

YOUR DAILY DOSE OF OPTIMISM



SUNSHINE POST

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Credit unions must decide: Will they digitize the past? Or build the future? For Gen Z and Alpha, the answer will determine whether cooperative finance becomes the most modern idea in banking....

On March 17, the United States looks as if it has been gently dipped in green. The river runs a bright, almost unreal shade of emerald...

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

Welcome, or welcome back to Healthy Aging, the place, where we finally reveal the biggest secret in human history: Ourselves...



Welcoming spring with tradition, insight, and community

Dear Readers,
March arrives with longer days, fresh energy, and the promise of new beginnings. As winter fades and spring edges closer, this month invites us to look ahead while staying grounded in the traditions and values that connect us as a community.

In this issue, we celebrate St. Patrick's Day, a holiday that brings people together through history, culture, and a shared sense of joy. To mark the occasion, our Recipe of the Month features classic corned beef—a hearty favorite perfect for gathering around the table with family and friends.

March is also a practical time of year, and our insights on tax and accounting aim to bring clarity and confidence during what can be a stressful season. Our goal is to provide useful, approachable information that helps you feel prepared and supported.

Health and well-being remain central to our pages. In Healthy Aging, Part 4, we continue exploring thoughtful ways to care for ourselves—mind, body, and spirit—at every stage of life.

And finally, we're proud to share an inside look at a very special school, one that stands out not only for what it teaches, but for the values it instills and the community it builds. Stories like this remind us how education shapes the future in meaningful ways.

[Read more about The Letter From The Editor on Page No. 2 →](#)

Interview with Katarina, Anja and Diana from DARIA US

Anja
Hello you two,
and a very warm welcome to our first interview round. My name is Anja, and together with my team I manage the Property Management. Behind every stay is a well-coordinated network of experienced professionals – from cleaning services to pool and garden maintenance, and many additional services that make each vacation as relaxed and high-quality as possible.

We build our homes ourselves and furnish them professionally, with great attention to detail and a clear commitment to quality. This ensures that nothing is left to be desired and that our guests feel completely at ease from the very first moment. We offer our guests comprehensive service with German quality standards, combined with personal care, reliability and genuine hospitality. All of these values – quality, ease and attention to detail – are reflected in the home we are about to introduce to you.

[Read more about DARIA Adventures on Page No. 10 →](#)

SUNSHINE POST

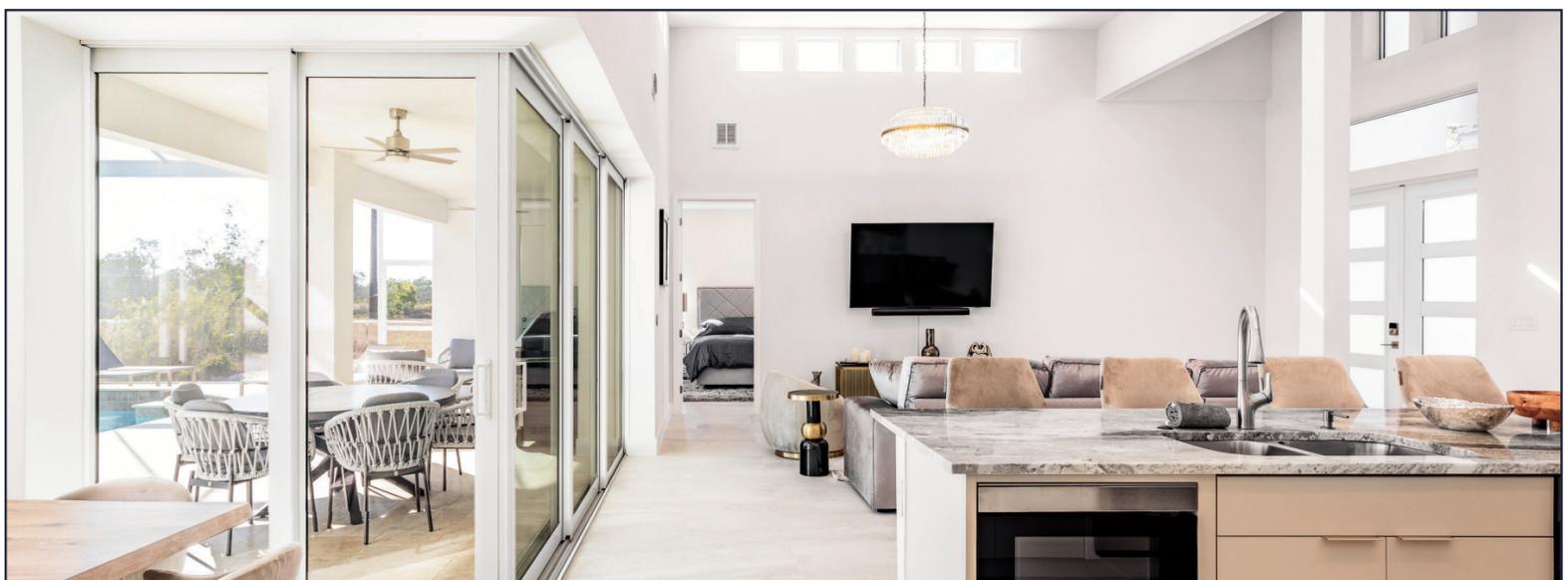
HERO OF THE MONTH

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

A neighbor, a volunteer, a mentor or just someone whose kindness inspires others? We at Sunshine Post would love to share their story.

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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Welcoming spring with tradition, insight, and community

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As the season begins to shift, we hope this issue brings you inspiration, knowledge, and a sense of connection. Thank you for being part of our community and for welcoming us into your homes each month. Here’s to a March filled with growth, gratitude, and a little extra green. Warm regards,
Rouven Zietz, Editor-In-Chief

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The Kindness – Our Streets. Our Responsibility.



Photos courtesy of: Jennifer Hagemeister

We live in a place many others only dream about. Palm trees swaying in the breeze. Canals reflecting the evening sky. Golden sunsets that feel almost unreal. For some, this is a vacation destination. For us, it’s home. We receive so much from this place every single day — space to breathe, light to grow, water that shapes our landscape, and a community that gives this region its character. And maybe that’s the most beautiful part of all: we are not just observers here. We belong here.

In our The Kindness series, we explore meaningful ways to give something back — to our community, our environment, and the place we call home. Sometimes it’s a small gesture. Sometimes it’s a bigger initiative. But it always begins with intention. Not out of pressure. Not out of obligation. But out of appreciation. Because as beautiful as our surroundings are, they don’t stay that way on their own. If you look closely while driving through our neighborhoods or walking along our canals, you’ll see it: bottles in the grass, plastic caught in the bushes, wrappers drifting toward the water. Items used for seconds — yet present for years. And we all know this: we are not separate from our environment. Nature, water, wildlife, and people are part of the same cycle. What ends up on our streets does not simply disappear. A healthy environment supports healthy communities — and a thriving community protects what it values. Maybe within that realization lies a powerful opportunity: to care for one small, visible piece of

our shared world. There are many ways to do that. One of them carries a simple but powerful name: Adopt-A-Road.

Adopt-A-Road – How It Works

Adopting a road doesn’t mean owning it. It means choosing to care for a specific stretch of it — consistently, visibly, and together. Here in Cape Coral and Fort Myers, a group can officially take responsibility for a road section, typically at least half a mile long — sometimes longer. The only requirement is that the road is not privately owned. During registration, you can request a preferred section. If it’s available and considered safe for volunteers, it will be assigned to your group. Before the first cleanup, clear safety guidelines ensure everyone knows how to participate responsibly. The structure behind the program makes it easy to focus on what truly matters: showing up. Participation usually means committing to about four to six cleanups per year — roughly once every two to three months. Not overwhelming. Not unrealistic. Just steady care. And if you choose to go beyond that, nothing stands in your way. Safety vests, trash bags, and cleanup tools are provided, and collected waste is properly disposed of. You don’t have to coordinate logistics. You simply gather your group and begin. As recognition for your commitment, an official roadside sign is installed bearing your group’s name. A small but powerful statement. A visible reminder that community care is more than a conversation — it is action. Adopt-A-Road is not an overwhelming project. For each group, it’s a

manageable and structured way to create tangible change — and to see the results with your own eyes. Small Efforts. Lasting Impact. You might wonder: does it really make a difference? Yes — it does. Research on road adoption programs shows that maintained road sections are measurably cleaner than unmanaged ones. In some evaluations, visible litter was reduced by up to one third. Consistency matters. Presence matters. When a stretch of road is cared for regularly, it tends to stay cleaner. Visible stewardship raises awareness and lowers the likelihood of additional litter. Care, quite simply, encourages more care. In a region like ours — shaped by canals, waterways, and delicate ecosystems — that impact becomes even more meaningful. Anything removed from the roadside cannot be carried into the water during heavy rains. Every bottle picked up, every piece of plastic collected reduces strain on the environment we depend on. Over time, the impact extends beyond cleanliness. It builds awareness. It strengthens a culture of respect for shared spaces. It reminds us that small, repeated actions create visible change. Adopt-A-Road is more than picking up trash. It is a long-term commitment to visible, steady community care. More Than Clean Streets — It Connects. Perhaps the most meaningful part of Adopt-A-Road isn’t the final result — but the shared experience. You can form your own group — people you enjoy spending time with or want to create something meaningful alongside. It might become a family tradition, a neighborhood initiative, or even a recurring team day within your company. Something that blends

purpose with connection. Then you find yourselves outside together. Under the open sky. Away from screens. Conversations happen naturally. Laughter follows. You begin noticing details you once overlooked — the curve of a canal, the shade of a tree, the quiet beauty in familiar places. And slowly, that road section no longer feels anonymous. It feels personal. Many participants say they see their surroundings differently afterward. They don’t simply drive past anymore. They look. They notice. They feel connected. And yes — a little proud. Because it feels good to create visible change. Not somewhere far away. But right here. Adopt-A-Road isn’t a one-time event. It’s a recurring commitment. A quiet appointment with your environment. A reminder that we are not only consumers of this beautiful place — we are caretakers. When people act together, community deepens. When community deepens, responsibility grows naturally. And when responsibility grows, the place we love remains exactly that — a place worth loving. Sometimes the greatest impact doesn’t come from dramatic gestures — but from consistent, intentional ones. And perhaps yours begins here.

by Jennifer Hagemeister

Get Involved
Adopt-A-Road – Lee County
<https://www.leegov.com/dot/adoptaroad>
Adopt-A-Road – Cape Coral (via Keep Lee County Beautiful)
<https://www.klcb.org/get-involved>

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“Grandma’s Bank?”

Why Credit Unions Are Losing Gen Z — and How a New Breed Is Being Built for Them

On a Tuesday afternoon in Tampa, 19-year-old Malik Johnson closed his laptop and shook his head.

“I don’t even know what a credit union does,” he said. “Isn’t that like... my grandma’s bank?”

His grandmother, as it turns out, has been a loyal credit union member since 1978. She still visits a branch. She still signs paper forms. She still talks about “relationship banking.”

Malik does none of those things. He trades stocks from his phone. He splits rent with three taps. He expects deposits to clear instantly. He has never written a check. He has never set foot in a bank branch. And he certainly doesn’t plan to.

This is the generational cliff facing America’s credit unions. For decades, they have thrived on loyalty. Members joined young and stayed for life. But that loyalty cycle is breaking. Gen Z — and the even younger Gen Alpha behind them — do not inherit financial institutions the way their parents did. They download them. And if the experience is slow, clunky, or inconvenient, they delete them.

The Technology Gap No One Likes to Admit

Behind the polished marketing of many credit unions lies a difficult truth: much of their core technology is decades old. Many still rely on:

- On-premise core processors
 - Batch-based transaction systems
 - Limited API integrations
 - Vendor-dependent mobile platforms
 - Fragmented digital channels
- What this means in practice is simple: friction.

Transfers that take hours instead of seconds.

Loan decisions that require manual review.

Apps that look like they were designed in 2013.

Customer service limited to business hours.

To Gen Z, raised on real-time everything, this feels archaic.

One 22-year-old college graduate put it bluntly:

“If I have to wait for banking to catch up to me, I’m using the wrong bank.”

Big banks have invested billions in digital transformation. Fintech startups were born in the cloud. Credit unions,

by contrast, often operate on legacy systems stitched together over decades. The cooperative model gave them stability. It did not give them speed.

The Image Problem: “Grandma’s Bank”

Technology is only half the issue. The other half is cultural.

For many young consumers, credit unions feel like relics.

Brick buildings with beige carpets. Friendly but slow service.

Newsletters about auto loans. Posters about financial literacy workshops.

There is nothing wrong with any of this. But for a generation raised on TikTok, Discord, and digital-first everything, it doesn’t feel relevant.

Gen Z does not equate physical presence with trust. They equate seamless experience with trust.

They do not seek relationships with institutions. They seek frictionless

tools. They are comfortable talking to AI. They are uncomfortable filling out paper forms. In their world, “talk to a loan officer” feels more intimidating than reassuring.

What Gen Z Actually Wants from Banking

Contrary to stereotype, younger generations are not financially careless. In fact, surveys consistently show that Gen Z is more financially cautious than Millennials were at the same age. But their expectations are radically different.

They expect:

- Instant payments
- Real-time balances
- Automated budgeting
- Transparent fee structures
- 24/7 availability
- Zero paperwork
- Seamless integration with digital ecosystems

They do not want to visit branches. They do not want to “schedule appointments.” They do not want to wait for underwriting committees. They want answers now. And if possible — without talking to anyone. This last point unnerves many traditional financial institutions. But for Gen Z, digital self-service is not antisocial. It is efficient.

Why Big Banks Aren’t Winning Either

If credit unions are struggling, does that mean big banks are winning? Not necessarily.

While major banks offer slick apps and fast transactions, they carry baggage:

- Fee fatigue
- Data concerns
- Perceived corporate detachment
- Distrust rooted in past crises

Gen Z may use them, but they do not love them. And fintech startups? They attract attention but often lack stability, insurance clarity, or full-service offerings.

This creates a fascinating opening.

There is space in the market for an institution that combines:

- The ethics and alignment of credit unions
- The digital sophistication of fintech
- The scale reliability of regulated institutions

Until recently, that combination seemed unrealistic.

Now, it is quietly becoming possible.

The Rise of the De-Novo Digital Credit Union

Across several U.S. states, something subtle is happening. A new generation of credit union organizers — technologists, cooperative advocates, former fintech architects — is pursuing de-novo charters. Not to build another branch-based cooperative. But to build something entirely new. These initiatives begin not with a building, but with a cloud architecture diagram. Instead of retrofitting legacy systems, they design:

- Cloud-native core systems
- API-first infrastructure
- Real-time payment rails
- AI-driven member support
- Fully mobile onboarding
- Robo-branches for remote identity verification

The result is not a digitized old credit union.

It is a digital-native cooperative.

What “Mobile-First” Actually Means

For older institutions, “mobile-first” often means offering an app alongside traditional channels. For these new de-novo initiatives, mobile is not an add-on. It is the institution. Opening an account takes minutes. Identity verification happens via biometric AI. Loan approvals use real-time risk models. Savings goals auto-adjust based on income flow. Chatbots operate 24/7/365 — with escalation to human agents only when needed. Members may never visit a branch. In some models, branches don’t exist

at all.

Instead, there are “robo-branches” — small digital kiosks or partner locations that handle secure authentication, complex documentation, or high-touch consultations when requested.

The system is designed for autonomy. And that autonomy resonates deeply with younger generations.

AI Without Exploitation

One fear around AI in banking is data exploitation. But here lies the cooperative advantage. Unlike venture-backed fintech firms, de-novo credit unions are not structured to monetize user behavior.

Their AI tools focus on:

- Fraud detection
- Spending insights
- Financial wellness nudges
- Predictive savings tools

Not targeted advertising.

Not cross-selling high-margin products. Not behavioral manipulation.

For Gen Z — increasingly privacy-conscious — this distinction matters.

They are comfortable with AI. They are skeptical of surveillance capitalism. A digital-native credit union can offer AI efficiency without corporate extraction.

The State-Charter Opportunity

Interestingly, many of these de-novo initiatives are emerging at the state-charter level.

State regulators, often more flexible than federal pathways, have shown openness to innovation — particularly where:

- Financial inclusion is a goal
- Underserved communities are targeted
- Technology enhances compliance and safety
- Cooperative governance remains intact

State charters allow experimentation while maintaining regulatory rigor. It is a quieter path — but potentially transformative.

Ideals and Identity

Beyond technology, these new institutions align closely with generational values.

Gen Z cares about:

- Environmental sustainability
- Social equity
- Transparency
- Ethical governance
- Community reinvestment

Traditional credit unions embody these values philosophically — but rarely communicate them in language that resonates digitally. De-novo digital cooperatives are embedding these ideals into their design:

Carbon-conscious lending policies. Community-driven governance dashboards.

Open transparency reports.

Member voting through secure digital platforms.

The cooperative model suddenly feels less like history — and more like the future.

A Turning Point for the Movement

The irony is striking. The very features that once made credit unions successful — physical presence, personal relationships, volunteer boards — now hinder their appeal to younger members. Yet the core principle remains powerful: member ownership. The challenge is not philosophical. It is infrastructural. Older credit unions face a difficult choice:

1. Undertake expensive, risky core conversions
2. Merge with larger institutions
3. Or slowly age alongside their membership

Meanwhile, new entrants are building from scratch — unburdened by legacy systems. It is creative destruction within a cooperative framework.

Could These Digital Cooperatives Outperform Big Banks?

In theory, yes.

Because they combine:

- Regulatory legitimacy
- Deposit insurance
- Ethical alignment
- Digital-native speed
- AI-enabled efficiency
- Cooperative governance

Big banks have scale but lack intimacy. Fintechs have agility but lack stability. Digital-native credit unions could potentially offer both. If executed well, they may not merely attract Gen Z. They may redefine what a financial institution feels like.

The Risk Ahead

Of course, this future is not guaranteed. De-novo initiatives are complex.

Capital requirements are substantial. Regulatory scrutiny is intense.

Technology execution must be flawless. And generational preferences evolve quickly. What appeals to Gen Z today may feel outdated to Gen Alpha tomorrow.

But for the first time in decades, the credit union movement faces not just decline anxiety — but innovation

The irony is striking.
The very features
that once made
credit unions successful
now hinder
their appeal to
younger members.

energy.

From “Grandma’s Bank” to “My Bank”

Back in Tampa, Malik eventually did join a credit union.

Not his grandmother’s.

A new one.

He found it through a social media ad — ironic for a cooperative. But the message was different:

“Own your bank. Control your data. Instant everything.”

The app opened in under five minutes. The chatbot answered at 2:17 a.m.

His paycheck cleared instantly.

His budgeting dashboard updated in real time.

He has never spoken to a teller.

He has voted digitally in a board election.

And when asked what kind of bank he uses, he doesn’t hesitate.

“It’s a credit union,” he says.

“But it’s not like the old ones.”

The Crossroads

The credit union movement stands at a crossroads. Behind it: a century of stability, trust, and community. Ahead of it: a digital battlefield defined by speed, autonomy, and algorithmic precision.

To survive, credit unions must decide: Will they digitize the past?

Or build the future?

For Gen Z and Gen Alpha, the answer will determine whether cooperative finance fades into nostalgia —

—or becomes the most modern idea in banking.

by FTF

USA Facts - Part 1

Economic Performance

In an era of rapid global change, the United States is often discussed in isolation—its economy, its politics, its influence treated as if they exist in a vacuum. Yet America's strengths, vulnerabilities, and choices only come fully into focus when viewed alongside those of other nations and within the wider geopolitical landscape.

This series aims to provide that perspective. Drawing on data, historical context, and comparative analysis, we will examine how the United States measures up economically and politically against its peers, rivals, and partners. From growth, debt, and inequality to governance, institutions, and international influence, each installment will place American realities in a global frame.

Our goal is clarity. By comparing facts across borders and situating them within today's geopolitical circumstances—from shifting alliances to emerging powers—we hope to move beyond slogans and assumptions. Understand-

ing where the United States stands in the world is essential to understanding the choices it faces at home.

In the months ahead, we invite readers to look past headlines and into the numbers, structures, and forces shaping America's position in a changing world.

Performance is measured, among other things, by gross domestic product! This figure describes the productivity of people in their respective groups, their country, and on average per person! The abbreviation is, unsurprisingly, GDP.

Below, we compare the USA, Florida, Germany, China, and Russia to establish some order and highlight significant differences!

First of all, it should be noted that global GDP in 2024 was around \$111 trillion! Of this, around \$30 trillion is attributable to the United States. That is about 27%. This clearly reflects the position of the USA in the global market and in world trade!

Florida accounts for 1.7 trillion of this,

which would make it the 15th largest country in the world economically if it were independent! Germany accounts for 4.7 trillion, making it still by far the largest economy in Europe and the third largest economy in the world!

China follows the Americans in second place with 19 trillion! Russia lags far behind at 2.1 trillion US dollars!

This observation becomes even clearer when looking at GDP per capita!

1. USA GDP per capita just under 90,000 dollars
2. Florida is in second place with just under 74,000 dollars (Florida has lower wages than the state average in many areas)
3. Germany with around \$55,000, far behind the productivity of US society!
4. Russia, with approximately \$14,000, is far behind the economic productivity of the "West"!
5. China is in fifth place with just over \$13,000.

By way of comparison, developing

countries range between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per capita, with the global average at \$20,000! These figures are very significant because they mean, for example, that no economy can do without the US in world trade! 27% of GDP is produced in the US! This figure shows the country's real strength and thus also its political significance!

If we combine the economic output of the US and the EU, it amounts to 45% of global GDP!

Overall, the prosperity of society is based primarily on its own productivity! Finally, we would like to add a political example!

If a country produces 27% of global productivity, it will always seek to influence global development, both politically and economically! Maintaining such a market position is a very complex task, which also explains why the US cannot simply stand by and watch when things take a turn for the worse in many cases!

by Irving Samuelson

Florida as a source of inspiration: A week that sets standards and broadens perspectives

One week can be enough to open up new horizons, realign strategic courses, and lead people to a common next level. That's exactly what happened when our consultants from Germany traveled to the Sunshine State of Florida to join CEO Frank Rahlf and colleagues for an intensive, inspiring, and groundbreaking week of training and strategy.

From the moment they arrived, it was clear that these days would be more than just a regular training program. The atmosphere was characterized by a spirit of optimism, professionalism, and a clear awareness that continuous development is not an optional extra, but an integral part of our self-image. This week was symbolic of what Daria US is all about: high standards, attitude, reliability—and the unwavering determination to achieve the best for everyone involved.

Deepening knowledge. Sharpening structures. Shaping the future.

As always, the agenda was challenging, well thought out, and strategically structured. Intensive technical modules alternated with practice-oriented workshops and strategic working groups. Each program item had a clear goal: to deepen expertise, optimize structures, and create sustainable added value.

The focus was particularly on the further development of sales. Markets are changing. Customer needs are becoming more diverse. Expectations are rising. Anyone who wants to be successful in the long term in a dynamic environment must be prepared to constantly question themselves – and to improve.

Existing processes were analyzed in detail, potential for efficiency gains was identified, and new standards were defined. Argumentation structures were sharpened, consulting approaches refined, and communication channels further professionalized. This was not about cosmetic adjustments, but about structural optimizations with long-term effects.

On the return journey, they brought with them new specialist knowledge, a deeper understanding of strategic interrelationships, clarity about how their individual performance fits into the big picture, and what contribution they make to the sustainable development of the company.

Energy that connects – exchange at the highest level

In addition to the technical input, it was above all the energy of this week that had a lasting effect. Different perspectives from Germany and the USA came together. Experiences were shared, best practices discussed, and challenges openly addressed.

This open, constructive dialogue created space for innovation. Ideas did not arise in isolation, but through joint thinking. Strategies were not only presented, but developed together.

Concrete next steps were defined in intensive sessions:



Photos courtesy of: Dina Veronique Scheve

- clear objectives for the coming months measurable milestones
- transparent responsibilities structured implementation plans

This clarity creates orientation. And orientation creates security – both internally and externally.

Clear vision. Strong implementation. Inspiring leadership and responsibility: Frank Rahlf shapes growth with attitude

A central element of this week was the close cooperation with the management, Frank Rahlf (CEO, Daria US). His personal commitment was not only organizational in nature – it was an expression of a deeply rooted conviction.

For Frank Rahlf, it is essential to have the consultants on site regularly. Not for symbolic reasons, but for strategic ones.

Necessity. Excellence does not come from distance, but from proximity. From direct exchange. From working together on details.

At Daria US, continuing education is not a marketing term. It is an attitude.

It is a mindset. It is a standard. And it is a clear line that runs through all areas of the company.

In numerous discussions, Frank Rahlf made it clear that sustainable success can only be achieved where people are continuously empowered. Those who bear responsibility must also invest—in knowledge, in structure, in quality.

This commitment sends a strong signal: We do not evolve by chance. We make a conscious decision to do so.

Sales as a dynamic, learning process

Continuous optimization in sales was one of the strategic focal points this week. Because sales today means much

continuously invests in quality.

Sustainable impact beyond the week: The week as a catalyst. Another strategic milestone. A foundation for the next steps in development.

What you'll take away:

- in-depth expertise
- new sales strategies
- streamlined structures
- clear objectives
- and tangible motivation

Here, development is not left to chance.

An outlook – also for our members

This dynamic does not end within the company structures. It has an impact outside the company.

As a member – or as a potential future member – you can look forward to your visit to the Sunshine State of Florida. Because behind this location is not just a geographical location, but a promise of quality.

- International perspective
- Innovative strength
- Professional structures
- And a team that is constantly working to improve

You will experience a company that takes its responsibility seriously. A company that invests. In people. In processes. In the future.

A week that was more than just training

This training week was no ordinary continuing education format. It was an expression of a corporate culture that does not claim excellence, but works for it.

It was a sign that Daria US thinks long-term. Acts strategically. And grows continuously.

What began or was deepened in Florida has an impact far beyond these days. In every conversation. In every consultation. In every strategic decision.

And that is precisely where its significance lies.

A week full of energy. Full of clarity. Full of responsibility. And full of future.

by Dina Veronique Scheve

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Lee County Housing Market Update

Market Interpretation

As of January 2026, Lee County's single-family market remains balanced, with months of supply at 6.6 despite a notable year-over-year decline. Active listings are down compared to last year, suggesting the inventory surge seen in 2024 has moderated. Homes are still taking slightly longer to sell than one year ago, though the increase in days on market has narrowed considerably compared to prior months. Median sale prices remain relatively stable, showing only a modest year-over-year adjustment and reinforcing the absence of sharp price deterioration. The list-to-sale price ratio at 96.9% confirms continued negotiation, with buyers maintaining leverage in most price segments. Mortgage rates holding just above 6% continue to restrain affordability, limiting aggressive bidding activity. Overall, the data reflects a market that has transitioned away from excess inventory pressure and into a more controlled, normalization phase where pricing discipline remains critical.

by Kevin Tremmel

Lee County Single-Family Housing Snapshot (January 2026 Data | Published March 2026)

Metric	Value	Year-over-Year Change
Median Sales Price	\$390,000	-2.3%
Active Listings	7,847	-6.1%
Median Days on Market	52 days	+4.0%
Months of Supply	6.6 months	-13.2%
List Price / Sale Price Ratio	96.9%	-0.5%
Avg. 30-Year Fixed Mortgage Rate	6.04%	As of 2/17/2026

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

Spotlight Home

793 Sunset Vista Dr, Fort Myers
3 Bed | 2 Bath | 2 Car Garage
Prime Location! No Flood Zone!



Photos courtesy of: Kevin Tremmel



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Life Ethic, Not Work Ethic - How Ria-Dewi von Garnier Shapes Daria US

Some people do not need to be loud to be present. Their strength is not expressed through volume or self promotion, but through consistency, clarity and an unwavering sense of responsibility. They are the ones who create stability when things get complex, who bring calm into moments of pressure, and who quietly hold everything together. Dewi von Garnier is one of those people.

As personal assistant to Frank Rahlf, Dewi plays a central role in the daily life of Daria US. She coordinates, structures, filters and protects processes that often remain invisible to the outside world. Yet what truly defines her is not her position, but the way she lives her values. Honesty, responsibility and reliability are not professional tools she activates when needed. They are the foundation of who she is.

When asked what she would want strangers to know about her, Dewi gives an answer that immediately reveals her inner clarity.

"Nothing at all," she says. She explains that people will always see what they want to see.

"Those who truly want to see me will see me, without explanation." She does not try to control perception or influence opinions.

"I just try to be as true to myself as I can," she adds. Authenticity, for Dewi, does not need justification. It simply needs space.

Family stands at the center of her life. It is small, deeply protected and non negotiable. Alongside family, honesty and responsibility form the core of her value system. Dewi speaks openly about how these values did not suddenly appear, but were shaped through reflection and experience. For a long time, she lived by values that were not truly her own.

"My values were always there," she reflects,

"I just lived other values because I did not recognize them yet." Understanding others has become especially

important to her. She believes many conflicts would lose their weight if people tried harder to understand each other's perspectives.

Work, for Dewi, is not something separate from life. It is not a burden, a duty or a sacrifice.

"I do not associate what I do with work," she explains.

"It is part of my life." She knows she is not defined by her job, and precisely because of that, she can fully commit to it. Discipline, punctuality and reliability are not constraints for her. They are expressions of respect. Respect for time. Respect for people. Respect for responsibility.

Every morning, Dewi gets up early, not because it is easy, but because consistency matters. Being on time, keeping promises and delivering what is expected are not small things to her. They are the building blocks of trust. And trust, in Dewi's understanding, is never abstract.

"Trust is not just there," she explains.

"Trust is created." It grows slowly, through repetition and consistency. Through small actions that may seem insignificant on their own, but become powerful over time. Showing up when you said you would. Doing what you promised. Being reliable not only when it is convenient, but especially when it is not.

For Dewi, trust does not require dramatic moments or grand gestures. It is built in everyday life. In punctuality. In reliability. In honesty. And just as carefully as trust is built, it can also be damaged if these small things are neglected. Trust, for her, is something that must be handled with awareness and care.

In moments of pressure, Dewi becomes calmer.

"The louder and wilder it gets around me, the calmer I get inside," she says. This inner calm allows her

to stay focused and clear, even when responsibility increases. She does not avoid difficult decisions. She makes them consciously and stands by them.

"I can live with the consequences of my decisions," she explains.

"And if a decision was wrong, I stand by it."

When asked about work ethic, Dewi reframes the concept entirely.

"I would not call it work ethic," she says.

"It is my life ethic." She does not switch between private and professional identities. She lives by one consistent set of principles in every area of life. Being honest. Being reliable. Being direct. Being present. This consistency is what gives her strength and makes even demanding work feel meaningful rather than heavy.

What motivates her is not individual recognition or personal success. It is the bigger picture.

"It is not about me or you," she explains.

"It is about everyone, and about our children." Building something that lasts. Something that carries meaning beyond the present moment. This mindset reflects the philosophy of Daria US, where values, trust and responsibility are not slogans, but lived reality.

Dewi is also a quiet role model, especially for young people. She encourages them to stay true to who they are, to stop playing roles and to trust their inner compass.

"Never forget who you are," she advises. Authenticity, she believes, saves energy. Reflection creates clarity. And being at peace with oneself is not weakness, but strength.

At the end of the conversation, when asked how she would introduce herself in this article, Dewi closes the circle with simple honesty.

"Hello, I am Dewi. I am real. I invite you."

Daria US is shaped by people like Dewi. People whose strength is not loud, but lasting. People who show that trust, responsibility and humanity are not extras, but the very core of meaningful work.

by Katharina Kaufmann

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When America Turns Green

How St. Patrick's Day Became a Celebration of Heritage and Joy

On March 17, the United States looks as if it has been gently dipped in green. The river runs a bright, almost unreal shade of emerald. In cities across the country, iconic buildings light up green after sunset, from skyscrapers to bridges and monuments. Bagpipes echo through downtown streets, parades wind past cheering crowds, and suddenly green hats, scarves, and even green hair seem perfectly normal.

It is St. Patrick's Day — and in America, it is impossible to miss. At first glance, the celebration looks like pure fun: music, laughter, parades, and a cheerful disregard for everyday routine. But behind the green glow lies a story of history, migration, and something deeply American — the joy of celebrating heritage openly and together.

The day is named after St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, a fifth-century missionary surrounded by legend. He is said to have brought Christianity to Ireland and to have used the shamrock, a simple three-leaf clover, to explain the idea of the Holy Trinity. That modest plant became one of the most recognizable symbols in the world, closely linked to the color green and to Irish identity.

For centuries, March 17 was marked in Ireland as a religious day rather than a public festival. The loud, colorful celebrations that define St. Patrick's Day today were not created on the island itself. They were shaped far from Ireland — in the United States. In the 19th century, millions of Irish emigrated to America, many fleeing poverty and the devastating Great

Famine. They arrived with little money and few connections, often facing discrimination and exclusion. Holding on to language, music, and traditions became a way to preserve dignity and identity in an unfamiliar world.

St. Patrick's Day offered exactly that. It became a day to remember home, to honor shared roots, and to turn memory into celebration. Parades began to fill American streets, especially in cities like New York, Boston, and Chicago. These marches were joyful, but they also carried a quiet message: we are here, we are proud, and we belong.

Over time, the celebration grew — and America embraced it wholeheartedly. The parades became larger, the music louder, the symbols brighter. Rivers were dyed green, skylines lit up, and St. Patrick's Day transformed into

one of the most recognizable annual celebrations in the country.

Today, the holiday reaches far beyond the Irish-American community. People of every background take part, many without any Irish ancestry at all. Friends gather after work, strangers strike up conversations, and entire cities seem to share a collective agreement: today is for enjoying life a little more than usual. Wearing green is no longer a sign of heritage alone — it is an open invitation to join in.

**Everyone's
Irish on March
17th!**

That openness is what makes St. Patrick's Day so unmistakably American.

The United States is a country shaped by immigration, and it loves to celebrate where people come from. Oktoberfest is held in cities across the country, Chinese New Year fills

neighborhoods with lanterns and dragon dances, and cultural festivals from all over the world are embraced with enthusiasm. These celebrations are not seen as foreign, but as part of a shared national story.

St. Patrick's Day fits perfectly into this tradition. It is a day that celebrates Irish heritage while welcoming everyone else to take part. History is not kept behind museum glass; it is brought into the streets, played as music, worn as color, and shared as laughter.

For Americans, the holiday is a reminder that the country's identity is made up of many journeys and many traditions. For readers in Germany, St. Patrick's Day offers a lively glimpse into how the United States understands itself: as a place where heritage is not something to hide, but something to celebrate — preferably with music, color, and good company.

So on March 17 — whether in Chicago's emerald river glow, in downtown Fort Myers with Irish tunes filling the air, or on Cape Coral's lively pub crawl — St. Patrick's Day is a day for all of us. A day filled with green, with music, with stories, with laughter ... and with the joyful reminder that our heritage makes us who we are, and our shared celebration makes us community.

All it takes to join in is a touch of green, a smile, and a willingness to celebrate together.



Source: Pixabay

by S. Mechalik

Between chocolate and self-discovery

What temptations really do to us

"You should give in to temptations — you never know if they'll come back." With this pointed remark, Oscar Wilde summed up the attitude to life of an entire era. And let's be honest: we smile a little in agreement. Whether it's the famous "tastiest temptation" from advertising, the next streaming highlight, a spontaneous purchase, or the desire for recognition—temptations are part of being human. But what exactly happens to us when we give in to temptation? And why does Lent in the Christian calendar focus on this very topic?

Why temptations are so attractive From a psychological point of view, temptations are not moral lapses, but rather an expression of a basic mechanism in our brain. Our reward system responds to the prospect of pleasure, status, or power with a real boost in motivation. Dopamine ensures that we want something before we get it. Pleasure in itself is not a negative thing. On the contrary: it stabilizes, creates balance, and strengthens our zest for life. It only becomes problematic when occasional enjoyment becomes a habit—and habit becomes an addiction. Then we lose not only moderation, but often also freedom. This is exactly where Lent comes in.

Fasting: Not a church mood killer Many people associate fasting primarily with deprivation: no alcohol, no sweets, less media. At first, it sounds like moral self-mortification. But that's not the whole story. Fasting is not an interruption of "real life," nor is it religiously holding one's breath until Easter. Rather, it is a conscious pause. An experiment. A kind of spiritual self-coaching. Christian tradition speaks of "repentance"—a change of perspective. It is not about denying oneself something, but about rediscovering

what really matters. The crucial point is not the renunciation itself, but the goal of renunciation.

The great temptations: More than just a piece of chocolate

The Gospel of Matthew tells how Jesus encountered temptations in the desert (Matthew 4). Later, he utters a sentence that serves as a headline for this passage: "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his life?" (Mt 16:26) This is not about sweets or small everyday pleasures. It's about power, influence, control — about the promise of limitless possibilities. Turning stones into bread. Proving oneself in spectacular fashion. Gaining political omnipotence. The punchline of the

visible. But when does self-improvement turn into self-loss?

Renunciation as value creation

Interestingly, behavioral research shows that those who can consciously renounce things increase their long-term satisfaction and self-efficacy. Not because renunciation makes you happy per se, but because it creates clarity. When I leave something out, I realize what role it plays in my life. Do I really need it? Or does it just fill a void? The "beginning of quitting"—as the original text puts it—is often the biggest challenge. Because this is where the real change happens: I take responsibility for my life. Renunciation



Photos courtesy of: Tobias Leinesser

story is remarkably modern: Jesus does not say "no" because power is fundamentally evil. He says "no" because he would lose himself. Because he would no longer be who he is. That is highly topical. Our society constantly offers us opportunities for improvement: faster, more beautiful, more successful, more

thus becomes value creation. Not in an economic sense, but in an existential sense. I discover my own value beyond consumption, recognition, or performance.

Enjoyment is part of life — but in moderation. Incidentally, Christian tradition is far

from condemning enjoyment outright. The Old Testament book of Jesus Sirach states: Those who deny themselves will also deny others. It is not about asceticism for its own sake. Just as aimless renunciation is not meaningful, aimless enjoyment is not fulfilling. Both gain their value only in the right measure. One could say that the "successful path through life" leads through the middle. And perhaps that is precisely the real message of Lent: finding moderation. Rediscovering balance. Regaining freedom.

Becoming free for more When we let go of something—be it consumption, constant availability, or ingrained habits—energy is released. Time. Attention. Openness. And this freedom has a direction. It does not stop at our own well-being. From a Christian perspective, it opens our eyes to God and our fellow human beings. Those who no longer revolve solely around themselves can once again see the "more" in life: the needs of others, the fragility of creation, one's own longing for meaning. Fasting is therefore not a religious diet program. It is training for inner freedom.

An experiment with an open outcome Perhaps it is worth viewing the coming weeks as an experiment: What happens when I consciously leave something out? What do I gain? What do I really lose? And perhaps we will discover that not every temptation needs to be fought—but that we can decide which ones to accept and which ones to reject. Oscar Wilde was right: You never know if she'll come back.

But perhaps the bigger question is: Who do I want to be when it does come back?

by Tobias Leinesser

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!

Bonus & Family-Friendly Options

(Past events that may return; check local listings each year)

- St. Patty's Kid Fun Run — themed kids' run with music and face-painting at Lakes Park, Fort Myers.
- Millennial Brewing Co. St. Patrick's Festival — craft beers, food trucks and games.
- Live Irish Music & Specials — Many local pubs and restaurants host green beer nights, live bands and Irish food specials throughout the weekend and on March 17th itself.

Fort Myers Beach St. Patrick's Day Parade

Where? Santini Plaza → Woman's Club on Sterling Ave

When? 10 AM – 11 AM

Parades, entertainment, music and family fun along Estero Boulevard.

14

St. Patrick's Day at the German-American Club

Where? Biergarten, Cape Coral

When? runs daytime

Irish and German food, live music and beer from both traditions.

14
15

St. Patrick's Day Bar and Pub Crawls

Fort Myers Bar Crawl: Nighttime bar-hopping experience with drink specials and festive energy.

14
15

St. Patrick's Day Block Party — Downtown Fort Myers

Where? River District (1st & Hendry) • Free event

When? ~ Noon–8 PM

Live music, Celtic dancers, petting zoo for kids, Irish-inspired food and drinks, and entertainment for all ages.

17

Naples St. Patrick's Day Parade

One of Florida's largest St. Patrick's Day parades with marching bands, festive floats and community spirit.

Where? Downtown Naples (from 3rd St South & Broad Ave)

When? Flag-Raising ~ 9:30 AM • Parade ~ 11 AM

After-Parade Parties & Pub Celebrations

- The Vine Room — Irish-themed cocktails and atmosphere post-parade.
- Tavern on the Bay — waterfront views with live music and festive drinks.
- Cabana Bar at Bayfront — live entertainment, Irish drinks.
- The Pub Naples — weekend brunches, live music & corned beef specials.
- Shea's Lansdowne — classic Irish pub vibe all weekend.

17

Send Us Your Event Recommendations!

info@sunshine-post.com

Source: Pixabay



The DARIA All-Inclusive Experience – Why vacationing, traveling and staying is so easy

Interview with Katarina, Anja and Diana
Anja

Hello you two, and a very warm welcome to our first interview round.

My name is Anja, and together with my team I manage the Property Management. Behind every stay

furnished with king-size beds, are stylishly designed and share a modern bathroom – ideal for families or friends traveling together while still enjoying their privacy.

The open, professionally equipped kitchen is the heart of the home. It combines functionality with elegant aesthetics and flows seamlessly into

smooth and stress-free. For activities, experiences and fun on site, we partner with Katarina from Adventure.

And with that, I'll hand it over to Diana.

Diana

As a Travel Service and Travel Agency, I offer tailor-made travel solutions for clients from all over the world. My services are designed for both members and international clients who value personal support, individual planning and unique travel experiences.

A key part of my offering is a limousine service, available in customized packages for different occasions – from private celebrations and business events to exclusive weekend experiences. Services and pricing are always tailored to the specific event and the client's individual wishes.

In addition, I take care of the entire travel organization**: flights, rental cars, accommodations, hotels, transfers and special add-on services are all planned and coordinated from a single source. The main advantage for my clients is having one dedicated contact person for all travel-related matters – from the initial idea through to the return home.

The focus is always on ****bespoke travel planning****. Clients may arrive with clear ideas or prefer to develop an individual concept together. I also support those who are not yet sure where or how they want to travel. In personal consultations, ideas, interests and needs are explored, documented and gradually shaped into a perfectly tailored travel experience.

It's not about offering the lowest price, but about intelligently combining services, creating special experiences and designing trips that truly fit the people taking them.

Another important focus is exclusive partnerships. Together with partners in accommodation, event management and experience design, we create holistic concepts – from elegant city trips and professionally hosted on-site events to extraordinary long-distance journeys, such as trips to the Bahamas, including complete program design. Sports and lifestyle events can also be seamlessly integrated.

What truly sets this travel service apart is the personal, close and continuous support. Everything is coordinated through one central contact – a level of service that has become rare and is therefore especially appreciated. The goal is to create journeys that are not off-the-shelf, but as individual as the people experiencing them.

And when it comes to fun and activities on site, Katarina comes into play.

Katarina

With Daria Adventures, we create excursions for people who want to experience Florida together. The trips are designed to be compact: you experience a lot without feeling rushed. It's about being outdoors, discovering new impressions, sharing experiences and truly feeling Florida in all its facets.

My name is Katarina Kaufmann, and I live in Florida. Through my daily life and work, I've discovered many

places that often remain unseen when you're only here for a short time. Many of these experiences have inspired me personally – and that's exactly what I want to share with others.

At the start, there is a carefully curated selection of excursions. These include trips to Cape Canaveral, where space history, technology and future visions come together at locations that are truly unique worldwide.

A particularly special nature experience is a guided walk through the Everglades, followed by an airboat tour. On foot, you experience the calm, vastness and unique atmosphere of this landscape before later gliding across the water by airboat, through mangroves, grasslands and natural habitats.

Another focus is on experiences on and around the water. A Siesta Key beach day with a jet ski tour combines relaxed beach time with action on the ocean. Those who wish to extend the day can join a sunset jet ski tour around Siesta Key, when the light softens and the sun slowly sinks into the sea. These tours are calmer, especially atmospheric and show the coastline from an entirely new perspective.

A truly unique experience is deep-sea fishing. Together, we head out into open waters – rod in hand, time to slow down. It's about the act of fishing itself, watching the water, the anticipation, and the moment a fish bites. Depending on the season, different species can be encountered, offering an intense and authentic ocean experience.

The program is rounded out with weekend trips to Key West and to Bimini in the Bahamas. These journeys offer a change of scenery, a sense of community and the feeling of being completely away for a few days – surrounded by sun, sea and new impressions.

These are the first planned excursions of Daria Adventures, clearly outlining the direction in which the offering will continue to grow.

Anja

Keep an eye on the newspaper! More information and new offers will be coming soon, with regular updates.

by Anja Behrendt, Katharina Kaufmann



Photos courtesy of: Anja Behrendt, Katharina Kaufmann

is a well-coordinated network of experienced professionals – from cleaning services to pool and garden maintenance, and many additional services that make each vacation as relaxed and high-quality as possible.

We build our homes ourselves and furnish them professionally, with great attention to detail and a clear commitment to quality. This ensures that nothing is left to be desired and that our guests feel completely at ease from the very first moment.

We offer our guests comprehensive service with German quality standards, combined with personal care, reliability and genuine hospitality.

All of these values – quality, ease and attention to detail – are reflected in the home we are about to introduce to you.

From the moment you step inside, you can feel the special atmosphere of this elegantly designed vacation home with three bedrooms and three bathrooms. Large window fronts flood the interior with natural light and combine modern design with an open, relaxed living concept. High-quality furnishings, clean lines and warm materials create a space where arriving and feeling at home come naturally.

Drop your bags, take a deep breath, and enjoy your vacation – that's the motto.

The master suite is a peaceful retreat featuring a comfortable king-size bed and direct access to the pool terrace through large sliding glass doors. The en-suite bathroom feels like a private resort, offering a spacious walk-in shower, double vanities and two walk-in closets for maximum comfort. Two additional bedrooms, also

the generous dining area and light-filled living space. Whether cooking together, enjoying long evenings at the table or relaxing on the sofa, this is where special vacation moments are created.

Whether enjoying breakfast by the water, swimming in the pool or sipping a glass of wine in the hot tub under the stars, the outdoor area invites you to linger and unwind.

A separate, quiet workspace makes the home ideal for workations or remote work, and of course, high-speed Wi-Fi is available throughout the house.

Only premium materials such as natural stone, stainless steel, mixed metals, natural wood, glass and ceramic were used for the interior design. This refined interior creates an exclusive, timeless atmosphere based on sustainable design concepts.

Our goal is to create a living style that combines maximum comfort, clean aesthetics and authentic warmth – modern, elegant and welcoming at the same time.

The exquisite open kitchen features luxurious surfaces, custom-made details and state-of-the-art appliances. It is both highly functional and a true design statement – a place where cooking, gathering and enjoying become an experience.

Our services include a personal welcome, 24/7 availability, and a wide range of optional add-on services such as kayak rentals and other leisure activities.

We speak German and English and work very closely with Diana from Travel to ensure your arrival is

You can reach us anytime for inquiries at:

booking@daria-us.com



Florida Panthers Three-Day Suite Owner Tour 2026

If there were ever a masterclass in how to combine first-class sports entertainment, luxury travel, and genuine human connection, the Florida Panthers Suite Owner Tour 2026 would be it.

As proud suite owners at the Florida Panthers' home ice in the Amerant Bank Arena, the Daria US Group was invited to join the Panthers' annual Suite Owner Tour. This year to none other than Washington, D.C. What followed was three days of premium service, unforgettable moments, and enough laughter to keep the hotel staff entertained for weeks.

Friday: 4:30 AM and Already Smiling.

Mid-January. Dark. Early. Very early.

At 4:30 AM sharp, Philipp Hills, Head of Sales for Daria US, and Maximilian von Garnier, Director of Daria US Sport Events, set off from Cape Coral toward Fort Lauderdale Airport. Coffee was mandatory. Valet parking? Of course organized. This wasn't just a trip—this was Panthers business.

At the gate, the energy shifted from "sleepy traveler" to "VIP departure lounge." Taralynn, Jessica, Alexa and Kacie had prepared a warm, heartfelt welcome complete with Panthers banners, balloons, and even breakfast for their guests. Every one of the 18 participants was personally introduced. No small feat before sunrise.

Then, just when everyone thought it couldn't get better, around the corner came none other than Stanley C., the Panthers' charismatic mascot. Photos were taken. Laughter erupted. Grown adults briefly reverted to being eight years old again.

On board, jetBlue, the official partner of the Panthers, decided a normal flight simply wouldn't do. The journey turned into a mid-air raffle featuring Panthers swag, a signed player jersey, and even a jetBlue ticket to a destination of choice. Suddenly, even turbulence would have been welcome if it meant another raffle round.



Champagne at 11 AM? Don't Mind If We Do.

Upon arrival in Washington, the Panthers entourage made their way to the stunning Conrad Washington DC, a flagship luxury property owned and operated by Hilton Worldwide. Located on First Street among some of the capital's most prestigious brands, the Conrad wasted no time setting the tone: champagne at 11 AM. Because when you travel with the Panthers, time zones become suggestions.

After a bit of free time - most of it happily spent exploring the nearby Chinatown - the group reconvened at the legendary Old Ebbitt Grill. Victorian charm, historic ambiance, and a private section complete with its own bar and bartender, because hydration is important.

Adding a stylish touch to the evening, the Panthers group unveiled a limited-edition scarf, exclusively designed and produced for suite members on this trip. It instantly became both a fashion statement and a badge of honor.

A cheerful and convivial first day came to a perfect close. Proof that when Panthers fans gather, "quiet dinner" is rarely on the menu.

Saturday: Politics, Plexiglass, and Pure Adrenaline.

The Conrad's breakfast on Saturday morning deserved its own five-star

review. Smiles were wide. Coffee was strong. Spirits were even stronger.

With two free morning hours, the Daria members braved slightly sub-zero temperatures under brilliant blue skies to snap selfies at the White House. While the Florida Panthers players had been honored there the previous day by the President of the United States for their second Stanley Cup victory, the President himself was nowhere to be seen. Probably still recovering from the celebrations.

Thanks to a personal connection through Alexa from the Panthers, the group received a highly personalized tour of the United States Capitol. Emotional. Impressive. Inspiring. One clear takeaway: everyone should experience the Capitol at least once. It's not just architecture, it's history breathing.

Game day called for game-day attire. After regrouping at the hotel, the Panthers family marched together toward Capital One Arena, with a quick snack stop at Clyde's of Gallery Place.

Inside the arena, their suite offered a spectacular view of the ice. Drinks, snacks, popcorn—perfect conditions for a perfect hockey night.

But then came the ultimate surprise: four seats directly behind the goal. The kind of seats where pucks slam into the plexiglass at nearly 90 mph and make even the bravest jump. The group rotated each period, ensuring everyone felt the full force of NHL action. Players crashing into boards. Ice spray flying. Pure adrenaline.

The game? A thrilling 5:2 victory for the Panthers.

Chants echoed. Smiles widened. Back at the hotel bar, the celebration continued long into the night. Because victories - especially away-game victories - taste better with good company.

Sunday: One Last Breakfast, One Last Toast

Sunday morning carried that bittersweet travel-day feeling. The group gathered once more to enjoy the exceptional Conrad breakfast before heading back to the airport and returning to Florida.

There was laughter. There were hugs. There were already plans forming for the next reunion. More Than a Trip. A Family.

It's hard to put into words just how flawless this weekend felt. Everything aligned. The Panthers organization delivered absolute premium service for premium members. But more importantly, something deeper happened.

New connections were formed. Future suite visits at Amerant Bank Arena were arranged. Friendships were forged.

The weekend reinforced one undeniable truth: The Florida Panthers are not just a hockey team. They are a family. A family built on trust, respect, loyalty and a whole lot of fun.

These are values that Daria lives by as well. And for that reason, the journey between the Panthers and the Daria is only just beginning. Go Panthers.



Photos courtesy of: Jacob Kugmun, John Heinrich

by Jacob Kugmun, John Heinrich

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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.

Hidden Sparks – Pets Looking to Shine

Every month, we pause for a moment to look a little closer — to notice the quiet ones, the gentle ones, and those who may not immediately step into the spotlight. Once again, we’re sharing two special souls from the Cape Coral Animal Shelter, each carrying a spark that deserves to be seen.

Some sparks shine boldly, others glow softly beneath the surface. But every one of them holds a light within — a light ready to grow brighter with patience, kindness, and love. With the right home, that hidden glow can turn into something truly radiant, bringing warmth not only to their own lives, but to yours as well.

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

by Jennifer Hagemester



Photos courtesy of Cape Coral Animal Shelter.

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

LILIANA

Liliana is a 3–5-year-old female — a sweet and gentle adult girl who is still discovering what the good things in life can truly feel like. Her journey hasn’t always been easy, but she’s ready for a fresh start filled with kindness, comfort, and love she can rely on.

She may take her time adjusting, but Liliana’s calm and tender nature shines through in quiet moments. She’s hoping for a family who will show her what it means to be cherished — with soft beds, warm cuddles, and the reassurance that she is finally safe. What she needs most is consistency, patience, and a home where she can slowly blossom into the pampered princess she deserves to be.

If you’re ready to offer steady affection and a peaceful place to rest, Liliana could be the loyal and loving companion you’ve been looking for. Her adoption fee is \$225.

JUPITER

Jupiter is a 5–7-year-old female — a beautiful tuxedo girl with a gentle heart and a soft, comforting purr. She can be a little shy at first, preferring to observe from a safe distance until she feels secure. With patience and kindness, however, her sweet personality begins to unfold.

Jupiter is the kind of cat who blossoms quietly, one cuddle at a time. She doesn’t rush into attention, but when she trusts you, she offers warmth and quiet companionship that makes a house feel like home. Her calm presence and gentle spirit make her a lovely match for someone who appreciates slow, steady connections.

If you’re looking for a soft-hearted companion who will grow closer to you day by day, Jupiter may be the one for you. Her adoption fee is \$70.



The Hidden Gem - Now with a Golden Edge

Same Legendary Quality, Wrapped in a Refined New Look



One of Cape Coral's most beloved culinary treasures has undergone a transformation - and what a glow-up it is.

Formerly known simply as Rock'n Rolls German Bakery & Bistro, this local favorite has now officially become part of the Daria family. And while the name may now carry the proud signature of Daria's German Bakery & Bistro, let us be very clear about one thing: the heart, the soul, the recipes, the staff, the craftsmanship - and yes, the love - remain exactly the same.

What has changed? The look. And oh, what a look it is.

Dressed in Blue and Gold
The redesign embraces Daria's signature deep blue - elegant, confident, unmistakable. But the true showstopper? The Goldkante (golden edge).

Every display. Every door. Every window. Even the striking black-and-white photographs lining the walls, each carefully selected to tell the proud

story of Cape Coral, now shines within a refined golden frame. It is subtle. It is sophisticated. It is the new unmistakable hallmark.

From this day forward, every Daria's German Bakery & Bistro will be recognized by exactly this defining feature: the golden edge. The Goldkante isn't just decoration, it's a statement.

And customers have noticed.

New guests walk in and pause. Regulars smile knowingly. "It feels elevated," one longtime visitor remarked. "But it still feels like home." That's precisely the point.

The Face You Trust - Still Front and Center

At the heart of it all remains the familiar and beloved face of the bakery: Jörg "Joe" Domscheit.

Joe continues to be the personality, the craftsman, and the smiling ambassador of this German institution. The recipes

are still family-rooted. The rolls still crackle perfectly when you break them open. The croissants still melt into buttery perfection. And the lunch plates still transport you straight to Germany without the need for a passport.

New outfit. Same legend.

Breakfast, Lunch - And Soon, the Scent of Berlin

The menu, however, has grown. And grown beautifully.

The breakfast offering has been expanded, giving early risers even more reasons to start their day the German way. Fresh breads, authentic spreads, traditional specialties - now with additional options designed to turn a quick coffee stop into a leisurely morning ritual.

At lunchtime, the kitchen is introducing new classic German dishes that deepen the culinary experience. Hearty, authentic, and prepared with the same uncompromising standards that have made the bakery a 4.9-star local sensation.

And then there's the news everyone has been whispering about. Yes. The Döner Kebab is coming.

The professional Döner grills have already been ordered in Germany. They're on their way. The kitchen itself has received a significant upgrade to prepare for this next chapter. And thanks to a newly installed window behind the counter, guests will soon not only see the legendary Döner spit — they will smell it before they even reach the register.

Let's just say: Cape Coral, prepare yourselves.

A Family Expands - Wrapped in Gold, Baked with Love

This transformation is more than a facelift. It marks the next evolution of a growing culinary family.

Very soon, Downtown Fort Myers will welcome its own Daria's German Bakery & Bistro — complete with the unmistakable Goldkante design. And yes, Fort Myers will also get to experience the authentic Döner Kebab that has already sparked excitement across Cape Coral.

The expansion doesn't dilute the magic. It multiplies it.

Because what made Rock'n Rolls special in the first place — craftsmanship, authenticity, warmth, and joy — is now amplified through the Daria identity. Same hands. Same recipes. Same standards. New elegance.

The Hidden Gem - Polished, Not Changed

If anything, this evolution proves what loyal guests have known all along: This was never just a bakery. It was always a hidden gem in plain sight. Now, it simply shines a little brighter - wrapped in blue, edged in gold, and ready for its next chapter. And the best part?

We're just getting started
by Jacob Kugmun



A Family Vision in the Heart of Downtown Fort Myers: Enjewel

In the heart of Downtown Fort Myers, where historic facades meet a steadily evolving lifestyle scene, there are places that do more than simply exist - they leave an impression. Enjewel is one of those places.

At first glance, the boutique already feels different. It is not loud, not overwhelming, and not designed to

that would carry meaning beyond day-to-day operations. The idea of building something that could remain within the family, something sustainable and lasting, played a central role from the beginning.

"I had always wanted the opportunity to build something that could eventually be passed on to my family," Dr.

"It was a bit of a gamble at the time," he says. "But it was a great little business with a lot of potential."

Since then, Enjewel has continued to evolve while staying true to its core identity.

What defines the boutique most clearly is its ability to balance quality with accessibility. While many retail concepts position themselves either in the high-end segment or in fast-moving, trend-driven markets, Enjewel occupies a space in between. The focus lies on offering pieces that feel unique and considered, while remaining within a price range that allows a broader audience to engage.

"Our goal has always been to offer unique clothing at a very reasonable price," Dr. Ferguson explains. "A lot of people assume we are expensive - but once they come in, that changes."

This moment - when expectation meets reality - is one of the most defining parts of the Enjewel experience. Customers are often surprised, not only by the price points, but by the quality and longevity of the pieces.

"I hear it almost every day - people come in and say, 'I can't believe this is only this much,'" he says.

A key element contributing to this dynamic is the way inventory is handled. Rather than holding extensive back stock, the boutique operates with a fully visible selection. Everything that is available is part of the space, which creates a constantly changing environment.

"I don't keep back stock," Dr. Ferguson explains. "Everything is out, which means the store is always changing - and people come back to see what's new."

Over time, the product range has been expanded carefully, including the addition of a men's line, while maintaining a cohesive identity. The selection remains curated, not excessive, allowing the store to retain its clarity and focus.

Beyond the products themselves, however, it is the atmosphere and the interactions within the space that define the experience. Enjewel is not designed as a transactional environment. It is structured around connection - between people, between generations, and between individuals and what they choose to wear.

One of the most distinctive aspects of the boutique is its multigenerational appeal. It is not uncommon to see different age groups shopping together, each finding something that resonates with them.

"The most meaningful moments for me are when you see a grandmother, a daughter, and a granddaughter all shopping together," Dr. Ferguson shares. "There's something here for everyone."

These moments represent a deeper layer of what Enjewel stands for. It becomes less about retail in the traditional sense

and more about shared experience.

This idea of continuity extends beyond the customer experience and into the structure of the business itself. Enjewel is, at its core, a family business. The long-term vision is not centered on expansion across multiple locations, but on stability and transition.

"This was always meant to be a family business," he says. "The goal is to pass it on and let it continue."

The connection to Downtown Fort Myers plays a crucial role in this narrative. Having lived in the community for over fifty years, Dr. Ferguson has witnessed its transformation from a quiet, almost inactive area into a growing destination.

"I can remember when downtown would shut down at five o'clock," he reflects. "What we're seeing now is completely different."

The revitalization of historic buildings and the steady growth of restaurants, hotels, and local businesses have contributed to a new energy within the area. At the same time, the development is ongoing, and certain challenges remain.

"We need more retail, more variety, and more reasons for people to come downtown," he explains. "And parking is still a challenge for many."

Seasonality also plays a significant role in the reality of running a business in this environment. While the winter months bring strong activity, the summer season can be considerably quieter.

"Summers can be difficult," Dr. Ferguson says. "You have to be prepared for that and plan accordingly."

Within this context, Enjewel represents a steady presence. It operates with a clear understanding of both the opportunities and the limitations of its environment. Rather than reacting to every trend, the boutique follows a consistent approach, grounded in its values and long-term perspective.

Equally important is the emphasis on relationships within the local business community.

"Building connections and supporting each other is essential," he says. "That's what makes a downtown work."

As Downtown Fort Myers continues to grow, Enjewel remains a place that values authenticity over scale, and connection over transaction. It is not defined by rapid expansion, but by consistency, intention, and a clear sense of purpose.

It is a space that feels considered.

A business that feels personal.

And an experience that feels genuine. You now have a deeper understanding of one of Downtown Fort Myers' true hidden gems.

If you find yourself walking through Downtown, take a moment to step inside and discover it for yourself - Enjewel is waiting just around the corner.

by Katharina Kaufmann



Photos courtesy of: Katharina Kaufmann

impress through scale. Instead, it draws you in quietly. The space feels curated, almost intimate, yet open and welcoming at the same time. There is a sense of ease the moment you step inside - as if the store was never meant to be rushed through, but rather experienced.

This atmosphere is no coincidence. It reflects the mindset of the person behind it.

Dr. Tim Ferguson, owner of Enjewel, did not come from a traditional retail background. His professional life was shaped by structure, leadership, and responsibility, having spent over four decades in public education in various roles, from teacher to district administrator and college professor. His transition into the boutique world was therefore not a continuation, but a deliberate shift - a decision to move from large-scale systems into something more personal and grounded.

Owning a small business had long been part of his vision. Not as a quick venture or expansion strategy, but as something

Ferguson explains.

The opportunity to bring that vision to life came unexpectedly. Enjewel, a boutique that had already been part of Downtown Fort Myers for over twenty years, became available when the original owner decided to retire. What started as a simple conversation about the realities of running a business downtown quickly turned into something more significant. "I walked in one day just to talk about downtown and the business experience," he recalls. "And during that conversation, she said she was ready to sell. That's really how it all began."

Rather than starting from scratch, Dr. Ferguson recognized the strength in what already existed - a loyal customer base, a clear concept, and a location with long-term potential.

Acquiring the business in 2020, during the uncertainty of the pandemic, added an additional layer of risk. At the same time, it underscored the nature of the decision: it was not purely strategic, but also intuitive.



Photos courtesy of: Katharina Kaufmann

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

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”

“In the long run, the biggest risk with AI is not that it becomes malicious, but that we become complacent.”

-Fei-Fei Li, Co-Director of Stanford’s Human-Centered AI Institute

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”

“We always overestimate the change that will occur in the next two years and underestimate the change that will occur in the next ten. Don’t let yourself be lulled into inaction.”

-Bill Gates, Co-founder of Microsoft

Spring Break Survival Guide

“We live in Cape Coral and our grandkids are visiting for Spring Break in March. Plan a week of activities that mix outdoor fun, educational experiences, and downtime – without breaking the bank.”

AI suggests:

1. Monday: Manatee Park for free wildlife viewing – March is peak manatee season before they migrate
2. Tuesday: IMAG History & Science Center in Fort Myers – hands-on exhibits and a living lab with native animals
3. Wednesday: Beach day at Bowditch Point Park with a packed picnic – calmer waters and shaded pavilions for all ages
4. Thursday: Bike the Cape Coral Greenway trails in the morning, splash pad at Sunsplash in the afternoon
5. Friday: Shelling excursion to Cayo Costa State Park by ferry – one of Florida’s best-kept secrets for uncrowded beaches

Spring Training Baseball Experience

“We’re new to Southwest Florida and want to experience Spring Training baseball. What teams play nearby, and how do we make a full day of it?”

AI suggests:

1. The Minnesota Twins play at Hammond Stadium in Fort Myers – catch games throughout March with affordable tickets starting around \$25
2. The Boston Red Sox train at JetBlue Park, also in Fort Myers – arrive early for batting practice and autograph opportunities
3. Make it a full day: tailgate in the parking lot with a cooler and lawn chairs – it’s a beloved local tradition
4. After the game, grab dinner on nearby Daniels Parkway – dozens of restaurants within a five-minute drive
5. Pro tip: Weekday games are less crowded and parking is easier – the intimate stadium atmosphere is what makes Spring Training special

Florida Garden Starter for Newcomers

“We’re new to Southwest Florida and want to experience Spring Training baseball. What teams play nearby, and how do we make a full day of it?”

AI suggests:

1. March is prime planting season in USDA Zone 10 – start with tomatoes, peppers, herbs, and mangoes that thrive in Southwest Florida heat
2. Forget traditional lawns – consider Florida-friendly landscaping with native plants like coontie, firebush, and muhly grass to save water and reduce maintenance
3. Visit the Lee County Extension Service at Terry Park for free gardening workshops and soil testing – Florida’s sandy soil needs different amendments than Northern clay
4. Install a rain barrel early – summer rainy season will fill it, and Cape Coral’s watering restrictions make stored rainwater invaluable
5. Watch for invasive species: never plant Brazilian pepper or air potato – they spread aggressively and are illegal to cultivate in Florida

Florida State Parks Spring Explorer

“We want to explore Florida’s state parks this spring before it gets too hot and buggy. Which parks near Southwest Florida are best for day trips, and what should we know before going?”

AI suggests:

1. Lovers Key State Park for kayaking, shelling, and dolphin watching – March offers ideal weather before summer mosquitoes arrive
2. Koreshan State Historic Site in Estero for a unique look at Florida’s utopian history – shaded nature trails along the Estero River
3. Day trip to Myakka River State Park (90 minutes north) – walk the canopy walkway and spot alligators from the observation platform
4. Pack sunscreen, water, and closed-toe shoes – Florida trails are sandy, and spring sun is stronger than newcomers expect
5. Buy an annual Florida State Parks pass for \$60 – it pays for itself in just a few visits and covers vehicle entry at all 175 parks

Corned Beef and Cabbage Recipe

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4-6)

- 3–4 lb corned beef brisket (with spice packet, if included)
- 10 cups water
- 1 onion, peeled and quartered
- 3–4 garlic cloves, smashed
- 10 whole black peppercorns
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 small head green cabbage, cut into wedges
- 4–5 medium potatoes, peeled and halved
- 4 carrots, peeled and cut into chunks
- Optional: mustard or horseradish sauce for serving

1 Prepare the Corned Beef

- Rinse the corned beef under cold water to remove excess salt.
- Place in a large pot or Dutch oven with water.
- Add onion, garlic, peppercorns, and bay leaves.

2 Cook the Corned Beef

- Bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
- Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer 2½–3 hours, or until the meat is fork-tender. (Tip: You can also cook it in a slow cooker on low for 6–8 hours.)

3 Add Vegetables

- About 30–40 minutes before the beef is done, add potatoes and carrots to the pot.
- About 15 minutes before the end, add cabbage wedges.
- Cook until all vegetables are tender.

4 Serve

- Remove the beef and let it rest 5–10 minutes.
- Slice corned beef against the grain into thick slices.
- Arrange on a platter with cabbage, potatoes, and carrots.
- Serve with mustard, horseradish, or a drizzle of cooking juices.

Tips for Perfect Corned Beef

- Don’t overboil: A gentle simmer keeps the meat tender.
- Slice against the grain: This ensures each bite is tender and easy to chew.
- Add extra flavor: Some people like to add a splash of beer, a few cloves, or a teaspoon of sugar to the cooking liquid.

by S. Mechalik

Where Learning Is Free to Breathe

For many students, school means pressure, overwhelm, endless days, piles of homework, and hours of sitting still. I know this all too well. Before my mother discovered Clonlara—whose name comes from Irish and means “weeping mare”—my school life was shaped by frustration and exhaustion. I was in a class of 36 students—a number that left little room for individuality. I did not feel seen, and I was both overwhelmed and underchallenged at the same time. It felt as if no one truly saw who I was, what I needed, or what genuinely interested me. My abilities had little space to develop. With something that felt close to burnout already in sixth grade, I quickly realized that learning the way it happens in many schools simply does not work for me. I did not want to just absorb knowledge—I wanted to grow, to explore, to understand, and to make a difference. I wanted to be seen as a human being, not just another number.

And that is exactly what I found at Clonlara. The very idea that a school truly sees each student as an individual, recognizes their strengths, and supports them on their own path deeply resonated with me. At Clonlara, I can learn in the way that suits me best: at my own pace, based on my interests, with guidance, but without restrictive boundaries. Since the age of nine, it has been my dream to become a veterinarian, so it is especially important to me that my education is meaningfully aligned with my future. Clonlara gives me the opportunity to design my transcript in a way that is optimal for the universities I plan to apply to. At the same time, other students can pursue hands-on projects, creative work, or completely individual topics. There is no single prescribed path—only the path that fits each student.

Clonlara was founded in 1967 by Pat Montgomery, Ph.D., and her husband Jim, and its campus is located in Ann

Arbor, Michigan. Pat had previously taught in public and parochial schools and recognized that traditional education systems often fail to take children’s natural development into account. Inspired by Jean Piaget, who emphasized learning through play, exploration, and discovery, she wanted to create a school where students could learn at their own pace and be respected as thinking, feeling individuals. Pat envisioned a school open to children of all ages, backgrounds, and beliefs, with a calm and supportive atmosphere in which community, real-world learning,



and family involvement play a central role.

In 1979, the Off-Campus Program was created, extending Clonlara’s educational approach beyond the physical campus into the homes of families across the United States and later into many other countries. In 2013, the Online Program was introduced, offering students the same freedom, flexibility, and individual support in a digital format. Today, Clonlara supports students in over 70 countries worldwide and offers programs in multiple languages. It is an internationally recognized school that leads to a full high school diploma—recognized

in the United States, Canada, many European

countries, and South America. A central element of learning at Clonlara is Full Circle Learning. Each project and learning experience is organized within a circle of ten steps: beginning with choosing a topic, followed by preparation, research, and a project proposal. Students then choose a mentor—this may be a friend, family member, or coach. This is followed by the active phase, in which the project is carried out, documented in a report, supported with photos and materials

sense of community: even in the Off-Campus Program, students are never alone. Through regular communication, meetings, and shared experiences, an inspiring global community emerges. Clonlara’s shared mission truly extends across continents.

For me personally, Clonlara is not just a school—it is a gateway to the real world, offering both freedom and security. I have learned to recognize my own limits, assess my abilities, and grow beyond them. I can focus on my interests, work creatively and practically, and know that I am always supported. Being trusted with responsibility and receiving individual guidance has helped me not only learn, but also find myself.

To me, Clonlara is a place where making mistakes is human and not forbidden. Here, I am able to pursue my dream of becoming a veterinarian while developing my curiosity, creativity, and sense of responsibility.

From elementary school through middle school and all the way to high school, Clonlara shows that learning can be more than pressure and sitting still. Learning can be engaging, hands-on, personal, and meaningful—at any age. And that is exactly what makes Clonlara so special.

by Lilibet Ida

Photos courtesy of: Lilibet Ida in a portfolio, presented, and finally reflected upon by both the student and the mentor. From high school onward, academic work is assessed using the American grading system. This concept combines independence with guidance, encouraging responsibility, goal-setting, and reflection, while ensuring continuous support.

I am particularly impressed by the role of the advisors. They help structure learning according to individual interests, guide students in planning projects or building their transcripts, and ensure that students are neither overwhelmed nor underchallenged. At the same time, Clonlara fosters a strong

If you’re interested in learning more about Clonlara and its approach to education, please visit:

clonlara.org

LUCK and HAPPINESS – in german there is only ONE word for both: „GLÜCK“



So Germans have to explain, define and choose: what is „Glück?“ What about YOU? Is there a real difference in YOUR description? How do you describe happiness? A coincidence? A state that rarely occurs? A positive event with low probability? A wish? A fleeting feeling? And why were we taught that rare things/events like the four-leaf clover and shooting stars are lucky charms? Isn’t happiness also a state of deep life satisfaction? – I think: YES! And in the same moment, that quiet voice of doubt and conditioning chimes in: “do you deserve this?”

Depending on your environment, the loud voice of society also chimes in: “that can’t possibly last! – Something always happens that makes you unhappy. Being happy all the time wouldn’t even be bearable.” – WHY? Because we’re very good at functioning and mastering challenges or at least surviving (psychologically). But for a lasting state of joy in life, we’d have to embrace change, which feels more challenging than struggling with the everyday...

For me, this happiness in the sense of “being happy” is best defined as joy of life. With lightness and pleasure, just like pure childhood happiness! – Can you remember? Pure childhood happiness?

I... I’m 3 years old and standing in my grandma’s kitchen, chubby-cheeked with reddish-blond hair, on a stool in front of her stove, snatching the first double-sided fried “Dampfnudel” from the pan with a big grin! Mmmm.

Carefree, mischievous, and overjoyed...

In the meantime, quite a bit has happened. Not just that my hair color has changed. I go to school and learn such important things like the quadratic formula – which I’m still waiting for someone to wake me up at midnight to ask me about..., I complete my carpentry apprenticeship and at a spontaneous party I fall in love with my future wife Karin. We have a good time, have two wonderful children and build a house. As a self-employed young entrepreneur I have my hands full and we have a functioning family life.

Mainly because I function. My handball sport is too risky as a self-employed person, the activities of the old gang too immature. I can’t afford spontaneity. I “slave away” to pay the mortgage rates and continue working so we can also go on vacation. Working – for family life on Sundays and on vacation...

Until the day when the doctor, saying that something is growing in my wife that will cost her her life, turns our life upside down.

When you stand there and no longer know which way is up – what you should say to your wife because you thought you had everything under control – no idea what you should do because there’s no manual for this... when you feel like you can never laugh again!

So I do what I already know how to do: I organize, structure, and work through what comes up – I function. For years. Even beyond the day of her funeral. Continue functioning and therefore can’t even grieve. I put myself in the background to be strong for my children and keep everything running.

Not much left of happy! Why Karin? Why us? Why? And because I sense that I won’t get answers to this from outside, but something absolutely has to change because otherwise I’ll break – I deal with myself. Get coached – what does me good? Why do I tick the way I tick? What do I want and what do I need?

Because I recognize that I can only process what I’ve experienced, can only do good for my loved ones, when I myself am doing well, when my reserves are full. Being happy doesn’t come by prescription – being happy happens when you choose yourself.

Hopefully you haven’t had to digest a stroke of fate yet... but perhaps you still sometimes wonder where your joy and lightness have gone? Whether you can be happy? – I know that you can be happy! Maybe you don’t know exactly how – and that’s where it’s good when someone gives you an impulse and asks the right questions... Can you remember who you were before the world told you who you should be?

Remember! – What is your double-sided fried “Dampfnudel”?

Because you already carry EVERYTHING within you - you don’t have to learn new strategies, but merely consciously choose YOURSELF and get to know yourself ;-) Because when you know your needs, you define your own happiness and thereby make yourself independent of all the “Hollywood kitsch and consumerism madness.” Even if a stroke of fate hits you or an uncontrollable “big problem” stands at your door, you can handle it better than in an externally determined image of happiness.

Change your perspective, leave your comfort zone, reconsider supposed life wisdoms and get to know yourself. – Much joy in doing so!

And... remember: You can “only” feel happiness in the here and now. Although you can imagine a beautiful future, you will only be able to be happy about it in the moment when it becomes the present.

Conversely, the negative events in our lives must be considered. It’s not WHAT we experience that defines us, but HOW we feel about what we experience.

by MATTHIAS Erbacher
Happiness and Joy of Life Expert

Sunshine Post Series on Healthy Aging: Part 3

Let's not make fitness unnecessarily complicated:

If you like lifting weights, lift weights. If you like cycling, lift weights. If you like running, lift weights. If you like yoga, lift weights anyway. See? It's actually that simple.

That's pretty much how we can summarize the last issue. And in fact, I think strength training is completely underrated. Unfortunately, as always, that's only part of the truth, or in our case, health.

Because these muscles, which have been well trained with a lot of effort, can also damage the body. To prevent this, we have to make a new effort and take care of our flexibility. A little spoiler: skipping the effort of muscle training so you don't have to start the effort of flexibility training is NOT a solution.

To illustrate the connections, I would like to refer to an interesting model developed by Canadian therapist Gray Cook and American trainer Michael Boyle.

The joint-by-joint approach focuses on the interplay between mobilization and stabilization of the joints.

The method assumes that the joints along the kinetic chain

are alternately specialized for mobility or stability.

If a joint in this "chain" does not function properly, this can lead to overload in the joints above or below it. Therefore,

in the case of knee problems, for example, the causes should not always be sought in the knee joint alone, but the structures above and below it should also be considered.

This diagram shows that, starting from the bottom, the joints have alternating tasks as they move upwards.

It therefore makes sense to start from the bottom up, as this is where the body's weight acts on the ground when walking, standing, jumping, etc.

Very often, pain in one area is caused by a malfunction in the adjacent (usually underlying) joint.

I would like to describe two examples of this:

Knee pain

The ankle joints have the task of being as mobile as possible, i.e., moving flexibly in all intended directions. This mobility allows them to absorb the forces generated when they hit the ground (walking, jumping, etc.), a bit like a spring.

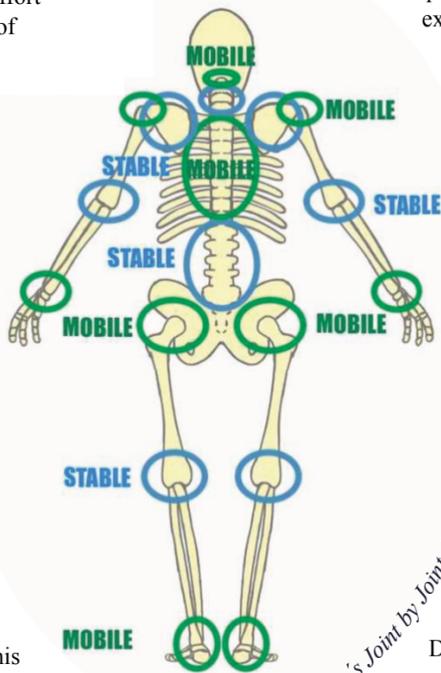
Wearing the wrong shoes, poorly healed injuries, or uneven weight distribution can restrict the mobility of the ankle joints. The forces of impact continue to act, of course, and are then absorbed by the next higher joint: the knee. However, the knee is not designed for this and suffers from the unfiltered forces. As is so often the case in conventional medicine, the symptom (in the knee) is treated, but the cause (in the ankle) remains undetected, and so it is only a matter of time before the knee causes problems again.

2. Back pain "Sitting is the new smoking" Sitting in a static position for too long causes the hips to stiffen and the muscles around the pelvis to become weak and

inflexible. Similar to the relationship between the knee and ankle, immobile hips transfer the problem to the region above. Back pain is therefore often caused not by a weak back, but by a completely immobile pelvis.

The hip flexor, which connects the front thigh bone to the torso, is particularly important here. Frequent, prolonged sitting shortens this muscle, and if it is not stretched explicitly, it permanently pulls the pelvis into an unfavorable position. So when you train your muscles and they remain tense due to a lack of stretching, they literally pull the joints together and narrow the space that the joints need for smooth movement.

Tense, inflexible muscles are sluggish and therefore cannot contract as quickly. This is particularly a problem when you stumble, for example. Sluggish muscles cannot respond quickly enough to the message from the brain to react quickly, making a fall much more likely.



Michael Boyle's Joint by Joint Approach

Based on these findings, I must of course qualify the introductory joke. If you like lifting weights, do yoga would be the appropriate addition.

You are gradually realizing that the price of healthy aging is unfortunately high. It takes a lot of time and effort, because it quickly becomes clear that a little strength training twice a week is unfortunately not enough.

"That's completely unrealistic for me. How am I supposed to manage that alongside work and family?"

Unfortunately, you're right. It's very difficult to achieve. And no AI can do this hard work for you.

You have to go there, you have to train!

It's all a question of your determination. If you can't find a way to make the effort, you probably won't live to be 100. It's that simple!

Did you know that throughout history, plump figures were considered the ideal of beauty and a status symbol because they symbolized prosperity and fertility? The Baroque period (17th century) in particular is known for its Rubenesque figures.

Why was that? Because it was difficult to become plump at that time. Food was not as abundant as it is today, and the predominantly hard physical labor consumed a lot of calories.

Today, it's hard to be slim and athletic because the fridge is always full and the nearest sofa is never far away. That's why being athletic is now attractive. The hard things in life are sexy, not the easy ones. This also explains the trend toward MMA sports. It's a damn tough sport. And doing tough things makes you attractive. If you still find it attractive to age healthily, you now know what to do.

Choose the hard path. Invest in exercise, muscle training, and mobility. The good news is that this mobility training can be easily integrated into your strength training routine and everyday life. It only takes an extra 15 minutes per workout, or 5 minutes every day.

In the next issue, you can read about which doctors you should trust on your journey to better health in old age.

by Clemens Müller

Sunshine State of Mind

Part 3: Between Palms and Pickups – The First Landing

It's mid-February in Southwest Florida. We've been in Fort Myers and Cape Coral for two weeks now, and even though this is officially still the "preparatory phase" before our final visa is issued, it already feels incredibly right. However, the path here was anything but a relaxed journey—it was a feat of strength that demanded everything from us until the very last second.

Drama Before the Party: A Bump and 65 Friends Before we boarded the plane, we had our big farewell party. Anyone who has ever emigrated knows that the final days are a volatile mix of time pressure and emotion. Two hours before the first guests were due to arrive, it happened: our boys were playing so wildly that the younger one ran full tilt into a wall. The result was a concerning bump and a distraught Mum, who drove straight to the hospital. We were on the verge of canceling the party.

Only when the all-clear came—no concussion—could we breathe a sigh of relief. Despite the shock, the party turned into a roaring success. 65 friends, companions, and my entire tennis team gathered to say goodbye. It didn't feel like a final farewell, but rather a "see you later." In the age of video calls and voice notes, the world has grown smaller, and we know that the people close to our hearts will remain part of our lives—no matter how vast the ocean between us.

Logistics Tetris and the Last Bottle of Wine

The Northern German winter bid us farewell with a harshness we hadn't experienced in 15 years. Freezing cold and darkness provided the backdrop for our final packing adventure. What stays in the house? What goes into the container? And what has to fit into the eight large suitcases accompanying us on the plane? Customs regulations for moving to the USA are a science in themselves. Thanks to the support of my future partner logistics company within the Daria Group, the groundwork was



Photos courtesy of: René Mrosek

done, but the actual packing remained a task of pure persistence.

On the evening before our departure, we were still sitting in the living room with a good friend at 10 PM, sharing one last glass of wine while I closed the literally last suitcase. At 3:45 AM, the large taxi pulled up. Showing up at Hamburg airport with eight giant suitcases, four carry-ons, and various backpacks earned us some strange looks—we were definitely the heavyweights at check-in. But

everything went smoothly, and after a layover in Frankfurt, we touched down in Fort Myers in the late afternoon.

The American Way of Drive

At the rental car station, it quickly became clear that a standard SUV would never hold our mountain of luggage. We needed a pickup truck. Lenn, our six-year-old, got to choose from a row of five giants and unerringly picked a RAM Rebel. The truck is so high that Janine literally has to climb in. A future colleague commented aptly: "Typically German—barely in the

USA, and you have to live the American lifestyle with the largest possible car." He's right. It just feels good.

After 28 hours without sleep, we moved into our rental house. Thanks to my sister and niece, who had already filled the fridge for us, we didn't have to worry about a thing. We set up our promised 'bed camp' and fell asleep for the first time under the subtropical Florida night. Okay, honestly: it was unusually cold that night.

Manatees, Super Bowl, and German Bread

The first weekend was a direct plunge into community life. Our future colleagues organized a Paddleboard tour to spot manatees. Even though the water was too murky that day to see the gentle giants, the ease of being out on the water was the perfect introduction. The following evening, we attended a Super Bowl party at the Daria Headquarter. It was the ideal opportunity to network in a relaxed atmosphere and get to know the people behind the community I will soon be working with.

Currently, we are in the exploratory phase. We are exploring the area, comparing schools and kindergartens, and preparing the infrastructural foundations for the IT company that my business partner and I are about to establish. It is a time of observation and learning. And yes, a small anecdote is a must: our first stop, of course, led us to "Daria's German Bakery." Small reality check after two weeks in Florida: Freedom? Yes! Big trucks? Absolutely! But when it comes to bread, we become the most typical of all Germans. An unsweetened loaf of bread is the true luxury for us in the Sunshine State.

The freedom and friendliness of the locals in the Fort Myers area provide a sense of lightness that was hard to imagine in the darkness of the Northern German winter. We have arrived—for now. The real building phase will begin soon, but the foundation already feels rock solid.

by Marc Siewert

From Dream to Driveway: Settling Into Re-

Letter to the Editor from Christi Klocke

Retirement had always come with a vision: sunshine, slower days, and a home in Florida. When the time finally arrived, we packed our bags, pointed the car south, and after three days on the road, arrived in Cape Coral—ready to begin life as half-year Florida residents, six months at a time.

Our new chapter began in a brand-new construction home, beautiful and full of promise... and completely empty. The only seating available was a pair of folding camping chairs, and at night we slept on an airbed. It wasn't glamorous, but it was ours—and it marked the beginning of turning a house into a home. Furnishing quickly became our first retirement challenge. Priority number one was a proper bed, followed closely by window coverings. From there



Photos courtesy of: Christi Klocke

came the small necessities that make daily life functional, then living room furniture. We purchased a gas grill, had it delivered, and proudly assembled it ourselves. A computer desk had to be ordered, shipped, and put together once it arrived. Television sets came last—and surprisingly, we went three full weeks without watching the news and didn't miss it at all.

Of course, hanging the TVs presented its own challenge, especially with a deadline looming: they had to be up in time for the Super Bowl.

Little by little, the empty rooms filled. Boxes disappeared. Furniture found its place. And one day, we realized we finally felt at home.

We had imagined warm Florida weather greeting us with open arms. The first few days delivered, with temperatures

in the 80s. Then came the unexpected—cold winds, wind chills dipping to 25 degrees, and even talk of snow in Cape Coral. Who would have thought we'd bring Minnesota weather with us?

Still, optimism remains strong. We're looking forward to sunshine returning, afternoons by the pool, and the many adventures waiting for us in Florida. Family and friends are already eager to visit, and we can't wait to share our home—and this new chapter—with them.

Retirement, we're learning, isn't just about where you end up. It's about the journey, the adjustments, and the joy of building something new—one room, one memory, and one sunny day at a time.

by Christi Klocke

Thank you DARIA Direktion Nord

Letter to the Editor from René Mrosek and Family

Dear Direktion Nord, dear Andreas, dear Tereza, dear Gabi. It is hard to find the right words for what we were blessed to experience this week – and yet they rise from deep within our hearts.

You were more than companions to us. You were our gentle nudges, our guides, our encouragers. You showed us that investing is not only about numbers, but about lightness. That financial freedom is not a distant dream, but a path one is allowed to walk – when the right people are standing by your side.

This week in Florida did not only show us where our money flows, but above all where our lives can flow. It allowed us to truly feel what unlimited freedom means. Freedom in thinking. Freedom



in feeling. Freedom in being. Daria did not simply entertain us – it moved us. Deeply. It awakened emotions, ignited energy, and showed us that life here is allowed to feel lighter. That dreams are given space when you dare to live them.

And for that, we thank you.

Thank you for guiding us in the right direction.

Thank you for believing in us.

Thank you for turning encounters into trust – and trust into friendship.

We could not be happier to know you. And we are endlessly grateful to be allowed to walk this path with you.

Thank you for everything.

From the bottom of our hearts.

Photo courtesy of: René Mrosek

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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.

The Sunshine Post Community wishes a Happy Birthday to...

Stefani Osborn
Darius Tukan
Athanasios Ntomaris
Alexander Stolz
Axel Bladeck
Julia Frei
Ralf Stachowiak
Shannon Mileur
Joachim Herrmann Matthes

And a special congratulation to:

Melina Schmelter
Katharina Kaufmann
Anja Cäcil Terbrüggen
Judith Wittmann
David Odenthal
Jennifer Hagemeister
Alexander Siegel
Daria Rahlf
Andre Bretzke

Would you like to congratulate someone special?

Send us your request at info@sunshine-post.com

and get featured in our next issue!

Subject: “Celebrating Life”

Caricature of the Month: March

The Illusion of the Open Door

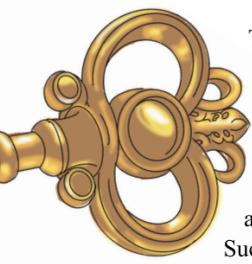
We’ve all heard the comforting cliché: “When one door closes, another opens.” It’s a phrase meant to offer hope, but have you ever truly stopped to question it? What happens if no other door opens? What if you find yourself standing in a cold, silent hallway where every single handle refuses to budge? And even worse—what if a door opens somewhere far away, and you don’t even know it exists? You could be missing a chance you were never even aware of, trapped in a corridor of missed connections.

I have come to see this metaphor in a different, perhaps more honest way. I don’t see a single hallway with a single opening. Instead, I see endless corridors lined with locked doors.

Each one is painted differently. Some boast vibrant, modern colors, while others carry the weathered texture of age. Some look invitingly new, while others seem to hold the heavy weight of a thousand untold stories.

But one thing is certain: every door is a unique mystery, and nobody—not your mentors, not your peers—can tell you for sure where they lead.

The goal of a meaningful life is not to mindlessly grab at every passing chance or to stroll aimlessly through whatever door happens to be unlocked. That is not progress; that is just wandering.



The real challenge is to stop waiting for a miracle and to start searching for the specific key that guides you through the right door.

In a world full of noise, the most important thing to remember is that a door only truly belongs to you if you are the one who chooses it.

Success is not only—or maybe not even—about luck; it is about intent.

Because in the end, it is only through your own deliberate actions that a simple path finally becomes your path.

by Emilia Fürst



By Emilia Fürst, Sunshine Post Editorial Team



DARIA
dreams come easy



INVEST IN YOUR DREAMS

