

THE CAPE CORAL SUN

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



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Major Seven Islands Development Approved

Construction is set to begin on a 47-acre residential, hospitality and entertainment destination planned across seven man-made islands in northwest Cape Coral.



After more than three years of collaboration between city staff and North Palm Beach-based Forest Development, the Cape Coral City Council approved the Seven Islands project during its second and final public hearing on Jan. 21.

A Long-Planned Vision

The current concept dates back to 2015, when the city hosted a community charrette to create a mixed-use vision for the site. Council formally approved that vision in 2016.

In November 2022, the city approved the \$20 million sale of the vacant land to Forest Development's Gulf Gateway Resort & Marina LLC, contingent on final project approval, which was granted in January.

City leadership identified the project as a major investment in the northwest region of the community.

What The Project Includes

Plans for Seven Islands call for a large, amenity-focused community designed to allow residents and visitors to live, work and recreate in one destination.

Key components include:

- Up to 995 residential units, including single-family and multifamily homes
- Nearly 46,000 square feet of commercial space
- A 10-story hotel with approximately 19,000 square feet of meeting space
- A public marina and waterfront dining
- A 16,500-square-foot community center
- An amphitheater, dog park and splash pad



- Kayak launch and public waterfront access
- Sidewalks and a pedestrian and golf-cart bridge connecting islands

The development agreement requires construction of seawalls, roadways and public infrastructure, along with a \$2.5 million compensation package from the city.

Developers are securing final state permits before construction begins. Full build-out is expected to take more than a decade, though officials indicate the timeline could accelerate depending on market conditions.

Major Seven Islands Development Approved on page 4

EHL Fragile X Foundation Announces Ninth Annual "Touch-A-Truck" Event In Cape Coral

The EHL Fragile X Foundation is excited to announce its highly anticipated 9th Annual Touch-A-Truck event, taking place on Saturday, March



28, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Lafayette Street between Cape Coral Street and Del Prado Boulevard in Cape Coral, Florida.

This free, family-friendly community event invites children of all ages to get up close and personal with a wide variety of vehicles, including fire trucks, ambulances, police motorcycles, construction equipment, and more.

Designed to educate, entertain, and inspire, Touch-A-Truck allows kids to climb aboard, explore, and interact with the vehicles while meeting the professionals who operate them. Each child will receive a "truck passport" and can visit designated stations throughout the event for a chance to win prizes.

In addition to the vehicles, attendees can enjoy:

- Health and safety exhibitors
- Local vendors and community sponsors
- Interactive activities for the whole family
- Vote for your favorite truck

To ensure an inclusive experience, the event will feature a "horn-free hour" from 9 to 10 a.m., providing a quieter environment for children with sensory sensitivities.

Touch-A-Truck is more than just a day of fun – it is a meaningful community event that raises awareness and support for individuals and families affected by Fragile X syndrome, a genetic condition that causes intellectual and developmental challenges.

The event continues to grow each year thanks to the support of local sponsors, volunteers, and community partners who share in the mission of making a difference while bringing smiles to thousands of families.

Admission is free, but attendees are encouraged to bring cameras, wear comfortable clothing, and be prepared for a hands-on day of exploration and fun. Parent supervision is required.

Cape Coral Cardboard Boat Regatta

Saturday, March 21 (Rain Date: Sunday, March 22)

The Cape Coral Cardboard Boat Regatta will take place Saturday, March 21, 2026, at Seahawk Park, 1030 NW 28th St., Cape Coral. The rain date is Sunday, March 22.



Open to businesses, schools, youth groups, nonprofits, and teams of friends, the regatta invites participants to design and build boats made primarily of cardboard. The event offers a fun, hands-on team-building experience as crews work together toward a common goal – and try to say afloat.

Registration Fees

- Individuals, families, youth and school groups (through 12th grade): \$30
- Clubs or organizations: \$50
- Rotoboat kit and registration: \$100
- Corporate teams (boats with corporate logos): \$275; additional boats \$40
- Vendor booth (10x10 tent space): \$100

Rotoboat Kit (2026)

The \$100 kit includes registration, cardboard, layout design, instructions, and a list of tools and materials.

Cape Coral Cardboard Boat Regatta on page 4

The Rynski Report: Why Our Landfills Are Littered With Keyboards

By Ryn Gargulinski

In this age of disposable everything, it's really no surprise when a specialized tablet keyboard purchased three years ago develops an "M" key that stays stuck.

Nor is it a surprise when you go to buy a replacement that the price nearly doubled for the exact same item. You sigh. You murmur a curse word. You click "BUY."

When your replacement keyboard, however, develops an "M" key that stays stuck – this time not after three years but after five months – you refuse to go with the oh-well-everything-is-just-garbage flow.

Sure, things that cost around \$20 have been delegated in your head to last one month or less as true garbage. Things that cost around \$50 are semi-garbage and expected to last four to seven months.

But when you just paid \$120 for an item (that used to be about \$63), it's only supposed to be fake garbage. Fake garbage fakes you out by lasting at least a year or two, breaking about 45 minutes after the warranty expires.

You refuse to simply pay another \$120 for yet another replacement. You will not be drained dry once again by this garbage culture. You vow to stand up for your rights as a consumer. To stand up and fight!

You take a deep breath. Steady yourself. Repeat a mantra about having all kinds of wolf power and courage. Then go out on a limb to do that horribly unthinkable thing that in the past has only led to dismal and utter failure.

You reach out to customer service to ask for a replacement. Since the keyboard was purchased on Amazon and the Amazon return window is spring-loaded to snap shut far before anything goes wrong, you are forced to connect directly with the manufacturer. In this case it's Microsoft.

You find Amazon's link to Microsoft Customer Service. First you must choose between entering your phone number for a callback sometime in July or a chat that has a high likelihood of being manned by an AI bot that answers none of your questions while sending you in a big loop back to Amazon.

You ask your dog to pick. He says try the chat.



You click the chat button and are immediately confronted with a series of questions that can only be answered by limited choices on a dropdown menu. What you need help with, the country you're from, the age of your two long-lost cousins in Kalamazoo, the shoe size of your first boyfriend back in seventh grade.

Once you submit your dropdown choices, your tax returns, a vial of blood and a detailed report on why you moved to Florida and then back to Arizona, you wait.

"Hi, My Name is KayKay and I'm excited to be helping you today!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

You stifle a gag. Wait for the next series of questions. They come. KayKay wants every piece of information you just spent 20 minutes carefully selecting from highly glitchy dropdown menus.

And the fun has not even begun yet. The next hour or so is spent in a series of tasks more arduous than a police obstacle training course. You have to find the miniscule serial number hidden somewhere on a keyboard strip that's about the width of a paperclip.

You need to send a photo of the serial number for KayKay



to read when you can't possibly decipher it. You need to send a photo of the proof of purchase, a scan of your left iris, DNA results from your dog's pedigree and half your life's savings.

You are then told the proof of purchase is invalid because it looks like a photo of a document and not an actual document. And it doesn't say where you bought it, even though you mentioned "Amazon" about 782 times.

You reprint the invoice. Scan and upload it. CIRCLE WHERE IT SAYS AMAZON.COM in BIG BLACK SHARPIE INK.

KayKay replies: "Thank you so much for patiently waiting while I escalate your case to our higher support team." The end. No word on when or if you can expect a resolution. No confirmation they now know it's from Amazon. Just crickets.

You sigh. Murmur a curse word. Go back to the listing for yet another replacement keyboard. Click "BUY." And the world continues to spin, bulging with landfills, littered with "M"-stuck keyboards.

Ryn Gargulinski [Rynski] is an award-winning author, artist, speaker and transformational doula who helps people see themselves and the world around them through the eyes of Love. With 10-plus published books and multiple awards, she also holds a BFA in Creative Writing, an MA in English literature, minister ordination, and certifications in coaching, Reiki and other forms of energy healing. Founder of RynskiLove.com, Rynski lived in Cape Coral before being called back to Arizona's Sonoran Desert. More at RynskiLife.com. Contact: Rynski@RynskiLife.

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Mind Your Money

Why Financial Success Isn't About Luck!

By Alexandra Valdes,
Azzendo Wealth Advisors



AZZENDO
WEALTH ADVISORS

March brings shamrocks, four-leaf clovers, and all things lucky. St. Patrick's Day reminds us how much people love the idea of good fortune falling into their laps. But when it comes to your finances, luck is simply not a strategy. While chance can certainly play a role in life, financial stability is built on awareness, intention, and consistent action – not superstition.

Last month's focus was on a simple but powerful New Year's resolution: getting a clear picture of your spending. February was all about gathering your numbers – tracking bills, reviewing statements, listing subscriptions, and documenting everyday expenses. That step may have felt basic, but it was essential. You can't plan a journey if you don't know where you're starting.

Now that March has arrived, it's time to use that information for the next step in your financial plan: calculating your free cash flow.

Compare Net Income Vs. Expenses

Start with your net income – what actually hits your bank account after taxes and deductions. Tip, if your health care is covered by your employer, ignore this cost in your calculation since it occurs before your take home pay. Then subtract your total monthly expenses. What's left is your free cash flow. This number tells you whether your financial life is currently running at a surplus, breaking even, or operating at a deficit. Keep in mind that you may have months when an annual cost is incurred. An easy way to address this is to divide that cost by 12 to get a monthly estimate. Is it perfect, no, but it helps you analyze your numbers properly.

Approach this step as if you are lifting the curtain or looking under the hood. Many people assume they're doing fine financially simply because bills are getting paid. But assumptions aren't facts. It isn't about what you make, it's about what you keep. I once made a financial plan for a lady who was retiring that year. She had saved nothing so was ill-prepared to stop earning an income. She was shocked because she said she never had to worry about money, and it's true, she didn't. She made more income than she spent. But she never did anything with that free cash flow.

Only when you run the numbers do you see the truth.

If You Find A Deficit

If your expenses exceed your income, don't panic – and definitely don't rely on luck to fix it. A deficit is not a failure; it's a signal. It's your financial dashboard warning light telling you it's time for adjustment.

The next step is to review each expense line by line. Look for opportunities to trim:

Are there subscriptions you rarely use? Could insurance, internet, or phone plans be renegotiated? Are there spending habits that could be reduced without lowering your quality of life? Small cuts across multiple categories often create meaningful results. The goal isn't deprivation; it's alignment – making sure your spending reflects your priorities and your reality.

If You Discover A Surplus

If your income exceeds your expenses, congratulations – this is where real planning begins. A surplus spells opportunity. It means you have resources available to intentionally shape your financial future rather than simply reacting to it. This is the stage where strategy replaces guesswork. With surplus cash flow, you can begin directing money toward goals such as:

- Building or strengthening a cash reserve fund
- Paying down debt faster
- Increasing retirement contributions
- Investing for long-term growth
- Saving for upcoming milestones

A surplus gives you options, and options are the true form of financial luck – the kind you create yourself through preparation.

Why This Step Matters

Too often, people skip directly to investing tips or savings hacks without first confirming they actually have money available to allocate. But planning without knowing your cash flow is like planting seeds without checking the soil. The foundation has to come first.

March is the perfect time to take this step because you've already done the groundwork. February helped you gather your numbers. Now you're using them to make decisions. That's real progress – and progress is far more reliable than luck.

The Takeaway

Four-leaf clovers are rare for a reason. Financial confidence shouldn't be. When you understand your cash flow, you replace uncertainty with clarity and hope with strategy. Whether your calculation shows a deficit or a surplus, you now have direction – and direction is far more powerful than chance.

This month don't wish for financial luck. Create it!

Alexandra Valdes is a wealth advisor focused on helping individuals, families and business owners confidently navigate various financial decisions regardless of what stage in their economic life they are in. She likes to combine her financial expertise with a calm, zen mindset to help reduce the stress that often surrounds finances. Through education and clarity, she works to empower others to feel confident and in control of their individual financial journey. Alexandra is also very involved with the Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce and is part of the 2025 Leadership class. Within her interest in serving the community, Alexandra focuses on helping children through her involvement in the Kiwanis organization. She is an outdoor enthusiast and loves to enjoy all the beaches her home state of Florida has to offer. You can reach Alexandra by phone at (305) 648-9814 or email her at Alexandravaldes@azzendo.com.

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Major Seven Islands Development Approved from page 1

Community Support And Concerns

Project representatives worked with city staff and the Northwest Cape Coral Neighborhood Association for several years to gather public input during planning.

Supporters view the development as a future activity hub for northwest residents, offering new amenities and waterfront access. Opponents raised concerns about increased vehicle and boat traffic, environmental impacts and long-term economic viability.

Representatives of the Matlacha Civic Association expressed concerns about potential impacts on nearby waterways, including the North Spreader Canal and Matlacha Pass.

Project representatives reported that environmental and infrastructure studies support the development and that a mixed-use design could reduce cross-city travel by concentrating housing, recreation and services in one location.

A New Gateway For Northwest Cape

City officials describe Seven Islands as the result of more than a decade of planning and community engagement to transform long-vacant waterfront land into a destination for residents and visitors.

If completed as planned, the development will introduce new housing, public waterfront access, recreation and commercial activity to one of the city's fastest-growing regions.



Cape Coral Cardboard Boat Regatta from page 1

Event Schedule

- 7:30 a.m. – Boat and vendor setup
- 9 to 10:30 a.m. – Boat judging (awards delivered at team slips)



Photos from previous years' regattas

- 12 p.m. – Regatta kickoff
- Participant Information**

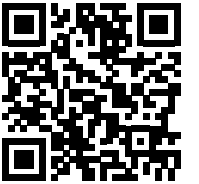
Captains must check in upon arrival to confirm registration details and submit required forms for each racer. Wristbands will be issued to participants with completed release forms.

All racers must wear footwear and a personal flotation device (provided upon request). Participants should secure eyeglasses and remove valuables before racing. Boats entered in multiple races should remain along the shoreline until called.

Participants in the "Free for All" race must remove all cardboard debris from the water following the event.

Scan QR Code for a video: Small Town Big Deal – High Seas High Jinks

For more information contact John Calla, (239) 989-8517, jwcalla45@gmail.com.



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Concur Or Object: Differing Viewpoints From Diverse Attorneys

The Cape Coral Debate: Prosperity vs. Preservation

The Case For Growth: Investing In A Vibrant Future

By Robson D.C. Powers, Esq.

Living and practicing law in Cape Coral gives me a unique perspective on the forces shaping our community. From my office, I see more than just construction; I see the tangible signs of a city coming of age. New families are moving in, small business owners are signing long-term leases, and developers are committing significant capital. These are not speculative gambles, they are calculated investments made by people who believe deeply in this city's future.

Growth in Cape Coral is not random; it is a direct reflection of demand. People want to live here because of the quality of life we offer, and businesses want to operate here because they see a stable, growing customer base. This demand signals a healthy, confident economy. Continued development in South Cape and along our commercial corridors brings essential amenities closer to home.

By diversifying our land use, we create a broader tax base. This is critical for the long-term health of our city. A robust commercial sector helps fund our police, fire departments, roads, and parks without placing an unnecessary financial strain on long-term residential homeowners. When local government provides clear, consistent, and predictable rules, the free market responds with the innovation and investment necessary to modernize our city.



Supporting economic freedom does not mean abandoning our roots. Cape Coral remains a city defined by family neighborhoods, waterfront living, faith communities, and locally owned businesses. Free enterprise and traditional American values are not opposites; they are symbiotic. The next decade will shape Cape Coral's identity for generations. Cape Coral's future is not just about getting bigger, it is about getting better.

The Case For Preservation: The Necessity Of Balanced Planning

By Kara Rogers, Esq.

Growth may be a sign of a healthy city, but it is only beneficial when it is balanced against the preservation of our natural resources and the capacity of our infrastructure. In the wake of Cape Coral's explosive expansion, we have struggled as a community to find that equilibrium.

Residents have consistently stood up to oppose projects that threaten our natural resources and beloved local landmarks. While the invasive Australian pines may have needed to be removed from Jaycee Park, the community is understandably frustrated that after over a year of renovation, the heart of that neighborhood remains in flux. Similarly, the Redfish Pointe development may be stalled for now, but the threat to our mangroves and local wildlife remains a persistent concern. Once these environmental assets are paved over, they are gone forever.



Our infrastructure challenges are even more daunting. The most recent North One East Utilities Expansion Project (UEP) comes at a staggering cost of over \$32,000 for a standard-sized lot. This is a massive financial burden for families already facing rising costs. Furthermore, many areas of the city remain reliant on wells and septic systems, with a full city-wide buildout not expected for almost twenty years.

Recent droughts have exacerbated the issue, forcing homeowners to spend thousands of dollars to drill deeper as the local aquifers are strained by an ever-increasing population. Beyond our daily needs, public safety is at risk. Lee County identifies Southwest Florida as one of the hardest places in the country to evacuate. With estimates for a full evacuation of at least 41 hours, we must ask if our road networks can truly handle more density.

Cape Coral residents don't expect to shut the door behind them, but they should expect their leaders to plan intentionally. We cannot simply keep kicking the can down the road, sacrificing our natural resources and the safety of our residents for unchecked expansion. We must prioritize the quality of our environment and the reliability of our infrastructure over the quantity of new rooftops. Cape Coral deserves a future built on a foundation of sustainability, not just growth at any cost.

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

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Business Spotlight

Tropical Breeze Fun Park

By Ryn Gargulinski

When you think of all-ages outings, words like “messy” and “chaotic” may come to mind quicker than words like “meticulous” and “boutique.” But Bob Trimarchi managed to not only create an enjoyable space that reflects the latter, but he has kept it going strong for nearly a decade.

Opening in 2017 on Santa Barbara Boulevard, Tropical Breeze Fun Park is it.

“Our name sums up what you can expect,” owner Bob said, “a fun tropical experience.”

Known as the Director of Fun, Bob’s in-a-nutshell description is where you’ll find the other aspects that make it a unique experience indeed.

“We’re a boutique family fun park with a tropical setting that is a meticulously landscaped mini-golf experience and GellyBall that celebrates the beauty of Cape Coral.”

Known for its adventurous golf course, lush landscaping, pristine cleanliness and friendly staff – including manager Janey White – the park has built up a reputation as a very special place where magical things can happen. Like marriages.



“My most memorable moment was when we had a wedding on hole 17 and they had a reception in our party hut,” Bob recalled. “It was a beautiful couple on a beautiful day, and everyone had a great time.”

Another magical moment was the one-of-a-kind golfing feat from one of the mini-golf players.

“We had a couple playing hole 15,” Bob explained. “The guy took his turn and the ball bounced off the edge of the cup – and he made a hole in one on hole 16.”

Additional magic comes from the regular lineup of birthday party celebrations you’ll find at the park on weekends, the burrowing owls that stop by the park from time to time and even visiting raccoons that want in on the fun – even if it means sacrificing a bit of freedom and comfort.



“We are a quaint, clean, safe and reasonably-priced fun park,” Bob said. “I want to continue to provide Cape Coral with a tropical memorable experience for all ages.”

“We had a racoon get stuck in the barrel on hole 11,” Bob said, “and we had to take apart to release him.”

Electronic mini-golf scorecards are another stand-out feature, as is the on-course drink delivery of your favorite adult beverages. Generous hours keep the park open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day, weather permitting.

Bob said the rainy season and specifically the hurricanes have been the biggest challenges running his business, although he was quick to note: “We were lucky with *Hurricane Ian* and didn’t have much damage.”

Originally from New Jersey, Bob was drawn to Southwest Florida by the beautiful tropical weather. His decision to open a Cape Coral fun park came from noticing a need for an all-ages family destination where everyone could have a blast.

The decision was backed by his own fond childhood memories of his parents taking him and his sister out for mini golf and dinner at the Jersey Shore. That, and the fact that he had owned a large facility in New Jersey that featured a driving range, pro-golf simulators, bumper boats, go-carts and, of course, mini golf.

“It’s a game that you can play when you are young or older,” Bob said. “I enjoy seeing families spend time together.”

Another way families can bond is through the park’s offering of GellyBall. An alternative to paintball, Gellyball uses non-staining, water-hydrated gel orbs to hit your target.

“No paint involved so no staining your clothes,” Bob said. “Also, it isn’t painful like paint ball but gives you the same thrill and excitement. We have also added black lights to the field to make it glow at night.”

Yet another layer of magical fun instantly inserted into the ambiance. The greatest magic for Bob, however, comes from the people.

His favorite part of running the business? “Working with a great team and seeing all the smiling faces having fun.” He particularly enjoys witnessing generations of families enjoying time with each other and the park.

The mission from here is to keep the fun – and the golf balls – rolling.



Tropical Breeze Fun Park

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Sudoku

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

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Dogwood Winter Offers Life, Laughter, And Love

By Ann Marie O'Phelan

On Friday, Feb. 20, Cultural Park Theatre opened its doors at 6 p.m. for the opening night celebration of *Dogwood Winter*, a play that runs through Friday, May 1, 2026. The festivity included tasty treats at the concession stand, wine tastings by Southwest Florida Wine Company, which donates the proceeds to the theatre, and a chance to mingle with the other attendees, including the actors, actresses, and stage crew.

The play, by playwright Traci Damron, shares wisdom and lessons hidden underneath the humor of snarky, southern remarks – Georgia-style. Amron, from Atlanta, Ga., is a new playwright; however, she is a high school English teacher who has taught playwriting to her young students for many years. Her inspiration came from movies such as *Steel Magnolias* and *Fried Green Tomatoes*, and television shows



like *The Golden Girls*. I thought to myself, “I really wish someone would write that way again for audiences.” My girlfriend said, “Well, then why don’t you write it?” And so, I did. “The real focus of this play is the relationships and wisdom that we, as women, have as we get a bit older, so I wanted to write a heartwarming, dramatic, and yet funny story that celebrated that as much as possible,” explained Damron. The name was a nod to Dogwoods, which offer spectacular blooms in the spring after the cold winter snaps. The characters were inspired by parts of Damron and the people she’s known over the years. Humor aside, the show also grapples with some tough subjects, such as betrayal and breast cancer, so there is a dramatic side. “But I would say there is definitely more laughter than tears,” added Damron, who is thankful to Cultural Park Theatre for bringing this show to life.



Executive Director Robin Murray and playwright Traci Damron before the show.



Dogwood Winter by playwright Traci Damron is on stage through May 1.

Damron laughed along with the audience, mingled with the crowd before the show, and stayed later to answer audience questions. Besides writing, Damron has been a bass guitarist since she was a teenager, and loves hanging out with good friends and drinking great wine.

Cultural Park Theatre was established in 1963 and offers plays, musicals, concerts, educational programs, and more community events. “Neighbors don’t just watch theatre – they help make it,” explained Executive Director Robin Murray. Supporting new playwrights is part of who the theatre is, and they were excited to welcome Traci Damron, and her dramatic and humorous, *Dogwood Winter* to the stage. “This is the kind of original storytelling that keeps our community theatre bold, fresh, and inspiring. Come experience it with us and be part of something new,” added Murray.

Upcoming shows include cabaret night, Broadway Hits on March 14 at 7 p.m., and Jimmy Buffett’s *Escape to Margaritaville*, a party on stage, from Friday, March 20 to Sunday, March 29, with matinee 3 p.m. and evening 7 p.m. showtimes available. Tickets can be purchased online or at the box office.

Cultural Park Theatre, 528 Cultural Park Boulevard, Cape Coral, FL 33990, ww.CulturalParkTheatre.org, (239) 772-5862,



Zach Ortman (left), playwright Traci Damron (center), and Brooke Thawley (right), showed up to see the opening show.



The occasion offered tasty treats at the concession stand. Wine was available for sale.



The crowd gathers before show time.

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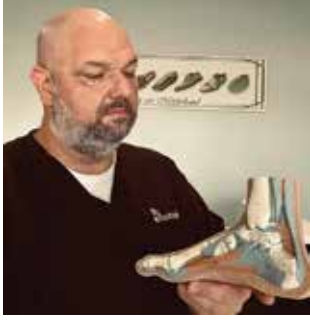
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Ask The Foot Pro

By Chris Hoppenworth,
Chris Hoppenworth is a certified and licensed pedorthist with over 30 years of experience in custom orthopedic footwear and insoles. His workshop in Southwest Florida provides custom-made diabetic insoles and footwear modifications for improved comfort and mobility and is enrolled with Medicare.



Today's Topic: Understanding Pes Cavus: When A High Arch Becomes A Problem

A high arch may look strong and athletic, but in many cases, a condition known as Pes cavus can lead to significant foot problems.



Pes cavus is more than just a "high instep." It is a structural deformity where the arch of the foot is excessively elevated. This changes how weight is distributed when you stand and walk. Instead of pressure being shared across the entire foot, it concentrates on the heel and the ball of the foot. Over time, that imbalance can cause pain, instability, and progressive deformity.

Patients with pes cavus often experience frequent ankle sprains, heel pain, calluses under the ball of the foot, and hammertoes. Because the foot is more rigid and less shock-absorbing, every step sends greater impact forces through the joints. Some people also develop metatarsalgia, stress fractures, or lateral ankle instability. In certain cases, especially when the condition is linked to neurological issues, symptoms may worsen over time.

One of the biggest challenges with a cavus foot is that it doesn't adapt well to uneven surfaces. The high arch creates a narrower base of support, making balance more difficult. I often hear patients say they feel "wobbly" or unstable, particularly on stairs or uneven ground.

As a licensed and certified pedorthist, my role is to improve comfort, stability, and long-term protection. Custom orthotics are often the foundation of treatment. Unlike generic inserts, properly designed custom devices for pes cavus focus on redistributing pressure, increasing surface contact, and adding shock absorption. Strategic padding and arch support can help offload painful areas while improving alignment.

Footwear is equally important. Many people with high arches wear shoes that are too narrow or too stiff, which increases pressure points. Extra-depth shoes, cushioned soles, and in some cases rocker-bottom modifications can significantly improve gait and reduce stress on the forefoot. If deformities like hammertoes are present, additional accommodations inside the shoe help prevent rubbing and skin breakdown.

In certain cases – especially for patients with diabetes – protective footwear may be covered under Medicare when medically necessary. Early intervention is key. The longer abnormal pressure patterns continue, the more likely secondary problems will develop.

A high arch may not seem like a serious condition at first glance, but pes cavus can have a lasting impact on mobility and quality of life. With proper pedorthic care, customized support, and well-fitted footwear, we can help restore balance, reduce pain, and keep you confidently on your feet.

Footopic Inc., 1112 SE 47th Ter., Unit B, Cape Coral, FL, (239) 257-1379, www.footopic.com.



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Cape Coral Museum In The Gardens

Plant Of The Month: Blue Plumbago

A beautiful flowering plant that adds a soothing touch of sky-blue color to any garden or landscape. With its clusters of flowers and versatile nature, Cape Plumbago, Blue Plumbago, or Skyflower is an ideal Florida-friendly™ choice for gardeners looking to create a serene and inviting garden. This plant thrives in Florida's heat and sun. It is versatile as a shrub, groundcover, or container plant and attracts pollinators like hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies.

True Blue Color: Offers a vibrant, unmistakable blue that's rare in the garden with green leaves that can turn deep red in autumn, especially the groundcover type (*Ceratostigma*).

Growth Habit: Can be a sprawling shrub (6- to 8-feet) or a low-growing groundcover, depending on the variety. Loves summer heat and visually cools down hot landscapes.

Sunlight: Needs at least 6 to 8 hours of sun for best flowering.

Water: Drought-tolerant once established but blooms better with regular watering.



Low Maintenance: Adaptable. Can handle tough conditions, including sandy soils and clay. Requires little fertilizer or pest control.

What Pairs Well With Plumbago?

Plumbago does well planted against a wall or fence as a backdrop to a flower bed. It pairs well with scarlet sage, white daisies, and blue mistflower. Why it's a favorite in south Florida, is because larvae of the Cassius blue butterfly feed on plumbago!



From The Desk Of Sheriff Carmine Marceno

Pedestrian Safety And Awareness

Our county is growing and, with that growth comes an increase in the number of vehicles, more pedestrians, additional cyclists and construction to alter, repair and improve roadways.



All of the aforementioned variables are capable of compromising pedestrian safety ... especially for children walking to and from school and/or bus stops. As part of Sheriff Carmine Marceno's "Safe Kids, Safe Schools" initiative, a safe walk to school, and back home later in the day, is a non-negotiable component.

Everyone is seemingly rushing to get somewhere ... school, work, appointments. All too many of us have our eyes focused on our cellular devices, have headphones/earphones and are simply not paying appropriate attention to all that is occurring around them.

While most reading this message are adults, we believe that our many years of street crossing and neighborhood walking makes us immune to these types of accidents.

This couldn't be farther from the truth.

Let's begin by remaining alert. If there is no sidewalk, please walk on the left side of the road facing traffic. Walk as far from the roadway as possible and reasonable.

Stop signs and red lights do not guarantee that a vehicle will stop. Do not assume that a vehicle will abide by traffic laws/signs. Attempt to make eye contact with the driver and, in an abundance of safety, always yield to oncoming vehicles.

Exit vehicles, whenever possible, from the passenger side.

Pedestrians and cyclists should exercise additional caution in areas of road construction as traffic patterns change during the course of the construction and drivers may become confused or disoriented.

Crossing major roadways can be perilous. Vehicles are moving at higher speeds, may have blind spots created by large trucks and, when turning, may not see a pedestrian jutting out from behind a parked vehicle or landscaping. These hazards increase exponentially during the dark of night.

Time spent discussing these matters with school-aged children is time well spent. While they may feel insulted when you broach this subject as they are "grown up" and "know how to cross a street," please remind them that even adults are susceptible to these sorts of tragedies.

Let's all be alert and cautious as we make our way around the county.

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Professionals Connect Council: Strengthening Connections Across Southwest Florida

By Adela Beqo

As Southwest Florida continues to expand, so does the need for meaningful collaboration across industries. Professionals Connect Council (PCC), founded by Adela Beqo, was created to address that need building a platform where professionals connect not only for networking, but for long-term partnership and shared impact.



With continued momentum into 2026, Professionals Connect Council remains committed to strengthening the professional landscape of Southwest Florida one intentional connection at a time.

Adela Beqo is a visionary entrepreneur, community builder, and the founder of the Professional Connect Council (PCC), a Southwest Florida platform dedicated to transforming professional networking into purposeful collaboration and community impact.

PCC was established with a clear purpose: to bring together leaders across business, construction, law, and community organizations in environments designed for intentional connection. Rather than traditional networking formats, PCC focuses on curated gatherings that encourage collaboration, leadership development, and relationship-building rooted in trust.

In a region experiencing rapid economic and population growth, industries often operate within separate circles. PCC aims to bridge those gaps, creating opportunities for professionals who may not typically intersect to share ideas, align resources, and build initiatives that strengthen both business and community.

At its core, PCC is grounded in the belief that connection is most powerful when it carries purpose. The organization emphasizes partnerships that extend beyond visibility focusing instead on shared leadership, mutual respect, and collective advancement across Southwest Florida.

Through strategic collaborations and thoughtfully designed experiences, PCC continues to expand its presence as a connector platform for professionals seeking more than transactional relationships. Its mission reflects a broader vision: fostering an ecosystem where business growth and community responsibility coexist.

“As Southwest Florida evolves, so must the way we connect,” said Beqo. “PCC exists to create spaces where collaboration feels natural, leadership is shared, and professionals can grow together rather than separately.”



Adela Beqo, founder of Professionals Connect Council (PCC), speaks during a recent gathering in Southwest Florida.

With a background in business development and international engagement, Adela brings a global perspective and a deep sense of purpose to every initiative she leads. Her past involvement with global and community organizations, including the British Council, the German-American Chamber of Commerce, and the World Affairs Council, reflects her belief that leadership begins with service and that connection is the foundation of progress.

In addition to her work with PCC, Adela continues to play a strategic role at Lifestyle Homes For Less, a family-owned Cape Coral homebuilding company recognized among the area's top builders. Her experience in brand growth, partnerships, and community relations continues to guide her mission of building bridges between business success and philanthropy.

Adela's purpose is clear: to inspire collaboration, empower leadership, and cultivate a community where professionalism and purpose thrive together.



Real estate professionals connect during a curated PCC gathering in Southwest Florida.

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First Watch

By Ed Estes

Cape Coral has no shortage of breakfast favorites, and most to do lunch as well. Such is the case for First Watch, a breakfast and lunch restaurant at the corner of Santa Barbara Boulevard and Veteran's Parkway (in front of Publix and Target ... the old Beef O'Brady's location). Their first location in Cape Coral is on Pine Island Road, this one is a little bit larger and has a separate dining room which opens up with large roller windows to the sidewalk and parking lot in nice weather.



The restaurant is open, light, airy and welcoming as you enter. As you enter the lobby, on the left you will find a coffee bar; the restaurant then winds around to the right to the seating area with a nice selection of tables and booths. At each setting there is a coffee mug, and the server was quick to offer us a pour of coffee as soon as we sat down. I ordered hot tea and was met with a hot water pot and a variety of different teas, herbal and black, for my selection as well as an offer of honey and lemon (sugar and non-calorie sweeteners are on the table).

The menu is divided between breakfast and lunch on either side of the menu. They also have a special seasonal menu with specialty items. It appears that donut hole variations are a reoccurring seasonal offering. Breakfast is introduced with a host of fruit/veggie inspired beverages like a Morning Medication, Kale Tonic and Purple Haze as well as coffee creations like Mint Mocha and Honey Caramel Crunch. Adult selections include mimosas, Spiked lavender Lemonade and Pomegranate Sunrise.

My wife Nancy started with the Pumpkin Spiced Donut (holes) with a caramel dipping sauce. I went a bit heavier with the Eggs Benedict (a bit of a twist, they included a tomato slice between the egg and ham, on toasted ciabatta, served with a green salad, but you can substitute the salad for potatoes). The breakfast menu was extensive (four variations of the Benedict), breakfast tacos, and varied egg dishes: omelets, frittatas (an Italian-styled omelet), breakfast bowls, pancakes and several variations of French Toast. It was late morning on a weekday, still a nice crowd coming in for a late breakfast or perhaps an early lunch.

Lunch is served all day, with a couple of soups, a variety of salads and some interesting sandwiches: Monterey Club, Ham and Gruyere, Roast Beef and Havarti, Turkey Burger, two veggie sandwiches and the BLTE (bacon, lettuce, tomato and egg). Both breakfast and lunch menus have children's selections as well.

I liked how they added a fresh look to their offerings: greens, fruit, chicken sausage (in addition to traditional pork) and whole grain bread to their menu. The restaurant offered a nice balance for those looking for something lighter and perhaps a bit healthier and those wishing for a more traditional "large" breakfast to last them through the day.

Located at 2514 Santa Barbara Blvd., First Watch is open from 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., seven days a week, but closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Ed Estes is a retired author, lawyer, professor and real estate broker who enjoys writing for the Sun to legitimize his dining at Cape Coral restaurants. If you'd like Ed to visit your restaurant for a future publication you can contact him at edestesjr@gmail.com.



Personality Traits For People Born In March

Those born in March are often described as peace-loving dreamers who welcome the promise of spring with optimism and emotional depth. With personalities shaped by reflection and creativity, March-born individuals tend to see the world through an imaginative lens while maintaining a strong inner sense of purpose.

Optimistic By Nature – March personalities typically hold a hopeful outlook on life. They believe that with the right mindset, challenges can be overcome and circumstances will ultimately fall into place. Their positive attitude often inspires those around them.

Highly Creative Spirits – Creativity is one of the most defining traits of March-born individuals. Drawn to beauty, art, and serenity, they often prefer quiet environments where they can think, create, and recharge. Many enjoy solitude, finding inspiration in peaceful surroundings.

Strong Intuition – People born in this month are known

for their perceptiveness. Their intuitive nature makes them observant and analytical, allowing them to read situations – and people – with surprising accuracy. They value sincerity and tend to approach conversations thoughtfully and logically.

Impulsive But Passionate – While generally calm, March-born individuals can be quick to act when driven by strong beliefs. Their enthusiasm can lead to impatience, and their determination sometimes appears as stubbornness when they feel strongly about a cause or decision.

Philosophical Thinkers – March personalities are often deep thinkers who reflect on life's meaning, emotions, and personal growth. Generous and thoughtful, they frequently analyze past experiences, using them as lessons that shape their outlook and choices. Welcoming spring with imagination and insight, those born in March balance gentleness with intensity – dreamers who quietly carry both creativity and conviction.

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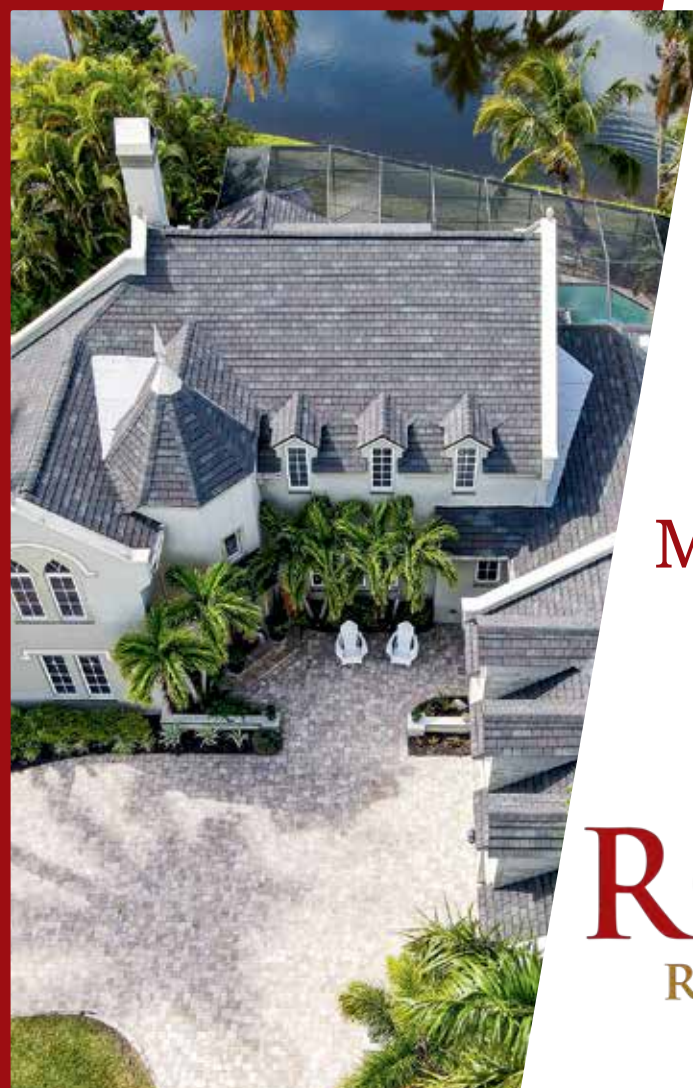
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Changing The Stigma: Why Community Theatre Matters (And Shines)

By Robin Murray,
Executive Director

Community Theatre deserves a second look- Robin Murray, Executive Director Cultural Park Theatre



For some people, the phrase community theatre still carries an outdated stigma: that it's "amateur," that it's "not the same quality," or that it's "just a hobby." Sometimes the assumption goes even further – that community theatre is code for "lower caliber" entertainment.

I understand where that perception comes from. For years, community theatre has been treated like a punchline in pop culture, or as something you only do "before the real thing." And to be fair, not every production everywhere is going to be perfect – because theatre is made by humans, in real time, with real-life constraints.

But here's what that stigma misses: the label "community" doesn't describe the quality of the work. It describes who the work belongs to.

At Cultural Park Theatre in Cape Coral, I see it constantly – neighbors showing up for one another, artists taking the craft seriously, and audiences leaving surprised by how moving, polished, and professional a community production can be.

Community theatre is often the first place someone is given a real opportunity.

It's where a young performer learns how to take direction, hit their marks, and carry a scene. It's where a first-time stage manager discovers they can lead a team under pressure. It's where a volunteer who "just wanted to help" finds themselves building sets, designing lights, or running sound – and realizes they've found a calling.

And yes, it's where artists begin journeys that can lead to Equity stages, touring companies, professional design work, or even owning and operating their own theatres.

The arts need places where people can grow. Community theatre is that place: a training ground, a proving ground, and a confidence builder.

There's a misconception that bigger budgets automatically mean better theatre. But theatre has never been only about money, it's about commitment, craft, and connection. Community theatres often create remarkable work with limited resources, because they have something that can't be purchased: a deep sense of ownership. The people on stage and behind the scenes aren't clocking in. They're investing.

That investment shows up in the details:

- Performers who rehearse after long workdays because the story matters
- Designers who solve problems creatively because they believe in the show
- Volunteers who learn new skills to make the show stronger
- Audiences who return again and again because they feel part of something

When the work is driven by heart and discipline, the results can be extraordinary.

One of the most meaningful compliments a theatre can receive is the kind you overhear on the way out, unprompted, honest, and full of surprise.

After our production of *Matilda*, I heard a patron say as they were leaving, "That was as good as a show that I've seen at bigger Equity theatres."

I'm not sharing that to chase comparison. I'm sharing it because it captures something important: community theatre can deliver professional-level experiences that move people.

And it's not rare. Across the country, community theatres produce work that is bold, polished, and emotionally powerful – because the standard is set by the people doing the work, not the size of the budget.

Community theatre isn't just entertainment. It's community infrastructure.

It creates a place where:

- Families make memories together
- Young people find belonging

- Seniors stay connected and engaged
- Local businesses gain cultural energy and foot traffic
- New playwrights find a platform
- Neighbors meet neighbors in a way that doesn't happen anywhere else

In a time when so much of life is digital and divided, community theatre is one of the few spaces where we sit together and feel something together.

It's time to retire the idea that community theatre is something to "graduate from." For many artists and patrons, it's not a stepping stone – it's the destination.

So, the next time you hear "community theatre," I hope you think of excellence, ambition, and heart. Because when a community tells stories together, the entire community becomes stronger.

Come see a show at Cultural Park Theatre and make room in your calendar for the other community theatres in our area too, because when we support local stages, we strengthen our whole community.

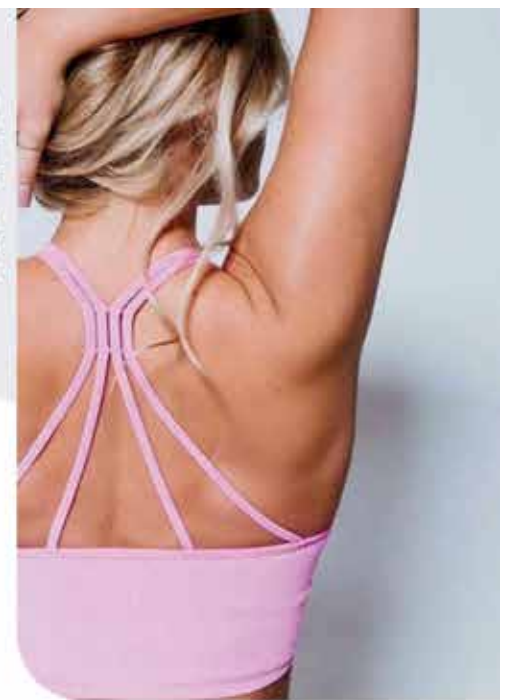
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Gulf Coast Village Hosts Vibrant Local Art Exhibitions

The Gulf Coast Village community is opening its doors to local artists and art lovers this spring, hosting two exciting exhibitions and offering opportunities to engage with the arts. Residents and visitors alike are invited to enjoy visual storytelling, meet the artists, and vote for their favorite works in these vibrant displays of creativity. **“Eat, Pray, Love” Art Show**

Guests can enjoy wine, light snacks, and a variety of compelling works created by talented regional artists. Attendees are encouraged to cast their vote for the People’s Choice Award during the reception to spotlight their favorite piece.

Dates And Times: March 4 through April 5, 2 to 4 p.m.

Opening Reception: Wednesday, March 4, 2 to 4 p.m.

People’s Choice Voting: 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Location: 1333 Santa Barbara Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33991

Sunrise And Sunset Art Show

Metamorphosis, an inspiring exhibition reflecting themes of growth, change, and rebirth, will feature Gulf Coast Village resident Tom Jennings as the featured artist.

Visitors can experience the exhibit in person and engage with the creative process.

Dates and Times: April 6 through May 15; open to the public daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., free of charge.

Reception and Meet the Artist: Wednesday, April 15, 2 to 3:30 p.m., Elevator Lobby, Gulf Coast Village Independent Living Center. Finger foods and wine provided by the Gulf Coast Village Chef and Marketing Department. People’s Choice Award announced at 3 p.m.

Monthly Meetings

The North Fort Myers Arts Association welcomes all to its monthly meetings on the third Friday of each

month, from 2 to 4 p.m., at the North Fort Myers Library. Attendees can meet fellow artists and share in the local artistic community.



Book Review: *The Correspondent* By Virginia Evans

By Lillian Till,

Flutterbuy Books and More

In an age of text messages and hurried emails, *The Correspondent* feels like a quiet rebellion – a reminder that words, when chosen carefully and sent with intention, still matter.



Virginia Evans’s debut novel, a No.1 New York Times bestseller and one of the year’s most celebrated literary surprises, centers on Sybil Van Antwerp, a woman who has spent a lifetime making sense of the world through letters. Each morning at half past ten, Sybil sits down to write – to her brother, her dearest friend, a university president who denied her request to audit a class, and even to literary icons like Joan Didion and Larry McMurtry. Some letters are witty. Some are sharp. Some are tender. And one, written again and again but never sent, holds the emotional key to her past.

Sybil is a woman who has lived fully: mother, grandmother, wife, divorcee, and accomplished attorney. She possesses the confidence of someone who has weathered decades of triumphs and mistakes. Yet when correspondence from someone tied to one of the most painful chapters of her life resurfaces, her carefully ordered world begins to shift. What unfolds is not melodrama but something far more powerful – an intimate reckoning with regret, forgiveness, and the stories we tell ourselves to survive.

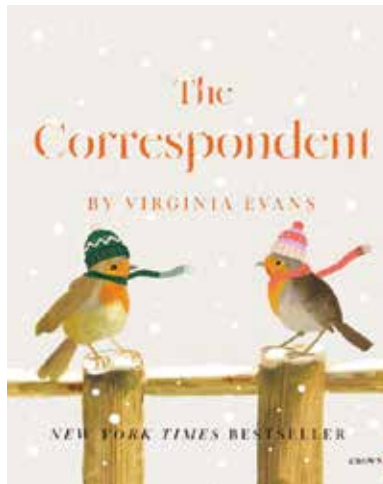
Evans structures the novel through Sybil’s letters, creating a narrative that feels both deeply personal and surprisingly universal. Through these exchanges, we see the arc of a life – the arrogance of youth, the clarity that age can bring, the relationships that shape us, and the quiet acts of kindness that endure. The novel gently poses a profound question: What if the letters we send – and the ones we don’t – are the truest record of who we are?

What makes *The Correspondent* remarkable is its stillness. It does not rely on spectacle. Instead, it invites readers to slow down, to sit with reflection, and to appreciate the transformative power of written words. In Sybil, Evans has created a character who feels startlingly real – flawed, intelligent, stubborn, and ultimately courageous enough to confront the past she has long avoided.

This is a novel about connection – not just romantic love, but intellectual companionship, familial bonds,

and the quiet solace found in literature itself. It is about how even “very small things” – a letter, a memory, an apology – can carry extraordinary weight.

Tender, wise, and quietly luminous, *The Correspondent* is a celebration of language and of the lives we piece together one page at a time.



For the past two years, Lillian Till and her golden retriever Finnigan have welcomed book lovers to Flutterbuy Books and More, a cozy spot for new and used book treasures. Lillian hosts a monthly Book Club at Flutterbuy that takes place on the last Tuesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. Come for the conversation, stay for Finn’s friendly tail wags! For more information about our book club or any upcoming events at our bookstore, visit us at FlutterbuyBooksAndMore.com!

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 proud to own. Opening a bookstore of her own has always been a dream, one she continues to nurture with every turn of the page.

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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."

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April 18, 2026 1-5pm



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Contact the Museum at 239-772-7037 or email events@capecoralmuseum.org for questions



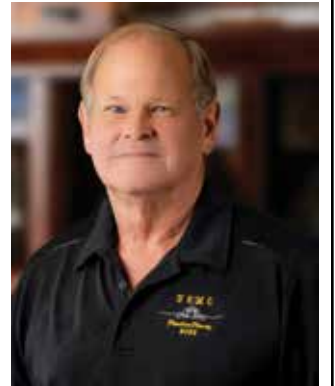
544 CULTURAL PARK BLVD, CAPE CORAL



Meet The Candidate

Florida's 19th Congressional District Candidate – Cape Coral's Mike Pedersen

Mike Pedersen is running for Congress because Southwest Florida deserves a representative who has lived the same challenges as the people he seeks to serve, not someone still learning the community.



A Floridian with deep roots, Pedersen moved to Miami at age 10 and, at 18, earned an appointment to the United States Naval Academy, widely recognized as the nation's top public institution. After graduating, he spent 20 years as a United States Marine Corps flight officer. He completed TOPGUN before it became a household name, flew combat missions in Desert Storm, and held above a Top-Secret clearance. His career was defined by strength, discipline, and firsthand knowledge of what weak leadership can cost.

After military service, Pedersen returned to Florida and has called Cape Coral home for 27 years. His children attended local public schools and graduated from Florida Gulf Coast University. Living on a Gulf-access canal, he has boated and fished Southwest Florida's waters and witnessed the impact of Lake Okeechobee releases on the local environment and economy. He has driven the roads, seen rapid growth, and understands the strain on infrastructure. He does not need a briefing on this region. He has lived it.

As a homeowner, he has weathered eight hurricanes. He understands what it means to board up windows, file claims, rebuild, and absorb the relentless rise in insurance premiums that are crushing Florida families.

Pedersen is also in his 23rd year coaching wrestling at Mariner High School. For two decades, he served as a Naval Academy Admissions Liaison Officer, mentoring students through one of the nation's most competitive application processes. He has visited every high school in the district and founded a free youth wrestling program in Cape Coral. Investing in young people remains central to his belief that strong communities begin with strong kids.

In Congress, Pedersen pledges to secure the border, restore fiscal discipline, protect our Second Amendment, strengthen the military, and defend Southwest Florida's water, infrastructure, to include the UEP, and our way of life.

Combat-tested, community-proven, and Florida-rooted, Mike Pedersen is running to be a true representative for Southwest Florida and would be honored to earn the community's support.

Candidate profiles published by The Cape Coral Sun are informational and do not constitute as an endorsement.

Health News

Understanding Colon Cancer

By Raza Mamoon, M.D.

Excluding skin cancers, colon cancer ranks as the third most common cancer in the United States. While it has long been associated with older adults, diagnoses among younger people are on the rise.

This March, in observance of Colon Cancer Awareness Month, it's a timely reminder of the power of prevention. Regular screenings can detect colon cancer early – when treatment is most effective – and staying informed about symptoms and risk factors helps individuals take control of their health.

Take Charge: Colon Cancer Screenings Save Lives

Early detection of colon cancer is crucial for better outcomes. Screening tests can find precancerous polyps, which can be removed before they turn into cancer. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends regular screenings for adults ages 45 to 75. If you have a family history of colon cancer or experience symptoms, talk to your doctor about starting screenings earlier.



Screening options include stool tests, flexible sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy or CT colonography. Your healthcare provider can help determine which option is best for you. If no polyps are found, screenings are generally repeated every 10 years.

Colon Cancer Explained

Colon cancer develops in the colon (large intestine) or rectum, which is connected to the anus. It occurs when cells in these areas grow abnormally. Most cases begin as polyps, small growths on the inner lining of the colon or rectum. Although not all polyps turn into cancer, some may develop into cancer over time, depending on their type, which can be determined during a screening.

There are several effective ways to detect colon cancer early. Knowing your family history and discussing it with your doctor is key. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends starting regular screenings at age 45, or earlier if a family history of colon cancer exists, helping catch potential issues before they become serious.

Early Signs, Symptoms And Risk Factors

Many people with colon cancer don't experience symptoms in the early stages. When symptoms do appear, they often depend on the tumor's size and location in the large intestine. Common signs to look out for include changes in

bowel habits, such as more frequent diarrhea or constipation; blood in the stool; rectal bleeding; persistent abdominal discomfort; a sensation that the bowel isn't fully emptied; or unintentional weight loss.

Certain factors can increase a person's risk of developing colon cancer. These include a family history of colon cancer or polyps, inherited genetic mutations, inflammatory bowel disease, diabetes, a low-fiber or high-fat diet, lack of regular exercise, smoking, excessive alcohol use, and prior radiation therapy to the abdomen. African Americans are also about 20% more likely to develop colon cancer. Knowing your risk and staying vigilant for symptoms is critical. Early detection can achieve a five-year survival rate of about 90%, according to the American Cancer Society.

Lifestyle changes can help reduce your risk. Maintaining a balanced diet, limiting alcohol, quitting smoking, and exercising regularly for at least 30 minutes a day can all support colon health. Combined with regular screenings and open communication with your healthcare provider, these steps can make a meaningful difference in preventing colon cancer or catching it early.

If you're at higher risk, have symptoms, want more information, or would like to schedule an appointment with your doctor, please visit www.leehealth.org.

LCEC Invites Anglers To 29th Annual Fishing Tournament For United Way

By Shannon Williamson, APR – LCEC Public Relations Director

Calling all anglers to the 29th Annual LCEC Fishing Tournament benefiting the United Way of Lee, Hendry, and Glades Counties! This year's tournament will take place on Saturday, April 18, at D&D Matlacha Bait and Tackle, 3922 Pine Island Road, NW, Matlacha, FL 33993

Since its inception in 1996, the annual LCEC Fishing Tournament has raised more than \$800,000 for United Way. This charity event, in partnership with United Way, demonstrates the LCEC commitment to the founding of cooperative principle of concern for community. LCEC is proud to serve its



communities and remains actively engaged in caring for its members, while providing reliable and affordable electricity.

The tournament will begin with an honor start at 7 a.m., and all final tournament photo submissions must be received by 3 p.m. A mandatory captains' meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 17, to review rules and distribute team angler bags. Cash and prizes will be awarded on tournament day, along with a silent auction, raffles, food and festivities.

Sign up by downloading the FishDonkey app through the app store and search "LCEC29" to register your team. For more information, visit <https://uw.lcec.net/fishing/> or facebook.com/lcecfish. Please contact Fish@lcec.net with any questions.



LCEC is Southwest Florida's Electric Cooperative providing reliable, cost-competitive electricity to members throughout the region. The LCEC headquarters are in North Fort Myers, Florida, the same location where the cooperative originated in 1940. Approximately 450 skilled employees are positioned throughout the six-county service territory, including Immokalee, Cape Coral, North Fort Myers, Sanibel/Captiva, Pine Island, Useppa, Cabbage Key, Marco Island, Everglades City, Ave Maria, and parts of Lehigh Acres.

Shannon Williamson, APR, is the Public Relations Supervisor for LCEC and has been part of the team since 2019. A Cape Coral native and proud Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) graduate, Shannon is actively involved in the community as a member of the Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce and currently serves as President of the Florida Public Relations Association.



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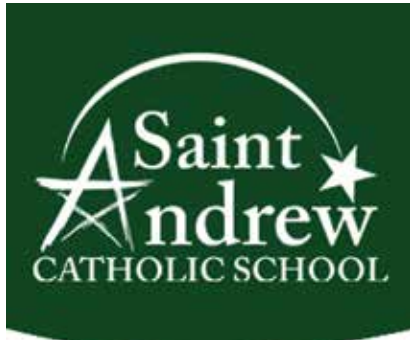
Remember When ...

St. Andrew Catholic Church On Del Prado Boulevard In 1966

From the very beginning, Cape Coral has been known as a city full of people who give back by donating time, services, or just being there

for people of certain nationalities. In the beginning that was especially important, since few people lived there, and everybody needed each other in order to make it through.

And no matter whether it was a church or a civic association, the one thing they had in common was they had to find somewhere to meet, whether it was the Cape Coral Yacht Club, a storefront, or even in private homes.



The first church to come to town was the Faith Presbyterian Church in 1961, according to Paul Sanborn, who went to work for the Rosen Brothers and Gulf American Land Corporation in 1962. "When they dedicated their church, Coronado wasn't finished, so they couldn't have it at the church, but at the corner of Cape Coral Parkway and Coronado," Sanborn said. "There had been no development over there to that point."

There were many denominations that came to Cape Coral in the early years, but it would take years for them to build their own sanctuaries.

The Rev. Everett Bunk started the Christ Lutheran Church in March 1960, for which his wife was an organist.

"We used to call Everett the 'Storefront Pastor' because they didn't have a church at the time. It was in the Big John Shopping Center," Sanborn said. "I used to call him the 'Peddling Pastor' because he used to ride a bike up Del Prado. The congregation told him not to do that because the traffic was getting bad."

The Rev. Bunk wasn't the only storefront pastor. Most churches got started in stores on Sunday when they were closed. Christ Lutheran got started at the Nautilus Inn and Webb's Clothing Store. Epiphany Episcopal held its first service in 1963 in the Quirk Arcade. St. Andrew Catholic Church held its first mass in the Youth Center in 1962.

Even in the late '60s, the Christian Science Center started out in a rented store on Cape Coral Parkway.

When First Christian Church started in December 1962, its first service was in a private home.

Many of the first church services were held at the Yacht Club once it opened in 1962. Sanborn, who managed the Yacht Club, said as many as four services would be held there on Sunday.

"Through the courtesy of Gulf American, the churches got to use the Yacht Club. The Catholics would come in a 7 a.m. for an hour, then the Episcopal Church came in after that, then the Methodists," Sanborn said. "That lasted for about a year until the churches built their own churches."

Sanborn said Gulf American also gave each new church a plot of land and \$1,000 to get started and it didn't take long for the churches to sprout out of the ground.

St. Andrew and the Episcopal Church were built in 1964 on Del Prado near where the Midpoint Bridge overpass is now.

Saint Andrew Catholic Church, 1509 SE 27th St., Cape Coral, FL 33904, www.standrewcs.org, (239) 772-3922.

Photo Credit: Vincent Armand



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AL #12982 HHA #299993155
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Gulf Coast Village is a Volunteers of America National Services community. Volunteers of America National Services (VOANS) is a 501(c)(3), not-for-profit service organization. It offers independent living, assisted living and memory support, long-term care and rehabilitation services, home health and continuing care at home services throughout Southwest Florida. Gulf Coast Village is a proud member of the VOANS family.





Nonprofit Spotlight

Cape Coral Museum Of History

By Ryn Gargulinski

While most kids go gaga with glee in a candy story, Janel Trul spent her childhood going gaga at The Smithsonian. And Civil War battlefields. And places like the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. Anything that held a bit of history has always been a major hit, making her the perfect fit for the role of Executive Director of the Cape Coral Museum of History.



Janel Trul

“We are here to educate, to engage and to inspire,” Janel said, and her contagious passion for history has been helping to play a role in all of the above since she took the museum’s helm in 2019.

Comprised of three buildings in the heart of Cultural Park, the museum is not your typical stuffy-quiet institution with hushed voices echoing through marble halls. It instead serves as a community hub, often bursting with animated conversations, applause, belly laughs – and even car horns – coming from the museum’s campus.

The car horns come from the monthly Classic Car Fest at Cultural Park. The applause and conversations come from the regular lineup of speakers, book signings and presentations.

The laughter comes from fun-infused events, such as the upcoming Brew Fest. Now in its fourth year, this annual fundraiser kicks off April 18, with tickets available online at www.capecoralmuseum.org.

The events are definitely a hoot, but they’re not the main reason Janel was initially drawn to the museum – and the city as a whole. As an avid collector of stories, this Texas native was most enthralled to be able to absorb the history of the Cape straight from many of the original sources.

“Here we can literally hear from the founders, or the community that build the city we know and love,” Janel said.

Although she notes we can no longer speak with the late Leonard or Jack Rosen directly – the two brothers who developed the Cape in 1957 as a “Waterfront Wonderland” – we can still learn from founding families, longtime business owners and residents who came to the Cape during its earliest stages.

Joe Mazurkiewicz Jr., who served as Cape Coral mayor for a 10-year span starting in 1983, is also a fan of the tales told.

“I love the museum as it tells the story of the Cape and the people who made it special,” he said. “It’s great to see and hear the stories and better understand how we got to where we are as a community.”

We can likewise view pieces of history that are regularly on display at the museum. The effort that goes into keeping such exhibits pristine is something the average visitor doesn’t tend to think about.

“We may have saved the items,” Janel explained, “but it takes a lot to keep the items in perpetuity.” Storage areas need to be equipped with precise lighting and climate control, while protective cases are required to retain cleanliness and security.

Proper storage is one of the high expenses of any museum, said Janel, who holds a graduate degree in public history and a decade’s-long career in the history and museum industry.

Fundraising is definitely an ongoing part of the industry as well, especially for establishments like the Cape’s museum that don’t have a permanent endowment fund.

Operated by the Cape Coral Historical Society and governed by its 23 Board of Directors, the museum opened to the public in 1987. Executive Director Janel is the single full-time employee, and she’s backed by one part-time staff member and about 50 volunteers (which often include Janel’s husband and three children).

The museum is getting a welcome boost this year as one of three nonprofits selected to receive part of the proceeds from the upcoming Casino Luau in the Cape.

Scheduled for March 27 at Sun Splash Family Water Park, the Casino Luau is presented by the city’s Chamber of Commerce’s 2025 Leadership class. Graduates are individuals who have completed the 13-week Leadership Cape Coral program designed to help them learn about the city’s infrastructure, complete with tours of various facilities.

“I was very, very honored to find out we were a recipient,” Janel said. “The museum has always been a part of the leadership program, where the class comes to see what we do firsthand.”

She noted the Leadership class of 2025 included several people who were at the museum on a regular basis or featured in exhibits, making the connection and the award extra-special.

“History is so important,” said museum Chairperson Linda Biondi. “If we learn from our history, we will make a better future.” She’s also a big fan of the museum’s activities, particularly the annual Brew Fest and the car show that runs monthly in season.



Then and now. Top: Temporary Country Club pro shop and snack bar (early 1960s). Bottom: Cape Coral Museum of History Rosen building (current day). After moving to Four Freedoms park in 1966, the building was moved again to Cultural Park in 1983 and opened as the original museum building in 1987.

She said, “If you don’t know where you came from, you don’t know where you’re going.”

With the museum consistently showcasing what has made the Cape unique, it can continue to play an integral role in helping to ensure the city’s future trajectory is onward and upward to remain a place the community adores.



Aerial photo of planes over Cape Coral.



Gulf American land Corporation (GALC) Cape Coral Gardens Mural

“Every month we get 150 to 200 cars on a Saturday morning,” she said. “With that comes a lot of visitors to the museum. People are finally getting to know where the museum is and what we do there.”

Former museum Chairperson Gloria Tate wholeheartedly agreed on the importance of learning from history, noting the museum is a key component in making that happen. She said one of the best ways to map out success going forward is to truly understand why the city was founded in the first place – and staying true to what residents really want.





Cape Coral Museum of History
 544 Cultural Park Blvd.,
 Cape Coral FL 33990
 (239) 772-7037
www.CapeCoralMuseum.org

CASINO LUAU IN THE CAPE

Join us for an evening of games, music, and island-inspired fun – all in support of a great cause.



March 27th, 2026
6:00 PM

Sun Splash Family Waterpark
400 W Lake Kennedy Dr, Cape Coral, FL 33991



Contact : +1 (239) 549-6900

Coming Up In The Cape

Cape Coral Farmers Market At Club Square Every Saturday – 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Presented by the Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce, a Farmers Market is held every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., downtown Cape Coral at Club Square (intersection of SE 47th Terrace and SE 10th Place).

The Cape Coral Farmers Market is overflowing with fresh, local, and healthy produce, fruits, and foods, along with melt-in-your-mouth baked goods, made-on-site guacamole, salsas, homemade jams and jellies, pickles and olive mixes, cheeses, take home foods and much more.

For more information, visit www.capecoralfarmersmarket.com.

Kountry Sunshine Karaoke At Lake Kennedy Center Tuesday, March 17 – 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Get your singing voices ready for a fun night at Lake Kennedy Center, 400 Santa Barbara Blvd., from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Doors open at 5 p.m. Sing to the music you love and/or come out to cheer on your friends! The cost is just \$5 per person. BYOB and snacks.

For more details, call (239) 574-0575.

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.

April Dinner Dance

The Cape Coral Social Club invites everyone to enjoy a night of fun, laughter, and lively dancing at the "Everybody Love Some Bunny" April Dinner Dance on Saturday, April 11, beginning at 5:30 p.m. The event will be held at the German American Social Club, 2101 Pine Island Road in Cape Coral.

Guests will enjoy a delicious dinner followed by music and dancing while celebrating the spirit of spring. With an "Everybody Love Some Bunny" theme, attendees are encouraged to wear festive spring colors, bunny-themed accessories, or simply their best dancing shoes.

Tickets may be purchased online at capecoralsocialclub.org or by calling Judy at (239) 699-0123. Come for dinner, stay for the dancing, and enjoy a hoppin' good time with friends.

Free Concert In The Park At Crystal Lake Park Tuesday, March 19 – 5 to 8 p.m.

The City of Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department proudly presents a free "Concert in the Park" on Thursday, March 19, from 5 to 8 p.m. at Crystal Lake Park, 4307 NW 36th St., featuring the music of Madison Morris.

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

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

Glide And Groove Line Dance Social At Four Freedoms Park Tuesday, March 24 – 7 to 10 p.m.

Mark your calendars and get ready to dance the night away at Glide and Groove: Mardi Gras Night!

Join us once a month on Tuesday night for Glide and Groove

at Four Freedoms Park, 4818 Tarpon Ct., – fun, social evening of line dancing, laughter, and connection for all adults. A professional instructor to guide you through easy-to-learn line dances – no experience needed!

A welcoming, social atmosphere where you can meet new friends and have a blast! From 7 to 10 p.m., just \$7 per person (includes instruction (a new line dance), music, and light snacks will be available!) and BYOB.

Bird Walk At Joe Coviello Park Thursday, March 26 – 8 to 9 a.m.

Join us for a guided stroll through Joe Coviello Park, 3514 Oasis Woods Lane, to explore the rich birdlife that calls this area home. Keep your eyes peeled for soaring raptors, the drumming of woodpeckers, and the songs of colorful songbirds. Whether you're a seasoned birder or just beginning, this walk offers a great opportunity to connect with nature and discover the diverse avian residents of the park. Binocular rentals available for \$5,

Coming Up In The Cape on page 19

Slipaway Food Truck Park & Marina Hosts Spring Night Markets

Slipaway Food Truck Park & Marina will host evenings of food, shopping, music and waterfront views with its Sip & Shop Night Market on the third Thursday of every month from 5 to 9 p.m.



Slipaway's Sip & Shop Night Markets will feature a curated lineup of local artisan vendors showcasing handmade crafts and unique products such as jewelry, dog treats, seaglass crafts, wooden cutting boards, bowls and accessories, candied jalapenos, dips, marinades, energy balls and more. Vendors may vary depending on the market.

Upcoming night markets are hosted on the third Thursday of the month, including March 19, April 16 and May 21.

The market gives residents and visitors a new way to experience the evening on the waterfront. Guests can enjoy dinner from one of Slipaway's resident food trucks and indulge in drinks from the full-service bar.



The Sip & Shop Night Markets will also feature live music from 6 to 9 p.m.

There is no entrance fee for the event, and visitors are welcome to arrive by boat and tie up at one of the venue's 26 docks or arrive by car and park onsite for free. Overflow parking and complimentary shuttle are available, visit SlipawayCape.com/contact for directions.

About Slipaway Food Truck Park & Marina

Slipaway Food Truck Park & Marina is a one-of-a-kind destination for family friendly outdoor fun and entertainment. Located at the base of the Cape Coral Bridge at 1811 Cape Coral Pkwy., E., the waterfront destination features 10 on-site food trucks, a full-service bar, shaded seating options, 30 boat slips, a fuel dock, Ship Store, unobstructed views of the Caloosahatchee River and more. Slipaway is a hot spot for festivals and events with daily live music and entertainment. For more information, visit SlipawayCape.com or email info@slipawaycape.com.



For The Love Of Hibiscus! Hibiscus Show And Plant Sale

The James E. Hendry Chapter of the American Hibiscus Society (JEH) announces its 73rd Annual Hibiscus Show/Plant Sale on Saturday, April 18, from 1 to 3 p.m. at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 2439 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers.



This free hibiscus show is the oldest, largest and best attended of all Florida's hibiscus shows, attracting several hundred people annually. This continuing show is made possible through the generosity of community sponsors.

The event will showcase hundreds of different hybrid hibiscus blooms in a variety of colors and forms which will be judged in several different classes including amateur, collector, open collector, commercial, miniatures and seedlings explains Denise Helfrich, show chair. In addition, more than 400 hybrid hibiscus plants will be for sale for \$20. All credit cards are accepted. Parking and admission to the Annual Hibiscus Show/Plant Sale is free.

This is the best opportunity Southwest Floridians have to add to their hybrid hibiscus collection as these

plants are not available in local garden centers. This delicate and beautiful plant grows abundantly in Florida's subtropical climate. Members of the chapter who are experts in the care and growing of hibiscus will be available to provide advice.



Several senior American Hibiscus Society judges will also be available to answer any questions regarding the rule for judging blooms.

Anyone who would like to learn how to grow, graft and hybridize this attractive tropical flowering plant can do so by joining the James E. Hendry Chapter at the show.

The show is the highlight of the year for the chapter; monthly meetings are held at The Berne Davis Botanical Garden, 2166 Virginia Ave., Fort Myers, FL on the second Sunday of each month at 1:30 p.m. Details on the JEH Chapter and pictures of all the blooms that will be available for sale can be found on the chapter's website www.hendrychapterhibiscus.com and Facebook Page: JEH Chapter American Hibiscus Society. Hope to see you there!

Coming Up In The Cape from page 18

call (239) 549-4606 to reserve.

Donut Dash 5K At Rotary Park

Saturday, March 28 – 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Get ready to lace up and embrace the sweetest tradition in Cape Coral! The Dunkin' Donut 5K Dash is bigger than ever. This year, we've officially teamed up with Dunkin' to bring you a high-energy morning of fitness, fun, and the timeless bond between law enforcement and donuts.

Whether you're sprinting for a PR or strolling with the family, you'll run alongside Cape Coral's finest and enjoy a course packed with spirit. Best of all, a portion of the proceeds will benefit the Cape Coral PAL youth programs, strengthening the bond between law enforcement and our community.

Race Events

- 5K Run (Chip-Timed)
- 1-Mile Fun Run/ Walk: Participants eat one free donut every quarter-mile
- The "Sweet" Finish: Exclusive sips at the finish line

Medals And Swag

- Finisher Medal for all participants
- Custom event T-shirt (guaranteed if registered by March 15)
- Exclusive daily Dunkin' deal for every registered runner at select locations
- Exclusive swag to collect while supplies last, including

BEACH BLAST PARTY AND OBSTACLE COURSE
SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2026
 9:30 AM - 1:30 PM
CRUSTAL LAKE PARK
 4307 NW 36TH ST, CAPE CORAL, FL 33993

FOR MORE INFO OR TO REGISTER, CALL 239-242-3506 OR GO TO CAPECORAL.GOV

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Sounds Of Jazz And Blues At Coral Oaks Golf Course
Saturday, March 28 – 5 to 9 pm.

Music lovers are invited to celebrate the 35th anniversary of Sounds of Jazz & Blues on Saturday, March 28, from 5 to 9 p.m. at Coral Oaks Golf Course, 1800 NW 28 Ave., Cape Coral. The popular outdoor concert, presented by Cape Coral Parks & Recreation, promises an evening of live music, food, and community under the stars.

Headlining this year's event is The Lao Tizer Band featuring Elliott Yamin, Karen Briggs, and Chieli Minucci. The group, a Jazz Group of the Year nominee, will take the stage from 7:30 to 9 p.m. in support of its latest release AMPLIFY, blending jazz, R&B, and funk into a high-energy performance.

Admission tickets are \$25 in advance and \$30 at the gate. Guests in this section should bring chairs or blankets, as seating is not provided. Food and beverages will be available for purchase.

HEALTH FAIR
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For event details or vendor information: 239-574-0806 or eniland@capecoral.gov

Experience tickets are \$50 in advance and \$55 at the gate and include round-table seating, a buffet-style catered meal, and two drink tabs for beer, wine, or soda. Water is included, with additional drinks available for purchase.

Children under age 5 may attend without a ticket.

Advanced tickets are available online only, and the event is rain or shine with no refunds issued. Organizers note the concert has sold out in advance in previous years and encourage early ticket purchases.

With live music, great food, and a scenic outdoor setting, the anniversary celebration is expected to be a highlight of Cape Coral's spring event season.

Don't miss a thing – scan the QR code for the full Cape Coral event calendar

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Real Estate Corner

True Cost Of Owning A Home In 2026: What Buyers Need To Know

By Kirstin Moll

Are you still listening to those doomer tweets about how unaffordable housing is? I'm going to hold your hand when I say this ... stop. Because housing affordability is actually starting to show signs of improvement and we're not feeding into the rage bait that is the internet.



Housing is expensive. Mortgage rates remain well above the historic lows of early 2020. Home prices climbed rapidly over the past several years. Rents surged, too.

So, when a bold social media graphic declares that affordability is worse than ever, it's easy to believe that's the full story.

But the broader data suggests something more nuanced is happening.

Affordability is not determined by price alone. It is shaped by mortgage rates, wage growth, housing supply, rental trends and negotiating power. Over the past year, several of those factors have begun to shift in ways that offer cautious optimism for both buyers and renters.

Here's what the numbers show.

Mortgage Rates Have Eased From Their Highs

Mortgage rates remain elevated compared to the sub-3% loans seen in 2021. But they have moderated meaningfully from their recent peaks.

As of mid-February, the average 30-year fixed mortgage rate is hovering near 6.05%. That is down from the highs above 7% reached during the most volatile period of rate hikes.

Even a modest drop can significantly impact a household's monthly payment. Earlier this year, rate declines opened refinance opportunities for an estimated five million borrowers nationwide, giving many homeowners the ability to reduce their payments or stabilize strained budgets.

National affordability metrics recently reached their strongest levels in roughly four years. Homes are not "cheap," but the pressure has eased compared to the tightest point of the cycle.

For prospective buyers, the difference between a rate in the high-6% range and one closer to 6% can affect monthly costs more than a minor shift in purchase price.

The Gap Between Renting And Buying Has Narrowed

For much of the past two years, the cost difference between renting and buying widened dramatically.

National data now indicates that gap is shrinking.

The income required to afford a typical home nationally sits around \$111,000 annually. The income needed to afford a typical apartment is approximately \$76,000. That \$35,000 difference remains significant, but it is the smallest gap in three years.

Mortgage rates have come down from their highs. Home price growth has slowed. Meanwhile, wages have continued to rise. Together, those forces have slightly improved the ownership equation.

Buying is not suddenly easy. However, the math is less punishing than it was at the peak of affordability strain.

For renters evaluating whether to renew a lease or explore homeownership, side-by-side comparisons of actual monthly payments, rather than online headlines, offer a clearer path forward.

Monthly Payments Have Declined Modestly

Affordability ultimately comes down to one question: What will the monthly payment be? Nationwide, homebuyer affordability improved by 7.5% in 2025. The median mortgage payment dropped to approximately \$2,025 which is about \$102 less per month than the year prior.

Over 12 months, that represents more than \$1,200 in

savings. While not transformative, incremental improvements can meaningfully impact household budgets.

Additionally, mortgage payments now consume a slightly smaller share of the typical household's income than they did at the start of last year, which is a signal that wage growth and rate stabilization are providing relief.

Rent Growth Has Slowed

Renters are also seeing signs of moderation.

Nationally, households are spending about 26.4% of income on rent. That's the lowest share since mid-2021. The typical asking rent in January was approximately \$1,895, flat month over month and up just 2% from a year earlier. That marks the slowest annual rent growth since 2020.

More rental units have entered the market, increasing vacancy rates and creating negotiating leverage in many areas. Nearly 40% of rental listings are offering concessions, such as free months or reduced deposits. If you live in Cape Coral, I know you've seen the signs out at every apartment building offering two months free.

While certain neighborhoods remain competitive, the broad pattern suggests that renters now have more options and flexibility than they did during the height of rental inflation.

Builders Are Offering Incentives

New construction, often perceived as the premium option, is showing increased flexibility as well.

In the fourth quarter of 2025, 19.3% of newly built homes saw price cuts, compared to 18.3% of existing homes. Builders, particularly in the South and West, have ramped up supply and are adjusting pricing and incentives to maintain sales pace.

Those incentives frequently include mortgage rate buydowns or closing cost assistance, which can significantly impact monthly affordability.

For buyers who have focused exclusively on resale inventory, expanding the search to include new construction may reveal additional negotiating opportunities.

Buyers Have More Negotiating Power

After years of intense bidding wars, the market balance has shifted in many regions. Cape Coral has been a buyer's market for quite some time now.

Nationally, there are approximately 37% more sellers than buyers. That's more than double the imbalance seen a year ago. That shift has translated into longer days on market, more frequent price reductions and increased willingness among sellers to negotiate repairs or concessions. Buyers now have more time to evaluate options rather than competing against multiple offers within days.

A Crash Is Not The Baseline Forecast

Despite persistent commentary predicting a housing collapse, mainstream economic forecasts do not point toward a crash.

Home price projections for 2026 range from a slight decline of -0.3% to modest growth of 4.3%. Mortgage rate forecasts for the year average between 6.0% and 6.5%. Home sales are expected to increase from 2025 totals with projected growth between 1.7% and 14%.

Markets remain influenced by inflation, employment trends and broader economic policy. However, current data indicates a housing market adjusting to affordability challenges.

A More Complete Picture

Housing remains costly. That reality has not changed.

What has changed is the trajectory. Mortgage rates have eased from their peaks. Rent growth has cooled. Builders are offering incentives. Buyers in many areas have regained negotiating leverage. And economic forecasts suggest stabilization rather than collapse.

For households weighing whether to buy, refinance, sell or renew a lease, broad national trends provide context. But personal finances, timelines and local market conditions ultimately matter most.

True Cost Of Owning A Home on page 21

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From The Classroom: A Teacher Reflects On A Year Of Progress In Lee County Schools

By Barbara Rebeor

Students aren't the only ones learning in the classroom ... educators learn, too.

After more than 20 years as a public school teacher, I have learned that meaningful change in education is rarely instant. When it happens, though, teachers and students feel the difference immediately.

This school year has brought important and impactful improvements across The School District of Lee County that are strengthening classrooms, supporting educators and



helping students succeed. As a middle school teacher and a member of my school's leadership team, I see these changes shaping daily life for both teachers and children.

Teaching runs deep in my family. My mother and grandmother were teachers, my sister is a teacher and now my daughter has joined the profession. My own path was shaped by educators who recognized that I did not always learn the same way as my peers. They showed me that obstacles are not impossibilities; they simply require the right strategies and support.

Stability In The Classroom Matters

One of the most significant improvements districtwide has been the dramatic reduction in teacher vacancies, dropping from hundreds at any given time to just a handful.

Although many substitute teachers are effective educators, a

classroom without a permanent teacher can mean inconsistent instruction and disrupted learning. Stability is essential for children and teens who thrive on routine and strong relationships.

When schools have constant turnover, it's challenging for everyone. Filling classrooms with qualified teachers is not just a staffing victory; it directly benefits student achievement.

With more teachers in place, schools can focus on instruction rather than covering vacancies, allowing educators to devote their energy where it belongs – on students.

Protecting Instructional Time

Learning requires focus, and one of the most noticeable shifts this year has been the district's bell-to-bell technology ban removing personal electronic devices during the school day. Teachers have reported higher engagement and fewer classroom distractions. In my classroom, the impact has been immediate. Students are talking more, behavioral issues have declined, and children appear more grounded and present.

Most importantly, they are rediscovering something that should never disappear from childhood: the chance to simply be kids. When distractions fade, curiosity has room to grow.

Getting Students To School Ready To Learn

Reliable transportation may sound operational, but it has a direct academic impact. The district's Safe Start Initiative has resulted in 95% of buses arriving on time, a major improvement from years of persistent delays.

Not long ago, students regularly arrived late, costing valuable instructional time and making it difficult to plan lessons or assessments. Today, that disruption has been significantly reduced.

Students are in their seats, prepared to begin the day exactly where and when they should be.

Investing In Teachers Pays Off For Students

Throughout my career, I have collaborated with educators across the country. Those experiences reinforced how fortunate we are in Lee County to have access to strong professional development and instructional training.

Much like a top-performing business, strong school systems invest in teachers because the return is student success.

Being named the School District's 2025 Teacher of the Year was both humbling and empowering. The recognition affirmed that our work matters while deepening my responsibility to mentor others, support new educators and help cultivate future teacher leaders. Great schools are built by educators who lift one another up.

Looking Ahead With Purpose

Transforming a school system takes courage, commitment and collaboration. As Superintendent Dr. Denise Carlin noted in reflecting on her first year, achieving greatness requires moving beyond "how we've always done it."

From the classroom perspective, I see that progress unfolding every day. When we support teachers, protect instructional time and prioritize student needs, we create schools where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

That is a win worth building on.

About The Author

Barbara Rebeor is a teacher at Harns Marsh Middle School in Lehigh Acres and the 2025 Teacher of the Year for The School District of Lee County.

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True Cost Of Owning A Home from page 20

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

Median Sale Price: \$354,900, -3.6% YoY
Price Per Square Feet: 206, -6.01% 1Y Change
Average Days on Market: 85 Days, +8.97 1Y Change

Median Rent: \$2,000/month, -13.04% 1Y Change
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.

A Treasure At Every Turn

By Ann Marie O'Phelan

Tucked off Cape Coral Parkway in downtown Cape Coral lies a treasure trove of amazing finds – from refinished furniture items to home décor to antiques to clothing.

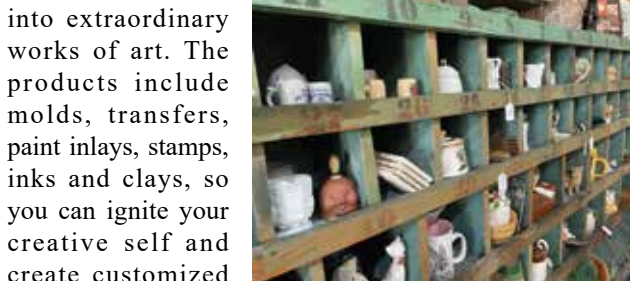
White Cottage & Company at 909 Miramar St., offers it all from room to room. One can find a variety of goods from over 25 vendors, and the selection is outstanding for gifts, collectors, or for oneself. Additionally, refinished fine-furniture pieces, such as dressers and tables, are also for sale.

“My love of interior design just stems from a love of beautiful things and creating beautiful spaces with found objects,” explained Owner Ann Marie Budris, who refinishes the furniture herself. It’s something she’s loved doing for over 30 years. Most of what she refurbishes are items she has picked out; however, there have been times when store inquiries have led to items worth refinishing.

Furthermore, Budris offers design services, a role that has her traveling to locations to transform spaces or helping clients in-store with their needs. She works closely with her clients to help refresh home interiors, revamp workspaces and offices, and elevate retail and business spaces – depending on the needs. Budris brings her creativity and design expertise to any project, large or small. Before owning her own shop, she found goods “picked” for many high-end retailers on Long Island, adding to her sense of what is interesting, tasteful, and a good find.

Teresa Gleisle, who assists at the store, describes it as a “vintage market with home décor, accessories, and clothing.” However, it’s even more than that, as one will also find jewelry, seasonal items, books, shoes, and more beyond the inviting entrance.

There are also creative crafting products by Iron Orchid Designs (IOD) to help one transform ordinary pieces



into extraordinary works of art. The products include molds, transfers, paint inlays, stamps, inks and clays, so you can ignite your creative self and create customized furniture, home décor, and personal projects – with easy-to-achieve, professional-looking results. It’s a great way to put your personal stamp on a piece of furniture or home décor and feel a sense of accomplishment when you finish.

The inviting store draws its share of out-of-towners and residents near and far. After all, it’s hard not to love exploring the items that are displayed behind glass, atop counters, on the walls, and on clothing racks. The friendly atmosphere makes the shopping experience all the better.



A Spring Outdoor Market, on location, is planned for Saturday, March 21, starting at 9 a.m. Regular store hours are Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 10 to 5 p.m. Closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Spring is a great time to find a new find or two – right in downtown Cape Coral.

White Cottage & Company, 909 Miramar St., Cape Coral, FL 33904, www.whitecottageandco.com, (239) 257-1541.

A Merge Of Creativity

By Ann Marie O'Phelan

Heike Wilms, the General Manager of Hairt in Cape Coral, describes the mix of an art gallery and hair salon as an inviting atmosphere, no matter why you stop in. The salon offers the best in haircuts, personalized colors, and high-end extensions by an international team of experts. The walls are full of original art, many created by local artists. The result is a chance to look great while viewing fabulous art pieces that keep the setting refreshing.

It’s unlike what most salons offer; however, for Wilms, it’s



what she knows well. Her love of art started 45 years ago when she lived in Germany. She started collecting pieces at 20 years old, when she first spotted a work of art that, at \$2,000, was unaffordable. After asking the artist if she could make payments to buy the piece, and upon which he agreed, the piece eventually became hers, and she still owns it to this day.

“It still hangs in my home,” said Wilms.

In addition to offering fantastic hair salon services, her quest with Hairt is to encourage art lovers to purchase handmade artwork as a unique decorative piece rather than another multiple print that hangs on so many walls.

“Original artwork is created from the heart,” explains Wilms, who carefully selected the 18 artists who are shown on the walls of her salon. While the pieces can run into the thousands, many are rather affordable and start at \$80. The pieces can be taken down from the walls and purchased at the salon. Plus, there are choices that are not hanging on the walls, as each artist has a bin with more to consider.



Also, speaking of originals, Hairt is also a place where people can get together, mingle, enjoy art, and feel “happy,” as Wilms mentions, thanks to regular public events.

One upcoming event, “Sax & Art,” is on Monday, March 23, from 4 to 7 p.m. Michael Yapello will perform jazz favorites, while guests mingle about and enjoy the festive atmosphere, tasty appetizers, and refreshing drinks.

When one leaves the premises, “They’ll no doubt leave with a smile on their face,” added Wilms.

Hours of operation: closed Mondays (except for special requests), Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Hairt, 3201 Del Prado Blvd., S., Suite 110, Cape Coral, FL, 33904, www.hairt.net, (239) 360-8162.



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RDMSlider LLC dba Two Maids Cleaning of Cape Coral, Cleaning Service, 1490 NE Pine Island Road, Bldg. 7, Unit D, Cape Coral, FL 33909, www.myfaithgeneration.com, (239) 243-9402.



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Guiding Grace Family Support Network, Nonprofit Organization, 907 SE 5th Avenue Cape Coral, FL 33990, www.GuidingGraceNetwork.org, (239) 242-7238.



Fibrenew Cape Coral, Leather/Plastic/Vinyl Restoration, www.fibrenew.com/capecoral, (239) 492-6777.



Faith Generation Church, Churches/House Of Worship, Hosted at Heritage Charter Academy, 2119 Santa Barbara Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33991, www.myfaithgeneration.com, (239) 687-3161.



Escondido Lounge & Oise Ushi, Restaurant, 1019 Cape Coral Parkway E, Cape Coral, FL 33904, www.escondidolounge.com, www.oiseristorante.com, (239) 898-7410.



Optimal Wellness, Medical Spa, 885 SE 47th Ter., Unit C, Cape Coral, FL 33904, (239) 471-7688.



Friends Of The Cape Coral Library

General Meeting – Saturday, March 21

The Friends of the Cape Coral Library invite the public to their next General Meeting on Saturday, March 21, held in the library's large meeting room at 921 SW 39th Terrace. The morning begins at 9:30 a.m. with light refreshments, followed by a business meeting at 10 a.m. and a featured presentation.

The program will highlight the Brotherhood of Heroes, a nonprofit museum and resource center located on Del Prado Boulevard South in Cape Coral. The organization honors First Responders and Military Service Personnel through exhibits that explore pivotal moments in American history. The Brotherhood of Heroes Resource Center also supports both active-duty and retired service members and first responders through community outreach and educational programming.



Friends of the Cape Coral Library General Meetings are free and open to the public, and guests are welcome. For more information, visit www.capefriends.org or follow the organization on Facebook.

Library Art Gallery Exhibit – Photography, Small Paintings And 3-D Miniature Scenes March 5 Through April 29

The Cape Coral Library's art gallery continues its rotating exhibition program designed to showcase local artists and artisans. Sponsored by the Friends of the Cape Coral Library, these exhibits provide a public venue for artists to display their work without commission fees. The gallery is open during regular library hours.

The current exhibition features photography by Carmen Sprague, her students from the Cape Coral Art League, and other members of the organization. Participating photographers include Tom Whiting, John McCuen, Linda Kruleski, Carmen Howard and Louise Rhode. The Cape Coral Art League, located on Cultural Park Boulevard, promotes visual arts education and community engagement through classes, workshops and exhibitions.

The gallery's illuminated display cases feature small-scale original paintings by award-winning artist Judith MacLaren. Working primarily in acrylic and watercolor, MacLaren's collection includes a diverse range of subjects reflecting decades of artistic experience and teaching throughout Southwest Florida.

Also on display are intricate 3-dimensional miniature scenes



Sorcerer's Lair detail



Sorcerer's Lair Scene by Greg and Maui Okon



Preening, Photographer Carmen Sprague



Hummingbird, Digital Print Painting by Tom Whiting



Photograph by John McCuen



Painting by Judith MacLaren



Burrowing Owl, Good Day in the Cape, Photographer Linda Kruleski



Bougainvillea, Mykonos Greece, Photographer Carmen Howard

created by Greg and Maui Okon, longtime Cape Coral residents. Their handcrafted miniature environments range from cozy beach settings to imaginative fantasy spaces, each carefully detailed to create an immersive visual experience.

Many pieces in the exhibition are available for purchase, with arrangements made directly through the individual artists. For information about library exhibits, contact Art Gallery Chairperson Monica Rahman at galleries@capefriends.org or visit www.capefriends.org.

Spring Book Sale Fundraiser – Open To The Public, April 17 And 18

The Friends of the Cape Coral Library will host their Spring Book Sale in the library's meeting room at 921 SW 39th Terrace. The sale will be open to the public, Friday, April 17, and Saturday, April 18, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. both days.

A special Members-Only Preview Sale will be held Thursday, April 16, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Non-members may join the Friends at the door with an annual membership of \$20 per family.

This popular semiannual fundraiser features thousands of gently used books organized by category. Shoppers will find adult fiction, children's and teen selections, nonfiction



Bird's Eye View, Photographer Louise Rhode

sorted by subject, music CDs and DVDs. Most items are priced at \$1 or \$2, with small paperbacks available for less than \$1. A curated selection of specialty items, including Florida-themed titles, autographed books and collectibles, will also be available at modest prices.

Proceeds from the sale support programs and services at the Cape Coral Public Library branch.

Payment is accepted by cash or personal check only. Credit cards are not accepted.

Donations of gently used books, CDs and DVDs are



Tiny book shopper with her dad



Books will be organized and ready for the sale.

accepted year-round. To arrange a donation, call the Friends' message line at (239) 349-2572 and leave a contact number. Additional details are available at www.capefriends.org.

Children's Environmental Art Contest – 20th Annual "Coloring The Earth" Program Theme: Protect Our Florida Black Bears

The Friends of the Cape Coral Library and the Cape Coral-Lee County Public Library invite children ages 5 through 12 to participate in the 20th Annual Children's Environmental Art Contest. The 2026 theme encourages young artists to explore ways to protect Florida black bears from habitat loss and other threats.

Participants are asked to create an original drawing or painting illustrating conservation ideas. Awards will be presented in four age categories.

Entry forms and contest details are available on the Friends of the Cape Coral Library website and in the Youth Services area of the library, where a designated submission box is located. The deadline for entries is noon on Saturday, May 2, 2026.

Questions about the contest may be directed to Art Contest Chairperson Alessia Leathers at alessialeathers@yahoo.com.

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First Day of Spring!
Friday, March 20th

Spring Into Action: Ways To Support The Cape Coral Animal Shelter

Beginning Puppy Training Classes

Give your pup a great start with six-week Beginning Puppy Training Classes designed to build confidence, teach basic manners, and strengthen the bond between dogs and their owners. Sessions are led by Kris Barnes, CCAS Shelter Manager and Certified Dog Trainer, in a supportive small-group setting.

Classes run March 28 through May 10, with no sessions April 4 or 5. Saturday offerings include large-breed older puppies ages 6 to 15 months from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.,



followed by large-breed younger puppies under 6 months from 10 to 11 a.m. Sunday classes are for small-breed puppies up to 15 months from 9 to 10 a.m. Visit the shelter's website www.capecoralanimalshelter.com for registration details.

Kitten Season Is Coming – We Need Your Help

Kitten season is approaching, bringing a surge of vulnerable young animals in need of care. Last year alone, 182 kittens entered the shelter, and staff members are preparing for similar or greater numbers this spring.



The shelter is urgently requesting donations of poultry-based wet kitten food, specifically chicken or turkey varieties. These nutrient-rich meals help kittens grow strong, stay healthy, and become adoption-ready. Donations can be shipped directly through the shelter's Amazon and Chewy wishlists, and even one can provides meaningful support.



Amazon



Chewy

Walk, Wiggle, Wag & Run Returns March 21

Continuing its mission to engage the community and support lifesaving care, the Cape Coral Animal Shelter will host its premier family- and pet-friendly fundraiser, Walk, Wiggle, Wag & Run, on Saturday, March 21, in Cape Coral, Florida. The event begins with a timed 5K run at 8 a.m., followed by 5K awards at 9 a.m. and a 1-mile fun walk at 9:30 a.m. Dogs are welcome on standard leashes.



Participants may choose the 1-mile walk around the shelter, the timed 5K, or a virtual 5K. The morning will feature awards, raffles, music, giveaways, and event shirts, with proceeds supporting food, medical care, shelter, and adoption services for homeless and neglected animals. Organizers say the event celebrates compassion, community, and second chances while raising vital funds for pets in need.

A Purr-fect Partnership With Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre And CATS



The shelter has partnered with Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre for its upcoming production of *CATS*, creating a unique blend of theatre and animal advocacy. Some adoptable cats will be named after characters from the show, and shelter staff and feline ambassadors will attend a special dress rehearsal to meet the cast.

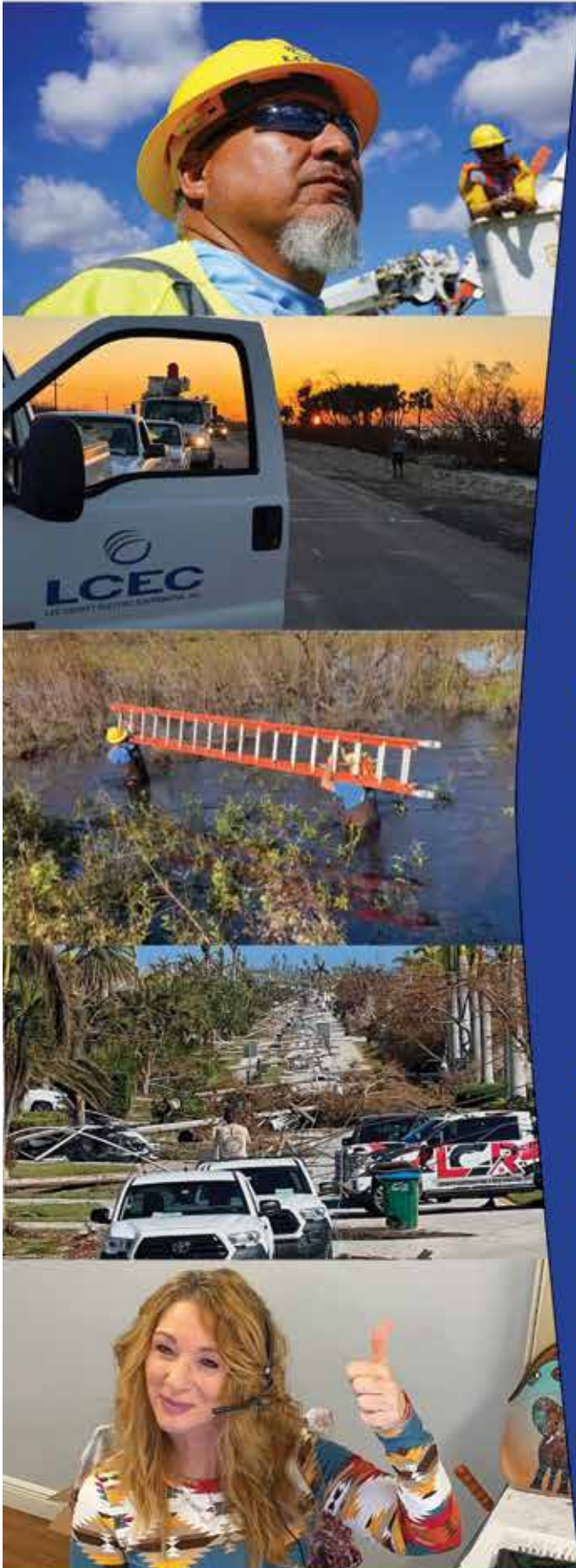
The production opened on Feb. 20 and runs through April 4.

Supporters can also purchase a symbolic "PAW" for \$5, with each donation helping provide care for homeless cats and being displayed at the shelter. Scan QR code to donate.



Through training, community support, and creative partnerships, the Cape Coral Animal Shelter continues to give animals a safe start and a hopeful future. The mission of the Cape Coral Animal Shelter is to engage a special bond between people and animals by means of adoption services, medical care, education, and training for the prevention of cruelty and abandonment. The shelter provides a safe place where animals remain in its care until they are placed in qualified, forever homes.

Cape Coral Animal Shelter, 325 SW 2nd Ave., Cape Coral, FL 33991, (239) 573-2002, www.capecoralanimalshelter.com.



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The plan

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

Preparation is key

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

When the lights are out, we are on!

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

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

HOW LCEC RESTORES POWER

Safety is the priority

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

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



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



STEP 1. DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

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



STEP 2. CRITICAL REPAIRS

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



STEP 3. QUICKLY & SAFELY

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



STEP 4. REMAINING OUTAGES

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

www.lcec.net



Hormone Replacement Therapy: The Science-Backed Path To Better Living

How Modern HRT Is Helping Men And Women Thrive At Every Stage Of Life

By Kristin Gustin, APRN,
Functional Medicine Provider

For decades, hormone replacement therapy (HRT) has been one of the most misunderstood tools in modern medicine. Once surrounded by fear and outdated warnings, HRT is now experiencing a powerful resurgence – driven by improved formulations, better research, and personalized medical oversight.



At Thrive by K, hormone optimization is not about chasing youth – it's about restoring balance, protecting long-term health, and dramatically improving quality of life. And the data strongly supports it.

The Hormone Decline No One Warns You About

Beginning as early as the mid-30s, hormone levels begin to shift. By the time women reach perimenopause and menopause – and men experience andropause – declining hormones can affect nearly every system in the body.

Common symptoms include:

- Chronic fatigue
- Weight gain resistant to diet and exercise
- Hot flashes and night sweats
- Brain fog and memory changes
- Anxiety, depression, or irritability
- Decreased libido and sexual dysfunction
- Loss of muscle mass and bone density
- Sleep disruption

According to national data, over 80% of women experience menopausal symptoms, and nearly 40% describe them as moderate to severe, significantly interfering with daily life and productivity. Meanwhile, studies show that up to 50% of men over age 50 have clinically low testosterone – yet the majority remain untreated.

What Is Hormone Replacement Therapy – Today?

Modern HRT is vastly different from the hormone therapies of the past.

At Thrive by K, hormone replacement therapy is:

- Personalized, based on comprehensive lab testing
- Bioidentical, meaning hormones are molecularly identical to those the body naturally produces
- Medically supervised, with ongoing monitoring and dose adjustments
- Goal-driven, focused on symptom relief, disease prevention, and longevity

There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Two patients the same age can require completely different hormone strategies. That's why individualized medicine matters.

The Statistics Speak Loudly-Menopause Symptom Relief

Clinical studies consistently show that estrogen therapy reduces:

- Hot flashes and night sweats by 75 to 90%
- Sleep disturbances by 60 to 80%
- Vaginal dryness and painful intercourse by over 70%

Within weeks, many patients say they're sleeping through the night for the first time in years, that alone can be life changing.

Bone Health And Fracture Prevention

After menopause, women lose up to 20% of their bone density within 5 to 7 years.

Large population studies show that hormone therapy:

- Reduces hip and spinal fracture risk by 30 to 50%
- Prevents osteoporosis more effectively than calcium or vitamin D alone
- Preserves bone strength when started early and continued appropriately

We don't just think about how patients feel today, we think about how they'll move, live, and age 10 or 20 years from now.

Heart And Metabolic Benefits

When initiated within 10 years of menopause, HRT has been shown to:

- Improve HDL (“good”) cholesterol
- Reduce LDL (“bad”) cholesterol
- Improve insulin sensitivity
- Lower the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by up to 30%

Hormone optimization is preventative medicine, it's about protecting the heart, the brain, and the metabolic system – not just symptom control.

Brain Health And Cognitive Function

Emerging research reveals that estrogen plays a critical role in brain metabolism.

Women who begin hormone therapy during perimenopause or early menopause show:

- Better memory retention
- Improved focus and mental clarity
- Lower long-term risk of cognitive decline

Patients often say, “I finally feel like myself again,” that mental clarity is not imagined – it's physiological.

Mood, Energy, And Quality Of Life

Hormones directly influence neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine. Balanced hormones are associated with:

- Reduced anxiety and depressive symptoms
- Improved motivation and drive
- Better sleep quality
- Increased resilience to stress

Testosterone has been unfairly villainized, when dosed appropriately and monitored closely, it can dramatically

improve quality of life without increasing health risks.

Testosterone Therapy: Not Just for Men

At Thrive by K, hormone therapy isn't limited to women. Testosterone optimization – when medically indicated – has been shown to:

- Increase lean muscle mass
- Reduce visceral fat
- Improve libido and sexual performance
- Enhance mood and confidence
- Support bone density in both men and women

Contrary to outdated myths, properly dosed testosterone does not increase cancer risk when monitored appropriately and may reduce overall mortality.

Addressing the Safety Concerns – With Facts

The fear surrounding hormone therapy largely stems from early studies that used:

- Synthetic hormones
- High oral doses

Hormone Replacement Therapy on page 27

Real Stories From Thrive By K

“I thought feeling exhausted was just part of getting older. I was dealing with constant fatigue, weight gain, and brain fog. My labs were always called ‘normal,’ but I didn't feel normal. After starting hormone therapy at Thrive by K, my energy returned, my sleep improved, and I finally felt like myself again.” ~ Female, 52

“This wasn't about vanity — it was about my health. The night sweats, anxiety, and insomnia were affecting every part of my life. Within weeks of treatment, I was sleeping through the night and waking up clear-headed. I only wish I had started sooner.” ~ Female, 48

“I didn't realize how much hormones affected men. I thought feeling tired and unmotivated was just aging. Testosterone therapy changed that completely. I'm stronger, leaner, mentally sharper, and more confident than I've been in years.” ~ Male, 55

“They actually listened. What stood out most was how thorough and personal the care was. Thrive by K took the time to explain my labs, my symptoms, and my options. I finally felt heard — and that made all the difference.” ~ Female, early 50s

“This is preventative care, not a quick fix. Knowing hormone therapy could protect my bones, heart, and long-term health gave me peace of mind. This felt like an investment in my future.” ~ Female, 60

Cape Coral Re:MADE



Cape Coral re:MADE Announces Two Creative Fundraisers For March 21.

The community is invited to take part in a day of creativity, connection, and conservation. From 12 to 2 p.m. at the South Cape Community Center, 4544 Coronado Pkwy. Guests can register for one of four engaging classes, including a denim bracelet, earrings or necklace workshop, paint a flamingo tote, paper flower bouquet design, or recycled planter class. Space is limited, early registration is encouraged. For a more flexible option with no reservations needed. The Make & Take Class area will include: cork trivets, handmade earrings, propagation stations crafted from cigar tubes, decoupage shells, and watercolor mini paintings. All skill levels are welcome for a fun, creative afternoon.

In the evening, the celebration continues with the A Bird's Eye View – OWL Edition 2026 Fundraising from 5 to 7 p.m. at BARunch. Local businesses and artists have created owl art pieces which will be auctioned to support the organization's mission. All owls will be on display at Cape Coral re:MADE located at 1327 Cape Coral Pkwy., E., from March 12 to 20 for community voting and silent auction.

Proceeds will benefit local makers and sustainability initiatives. Cape Coral re:MADE is a 501(c)(3) “Creating Purpose through repurposing.” The community is encouraged to attend, participate, and help turn creativity into positive change for this 100% volunteer run organization.

Volunteer Spotlight: Karen Lindeman

Cape Coral re:MADE is proud to shine the spotlight on one of our most kindhearted and creative volunteers, Karen Lindeman. Anyone who has spent time in the store knows Karen by her warm smile, contagious laughter, and the hugs she so generously shares. Her presence alone brightens the space.

Originally from Wisconsin, Karen and her family answered the call of paradise and moved to Cape Coral in 2020. She is a devoted mom to her son, Paul, who is married

to Adina, and a proud grandmother to Sam and Soleyah. Seeking community and connection, a friend introduced Karen to Cape Coral re:MADE, and she has been volunteering faithfully since December 2024.

Karen is a true maker at heart, working across many creative mediums. During her volunteer hours, she can often be found painting furniture, bringing new life to repurposed pieces, or helping create engaging in-store projects. As we've gotten to know her talents, we've discovered she is also an accomplished quilter who enjoys sewing and bead making. She created the birthday balloon from donated fabric! One of her most unique and recent creative ventures is fabric postcards – beautiful, handcrafted pieces that can actually be mailed.

Karen shares that Cape Coral re:MADE has impacted her life by making her feel supported, valued, and loved. We are incredibly grateful for Karen's time, creativity, and joyful spirit. Thank you, Karen, for all you do and for bringing so much heart to the Cape Coral re:MADE community.



Mike and Kim Singletary Promote Bravenly Products During Local Meet-and-Greet

Football fans recently had the opportunity to meet NFL Hall of Famer Mike Singletary and his wife, Kim, during a special event where the couple promoted Bravenly health and wellness products while connecting with local supporters.



Singletary, one of the most iconic players in the history of the Chicago Bears, greeted fans throughout the evening, posing for photos and sharing stories from his legendary football career. Known for his leadership on the field and his role on the Bears' famed 1985 Super Bowl championship team, Singletary remains a beloved figure among football fans.

During the event, Mike and Kim spoke about their involvement with Bravenly and their passion for helping others pursue healthier lifestyles. The couple took time to talk with attendees about the products, answer questions, and share their enthusiasm for the company's mission and community-focused approach.

The event also welcomed authors Chet and Tom Ballard, who attended in support of the Singletarys. The Ballard brothers recently released their book, *SIDELINES: Four Decades of Sundays with*



Hall of Fame Chicago Bears' linebacker Mike Singletary with Sidelines authors Tom and Chet Ballard at their Feb. 22 signing event at Walk-On's Sport Bistreaux

"Da Bears," which highlights their more than 40 years working on the sidelines with the Bears organization as stadium concierges and members of the security staff.

Their book provides a behind-the-scenes look at game days, offering stories and observations from decades spent just steps away from the action.

Throughout the day, attendees enjoyed meeting the Singletarys, learning more about Bravenly's wellness products, and connecting with fellow fans who share a love for Bears football and the community built around it. The relaxed atmosphere allowed fans to mingle, take photos, and enjoy a memorable evening with one of football's most respected figures.



Hormone Replacement Therapy from page 26

- Poor patient selection
- Little individualization

Modern bioidentical hormone therapy has a vastly different risk profile.

Key findings include:

- No increased breast cancer risk when estrogen is used appropriately and paired correctly
- Lower clot risk with non-oral delivery methods
- Improved safety when therapy is started earlier rather than later

Medical societies now agree: for healthy patients, the benefits of HRT outweigh the risks when properly prescribed and monitored.

Why Thrive by K Is Different

At Thrive by K, hormone therapy is never "cookie-cutter."

Patients receive:

- Comprehensive hormone and metabolic testing
- Individualized treatment plans
- Ongoing monitoring and optimization
- Education and empowerment around long-term health
- Options including bioidentical hormones and advanced delivery methods

The goal is not just symptom relief – but sustained vitality, disease prevention, and confidence in your body again.

The Bottom Line

Hormone replacement therapy is no longer about controversy – it's about clarity, data, and individualized care.

For millions of people, HRT represents:

- Better health
- Better energy
- Better mental clarity
- Better aging

And at Thrive by K, it represents a commitment to helping patients truly thrive, not just get by.

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



Yasaira Rodriguez, MD

Kate Wagner, OD

Nina Burt, OD

New In-Office Surgical Suite for Cataract and Eyelid Surgery

Now offering cataract and eyelid surgery in our brand-new, state-of-the-art surgical suite—right in our office! Enjoy maximum safety and convenience.

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See Patient Stories

Nine Things That Should Be On Your Florida Bucket List

One day, you and everyone you know will kick the bucket, so why not start building your bucket list?

And the best part is that Floridians do not even have to leave the state to experience life-changing, impressive, and memorable experiences. Well, maybe they'll have to venture miles into the waters, but it's worth it.

Here's what Florida residents (or some out-of-state fans) can add to their bucket list for 2026.

Eat Key Lime Pie In The Key West

Starting strong, you can't have a Florida-themed bucket list without eating the state's most iconic dessert.



Enjoy some Key lime pie in its natural habitat: Key West. There is even a walking tour for those unsure of the best place to get a slice of pie.

Bonus points if you also grab stone crab claws while they're in season, which is Oct. 15 through May 1.

Swim With Manatees In Crystal River

Most, if not all, Floridians already know it is illegal to touch a manatee. Violating this law can result in fines of up to \$500 and even jail time.



But you can certainly still swim with them! Crystal River is one of only a few places in the world where you can experience swimming with manatees in their own natural environment.

According to its website, in-water guides help participants snorkel alongside these beloved gentle creatures with the utmost care and respect.

Manatee season runs from Nov. 15 to March 31, with several tours and experiences to meet manatees in Crystal River happening year-round. However you decide to hang with manatees, it's sure to change your life.

Take A Scenic Drive Along 30A

For those looking for a tranquil, picturesque experience to add to their bucket list, venture up to Florida's panhandle to go on a drive along 30A.



30A is a 24-mile stretch of Florida's Gulf Coast in South Walton County, which includes several charming beach towns between Panama City Beach and Destin. Get a slice of Europe with Rosemary Beach, check out where *The Truman Show* was filmed in Seaside, and chill out in Grayton Beach.

Take An Airboat Ride In The Everglades

After your relaxing drive along 30A, why not up the ante with an airboat ride? And not just any airboat – we're talking a ride in the Everglades.

Everglades National Park protects the southern 20% of the original Everglades in Florida. It is home to more than 2,000 species, including alligators, crocodiles, the Florida panther, and, unfortunately, the invasive Burmese python.



The National Park Service website offers several park tours, including airboat rides.

Search For Shells On Sanibel Island

There's nothing like a warm, sunny day on the beach and spotting a perfect seashell to nab for a little souvenir. And there is no better place to see your desired shell than at the "Seashell Capital of the World."



Southwest Florida's Sanibel Island is home to more than 250 species of shells, littering its roughly 15 miles of sandy beaches with millions of treasures ranging in size and color.

Thousands travel to the island every year, armed with buckets and sifters in hope of scoring more shells for their growing collection.

Attend A Show At Art Basel

Experience great artwork and possibly meet some stars.



Art Basel is a global art fair founded in Switzerland in 1970, with numerous satellite fairs in cities such as Miami. According to its own description, its galleries and exhibits feature "significant works by masters of modern and contemporary art, as well as the new generation of emerging stars."

And while it does attract the rich and famous every year, anyone can go to experience the incredible art. Miami's fair usually takes place in early December every year. Tickets for next year's fair will go on sale sometime in 2026.

Visit Cassadaga

Roughly 50 miles away from Orlando, one small town is known for having many psychics and mediums, some who even claim they can communicate with the dead.

Over 130 years ago, a medium from New York took the advice of his spirit guides and founded Cassadaga, the south's largest spiritual community and the self-proclaimed Psychic Capital of the World.

Whatever your beliefs, visitors are welcome and encouraged to attend workshops and seminars, visit the bookstore, and take walking tours, including one on the history of Cassadaga and an "Encounter the Spirits" night tour.



Dry Tortugas National Park

Another national park to add to the bucket list, Floridians who have yet to experience Dry Tortugas National Park should definitely add it.



While the national park ranks among America's least visited national parks, the remote park in the Gulf of America, formerly the Gulf of Mexico, boasts crystalline waters teeming with vibrant marine life amid protected coral reefs. It spans 100 square miles, 99% of which is water. It is 70 miles away from Key West.

Entry costs \$15 for visitors aged 16 and up and is free for any kids younger than that.

It is a journey to reach it; it's only accessible by boat or seaplane, neither of which is cheap. Day trips on the ferry cost \$200, while half-day seaplane excursions cost \$451 for travelers over age 12.

And Finally For The Theme Park Junkies: Do The 4 Park-1 Day Challenge

We had to include something for the Floridian theme park fanatics.



For visitors who dare throw caution and pixie dust to the wind, there's the "4 Parks in 1 Day" challenge, where you hit Magic Kingdom, Animal Kingdom, Epcot, and Hollywood Studios all in one day. There's no ceremony or prize, except the knowledge that you succeeded and have the pictures to prove it.

According to *USA Today*, there are unofficial rules for completing the challenge: At each of Walt Disney World's four parks, all participants must ride at least one ride, eat at least one snack, and take pictures at an iconic photo spot.

Tickets to any of Disney's theme parks start at \$119; however, prices vary by season and day of the week. They offer multiday ticket packages and discounts for Florida residents, military members, and vacation club members.

FLORIDA'S PREMIER DINNER THEATRE
BROADWAYPALM

MAIN THEATRE
FEB 20 - APR 4

CATS

This Andrew Lloyd Webber, record-breaking musical is a dazzling spectacle of music, dance, and fantasy. Featuring the iconic *Memory*, *CATS* is a breathtaking celebration of life.

OFF BROADWAY PALM
FEB 27 - APR 11

LOVE, LIES, and the LOTTERY

Secrets, surprises, and laughs unfold when a winning lottery ticket goes missing. Pandemonium erupts with mistaken identities, romantic entanglements, and outrageous twists.

CONCERT

TOBY

MAR 9 - 10

CONCERT

DECEMBER '63

MAR 29 - 30

The Musical

Pinkalicious

Pinkalicious can't stop eating pink cupcakes which lands her in the doctor's office with Pinkittitis, which turns her pink from head to toe!

CHILDREN'S THEATRE
MAR 3 - APR 2

1380 Colonial Boulevard, Fort Myers
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Heal To Connect Celebrated Official Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

By Daniela Duran Cintra, PMHNP-BC

Heal to Connect, an Integrative Psychiatric & Behavioral Health Office that has proudly been serving the Cape Coral Community, is pleased to announce that they officially celebrated their ribbon cutting ceremony on Wednesday, March 5 at their newly remodeled location at 836 Lafayette St.

While our doors have already been open and we have been honored to support families throughout Southwest Florida, this ceremony marks an important milestone in our continued growth and commitment to the community we serve.

Heal to Connect was founded with a mission to provide compassionate, evidence-based, and integrative psychiatric care for children, adolescents, and adults. We specialize in comprehensive psychiatric evaluations, neurodevelopmental assessments including autism and ADHD, medication management, and coordinated care alongside therapy, ABA, occupational, speech, and other supportive services.

This ribbon cutting ceremony is our opportunity

to formally celebrate with our patients, families, community members, healthcare providers, educators, and local partners who have trusted and supported us since the beginning.

Guests enjoyed a formal ribbon cutting presentation, office tours, light refreshments, and an opportunity to meet our team and connect with others in the community.

We are deeply grateful for the trust our patients and families have placed in us, and we remain committed to serving Cape Coral with integrity, warmth, and clinical excellence.

At Heal to Connect, we believe healing happens through connection – and we look forward to continuing to connect with you

HEAL TO CONNECT

Heal to Connect
836 Lafayette St., Unit 2
Cape Coral, FL 33904
(239) 284-5604
www.healtoconnect.com

Catch The Action

March On The Water

By Capt. Bill Russell

With record cold weather over the past couple months behind us we can look forward to warmer days. With luck, March will kick the pattern as we exit winter and move into spring. Spring fishing is looked upon as some of the best of the year with a wide variety of species willing to bend a rod. As days get longer and warmer, the water temperature rises. Schooling baitfish returns after seeking warmer weather over the winter. This is a combination that rings the dinner bell for fish along our coastal waters southwest Florida and Cape Coral.

The winter sheepsheads run will come to a close over the month. As they complete their spawning duties, they disperse to who knows where. There's still a good chance to hook big ones around inshore structure and nearshore reefs, especially early in the month. Inshore, catching



pompano is a possibility when fishing with shrimp or small pompano jigs.

Spanish mackerel are a fun target as they are ferocious feeders, fast, and great fighters. Prepared fresh, they offer

excellent table fare that's often overlooked. For me, they are the perfect fish when looking for fun and action. When mackerels are present, odds are good that sharks are nearby; sharks love snacking on mackerels.

This month kicks off snook fishing along our coastal waters. Water temperature is critical for snook, too cold and they are often dormant. As the water rises to 70 degrees or above and holds, we can look for snook to become active, on the move, and hungry. Like many of our gamefish, as the water warms their primary diet becomes oily baitfish. Many snook spend the winter months in the protection of the Cape Coral canals that offer protection from the cold. As we move into spring, snook begin exiting the canals and set up ambush points around canal mouths, shorelines, island points, and structure throughout the Caloosahatchee River and to the west. Snook can have a big appetite this month and eat a variety of baits. Snook season is open for the next two months through April.

With the arrival of baitfish and warming water, big trout become common catches. Many of our largest sea trout of the year are caught this month. Trout are in their first and largest spawn cycle of the year, look for the bigger fish to get aggressive and hungry. Look for them over clear grass flats, sand bar edges, and off oyster bars.

Good redfish numbers were reported towards the end of February and should get better this month.

Following months of daytime low tides and often not much water to navigate, our first spring high tides begin. Higher tides allow for good opportunities to target redfish along mangrove shorelines and over oyster bars. Early morning low tides also allow anglers a great opportunity at tailing redfish over the shallow flats. Good redfish numbers were reported towards the end of February and should get better this month.

Offshore, on days the weather allows there are good opportunities for a variety of fish including reef dwellers like snapper, grouper, grunts, porgies, sheepsheads, and others. Schools of fast-moving Spanish and king mackerel, plus false albacore, or bonito and even some blackfin tuna are making their way up the coast and busting up any schooling baitfish they encounter. Keep an eye out for tripletail around buoys or floating debris and don't be surprised if a big cobia makes his presence around your boat while bottom fishing. Fishing around one of the many public artificial reefs is always a good choice for a variety of fish.

Early season tarpon begin to show off the beaches, to the southern part of our region slowly making their way up the coast. Tarpon hook-ups are possible inshore as the waters warm over the month.

March is a month where anything is possible, and you should always expect the unexpected. We generally have some cool and windy days, but they will be offset with great weather as we break into the spring season.

Stay up to date with fishing regulations by visiting www.myfwc.com. Also, upload the Fish Rules app to your phone. It has current regulations and seasons with pictures to help identify fish.

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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How To Identify Florida's Eight Most Common Spiders

Florida's warm, humid climate provides an ideal habitat for many spider species. While most are harmless and help control insect populations, recognizing common spiders can give homeowners peace of mind.

Southern Black Widow

Recognized by a glossy black body and red hourglass marking on the underside of the abdomen. Typically found in dark, undisturbed areas such as sheds, garages, wood piles, and storage spaces. Bite is medically significant and requires immediate medical attention.

Brown Recluse

Light brown with a violin-shaped marking on the back.



Southern Black Widow



Brown Recluse



Spiny Orb-Weaver



Wolf Spider



Common House Spider



Golden Silk Orb-Weaver



Jumping Spider



Cellar Spider

Sudoku Answers

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

Prefers quiet indoor spaces like closets, attics, and storage boxes. Not aggressive but potentially dangerous if bitten.

Common House Spider

Small brown or gray spider that builds irregular webs in corners, basements, and garages. Harmless and beneficial for controlling household insects.

Golden Silk Orb-Weaver

Large spider with yellow and black coloring that spins distinctive golden webs outdoors. Common in gardens, wooded areas, and near water. Harmless to humans.

Spiny Orb-Weaver

Small, colorful spider with spiny projections on its abdomen. Often found in gardens and shrubs. Harmless and helpful for pest control.

Wolf Spider

Large, fast-moving ground hunter with a hairy body and stripe patterns. Found in lawns, gardens, and occasionally indoors. Mostly harmless.

Jumping Spider

Small, compact spider with large forward-facing eyes and quick movements. Common on windowsills, plants, and sunny surfaces. Harmless and beneficial.

Cellar Spider

Thin-bodied spider with extremely long legs, often found in humid indoor areas such as basements, closets, and bathrooms. Harmless and helpful in controlling insects.

Managing Spiders Around Your Home

Avoid direct contact whenever possible. Keep storage areas clean and uncluttered. Seal gaps around doors and windows. Trim vegetation near the home's foundation. Reduce outdoor lighting that attracts insects. Identify species before removing them – many are beneficial.

Florida's diverse environment supports a wide range of wildlife, including spiders that play an important role in the ecosystem. With basic identification knowledge, homeowners can safely coexist with these fascinating creatures.

Epiphany Episcopal Church To Host "Oscar Night" Celebrating 90 Years Of Award-Winning Music

Music lovers and movie fans alike are invited to a glamorous evening of entertainment as Epiphany Episcopal Church presents "Oscar Night," a special tribute celebrating 90 years of iconic Oscar-winning music. The event will take place on March 20 at 6:30 p.m. at the church, located at 2507 Del Prado Blvd. S. in Cape Coral.

The evening will feature the acclaimed Robert Bahr Combo, with Anne Bahr on vocals, performing some of Hollywood's most beloved songs from Academy Award-winning films. The concert will bring decades of memorable movie music to life, offering audiences a nostalgic journey through the timeless melodies that have helped define generations of cinema.

Guests can expect an elegant night filled with music, nostalgia, and celebration. Following the concert, attendees are invited to stay for a festive Oscar Party, where they can enjoy light refreshments and continue the evening in true Hollywood style. Guests are encouraged to dress to impress and embrace the sparkle and glamour of the red-carpet theme.

Tickets for the event are \$30 per person. Those interested in attending can reserve tickets by contacting Lori at (239) 218-7556 or Arlene at (239) 770-4468.

With outstanding live music and a festive atmosphere, Oscar Night promises to be a memorable celebration honoring the unforgettable songs that have shaped movie history.



CAPE CORAL
MUSEUM OF HISTORY

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Cataracts: Commonly Misunderstood

As the most common surgical procedure performed in the United States, cataract removal is surprisingly routine: it's a highly successful outpatient procedure, performed every day of the week, in surgical centers throughout the country. But ironically, cataract surgery is also commonly misunderstood.

"Frequently, I see patients who have heard bits of information from friends or family members, or saw something online that sounded promising," explains Dr. Yasaira Rodriguez, cataract surgeon and Medical Director at Elmquist Eye Group in Fort Myers and Cape Coral. "While first-hand experiences from friends and family are usually accurate, online information about medications or eye exercises that cure cataracts are inaccurate and even harmful."

Myth #1: Cataracts Are Growths In The Eye

A cataract is not a growth on or in the eye. It's a clouding of the eye's natural lens and will affect everyone if they live long enough. This clouding of the lens becomes worse over time, like a window fogging over. If left untreated, the deterioration in vision caused by cataracts will eventually result in total blindness.

Myth #2: Cataract Surgery Is Difficult

Cataract surgery is a simple procedure performed right in our office — no hospital, no fasting, and no IV anesthesia required. You take a light oral sedative, stay awake but relaxed, and are on your way home in about two hours. A small incision is made, often using a laser, the cloudy lens is gently fragmented using ultrasound waves and removed, then a new lens is placed. There is virtually no pain, and most patients resume normal activities within just a few days.



Myth #3: Waiting Is Best

In the past, you might have thought you needed to wait until a cataract was fully clouded or "ripe" before contemplating surgery. This meant a near total loss of vision before undergoing surgery, and a marked decrease in quality of life. "Thirty years ago, cataract surgery was quite invasive, and patients were told to wait for the cataract to ripen, which really meant harden," says Dr. Rodriguez. "At that time, a very hard cataract was easier for a surgeon to remove. Today, however, ultrasound technology allows us to remove much softer cataracts, so there is no need to wait until vision is lost. We are able to give you back clear, bright vision, so you can continue enjoying the hobbies and activities you love."

Does this mean that patients should rush into surgery the minute they've been diagnosed with cataracts? Not necessarily, says Dr. Kate Wagner, optometrist and partner at Elmquist Eye Group. She advises patients to consider surgery when poor vision begins to impact daily life. Dr. Wagner reports that once cataracts are removed and clear lens implants inserted, patients notice significant changes. "They're able to return to the activities they love, but gave up due to decreased vision, poor near vision, and poor depth perception. Most tell me they wished they'd done it sooner," Dr. Wagner says.

Myth #4: Drops Will Eliminate A Cataract

Many holistic and alternative therapies are being used throughout medicine, and eye care is no exception. However, misinformation abounds regarding treatment for cataracts. "Understandably, patients want the least-invasive solution for aging eyes and drops promising to dissolve cataracts sound simple and painless," says Dr. Wagner. "But drops are not an option. Drops don't slow the progression of a cataract, nor do they reverse cloudiness in the lens. For cataracts, the only solution is to remove the cloudy lens surgically and implant a clear lens in its place."

Myth #5: I'll Still Need Glasses After Surgery

Lens implants have made great strides in the last 20 years, and you now have a choice about the vision you'll enjoy after cataract surgery. Traditional monofocal lens implants will usually correct distance vision, but glasses will still be needed for near, and computer work afterwards. Newer multifocal and extended-depth-of-focus implants can restore an even fuller range of vision. "We have extraordinary solutions for cataract patients now, helping patients see like they did at age 45 or 50, often without glasses," says Dr. Rodriguez.

Drs. Rodriguez and Wagner recognize that medical information can sometimes feel confusing, and they understand patients may not even be sure what questions to ask when they see the doctor at their appointment. Their commitment is always to helping you completely and accurately understand your own health care and choices. "Our highest priority is patient education," says Dr. Rodriguez. "It's imperative that you understand our diagnosis, your treatment options, the surgical experience and what to expect post-operatively. The vision we'll help you achieve is what you'll enjoy throughout your life, and we want you to get back to seeing, and doing, the things you love."

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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