

WELLEN PARK JOURNAL

FALL 2021

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CREATING DOWNTOWN WELLEN

Partners, friends
and neighbors
gather for
ceremonial
groundbreaking



COURTESY PHOTOS

BY PATRICIA HORWELL
Editor, Wellen Park Journal

IT WAS A GLORIOUS DAY FOR A GROUNDBREAKING. SMILES AND painted shovels everywhere. Hundreds of invited guests. All coming together to celebrate the beginning of construction of beautiful Downtown Wellen. Food and drink were abundant as guests chatted, took photos and milled around in the tent erected on the site of the future downtown.

SEE DOWNTOWN, A42 ▶



▲ Wellen Park Development partners used artistically painted shovels for the turning of the dirt ceremony.

◀ Neal Communities' team with their painted shovel.

Sip and Serve

Prime location planned for Downtown Wellen restaurant - Salty Bull

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA
Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

When Downtown Wellen Park opens, one of the first sights people will see is a great place to dine.

The Salty Bull Steaks, Seafood & Raw Bar

has a prime location in The Nook, a tree park that features three majestic oak trees that were relocated from within Wellen Park. A side patio with outdoor seating will give diners a view to all that is happening downtown.

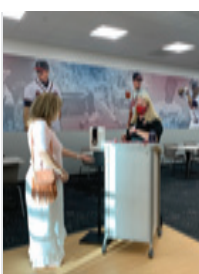
SEE SALTY BULL, A38 ▶



◀ The Porterhouse "steak-uterie" board for two featuring grilled porterhouse, Tuscan tomato bread salad, grilled asparagus, Caesar wedges, pickled cherry peppers, figs, chimichurri and bleu cheese butter is sure to be a favorite.

Become a Lecom Legend

VIP Legends Club is the best way to watch a spring training game. A8-9 ▶



Countdown to Downtown

Visit the Welcome Center to vote on your favorite ground-breaking painted shovels, at the same time funding the arts. A20-21 ▶



The Arts Are Back

The Venice Symphony to launch its 2021-2022 season in November. A40-41 ▶



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TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

SCF's Workforce Development Courses Today Train for Jobs in the Future

BY MARTY FUGATE

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

It was a busy day at State College of Florida, Sarasota-Manatee (SCF). Terri Clark took the time to speak with us anyway. That's not unusual. For Ms. Clark, every day is a busy day. She serves dual duties as SCF's dean of lifelong learning and workforce development. What's the difference? Sometimes very little. Sometimes none. The line between life and work is pretty thin these days. SCF's curriculum reflects that.



CLARK

The workforce classes at SCF address the changing demands of modern life.

Ms. Clark notes that 21st-century careers have evolved at warp speed. "There are tremendous needs in the technology and health care fields, and those needs have been accelerated by the pandemic," she says. "We are committed to training students to fill those roles in our local workforce."

The situation is analogous to Alice's predicament in "Through the Looking Glass." In today's career world, you have to run as fast as you can just to stay in the same place.

For contemporary workers, SCF provides solutions for time-strapped individuals who feel stuck on this accelerating treadmill. It offers options for part-time learning, evening and weekend classes, flexible start dates and



COURTESY PHOTO

Digital Cinema, Photography students attend class.

instructional methods that include in-person, self-paced online and online live instruction choices.

Workers of Tomorrow and Today

SCF offers a wide spectrum of industry certification training options "These can open doors for those currently outside the workforce," Ms. Clark says. "These credentials also empower workers trying to keep up with changes in their existing fields — or take a step up to another career altogether."

Technology courses are especially popular. SCF offers high-tech training in a host of job-related software programs. Its Coding Academy boot camp explores the operating systems that run these programs.

"Workers graduate from our 'boot camp' with an industry certification and a job waiting for them in the area," Ms. Clark says. "Students can also apply that certificate toward their college credit hours."

According to Ms. Clark, SCF's workforce training expands possibilities for students and

SEE SCF, A14 ►

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ALL WELLEN GOOD

Putting Down Roots

Wellen Park Residents and Friends Join in on Community Planting Day

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

Wellen Park residents, employees and community members dug into the task of planting hundreds of saplings around the 80-acre Grand Lake during Community Tree Planting Day on Sept. 15.

A mix of long leaf, slash and loblolly pine along with some bald cypress was selected to enhance the aesthetic look of the future Downtown Wellen area. The trees will also provide shade along the community's trails, offer habitat to wildlife and increase the state's pine population.

"When we do things like this as a community, it shows a lack of selfishness because you're doing something that will really benefit others in the long-term future," says Rick Severance, president of Wellen Park.

Mr. Severance and his staff were among the 75 volunteers who dug holes, added soil enhancers, planted the saplings and watered the new plantings.

"It was very rewarding and satisfying," he says of the experience. "When you give back to the community that you are helping to create, it shows that you're invested in the small things. And a lot of the small things make up the large things."

Wellness is a major focus of Wellen Park. This includes giving residents opportunities to connect with one another, take care of themselves and pursue a healthy and active lifestyle.

"This day gave people a chance to meet people who weren't in their neighborhood



Kocareli family members team up to plant some greenery.

but were part of Wellen Park overall," Mr. Severance says. "I loved getting to know these people and hearing their personal stories about why they moved to Wellen Park."

Mr. Severance says the volunteers included

a resident who just moved to Wellen Park and was looking to meet new friends, two nurses who enjoyed a day outdoors, an HR manager with a national retailer who brought her young family out to enjoy the day, and

a group of eight friends and family from IslandWalk who routinely find volunteer opportunities to participate in.

SEE PLANTING, A6 ►

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ALL WELLEN GOOD

PLANTING

From page 4

The planting crew worked hard for four hours but also enjoyed refreshments and shade in the volunteer tent, as well as a group lunch following the tree planting.

Although most of what they planted were saplings, some trees about 7-feet-tall were added to create some variation in height.

"It looks phenomenal," Mr. Severance says. "It will be interesting to see what these trees will look like in two years. In some cases, the saplings can grow as much as 3 feet per year."

The Community Tree Planting Day was

the latest tree-focused initiative Wellen Park has undertaken. Its Heritage Tree Program begun earlier this year is a nearly \$1 million effort to relocate 26 healthy live oak trees, ranging from 14 to 96 inches in diameter, from various spots within the community to Downtown Wellen. Not only will the decades-old trees help establish an immediate sense of place, but they'll also remove thousands of pounds of carbon dioxide from the air each year, generate oxygen and minimize rainwater runoff.

"Every time we make an investment," Mr. Severance says, "we understand there's a return. Sometimes it's monetary and sometimes it isn't, but it's the right thing to do for the community." 🍀



CHRIS TILLEY/WELLEN PARK JOURNAL

Wellen Park neighbors gathered to plant a variety of trees.



Rick Severance, president of Wellen Park talks to volunteers.

"It looks phenomenal. It will be interesting to see what these trees will look like in two years. In some cases, the saplings can grow as much as 3 feet per year."

— Rick Severance, president of Wellen Park



US Air Force retired veteran Jean Townley and Dinie Kramer digging in at Wellen Park.

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FUN-LOVING LIFESTYLE

VIP Club is Best Way to Watch a Braves Spring Training Game

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

Forget peanuts, popcorn and Cracker Jacks. How about Philly cheesesteak sliders, Beef Wellington, shrimp kebabs, and lobster mac and cheese? Plus, unlimited beer, wine and soft drinks.

That's what members of the LECOM Legends Club at CoolToday Park enjoy.

The 6,000-square-foot air-conditioned VIP room behind home plate is the ideal spot to enjoy the game and unlimited refreshments. Members can pop in and out, sitting in the stadium for part of the game and going into the club with lounge seating for food and drinks. Video monitors ensure that they see all the action.

"This is an exclusive, very unique space that allows fans to enjoy the game from a different perspective," says Mike Dunn, vice president of Florida Operations for the Atlanta Braves. "An all-inclusive room is a trend in ballparks."

The Braves approached Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) about partnering on the room that opened this past March. The medical college has a campus in Bradenton.

The décor of photos and memorabilia pays homage to Atlanta Braves legends such as Bobby Cox, Hank Aaron, Andrew Jones, David Justice, Ralph Garr and John Smoltz.

"It's a room where we showcase some of their contributions to the club," Mr. Dunn says. "Some of our programming throughout season hopefully entails some of the legends."

Through a private entrance, club members



COURTESY PHOTO

Lecom Legends Club members enjoying a game.

enjoy hospitality before, during and after the games. This includes gourmet snacks, a hot buffet, a dessert bar and unlimited wine, beer and soft drinks. Other drinks are available for purchase at the full bar.

The spring training season includes 16 games, but LECOM Legends Club members are invited to exclusive as well as discounted public events throughout the year, such as wine tastings, whiskey tastings, dances and comedy shows.

Non-members can lease the club area for weddings, holiday parties and other special events. There is room for a stage and dance floor.

SEE VIP, A10 ►



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FUN-LOVING LIFESTYLE



COURTESY PHOTOS

Photos and memorabilia pays homage to Atlanta Braves legends.

“This is an exclusive, very unique space that allows fans to enjoy the game from a different perspective.”

— Mike Dunn, vice president of Florida Operations for the Atlanta Braves.

VIP

From page 8

“The space is very warm and inviting to the baseball spectator and the non-baseball attendees,” Mr. Dunn says.

Just 100 memberships, each including two guests, are available. Mr. Dunn says a day pass is being considered for 2022.

For more information, call 941-413-5000, ext. 4.



Above: The clubhouse is spacious and comfortable.

Left: Lanyards for Legends Club members.

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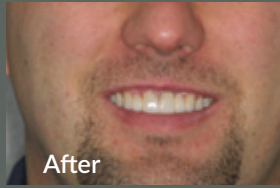
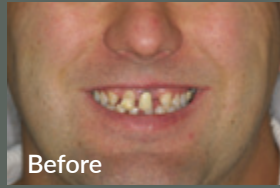


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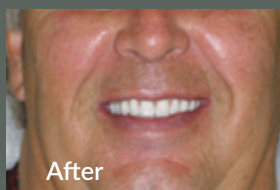
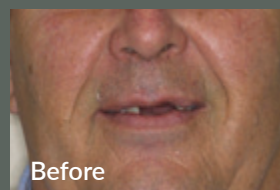
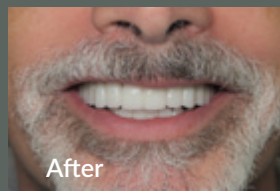
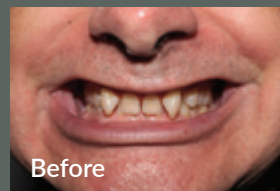
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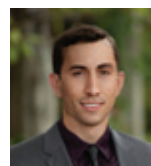
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AROUND TOWN

Coming to Wellen Park Luxury Apartment Living for Seniors

BY PATRICIA HORWELL

Editor, Wellen Park Journal

Coming in March 2023, luxury senior living will become a reality at Wellen Park. Already under construction by national developer Ryan Companies US, Inc. and Grand Living Management at Grand Living Wellen Park will be an age-in-place community, which allows residents to remain in their original apartment even as their health-care needs change.

The building will include 156 independent and assisted living units, and 36 memory care units. Cottages built by Mattamy Homes, the master developer of Wellen Park, will also be available.

According to a recent study conducted by Moore Diversified Services, Inc., the 75 and older demographic with income-qualified households in the Venice area is expected to increase by 35.8 percent between 2020 and 2025. The 235,267-square-foot building will help fulfill the demand in the area.

“Ryan and Grand Living have a proven track record of delivering luxury, next-generation senior living communities where they are needed most,” says Eric Anderson, senior vice president of senior living development, Ryan Companies. “Grand Living is the perfect addition to Wellen Park — with best-in-class retail, restaurants and entertainment just a stone’s throw away.”

As with residents living in each neighborhood throughout Wellen Park, those who will live at this new community will benefit from all that Wellen Park has to offer, including a robust downtown area featuring an 80-acre



Above: An artist's rendering of Grand Living's main building. Right: A rendering of Grand Living Wellen Park's cottages.



COURTESY IMAGES

lake, entertainment venues, active parks, retail shops, waterfront dining and pedestrian-friendly trails and streets.

“We have been very mindful to select partners like Ryan Companies that can layer in the appropriate diversification of residential lifestyles with the level of quality people have to come to expect at Wellen Park,” said Rick Severance, president, Wellen Park. “The addition of a luxury senior living community provides options for both Wellen Park residents who want to age in place or have their senior loved ones nearby.”

Ryan Architecture + Engineering designed the luxury-inspired, four-story

building, which will incorporate key design features and amenities to promote a healthy lifestyle for residents, including multiple dining venues; a library; wellness/telehealth center with fitness areas, spa and salon; club room; activity room and a large gathering space for community events and spiritual services.

“We are proud to be a part of the Wellen Park neighborhood and look forward to showing our future residents first-class happiness, showcasing our extraordinary environment and remarkable programs and services,” said Dan Peterka, Grand Living’s president and CEO.

“Grand Living is the perfect addition to Wellen Park — with best-in-class retail, restaurants and entertainment just a stone’s throw away.”

Eric Anderson, senior vice president of senior living development, Ryan Companies.

Once the building is completed, Grand Living Management will handle day-to-day operations and Ryan will provide asset management services.

Ryan Companies has completed 50 senior living communities across the country with more than 500 units in Florida. This will be the 11th project in partnership with Grand Living Management and the fourth in the state. 🏡

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Vance M. Wright-Browne, MD

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TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

SCF

From page 2

retirees alike.

SCF's workforce training expands possibilities for students and retirees alike. Lifelong learning opportunities in performing arts, computer basics and arboriculture are among classes that find an audience in all age groups. The college is adding new offerings all the time, and there is always an eye on the job market when determining where to expand.

Ms. Clark compares the school's many offerings to an airport hub. "It depends on your destination, she says. "A student can apply their credit hours towards their associate degree at a state college. Mid-career graduates can apply it to their current jobs or their next job. You can also learn for the love of learning and not apply it to your career. Where you want to go with it is entirely up to you."

And what if you don't know where you want to go?

Each student in SCF's workforce training program gets a success coach. The college has a team of success coaches to guide students through academic challenges and career exploration. Many students, especially those attending college for the first time, are still considering options ranging from earning an Associate in Arts degree and transferring to a university or looking for a fast springboard into a career "They examine goals, options and obstacles to overcome. It's not a one-and-done talk. The success coach follows each student throughout their tenure at SCF."00

Tomorrow's Employers Need Workers Today

An ambitious firm can aim for the moon —



COURTESY PHOTOS

SCF Center for Advanced Technology & Innovation.

and fills its office or shop floor with the most cutting-edge technology available. But if it can't find enough tech-savvy workers to fill those jobs, its moon shot will be a dud.

Many area corporations were stymied by that problem. SCF has stood in the gap to provide its workers the 21st century training they need.

"Today's students are tomorrow's workers," Ms. Clark says. "Employers throughout the region partner with us to train or retrain their employees. It's a win-win situation for employer and employee alike."

Ms. Clark notes that SCF offers both certified workforce development, workforce certificates, and associates in science degrees.

SCF's instruction is informed by local advisory boards of area businesses and chambers of commerce who are in touch with the needs of today's employers.

"Employers throughout the region depend on SCF to provide hands-on training to their workforce," Ms. Clark says. SCF can provide training at one of its campuses, online or at a partner's location.

Entrepreneurs Wanted

So far, we've focused on SCF's workforce training for existing businesses and employees. But many of the future's most rewarding jobs don't even exist yet. American innovators are constantly breaking the rules, changing

"Employers throughout the region partner with us to train or retrain their employees. It's a win-win situation for employer and employee alike."

— Terri Clark, SCF's dean of lifelong learning and workforce development

the game and creating new job possibilities. Creative destruction is their specialty. Even so, tomorrow's entrepreneurs need a little help today.

And SCF provides just that.

"Our entrepreneurial training is second to none," Ms. Clark says. "SCF's 26 West Center is a gateway of innovation, providing entrepreneurs with the resources, tools and workspaces they need to innovate and expand."

Future Bill Gates and Warren Buffets find a galaxy of possibility inside this gateway. The 26 West Center provides a host of training, seminars and networking opportunities. The areas it explores include financing, marketing, technology and business practices in specific industries. That said, each student can set his or her own entrepreneurial path.

"Entrepreneurs have full access to the entire SCF system of resources at the 26 West Center," Ms. Clark says. "That includes the expert faculty and staff of our Library & Learning Center, and a network of professionals who serve as mentors, advisers and door openers."

Future business innovators gain invaluable knowledge at SCF. Where will they go with it? Only time will tell ...

But I can hardly wait. 💎



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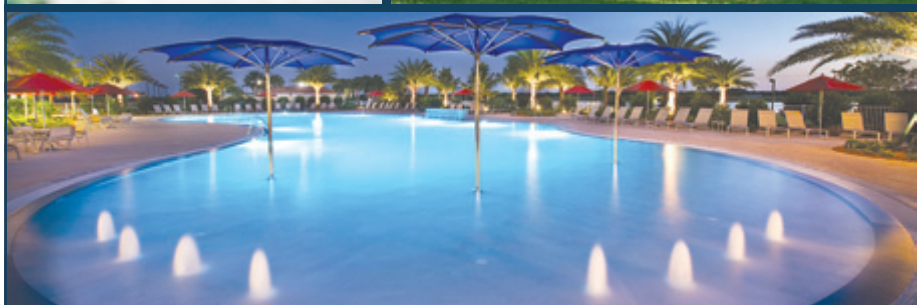
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PET TIPS

From veterinarian
Andrea Daniels of West Villages Animal Clinic
www.westvillagesvet.com



Keeping Your Pets Safe During the Holidays

The holiday season is here, and many pet parents plan to include their furry companions in the festivities. During the holiday season, starting with Halloween and ending with New Year's Day, it is important to try to keep your pet's eating and exercise habits as close to their normal routine as possible.

Halloween can be particularly spooky for our furry children. The best Halloween plan for your furry friend is "no tricks, no treats." Leave your pet at home if trick or treating. If you do choose to take your furry friend out, costumes should be loose enough to provide freedom of movement and not interfere with vision or hearing. If your pet stays home, the constant doorbell and strangers in weird costumes can be too much for them. Pets should stay away from candy and their wrappers, caramel apples as well — these treats or snacks can lead to intestinal upsets, GI blockages, and pancreatitis.



Thanksgiving and pets go hand in hand — aren't you forever thankful you have your furry friend? Before the celebration begins let's ensure your Thanksgiving festivities will be as pet friendly as possible. Since Thanksgiving is largely about food, remember not all people foods are safe for pets.

Turkey should be cooked, boneless and given in a small amount. Do not feed bones or skin — dogs and cats have a difficult time processing fatty foods like turkey skin and it can lead to GI injury. Some pies and cakes include harmful ingredients like xylitol, which can be fatal to your furry friend. Chocolate can be harmful to both dogs and cats and cause vomiting, diarrhea and seizures.

Christmas is a favorite for pets, there's usually a present from Santa under the tree for them. Here's some helpful hints to keep Christmas fun, safe and enjoyable for all. Anchor your tree so it doesn't tip and fall. Many cats like to climb them. Also, stagnant water can make our pets sick so keeping them from drinking the live tree water is important. Avoid mistletoe and holly. Both can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and some cardiovascular issues. Lilies can cause kidney failure in cats so keep them away from the pretty flowers. Tinsel is a shiny toy for cats but ingesting it can lead to an obstructed digestive tract, dehydration and severe vomiting. Keep wires from the Christmas tree clear and contained so animals don't chew on them. We like to share our foods with our pets during the Christmas season. It is their holiday too after all but keep many of the foods (just like Thanksgiving) away from them. Instead, pick special treats for them — chew toys, kongs, stuffed catnip toy or a cat dancer.



New Year's Day is fun for most, but sometimes not for your furry friend. Strings and thrown confetti can get lodged in a cat's intestines. Noisy poppers can frighten noise sensitive dogs and cats. Many pets are also afraid of fireworks, so be sure to secure your pet in a safe and escape proof area to hide when close to midnight. When dealing with any get together during the holidays remember that some florals are harmful to pets. When in doubt use artificial flowers. Some pets become shy or protective when it's a full house so sometimes putting them in a quiet room away from the action is the best solution.

SHOT AROUND WELLEN



COURTESY PHOTO
 Atlanta Braves mascot, Blooper, with firefighters at the Public Safety Awareness Day Event at Cool Today Park.

Just Desserts Dance at Island Walk



1. Dick Murdock and Maeve Murdock
2. Susan Carter, Dixon Carter and Marie Fields
3. Bill Barrientos and Bella Barrientos
4. Ron AlarveDan and Dana McCullough
5. Doing the Electric Slide
6. Vanessa Tinsley of Peach Wave
7. Jim Collin and Marge Collin





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ALL WELLEN GOOD

Wellen Park Golf & Country Club coming to Playmore District

Wellen Park Golf & Country Club, a new lifestyle neighborhood by national home-builder Lennar is coming to Wellen Park's Playmore District.

The neighborhood will consist of more than 1,300 condominium, coach and single-family homes, priced from the \$200s. Floor plans will range from 1,120 square feet to 3,473 square feet, and all home options will feature innovative design details and Lennar's signature Everything's Included® program, which provides homebuyers with a high level of standard features already included in the price of the homes. Features include granite countertops, stainless steel appliances and designer-style cabinetry.

Wellen Park Golf & Country Club will also include an 18-hole course and a clubhouse offering resort-style living and entertainment. Golf course construction is expected to take a year, and when completed, residents will be able to enjoy access to bundled golfing opportunities.

Homebuyers will have access to fast and dependable fiber-based solutions for TV, internet and phone service from Hotwire Communications. Residents will enjoy internet speeds of up to 10Gbps, more than 100 times faster than the average connection in the U.S.

Hotwire offers the personal touch by meeting individually with each customer for a one-on-one, in-home consultation, determining the exact package of services and products to meet their individual needs.

Residents will have easy access to the community's network of paths and trails for walking, running and biking and is conveniently



COURTESY PHOTOS

Wellen Park Golf & Country Club will include an 18-hole course, clubhouse along with a variety of amenities.

located near Downtown Wellen and Cool Today Park, the spring-training home of the Atlanta Braves. Sales are expected to begin in the second quarter of 2022.

Wellen Park currently has approximately 8,000 residents, and at full build-out will have more than 60,000 residents and 22,000 homes.

Now under construction, Downtown Wellen will feature a vibrant hub filled with shopping, dining and entertainment options and

other amenities. The mixed-use development will be open to residents and visitors alike and feature waterfront experiences, pedestrian-friendly streets and public community spaces.

Join the Wellen Park Golf & Country Club VIP interest list at www.wellenpark.com/neighborhood/wellen-park-golf-country-club to be first to receive neighborhood updates. 🏡



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WELL VERSED

Wellen Park Digs Art

Contest to Celebrate Favorite Downtown Wellen Ground-Breaking Painted Shovels

Wellen Park is holding a contest where people can admire the makings of a future Downtown Wellen art installation — custom painted shovels used in the recent Downtown Wellen groundbreaking ceremony — and vote for their favorites. By choosing their favorites, voters will actually be helping the local arts scene thrive. For each ballot cast, Wellen Park will donate \$1 to the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County in support of local community arts.

Visitors may view the painted shovels at the Wellen Park Welcome Center through Nov. 24 and choose their favorites. Contest results will be announced in late November.

First-, second- and third-place winners will each be awarded a \$1,000 donation to the charity of their choice. Superlative category winners will be chosen by a select panel of judges and receive a \$500 donation to the charity of their choice.

The painted shovels are a visual representation of the dedication that Wellen Park has to the arts, cultural experiences, wellness and most of all, community.

The uniquely painted shovels were created by nearly 40 Wellen Park partners involved in the development of Downtown Wellen. The collection is one of several custom art installations planned for Downtown Wellen.

“The originality and creativity of these shovels truly embody the spirit of Wellen Park,” said Christine Masney, vice president of marketing for Wellen Park. “They’re truly a special representation of this community that we’re excited to share with everyone.”

While at the Welcome Center to view the



Nearly 40 Wellen Park development partners painted custom shovels to celebrate the groundbreaking of Downtown Wellen.

COURTESY PHOTOS

shovels, residents and visitors may also enjoy several other unique art displays. “Blooms” is a vibrant mural of colorful flowers painted on the building’s exterior walls. Indoors, another custom art piece is on display: “Heartfelt

Connections,” created by Sarasota-based artist Alexis Fraser, known as “Lipstick Lex.” The 8-by-10-foot piece is made up of lipstick kisses as an homage to Wellen Park’s heritage tree program.

Also, inside the Welcome Center, local artists from the North Port Arts Center are regularly featured and celebrated through a mobile pop-up cart and nook that provides rotating short-term exhibit space. Guests

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WELL VERSED



COURTESY PHOTOS

For every vote cast in the "Wellen Park Digs Art" painted shovels contest, Wellen Park will donate \$1 for the love of arts to the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County.

"The originality and creativity of these shovels truly embody the spirit of Wellen Park."

— Christine Masney, vice president of marketing for Wellen Park

may enjoy and view the artwork on site, as well as purchase pieces to take home.

Now under construction, Downtown Wellen will feature a vibrant hub filled with shopping, dining and entertainment options and other amenities. The mixed-use development will be open to residents and visitors alike and feature waterfront experiences, pedestrian-friendly streets and public community spaces.

Phase One of Downtown Wellen is expected to open in the fourth quarter of 2022 and will include retail shops; waterfront dining and other restaurants; a town hall; a kids' playground and splash pad; a food truck kiosk area; an outfitter equipped with e-bikes, paddleboards and kayaks for enjoying the active lake; and a three-mile health and wellness trail.

The Welcome Center is open Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and Sunday, 12-5 p.m.



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ALL WELLEN GOOD

Plan Your Visit to the Wellen Park Welcome Center

Step inside the Wellen Park Welcome Center, and it's quickly obvious that it's much more than just your basic information spot. Yes, prospective homebuyers can learn all about living at the wellness-focused community here. But it's also a warm and welcoming gathering place where current residents can relax and meet up with friends.

Created as an immersive, interactive community hub, the Wellen Park Welcome Center features a sleek design where artwork and other visual displays help tell the community's story. A breathtaking preserved moss wall that spans almost 40 feet illustrates Wellen Park's neighborhoods and topography, while a vertical electric bicycle display highlights the extensive trail and pathway network. "Heartfelt Connections," a custom art piece made up of lipstick kisses created by Sarasota-based artist Alexis Fraser (known as "Lipstick Lex"), shares the story of Wellen Park's heritage tree program in a unique way.

The displays give prospective homebuyers a feel for the community. But they also help create a comfortable space where current residents and other visitors can spend time and visit with friends while enjoying a cup of coffee, glass of wine or craft beer from the adjoining Barrel & Bean café.

Barrel & Bean offers locally sourced Venetian Coffee Roasters coffee and pastries in the morning, sandwiches and paninis for lunch, and small plates, wine and Venice-based 3 Bridges Brewing craft beer for happy hour and dinner. It's open to the public and operated by OTW Restaurant Group, which also owns Irma's Tacos in the adjacent Market-place shopping center.

Food and beverages can be enjoyed alfresco at the spacious outdoor patio lounge area that runs the entire length of the building. It's



COURTESY PHOTOS

Prospective homebuyers can learn all about living at the wellness-focused community at the Wellen Park Welcome Center.

WELLEN PARK WELCOME CENTER

>> **Where:** 12275 Mercado Drive, Venice.

>> **Contact:** 941-499-8210, www.wellenpark.com

>> **Hours:** 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 12-5 p.m., Sunday.

a great spot for gorgeous sunset views, and a portion of the patio is shaded by a weather-responsive electric pergola.

The Wellen Park Welcome Center, Barrel & Bean and the adjacent lawn area will also serve as the location for an upcoming event series beginning in this fall. The 18-month-long "Countdown to Downtown" celebration has kicked off.

Expect a series of curated events featuring a range of makers, craft artisans and culinary talent. Current residents, prospective homeown-


ers and the general public will be able to get a feel for the community's lifestyle and preview the kinds of experiences that will take place in Downtown Wellen once it's completed.

Whether you already live in Wellen Park or are interested in learning more about the community, stop by the Wellen Park Welcome Center. If you already know why Wellen Park is a great place to live, come on in and have a seat.


Brand ambassadors at the Welcome Center can answer questions and guide you through

interactive touchscreen kiosks that display home plans, move-in ready and quick move-in homes and neighborhood and regional amenities. Look for them waiting to welcome you by the three-wheeled Italian Apé truck that's been retrofitted as a reception desk, another playful touch that helps shows this is not your ordinary welcome center.

The Welcome Center is open 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Monday-Saturday, and 12 p.m.-5 p.m., Sunday. Call 941-499-8210 or visit www.wellenpark.com for more information. 🍷



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FALL 2021

| A23

ISLAND WALK – DIVOSTA



Crestview

Downsize and upgrade all at once with the Crestview home design at IslandWalk. With 1,574 square feet, and the ability to flex up to 3 bedrooms or 2.5 bathrooms, the Crestview design offers a layout that is just the right size, giving you room to breathe without wasting space. Enter the home to a formal entry way, offering seamless sightline views of the connected living spaces to the outdoors. Continue to 'wow' your company with a cook's kitchen suitably placed at the rear of the home, allowing for effortless indoor or outdoor meals with convenient access to the covered lanai. And, enjoy personalization options such as a multi-generational suite featuring an oversized bedroom with private ensuite bathroom, or the flex room offering a great opportunity for a home office or craft room for freeing up more space in the everyday living area.

Sales center:
13591 Salinas Street, Venice
941-220-0548



Specifications

Base price: From the \$400s

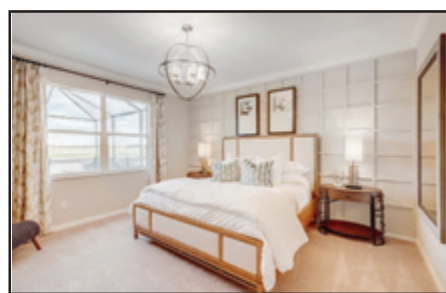
SF: 1,574

2-3 Bedrooms

2-2.5 Bathrooms

Home Type: Single Family

TORTUGA – LENNAR



Marsala

The 2,201-square-foot Marsala home is designed to entertain, featuring an open-concept kitchen and great room. A sumptuous owner's suite creates a personal retreat set apart at the back of the home with two walk-in closets and fabulous master bath. Two additional bedrooms each have their own private bathroom. The den is a great home office or hobby room. The Marsala is complete with a spacious covered lanai and two-car garage.

Sales center:
19611 Tortuga Cay Dr.
941-214-9684



Specifications

Base price: \$364,999

SF: 2,201

3 Bedrooms + Den

3 Bathrooms

Home Type: Single Family

* Prices are subject to change without notice.

GRAN PLACE – SAM RODGERS HOMES



Fort Walton

The Fort Walton creates the perfect place to spend time with family and friends. With an impressive 3,127 square feet of living area, the four-bedroom, three-bathroom design with optional in-law suite offers expansive views of the outdoors from the oversized island kitchen, the breakfast nook and the grand living room.

Sales center: Coming Soon
18075 Home Run Drive
941.621.9307

Specifications

- Base price: COMING SOON!
- SF: 3,127
- 4 Bedrooms
- 3 Bathrooms
- Home Type: Single family

SARASOTA N WCI, A LENN



Roma

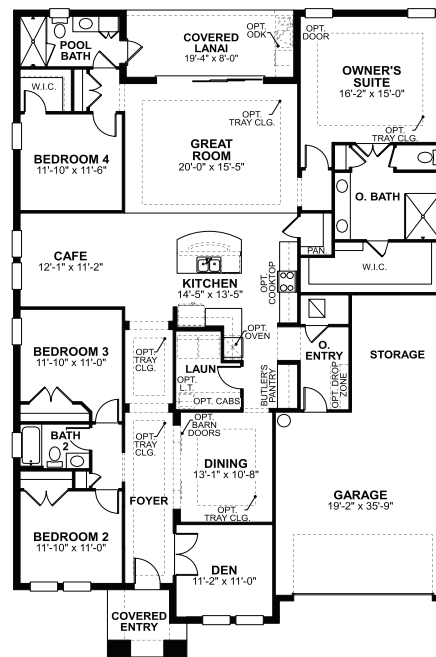
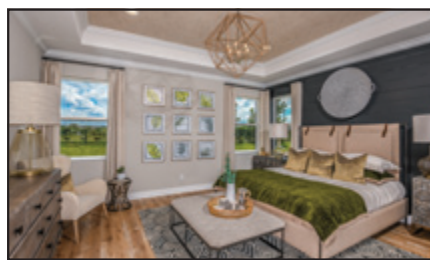
The living is easy with a perfect 1,917 square feet of living area, four bedrooms plus den, two full baths, a large 2-car garage leading to screened-in lanai.

Sales center:
23114 Copperleaf Drive, Venice
941-246-0076

Specifications

- Base price: \$371,999
- SF: 1,917
- 2 Bedrooms & Den
- 2 Bathrooms
- Home Type: Single Family

OASIS – M/I HOMES



The Jackson

A spacious and elegant design, the Jackson's standard layout includes 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, a 3-car garage with additional storage space, and a den with a full separate mudroom and utility room. As you walk in the Jackson, you step through a covered entry into a long foyer. A den sits at the beginning of the house, creating a light-filled space for work or play. Two large bedrooms sit on the other side with a full bathroom. At the end of a long hallway with an optional tray ceiling, you are greeted by a large open concept space. The kitchen offers an informal dining nook, ample countertop and cabinet storage, and a full walk-in utility room. With clear sightlines, the kitchen opens out into the great room. Designed with maximum space for entertaining and family gatherings, the great room is backed by huge sliding glass doors that lead to a covered lanai. The owner's suite is fit for any king and queen with an optional tray ceiling. The owner's bathroom offers double sinks, an enclosed shower space, a separate toilet area, and a massive walk-in closet with the option to extend it even further. The mudroom provides a seamless transition from outdoors to indoors, featuring a 2-car garage with additional space that can be turned into a home gym or used for extra storage.

Sales center:
19806 Bridgetown Loop, Venice
941-208-6897

Specifications

- Base price: \$466,990
- SF: 2,744 – 3,335
- 4-5 Bedrooms
- 3-5 Bathrooms
- Home Type: Single Family

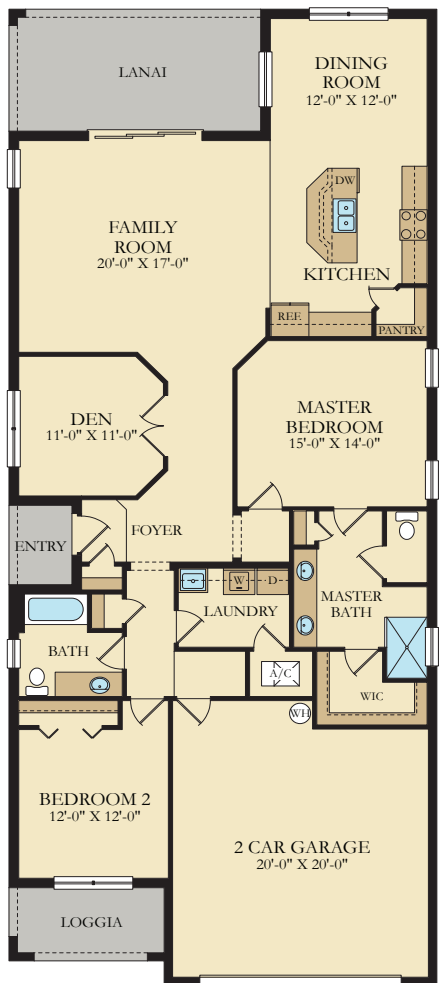
* Prices are subject to change

NATIONAL –
STAR COMPANY



Wider-air living space, featuring two spacious
dining and airy and open living room with sliders

nice



GRAND PALM – NEAL COMMUNITIES



Sanibel

Sanibel in Grand Palm features a generously-sized open living area at its heart, with an island kitchen with walk-in pantry, breakfast nook and family room, which has views into the separate dining room. The master suite spans one side of the home and includes a large master bedroom with coffered ceiling and an optional door directly to the lanai, two walk-in closets and spacious master bath with two sink vanities, garden tub, walk-in shower and private water closet. The Sanibel also includes two additional bedrooms and den. Options include a club room or fourth bedroom in lieu of the den. If you opt for the club room you also have the option of an extended lanai with outdoor kitchen wall..

Sales center:
21209 Wacissa Dr, Venice
941-214-9190

Specifications

- Base price: Low \$600s
- SF: 2,453
- 3 Bedrooms
- 3 Bathrooms
- Home Type: Single Family

BOCA ROYALE – NEAL COMMUNITIES



Meadow Brook

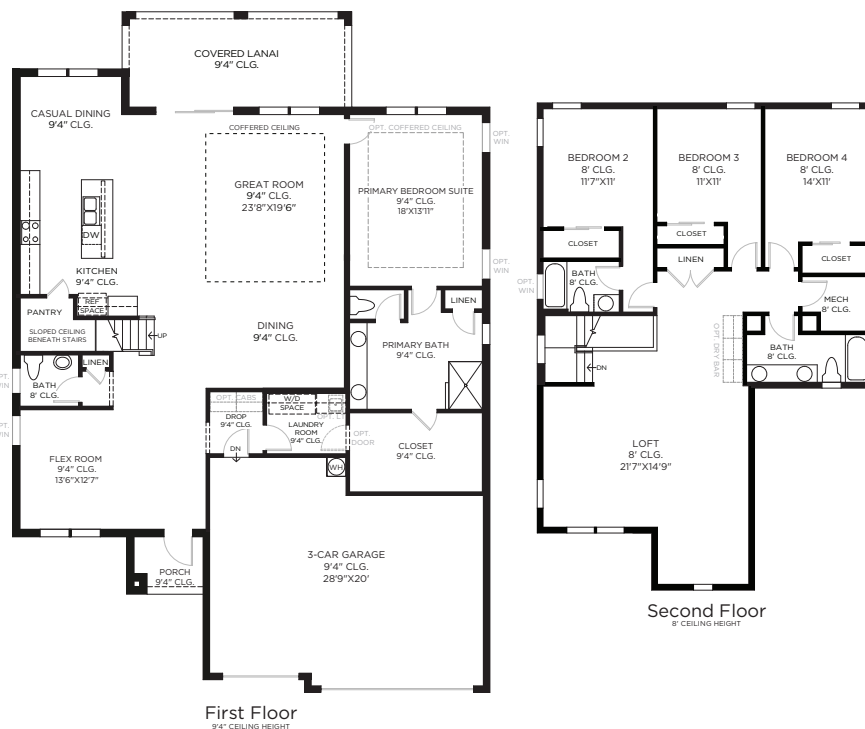
The Meadow Brook offers an open layout and several options for personalization. Add a den in lieu of the leisure room or a pool bath to the spacious lanai. You can also create a guest suite in place of one of the secondary bedrooms. The open gourmet kitchen comes with an island, corner walk-in pantry and dining nook and overlooks a spacious great room. A door from the bedroom to the lanai can be added in the master suite which also includes dual walk-in closets and bath with large walk-in shower and private water closet. This home is available in 1 or 2 story options with the optional bonus room adds an additional bedroom and bathroom and brings the home to 2,600 square feet.

Sales center:
1 Golf View Dr, Englewood
941-214-9760

Specifications

- Base price: High \$400s
- SF: 2,014
- 3 Bedrooms
- 2 Bathrooms
- Home Type: Single Family

SOLSTICE – TOLL BROTHERS



Willet

With a floor plan that flows effortlessly, the Willet home design offers numerous flexible living options. The first floor features an expansive great room, dining room, and flex room with a coffered ceiling and a large, covered lanai. The well-designed kitchen features a casual dining area, a large center island with breakfast bar, plenty of counter and cabinet space, and a spacious walk-in pantry. The primary bedroom suite is enhanced by a large walk-in closet and spa-inspired primary bath with a dual-sink vanity, a large luxe shower, linen storage, and a private water closet. Upstairs features an oversized loft and three secondary bedrooms, one with an ensuite bath, and another full bath with a dual-sink vanity. Additional highlights include a convenient powder room and drop zone, centrally located laundry, and extra storage.

Sales center:
152 Daylily Blvd. North, Venice
941-214-9684

Specifications

- Base price: From the low \$600s
- 3½-4 Bathrooms
- SF: 3,395+
- Home Type: Single family
- 4-6 Bedrooms + Den

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Hampton II

The Hampton II single-family home is carefully crafted to enhance your lifestyle with optimized living spaces. This open split floorplan features 3 bedrooms, a flex room, 2 baths, and a 2-car garage. As you walk into the Hampton II, you are welcomed by the spacious, airy designer kitchen with abundant countertop and cabinet space, a walk-in pantry and island with a breakfast bar. Seamlessly connected is the airy Great Room and dining area that are bathed in natural light. An oversized covered lanai is perfect for enjoying the beautiful Florida weather. The owner's suite is a private retreat and includes a spa-inspired owner's bath with a large glass-enclosed shower, walk-in closet, and 2 vanities. A flex room rounds out the livability of this home by providing the ideal place for a home office, hobby room or living room.

Sales center:
11720 Renaissance Blvd., Venice
941-208-6375

Specifications

- Base price: \$508,990
- 2 Bathrooms
- SF: 2,300
- Home Type: Single family
- 3 Bedrooms

* Prices are subject to change without notice.



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WANDER WITH WELLEN

Step Back into Elegant Old Florida at Historic Boca Grande

BY PATRICIA HORWELL

Editor, Wellen Park Journal

Boca Grande or Gasparilla Island, playground of presidents and celebrities, lies about a 30-minute ride and a \$6 toll from Wellen Park, making it the perfect day trip for residents and their out-of-town guests. And although the island has played host to the George H. W. Bush family, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Audrey Hepburn and others, it manages to maintain its small town, laid-back charm.

The fishing here is great and has been attracting visitors for more than 100 years. Boca Grande is known as the tarpon capital of the world. Strictly a catch and release event, tarpon fishing is not for the faint of heart. The tarpon, known as the silver king, is a difficult creature to hook and hang onto but an experienced captain can help even novice anglers. Tarpon run from April to October, but the best fishing is during April and May. Book a trip with a captain out of one of the island's several marinas, including Whidden's Marina, on the National Register of Historic Places.

Boca Grande's white sand beaches are famous among shell collectors and there are two old lighthouses to explore. Gasparilla Island State Park on the south end of the island is home to one of them. Admission to the park is cash only and based on the honor system.

Originally known as the Gasparilla Island Light Station, the Port Boca Grande Lighthouse is the oldest structure on the island and has operated since 1890. It is home to a museum that opened in 1999 and is open to visitors from 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Tuesday



The historic Port Boca Grande Lighthouse was originally known as the Gasparilla Island Light Station.

PHOTOS BY PATRICIA HORWELL / WELLEN PARK JOURNAL

through Saturday and is closed Sunday and Monday, as well as during the month of August and on major holidays.

The museum covers cultural and social history of the area dating from 12,000 B.C. to the present. It contains a nature room featuring a "please touch" area with local

bones, fossils and shells. The museum gift shop offers souvenirs, local artwork and jewelry. All proceeds from the gift shop and donations to the museum directly support the lighthouse, local state parks, Gasparilla, Cayo Costa, Don Pedro and Stump Pass, and educational programs.

Bring your bike along when you visit and cycle the picturesque 6.5-mile path that runs the length of the island.

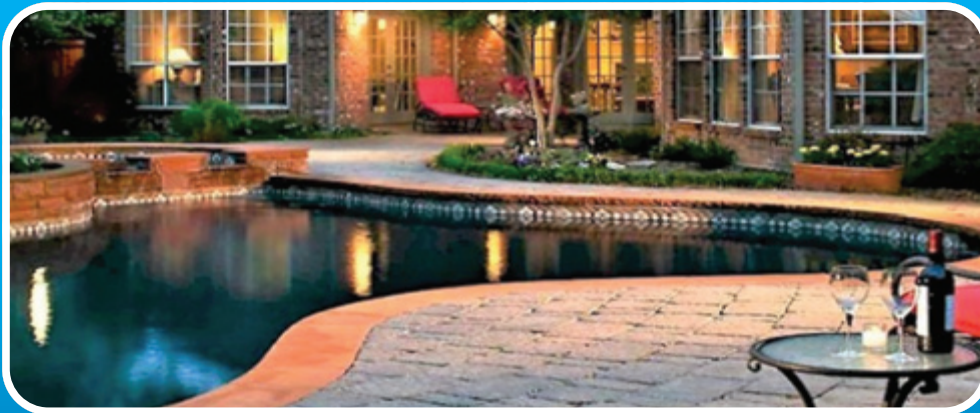
The quaint town offers plenty of shopping and restaurant fare. Or pick up a picnic lunch at one of the local grocers. A popular lunch stop is the Pink Elephant, which is affiliated

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WANDER WITH WELLEN



There is no lack of shopping on Gasparilla Island.

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with the century-old Gasparilla Inn & Club. You might try the Jumbo Lump Crab & Shrimp Caesar, which is chock full of delectable crab and shrimp or the BBQ Beef Brisket Sandwich (bring your appetite). Wash it all down with a Pretty in Pink martini or an ice-cold craft beer.

Finally, be sure to visit the elegant Gasparilla Inn & Club with its extravagant accommodations, including luxury suites and cottages. Or dine in the restaurant. And if you're feeling flush, stay the night. The inn is closed summers and reopens each year in mid-October. ♦



Lunch at the Pink Elephant is not to be missed.

PHOTOS BY PATRICIA HORWELL / WELLEN PARK JOURNAL



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ALL WELLEN GOOD

Cleaning Up Coastal Waters Is Focus of Local Volunteers

BY NANCI THEORET

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

Tangles of fishing line.
Barnacle-encrusted crab traps.
Bait buckets.
Tires.
PVC pipe.
A drone.

For more than 20 years, scuba divers and other volunteers with the Suncoast Reef Rovers have removed a laundry list of lost, abandoned and discarded debris from the waters of Venice’s popular Gulf of Mexico destinations. Mangled fishing rods and gear wedged in the rocks of the North and South Jetties. Beach chairs and umbrellas resting 18 feet below on the ocean floor. A water-logged beanbag chair.

“We’re kind of like the small dive club that can,” says Ken Lackmann, a longtime member who dove with the volunteers before assuming the duties of underwater debris cleanup events coordinator 11 years ago. “We provide environmental aid and coastal stewardship. If this debris was left year after year, it would end up snagging the sea life and creatures living in these habitats.”

The Reef Rovers conduct five to six annual underwater cleanups, each requiring a cadre of scuba divers, snorkelers, kayakers, shore-based helpers. It is a herculean effort to coordinate. Mr. Lackmann has to factor in early-morning slack tides coinciding with nonholiday weekends — usually only a handful a year — plus diver-friendly warm water temperatures and other variables as unpredictable as the weather.

Although the Reef Rovers number only 38 paid members, their cleanups attract a



COURTESY PHOTO

Suncoast Reef Rovers volunteer members at an underwater cleanup event.

growing number of volunteers — families, father-and-daughter dive teams, high school students, Girl Scout troops, environmental groups, email recipients, Facebook followers and tourists heeding the call for help.

“More people are asking to help out,” Mr. Lackmann says. “The more eyes and helpers we can have, the more underwater trash we can bring up.”

A North Jetty cleanup in September drew 51 volunteers, including 25 divers, three police boats and assistance from Sea Tow Venice, which donates the mechanical muscle and the technology to hoist the heaviest objects.

“If we had 50 divers, we still wouldn’t have enough,” Mr. Lackmann says. “Sometimes

the visibility is only two to three feet which is difficult when you’re looking through rocks.”

It all adds up — 862 pounds of trash collected during the recent North Jetty cleanup, an average of 500 to 800 pounds per event, up to six times a year over 20 years.

“If it weren’t for the Reef Rovers the north and south jetties of Venice, which are popular with tourists, would be very littered and very hazardous,” says Ronda Ryan, director of Sarasota Bay Watch which participates. “Abandoned fishing gear and nets will ruin the habitat and decrease the amount of fish there. By cleaning and maintaining these areas, they’re ensuring a healthy fish population in a heavily visited tourist area.”

During the September dive, the group

removed 146 pounds of steel, 142 pounds of fishing line, 113 pounds of nets, 80 pounds of lead, 75 pounds of miscellany, 72 pounds of tires, 55 pounds of rope, and numerous other items. All collected in an area about the length of a football field.

It’s true what they say about another man’s junk. Sarasota Bay Watch sifts through the debris, recycling, reusing and repurposing items for educational outreach. The nonprofit fashioned a mermaid from nets, lines, lures, buoys and other derelict fishing gear.

“We have a spectacular relationship with the Reef Rovers,” says Ms. Ryan. “They’re a very strong, enthusiastic group who are laser-focused at what they do. They’re very knowledgeable about local conditions and

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ALL WELLEN GOOD

“We provide environmental aid and coastal stewardship. If this debris was left year after year, it would end up snagging the sea life and creatures living in these habitats.”

— Ken Lackmann, Suncoast Reef Rovers member

the troublesome sites.”

The group also accommodates special requests. Members have repositioned Venice Beach swim buoys moved by storms, cleaned up the waters around Higel Park, the Venice Yacht Club and the marina at the Crow’s Nest Bar & Grill — places where current and conditions aren’t conducive to retrieving something accidentally dropped overboard.

While they’ll continue to expand their base of volunteers and cleanups, the group is the process of creating an artificial reef snorkel-

ers and divers can visit just off the beach. And just like the Reef Rovers’ cleanups, the project will extend to the community.

“We want to involve middle and high school kids in the actual design,” says Mr. Lackmann who plans to retire by then. “We want them to figure out the best patterns for 75 to 100 reef balls. The winner will get a cash award, free diving lessons and their name on one of the artificial reef balls.”

For more information or to volunteer, visit www.suncoastreefrover.org.



COURTESY PHOTO

Suncoast Reef Rovers volunteers inspect debris recovered from the ocean floor.

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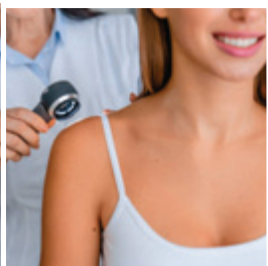
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WHY I LIVE HERE

New York Couple Plants Roots in Island Walk

BY NANCI THEORET

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

Geoff and Carol Gurock did something others only dream of — they left their old lives behind. The couple, from Long Island, New York, sold their house and everything they couldn't fit into four carry-on size suitcases, loaded dogs Chance and Shelby into their SUV, and headed south in search of new adventures and a new life in Florida. Miles and months later, they found it in the people and places of Venice and Wellen Park.

"It was very out of character for two organized people who are normally very detailed in their planning," Geoff chuckles. "The snowblower sold first so there was no turning back."

Carol was about to retire from teaching in June 2019; Geoff, a sales rep for a safety equipment manufacturer, could travel and work anywhere. And their youngest son had just announced he was flying the coop, "following his heart — and his girlfriend — to northern California," says Geoff. "Unexpectedly, we were about to become empty nesters."

The Gurocks' adventures took them to Delaware, the Carolinas and ultimately to Florida where their only set-in-stone plan was to spend a month in Delray Beach and another in Naples — destinations they'd previously visited on vacations. They were delayed in Delray after Chance required veterinary care. With Naples no longer on their itinerary, the couple was at a loss.

"We thought we would know by then where we would want to live," says Geoff. "We were asking ourselves where to go next. I remember someone once telling us they loved Venice and we had never been there.



COURTESY PHOTO

Geoff and Carol Gurock.

So once again, we packed up the car and the dogs and headed west."

Whether they were dining at a downtown Venice restaurant, visiting the Ringling Museum in Sarasota or waving to neighbors from a 10-day rental in Gran Paradiso at

Wellen Park, the couple noticed a discernible difference: "People are a lot friendlier down here," Geoff says. "We felt welcomed by others who had made the journey before us."

There was the woman who showed Carol how to find sharks' teeth on Venice Beach.

("Once you see them, you can't unsee them," she laughs.) Doctors and other professionals who were more causal than their northern counterparts. And neighbors who welcomed them with open arms.

The Gurocks quickly acclimated to life at

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WHY I LIVE HERE

“The snowblower sold first so there was no turning back.”

— Geoff Gurock

Wellen Park, renting an unfurnished home in IslandWalk. They even scored an invitation to the block party the day before their official move in. The spartan lifestyle — the one without furniture, art or belongings — was about to catch up. “We had lawn chairs and a mattress and were going to have to look at white walls for a year,” Geoff says. “It was getting old really quick.”

So, they bought in IslandWalk, finally finding that place to call home, where their daily 4.5-mile walk begins every morning just outside the door, a flex room is now Carol’s studio and the white of a wall is glimpsed behind Carol’s paintings and Geoff’s photographs, all inspired by the beauty of Florida and its wildlife. A home where they’ve made the best friends they’ve ever had.

“We’ve met so many people,” says Geoff. “It feels like I’ve known them my whole life. It’s like when you were a kid and you’d go to your neighbor’s house and if they weren’t in, you’d go to the next house. You’d always find someone who was in. It feels like I’ve had these friendships for years.”

Now retired to pursue photography full time, Geoff praises the community lifestyle, amenities and convenience. “There’s gyms, pickleball, great shows, bands and dancing. You can be busy all the time. Sometimes we wonder how we managed to squeeze in a whole day working.

The Gurocks are also within walking distance of Downtown Wellen, eight miles from



Geoff Gurock / Courtesy Photos

Manasota Key and close to the Venice Art Center where they’re members. Carol has started golf, Geoff plans to learn soon.

“We love going to the theaters in Sarasota,” he says. “In New York City, it was a chore. It required a plan. Here, it’s just an easy drive. We have the best of everything.”

“I feel like we went on vacation and forgot to go home.”

Photos of Caspersen Beach, above, and a heron at South Jetty by Geoff Gurock.

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AROUND TOWN

Howling at the Moon Annual Run Raises Cash and Spirits

BY NANCI THEORET

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

For several years, Angela Stinnett manned the sidelines of Bocca Lupo's annual Howl at the Moon 5K run. This year she ran it.

"I've been with the company almost seven years and have always been working through the restaurant," says Ms. Stinnett, a manager at the Wellen Park restaurant. "This was the first year I had the chance to run. It was my first time ever running a 5K."

Ms. Stinnett was among the record turnout for this year's Oct. 1 race, its ninth and the first in Wellen Park. The 8:30 p.m. starting gun sent a sea of more than 460 runners on a course from Bocca Lupo to CoolToday Park and back. It marked a triumphant return for a beloved community event that was cancelled last year and was a little iffy for a 2021 return. Howl at the Moon and a golf tournament the following day raise money for the Jessica Costanzo Scholarship Fund, founded by Mark and Marguerite Costanzo in honor of their 23-year-old daughter killed in a car accident in 2014.

"Our whole company comes out and supports our partner Mark," says David Valentino, who co-owns the family-run Bocca Lupo with his brother Dennis Valentino and Mr. Costanzo. "It's a very important weekend for our company. With so many races being cancelled the past year, we weren't sure if we would be able to do it or if there would be much response. The response was tremendous, it exceeded our expectations and shows another way that life is returning to normal."

Runners hailed from nearby cities, others from as far away as Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, even California, and included a 4-year-old who walked with his mom and a Fort Myers runner celebrating his 90th birthday the following day. Ian Walsh of Bradenton won the male overall division in 19:41; North Port's own Olivia Bonevento was the fastest female finish just shy of 27 minutes and ninth in the field. Ms. Stinnett finished 317th, an accomplishment she's proud of.

"It was great to see the turnout and to see everyone again," says Ms. Stinnett. "I know the kids the scholarships go to. My daughter works at the restaurant and is college-age. It's nice to know this scholarship is available to her. This race really goes back to being part of the community especially now when we need it the most."

Howl at the Moon started 10 years ago as a play on "bocca lupo," Italian for mouth of the wolf, and has been held in Englewood and recently at Charlotte Sports Park. The 2021 race was moved to Wellen Park — and paved roadways — to celebrate the restaurant's newest location, which opened in April 2020. The golf tournament was added six years ago.

"My wife got into running and dragged me into it 10 years ago," says Mr. Valentino. "We were participating in 5Ks and fun runs



COURTESY PHOTOS

Howl at the Moon, sponsored by Bocca Lupo, was a great experience for all.

and thought it would be wonderful to host our own as another way to be part of the community."

The 5K and the golf tournament have raised over \$100,000 and have awarded 23 full scholarships to students attending Epiphany Cathedral School, Venice High School and Webber International University — Ms. Costanzo's alma maters. Bocca Lupo also awards three employee scholarships, one earmarked for those pursuing a culinary degree or a career in the restaurant business.

With its late start time, after-run party at Bocca Lupo, deejay and beer truck, Howl at the Moon differs from most races. "Most 5Ks are in the morning and any runner will tell you people go home after the races," says Mr. Valentino. "I think the party is the point for our runners. I'd say 90 percent stayed for the party."

This year, Howl at the Moon enlisted the help of race organizer My Favorite Race Events and its race director Tracy Hussey who's been involved with previous runs.

"It's a challenge to put on a race of this size," Mr. Valentino says. "Tracy brought us sponsorships, took care of logistics, permits and mapped out the course. I got the fun part; I got to serve pizza and beer."

Mr. Hussey offered his services for free. "I always do one race a year as a give back to the community and can't think of a better one than Howl at the Moon," he says. "My company didn't take a dime, so all of the net proceeds go to my dear friends the Costanzos and David Valentino. They do a lot of great things for the community."

My Favorite Race Event also organized the half-marathon/5K at CoolToday Park.

Howl at the Moon complements Bocca Lupo's long-time support of the community. The restaurants host Pizza for a Cause every





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AROUND TOWN

“We were participating in 5Ks and fun runs and thought it would be wonderful to host our own as another way to be part of the community.”

— David Valentino, co-owner of Bocca Lupo

Tuesday night, donating a portion of the entire proceeds from food, alcohol, dine in and dine out sales at all three locations to that night’s local charity, schools or community groups. Interested groups can sign up on the restaurant’s website.

“It’s important for us to be part of the community,” says Mr. Valentino. “We opened the Wellen Park restaurant at the worst possible time and for the first nine months were under one level of restriction or another. We were frightened. The

welcome we received and the community support gives me goosebumps. We were one of the first restaurants in Wellen Park. People identify their community by the small businesses in it. Every little community has their own local food and pizza is very local, microlocal. Now we’re fully open and mobbed every day. The Wellen Park restaurant is every bit as successful as the others. We belong to the Wellen Park community.”



Howl at the moon 5K medals awarded to participants.

COURTESY PHOTO

WELL VERSED

Arts and Cultural Alliance Is Alive and Well

BY CHARMAINE ENGELSMAN-ROBINS
Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

Jim Shirley has been the director of the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County since 2006. In that role he works to promote artistic endeavors in the community and in the schools. Although it was a challenging year, arts organizations showed their creativity by entertaining the public in new and different ways. They developed new and ingenious ways to carry on — virtual attendance for perfor-



SHIRLEY

mances and classes, closing box offices and selling tickets online, changing the physical formation of how arts are presented and audiences situated. There was singing on flatbed trailers and outdoor performances and concerts in parks all over the community.

And Mr. Shirley had a hand in making that happen,

“We are the only official arts agency to be recognized by statute,” Mr. Shirley says. “We are not a county agency but an independent 501c3, eligible to receive money from such sources as specialty license plate sales; with that we are able to bestow grants.”

The source of this grant money is the bed tax; one-half of each penny is designated for

the arts, or more specifically, to be shared with arts groups that attract tourists. How much can those half-pennies add up? Mr. Shirley reports that last year the Alliance distributed \$2 million in grants.

Two million dollars — compiled one half-penny at a time.

The alliance is member-powered and advocates for arts and culture in Sarasota County. It was founded in 1986 and has administered more than \$26 million in grants to area artists and arts organizations.

The organization works to make sure that arts and culture remain a priority so this vibrant, creative community continues to flourish. Alliance staff achieves this through advocacy, education and community outreach.

Mr. Shirley’s position with the Alliance allows him to speak to officials like members of the Board of County Commissioners, for example, not just as Citizen Shirley but as the voice of 5,000 alliance members.

And thanks to those voices, Sarasota County will continue to remain the arts hub of Florida.



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COURTESY PHOTO

Sample menu offering: seared sea scallops and Florida lobster tail with herbed risotto topped with roasted tomato-anchovy brown butter and aged balsamic.



COURTESY IMAGE

A rendering of The Nook dining area, featuring three majestic oak trees that were relocated from within Wellen Park.

“We’re planning to deliver more elevated culinary options that foodies are looking for as they look to dine closer to home.”

— Tommy Villani, managing partner with OTW

SALTY BULL

From page 1

The new restaurant is the latest concept from the OTW Restaurant Group, which has already brought to the area the Off the Wagon

micro-brewery and restaurant in Venice, as well as Barrel & Bean in the Wellen Park Welcome Center and Irma’s Tacos, Craft Beer and Tequila Bar in the Marketplace.

The Salty Bull will be a chef-driven and approachable steakhouse presenting a top shelf raw bar featuring the finest and freshest seafood from Florida and other premium American sources only.

“We’re planning to deliver more elevated culinary options that foodies are looking for as they look to dine closer to home,” says Tommy Villani, managing partner with OTW.

“The contemporary American menu will visually present steaks and seafood in fun new innovative way.”

Mr. Villani says that the platings should lead to “Instagram-worthy food” that people will

want to take a picture of as they dine.

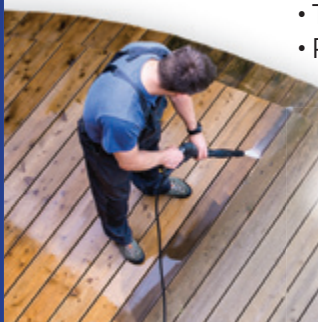
Executive Chef Mike Leopold, who oversees the menus for all OTW restaurants, has begun posting potential menu items once a week on the Salty Bull’s Facebook page to gauge reaction to his ideas.

“The feedback has been incredibly positive,” Mr. Villani says. “I think there’s a huge void in this area for this type of concept.”

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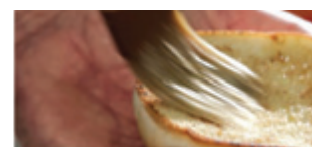
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“The feedback has been incredibly positive. I think there’s a huge void in this area for this type of concept.”

— **Tommy Villani**, managing partner with OTW

One proposed menu item is crispy duck breast, crispy fried salt-and-pepper rice noodles, and sweet and sour zucchini with hoisin sauce. Another is horseradish panko-crusted swordfish, Old Bay potato pancake, Bloody Mary broth, and mustard aioli with a micro-cilantro-celery leaf garnish.

A fun idea is the Porterhouse “steak-cuterie” board for two featuring grilled porterhouse, Tuscan tomato bread salad, grilled asparagus, Caesar wedges, pickled cherry peppers, figs, chimichurri and bleu cheese butter.

A highlight of the Salty Bull will be its full-service raw bar bursting with oysters, shrimp, crab legs and much more. It will be placed front and center as people enter, sure to whet appetites as guests arrive.

Similar to Irma’s, the Salty Bull will have a concrete bar top. There will be tile façade at the bar and a huge liquor display reaching from the bar top to the ceiling, including a temperature-controlled wine storage enclosure. Expect high-end wines, cocktails, whiskeys and bourbons.



COURTESY IMAGE

The Salty Bull will be located in the mixed-use building.

Mr. Villani said the decor will be upscale but not white tablecloth, with white brick walls, restored wood tables, and an eclectic mix of leather chairs and booths.

“When people go out, they want a memorable experience in an on-trend, contemporary atmosphere.”

The dining room will seat about 80 to 100, with seating outside for about 50 and at the bar for 20.

Opening is anticipated in the fourth quarter of 2022 or beginning of 2023.

Follow Salty Bull updates at facebook.com/saltybullrawbar.

◀ **Sample menu offering: oysters wellenfellers broiled on the half shell and topped with gouda, bacon, roasted red peppers, lemon aioli and scallions.**

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WELL VERSED

The Arts Are Back

Making music again with the Venice Symphony

BY NANCI THEORET

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

Intermission is over!

After an 18-month pause, the Venice Symphony returns to the stage Nov. 19-20 with the entire lineup of guest artists originally booked for the lost season — 2020-21. It's an impressive feat given the backlog of missed concert dates; musicians and managers are scrambling to reschedule as music returns to the masses.

"It's a 100-to-one longshot to get all of our guest artists from last year's season," says Venice Symphony conductor and music director Troy Quinn, now in his third season. "They're all excited to come to Venice and perform. I've been talking to (world-renowned piper) Eric Rigler about his concert for two years now and it's going to feel like a wonderful reunion when he's here. We're eager to make music again."

The 2021-22 season, the orchestra's 47th, showcases classical music with the modern-day nuances of Broadway, Hollywood, plus genre-spanning homages to "Game of Thrones" and the DC and Marvel comics universe, personally selected by the young conductor.

"We're combining genres this season," says Mr. Quinn. "I get to be pretty adventurous in programming. There's a variety of enlightening and entertaining selections, something for everyone. It's going to be a great season."

Performing at the 1,089-seat Venice Performing Arts Center, the Venice Symphony typically plays to sold out audiences. For its 2019-20 season, which was cut short by the worldwide pandemic, it boasted 1,800 sub-



COURTESY PHOTO

The Venice Performing Arts Center

scribers to four concerts and sold out 16 of the 17 concerts.

"We are excited for the community to know we're back and their seats are waiting for them," says Christine Kasten, president and CEO. "Based on our ticket sales, we see that people are ready to come back."

The new season opens with "Brahms and the Boys," featuring Thomas Hooten, "one

of the greatest trumpeters of our times," says Mr. Quinn. It continues through April with jaunts to comic land, La La Land, winter wonderland and Scotland.

The Venice Symphony was founded in 1974 to inspire, unite and transform lives through music. Since its humble beginnings with an 86-year-old French horn player, an 8-year-old violinist and an ensemble of vol-

unteer musicians, the orchestra has grown to more than 75 accomplished professional musicians from all over the country.

Pre-concert discussions with Mr. Quinn, soloists and musicians are offered prior to each performance. They are free and open to the public.

For tickets and information call 941-207-8822 or visit thevenicesymphony.org.

WELL VERSED

"We're combining genres this season. There's a variety of enlightening and entertaining selections, something for everyone. It's going to be a great season."

— **Troy Quinn**, Venice Symphony conductor and music director



COURTESY PHOTO

2021-22 Concert Season

Brahms and The Boys

Nov. 19-20

The symphony opens its 47th season with Johannes Brahms' "Symphony No. 4 in E Minor," hailed as "a visionary masterpiece" and ranked sixth of all classical symphonies by the BBC. Thomas Hooten, principal trumpet of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, performs on Haydn's "Trumpet Concerto in E-Flat Major" and the modern classic "God Only Knows."



PHOTO BY ROB SHANAHAN

A Holly Jolly Holiday

Dec. 17-18

A time-honored tradition with a twist featuring classic carols and Hanukkah music, the concerts cover beloved classics, music from "The Nutcracker" and holiday film favorites. Sarasota's Key Chorale, the area's premier symphonic chorus, is scheduled to perform Handel's majestic "Hallelujah Chorus" and lead a traditional sing-along.

Under the Big Top: A Tribute to the Circus

Jan. 14-15

Celebrate the area's ties to the circus at this captivating concert accompanied by images from the Ringling Circus Museum. Selections include the "Gypsy Overture," music from "The Lion King," "Swan Lake" and even the can-can. Guest soloist Coya Bailey Jones performs "Never Enough" from "The Greatest Showman."

A Night at the Oscars

Feb. 4-5

World-renowned piper Eric Rigler reprises his original soul-stirring performance of "My

Tom Hooten

Heart Will Go On" from the movie "Titanic" as well as tributes to "Braveheart," "Forrest Gump," "The Godfather," "Rocky," "The Magnificent Seven," "La La Land," "Breakfast at Tiffany's" and more.

Superheroes and Schumann

Feb. 25-26

The Venice Symphony Orchestra transports audiences from Jean Sibelius' "Finlandia" to "Thor: The Dark World" with stops in the Marvel and DC universes. The concert concludes with Robert Schumann's "Symphony No. 4 in D Minor" featuring concertmaster Marcus Ratzenboeck.

Game of Romes

March 18-19

The rousing score of "Ben-Hur" opens the program, followed by intermezzos from Mascagni and Puccini, the theme from "Game of Thrones" and Rossini's masterpiece, the "William Tell Overture." The finale is Felix Mendelssohn's "Symphony No. 4," also known as the "Italian Symphony."

Fantasy, Firebird, and Fabiola

April 22-23

Hailed by The New York Times as "playing with extraordinary precision and luminosity," violinist Fabiola Kim solos on Ralph Vaughan Williams' "The Lark Ascending," Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" and music from "Chariots of Fire" and "How to Train Your Dragon" and leads the symphony to a rousing season finale on Igor Stravinsky's "The Firebird Suite." 🍀



COURTESY PHOTO


Fabiola Kim

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DOWNTOWN

From page 1

The many development partners of Wellen Park, local officials and community members used the shovels they artistically painted to begin the earthmoving process. The shovels will be featured as a permanent art installation once Downtown Wellen opens.

“We wanted to do something forward thinking with the same synergy that one will feel when visiting Downtown Wellen,” said Rick Severance, president of Wellen Park.

The event perfectly captured the lifestyle vibe that has made Wellen Park so attractive to homebuyers.

Guests were able to put together fresh flower bouquets from a mobile floral vendor, enjoy specialty drinks from a retrofitted vintage horse trailer-turned modern boutique bar and participate in an interactive painting station where they decorated pavers that will be used as part of a colorful walkway in the playground area of Downtown.

Downtown Wellen will feature an 80-acre lake, retail shops, numerous dining options, pedestrian-friendly streets and walkways, a permanent food truck park, a great lawn and a Town Hall that will host concerts and events. Residents and visitors alike will enjoy relaxing in the hammock grove and gathering under a giant heritage oak tree, nearly 100 years old.

The food truck park will include one from the Atlanta Braves, serving ballpark fare in Downtown Wellen.

Even the youngest residents will enjoy the downtown space with its natural playground, designed to appear as part of the landscape.

“We are designing a downtown that functions from morning to late evening,” Mr. Severance says. “Take a morning walk, meet for a business lunch or enjoy an evening concert. People want

“We are designing a downtown that functions from morning to late evening. Take a morning walk, meet for a business lunch or enjoy an evening concert. People want a purpose, with things to do and experiences they will remember.”

— Rick Severance



Drink Bar ready for Downtown Wellen groundbreaking guests

PHOTOS BY ANNALEE HULL



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a purpose, with things to do and experiences they will remember." The spacious downtown will create an environment that is spread out and comfortable. "It will be one of those places you'll want visit again and again."

There are a significant number of leases already signed by various merchants and restaurateurs, Mr. Severance says. Outdoor concerts and movies, paddleboarding, kayaking and cycling will be among the many activities available to residents of the wellness lifestyle community.

As part of the groundbreaking program, Wellen Park announced a new series of curated events to start this fall that will inspire, excite and provide an ongoing preview of what's to come at Downtown Wellen. Featuring a range

of art makers, craft artisans, fitness and wellness experts, and culinary talent, the "Countdown to Downtown" event series will take place in and around the Wellen Park Welcome Center, which offers a front-row view of the construction progress in Downtown Wellen. Stay tuned on Wellen Park's social channels @WellenParkFL and wellenpark.com for full event details.

"I really believe that Downtown Wellen will be a place where families, couples and members of every generation can make memories. Grandkids will visit over spring break. People will get engaged or married here, maybe celebrate a 50th wedding anniversary," Mr. Severance says.

"We want to be that spot that helps them make those memories." 🍷



COURTESY PHOTOS

Many guests who attended the groundbreaking ceremony left with a bouquet of flowers.



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WELL VERSED

Local Artists Richard Krevolin and Michele Moore Show at Welcome Center

BY CHARMAINE ENGELSMAN-ROBINS

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

Renaissance Man

Someone who is outstanding at several different things, especially those considered to be artistic, is often referred to as a Renaissance man or woman. Richard Krevolin makes other Renaissance men look like shirkers. Though he didn't pick up a brush until he was more than 50 years old, once he did, he created art that ranged in style from abstract to realist. His offerings are fascinating and varied, as you'll see by stopping by the Wellen Park Welcome Center where he has several pieces on exhibit.

First working in oil on canvas, Mr. Krevolin has more recently been working with acrylics using brushes, socks, fingers — not kidding. You can see him in action on his Facebook page and as a bonus you'll meet his darling rescue terrier, Honey.

In the same video he's also poking around the world of NFTs with an art dealer friend. An NFT is a unit of data, stored digitally, that certifies a digital asset to be unique and therefore not interchangeable. NFTs can be used to represent items such as photos, videos, audio, and other types of digital files. If you are trying to wrap your head around that concept, you might find some insights in their discussion.



Left: Richard Krevolin with his painted seahorse. Above: Abstract Heart by Richard Krevolin.

COURTESY PHOTOS

In addition to possessing a healthy amount of innate talent, Mr. Krevolin is well educated — graduating first from Yale, then earning a master's degree from the UCLA School of Cinema and Television and one in playwriting and cinema from USC. Sharing his wisdom with his students has resulted in some fine major films from them.

Mr. Krevolin is the writer/director/producer

of and actor in the PBS documentary "Making Light in Terezin," an unusual offering which IMDb describes thus: "This documentary highlights the role that theater played in World War II through interviews with survivors and an in-depth look at the need for laughter in times of trauma." It is available to stream on plex.tv, tubitv.com or Prime Video.

A raw-cut sample of his part in "Hotel Cal-

ifornia," can be found on his Facebook page, www.facebook.com/richard.krevolin (July 14 post).

He also co-wrote and directed "Attachments," a feature length comedy starring Katherine Ross. His plays have been produced around the world, and he still teaches playwriting at the Venice Theatre in addition to working as a story consultant, script doctor, brand narrative coach and does art and murals on commission.

He contributed, at the behest of the Venice Art Center, the vibrant seahorse in front of Made in Italy. In addition to the pieces shown at the Welcome Center, you can see more of his work online at www.gatiart.com.

Creating Can Be Healing

Artist Michele Moore is also featured at the Welcome Center. Raised in Miami, she relocated to North Port in 2005. Despite the fact that she is a talented artist, it wasn't the art scene that drew her to this coast. It was the great fishing. She is an angler at heart.

Within 10 months after she moved here her mom joined her in North Port, where she lived until she died in 2017, throwing Ms. Moore into an inconsolable state of grief. In addition, her husband Phil was battling PTSD following his military service. He also deals with color blindness, something that hampers his artistic bent.

When Ms. Moore quit smoking, she was seeking something calming that would help her get through her trials. That was when the couple began taking evening classes at the North Port Art Center. They were delighted to

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WELL VERSED

discover not only the joy but the remarkable healing power in the creation of art.

“Keeping busy is key,” Ms. Moore says. And she certainly practices what she preaches — in addition to creating commissioned pieces, running her own business and taking classes, Ms. Moore became so involved in North Port Art Center that she now works there part-time as its outreach coordinator.

For the first time, she really looked at the doodles and drawings she’d rather mindlessly created in the past and recognized that her artistic soul had been hiding just below the surface for quite some time. Leaving the banking industry after 10 years may have allowed her to change her focus to something that had been there, but buried, all along. She credits the North Port Art Center and its excellent, encouraging teachers for fully awakening her artistic instincts.

While you’re probably familiar with most of these disciplines, bone jewelry might be new to you; Ms. Moore accepts bird, fish and animal bones from various sources and recycles all or small parts of them into unusual jewelry.

“Everyone has the ability to make a mark,” she says matter-of-factly, “and that’s what art is, making marks. You just have to recognize that and have the courage to make that first mark.”

Her abilities now awakened, Ms. Moore has discovered many ways to express it: In 2020 the North Port Art Center exposed her to “pen pastel” work — an enjoyable and slightly less costly method than working with regular pastels. She took classes with two of the center’s instructors, Laura Pommier and Barbara Archer-Baldwin.

She particularly enjoys creating portraits of her beloved dogs, Chauncey and Major.



Above: A sample of jewelry created by artist Michele Moore, pictured left.

COURTESY PHOTOS

She also is designing and making bone jewelry, painting, sketching, drawing and creating photographs. Her photography has now led her into cinematography.

While most art and jewelry lovers are probably familiar with most of these disciplines, bone jewelry might be something new. Ms. Moore accepts bird, fish and animal bones from various sources and recycles all or small parts of them into unusual jewelry, with a somewhat lacey effect — earrings, necklaces, bracelets and more.

“Being creative every day is the only way to get better,” says Ms. Moore. “Whether your art is — baking or painting or sewing or sculpting — whatever it is that moves you, do it every day.”

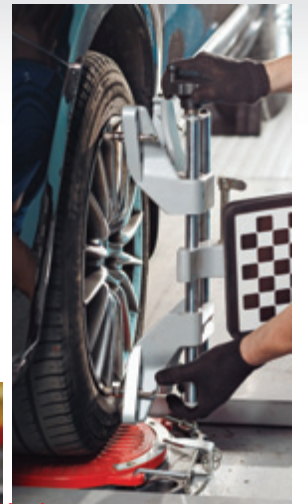
The art of Ms. Moore and Mr. Krevolin are on display now for browsing and for purchase at the Welcome Center.

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EVENTS CALENDAR

Note: Please observe each venue's safety protocols and procedures. If not included in the listing, contact the venue directly. All listings subject to rescheduling or cancellation; check before you go.

Oct. 29: Meet the Artists — Meet local artists Richard Krevolin and Michele Moore from the North Port Art Center at this free event. Enjoy cocktails and charcuterie as you peruse their work on display. The event begins at 6 p.m., Friday, Oct. 29 at the Welcome Center.

Oct. 29: Escape to Margaritaville — Musical comedy featuring both original songs and your most-loved Jimmy Buffett classics." Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, Sarasota.

Oct. 29: Rhythm on the River: Appalachian Road Show. Bluegrass, Folk, and original music. On the Ford lawn along the Caloosahatchee River 6-8 p.m. (Gates open at 5:30 p.m.) Edison and Ford Winter Estate, 2350 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers. Info: 239.334.7419. Ticket purchases online at www.edisonford.org.

Oct. 29 thru Nov. 13: The Silken Ladder (La scala di seta) by Gioachino Rossini - Sarasota Opera — boxoffice@sarasotaopera.org — Box Office phone: 941.328.1300 Mon. — Fri. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. - Sarasota Opera, 61 N. Pineapple Ave., Sarasota.

Oct. 29 – Dec. 5: At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen — "In rural Georgia, drag star Courtney Berringer ... would like to welcome you to her wake." Urbanite Theatre, 1487 Second St., Sarasota.

Nov. 1: Join the Venice Concert Band for Our Heroes concert honoring military veterans and the many local heroes who served on the front lines of necessary services during the pandemic. Purchase tickets (\$14) at www.veniceconcertband.com or at the door (cash only) at Venice Performing Arts Center, 1 Indian Ave., Venice. Doors open at 6:15 p.m., concert begins at 7 p.m.

Nov. 1 – 19: The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art opening of Ringling Reimagined in the Community Gallery, highlighting work by local children. 5401 Bay Shore Road, Sarasota.

Nov. 3: Disney Princess – The Concert. Sarasota Premiere. "... acclaimed Broadway stars sing your favorite Disney Princess songs, and share their exclusive, behind-the-scenes stories." Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org or Box Office: 941.263.6799

Nov. 3, 2021 – Jan. 2: Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story by Alan Janes — "One of the most successful Rock & Roll musicals of all time." Florida Studio Theatre's Gompertz Theatre, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota.

Nov. 5 – Dec. 2: Venice Art Center – "Fall Members' Show" — 390 Nokomis Avenue S., Venice. www.veniceartcenter.com.

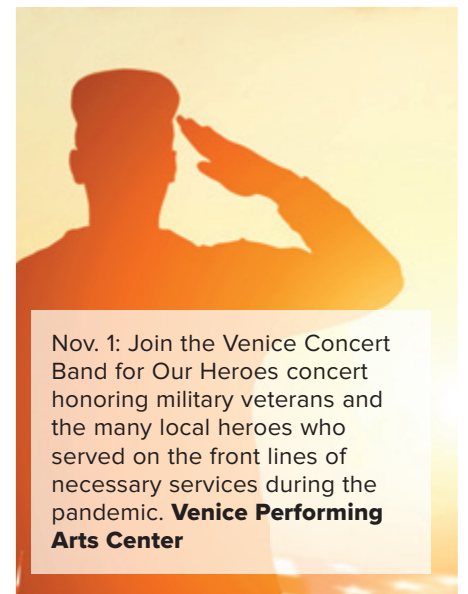
Nov. 6: Walking Club Meetup — 9 a.m. 12275 Mercado Drive.

Nov. 9: Wine-Pairing Dinners — Join your neighbors at wine-pairing dinners planned for the Welcome Center, 12275 Mercado Drive. Presented by Barrell & Bean and the Venice Symphony. A wine expert will discuss the wines, why they were chosen and how best to serve them. At 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$75 per person. Register at www.wellenpark.com/news-events.

Nov. 11: An Evening with Bruce Hornsby. Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

Nov. 12: Straight No Chaser: Back In The High Life — "Chart topping a cappella group Straight No Chaser returns to Sarasota!" Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

Nov. 14: Children's Paver Painting — 10 to 11 a.m. at the Welcome Center, 12275



Nov. 1: Join the Venice Concert Band for Our Heroes concert honoring military veterans and the many local heroes who served on the front lines of necessary services during the pandemic. **Venice Performing Arts Center**

Mercado Drive. Free event. Register at www.wellenpark.com/news-events.

Nov. 14: Brunch with Beethoven, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Plantation Golf and Country Club, 500 Rockley Blvd., Venice. Enjoy a brunch buffet, complimentary cocktail, and more while listening to selection of classical favorites performed by musicians from the Venice Symphony Orchestra. Proceeds support music education programs. Sponsorship and table information from Holly Anderson, Director of Philanthropy: call 941-207-8822, ext. 106 or email handerson@thevenicesymphony.org.

Nov. 16: Book Club Buzz – (Nov. 17, 2021 thru Mar. 27- Friends in Low Places — by Richard and Rebecca Hopkins with musical arrangements by Jim Prosser. Florida Studio Theatre's Goldstein Cabaret, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota.

Nov. 18: Neil Berg's 50 Years of Rock & Roll, Part 4 — "With a cast consisting of incredible rock and roll singers and stars from Broadway's greatest rock musicals, Neil Berg returns by popular demand to share more of the 50-year history of the music that changed the world forever!" Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org

Nov. 19 – Dec. 19: Venice Theatre presents Assisted Living, the Musical: The Home for the Holidays. "Hysterical sequel to the runaway hit about the nursing home and beyond. Christmas, Kwanza, Hanukkah, and retirement will never be the same." 140 Tampa Ave. W. Venice. Tickets, www.venicetheatre.org

Nov. 19: Kathleen Madigan. Comedian Kathleen Madigan brings her 'Do You Have Any Ranch?' tour to the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org

Nov. 20: 8 a.m. - 3rd Annual "Turkey Trot for the Twig" 5k and Fun Run presented by Smoothie King and JKPD. Legacy Park, 395 E. Venice Ave, Venice. Event is to benefit children in the foster care system and the programs of The Twig Cares.

Nov. 20, 5:30 p.m. – Nov. 21, 12 a.m.: Bicycles International Full Moon Gran Fondo Cycling Event. Bicycles International Venice, 1744 S. Tamiami Trail, Venice. Register here: <https://event.racereach.com/bicycles-international-full-moon-granfondo>

Nov. 20: 35th Anniversary Mannheim Steamroller Christmas by Chip David "... will feature fan-favorite original classic Christmas hits from the first Mannheim Steamroller album, along with multimedia effects in an intimate setting. 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

Nov. 20, 2021 – Jan. 1: Hair — "The rock musical that started it all!" at the Asolo Repertory Theatre. "This joyous rebellion proudly reclaims love as the heart of what it means to be American." Tickets by phone 941-351-8000, online at www.asolorep.org

FUN-LOVING LIFESTYLE

EVENTS CALENDAR

Nov. 21: America: 50th Anniversary Tour. “America continues to be a band capable of transcending borders with their uplifting music and positive message.” 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

Nov. 23 and Nov. 27: NPAC Youth Art at North Port Art Center – “Art is Calling! Teens Beyond the Screens – An open studio for any level to promote creativity and self value. All supplies included: painting, drawing, sculpey clay and more. Teenagers 13+, \$10. a student per class.” 5950 Sam Shapos Way, North Port, 941-423-6460

Nov. 23 – 28: Come From Away – Musical. On 9/11, the world stopped. On 9/12, their stories moved us all. 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

Nov. 24: Running Group Meetup – 6 p.m. at the Welcome Center, 12275 Mercado Drive. Two free drinks per person at Barrel & Bean. Register at www.wellenpark.com/news-events.

Nov. 28: SW FloridaCon, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Crowne Plaza Fort Myers at Bell Tower Shops, an IHG Hotel. More than 125 vendors, guests and events. Live wrestling. Huge Cosplay Contest. New show feature – Sports Cards. info@swfloridacomicon.com

Nov. 29: Cirque Dreams Holidayze lights up the stage in dazzling family spectacular. 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

Nov. 30: Dave Koz and Friends: Christmas Tour 2021 – Chart-topping Grammy-nominated saxophonist returns to the road this holiday season with the 24th annual Dave Koz and Friends Christmas Tour 2021. 777 N.

Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

Dec. 1: Michael Londra’s Celtic Yuletide – Sarasota Premiere. Emmy nominee, PBS host Michael Londra brings an evening of Christmas from Ireland to the Van Wezel, told in song, dance and the festive stories of his youth. 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

Dec. 2: The Temptations and the Four Tops – 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

Dec. 3: The Allman Family Revival – On what would have been Gregg Allman’s 70th birthday, enjoy three hours of iconic southern rock. 7:30 p.m. A celebration of the spirit and music of Gregg Allman, hosted by Gregg’s son, Blues Music Award winning Devon Allman. This performance was previously The Allman Betts Band exclusively. The tour has changed slightly, but your tickets will still be honored. 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

Dec. 4: Walking Group Meetup – 9 a.m. at the Welcome Center. Two free coffees or mimosas per person. Register at www.wellenpark.com/news-events.

Dec. 4: Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe’s 22nd anniversary gala presents “A Night at the Savoy,” (6-9 p.m.) recreating the look and sound of Harlem’s famous ballroom at 2075 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota in the Circus Arts Conservatory’s Sailor Circus Arena. Dinner will be catered by Michael’s on East. Tickets www.westcoastblacktheatre.org.

Dec. 4: 2nd Annual Mullet Fest. 10 a.m.- 7 p.m., the Charlotte County Fair, 2333 El Jobean Road, Pt. Charlotte. Mullet smoke-

off competition, cast net throwing competition, live music, local arts. Adults \$5, kids 12 or under free. Craft Beer available from Big Top Brewing Company.

Dec. 4: Martina McBride: The Joy of Christmas 2021 Multi-Grammy nominee Martina McBride “... recently, McBride launched her first exhibit at the Country Music Hall of Fame, highlighting her prestigious career in country music.” 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

Dec. 6: Venice Concert Band – Holiday Joy Christmas! Hanukkah! 7-9 p.m. Traditional sounds of the season and a few selections with happy and surprising twists. Venice Performing Arts Center, 941-218-3779 Tickets \$14 (on sale 11/22/21) at www.veniceperformingartscenter.com

Dec. 6: An Intimate Evening with David Foster: HITMAN Tour – Sixteen-time Grammy winner and a prolific songwriter, David Foster played a key role in the career launches of Celine Dion, Josh Groban, Michael Buble and more. 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

Dec. 7: Wine-Pairing Dinners – Join your neighbors at wine-pairing dinners planned for the Welcome Center, 12275 Mercado Drive. Presented by Barrel & Bean and the Venice Symphony. A wine expert will discuss the wines, why they were chosen and how best to serve them. At 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$75 per person. Register at www.wellenpark.com/news-events.

Dec. 7: The Allman Family Revival at Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall. 7:30 p.m. Tickets, www.vanwezel.org 777 N. Tamiami

Trail, Sarasota.

Dec. 8: America in One Room: comedy by Emmy nominee Jason Odell Williams – Florida Studio Theatre’s Keating Theatre, 1241 North Palm Ave., Sarasota.

Dec. 08: Joe Bonamassa – Sarasota Premiere. “Hailed internationally as one of the greatest guitar players of his generation and cited by Guitar World Magazine as ‘the world’s biggest blues guitarist.’” 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

Dec. 14: Sarah Brightman: A Christmas Symphony – Sarasota Premiere. Accompanied by orchestra and a choir, Sarah Brightman decks the hall with show-stopping renditions of classics from the Christmas canon. 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

Dec. 16: Cycling Group Meetup – 6 p.m. at the Welcome Center. Tickets are \$30 per person. Register at www.wellenpark.com/news-events.

Dec. 21: Book Club Buzz – Meet with your fellow book lovers. Register at www.wellenpark.com/news-events. At the Welcome Center. Two free coffees per person. Register at www.wellenpark.com/news-events.

Dec. 30: Running Group Meetup – 6 p.m. at the Welcome Center, 12275 Mercado Drive. Two free drinks per person at Barrel & Bean. Register at www.wellenpark.com/news-events.

Dec. 31: Jefferson Starship – Mother of the Sun Tour – Sarasota Premiere. Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. www.vanwezel.org.

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