

THE CAPE CORAL SUN

Celebrating the Past, Present, & Future of Southwest Florida's Largest City!



VOL. 4 NO. 2

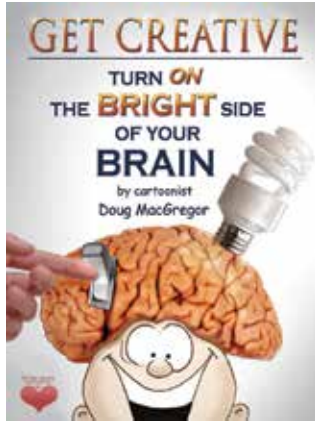
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FEBRUARY 2025

Gulf Coast Village To Host Acclaimed Southwest Florida Artist, Author And Illustrator Doug MacGregor

Join Gulf Coast Village residents for a session of humor and creativity as acclaimed artist Doug MacGregor shares his one-of-a-kind perspective on life in Southwest Florida.

MacGregor, who is best known for his 23-year career as a Fort Myers *News-Press* editorial cartoonist, will speak at the Cape Coral life plan community at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 27, entertaining residents and prospective residents alike with his side-splitting humor.



Doug MacGregor on page 8

2025 Will Be A Game Changing Season For Sunsplash Family Water Park

Park Opens For The Season March 8 And Daily For Spring Break March 14 To 30

Sunsplash Family Waterpark in Cape Coral, Florida will open for the exciting 2025 season starting Saturday, March 8.

This season will be game changing as the park is adding a 12,000-square-foot Paradise Cove Wave Pool, offering variable waves in 160,000 gallons of refreshing fun. As a part of this historic park expansion, the park is also adding a 16- by 9-foot video screen, additional seating, and shade for over 300 guests and more luxury cabanas with epic views and access to Paradise Cove. "Paradise Cove Wave Pool will be a game changing new attraction for Sunsplash" says Ron McKenzie, Chief Marketing Officer for Orlando based Proparks Attractions Group. "It will provide a brand-new in-park gathering point for our guests and allows us to offer even more fun and exciting special events. We know that Cape Coral has been asking for a wave pool for decades, and we are happy



to finally be making the vision a reality." The park anticipates that Paradise Cove Wave Pool will open early Summer 2025!

Sunsplash offers a variety of ways to cool off including a meandering lazy river, thrilling water slides and fun kids' attractions with slides and interactive splashy fun for the little ones.

Sunsplash Family Water Park on page 6

First Of Two Biergarten Fests To Be Held In Cape Coral

The German American Social Club of Cape Coral (GASC) is opening its Bavarian Gardens to replicate the fun of Oktoberfest and to celebrate its German heritage on the weekend of February 15 and 16. After the huge success of its 39th Oktoberfest last year, the club members cannot wait to celebrate good times and sunshine, teaming up to get the festivities back into full swing for its Southwest Florida Freunde.



With German music performed by the Dynamic Duo on Saturday afternoon and Manni Daum Trio throughout the day on Sunday, plus featuring blues by the Pitbull of Blues on Saturday late afternoon until evening, the Bavarian Gardens will be bustling, and the organizers anticipate a crowd of joyful dancers or foot tappers on the dance floor at the pavilion, raising their cups and enjoying a potato pancake or a brat. GASC President Erich Kohl is extremely excited to greet the community back to the club and to celebrate spring in the Cape Coral gardens.

Once again, the members of GASC are working hard to prepare for the first of the two outdoor Biergarten festivals planned this season. The party for the whole

Biergarten Fests on page 2



WATERPARK SEASON IS HERE!

Sunsplash Opens March 8th!

Southwest Florida's biggest and best water park opens March 8th.
Just in time for Spring Break. The park is open daily for Spring Break March 10th - 14th.

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The Rynski Report: Better Than Dog Hugs

By Ryn Gargulinski [Rynski]

If you're as big a dog lover as I am, you want to run up and hug pretty much every dog you see. Common sense – and that close-call with a trained-to-kill Chow back in New Mexico – tells you that's not the best way to go expressing your love to dogs that don't know you.



But even our own dogs may not appreciate all our love expressed in hugs, kisses or expensive toys. The toys get ignored and left to trip us in the bathroom doorway. Kisses are known for imbuing us with a mouth full of fur.

And dog hugs can be iffy. One of my pooches absolutely loves my hugs, roiling with glee when I smother and rock him while making monster noises. Do the same to my other dog, and he plays dead long enough for me to let down my guard – and then promptly tries to rip my face off.

The good news is, there's a better way to show our eternal affection. A way that is safer, more powerful and works for dogs of all breeds, shapes, sizes and fur length. That way is called Reiki.

Reiki is divine life force energy, channeled from the heavens – and into you. As you absorb your needed share, you can also channel the energy to your dogs, your cats, your pet mouse in your pocket, your pocket itself, your entire wardrobe, your car, your yard – anything made up of energy. So that basically covers everything.

We are all born with the innate ability to receive, absorb and channel Reiki, and you can undergo a series of Reiki initiations/certifications to become an even clearer and more powerful channel for the abundant flow.

But even without the initiations, you can serve as a channel for this divine life force energy that heals, soothes, relaxes, supports and fuels us all with love.

Channeling Reiki to your dog starts by relaxing your mind, body and spirit. Be still. Be quiet. Stop thinking about what's for dinner or that stupid driver who cut you off last week. Focus all thoughts, emotions and sensations on opening

the essence of your being to receive the divine life force energy from above.

Envision Reiki flowing into your crown, down your spine, and then into, around and through every corpuscle of your being. See and feel it flowing around your physical being, cleansing your aura, energizing the entire room you're in, and softly floating around you in all directions.

See and feel a surge of Reiki energy running down each arm, coming out of your palms. Now focus that energy into your dog.

You can channel Reiki from across the room (or the world!), or you can actually lay your hands on your dog to



bring a warm touch along with the Reiki. Putting one hand on the dog's crown and the other above his heart is one of the most comforting positions.

Experiment to determine what your dog likes best, then keep it up on a regular basis. Close out each session with gratitude. For your dog. For the Reiki. For life. And for finding a way to share all the love of the universe without the risk of getting your face ripped off.

Ryn Gargulinski [Rynski] is a Cape Coral freelance writer, artist, speaker and healer who loves to entertain and inspire. In addition to more than 10 published books and multiple awards, she holds a BFA in Creative Writing, an MA in English literature, minister ordination, and Reiki and coaching certifications. Founder of the Sanctuary of the Wild Souls community, Rynski lives with her two happy hounds, one happy hubby and way too many crystals. Learn more at RynskiLife.com. Contact: Rynski@RynskiLife.com.

Biergarten Fests from page 1

community will be held in Bavarian style. Southwest Florida is invited to enjoy two pleasant and fun-filled afternoons of German food, beer or wine, music, and above all, what we've come to understand as Gemütlichkeit.

Throughout the day, the gardens will be filled with German traditional music and the delicious aroma of typical German fare such as Bratwurst, Knockwurst, Schnitzel, and potato pancakes. There's plenty to look forward to as the community can enjoy the shaded gardens with friends and family. The event opens at noon on Saturday and Sunday, closing at 8 p.m. on Saturday and 7 p.m. on Sunday.

From 5 to 8 p.m. on Saturday, the club is especially excited to be featuring the award-winning Josh Rowand and the Pitbull of Blues, the high-energy Florida band that has been on the prowl for many years. A regular on the festival circuit, the Pitbull of Blues Band is known for its fun-loving mix of traditional and original blues. Josh is proud to be the only U.S.-endorsed artist with Ali Kat

Guitars and with his stunning guitar work, he leads the crowds through a repertoire of all that is blues and more.

Tickets are \$5 and parking is free, as are children ages 12 and under!

And it doesn't stop there. The Southwest Florida Community can look forward to yet another Biergarten Fest on March 15 and 16.

President Kohl and his team are proud to be able to invite everyone in Cape Coral and beyond and share German heritage and Gemütlichkeit! There's plenty of good cheer, and beer, to go around at the German American Social Club. The club has been brimming with excitement as it offers a jam-packed filled schedule of events this season. "We're really looking forward to another fun-filled year as we move closer to our 40th Oktoberfest later this year! Stay tuned!" says Kohl, cheerfully.

Check out the club's website www.gasc-capecoral.com for more information on the various events being offered.

Of course, the club opens its doors to members and the public for dinner and dancing every Friday night at 5.30 p.m.

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Publisher
Coastal Media Communications, LLC

Publisher/Owner Joe Yapello
publisher.ccsun@gmail.com, (239) 770-8284

Publisher/Owner Bonnie Yapello
bonniey.ccsun@gmail.com, (239) 464-3731

Editor Sherry Whalon
capcoralsuneditor@gmail.com

Columnist/Staff Reporter Ryn Gargulinski
ryngargulinski.ccsun@gmail.com

Webmaster/Ad Designs..... Mandy Carter
mandymichellecarter@gmail.com

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Contributing Writers

Judy Calla, Cape Coral Art League
..... capcoralartleague.org

Laurie Carlson, Cape Coral Cruise Club
..... www.capecoralcruiseclub.com

Mandy Michelle Carter
..... info@mandydoesmarketing.com

Lillian Till, Flutterbuy Books and More
..... (239) 789-6619, www.flutterbuybooksandmore.com

Sheriff Carmine Marceno, Lee County Sheriff's Office
..... www.sheriffleefl.org, www.facebook.com/sheriffleefl

Liz McCauley, Cape Coral Animal Shelter
..... www.capecoralanimalshelter.com, (239) 573-2002

Kirstin Moll, Real Estate
..... realestate@kirstinmoll.com, (573) 450-3181

Monica Rahman, Friends of the Cape Coral Library
..... monica4608@comcast.net

Capt. Bill Russell, Catch The Action
..... www.fishpineisland.com, (239) 410-8576

Karen Ryan, LCEC Public Relations Director
..... www.lcec.net, Karen.Ryan@lcec.net

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We invite you to step aboard our elegant, USCG-inspected boat, designed to host up to 30 guests in comfort and style! Whether you're planning a birthday bash, bachelorette party, team-building event, family adventure, or community gathering, Off the Leash Charters delivers unforgettable moments on the water.

Our customizable private charters offer flexibility, allowing guests to select their preferred pickup location, cruise duration, and route, including convenient pickups from private docks.

Beyond private charters, we offer a variety of ticketed cruises departing throughout the week and weekends from popular waterfront destinations such as Oxbow Bar & Grill and Pinchers in Downtown Fort Myers, Sea-Craft Waterfront Tiki in North Fort Myers, and a private dock on Del Prado Blvd., S. in Cape Coral.



Owners Todd and Renee



We are deeply grateful for the enthusiastic support of the River District Alliance, Lee County Visitors and Convention Bureau, Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce, and, most importantly, our delighted passengers. The local community, including residents, snowbirds, and visitors, have eagerly awaited the return of charter boat services to this scenic stretch of the river since the devastating impact of *Hurricane Ian*, and we are thrilled to bring it back.

Come aboard and join us on the water to experience the magic of Off the Leash Charters.

Soak Up The Sun Cruise From Dock On Del Prado Blvd., S. (Cape Coral)

Chill out on a relaxing afternoon cruise along the beautiful Caloosahatchee River and explore the stunning Cape Coral



canals – the “Venice of America”! Bring your own beverages and enjoy a fun day on the water with your favorite crew. Perfect for a romantic day with your sweetheart, a family adventure, or a fun-filled outing with friends.

Sunset Canal And River Cruise From Dock On Del Prado Blvd. S. (Cape Coral)

Cape Coral, “Venice of America,” boasts over 400 miles of canals. Imagine gliding through this watery maze, lined with waterfront homes and private docks, interacting with residents on shore. Then, enjoy a spectacular sunset on the river before returning to your dock. It's the perfect way to unwind and soak up the beauty of this coastal paradise.



Caloosahatchee River

Journey upstream towards historic downtown Fort Myers and the Fort Myers Power Plant, or drift downstream to Levi's island (lovingly nicknamed after our pup) and San Carlos Bay. Wherever the river takes you, let the good vibes flow!

Halfway To Nowhere

Sometimes, it's nice to simply cruise without a destination in mind. Let the captain choose the course so you can relax with friends, lose yourself in music, and let the salty air carry away your worries. Allow the journey to unfold organically and unplanned.

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Making Life Easier®

Cape Coral Opens Civitas: A New Era Of Affordable Workforce Housing

Cape Coral has officially opened its first workforce-based housing community, Civitas of Cape Coral, marking a significant step in addressing the city's growing need for affordable housing. The 96-unit development, located off Pine Island Road, provides essential housing options for individuals and families earning 80% or less of the area median income (AMI).

A Much-Needed Solution To Rising Housing Costs

With skyrocketing rental prices across Southwest Florida, many residents have struggled to find affordable places to live. Civitas offers a solution, with rental rates as low as \$634 per month for certain units, and prices ranging up to \$1,800 for three-bedroom apartments. Each unit is equipped with a washer and dryer, ensuring modern



conveniences for residents.

To qualify for Civitas, applicants must meet specific income and household size requirements. For example, a three-person household earning no more than \$25,000 annually could secure a one-bedroom unit for as low as \$634 per month. Meanwhile, a similar unit for someone earning \$41,000 might cost closer to \$1,400 per month.

"Good. Because we need it. The housing prices are way too high for anybody to survive," said Cape Coral resident Christine Heerlyn. "You can't live off of less than \$100,000 here."

A Modern, Amenity-Rich Community

Civitas is more than just an affordable housing project – it is a thoughtfully designed residential enclave spanning 4.65 acres. The community consists of three three-story concrete residential buildings, constructed to meet NGBS Green Building certification standards.

The unit mix includes nine one-bedroom, 57 two-bedroom, and 30 three-bedroom apartments. Residents have access to a 6,100-square-foot clubhouse featuring a fitness center, business center, and a swimming pool. Additionally, Civitas offers free programs, including an Employment Assistance Program and a Financial Management Program, to support residents in achieving economic stability.

The Collaborative Effort Behind Civitas

Civitas is the result of a public-private partnership between the Lee County Housing Authority, ReVital Development Group, and Birdsong Housing Partners. The development received financial support from various entities, including \$5.6 million in state hurricane relief funds, \$1.1 million from the City of Cape Coral, and \$2 million from Lee County.

"It's exciting. It's overwhelming," said Michael Allen, President of ReVital Development Group. "We're happy to finally see the vision come to reality and provide housing for hard-working families in Cape Coral."

Meeting The Demand For Affordable Housing

The need for affordable housing in Cape Coral has never been greater. At the Civitas pre-leasing event, hundreds of hopeful applicants camped out overnight, eager to secure a unit.

Mark Brady, a local resident who currently sleeps in his



car, expressed his urgency for housing options like Civitas. "I'm disabled. I collect Social Security, about \$23,000 to \$24,000 a year, and that is it," he said. While he was unable to qualify in time for Civitas, he remains hopeful as the city plans more developments.

Cape Coral City Councilor Jennifer Nelson-Lastra emphasized the importance of these projects: "When they're starting teachers, law enforcement officers, or first responders ... their salary is not of that median range. It's a huge issue."

District 5 Councilmember Joseph Kilraine echoed similar sentiments: "People think of low-income housing as something that's not very prestigious. But if you look at this facility and what they offer – it's unbelievable. It's a great asset to have in the city."

Looking Ahead: More Affordable Housing On The Horizon

The completion of Civitas is just the beginning. Developers are already planning an additional 160 affordable housing units in North Fort Myers, with future projects also being considered in Cape Coral.

"That's definitely the goal – to show that it can be done, how it can be done, and that it's well received by the community and local government," Allen said. "We have our next development in Cape Coral planned as well, about a mile down the road for seniors. We'll continue to focus here in Cape Coral and Lee County, and grow."

As Cape Coral continues to expand, developments like Civitas provide much-needed stability for residents, ensuring they can live where they work and contribute to a thriving, diverse community.

For more information on eligibility and applications, visit civitas.pmiflorida.com. Civitas of Cape Coral is located at 123 Civitas Court, off Pine Island Road.

Sudoku

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5		4	1	2	9			8
3	1				5			2
9								

Answer in this issue

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Business Spotlight

AquaShine Express: More Than Just Another Car Wash

By Ryn Gargulinski, Sun Reporter

Car washes may seem to flock to Cape Coral like birds to a pile of French fries – but not all car washes are created equal. Take it from Jade Leone, general manager of the newly opened AquaShine Express Car Wash on Nicholas Parkway.

“It has a friendly atmosphere,” Leone says of the car wash that celebrated its grand opening on Jan. 31 after a soft launch in mid-December. “Everyone is very happy to help.”

A personal greeter is stationed to welcome every driver before their car enters the high-tech Express Tunnel system. Other employees are on hand to provide assistance in the site area, which offers the free use of vacuums, glass cleaner and towels with every wash.

The site area is also where employees are able to build relationships with customers.

“You get to know new faces, new people,” says employee Jeremiah Higgins of his favorite part of the job. “You become friends.”

Other employees, like Jacob Hernandez, are equally enthusiastic about different aspects.

“I like seeing the wraps go off,” he says of the rotating brushes that clean the back, front and sides of the vehicle. And who wouldn’t?

Brand-new and made of neoprene, the wraps don’t trap dirt like old-school cloth wraps. The wraps are combined with the pH-balanced soaps, wax and sealant options, making the wash gentle enough to get your car cleaned as frequently as you wish.

The entire tunnel is thoroughly cleaned at the close of every day, and the tunnel tested with a drive-through of Jade’s Audi every morning.

“I’m OCD,” she laughs, which is a perfect trait to bring to a place specializing in vehicle cleanliness. She was also able to bring ideal employees to AquaShine, hiring everyone who works there. Some of them were recruited from two competing car washes, where Jade had worked in management capacities.

The 20-year-old is already building her career in the car wash industry, citing things like confusion and unfair



AquaShine Express Car Wash General Manager Jade Leone shows off the state-of-the-art Express Tunnel system.



AquaShine Express Car Wash General Manager Jade Leone says the tire shine option has been getting tons of compliments.



The use of the sites vacuums, glass cleaner and wipes are included free with every wash.

practices as the reasons she left the other car washes behind. She enjoys the industry for the opportunity to learn and grow.

Cape Coral’s growth is what prompted AquaShine to open shop here, along with our strong economy and high-traffic areas. While the car wash is owned by a private equity company headquartered in North Carolina, the facility itself has a local community feel.

Additional perks include unlimited monthly wash packages, convenient license plate recognition entry, and in the higher-tiered packages, a tire shine option that Jade says has been a customer favorite since the get-go. A bug-remover gel is coming soon.

Monthly subscribers can get unlimited washes from any of the AquaShine locations. Four are up and running in Georgia and South Carolina, and others are planned for the Florida cities of Sarasota, Orlando, and Melbourne.

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Book Review: *Like Mother, Like Mother* By Susan Rieger

By Lillian Till, *Flutterbuy Books and More*

Susan Rieger's latest novel, *Like Mother, Like Mother* is an intricate exploration of family secrets, generational trauma, and the complex bonds between mothers and daughters. Set initially in 1960s Detroit, this compelling narrative weaves together the stories of three generations of strong-willed women whose lives are profoundly shaped by buried family history.



The story begins with a haunting premise: two-year-old Lila Pereira's life is upended when her abusive father has her mother committed to an asylum. This traumatic event sets in motion a multigenerational saga that examines how trauma, resilience, and identity ripple through time. Rieger handles these heavy themes with remarkable sensitivity and nuance, creating a narrative that is both emotionally resonant and intellectually engaging.

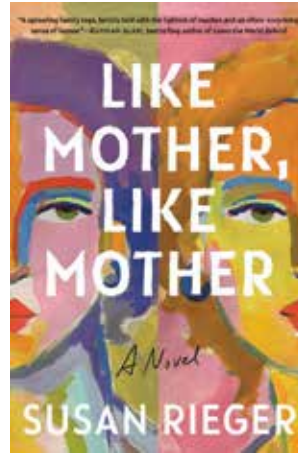
The novel's greatest strength lies in the character development. The writing is brilliant in its portrayal of complex, flawed characters who feel authentically human in their struggles and aspirations. Each woman in the story grapples with her own demons while navigating the delicate balance between personal ambition and family obligations. Rieger particularly excels at examining the tension between career ambitions and family

responsibilities, a theme that resonates strongly in today's context.

The author's writing style is sophisticated yet accessible. While the prose can be considered "highbrow" it remains deeply engaging, pulling readers into the story from the first page. Rieger's background as a Columbia University Law School graduate and former Associate Provost brings a sharp analytical edge to her storytelling, while never sacrificing emotional depth. Her prose is sharp and efficient, matching the journalistic background of her protagonist.

The novel excels in its exploration of themes including family dynamics, marriage, ambition, and motherhood. The *Kirkus Reviews* praises it as "both snappy and sprawling, psychologically sharp," noting how successfully it captures both cultural and political details of its various time periods. The author's careful attention to historical context enriches the narrative without overwhelming it.

However, potential readers should be aware that the novel deals with some challenging subject matter. As some reviewers note, there are trigger warnings for certain content, particularly in the backstory. While these elements are handled with care,



they may be difficult for sensitive readers.

The novel has been praised for being "immersive" and "powerful" in its portrayal of families lost and found, broken and irreparable. Rieger's ability to maintain narrative tension while exploring deep psychological territories is impressive. The story "held readers' hearts from the very first page," according to *Fresh Fiction*, a testament to its emotional impact.

What makes *Like Mother, Like Mother* particularly noteworthy is its refusal to offer easy answers or neat resolutions. Instead, it presents an examination of how family histories shape us, sometimes in ways we don't fully understand. The novel proves especially compelling for readers interested in nuanced portrayals of family, identity, and enduring questions about what it means to be shaped by our past.

In conclusion, *Like Mother, Like Mother* is a masterfully crafted novel that succeeds on multiple levels: as a family saga, as a psychological study, and as a commentary on motherhood and identity. While it may challenge readers with its subject matter, the rewards of engaging with this thoughtful and beautifully written work far outweigh any difficulties. It's a significant achievement in contemporary literary fiction that will resonate with readers long after they've turned the final page.

Lillian Till has been a dedicated nurse in our community for 30 years. Married for 35 years, she is the proud parent of two children and grandparent to three. Lillian can often be found at Flutterbuy Books and More where she is the proud owner. Opening a bookstore of her own has always been a dream, one that she continues to nurture with every turn of the page.

Sunsplash Family Water Park from page 1

Just in time for Spring Break, Sunsplash opens for the 2025 season Saturday, March 8 and will open daily for Spring Break, March 14 to 30. This season, the park will offer new and exciting events to include even more Sunset at Sunsplash evening exclusive parties for guests. Some fun events include Spring Break parties, St. Patrick's Day Celebrations, Easter Egg Hunts, Foam Cannon parties, Superhero days and



Football watching parties. This year the park is debuting a "Parrothead Exclusive evening in September." In addition to the events, throughout the year, the park also partners with guests and the community to collect school supply drives and food drives to provide for those in need.

If you are celebrating a birthday or would like to reward your students, youth groups, scouts, or employees.

Sunsplash also has terrific group packages for groups of any size.

The best way to enjoy Sunsplash is with a 2025 season pass. The pass includes unlimited visits, two bring a friend for free tickets, a 2025 souvenir bottle, early park entry, and a 20% discount on food and beverage purchases and cabana rentals. Season passes pay for themselves in just two visits. You can also find discounts on tickets and food and beverage packages on the park's website.

Sunsplash continues to expand the season as they



remain open daily and select weekends through Nov. 30.

"Our goal is to eventually be open year-round, and we think the excitement over the wave pool in 2025 will allow us to achieve that goal in the very near future," according to Mckenzie.

For more information on operating days and hours, special events, season pass and ticket prices, group packages and Paradise Cove Wave Pool updates. Check out the Sunsplash website, sunsplashwaterpark.com.

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In-Office Cataract Surgery Is Game-Changing

When it comes to restoring clear vision through cataract surgery, you have more options than ever before. Diagnostic testing is more sophisticated. Lens implants offer a range of vision options. And one of the most exciting advancements is the shift from hospital and ambulatory surgery centers (ASC) to in-office surgical suites. This evolution in ophthalmic care is more than just a trend—it's a patient-centered innovation that offers unparalleled benefits in terms of safety, cost, and convenience.

The Patient Advantage: Safety, Convenience and Cost-Savings

In-office cataract surgery is designed with patient safety and comfort in mind. Unlike hospital or day-surgery centers that require fasting, IV sedation, and complex scheduling requirements, in-office surgery simplifies the process. "Patients appreciate the seamless journey from consultation to post-op care, all in one familiar, trusted environment," says Dr. Yasi Rodriguez, medical director and surgeon at Elmquist Eye Group.



Key benefits include:

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Real Estate Corner

Is It Time To Cash In On Your Home's Equity?

By *Kirstin Moll*,

If you're a homeowner, chances are you've watched your home's value rise over the past few years. Thanks to record-high equity levels, many homeowners are sitting on what feels like a financial jackpot. But with the housing market shifting, you might be wondering:

Should I sell my home and cash in on my equity, or stay put and make the most of what I have?

Here's how to use your home equity to make the smartest decision for your situation.



What Is Home Equity, And Why Does It Matter?

Home equity is the difference between your home's current market value and what you still owe on your mortgage. For example, if your home is worth \$400,000 and you owe \$200,000, you have \$200,000 in equity.

According to *CoreLogic's Q3 2024 Homeowner Equity Insights Report*, U.S. homeowners with mortgages saw their collective equity increase by \$425 billion over the past year – a 2.5 percent year-over-year gain. This brings total homeowner equity to a staggering \$17.5 trillion.

While the pace of equity growth is expected to slow in 2025, homeowners still stand to benefit from historically high levels of equity.

This brings us to an important decision point for homeowners: understanding how your equity position can guide your next move.

Should You Sell?

Selling your home can be a great option if you want to: **Cash In On Your Equity Gains**

Median home prices climbed 50% from September 2019 (\$272,100) to September 2024 (\$409,000). By selling now, you can turn your equity into cash to fund a down payment on a new home, pay off debt, or invest elsewhere.

Downsize Or Relocate

If your current home no longer fits your needs, equity can help you afford a smaller home or move to a new area. Whether it's downsizing to reduce costs or relocating to a new area for better opportunities, your home's value can be

a key resource in making your next move.

Avoid Future Market Shifts

While home prices are expected to grow modestly (CoreLogic projects a 2.3 percent increase in 2025), rising inventory levels and regional affordability challenges could impact equity gains in the coming years. Selling now could help you maximize your profits.

Or Should You Stay?

Staying in your home might make more sense if you:

Want To Build More Equity

With home prices still rising, although at a slower pace than years past, you can continue building equity through regular mortgage payments and appreciation. By steadily reducing your mortgage balance and benefiting from even modest home price growth, you're consistently increasing your financial stability. This slow but steady equity growth ensures your home remains a valuable long-term investment.

Plan To Access Your Equity Strategically

As a homeowner, you have the option to tap into your equity through a home equity loan or HELOC to fund renovations or consolidate debt. These options often come with lower interest rates than personal loans or credit cards. Just be sure to use the funds for productive purposes.

Prefer Stability

If you're happy with your home and don't want to navigate the current housing market, staying put and focusing on maintaining your property might be the best choice. By staying, you can enjoy the stability of familiar surroundings while continuing to build equity through regular mortgage payments and property appreciation.

Key Factors To Consider

When deciding whether to sell or stay, ask yourself:

- **What are my financial goals?** Do you need a lump sum of cash now, or do you prefer to continue building long-term wealth through equity?
- **What is the market like in my area?** Cape Coral has been steadily growing for years but if you've bought in the last

couple years (at the height of the market), it's likely you don't have enough equity to make it worthwhile on cashing in. But, of course, always get a home equity report by your realtor.

• **What are the costs of moving?** Factor in expenses like closing costs, moving fees, and potential higher mortgage rates if you're buying a new home.

Whether you decide to sell or stay, your home equity is a powerful financial tool. Selling can provide immediate financial benefits, while staying allows you to continue building wealth over time.

Interested in learning how much equity you've gained over the past year? Contact me and I'll send over a personalized report!

And before you go: Here are the stats on the real estate market in Cape Coral this month:

- Median Sold price: \$390,028 (\$232/sq. ft).
- Down 2.5 percent from last year.
- Number of homes for sale: 4,747.
- Up 8 percent from last month.
- Number of homes sold: 402.
- Up 13 percent from last month.
- 285 Homes were sold under asking.
- 78 Homes were sold at asking.
- 39 Homes were sold over asking.
- Average Days on Market: 87 Days.
- Up 47 percent from last year

Until next month, *Kirstin Moll*

Kirstin made the move from Missouri to the sunny shores of Southwest Florida in 2015 and has been proud to call it home ever since. Before stepping into the world of real estate, she honed her skills as a marketing director for a real estate company and then moved on to be a creative director, designing campaigns for some of the top companies in the country. Kirstin's background in marketing and design gives her a unique edge in showcasing properties in their best light. Kirstin is passionate about providing a full-service luxury experience for every client, whether buying or selling. From the initial consultation to closing, she ensures that every detail is meticulously handled, delivering a seamless and elevated process tailored to meet each client's needs. Please contact Kirstin at (573) 450-3181 or email with any questions to realestate@kirstinmoll.com.

Doug MacGregor from page 1

MacGregor moved to Southwest Florida in 1988, working for *The News-Press* until 2011. He then served as the arts in healthcare coordinator for Lee Health through 2023, and currently volunteers his time at Golisano Children's Hospital, where he draws cartoons alongside the hospital's young patients.

He is also the author and illustrator of six children's books: *Turtellini*, *The Turbo-Charged Turtle*, *Turtellini's Amazing Sky-High Adventures*, *Morgan McKinney's Bigger-Than-Life Bedtime Story*, *Rad Hair Day*, *Ochre the Smoker*, and *Get Creative, Turn on the Bright Side of Your Brain*.

Gulf Coast Village, Cape Coral's only life plan community, has been a longtime supporter of the arts. In November, the community launched its rotating art exhibit, Gulf Coast Gallery, a partnership with the North Fort Myers Arts Association that features art from local artists and Gulf Coast Village's resident artists.

Each exhibit has its own theme, with the most recent one *Around the World in 50 Days*. MacGregor's artwork is on display at Gulf Coast Village through Feb. 27 as part of the current art exhibit.

With the recent launch of our ongoing art exhibit, Gulf Coast Gallery, we're excited to have one of Southwest Florida's most well-known artists come speak to our residents and guests," said Ryan Keller, regional vice president of senior living for Volunteers of America National Services, the sponsoring organization of Gulf Coast Village.

The event will take place at Gulf Coast Village, located at 1333 Santa Barbara Blvd., in Cape Coral. To register for this free event, please R.S.V.P. by Feb. 20 by calling (239) 510-8712.

About Gulf Coast Village

Founded in 1989, Gulf Coast Village is the only life plan community in Cape Coral, Florida. Residents enjoy active living in an unparalleled lifestyle of comfort and convenience with a rich array of services and amenities that are focused on living well. The community also offers the security of knowing there is a full continuum of care, including independent living, assisted living, specialized memory support, skilled nursing, home health and rehabilitation services. Gulf Coast Village is located at 1333 Santa Barbara Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33991. For more information, call (239) 510-8712 or visit GulfCoastVillage.org.

About Volunteers Of America National Services

Volunteers of America National Services (VOANS), a subsidiary of Volunteers of America, provides affordable housing and healthcare services in over 40 states and in Puerto Rico. The organization employs over 2,000 dedicated staff who provide high quality services and care to our clients. As one of the largest nonprofit affordable housing owners/operators in the nation, the VOANS portfolio includes over 240 properties and 15,000 affordable housing units. VOANS also operates senior living and healthcare programs, including independent living, assisted living, memory care, home health care, adult day care, skilled nursing care and Program for All Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE). Learn more at www.voans.org.

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Friends Of Cape Coral Library

Booths At Burrowing Owl Festival And Southwest Florida Reading Festival

The Friends of the Cape Coral Library (FOCCL) are excited to once again have a booth at the annual Burrowing Owl Festival on Saturday, Feb. 22 at Rotary Park in Cape Coral. You'll find us in the "Kids Corner" tent. We're also happy to be a sponsor again for the Southwest Florida Reading Festival held this year on Saturday, March 1 on the campus of the Fort Myers Regional Library. We'll have a booth at the reading festival and will be introducing the presentation by No. 1 *New York Times* best-selling writer Debbie Macomber. Visit www.readfest.org for



information and author speaking/book signing schedules.

Our tables at both of these events will provide children ages 5 to 12 with information about the 19th Annual Children's Environmental Art Contest Coloring the Earth sponsored by the Friends of the Cape Coral Library and the Cape Coral-Lee County Public Library. The theme this year is Let's Protect Our Mangroves! We will have supplies available for youngsters to create an original drawing or painting that shows how we can protect this precious species from habitat loss and other main threats. We'll have paper, crayons, colored pencils and markers along with printed information and pictures of mangroves that kids can browse through for inspiration to get a head start on their entries. FOCCL members along with students from Florida Gulf Coast University will be on hand to help. Our booths are always a popular stop at the festivals, and we're looking forward to seeing lots of budding artists this year!

You can also find an entry form with details about the children's art contest via a link on the Friends of the Cape Coral

Library home page: www.capefriends.org or pay a visit in person to the Youth Services area of the Cape Coral Library located at 921 SW 39 Terrace.

Current And Upcoming Art In Cape Coral Library Gallery

Changing exhibitions in the Cape Coral Library's expansive art gallery are sponsored by the Friends of the Cape Coral Library and are designed to afford local artists the opportunity to share their work in this public forum and to sell their art directly without commissions.

The current exhibit features beautiful oil paintings and amazing "paper mosaics" by Kim Carioto-Krugle on all the walls of the gallery. Small, colorful and delightfully whimsical paintings by Martha Stevenson are in the three cases. This exhibit is open during the library's regular business hours. But it only runs through Feb. 27, so be sure to make plans to visit the Cape Coral Library soon to enjoy this exciting artwork!



Oxford Botanical Garden, Painting by Kim Carioto Krugle



Painting Friends, 8 x 10, by Martha Stevenson

The next exhibition in the Cape Coral Library will feature the work of two artists who both, coincidentally, have first names of "Pat" and will run from early March until the beginning of May. Local artist and instructor Pat St. Onge will exhibit her paintings on the walls, while talented glass artist Pat Johnson will display her work in the cases. Stay tuned for more details in next month's issue.

For information about library exhibits, contact Art Gallery Chairperson Monica Rahman by email to galleries@capefriends.org or visit www.capefriends.org. Follow "Friends of the Cape Coral Library" on Facebook.

January General Meeting Program Was Enjoyed By All (Next Meeting Is Scheduled For March 22)

For the January General Meeting, the Friends of the Cape Coral Library had a change on the program with short notice due to an illness and really appreciated that our scheduled presenter for March, Beverly Saltonstall, was willing to fill in at the very last minute at this meeting. Beverly, a founding member of the Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife and author of the book *Cape Coral Owls Don't Hoot*, gave an extremely informative, very enjoyable, and often humorous presentation about our beloved burrowing owls. The many FOCCL members and five guests in attendance were fascinated as well as entertained. Thank you to Beverly for sharing with us her affection for these little creatures!



Guest Speaker Beverly Saltonstall

The switch in programs means that the planned speaker for the Saturday, March 22 FOCCL General Meeting will now be Mr. Philip Flood of the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The FOCCL March meeting will be held at the Cape Coral Library beginning at 9:30 a.m. with light refreshments, and the business meeting will start at 10 a.m., followed by the program presentation. Visit www.capefriends.org or follow us on Facebook for updates.

March DESIGNER MADNESS

Roberto Coin

Thursday, March 13th on Sanibel

Erica Courtney

Thursday and Friday, March 20th and 21st on Sanibel
Saturday, March 22nd at the Bell Tower

John Hardy

Thursday, March 27th at the Bell Tower
Friday, March 28th on Sanibel

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Cape Coral Art League

Open Painting

Enjoy the company of fellow artists. Just drop by and bring your own art project and supplies. Enjoy some yummy snacks and enjoyable music too! No registration required! (Adults only, please).



Every Wednesday (September through July) from 1 to 4 p.m. Open to the public. \$3 for members, \$6 for nonmembers (Pay at the door).

Student Sundays – Teaching Young People Art (October Through June)

Exposing young people to the visual arts can help in the development of motor skills, language skills, social skills, teamwork, decision-making, risk-taking, and, of course, inventiveness. At the Cape Coral Art League, we strive to teach the next generation about drawing, color, layout, perspective, and balance – skills that can benefit them in their academic work as well as expand their creativity. And they have fun while learning!

Ages 6 to 14 (no younger, please). 1 to 4 p.m. Fee: \$20. All materials provided. Cash or check at the door only. Please arrive 15 minutes early to register – no pre-sign-ups. No reservations required. New lesson every week. Check our Facebook page or our website for updates.

March And April Classes

Beginning Acrylic – Mondays, 10 a.m. to noon
Intermediate Acrylic Painting – Mondays, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.
Learn to Draw – Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to noon
Creative Watercolor for the Beginner and Above, Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to noon

Pastel Painting for Beginners – Tuesdays, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.
The Art of Zentangle – Tuesdays, 1 to 3 p.m.

Oil Painting for All Levels – Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to noon
Digital Photography and Graphics (Adults 16-plus) – Wednesdays, 3 to 5 p.m.

Hooked on Watercolor – Intermediate – Thursdays – 9 a.m. to noon
Intermediate and Advanced Pastel Painting – 9 to noon



Scan the QR code for the schedule.

March Exhibit – Simply Red

March 6 through April 3, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

Opening reception on Thursday, March 6, 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Class Act

March 6 through April 3, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

Opening reception on Thursday, March 6, 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Art Supplies - Garage Sale And Miscellaneous

Friday, March 28 and Saturday, March 29, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Free parking and entry

Upcoming Shows And Events

Celebrating Color

April 10, through May 1, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

Opening reception and presentation of awards on Thursday, April 10, 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Season Highlights

April 10, through May 1, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

Opening reception and presentation of awards on Thursday, April 10, 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Workshop: Resin Pour With Judith Nickerson

Friday, April 4, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Workshop: Babcock Ranch Eco Tour With Carmen Sprague

Friday, April 25, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Please consult www.capecoralartleague.org for more information.

Unique Gifts At Reasonable Prices!

The gift shop is located inside the Cape Coral Art League and showcases talent within the League.

Come browse the creativity of local artists. Thinking of a gift for someone special? You will find it here among the unique and treasured. Artistic expression is found here – come in and experience it. Don't forget to pick up a mini – small originals made by our members – they are a perfect gift!

Office, gallery and gift shop hours are Monday through Thursday: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Cape Coral Art League, 516 Cultural Park Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33990, (239) 772-5657, www.capecoralartleague.org.

Cape Coral For The Children

Transforming Lives Through Hope, Education, And Community Support

Cape Coral for the Children (CCFC) was started in 2012 and founded by Julie Lombardi after hearing a 17-year-old's story at a Do the Right Thing recognition. The teen lived day-to-day with the help of a friend and slept at various homes when possible. His father was incarcerated, and his mother deceased. Despite his hardships, he maintained a 4.0 GPA while holding a job and was accepted into college.



Telling friends about this experience prompted the thought that something had to be done about children in Cape Coral who need help because of their being classified under the McKinney/Vento Act as homeless under Project Access.

The Federal McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act states that children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence are considered homeless. If, due to a loss of housing, a child must live in a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground, on the street, in abandoned buildings, or doubled-up with relatives or friends, he/she is eligible to receive service provided under the McKinney Vento Act.

When CCFC was founded in 2012 there were approximately 300 children who lived in Cape Coral and qualified for assistance under the McKinney Vento Act. Today the number of children is 424.

Working with Lee County Social Service Agency in the local school system, CCFC learned that the schools and teachers provide students with dignity by opening the schools early in the morning and having toiletries available for the children to clean up prior to the school day. Thus, there is a need for toiletry products of all kinds, so CCFC collects products from the community and delivers them to the Lee School system.

Thus began the first of several programs: the school children's toiletry program and the scholarship program.

Wanting to do more, CCFC was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) charity and decided to raise money to provide scholarships for students who were dealing with a family situation that required financial assistance to attend college or technical school to further their education.

Cape Coral for the Children started out giving \$500 scholarships, then to \$700, and the last few years, the nonprofit was able to distribute seven \$1,000 scholarships to Cape Coral high school students who qualified. To date the organization has awarded \$72,000 in scholarships.

Cape Coral for the Children's main fundraiser takes place each fall with a fashion show where all proceeds go towards funding scholarships. Non-paid volunteers fully run the charity organization; Cape Coral for the Children also hosts a luncheon on the second Wednesday of each month where participating establishments provide gift cards for the charity to raffle off at the fashion show.



On Sunday, Feb. 23, Cape Coral for the Children will host a Bingo/Basket fundraiser. This event will be held at Rusty's Grill in Cape Coral, doors will open at noon with bingo games starting at 1 p.m. Advance tickets to play bingo can be purchased online at www.capecoralforthechildren.org. Advance tickets are \$20 for 10 games. If purchased at the door, tickets will be \$25.

As a volunteer organization being able to make a difference in the lives of children struggling and living an atypical lifestyle is what makes it worth the many hours dedicated to the programs sponsored by Cape Coral for the Children. It is all about the needs of children.

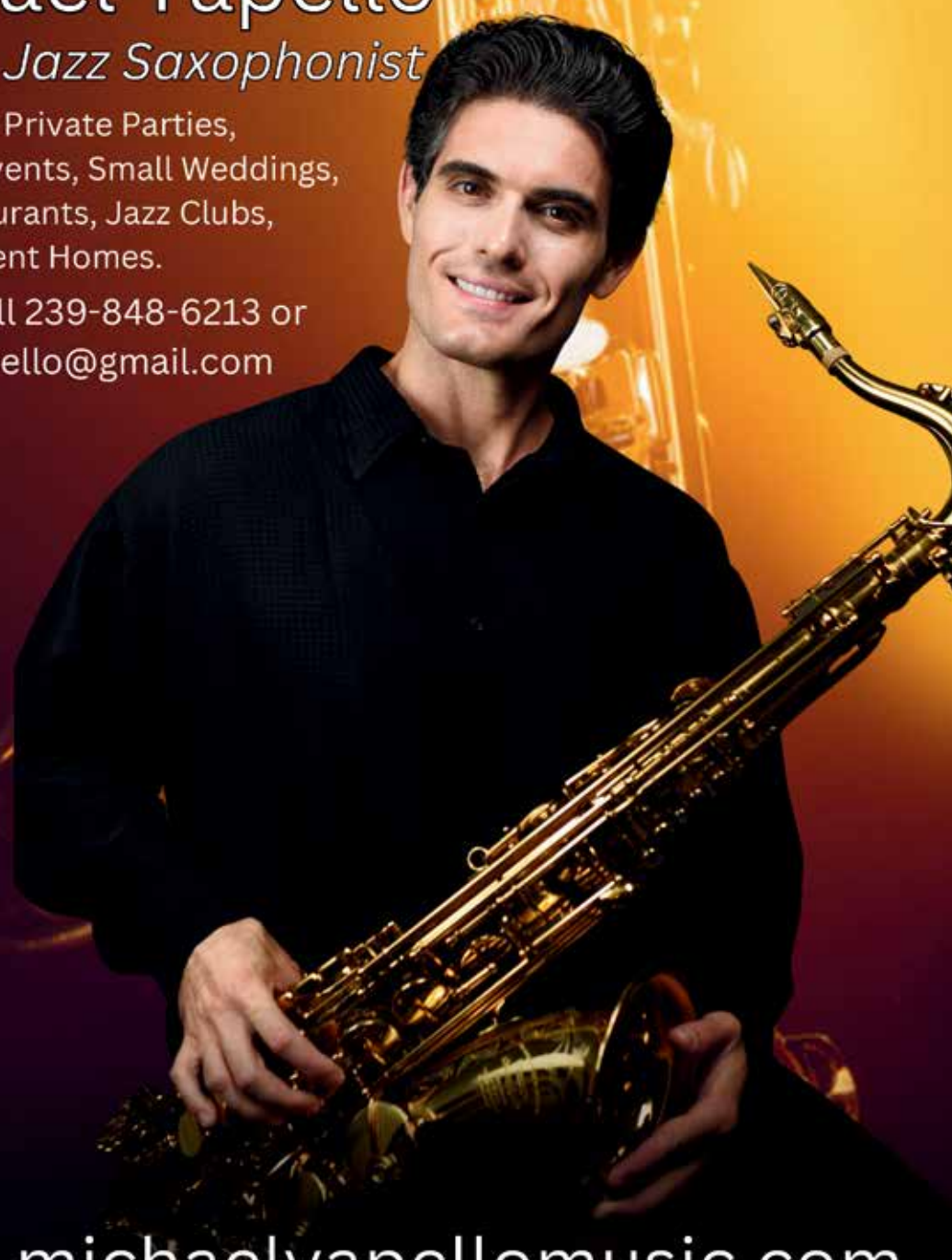
For more information on Cape Coral for the Children, visit capecoralforthechildren.org, 501(c)(3) charity – EIN #32-0388454.

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Footopic: The Art Of Custom Shoemaking Is Alive And Well In The Cape



By Ryn Gargulinski, Sun Reporter



The next time you're hankering for a pair of perfectly fitted shoes made out of, say, stingray leather, Footopic is the place to get them. In fact, you can dream up just about any shoe style or color and Footopic owner Chris Hoppenworth would be glad to do his best to create them just for you.

A small handful of shoemakers may still exist throughout the nation, but Footopic is one of the few where everything is 100 percent handmade. Handed down through four generations, Chris's business opened in downtown Cape Coral in August 2024 – a mere month after his family of four moved from Hanover, Germany.

And it's not just the outer looks that make his shoes special. It's the high-quality materials, the skill, talent and experience that goes into making them, and, of course, the precise measurements and anatomical expertise that makes slipping on his custom shoes or insoles akin to slipping into a little bit of heaven.

"Seeing a smile on the customer's face from the pain-free feeling" is one of Chris's favorite aspects of his profession. By the time many of the customers get to his shop, they've been to four or five other places seeking relief from feet problems and pain.

"I was the guy who was able to help," says Chris, holder of a German Meisterbrief – the equivalent of a master's degree – in the field. The intense study ensured high-end knowledge of all the inner workings and functions of all the anatomical structures in the legs and feet.

Unlike the majority of today's one-size-fits all, subpar disposable items, the custom shoes and insoles from Footopic are crafted to be one-of-a-kind specifically for the dimensions and unique characteristics of your feet. They are also crafted to last.

His insoles come with a lifetime warranty and six months of free adjustments.

A typical visit starts with a 15- to 30-minute measurement and question session where Chris diagnoses the problem behind the discomfort. He then explains his proposed solution and, if the customer agrees, he creates the custom insoles in 72 hours or less.

The quick turnaround comes from his dedication. And the fact that he has a fully equipped workshop on the premises. The only shop Chris found in the United States that could do something similar was in California – and their turnaround time was four weeks or more because they had to send away the measurements for creation overseas.

Custom shoes take a bit longer to create, depending on the complexity and materials of the shoe. Seven of the main steps are illustrated in a poster behind the shop's front counter.

"It's really more like 50 steps," Chris explains, "but there wasn't room on the poster." Some steps can also take days if they require time for the hand-cut leather to dry and take proper shape.

Customers are apt to say the custom shoes are worth the wait, as are Chris's wife Julia and their two daughters, eight-year-old Viktoria and six-year-old Mathilda. Chris and Julia first met in 2009. The two moved in together three weeks later, marrying in 2012. (Yes, he made her shoes for the wedding.)

The family decided to move out of Germany as they watched its public schools decline and changes in the public health system policies impact the shoemaking business. Chris

pulled out a map, put it on the table, and went through it with Julia using the process of elimination. The United States quickly became the desired location.

Florida beat out the West Coast for its lack of earthquakes. Cape Coral rose to the top as Chris had been a frequent visitor to his friend's house here. The city was also attractive for its low crime rates, good education, affordable cost of living – and absence of skyscrapers.

"I love that you can always see the sun," Chris says. The Cape also has a big enough customer base for the business to thrive.

First established in Hanover in 1925, the company's first owner was Mr. Emde. Mr. Schulze then purchased the business in 1963. Chris's father bought the company in 1992, selling it to his son in 2011.

While Chris was raised in a shoemaker's family, it wasn't something he had always been thrilled about doing.

"I hated it," he says of his first years working at the shoe shop with his father. As the boss's son, he was subjected to extra-long hours, extra-tedious tasks – and absolutely no favoritism. Chris left shoemaking for a spell to spend 10 months in the German army. He came back to dad's shop for two more years,



Footopic owner Chris Hoppenworth shows off a custom pair of stingray leather shoes he created to showcase custom shoe possibilities.



Footopic owner Chris Hoppenworth outside his shop with wife Julia and daughters Mathilda and Viktoria.



Chris in his on-site workshop where all shoes and insoles are 100 percent handmade.



Footopic family daughters Viktoria (left) and Mathilda put their best foot forward, showing off a model foot in the shop.

until the two once again started bickering.

Chris then worked for other shoemakers but was drawn back to dad's business when his mom contacted him to mend fences. Dad's health was declining. He couldn't work as long and hard as he used to.

By the time Chris was ready to make dad an offer for the business, he had already spent five years as a journeyman to earn a college degree in the shoemaking trade, along with another nine months as a full-time student earning his German Meisterbrief.

Chris insisted on a full-out purchase of the business so his dad would have funds to retire, and Chris would have leeway to make the radical changes he wanted.

One of the first was to computerize all the prescriptions and other paperwork. He then made adjustments involving the suppliers and useful technology – like trading the 1980s-era cash register for a digital payment system.

He also updated the look and feel of the shop. "It looked like Walgreens," Chris says of his dad's shop with all the ready-made, off-the-shelf foot-related products that he eliminated to focus solely on custom insoles and shoes.

Of course, the move from Hanover to Cape Coral was another huge change in the business, especially since it took more than eight weeks for all the heavy shoemaking equipment to arrive on a cargo ship.

One thing that will never change is the hands-on care, dedication and craftsmanship that remains the heartbeat of the business.

"When I started out, I hated this job," Chris says. "But 10 years later, and after getting my master's degree, I realized my dad taught me so well. My passion now comes from doing it with such a high degree of knowledge. It became a passion, and I could not imagine doing anything else."

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Happy St. Patrick's Day

Roman Roofing's Production Team Delivers Excellence

At Roman Roofing, precision and dedication are at the heart of every project.




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What sets Roman Roofing apart is its commitment to quality – utilizing job site supervisors and a team of W-2 craftsmen to ensure each roofing project meets the highest standards. This hands-on approach guarantees consistency, accountability, and superior roofing experience for every homeowner.

Going beyond just installations, the team prioritizes

customer satisfaction, going the extra mile to provide homeowners with a smooth, stress-free process. With Roman Roofing, excellence isn't just a goal – it's a promise, upheld by a team that truly cares.

SWFL

Children deserve a village beyond the system.



FOSTER VILLAGE SWFL
bridges the gap

The Mission of Foster Village SWFL is to come alongside children and families in the child welfare system and show them that they are not alone. Our goal is to create opportunities for the community to be a "village" of support to these vulnerable and under-served children and families.

.....

Questions?

WWW.FOSTERVILLAGEswfl.ORG
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DONATE. VOLUNTEER.
Spread the word!

Together, we can make sure foster families and children have their critical needs met. We can connect caregivers to resources and to each other, and advocate for change in the system... creating a better future for our community and our children for generations to come.

.....

WE ARE HERE TO CARE FOR THE CAREGIVERS & EMPOWER FAMILIES TO OVERCOME ADVERSITY.

Will you join us?



Trees And Power Lines: A Hazardous Combination

By Karen Ryan, APR, CPRC
 – LCEC Public Relations
 Director



Southwest Florida is renowned for its lush vegetation, dense foliage, and iconic swaying palm trees. However, these natural beauties can pose significant risks when they come into contact with power lines. Ensuring everyone's safety begins with understanding the dangers associated with trees near electric lines.

Trees can conduct electricity. If tree limbs touch power lines, electricity can flow through the tree to the ground. Anyone who touches a tree in contact with a power line can become part of that path, risking serious injury or even death.

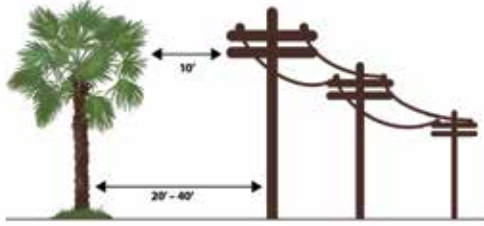
Safety First

Before allowing children to climb trees or caring for trees

in your yard, always take a moment to look up and check for overhead power lines. When digging or planting, remember to call 811 to ensure underground utility lines are marked to avoid accidental contact. Always contact your utility before caring for trees near power lines.

Leave Trimming To The Experts

Never attempt to trim trees near power lines or remove branches that are in contact with them. Certified tree professionals have the necessary training and equipment to safely manage vegetation around high-voltage lines.



Plant Smart, Stay Safe

Planning your landscaping with safety in mind is crucial. As a rule of thumb, plant trees expected to grow taller than 20 feet at least 20 feet away from power lines. For a list of trees suitable for planting near electric lines, visit www.lcec.net.

By taking these precautions and being aware of the risks, you can protect your family and keep the natural beauty of Southwest Florida safe and enjoyable.

Karen Ryan, APR, CPRC is the Public Relations Director for LCEC. She has been on the LCEC team since 1997 and has been writing about energy safety, savings and utility cooperatives for decades. LCEC served nearly 250,000 members in a six-county service territory and has been delivering electricity in Cape Coral since 1958. Karen serves on the Board of Directors for United Way of Lee, Hendry, and Glades and the Edison & Ford Winter Estates and is a past member of the Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce. She is also a past-president of the Florida Public Relations Association and the Edison Festival of Light and past chair of the American Heart Association Heartwalk and United Way campaign.



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Step Into The Rhythm

Dance Classes And Socials In Cape Coral!

Looking for a fun, welcoming atmosphere to learn some exciting dance styles? Whether you're interested in ballroom, Latin, or even a little country flair, the City of Cape Coral and Four Freedoms Park have teamed up with the Cape Coral USA Dance Chapter (6123) to offer dance classes every Thursday!



Learn From Top Instructors

Join our fabulous instructors as they guide you through a variety of dance styles:

- January – Rumba with Leigh Ann Lawson
- February – East Coast Swing (Jitterbug) with Karen Ramage
- March – Salsa/Mambo with Madison Rogers
- April – To be announced... stay tuned!

Location:

Four Freedoms Park, 4818 Tarpon Court (off Cape Coral Parkway)

Schedule:

- 7 to 7:30 p.m. Doors open and practice time
- 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Class Instruction
- 8:30 to 9 p.m. Practice and socializing

Cost: Just \$10 per person!

The Cape Coral USA Dance Chapter is dedicated to keeping dance accessible and affordable, offering top-notch instruction and practice sessions at a community-friendly price.

Monthly Dance Party – Show Off Your Moves!

To top it all off, we invite our students to a lively social dance each month! It's the perfect opportunity to practice your new skills, meet fellow dancers, and have a fantastic time. Mark your calendar for the second Saturday of every month for an evening of dance and fun!

Location: Rhythm in Motion Dance Studio, 912 Del Prado Blvd., S.

Next Dance: March 8

Time: 5 to 7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$10 for USA Dance members, \$15 for guests

Food: Light snacks provided

Contact: Carol Davis, president (239) 565-7947 or Angel Brana, vice president (850) 778-6535

Come dance with us, make new friends, and be the star on the dance floor! Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned dancer, this is your chance to move, groove, and have an unforgettable time. See you on the dance floor!

For more information, please visit our website at www.usadance.org/members/group.aspx?id=210818 or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usadancecapecoralf.

Coming Up In The Cape

Designer Bag Bingo

Friday, Feb. 21 – 7 to 9 p.m.

Adults ages 18-plus are invited to join us for Designer Bag bingo at Lake Kennedy Center, 400 Santa Barbara Blvd., on Friday, Feb. 21, from 7 to 9 p.m. The doors will open at 6:30 p.m., and bingo will begin at 7 p.m.

The cost is \$25 per person to play 10 games for the chance to win a designer handbag. Participants are welcome to BYOB and food. Please R.S.V.P. to (239) 574-0575.

Burrowing Owl Festival/Wildlife And Environmental Expo At Rotary Park

Saturday, Feb. 22 – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This popular annual event is a great day for the whole family, with entertaining and educational programs, hands-on activities for children, live animals, butterfly house tours, bus tours to active owl burrows, a silent auction, and tasty festival food. Join us at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road, for a family fun day.

The requested entry is a \$5 donation for adults and free for children 12 and under.

For more information, call Rotary Park at (239) 549-4606 or email rotaryparkinfo@capecoral.gov.

Wine And Chocolate Party At Lake Kennedy Center

Saturday, Feb. 22 – 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Grab your friends or a date and have some fun at Lake Kennedy Center's Wine And Chocolate Party, 400 Santa Barbara Blvd., on Saturday, Feb. 22, from 6:30 to 9:30 pm! Enjoy wine and chocolate tasting, refreshments, and live music.

The cost is \$16 per person, and space is limited, so be sure to register early.

For more information and to purchase tickets, call Lake Kennedy Center at (239) 574-0575.

Photographers Bus Tour
Saturday, February 22, 2025
7:00 am - 11:00am



Travel in style in an air-conditioned mini-bus with expert birders and photographers Tammy & Dave McGuade and Eary & Jennifer Warren. This wildlife photography tour is offered by Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife in conjunction with the 23rd Annual Burrowing Owl Festival Wildlife & Environmental Exposition.

\$70 per person
Includes admission to the festival upon your return at 11:00am
Please arrive promptly at 7:00am
Advance registration is required, and seats are limited

www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org

Rotary Park Environmental Center
5505 Rose Garden Road
Cape Coral, FL 33954
239-549-4606



MGA League At Coral Oaks Golf Course

Wednesday, Feb. 26 – 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Coral Oaks Golf Course hosts an 18-hole Men's Golf Association (MGA) event every Wednesday with an 8 a.m. "shotgun" start. This means every golfer starts at 8 a.m., with each four-man group on a different hole. Groups are drawn by the Coral Oaks Pro Shop.

MGA annual dues are \$50, and each Wednesday, every golfer pays for golf plus \$6 into the prize money pool, which is given as credit to be spent at Coral Oaks, either in the Pro Shop or the restaurant (golfer's choice).

There are also MGA events offered on Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays, starting at 7 a.m. These are typically smaller groups, with every foursome starting in succession on hole No. 1.

For more information on the MGA League, Contact Dave Kenney at flsaltbass@gmail.com or Coral Oaks Golf Course at (239) 573-3100.

Mid-Week Bingo At Lake Kennedy Center

Thursday, Feb. 27 – 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Take a mid-week break with an afternoon of Bingo at Lake Kennedy Center, 400 Santa Barbara Blvd., on Thursday, Feb. 27 from 12:30 to 2 p.m. Doors open at 12:15 p.m.

The cost is \$12 for 10 rounds of bingo and a snack. Extra cards are available for \$10 each. BYOB and food.

For more information and to reserve your spot, call Lake Kennedy Center at (239) 574-0575.

Free Star Party At Rotary Park

Friday, Feb. 28 – 7 to 10 p.m.

Join the Southwest Florida Astronomical Society for a fun, free evening of night sky observation on Friday, Feb. 28, from 7 to 10 p.m. at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road.

Take a look through several telescopes and talk to the experts from the society about what can be seen.

This is fantastic fun for people of all ages! No flashlights, please.

Spring Craft Fair At Lake Kennedy Center

Saturday, March 1 – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Join us for an Indoor Spring Craft Fair at Lake Kennedy Center, 400 Santa Barbara Blvd., on Saturday, March 1, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., with a chance to meet the Easter Bunny from 10 to 11 a.m. Vendors are \$25 to \$30 per spot, and shopping is free.

Florida Friendly Yards Tour

Saturday, March 1 – 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Scheduled for Saturday, March 1, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., join a guide to visit several Cape Coral yards to see how others have transformed their plain Cape Coral lots into beautiful, eco-friendly retreats.

Please bring your own drinking water and wear close-toed shoes. The cost is \$15 per person and advance registration is required as seats are limited.

For more information and to reserve your spot, call Rotary Park at (239)549-4606.

Third Annual Vegan Street Fest

Sunday, March 2 – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Third Annual Vegan Street Fest will be held on Sunday, March 2, between Viscaya and SE 10th Place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Festival will include vendors, food trucks, health speakers, and music.

Tea Time

St. Andrew Council of Catholic Women
invite everyone to their

Annual Tea Party

Tues., March 4, 2025
at 12:30pm
(doors open at 11:30am)

Endless pots of tea

Finger sandwiches & scones

Personal Touch
1550 Santa Barbara Blvd.
Cape Coral

\$35 Per Guest!

Raffles & 50/50

Gift Baskets

To pay for your reservations call:
Peggy: 239-829-0171
by Feb. 17th



Coming Up In The Cape on page 15

Garden Club Of Cape Coral – March In The Park

Saturday, March 8 – 9 a.m. To 3 p.m.

On March 8, the Garden Club of Cape Coral will present its 17th annual major fundraiser "March in the Park," a plant and garden art sale. This sale will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at a NEW location – Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road in Cape Coral. With over 40 vendors, there will be plants of all kinds, trees, shrubs, ground cover, native plants, and miniatures to name a few. Garden Art will include essential and fragrance oils, glass reflections, metal works, decorative pots and planters, and a pet boutique. Thrifty treasures will also be available! The Boy Scouts will be selling hot dogs and hamburgers, and vendors are offering ice cream, coffee, tea, smoothies



and other treats will also be available.

Master gardeners will be available all day to answer questions. A free kids' booth, with a face painter, will have activities and take-home projects for all ages. Food, music and drawings will be available throughout the day. Admission and parking are free.

The Garden Club of Cape Coral is a nonprofit organization, and all proceeds from March in the Park are used to fund the club's objectives such as local high school Seniors Scholarship Merit Awards, civic beautification, local middle and high school garden projects, and to promote civic awareness of environmental and conservation concerns.

Remember to save the date, March 8! Come join us at "March in the Park" for a fun, informative day, learn from the experts, and find out how to grow and take care of plants in South Florida. For additional information check our website at www.gardenclubofcapecoral.com.

Come to the party in the park ... March In The Park ... March 8!

Cape Coral Social Club

Friends, Fun, Community

The Cape Coral Social Club provides members with the opportunity to make new friends while enjoying the camaraderie of current friendships in a warm and congenial atmosphere. Members are encouraged to have fun and participate in the club's various offerings that include monthly general meetings featuring informative and entertaining speakers and monthly dinner dances with great food, music and dancing. We also offer organized day trips, cruises, games, boating and much, much more.

To find out more about the Cape Coral Social Club you can attend our monthly meetings as a guest. Monthly meetings are held every fourth Thursday of the month at the German American Social Club (we rent space there). Sign in and light refreshments start at 9:30 a.m. and the general meeting with the guest speaker starting at 10 a.m. The address is 2101 SW Pine Island Road, Cape Coral, FL 33991.

Why Join Us

- Enjoyment for everyone
- Organized trips, tours, cruises, dining and much more.
- Informative and relevant guest speakers
- Monthly dinner dances
- Have fun
- Make new friends
- Community involvement

Check out our February newsletter by scanning the QR code.



Who Can Join

- Anyone from Cape Coral and surrounding areas
- No residence requirements
- All are welcome, visitors and residents (and snowbirds!)

Community

- The Cape Coral Social Club (CCSC) serves the community by supporting many local charities such as:
 - The Cape Coral Caring Center
 - Do the Right Thing
 - Cape Coral for the Children Charity
 - Cape Coral Animal Shelter

Join Us

For Some St. Patty's Day Fun!

Join us Saturday, March 1, 5:30 p.m. for our "Wearing of the Green" dinner dance hosted by the Cape Coral Social Club at the German American Social Club, 2101 SW Pine Island Road, Cape Coral. Club dances are open to the public. Music will be provided by Kim Jenkins.

Club members pay \$35; nonmembers pay \$40 (cash or check) or \$38 or \$43 if using a credit card.

For information or to purchase tickets go to www.capecoralsocialclub.org/monthlydance.

For more information or to join please visit our website at www.capecoralsocialclub.org.

Coming Up In *The Cape* from page 14

**St. Patrick's Bingo At Lake Kennedy Center
Sunday, March 2 – 2 to 4 p.m.**

Adults ages 18-plus are invited to join us for St. Patrick's Day themed bingo at Lake Kennedy Center, 400 Santa Barbara Blvd., on Sunday, March 2, from 2 to 4 p.m. The doors will open at 1:30 p.m., and bingo will begin at 2 p.m.

The cost is just \$12 per person to play 10 games and includes a snack. Feel free to BYOB.

For more information or to R.S.V.P., call (239) 574-0575.

**Sunset Fest At Four Freedoms Park
Wednesday, March 5 – 3:30 to 6:30 p.m.**

Join us for a monthly Sunset Fest at Four Freedoms Park, 4818 Tarpon Court, on Wednesday, March 5, from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. It will feature vendors, food trucks, and a beautiful sunset! Each month will include different food trucks to allow patrons to try new flavors!

Call Four Freedoms Park at (239) 574-0804 to register as a vendor or food truck.

Concert In The Park

March 6 – 5 to 8 p.m.

The City of Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department proudly presents a FREE "Concert in the Park" on Thursday, March 6, from 5 to 8 p.m. at Cultural Park, featuring the music of Mattlee Crew.

The music will start at approximately 5:30 p.m., but plan to arrive early to enjoy dinner from our onsite food truck, grab a good spot and have a chance at our giveaways! Blankets and lawn chairs are encouraged.

Bring a date or a group of friends, or even fly solo if you enjoy live music, dinner, drinks, and a breathtaking sunset! No R.S.V.P. is needed.



**Butterfly Garden Design At Rotary Park
Friday, March 14 – 1 to 3 p.m.**

Join us for a Butterfly Garden Design class at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road, on Friday, March 14, from 1 to 3 p.m. and learn all about butterflies found in this area and what plants and flowers are best to attract them.

Please bring pictures or drawings of your yard so the design expert can help you create a butterfly-friendly landscape of your own. Tour the butterfly house and gardens as part of this class, too.

The cost is \$15 per person and advance registration is required at (239) 549-4606.

**Doxie Dash At Rotary Park
Saturday, March 15 – 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Join us for an event filled with wagging tails, speedy paws, and the chance to explore a variety of vendors on Saturday, March 15, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road.

Whether your dachshund is a racing champion or just loves being in the spotlight, this event guarantees an unforgettable experience! Let the races commence and may the fastest dachshund win! All dogs are welcome to join in the fun.

For more information, call Rotary Park at (239) 549-4606.

**Third Annual Brew Fest At Cultural Park
Saturday, March 15 – 1 to 5 p.m.**

The Cape Coral Museum of History will host the Third Annual Brew Fest at Cultural Park, 528 Cultural Park Blvd., on Saturday, March 15, from 1 to 5 p.m. The event will feature beer tasting, food, vendors, music, classic cars, and museum tours.

**Music & Arts Fusion Walk On 47th Terrace
Saturday, March 15 – 5 to 9 p.m.**

SE 47th Terrace between Vincennes Blvd. and SE 15th Place

The Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department is proud to bring local artists and musicians together! Come out for an evening of live music and vendors, and support local businesses. This event will feature pop-up shops by local artists that showcase everything from handmade jewelry to paintings. This is a family-friendly event!

Vendors

Artists, designers, and makers with high-quality, handmade, original work are invited to be a part of Cape Coral Music & Arts Fusion. Acceptable categories are candles, clay, digital, glass, jewelry, leather, living plants, mixed media, paintings, photography, soaps/lotions, and woodwork.

For more information, contact Cape Coral Parks & Recreation at (239) 573-3128.

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SE HABLA ESPAÑOL

Walk, Wiggle, Wag & Run

Saturday, March 22

Walk, Wiggle, Wag & Run is the Cape Coral Animal Shelter's premier family and pet-friendly event! Together, we will raise vital funds to help the homeless and neglected animals in our care and find them future loving and forever homes.

The 2025 Walk, Wiggle, Wag & Run event is Saturday, March 22 at the Cape Coral Animal Shelter, 325 SW 2nd Ave, and includes both a fun walk around our shelter and a 5K timed run. There is music, food trucks, vendor marketplace, and fabulous giveaways including an event shirt!

Pet friendly event! Dogs welcome! Standard leashes only – retractable leashes and pronged/choke chain collars will not be permitted at this event.

Please be prepared to clean up after your pet.

5K Run event award placement medals by age group and male/female category human runners. Specialty prize baskets for first, second and third place for 5K dog runner teams!

Participant event shirt and bib distribution: March 21 at the Cape Coral Animal Shelter from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. or event day registration at the check-in table.

Please note: No event shirt guarantee if you register after March 1, 12 p.m.

For more information or to sign up early, please visit <https://runsignup.com/race/fl/capecoral/5krescuerunforthecapecoralanimalshelter>.

Catch The Action

February On The Water

By Capt. Bill Russell

Waters around Cape Coral and Southwest Florida afford us a choice of fishing opportunities as we move towards the close of winter with spring in sight. While some fish are completing their spawning duties, others are just beginning. February will bring us cold days followed with a warming trend. By the later part of the month, cold days should become less numerous, followed with a rise in water temperature.

The winter run of sheepsheads will peak as the larger fish complete their spawning duties. Sheepshead school around structure with a good tidal flow inshore, around the beaches, and nearshore. They are the one fish that thrives in the cold with the best bite often coming over the coldest days. Sheepshead are one of Florida's tastiest fish and get a good deal of attention from anglers fishing from boat and land. Public docks, piers, and bridges offer excellent sheepshead fishing for shore bound anglers; however, many were damaged or destroyed from the last couple years of hurricanes.

As the month passes, warming waters and the return of schooling baitfish will mark the beginning to some of the largest sea trout of the year. Large trout are locally known as "gators" or "gator trout" and exceed well over 20 inches, often pushing 30 inches. They are moving onto the inshore grass flats, as well as oyster bars, and deeper holes. Sea trout are sight feeders and prefer water with good clarity. These larger fish are often egg laden as we approach their spawning season and should be handled with care and released after a good battle.

The snook bite should fire off with the return of baitfish and warming waters. In my opinion, snook are our top inshore sportfish. I am often asked, "If you could only target one fish what would it be?" Snook is always my answer. They strike hard, fight hard, and have the natural instinct to head to the nearest structure and break off. Large or small they are a blast to catch, full of tenacity, and just a cool fish. It's easy to get addicted and catch snook fever. Snook are ambush feeders that are found around island points, oyster bars, sand holes near islands, and structures such as docks, bridges, and pier pilings and riprap. During the cooler months most of the saltwater canals in the Cape are a good bet to hold snook. Snook season is closed through February.

While redfish tolerate the cold, their numbers and appetite increase as winter nears its end. They range in size from

Sudoku Answers

4	3	2	8	1	7	5	6	9
8	9	6	3	5	2	7	1	4
7	5	1	9	4	6	8	2	3
6	7	3	2	8	4	9	5	1
2	8	5	7	9	1	4	3	6
1	4	9	5	6	3	2	8	7
5	6	4	1	2	9	3	7	8
3	1	8	4	7	5	6	9	2
9	2	7	6	3	8	1	4	5



little guys barely a foot long to well over 30 inches. While snook have fast blazing runs, dramatic leaps from the water, and head for the nearest structure, redfish are in a different category. They fight like a bull, not fast but super strong and don't know the word quit. They will fight hard from start to finish. Redfish are found in the areas previously mentioned for sheepshead, sea trout, and snook, as well as under mangrove overhangs on the higher stages of tides. Anglers also choose to sight fish reds as they are tailing and pushing a wake as they hunt for prey over the shallow flats. Negative low tides offer the best opportunities, particularly early morning, and late afternoon.

In the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, fish are on the move as they follow the rising water temperature north. Often just a few miles off the beach. King and Spanish mackerel plus bonito or false albacore are off the coast and often in large schools.

Watch for feeding birds to locate the hungry fish. Cobia, a local favorite, which is often mistaken for a shark due to its similar appearance, may show up at any time around your boat offshore or inshore. Bottom fishing around reefs could yield a variety including sheepsheads, various snapper, grouper, permit, and flounder to name a few. Also, keep an eye open for triple tail sunning on their side around floating objects.

The transition from late winter into early spring can offer some of the best fishing the area offers as days get longer and water temperatures rise. Of course, we can expect a couple more cool fronts before month's end that will affect the bite and fishing conditions, but spring is just around the corner. To keep up with current fishing regulations, you can go to www.myfwc.com or download the Fish Rules app for the latest rules and regulations.

Hope to see ya on the water.

For charter information, please contact us at Gulf Coast Guide Service and "Catch the Action" with Capt. Bill Russell, call or text (239) 410-8576, website: www.fishpineisland.com, email: gcl2fish@live.com.

Capt. Bill Russell is a native and lifelong resident of Pine Island who has spent his entire life fishing the waters surrounding Pine Island and Southwest Florida. For the past 29 years, Bill has been a professional fishing guide who takes pride in customizing each trip to ensure everyone on board has a great time and will return again. Come join us and "Catch the Action."



Attention Veterans: Pine Island American Legion Post 136 Now A Non-Smoking Location

Effective since Dec. 19, 2024, the Pine Island American Legion Post 136 is a non-smoking location. All forms of smoking, use of tobacco products, vaping or other smoking products are prohibited anywhere inside the posts building.

The Legion has a broad range of programs for family, youth, community and national affairs. With over 27 different programs, we've got you covered from the baseball diamond to our nation's borders. Additionally, we make a difference not only within our local communities, but nationwide as an organization.

The American Legion, Department of Florida, proudly stands at over 130,000 members with more than 300 Legion posts across the state. Members rally to support our military and their families in a variety of ways through promoting strong national security, advocating patriotism and honor, mentoring youth, and sponsoring wholesome programs within our communities.

We're brothers and sisters in arms. Together, we can make a difference. Your membership provides

vital support to veterans' services, lobbying efforts, and outreach in local communities. With membership, you get exclusive member discounts, have access to scholarships and programs, and receive 12 issues of *The American Legion* magazine. And then there's the camaraderie.

The American Legion is open to veterans, children/grandchildren and spouses of veterans. The American Legion has an active Riders program to support the American Legion Post. Come in as a guest, leave as a part of the family.

American Legion Post 136, 4106 Stringfellow Road, Saint James City, FL 33956, (239) 283-4434, mile marker 2, <https://post136fl.org/index.php?id=1>



Southwest Florida Fine Craft Annual "Expressions" Exhibition At The Cape Coral Art Center

The Southwest Florida Fine Craft Guild (SWFFCG) is proud to present its annual exhibit for 2025, "Expressions," a captivating exhibition that showcases the fusion of traditional and contemporary fine craft. Featuring the work of talented Guild members, this exhibit celebrates the innovative use of diverse technical methods and materials to create stunning three-dimensional pieces of art.

The Southwest Florida Fine Craft Guild is a nonprofit organization that is deeply committed to the growth and development of local artists and the artistic community.

Through exhibitions, workshops, and scholarships, the Guild provides opportunities for both established and emerging artists to share their work and connect with the community. In addition to supporting local artists, the Guild is dedicated to fostering youth creativity through initiatives like scholarships for students at Florida Gulf Coast University, Cypress Lake High School Center for the Arts, as well as Creative Camp at the Cape Coral Art Center.



To learn more about our projects, upcoming events, and how you can get involved, please visit our website at www.swffcg.org or stop by the Cape Coral Art Center, 4533 Coronado Pkwy.

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Ribbon Cuttings



Off the Leash Charters LLC, Charters, www.offtheleashcharters.com, (239) 851-4663.



Five Star Painting of Cape Coral, Painting Contractor, 909 SE 47th Ter., Ste 201-1, Cape Coral, FL 33904, www.fivestarpainting.com/cape-coral/residential, (239) 373-1962.



Southwest Psychological Services, Counseling, 1314 Cape Coral Pkwy., E., Suite 210, Cape Coral, FL 33904, www.southwestpsychservices.com, (239) 834-9333.



South Cape Scooters, Scooter Rental, 1516 SE 46th Lane, Unit 1B, Cape Coral, FL 33904, www.southcapescooterrentals.com, (239) 888-0790.



Thrive by K, Medical Spa, 4636 SE 9th Pl., Suite A, Cape Coral, FL 33904, www.thrivebyk.com, (239) 984-6707.



Tommy's Express Holdings, Car Wash, 1527 Chiquita Blvd., S., Cape Coral, FL 33991, www.tommys-express.com, (239) 233-1142.



**Left:
Southwest Florida Marine Technologies, Marine Electronics, 4519 SE 16th Pl., Unit 104, Cape Coral, FL 33904, www.electronicsmarineservice.com, (239) 541-2499.**

**Right:
Assured Bookkeeping Plus, Accounting/ Tax Service/Bookkeeping, 1222 SE 47th St., Cape Coral, FL 33904, www.assuredbookkeepingplus.com, (239) 294-6832.**



AquaShine Express Car Wash, Car Wash, 245 Nicholas Parkway W., Cape Coral, FL 33991, www.aquashineexpress.com, (704) 488-3199.

Join The Chamber



As a member, you are helping to strengthen our local economy, promote the community, provide networking opportunities, represent the interests of business with government and take political action.

As your Chamber of Commerce, we work to bring you more business, create better connections, make you more visible and help you work smarter. Your membership is a good investment in the future of our community and your business.

We offer membership for all business sizes, nonprofits, retired individuals or those not working in an organization or business. If you are an individual not affiliated with a business or are retired, you can contact a member of our membership department at (239) 549-6900 to see if the individual level is an opportunity that is available to you.

Cape Coral Museum Of History

Remember When... The Mail Was Delivered By Boat?

In 1959, Cape Coral was at the dirt end of nowhere. So how were people supposed to get mail? Like everything else, the resourceful pioneers of this Waterfront Wonderland sorted out the mail issue quite well.



Right across the river, within a block of the Fort Myers yacht basin, was the post office (the Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center today), so, obviously, the quickest way to get mail to the heart of Cape Coral was straight across the river. By boat.

The first delivery was on Oct. 21, 1959. Captain Ladd brought the mail over on the *Santiva* (so named for the islands he served originally). Nearly everybody in Cape Coral was there to meet the boat. Excitement ran high. Cape Postmaster Joe Bradford stepped forward to accept the small bundle and, one imagines, was accompanied by the citizens of Cape Coral back to his cubbyhole in the Surfside Restaurant that was the Cape's first post office.

The *Santiva* arrived around 9:30 a.m., depending on whether the Cape's doctor, who liked to fish, was aboard. Dr. David visited the Cape medical clinic once a week and could not resist the opportunity to get in a little fishing on the way over.

The *Santiva* also doubled as a sight-seeing boat. Early Cape residents, eager to get to know their exotic surroundings, could



ride along to see the island stops, which included Pine Island, Sanibel, and Captiva. On the way back to Fort Myers, the *Santiva* would drop them off and pick up the outgoing mail. For passengers boarding at Fort Myers, the 75-mile round-trip cruise cost \$3.30.

The last *Santiva* mail delivery to the Cape Coral yacht basin was in February of 1963, one week after the Gulf American Land Corporation (GALC) opened the Cape's first post office

building on 47th Terrace. The following December, Captain Ladd retired and put the *Santiva* up for sale. Bridges to the Cape and the islands were under way.

Since its inception in 1987, the Cape Coral Museum of History has sought to discover, preserve, and share the history of Cape Coral through its archives, museum exhibits, and public programs. The museum is the official repository for the history of Cape Coral and serves as a public resource for all sectors of the local community, as well as international and U.S. tourists. Operated by the Cape Coral Historical Society, the museum exhibits artifacts, documents, and photographs pertaining to the history of Cape Coral and Southwest Florida.

Hours: Closed Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Admission: Adults \$10, \$5 for 62 and over, \$5 for military, \$3 for students, children 5 and under free.

Cape Coral Museum Of History, 544 Cultural Park Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33990, (239) 772-7037, capecoralmuseum.org.

Here We Grow Again!

Business Development Updates

Listed below is a snapshot of the newest projects currently in permitting or under construction. Stay tuned as we keep building Cape Coral's future.

Big Nicks BBQ, 870 SE 47th Ter.

- Tenant build-out
- Located within the Cove on 47th
- 1,359-square-foot restaurant space
- Building permit issued

Fred Anderson Toyota of Cape Coral, 2025 NE Pine Island Road

- New construction
- Site permit issued
- Building permit under review
- 83,189-square-foot dealership

Oak & Stone, 870 SE 47th Ter.

- Tenant build-out
- Located within the Cove on 47th
- 8,240-square-foot restaurant space

House of Omelets, 440 Cape Coral Pkwy., E., Unit 2

- Tenant build-out
- Establishing its second Cape Coral location within Bimini Square
- 2,308-square-foot restaurant space

Zuly Dental Medicine, 4636-4640 SE 9th Place

- Renovation
- Start-up of new dental practice
- 3,709-square-foot medical space



PLAN. PREPARE. PATIENCE.

LCEC works year-round to harden the system and prepare for storm season. Utility customers are encouraged to prepare with a plan that includes special needs, evacuation, and a storm kit.

The plan

LCEC has a tried and true plan that is updated and practiced annually. The electric grid is built to be resilient. Resources and relationships are cultivated in case they are needed.

Preparation is key

LCEC has comprehensive vegetation management, inspection, and maintenance plans to mitigate the potential for outages. When power is interrupted, the LCEC team is prepared to respond as quickly and safely as possible.

When the lights are out, we are on!

Since 1940, LCEC employees, contractors, and vendors have been there to respond to every major event with a sense of urgency. We know our members depend on electricity to power their lives and we are committed to meeting the needs of our community 24/7/365.

Visit the lcec.net Storm Center for more information about Storm Preparedness.

HOW LCEC RESTORES POWER

Safety is the priority

During disaster response, and every day, safety is everyone's responsibility. While LCEC and all of our responding partners are laser-focused on restoring power as quickly as possible, safety is always the priority.

- Stay clear of downed power lines, as they may be energized.
- Puddles of water contacting downed lines are dangerous.
- Keep LCEC phone lines clear for emergency calls by only calling to report safety threats.



AFTER A MAJOR EVENT... HERE'S HOW THE RESTORATION PROCESS WORKS



STEP 1. DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

Includes physical inspection of our facilities. Once damage assessments have been made, LCEC begins repairs.



STEP 2. CRITICAL REPAIRS

We repair main circuits and restore critical facilities such as hospitals, police, and fire stations.



STEP 3. QUICKLY & SAFELY

Repair lines that get the greatest number of customers on as soon as possible.



STEP 4. REMAINING OUTAGES

Restoring power to those small pockets or individuals still without power.

www.lcec.net

Concur Or Object: Differing Viewpoints From Diverse Attorneys

Moving In Together for Valentine's Day: To Be Or Not To Be?

Roommates Or Romance? Is Cohabiting Right For You?

By Kara B. Rogers, Esq.

Moving in with your partner is a huge relationship milestone! Congratulations on reaching this point. My husband and I are celebrating thirteen years of marriage, so I've learned firsthand that sharing a home can be incredibly rewarding and incredibly challenging. To help you decide if you're ready for this big step, consider these key points:



- **Timing is Everything:** How long have you been together? There's no magic number of months or years, but generally, the longer and more stable the relationship, the better. Ask yourself: Is this a long-term relationship with a future? If so, cohabitating might be a great next step.

- **Money Matters:** Have you talked finances? Do you have a plan for managing money and shared expenses? Getting on the same page financially before you move in is crucial. It prevents misunderstandings and strengthens your bond.

- **Home Sweet Home ... Or Not?** Discuss household expectations. Who does dishes? Who takes out the trash? You don't need to micromanage every detail, but a general understanding of shared responsibilities is key to peaceful cohabitation.

- **The "Just in Case" Clause:** Contracts aren't romantic, but they're practical. If you're moving in together before marriage, a written agreement outlining your living arrangement and what happens if the relationship ends can be a lifesaver. It can help you

navigate living together and, if needed, separate amicably.

Ultimately, moving in together is a huge decision, and one that you and your partner must navigate together. If hammering out the details feels overwhelming, consider consulting an attorney who can help you navigate this exciting, but sometimes complex, time. But remember, while logistics are important, this is ultimately a decision of both the heart and the head. So, don't get so bogged down in the details that you forget what's truly important: you and your partner!

Sharing A Home: Romance Or Risky Business?

By Robson D.C. Powers, Esq.

Moving in together is a huge step. While it seems romantic, it's also a major legal and financial commitment. Before sharing your space, consider these potential downsides:



- **Shared Expenses, Shared Headaches:** Sharing costs can get messy. Unequal contributions can lead to resentment. Breaking a lease or dividing property is legally and financially complex, especially if one partner is more financially secure than the other.

- **Chore Wars and Boundary Blues:** Who does the dishes? Disputes over chores are common. Living together blurs personal boundaries. It can be hard to find alone time or maintain outside interests.

- **Legal Loopholes:** Unlike marriage, cohabitation doesn't automatically grant property rights. Without a written agreement, disputes over assets can be complicated. Plus, once your partner moves in, they have legal rights. You can't

just kick them out and you may have to take legal action to remove them from the property.

- **The Breakup Factor:** Have you ever seen the comedy film *The Break Up*? It may seem hyperbolic, but when relationships end it can be messy, both literally and figuratively. Unfortunately, not all relationships last forever, and breakups can be emotionally and financially devastating, especially when cohabitation is involved. Think about how you'd handle a split before you move in.

- **The Cohabitation Agreement:** Cohabitation is a big deal. A cohabitation agreement is highly recommended. It outlines financial responsibilities, property ownership, and a separation plan, protecting both partners. Love is great, but a clear agreement can prevent future heartache. If you don't think you're ready to draw up a cohabitation agreement with your partner, consider whether you're ready to move in together.

Cohabitation is a huge decision, legally and personally. If you're thinking about moving in together (especially with love in the air!), a cohabitation agreement is highly recommended. And if you have doubts about moving in together, don't be afraid to pump the brakes. Living with your partner might be right for you someday, but it doesn't have to be today.

Robson D.C. Powers, Esq. and Kara B. Rogers, Esq. are the founders of Powers & Rogers, PLLC located at 615 Cape Coral Pkwy. W., Suite 206, Cape Coral, FL. Both have been selected as Rising Stars by Super Lawyers, a recognition bestowed on only 2.5% of attorneys in the state. They practice in civil litigation including business, real estate, construction, and probate litigation.

Disclaimer: Nothing contained herein should be construed as legal advice. You should always consult an attorney for any legal questions.



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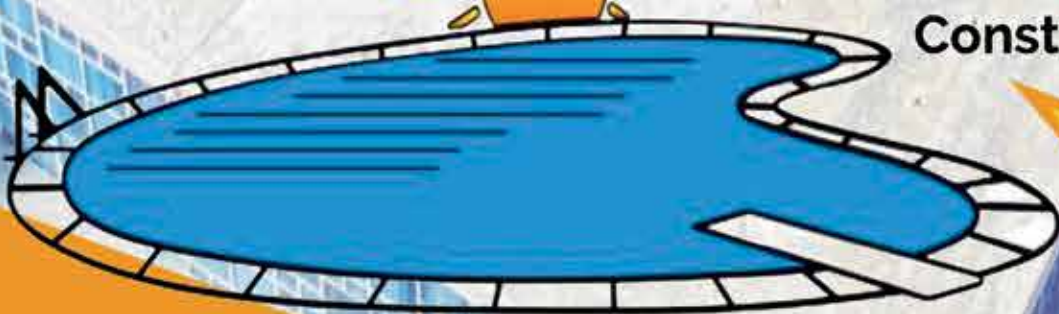
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