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# SUNSHINE POST

04	CREDIT UNIONS	12	4TH OF JULY	13	53 YEARS LATER	20	AI-PROMPTS
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On a sunny afternoon in southwest Florida, five generations sit around the same table. Evelyn, 78, remembers when her father balanced ...

The Sunshine Post Culture Department has all the latest tips on where to go, who to see and what to do in and around Fort Myers. Enjoy!

There are sports stories that eventually become bigger than sports themselves. Stories that are passed down from generation to generation.

In this series, powered by our tech team and AI connoisseurs, we'll show you how to benefit from AI in daily life.



Photos courtesy of Nancy Winkel

Welcome back to our series on healthy aging. Here, we're giving the floor to real experts and hearing some truly incredible stories. Enjoy the read. Our first expert is IFBB Pro bodybuilder Nancy Winkel, a true expert in strength training.

**Clemens Mueller:**

What was the moment you decided you wanted to compete on stage?

**Nancy Winkel:**

There wasn't really a single specific moment. I originally started working out because I was unhappy with my body. After trying various sports, I gradually got more and more into strength training. Over the years, my training became more structured, my diet more consistent, and at some point, bodybuilding had simply become an integral part of my life.

For a long time, I had absolutely no ambitions to compete on stage. I did the sport because I loved it—the training, the routines, and the entire lifestyle behind it.

Read more about our series Healthy Aging on Page No. 19 →



Lieber auf Deutsch?  
Scan here for our exclusive digital German edition.

## Summer Stories, Lasting Inspiration

Dear Readers,

July is a month that encourages us to slow down and savor the season. Long sunny days, warm evenings, and gatherings with family and friends remind us that some of life's greatest joys are often the simplest ones. As summer reaches its peak, this issue of Sunshine Post is dedicated to the people, ideas, and experiences that inspire us to live well and stay connected.

One of the highlights of this month's edition is our interview with a local pastor, who shares thoughtful reflections on faith, community, and finding purpose in an increasingly busy world. Whether you consider yourself religious or simply appreciate meaningful conversations, his perspective offers valuable insights into the importance of connection and compassion.

We also sit down with a remarkable bodybuilder and healthy aging advocate who challenges common assumptions about growing older. His story is a testament to the power of discipline, resilience, and lifelong self-improvement.

Read more about The Letter From The Editor on Page No. 2 →

Sunshine Post

### HERO OF THE MONTH



Do you know someone who makes our community a better place?

Nominate your hero of the Month today and help us shine a light on the people who truly make a difference.

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Let's celebrate the everyday heroes among us together.



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# Summer Stories, Lasting Inspiration

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who challenges common assumptions about growing older. His story is a testament to the power of discipline, resilience, and lifelong self-improvement. As our Healthy Aging series continues, we hope his experiences inspire readers to pursue their own wellness goals—regardless of age. Of course, no July issue would be complete without celebrating the flavors of summer. This month's collection of fresh seasonal recipes is filled with light, delicious dishes perfect for warm-weather gatherings, backyard barbecues, or quiet evenings on the patio. Throughout this edition, you'll find stories that encourage reflection, promote well-being, and celebrate the many ways people enrich our communities. Whether through faith, fitness, food, or friendship, the common thread is the desire to live fully and

share that journey with others. As always, thank you for being part of the Sunshine Post family. We hope this issue brings you inspiration, enjoyment, and perhaps a few new ideas to make the most of the summer season. We wish you a wonderful July filled with sunshine, health, and memorable moments. Sunny regards,

*Rouven Tietz Editor-in-Chief*

**Sunshine Post**  
Editor-in-Chief/Managing Editor  
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# Be an Anchor in a Child's World



Photos courtesy of: Jennifer Hagemeister

*A caring mentor cannot replace a family — but they can offer time, trust, encouragement, and a steady place in a young person's life.*

Every child carries something bright within them. A talent not yet discovered. A dream not yet spoken out loud. A strength they may not even know they have. Sometimes all it takes is one steady person to help them see it — someone who listens, encourages, shows up again and again, and reminds them that their future is worth believing in. Because children do not only grow through school, sports, grades, or achievements. They grow through connection. Through trust. Through having someone in their corner who makes time, asks questions, celebrates small steps, and stays present when life becomes turbulent.

**Not a Replacement — A Supportive Addition**  
And while many children are surrounded by loving families, there are moments in a young person's life when one more supportive relationship can make a meaningful difference. A mentor is not there to replace a parent. A mentor is there to add another safe, supportive voice to a child's world. Sometimes parents are working long hours. Sometimes families are going through difficult seasons, grief, illness, financial pressure, or major life changes. Sometimes a child is simply growing into an age where not every thought, worry, or question feels easy to share at home. That does not mean something is wrong with the family. It means the child is human — and growing.

Having another trusted person can give a young person space to talk, laugh, ask, wonder, and feel seen in a different way.

**When a Child Needs One More Safe Place**  
Some children need extra support because life around them is challenging. Others may simply need another steady person during a season of change, uncertainty, or growing up. A mentor can become that safe place. Someone who listens without rushing. Someone who offers calm when life feels loud. Someone who gives a child space to talk, laugh, ask, wonder, and feel seen in a different way. For a young person, that kind of presence can matter deeply.

**What Big Brothers Big Sisters Does**  
That is the heart behind Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast. The organization matches children and teenagers — called "Littles" — with volunteer mentors, known as "Bigs." These one-to-one mentoring relationships are built around time, consistency, and care. A Big may take their Little to the park, visit the library, share a meal, talk about school, explore a hobby, or simply spend a few hours together doing ordinary things. And often, it is those ordinary things that become extraordinary.

**Why Showing Up Matters**  
For a child, knowing that someone shows up again and again can matter deeply. Knowing that someone remembers what they said last time, asks how the test went, notices when they seem quiet, or believes they can do more than they

think — those moments can become anchors. Research on youth mentoring has shown that supportive, consistent relationships with caring adults can help children build confidence, strengthen school engagement, make better choices, and feel more connected. It cannot solve every challenge in a child's life, but it can become one strong, steady piece of their support system.

**A Process Built on Trust and Care**  
Here in Lee County, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast serves families throughout the region, including Fort Myers, Cape Coral, and North Fort Myers. Volunteers must be at least 18 years old and go through an application process that includes references, interviews, background checks, and training. This careful process helps protect the children and helps make thoughtful matches possible. The application process may take some time, and yes, there are a few important steps before someone becomes a Big. But that is part of what makes the program safe, thoughtful, and meaningful. A child's trust is something precious, and it deserves care. For the volunteer, it may be a one-time process of paperwork, interviews, references, and background checks. For a child, it may open the door — to a relationship, a memory, a source of encouragement, or a sense of confidence that stays with them for years.

**Four Hours Can Mean So Much**  
The commitment is meaningful, but it is also realistic: volunteers are generally asked to commit to at least one year, meet with their Little twice a month, and spend a minimum of four hours per month together. Four hours a month is still a commitment in an adult's busy life — but it is a commitment with purpose. For a child, those hours can mean structure. Encouragement. Stability. A break from worries. A chance to be heard. A chance to feel important to someone who chose to show up.

**You Don't Have to Be Perfect**  
Becoming a Big is not about being perfect. It is not about having all the answers or trying to fix a child's life. It is about being reliable. Being kind. Being interested. Being willing to walk beside a young person with patience, care, and respect. Some relationships may be for a certain chapter. Others may leave a mark for

a lifetime.

**If You Can't Become a Big, You Can Still Open a Door**

And even if becoming a Big is not the right step for you right now, you can still make a difference. Sometimes kindness begins by opening a door. You might know a family who could benefit from hearing about this opportunity. You might be connected to a teacher, coach, church, neighborhood group, or community organization that works with children. You might simply share the information with someone who knows a young person who could use one more steady person in their corner. Because helping a child does not always begin with a grand gesture. Sometimes it begins with time. Sometimes it begins with listening. Sometimes it begins with making sure the right person knows that help exists.

**Children Are the Future We Build Today**

If we want a strong, caring, hopeful community tomorrow, we have to invest in the children growing up in it today. Every child deserves the chance to be seen, supported, and encouraged — not only for who they are right now, but for everything they may become.

For a child, a mentor may not be the whole harbor. But they can be an anchor — steady, trusted, and remembered long after the moment has passed.

*By Jennifer Hagemeister*

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast — Lee County Office**  
8280 College Parkway, Suite 201  
Fort Myers, FL 33919  
Phone: (239) 288-4224  
Website: [bbssun.org](http://bbssun.org)

**To learn more:**  
Choose "Become a Big" to learn about volunteering as a mentor, or "Enroll a Child" to learn more about youth enrollment.

**Office hours:**  
Monday–Friday, 8:30am–5:00pm.  
Please call ahead.

# Estate Planning & Asset Protection International

## Foreign Real Estate: Who Has the Authority to Decide?

**Germany and the United States Compared**  
Real estate remains one of the most important components of personal wealth for investors worldwide. Whether held as an investment property or as part of a family wealth preservation strategy, real estate often represents a substantial portion of an individual's net worth. But what happens if the owner suddenly becomes incapacitated or passes away? Who has the legal authority to manage, sell, lease, or refinance the property? This article examines the differences between Germany and the United States and highlights how international real estate holdings can become financially immobilized without proper estate planning and asset protection structures.

**Germany: A Power of Attorney Is Essential**

Germany's legal system provides protection for property owners who are no longer capable of making decisions. However, if no valid Power of Attorney exists, the courts may intervene. For real estate owners, this can create significant challenges:

- **Property Management or Sale:** A court-appointed legal guardian may require judicial approval before making major decisions involving the property.
- **Rental Income:** Bank accounts receiving rental income may become inaccessible until an authorized representative is formally appointed.
- **Financing and Refinancing:** New loans, mortgages, or refinancing transactions often require court authorization.

**The International Property Challenge**

Many German property owners assume that a German Power of Attorney will automatically be recognized abroad. In reality, foreign banks, title companies, and legal authorities frequently require:

- Apostilles or additional certifications
- Certified translations
- Separate powers of attorney drafted under local law

Without these steps, even close family members may be unable to act on behalf of the owner.

**United States: State-Specific Rules and Powers of Attorney**

In the United States, authority over real estate matters is largely governed by state law. Generally speaking:

- Property owners can establish a Durable Power of Attorney that specifically authorizes real estate transactions.
- Without a valid Power of

Attorney, a court may appoint a Guardian or Conservator to make decisions on behalf of an incapacitated individual.

- Real estate transactions often require notarization and, depending on the state, recording with the local county office.

income taxes, or other financial obligations may be missed. For international property owners, every delay can increase costs, reduce income, and create unnecessary exposure to legal and financial risk.

**Practical Challenges**

Cross-border ownership frequently creates complications:

**Case Study**

Consider a German investor who owns a vacation home in Florida. Without a properly recognized Power

3. Update Documents Regularly  
Marriage, divorce, inheritance events, new property acquisitions, or sales may require revisions.
4. Create an Emergency Documentation File  
Maintain organized access to legal documents, insurance policies, banking information, and property records.
5. Work with International Professionals  
Attorneys and wealth advisors familiar with both U.S. and German regulations can help prevent costly mistakes before they occur.

**Conclusion**

International real estate holdings are an important component of many wealth portfolios. However, without proper estate planning structures, they can quickly become financial liabilities during periods of incapacity or after death.

Germany and the United States both provide legal mechanisms to protect incapacitated property owners, but each system operates under different rules and procedures. Cross-border property ownership adds another layer of complexity.

For investors, the message is clear:

- Plan early.
- Treat international Powers of Attorney as a necessity, not an option.
- Seek professional guidance from qualified cross-border advisors.

Investors who proactively prepare for these situations ensure that spouses, family members, and trusted representatives can act when needed—protecting both assets and financial continuity while avoiding unnecessary delays and losses.

*By Bernd Roebers*



In his role as a senior consultant, Bernd Roebers works with people who are considering emigrating to the United States and/or starting a business. In this column, he regularly shares these "stories" with us.

## Germany vs. United States: A Comparison

	Germany	USA
<b>Topic</b>		
<b>Authority During Incapacity</b>	Court-appointed guardian if no Power of Attorney exists	Guardian or Conservator if no Power of Attorney exists
<b>Recognition of Foreign Powers of Attorney</b>	Often limited	German documents frequently not accepted
<b>Required Formalities</b>	Certification, apostille, translation	Notarization and possible county recording
<b>Financial Risks</b>	Frozen income, delayed transactions	Similar risks, often amplified for foreign owners
<b>Best Practice</b>	Establish Powers of Attorney early	Review state-specific requirements for every property

# Five Generations, One Financial Future

Why the Next Credit Union Could Be Built for Everyone

On a sunny afternoon in southwest Florida, five generations sit around the same table.

Evelyn, 78, remembers when her father balanced the household budget in a handwritten ledger. Her son Michael, 54, remembers opening his first checking account at a local branch where the manager knew every customer by name. Michael's daughter Sarah, 32, has never met her bank manager. And Sarah's children, Noah and Emma, aged 11 and 8, have never seen a checkbook.

Five people. Five generations. Five completely different experiences with money.

Yet all of them are trying to solve the same problem. How do you build a secure future?

It is a question that has shaped every generation's relationship with financial institutions. And it may ultimately explain why the credit union movement—after more than 150 years—could be entering one of its most important chapters.

## Every Generation Gets the Banking System It Inherits

The Baby Boomers inherited a world built around branches. Banking was personal. You visited a building. You knew the tellers. You sat across a desk from a loan officer. Trust came from familiarity.

Generation X inherited a financial system becoming more corporate.

Branches remained important, but consolidation accelerated. Large national institutions emerged. Trust increasingly came from stability and reputation. Millennials came of age during the internet revolution.

They witnessed the rise of online banking, mobile apps, and the 2008 financial crisis. They learned convenience—but also skepticism. Trust became conditional. Generation Z inherited a world where money is digital by default.

Payments are instant. Apps are expected. Paper is obsolete. Trust comes from experience. If something works seamlessly, it earns credibility.

And Generation Alpha?

The first generation growing up alongside artificial intelligence? Their expectations may be different again. For them, financial services may become almost invisible. Money will simply move. Questions will simply be answered. Complexity will simply disappear. At least that is what they will expect.

## Different Tools, Same Goals

Despite the technological differences, every generation tends to want the same things.

- A safe place to save.
- Fair access to credit.
- A way to buy a home.
- A way to support a family.
- A chance to build wealth.
- A sense that the system works for them rather than against them.

These goals have not changed. The delivery mechanisms have. And that distinction matters. Because many discussions about the future of finance

focus excessively on technology. Technology is important. But technology is not the destination. It is transportation. The destination remains human.

## The Great Generational Misunderstanding

Older generations often view younger consumers as impatient. Younger generations often view older institutions as outdated. Both perspectives contain some truth. But both miss something important. When a Baby Boomer visits a branch, they are not necessarily seeking a transaction. They are seeking confidence. When a Gen Z member uses a mobile app, they are not avoiding relationships. They are seeking efficiency. The objective is the same. The method differs.

The most successful financial institutions of the future will recognize this distinction. They will stop designing products around generations. They will start designing experiences around human needs.

## The Surprising Strength of the Cooperative Model

This is where credit unions occupy a unique position. Because unlike most financial institutions, they were never designed around products. They were designed around people. For more than a century, credit unions have adapted repeatedly. From rural villages. To industrial cities. To suburban communities. To digital platforms.

Their structure remains remarkably relevant.

Members are owners. Users have a voice. Success is shared. These ideas resonate differently across generations.

But they resonate nonetheless.

A retiree may appreciate stability. A young entrepreneur may appreciate transparency. A student may appreciate fairness. A remote worker may appreciate flexibility.

All find a place within the same cooperative framework.

**Industrialization.**  
**Urbanization.**  
**Globalization.**  
**Digitization.**

## The Emerging Social Challenge

Over the next several decades, society faces a new challenge. Not simply financial inclusion. Digital inclusion. Increasingly, access to opportunity depends upon access to digital financial systems.

The ability to:

- receive payments,
- build credit,
- save efficiently,
- transfer money globally,
- participate in commerce,

will increasingly require sophisticated digital infrastructure. The risk is obvious.

Those left behind digitally may also be left behind economically. Historically, credit unions helped bridge financial



Source: Pexels

gaps. In the future, they may help bridge digital gaps as well.

## Technology That Connects Instead of Divides

Technology often receives criticism for making society less personal. Sometimes that criticism is justified. But technology can also strengthen communities when used thoughtfully.

Imagine:

A retiree receives personalized financial guidance through a simple video call. A college student opens an account in minutes from a dorm room. A small business owner accesses capital instantly. A family sends money internationally without punitive fees. Different generations. Different needs. One platform. One institution. One cooperative mission. This is not technology replacing humanity. It is technology extending it.

## Why Trust May Become the Most Valuable Asset

In an age of artificial intelligence, deepfakes, data breaches, and algorithmic decision-making, trust may become the defining economic resource.

People will increasingly ask:

- Who owns my data?
- Who makes decisions?
- Who benefits from my participation?
- Who is accountable?

Traditional corporate structures often struggle to answer these questions convincingly. Cooperatives have a unique response. The institution belongs to the members. The incentives align with the users. The governance remains accountable. Trust is not marketed. It is built into the structure itself.

## The Opportunity Ahead

This is why the emergence of digitally native credit unions matters. Not because they are technologically impressive. Not because they are modern. Not because they are innovative. Those things are secondary. They matter because they represent an attempt to combine two ideas that society desperately needs: The efficiency of the future.

And the values of the past. Technology without values becomes extraction. Values without technology

become irrelevance. The opportunity lies in combining both.

## A Cooperative for the Next Century

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the credit union movement is that its central idea has survived every major economic transformation of the modern era.

Industrialization.

Urbanization.

Globalization.

Digitization.

And now artificial intelligence.

Each era changed the tools. None changed the principle. People helping people. The next generation of credit unions may look radically different from those that came before. They may operate entirely through smartphones. They may use AI extensively. They may facilitate global transactions in seconds. They may never issue a paper statement. Yet beneath the infrastructure, the mission remains familiar. The technology evolves. The purpose endures.

## The Long Arc

Back at the table in Florida, the conversation continues. Evelyn talks about her first savings account. Michael remembers applying for a mortgage. Sarah checks her phone and pays a bill. Noah asks whether money will still exist when he grows up. Everyone laughs. No one really knows the answer. But perhaps that is the wrong question. The better question is this: What kind of financial institutions do we want future generations to inherit?

If the answer includes trust, fairness, inclusion, transparency, and opportunity, then the cooperative model may have a larger role to play than ever before. The tools will change.

The generations will change.

The world will change.

But the need for institutions that place people at the center will remain. And perhaps that is why the story of credit unions is far from over. Perhaps it is only beginning.

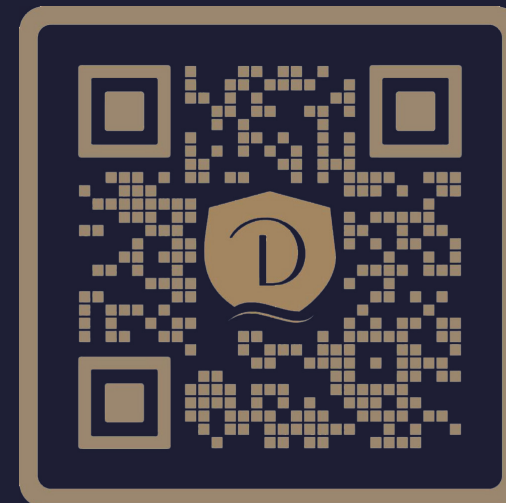
By TFT

# The Credit Union: July Survey

Your voice matters! Scan the code to participate.



<https://survey.dariacreditunion.com/fourth-survey>



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# Lee County Housing Market Update

## Market Interpretation

As of May 2026, Lee County's single-family housing market continues to show a clear reduction in supply compared to one year ago, with active listings down more than 20% year-over-year. Months of supply also declined sharply to 6.2 months, moving the market closer to balance after a period of elevated inventory. Despite tighter supply, homes are still taking slightly longer to sell than last year, which shows that buyer demand remains measured rather than aggressive. Median sale prices are down only 1.0% year-over-year, indicating continued price stability rather than a major correction. The list-to-sale price ratio improved to 97.4%, suggesting that sellers are retaining slightly stronger pricing power while buyers still maintain some room for negotiation. Mortgage rates remain elevated at 6.56%, continuing to limit affordability

### Lee County Single-Family Housing Snapshot (May 2026 Data | Published July 2026)

Metric	Value	Year-over-Year Change
Median Sales Price	\$385,000	-1.0%
Active Listings	7,544	-20.2%
Median Days on Market	52 days	+4.0%
Months of Supply	6.2 months	-27.9%
List Price / Sale Price Ratio	97.4%	-0.1%
Avg. 30-Year Fixed Mortgage Rate	6.56%	As of 6/15/2026

and keeping some buyers cautious. Overall, the data points to a market that is becoming more balanced, with shrinking inventory, stable prices, and transaction activity still heavily influenced by financing conditions.

By Kevin Tremmel

*Data reflects closed single-family home activity in Lee County for May 2026. All MLS metrics are reported as rolling 3-month averages to better capture underlying trends. Mortgage rate data sourced from Mortgage News Daily.*



Interested in Buying or Selling?  
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# Double Taxation: Fear, Myth, and Reality



Source: Pexels

Will I end up paying taxes twice?"

Few questions create more uncertainty among Germans in Florida than this one. Whether it's forming an LLC, investing in U.S. real estate, relocating to Southwest Florida, or running a business across borders, concerns about double taxation often arise as soon as Germany and the United States are involved.

The good news: In most cases, the fear is greater than the actual problem. The less encouraging news: Many people rely on assumptions, internet forums, or advice from well-meaning friends. And that can become expensive. Why Does a Tax Treaty Exist? Imagine earning income in the United States while still having tax obligations in Germany. Or living in Florida while maintaining assets, investments, or business interests in Germany.

Without clear rules, both countries could potentially claim the right to tax the same income. To avoid this, Germany and the United States entered into a Double Taxation Agreement (DTA), commonly referred to as a tax treaty.

Its purpose is straightforward: To prevent the same income from being taxed twice and to establish which country has the right to tax specific types of income. For entrepreneurs, investors, and expatriates, the treaty provides an important framework for cross-border activities.

#### What the Treaty Can Do

The treaty creates clarity. It helps determine:

- which country may tax certain income
- how taxes paid in one country are treated in the other

- how double taxation can be reduced or avoided
- how cross-border business activities are handled

For many international entrepreneurs, this framework makes investments and business operations possible in the first place. But this is also where one of the biggest misconceptions begins.

#### What the Treaty Cannot Do

Many people view the tax treaty as an automatic shield. The assumption often sounds like this: "I have a tax treaty, so I'm protected." Unfortunately, that is not how it works. A tax treaty does not replace tax planning. It does not replace bookkeeping. It does not replace proper business structures. And it certainly does not protect against mistakes.

If income is reported incorrectly, deadlines are missed, or an unsuitable structure is used, the treaty will not magically solve the problem. The treaty is a tool. Not a guardian angel.

#### Common Misunderstandings

When working with German entrepreneurs who have U.S. connections, we hear the same misconceptions repeatedly: "I have an LLC in Florida, so I no longer need to report anything in Germany." "I already pay taxes in the U.S., so Germany no longer cares about my income." "The tax treaty automatically prevents all double taxation." "Once I move to Florida, I'm immediately out of the German tax system." In reality, the answers are usually much more nuanced.

Key factors include:

- tax residency

- type of income
  - business structure
  - asset ownership
  - timing of relocation or investments
- This is why early planning is so important.

#### Why Structure Matters More Than Tax Rates

Interestingly, the biggest problems are rarely caused by high tax rates. Most problems arise because of poor structure. Entrepreneurs who understand their numbers, maintain proper bookkeeping, and consider both tax systems from the beginning can avoid many costly surprises. Those who wait until tax season to address decisions made months or years earlier often discover that their options are far more limited. At the end of the day, success is not determined by the tax treaty itself. Success depends on whether the structure behind it was built correctly from the start.

The treaty is a valuable tool. But like any tool, it only works when you know how to use it.

By Alexandra Welsch

In our next issue: Why asset protection does not begin with an LLC—it begins with the decisions made long before the company is formed.

# Lee County Real Estate Requires Strategy, Local Expertise, and the Right Advisor

**Thinking about selling?**  
Contact Daria US Brokerage for a professional home value review and seller strategy session.

**Planning to buy?**  
Schedule a buyer consultation before you start your search so you understand the market, the process, and your best opportunities.

**Relocating or investing in Lee County?**  
Let us help you evaluate the area, understand the local market, and make a confident decision.

The Lee County real estate market has changed. Buyers are more selective, sellers face more competition, and successful real estate decisions now require more than simply looking at online listings or guessing at a home's value.

For buyers, the challenge is finding the right property at the right price while avoiding costly mistakes. For sellers, the challenge is standing out in a more competitive market and positioning the home correctly from the beginning. In both cases, the right strategy matters. That is why Daria US Brokerage was created: to provide buyers and sellers in Lee County with honest guidance, strong market knowledge, and a clear plan for making smart real estate decisions.

Led by Broker Kevin Tremmel, Daria US Brokerage serves clients throughout Southwest Florida, with a strong focus on Lee County, including Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Lehigh Acres, North Fort Myers, Sanibel, Pine Island, and surrounding communities.

Whether someone is buying a primary residence, selling a home, relocating to Florida, purchasing a vacation property, or investing in real estate, the goal is the same: make the right decision with the right information.

## A Brokerage Built for the Lee County Market

Lee County is not one single real estate market. It is made up of many different submarkets, each with its own pricing, buyer demand, property types, and local dynamics.

Cape Coral is different from Fort Myers. Waterfront properties are different from inland homes. Newer construction competes differently than older resale homes. Properties in flood zones, gated communities, boating neighborhoods, or high-growth areas all require different analysis. That is why local expertise matters.

A good real estate advisor needs to understand more than the average sale price. They need to understand how location, property condition, insurance, flood zones, roof age, upgrades, neighborhood trends, and buyer behavior affect value.

At Daria US Brokerage, we take a practical and analytical approach. We look at the property, the market, the competition, and the client's goals before recommending a strategy. That matters because real estate decisions are too important to base on assumptions.

## For Sellers: The Right Strategy Starts Before the Home Hits the Market

For sellers in Lee County, preparation is critical. Many homeowners still remember the market from a few years ago, when homes sold quickly, inventory was low, and buyers had fewer options. In that environment, sellers often had the advantage.

Today, sellers need to be more strategic. A home that is overpriced, poorly presented, or weakly marketed can sit on the market and lose momentum. Buyers pay attention to price reductions, days on market, property condition, and how a home compares to other active listings. If a property does not show value early, many buyers simply move on.

That is why the selling process should begin before the listing goes live. At Daria US Brokerage, we help sellers answer the most important questions before going to market:

- What is the home realistically worth in today's market?
- How does it compare to active competition?
- What improvements or preparations would help the home show better?
- What pricing strategy gives the seller the strongest position?
- What marketing plan will attract serious buyers?
- What should the seller expect during negotiations?

A successful sale is not just about listing the property. It is about positioning it correctly.

Professional presentation, strong pricing, accurate market analysis, and clear communication all matter. The goal is to create buyer interest early, avoid unnecessary time on market, and negotiate from the strongest possible position.

For sellers, Daria US Brokerage provides a clear plan, not generic advice. If you are thinking about selling your home in Lee County, contact Daria US Brokerage for a professional home value review and seller strategy session before you list.

## For Buyers: The Right Home Is About More Than the Listing Price

Buying real estate in Lee County also requires a thoughtful approach. A home may look attractive online but still have issues that affect value,

insurability, maintenance costs, or resale potential. Another property may appear expensive at first glance but offer better long-term value because of location, condition, construction quality, or future demand.

That is why buyers need more than someone who opens doors. They need someone who can help them evaluate the full picture.

At Daria US Brokerage, we help buyers look beyond the surface. We guide clients through the factors that matter in Southwest Florida, including:

- Location and neighborhood trends
- Flood zones and insurance considerations
- Roof age and property condition
- HOA rules and rental restrictions
- Comparable sales and current competition
- Inspection concerns
- Negotiation strategy
- Long-term resale value

This is especially important for buyers relocating from another state or another country. Florida real estate comes with specific considerations that may be unfamiliar, including insurance, hurricanes, flood zones, property taxes, homestead exemption, inspections, and local market differences.

A buyer who understands these factors is in a stronger position. They can make better offers, avoid bad purchases, and move with confidence when the right property becomes available. The goal is not just to buy a home. The goal is to buy the right home.

If you are planning to buy in Lee County, speak with Daria US Brokerage before you start touring homes. A smart buying strategy can save you money, time, and stress.

## Serving Local, Relocating, and International Clients

Southwest Florida continues to attract buyers from across the United States and around the world. Many are drawn to Lee County for its lifestyle, climate, boating, beaches, golf, outdoor living, investment potential, and long-term growth.

But relocating to Florida or purchasing property from a distance can be complicated.

Buyers need clear guidance. Sellers need strong exposure. International clients need an advisor who understands both the local market and the concerns of people coming from a different real estate system.

Daria US Brokerage is especially positioned to support both local and international clients. In addition to Kevin Tremmel's local real estate, brokerage, investment, and development experience, Melina Schmelter brings an international real estate background, with experience in Germany, London, and the United

States. This adds valuable perspective for clients who are relocating, investing, or comparing the Florida process to what they know from Europe.

For German-speaking and international clients, that understanding can make the process clearer, easier, and more comfortable.

For local Lee County clients, it also adds another layer of professionalism, communication, and market perspective.

## Real Estate Guidance Should Be Honest and Practical

Real estate decisions are financial decisions, lifestyle decisions, and often emotional decisions. That is why clients need honest advice.

At Daria US Brokerage, we believe in giving clients clear information, even when the truth is not what they expected to hear.

If a seller's price expectation is too high, we will explain the market reality. If a buyer is looking at a property with serious concerns, we will point them out.

If an investor's numbers do not make sense, we will say so.

If waiting is the better option, we will discuss that as well.

The goal is not to pressure clients into a decision. The goal is to help them make the right decision.

That means providing market knowledge, explaining the risks, identifying opportunities, and creating a realistic strategy.

## Your Lee County Real Estate Resource

The Lee County real estate market still offers strong opportunities for buyers, sellers, investors, and relocating clients. But the market rewards preparation.

Sellers need accurate pricing, strong presentation, and a clear marketing plan.

Buyers need local knowledge, property analysis, and smart negotiation.

Investors need realistic numbers and a practical understanding of risk and opportunity.

Relocating and international clients need clear communication and step-by-step guidance.

That is what Daria US Brokerage provides.

Whether you are selling a home in Cape Coral, buying in Fort Myers, relocating to Bonita Springs, investing in Lehigh Acres, or exploring opportunities anywhere in Lee County, our team is ready to help you make a smarter move. Real estate in Lee County is too important to approach without a plan.

With the right guidance, buyers and sellers can move forward with clarity, confidence, and a stronger strategy.

By Kevin Tremmel

# Summer in Southwest Florida: A Season of Memories

When Germans think of summer vacation, they often picture six weeks away from school, family trips, sunny afternoons at the lake, and long evenings outdoors. In the United States, however, summer break is something entirely different. For many children, school ends in late May and does not begin again until August. Nearly three months stretch out before them like an endless horizon of possibilities.

For a child, those weeks feel like freedom itself.

There are no school bells, no homework waiting on the kitchen table, and no rush to catch the morning bus. Instead, each day begins with sunshine streaming through the window and the excitement of wondering what adventures might unfold before bedtime.

For a child, those weeks feel like freedom itself.

Here in Southwest Florida, summer revolves around family, friends, and the outdoors. The warm Gulf waters beckon families to the beach, while neighborhood pools fill with laughter and splashing children. Parents often take time off for vacations, day trips, or weekends on the water. Summer camps, baseball leagues, and community events keep children busy, but some of the most cherished moments are often the simplest.

Many Americans look back on their childhood summers not because of expensive vacations, but because of the little things. They remember grabbing their bicycles after breakfast and disappearing into

the neighborhood with friends. Parents would often say only one thing before the children rode away: "Be home before dark."

The hours that followed felt endless. Children raced down sidewalks, built makeshift forts, played hide-and-seek, and gathered for spontaneous ball games in front yards and cul-de-sacs. A basketball hoop mounted above a garage door could become the center of the universe for an entire afternoon. Sometimes the game lasted until the sun dipped low in the sky and everyone was too tired to keep score.

In many neighborhoods, children drifted from one house to another throughout the day. Someone's mother would hand out popsicles. Another family might fire up the grill for hamburgers and hot dogs. Neighbors became extended family, and children rarely needed organized entertainment to stay occupied.

As evening approached and the Florida heat softened, the magic of summer often truly began.

Families took walks after dinner while children continued to play outside. The sky slowly turned shades of orange, pink, and purple as the sun disappeared beyond the horizon. In many parts of the country, children chased fireflies through backyards and open fields. They carefully caught the tiny glowing insects in their hands or collected them in jars for a few minutes before setting them free again. For generations of Americans, fireflies have become one of the most beloved symbols of summer.

There was something magical about those evenings.

No screens. No schedules. Just the sound of crickets, laughter drifting across the neighborhood, and children squeezing every last minute from the

day before darkness finally sent them home.

No screens.  
No schedules.  
Just the sound of crickets, laughter drifting across the neighborhood, and children

For teenagers, summer often brought another kind of adventure. It might be a first summer job, earning spending money and learning responsibility. It might be evenings spent talking with friends long after sunset. And for many, it was the season of first love.

Perhaps it was a crush met at summer camp, a classmate who suddenly seemed different once school was out, or a brief romance that lasted only a few weeks but remained unforgettable for years. Long walks on the beach, ice cream after sunset, and awkward conversations under the stars have become part of countless American summer memories.

Here in Southwest Florida, those moments often happen against a uniquely beautiful backdrop. Families gather on the beach to watch dolphins swim offshore. Children search for seashells on Sanibel Island. Neighbors come together for outdoor concerts, fireworks displays, and community festivals. On the Fourth of July, entire communities celebrate under skies

illuminated with colorful fireworks reflected in the water.

Summer also brings a slower rhythm to family life. The normal routines of school, sports, and homework pause for a while. Parents and children have opportunities to spend time together that can be difficult to find during the busy school year. Whether it is a road trip across the country, a day at the beach, or simply an evening spent talking on the porch, these moments often become the memories families treasure most.

Of course, summer cannot last forever. Eventually, store shelves fill with backpacks and notebooks. Children compare class schedules and wonder who their next teacher will be. Parents prepare for the return of routines and early mornings.

Yet every August, as another school year begins, families carry something special with them: a collection of memories created during those long summer days.

Years later, most people will not remember every lesson they learned in school. But they often remember the bike rides, the fireflies, the backyard ball games, the sunsets, the friendships, and the feeling of staying outside until darkness finally signaled the end of another perfect summer day. Perhaps that is the true magic of summer in America.

It is not simply a break from school. It is a season of freedom, family, friendship, and memories that last a lifetime.

By S. Mechalik



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# Summer, Longing, and the Journey Within

## Why Being on the Move Is More Than Just a Vacation

For many people, July is a season of setting out. Schools close their doors, suitcases are packed, travel plans are made, and anticipation for the holidays begins to grow. Airports, train stations, and highways fill with people eager to leave. But where are we really going? And what are we searching for when we travel?

Some time ago, I heard a striking statement in a television documentary about tourism in the Alps. A tourism manager said: “The typical tourist is adventurous and a little limited.” The remark may sound provocative, but it raises an interesting question: What do we actually expect from traveling? Is it about collecting as many attractions as possible, gathering spectacular photos, and escaping everyday life for a few weeks? Or is there perhaps something deeper behind our longing for distant places?

Anyone who honestly reflects on their own travel habits will realize that vacations often mean more than relaxation. They are about freedom. About distance from daily routines. About the hope of finding something that may have been lost in everyday life. Perhaps it is precisely this longing that has inspired people to set out on journeys for centuries.

The poet Joseph von Eichendorff expressed this beautifully in a well-known song: “To whom God wishes to show true favor, He sends out into the wide world.” Here, traveling is not seen as an escape from everyday life but as a gift from God. The wide world becomes a place of encounter, learning, and wonder. Those who travel can rediscover creation and, in doing so, perhaps rediscover themselves as well.

Interestingly, this perspective is even reflected in the words we use for vacation. In English, we speak of “holidays” – originally “holy days,” days set apart from ordinary life. Days intended to help us become whole again. The German word Urlaub comes from the Middle High German urloup, meaning permission to leave one’s duties behind.

## Chasing More; People. Visions. Stories.

Regular readers of the Sunshine Post may already be familiar with them – the stories of people who pursue their own path with passion, courage, and a clear vision. People like Dewi von Garnier, Dr. Tim Ferguson of Enjewel, or the dedicated minds behind Arts for ACT. Individuals whose ideas, commitment, and values enrich and inspire our community.

Time and time again, these conversations have reminded me that behind every business, every project, and every success story, there is one thing above all else: people. People who recognize opportunities. People who take responsibility. People who do not wait for change to happen but actively create it. From these encounters, a new Sunshine Post series is officially born: Chasing More.

A column dedicated to entrepreneurs, artists, athletes, families, visionaries, and changemakers. To people who remain curious, continue to grow, and make a positive difference through the way they choose to live their lives. The first official faces of Chasing More are Eni and André Maier.

At first glance, their story might seem to be about tennis. After all, the sport has been part of André’s life since childhood, leading him to Germany’s Second Bundesliga and later to the United States on a tennis scholarship. Yet only a few minutes into our conversation, it became clear that their story is about something much

Other languages use words such as vacation, vacances, or vacaciones, all rooted in the Latin word vacare: to be free, to have leisure, to have time for something.

All these expressions point in the same direction: a vacation is more than free time. It is a gift of time. Time to breathe deeply. Time to widen our perspective. This is also where faith and travel intersect. The Bible repeatedly tells the stories of people who set out on journeys. Abraham leaves his homeland. Moses leads his people through the wilderness. The disciples leave their nets and follow Jesus. Faith always involves being on the move. Those who believe do not remain where they are. They open themselves to new experiences and trust that God accompanies them on the way.

Perhaps that is why every journey begins with something that goes beyond simply leaving home. It is a departure from the routines and habits of daily life. Many people know the feeling: during the first days of vacation, thoughts are still occupied with work, appointments, and responsibilities. The body may have arrived at the destination, but the soul often needs more time. Only gradually do the inner chains of everyday life begin to loosen.

Travel opens new horizons. It introduces us to different landscapes, cultures, and ways of living. Above all, it reminds us that the world is larger than our own immediate surroundings. When we travel, we discover that things could be different. We realize that life offers more possibilities than we often recognize in our daily routines.

Yet traveling is not only about setting out; it is also about learning to pause. The Bible has a special word for this: Sabbath. God himself placed a rhythm of work and rest into creation. Human beings were not made to function without interruption. They need times of renewal in order to remain fully human.

This message is more relevant today than ever before. Many people are constantly reachable. Emails, messages, and social

greater.

About family.

About community.

About personal growth.

And about having the courage to seize opportunities when they arise.

Together with their two young children, the family is preparing to begin a new chapter in Florida. But anyone who speaks with Eni and André quickly realizes that this journey is not about chasing a location. It is about building a life that reflects their values. And that is exactly why they are the perfect first faces of Chasing More.

### More Than Tennis - Why Eni and André Maier Are Moving Their Family to Florida

What inspires a young family with two small children to leave their life in Germany behind and start over on the other side of the world? For Eni and André Maier, the answer does not begin with Florida. It begins with a mindset.

A belief that growth happens when we are willing to explore new paths. A willingness to recognize opportunities rather than be held back by uncertainty. And a desire to show their children that dreams are not just something we talk about - they are something we can choose to pursue.

As I spoke with Eni and André about their upcoming move to Florida, it quickly became clear that their story is about far more than relocation. It is the story of a family that consciously chooses growth. Adventure. Joy. And the opportunity to build something

media determine the rhythm of the day. Even on vacation, it is often difficult to truly disconnect. But real rest begins where we learn to let go. Where we trust that the world will continue to turn even without our constant involvement.

A vacation can therefore become a school of trust. An invitation to lay down our worries for a while and place them into God’s hands. To stop trying to control everything. To stop feeling that we always have to perform.

There is something else that belongs to every journey: wonder. Those who rush from one highlight to the next often miss what matters most. The most beautiful vacation memories are rarely the result of perfect planning. They arise in unexpected moments: while watching a sunrise, meeting unfamiliar people, sharing an evening conversation, or standing silently before a breathtaking landscape.

Christians view the world through a unique lens. They believe that creation did not come into existence by chance but is an expression of God’s love and creativity. When we gaze upon mountains, listen to the sea, or walk through ancient cities, we can discover traces of God. The world becomes a window through which something of his greatness can be seen.

By Tobias Leinesser

Photos courtesy of: Tobias Leinesser



meaningful together.

“Change has never been something negative for us,” Eni explains. Having moved several times before, the family has learned that some of life’s greatest opportunities often appear when we are willing to embrace the unknown. Anyone who meets them immediately notices their positive energy. Their enthusiasm for life. Their excitement about meeting new people, discovering new experiences, and exploring possibilities they may never have imagined before.

Movement has always played an important role in their lives - and not only in a literal sense. Sports have been a constant companion for many years. Eni and André share a passion for an active lifestyle, personal challenges, and continuous growth. Together, they even completed an Ironman in Switzerland, an achievement that requires not only physical strength but also discipline, trust, and perseverance. Qualities that continue to shape their journey today.

For André, however, tennis has always held a particularly special place. Growing up during Germany’s tennis boom, the sport became an integral part of his life from an early age. What began as a passion eventually led him to compete in Germany’s Second Bundesliga and later earn a tennis scholarship in the United States. For four years, he studied and competed at a high level.

“Tennis has opened countless doors for

Travel can therefore teach gratitude. Gratitude for the beauty of nature. For the people who accompany us on our journey. For the time we have been given. At ages four and five, their children are at a stage where many families seek stability above all else. Eni and André have consciously chosen a different path.

Summer therefore invites us to do more than simply travel. It invites us to journey inwardly as well. To leave familiar paths behind. To discover something new. To find rest. To learn to wonder again. And perhaps, in the vastness of the world, to rediscover that God has been traveling with us all along.

For in the end, the most meaningful journeys are often not those that take us to distant places. They are the journeys that transform our hearts. There begins the freedom for which we truly long. And there, a vacation becomes more than a break from routine—it becomes a path to ourselves, to one another, and to God.



Together with their two children, they are preparing for a fresh start in Florida. A decision that requires courage. At ages four and five, their children are at a stage where many families seek stability above all else. Eni and André have consciously chosen a different path.

Not because they are running away from something. But because they are moving toward something. Toward new experiences. Toward personal growth. Toward the opportunity to show their children that life rewards those who are willing to embrace possibility. “We want our children to understand that dreams are not only allowed - they are worth pursuing,” they explain. That mindset is also reflected in the project they will help bring to life in the future.

Because what is planned in Florida is far more than a sports facility. The vision is a modern Daria Academy - a place where sports, community, and quality of life come together.

The concept includes a modern multi-racket club featuring tennis, padel, and pickleball, complemented by indoor and outdoor facilities, fitness and wellness areas, dining experiences, and community events designed to bring people together.

What makes the project especially inspiring is the philosophy behind it. The focus is not on performance. The focus is on people. On creating a place where families can spend time together. Where friendships are formed. Where meaningful connections happen. And where sports become a bridge between people. That philosophy perfectly reflects who Eni and André are. Throughout our conversation, one theme continued to emerge: the importance of community. Not as a buzzword. But as a lived value. People supporting one another. People learning from one another. People growing together. Perhaps that is why they feel so connected to this community. And perhaps that is the real story

behind their move. Not the palm trees. Not the warm weather. Not even the tennis academy. But the decision to consciously shape their own lives. The courage to recognize opportunities. The courage to take new paths. And the courage to show their children that life often begins where the comfort zone ends.

Listening to Eni and André leaves a clear impression. They are not moving to Florida because life will be easier there. They are moving because they see an opportunity to build a life that reflects their values.

A life filled with movement. With community. With possibility. And with excitement for everything that lies ahead. For the Maier family, a new chapter is about to begin in Florida. And perhaps their story reminds us that the greatest opportunities are often not the ones we spend years planning.

They are the ones we recognize when they unexpectedly appear right in front of us.

By Katharina Kaufmann

Photos courtesy of: Katharina Kaufmann



## Conversations with God

### Part 1: Meet Pastor Marty – Faith, Freedom, and Finding Joy

Sometimes the most inspiring conversations happen over a cup of coffee, inside a small church, or simply while talking with someone who genuinely loves people. For our new series, “Conversations with God,” I sat down with Pastor Martin Luchterhand, known warmly as Marty, from Fort Myers. What I discovered was not only a man of faith, but someone who loves motorcycles, fishing, family, laughter, and helping people find hope.

**Alexandra:** Pastor Marty, tell our readers a little about yourself. Who is Marty?

**Marty:** I live in Fort Myers with my wife, Wendy. We have been married for almost 34 years and have four sons. Wendy is a doula and birth professional who supports women and families throughout pregnancy, birth, and postpartum recovery. I am very thankful for her. Family is incredibly important to me. I have been a pastor for more than 30 years, but I have also worked in other professions throughout my life. Today, I continue serving churches while also running another business to support my family. Outside of ministry, I love the outdoors. Hunting, fishing, riding motorcycles, exploring small towns, and spending time with family bring me a lot of joy. And yes — sometimes I still play Pokémon GO with my kids.

**Alexandra:** Was becoming a pastor always your dream?

**Marty:** Actually, no. He laughed. My father was a pastor, and when I was younger, I thought pastors did not have any fun. I saw them as serious people who spent all their time working. But during college, something changed. I realized I loved two things: God’s Word and people. I discovered that being a pastor allowed me to bring those two things together. That became my calling.

**Alexandra:** Was there a specific moment when you knew this was your path?

**Marty:** Yes. During a mission trip in Bakersfield,

California, I spent a week knocking on strangers’ doors and talking with them about faith. To be honest, it terrified me. But at the same time, I loved it. That experience confirmed what was already growing in my heart. I knew I wanted to dedicate my life to helping people discover hope and purpose through God’s Word.

**Alexandra:** Today, you serve a small church community in Englewood alongside your bread-and-butter job. What do you love most about that?

**Marty:** The people. In a smaller church, you really get to know everyone. You can walk alongside people through life’s challenges and victories. What excites me most right now is watching people embrace change. Many churches struggle because they become afraid of trying new things. I have watched this congregation move from worrying about survival to asking, “How can we bring God’s message to more people?” That transformation has been incredible to witness.

**Alexandra:** If money, obligations, and schedules were no concern at all, what would your dream ministry look like?

**Marty:** That is actually an easy question. There are many churches across America that currently do not have a pastor. If I had the freedom to do it, I would love to travel from community to community, serving churches for a few months at a time. My role would not be to stay forever. It would be to help them get healthy, overcome challenges, build momentum, and prepare them for the next pastor who will eventually lead them long-term. Over the years, I have served several churches and worked as a circuit pastor, helping congregations solve problems and navigate difficult transitions. Because of that experience, I can often see opportunities for growth that others may miss. For me, it would be a blessing to travel, meet new people, strengthen churches, and then hand them over ready for their next chapter.

In many ways, it would combine three things I love most: people, God’s Word, and seeing communities flourish.

**Alexandra:** That sounds less like building something for yourself and more like helping others build their future.

**Marty:** Exactly. A good pastor should not only think about today. He should help prepare people for what comes next. Sometimes that means stepping in for a season, helping a church rediscover its purpose, and then stepping aside so someone else can continue the work. I think that is one of the most rewarding parts of ministry.

**Alexandra:** What is something people often misunderstand about pastors?

**Marty:** That we are all about rules. He laughed. People sometimes assume faith means restriction. For me, it is the opposite. Faith has given me freedom. I love life. I love laughing. I enjoy people. I enjoy adventure. I do not see faith as something that limits us—I see it as something that gives life meaning and purpose.

**Alexandra:** What brings you joy when you are not working?

**Marty:** My family. And if I had unlimited free time, you would probably find me riding a motorcycle, sitting around a campfire, hunting, fishing, or exploring the mountains. I especially love Montana. The beauty, the clean air, the mountains — it is one of my absolute favorite places in the world.

**Alexandra:** What does a perfect day look like for you?

**Marty:** A small mountain town. A cozy cabin. Walking through local shops, meeting people, eating ice cream, collecting little souvenirs, and simply appreciating another corner of God’s creation. Sometimes the greatest blessings are

the simple moments.

**A Personal Reflection** What struck me most during our conversation was not only Pastor Marty’s faith — it was his joy. In a world that often feels rushed and complicated, he reminds us that faith does not have to be heavy. It can be filled with laughter, adventure, freedom, and genuine connection.

Perhaps that is one reason people enjoy being around him: he is the same person inside and outside the church. He carries a special spirit — honest, warm, joyful, and deeply human. What also stayed with me was his servant-hearted vision for the future. While many people dream of building something for themselves, Pastor Marty dreams of traveling across America, helping struggling churches find new life, guiding them through seasons of transition, and preparing them for the next generation of leadership. It is a vision built not on recognition, but on service. And maybe that is what authentic faith looks like: not simply believing, but living with purpose, joy, humility, and a genuine desire to help others and their communities flourish.

*Coming Next Month... Conversations with God – Part 2: Faith in Everyday Life Join us next month for another inspiring conversation.*

By Alexandra Welsch

Photos courtesy of: Alexandra Welsch



# Whats happening? The Sunshine Post Event Calendar; July

Searching for the next big party or perhaps a sophisticated soirée? Look no further! The Sunshine Post Culture Department has all the latest tips on where to go, who to see and what to do in and around Fort Myers. Enjoy!

## Cape Coral – “Red, White & BOOM!”

**Where?** Around Cape Coral Parkway and the Cape Coral Bridge  
**When?** Starting in the late afternoon  
• Cape Coral hosts one of the region’s largest Fourth of July celebrations: “Red, White & BOOM!”  
• Visitors can enjoy a large street festival featuring live music, food vendors, and family-friendly activities.  
• The highlight of the evening is the spectacular fireworks show over the Caloosahatchee River, which typically begins around 9:30 PM. Reflections on the water make the display especially impressive and attract visitors from across the region every year.

04

## Fort Myers Beach – Fireworks on the Beach

**Where?** Fort Myers Beach | Times Square and the beachfront area  
**When?** All Day  
• Fort Myers Beach offers a classic coastal Fourth of July atmosphere. The center of activity is around Times Square and the beachfront area.  
• In the evening, the beach itself becomes the viewing area for the fireworks display over the Gulf of Mexico, usually beginning around 9:00 PM. Many visitors arrive early to secure a spot directly on the sand.  
• While additional activities may vary from year to year, fireworks and the beachside atmosphere remain the heart of the celebration.

04

## Beach and Waterfront Events

Independence Day is celebrated throughout Southwest Florida with both large and small community events. Along the coastlines and riverfronts, fireworks, live music, and family gatherings take center stage. Each city brings its own unique atmosphere to the holiday. Across Southwest Florida, the Fourth of July shares a common theme: water, community, and fireworks. Whether along riverfronts, downtown streets, harbors, or beaches, the holiday centers around gathering together, enjoying music and food, and experiencing the summer night sky as a community.

## Fort Myers – Celebration in the River District

**Where?** Downtown Fort Myers and Caloosahatchee River  
**When?** All Day  
• Downtown Fort Myers celebrates Independence Day in the popular River District. In the evening, the downtown area transforms into a lively festival scene with live music, food trucks, and entertainment for families.  
• At sunset, visitors gather along the Caloosahatchee River, especially near Centennial Park. The fireworks usually begin between 9:30 and 10:00 PM and are launched over the water — a classic summer moment in downtown Fort Myers.

04

## Punta Gorda – Harborfront Celebration

**Where?** Punta Gorda | Fishermen’s Village and the Charlotte Harbor waterfront  
**When?** Afternoon and evening  
• Throughout the afternoon and evening, visitors can enjoy live music, food vendors, and family activities. Later, crowds gather along the harbor to watch the fireworks over Charlotte Harbor Bay, typically beginning around 9:00 PM.  
• The reflections on the water and the view of the boats create an especially charming and relaxed atmosphere.

04

## Naples – Fireworks at the Pier

**Where?** Naples | Naples Pier and the surrounding beaches  
**When?** Evening  
• Naples offers a more elegant and laid-back Independence Day celebration along the Gulf of Mexico. Fireworks are launched from a barge offshore and are best viewed from Naples Pier and the surrounding beaches.  
• Many visitors arrive early in the evening with blankets and picnic baskets. Around 9:00 PM, the fireworks illuminate the sky over the ocean and reflect across the water — creating a timeless and scenic coastal experience.

04



Photos courtesy of: S. Mechalik

## Send Us Your Event Recommendations!

info@sunshine-post.com

# 53 years later – How the New York Knicks finally reclaimed the NBA Throne

There are sports stories that eventually become bigger than sports themselves. Stories that are passed down from generation to generation until almost nobody remembers what the original moment must actually have felt like. For decades, New York had exactly that kind of story. It was the story of a team that once belonged among the greatest organizations in American sports, that played in the most famous arena in the world, that had millions of fans — and yet kept falling short. It was the story of the New York Knicks. Now that story has a new chapter. The New York Knicks are NBA Champions in 2026. With a 4-1 victory in the NBA Finals over the San Antonio Spurs, the most historic basketball franchise of America’s biggest city captured its first championship since 1973. Three championships now stand in the record books, but between banner number two and banner number three lie an unbelievable 53 years. More than half a century of waiting. A span of time in which people were born, built families, grew old, and never experienced their Knicks winning the final game of a season.

When the final buzzer sounded in the decisive Game 5 of the Finals, what broke loose in New York was not simply joy. It felt more like the release of decades of tension.

### The Long Road to Becoming a Legend

To understand why this championship means so much to the city, you have to go back. The Knicks are one of the oldest and most storied organizations in American professional sports. Founded in 1946, they predate the NBA in its modern form. Their name — “Knickerbockers” — comes from New York’s early Dutch settlers and remains deeply tied to the identity of the city. But tradition alone does not create a legend. The true greatness of the Knicks was built in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Under head coach Red Holzman, New York created a team that is still remembered as one of the most elegant and disciplined teams in basketball history. At the center were players who became permanent symbols in New York: Walt Frazier with his effortless style and elegance, Willis Reed as the uncompromising leader, Bill Bradley with his basketball intelligence, and

later Earl Monroe with his creativity. Those Knicks represented something New York has always admired: teamwork without ego. In 1970, the franchise won its first championship and created one of the most famous moments in sports history. Before the decisive Game 7 against the Los Angeles Lakers, captain Willis Reed was injured. For days, people debated whether he would even be able to play. Just before tipoff, Madison Square Garden became silent. Then the tunnel opened and Reed stepped onto the court. The arena exploded. He played only a few minutes, but his presence alone changed the game. New York won, and the moment became immortal. Three years later came championship number two. At the time, nobody believed the Knicks would wait this long for another title.

### Decades of hope and waiting

In the 1990s, the return seemed close more than once. Patrick Ewing brought the Knicks back to the top of the league. The team played hard, physical, and relentless basketball. In 1994, New York reached the Finals against Houston and lost in seven games. In 1999, they returned to the Finals. Again, there was no happy ending.

After that began a long period of searching. Players came and went. Coaches changed. Every few years came another promise of a fresh start, and every few years New York fell short. And yet something remarkable happened: the Knicks

never lost their importance. Madison Square Garden stayed

full. The city stayed loud. The fans never stopped believing that one day their time would

### The 2025/26 Season – From Contender to Champion

Then came the 2025–26 season. At the beginning, New York was viewed as strong but not necessarily as the favorite to win it all. Many observers believed other teams had more talent or greater depth. But the Knicks quickly developed a quality that would define their journey: they won games they had no business winning. They didn’t play spectacular basketball. They played mature basketball. They defended. They controlled the pace. They made fewer mistakes than their opponents. At the center of everything stood Jalen Brunson. The point guard became the face of the franchise. What made Brunson special wasn’t just his scoring — it was his calm. While other teams became frantic, New York stayed composed because Brunson stayed composed. The Knicks put together a strong regular season and slowly built the identity of a true championship contender. In the playoffs, belief turned into certainty. Series by series, New York kept moving forward — not through dominance, but through resilience.

### The Finals and the Night of Redemption

Waiting at the end were the San Antonio Spurs: a young team, fearless, fast, and full of energy. Many expected a long Finals series, and suddenly all of New York wanted to be part of it. Ticket prices for the Finals at Madison Square Garden reached historic levels. For Game 3, the cheapest seats climbed above \$7,000. Median ticket prices reached around \$14,500. Individual premium and courtside seats were listed for more than \$100,000. TickPick estimated average

prices above \$5,000 per ticket — more expensive than many Super Bowls. And yet people kept buying. Because Madison Square Garden is more than an arena. It is often simply called “The Garden” and is known worldwide as “The World’s Most Famous Arena.” Basketball, boxing, concerts, politics, and pop culture — few places connect sports and mythology like this building in the middle of Manhattan. The Knicks made it clear early in the series that they came to make history. The 4-1 result looks more comfortable in hindsight than it actually felt. Several games were close. More than once New York had to survive difficult stretches. Especially Game 5 became one of those nights the city will never forget. The Spurs kept coming back. The pressure became enormous. Nobody wanted to return to Texas. In the fourth quarter every possession became difficult. And in that moment, Brunson took over. With mid-range shots, drives to the basket, and decision after decision, he carried his team across the finish line.

### Forty-five points - Finals MVP - 94-90 - The buzzer sounded

Players rushed onto the floor. People cried in the stands. Fans embraced each other. Outside, on the streets of Manhattan, a celebration began that some people had waited their entire lives to see. For 53 years, a Knicks championship had been only a memory. In 2026, it became reality again. And somewhere beneath the roof of Madison Square Garden, a new banner will soon hang — not just as a symbol of a title, but as a reminder that even the longest wait eventually comes to an end. The Knicks are one of the oldest teams in the NBA and have existed since 1946. The name “Knickerbockers” comes from New York’s early Dutch settlers. Madison Square Garden no longer stands at its original location; today’s arena is already the fourth version. Despite their enormous fan base, the Knicks had won only two championships before 2026. The 2026 title turned a historic franchise back into a winning organization. And maybe that describes this summer in New York best: It wasn’t just a team that became champion. An entire city got its basketball history back.

By John Heinrich

Source: Pixabay



Your voice matters. At the Sunshine Post, our new Letters To the Editor section is a space for readers to share opinions, spark conversations, and respond to the stories shaping our community.

Whether you want to comment on a recent article, highlight a topic that deserves attention, or simply share your perspective – we welcome your thoughts.

Send your letter (up to 250 words) to editor@sunshine-post.com.

# Magic Moments in Fort Myers

Some evenings are so much more than just a football match. They become a symbol of unity, enthusiasm and what happens when people with a shared vision come together.

Following the German national team's impressive 7-1 opening victory, anticipation for the next match was huge. Expectations were high, conversations brimming with enthusiasm, and the atmosphere within the DARIA Community was priceless. It soon became clear: This special experience is set to continue.

Once again, the DARIA headquarters in the heart of Fort Myers opened its doors for another public viewing of the German national team. What unfolded was far more than just a sporting event. It was an evening that brought people together, fostered new connections and strengthened existing friendships.

Even before kick-off, the venue was filling up with members of our community, business partners, friends and even before kick-off, the venue was filling up with members of our

community, business partners, friends and guests. Everywhere you looked, people were laughing, chatting and raising a glass to what promised to be a special evening. Whilst every ball was fiercely contested on the pitch, an atmosphere of genuine camaraderie took hold at the DARIA headquarters. The tension rose with every chance on goal. The cheers grew louder with every goal. And with every passing minute, it became clear that on this evening it was about so much more than just football. It was about people who want to actively shape their own futures. About people who recognise opportunities, think big and are ready to break new ground together.

That is exactly what defines the DARIA Community.

It is not just about numbers, statistics or reach. It is made up of individuals. People with visions, goals and a desire to develop further. People who support one another, share experiences and grow together.

The Public Viewing thus became a symbol of what DARIA has stood for from the very beginning: community,

trust, development, and the belief that great things can happen when the right people come together.

Whilst the German national team impressed on the pitch, it became clear at DARIA headquarters that the greatest successes often arise off the pitch. In conversations that inspire. In encounters that open up new possibilities. And in relationships that last...that stand the test of time.

The true strength of a community is not measured by its size, but by the quality of its connections. It is evident in those moments when people are there for one another, celebrate successes together and motivate each other to achieve their goals.

The evening ended with beaming faces, countless conversations and the feeling of being part of something special. Some stayed together long after the final whistle, exchanging ideas and enjoyed the unique atmosphere in the heart of Fort Myers.

For DARIA, this evening was yet another confirmation of what drives us. Property, investments and business

opportunities create possibilities. But true value is created by the people who seize these opportunities together and turn them into something great.

Our Founding Members, our partners, our friends and our entire team form the foundation of this special community. They are the reason why why encounters lead to friendships, ideas lead to projects, and visions become reality.

We are incredibly proud of this. Because DARIA's greatest strength lies not only in its buildings, concepts or figures. DARIA's greatest strength has always been the people behind it.

On this evening, Fort Myers demonstrated once again what is possible when community meets a vision – and when people come together who do not merely dream of life, but shape the future together.

By Dina Veronique Scheve



Photos courtesy of: Dina Veronique Scheve

# Asparagus Bowl with Salmon & Quinoa

Perfect for meal prep – keeps fresh in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. This makes for a very well-balanced lunch or dinner, providing long-lasting satiety thanks to its combination of high-quality protein, healthy fats, and fiber.

## INGREDIENTS (SERVES 1)

- 100 g green asparagus
- 100 g salmon fillet
- 60 g quinoa (uncooked)
- 1/2 avocado
- 6 cherry tomatoes
- 1 handful of arugula (rocket) or baby spinach
- 1 tsp olive oil
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- Salt and pepper
- Optional: sesame seeds or pumpkin seeds

by Dina Veronique Scheve

For a higher-protein meal prep version, increase the salmon to 150 g. This would bring the bowl to approximately:

## NUTRITIONAL VALUES (APPROX. PER SERVING)

- 744 calories
- 43 g protein
- 54 g carbohydrates
- 39 g fat
- Approx. 12-14 g fiber

## NUTRITIONAL VALUES (APPROX. PER SERVING)

- Approx. 640 calories
- Approx. 33 g protein
- Approx. 54 g carbohydrates
- Approx. 33 g fat
- Approx. 12-14 g fiber



Photos courtesy of: Dina Veronique Scheve

1. Cook the quinoa according to the package instructions.
2. Wash the asparagus, trim off the woody ends, and cut it into bite-sized pieces.
3. Heat the olive oil in a pan. Sear the salmon on both sides and season with salt, pepper, and lemon juice.
4. Add the asparagus to the pan and sauté for about 5-7 minutes until tender-crisp. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Assemble the bowl with quinoa, asparagus, salmon, avocado, cherry tomatoes, and arugula.
6. Top with sesame seeds or pumpkin seeds if desired and enjoy! extra tropical flavour.

# Cooling Off in Southwest Florida

## The Best Outdoor Pools & Water Destinations for Families This Summer

July in Southwest Florida means sunshine, summer break, and temperatures that regularly climb above 90°F (32°C). For families, this is the perfect time to discover the many outdoor pools, lagoons, and water attractions the region has to offer. Whether you are looking for thrilling water slides, relaxing resort pools, or tropical island experiences, Southwest Florida has become a true paradise for water lovers of all ages. From Cape Coral to Captiva Island, more and more families spend their weekends enjoying waterparks, resort day passes, and outdoor entertainment — especially during the long summer school vacation.

### Water Slides, Lazy Rivers & Summer Concerts in Cape Coral

One of the best-known summer attractions in the region is Sun Splash Family Waterpark. Located in Cape Coral, it is Southwest Florida's largest seasonal outdoor waterpark and remains a favorite destination for local families and visitors every summer. The park features large water slides, a lazy river, splash zones for younger children, swimming pools, and relaxing areas for parents. One of the biggest highlights is the wave pool, where families can cool off while enjoying the tropical Florida weather. Children especially enjoy the interactive splash playground, while teenagers are often drawn to the faster thrill slides.

During the summer season, the park is generally open daily from approximately 10:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., with extended hours during special summer events and selected weekends. Admission prices usually range from approximately \$25-\$35 for adults and slightly less for children, depending on online promotions and seasonal specials. Children under two years old are admitted free of charge. What makes Sun Splash especially attractive during July is its lively summer atmosphere. In addition to the water attractions, the park regularly hosts summer concerts, family nights, music events, and entertainment programs throughout the season. Families can spend the entire day floating through the lazy river and then stay into the evening for live music and special summer celebrations. Many local families rent private cabanas for the day, making it feel like a mini resort vacation without leaving Cape Coral.

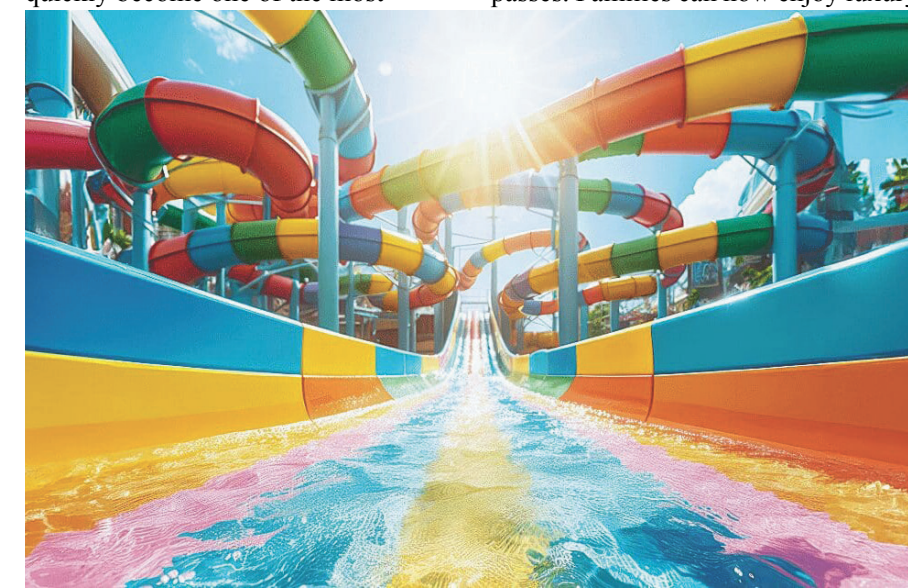
### The Tropical Lagoon Experience in North Fort Myers

One of the newest and trendiest attractions in Southwest Florida is Brightwater Lagoon. Unlike a traditional waterpark, Brightwater offers a giant crystal-clear lagoon

experience with a tropical resort atmosphere.

The lagoon includes sandy beaches, swimming areas, paddleboarding, kayaking, inflatable obstacle courses, lounge chairs, and food trucks. Palm trees and turquoise water create an environment that feels more like the Caribbean than a neighborhood pool. During summer, opening hours are generally from late morning until evening, often around 10:00 or 11:00 a.m. until sunset or later on weekends. Prices vary depending on activities selected, but general lagoon access often starts around \$20-\$30 per person. Additional attractions such as obstacle courses or private cabanas are available for extra fees.

What families especially enjoy is the relaxed atmosphere. Parents can sit in shaded lounge areas while children spend hours swimming or playing on the inflatable water attractions. Evening lighting and occasional live entertainment also make Brightwater popular for sunset visits during the hot summer months. For many residents, Brightwater has quickly become one of the most



Photos courtesy of: Katharina Kaufmann

unique outdoor summer destinations in Southwest Florida.

### Wakeboarding Adventures at Revolution Cable Park

For families with teenagers or anyone looking for a more active outdoor adventure, Revolution Cable Park offers one of the most unique summer activities in the region. Instead of traditional swimming pools or slides, visitors can try cable wakeboarding, kneeboarding, wakeskating, and water skiing on a professionally designed cable system. Riders are pulled across the water by an overhead cable instead of a boat, making the sport easier and more accessible for beginners. The park is very beginner-friendly and provides instruction, safety equipment, helmets, and life jackets. Even first-time visitors can usually participate after a short introduction from the staff.

During the summer season, Revolution Cable Park is generally open Wednesday through Friday from approximately 1:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. and weekends from noon until evening. Pricing is considered reasonable compared to many outdoor sports activities. A two-hour beginner pass costs approximately \$40-\$45 and includes most rental equipment.

What makes Revolution Cable Park especially attractive is its relaxed outdoor atmosphere. The park is surrounded by tropical landscaping, lakes, and green space, creating a much calmer experience than large tourist attractions. Teenagers especially enjoy practicing tricks and jumps on the water obstacles, while parents often relax and watch from shaded seating areas nearby.

For many families, it offers something completely different from the typical Florida pool day.

### Resort Luxury Without Staying Overnight

One of the biggest tourism trends in Florida is the popularity of resort day passes. Families can now enjoy luxury



Photos courtesy of: Katharina Kaufmann

hotel pools and tropical resort amenities without booking an overnight stay.

A very popular option is Margaritaville Beach Resort Fort Myers Beach. Located directly on Fort Myers Beach, the resort offers a true vacation atmosphere with large pools, beach access, restaurants, tropical drinks, and entertainment.

Day passes allow visitors to access the resort pool areas without staying overnight. Summer weekday passes generally begin around \$40-\$70 depending on availability and season. Premium seating and private cabanas are available for additional costs. One of the biggest attractions at Margaritaville is the entertainment atmosphere. Throughout the summer, the resort often features live DJs around the pool area, music events, and sunset entertainment. The combination of pool, beach, music, and tropical surroundings

makes the resort especially popular with both families and younger visitors. Parents can relax with poolside dining while children move between the pool and the Gulf beach just steps away. During sunset hours, the atmosphere often feels more like a Caribbean vacation than a typical Florida hotel.

Family members searching for a quieter and more exclusive experience often choose Tween Waters Island Resort & Spa on beautiful Captiva Island. The historic island resort is known for its tropical landscaping, marina views, peaceful atmosphere, and relaxing pool areas. Day passes are available during selected times of the year, allowing guests to enjoy the pools and resort facilities without reserving a hotel room.

### Island Relaxation on Captiva

Unlike the energetic atmosphere of waterparks, Tween Waters focuses on relaxation and classic island charm. Families often combine a pool day with shell collecting on the beach, biking around the island, or enjoying dinner while watching the sunset. Pricing varies depending on season and availability, but many visitors consider the experience worthwhile because of the unique island atmosphere. European visitors especially appreciate the slower pace and natural beauty that make Captiva Island feel completely different from the busier mainland areas.

Whether it is the thrilling slides and concerts at Sun Splash, the tropical lagoon atmosphere at Brightwater, the active sports experience at Revolution Cable Park, or the resort luxury of Margaritaville and Tween Waters, Southwest Florida offers countless ways to enjoy the outdoors during the hottest months of the year.

For many residents and seasonal visitors, these destinations are more than simply pools — they represent the relaxed Florida lifestyle that makes summer in Southwest Florida feel like a year-round vacation.

### A Florida Summer Tradition

Outdoor pools, lagoons, and water attractions have become an important part of summer life in Southwest Florida. As temperatures rise and schools close for summer break, families search for places where they can stay cool while enjoying time together outdoors.

Whether it is the thrilling slides and concerts at Sun Splash, the tropical lagoon atmosphere at Brightwater, the active sports experience at Revolution Cable Park, or the resort luxury of Margaritaville and Tween Waters, Southwest Florida offers countless ways to enjoy the outdoors during the hottest months of the year.

For many residents and seasonal visitors, these destinations are more than simply pools — they represent the relaxed Florida lifestyle that makes summer in Southwest Florida feel like a year-round vacation.

By Katharina Kaufmann

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# Hidden Sparks Pets Looking to Shine

Summer has a way of changing the rhythm of our days — bringing longer light, warmer evenings, and sometimes the perfect moment to make room for a new kind of love. For some, it may even be the perfect season to open their hearts to a new companion. And while shelters may be celebrating summer adoption promotions, the real reason to adopt has never changed: every animal deserves the chance to be loved, cherished, and finally belong. This month, we're introducing two special souls from the Cape Coral Animal Shelter who are more than ready for their fresh start. Both have faced a few challenges along the way, yet neither has lost their ability to trust, love, and hope. Their sparks may shine in different ways, but both are simply waiting for someone to see the wonderful companions they truly are. Because sometimes, giving an animal a second chance doesn't just change their life — it changes yours, too.

Maybe one of these furry souls is waiting just for you, ready to fill your home with love.

*By Jennifer Hagemester*

**Hours of Operation:**  
**Tuesday & Thursday:**  
 12:00–5:00 pm  
**Friday through Sunday:**  
 12:00–4:00 pm  
**Monday & Wednesday:**  
 Closed

**Cape Coral Animal Shelter**  
 325 SW 2nd Avenue  
 Cape Coral, FL 33991  
 More information and all adoptable animals at:  
[www.capecoralanimalshelter.com](http://www.capecoralanimalshelter.com)



**CARDIFF (MAVERICK)**

Cardiff (Maverick) is a 3–5-year-old male with soulful, expressive eyes and a heart every bit as big as he is. The only problem? Cardiff has absolutely no idea that he's a large dog. In his mind, he's still perfectly lap-sized and happiest when he's close to his people, soaking up every bit of affection and attention they're willing to share.

Cardiff arrived at the shelter with a few medical hiccups, but thanks to the dedicated care he's receiving, he's feeling better every day. What he's truly ready for now is a forever home filled with patience, kindness, and maybe a couch he can lovingly claim as his own. Beneath his big-dog appearance is a gentle soul with endless love to give.

Cardiff has waited long enough for the life — and the family — he has always deserved. Through the shelter's Sun's Out, Tongues Out summer promotion, his adoption fee is currently half off, making this the perfect time to welcome this lovable giant into your heart. His adoption fee is \$112.50.



**PUFF**

Puff is a 3–5-year-old male who perfectly embodies the art of taking life easy. This sweet, laid-back guy is happiest with a cozy place to curl up, plenty of affection, and a human to call his own. He has a huge heart and will gladly return every bit of love and attention you share with him.

Puff does have a medical condition, which means he needs to be either your one-and-only feline companion or live with another cat who shares his condition. He'll also need a family committed to keeping up with regular veterinary care so he can continue feeling his very best.

But those who know Puff will tell you the same thing: he is absolutely worth it. His gentle spirit, affectionate nature, and unwavering love make him a truly special companion. Once Puff trusts you, you'll have a loyal friend who will happily spend his days close by, simply enjoying your company. All Puff is looking for is someone who will cherish him as deeply as he will cherish them. Could that someone be you? His adoption fee is \$90.

Photos courtesy of Cape Coral Animal Shelter.

# Winner 2026!

How Daria's German Bakery & Bistro Became Cape Coral's Best Bistro and Why Success Never Goes Out of Style



Photos courtesy of Jacob Kugmun

There is an old saying that success leaves clues. In Cape Coral, however, it seems to leave something even better: the aroma of freshly baked bread in the morning, the comforting scent of slowly simmering goulash around lunchtime, and by afternoon, the irresistible temptation of cheesecake and chocolate cake. And if recent events are any indication, success also appears to leave behind a rather impressive collection of awards. The latest and perhaps most prestigious addition to that growing collection has just arrived.

The highly respected Florida Food & Dining Guide, through its renowned Best Places to Eat in Florida program, has officially named Daria's German Bakery & Bistro the "Best Bistro in Cape Coral – Winner 2026." For many loyal guests, the announcement came as wonderful news. For others, it felt almost inevitable. After all, these are not the kind of awards that simply appear overnight. They are certainly not something that can be purchased or manufactured through clever advertising campaigns. Recognition of this kind is built the old-fashioned way. It requires years of consistency, thousands of satisfied guests, countless early mornings, and a team that refuses to compromise on quality even when nobody is watching.

And perhaps that is exactly why this latest honor means so much. Over the years, the Florida Food & Dining Guide has established itself as one of the most trusted culinary publications in the Sunshine State. Through its Best Places to Eat in Florida awards, it highlights restaurants, cafes, bakeries, and bistros that consistently stand out for exceptional food, genuine hospitality, and memorable dining experiences. Their recommendations are followed by food lovers across Florida, and the establishments receiving recognition have earned reputations not through publicity stunts, but through excellence.

In other words, this award is not about who had a particularly lucky month. It is about who continues to deliver year after year. And that brings us back to Joe. Because long before awards and headlines entered the picture, Jörg "Joe" Domscheit was already focused on something far more important. His goal was never to collect trophies. His goal was to create a place where quality mattered, where guests felt welcome, and where traditions were respected rather than reinvented. The awards, it seems, simply decided to follow.

What started as a beloved German bakery in South Cape Coral has

gradually evolved into something much larger. Somewhere along the way, visitors who initially stopped by for fresh bread found themselves staying for lunch. People who only intended to grab coffee discovered homemade cakes. Snowbirds introduced friends. Friends became regulars. And regulars became enthusiastic ambassadors who happily spread the word throughout Southwest Florida.

The recognition as the number one bakery in the Caloosahatchee region was followed by a steady stream of glowing five-star reviews. BusinessRate recognized the bakery's outstanding reputation and consistency, and shortly thereafter Daria's found itself among the celebrated Best Places to Eat in Florida. Now, with the title of Best Bistro in Cape Coral – Winner 2026, another remarkable chapter has been added to a success story that seems to gather momentum with every passing month.

Of course, Joe himself would probably be the first to point out that no award has ever been won by one person alone. Hospitality has always been a team effort. Behind every loaf of bread, every slice of cake, every bowl of soup and every perfectly prepared schnitzel stands a group of people who genuinely care about what they do. There are bakers who begin their work before sunrise, staff members who somehow remember names and favorite pastries, and countless small moments of kindness that guests may barely notice, but never forget. Perhaps that is why Daria's feels different.

It does not feel manufactured. It feels personal. And that may be the rarest ingredient of all.

The bakery's success has also served as a reminder that true German baking is not about speed. It is about craftsmanship. Germany's bread culture, often considered one of the richest in the world, has been shaped over centuries by patience, tradition, and meticulous attention to detail. Master bakers have long joked that the most important ingredient in good bread is not flour, yeast, or water. It is time. Interestingly enough, the same principle seems to apply to successful businesses. Neither exceptional bread nor exceptional reputations can be rushed.

And anyone who believes Joe might now sit back and admire the view clearly does not know him very well. While guests continue enjoying award-

winning breads, pastries, hearty soups, giant schnitzels, and traditional German comfort food, preparations are already well underway for the next exciting chapter. Later this year, Daria's German Restaurant will open in Northeast Cape Coral, where the philosophy that made the bakery so successful will not simply continue, but expand. Together with Ralf Kleinmann, whose family's legendary gastronomic roots reach all the way back to Cologne and the famous Oma Kleinmann, Joe intends to bring the same uncompromising standards, the same warmth, and perhaps some of the most ambitious schnitzels Florida has ever encountered to an entirely new setting.

Naturally, growth creates opportunity, and with a new restaurant on the horizon, Daria's is currently looking for additional members to join the family. People who believe that food should be prepared with pride and hospitality should be genuine are warmly invited to stop by the bakery at 3512 Del Prado Blvd South, Suite 104, Cape Coral, Florida 33904, and simply ask for Joe. The approach, much like everything else at Daria's, remains refreshingly uncomplicated. There are no corporate labyrinths, no endless application portals, and no unnecessary formalities. Just people who enjoy building something special together. Perhaps that is what makes this story so remarkable.

Despite the awards, despite the growing recognition throughout Florida, despite the endless stream of glowing reviews and despite being officially crowned the best bistro in Cape Coral, nothing about Daria's feels finished. Quite the opposite.

There is still excitement in the air. New ideas are constantly emerging. Plans are being discussed. Recipes are being tested. And somewhere, one suspects, Joe is probably already thinking about the next challenge. Because if baking teaches us anything, it is this: Once one loaf comes out of the oven, the next one is already rising. And maybe that is the perfect metaphor for Daria's German Bakery & Bistro itself.

A place built on tradition. Driven by quality. Strengthened by family. And apparently, just getting started.

Blue. Gold. Daria. And now, officially, Cape Coral's Best Bistro.

*By Jacob Kugmun*



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## Florida Food & Dining Guide

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Best Bistro in Cape Coral, Florida

## Daria's German Bakery & Bistro



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Date: 05/26/2026

Presented by: *Christie Alexander*

All About the Sunshine State

# Are you merely functioning—or are you truly living?

Discipline, reliability, tenacity, Enthusiasm, the joy of creation, vision

How much joy is there in your everyday life?

Does life only begin after work and on weekends? Is “being happy” disconnected from your work? Do you function \*in order\* to live, or do you actually live \*within\* your work? “Doesn’t life also have to be mastered by ‘functioning’? — What does he mean by that? Is ‘functioning’ supposed to be a bad thing? — After all, that is how we earn our living...”

Economic success is not the only yardstick for a fulfilled life. Ted Turner—the recently deceased pioneer of the TV news industry and founder of CNN, the revolutionary 24-hour live US news channel—is a prime example. Born in 1938, he was raised with extreme harshness and strictness by his father; as a child, Ted was required to work for his father and pay rent at home so he would grasp the value of money. Accompanying this was the mantra: “Set goals so high that it is impossible for you to achieve them in your lifetime!”

Always with a focus on financial profitability, of course... For instance, Ted’s father cut off his tuition funding when he enrolled in “Classical Studies,” calling him a “jackass”—a fool or an idiot—because of what he considered a useless field of study.

**Family conditioning vs. self-discovery**  
When Ted was just 24 years old, his father took his own life, driven by immense business pressure and psychological struggles. Ted describes himself as having been left without direction as a result. With his father’s death, the only person from whom Ted ever wanted to hear the words “You did a good job” was gone. With that “judge” now missing, Ted

spent decades running and toiling—buying TV stations, founding CNN, and amassing billions—always in an unconscious attempt to prove to his dead father that he was not a failure. This culminated in his being named “Man of the Year” by \*TIME\* magazine in 1991 and appearing on its cover. As he accepted the award, he held up the magazine featuring his portrait and asked, his voice choked with emotion: “Is that enough for you, Daddy?” The next morning, he held a press conference and declared that he was the saddest person in the world. He had suddenly realized that he had spent decades of his life running solely to meet his father’s expectations, rather than living his own life. But—he had gained that insight.

And from that point on, he used his success to help others—thereby shifting the perspective on ambitious goals. He reframed the idea: Set goals that lie beyond your personal reach, so that you always have something worth living for.

Fast forward—a young boy named James is growing up in poverty in Ontario, Canada, during the 1970s. He has a talent for making people laugh. The family is hard hit by the economic crisis.

His father, an accountant, loses his job; consequently, they are forced to give up their home and live—all six of them—in a VW bus and tents pitched in relatives’ front yards.

With his parents’ encouragement, James summons the courage to perform at a comedy club. He models himself after famous comedians and tells jokes on stage. The audience responds to this imitation with loud boos; traumatized by the reaction, James

hides his comedic side for months...

## From copy to original

It is only when he lands a job at a bleak steel mill that the family is able to move into a house again. It stands on the factory grounds, and their residency comes with a condition. The family has to work night shifts as cleaners and security guards. This strain takes a huge toll on the children, especially James. He develops a destructive anger toward life, prompting his father to pull the plug: seeing that factory work is systematically destroying his children’s spirits and futures—and specifically James’s creative energy—he quits the job, and the family moves (once again in a VW bus and tent) to the shores of Lake Ontario. From that point on, James devotes himself to comedy again, pushing to incorporate his talent for making funny faces into his act. He perfects the skill and achieves resounding success with this artistic persona during another performance at the same comedy club, “Yuk Yuk’s.” He lives by his father’s motto: You can fail at something you don’t even want to do—so why not take the risk and try to do what you love? His success stems from authenticity rather than mere imitation. Ultimately, the leap to Hollywood (with the help of supporters) becomes a logical next step for James—better known by the nickname he uses for films like \*The Truman Show\* and \*The Mask\*: Jim Carrey. A man who has experienced the consequences of merely “functioning” and the power of acting authentically. He is a man who—likely due to his childhood experiences—has remained grounded; he underscored this strikingly in his 2016 Golden Globes speech, where he used his signature

ironic, sarcastic style to poke fun at the insignificance of accolades and awards, saying: I am two-time Golden Globe winner Jim Carrey. You know when I’m going to sleep at night, I’m not just a guy going to sleep. I’m two-time Golden Globe winner Jim Carrey going to get some well needed shut eye. And when I dream I don’t just dream any old dreams. No sir. I dream about being three time Golden Globe winner Jim Carrey. Because then I would be enough. It would finally be true. And I could stop this, this terrible search. For what I know ultimately won’t fulfil me.

## Striving for success without substance is like bland soup.

In his authentic way, Jim Carrey says that what matters is having one’s own needs met, believing in oneself and one’s abilities, and being at peace with oneself.

How much of \*you\*—how much authenticity—is in your life? How much “living” is there within your “functioning”?

When I consider how much time (of our lives) work consumes, it is absolutely worth making changes to bring \*more\* life into our daily routine. DARIA is a living example of this: people start businesses in fields that interest them. They become fully immersed in their work because they are realizing their vision. The result: they go the extra mile with enthusiasm, and it doesn’t feel like work.

LIVING isn’t just leisure time—LIVING is the realization of your vision, of your personal “Why,” because then no “How” is too difficult.

By Matthias Erbacher

# Sunshine Post Series on Healthy Aging: Part 8



Photos courtesy of Nancy Winkel

Welcome back to our series on healthy aging. Here, we’re giving the floor to real experts and hearing some truly incredible stories. Enjoy the read. Our first expert is IFBB Pro bodybuilder Nancy Winkel, a true expert in strength training.

**Clemens Mueller:**  
What was the moment you decided you wanted to compete on stage?

**Nancy Winkel:**  
There wasn’t really a single specific moment. I originally started working out because I was unhappy with my body. After trying various sports, I gradually got more and more into strength training. Over the years, my training became more structured, my diet more consistent, and at some point, bodybuilding had simply become an integral part of my life. For a long time, I had absolutely no ambitions to compete on stage. I did the sport because I loved it—the training, the routines, and the entire lifestyle behind it. It wasn’t until I shared my progress on Instagram that my first coach at the time took notice of me. He saw potential in me and encouraged me to just give it a try.

It all happened pretty quickly: I met my coach in the fall of 2022, and by the spring of 2023, I was already on stage for the first time. So it wasn’t so much a long-planned step as it was a development born of passion, discipline, and the right support at the right time.

**Clemens Mueller:**  
Bodybuilding requires tremendous discipline. How do you integrate sports, work, and social life into your daily

routine?  
**Nancy Winkel:**  
My daily routine is very structured—especially right now as I’m preparing for a competition. This includes daily steps, morning cardio, training, fixed meals, and clear routines. During this phase, there are hardly any deviations from the plan.

For me, bodybuilding is a 24/7 sport. Unlike many other sports, it doesn’t end when you leave the gym. Nutrition, recovery, daily structure, and mental discipline are just as much a part of it as the training itself.

I’m currently in the unique position of being able to focus very intensely on my professional sport. I have a flexible career, work part-time as a coach, am unmarried, and have no children. This allows me to align my daily routine very consistently with my sport. But I’m aware that this isn’t a given. Especially with a family, children, or a traditional full-time job, it’s significantly harder to pursue this sport at a very high level.

**Clemens Mueller:**  
Which setback challenged you the most—and what kept you going despite it?

**Nancy Winkel:**  
I don’t like to talk about setbacks. For me, they’re more like experiences or lessons learned. Of course, there are situations where things don’t go as you’d hoped—for example, a finish that you might have expected differently. But you can always take something away from that, too.

What challenges me the most are actually the last few days or weeks before a competition. Physically and

mentally, you often reach your limits then. You’re tired, exhausted, can no longer see your own body objectively, and start comparing yourself to other athletes. Social media in particular can make this mentally very challenging. What keeps me going then is looking at what I’ve already achieved. I stood on the New York Pro stage—something that a very small fraction of athletes worldwide can say they’ve done. That didn’t just happen; it’s the result of years of consistency, discipline, and daily work.

In the end, it’s always about my own development. If I manage to get better every year and bring my personal best to the stage, then that’s already a success for me.

**Clemens Mueller:**  
How do you approach nutritional quality—especially during competition prep compared to the off-season?

**Nancy Winkel:**  
Basically, my diet during competition prep isn’t that different from the off-season. The food choices remain largely the same. You continue to eat foods that agree with you, are nutrient-rich, and reliably fuel the body.

In the competition diet, it’s mainly the quantities that are adjusted. Calories are reduced step by step, often primarily through carbohydrates. Protein remains very important, especially to protect the muscles as best as possible during a calorie deficit.

Micronutrients also play a major role. Fruits, vegetables, and nutrient-rich foods are important because a strict competition diet can put a strain on the body and the immune system. At the same time, we have to be honest: extreme competition preparation is ultimately not health-oriented in the traditional sense and isn’t suitable for everyday life or for the “average person.” That’s why it’s important to me to make my preparation as controlled and nutrient-rich as possible.

**Clemens Mueller:**  
What are your athletic goals for 2026?

**Nancy Winkel:**  
I made my pro debut in May at the New York Pro. After that, we intentionally built in a short recovery and stabilization phase because it would have been too difficult to maintain that extreme competitive form all the way until my next competition.

My next competitions are already planned, and I’ll be heading back to the U.S. I’m realistic about whether I’ll make it to the Olympia stage this season. I know I’ll be competing against very experienced athletes there, some of whom have already stood on the Olympia stage and have been in the pro business significantly longer. My main goal, therefore, is to gain experience, become more visible on the pro stage, and gradually establish myself in the league. I want to present my best package and continue to develop. In bodybuilding, everything else also depends on being on the right stage at the right time in the right lineup.

**Clemens Mueller:**  
What would you say to women who are interested in strength training but are afraid of societal judgment?

**Nancy Winkel:**  
I find it regrettable that women are still judged so heavily on their appearance even today. You often get the feeling that, as a woman, you can’t please anyone anyway: you’re too fat, too thin, too muscular, not feminine enough, or don’t fit the norm for some other reason.

But strength training shouldn’t be viewed solely through the lens of appearance. Of course, physical form plays a role in bodybuilding because it’s a performance sport. But muscle means so much more than just looks. It’s about health, performance, and healthy aging. Strength training is especially valuable for women. It helps maintain muscle mass, strengthen the body, and stay flexible and capable over the long term. Building muscle is also a key factor when it comes to osteoporosis, fall prevention, and quality of life in old age.

Many women are afraid that strength training will make them look “too muscular” right away. This concern is unfounded. A strongly muscular body doesn’t develop by chance or from a few sessions with heavy weights. It takes years of consistent training, a structured diet, and a whole different level of effort. My advice would therefore be: Don’t be afraid of heavy weights. Don’t let yourself be influenced by the opinions of others. Your body will thank you—not just visually, but above all in terms of long-term health.

**Clemens Mueller:**  
What does healthy aging mean to you personally—and where do you see yourself in 20 years?

**Nancy Winkel:**  
For me, healthy aging means staying capable, active, and independent for as long as possible. My goal is to maintain a good quality of life even in old age and to support my body so that it functions for as long as possible. In 20 years, I probably won’t be on a professional stage anymore. But I believe that once you’ve been a bodybuilder, you always remain one at heart. Training, body awareness, and the desire to stay fit will likely always be a part of my life. Of course, my training will have to change and adapt as I get older. But as long as I’m able, I want to stay active, maintain my muscle mass, and keep my body strong. For me, that’s a central part of quality of life.

By Clemens Müller

Follow Nancy on Instagram:

@nancy.winkel.ifbbpro

## Daria US Property Management LLC’s Monthly: Home Tips & Insights

As summer reaches its peak in Southwest Florida, homeowners are faced with soaring temperatures, high humidity, and increased energy consumption. July and August are typically the hottest months of the year, and for many residents, air conditioning becomes the largest contributor to monthly utility bills.

While it may be tempting to turn down the thermostat or even switch the system off when leaving town, Florida’s climate requires a different approach. Air conditioning does more than keep a home comfortable—it also plays a critical role in controlling indoor humidity and protecting the property itself.

Understanding how to balance comfort, efficiency, and home protection can help homeowners reduce costs while avoiding expensive repairs.

By SMEchalik

Daria US Property Management LLC

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### Smart Ways to Reduce Energy Costs

Keeping your home protected doesn’t mean sacrificing efficiency. Small adjustments can make a noticeable difference on monthly utility bills.

- **Set Your Thermostat Correctly**  
If you are away from your property for an extended period, consider setting the thermostat between 78°F and 80°F (25°C–27°C). This allows the system to continue controlling humidity while using less energy than normal comfort settings.
- **Replace Air Filters Regularly**  
Dirty filters restrict airflow and force the system to work harder. Replacing filters regularly improves efficiency, indoor air quality, and the lifespan of the HVAC system.
- **Close Blinds and Curtains**  
Direct sunlight can significantly increase indoor temperatures. Keeping blinds or curtains closed during the hottest part of the day helps reduce heat gain and lowers cooling demands.
- **Use Ceiling Fans**  
Fans improve air circulation and can make rooms feel cooler, allowing homeowners to use higher thermostat settings without sacrificing comfort.
- **Schedule Preventative HVAC Maintenance**  
A well-maintained air conditioning system operates more efficiently and is less likely to experience costly breakdowns during the hottest months of the year.

### Property Management Tip

Never think of your air conditioner as just a cooling system. In Southwest Florida, it is one of your home’s most important tools for humidity control and property protection. Proper settings and regular maintenance can save both energy and costly repairs.

### Small Steps Today Can Prevent Major Costs Tomorrow

Many homeowners focus on reducing monthly utility bills, but protecting the condition of the home should remain the priority.

The cost of running an air conditioning system at an appropriate setting is often far less than the expense of repairing mold damage, replacing warped materials, or addressing humidity-related issues. A few preventative measures can help keep energy costs under control while preserving the long-term value of your property.

### Protecting Seasonal & Vacation Homes

For seasonal residents, summer presents unique challenges. A home left unattended for weeks or months can quickly develop issues if temperatures and humidity are not properly managed. Regular property inspections can help identify concerns before they become major problems. Early detection of leaks, HVAC malfunctions, excessive humidity, or storm-related issues can prevent costly repairs and protect your investment. Professional property management services provide homeowners with confidence that their property is being monitored and maintained, even when they are hundreds or thousands of miles away.

### Your Air Conditioner Is Also a Dehumidifier

Many homeowners, especially those from northern states or Europe, are surprised to learn that air conditioning in Florida serves two important functions. First, it cools the home. Second, and equally important, it removes moisture from the air. During summer, humidity levels in Southwest Florida can exceed 80 percent. Without proper humidity control, moisture can build up inside a home and create ideal conditions for mold growth, musty odors, warped wood, peeling paint, and damage to furniture and electronics.

For this reason, completely shutting off the air conditioning while away is generally not recommended.

At Daria US Property Management LLC, we help homeowners protect their investment through regular property inspections, preventative maintenance coordination, and reliable home watch services. Whether you’re away for a few weeks or several months, we provide peace of mind knowing your property is being professionally cared for.

REACH THE HEART OF COMMUNITY WITH THE SUNSHINE POST

# Revolutionary: How AI Can Transform Your Day

Artificial intelligence is not science fiction – it hasn't been for a long time. More and more people are using AI tools to master everyday challenges – from weekend trips, to what's for dinner, to budgeting. In this series, powered by the insights of our tech team and seasoned AI connoisseurs, we will show you how you too can benefit from this technology.

by Marc Siewert

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The best AI prompts are specific! Specificity = Better results!

Instead of: "Help me cook"  
Try: "Quick 30-min dinner for 4 with chicken"

**What's your everyday AI Question?**

Whether it's a recipe, travel dilemma, or practical tip, send us your most used questions at

info@sunshine-post.com

Subject: "AI Prompt Submission"

### Faith & Community

"How can people strengthen their faith, find purpose, and build meaningful connections in today's fast-paced world?"

**AI suggests:**

1. Set aside a few minutes each day for reflection, prayer, or meditation
2. Focus on serving others through small acts of kindness and generosity
3. Join a local faith community or discussion group to build deeper connections
4. Practice gratitude by recognizing blessings in everyday life
5. Remember that faith is often strengthened through challenges, not despite them

### Summer Recipe Inspiration

"I want to create fresh summer meals using seasonal ingredients available in Florida. Suggest simple dishes that are healthy, colorful, and easy to prepare."

**AI suggests:**

1. Combine fresh seafood with citrus fruits for light summer dinners
2. Use watermelon, berries, and mint for refreshing salads
3. Create grilled vegetable platters with homemade dips
4. Incorporate tropical fruits into smoothies and desserts
5. Focus on recipes that require minimal cooking time

### Healthy Aging Through Strength Training

"What are the most effective ways to improve strength, fitness, and overall health at any age?"

**AI suggests:**

1. Incorporate strength training two to three times per week
2. Focus on consistency rather than intensity when starting out
3. Prioritize proper nutrition with adequate protein and whole foods
4. Combine exercise with sufficient sleep and recovery
5. Set realistic goals and celebrate small improvements along the way

### The Perfect Summer Morning

"Help me design the perfect summer morning routine that promotes happiness, health, and productivity while enjoying Florida's warm weather."

**AI suggests:**

1. Start the day with a walk or light exercise before the heat arrives
2. Enjoy breakfast outdoors whenever possible
3. Practice gratitude or journaling for a few minutes
4. Stay hydrated from the beginning of the day
5. Limit phone use during the first hour after waking up

# DO YOU WANT TO ADVERTISE WITH US?

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# Letters To The Editor

**Dear Community,**

Our consultant Marco Arnoldt recently hosted another highly successful regulars' table in the Lüneburg Heath near Handeloh in northern Germany. 260 kind-hearted people from the Daria Community (Northern Division) discussed solutions and ideas on how to use or pass on existing opportunities for our Daria community. development are always the foundations for the success of such an extensive project, said Daria consultant Marco Arnoldt. Everyone enjoyed each other's company over food and drink. Thank you for a wonderful evening.

Children and families of all ages were in attendance. Warm regards, Marco

Some of the wonderful community of Economic self-sufficiency and personal



# Celebrating Life's Milestones with the Sunshine Post!

**Honoring birthdays, anniversaries and special moments from our community!**

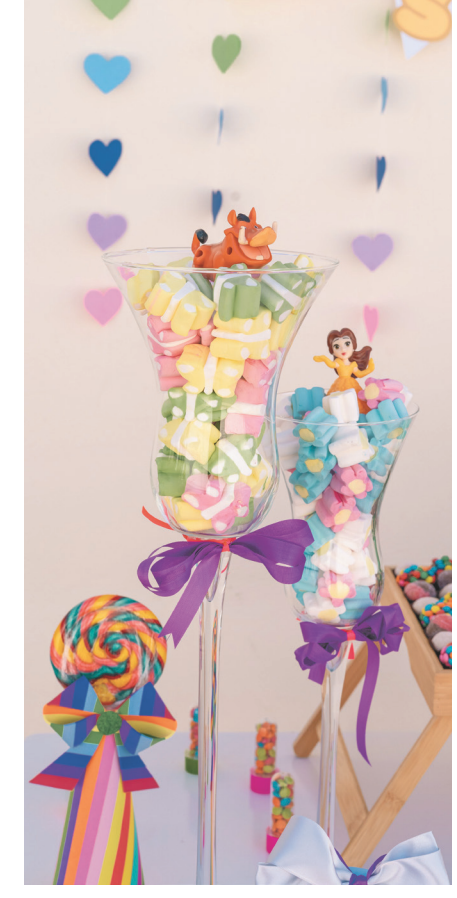
We want to shine a spotlight on the people whose special days remind us why milestones matter. Birthdays, anniversaries, and personal achievements mark the chapters of our shared story. Join us in congratulating the friends, families, neighbors, and colleagues who are celebrating important moments in their lives.

Source: Pexels

- The Sunshine Post Community wishes a Happy Birthday to....**
- Sieglinde von Dühren
  - Ronja Müller
  - Sven Wortmann
  - Sabine Queck
  - Emanuel Leber
  - Marion Rischartz

**And a special congratulation to:**

Jutta Burmeister



Would you like to congratulate someone special?

Send us your request at

info@sunshine-post.com

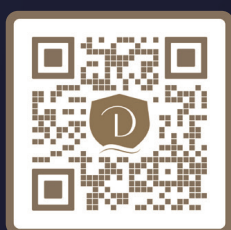
and get featured in our next issue!

Subject: "Celebrating Life"





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