

YOUR DAILY DOSE OF OPTIMISM



SUNSHINE POST

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There is only a faint buzzing in the darkness. I cannot see where it is flying. The night air is boiling, drunken with a head ache from a hot summer day.

August 15 is one of the most important days of the year in Italy. Ferragosto is the name of the holiday that, at first glance, seems to be all about summer, beaches, and family celebrations.

Some stories can only be written by sports. Others take years of patience, perfect timing, and a little bit of fate before they finally become reality.

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: Roland Gutowski

Where a vision becomes a movement
There are events that are superbly organised. And there are moments that go far beyond an event
Moments that bring people together. That inspire. That give courage. That live on long after the last song, the last conversation and the last ray of sunshine.

The DARIA Summer White Party 2026 at the beautiful Stella Rheni in Bonn was precisely such a moment.
A summer evening that will be remembered not only for its perfection, but above all for its authenticity.
For the encounters. For the emotions. For the feeling of having found one's place.

As soon as we entered the sprawling park, it was clear that something special was about to unfold. Amidst centuries-old trees, stylishly decorated lounges, elegantly laid tables and an atmosphere that radiated tranquillity, elegance and joie de vivre all at once, our Daria Founding Members gathered from all over Germany and Florida.

Read more on Page No. 4 →



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

Holding On to Summer

Dear Readers,
Bittersweet August. The sun still shines brightly, the evenings are still warm, and the beaches are still calling our names—but somehow, we know that summer is quietly beginning to wave goodbye. Perhaps that's what makes these last weeks of the season feel so special. They remind us to slow down, take one more walk along the shoreline, enjoy one more sunset, and make just a few more memories before autumn gently arrives.

This month's edition of Sunshine Post celebrates exactly that spirit: making the most of every remaining summer day.

Whether you're rediscovering your own neighborhood or entertaining visiting friends and family, we've put together a guide to Downtown Fort Myers, highlighting some of the best places to stroll, dine, shop, and experience the heart of our community. Sometimes the greatest adventures aren't far away—they're right around the corner.

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.

Send us your suggestion at info@sunshine-post.com
Let's celebrate the everyday heroes among us together.



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experience the heart of our community. Sometimes the greatest adventures aren’t far away—they’re right around the corner. For sports fans, August marks another exciting tradition: the return of NFL season. Anticipation is building across the country, and whether you’re a lifelong fan or just beginning to understand the game, we’ve gathered insights to help you get ready for kickoff and everything the new season has to offer. Of course, August is also about appreciating the slower moments. It’s the perfect time for one last beach picnic, an evening on the porch, a family barbecue, or simply watching the sunset paint the sky in shades that seem brighter than ever before. Summer has a way of reminding us that happiness often lives in life’s simplest

moments. As always, our goal is to bring you stories that inspire curiosity, encourage connection, and celebrate the community we are fortunate to call home. Every issue is another opportunity to learn something new, discover a hidden gem, or simply pause for a few moments with a good cup of coffee and a great story. Thank you for spending another month with us. We hope this August issue encourages you to embrace every sunny day still ahead—and to carry a little of summer’s warmth with you long after the season has passed. We wish you a beautiful August filled with sunshine, laughter, and memories that will last long after summer ends. Sunny regards,
Rouven Zietz Editor-in-Chief

Sunshine Post

Editor-in-Chief/Managing Editor
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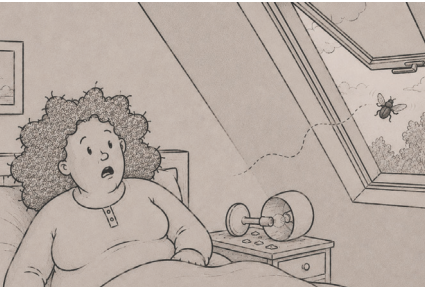
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Rise of a Star – Part 1

From a series by Ina Rodewald – The End

There is only a faint buzzing in the darkness. I cannot see where it is flying. The night air is boiling, drunken with a head ache from a hot summer day; even now, in the middle of the night, it has not cooled down. I am awake, yet dizzy, my eyes half open. I cannot see properly. The lights are off, and I cannot reach the switch of the lamp that had fallen off the little table by my bed long ago.



It is hard for me to move in my huge body. It feels as if I have tons of flesh around me that does not belong to me. It is not ME. It is some kind of appendage of mine that I am ashamed of.

The buzzing starts again. Whatever this little creature is, it has not gone away. Then, all of a sudden, the buzzing stops, and I feel it. Something is crawling on my lower leg. Along my left calf. I start to shake my leg, yet whatever it is, it sticks to my skin like glue. It works its way along my heel and then climbs up to my toes. I stop shaking. I am somewhere between shock, fear, amazement and a great curiosity. What can it be, climbing so stubbornly up my leg and onto my foot?

I am too huge to sit up and take a look. It is too stressful. Maybe shaking or moving is not a good idea. It might fall off if I make the effort, and then it would drop into my bed sheets, somewhere! And I would not know where it was, and that scares me even more.

So I would rather FIND OUT what it is that is climbing onto my toes. I reach for my mobile and switch on the torch. I aim the beam of light at the big toe of my left foot and wait for IT to arrive.

There it is! It emerges from behind my toe and climbs it like a mountain. A brown bug, the size of a bean, bigger than I thought it would be. It sits there, and I swear, it looks at me. It stares straight into my eyes. It is grinning. Seriously, it has a line in its little face that looks like a mouth.

It sits there and looks at me. I don’t know for how long, maybe only a few seconds, yet it feels like an eternity to me. It looks at me with the same curiosity with which I look at it.

What kind of little creature are you? Are you a cockroach? Or some other kind of animal? Are you a bug? Are you a real terrestrial animal at all? Or some alien creature? How can you look into my eyes like this? And straight into my heart? It looks at me with curiosity. As if it were asking: Who are you? Why are you so massive that you cannot even move? Why does it smell so bad in this room? Why are there empty bottles on the floor? Why do you look infinitely sad and empty? Who are you? Where is your real self? Buried in this bed. Hidden in this body. MOVE! Show me yourself! Where are you?

I think: I am not here anymore. I am already dying. I do not want to be in this world anymore. I am useless. I am half dead anyway. I cannot even move anymore. I am a total failure. Just leave me in peace!

The creature keeps staring into me. I can hear its words. How is that possible? A bug cannot talk! “Only your eyes are moving in this big body, and your eyes seem to be searching for an answer. Your eyes are hazelnut brown, with little golden fibres in between. They look at me curiously and at the same time very kindly.” Without making a sound it stares right into me and tells me again: MOVE!

Your time is not up. You can live. You can bring something valuable into this world. And then it starts to giggle. I swear to you. It giggles with a peculiar sound that I cannot describe, and it sends chills all over my body.



It raises its head, pulls out pincers, yes, pincers, I had not seen them before, and drops them with force into my big toe. I scream, from the pain and the shock of this unexpected turn of events. I scream also because I feel helpless, defenseless, scared. There is this little creature out of no-where, and it has looked right into my soul, grinned at me and bitten me. This little thing is mocking me.

I cannot move! I try to sit up and push the blanket towards my toe to chase it away. Impossible. There is no way I can reach down there, or even move anything towards my feet. I do not know whether it is still there or not. I do not even realize I am still screaming.

Quick steps are approaching my room door, running upstairs. Gabby is in the door, panting, in her pajamas, her dark, strong hair sticking out in all directions. She takes me by the shoulders and looks at me, worried. “Mum, what is it? Stop screaming! What happened? Did you have a bad dream?”



I feel her hands on my shoulders and stop screaming. The screams turn into tears without warning. The tears come from far below, up through my chest, rising into my head, until they find their way out, well up out of my eyes and flood my face. I cry like I have not cried in years. I cry like a baby. A scared baby. A helpless baby. Gabby is completely confused. She just stands there and does not know what to do. She sobs: “Mum, please, tell me what happened. What can I do? Your face is so pale, you look like you have seen a ghost. Why are you crying? I have never seen you cry. Should I call a doctor?” I keep crying pointing to my toe. Between all the sobbing and tears I try to explain that a bug bit me on my big toe.

I am so busy crying and feeling helpless and upset that I have not noticed Gabby has sunk to the floor in front of my bed. She lies there with her head on the edge of my bed, and she is crying too. Like a baby. Her whole body is trembling.

When I hear her sobbing, I wipe my tears away with the back of my sleeve. I am so shocked to see my little, tough, strong daughter cry. Usually she is silent, swallowing so much. I know she often clears the bottles away while I am asleep, and I know she tries to cope with this difficult situation as best she can. She has watched me grow bigger and bigger, more and more depressed. She has had to put up with my fits of despair and rage when I wanted to eat or drink. Sometimes she did not want to bring food, especially no crisps or sweets. She said there was not enough money to

buy these things. Yet I told her she had to do it. I forced her with every kind of blackmail, so that she did what I wanted her to do. She had to cook and bring food to my bed, as I could no longer get up. She bore my fits of rage and my yelling. She heard me swearing about her useless dad. And still she comes back every day, brings food and drink, and even tries to help wash me, which is very difficult. Changing the sheets has become impossible, as I can nearly not make the short way to the toilet any more.

I had resisted all her pleas for help. She had asked me countless times to seek help. Yet I am too ashamed. I am too ashamed to let a doctor or some stranger into my house and have them tell me that I have failed. That I am totally overweight, that I drink, that I cannot do any job anymore, as I cannot move in this massive body, that I do not have any friends anymore, as they despise me in this ugly body, that I am the worst mother in the world. And all of it because of my lousy, shitty husband. Well, ex-husband. He had promised me the world, back then, when I was still young and pretty. Then, when we had kids, he changed his mind. He did not want me anymore. I had lost my shape with the pregnancies, that is what he said, though compared to now it was nothing. I had become a worrying mum, putting the kids first; he called me a hen sitting on her chicks, not allowing them a single step on their own. He made fun of me in public. He called me many names, but no longer sweetheart, honey or darling, as he used to. He started looking for other women and dumped me like a used broom into the corner.



For a while I tried to manage. He had a girlfriend very quickly, probably already had one before he left me. He needs a woman anyway, as he cannot wash his own clothes or cook a meal. He can only talk big. After trying various jobs, which is so hard with two small kids, I started working at night. It was the only time I could leave the house, without a babysitter, so that nobody noticed. I took them to bed and said to Philip, my son: You look after your little sister. If there is any problem, you press this button. Then my number is dialed and you can tell me what is going on.

In the beginning he called me a few times at night; he told me he was scared at home alone. I explained to him that this was not a good enough reason to call me, that he could only call me in urgent cases. I told him he had to be strong, and that he was not alone at home but with his sister. And that nothing could happen to them. So he stopped calling. And it worked. I could work at night and sleep during the day.

After working in that nightclub for a while, I suppose I was drunk a few times too often, and my boss asked me to stop working in the service area and to work only at reception. It was much worse pay. At least I did not have to serve the clients anymore. But after a while things got worse. The kids had so many problems at school, I could not help them, I was too tired during the day.

I started eating more and more to forget about my shitty life. I was so desperate. My life was a mess. And the more weight I put on, the worse it got. My boss sacked me; he said I was not attractive enough for his business. Can you believe that? Another pig. Men just hire women, then sell them on to men, and if they are not good enough, they get dumped. I was furious at all men.

So I started looking for another job. But I could not find anything. Sleeping, eating

and the odd glass of wine seemed to be the only things that still gave me any pleasure in life. Eventually I became so big that I could not have worked anymore, even if I had wanted to. I was very short of breath. My bedroom and my bathroom were upstairs. One day I could no longer make my way down to the kitchen, so I stayed where I was. No one could blame me. It was not my fault if I could not pay for all the bills. My ex-husband had not paid his maintenance regularly, so what could I do? We lived on social aid. The kids were behaving very badly. One day the police brought Philip home, as he had been caught stealing in the supermarket. They had to release him, as he was only thirteen. I will never forget that moment. The two young police officers came into my bedroom and stared at me as if I were an alien. They told me about Philip stealing and then released him, because I said: Get your papers and show that you are only thirteen. Philip looked away, not out of shame for being caught stealing, but out of shame for me! As soon as the officers had left, he yelled at me: I hate you, I hate you, I hate you! and ran out of my room.



Well, what could I have done? It was not my fault, this whole misery. I could not help it! Or so I thought, at least. I was a poor victim!

Still, I stayed captured in this paralyzed state of mind. I stayed in my room, lived my life apart from everyone else, and the only thing connecting me to the outside world was my mobile, the television and, I suppose, the kids.

Philip stopped coming to see me. Whenever I asked Gabby to tell him to come and see me, she made excuses and gave me reasons why he could not come. Even when I yelled at her, demanding him to come, she would just shrug and leave the room. I couldn’t run after her. My life was a mess, and I had accepted this shitty life that had no way out. I had accepted that my life was deteriorating more and more. I was already immobile. I took sleeping pills, so that I could sleep during the day as well. My head was numb most of the day, so I could not think clearly. Nobody cared about me. I did not care about myself. I was decaying. Until this stupid bug came along, looked into my soul and bit into my toe.

How long had I been living this life? This dead, empty, immensely desperate life! I have not actually lived at all. I have vegetated, like an empty shell. Or rather, I felt like a balloon filled with a black, flabby dough that held nothing but anger, frustration and depression. That was no life. It was the end of MYSELF. I was not me anymore. Where was the laughing, happy Katy who enjoyed life? She no longer existed.

In that very moment I realized: this is it. From now on I will change my life, and I will get up out of this terrible bed and find my place in life again. The bug had said my time was not up yet, and that I should live! Either I carry on like this, and then I die slowly, or I decide NOW that I do want to live, after all. I think of the bug and think: You little beast! I will show you! I am coming back to life!

By Ina Rodewald
To be continued in our next issue...

Photos courtesy of: Ina Rodewald

DARIA Summer White Party 2026

Where a vision becomes a movement

There are events that are superbly organised. And there are moments that go far beyond an event

Moments that bring people together. That inspire. That give courage. That live on long after the last song, the last conversation and the last ray of sunshine.

The DARIA Summer White Party 2026 at the beautiful Stella Rheni in Bonn was precisely such a moment.

A summer evening that will be remembered not only for its perfection, but above all for its authenticity.

For the encounters. For the emotions. For the feeling of having found one’s place.

As soon as we entered the sprawling park, it was clear that something special was about to unfold. Amidst centuries-old trees, stylishly decorated lounges,

the present day.

A vision that brings together people who might never otherwise have met. Young entrepreneurs. Families. Experienced investors. People with decades of professional experience.

Those just starting out in their careers. Visionaries. People with a wide variety of life stories. And yet, within minutes, a feeling arises as if we’ve known one another for years. Not because everyone has the same story. But because everyone knows the same direction. Forward. When community means more than just a word. At a time when community is often talked about but increasingly rarely put into practice, DARIA deliberately sets a different standard. Here, it’s not about who speaks the loudest.

Not about who’s been here the longest. Not about who’s already achieved the greatest success. Here, something else matters
People meet on equal terms.
Experiences are shared. Ideas emerge.

another. It wasn’t uncommon to hear comments such as:
“It’s lovely that we’re finally getting to know each other in person.”

Or:
“I’m delighted that we’re embarking on this journey together.”
“I’m so grateful to you that I can be here!”

That is precisely what makes the difference. These were not superficial conversations. They were genuine encounters. Our founding members are not mere spectators. They are co-creators. People who place their trust in others. People who take responsibility.

People who are ready to build something together. Every single one of them plays their part. And that is precisely why something emerges that is far greater than the sum of its members. A community that inspires. A community that takes responsibility. A community that recognises opportunities.

A community that stands up for one

with their passion, their experience and their tireless energy. They don’t simply develop concepts. They develop possibilities. They don’t just invest time. They invest trust. They don’t just create projects. They create prospects.

With a remarkable combination of entrepreneurial vision, innovative drive and a human touch, they succeed time and again in providing fresh impetus and bringing people together.

Many ideas that seem self-evident today begin with a simple question:
“How can we make life in our community even better?”

This mindset runs through every decision. Through every event. Through every encounter. And that is precisely why this evening turned out the way it did. An evening full of appreciation. An evening full of gratitude. An evening full of promise.

From the bottom of our hearts:
Thank you, Frank Rahlf. Thank you, Patrick Lauber. Thank you, Jutta



Photos courtesy of: Roland Gutowski

elegantly laid tables and an atmosphere that radiated tranquillity, elegance and joie de vivre all at once, our Daria Founding Members gathered from all over Germany and Florida.

Over 600 Founding Members. An impressive figure. This number represents:
Over 600 individuals. Over 600 stories. Over 600 decisions. And over 600 people united by one thing:
The belief that the future is shaped together. All in white! Not simply because it was the theme of the evening, with an American twist. But because ‘white’ symbolises what has defined DARIA from day one. Trust. Solidarity. Openness. A new beginning. Vision.

The future. A shared direction. More than just property

Anyone encountering DARIA for the first time might initially see high-quality properties, exciting projects or extraordinary opportunities.

However, anyone who becomes part of the community soon realises:

DARIA is never just about property. DARIA stands for a community and a better tomorrow. About relationships. About trust. About responsibility. And about a vision that extends far beyond

New connections are formed. Conversations turn into friendships. Encounters give rise to partnerships. And sometimes, a single evening is enough to change the way you see your own future. That was palpable everywhere. In the conversations.

Over a meal together. Whilst laughing. During the speeches. Whilst listening to the music.

Whilst people looked back together on what has already been achieved – and at the same time towards what is yet to come. Because a strong community isn’t recognised by how it celebrates successes together. But by how it supports one another. That is exactly what DARIA is. A community that supports.

The Stella Rheni – The place to be
The setting could hardly have been more fitting. The historic Stella Rheni offered not only an impressive backdrop and superb cuisine. It lent the entire evening a special atmosphere

Surrounded by nature, elegant architecture and a stunning view, an environment was created that was both relaxing and inspiring. Summer flair. Lovingly arranged flowers. Culinary highlights. Live music. And everywhere, people taking time for one

another. Innovation means never standing still Another special moment of the evening was looking to the future.

With the launch of the new DARIA app, it became clear that development never ends, and this powerful duo – Lydia Siegel and Marc Siewert & colleagues – take it to a new level every day.

It stands for more than just digital innovation. It stands for closeness. For connectivity. For transparency. For speed. For information.

And, above all, for a community that will be even more closely connected tomorrow than it is today. Because growth does not simply mean getting bigger. Growth means becoming better. This is precisely the ambition DARIA pursues. Every day. With every project With every idea. With every decision.

Vision needs people. Behind every extraordinary development are people who are prepared to take on responsibility. People who think ahead. People who recognise opportunities before others do.

We would therefore like to extend our special thanks to Frank Rahlf, Patrick Lauber and Jutta Burmeister.
Three individuals who shape DARIA

Burmeister. Thank you for your courage. Thank you for your vision. Thank you for your perseverance. Thank you for working day in, day out to create opportunities, bring people together and develop DARIA with passion.

Always with a vision that goes far beyond financial success.

For the benefit of everyone involved. Being a member – is it all a question of age? This question is often asked. Everyone could see the answer for themselves that evening. People with decades of professional experience stood alongside those who are only just taking their first steps towards financial freedom. And that is precisely where the strength lies. DARIA knows no age limits. DARIA knows no pigeonholing.

DARIA knows no prejudices. DARIA knows people. People with goals.

People with dreams. People with character. People with courage.

So if you’re still asking yourself today whether success, community or vision are a matter of age ...
No. They are a matter of attitude.



A question of willingness. A question of choice. And that is precisely why DARIA is growing across generations. Not because people are the same. But because they share the same values.

One direction. One vision. One future
A long evening, a long night, filled with radiance and energy. The final conversations of the evening and a feeling that lingered. Gratitude.

Not for a successful evening. But for what that evening brought to light. That an idea has become a movement. That a community has emerged from individuals. That the future grows

from trust.

The DARIA Summer White Party 2026 was therefore far more than just a summer party.

It was a visible sign of just how powerful community can be. Proof that great visions do not arise in isolation. They arise where people are prepared to stand up for one another.

To inspire one another. To grow together. And to take responsibility for one another. With around 1,000 Founding Members, DARIA is stronger today than ever before.

But the most important figure of the evening was not the 600-plus attendees who were there in person. It was the countless number of encounters. Of new ideas. Conversations. Hugs.

Perspectives. Hopes. And people who have decided not to go it alone. Because that is exactly what DARIA is all about. Not buildings. Not projects.

Not numbers. But people. A community that supports.

A vision that unites. A future shaped together. With courage. With trust. With passion. With responsibility. For

the benefit of everyone involved. And perhaps that was precisely the most important insight from this White Party!

The most beautiful places are not created where extraordinary buildings stand. They are created where extraordinary people come together.

Just like at DARIA.
The journey has only just begun.

By Dina Veronique Scheve



More than Numbers

Why Asset Protection Begins Long Before You Form an LLC

In my profession, people rarely start by talking about taxes. They tell me about their dreams. A new life in Florida. More freedom. Owning a business. Buying a waterfront home. Starting over between Germany and the United States. Then, almost casually, someone says: “By the way... we’ve already formed an LLC.” That is usually the moment when my real work begins. An LLC can be an excellent business tool. But it is neither a tax strategy nor automatic asset protection. It cannot protect you from poor planning, missed opportunities, or tax consequences that may not become visible until years later. Real asset protection begins long before any paperwork is filed. It begins with asking the right questions. Where will you become a tax resident? Will you continue to own assets, real estate, or business interests in Germany? Will your LLC operate a business or hold investments? Where will your income be generated? And perhaps the most important question of all:

Where do you want to be five or ten years from now? These questions may sound personal rather than financial. That is exactly why they matter. Anyone living, investing, or building a business between Germany and Florida is navigating far more than two countries. They are navigating two tax systems, two legal systems, and often two very different ways of thinking. What seems simple today may become expensive tomorrow. An LLC formed online in just a few minutes may later trigger reporting requirements that were never anticipated. A business remaining in Germany after relocating to Florida may continue creating tax obligations. Assets and investments may be treated differently by each country. Even paying personal expenses through a business account can weaken the very separation that is supposed to protect you. The most expensive mistakes are rarely caused by bad intentions. They happen because no one asked the right questions early enough. One sentence I hear again and again is:

“I wish I had known this sooner.” That sentence reminds me why I see myself as more than a Tax Professional. I see myself as a Financial Angel. Not because I perform miracles. But because I help people recognize opportunities before they become problems. I translate complex financial and tax concepts between Germany and the United States into practical decisions people can understand and act upon. A Financial Angel does not focus only on bookkeeping or tax returns. A Financial Angel looks at the person behind the numbers. Because behind every balance sheet is a story. Behind every new business is a dream. And behind every successful financial future is the courage to make the right decisions early. That is why accounting means much more to me than recording the past. It connects bookkeeping, tax planning, business structure, and long-term goals. It creates clarity before important decisions become irreversible and helps ensure that your structure continues to work as your life and

business evolve. An LLC can certainly be an important part of that strategy. But only when it is built on a solid foundation. Because in the end, your wealth is not protected by the company itself. It is protected by the decisions you make long before the company even exists. **That is why this column is called MORE THAN NUMBERS.** Because numbers never tell the whole story. They tell stories about people, dreams, courage—and the decisions that protect them. *In our next issue: The Most Expensive Decision Is Often the One Nobody Makes—Why Waiting Is One of the Biggest Mistakes in Accounting and Tax Planning.*

By Alexandra Welsch

Estate Planning: What Happens to Your Wealth After Death? Germany and the US in comparison

Every asset owner eventually faces the same question: What happens to my wealth when I am no longer here? The answer depends greatly on where assets are located and how they are structured. Germany and the United States follow very different legal frameworks for estate administration, and inadequate planning can lead to costly delays, family disputes, and significant financial losses for heirs. This article examines how estate planning works in both countries and highlights the financial consequences of failing to prepare.

Germany: Wills and Statutory Succession In Germany, inheritance matters are governed by the German Civil Code (Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch, or BGB). If a person dies without a valid will, assets are distributed according to statutory succession laws. **Key Considerations**

- Spouses and children inherit according to predetermined legal shares.
- Without a will, disputes among children, siblings, or other family members may arise.
- Banks and public authorities generally require a Certificate of Inheritance (“Erbschein”) before granting access to accounts or transferring property rights.

Financial Implications **Frozen Accounts:** Financial institutions typically restrict access to accounts until legal inheritance documentation has been provided. **Real Estate Delays:** The transfer or sale of real estate can take weeks or even months while ownership is legally established. **Tax Obligations Continue:** Inheritance and income tax filing deadlines remain in effect regardless

of administrative delays. **Business Succession Risks:** Without clear succession instructions, business operations may be disrupted or even come to a standstill. A properly drafted will can significantly reduce uncertainty and help avoid conflicts among heirs. **The United States: Probate and Trust Structures** In the United States, estate administration depends largely on the type of assets involved and the laws of the state where those assets are located. The central process is known as probate. **Probate:**

- Probate is a court-supervised process for administering a deceased person’s estate.
- Without a trust or other planning tools, courts oversee the identification of assets, payment of debts, and distribution of property to beneficiaries.
- Probate proceedings may take months or even years to complete and are often part of the public record.

Trusts Many Americans use Living Trusts to avoid probate altogether. A trust transfers assets into a legal structure during the owner’s lifetime. After death, the designated trustee administers those assets according to the owner’s instructions. Trusts offer several advantages:

- Faster asset distribution
- Greater privacy
- Reduced court involvement
- Increased flexibility for beneficiaries

The Financial Cost of Poor Estate Planning Regardless of the country or type of asset involved, insufficient planning

often creates similar challenges:

- Frozen Accounts** Mortgage payments, rent obligations, and other recurring expenses may become difficult to manage.
- Delayed Real Estate Transactions** Valuable market opportunities can be lost while ownership issues are resolved.
- Tax Complications** Deadlines for inheritance, estate, and income taxes still apply.
- Family Disputes** Without clear instructions, disagreements among heirs can escalate into costly legal conflicts.
- Business Interruptions** Important operational decisions may be delayed or blocked entirely. These risks become even more complex when assets are held internationally and multiple legal systems are involved.

Case Study: A German Investor with U.S. Real Estate Consider a German investor who owns a residence in Germany and an apartment in Florida. If the investor dies without a will and without appropriate cross-border planning:

- German banks may require a Certificate of Inheritance before releasing funds or transferring ownership rights.
- The Florida property may be subject to probate proceedings before heirs can gain control.
- Family members may be unable to access rental income while mortgage obligations and operating expenses continue.

By contrast, a coordinated estate plan—including a valid German will and a properly structured U.S. trust—can help ensure immediate access to assets and preserve the family’s financial flexibility.

Five Essential Estate Planning Strategies

- Create a Comprehensive Will** Clearly identify beneficiaries, asset distribution instructions, and management responsibilities.
- Evaluate Trust Structures** For U.S. real estate and investments, trusts often provide efficient and flexible succession solutions.
- Review International Powers of Attorney** Ensure that legal documents are recognized and enforceable in every relevant jurisdiction.
- Update Your Plan Regularly** Marriage, divorce, children, business interests, and major acquisitions can significantly affect estate planning needs.
- Seek Professional Guidance** Experienced attorneys and international wealth advisors can identify risks before they become costly problems.

The comparison highlights a common reality: individuals who want a smooth transfer of wealth must plan early—and increasingly, they must plan internationally. **Conclusion** Estate planning is far more than simply writing a will. It is a critical component of a comprehensive wealth preservation strategy, especially for families with international investments and cross-border assets. Without proper planning:

- Bank accounts, real estate holdings, and business interests can become temporarily inaccessible.
- Delays and disputes may threaten a family’s financial stability.
- Significant wealth can be lost through inefficiency, legal expenses, and avoidable complications.

A professionally designed international estate plan helps protect both assets and loved ones while ensuring that wealth remains accessible and effectively managed across borders. For today’s global investors, estate planning is not just about protecting wealth—it is about protecting family, preserving opportunity, and securing a lasting legacy.

In his role as a senior consultant, Bernd Roebbers 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.

Comparison between Germany and the USA		
Topic	Germany	USA
Primary Framework	Wills and statutory succession	Probate and trusts
Process Duration Without Planning	Weeks to months	Months to years
Privacy	Generally private	Often public through probate
International Assets	Additional legal documentation often required	Trusts frequently preferred
Financial Risks	Frozen accounts and administrative delays	Lengthy proceedings and public disclosure

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Mission impossible or just a challenge?



Photos courtesy of: Ramona Braun

June was a great month with an amazing start in the Sunshine State. I had the fantastic chance to join the wonderful warm-hearted DARIA team for a week; positive vibes only! Living in Virginia Beach I had to decide between taking a flight or just driving down along the East Coast to Fort Myers/Cape Coral. I already was more into the second option, so I didn’t have to rent a car and have also kind of an adventure as I never drove that many miles just all by myself. Then there is my good old BMW built in 2001, which has been my “partner” for 25 years now. It’s not just a car to me, the history this “partnership” is based on was a dark period of my life.

In 1996 I was 19 when I had a very bad accident on a country road in Bavaria, Germany: Several days in a coma, doctors were telling my mom she’d better pray that I won’t wake up again, as I couldn’t ever take care of myself again, the damages multiple bleedings in my brain caused were way too severe. Well, as you’re reading my article now, I came back to life a long time ago. 3 ½ years in hospitals and rehabs were filled with predictions of what I wouldn’t be able to do anymore and every single medical report contained “lack of insight into my illness”. I wasn’t able to do horseback riding anymore they told me – I would be lucky if I can walk without a mobility aid. I also wouldn’t be capable of learning new things

anymore either, or I couldn’t work in my profession after all. I just thought “We’ll see”. Well – my first attempt to get back on a horse would have been worth a video for fun clips. As I had a lack of balance I oversteered – I climbed up on the left side and fell straight back down on the right, lol! Long story short – despite all those negative, frustrating forecasts, I was able to get back to trail riding, hiking in the mountains of Austria, and even learning. I was certified as a foreign language secretary, completed the Bachelor of Business, passed the instructor aptitude exam, and succeeded the study course as a Certified SAP Purchaser – all of that while holding a full time position in the technical procurement division of the University Hospital of Regensburg, Germany and later in Bonn, Germany. Back to my car: More than four years after the accident my insurance finally paid, and I bought my beloved BMW E46 (2001) compact. I took it to Portugal where I lived with my family from 2017-2020. I also refused to leave it in Europe when we moved to Virginia. It became Americanized – tinted windows and a huge vintage styled US flag on the hood. Because of wear and tear the engine started burning oil like crazy during the last years. I couldn’t find an American garage, not even at the BMW dealerships and garages, who would touch a European engine - or was interested to put effort into such an old car. At the end of May my brother Sandro who’s still leaving in Germany discovered “The German Guys” online, located in Bunnell, FL. I looked at maps and was like “That’s on my way to Fort Myers!”. Knowing there aren’t any coincidences ever, I called there and – indeed – Christian, the owner of

the garage immediately said he would take care of it. I rented a trailer, drove my BMW with the instructions and support of my son Louis and my husband Rainer onto it while sweating blood and water. There were several challenges caused by the height of the trailer’s front and the difference to the low height of the BMW front. So, some wooden pieces had to be placed on the trailer to drive on. Well, the next morning I was on my way to Florida. My daughter Marina and my sister-in-law were like “you’re nuts!” – me, 5 ft 3, dainty and no trailer experience at all, going on a 700 miles trip all by myself. I have to admit I had second thoughts when I started driving and my navigation brought me right to a crossing where I had to take a sharp left turn and soon had to pass a narrow bridge – I sat as straight as a rod, I imagined I would need a wheelchair after that trip if I kept sitting that strained, lol! An hour later, I had almost forgotten what had impressed me so much just moments before. After 10 hours of driving (trailer was limited to 55 mph) I decided to watch out for a place to stay overnight in South Carolina. I had to make sure the hotel would have a pull through parking possibility which I had to clarify on the phone first. The next day I had to pass Georgia and finally arrived in Bunnell, FL dropped the car and trailer and continued the ride for another 235 miles to Cape Coral. Conclusion: Believe in yourself, feel what you are able to do and go for it! The only person who can limit you – is YOU! Be unlimited. Become a DARIAn.

By Ramona Braun

The Last Days of Summer in Southwest Florida

When Families Make Memories Before School Begins

For many families in Southwest Florida, August has a special feeling. The days are still filled with sunshine, the pools are still busy, the beaches are calling, and the evenings seem to last forever. But there is also a quiet reminder in the air: summer break is slowly coming to an end.

For children across the United States, summer vacation is much longer than what many families in Europe are used to. Instead of only a few weeks away from school, American children often enjoy almost three months of summer break. It is a season filled with freedom, adventure, and countless small moments that become childhood memories.

August becomes the month of “one more time.”
One more trip to the beach.
One more afternoon swimming in the pool.
One more bike ride through the neighborhood.
One more evening outside until the sun disappears.
These simple moments are often what children remember the most.

In Southwest Florida, summer has its own special rhythm. Families spend time outdoors despite the heat, finding ways to enjoy the beautiful surroundings they are lucky to call home. A morning boat ride through the canals, a walk along the water at sunset, a visit to a local park, or a backyard barbecue with neighbors can turn an ordinary day into a special memory. For many children, summer is about more than just being out of school. It is about independence and discovery. It is about catching fireflies in the evening, playing outside with friends, learning to swim,

riding bikes through the neighborhood, and enjoying the feeling of having nowhere to rush. These are the moments that create the stories children carry with them. But August also brings a change. Store shelves fill with school supplies, backpacks appear again, and families begin preparing for a new school year. Parents start adjusting bedtime routines, organizing schedules, and getting everyone ready for the busy months ahead. The return to school is an important milestone for American families. Children reunite with friends, meet new teachers, and begin another chapter of learning and growing. There is

excitement, but sometimes also a little sadness as the relaxed days of summer become memories. For families who moved to Southwest Florida from other countries, especially from Europe, this long summer break can feel like a completely different way of life. It is a chance to experience a slower summer, where family time, outdoor activities, and community connections become an important part of everyday life.

The beauty of these last summer days is that they do not require anything extraordinary. Often, the best memories are created during the simplest moments: sharing an ice cream after a hot day, watching the sunset together,

laughing around the dinner table, or enjoying one final swim before school begins. As August comes to an end, families across Southwest Florida hold on to these moments just a little longer. Because summer is not only a season on the calendar — it is a collection of memories, experiences, and little traditions that stay with us long after the first school bell rings.

By S. Mechalik
Photos courtesy of: S. Mechalik



Ferragosto – When Summer Becomes a Time for Reflection

August 15 is one of the most important days of the year in Italy. Ferragosto is the name of the holiday that, at first glance, seems to be all about summer, beaches, and family celebrations. Yet behind the crowded seaside towns, the long tables, and the shared excursions lies a deeper meaning. Ferragosto speaks of rest and new beginnings, of community and gratitude, of the human longing to step out of everyday life for a moment.

The festival has its origins in antiquity. Emperor Augustus established the “Feriae Augusti,” the August holidays, to provide a period of rest after the harvest season. Later, the Church connected this date with the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. In this way, a civil holiday also became a religious celebration, and both traditions continue to shape the Italian spirit today.

Anyone who has experienced Ferragosto quickly realizes that it is more than an ordinary vacation day. Many cities seem almost deserted as families set out together for the sea, the mountains, or the countryside. People cook, celebrate, laugh, and spend time with one another. For a brief moment, the hectic rhythm of daily life appears to stand still.

Within this lies a message that reaches far beyond Italy. In the United States, August is also a major travel season for many people. Although Ferragosto is not celebrated there, the longing for freedom, rest, and new experiences is remarkably similar. American families head for national parks, coastal destinations, and long road trips across the country. Images of endless highways, motorhomes, and sunsets over the Rocky Mountains reveal the same desire: to leave everyday life behind and return renewed.

The traditions may differ, but the human needs do not. In Italy, people

often gather around a large family table; in the United States, they may meet for a barbecue or an outdoor picnic. In both cases, the focus is on community. People want to spend time together, share stories, laugh, and create memories.

Language itself reflects this idea. In English, we speak of “holidays,” originally “holy days,” days set apart from ordinary life. A vacation is therefore not merely free time but a special period that lifts us out of the everyday. The German word Urlaub comes from the idea of receiving permission to step away from one’s duties. Whether in Italy, Germany, or the United States, human beings need times when they are allowed to let go. Faith has always known this movement. The Bible repeatedly tells of people who set out on journeys. Abraham leaves his homeland, Moses leads his people through the wilderness, and the disciples follow Jesus along unfamiliar paths. Faith is not about standing still. Faith means being on the move, outwardly and inwardly.

Travel thus becomes an image of life itself. Those who are on the road discover new landscapes, different people, and unfamiliar cultures. At the same time, they often discover new aspects of themselves. Their perspective widens. Everyday life loses its self-evident character. They realize that there are more paths than the ones they have always walked. Ferragosto unites this spirit of departure with the art of pausing. It is a celebration that invites not only travel but also arrival—arrival among the people who matter most, arrival within oneself, and perhaps a renewed arrival in the presence of God.

Especially beautiful is the idea of gratitude. Summer offers an abundance of impressions: the light of evening, the sound of the sea, the scent of the

mountains, and meals shared under the open sky. In the United States, it may be the view across the Grand Canyon; in Italy, the sight of the Amalfi Coast; in Germany, a quiet evening by a lake. All these moments remind us of the richness of creation. Christian faith invites us not only to enjoy this beauty but also to recognize it as a gift. The most unforgettable vacations are often not shaped by spectacular attractions but by simple moments: a conversation, a sunset, or a silent gaze across a landscape. Here lies a connection between Ferragosto and the American summer travel season. Even if the name is unknown, many people share the same experience: when we step out of our usual rhythm for a while, we begin to see the world with fresh eyes. We discover that rest is not found merely in doing nothing, but in learning to notice. Perhaps that is the true message of this

summer day: life consists not only of work and obligations. It also consists of time that has been given to us, time that can help us become whole again. When Italy celebrates Ferragosto on August 15, it is therefore celebrating more than summer. It celebrates the freedom to leave everyday life behind for a moment. It celebrates human community. And it celebrates—whether consciously or not—the hope that behind the beauty of this world stands a God who desires to give humanity rest, joy, and a future.

And perhaps this is just as true for a traveler driving along Route 66 as for a family gathered on the Italian coast: those who are on the move and yet know how to pause discover more than new places. They discover something of the vastness of life—and perhaps something of the presence of God.
By Tobias Leinesser

Source: Pexels



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Whats happening?

The Sunshine Post Event Calendar

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!

Although August is one of Southwest Florida’s warmest months, it remains filled with community celebrations, farmers markets, live music, nature programs, and family-friendly events. While the summer tourism season slows down, local communities continue to host festivals, outdoor concerts, art events, and seasonal attractions that highlight the region’s relaxed Gulf Coast lifestyle. Many activities take place during the cooler morning or evening hours, making August an excellent time for both residents and visitors to explore Southwest Florida.

Fort Myers Farmers Market

Where? Downtown Fort Myers
When? every Saturday morning

- offering fresh produce,
- baked goods,
- seafood,
- handmade crafts
- local products along First Street

01

Chris MacDonald’s Memories of Elvis

Where? Fort Myers

- Award-winning Elvis tribute artist Chris MacDonald celebrates the King of Rock ‘n’ Roll with an energetic show featuring classic songs, costumes, and stories from Elvis’ career.

15

Fort Myers Mighty Mussels Home Game

Where? Hammond Stadium
When? season schedule permittin
Minor League Baseball with the Fort Myers Mighty Mussels

01

Fort Myers Monthly Music Walk

- downtown streets come alive with live bands, street performers, and local artists.

21

Fort Myers Monthly Art Walk

07

Fort Myers Teen Production of Les Misérables

07-09

Alabama in Concert

Where? Hertz Arena, Estero
When? a one-night concert
Country Music Hall of Fame members Alabama perform their greatest hits, including classics like Mountain Music and Song of the South

13

Send Us Your Event Recommendations!

info@sunshine-post.com



Source: Pexels

Classic Cajun Jambalaya Recipe

Family Style

Jambalaya is a perfect Labor Day / family gathering dish because it is a one-pot meal, easy to make for a crowd, and full of Southern flavor. This version combines chicken, sausage, and shrimp — a popular Gulf Coast style.

INGREDIENTS

(SERVES 6-8)

Meat & Seafood

- 1 lb (450 g) chicken thighs, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 lb (450 g) smoked sausage or andouille sausage, sliced
- 1 lb (450 g) shrimp, peeled and deveined

Vegetables (“The Cajun Trinity”)

- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 3–4 cloves garlic, minced

Rice & Liquid

- 2 cups long-grain white rice
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 can (14.5 oz / 400 g) diced tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste

Seasoning

- 2 teaspoons Cajun seasoning
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt & black pepper to taste
- Optional: a little cayenne pepper for heat

Finish

- Fresh parsley, chopped
- Green onions, sliced
- Lemon wedges (optional)

1

. Brown the meat

Heat a large heavy pot or Dutch oven. Add a little oil and brown: chicken first (about 5–7 minutes) remove and set aside. Then brown the sausage for a few minutes.

2

. Cook the vegetables

Add onion, bell pepper, and celery. Cook for about 5 minutes until softened. Add garlic and cook another 30 seconds.

3

. Build the flavor

Add: Cajun seasoning
paprika
thyme
oregano
Stir for 30 seconds.
Add: tomatoes
tomato paste
chicken broth
bay leaf

4

. Add rice & chicken

Return chicken to the pot. Add rice and stir. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer: 25–30 minutes
Do not stir too much — the rice needs time to cook.

5

. Add shrimp

Add shrimp during the last 5–7 minutes. Cook until pink and cooked through. Remove bay leaf.

6

. Serve

Top with: parsley
green onions
lemon

Serve warm with: cornbread
coleslaw
salad
cold drinks

Photos courtesy of: S. Mechalik



SOUTHWEST FLORIDA LABOR DAY TWIST:

For a Florida version, many families would:

- add extra Gulf shrimp
- use local seafood
- cook it outside in a large pot
- serve it buffet-style with friends and neighbors

It is exactly the kind of dish that fits a late-summer backyard gathering before school starts again.

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Sunshine Post Interview on Healthy Aging

I caught the football bug and 38 years later, it’s still with me.

Maximilian “Mega Max” von Garnier—Legendary Player, Coach, and Ambassador for Active Aging
He’s been holding the ball for over 35 years—first as a star player for the Hamburg Blue Devils, then as a coach who molded young athletes into European champions. Maximilian von Garnier, known as Mega Max, is one of the defining figures in German American football. In a conversation with Clemens Mueller, he reveals why sleep is the most underrated secret weapon in sports, why he prefers playing pickleball to strength training these days—and what healthy aging really means to him.

You first held a football in your hands at age 17 in Berlin-Charlottenburg—at a time when hardly anyone in Germany knew what American football was. What fascinated you back then, and what still drives you after more than 38 years?

I’d been to America shortly before that and had only watched football on TV during the NFL season. We were two guys, 16 and 17 years old, who had no idea how it worked—but we were simply fascinated by the athleticism and sensed that there was a whole lot of tactics and strategy behind it. When I got back to Berlin and went to the first practice of the newly founded Berlin Rebels youth team, the spark was ignited. I caught the football bug—and 38 years later, it’s still with me.

You’re a founding member of the Hamburg Blue Devils and played there for years as a key player. What drove you to start coaching at the same time, so early on?

For me, it was always important to ask: What can you personally do to contribute to success? Don’t ask what others could do better—instead, look in the mirror. I was the first one on the field and the last one off. Especially when we were at the top, I worked the hardest to maintain that level. Passing on that knowledge was a natural extension of that for me. At times, I coached three youth teams simultaneously in Hamburg, and later led a third-division team back to the first division.

Our newsletter focuses on healthy aging. How has your physical well-being changed over the decades—and how do you approach exercise today?

I played for 21 years without ever really

taking a break. I was very athletic; I ran the 100 meters in under 11 seconds—at 1.90 meters tall and just under 90 kilos. To maintain that level of athleticism past 30, I had to put in an enormous amount of effort. After my active career ended, I scaled back—and realized: If you’re not burning as many calories but still have the same appetite, you gain weight. The lesson was: You always have to find your balance. For me today, that’s pickleball—outdoors, with friends or my daughter, tactical, fun, and a real physical workout. After two and a half hours, you’re completely wiped out—but it doesn’t feel like a workout. That’s the key for me.

We work with the concept of the five major pillars of long-term health: exercise, nutrition, sleep, breathing, and nature. Which of these areas was your biggest challenge?

We don’t need to discuss nature—I spend a lot of time by and on the water, and I absolutely love jet-skiing. That feeling of freedom is good for me and my soul. Nutrition? I enjoy eating and make sure it doesn’t get out of hand. A cheeseburger every now and then is no problem—but one every day would be. I’ve had a six-pack for a long time, but what’s the point of it? Moderation, not excess—that’s what matters. And then there’s sleep: For me, it’s truly a miracle cure for the body, soul, and mind—something most people massively underestimate. I sleep seven to eight hours—I’ve always done that. Recovery is just as important as the workout itself. A lot of people don’t understand that.

What advice do you give young athletes

today—not just in terms of sports, but for a healthy lifestyle in the long run?

Talent alone will take you far—but not all the way to the top. To truly be at the very top, you have to do more than others. Always. One of my first coaches noticed that I wasn’t good at running certain passing routes. He had me practice nothing but those routes until they became my absolute strengths. Work so hard on your weaknesses that they become strengths. And once you’re at the top, don’t stop—because then everyone will be chasing you. Commitment, attitude, effort. These are the things you can control yourself. Be the best version of yourself in these areas.

What does healthy aging mean to you personally—and what does your ideal daily life look like in 20 years?

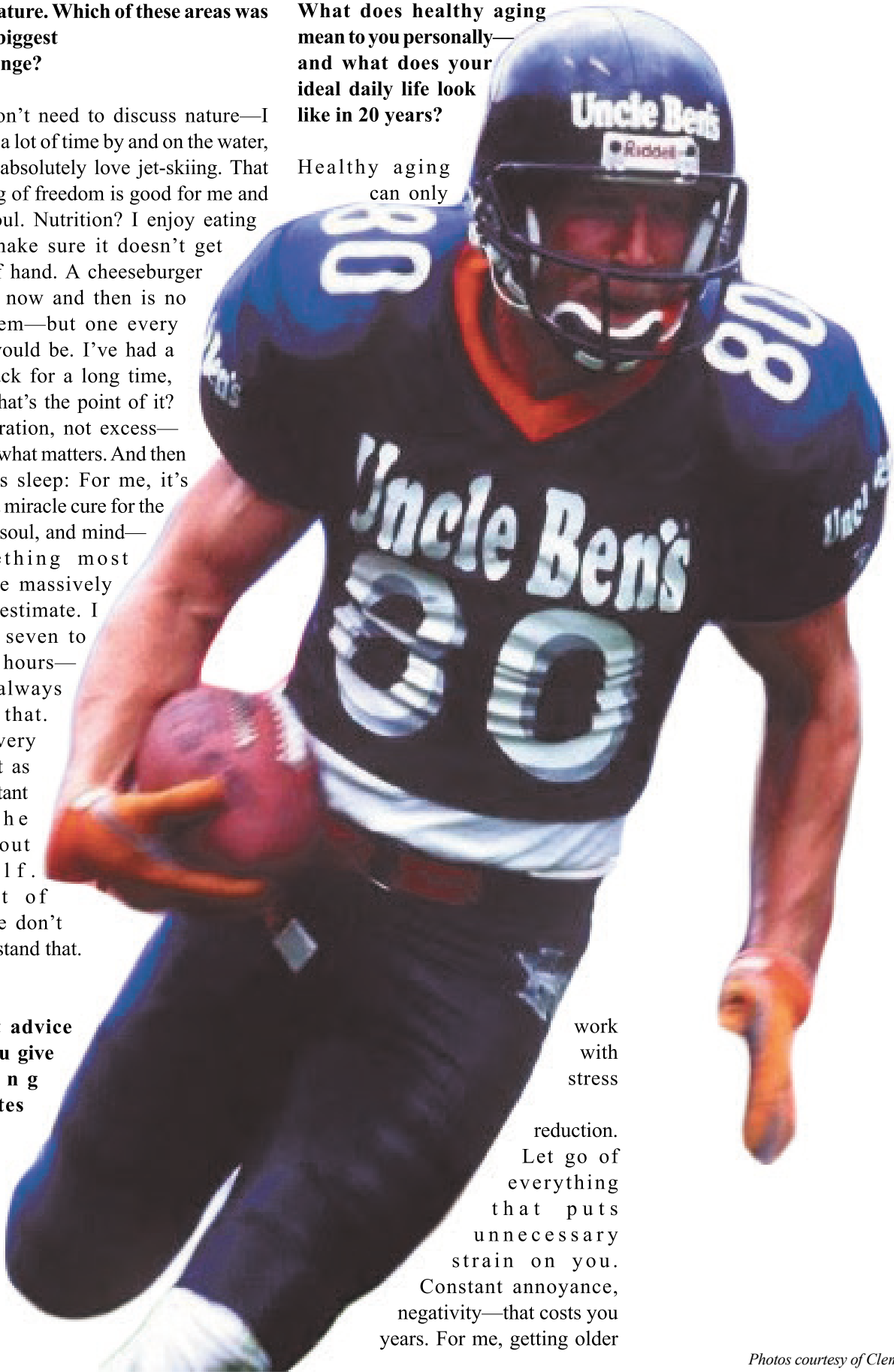
Healthy aging can only

work with stress

reduction. Let go of everything that puts unnecessary strain on you. Constant annoyance, negativity—that costs you years. For me, getting older

is something positive, and it should be approached positively. Find out what makes you happy—and do that. For me, it’s playing pickleball with friends, being by the water, and the sense of community. In 20 years? Hopefully, I’ll still be playing pickleball—preferably at the Daria courts, with 999 different partners and people who share their joy of being active together. What could be better?

By Clemens Müller



Photos courtesy of Clemens Müller



We Want to Hear from You!

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.

Family Ties on the Ice:

The Tkachuk Brothers Fulfill Their Biggest Dream with the Florida Panthers

Some stories can only be written by sports. Others take years of patience, perfect timing, and a little bit of fate before they finally become reality. The reunion of brothers Matthew and Brady Tkachuk with the Florida Panthers falls squarely into that category. After spending years as stars on different NHL teams, the two will finally play together full-time for the same franchise, fulfilling a dream they have shared since childhood. Brady Tkachuk’s blockbuster move from the Ottawa Senators to Sunrise ranks among the biggest trades in recent NHL history and has created excitement far beyond South Florida.

A Dream Finally Becomes Reality

For many around the hockey world, it was never a question of if the brothers would eventually share NHL ice together—it was

wearing Panthers sweaters.

Two Brothers, Two Remarkable Careers

Matthew Tkachuk has long established himself as one of the defining faces of today’s NHL. After beginning his professional career with the Calgary Flames, he was traded to Florida in 2022—a move that proved to be a perfect fit for both player and organization. With his unique blend of elite skill, emotion, leadership, and just the right amount of edge, he helped elevate the Panthers into one of the league’s elite teams. Multiple Stanley Cup Final appearances and championship success cemented his place among the greatest power forwards of his generation. He’s the type of player opponents love to hate but teammates absolutely love to have—someone capable of taking over games through talent, passion, and an unshakable will to win.

Brady Tkachuk followed a similar path while forging an identity all his own. As captain of the Ottawa Senators, he spent years serving as the heart and soul of one of the NHL’s youngest teams.

He embodied leadership, toughness, and loyalty. Few players combined physicality, scoring touch, and relentless effort as naturally as the younger Tkachuk brother. In Ottawa, he became a fan favorite while rewriting several franchise records. At the same time, there was always a feeling that the day would eventually come when the brothers’ careers would intersect. That day has finally

arrived. simply a matter of when. Their appearances with Team USA had already shown just how naturally they complement one another. Together, they captured Olympic gold in 2026, winning over fans with their passion, intensity, and relentless style of play. Now they’ll have the opportunity to showcase that same chemistry every single night while

More Than Just Talent

What makes the Tkachuk brothers so special goes far beyond their hockey abilities. They play with a passion that’s visible in every shift. They never shy away from physical battles, embrace responsibility in the biggest moments, and possess the rare ability to make everyone around them better. Both are exceptional leaders, even though their personalities differ. Matthew is known as the emotional catalyst with an unpredictable edge, while Brady is the steady captain who leads through consistency, determination, and relentless effort. Together, they form a combination the NHL has rarely, if ever, seen.

The Foundation of Their Success

The roots of this remarkable story lie within the family itself. Their father, Keith Tkachuk, is widely regarded as one of the greatest American hockey players of all time. Over nearly two decades, he established himself as one of the NHL’s premier power forwards, scoring more than 500 career goals while leaving a lasting impact with the Winnipeg Jets, Phoenix Coyotes, St. Louis Blues, and Atlanta Thrashers. For Matthew and Brady, pursuing a professional hockey career almost seemed inevitable—not because anything was handed to them, but because they learned from an early age what true professionalism looks like. Hard work, discipline, and passion were simply part of everyday life in the Tkachuk household.

The brothers still enjoy sharing stories about growing up in NHL locker rooms, spending countless hours on long drives to youth hockey tournaments, and learning invaluable lessons from their father. Keith was never just the famous former NHL star. Above all else, he was a father who constantly challenged his sons to outwork everyone else. That mindset continues to define both Matthew and Brady to this day.

A Strong Bond Beyond the Rink

Away from the ice, Matthew and Brady Tkachuk have long been a close-knit team. Through their shared podcast “Wingmen,” they regularly provide entertaining behind-the-scenes looks at life in the NHL. They talk about games, opponents, teammates, and the world of professional hockey, while also enjoying the opportunity to poke fun at themselves. The combination of humor, honesty, and hockey knowledge has helped turn the podcast into a popular platform among fans. Anyone who follows the brothers quickly realizes that, despite all their success, they remain at their core what they have always been: two brothers who enjoy joking around, challenging each other, and having fun together. Their connection also extends far beyond hockey. Family remains at the center of their lives, with summer golf outings, time spent with friends, and charity events all playing an important role. The Tkachuks know how to enjoy life while never losing sight of what truly matters. That authenticity and down-to-earth personality are exactly what make them so relatable to fans.

Florida’s Championship Blueprint

From a hockey perspective, their future together could hardly be more exciting. The Panthers already feature one of the strongest rosters in the NHL. With Aleksander Barkov, Sam Reinhart, Sam Bennett, Aaron Ekblad, Matthew Tkachuk—and now Brady Tkachuk as well—Florida has built an impressive combination of talent, experience,

leadership, and championship mentality. It is no surprise that many experts continue to view the Panthers as one of the league’s top Stanley Cup contenders. Perhaps this marks the beginning of a completely new chapter in franchise history. Two brothers who spent years building their own careers separately are finally standing side by side. Not as opponents, not only for a handful of international games—but every night, wearing the same jersey.

Bill Zito Makes the Dream Possible

Behind this spectacular reunion stands one key figure: Florida Panthers general manager Bill Zito. The architect of the franchise’s recent success has earned a reputation for making even the boldest ideas become reality. Through major acquisitions and important contract decisions, Zito has repeatedly demonstrated an exceptional sense of timing and an ability to identify the right players for the right moment. The addition of Brady Tkachuk would likely hold a special place even among Zito’s impressive accomplishments. Convincing an NHL captain to leave his team while bringing together two of the league’s most talented power forwards once seemed almost impossible. Zito made it happen. With courage, vision, and a commitment to keeping Florida’s championship window open for years to come, he delivered a move that would be remembered as one of the most remarkable transactions in modern NHL history. The fact that the deal also fulfilled a lifelong dream for two brothers—to finally play together for the same team in the world’s best hockey league—makes it far more than a simple roster move. It becomes a piece of hockey history.

A Happy Ending for the Entire Family

And perhaps nobody is happier about this moment than Keith Tkachuk. For years, the proud father had to travel across North America, watching Matthew play in Florida while making trips to see Brady compete in Ottawa. Those days are now over. Going forward, one trip to Sunrise—or perhaps even a short drive from home—will be enough to see both of his sons on the same ice. And who knows? Maybe in the early summer of 2027, Keith will witness the greatest moment of his hockey family’s story: Matthew and Brady Tkachuk lifting the Stanley Cup together under the Florida sky. At that point, the only decision left for the proud father would be figuring out which son to congratulate first—a luxury problem that any hockey parent would gladly accept.

By John Heinrich

Photos courtesy of: John Heinrich



Chasing More

The Heart of a City Is Built by Its People



Photos courtesy of: Katharina Kaufmann

Sometimes, a single question reveals more about a place than any travel guide ever could.

For this edition of CHASING MORE, I walked through Downtown Fort Myers and stopped people along the way. No city officials, no business owners, no tour guides - just ordinary people who live here, work here, or simply enjoy spending time downtown.

I asked them one simple question: “What makes Fort Myers special to you?”

I expected answers about the sunshine, the palm trees, or the beautiful views along the Caloosahatchee River. But surprisingly, almost no one started there. Instead, they talked about people. About connection. About community. And that made me stop and think. What is it that truly makes Downtown Fort Myers so unique? Perhaps part of the answer lies in the

way it was built. Unlike many American cities designed primarily around cars, Downtown Fort Myers feels different. Its streets invite you to slow down. Restaurants, cafés, boutiques, art galleries, and historic buildings sit within walking distance of one another. People stroll instead

of rushing. They stop to admire a storefront, grab a coffee, sit on a bench, or strike up a conversation with someone they’ve never met before.

In many ways, it feels surprisingly European. Not because of the architecture alone, but because of the experience. It’s a place designed to be explored on foot, a place where the journey itself becomes part of the destination. Maybe that’s why Downtown doesn’t simply feel like the center of a city. It feels like its living room. One woman smiled before answering: “I rarely come here with a plan. Downtown is at its best when you

simply wander. Something beautiful always seems to happen.”

An older couple told me they have walked these streets together every week for years. “We don’t know everyone personally, but after a while you start recognizing faces. You wave, exchange a few words, and eventually it feels like you’re part of something bigger.” That phrase stayed with me. Part of something bigger. Not because of a landmark. Not because of a famous attraction. But because of the people.

Of course, many mentioned the restaurants, cozy cafés, local shops, live music, and the incredible atmosphere after sunset.

One man put it perfectly: “There may be cities with better restaurants or taller buildings, but very few places feel this genuine.” Another laughed before giving his answer. “Honestly? The only thing I complain about is parking.” That answer came up more than once. Finding a parking spot - especially on weekends or during events - can require a little patience. But almost everyone immediately followed with the same thought: “Once you’re here, you forget all about it.” Because Downtown offers something that can’t be designed or manufactured. It creates moments. Throughout my conversations, one word kept coming back: Community. Not because it’s a popular buzzword. Because people genuinely feel it. That became especially clear after the passing of beloved local musician Jimmy Melton.

His loss wasn’t only felt by family and close friends. The entire community came together. People shared stories, left flowers, supported one another, and celebrated the life of someone who had become part of Downtown’s identity.

It wasn’t an official city event. It wasn’t organized. It was simply a community showing up for one of its own. Moments like these remind us that Downtown Fort Myers is much more than beautiful streets and historic

buildings. It’s where a city comes together. A young mother summed it up beautifully:

“My children are growing up here. To them, Downtown isn’t just where we go. It’s where we celebrate birthdays, meet friends, and create memories they’ll carry forever.” Maybe that’s the real difference. Many cities have a downtown. Fort Myers has a heart. A heart that beats through its morning coffee shops. Its afternoon sidewalks. Its evening restaurant patios filled with laughter and music.

And through the countless conversations between people who may have started as strangers. The longer I spent talking to people, the more I realized something. Almost no one described Downtown by listing attractions or buildings. Instead, they described a feeling. The feeling of belonging. The feeling of slowing down. The feeling of being welcomed, even if nobody knows your name. Perhaps that’s why it’s so difficult to explain why people love this place. Because it isn’t just one restaurant. Or one street. Or one event.

It’s the combination of history, atmosphere, and the people who choose, every single day, to make this place feel alive. Buildings can be designed. Roads can be built. Restaurants can open. But community cannot be constructed. It grows. And maybe that’s exactly why Downtown Fort Myers means so much to the people who call it home.

Because at the end of the day, the heart of a city is never made of brick or concrete.

It’s made of people.

By Katharina Kaufmann

The Florida Edit

Siesta Key - Why This Beach Is One of Florida’s Most Beautiful Places

There are places in Florida you visit simply because they appear on every list of must-see attractions. And then there are places you visit and immediately understand why people from around the world return year after year.

Siesta Key undoubtedly belongs to the second category.

When most people think of Florida, they picture endless white beaches, swaying palm trees, turquoise water, and sunsets that paint the sky in shades of orange, pink, and gold. The truth is, not every beach lives up to that image. Siesta Key does.

Located on Florida’s Gulf Coast, just about two hours from Cape Coral, this small barrier island has become one of the state’s most beloved beach destinations. Yet despite its popularity, it has managed to maintain its relaxed and laid-back character. Life seems to move a little slower here. People get around by bicycle or golf cart, charming cafés invite visitors to linger,

and the moment you catch your first glimpse of the water, it becomes clear why this destination is consistently ranked among the most beautiful beaches in the United States.

But what exactly makes Siesta Key so special?

It is not just the beach itself. It is the combination of nature, atmosphere, and the feeling this place creates.

Siesta Beach has been recognized as one of America’s best beaches for years. Its sand is composed of nearly 100 percent quartz, making it unlike almost any other beach in Florida. While traditional sand often becomes unbearably hot during the summer months, Siesta Key’s quartz sand remains surprisingly cool underfoot, even on the hottest days. Soft, powdery, and almost silky to the touch, it is something you truly must experience for yourself.

Then there is the sheer size of the beach. Unlike many coastal destinations,

Siesta Beach feels open and expansive. Even on busy days, there is plenty of room to spread out and enjoy the surroundings. The view stretches endlessly across the Gulf of Mexico, uninterrupted by towering hotels or large developments that often dominate other waterfront destinations.

Another reason for Siesta Key’s popularity is the water itself.

Thanks to its location along the Gulf Coast, the waves are typically calmer than those found on Florida’s Atlantic shoreline. The gradual, shallow entry into the water makes it ideal for families, swimmers, and long walks along the coast. Combined with the bright sandbanks and abundant sunshine, the Gulf takes on stunning shades of turquoise and blue colors more commonly associated with the Caribbean than the mainland United States.

Yet the true magic of Siesta Key cannot be measured by awards, rankings, or statistics.

It lies in the atmosphere. While many famous vacation destinations have become dominated by large hotel chains and crowds of tourists, Siesta Key has retained much of its original charm. The village feels like something out of a classic American beach movie. Colorful cottages, locally owned restaurants, boutique shops, and live music create an inviting environment where visitors immediately feel at home.

Nobody seems to be in a hurry here. People gather for breakfast on sunny patios, families spend entire days on the beach, and every evening both visitors and locals come together to watch the sunset. It is this unique combination of quality of life and relaxed coastal living that keeps people coming back.

You come here to forget about everyday life for a while. And that is exactly what a perfect Florida beach day should be about.

Read more on the next page →

It is not about rushing from one attraction to the next or trying to check every activity off a list. Instead, it is about slowing down and appreciating the moment. A good book beneath an umbrella. A walk along the shoreline. The sound of waves rolling onto the beach. A meaningful conversation with friends or family. Often, it is these simple experiences that become the most memorable parts of a trip.

As the midday sun reaches its peak, the island’s restaurants and cafés begin to fill with visitors. Fresh seafood, light coastal cuisine, and waterfront views are simply part of everyday life here. Yet as beautiful as the beach may be during the day, the real highlight begins in the evening.

As the sun slowly starts its descent and the temperatures become more comfortable, Siesta Key reveals a

completely different side of itself. Experiencing Florida from the water is something everyone should do at least once. While many visitors choose to watch the sunset from the shore, seeing it from the Gulf offers an entirely different perspective.

Gliding across the water on a jet ski while the sun slowly sinks toward the horizon is difficult to put into words. The sounds of the day begin to fade. The light changes with every passing minute. The sky transforms from orange to pink, from pink to purple, while the Gulf reflects the colors like a giant mirror. For a brief moment, time seems to slow down.

These are often the memories that stay with people long after they return home. Not the shopping centers. Not the major attractions. But the quiet

moments when you simply stop and absorb the beauty around you.

A sunset jet-ski tour around Siesta Key combines the best of both worlds. On one hand, there is the excitement and freedom that comes with riding across open water. On the other, there is the tranquility and natural beauty of a Gulf Coast sunset.

If you are lucky, you may even encounter dolphins along the way. These curious animals are frequently spotted near the shoreline during the evening hours. There are never any guarantees but that unpredictability is often what makes wildlife encounters so memorable.

As the final rays of sunlight disappear beyond the horizon and the first lights along the coast begin to glow, the day comes to an end. A day that captures everything Florida

is known for.

Sunshine. Water. Freedom. And the unmistakable sense of relaxation that defines life along the Gulf Coast.

Siesta Key is certainly not Florida’s only beautiful beach. The Sunshine State is home to hundreds of stunning stretches of coastline. Yet few places embody the Florida dream quite as effortlessly and authentically as this small island paradise.

Perhaps that is why so many visitors return again and again.

And perhaps it is only after spending a day on Siesta Key that you truly understand why some places become more than just destinations. They become memories.

By Katharina Kaufmann

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Whether you’re a local business, an event organizer, or a service provider, our readers are your audience.

School Choices in Lee County, Florida

Finding the Right Path for Your Child

For many families, moving to Southwest Florida is a dream come true. Sunshine, beaches, outdoor activities, and a relaxed lifestyle are some of the reasons people choose places like Cape Coral, Fort Myers, and the surrounding communities as their new home. But for families with children, one of the biggest questions after moving is often: Where will my child go to school? For families coming from Germany or other European countries, the American school system can feel very different. Instead of one main public school system with a fixed structure, families in Lee County have several options to consider — including public schools, charter schools, and private schools. Choosing the right school is not only about academics. It is also about finding a place where children feel comfortable, make friends, discover their interests, and become part of their new community.

By Anja Behrendt

Every Family Has a Different Choice

There is no single “perfect” school for every child. The best choice depends on each family’s priorities, location, learning style, budget, and what environment helps their child thrive. For families moving to Lee County, taking time to research schools, visit campuses, and understand the different options can make the transition much easier. Because choosing a school is not only about where children learn — it is about where they grow, build friendships, and create memories during an important chapter of their lives. Southwest Florida offers families many opportunities, and finding the right school can be the first step toward feeling truly at home.

Public Schools — The Traditional American School Experience

Public schools are the most common choice for families in the United States. They are funded by local taxes and are free for students who live within the school district. In Lee County, public schools are managed by the Lee County School District and include elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. One important difference for families from Germany is that students usually attend the school assigned to their home address. This is called a school zone. The neighborhood where a family lives often determines which school their child will attend. Public schools offer a wide range of programs, including:

- sports teams
- music and arts programs
- technology classes
- advanced academic programs
- clubs and activities

For many children, school is also the center of their social life. Football games, school events, performances, and community activities are a big part of the American school experience.

Starting School in Southwest Florida — More Than Just Education

For children moving to Florida from another country, starting school is also a big step socially and emotionally. A new school means:

- making new friends
- learning a new environment
- improving English skills
- discovering American traditions

The good news is that many schools in Southwest Florida have experience welcoming families from different backgrounds. Children often adapt quickly, especially when they are surrounded by classmates, teachers, and activities. Sports, clubs, and after-school activities can become a wonderful way for children to connect and feel at home.

Charter Schools — Public Education with a Special Focus

Charter schools are also public schools, but they operate differently from traditional public schools. They are tuition-free, but they usually have a specific educational focus or teaching approach. Some may specialize in areas such as:

- science and technology
- arts
- international programs
- project-based learning
- different teaching methods

Because charter schools often have limited space, families may need to apply, and some schools use a lottery system if there are more students interested than available spots. For families looking for a different educational environment while still choosing a public option, charter schools can be an interesting alternative.

Private Schools — Smaller Classes & Individual Attention

Private schools are independently operated and require tuition payments. Many families choose private schools because they are looking for smaller class sizes, specific educational philosophies, religious education, or specialized programs. Private schools in Southwest Florida vary greatly. Some focus on traditional academics, while others offer unique programs in arts, athletics, or personalized learning. For some families, the smaller community feeling and closer relationship between teachers and students are important factors.

Source: Pexels



Hidden Sparks Pets Looking to Shine

Every month, we’re reminded that not every spark reveals itself right away. Some shine brightly from the very first moment, while others take their time—waiting for the right place, the right people, and the right kind of connection that truly light up.

This time, we’re introducing two very different personalities from the Cape Coral Animal Shelter—each with their own unique way of showing who they are. One might speak her mind a little more than expected, the other may take a moment to warm up. But both carry that unmistakable spark—the kind that brings character, laughter, and heart into a home.

Because sometimes, the brightest light doesn’t come from perfection, but from personality.

Maybe one of these furry souls is waiting just for you—ready to shine.

By Jennifer Hagemeister

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



HAFLINGER (MERCY)

Haflinger (Mercy) is a 1–3-year-old female — a goofy, loving girl with a big heart and an even bigger personality. She’s incredibly smart and eager to learn, especially in a positive and encouraging environment where she can truly show what she’s capable of.

Mercy thrives with structure and guidance. She’s looking for a home with a secure fenced yard and people who understand her playful energy and can provide clear boundaries. While she may take a little time getting to know new friends, thoughtful introductions help her feel safe and confident.

Once she settles in, her sweet and silly nature really begins to shine. Mercy is the kind of dog who will reward patience and consistency with loyalty, fun, and a whole lot of personality. If you’re ready for an intelligent, lively companion who will grow alongside you, Haflinger (Mercy) could be your perfect match. Her adoption fee is \$225.



Photos courtesy of Cape Coral Animal Shelter.

SARAI

Sarai is a 5–7-year-old female — a fabulous feline with a big personality and plenty to say. She’s incredibly talkative and never shy about sharing her opinions — whether she approves of something or not, you’ll definitely hear about it. Sarai knows exactly what she likes, and she isn’t afraid to make that clear.

But behind her confident attitude is a cat who truly enjoys her people. She has a sweet side that comes out in her own way, especially when she feels comfortable and understood. And when she’s not busy running the show or commenting on her surroundings, you’ll likely find her happily rolling around in catnip, fully embracing life’s little pleasures.

Sarai is a perfect match for someone who appreciates a cat with character, humor, and a mind of her own. If you’re looking for a companion who brings both entertainment and affection into your home, Sarai might just be the one. Her adoption fee is \$70.



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The Schnitzel Test Is Complete

Daria’s Visits the Legendary Oma Kleinmann, and Cape Coral Has Every Reason to Be Excited



Photos courtesy of Jacob Kugmun

Every great culinary story has its roots somewhere. For Daria’s German Bakery & Bistro, those roots have always reached far beyond freshly baked bread, homemade cakes, and hearty German comfort food. They reach deep into a philosophy built on craftsmanship, hospitality, and traditions that have been carefully preserved for generations. Over the past months, Southwest Florida has watched that philosophy earn one prestigious recognition after another. From being named the No. 1 Bakery in the Caloosahatchee Region, to receiving continuous five-star reviews, to being honored among the Best Places to Eat in Florida, and most recently being crowned Best Bistro in Cape Coral – Winner 2026, one thing has become abundantly clear: quality has a remarkable habit of being recognized. Yet for Joe, recognition has never been the destination. It has simply been confirmation that the journey is heading in the right direction. And if there is one name that perfectly embodies the same philosophy of uncompromising quality, genuine hospitality, and culinary tradition, it is Oma Kleinmann.

Long before Ralf Kleinmann joined the Daria Gastro Group, his family had already built one of Germany’s most beloved gastronomic institutions. What began in post-war Cologne eventually became the legendary restaurant “Bei Oma Kleinmann,” a place where generations of guests have enjoyed authentic German cuisine, where hospitality has always felt personal, and where Paula Kleinmann—known affectionately throughout Cologne simply as “Oma Kleinmann”—became nothing less than a culinary icon. Her legacy continues to inspire countless restaurateurs, and today, through her grandson Ralf, that same philosophy is finding a new home in Southwest Florida.

But one question remained: Just how

good are the famous schnitzels at Oma Kleinmann really? There was only one logical way to answer it. Go to Cologne. And that is exactly what the leadership of the Daria Gastro Group did this July. Together with Daria founder and CEO Frank Rahlf, sales directors from across Germany, and members of the company’s leadership team, the group traveled to Cologne with one very serious mission. Scientific research. Well... delicious scientific research. Over the course of the evening, the famous schnitzels of Bei Oma Kleinmann were examined with the kind of dedication normally reserved for engineering projects or championship football game plans. Every classic deserved its chance to shine. From the traditional Wiener Schnitzel to the hearty Lumberjack Schnitzel and the beloved Jägerschnitzel, nearly every variation the restaurant had to offer found its way onto the table. Guests could choose from no fewer than fourteen different schnitzel creations, including three generously filled specialties, with every dish individually prepared using either premium veal or pork according to personal preference. And then came the moment everyone had been waiting for. The plates arrived. Or perhaps more accurately: The schnitzels arrived first, and the plates simply tried their best to keep up. Every schnitzel extended confidently beyond the edge of the plate, accompanied by traditional potato-cucumber salad and a choice of crispy fried potatoes or golden French fries. Even the vegetarian schnitzel made with Edam cheese and the vegan celery schnitzel proved that Oma Kleinmann has never believed outstanding food should exclude anyone. For a brief moment, eyes grew wide. Then something remarkable happened.

The table became almost completely silent. Not because conversation had ended. Because chewing had become the highest priority. Before long, that silence gave way to laughter, smiling faces, and a steady stream of comments that could be heard from every corner of the table. “This tastes incredible.” “That’s the best schnitzel I’ve had in years.” “I honestly can’t eat another bite... but somehow I also can’t stop.”

When compliments begin competing with schnitzels for attention, something special is happening. The following day, Maximilian von Garnier, who together with Jörg “Joe” Domscheit leads the Daria Gastro Group, returned to “Bei Oma Kleinmann”, accompanied by Ralf Kleinmann and Alexandra Kleinmann. This visit had a different purpose. The tasting had answered one question. Now it was time to understand everything happening behind the scenes.

Together with co-owner Lara Maureen Wolf, countless questions were asked about preparation methods, kitchen organization, workflows, timing, and the countless details that guests rarely notice but always experience. What impressed the visitors perhaps even more than the food itself was the remarkable choreography unfolding behind the kitchen doors. Despite serving between 200 and 250 schnitzels during a single evening, every plate left the kitchen with astonishing speed, consistency, and attention to detail. There was no chaos. No unnecessary movement. Every member of the team knew exactly where to be, what to do, and when to do it.

Watching the kitchen in action felt almost like observing a perfectly rehearsed orchestra. Except this orchestra happened to be conducting schnitzels. The visit made one thing unmistakably clear. Outstanding food is never an accident. It is the product of systems, experience, discipline, teamwork—and people who genuinely care. The entire Daria Gastro Group extends its heartfelt thanks to the complete team at Bei Oma Kleinmann for their extraordinary hospitality, their openness, and their willingness to share decades of experience. Together, Daria and Oma Kleinmann are now working hand in hand toward a shared goal: bringing that same level of quality, unmistakable flavor, and love for every small detail to Cape Coral. Later this year, that vision will become reality when Daria’s German Restaurant opens in Northeast Cape Coral.

There, the legendary Oma Kleinmann schnitzel concept will continue under the guidance of Ralf Kleinmann, who is helping bring generations of family expertise to Southwest Florida. At the same time, Joe is adding his own ideas, including several chicken schnitzel variations that will expand the traditional menu while remaining true to its roots. Because respecting tradition does not mean standing still. It means building on strong foundations. Interestingly enough, schnitzel remains one of the most beloved comfort foods not only in Germany but across much of Central Europe. Few dishes have traveled so successfully across generations, cultures, and borders. Whether served in Vienna, Cologne, Zurich, or soon Cape Coral, a perfectly prepared schnitzel has an almost magical ability to gather families and friends around one table—and occasionally convince someone that dessert might have to wait until tomorrow. Of course, a restaurant this ambitious also needs people who share its passion. As preparations continue for the opening of Daria’s German Restaurant, the Daria family is actively looking for new team members who believe that hospitality still begins with genuine kindness and that great food deserves great people behind it. Anyone interested in becoming part of this exciting journey is warmly invited to visit Daria’s German Bakery & Bistro, located at 3512 Del Prado Blvd S, Cape Coral, FL 33904, and simply ask for Joe. No complicated application process. No endless paperwork. Just a conversation. Sometimes the beginning of something extraordinary starts with a handshake. And if the story of Daria has taught Southwest Florida anything over the past year, it is this: Awards may recognize excellence. Tradition may inspire excellence. But people create excellence. And somewhere between Cologne and Cape Coral, between Oma Kleinmann and Joe, between history and the future, something very special is being built. One perfectly thin, wonderfully oversized schnitzel at a time. Blue. Gold. Daria. And soon... perhaps the most talked-about schnitzels in all of Florida.

By Jacob Kugmun



Conversations with God – Part 2

Finding God in Everyday Life - An interview with Pastor Marty Luchterhand



Photos courtesy of: Alexandra Welsch

Alexandra: Marty, in our last interview we spoke about trusting God. Today I’d love to talk about something very practical: How can we find God in our everyday lives?

Pastor Marty: I think it begins by remembering that every good and perfect gift comes from above. We all have a lot on our plates. The Bible teaches that every good and perfect gift comes from our Heavenly Father. If I’m going to get through this day, it’s because God is going to give me the blessings I need today. There are blessings I’d like to have that I don’t have yet, but instead of focusing on those, I look at what I already have. I have food. I have clothing. I have my family. I have my health—or at least I think I do! And actually, I’m healthier than I was two years ago. Back then I was a mess. Today I thank God because He has given me a new lease on life. The Bible is full of God’s promises for every situation in life. If you came to me and said, “Marty, I don’t know how I’m going to get everything done,” I would simply put your name into one of those promises. “The Lord is Alexandra’s Shepherd; Alexandra shall lack nothing. He makes Alexandra lie down in green pastures. He leads Alexandra beside quiet waters. He restores Alexandra’s soul. He guides Alexandra in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.

Even though Alexandra walks through the valley of the shadow of death, she will fear no evil, for You are with her. Your rod and Your staff comfort her. You prepare a table before Alexandra in the presence of her enemies. You anoint her head with oil. Her cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy will follow Alexandra all the days of her life, and she will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” That’s Psalm 23. When I pray like that, I remember that I’m simply Jesus’ little lamb. And you are one of Jesus’ little lambs too. When you have Jesus as your Good Shepherd, what do you really have to fear?

Alexandra: Silent for a few seconds. I’m so touched. Thank you so much for this blessing. I’m not yet as experienced in having conversations with God as you are after so many years. What would you recommend to someone like me—or to our readers—who would like to build a

personal conversation with God? How can they start?

Pastor Marty: I’d recommend two things. The first is simply spending time in God’s Word. I teach a ten-week Bible instruction class where we simply open the Bible, study together and ask questions. It’s nothing fancy, but it helps people become connected to

God’s truth. For anyone starting today, I’d simply recommend reading the Gospel of John. Read a little about Jesus every day. Then pray. Prayer doesn’t have to be complicated. Tell God you’re sorry for the mistakes you’ve made. Thank Him for forgiving you. Pray for yourself, your family, your work, your friends and the people around you. Sometimes when I’m driving, my whole prayer is just, “Lord, help.” God already knows exactly what I’m thinking.

Alexandra: So we don’t have to overcomplicate it or use beautiful words?

Pastor Marty: Exactly. God already knows your heart.

Alexandra: You just mentioned that God knows our thoughts. But many people ask another question: How can we actually learn to listen to God? There are so many voices around us—and sometimes inside us.

Pastor Marty: God speaks through His Word. There are many voices today. The media has a voice. Society has a voice. Whenever I hear something, I always ask myself, “What does the Bible say about this?” That’s how I measure everything. The Bible teaches us to take every thought captive for Christ. When I think about my wife the way God teaches me to, I’m a better husband. When I think about my children the way God teaches me to, I’m a better father. When I love people the way Jesus loves them, I’m a better pastor, a better friend and even a better business owner. But if I only listen to the world, I become selfish. God’s Word really works. It truly changes how we live.

Alexandra: We’re talking about finding God in everyday life. But every one of us also goes through difficult seasons. Have you ever experienced moments when your own faith was tested?

Pastor Marty: Oh yes. Actually, I think the more mature your faith becomes, the more difficult some of the challenges become. Those difficulties drive you back to God’s promises. For me, that foundation is always the same: “The Lord is my Shepherd.” I’ve served churches where standing on God’s truth wasn’t always popular. There were times when I had to say “no,” and suddenly half the congregation didn’t like me anymore. Some even wanted me gone. Honestly, that wasn’t the hardest part. The hardest part was watching my family suffer because of it. They saw

me trying to stay faithful to God’s Word while receiving criticism for it. Sometimes you wonder why. But then I remember Jesus. People crucified the perfect Son of God. For God’s children, the pattern has always been the same: first comes suffering, then comes the crown of glory. Looking back, every difficult season has made me stronger.

Alexandra: Did you ever question God?

Pastor Marty: I never questioned God’s goodness. Sometimes I questioned His wisdom because I didn’t understand why something was happening. What hurts me most isn’t when unbelievers attack me. I actually expect that. What hurts is when Christians hurt other Christians. When people who know Jesus choose not to live according to His Word, that’s painful. But my goal has never been to make everyone like me. My goal is to glorify God.

Alexandra: As a final thought, only one - what would you like our readers to remember whenever life becomes difficult?

Pastor Marty: I’d ask one simple question: Who gave you your plate? God did. He knows exactly what you’re carrying today. All He asks from you is faithfulness. Be faithful with what He’s placed in front of you today. Some things may not even belong on your plate anymore, and God will show you that. You’ll make mistakes. I make mistakes every single day. But because of Jesus, my sins are forgiven. That’s why I can enjoy life. At the end of the day, it’s not me against the world. It’s me and God. And when it’s you and God, you have everything you truly need. “Faithfulness is not about carrying everything. It’s about trusting the One who carries you.” — Pastor Marty Luchterhand

Preview – Part 3
In our next interview, we’ll discover another fascinating side of Pastor Marty. Beyond serving his congregation, he also works with homeowners, helping them restore and protect their roofs. We’ll talk about why he sees every profession as a calling, how faith shapes his work outside the church, and why serving people doesn’t stop at the church doors.

By Alexandra Welsch

REACH THE HEART OF COMMUNITY
WITH THE SUNSHINE POST

Daria US Property Management LLC’s Monthly

Home Tips & Insights

As August arrives in Southwest Florida, homeowners experience some of the most intense weather conditions of the year. Hot temperatures, high humidity, heavy afternoon thunderstorms, and increased tropical activity are all part of the summer season.

For full-time residents, this means staying prepared and keeping up with regular home maintenance. For seasonal residents and vacation homeowners, August brings an additional challenge: making sure their property remains protected even when they are away. Hurricane season officially runs from June through November, but August and September are historically among the most active months. Taking preventative steps before a storm threatens can help reduce damage, avoid costly repairs, and provide peace of mind.

By SMechalik

Property Manage-
ment Tip:

Do not wait until a storm is approaching to prepare your home. The best time to check your property, update maintenance items, and create a storm plan is before severe weather is in the forecast.

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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.

Inspect Your Home Before
Storms Arrive

Many storm-related problems begin with small maintenance issues that could have been addressed earlier. Homeowners should regularly check:

- **Roof & Exterior Areas**
Strong winds and heavy rain can expose existing weaknesses. Look for missing shingles, damaged tiles, loose materials, or areas where water could enter.
- **Gutters & Drainage**
Florida rainstorms can bring large amounts of water in a short period of time. Clogged gutters or blocked drainage areas can lead to water pooling around the home, increasing the risk of leaks and flooding.
- **Windows & Doors**
Check seals, weather stripping, and caulking around windows and doors. Proper sealing helps prevent water intrusion and protects against humidity damage.

Maintain Your Landscaping for
Storm Safety

Beautiful tropical landscaping is one of the reasons people love Southwest Florida, but during storm season, outdoor maintenance becomes especially important. Regular trimming of trees and palms helps reduce the risk of branches breaking during strong winds. Dead or weak limbs near the home, roof, or pool area should be removed before storms become a threat. Also make sure outdoor furniture, decorations, and pool equipment can be secured quickly if a storm approaches.

Protecting Seasonal & Vacation
Homes While Away

Many Southwest Florida homeowners spend part of the year somewhere else. During the summer months, an empty home can face problems that are not discovered until significant damage has already occurred. A small water leak, HVAC issue, power interruption, or humidity problem can quickly become a major repair if no one is checking the property. Regular home inspections can help identify:

- Water leaks
- Air conditioning problems
- Excessive humidity
- Mold concerns
- Storm-related damage
- Exterior maintenance issues

Early detection often means smaller repairs and lower costs.

Keep Your Home Ready Even
During Tropical Weather

Modern technology can also help homeowners stay connected with their property. Smart thermostats, cameras, leak detectors, and monitoring systems provide additional information when owners are away. However, technology works best when combined with professional property checks. A camera may show a problem, but it cannot walk through the home, check for moisture, or coordinate repairs.

Prevention Is Always Less Expensive Than Repairs

Southwest Florida homes require year-round attention because of the unique climate. Heat, humidity, rain, and storms all place additional stress on properties. A few preventative steps in August can help protect your home throughout the rest of hurricane season and beyond. Keeping your property maintained is not only about avoiding damage — it is about protecting the investment you have worked hard to build.

The Fairy Tale of Everlasting Happiness

How many of you have sat there, wistfully, at the end of a fairy tale—hearing the words “...happily ever after”—and sighed, thinking: “Oh, wouldn’t that be wonderful!”? What began with the Brothers Grimm has been—and continues to be—carried on by Hollywood: the image of an unclouded life of pure bliss as the ultimate outcome following an eventful and exciting chapter of life... It often feels as though every advertised product offers a “permanent” solution. Competitors try to outdo one another with superlatives and promises—claims that are increasingly exaggerated to the point of absurdity, bordering on comedy.

Even in the fields of personal development and coaching, I often get the impression that people are led to believe in a goal akin to a state of permanent happiness—free from any further triggers or crises. This raises the question for me: are those promoting this—whether in advertising or as coaches—doing so out of deep conviction, or for strategic reasons?

In marketing, employing psychologically effective strategies to appeal to more potential customers is one thing; in personal development, however, the focus should be on the ability to cope with past traumas and future challenges—ideally emerging from them stronger and with a solution-oriented mindset.

What does this mean in everyday life? Well, even if I work through a childhood trauma—recognizing it clearly and even putting a name to it—correcting

its lingering effects (such as emotional reactions and behavioral patterns) remains an arduous undertaking. In my view, one cannot rule out the possibility that a specific event, a memory, or some other “trigger” might cause the person to react all over again, or find themselves overwhelmed by the emotions associated with the trauma. In some cases, that is actually a good thing—imagine if you were to “cure” yourself of a protective reflex simply because you were startled by a wild animal as a child... It is certainly good to flee from an alligator even as an adult, isn’t it?

Since we do not live in a private “bubble”—and are therefore constantly confronted with new situations, changing circumstances, and other people—facing new challenges is an essential part of life. Ideally, we learn from this—not just intellectually, but certainly through feeling as well. After all, life is about growth—and always has been.

Consequently, the myth of perpetual happiness (as it is so vividly portrayed to us in images and stories) is a narrative that—precisely because it is unattainable—makes us more unhappy than simply acknowledging the “ups and downs” of our lives.

Everything in nature demonstrates this principle of duality: day and night (without darkness there would be no concept of light), warmth and cold, good and evil. Even our modern digital world is built on this principle of 0s and 1s... The undulating emotional curve of peaks and valleys

is (or should be) like the engine of our development. Unfortunately, it is far too often prevented from reaching its full potential by not experiencing the lows but rather by classifying them as pathological, treating them, and thus suppressing them. And those who don’t experience or fully feel the emotions of the lows often seek even greater (unnatural) heights.

For me, living happily also means being aware of this. Experiencing the strength to live with all the emotions of both sides. Allowing the emotional world to work on and within me, even in seemingly bitter times. It is not suppressing feelings that makes us strong—quite the opposite: feelings that are expressed strengthen us and our system! Even the seemingly negative ones:

Anger—has its own power, which, when channeled, opens up new possibilities. Grief – is the sign of lost love and the key to a new beginning. Fear – protects us from real dangers. Disgust – protects us from poisoning, both physically and morally. Loneliness – is like “social hunger” that, at best, motivates us to seek connection. PS: In modern physiotherapy (as well as body psychotherapy), the pelvis is known as a primary storage site for emotional stress. The psoas muscle (the “muscle of the soul”) The iliopsoas muscle is the deepest hip flexor in humans. It connects the spine to the femur and is directly connected to the reptilian brain (the evolutionarily oldest part of our brain, responsible for survival).

- When we experience fear, anger, stress, or threat, the nervous

system fires the fight-or-flight response.

- The very first physical reaction to this is that the psoas muscle reflexively contracts, causing us to crouch down (protecting our organs) or prepare to flee.
- If feelings are chronically suppressed (you’re not allowed to run away, fight, or scream), this muscle remains in a state of constant tension (girth). The brain forgets how to send the signal to relax.

So, does “the pursuit of happiness” actually make us unhappy? It’s probably a matter of definition. The biographical film of the same name depicts the unbridled will to achieve financial success, which can certainly be considered happiness in the sense of an increased standard of living. However, life hasn’t always been smooth sailing for Chris Gardner after his first millions.

...was most poignantly revealed when his wife passed away at the age of just 55. Shortly before she died, she asked her husband: “When we see how short life can be, what will you do with the rest of your life?”

The insight gained from this question can bring you happiness—amidst all of life’s challenges.

My answer? – Do what fulfills you! Or, to put it simply: At the end of the day, your feet should be dirty, your hair messy, and your eyes sparkling!

By Matthias Erbacher

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”

Downtown Fort Myers Explorer

“I’m spending a day in Downtown Fort Myers. Create the perfect itinerary with cafés, local shops, historic sites, restaurants, and hidden gems.”

AI suggests:

1. Start with breakfast at a local coffee shop along First Street
2. Visit the River District’s boutiques, galleries, and public art
3. Tour the Edison and Ford Winter Estates nearby
4. Enjoy lunch at a waterfront restaurant overlooking the Caloosahatchee River
5. End the evening with live music or a sunset walk along the riverfront

NFL for Beginners

“I’m new to American football. Explain the NFL season, the basic rules, and how I can enjoy watching games like a lifelong fan.”

AI suggests:

1. Learn the objective of the game before memorizing the rules
2. Understand the regular season, playoffs, and the Super Bowl
3. Follow one team to make every game more exciting
4. Watch short highlight videos to learn common plays and strategies
5. Don’t worry about knowing everything—most fans learn over time

The Perfect End of Summer Bucket List

“Summer is coming to an end. Create a bucket list of fun, relaxing, and memorable activities to enjoy before autumn arrives.”

AI suggests:

1. Watch one more sunset from the beach
2. Plan a picnic with family or friends
3. Visit a place in your hometown you’ve never explored
4. Try a new summer recipe using seasonal ingredients
5. Take plenty of photos to remember the season

Making Summer Memories Last

“How can I make the most of the last weeks of summer and create memories that will stay with me long after the season ends?”

AI suggests:

1. Spend more time outdoors without rushing from place to place
2. Organize one meaningful get-together with people you care about
3. Keep a journal of your favorite summer moments
4. Disconnect from your phone during outdoor activities
5. End each day by reflecting on one thing you’re grateful for

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Testimonials

My name is Ernie Durham, I am a Christian and a Navy (Combat) Veteran, a 100% Disabled man. I started receiving your wonderful newspaper and enjoyed it immensely! I, too, am an optimist and agree with your values. (Honey attracts, whereas vinegar repels in relationships! Like toxic people!) THANK YOU for giving me your kind, understanding, informative paper. As you know, there are not very optimistic things sometimes. But, we can shine in the dark like the Sun coming in the dawn!

-Ernie D.

To Katharina Kaufmann,
I enjoyed your well written article last month about downtown Ft. Myers Jimmi Melton, and I have saved it.

-Linda H.



I’m not quite sure how I got on your mailing list but this is the third publication I’ve received from you and it just makes me happy. I only wish there were more other avenues to receive positive news stories like yours. It is very appreciated!

-Rebecca J. C.

I enjoyed the first edition of the Sunshine Post and appreciate your mission. We could all use a dose of optimism in our lives and it’s refreshing to read a publication that does not address politics and the state of our world. (...)

-Phyllis D.

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....

Charline Sarembo

Brigitta Fach

Nicole Tundo-Hitz

Ina Rodewald



Would you like to congratulate someone special?

Send us your request at

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and get featured in our next issue!

Subject: “Celebrating Life”



DARIA

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