better choice of words) from Croatia in the 3rd Century AD. What makes this grape variety and wine so unusual is the aroma. Think of a flower garden in a bottle. You'll be more tempted to smell than taste the apricots, peaches, and honeysuckle with a hint of gingerbread aroma wafting from every bottle of Viognier you open. Thankfully this is a wine-tasting article rather than a wine-smelling article. Regarding taste, Viognier delivers apricot, mangos, tangerine, honeysuckle, and fresh-cut roses coating your palate. Medium body, with some dryness and acidity, this might be your next afternoon by the pool favorite.

**RATING SYSTEM:** Ratings are given on a 1-5 scale, with five being the highest.

## 2021, JV FLEURY COTES DU RHÔNE BLANC, JV FLEURY WINERY

*Rhône France, \$25 U.S., 13% ABV*

The 2021 JV Fleury Cotes Du Rhône Blanc is made with 100% Viognier grapes and grown in the home of Viognier wines, the Rhône region of France. Having much faith in the Viognier grape may seem too foolhardy, but JV Fleury's winery courage in the robust Viognier grape pays off in a delicious white/amber beauty. When you uncork, the JV Fleury Cotes Du Rhône Blanc fills your nose with the aroma of peaches, orange blossoms, and mangos. On the palate, tropical fruits fill your mouth with a hint of dryness and acidity. Poolside or tableside, this is a go-to Viognier.

**RATING:**

## 2021 SOBON ESTATE VIOGNIER, SOBON ESTATE WINERY

*Amador County, California, \$38 U.S., 13.8% ABV*



2021, JV Fleury Cotes Du Rhône Blanc



2021 Sobon Estate Viognier



2019 Psagot Viognier

The 2021 Sobon Estate Viognier is California's answer to the Rhône region of France. The Sobon Estate Viognier is 100% viognier, like the JV Fleury Cote Du Rhône Blanc, but what it lacks in history, it makes up in taste. On the nose, peaches, cantaloupe, and ripe, creamy bananas. With a buttery finish, apricots, peaches, and apple blossoms are on the palate. Slightly acidic and medium-bodied, this viognier can challenge its French big brother.

**RATING:**

## 2019 PSAGOT VIOGNIER, PSALSAGOT WINERY

*Occupied West Bank, Israel, \$29 U.S., 13.9% ABV*

I always like to pull a wild card when I do wine reviews, and the 2019 Psagot Viognier is the wild card of wild cards. With grapes produced in the occupied territories, this wine can be controversial. Controversial, maybe; delicious, yes. The 2019 Psagot Viognier, unlike our other two selections, is a blend of viognier and chardonnay grapes that I enjoyed because it provided the snap of the viognier grapes that were rounded by the consistently smooth as the other side of the pillow chardonnay grape. On the nose, the 2019 Psagot Viognier has the inviting aroma of freshly picked apples, citrus, and honeysuckles. On

the palate, it delivers green apples, apricots, grapefruit, and a smooth honey finish. The 2019 Psagot Viognier is a wild card worth taking a chance on.

**RATING:**

## OVERALL IMPRESSION:

I'm as guilty as everyone else when it comes to wine selections. We all choose what we know because we know what we're getting. However, wine is not only a beverage, it's an art and with art, sometimes you must take a chance on something out of the norm, which may become your next norm. Though I would never have selected a white wine such as Viognier when sitting in my back lanai enjoying a Florida sunset, I think the selections I made this month are well worth the time to test and enjoy while venturing out of your wine comfort zone.

## FANS AND READERS:

Like our Facebook page "The Unassuming Wine Bros," follow us on Instagram @theunassumingwinebros, or email us at [vigoloveswine@gmail.com](mailto:vigoloveswine@gmail.com). Let us know what you think about this article, these bottles, or suggestions for upcoming articles.



## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

# Patients with Early-Stage Prostate Cancer May Benefit from an Easier Treatment Option

By Lori Boyd

For patients dealing with prostate cancer, surgery or radiation can often come with side effects, including erectile dysfunction and incontinence. The minimally invasive High Intensity Focused Ultrasound (HIFU) procedure, available at Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, aims to treat prostate cancer with reduced side effects.

## HOW DOES HIFU THERAPY WORK?

HIFU destroys prostate cancer cells through precise focusing of sound waves to the targeted location. A transducer from an ultrasound probe inserted into the rectum delivers the sound waves. The use of a robotic arm allows the surgeon to precisely control the probe's movements. The heat, created from the interaction between the sound waves and the cancerous tissue, is what destroys the cancer cells.

## ADVANTAGES OF HIFU

- HIFU is minimally invasive, so only the cancerous tissue is targeted, not the surrounding tissue.

- Precision features significantly reduce side effects, such as impotence or urinary problems.

- HIFU is an outpatient treatment. Patients typically recover for about two hours in the hospital and then go home, often without a need for pain medication.

## EXPERIENCE MATTERS

When it comes to the use of HIFU for the treatment of prostate cancer, experience is important, according to Stephen Scionti, MD, board-certified urologist. Dr. Scionti performed the first HIFU treatment at Lakewood Ranch Medical Center in 2018, when the hospital became one of the first in Florida to acquire HIFU.

For patients who are seeking the advantages of HIFU, Dr. Scionti recommends that they do their research to find a physician who has experience with the procedure. Dr. Scionti has worked extensively with HIFU and has performed more than 1,000 successful procedures worldwide.

## PROSTATE CANCER STATISTICS AND RISK FACTORS

Other than skin cancer, prostate cancer is the most com-

mon cancer in American men. Approximately 288,300 new cases of prostate cancer are estimated for 2023, and 34,700 deaths, according to the American Cancer Society.

Individuals with the highest risk factors for prostate cancer include African American men, men who are 65 and older, and men with a family history of prostate cancer. Finding prostate cancer early may help reduce symptoms, make treatment easier or prevent death from prostate cancer. Talk to your physician about your risk for prostate cancer and what screening measures may be right for you.

Individual results may vary. There are risks associated with any minimally invasive procedure.

Talk with your doctor about these risks to find out if this procedure is right for you.

*Physicians are on the medical staff of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, but, with limited exceptions, are independent practitioners who are not employees or agents of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center. The hospital shall not be liable for actions or treatments provided by physicians. For a referral to a physician at Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, please call 800-816-4145.*



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## THE (PET) DOCTOR IS IN!

By Erin Siems, DVM



Spring is here ... or should we say early summer? Although Florida is not particularly known for its seasons, spring tends to bring about our longest, most annoying season — allergy season. Just like us, many pets have seasonal or environmental allergies. While people tend to get itchy eyes and runny noses, common signs of allergies in pets include itching, licking paws, ear infections, watery eyes and sneezing. Just like people allergies, pet allergies are not curable but can usually be managed. The severity of the allergies will determine how much maintenance is needed.

If your fur friend has allergies, the best way to decide on a treatment plan is to consult your veterinarian. Together, you can come up with a targeted plan for success for treating your pet and managing their environment. A few common environmental solutions are to vacuum often, use HEPA filters and wash bedding in hot water weekly.

Often allergy pets will need more frequent bathing with a hypoallergenic or medicated shampoo and nutritional supplements like omega fatty acids. Some pets need prescription medications and/or diets to help with the allergies and any resulting infections. Some need allergy testing and special medication

formulated for their specific allergies. There are even dermatologists for dogs who are experts in this field!

This allergy season know that help is out there. Know the signs of allergies in pets and know that you can help make your fur baby more comfortable. After all, pets make our lives better in so many ways, so why wouldn't we do the same for them?

*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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# Bella

Please Adopt Me

*I need home, not just a place*

Bella is a sweet female, about 2 1/2 years old. She likes to be brushed and likes to play. She would do well as a single cat in the house but is okay with dogs.

Apply online at [www.duetteanimalrescue.org](https://www.duetteanimalrescue.org).

Duette Animal Rescue Team



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***Make a donation in support of the event or bid online.***

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Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee is a 501 (c)3 organization. The Florida Registration Number for Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee is #CH1420. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL FREE 800-435-7352 OR AT WWW.800HELPFLA.COM WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.



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