

THE CAPE CORAL SUN

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



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Here We Grow Again!

New Toyota Dealership Coming To Cape Coral

Cape Coral is set to welcome a brand-new Toyota dealership on Pine Island Road, marking another milestone in the city's rapid development.

A Growing Auto Hub

Back in 1990, Cape Coral's first major auto dealership opened its doors, serving a then-population of just 75,000. Now, with over 225,000 residents, the city continues to expand, and the addition of a Toyota dealership further cements Pine Island Road as a bustling automotive corridor.

The new dealership, operated by the North Carolina-based Anderson Automotive Group, will be located just east of BJ's Wholesale Club. This marks the third Toyota dealership in Lee and Collier counties, alongside AutoNation in Fort Myers and Germain in Naples.

Who's Behind The New Dealership?

Anderson Automotive Group, a family-run business since 1955, has been paving the way for this expansion after purchasing 15 acres for \$7.6 million last year. The company recently sold two dealerships to focus on

new opportunities, including enhancing customer service and growing their operations.

The company has expressed its commitment to customer satisfaction and making a positive impact in the community by optimizing resources to best serve its customers.

Details On The New Dealership

The \$24 million project will include approximately 85,000 square feet of structure space, according to city plans.

Construction is being carried out under the authority of Southeast Toyota Distributors.

Groundbreaking for Fred Anderson Toyota of Cape Coral was on Feb. 13 at 2025 NE Pine Island Road. Once complete, the dealership will offer a range of new and pre-owned vehicles, as well as a full-service and parts department.



Cape Coral's Continued Growth

Cape Coral's commercial and residential development continues to accelerate, with the Toyota dealership being just one of many new ventures shaping the city's future. As the area expands, businesses and infrastructure projects keep pace, ensuring Cape Coral remains a prime location for both residents and investors.

South Cape Community Center Offers Activities

The South Cape Community Center, located on the grounds of Faith Presbyterian Church at 4544 Coronado Pkwy., is a 17,400-square-foot facility offering diverse recreational programs and facility rentals for Cape Coral residents.

The center features a full-size, air-conditioned gymnasium with a basketball court and indoor volleyball, four indoor pickleball courts, and an event room for up to 400 guests, with parking available for 240 vehicles.

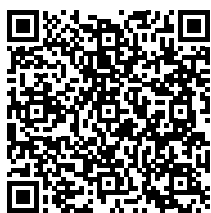
The center serves as a hub for adult fitness and recreation, with a focus on programs for adults ages 50-plus. It also hosts family-friendly and children's activities throughout the year. Hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Events And Classes

The South Cape Community Center has diverse social, recreational, and educational opportunities. This includes events in the event room and a variety of classes and programs, including:

- Health and Fitness Classes
- Dance Programs
- Music Programs
- Educational and Leisure Activities
- Lunch and Learns
- Crafty Workshops

For more information on specific programs or to view upcoming class dates and times, please scan the QR code or call (239) 574-0806.



Pickleball Drop-In Play

Monday through Friday, 12 to 3 p.m. and Saturday, 7:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

- \$5 per hour
- \$40 for a 10-hour punch card, \$80 for a 20-hour punch card

Pickleball Court Rentals

Four indoor air-conditioned pickleball courts can be rented during the following times: Monday through Friday, 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m.

\$20 for up to 5 people; \$5 per person for additional people

Open Gym Drop-In

Monday through Friday, 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. and Saturday, 7:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

\$5 per hour.

Play basketball, go for a cardio walk, or get some fitness exercise with our dumbbells, balance balls, and resistance bands, all inside our air-conditioned gym.

Friendship Center Dining Program (at South Cape Community Center)

Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Nutritious, healthy meals keep one's mind and body at peak performance. The South Cape Community Center can help you maintain good health by offering meals through the Friendship Dining program.

This program is open to anyone over 60 looking for a healthy, nutritious hot meal in a clean, safe, and friendly environment. A donation of \$3 per meal is suggested to help cover the cost of the meals. However, anyone is welcome to a hearty meal regardless of their ability to pay. All contributions help provide meals for older adults in our communities.

Facility Rentals

The South Cape Community Center has an event room, a 20-seat theater perfect for seminars and presentations, a kitchen and banquet area, a conference room with A/V capabilities, and five classrooms that can be rented for meetings and special occasions (i.e., weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, seminars, fundraisers, etc.). The event room features soaring ceilings and a stage and can accommodate up to 400 seated people. Round tables, chairs, and banquet tables are all included in the rental cost. The kitchen, banquet, and classrooms are the perfect size for meetings and seminars.

Call (239) 574-0806 for more information and room availability.

Please note: The rental form must be completed, and a deposit must be made in full to secure reservations.

Cape Coral Cardboard Boat Regatta

Saturday, March 29 (Rain Date – Sunday, March 30)

Get ready for one of Cape Coral's most exciting and wacky festivals – the Cardboard Boat Regatta! This unique event takes place on Saturday, March 29, at Seahawk Park (1030 NW 28th Street, Cape Coral). The fun kicks off at 9 a.m., with a rain date set for Sunday, March 30.

The festival is free to attend, but a small donation is required for parking. Be sure to bring lawn chairs or a blanket, hats, and sunscreen for a comfortable day in the sun.



Cape Coral Cardboard Boat Regatta on page 2

The Rynski Report: Let's Hear It For The Lefties

By Ryn Gargulinski
[Rynski]



What do Marilyn Monroe, Jimi Hendrix, Michaelangelo and Kermit the Frog have in common? All these talented, beautiful people – and frog – are left-handed. The list of famous lefties doesn't stop there. It's chock full of notable artists, authors, musicians, actors and other folks who have accomplished amazing things.

But perhaps the most amazing accomplishment of all for us lefties is simply getting through life in a world geared toward right-handed people. With 90% of the population being right-handed, the lack of easily accessible left-handed accommodations is not a surprise.

What may be a surprise, especially for righties, is just how many things can be irksome or challenging for a lefty. From the minute we're born, we're given toys with buttons and cranks that favor the right-handed baby. Ever get a chance to play a left-handed jack-in-the-box? Me neither.

We then head to our kindergarten craft sessions only to find all our projects come out strangely jagged from being forced to use right-handed scissors. Elementary through high school puts us in the seats of right-handed desks with all the surface area on the wrong side.

As we're twisting our way through class, our left hand is battered and imprinted by the right-handed spiral notebook, and then smeared with pencil or ink as our left hand drags across the page as we write.

We then learn to drive in cars with right-handed gear shifts, drink from coffee cups that put the decorative design on the wrong side, and need to ask someone to help us open the mustard and ketchup packages in fast food restaurants. That's right, even the little tabs on the condiment packets are set up for right-handed people.

The kitchen is such a right-handed oasis, it's a wonder we can cook anything at all. Manual can openers are right-handed. Potato peelers are right-handed. Even measuring cups are right-handed.

Grab one of those large glass measuring cups with your right hand, and you get measurements that include recognizable things like cups and ounces. Grab it with your left hand, and all you see is a sea of metrics. No wonder our cakes come out weird.

It's been said what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. While a few studies I just ran across did note that lefties may have a higher risk of injury (and possibly neuroticism) from being forced to use all these right-handed items throughout their lifetime, it also broadens our skills.



Ten bucks says many lefties are more flexible than our right-handed counterparts, thanks to having to twist our way through school in those abominable desks.

We're also apt to be more adaptable, learning to do things with both hands when we don't feel like trying to track down the only left-handed bowling ball in the entire bowling alley.

We may also have a leg-up in other sports, as opponents

are most often expecting a kick, throw or punch coming from the right side. Surprise!

And things like restringing a guitar for left-handed playing helps us learn precision and patience (unless, like I did, you just ask your dad to do it).

Measuring cups and wrong-sided coffee cups aside, being left-handed can be seen as a wonderful blessing. We're fun. We're creative. We're adaptable. And we're up there in the league of geniuses like Jimi Hendrix and Kermit the Frog.

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.

Cape Coral Cardboard Boat Regatta from page 1

Spectators can vote for their favorite boat, and awards will be presented during a final ceremony after the races.

And yes – the boats are really made out of cardboard ... and a whole lot of paint! Some barely make it across the finish line, while others prove to be surprisingly seaworthy, navigating the short, zigzagging racecourse with ease.

The Regatta is open to families, youth groups, individuals, clubs, organizations, and businesses, all eager to put their handmade boats to the test.

Boats range from small, simple designs made by kids to elaborate, creative masterpieces. Each race features two boats competing head-to-head in a series of heats.

Beyond the races, the festival offers food, crafts, and T-shirt vendors, along with a children's playground, making it a perfect event for all ages.

Event Schedule

7:30 a.m. – Boat and Vendor Set-Up

Rotarians and volunteers arrive early to finalize the park setup. Vendors begin setting up their booths, and participants start decorating their slip areas and putting their boats on display.

9 a.m. – Boat Judging

Official judging of boats and teams takes place from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Awards will be presented and delivered to the contestants at their slips shortly thereafter, allowing spectators to see the winners before the races begin.

12 p.m. – Boat Regatta Kickoff

The races officially begin! Teams will take to the water to test their creations in an exciting head-to-head competition. Want to be part of the fun behind the scenes? Volunteer your time and skills to help make this event a success! There are plenty of opportunities available for those looking to get involved.

Visit www.capecoralarotary.org/cardboard-boat-regatta for more information.

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Business Spotlight

Florida Boy Burger: Celebrating The Spirit Of Old Florida

By Ryn Gargulinski, Staff Reporter

Florida is all sunshine, beaches and white kitchen cabinets, right? Well, that's not ALL it is. It's also swampland, adventure, alligators, cowboys, cattle, country fishermen, and the unbridled wildness of body, mind and spirit. The latter is what gives us the cherished moniker of "The Freedom State" – and it's also what Florida Boy Burger Co. is all about.

Spearheaded by Lee County natives Roger Lolly and Lou Cioffi, Florida Boy Burger opened a Cape Coral location in February. As part of the larger Florida Boy brand, the restaurant continues the legacy of paying homage to old Florida – in the most delicious way.

Appetizers range from alligator sausage to jumbo frog legs. Burgers can be served straight up or with fanciful, red hot, or even a peanut butter and jelly twist – depending on your mood of the day.

Wildlife abounds from floor to ceiling, including a raccoon fishing above the register, a wild boar's head guarding the bathroom hallway, and a tank of live baby alligators greeting visitors in the main dining room.

Tributes to old Florida bedeck the walls, complete with cow hides, python skins, and wooden crate slats from farms throughout the state. You'll also find historical photos – like Babe Ruth catching a gator – along with images of family, friends and other Florida locals doing what they do best: live for adventure.

"Swimming with alligators has been done for generations," Roger says as he shares a video clip of him doing exactly that. He comes from six generations of fishermen on Pine Island, where his grandma served as mayor – a post she won in a drinking contest.

"She always had an Old Milwaukee in one hand and a long brown More cigarette dangling in the other," Roger recalls.

Mullet fishing with his uncle in the bay is another fond memory. His uncle would throw the kids into the water, then throw each kid a paddle.

"Our job was to scare the sharks out of the nets by hitting the nets with the paddle," Roger says.

Lou has equally entertaining childhood stories, especially around his father's plumbing business on Del Prado. Lou remembers shop employees asking him to go get them a drink from the cooler – where they'd hide baby gators as a surprise.

Lou and Roger met while both attending Mariner High School, noting they were probably in the bottom one percent of students. "They were glad to get rid of us," Roger laughs.

Both also went on to earn M.B.A. degrees, with Roger in his final stages of earning a doctorate in education. Both are married with kids and live in Fort Myers.

Perhaps most notably, both share a passion for old Florida they aim to continue to celebrate through the Florida



This life-size alligator jutting out above the food counter is just one of many around the shop.



Fishing is a huge theme throughout the restaurant, even for the raccoon above the register.

Boy brand. With more than 300,000 FloridaBoyInc Instagram followers and a reality show picked up by a network (company majority-owner Roger is still reviewing the contract), the brand is already a major hit.

And with a menu that includes half-pound burgers, local ingredients, and a vibe that immerses you in old Southern charm, Cape Coral's Florida Boy Burger restaurant is poised to do the same. A Fort Myers location has already met with success, and others are planned for Orlando and Jacksonville.

"People come in as customers," Lou says, "and they leave as family."



Florida Boy Burger owners Roger Lolly (right) and Lou Cioffi show off one of the alligator heads from the table centerpieces.



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Cape Coral Sail And Power Squadron Wins National Award

At the 2024 Annual Meeting of the United States Power Squadron, held in Orlando, Florida in February, three members of the Cape Coral Sail and Power Squadron | America's Boating Club Cape Coral received the Polaris Award for Excellence in Team Teaching. Members Ted Dawson, Bill Harris and Tom Dawson were honored for their work as instructors of America's Boating Course for the squadron.

Ted Dawson joined the squadron in 2011 and began teaching the course by himself for a couple of years until he was joined by Bill Harris. In 2017 Ted recruited his brother Tom to help when he moved to Cape Coral. Each member of the team brings a unique set of skills to teaching, together they worked to make the classroom experience one that would bring the material to life.

Since 2011 over 3,000 people have taken America's Boating Course at the Cape Coral Sail and Power Squadron.

America's Boating Course is a nationally recognized class that helps students earn their state's Boating Safety Education I.D. Card. The course provides the foundation every boater needs to know before they head out on the water. Florida legislators have been trying to make having this card mandatory for all boat operators however for now only those born on or after Jan. 1, 1988 need the card.

Boaters new to Lee County are surprised to learn there is an estimated 100,000 vessels which creates congestion in many places. Many boaters here have never learned the navigation rules that govern operating a boat. Students, most with years of boating experience, tell us they are taking the class as a refresher as they find our waterways to be a challenging experience. Recognizing this the team adapted the material in a way that allowed the students to see how the lessons apply to our waterways.

Registration for the next session of America's Boating Course is open now. The class will start Monday, May 5 and

meet on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. for three weeks.

The Cape Coral Sail and Power Squadron offers a variety of other courses and seminars throughout the year. On Tuesday, April 8 the squadron will be offering a look at the local waters for boaters new to Lee County. The Southwest Florida Boating Seminar was created to answer the common questions our members are asked about why our waters are so different. Then on Wednesday, May 14 plan on attending the Hurricane Preparation for Boaters seminar. This seminar helps new boaters get an idea of what they need to do to prepare their boat for hurricane season.

Pre-registration is encouraged for all our classes and seminars online at www.ccsaps.org. If you have any questions about our offer or are interested in joining drop by or call our offices Tuesday, Thursday, or Saturday, from 9 a.m. to noon. The squadron offices are located at 917 SE 47th Terrace, Cape Coral and the phone number is (239) 549-9754.

Sudoku

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

Answer in this issue



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Discover A New Level Of Wellness

By Kristin Gustin

I am thrilled to introduce myself as your dedicated wellness healthcare provider, here to share insights, tips, and stories that promote a healthier and happier life. My name is Kristin Gustin, and I have spent the past 15 years diving deep into the world of health and wellness.



At Thrive by K, we address the root causes of health issues and optimize overall wellness. By focusing on personalized care, these services integrate advanced diagnostic testing and natural, evidence-based treatments to support everyone's unique health journey. Thrive by K empowers clients to take control of their health and thrive at every stage of life.

What Is Thrive By K?

Thrive by K is your local functional healthcare provider. We have built a warm and caring environment where we truly value our patients. We are here to support you on your journey toward achieving optimal health and wellness, every step of the way. Through our preventive care and wellness expertise, we aim to inspire and guide our patients toward sustainable lifestyle changes and holistic well-being. We blend compassionate care with cutting-edge medical treatments to help everyone we serve meet and exceed their health and wellness goals. We are committed to continuous

learning, innovation, and exceptional, personalized care that respects and honors every client's unique needs and choices.

A Bit About Me

As an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner, I am passionate about adult preventative care and wellness. As your medical healthcare provider, I will care for you like family, respect you and your decisions, and exceed your expectations with excellent, compassionate care. I received my master's degree in science of nursing at the University of South Florida and have over 10 years of experience in various specialties, including cardiology, pulmonology, and urology. On the personal side, when I'm not working, I'm enjoying motherhood, volunteering, boating, sports, and fitness.

A Bit About Sammy

Samantha "Sammy" Holt's lifelong fascination with science and the human body led her to join Kristin on a dedicated health and wellness journey. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from UMass Boston. Samantha's professional journey is marked by nearly two years of collaboration with Kristin, whose expertise she trusts implicitly. Her personal health journey includes overcoming struggles with weight. With the help of tirzepatide and Kristin's guidance, she achieved and maintained remarkable weight loss. She has maintained her weight for more than a year and feels and looks better than ever. Samantha is enthusiastic about sharing her journey and helping others achieve happier, healthier lives.



Services We Offer

Thrive by K focuses on functional health through a comprehensive approach that includes weight management, cutting-edge peptide therapies, hormone replacement, sexual enhancement, anti-aging treatments, intravenous (IV) infusions, and aesthetic services. Our goal is preventative care, treating health concerns, and fostering overall well-being.

We understand that convenience is essential, so we provide flexible options for our clients, including in-office appointments, telehealth consultations, and personalized



Lee County Commissioner Kevin Ruane, Kristin Gustin, and Doreen Ruane at Thrive by K recent grand opening.

home visits. Our commitment to patient care extends beyond regular hours; we are known for our willingness to support our patients in need, even during late hours and on weekends, ensuring everyone has access to the care they deserve.

Join Me On This Journey

I believe that wellness is a journey, not a destination, and I am excited to explore topics related to health and well-being with you. You will find valuable insights, practical tips, inspiring stories, and resources to support your wellness goals here.

As I share my knowledge and experiences, I hope to educate and inspire you to take charge of your health. Together, we will build a community where everyone feels supported and empowered to thrive.

Thank you for taking the time to get to know me and learn about Thrive by K, where being healthy is being happy. I can't wait to see how far we can go together on this incredible journey toward holistic wellness.

Stay tuned for our upcoming posts and remember: your health is a lifelong adventure – let's thrive together!

Kristin Gustin, APRN/Owner
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Cape Coral Construction Industry Association (CCCIA)

Creative Take On Networking Enhances Relationships, The Overall Industry

By Ryn Gargulinski, Staff Reporter

While most speed-dating scenes have you talking hobbies and horoscope signs, the Cape Coral Construction Industry Association (CCCIA) version of speed dating focused on things like concrete, carpentry and customer satisfaction.

More than 100 attendees gathered for the CCCIA's February monthly membership event at the La Venezia Ballroom. Featuring a creative twist on your typical networking, the event showcased a lineup of builders for attendees to meet – speed-dating style.

"There's a desire to connect to folks more than ever," said CCCIA President Keith Quackenbush. "We're trying things a little differently to take it to the next level."

That next level is working, as evidenced by feedback from one of the featured builders.

"Thank you for the warm welcome to the CCCIA," said The Lykos Group Project Manager Joseph Avvampato. "Great group of individuals. The event was fantastic, and I was able to gather 55 new contacts to add to my arsenal."

Created by association Executive Director Lynn Boldissar, the speed-dating format gave industry vendors, suppliers and related organizations a chance to share their expertise as well as info they wished every Cape Coral builder, and even residents, knew.

Like the importance of customer communication. In the laid-back world of Southwest Florida, it's not uncommon for homeowners to have to follow up with their own scheduling, maintenance appointments, or even tracking down no-shows – when it needs to be the other way around.

"Strive to try to communicate with customers as much as it makes sense," said Mark Skrodzki, project manager of Key Screening. "Reach out to clients to let them know the timing of the project, the kinds of ideas they can implement."

The company likewise goes above and beyond, such as replacing a customer's screen when a rat chewed through it the same day the project was installed. Even though the warranty didn't cover the replacement, the company felt it was the right thing to do.

Maintaining a high level of standards is also a sticking point for Chris Fox, account manager for the roofing company of Gulf Western Group. He points out that apathy has become a trend across the world in just about every industry.

"[Some] people don't care anymore," he said. "A phrase you hear is 'Not my job.'" He emphasized the importance of stepping up to help homeowners find a solution rather than foisting problems off to someone else. "Go that extra step."

Sometimes that extra step can be as simple as pointing a customer to the right person who can help them, and sometimes it can be a whole lot more. Like cooking tutorials.

"I wish more builders knew the value of having someone to work with in specialty areas," said James Harasym, account manager for Fuse Specialty Appliances. Rather than grabbing at the most convenient appliance from the nearest big box store, builders could benefit from a more tailored approach to suit their customers' lifestyle.

"So much progression has been made in the appliance industry," Harasym said, mentioning things like all-in-one options that work as an oven, steamer and microwave in a single cooking appliance.

Certain companies, like Fuse, encourage builder relationships with incentives, pricing comparable to big box shops, and ongoing support for their customers.

"We can go out and cook with them," Haraym noted, "Show them how to use their new appliance." Haraym serves as the single point of contact for builder and residential accounts he brings in, handling the entire process from the first meeting to the delivery, installation – and beyond.

In an industry peppered with permits, inspections and enough regulations to make your head spin, having a single point of contact in any capacity can be a godsend for builders and homeowners alike. As can be doing your homework.

"Do the research before you build," said Andrey Cunha. He serves on the CCCIA Board of Directors as well as a builder and remodeler for The Dream Remodel. Known as the "Cash Money Guy," he also brings an extensive background in the mortgage and real estate arenas.

The research he encourages builders to undertake includes ensuring the proposed home is the right fit for the neighborhood. Inexperienced builders, particularly those not familiar with the Cape, may think they can simply build any home style, size or aesthetic in any neighborhood they like.

While that may technically be true, the project is likely to tank if the home is not aligned with the neighborhood and the market. This, of course, affects the entire market.



CCCIA Executive Director Lynn Boldissar and Lake Michigan Credit Union Loan Officer, Oksana Sherman



Wade Kundinger, Sales Manager at CCCIA and Anthony Ramirez Assistant Manager with Enterprise

Cape Coral Construction Industry Association on page 7

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Cape Coral Construction Industry Association from page 6

Potential homeowners have their own slate of questions to ask themselves.

“What do you want to build? What can you afford to build? Look at the neighborhood, the schools” Cunha said. “You want to talk to homebuilders. It’s not just having the right product but having a quality product.”

Protecting the environment is another key area of importance, sometimes overlooked by both builders and residents.

“I wish they would come to us first,” said Benedict Sumah, president of I.V.A. Environmental Services. His firm specializes in “holding the line between protecting the species and creating homes.”

When builders and residents consult with him as part of the planning process, he’s often able to help them redesign around nature to find a way for new development and the existing ecosystem to co-exist. But all too often, he’s only consulted after the project has begun and encountered a problem.



Key Screening owner Alec Bevan on left, and employee Mark Skrodzki on right.

“Some issues can be expensive to resolve,” he said, adding that his firm is meant to be a first-in-line consultant rather than an after-the-fact budget overrun. While building around nature is the preferred option, another is relocating wildlife to a place where it can continue to thrive.



It all boils back down to doing the homework.

“Most people spend more time researching their shoes on Google than they do their roofing contractors,” Gulf Western Group’s Fox said. “An 11-year-old can create an official-looking document in two seconds online. Don’t sign anything that day.”

Instead, homeowners need to take the time to review any contract details while making sure the contractor’s license and insurance are current. Trustworthy companies will have no problem sharing such details, and using trustworthy companies protects homeowners as well as the industry as a whole.

Participating builders: Aubuchon Homes, MajKowski Construction, Sinclair Custom Homes, Sunlife Homes, and The Lykos Group.

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.




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




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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

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When it comes to roofing, Roman Roofing Inc. stands as the epitome of quality,

professionalism, and reliability. Since its inception, this Cape Coral-based company has built a reputation for delivering unparalleled service, earning the trust of homeowners and businesses alike.

What sets Roman Roofing apart? It starts with a commitment to excellence. Specializing in tile, metal, and shingle roofing systems, Roman Roofing offers tailored solutions for Florida’s unique climate. Every project is executed with precision, using only top-tier materials designed to withstand the state’s harsh weather conditions, from intense sun to hurricane-force winds.

“Our goal is not just to meet expectations but to exceed them,” says Owner Norm Dopfer. “We pride ourselves on our craftsmanship, transparency, and dedication to customer satisfaction.”

The company’s highly trained team ensures each roof is installed to perfection. Roman Roofing’s robust training programs ensure employees stay at the forefront of industry standards, delivering superior results every time. The company is also a champion of community values, supporting local initiatives and contributing to Cape Coral’s growth.

Unlike competitors, Roman Roofing believes in open communication, offering detailed estimates, timely updates, and no hidden costs. Customers frequently commend their seamless experience, praising the company’s integrity and attention to detail.

Roman Roofing is licensed, insured, and boasts an impressive portfolio of completed projects, making it the go-to choice for anyone seeking dependable roofing services. Whether you need a simple repair or a full installation, Roman Roofing is equipped to handle jobs of all sizes with efficiency and care.

For those in search of a roofing partner that combines skill, trustworthiness, and exceptional service, Roman Roofing Inc. shines as Cape Coral’s roofing leader. Discover the difference today—because your roof deserves the best.

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(239) 458-7663, www.romanroofing.com.

2025 Chairman's Gala & Excellence In Business Awards

Submitted by Donna S Germain, IOM, FCCP
President/CEO

On Feb. 1, our Chamber celebrated our local businesses and community leadership at the 2025 Chairman's Gala & Excellence in Business Awards. The evening was a tribute to outstanding businesses, dedicated members, volunteers and community champions who have made a significant impact in Cape Coral in 2024.

The businesses and individuals recognized have not only demonstrated remarkable achievements in their respective industries, but stive on a daily basis to make Cape Coral and Lee County better. Congratulations to the following 2025 Excellence in Business Award recipients.

Large Business of the Year: Seminole Casino Hotel – Recognized for its economic impact, positive recognition of their team and commitment to excellence.

Small Business of the Year: LifeSynergy Wellness – Celebrated for its dedication to improving community health and well-being.

New Small Business of the Year: BARunch – Acknowledged for its impressive entry into the Cape Coral business community.

Entrepreneur of the Year: Chris Scuderi, owner of Gator Mike's Family Fun Park and Mellow Mushroom Cape Coral, for his innovative leadership and contributions to local entertainment.

Nonprofit Organization of the Year: The Guardian Angels For Special Populations – Honored for its outstanding service and advocacy for individuals with special needs.

Alongside outgoing board chairman, Dusty Shelton, I had the great privilege of presenting our Chamber Awards to individuals who have shown unwavering dedication to our organization, committees and our community.

Congratulations to the following winners: **Board Member of the Year:** Jenell Dolan, LCEC, **Trustee of the Year:** Michelle Richard, Main Street Home Loans, **New Member of the Year:** WB Williamson Bros, Inc., **Welcome Center Volunteer of the Year:** Kenny Potts, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services, **Member of the Year:** Kiwanis Club of Cape Coral, **Volunteer of the Year:** Annette Warren, Priority Business Solutions,

Government Affairs Committee Member of the Year: Annette Warren, Priority Business Solutions, **Membership Development Committee Member of the Year:** Lenny Cannova, Modern Woodmen of America, **Education Committee Member of the Year:** Melanie Musik, PACE Center for Girls.

It was also a pleasure for my team and I to present the Chamber Champion Awards, recognizing businesses and individuals who have gone beyond to support the Chamber staff throughout this year. Congratulations to the following recipients: Wintrust Banking Center, ACRA Electric, *The Cape Coral Sun*, Tom and SuEllen Hobel (SuEllen's Floral), Larry Stone - RAM Restorations and TriCircle Pavers.

The awards ceremony would not have been complete without our special recognition awards. We awarded the first ever Gundersen Award to Eric Gundersen, a board member and volunteer who goes beyond on a daily basis for our organization. We also awarded the Chamber's Lifetime Achievement Award to Tom Giles from Avalon Engineering. Tom has been a member of the Chamber since the early '80s and served as Chairman in 1985. He has led countless committees and event task forces over the years.

As we moved to the end of the evening, our 2023 and 2024 Chairman Dusty Shelton passed the gavel to 2025 Chairman Bill Johnson, Jr. We then inducted our 2025 Board of Directors and Trustees with the help of State Representative from District 79, Mike Giallombardo.

Congratulations to the 2025 board: Chairman Bill Johnson, Jr., IOM, FCCP, of the Lee County Horizon Foundation; Chair Elect Mick Sheldrake of Guardian Angels For Special Populations; Past Chair Dusty Shelton of It's IT; Treasurer Bill Jones of WastePro; Financial Advisor Stephanie Ramirez of Assured Bookkeeping Plus; Member At Large Jeff Justin of LCEC.

Board members include Chuck Warren of Coral Ridge Funeral Home and Cemetery, Eric Gundersen of Drones SWFL, Jay Santos of Key Bank, Jenell Dolan of LCEC, Julie Ferguson, Past Chair of Cape Coral Caring Center, Kurt Godwin of Discovery Maps, Lorri Philbin of Lee Health, Matthew Connor of Connar Enterprises, Molly Wright of Suncoast Beverage, Nancy Travis (Individual), Nita Whaley of CC Real Estate Services,



2025 Cape Coral Chamber Board



Small Business of the Year: LifeSynergy Wellness



Chairman Dusty Shelton passing the gavel



Nonprofit Organization of the Year: The Guardian Angels For Special Populations



Chamber's Lifetime Achievement award to Tom Giles from Avalon Engineering



Chamber Champion award recipient SuEllen's Floral

Rachel Kaduk of Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, Samara Weidner of Technology At Work, Sharon Woodberry of the City of Cape Coral, Toni Mueller of Finemark Bank, Tracy Sicard of Fast Signs, and Vanessa Chaviano of LIV Digital Marketing.

Trustees include Alex Dias of Florida Blue Medicare, Cory O'Donnell of Owen-Ames-Kimball Co., Lenny Cannova of Modern Woodmen of America, Michelle Richard of Main Street Home Loans, Sergio Nascimento of IncredibleBank, Rich Leon of Kiwanis Thrift Store, and Annette Warren of Priority Business Solutions.

Chairman Emeritus members include Annette Carrasquillo of LAI Design Associates, LLC, Brett Bisbe of B2 Technology Solutions, Inc., Christopher Spiro of Spiro & Associates, Donna Meola of Truist Bank, Ed Ramos of Ramos Builders, Inc., Elmer Tabor of Cape Coral Town Center, Joseph Mazurkiewicz of BJM Consulting, Inc., Michelle Lewis of B2 Technology Solutions, Inc., Thomas Giles of Avalon Engineering, Wayne Kirkwood

2025 Chairman's Gala on page 9

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Easy Ways To Save On Your Energy Bill

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



Do you know the top two energy culprits in your home are air conditioning/heating and the water heater? While these are the biggest contributors to your electric bill, appliances such as refrigerators, stoves, and televisions also play a significant role. The good news is that reducing energy usage does not mean making drastic sacrifices. Braving the summer heat without air conditioning or shivering on the rare cooler days in Southwest Florida can be avoided. A few simple changes will result in noticeable savings every month.

Avoid late fees by setting up autopay: Paying your bill on

time helps you dodge extra charges. Ensure your bill is paid directly from your bank account each month.

Reduce Energy Waste

- **Turn off ceiling fans and electronics:** Ceiling fans cool people, not rooms. When you leave a room, switch them off. The same goes for lights and electronics.

- **Use appliances wisely:** Run dishwashers and washing machines only with full loads. It saves water too.

Air Conditioning Efficiency

- **Maintain your A/C system:** Clean or replace filters monthly and schedule annual maintenance to keep the unit running efficiently.

- **Set the thermostat at 78°F in the summer:** Each degree lower can increase cooling costs by eight percent.

- **Set the thermostat at 68°F in the winter:** Dress warm and use space heaters safely.

Lower your water heater thermostat: Setting it no higher than 120°F reduces energy costs and prevents scalding.

Skip the oven in summer: Your oven adds heat to your home, making your air conditioner work harder. Use a microwave instead for a more energy-efficient option.

Involve your family: Teaching children to turn off lights and conserve energy helps instill habits that save money over time.

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.



Four LCEC Employees Honored For Outstanding Volunteerism

LCEC is proud to recognize the dedication of employees who go above and beyond to support their communities through volunteerism. Community service has been a long-standing tradition at LCEC and it is engrained in the company culture. Every year, employees donate thousands of hours to causes they care about.

One of the ways LCEC supports these efforts is through the LCEC Pay it Forward Program, launched in 2016. Employees who volunteer and track their hours and earn donations to the 501(c)(3) charity of their choice. There are three tiers to the program ranging from 50 volunteer hours resulting in \$50, 100 hours in \$100, or 500 hours or more resulting in a chance to win a \$500 donation.

Each year, LCEC honors employees who reach the remarkable milestone of more than 500 volunteer hours. LCEC employees will gather to recognize Don, Jenell, Nancy, and Nicky for reaching this impressive benchmark in 2024 and earning the prestigious honor of becoming a member of the LCEC 500 Club. Each of these outstanding individuals will be entered into a drawing for a \$500 donation to the charity of their choice.

Donations benefit a range of local organizations such as Guns n' Hoses Pipe and Drums, Cape American Baseball, Visuality, Cape Charter School Foundation, and Calendar Girls.

LCEC is committed to fostering a culture of service, empowering and supporting employees to make a difference in the communities and sustaining a passion for volunteerism. For more information about LCEC in the community, visit <https://www.lcec.net/my-cooperative/community/>.

2025 Chairman's Gala from page 8

(Retired), Trish Lassiter of Lee County Electric Cooperative - LCEC, Joseph Francioni of SWFL Water Testing, and Zachary Zeis of Suncoast Beverage.

The 2025 Chairman's Gala & Excellence in Business Awards was a night of celebration, networking, and recognition. The Chamber extends its gratitude to all honorees, members, and sponsors who continue to make Cape Coral a thriving business community.

Thank You To Our Event Sponsors

A special thank you to our generous event sponsors whose support made this incredible evening possible: Photo Booth Sponsor: Achieva Credit Union, Champagne Toast Sponsors: Dusty and Dennis Shelton, It's IT, Chairman's Sponsor: Cool King Air, Centerpiece Sponsor: Suellen's Floral

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Gold Sponsors: Acra Electric Inc., First Horizon Bank, Lee Health, The Salad King

Silver Sponsors: LCEC, Your Name Here Specialties
Past Chairman Sponsors: Wintrust Banking Center – Sponsored Dusty Shelton, 2023-2024 Chairman.

Congratulations to all award recipients, and here's to another year of success and growth for the Cape Coral business community!

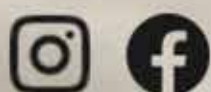


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Book Review: *By Any Other Name* By Jodi Picoult

Thought-Provoking Exploration Of Identity And Love

By Lillian Till,

Flutterbuy Books and More

Jodi Picoult, the master storyteller renowned for weaving intricate narratives that challenge moral boundaries and social issues, returns with her latest novel, *By Any Other Name*. In this deeply moving and thought-provoking novel, Picoult examines the complexities of identity, love, and the ways in which society dictates how we define ourselves and those around us. With her signature blend of compelling characters and timely themes, she crafts a story that lingers in the mind long after the final page is turned.



A Story Of Self-Discovery And Love

At its core, *By Any Other Name* is a novel about self-discovery and love, but not in the conventional sense. The protagonist, whose journey serves as the backbone of the story, grapples with questions of identity—both personal and romantic. Picoult presents readers with a narrative that forces them to reconsider how labels shape our perceptions and whether love can transcend the boundaries imposed by society.

One of the most striking aspects of the novel is the way Picoult structures the narrative. She masterfully employs dual timelines and multiple perspectives, allowing readers to see the protagonist's evolution firsthand. This technique not only enhances the emotional depth of the story but also provides insight into how past experiences and societal expectations influence present decisions.

Themes Of Identity And Societal Expectations

Throughout *By Any Other Name*, Picoult raises profound questions about identity. In a world where labels—be they related to gender, sexuality, or social roles—often dictate how we interact with one another, the novel challenges readers to consider whether these labels truly define us. The protagonist's journey is one of breaking free from societal constraints and embracing their true self, even when faced with opposition from those around them.

The novel also delves into the power of names and how they shape our understanding of ourselves and others. What does it mean to be known by a certain name? How does changing a name—or rejecting one—alter one's sense of self? These questions are explored with Picoult's signature nuance and emotional resonance, making for a thought-provoking read.

Picoult's Signature Storytelling

As always, Picoult's writing is both eloquent and emotionally charged. She has a knack for creating characters that feel real and relatable, and *By Any Other Name* is no exception. The protagonist's struggles, triumphs, and heartaches are rendered with such authenticity that readers can't help but become deeply invested in their story.

The novel also features Picoult's characteristic deep dive into research, ensuring that the themes and issues presented are explored with accuracy and respect. Whether she's tackling medical ethics, legal dilemmas, or, in this case, the fluid nature of identity and love, Picoult approaches each subject with a depth that enriches the reader's experience.

Emotional Impact And Reader Takeaways

Few authors can evoke emotion quite like Jodi Picoult, and *By Any Other Name* is a testament to her ability to tug at the heartstrings. The novel is filled with moments of joy, sorrow, and revelation, each one crafted to resonate with readers on a deeply personal level.

One of the most powerful aspects of the book is its ability to foster empathy. Regardless of whether readers have personally experienced the struggles depicted in the novel, Picoult's storytelling allows them to step into the protagonist's shoes and see the world through their eyes. This is what makes *By Any Other Name* not just a compelling read but an important one.

Final Thoughts

By Any Other Name is a beautifully written, emotionally charged novel that challenges readers to think critically about identity, love, and the societal constructs that shape our lives. Jodi Picoult once again proves why she is one of the most beloved and thought-provoking authors of our time. With its rich characters, poignant themes,



and masterful storytelling, this novel is a must-read for fans of literary fiction and those seeking a book that will stay with them long after the final page is turned.

Whether you are a longtime admirer of Picoult's work or a newcomer to her novels, *By Any Other Name* is a story that will touch your heart, challenge your perceptions, and remind you of the transformative power of love and self-acceptance.

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 a grandparent to three. Lillian is often found at Flutterbuy Books and More, which she is the proud owner of. Opening a bookstore of her own has always been a dream, one she continues to nurture with every turn of the page.

Cape Coral Receives Key Permit For Yacht Club Community Park

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) issued a critical permit for the Yacht Club Community Park renovation yesterday afternoon, bringing the City of Cape Coral one step closer to breaking ground on the park's improvements.

The environmental resource permit will now be sent to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), with federal approval anticipated in April 2025, barring unforeseen circumstances. Once received, the construction manager at risk will advertise the marine improvement portion of the project for construction bids, marking a significant step forward in the project.

The FDEP permit covers essential construction activities, including:

- Relocating the existing boat ramp in the Caloosahatchee River.
- Replacing and reconfiguring docks in the marina basin and adjacent canal.
- Replacing nearly 3,000 linear feet of seawall.
- Dredging over 38,500 square feet to improve water access and navigation.
- Redeveloping the 16.6-acre upland area of Yacht Club Community Park.

Since 2021, the city has worked closely with USACE and FDEP to secure necessary approvals for the park's transformation. This process has included extensive environmental and regulatory reviews, addressing water quality, submerged land leases, and slip transfers. Following *Hurricane Ian's* impact in September 2022, additional coordination with state and federal agencies was required.

Design plans for the Yacht Club Community Park renovation are underway, with completion anticipated by November 2025. For updates on the project, visit the Yacht Club Community Park webpage at <https://bit.ly/4krlli1>.



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Hammerhead Gym: Even *Ian* Couldn't Keep Them Down



By Ryn Gargulinski, Staff Reporter

One wall. That's all that had been left standing of the McCormicks' newly purchased Fort Myers Beach gym after *Hurricane Ian* ripped through Southwest Florida on Sept. 28, 2022.

Located right on the gulf, Hammerhead Beach Gym had been bought the previous year by Iowa natives Sarah and Armand McCormick. They had packed up their world, moved with their two sons to Florida, and aimed to run two thriving gyms in the Fort Myers area – one on the beach and one on Summerlin Road.

Ian obliterated one and flooded the other.

"What have we done?!" Armand recalls as his reaction to the absolute devastation.

Sarah elaborates. "I was terrified. That was our livelihood, and to have it taken away so quickly was really scary. We were heartbroken and honestly felt a little lost for quite some time." And who wouldn't? But in true Floridian style, the two didn't just lie down and wait for the next hurricane. They instead shifted their game plan, knowing that rebuilding a beach location would not be happening for quite some time. They cleaned up and opened their Summerlin Road facility.



The muscular shark logo came with the purchase of the Fort Myers Beach Hammerhead location.

They worked out a deal to purchase an existing gym for sale on Cape Coral Parkway East. They renamed it Hammerhead Gym, kept the eye-catching shark logo that came with the Fort Myers Beach purchase, and opened its doors in June 2023. But the story's not done yet.

"Even though [the Cape Coral location] had always been a gym, we felt like we were starting a brand-new business again," Sarah says. "Nobody knew us here. We didn't have a name or reputation, and that is huge is this business!"

Sarah and Armand would know, coming from a strong background in nutrition, exercise and overall fitness. Now married 16 years, the two first met at the University of Northern Iowa in the exercise science program. They shared a love of fitness from the get-go – and he actually proposed to her while on a run.

They opened their first gym together in 2009 – in their Iowa basement. Their love of fitness, love of spreading the love of fitness, certifications, experience, and business grew from there. Cape Coral's Hammerhead is their thirteenth facility.

While the location came with much of the equipment, the couple still needed to rearrange things and add special touches – like the state and military flags that hang from the ceiling.

The only salvageable parts of the FMB location were what didn't blow away: steel weight plates and the rig, which is a massive weightlifting frame comprised of heavy steel bars even *Ian* couldn't budge.

The membership base needed to be rebuilt as well. That came with its own challenges.

"I think there were a lot of hard feelings towards the owners of the gym that used to be here and people somehow thought we were associated with them," Sarah says. "Almost two years later we definitely feel supported and welcomed now by the local population and are so thankful that God gave us this opportunity."



Married 16 years, gym owners Armand and Sarah McCormick practice the fitness they teach.



Cape Coral's Hammerhead Gym enjoys special touches, like the flags hanging from the main area's ceiling.



Armand and Sarah McCormick demonstrate an exercise at their Cape Coral gym.

Between the Cape Coral and Fort Myers locations, Hammerhead Gym now boasts about 800 members. One of the biggest perks is 24-hour access, with the ability to work out any time of the day or night by entering a quick bit of info through the website.

"We genuinely prioritize health, fitness, and wellness," Sarah says. "We pour our passion into this business and do our best to lead by example. We stay engaged, striving to make a positive impact on each member's life. We believe in creating a community, not just a fitness center."

Hammerhead Gym
1013 Cape Coral Parkway East
(239) 955-3755
HammerheadGymfmb.com



Hammerhead Gym owner Sarah McCormick on the gymnastic rings in the gym's class and exercise room.



Hammerhead Gym owner Armand McCormick on the gym's InBody machine that measures muscle mass, body fat percentage and water distribution.

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Real Estate Corner Timing The Market

By Kirstin Moll

There's been a lot going on in my life over here. I'm a new first-time mom and wow ... can I just say that I have a newfound respect for the moms out there. This is tough work, y'all. Rewarding, of course, but the time management is on another level. If you've ever had a baby, you know what it feels like to juggle it all. Newborns need to eat every two hours. So generally, those early days went like this: nurse the baby, burp the baby, change the baby's diaper, put the baby to sleep, pump, store milk, and then by time you're done with all that, the two-hour cycle starts again. Plus, somewhere in there you're supposed to sleep and eat. Never mind the laundry piling up in the corner and you can forget about showering. You don't care anyway because you're in survival mode at this point. But what does this have to do with real estate? I'm getting there. Trust me.



So then, you have your first pediatrician visit. Which means you have to time when to leave the house. Daunting. Do you know what it's like to time leaving the house with a newborn? It's like trying to time the market. Absolutely IMPOSSIBLE because you can never foresee what's coming next.

I know you want to time the market. I know you want to buy when it's low and sell when it's high. I know you want to wait until the rates drop which could be next month. It could also be next year. It quite actually might be never. The fact of the matter is, we don't know. If we had a crystal ball, we'd all be rich.

It's important to buy and sell when the time is right for you. It's really that simple. If you just had that baby and need a bigger house to fit comfortably in one space together, it's time to buy. If your children have moved out and you don't want have the upkeep of such a large house, it's time to sell and downsize. When you start to look at real estate in that light it becomes a lot less stressful. You learn to trust your timing.

This isn't to say that there isn't a better time to buy or sell than others though. We all know that there is. Take right now, for instance, it's a great time to buy in Cape Coral! Why? Because we have an influx of inventory which means sellers are dying for you to pick their home over the next. This is a great time to be able to sift through homes, be picky, and put in an offer under asking. And can I just say, if you are looking to buy right now, just submit the offer. Trust me. You might think an offer \$70,000 under asking will get turned down, but I'm here to tell you I've seen multiple offers accepted \$100,000 under asking. Sellers want to sell. Buyers want a deal. So just shoot your shot.

Moving to my next thought – buyers seem to be hesitant right now because they're almost overwhelmed by how many homes there are to look at. I'm seeing them wait because there might be the "perfect" home right around the corner. As your realtor, I'm telling you: there probably isn't. There's always going to be something wrong with the home. You wanted it to be fenced in, the cabinets are white instead of the natural wood you like, the landscaping has one too many bushes. It's like dating in the modern world. You're going to find something you

don't like. Use this time to get creative with your offers.

I have a home listed that has gorgeous landscaping. For some, they see it as too much maintenance. For others, it's beautiful and provides privacy. I've had a personal conversation with my sellers, and they've agreed that for the buyer that thinks it's too much maintenance, they would take out any bushes a buyer would want if they just asked for it in the offer. They are even willing to throw in lawn care services. This is a time for you to just ask and see what happens. The worst they can do is say no.

If you're looking in the Cape Coral area, reach out to me. I'm well versed in getting creative with offers and I'm happy to help you find the best home for you.

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

- Median sold price: \$389,888 (\$231/square feet).
- Down 2.5% from last year.
- Number of homes for sale: 5,291.
- Up 16.9% month over month.
- Number of homes sold: 303.
- Down 31.4% month over month.
- 220 homes were sold under asking.
- 55 homes were sold at asking.
- 28 homes were sold over asking.
- Average days on market: 78 days.
- Up 20.9% change year over 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.



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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:

- **No IV Anesthesia:** Procedures are performed using oral sedation, eliminating the need for IVs and reducing the risk of anesthesia-related complications.
- **No Fasting:** Patients can eat and take medications normally before surgery, reducing pre-operative stress.
- **Streamlined Scheduling:** Hospital or ASC facilities must juggle multiple surgeons operating out of one facility, complicating scheduling and usually requiring longer lead times. With office-based surgery, we can move to surgery quickly, usually within a week, because patients are scheduled in the same office, by the same assistants, serving only one surgeon, all of whom are familiar and welcoming.
- **Lower Cost:** Office-based procedures eliminate costly and redundant physician and facility billing, making them more cost-effective for both insured and self-pay patients.

Technology That Puts Patients First

Advances in ophthalmic technology have made in-office surgery not only possible but exceptionally safe and preferred. The use of femtosecond lasers and advanced phacoemulsification equipment ensures surgical precision and rapid recovery. "The technology we have today was unimaginable just a few years ago," notes Dr. Rodriguez. "We can achieve remarkable outcomes with less downtime, allowing patients to return to their daily lives faster."

Accessible, Affordable, Advanced Care

Cost is often a concern when considering surgery, but in-office procedures are typically more affordable due to lower facility fees. Elmquist Eye Group accepts most major insurance plans, including Medicare, and offers transparent pricing for patients opting for presbyopic, astigmatism-correcting and standard IOL implants.

Ready to See Clearly Again?

There has never been a better time to explore cataract surgery. We're accepting new patients and most qualify for the office-based surgical experience. Schedule your cataract evaluation today by calling 239-350-4696 or visiting Elmquist.com to learn how this innovative approach can help you restore your best vision for life.

For over 30 years, Elmquist Eye Group has provided expert eye care anchored in excellent service. Our combination of experience, compassionate care and proven results is unparalleled. If you'd like to schedule an appointment with Yasi Rodriguez, M.D.; Kate Wagner, O.D.; or Nina Burt, O.D., please call (239) 350-4696 or visit Elmquist.com.



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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.

Special Class – Introduction to the World of Digital Art

March 15 and 22, Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Members/nonmembers \$50

Required: iPad, tablet, or touchscreen laptop with stylus and Autodesk Sketchbook installed.

Special Event

Garage Sale – Art Supplies And Miscellaneous

March 28 and 29, Friday & Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

April 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, from 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, from 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.

April Shows And Events

Florida Life

May 8 through May 21 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday

Opening reception and presentation of awards on Thursday, May 8 from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Member's Month

May 8 through May 21 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday

Opening reception and presentation of awards on Thursday, May 8 from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

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 12 p.m.

Digital Photography and Graphics (Adults 16-plus) – Wednesdays, 3 to 5 p.m.

Intermediate and Advanced Pastel Painting – 9 a.m. to noon

Scan the QR code for the schedule.

Workshops 2025

April 4 – Resin Pour

April 25 – Babcock Ranch Eco Tour

Please consult www.capecoralartleague.org for more information.

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



Catch The Action

March On The Water

By Capt. Bill Russell

Good things happen this month on the waters around Southwest Florida. The kick-off to the spring fishing season is in full effect as we transition out of winter to the warm days of spring.

For the next couple of months or until daily afternoon rains begin, we experience the clearest water of the year along our coast. It's the perfect time to explore the inshore and nearshore waters, learn new areas, and look for fish or locate and mark structure that looks fishy.

Over the winter months we have endless days with low tides and little water to navigate. That will change and make it possible to fish areas that were not accessible over the past several months. Spring tides arrive with higher water over daytime hours. Yes, we still have low water, but not all day every day. Combine the incoming tides with the clean water and you will find some great days to explore.

This is the month to catch the largest sea trout of the year. They are aggressive as they head into spawning season and feed on a variety of baits. It's common to catch trout to 24 inches with the possibility of even larger fish. They are often in schools, if you're lucky enough to come across a school of big ones it can provide nonstop action.

As the coastal waters warm it triggers some of the best snook fishing of the year. When the water rises to 70 degrees or above and holds, snook become very active, on the move, and hungry. Like many of our gamefish, their primary diet consists of oily baitfish that invade the warming waters. Snook of all sizes are a blast to catch.

Higher water this month allows for good opportunities to catch redfish along mangrove shorelines and oyster bars. It's possible to catch redfish, snook, and large sea trout from the same area along shorelines and oyster bars. Anglers looking for a challenge have early morning low tides to hunt redfish tailing over the shallow flats.

The winter sheepsheads run winds down over the month. There's still a chance to land a few big ones around inshore structure and nearshore reefs. Sheepsheads got a late start this year, with improved catches as we closed out February. Good action will continue into the month. Inshore, tasty pompano and permit are caught fishing with shrimp or small pompano jigs. They often run in schools and prefer a hard or sand bottom along channel edges, bar drop offs, and around the beaches.

Spanish mackerel is a great fish to catch as they are ferocious feeders, lightning fast, run in schools, and offer a great fight. Prepared fresh, they offer excellent table fare that is often overlooked. To me they are the perfect fish when looking for fun and action. When mackerel are present odds are good that sharks are nearby, sharks love snacking on mackerel.

Offshore, on days with calm seas there are good opportunities for a variety of fish including reef dwellers like snapper, grouper, grunts, porgies, sheepsheads, and others. As



the water warms, schools of fast-moving Spanish and king mackerel, false albacore, or bonito, and possibly some blackfin tuna are making their way up the coast and busting up any schooling baitfish they encounter, often well within sight of land. Cobia are prowling gulf waters, and many are hooked around artificial reefs. They can get big, keep a few heavy rods rigged and ready, you never know what may show up. Tripletail is a possibility. Most are sighted hanging out under floating debris, buoys, and structure. Tarpon start showing off the coast, beginning to the south and moving north. Just how early this happens in the month is based on the weather and water temperature.

March weather is often all over the place. Cool days, windy at times, and perfect sunny days are expected as we move into the warm season. As of this writing, red tide in area waters has dissipated and fishing has improved as a result. Overall, it's a great month to get on the water and enjoy good fishing.

Stay up to date with fishing regulations by visiting the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission at: www.myfwc.com. Also, upload the Fish Rules app on your phone. It has current regulations with pictures to help identify fish. If you turn on your GPS location the Fish Rules app updates to your location. In my opinion, it is more accurate and up to date than FWC's website.

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."



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Publisher.ccsun@gmail.com



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Fuego Pilates, Fitness Centers, 1326 Lafayette St., Cape Coral, FL 33904, www.Fuego-Pilates.com, (813) 489-9752.



Crocker Marine Services, Marine Contracting, 9810 Littleton Road, North Fort Myers, FL 33903, (239) 841-9674.



Scoop Soldiers, Pet Waste Removal, www.scoopsoldiers.com, (239) 944-1287.



Cape Coral Animal Shelter, Nonprofit Organization, 325 SW 2nd Ave., Cape Coral, FL 33991, <http://www.capecoralanimalshelter.com>, (239) 573-2002.



Compassionate Healthcare of Florida, Health Care Services, 2612 Santa Barbara Blvd., Suite 9, Cape Coral, FL 33914, www.ftmmjhealth.com, (239) 310-1405.



Faith Generation Church, Churches/House Of Worship, PO Box 152928, Cape Coral, FL 33915, www.myfaithgeneration.com, (239) 687-3161.



IncredibleBank, Banks, 2512 Skyline Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33914, www.incrediblebank.com, (239) 837-0730.



The Hadley Apartments, Property Management, 1434 SW 2nd St., Cape Coral, FL 33991, <https://liveatthehadley.com/>, (561) 339-1663.



Chelsea DeFina-Domain Realty, Real Estate, 8290 College Pkwy. #201, Fort Myers, FL 33919, www.myswflhomes.com, (203) 623-1052.

Coming Up In The Cape

MGA League At Coral Oaks Golf Course Wednesday, March 19 – 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.

Tropical Plant Sale At Rotary Park Saturday, March 22 – 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Check out the Spring Tropical Plant Sale on Saturday, March 22, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road.

There will be an assortment of different vendors offering various plants for sale. Tropical plants, edible plants, bromeliads, and even some native plants will be available for purchase. This sale will take place outside in the open space to the east of the park building.

There is no fee to come out and look around, and you never know what you might find!

2025 B.I.G. Car Show At Rotary Park Sunday, March 23 – 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Hosted by the British Car Club of Southwest Florida, the 2025 B.I.G. (British-Italian-German) Car Show will be held on Sunday, March 23 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road, with up to 150 cars on exhibition. A local Boy Scout troop will provide food like previous years.

For more information, visit <https://bccswf.com/product/b-i-g-car-show-2025>.

Free Concert In The Park At The Yacht Club Community Park Thursday, April 3 – 5 to 8 p.m.

The City of Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department proudly presents a free "Concert in the Park" on Thursday, April 3, from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Yacht Club Community Park, 5819 Driftwood Pkwy.

Mattlee Crew, a local band playing the best of the funk, blues, and classic rock from the '80s, will perform from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. From 5 to 8 p.m., The Brunchy Bunch food truck, serving brunch food with a twist, and Crooked Cow, serving ice cream, will be on site.

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 RSVP is needed.

EHL Touch A Truck 2025 On Lafayette Street Saturday, April 5 – 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The 2025 Touch A Truck will take place on Saturday, April 5, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. between 1210 and 1419 Lafayette St., in Cape Coral.

This is a family-friendly event where kids of all ages can explore and ask questions about their favorite vehicles such as Cape Coral Rescue Fire Truck, Lee County Emergency Medical Ambulance, Cape Coral Police BMW Motorcycles, and the Florida Forestry Swamp Buggy to name a few.

All participants will receive a truck passport and can visit the designated locations for a chance to win a prize. We will also have a stage with entertainment geared toward children of all ages, health and safety exhibitors, and local vendors and sponsors. Get a truck passport stamped and be eligible to win prizes.

For more information, visit [/www.fraxa.org/events/cape-coral-touch-a-truck-2025](http://www.fraxa.org/events/cape-coral-touch-a-truck-2025), or call (239) 994-7574.



Fossil Show At Rotary Park Saturday, April 5 – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Bring your family out for a free Fossil Show on Saturday, April 5, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road.

This show has something for everyone: Fossils, gems, history, shopping, and fun. There will also be fossil digs for children.

Swiftie Dance Party At The Youth Center Saturday, April 5 – 6 to 9 p.m.

Dear Reader, Can I Ask You A Question? Is The Getaway Car ready? Call all your Swifties because you know *All Too Well* that we're ready to see your *Gorgeous* faces and *Dance To This Sick Beat*. Long Live the *Friendship Bracelets*, *Paper Rings* and ... *You Need To Calm Down* ... the snacks. This special event is only \$22 per person, don't be *Down Bad*, call (239) 242-3950 to register! William Bill Austen Youth Center, 315 SW 2nd Ave., Cape Coral.



Breakfast With The Bunny At Lake Kennedy Center Saturday, April 12 – 9 to 10 a.m.

Hop down to Lake Kennedy Center, 400 Santa Barbara Blvd., on Saturday, April 12, from 9 to 10 a.m. to enjoy breakfast with everyone's favorite bunny!

The cost is \$16 per adult, \$12 per child, and free for children ages 2 and under; however, all ages must still register in advance at (239) 574-0575.

Flashlight Egg Hunt At The Youth Center Saturday, April 12 – 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.

Bring your family, flashlights, and baskets for an evening of egg hunting in the dark on Saturday, April 12, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Youth Center, 315 SW 2nd Ave., Cape Coral!

This is a night to see who can find the most eggs in the dark and who will find the special prize eggs. There will be family crafts and activities inside.

The cost is \$40 for a family of four and \$5 for each additional person. Sweets and drinks are included.

Limited space is available, so reserve your family spot today!

For more information and to sign up, call the Youth Center at (239) 242-3950.

Afternoon Tea Party At Lake Kennedy Center Thursday, April 17 – 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

You are cordially invited to afternoon tea at Lake Kennedy Center, 400 Santa Barbara Blvd., on Thursday, April 17, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Join us for a special afternoon with sandwiches, scones and more! Don't forget your gloves and hat!

The cost is just \$12 per person, and advanced registration is required at (239) 574-0575.

Spring Native Plant Sale At Rotary Park Saturday, April 19 – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Join us for the Spring Native Plant Sale at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road on Saturday, April 19, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Shop from a variety of native trees, shrubs, flowers, grasses, butterfly plants, and tropical edible plants, too. Plant experts will be on hand to answer questions and help you choose the right plant for the right place. Come early for the best selection.

For more information, call Rotary Park, (239) 549-4606. This event is held in conjunction with the rain barrel workshop.

Rain Barrel Workshop At Rotary Park Saturday, April 19 – 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Rain barrels are a great way to reduce stormwater runoff and save water for a dry spell.

Join us for a Rain Barrel Workshop at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road on Saturday, April 19, from 10 to 11 a.m.

In this workshop led by Lee County Master Gardeners, you will learn how to make and install a rain barrel to use at home. The class fee of \$50 includes a pre-assembled rain barrel and is held on the same day as the native plant sale.

Advance registration and payment are required as a limited number of barrels are available.

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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 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

April Dinner Dance

Get ready to dance the night away at the Cape Coral Social Club's April Dinner Dance, set for Saturday, April 5, at 5:30 p.m. This lively event is open to the public and promises an evening of great food, music, and socializing. Guests can choose from three delicious meal options while enjoying live entertainment by The Bandstand Band.

Tickets are priced at \$35 for members and \$40 for guests when paying by cash or check. Credit card payments are also accepted at an adjusted rate of \$38 for members and \$43 for guests. Tickets can be purchased at Lake Kennedy Center, Farmer Joe's, Family Hardware on SE 47th Terrace, or online at www.capecoralsocialclub.org.

For more information, contact Judy, (239)-699-0123.

Cape Coral Museum Of History

Remember When...

Gulf Coast Farms bloomed with the Easter colors of 18 million gladiolus bulbs?

Gladioli are the flowers of August and the flowers of choice for one's 40th wedding anniversary. Because of their upright stature, gladioli are traditionally associated with the virtues of sincerity and integrity. But they are also the flowers of Easter, and once upon a time, they gladdened over a thousand acres of northwest Cape Coral.

The 1,441 acres of Gulf Coast Farms along Matlacha Pass south of Pine Island Road once bloomed with the Easter colors of 18 million gladiolus bulbs planted annually.



The flowers harvested in mid-June for shipment nationwide and overseas were protected from winter frosts by kerosene smudge pots glowing row upon row in the fields, or by bonfires of burning tires, or, in later years, by crop dusters circling low to keep warm air in



Gulf Coast Farms, photo courtesy of the Norman Cox family

motion over the precious young life of the flowers. The gladiolus flower was given its name by the Roman author and naturalist, Pliny, who named it "gladiolus," or "little sword," because its leaves are long, narrow and sharply pointed and enclosed in a sheath of leaves.

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 \$5, Members Free, Students with ID, Free, Children 17 and under Free

Cape Coral Museum Of History, 544 Cultural Park Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33990, (239)772.7037, capecoralmuseum.org.

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



Friends Of Cape Coral Library

Art On Display: Paintings And Fused Glass Exhibit At Cape Coral Library

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 library is located at 921 SW 39th Terrace, off of Mohawk Parkway, and the latest exhibit will be open during their regular business hours from March 5 through May 5.

Artwork by Pat St. Onge will be on display on the walls of the library's gallery. Pat's constantly evolving "toolbox" of painting techniques has grown out of her years of experience in both fine and commercial art. Having worked in a variety of media, Pat states that her favorite medium is usually in whichever one she is currently using. Recently, she's enjoyed incorporating paint-pouring methods with traditional brushwork. St. Onge finds teaching and sharing her knowledge a great source of satisfaction – and a lot of fun. She has taught classes for adults and children at various venues since the 1970s. Pat grew up in Lakewood, Ohio, where she attended Cooper School of Art in Cleveland for her foundation classes.

She earned her BFA at Quincy University in Illinois, and her MA in Art History at the University of Findlay in Ohio. She studied digital art pre-press and basic web design while attending Rhode Island School of Design in Rhode Island. In 2016, Pat and her husband retired to Fort Myers. She continues to expand her skills via classes in oils under Dennis Morton at the Cape Coral Art League, where she also teaches beginner and intermediate acrylics. Pat's gallery associations have included Wild Child Art Gallery, The Gallery of Matlacha, the Alliance for the Arts, Matlacha Menagerie and, most recently, Sea Legs Art Gallery in Tarpon Springs – in addition to shows at the Cape Coral Art League where she's been awarded many ribbons for her artwork.

Visitors to the library gallery will enjoy seeing glass creations by Pat Johnson in the three display cases. Johnson is a fused glass artist as well as a managing member at Harbour View Gallery in Cape Coral. She received her associate's in art and science degrees from a local Community College in Western Massachusetts. She continued her education at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Mass., majoring in Art Education. Johnson's experience and expertise in the visual arts is quite varied. She started her journey in art using pencils, charcoal and oils and then moving to acrylics, clays, all aspects of photography and glass fusion. In the early days of her career, Pat could be found working in several photography labs supervising art departments and working with many local photographers. Retouching, airbrushing, negative retouching and restoration of old photographs were all done by hand. Pat also worked in the furniture industry as a store manager and buyer and later ran a small business in the interior design field. These various positions throughout her life revolved around her creative and artistic



Cumbia Dancer



Edison Fig



Pat Johnson, Five inch plate



Robin egg blue bowl



Rainbow on wrought iron

background and her ability to work with the general public. Pat Johnson's love of glass fusing was sparked when she first came to Cape Coral and took classes through the Cape Coral Art Center. She knew immediately that this was the medium for her, started using glass as a means to express herself, and has now been working on her craft for about 15 years.

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

Spring Book Sale Fundraiser - Open To The Public April 11 And 12

Dates, Hours and Location: The book sale will be held in the meeting room at the Cape Coral Library located at 921 SW 39th Terrace. The sale will be open to the public on Friday, April 11 and Saturday, April 12 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. both days. (Special members only preview sale will be held the day before on Thursday, April 10 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Nonmembers may join the Friends of the Cape Coral Library nonprofit organization at the door by paying the annual dues of only \$20 per family.)

About The Sale: The huge meeting room of the Cape Coral Library will be filled with thousands of quality used books arranged by category. There will be lots of fiction for adults and a section for children and teens. Find nonfiction sorted by subject. Find music CDs, plus movies on DVD.



Most items are \$1 or \$2, with small paperbacks at less than a buck! We will also highlight a large selection of "Special" books (such as those by Florida authors, autographed books, collectibles and more) that are priced somewhat higher, but are still an incredible bargain.

Proceeds from the event are used to support the Cape Coral Public Library branch.

How to Pay: Bring cash or personal check only. (Credit cards are not accepted.)

Donate Books: Donations of gently used resale quality books, CDs and DVDs for our book sales are accepted year-round. Call the Friends' phone message service at (239) 349-2572, leave a clear message with your phone number, and we will return your call.

For More Information: Visit us at www.capefriends.org and follow us on Facebook.

Great Turnout And Wonderful Student Volunteers At Burrowing Owl Festival

The Friends of the Cape Coral Library once again had a booth at the annual Burrowing Owl Festival on Feb. 22 at Rotary Park. As always, our popular tables in the "Kids Corner" were busy all day as children ages 5 to 12 were provided 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 had supplies available for youngsters to create an original drawing or painting showing how we can protect this precious species from habitat loss and other main threats. A very special thank you to the wonderful students from Florida Gulf Coast University who were on hand to help the budding young artists!

You can also find an entry form with details about the children's environmental 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 39th Terrace.

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Concur Or Object: Differing Viewpoints From Diverse Attorneys

Unlocking Non-Competes: Prudent Business Practice Or Golden Handcuffs?

Prevent Competition And Protect Your Competitive Edge

By Robson D.C. Powers, Esq.

Competition fuels progress, but unchecked talent flight can bleed your business dry. Non-competes aren't about stifling talent; they're about safeguarding your hard-won edge. Here's why they matter, in detail:



- **Fortify Your Secrets and Competitive Edge:** Your business thrives on proprietary strategies, client relationships, and confidential information. Without a non-compete, departing employees can take that knowledge straight to a competitor, jeopardizing your competitive advantage. A well-structured non-compete isn't about restricting mobility – it's about preserving the integrity of your business.

- **Recoup Your Investment in Employees:** Companies invest heavily in training, mentorship, and career development. Without non-competes, employees can take this investment and immediately leverage it for a competitor. Non-compete agreements help businesses protect these investments, ensuring they aren't simply talent incubators for rivals.

- **Stabilize Your Industry and Prevent Talent Poaching:** Industries with high turnover can become chaotic without non-compete agreements. Without stability, businesses face constant disruptions, making long-term planning difficult. Non-competes help prevent aggressive talent poaching that can weaken an entire sector.

- **Dodge Legal Landmines and Protect Business Interests:** While critics argue that enforcing a non-compete is costly, consider the alternative: lawsuits over stolen clients, leaked strategies, or competitive sabotage. A clear, reasonable non-compete agreement serves as a preemptive measure, reducing the risk of expensive legal battles.

- **Cultivate Commitment and Business Loyalty:** A non-compete doesn't mean you distrust employees – it signals that your business is valuable and worth protecting. Employees who sign fair agreements understand they are part of something meaningful. A well-balanced non-compete fosters commitment rather than restricting opportunity.

Ethical, reasonable non-competes are your business armor. Before you ditch them, ask: Can you afford the risks of unrestricted talent mobility and intellectual property loss? Your business is worth defending.

When Competition Wins: Ditching The Non-Compete

By Kara B. Rogers, Esq.

A little competition can be a good thing. Sure, non-competes seem like a smart move in some industries. But are they always necessary? Let's explore why you might want to skip the non-compete with your employees:



- **The "Lone Wolf" Effect:** Are You Scaring Off Talent? If everyone else in your field is playing nice, why are you the only one with ironclad restrictions? You might be unintentionally deterring top

talent who value their freedom. Ask yourself: is protection from competition worth losing out on the best candidates?

- **The "Pre-Nup" Problem: Sending the Wrong Message?** Non-competes can feel like a business pre-nup. They're practical, but they also signal a lack of trust. Are you willing to risk morale for the sake of security? Consider the message you're sending your employees from day one.

- **The "Innovation vs. Isolation" Dilemma: Developing Fields Need Mobility.** Emerging industries thrive on the free flow of ideas. While protecting proprietary information is vital, stifling employee mobility can hinder growth. Explore alternatives like Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) to balance protection with innovation.

- **The "Courtroom Costs" Conundrum: Can You Afford to Enforce It?** Drafting contracts is an investment but enforcing them is where the real costs lie. Before you draw up a non-compete, consider whether you're willing to spend the money to enforce it. If you're not prepared for a legal battle, a non-compete might be more trouble than it's worth.

Ultimately, deciding whether or not to use non-compete agreements should be done on a case-by-case basis. When in doubt, talk to a lawyer. Even if you don't implement a non-compete, having the right information will help you ensure your business is moving in the right direction.

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. Both have been selected as Rising Stars by Super Lawyers, a recognition bestowed on only 2.5 percent of attorneys in the state. They practice in civil litigation including business, real estate, construction, and probate litigation.

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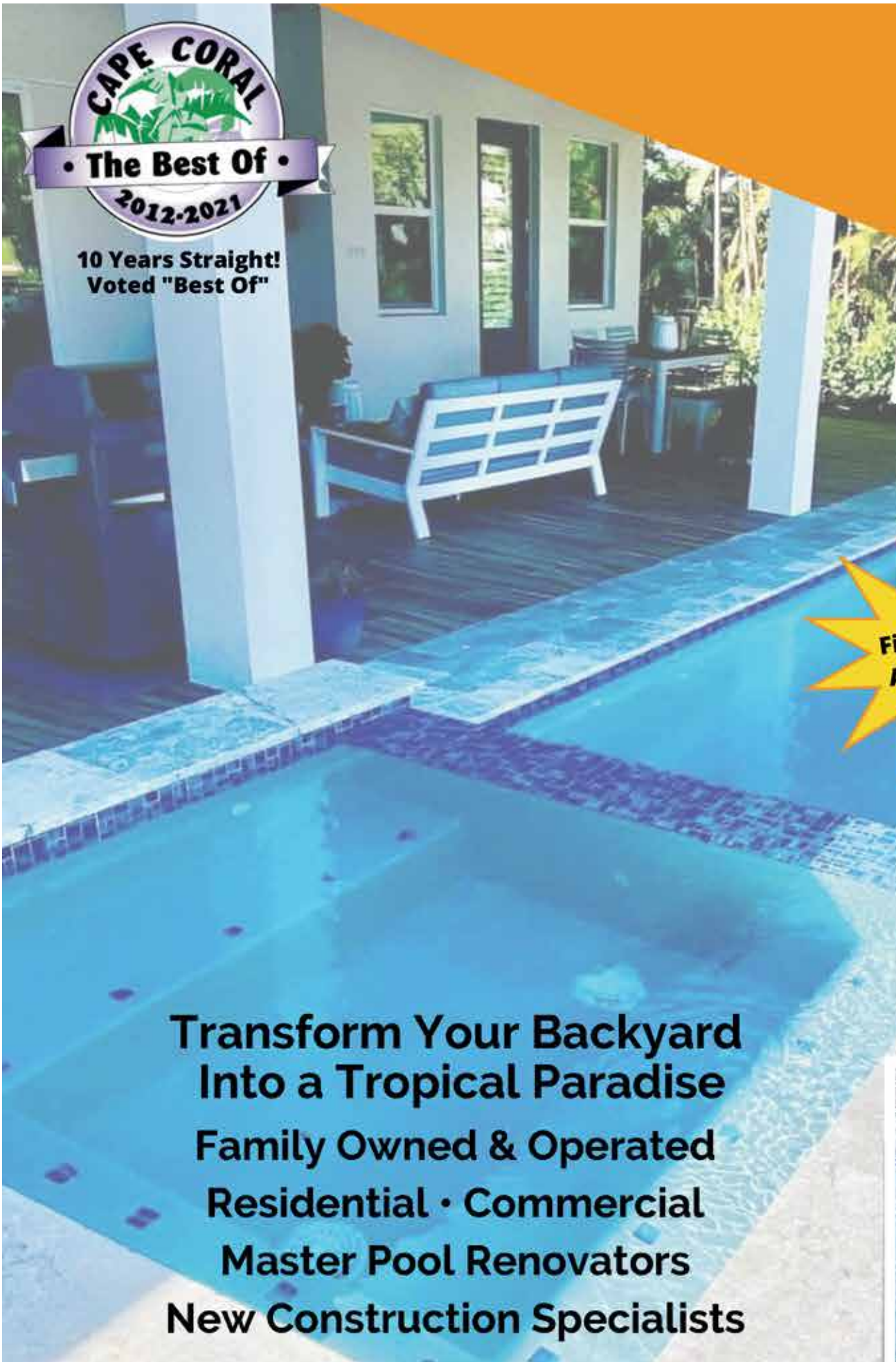
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