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Pets Are Family – Plan For Them During Hurricane Season

By Liz McCauley

Every year as hurricane season approaches, we’re reminded to stock up on supplies, review our evacuation routes, and prepare our homes. But one part of hurricane planning is often overlooked until it’s too late – our pets. Here in Cape Coral, we’ve experienced firsthand how quickly a storm can change everything. If our pets are truly members of our family, they deserve to be part of our emergency plans from the very beginning.

At Cape Coral Animal Shelter, we’ve seen firsthand what happens before, during, and after major storms. One of the most memorable examples was *Hurricane Ian*. As the storm approached, we realized many families who needed to evacuate didn’t have a safe way to transport their pets. We put the word out on social media that anyone needing a dog crate or cat carrier could come to the shelter and pick one up – free of charge. The response was overwhelming. In just three hours, we gave away more than 250 crates and carriers.

After the storm, we heard countless stories from grateful pet owners. Some used them to move pets to higher ground as floodwaters rose. Others needed them to stay in emergency shelters where crates were required. Many told us those crates gave their frightened pets a safe, familiar place during one of the most stressful experiences of their lives.

That experience reinforced something we’ve always believed: preparation saves lives. First and foremost, never leave your pets behind. If emergency officials tell you to evacuate, your pets should be going with you. If it isn’t safe for you, it isn’t safe for them. If you have an indoor/outdoor cat, don’t wait until the day before the storm to bring them inside. Animals often sense severe weather long before we do and may disappear into hiding. Once they’re inside, keep them inside.

Every pet should wear a collar with a current ID tag, but don’t stop there. Microchips reunite families every day, but only if the registration information is current. If you’ve moved, changed phone numbers, or never transferred ownership after adopting your pet, take a few minutes to update your information today.

Keep your pet’s vaccination records and medical history on your phone, in cloud storage, or printed in your emergency kit. Many evacuation shelters, boarding facilities, and hotels require proof of vaccinations before accepting pets.

Speaking of emergency kits, every pet should have one. Pack at least a week’s supply of food and water, medications, bowls, leashes, waste bags, litter and a litter pan for cats, a crate or carrier for each pet, comfort items like a favorite blanket or toy, and recent photos of your pets – including pictures of you together – to help establish ownership if you’re separated.



Another tip many people overlook is getting pets comfortable with their crate before hurricane season. A familiar crate becomes a place of security instead of fear. If your pet becomes extremely anxious during storms, talk with your veterinarian now about options to help keep them calm. Don’t wait until a storm is approaching – your veterinarian may already have evacuated.

After every major storm, animal shelters see an increase in lost, displaced, and injured animals. Our community has always stepped up by fostering pets, donating supplies, volunteering, and helping reunite lost animals with their families. Those acts of kindness make an incredible difference.

At Cape Coral Animal Shelter, we often say that pets are family. Hurricane season gives us the opportunity to prove it. Make a plan today, update those microchip records, pack your pet’s emergency kit, and if evacuation becomes necessary, bring every member of your family with you – including the ones with four paws. Because when the storm has passed, nothing matters more than having your family together.

With more than 20 years of experience in animal welfare and nonprofit leadership, Liz McCauley has dedicated her career to improving the lives of animals and strengthening community support for shelters and rescue organizations. In addition to her work as the executive director of the Cape Coral Animal Shelter & Veterinary Clinic, she serves as President of FAAWO (Florida Association of Animal Welfare Organizations), advocating for collaboration and progress across the state. Liz lives on Pine Island with her husband, Bobby, and their four crazy rescue dogs – Buckey, Oliver, Lucy, and Henry. You can reach Liz at (239) 573-2002, Ext. 100, or at liz@capecoralanimalshelter.com.

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



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Mind Your Money

Beneficiaries: Naming Them Matters More Than You Think

By Alexandra Valdes,
Azzendo Wealth Advisors

When legendary musician Prince passed away in 2016, he left behind an estate worth hundreds of millions of dollars – but no known documentation identifying who to give it to. Years of legal disputes, family disagreements, and costly delays ensued before his assets could ultimately be distributed. While assets with properly designated beneficiaries often bypass probate, without beneficiaries (or with outdated ones) they can become part of a much more complicated process. Prince’s story is a powerful reminder that failing to plan can leave loved ones with unnecessary stress during an already difficult time. While Prince’s situation dealt with a large estate, these challenges are not unique to the wealthy. Every family can face the same challenge.

One of the easiest ways to ensure your investment accounts don’t get stuck in the court system is to have up-to-date beneficiary designations.

The Order Of Beneficiaries

A primary beneficiary is the first person/people in line to inherit the assets in an account. This could be a spouse, child, other family member, friend, trust, or even a charity. You may name multiple primary beneficiaries and specify the percentage each person or organization should receive. For example, you could designate two children to each receive 50% of the account.

A secondary or contingent beneficiary serves as a backup. This person or organization receives the assets only if the primary beneficiaries have passed away or are otherwise unable to inherit the account. Without a contingent beneficiary, assets could end up in probate anyways with additional costs and delays.



AZZENDO
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Naming beneficiaries is not a “set it and forget it” task. Life changes such as marriage, divorce, a child’s birth, or someone’s death should prompt a review of your beneficiary designations. Outdated beneficiaries can unintentionally direct assets to someone you no longer wish to inherit them. Even if a life-changing event hasn’t occurred, if it’s been a while since you last checked this, this is your reminder!

The Types Of Beneficiaries

When naming multiple beneficiaries, you may also be able to designate beneficiaries’ share should be distributed if one of them dies before you. The three most common elections are per stirpes, per capita, or no election.

Per stirpes means “by branch” of the family. If a beneficiary dies before you, that person’s share passes to his/her descendants. For example, if one of your two children dies before you but that deceased child had two children, those two grandchildren would split their deceased parent’s share leaving your other child’s portion unchanged.

Per capita typically means “by the head.” Under this designation the account is divided equally among the beneficiaries who are actually living at the owner’s death. Therefore, if a named beneficiary predeceases the owner, that person’s share is reallocated among all the surviving, named beneficiaries rather than passing down to the deceased beneficiary’s own children. That means under this designation, other primary beneficiaries’ share may be impacted. Keep in mind that some financial institutions have different legal language when it comes to per capita, so it’s important to review this with your custodians where your accounts are held.

With no election, if a beneficiary dies before you, the outcome depends on the account agreement and applicable state law. In some cases, the deceased beneficiary’s share may simply be divided among the surviving beneficiaries. In others, it may pass to your estate if no alternative provisions exist. Because the result can vary, relying on the default rules may produce outcomes you did not intend.

Beneficiary designations are among the easiest tools to protect your assets beyond your passing, yet they are so often overlooked. Taking a few minutes to review and update them can help ensure your investment accounts pass according to your wishes, minimize delays, and provide greater clarity for the people you care about most.

Alexandra Valdes is a wealth advisor focused on helping individuals, families, and business owners confidently navigate financial decisions at every stage of their economic lives. She combines 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 financial journey. Alexandra is also involved with the Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce and is part of the 2025 Leadership class. She serves the community through her involvement in the Kiwanis organization, with a focus on helping children. She is an outdoor enthusiast and loves enjoying the beaches her home state of Florida has to offer. You can reach Alexandra at (305) 648-9814 or alexandra.valdes@azzendo.com.





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No Veteran Left Behind

Breaking Barriers To Health And Independence: A Step Toward Solutions

By Fabian Flores

Imagine losing your ability to drive, access healthcare, or connect with loved ones. For many veterans, these challenges are a harsh reality. In Southwest Florida, thousands of veterans face unique barriers to care, from navigating complex VA systems to dealing with physical and mental health impacts of service.

The struggles they face aren't just personal – they're a public health issue. Social determinants of health like transportation, food security, and housing stability play a huge role in overall well-being. A veteran may have served their country, but now struggles to get to a doctor's appointment, afford groceries, or even install a grab bar at home to prevent a fall.

Community Heroes: Veteran Outreach Program

On Sept. 24, the Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department and Community Bridge of Southwest Florida are hosting a resource fair focused on veterans' needs. This event connects veterans to resources that can make a difference, including:

- Mobility and safety at home, in September
- Memory care and power of mind, in October



- Nutrition and food access, in November
 - Family, friends, and connections, in December
- Why Your Support Matters**
- Veterans have given much to their country. Now, their community can give back. By attending, volunteering, or spreading the word, you can help a veteran:
- Get connected to transportation for medical appointments
 - Fall prevention and home safety modifications to age in place
 - Find nutritious food options
 - Build a social network to combat isolation

- Join The Effort**
- Sept. 24, 4544 Coronado Pkwy., Cape Coral, FL 33904
 - Call: (239) 574-0806 for more information.
- Let's show our veterans they're not alone. Share this event with a veteran who could benefit.
- Fabian Flores is a veteran support specialist in Southwest Florida. He connects veterans with their VA benefits, home care services, and resources that promote a more independent lifestyle. He has facilitated thousands of hours of home care each week for hundreds of veterans in Lee County.*

Ms. Oktoberfest 2026 from page 1

spirit of Gemütlichkeit, and encourage younger generations and new members to become involved with the club. Christine is honored to help preserve its traditions, support its continued growth, and ensure that German-American heritage remains a vibrant part of the Cape Coral community for generations to come.

This year, the event was sponsored by ZAK's Jewelry and JJ Taylor. Ms. Oktoberfest 2026 and each of the runners-up received a gift certificate from ZAK's Jewelry. A GASC Club curated swag bag was also given to each contestant. Judges included invited VIPs and the voting membership of the German American Social Club. Present for the program were local dignitaries, the press, and several of our valued Oktoberfest sponsors, making this an evening of glamour and celebration.

The German American Social Club of Cape Coral is looking forward to another well-attended

41st Oktoberfest, which will be held the last two full weekends of October, the 16, 17, and 18, and the 23, 24, and 25, on the grounds of the GASC property, at 2101 SW Pine Island Rd, Cape Coral, FL.



Photos of the event were provided by Tiffany Noel with Real Tours.

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www.mycapecoralsun.com

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Traci Talks: Real Conversations About Senior Living

What If Senior Living Isn't What You Think It Is?

By Traci Talley,
Heartfelt Senior Solutions
The picture many families carry in their minds is years out of date. One family's experience reveals what has changed.



Before someone ever walks through the doors of a senior living community, they've usually already decided what they're going to find.

For many people, that picture was formed years ago. It may come from visiting a family member in a nursing home, something they've seen on television, or stories they've heard from someone else. Whatever the source, those memories often become the lens through which they view senior living today.

Truthfully, I understand why.

I once carried that same picture in my own mind. Before I spent many years working in senior living, my only experiences were visiting my grandmother – and later my father – in nursing homes. If life hadn't led me into this profession, I would probably still have that same picture in my mind today. That's why I understand why so many families do.

That realization has shaped the way I guide families today.

I was reminded of it again recently while working with a wonderful Southwest Florida family. Their 93-year-old father was beginning to explore senior living for the first time. Like so many older adults, Dick already had a picture in his mind of what senior living would be like. Until he walked through the front doors himself, that picture had never really been challenged.

One of my favorite moments is watching assumptions give way to understanding. Families are often surprised to discover there isn't just one version of senior living. Every community has its own personality, atmosphere, level of care, dining style, amenities, and culture. Some are quiet and intimate. Others are lively and active. Some offer traditional dining times, while others feature flexible, anytime dining. Some are designed for

people who simply want a maintenance-free lifestyle, while others provide additional support as health needs change.

That's why I never begin by recommending a community. I begin by getting to know the person behind the care needs.

Of course, I need to understand their health, mobility, medications, care needs, budget, and what support they may need today – and in the future. But that's only part of the story. I also want to understand who they are. What does a good day look like? What hobbies have they always enjoyed? What routines are important to them? What parts of their current lifestyle do they most want to preserve?

Every person is different.

Every community is different.

The best match happens when the two come together.

That's where having an experienced guide who understands both the person and the communities can make all the difference. Knowing the communities throughout our area allows me to narrow what can feel like an overwhelming number of choices into a thoughtfully selected group that truly fits each person's care needs, personality, lifestyle, location, and budget. Instead of families spending weeks researching, calling, and touring community after community, I can help them focus on the few that genuinely deserve their time and attention.

Without that guidance, families often begin touring communities on their own. Sometimes the very first community they visit reinforces every fear they've carried for years –not because senior living isn't a good option, but because it simply wasn't the right community for their loved one. One tour should never define what today's senior living has to offer. The right decision usually isn't found by touring the most communities. It's found by touring the right communities.

As we toured together, Dick began seeing a very different picture than the one he had carried in his mind. Instead of hospital-like rooms, he found private apartments where residents bring their own furniture, family photographs, treasured keepsakes, and favorite chair to create a place that truly feels like home. Instead of long, quiet hallways, he saw neighbors visiting over lunch, people laughing together, and residents simply enjoying life.

Dick also discovered something else.

Today's senior living doesn't ask everyone to live the same way.

Some residents enjoy staying busy, while others prefer a quieter pace. The difference is that they have a choice. Whether someone enjoys gathering with friends, participating in activities, or simply spending a peaceful afternoon in the comfort of their own beautifully furnished apartment, they decide how they want to spend their day. Support is there when it's needed, but independence remains at the heart of everyday life.

His greatest fear wasn't really about moving. It was about losing the life he loved.

Once he experienced today's senior living through his own eyes instead of relying on an image from years ago, the conversation became very different.

That doesn't mean senior living is the right answer for everyone. Sometimes remaining at home with additional support is the best solution. Sometimes independent living, assisted living, memory care, or skilled nursing is the appropriate next step.

Every family's situation is different, and every person's needs are unique.

Senior living hasn't stood still over the past 20 or 30 years. It continues to evolve as each new generation brings different expectations, interests, and lifestyles. Today's older adults are looking for excellent care, certainly, but they're also looking for independence, dignity, flexibility, connection, and the opportunity to continue living life on their own terms.

My hope is simply this: Don't let a picture from decades ago make today's decision for you. Ask questions. Visit communities. Explore your options before a crisis forces decisions to be made under pressure.

You may discover that what you expected – and what's actually there – are two very different things.

And sometimes, that first conversation is all it takes to begin seeing the next chapter in a whole new light.

Traci Talley is founder and senior placement advisor with Heartfelt Senior Solutions. She helps older adults and their families navigate senior living decisions throughout Southwest Florida, providing personalized guidance and support at no cost to families.

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A Flag, A Park, A Legacy

By Joe Yapello,
Sun Publisher

Shortly after Cape Coral’s new Jaycee Park opened, its splash pad temporarily closed for maintenance. Critics of the renovation seized the moment to justify their initial opposition. When the Kearns Restaurant Group subsequently backed out of the park’s concession deal, an online chorus of “I told you so.” quickly intensified.

For a brief moment, the fierce controversy over removing the park’s Australian pine and American elm trees seemed to fade.

The controversy reignited when 33 southern live oaks were removed for parkway improvements ahead of the upcoming Cape Coral Bridge expansion project. The removal put tree clearing back in the spotlight. For years, the roots of those oaks had severely buckled the brick-paver sidewalks, pushing them up into miniature peaks.

While the tree saga was being played out, a new proposal by City Manager Mike Ilcyszyn to erect a 250-foot flagpole inside the Bernice Braden Park at the foot of the Cape Coral Bridge, to co-inside with the Cape’s Red, White, & Boom celebration, seemed to set off an illegally banned M-80 explosive whose concussion could be felt throughout all four quadrants of the city. Never mind the fact that private donations had been raised to pay for the project – it was the potential monthly taxpayer contributions for its long-term maintenance and upkeep that would ring out the loudest.

The flag flew proudly for just about three weeks before tragedy struck, and the media pounced. A torn fabric seam and a broken eyelet near the top apparently put the entire project in jeopardy. TV reporters rushed to declare the controversial flagpole broken, and the internet erupted with an even louder crescendo of “We tried to tell you, but you wouldn’t listen.”

But the setback was short-lived. In a surprise turnaround to the unexpected few, the manufacturer drove a replacement 300-pound flag all the way back from Texas. Upgraded with reinforced D-rings and stronger webbing, it was proudly raised once again to its rightful place atop Florida’s largest flagpole.

So, what comes next? This question has loomed since the flag was first proposed, and its potential for controversy was clear long before Council approval. I never anticipated that an inspiring addition to our city – and our nation – would cause such deep angst among residents, or that a minority of voices would become the loudest.

But a deeper question keeps coming back to me: What would Bernie Braden think? Few of



today’s residents truly knew her, and fewer still stopped to consider how she would react to this toxic negativity.

I was fortunate to know Bernie Braden well, stretching back to the late 1980s at the *Cape Coral Breeze* office on Del Prado. From my desk behind the main counter, I often watched her lower her glasses and patiently flip through our giant historical binders of current and past editions, sometimes taking notes or asking for a copy of a particular paper she may have missed. Back then, everyone knew Bernie, and everyone knew her fierce, positive devotion to Cape Coral as a city council member and real estate professional.

Thankfully, Gloria Raso Tate is still with us. As one of Bernie’s closest friends and a fierce advocate for Cape Coral in her own right, she holds the definitive answer as to what Bernie would think of this flag controversy.

“I think Bernie would be so pleased to see the park in her honor, and adding the flag would have made her so proud,” Gloria stated. “She was a true patriot American who loved serving her country in the military and then Cape Coral on city council.”

To Gloria, Bernie Braden was both a lifelong friend and a real estate titan and city leader who helped shape our history. “We had been friends since I was a young girl,” Tate recalls. “She later joined our office and the



Gloria Raso Tate

two iconic businesses – Bernie Braden Realty and Raso Realty, Inc. – came together under one roof. Bernie was not one for discord or anger. She would find the good in everything she did and she projected that positive note in her life. Arguing over the flag would have made her so disheartened.”

Lost in much of the current controversy is a wave of impending, positive redevelopment: a brand-new Cape Coral Bridge, a revitalized Bernice Braden Park, and upgraded, safer access to both the Chamber of Commerce Welcome Center and the Slip A Way Food Truck Park & Marina. Adding to this momentum, long-time resident Robert Greco of ACRA Electric Inc. is leading the charge to restore the 55-foot Veterans Memorial Monument – originally erected on Cape Coral Parkway in 1969 to honor our nation’s service members.

And where will this restored monument stand? Right where it belongs: Bernice Braden Park.

Bernice Braden’s legacy continues to cast an overwhelmingly positive light on our city. Soon, we will all have the privilege to stand together and re-dedicate the park named in her honor. The site where a historic 1839 attack during the Second Seminole War drove Col. William S. Harney down the Caloosahatchee River; the site where a brand-new bridge span paved the way for our burgeoning city in 1964; and now, the site where the state’s largest flag is proudly flying to celebrate our nation’s 250th anniversary and to welcome residents and visitors alike as the enter and leave the city.

If you choose to take a different side on this issue, that is your right and privilege. Cape Coral faces an endless horizon of future challenges that will keep us busy arguing and fighting for generations. But for me, dragging our American flag into political division simply does not sit right.

Instead, I would much rather thank our city manager for his vision and service to both our country and to our community. I thank our mayor, city council, business leaders, and every resident who donated their hard-earned money to help “Raise the Flag.”

When the dust settles, I know exactly where I stand. My loyalty lies unapologetically with Gloria and Bernie. Gloria remains an undeniable beacon of pride for our city – and I have no doubt that Bernie would be standing right by her side, shoulder to shoulder, beaming with that exact same pride.

Knowing them both as I do and have, you have my absolute word on that.

Joe Yapello is a results-driven publisher and media executive with nearly four decades of experience helping local businesses navigate their marketing needs in Southwest Florida. Since 2022, Joe and his wife, Bonnie, have served as the owners and publishers of The Cape Coral Sun. Throughout his diverse career, Joe has worked as an independent sales director, publisher, and freelance writer, spanning print, radio, and television media. His extensive corporate background also includes key advertising sales roles with Comcast Spotlight and The Breeze Corporation. Deeply invested in his local community, Joe graduated from the Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral Leadership Class of 2025 and currently serves as the co-chair for the 2026 class. In addition to his leadership roles, he volunteers on the Chamber’s Membership Development Committee and serves as a board member for the Cape Coral Museum of History.



Bernice Braden

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Concur Or Object: Differing Viewpoints From Diverse Attorneys

Hidden In The Paperwork: What Cape Coral Landowners Need To Know

One Checked Box Could Cost Cape Coral Land Sellers Thousands

By Robson D.C. Powers, Esq.

Picture this. You accept an offer on your vacant Cape Coral lot, sign the contract, and begin planning how you'll use the proceeds from the sale. Then, at closing, thousands of dollars are deducted to pay a Utility Expansion Program (UEP) assessment you never expected to owe. After reviewing the contract, you discover that a single checked box made you responsible for paying it.

Cape Coral is unique because many properties are subject to UEP assessments. Depending on the property, those assessments can total \$30,000 or more. Yet many sellers focus almost entirely on the purchase price and overlook the section of the contract that determines who will pay outstanding government assessments. It happens more often than many people realize. There are many sophisticated corporate buyers who are looking to purchase distressed or unwanted properties at a bargain, and heirs who inherit property without ever having lived in Cape Coral are particularly vulnerable to this type of oversight as they may not be aware of these assessments.

In many real estate contracts, responsibility for these assessments is negotiable. The buyer may agree to assume them, the seller may agree to pay them, or the parties may



negotiate another arrangement. The important point is that the decision should be intentional, not accidental. Once a contract is signed, changing that allocation may not be possible.

This is a reminder that every provision in a real estate contract matters. A checked box can affect your bottom line just as much as the purchase price itself. Before signing any contract to sell property in Cape Coral, take the time to read it carefully. Ask questions if something is unclear, and make sure you understand how assessments, closing costs, and other financial obligations have been allocated. A few minutes spent reviewing a contract before signing could save thousands of dollars at closing.

Leave Land, Not A Liability

By Kara B. Rogers, Esq.

I agree with everything Robson has laid out, and I'll add a step that happens long before any contract is signed: What you tell your heirs before they inherit the property at all.

Many of the people caught off guard by a UEP assessment are heirs, not original owners. They inherited a lot in Cape Coral they've never seen, often from a parent or grandparent who bought it decades ago as an investment or a future retirement plan that never happened. The property passes down, but the knowledge doesn't always come with it. Nobody ever sat down and explained what a UEP assessment is, whether one applies to this particular lot, or how much it could cost.



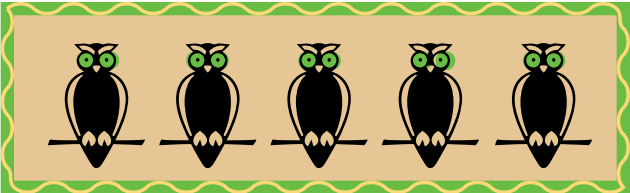
This is a gap that estate planning can close. If you own vacant land in Cape Coral, or anywhere with pending utility or infrastructure assessments, your estate plan should account for it. A letter of instruction, a conversation with your personal representative, or even a line in your trust documents can flag that the property may carry an assessment and tell your heirs how to check on the amount owed before they ever list it for sale. It's even better if you can find out how much you owe in assessments yourself and keep the documentation with your other estate records.

This kind of planning costs very little now and can save your heirs a real headache later. It also protects them from making the kind of accidental decision Robson describes, leaving them between a rock and a hard place when they get to the closing table and find out that what seemed like a fair deal at first glance wasn't at all what they expected.

Good estate planning isn't only about who gets what. It's about making sure your loved ones actually understand what they're getting.

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

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



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Ask Dick Wagner

Straight Answers About Sales, Service, Marketing, And Everyday Buying Decisions

Helping Average Salespeople Become Million-Dollar Producers

By Dick Wagner

Question: Why do so many businesses make it so difficult to get a straight answer?

Answer: Because many businesses have not trained their people to give clear, consistent answers.

Customers shouldn't need a decoder ring to understand what something costs, what happens next, or how long it may take. A professional company should be able to explain its process in plain language.

For consumers, vague answers are worth noticing. "We'll figure it out," "That depends," or "Someone will call you" may sometimes be reasonable, but a steady diet of uncertainty points to poor organization.

For business owners, confusion often means a lost sale. Most customers won't tell you they are confused. They will simply wait, walk away, or choose a company that explains things more clearly.

Clear communication means being honest about what you know, what you still need to determine, and when you'll have an answer for them.

Question: How much should I trust online reviews?

Answer: Enough to pay attention, but not enough to turn off your common sense.

Reviews can reveal patterns. One angry customer may be unreasonable. Pay attention if 10 customers are complaining about missed appointments, poor communication, or unfinished work.



Ask Dick Wagner Coaching

Dick Wagner, Owner
Email: dick@askdickwagner.com
www.askdickwagner.com
Cell: (419) 202-6745

Consumers should look beyond the star rating. Read how the company responds to criticism. A calm, professional response may tell you more than another five-star review saying, "Great job!"

Business owners should remember that reviews are not merely compliments. They are part of the sales process, and prospective customers often read them before making contact.

Don't argue with unhappy customers online. Few things damage trust faster than watching a business turn a complaint into a public brawl.

Always respond professionally, address legitimate concerns, and show readers how your company handles problems.

Question: Why do businesses give me so many choices that I end up choosing nothing?

Answer: Because more options don't always make a decision easier. Sometimes they just make it exhausting.

Customers usually want two or three options, not a long list of packages, upgrades, features, and price levels. They want someone to simply explain the differences and help them make a smart decision.

For consumers, a good salesperson should ask what matters most to you, understand your budget, and narrow the choices to the ones that actually fit. Handing you a stack of options and saying, "Let me know," is not guidance. It is homework.

For business owners, when prospects become unsure, they rarely say no. They usually say, "Let me think about it," and then buy nothing.

A good salesperson makes the decision easier. They recommend the best option, explain why it makes sense,

and point out any trade-offs.

Customers don't need 20 choices. They need enough information to feel confident about choosing the right options.

Dick Wagner is a sales and marketing coach with more than 28 years of real-world business development experience. Through Ask Dick Wagner Coaching, he helps service-based businesses build stronger sales systems, improve follow-up, develop referral partnerships, and turn average salespeople into confident, consistent producers.

His coaching is designed for companies that rely on trust, relationships, local reputation, referrals, and consistent outreach. Dick teaches salespeople and route marketers how to identify better prospects, ask better questions, follow up with purpose, and become valuable resources instead of simply dropping off literature and hoping to be remembered. His practical, field-tested approach helps businesses create better processes, stronger customer relationships, and sustainable growth.

Dick is the past president of the Society of Cleaning and Restoration Technicians and has served in nonprofit leadership and child advocacy roles throughout Florida. In 2010, he launched AskDickWagner.com, which features hundreds of articles on sales, marketing, referral development, route marketing, and business growth. Today, Dick coaches service businesses across the United States and works with clients nationwide. He lives in Southwest Florida with his wife of 38 years.



Florida Fun Fact!

Florida Is Home To The World's Smallest Post Office

This tiny post office, measuring just 8 feet 4 inches by 7 feet 3 inches, was originally a storage shed for irrigation pipes on a tomato farm. After a fire destroyed the original Ochopee post office in 1953, this little shed was repurposed as a replacement and has been serving locals and tourists ever since. It's particularly popular with stamp collectors who go to get one of the famed Ochopee postmarks.

Despite its size, it operates like any other post office, offering mail services to residents in the area, including Miccosukee and Seminole Native American reservations.

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Ola Hawatmeh is an unwavering America First patriot, accomplished business owner, designer, philanthropist, and dedicated conservative activist fiercely committed to President Trump's MAGA agenda. Born in the United States to Christian immigrants from Jordan, who pursued the American Dream through grit and opportunity, Ola embodies the resilience Trump champions - fighting to secure our borders with his border wall and Remain in Mexico policy, ignite economic prosperity through tax cuts and deregulation that drove record-low unemployment before COVID, and dismantle the radical left's assaults on our liberties.

I WILL FIGHT FOR PRESIDENT TRUMP'S AGENDA AND PUT SOUTHWEST FLORIDA FIRST IN EVERY VOTE.

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CD-19 SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Currently a Senior Policy Advisor for the U.S. House of Representatives, and had the privilege to help garner the final vote that helped pass the President's "One Big Beautiful Bill."

"We didn't know if we were going to have every vote, and she's working on the hill with other members, and she actually helped us get the bill across the finish line, so you can thank her for lower taxes, for deregulation, for energy production, all the things that we care about as Americans."

-U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman (R)

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- ★ **Protect District 19 Veterans**
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Real Estate Corner

Six Costs Renters Should Budget For

By Kirstin Moll

Most renters who are preparing to buy their first home know they'll need a down payment and closing costs. They research mortgage payments, compare interest rates, and calculate what they can afford each month.

But that's only part of the picture.

The move from renting to homeownership comes with several expenses that are easy to overlook, and if you don't plan for them, they can add unnecessary stress to an exciting milestone.

The good news? Most of these costs are predictable. With a little planning, you can build them into your budget and avoid last-minute surprises.

Here's what every renter should consider before making the move to homeownership.

1. The Upfront Costs Of Buying A Home

Before you even get the keys, there are several one-time expenses that come with purchasing a home.

Depending on your loan and the property you're buying, those may include:

- Your down payment
- Earnest money deposit
- Home inspection
- Appraisal
- Closing costs

These are the costs most buyers expect because they're discussed throughout the homebuying process. Your lender and real estate agent will help you understand what to expect based on your specific purchase.

2. Don't Forget About Your Lease

One of the biggest budgeting mistakes first-time buyers make has nothing to do with buying a home. It's forgetting about the lease they're leaving behind.

Before you start shopping, take a close look at your lease agreement.

Ask yourself:

- How much notice do I have to give?
- Is there an early termination fee?
- Can I move to a month-to-month lease if needed?
- Will I receive my security deposit back?

Every landlord has different policies, and understanding yours early can help you avoid unexpected costs later.

3. Budget For Moving Expenses

Moving is one of those expenses that's easy to underestimate because it's made up of lots of smaller costs.

Depending on your situation, you may need to budget for:

- Professional movers or a moving truck



- Boxes and packing supplies
- Utility transfers and connection fees
- Cleaning services
- Storage
- Time away from work

Even if you're moving locally, these expenses can add up quickly. Building them into your budget ahead of time can make moving day much less stressful.

4. Your Lease And Closing Date May Not Line Up

Many buyers assume they'll simply move out of their rental and into their new home on the same day.

Sometimes that happens. Sometimes it doesn't.

A closing can be delayed for reasons that are completely outside your control, including appraisal scheduling, underwriting, title work, repairs, or insurance requirements.

If your lease ends before your closing, you may find yourself paying for:

- Month-to-month rent
- A short-term rental
- A storage unit
- Two separate moves

The good news is that there are often ways to minimize these costs.

Some landlords are willing to offer a short-term extension, and in some transactions, buyers and sellers can negotiate a rent-back agreement that gives everyone a little more flexibility. While these options aren't available in every situation, they're worth discussing with your real estate agent early in the process.

5. Plan For The First Few Weeks In Your New Home

Many new homeowners are surprised by how many small purchases happen during the first month.

You may need things like:

- Window coverings
- Paint and supplies
- Lawn equipment
- Basic tools
- New locks
- Cleaning supplies
- Furniture or shelving

None of these purchases may be particularly expensive on their own, but together they can have a noticeable impact on your budget.

6. Leave Yourself A Financial Cushion

One of the best pieces of advice I give buyers is simple: Don't spend every dollar you have at closing.

Owning a home means you're now responsible for repairs and maintenance, and those expenses don't always wait until it's convenient.

Whether it's a water heater, an appliance, or an

unexpected repair, having some money set aside after closing can provide valuable peace of mind as you settle into your new home.

How To Prepare For A Smooth Transition

A little planning goes a long way. Before you buy, make sure you:

- Review your lease and understand your notice requirements.
- Ask your landlord about extension or month-to-month options if your timing changes.
- Budget for moving expenses, not just your down payment.
- Leave room in your budget for the first few weeks of homeownership.
- Keep an emergency cushion after closing whenever possible.
- Work with a lender and real estate agent who understands your timeline and can help you plan ahead.

Buying A Home Should Be Exciting, Not Full Of Surprises

Buying your first home is one of life's biggest milestones, and careful planning can make the experience much smoother.

While most buyers focus on saving for the down payment, it's often the smaller, overlooked expenses that create the biggest headaches. Understanding them ahead of time allows you to make confident decisions and enjoy the transition from renting to homeownership.

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

Median Sale Price: \$369,450 | 2.63% 1Y Change

Price Per Square Feet: 244 | -4% 1Y Change

Average Days on Market: 80 Days. | -9.2 1Y Change

Median Rent: \$2,000/month | -9.09% 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.



Sudoku

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

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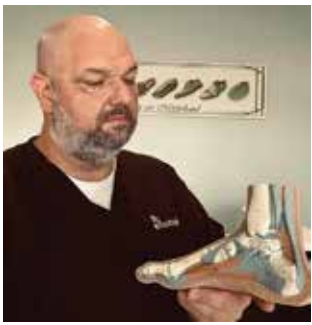
A licensed medical provider will review your responses and discuss your treatment options.

STEP 4

Begin a healthy treatment regimen based on your personalized plan and start thriving.

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 modifica-
tions to improve mobility
and is enrolled*



Today's Topic: Living With Neuropathy: How A Podiatrist Can Help Protect Your Feet

Neuropathy is one of the most common – and most misunderstood – conditions affecting the feet. I see it every day in my practice, especially in patients with diabetes, but also in people with circulation issues, back problems, or long-term nerve damage from other causes. Simply put, neuropathy means the nerves are not doing their job properly. In the feet, that can have serious consequences.

Many patients describe neuropathy as numbness, tingling, burning, or a “pins and needles” sensation. Others feel almost nothing at all. That loss of protective sensation is often the biggest danger. When you can’t feel pain or pressure normally, small problems – like a seam rubbing inside a shoe, a pebble, or a developing callus – can go unnoticed. Over time, this can lead to skin breakdown, ulcers, infections, and in severe cases, even amputation.

Neuropathy also changes how people walk. When sensation is reduced, balance suffers. Muscles may weaken, foot shape can change, and pressure shifts to areas that aren't designed to handle it. This creates high-pressure "hot spots" under the ball of the foot or toes, increasing the risk of wounds.

This is where a pedorthist plays a key role. As a licensed and certified pedorthist enrolled with Medicare, my focus is on protecting the foot, redistributing pressure, and improving stability – before serious problems develop.

Custom-made orthotics and diabetic insoles are designed to offload high-pressure areas and cushion sensitive feet. Unlike over-the-counter inserts, these are made from impressions or digital scans of your feet and adjusted to your specific needs. Extra-depth or custom-molded shoes provide room for deformities, prevent friction, and allow orthotics to work properly. For some patients, simple shoe modifications – such as rocker soles or added cushioning – can significantly reduce stress on the foot during walking.

Just as important is education. I work closely with patients to help them understand proper shoe fit, daily foot inspection, and when to seek care. Neuropathy doesn't have to mean giving up comfort, mobility, or independence – but it does require the right support.

If you have neuropathy, don't wait for pain to tell you something is wrong. With the right pedorthic care, we can help protect your feet, reduce risks, and keep you safely on your feet for years to come.



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Proudly Serving Veterans ————— Through The VA's Community Care Network (CCN)

For many veterans, remaining in the comfort of their own home while receiving quality care is one of the most important factors in maintaining independence and quality of life. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers programs designed to make that possible, including the VA Community Care Network (CCN) and the Home and Community-Based Care Program.

These programs provide eligible veterans with access to professional in-home caregiving services that can help them continue living safely at home while receiving the assistance they need.

What Services Are Available?

Depending on a veteran's individual needs and VA authorization, home care services may include:

- Personal care, including bathing, dressing, and grooming
- Assistance with walking and mobility
- Safe transfers and fall prevention
- Friendly companionship
- Alzheimer's and dementia care
- Recovery assistance following surgery
- Medication reminders
- Light housekeeping and daily household assistance
- Respite care for family caregivers

These services are designed to support both veterans and their families while promoting independence and improving overall quality of life.

How Veterans Can Get Started

Obtaining home care services through the VA Community Care Network is a straightforward process.

Step 1: Enroll with the VA if you are not already enrolled by completing VA Form 10-10EZ and submitting it along with your DD214 to your local VA office.



Step 2: Schedule an appointment with your VA primary care physician to discuss your medical needs and whether in-home care would be beneficial.

Step 3: Request a referral to the VA Home and Community-Based Care Program.

Step 4: Once the referral has been made, contact Preferred Care at Home so their staff can help guide you through the process.

Step 5: The VA reviews the referral and approves eligible services.

Step 6: When speaking with your VA care coordinator, you may request Preferred Care at Home as your provider for approved services.

Compassionate Care For Veterans

Preferred Care at Home is committed to helping veterans receive compassionate, dependable care while remaining in the familiar surroundings of home. Their caregivers assist with daily living activities while providing the dignity, respect, and companionship every veteran deserves.

For additional information about available services or assistance with the referral process, contact Preferred Care at Home, (855) 424-5683, PreferHome.com/LOVE.

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You must be employed full-time by a Florida-based employer, except qualifying active-duty military, Guard members, and eligible veterans.

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**CAPE CORAL SHOWS OFF—
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The New Home Of Heritage Charter Academy: A Place To Learn, Dream, And Grow

By Mavis Ibarra

Education is undoubtedly one of the most rewarding fields from a human perspective. Those who dedicate their lives to teaching know that their work goes far beyond delivering academic content: it requires humanity, vocation, and a deep desire to support each student’s personal growth. I imagine what it must feel like to walk alongside generations of children and families, watching them evolve, overcome challenges, and discover their own potential.

Robyn Gomez, principal/operations director of Heritage Charter Academy, knows this experience well. Although Heritage’s story began in 2019, Robyn was not part of the school at that time. That year marked a new beginning for the institution when Dr. Angela Combs, Chief Operating Officer of Choice Charter Schools, stepped in to stabilize and rebuild the school alongside a small but dedicated team. They laid the foundation for the positive school culture that defines Heritage today.

Robyn joined Heritage at the end of 2020. What drew her in was the family atmosphere she felt the moment she walked through the doors, as well as the tremendous potential of the school – a place that could become not only a cornerstone



Groundbreaking ceremony – LAI Construction & Design’s Rick Losee joins Robyn Gomez, Operations Director/Principal; Dr. Angela Combs; and Alex Veloudos from Choice Charter Schools

is preparing to welcome more than 500 students into a space designed to support high standards of learning and personal development.

Today, walking through the new campus, it is impossible not to feel the magnitude of this dream realized. “This building represents years of perseverance, commitment, and the belief that students deserve the very best,” Robyn says. For her, the true essence of Heritage Charter Academy is not found in the size of the campus but in the community that fills it each day. “It’s the smiles of our students, the dedication of our teachers, the trust of our families, and the partnerships we’ve built throughout the community that define who we are.”

A Journey That Shaped Her Life

For Robyn, the construction and development of Heritage Charter Academy has been a deeply transformative experience. “This journey has been one of the greatest honors of my career. I’ve dedicated my life to education, and being part of bringing this vision to life brings a tremendous sense of fulfillment,” she reflects.

She remembers the days she walked through the construction site wearing a hard hat, imagining hallways filled with children. “There were moments when we would stop and think: one day children will laugh, learn, and dream here. And now, on August 11, we will see those hallways full of students. That brings an incredible sense of satisfaction.”

Her reflection reveals the essence of her leadership: “Buildings can be constructed with concrete and steel, but schools are built with hope, trust, and people who believe in children. Every challenge, every long night, every decision was made with one question in mind: ‘Is this what’s best for our students?’”

Knowing that generations of families will create memories here is something Robyn treasures deeply. “Contributing to that legacy is something I will carry with me forever.”

A School That Feels Like Family
From its earliest days, Heritage Charter Academy embraced the belief that education extends beyond academics. Although the campus has grown significantly, the heart of the school remains unchanged.

“We intentionally built a school culture centered on family,” Robyn explains. “Students, parents, teachers, and staff support one another through every achievement and every challenge. We embrace the ‘whole child’ approach, recognizing that children thrive when their academic, social, emotional, physical, and personal development are nurtured together.”

This commitment goes beyond the classroom. Every two weeks, the school hosts food pantry distributions to support Heritage families and the surrounding community. “When families feel supported, students are empowered to learn and succeed,” she says.

Moments That Leave A Lasting Impact

When asked about meaningful experiences with students or families, Robyn becomes emotional. “One of the things I value most is seeing children grow over the years. Some students arrived shy and insecure, and today they are leaders who guide younger students, speak with confidence, and believe in themselves in ways they never imagined.”

She also remembers families who trusted the school during difficult times. “We’ve celebrated birthdays, supported



families through hardships, celebrated victories, and watched siblings grow together. Those moments remind me that schools become part of a family’s story.”

One memory stands out above the rest. “A father stopped me after dismissal and said, ‘Thank you for loving my son the way you do.’ It wasn’t about grades or awards. It was about knowing his child felt safe, seen, and valued. That conversation reaffirmed everything I believe education should be. When children know they belong, learning flows naturally.”

A Student-Centered Academic Model

Academically, Heritage Charter Academy offers a rigorous and personalized program. “We recognize that every child learns differently,” Robyn explains. “Our teachers use data to personalize instruction, challenge students to reach their full potential, and provide support when needed.”

Families appreciate the smallcommunity environment, which allows each child to be truly known as an individual. The school combines strong instruction in reading and math with leadership programs, character development, responsibility, and socialemotional learning.

“Success is not measured only by test scores,” Robyn says. “It’s measured by confidence, resilience, kindness, and a love for learning. Our goal is to prepare students academically and as compassionate, responsible young people ready to make a positive impact in their communities.”

Opportunities

The new campus expands opportunities in academics, sports, arts, leadership, and enrichment. “Our students benefit from a wide variety of programs designed to help them discover their passions, build confidence, and prepare for their future,” Robyn explains.

Heritage Charter Academy welcomes new families with enthusiasm. The enrollment process is simple and designed to be warm and accessible.

“Families can visit our website, call our office, or schedule a campus tour,” Robyn says. “Once they walk through our doors, we hope they feel what we feel every day: Heritage is not just a school. It’s a home.”

“Heritage Charter Academy is more than a school. It is a family. It is a place where children are encouraged to dream big, work hard, care deeply, and believe in themselves. Together, we have built something truly special.”

As the school enters this new chapter, it remains committed to providing exceptional educational experiences, strengthening community partnerships, and preparing every student not only for academic success, but for a life of purpose, leadership, and service.

Mavis Ibarra graduated as a journalist in 2007 and since then she has successfully ventured into several media outlets. In them she has written on various topics, although her contributions to cultural and environmental issues stand out. During her work as a press reporter, she has also collaborated as a scriptwriter for radio and television programs aimed at different audiences. Among her personal preferences are the enjoyment of nature and the sea, she loves to dance, listen to music and share with her family.



Ribbon cutting held on July 16 – Cutting the ribbon Angela Combs from Choice Charter Schools, Robyn Gomez, Operations/Principal and Tina Pegler, Board Member



The new Heritage Charter Academy campus, a 47,000-square-foot facility designed to inspire learning, growth, and community.

of the community but also a center of academic excellence. “From that moment on, I knew Heritage was a place where I could invest my heart and, together with our staff, students, and families, build something truly special,” she says.

After seven years of planning and construction, Heritage Charter Academy begins a new chapter this school year. The new campus, located at 1429 NE 15th Ave., will officially open its doors on August 11, just weeks after the ribbon-cutting ceremony held on July 16.

With 47,000 square feet, modern classrooms, STEM labs, a state-of-the-art gym, and a regulation soccer field, the school

Heritage Charter Academy,
1429 NE 15th Ave., Cape
Coral, FL 33909, info@
heritagecharteracademy.org
(239) 829-5134.



Health News

How Local Businesses Can Strengthen The Community Through Blood Donations

By Lee Health Blood Center Administrative Director Jeremy Puckett

The year-round sunshine, Gulf access and tropical lifestyle are just some of the many reasons people love calling Southwest Florida home. But what truly makes Cape Coral special is its lively community spirit, a big reason many people choose to live and work here. Local businesses are at the heart of keeping that welcoming, vibrant culture alive.

When businesses invest in the area, their influence extends beyond their immediate operations. A meaningful way to give back is to help secure a safe and adequate blood supply for the region. Just as successful businesses plan ahead – whether for managing inventory, supporting staff or handling surprises – the community relies on having lifesaving resources ready before emergencies arise.

Why Blood Donations Matter

Maintaining a reliable blood supply requires consistent



community support. The blood used for patient care must be continuously replenished, so the Lee Health Blood Center needs approximately 800 donors each week to ensure blood is available when patients need it most. A single donation can save up to two lives.

This need is especially critical during the summer months, when donations often decline even as the need for blood remains steady. Blood and blood products are essential for a wide range of medical services, including surgeries, cancer treatments, care for premature infants, treatment of anemia and many other medical conditions.

After a whole blood donation is collected, it is separated into components such as red blood cells and plasma so each can be used for the patients who need it most. Implementing advanced technology, such as the Giotto Monza blood processing system, will help Lee Health process these lifesaving components more efficiently and to a high consistency standard.

By implementing this technology next year, the largely manual current process will transition to a more efficient, streamlined process that will help ensure a steady blood supply and enable blood center staff to better meet the ongoing demand for patient care.

When individuals donate through the Lee Health Blood Center, they can also be confident that their donation stays within Lee County, supporting patients throughout the health system and making a direct impact on neighbors, friends and loved ones.

What Are The Requirements To Donate?

Many people are eligible to give. In general, donors must weigh at least 115 pounds, be at least 17 years old (or 16 with parental consent), and provide a valid photo ID if donating for the first time.

While some individuals may be deferred due to factors such as a current illness, a recent blood or plasma donation, a history of hepatitis or a positive HIV test, many deferrals are temporary. If there is uncertainty about

eligibility, the staff at the Lee Health Blood Center can answer questions and help determine when it is safe to donate.

Lee Health Blood Centers are located throughout Lee County in Cape Coral, Estero and Fort Myers. For more information, please visit www.leehealth.org/our-services/blood-centers/blood-mobile.

How Local Businesses Can Get Involved

Hosting blood drives or encouraging employee donations helps busy individuals give blood and fosters a culture of service and community.

Employers and local businesses can promote blood donation by hosting drives, offering flexible donation opportunities for employees, donating independently or encouraging others to participate.

For more information on blood mobile locations, please visit www.leehealth.org/our-services/blood-centers/blood-mobile/blood-drives.

To host a blood mobile at your business, please call (239) 343-2333.

Maintaining a consistent blood supply benefits the entire community, enhances local engagement and demonstrates an investment in community health. The next person needing blood could be someone you know or work with.

One donation can change the course of someone's life. Whether hosting a blood drive, encouraging employees to donate or rolling up a sleeve to give blood, everyone can help ensure blood is available when friends, families and neighbors need it most.



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info@fostervillageswfl.org

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Where Faith, Vision And Community Came Together

Every community has moments that shape its history. For Cape Coral, one of those moments was the creation of Gulf Coast Village, a faith-based continuing care retirement community that has served residents for nearly four decades.

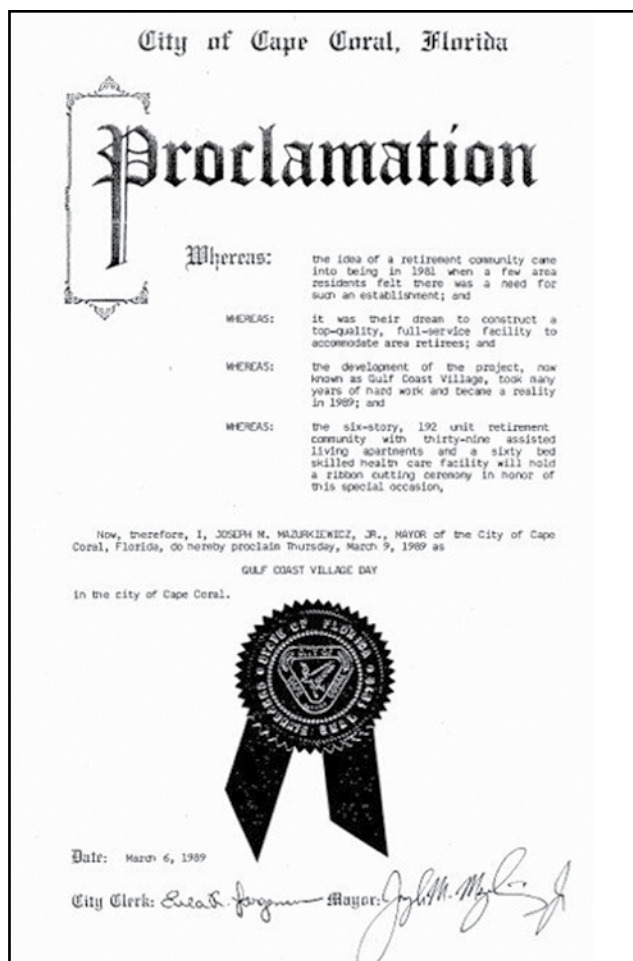
The story of Gulf Coast Village began in the early 1980s when local pastor Rev. Richard “Dick” Hafer recognized a growing need. As Cape Coral expanded, families seeking a faith-based retirement community had to go outside of the Cape Coral area. Rev. Hafer believed Cape Coral deserved

In 1981, Gulf Care, Inc. was established as the nonprofit organization that would develop the project. While the legal name was Gulf Care, Inc., the retirement community itself would become known as Gulf Coast Village, the name familiar to residents today.

The property that would become Gulf Coast Village had been owned by Clarence “Butch” and Doris Duffala. Butch was one of Cape Coral’s early builders and helped shape the young city’s growth. In 1980, the property was purchased by Realtor Dennis J. Fullenkamp. On Sept. 17, 1984, he transferred the property to Gulf Care, Inc., allowing plans for what would become Gulf Coast Village to move forward. Dennis remembered



Gulf Care, Inc., Board of Trustees February 1989



6-7926-1
4-7-80 no

1849766

This instrument was prepared by:
HARVEY BOLLIENG
PARSEE, SHIELDS, GARNER,
HAYENFIELD, DALTON & HARRISON
4018 First and Fourth Streets
P.O. Office Box 88
Gainesville, Texas 76501
RECORDED IN THE PUBLIC CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE COUNTY OF TARRANT TEXAS
BOOK 174B PAGE 2867

Warranty Deed (STATUTORY FORM—SECTION 409.02 (F.S.))

Deeds Indenture. Made this *17th* day of *September*, 1974, Between

DENNIS J. FULLINGTON, Trustee and Individually

of the County of Lee State of Florida , grantor*, and

GULF CASH, INC., A Florida Non-Profit Corporation

whose post office address is 1503-B 47th Street, S.E., *CASA CORAL,*

of the County of Lee State of Florida 33904 , grantee*.

Witnesseth. That said grantor, for and in consideration of the sum of \$100.00 Dollars, and other good and valuable considerations to said grantee in hand paid by said grantee, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, has granted, conveyed and sold to the said grantee, said grantee's heirs and assigns forever, the following described land, situate, lying and being in: Lee County, Florida, to-wit:

The Southwest Quarter (SW) of the Northwest Quarter (NW) of the Southwest Quarter (SW) of Section 24, Township 44 South, Range 23 East,

AND

The Southwest Quarter (SW) of the Northwest Quarter (NW) of the Southwest Quarter (SW) of Section 24, Township 44 South, Range 23 East.

Subject to easements, restrictions and reservations of record and taxes for the current year and all subsequent years.

This property is set now, nor has it ever been, nor is it contiguous to homesteaded property of the grantor.

Said grantor does hereby fully warrant the title to said land, and will defend the same against the lawful claims of all persons whatsoever.

* "Grantor" and "grantee" are used for singular or plural, as context requires.

In Witness Whereof. Grantor has hereunto set his hand and seal at Gainesville, Texas, this 17th day of September, 1974, signed, sealed and delivered in our presence.

[Signature] Clerk of Circuit Court in and for Lee County, Florida.
[Signature] Sec'y. of Lee County, Florida.
Clerk Ad Interim

SEP 17 4 26 PM '84

RECORDED IN THE PUBLIC CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE COUNTY OF TARRANT TEXAS
BOOK 174B PAGE 2867

STATE OF Florida
COUNTY OF Lee
I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this day before me, an officially qualified to take acknowledgments, personally appeared

Dennis J. Fullington, Trustee and Individually

to me known to be the person described by and who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged before me that he executed the same.

Witness my hand and official seal in the County and State last aforesaid this *17* day of *September*, 1974.

[Signature] Public Notary

My commission expires January 10, 1975.

*Deed between Dennis J. Fullenkamp, Trustee and Gulf
Care, Inc.*

As plans progressed, Gulf Care worked with Medical Facilities, Inc. to develop the project. In 1985, Volunteers of America Health Services joined the effort, bringing experience in senior living communities and helping move the project toward completion. By early 1987, more than half of the planned apartments had already been reserved, demonstrating the strong community interest in the new retirement village.

On Oct. 25, 1987, more than 100 future residents, church leaders, community supporters and Volunteers of America representatives gathered for the groundbreaking ceremony. Less than two years later, the first residents began moving into their new homes, and on March 12, 1989, Gulf Coast Village officially celebrated its grand opening. Cape Coral Mayor Joseph Mazurkiewicz proclaimed March 12, 1989, as Gulf Coast Village Day, recognizing the completion of a project that had become a reality through years of dedication and cooperation.

As a longtime board member and certified public accountant, Michael Rubenstein helped guide Gulf Coast Village's financial stewardship while supporting thoughtful growth. He recalled the board's decision to develop the residential memory care neighborhood after several years of attending World Health Organization conferences and gathering ideas for its design. During this period, Gulf Coast Village also acquired property to the south. Originally

The Story Of Gulf Coast Village on page 16

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Cape Coral FL 33991

Cape Coral, Curated

By Michelle Richard, Real Estate Broker, Lifestyle Expert, and American Dream TV Host

If you ask 10 people in Cape Coral where they're from, you'll probably get 10 different answers.

New York. Michigan. Massachusetts. Illinois. New Jersey. Rhode Island.

That's one of the things I love most about living here.

Almost all of us were new here at some point. We changed our address, left behind what was familiar, and arrived with a lifetime of experiences, perspectives, talents, traditions, and stories. Every one of us brought something valuable.

I understand that feeling because I lived it.

After spending 43 years in the same tiny state, my husband and I took a leap of faith and drove about 1,400 miles to a city where we knew exactly two people.

Starting over as an adult can feel exciting and intimidating. You're looking for your favorite restaurant, great Chinese food, a hairdresser, a doctor, and all the little places that make a city feel like home. More than anything, you're hoping to find your place.

I could have waited for Cape Coral to find me.

Instead, I decided to find Cape Coral.

I volunteered. I joined organizations. I attended community events. I introduced myself. I supported local businesses. I



asked questions and listened more than I talked. Before long, I became the biggest cheerleader for the people, businesses, and nonprofits I had grown to love.

There wasn't a grand plan.

I simply wanted to know the city I had chosen to call home.

Looking back, I wasn't building a network.

I was building a life.

The friendships came naturally. The opportunities followed. Somewhere along the way, Cape Coral stopped feeling like the place I had moved to and started feeling like home.

My son eventually decided to make the move, too. Today he and my daughter-in-law are raising my grandson in the Cape, with another little boy on the way. They own a home here, and her parents have also bought a home in Cape Coral.

It's incredible where one decision can lead.

That experience also changed the way I see every newcomer.

I don't see someone who's "just moved here." I see someone arriving with a lifetime of experiences, talents, and perspectives the rest of us don't have. Every new resident adds something to Cape Coral, and that's one of this city's greatest strengths.

No two stories are exactly alike, and that's exactly the point.

One conversation leads to another. A recommendation becomes a friendship. A volunteer opportunity introduces you to someone you'll know for years. Every conversation leaves you with something new. That's how I got to know Cape Coral, and I can't imagine a better way to become part of a community.

That's what continues to inspire me every day.

If you're new to Cape Coral, my advice is simple. Get involved.

Volunteer for something that matters to you. Join an organization. Go to the community event you've been meaning to attend. Introduce yourself. Support the small businesses that make Cape Coral unique. Ask questions. Listen to people's stories.

You'll discover favorite places, meet incredible people, and find opportunities you never expected.

One day, you'll realize you're no longer new.

You're one of the people helping someone else feel at home.

I didn't just find a new place to live. I found a city full of people who continue to inspire me every day. That's still my favorite way to experience Cape Coral: Get involved, meet people, support local businesses, ask questions, and listen. You never know where one conversation might lead.

If you see me around Cape Coral, come say hello. I'd love to meet you, hear your story, answer a question, or introduce you to someone. Welcoming people to this community is one of my favorite things to do.

Cape Coral shows off, I make it unforgettable.



Let's Chat!

The Story Of Gulf Coast Village from page 15

designated by Gulf American as a parking lot, it later became the site of the community's newest residences.

Today, Gulf Coast Village has grown far beyond its original campus, offering independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing, rehabilitation, memory care and other services. As the community approaches its 40th anniversary, Executive Director Sarah Richard says the commitment remains the same. "We're proud of the legacy we've built, but we're even more excited about what's ahead. Our focus is on



investing in our campus, our team and the resident experience so Gulf Coast Village remains a place people are proud to call home for the next 40 years and beyond."

Next month: The story continues with Rev. Richard "Dick" Hafer, whose vision for a faith-based retirement community helped shape the founding of Gulf Coast Village. Today, he is a resident of Gulf Coast Village, giving us the rare opportunity to hear the story from someone who helped bring that vision to life.



Ariel view construction of Gulf Coast Village building.



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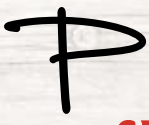
Cape Coral Mayor
JOHN GUNTER

Cape Coral District 1
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Cape Coral District 6
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School Board
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Personality Traits For People Born In August

People born in August are often known for their confidence, generosity, and natural leadership. They have vibrant personalities that draw others to them and possess a strong desire to succeed while inspiring those around them. Whether they are taking charge of a project, supporting a friend, or pursuing a personal goal, August-born individuals tend to approach life with enthusiasm, determination, and a positive outlook.

Confident And Courageous – August-born individuals are rarely afraid to take the lead. They trust their instincts, embrace challenges, and often become the people others look to for guidance and encouragement.

Warm And Generous – They have big hearts and genuinely enjoy helping others. Whether through their time, kindness, or support, they often go out of their way to make people feel appreciated and valued.

Ambitious And Driven – Success is important to those born in August. They set high standards for themselves and work hard to achieve their goals, refusing to settle for anything less than their best.

Loyal And Protective – Family and friendships mean everything to August-born individuals. They are dependable, fiercely loyal, and will stand beside the people

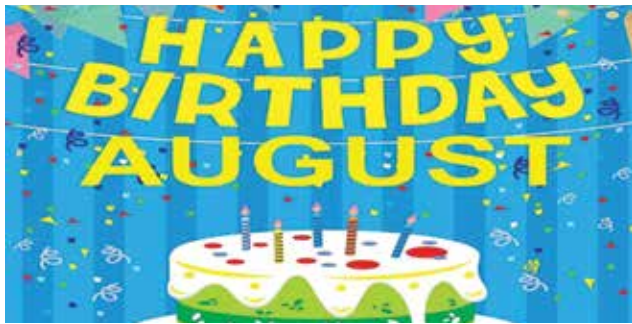
they love through both good times and difficult moments.

Creative And Charismatic – Their outgoing personalities and creative minds often make them the center of attention. They enjoy expressing themselves and have a natural ability to motivate and inspire others with their enthusiasm.

Optimistic And Resilient – Even when faced with setbacks, August-born individuals tend to remain hopeful and determined. They view obstacles as opportunities to grow and often bounce back stronger than before.

People born in August bring confidence, kindness, and determination wherever they go. Their ability to lead with both strength and compassion makes them dependable friends, inspiring leaders, and positive influences in the

lives of those around them. Their warmth, resilience, and generous spirit leave a lasting impression on everyone they meet.



Cape Coral Sun Online!

Did you miss an issue of the *Cape Coral Sun*? No worries! Visit our website to access archives of past issues, catch up on articles, and discover more about the community. You'll also find a wealth of exclusive online content, including extended ads from local businesses not featured in print.

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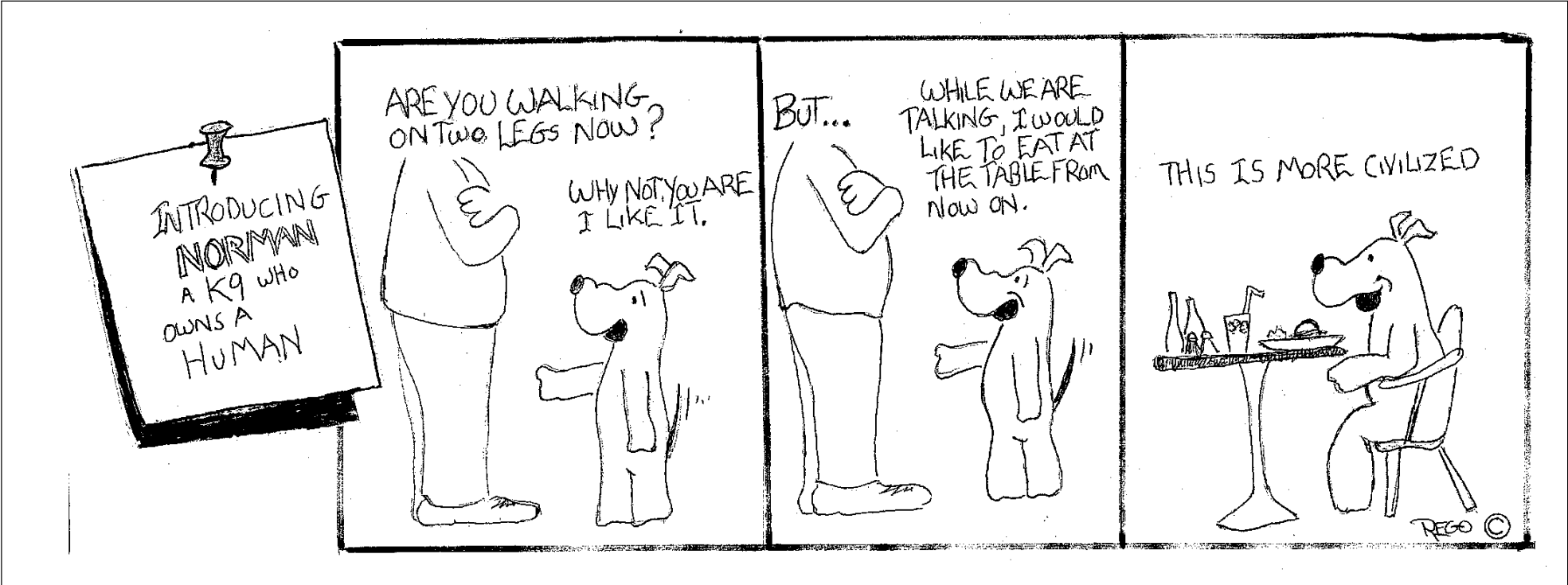
Sudoku Answers

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

BACK TO SCHOOL

ASSIGNMENTS	DESK	JANITOR	OLD FRIENDS	SCHOOL OFFICE
BACKPACK	DOORS	LANGUAGE ARTS	PADLOCK	SCHOOLYARD
BATHROOM	ENROLL	LEARNING	PAPER	SCIENCE
BELL	ERASER	LIBRARY	PENCILS	SECRETARY
BINDER	EXAMS	LOCKER	PENS	SEPTEMBER
CAFETERIA	FIRST DAY	LUNCHROOM	PRINCIPAL	SOCIAL STUDIES
CHALKBOARD	GYMNASIUM	MATH	QUIZZES	STUDENT
CLASSROOM	HALLWAY	NEW FRIENDS	ROLL CALL	STUDY
CLOCK	HOMEWORK	NOTEBOOK	RULES	TEACHER
COURSES	INTERCOM	NURSE	SCHOOL BUS	

I	Y	D	U	T	S	E	P	T	E	M	B	E	R	N	U	R	S	E	H
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H	B	I	N	D	E	R	O	Y	L	N	Y	N	O	T	E	B	O	O	K



LCEC Summer Tips: Beat The Heat And Prevent A Shocking Energy Bill

By Shannon Williamson,
APR – Manager of Public
Relations

When the heat of summer causes Southwest Florida residents to turn their air conditioners to cooler settings, electric bills begin to rise. In warmer temperatures, home cooling systems must work that much harder (using more energy) to maintain temperatures. Home cooling costs can account for around 50 percent of the residential electric bill. In fact, air conditioning is often the average



household’s largest annual power cost. LCEC suggests the following tips to help reduce summer bills.

1. Keep your air conditioner set at 78 degrees Fahrenheit. Every degree below adds 8% more to cooling costs.
2. Replace A/C filters once a month, and have the unit cleaned every year.
3. Use ceiling fans to assist in the cooling process. Use wisely ... don’t leave ceiling fans running in rooms where people are not present.
4. The water heater is the second largest expense on your electric bill. Set between 120 and 140 degrees. Always unplug the water heater before adjusting the temperature.
5. Turn the lights off when leaving a room and turn the TV off when not watching.

6. Properly weather-strip your home to keep the heat out and the cool air in.

7. Consider window tinting. Windows account for half of air conditioning bills. Keep window coverings closed during hot, sunny days, and open at night. Consider planting trees in the yard to shade the windows that receive the most heat.

8. Install a timer on the air conditioner so that it will control humidity when your home is vacant for long periods of time.

Visit www.lcec.net for more energy tips and enroll in LCEC SmartHub to manage your energy usage year-round!

Shannon Williamson, APR, is the manager of Public Relations 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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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.



Catch The Action

August On The Water

By Capt. Bill Russell

Fishing or boating in Southwest Florida in August means dealing with hot days and thunderstorms. Fishing can be good, and often without much competition, if you plan your day to take advantage of conditions.

If you just want to have fun and a little fishing while relaxing, then the beaches are a good choice, especially if you are fishing with the family. Good numbers of snook are roaming the surf throughout the summer and are a sight fishermen’s dream. Most snook are running 22 to 26 inches, but there are much bigger ones. Free lined pilchards, small pinfish, shrimp, white bucktail jigs, and a variety of small white flies or lures are top baits. Look for the fish right off the edge of the beach in the surf or near any submerged structure. Remember snook are catch and release only. Trout, mangrove snapper, whiting, founder, pompano, mackerel, and tarpon are a few of the other species you may hook into along the beach. Fish a little; swim a little, not a bad way to spend the day.

Summer gives us days with flat calm seas from early morning to midafternoon, perfect for offshore fishing. Our coastline is dotted with artificial reefs, many well



within sight of land and GPS coordinates available to the public. If you are an inshore angler, it’s a nice change of pace to make a short run offshore, especially during the heat of summer when the inshore water temperatures are so high.

A cool aspect when fishing around the reefs is you never know what you might hook into. Everything from a small snapper to huge goliath grouper calls the reefs home. To get the most out of the day you want an assortment of tackle that can manage the fish you target. Obviously with snapper you do not need super heavy tackle, the lighter the better for the best action. But if you want to attempt to pull out a big goliath grouper from his home, you will need a rig extra heavy; we are talking 2- to 500-pound line. And many times, that’s not heavy enough.

In between snapper and goliaths there’s the possibility to hook Spanish and king mackerel, cobia, permit, barracuda, snook, sharks of all sizes, plus other species. Many anglers fish several different line class rods at a time targeting more than one species.

Armed with a variety of baits is the best way to catch multiple species. Small baits like shrimp, pilchards, and little pinfish are great for snapper and other bottom fish. Larger live bait is often the ticket for a big barracuda, snook, or cobia. Big bait, dead or alive is the choice for goliaths. If you want to hook up with a permit, you need small live crabs; they are often the best bait for cobia as well. Anchoring up current of the structure with a quality block of chum is the best way to bring the action behind the boat.

Inshore, sea trout fishing is steady throughout the

summer. Look for larger trout over areas of open water where shallow sand bars transition to deeper grass flats from three to six feet deep with good water movement. Schools of small bait fish concentrate in these areas. Trout, plus Spanish mackerel, bluefish, ladyfish, and sharks are located around the bait. Diving pelicans, terns and gulls often give up the location of schooling bait.

Speaking of sharks, they are abundant throughout the inshore waters. Size can range from a couple of feet to well over ten feet. Fresh chunks of mullet or ladyfish and large live pinfish are top bait choices. Some days we do better fishing baits on bottom and other days suspending baits under a float does the trick. It’s just fishing, don’t be afraid to experiment to see what works for you.

Over higher tides target redfish and mangrove snapper under mangrove overhangs and oyster bars. You can catch a big redfish on a small bait but seldom hook a snapper on a large bait. Mangrove snappers are one of our tastier fish. If you want to catch some, small baits and hooks with a light leader are key. Inshore mangrove snapper numbers were on the rise through June and July, there should be plenty around this month.

It’s a good idea to use the weather and tides to your advantage, especially over the hot days of August. Water temperature can change quickly, give us three or four days with bright sunny skies and the inshore waters get hot, often slowing the bite. A couple of rainy days with limited sunshine and water temperature will drop several degrees; this can trigger good fishing. If conditions allow, get an early start to the day for plenty of time on the water and back to a safe place ahead of the heat and afternoon storms.

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 30 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.”



Meet The Candidate Amanda Cochran: Deep Roots, Conservative Values, And A Commitment To Lee County

Amanda Cochran is running for Lee County Commission District 5 because she believes public service should belong to the people – not political insiders or special interests.

As a sixth-generation Southwest Floridian, Cochran is grateful for her family’s longstanding connection to this community. Her great-grandfather helped move cattle through Southwest Florida during the horse-and- buggy days, long before the roads and neighborhoods we know today existed. Her grandfather met her grandmother in Fort Myers while serving at Buckingham Army Airfield during World War II. Her mother was crowned Miss Lee County in 1968. For Cochran, Lee County is more than a place to live – it is home, heritage, and a legacy she is honored to carry forward.

“Few things have shaped me more than growing up in a family that has been part of this community for generations,” Cochran says. “I love Lee County, and I want to ensure it remains a place where future generations can thrive.”

A lifelong conservative Republican, small business owner, and community advocate, Cochran has spent the past several years traveling throughout Lee County listening to residents, business owners, veterans, teachers, first responders, and community leaders. While every community has unique concerns, she says one message is consistent: people want a government that listens, communicates openly, and remains accountable to the citizens it serves.

Cochran’s priorities include improving infrastructure, addressing traffic congestion, supporting public safety, protecting water quality, and ensuring county government remains responsive to the needs of residents.

She is also a strong supporter of law enforcement officers, firefighters, EMS personnel, teachers, healthcare professionals, veterans, and local small businesses – people she describes as the backbone of our community.

At the center of her campaign is a commitment to transparency, fiscal responsibility, and citizen representation.

“The role of a County Commissioner is simple,” Cochran says. “To serve on behalf of the people – not in place of them.”

Every decision, she says, should be guided by one fundamental question:

“How does this impact the people of Lee County?”

Her campaign slogan reflects the principle that guides her candidacy: Trust is Earned, NOT Given.





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Lelulo's Pizzeria – 6th Annual Special Pops VIP Staff Day, Restaurant, 3123 Chiquita Blvd., S., Cape Coral, FL 33914, www.lelulospizza.com, (239) 205-6935.



Heritage Charter Academy – New Location, Education – Schools, 1429 N.E. 15th Ave., Cape Coral, FL 33909, www.heritagecharteracademy.org, (239) 829-5134.

Friends Of The Cape Coral Library

All Are Welcome! Saturday Morning, Sept. 19 Friends of Cape Coral Library General Meeting

Everyone is invited to the Friends of the Cape Coral Library (FOCCL) General Meeting on Saturday, Sept. 19. The morning will begin at 9:30 a.m. with coffee, tea, light snacks, and social time. The business portion will start at 10 a.m., and the program described below will follow. FOCCL general meetings, which take place in the large meeting room of the Cape Coral Library at 921 SW 39th Ter., are free and open to the public. You are welcome to bring a guest or two. **September Meeting Program: Cape Coral Police Department**

Officer John Kuhn from the Cape Coral Police Department will be on hand to present what is sure to be an interesting

Meet The Candidate Florida’s 19th Congressional District Candidate: Ola Hawatmeh

Ola Hawatmeh is an unwavering America First patriot, accomplished business owner, designer, philanthropist, and dedicated conservative activist fiercely committed to President Trump’s MAGA agenda. Born in the United States to Christian immigrants from Jordan, who pursued the American Dream through grit and opportunity, Ola embodies the resilience Trump champions – fighting to secure our borders with his border wall and remain in Mexico policy, ignite economic prosperity through tax cuts and deregulation that drove record-low unemployment before COVID, and dismantle the radical left’s assaults on our liberties.



Ola is running for Congress in Florida’s 19th District to advance Trump’s vision of putting America first, draining the swamp with term limits and ending endless foreign wars, and preserving the Judeo-Christian values, Second Amendment rights, and unapologetic patriotism that make our nation exceptional for future generations.

In 2004, she founded Mom Me Makeover, a company empowering Americans with transformative makeovers to shine inside and out, much like Trump’s tariffs safeguarded American workers from unfair foreign trade. Her success led her to establish Makeover for a Cause, a charity that donates makeovers to nonprofits nationwide, including veterans through Wounded Warriors and Hope for Heroes, empowering women via Dress for Success, supporting children through Friends of Kids with Cancer, and aiding communities via St. Patrick’s Center, embodying Trump’s commitment to uplifting those ravaged by failed Democrat policies and his push for school choice to empower families.

Ola has personally transformed the lives of countless teenagers battling cancer, providing shopping sprees and hair/makeup makeovers to restore their confidence. She expanded her vision with Ola Style, her thriving fashion design company, while hosting charity fashion shows across the country that celebrate American ingenuity, aligning with Trump’s “Buy American, Hire American” executive orders.

As co-founder of the Middle East Women’s Coalition, Ola has spoken on Capitol Hill, fiercely advocating for secure borders, energy independence, and peace through strength – core tenets of Trump’s Abraham Accords, which achieved historic Middle East peace without new wars, and his MAGA platform rejecting nation-building abroad. The coalition proudly endorses Trump’s reelection, recognizing his bold leadership in rejecting globalist threats like the Paris Climate Accord to prioritize American jobs.

For the past year, Ola has served as a Senior Policy Advisor in Washington, D.C., working with constituents, helping bills get co-sponsors, and addressing policy-related issues and on legislation. Ola plans to use her experience working in Washington to help address critical issues in Florida’s 19th District, such as clean water initiatives, tackling the rising cost of living, and reforming insurance policies to protect families – issues Trump has prioritized through infrastructure investments and economic relief measures.

program on keeping safe in these technologically trying times. How to avoid scams on your phone and computer and community at large will be discussed.

Dedicated Artists Of Southwest Florida (DASF) Welcomed Back To Exhibit Sept. 10 Until Oct. 30

Members of the Dedicated Artists of Southwest Florida Inc. (DASF) have been invited back nine times now to exhibit at the Cape Coral Library and each year’s display of latest creations is always impressive. Over a hundred pieces of beautiful two- and three-dimensional



Deb Carlson and Cathy Crock of DASF with quilts and decorated suitcases for foster kids



Cathy Ressler, DSAF



Madonna Williams, DASF

art by DASF members are anticipated and will fill the gallery walls and three illuminated cases in the library. Visitors can enjoy the exhibit free of charge during regular business hours starting Sept. 10.

The Dedicated Artists of Southwest Florida is a vibrant club with 65 active members who are residents of the local tri-county area ranging from Port Charlotte to Naples, as well as the East Coast of Florida and even Ontario, Canada! Members vary in experience from novice to professional. DASF meetings are held the second Saturday of each month in the Cape Coral Art League building at 516 Cultural Park Blvd., and include a painting project conducted by one of the talented DASF instructors.



Coordinated quilt and suitcase donated by DASF to Children’s Network of Southwest Florida.

Friends Of The Cape Coral Library on page 23



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Friends Of The Cape Coral Library from page 22

DASF meetings begin with a social time and light refreshments at 9 a.m. followed by a business meeting at 9:30 a.m., then a brown bag lunch and the painting project. For more information about Dedicated Artists of Southwest Florida membership, meeting schedules, location, art projects, seminars, community support, and events be sure to visit www.DASFartists.com.

While learning and teaching the art of painting is integral to its mission, the club also performs an impressive amount of community outreach. As a 501(c)(3) public charity, Dedicated Artists of Southwest Florida, Inc., philanthropic programs support the Harry Chapin Food Bank, an annual scholarship for a graduating Lee County high school senior, and other projects. DASF provides decorated suitcases and wall art for the Children's Network of Southwest Florida as well as hand-painted keepsake memory boxes given to various hospitals for grieving families to hold remembrances of a child lost.

To support its community outreach, DASF holds an annual winter luncheon fundraising gala at a local country club in December.

Changing art exhibits in the library's gallery are sponsored by the Friends of the Cape Coral Library and are designed to afford local artists the opportunity to share their work in this public forum.

For information contact Monica Rahman, Art Gallery Chairperson, at gallary@capefriends.org or visit www.capefriends.org.



Sharon Yanz of DASF will be exhibiting this beautiful painting.



DASF's Gerri Zoppa taught an acrylic painting program.

capefriends.org. Follow "Friends of the Cape Coral Library" on Facebook.

Everyone Enjoyed Hearing About Books At Friends Of The Cape Coral Library, July 25 General Meeting

There were lots of book lovers in attendance. The program for the FOCCL general meeting in July has historically been the popular round table talk about books we've read, and this year's program did not disappoint! Everyone enjoyed hearing about a wide variety of books that were recommended. A link to the book list can be found on the Friends of the Cape Coral Library website: www.capefriends.org under the event photos tab.



Jo Anne showed the book she was recommending at July meeting.



Phyllis recommended this book during July meeting round table.



New FOCCL Membership Chair Sandy Caldwell greeted everyone at the July meeting.

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A Summer Of Growth, Gratitude, And Big Applause At Cultural Park Theatre

By Robin Murray,
Executive Director,
Cultural Park Theatre

If you’ve ever wondered what summer looks like inside a community theatre, I can tell you this: it’s not “quiet season.” At Cultural Park Theatre (CPT), summer is when we recharge our creative spirit, welcome new faces, and build the kind of community that makes live theatre possible.

This year, we’re celebrating a truly successful summer, one filled with laughter, learning, service, and a whole lot of heart.

Our Summer Camp for Kids once again reminded us of why we do what we do. Watching young performers grow in confidence, sometimes in just a few days, is one of the most rewarding parts of our year. Camp is where kids discover that their voice matters, and teamwork can feel like magic.

And this summer we launched something brand new: Camp Actawanna, our first ever adult summer camp experience. Yes, grown-ups came to camp, too, and it was an absolute blast. Camp Actawanna gave adults a chance to play, learn, and reconnect. And the response was so positive that we’re already excited about next year!

Every year, our CPT family comes together for our annual bonding and regroup meeting, a time to check in, strengthen our teamwork, and improve the way we do things behind the scenes.

This year, we made meaningful progress by tightening up a few processes to help our volunteers and staff work even better together. But we didn’t stop there.

As part of the day, the group of us rolled up our sleeves and built five bicycles for a local nonprofit, Oma’s Heart. There’s something powerful about theatre people doing what theatre people do best, working as an ensemble!

We’re also excited to share that our show troupe for the 64th season have been chosen, and they’ve already started building the kind of connection that makes a



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season shine. They recently enjoyed a wonderful bonding day filled with games and plenty of time getting to know one another.

Summer also brought a special project that blended creativity, and purpose. A group of us ladies spent time over the summer building a dress for the PACE Center for Girls Lee event. It was one of those hands-on projects where ideas fly, laughter fills the room, and the result is a shared accomplishment.

It’s a reminder that theatre isn’t just what happens under the lights, it’s what happens when people come together to make something meaningful.

As we head into the 64th season, the excitement around Cultural Park Theatre is real. If you’ve been thinking about getting involved, on stage, backstage, or anywhere in between, this is your moment.

Join us Saturday Aug. 15 at 11 a.m. for our Volunteer Meet ’N Greet with our volunteer coordinator, Miss Jan Stafford. It’s a relaxed, welcoming way to learn about volunteer opportunities and meet the people who make CPT run.

We have several exciting audition opportunities coming up.

- 1. *Radium Girls*, Aug. 8 at 10 a.m. We need adult and young adult performers.
- 2. *Dear Jack and Dear Louise*, Aug. 22 at 10 a.m.
- 3. Stage Read: *Anger Management* written by Eileen Haas-Linde, Aug. 29 at 10 a.m.



We’re also thrilled to announce our new homeschool initiative, beginning Aug. 12, led by Miss Debbie Emling. We still have room in:

- 1. *Flat Stanley Jr* – Wednesdays, 9 a.m.
- 2. *Dare to Dream Jr* – Fridays, 9 a.m.
- 3. *Little Stars* for ages 3 to 6 – Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. or 1 to 4 p.m.

And don’t miss *Raise Your YaYaYa* with Miss Jodie on Sept. 5. There will be three sessions that day.

This summer reminded us of what Cultural Park Theatre is all about: community, creativity, and connection. We’re grateful for everyone who participated, our campers, volunteers, supporters, and the many hands that make our theatre feel like home.

Now we’re ready to bring that energy into the new season, and we hope you’ll join us.

More info at culturalparktheatre.org
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Embracing Aging: Discovering Anti-Aging Innovations For A Vibrant Life

By Kristin Gustin, APRN,
Functional Medicine
Provider

Aging is a natural part of life, but that doesn't mean we have to settle for feeling sluggish or looking older than we feel. At Thrive by K, we're passionate about helping you navigate the aging process with grace, vitality, and a sense of adventure. In this blog, we'll explore some exciting developments in the world of anti-aging, including low dose naltrexone, tadalafil, methylene blue, NAD+, SLU-PP-332, genotropin, and hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Let's



dive in and discover how these innovations can support your journey to a more vibrant life.

1. Low Dose Naltrexone (LDN): A Surprising Ally

You might have heard of naltrexone as a medication for addiction, but did you know that at lower doses, it can be a powerful ally for your immune system? Low dose naltrexone (LDN) is gaining attention for its potential to reduce inflammation and promote healing. By modulating your immune response, LDN may help you feel more energetic and balanced. Imagine waking up each day feeling revitalized and ready to take on whatever comes your way!

2. Tadalafil: More Than Meets The Eye

Tadalafil is best known for helping with erectile dysfunction, but recent research suggests it may also have benefits for overall vitality. This medication improves

blood flow, which can enhance physical performance and even support brain health. Think of tadalafil as a way to boost not just your romantic life but also your everyday energy and mood.

3. Methylene Blue: A Bright Idea For Brain Health

Methylene blue has a long history in medicine, but it's now being explored for its potential to enhance cognitive function and energy production. As we age, we may find it harder to maintain mental clarity and stamina. Methylene blue works at the cellular level to improve how our cells produce energy, helping you stay sharp and focused. It's like giving your brain a refreshing boost!

4. NAD+: The Key To Cellular Vitality

NAD+ is a crucial molecule that supports cellular energy and repair, but our levels of it naturally decline as we age. This drop can lead to fatigue and other age-related issues. Fortunately, there are supplements available that can help increase NAD+ levels, potentially improving your energy, metabolism, and overall health. Imagine feeling more youthful and vibrant as you navigate your daily activities!

5. SLU-PP-332: A New Player In Anti-Aging

SLU-PP-332 is a newer compound that's catching the attention of researchers for its potential anti-aging benefits. While studies are still ongoing, early findings suggest it may promote cellular repair and reduce inflammation. Think of it as a promising new tool in your anti-aging toolkit, aimed at helping you feel your best.

6. Genotropin: The Growth Hormone Connection

Genotropin is a form of human growth hormone (HGH) that has been used in specific medical conditions, but it's also being explored for its potential to enhance vitality in aging adults. By supporting muscle growth and metabolism, HGH therapy might help you regain some of the youthful energy you thought was long gone. However, it's important to approach this option thoughtfully and under medical guidance.

7. Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT): Finding Your Balance

As we age, hormonal changes can lead to a range of challenges, from mood swings to decreased libido. Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) aims to restore hormonal balance, helping you feel more like yourself again. Many individuals find that HRT improves their quality of life by alleviating uncomfortable symptoms. If you're considering HRT, it's essential to have an open conversation with your healthcare provider about what's best for you.

8. GHK-Cu: The Copper Peptide Powerhouse

GHK-Cu, a copper peptide, is making waves in the anti-aging community for its remarkable properties. This peptide is known for its ability to promote collagen production, enhance wound healing, and improve skin elasticity. GHK-Cu can help reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles while also supporting overall skin health. It works by signaling to cells to repair and regenerate, making it a valuable addition to any anti-aging regimen. Imagine your skin looking firmer and more youthful as you embrace the aging process!

9. BPC-157: The Healing Peptide

BPC-157, or Body Protection Compound-157, is a peptide that has garnered interest for its potential healing properties. Known for promoting tissue repair and regeneration, BPC-157 may help accelerate healing from injuries, reduce inflammation, and improve gut health. Its ability to support recovery can contribute to overall well-being as we age, allowing you to bounce back faster from setbacks and maintain an active lifestyle.

Conclusion: Your Journey To Thriving

At Thrive by K, we believe that aging doesn't have to mean losing your vitality. With innovations like low dose naltrexone, tadalafil, methylene blue, NAD+, SLU-PP-332, genotropin, and hormone replacement therapy, there are exciting options available to help you embrace this stage of life with enthusiasm.

Remember, the journey to thriving in your later years is not just about treatments and supplements; it's about maintaining a holistic approach to wellness. Prioritize a balanced diet, stay active, manage stress, and nurture your relationships. By taking these steps, you'll be well on your way to enjoying a vibrant and fulfilling life as you age.

We're here to support you every step of the way. Stay tuned for more insights, tips, and inspiration as we navigate the beautiful journey of aging together!

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



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Cape Coral Animal Shelter Reaches More Than 1,100 Children Through Expanding Humane Education Programs

Cape Coral Animal Shelter is proud to celebrate another successful summer of inspiring compassion, responsibility, and safe interactions with pets by reaching more than 525 children through its annual community summer camp education program.

Now in its sixth consecutive year, the shelter’s popular summer outreach program brings interactive, age-appropriate presentations to children attending camps throughout the Cape Coral community. Through engaging discussions, demonstrations, and hands-on learning, children discover how to safely approach unfamiliar dogs, understand animal body language, practice responsible pet care, and develop empathy for animals.

This year’s program reached children at community centers, parks, youth programs, and schools throughout the city, continuing a tradition that has impacted thousands of local children over the past six summers.

The summer camp initiative beautifully complements Cape Coral Animal Shelter’s in-classroom humane education program, which was launched last year and continues to grow. Since its inception, the classroom program has reached:

- 623 pre-K through 5th grade students
- 50 special needs adults
- Nine schools
- 30 classrooms

The program began with its first presentation to 82 kindergarten and first-grade students and has expanded into a valued educational resource for local schools.

“Our mission extends far beyond finding homes for homeless animals,” said Liz McCauley, executive director of Cape Coral Animal Shelter. “Education is one of the most powerful tools we have to create a more compassionate community. When children learn how to safely and respectfully interact with animals, they’re not only helping prevent bites and injuries – they’re developing kindness, empathy, and respect that will last a lifetime. Those lessons benefit both people and pets.”

The shelter’s summer camp program is led by volunteer Thomas Ellegood, a retired Lee County Sheriff’s Office professional whose passion for children and natural ability to connect with young audiences has made him a favorite among campers. Throughout the summer, he is joined by a dedicated team of volunteers who help make each presentation engaging, educational, and fun.

The in-classroom education initiative is led by retired educator Karen Huston, along with a committee of committed volunteers who work closely with local schools to provide meaningful, interactive lessons that reinforce responsible pet ownership and animal welfare.

Together, the two programs have reached more than 1,100 children and adults through classroom presentations and community outreach, demonstrating Cape Coral Animal Shelter’s ongoing commitment to education as a vital part of its mission.

As Cape Coral Animal Shelter continues to grow, so does its commitment to serving the community – not only by providing shelter, veterinary care, and adoption services, but by helping raise the next generation of compassionate, responsible pet owners.

About Cape Coral Animal Shelter

Cape Coral Animal Shelter is a nonprofit, privately funded animal shelter dedicated to saving the lives of homeless animals through sheltering, adoption, veterinary care, spay/neuter programs, community outreach, and humane education. Since opening in 2020, the shelter has helped thousands of animals find loving homes while providing innovative programs that strengthen the bond between people and pets throughout Southwest Florida.



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Cape Coral re:MADE Volunteer Spotlight: Candy K.

This week’s Cape Coral re:MADE volunteer spotlight shines on one of our wonderfully creative volunteers, Candy Kesser. For more than a year, Candy has shared her artistic talents, warm smile, and generous spirit with everyone who walks through our doors, making her a valued part of our re:MADE family.



Originally from Decatur, Ill., Candy spent most of her life in the San Diego area before relocating to Cape Coral 11 years ago. She is the proud mother of two children and grandmother of four, and she treasures every opportunity to visit and spend time with her family.

Before joining re:MADE, Candy enjoyed an exciting career as a sports photographer and journalist.

Today, she channels that same creativity into designing beautiful stained-glass artwork, including colorful night lights, whimsical Looney Tunes-inspired figures, and eye-catching window displays that delight our customers.

Candy is always willing to lend a helping hand wherever it’s needed, but what she enjoys most about volunteering is the inspiration that comes from creating alongside other talented makers. The friendships, collaboration, and exchange of ideas have even inspired her to launch her own website, thecraftyartists.com, while



also sharing her newest creations on Facebook through The Crafty Artists.

When she’s not creating beautiful works of art, Candy enjoys boating, pickleball, racquetball, and exploring new creative projects. Her enthusiasm, imagination, and willingness to serve make her an incredible blessing to Cape Coral re:MADE. We are grateful to have Candy as part of our mission of: Doing Life. Better Together.

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Culinary Adventurist

The Gallery At Cape Coral

By Ed Estes

At a recent Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting Event, I met Rachel Stoffle, the leasing consultant for The Gallery at Cape Coral, a retirement community, or perhaps a better description: a “retirement resort.” I remember my father was terrified with the thought of being “shipped off” to a retirement home ... to the point that he made my sister promise never to send him to one. That may have been an unfortunate decision because as his Alzheimer’s condition progressed, I think he would have received better care in a professional facility than he was able to receive at home. But my dad was “old school” having seen what retirement facilities were in the 1970s and not realizing what some have become today.

The Gallery at Cape Coral, while a residence retirement facility, is truly fashioned as a resort, with a heavy influence



on fine food and social opportunities. From the moment you walk in, you are greeted with an elegant setting with an emphasis on dining. Normally I visit restaurants anonymously to ensure objectivity, but since The Gallery is only open to their residents and guests, I was honored to be invited by Rachel to join her for lunch and I gratefully accepted. Having tasted their cuisine earlier at their Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting, I was excited about the visit. We met at 1 p.m. to allow the noon rush to dissipate from the dining room. An unexpected treat was a visit to our table by both the Executive Chef Brian Bowman and his Sous Chef Abdelmajid Sayeh. Brian stressed the fact that he ran a “scratch kitchen,” where everything was made fresh, including the soups. That said, I had to try the soup du jour: chicken noodle. There is something about experiencing the firmness of fresh vegetables, the carrots, celery, etc. in a freshly made broth that brought out unmatched flavors. It truly was the best chicken noodle soup I have ever tasted. Perfectly seasoned, I had no interest in altering its flavor with either salt or pepper.



Upon recommendation from Brian and Rachel, I ordered the filet mignon as an entrée. I must confess I am a bit of a snob (correct that, my wife Nancy would say I am a huge snob) when it comes to the preparation of my steak (and for the record, it will almost exclusively be a tenderloin or a rib eye). Medium rare will have a very slight char to the outside, and on the first cut, the edge of the steak will be dark pink with the center a nice medium red: not purple, not light pink, certainly not grey. It is for this reason I rarely order steak out, because most places will over cook it to my taste. 239 Prime Steakhouse on Cape Coral Parkway is the only place I have found in the Cape so far that seems to consistently get it right ... until now. The Gallery nailed it. My sides were fresh broccoli and mashed potatoes, which could not have been better.

The dining room has a full bar, with beer, wine and liquor available with dinner, or at other times throughout the day. When I arrived, I could not miss the Bud Light semi-tractor trailer truck in front. You must admire a retirement facility with enough demand to warrant such a delivery. Simply said, these are not your grandparents’ “Geritol crowd;” they are active and young at heart ... age is truly just a number to them!

The menu pricing was very reasonable, much less than what you would find at a comparable restaurant. Service was excellent and yes, some of the best iced tea (unsweet of course) anywhere around. Residents receive a quarterly meal stipend for the restaurant and bar, automatically included in their residency agreement and may invite outside guests and family members to join them. The Gallery is not a purchase for ownership facility (no fear about those horror stories where residents are fleeced out of their life savings and held captive as a financial hostage), but a lease situation which allows a certain amount of flexibility when it comes to housing choices: studio, one, and two-bedroom units. They also have an assisted living and secure memory care neighborhood next door which allows for a seamless transition should the need for extra support arise later in life.

The only drawback from my visit is I cannot go back, unless I make a friend there to invite me ... which may be in the works as I did offer to teach a wine appreciation class if their administration can work out the details with their beverage distributor. The Gallery at Cape Coral is located at 2307 Chiquita Blvd., S., just think of the new multi-story building northeast of the Chiquita and Veterans Parkway intersection, and you are there. For those of you who have relatives who might be looking for that next place, or for yourself, as we all must consider our future; I encourage you to give Rachel Stoffle a call at (239) 784-6384 or email her at rstoffle@eslliving.com Retirement living is not always what we like to think about, but for me, I found comfort knowing some of my best days may still be in front of me.

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.



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Building Cape Coral’s Economic Future, Together

Helping Businesses Start, Grow And Invest – Creating Opportunities That Benefit The Entire Community

By the City of Cape Coral Office of Economic & Business Development

When businesses succeed, communities grow stronger. New and expanding companies create jobs closer to home, introduce new services and amenities, support local programs and help build a city where residents and businesses can thrive together.

Helping to make that possible is the City of Cape Coral’s Office of Economic & Business Development.

The office is a resource for entrepreneurs, established businesses, developers, investors and companies considering Cape Coral. Whether you are opening your first location, expanding an existing operation or planning a major investment, the Economic Development team can provide the information, connections and guidance needed to turn an idea into a viable project.

For businesses considering Cape Coral, that assistance may include demographic, workforce and market data; help identifying available commercial or industrial properties; and connections to workforce, financing and other business resources. Developers can also receive support exploring opportunities for retail, restaurants, offices, medical facilities, mixed-use projects and industrial development.

Starting or expanding a business often involves navigating several city requirements. Economic Development staff can help make that process easier by coordinating pre-application meetings, connecting applicants with the appropriate city departments and clarifying zoning, permitting and site-development requirements.

The team also helps business owners understand the Business Tax Receipt process. Commonly known as a BTR, a Business Tax Receipt is required for all businesses based in and operating within Cape Coral.

That support does not end when a business opens its doors. Existing companies can contact the office for assistance with expansion opportunities, permitting coordination and introductions to partner organizations. The goal is simple: help Cape Coral businesses succeed, remain in the community and grow here.

Listening to local employers is an important part of that work. Each month, the office hosts a Business and Industry Roundtable focused on a different sector of Cape Coral’s economy. These conversations give business owners an opportunity to discuss their challenges, needs and ideas directly with city staff. What the city learns through these discussions can help improve processes, strengthen partnerships and identify areas where additional support is needed.

The city is always looking for ways to help businesses

connect with customers. Through the free Business Spotlight Series, a Cape Coral business is featured each week across the city’s social media channels. This free program gives participating businesses added visibility while helping residents discover the people, products and services available in their own community.

Supporting existing businesses is only one part of building a strong local economy. Cape Coral must also attract new employers and commercial investment that complement the city’s continued residential growth.

Today, 57% of Cape Coral’s workforce travels outside the city for work. Recruiting employers in targeted industries create more career opportunities closer to home, reduce the distance residents must commute and bring additional services and investment into the community. Commercial growth also broadens the tax base that helps support the public services residents rely on.

The city’s target industries include healthcare and life sciences; business and financial services; technology and media; manufacturing, logistics and industrial services; sustainable real estate; consumer and community services; and culinary tourism. Qualifying projects may also receive guidance on incentive programs designed to support job creation, private investment, site development, business expansion and redevelopment.

Together, these efforts are helping create a more complete and resilient Cape Coral – one with thriving neighborhood businesses, diverse employment opportunities, needed services and sustainable commercial growth.

If you are opening, expanding or relocating a business—or planning to develop or invest in Cape Coral – the Office of Economic & Business Development is ready to help you move forward.

For more information, please call (239) 574-0443, email EDevOffice@capecoral.gov or visit capecoral.gov/edo.

Business Development Updates
Below is a snapshot of the newest projects moving through permitting or currently under construction—each helping shape Cape Coral’s future.

IN PERMITTING



Cape Coral Grove
2301 SW Pine Island Rd.
• 35,500 sq ft commercial building
• 131-acre mixed use development
• Site Clearing Plan Approved
• Subdivision Construction Plan under review
• Site Development Plan under review



Walmart
2210 SW Pine Island Rd.
• Retail & grocery - 175,360 sq. ft.
• Site development plan approved



TownePlace Suites by Marriott
1475 NE 8th Ter.
• 13,500 sq ft lodging facility
• 4-story, 112 guestrooms
• Site Development Plan - Issued

IN CONSTRUCTION



Floor & Decor
2800 NE Pine Island Rd.
• Retail
• New construction
• 60,160 sq. ft. building



Lee Health
2514 SW 2ND CT
• 100,000+/- sq ft two-story building
• Medical office, ambulatory surgery functions, additional outpatient services
• Site Development Plan - Issued



Pine Island Commerce Park
2616 Celtus Parkway
• New Construction
• Site Development issued
• Building permit issued
• Total sq ft 100,545 (office 6,104 sq ft; warehouse 94,441 sq ft)

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**SPECIAL ENGAGEMENT
AUG 28 - 30**
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**TRIBUTE CONCERT
SEPT 4 - 5**
A feel-good tribute to the smooth sounds of the '70s and '80s featuring hits from the Doobie Brothers, Steely Dan, Christopher Cross, and more.

**TRIBUTE CONCERT
SEPT 11 - 12**
A nostalgic concert featuring hits from the '60s and '70s, including favorites by Billy Joel, Simon & Garfunkel, Hall & Oates, and unforgettable one-hit wonders.

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A Major Renovation Called For A Big Celebration

Gulf Coast Village Is Better Than Ever

By Ann Marie O’Phelan

This past July 23, the completion of the 15-month exterior renovation for the Gulf Coast Village was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, food trucks, live music, and a festive crowd.

The not-for-profit Village has been on the map since 1989 and offers older adults many life choices – from independent living to assisted living to memory support to health services and more. It is a nationally recognized Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC). It is also sponsored by VOANS (Volunteers of America National Services), one of the nation’s largest and most comprehensive human services organizations.

The renovation, a capital improvement project, was undertaken to elevate the property and address the remaining issues caused by Hurricane Ian.

“While the project began as a response to the hurricane damage, the vision quickly became much larger. Our goal was to strengthen the building with hurricane-resistant improvements while also creating a more beautiful, welcoming, and functional community that will serve current and future residents for decades to come,” explains Executive Director Sarah Richard, MHA, LNHA.

The renovations include refreshed amenity spaces, updated apartment designs, modernized corridors, a dedicated art studio, and a new movie and multipurpose room.

“These enhancements create more opportunities for residents to socialize, pursue hobbies, and enjoy an engaging lifestyle,” adds Richard.

And the renovations are greatly appreciated by residents, such as Darlene Ferrer, who has lived at the Village since 2020.

“It’s now a safe place to live and we residents appreciate the effort the staff went through to make the construction as seamless as possible,” says Ferrer.

“More than the buildings themselves, what truly sets us apart is the people. There’s a genuine ‘Village’ feeling here: our residents look out for one another, our staff truly care, and it feels like home. That’s something you can’t renovate; it’s something you build over time,” adds Richard.

The renovations provide a more welcoming and modern appearance, agrees resident Mike Dougherty, who adds that there’s more: “I love living here!” Dougherty



Gulf Coast Village Executive Director Sarah Richard



Carol Schneider (left) representing Volunteers of America and Mick Sheldrake, Chairman of the Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce.



planning future renovations to their skilled nursing and rehabilitation center to ensure the Village continues to provide exceptional care in a modern environment.

“Gulf Coast Village has proudly served this community for nearly 40 years, and these renovations and plans represent our commitment to the next 40,” says Richard.



Poetry Corner

Miss Vitale’s Three-Legged Dog

A three-legged dog
was the only thing
'tween us and it:
cookies in the spring.

We heard Miss Vitale
gave out cookies on her porch.
Not in January.
Not in March.

But, Miss Vitale had one thing,
'tween her and thus: cookies in the spring.
The dog she loved, loved only her,
of children, he thought, his dinner.

But up we went,
close and closer.
The porch was now in view,
cookies called – we risked the fall,
from Three Legs (if it’s true).
No sign of Three Legs.
Maybe’s dreamin’ of children for all we knew!

We heard he eats them, the Three Legs does.
Bites them through and through.
With one leg gone, who blames him?
It’s all he liked to do.

Then out he ran, the Three Legs!
Straight at us, I gasped,
I froze in place and stood there
of life I’d seen the last!

It's the end of us, we children,
and for the end we braced.
What an end – for cookies!
Saw death there face to face.

Then face to nose we stood there,
froze in fear and then,
like a gentle pup,
he licked me,
and escorted us in.

Submitted by Sandra Cassidy, Cape Coral Sun reader

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 always 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.

Bird Walk At Rotary Park Tuesday, Aug. 11 – 8 to 9 a.m.

Join us for a free guided stroll through Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road, to explore the rich birdlife that calls this area home. 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.

Mr. Romantico At Lake Kennedy Center Saturday, Aug. 11 – 6 to 9 p.m.

Join us for a night featuring Italian classics and dancing '50s, '60s and '70s at the Lake Kennedy Center, 400 Santa Barbara Blvd S. This artist performs a “Tribute to Legends” including Bocelli, Elvis, Mario Lanza, Sinatra, Tom Jones, Neil Diamond, Pavarotti, Dean Martin and more.

Perfect for lovers of harmony and great music B.Y.O.B.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Cost: \$12 prepaid (deadline 4:30 p.m. day before), \$15 at the door.

Don’t miss this chance to dance and sing along to the timeless hits! Call for more information, (239) 574-0575.

Dog Days Of Summer Luncheon At Lake Kennedy Center Thursday, Aug. 13 – 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

The Dog Days of Summer are here! Enjoy a laid-back luncheon at Lake Kennedy Center, 400 Santa Barbara Blvd S. on Thursday Aug. 13, starting at 1:30 pm. The cost is \$10 per person. For more information call (239) 574-0575.

Vino’s Picasso Paint And Sip at Rotary Park Saturday, Aug. 15 – 2 to 4 p.m.

Section 4: Palms and Sunset

Experience a fun and relaxing time as you create your masterpiece with talented instructors during this Paint & Sip event at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road, on Saturday, Aug. 15, from 2 to 4 p.m. The cost is \$50 per person. No prior art experience is necessary, and all supplies are provided. All you need to do is bring your creativity and a positive attitude!

The event is open to all ages (note that a parent must accompany individuals under 21). Please note that we do not sell alcohol at these events; feel free to bring your own. For more information and to register, call (239) 549-4606.

Glide and Groove Line Dance Social Aat Four Freedoms Park Tuesday, Aug. 18 – 7 to 10 p.m.

Theme: “Decades Dance.”

Coming Up In The Cape on page 31

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Coming Up In The Cape from page 30

Mark your calendars and get ready to dance the night away at Glide and Groove! Join us once a month on Tuesday night for Glide & Groove at Four Freedoms Park – a fun, social evening of line dancing, laughter, and connection for all adult. 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

Rock n' Roll

Cape Coral Social Club—Open to the Public

"50's Sock Hop" Dinner Dance

Saturday, September 12, 2026

5:00 pm — 9:00 pm

German American Social Club

2101 SW Pine Island Rd., Cape Coral

Music by: A Moment in Time

Menu: Choice of one

• Beef Brisket; OR Chicken Breast Piccata; OR Vegetarian Eggplant Rollatini.

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• Rolls & Butter • Green Salad with Ranch

• Linguini with Roasted • Green Beans Almandine

• Red Peppers • Pecan Pie

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Salads are served at 5:30 pm

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\$35* members/\$40* guests (cash or check) —NOTE: \$38 or \$43 when using a credit card. Payment taken at the general meeting, Lake Kennedy Center, Farmer Joe's, Family Hardware on SE 47th Ter., on web at www.capecoralsocialclub.org or contact Judy at 239-699-0123. Indicate entrée choice & table seating preference. No refunds for cancellations or no shows.

Let's Rock & Roll!

(includes instruction (a new line dance), music, and light snacks will be available!) and BYOB.

Crafts And Coffee At South Cape Community Center
Friday, Aug. 21 – 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Join us for crafts and coffee at the South Cape Community Center, 4544 Coronado Pkwy., where seniors can get creative, make new friends, and enjoy coffee together in a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere. Registration is required. Call (239) 574-0806 to register.

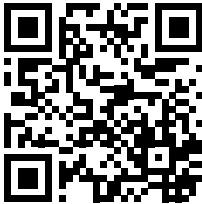
CHILL Plunge 5K and Fun Run At Rotary Park
Saturday, Aug. 22 – 7 to 10 a.m.

Get ready to cool off and kick off the school season with one of Cape Coral's most unique fitness events at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road. The CHILL Plunge Back to School 5K and One-Mile Fun Run brings together fitness, recovery, community, and fun for an unforgettable morning at Rotary Park.

Participants will enjoy an exciting race atmosphere followed by free cold plunges after the event provided by CHILL. Whether you're chasing a personal record or simply enjoying the experience with friends and family, this event is all about healthy lifestyles, positive energy, and community connection.

A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Cape Coral Police Athletic League, youth programs, helping build positive relationships between law enforcement and the youth of Cape Coral.

Don't miss a thing – scan the QR code for all Cape Coral calendar events



Youth Flag Football Returns To Cape Coral

Young athletes will soon have the opportunity to hit the field as Cape Coral Parks & Recreation opens registration for its popular Pee Wee Youth Flag Football League.

Registration begins Aug. 15 and runs through Sept. 1 for boys and girls ages 5 to 8. The co-ed league provides a fun, safe, and encouraging environment where children can learn the fundamentals of football while developing teamwork, sportsmanship, and confidence.

Practices will begin the week of Sept. 14, with the season kicking off the week of Sept. 28 at the Cape Coral Sports Complex. Games and practices will be held on Monday and Wednesday evenings, making it easy for families to enjoy the excitement of youth sports during the week.

The league is designed to ensure every child has the opportunity to participate. There are no tryouts, and players are assigned to teams based on age. The city provides uniforms, flags, footballs, and certified game officials, allowing families to focus on cheering on their young athletes.

Cape Coral Parks & Recreation is also seeking volunteer coaches who would like to make a positive impact on local youth by helping teach the game and encouraging teamwork and good sportsmanship throughout the season.

Whether your child is stepping onto the field for the first time or looking to continue building their skills, the Pee Wee Youth Flag Football League offers a great way to stay active, make new friends, and enjoy the thrill of the game.

For additional information, contact Cape Coral Parks & Recreation Athletics at [Athletics@capecoral.net](mailto:athletics@capecoral.net).

Registration opens Aug. 15, so families are encouraged to mark their calendars and sign up early for another exciting season of youth flag football.

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