

YOUR DAILY DOSE OF OPTIMISM



SUNSHINE POST

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It's 7:14 a.m. on a Wednesday. Emma Chen is standing in line for coffee, half awake, scrolling through her phone. The person behind her is talking loudly on a headset about crypto markets.

It begins with a sense of unrest in the early morning. The world still lies in half-darkness, everything still seems the same as before—yet suddenly everything is set in motion.

When the final buzzer sounded in the sold-out Milano Santagiulia Ice Hockey Arena in Milan, an explosion of joy, tears, and disbelief erupted on the American bench.

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



Explore the wild side of Florida with us! (Photo courtesy of Katharina Kaufmann)

There are places in Florida that feel almost untouched by time - landscapes where the rhythm of nature still dictates the pace of life. The Everglades are one of those places. Over the past year, I have returned there nearly every week, and each visit has reminded me how unique this ecosystem truly is. No matter how often you step into this vast wilderness, the Everglades always reveal something new: a sudden splash in the water, a heron lifting into the sky, or the quiet movement of grass in the warm Florida breeze.

Stretching across much of southern Florida, the Everglades are often described as a "river of grass." Water flows slowly and almost imperceptibly from Lake Okeechobee toward Florida Bay, creating one of the most remarkable wetlands on Earth. At first glance, the landscape might appear simple, but the longer you spend here, the more complex and fascinating it becomes. Sawgrass marshes stretch endlessly across the horizon, cypress domes rise from the water like natural cathedrals, and winding trails invite visitors into a world that feels far removed from the busy coastal cities of Florida.

Read more about Katharina's adventures in the Everglades on Page No. 12 →



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

Spring, renewal, and moments worth sharing

Dear Readers,
We can all sense the feeling of renewal that April usually greets us with. The first quarter of the year is officially over. What has happened?

The days grew brighter, nature began to bloom again, and many of us now find ourselves looking forward to gathering with the people who matter most. In this month's edition of Sunshine Post, we celebrate the spirit of spring—connection, reflection, and the simple joy of spending time together.

A highlight of this season is Easter, a holiday that carries different meanings for different people. In this issue, we explore Easter from two unique perspectives. One article reflects on the religious traditions and deeper meaning behind the celebration, while another looks at the vibrant and joyful ways Easter is celebrated in the tropical climate of Southwest Florida, where sunshine, outdoor gatherings, and colorful traditions give the holiday a distinctive flavor.

Read more about our newest issue in our Letter From The Editor on Page No. 2 →

SUNSHINE POST

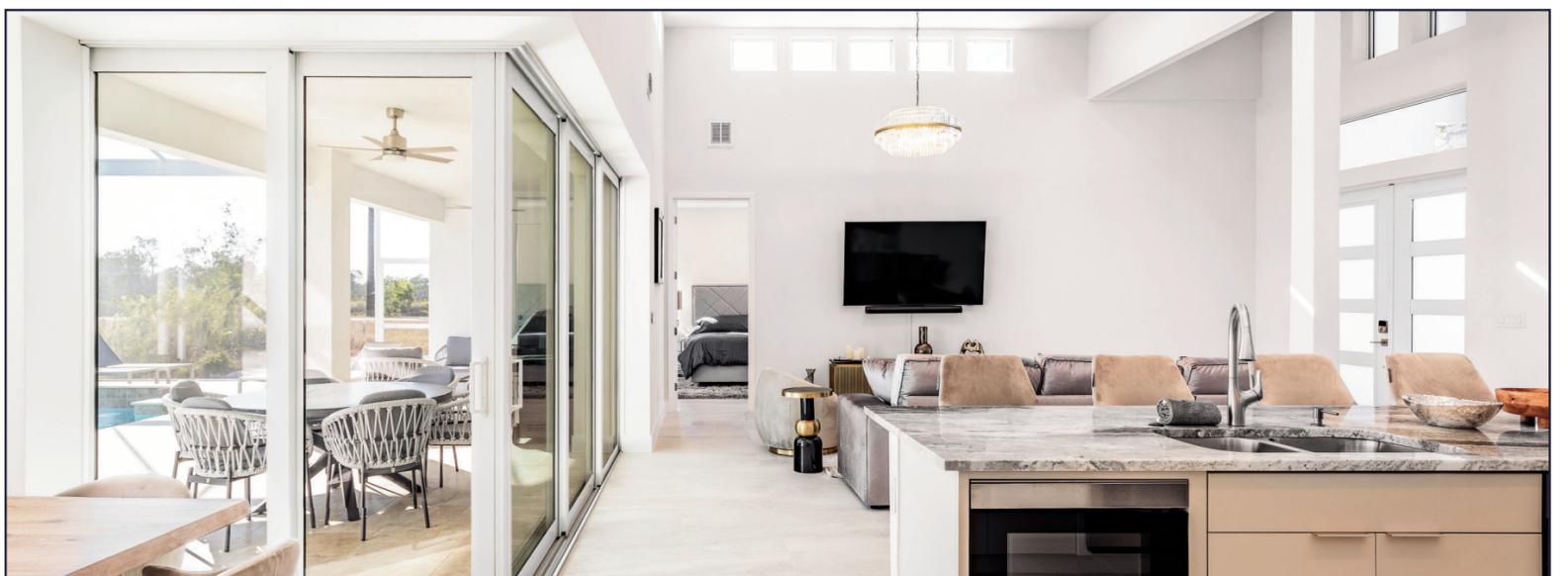
HERO OF THE MONTH

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

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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where sunshine, outdoor gatherings, and colorful traditions give the holiday a distinctive flavor.

Because April is also a time for making memories, we've gathered a variety of ideas for how to spend the holiday and the month ahead—whether you're enjoying a quiet day on your own, planning a special moment with your partner, or creating fun traditions with the whole family. Sometimes the best celebrations are the ones that simply bring people together.

Food, of course, plays its own important role in spring gatherings. As always, we are glad to offer extra inspiration for your kitchen and your holiday table with our newest Recipe of the Month! Whether you're cooking for loved ones or simply trying something new, we hope our dishes add a little flavor to your April.

We're also excited to welcome new voices to our writing team. In this issue, they bring their expertise to a deeper exploration of accounting and wealth management, providing practical insights that can help readers better understand financial planning, long-term security, and the decisions that shape our financial futures.

As always, our goal is to create a publication that informs, inspires, and reflects the community we share with a positive and truthful voice. Whether you're turning these pages for practical advice, new ideas, or simply a pleasant moment with your morning coffee, we're grateful to have you with us. From all of us at the newsroom, we wish you a joyful April filled with renewal, connection, and a few wonderful surprises along the way.

Warm regards,
Rouven Zietz Editor-In-Chief

Sunshine Post

Editor-in-Chief/Managing Editor
Rouven Zietz

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The Kindness: Caring for the Coast We Call Home



Act now: Our beaches are not something to take for granted! (Photo: Pexels)

We get to call a place home that people travel from far and wide to experience.

Endless waterways, white beaches, palm trees swaying in the breeze and sunsets that paint the sky in colors you rarely see anywhere else. Southwest Florida is not just beautiful — it is extraordinary.

In our last issue, we introduced the Adopt-a-Road program, a wonderful initiative that allows residents to take long-term responsibility for keeping a street clean.

But taking on a road is not the right fit for everyone. The good news is that there are many other meaningful ways to care for our environment and our community — ways that are flexible, welcoming and easy to join.

Across Lee County, volunteers regularly come together for cleanup events that allow anyone to lend a hand for a few hours and make a visible difference. Sometimes all it takes is a pair of gloves, a trash bag and the willingness to show up.

Cape Coral Earth Day Cleanup

One special opportunity to get involved this April is the Cape Coral Earth Day Cleanup, organized by the City of Cape Coral.

In honor of Earth Day, residents are invited to come together and help care for the city's shared spaces. Volunteers spend a few hours collecting litter from parks, neighborhoods, canals and other public areas — small efforts that together make a meaningful impact.

The event will take place on April 22, 2026, with volunteers working at several designated locations across Cape Coral. The city typically provides the necessary equipment and guidance so that anyone who would like to participate can easily join.

Events like this are about more than simply picking up trash. They are moments where neighbors work side by side, strengthening the sense of community while helping protect the environment we all enjoy.

More Ways to Get Involved

For those who enjoy the idea of helping but prefer something more flexible than adopting a road, there are several organizations throughout Southwest Florida that organize cleanup efforts year-round.

Many of these initiatives offer a simple volunteer registration that allows people to receive updates about upcoming events. From there, participants can decide individually which cleanup days fit their schedule. Whether someone joins once a year or several times, every helping hand contributes to preserving the beauty of this remarkable region.

Here are three inspiring initiatives that make it easy for residents to get involved:

1. Keep Lee County Beautiful

One of the most active environmental nonprofits in the region is Keep Lee County Beautiful, an organization dedicated to protecting and improving the natural environment throughout Lee County.

Working with volunteers, community groups and local partners, the organization coordinates cleanup efforts across neighborhoods, parks, canals and other public spaces. These events not only help remove litter but also encourage a shared sense of responsibility for the places where we live, work and spend our time outdoors. By bringing people together around a common goal, initiatives like these show how powerful simple community action can be.

2. Ocean Blue Project

Another inspiring effort along the Gulf Coast is the Ocean Blue Project, which focuses on protecting our beaches and marine ecosystems from plastic pollution and debris.

Through volunteer beach cleanups, participants help remove waste from the shoreline before it can break down into microplastics or harm wildlife. Every piece of litter collected helps protect the fragile coastal ecosystems that so many animals depend on — from shorebirds searching for food along the waterline to dolphins and sea turtles swimming just offshore.

At the same time, these events offer volunteers a powerful reminder of how closely connected we are to the ocean. Spending a morning walking the beach, working together with others and caring for the coastline often leaves participants with a renewed appreciation for the natural world around them.

The Ocean Blue Project welcomes volunteers of all ages, making it an easy and rewarding way to support the health of our coastal environment.

3. Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation

The Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) has long been dedicated to protecting the delicate coastal ecosystems that make Southwest Florida so unique.

Through programs such as Coastal Watch, volunteers help monitor and clean beaches while supporting conservation efforts that protect wildlife habitats along the Gulf. These efforts contribute to safeguarding the natural environments that countless species rely on — from nesting seabirds to marine life living beneath the waves. Participating in these initiatives offers a meaningful opportunity to contribute to the long-term health of our coastal

landscapes while learning more about the ecosystems that surround us.

Every Hand Makes a Difference

Making a difference does not always require a long-term commitment.

Sometimes joining a cleanup for just a few hours can already have a meaningful impact — not only for the community, but also for the delicate balance of nature around us.

When we remove litter from our beaches, parks and waterways, we help protect the habitats that birds, fish and countless other species depend on. At the same time, we create cleaner, healthier spaces for the people who live here today and for those who will call this place home in the future.

In the end, every small action becomes part of a much larger circle. When individuals step forward to care for the world around them, our environment becomes healthier, our community grows stronger and this extraordinary place we share remains beautiful for generations to come.

By Jennifer Hagemeister

Get Involved

Cape Coral Earth Day Cleanup
April 22, 2026
City of Cape Coral
www.capecoral.gov

Keep Lee County Beautiful
Community cleanups across Lee County
www.klcb.org

Ocean Blue Project
Volunteer beach cleanups along the Gulf Coast
www.oceanblueproject.org

Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation
Coastal Watch beach cleanup program
www.sccf.org



(Photo: Pexels)

Business Talk: The Vision and Journey with Heart of Matthias and Arthur Tukan

Interviewer:

Bernd Roebers for Sunshine Post

Business Talk Guests:

Matthias and Arthur Tukan, brothers and young entrepreneurs from Germany, currently forging their luck in Southwest Florida.



First meeting at the airport; left to right: Matthias, Bernd, Arthur (Photo courtesy of Bernd Roebers)

Entrepreneurial Motivation & Values

Bernd:

Arthur, when people listen to you talk about your company, they immediately sense this is about more than just business to you. What would you say truly drives you in your project?

Arthur:

It really is much more than an entrepreneurial project. Even before 2020, my brother and I talked about wanting to take responsibility together. Not just to function as people — but to create.

We didn't want to "milk cash cows." We wanted to leave a real footprint. Something that lasts. For us. For our families. For our children.

When you look at how the world is developing, you naturally ask yourself: What kind of environment do we want our children to grow up in? We don't want to be the anvil that gets struck — we want to be the hammer that shapes.

Matthias:

And the community we're part of

gives us exactly that space. It's not about quick money. To us, business is about connection, contribution, and leadership in the truest sense — as fathers and as brothers.

The Path into Logistics

Bernd:

How did you specifically get into the logistics industry?

Arthur:

It wasn't random. I often visited Matthias at work, observed the processes, the vehicles, the operational precision. At some point, it just clicked: This is our strength. This is where we can truly create value.

That's when we decided to complete the European Transport Manager certification — a demanding qualification required for commercial freight transport operations in Europe.

Matthias:

The exam was intense. We invested a lot — time, energy, focus. In the U.S., this specific certification isn't required because the regulations are different, but the knowledge, discipline, and structural competence we gained are priceless.

Arthur:

And I'll be honest: It wasn't always easy. But those kinds of processes serve as something you can bond over!

Working as Brothers

Bernd:

Siblings together in a business — that's unique. Why does it work for you?

Arthur:

Because we're different — but aligned at the core. We share values like responsibility and loyalty. Matthias brings incredible operational strength. I tend to think more strategically, more vision-oriented. That complementarity makes us strong.

Matthias:

And I want to say this clearly: Arthur showed incredible commitment during the Transport Manager certification. This wasn't a side project. It was full dedication.

The important thing is: We're not in Florida because we were dissatisfied somewhere else. In my current company, I realistically had the opportunity to move into a managing director position within three to four years.

But our business vision here in Florida... it feels bigger. More meaningful.

The Ten-Year Vision

Bernd:

If we fast-forward ten years, where do you see yourselves?

Matthias:

We see our own fleet with at least 10 to 15 drivers. Our own internal structures in sales, accounting, and operational management.

We want to control the entire process chain ourselves — from origin to destination.

Arthur:

And we want to radiate quality and reliability. Establishing the values often associated with German precision and discipline within the U.S. market.

There's no standing still. We think in terms of growth — but healthy, structured, step by step. Autonomy is our goal.

Visa Process & Relocation

Bernd:

What's the current status of the visa needed for your business?

Arthur:

All documents have been submitted. Realistically, we expect a decision by the end of April or beginning of May — but there's no guarantee.

What I can say is this: Once the approval comes, we're going.

Mentally, we're already on our way.

Matthias:

The preparation is complete. Our children are four years old and one and a half — that makes the move easier. It's still early childhood.

And that's exactly why it feels right to go now.

Family & Values

Bernd:

What role does your family play in this step?

Arthur:

A huge one. Probably the most important.

We're excited about our children growing up in a value-oriented community.

It's not just about economic success — it's about creating a framework where children grow up stable, secure, and grounded in strong values.

Matthias:

Bernd, at this point, we want to thank you as well. Your conviction is tangible. You're not just professionally committed — one can tell that what you do truly matters to you.

Arthur:

That's exactly what motivates us, too. It's about transparency. About honesty and commitment.

And we are proud out of gratitude for the path we are allowed to walk.

Matthias and Arthur are not embarking on a short-term business venture — they are stepping into a value-driven entrepreneurial journey.

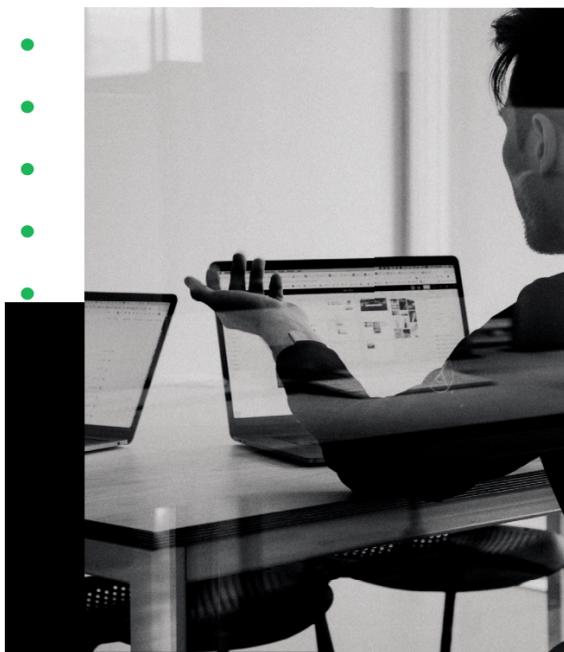
With a clear logistics focus, a long-term U.S. vision, and a strong family foundation, they are here to stay.

The visa process is underway. The relocation is prepared.

And what you clearly sense is this:

This isn't just a plan. It's a decision rooted in conviction and in responsibility for the next generation.

By Bernd Roebers, for the Sunshine Post



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The Credit Union Is Yet to Come

And Why This Might Be the Future of Banking

It's 7:14 a.m. on a Wednesday. Emma Chen is standing in line for coffee, half awake, scrolling through her phone. The person behind her is talking loudly on a headset about crypto markets. The espresso machine hisses like a steam engine.

Emma opens her banking app. Not because something is wrong. Just because she's curious.

The app greets her with a short message: "Good morning, Emma. Your rent clears today. You're still on track to reach your travel fund goal by July."

A small graph animates across the screen. Her spending from the last week is summarized in three simple icons. Groceries. Ride shares. Coffee. Apparently a lot of coffee.

Emma taps the "round-up savings" feature. The app automatically transfers the spare change from yesterday's purchases into a high-yield savings bucket labeled "Portugal 2026."

She smiles, pockets her phone, and steps forward in line.

Emma has never visited a bank branch. She has never filled out a paper application.

She has never waited for "business hours."

In fact, she has never once thought of the financial institution behind her app as a bank at all.

And that might be the future of credit unions.

A Cooperative Built for the Smartphone Era

For more than a century, credit unions have served communities with a simple promise: people helping people. But the way people live — and manage money — has changed dramatically. Today's younger generations expect something radically different from their financial institutions:

- Instant payments
- Real-time information
- Mobile-first design
- 24/7 service
- Seamless integration with the rest of their digital lives

They do not want to visit a branch. They do not want to sign forms. They do not want to "schedule an appointment with a loan officer."

They want answers instantly. And they want them on their phones. For many traditional credit unions, this shift has been difficult. Legacy technology stacks, built decades ago, were never designed for real-time digital banking. But a new generation of credit union builders is starting from scratch. And when you start from scratch, you can build something very different.

The Digital-First Cooperative

Imagine a credit union designed not around branches, but around the smartphone.

Opening an account takes less than five minutes.

Your identity is verified through secure biometric checks. Your ID is scanned. Your face confirms the match. Within moments, your membership is established.

No paperwork. No waiting. No printing. Your debit card appears instantly in your digital wallet.

Physical cards are optional. From that moment forward, your entire financial life flows through one interface — clear, intuitive, and always available. Every payment is visible in real time. Every budget category updates automatically.

Every saving goal adjusts dynamically based on your spending patterns. The technology is sophisticated. But the experience is simple. It feels less like banking — and more like using any other modern app.

Banking Without the Wait

Traditional financial institutions operate within fixed hours.

But money doesn't. Bills arrive at midnight. Paychecks post at dawn.

Emergencies rarely wait for Monday morning.

In the new generation of digital-native credit unions, service never sleeps. Artificial intelligence handles most interactions instantly:

- "Can I afford a \$1,200 laptop?"
- "What's my safe spending limit this week?"
- "How do I improve my credit score?"

The answers appear immediately. But when a situation requires nuance — buying a home, resolving a dispute, planning a business loan — the system escalates seamlessly.

Instead of standing in line at a branch, members can speak to a financial guide through secure video.

Think of it less like a teller window and more like FaceTime with a financial coach.

Human expertise remains available — but only when it's actually useful.

The Rise of the Robo-Branch

Does this mean physical locations disappear entirely?

Not necessarily. Some new credit union models include something called robo-branches.

Picture a small, modern kiosk in a shopping center or coworking space.



Credit unions and their advancement in modern technologies: A possible breakthrough? (Photo: Pexels)

Inside:

- Secure identity verification
- Document scanning
- Video consultation booths
- Biometric authentication terminals

No tellers. No waiting lines. Just a digital gateway to the credit union's services.

Members who prefer a fully digital experience never need to visit.

Those who want an occasional human interaction still can.

It's a hybrid model: digital first, physical when helpful.

Financial Tools That Think Ahead

One advantage of modern cloud-native technology is the ability to analyze financial data in real time.

In a next-generation credit union, your app does more than show your balance. It anticipates your needs.

If your spending patterns suggest you're drifting toward overdraft territory, the system warns you days in advance.

If you're consistently paying rent on time, the system suggests ways to build credit history.

If your savings reach a milestone, it proposes new investment options. All without intrusive sales pitches.

Unlike many fintech companies, a cooperative credit union has no incentive to push risky financial products.

Its purpose is not to maximize profit from its members. Its purpose is to improve their financial well-being.

AI That Works for Members, Not Advertisers

Artificial intelligence plays a central role in these new digital systems.

But there is a crucial difference. In many parts of the tech industry, AI is used to extract value from users — targeting advertisements, selling data, nudging behavior.

In a cooperative financial institution, the incentives run in the opposite direction. AI exists to protect and support members:

- Detecting fraud instantly
- Identifying unusual transactions
- Suggesting better saving habits
- Improving financial resilience

Your financial assistant is not trying to sell you something.

It is trying to help you succeed. That distinction — subtle but powerful — may become one of the defining advantages of the cooperative model in the digital age.

Governance in the Digital Era

Traditional credit union governance relies on annual meetings and mailed ballots.

Younger members expect something very different.

In a modern digital cooperative, governance itself becomes digital.

Members can vote securely through the app.

They can review board decisions, read transparent financial summaries, and participate in policy discussions.

Participation becomes easier, not harder. The result is a stronger cooperative — one where member ownership is not just symbolic, but active.

A complex and expensive process. Core system conversions can take years. Starting fresh changes the equation. A de-novo credit union can design its technology architecture from day one around:

- Cloud-native cores
- API-first platforms
- Open integrations
- Real-time processing

Instead of adapting the past to the present, it builds directly for the future.

A Quiet Movement

Across several U.S. states, small teams of organizers, technologists, and cooperative advocates are exploring this new model.

Some are former fintech engineers. Others are credit union veterans who believe the cooperative movement deserves modern tools.

They are studying regulatory frameworks, drafting charter proposals, and designing systems that could support the next generation of member-owned financial institutions.

Most of these efforts are still early.

Quiet conversations.

Whiteboard diagrams.

Late-night strategy calls.

But every once in a while, an idea crosses the threshold from discussion to action.

Something New on the Horizon

Right now, somewhere in the United States, a group of organizers is preparing what could become the first de-novo state-chartered credit union application in many years.

Their vision is simple but ambitious:

A fully digital, cloud-native cooperative designed from the ground up for the financial lives of younger generations.

No legacy systems.

No outdated processes.

Just a member-owned financial platform built for the world as it actually works today.

The work is already underway.

And like every cooperative before it, the success of such an institution will ultimately depend on the people it serves.

Your Voice in the Design

Unlike traditional financial institutions, a cooperative begins with its members.

Which is why the architects of this new initiative are asking an unusual question: What should the next credit union look like?

What services matter most?

How should digital banking actually work?

How should members interact with their cooperative?

On the opposite page of this publication, readers will find a QR code — a simple barcode that links to the first of a series of surveys.

The goal is straightforward:

To listen.

To understand.

To design a financial institution shaped by the preferences of the people who will use it.

The Next Chapter

Credit unions began more than 150 years ago with a simple insight.

Now it faces its next test.

Can the cooperative model reinvent itself for the digital age?

Can a member-owned institution deliver the speed and convenience younger generations demand — without sacrificing the principles that made credit unions unique?

If the emerging generation of digital-native cooperatives succeeds, the answer may be yes.

And somewhere, perhaps not too far from where you're reading this, the next chapter of that story may already be beginning.

By FTF

Stay tuned! More surveys are just around the corner. We want to hear your voice!

In other words, they combine the strengths of both models.

If executed well, they could deliver a financial experience that surpasses what either banks or fintech companies offer today.

Why Starting Fresh Matters

Many existing credit unions are trying to modernize their technology:

The Credit Union April Survey

Your voice matters! Scan the code to participate.



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Lee County Housing Market Update

As of February 2026, Lee County's single-family housing market continues to show signs of stabilization following the inventory expansion seen in prior years. Active listings are notably lower than one year ago, which has helped reduce months of supply despite still remaining slightly above the traditional equilibrium level of 6 months. Homes are taking modestly longer to sell compared to last year, reflecting a more measured pace of buyer activity. Median sale prices have remained nearly flat year-over-year, suggesting that values have largely stabilized after earlier adjustments. The list-to-sale price ratio of 96.8% indicates that negotiation remains common, with buyers continuing to secure small discounts or concessions. Mortgage rates have moved higher again, now sitting above 6.4%, which continues

Lee County Single-Family Housing Snapshot (February 2026 Data | Published April 2026)

| Metric | Value | Year-over-Year Change |
|----------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Median Sales Price | \$400,000 | -0.2% |
| Active Listings | 7,966 | -11.7% |
| Median Days on Market | 52 days | +6.1% |
| Months of Supply | 6.7 months | -18.3% |
| List Price / Sale Price Ratio | 96.8% | -0.5% |
| Avg. 30-Year Fixed Mortgage Rate | 6.41% | As of 3/16/2026 |

to limit affordability and dampen urgency among some buyers. Overall, the data points to a market that is gradually rebalancing, with improving absorption but still requiring disciplined pricing and patience from sellers.

By Kevin Tremmel

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



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Strategic US Accounting & Asset Protection: Why Experience Makes the Difference

Many Germans living in the USA who want to invest or start an LLC initially look for a bookkeeper or a CPA. In practice, however, it quickly becomes clear: what is really needed is someone who thinks ahead – tax-wise, entrepreneurially, and with an eye on asset protection. This is precisely where the difference lies between mere declaration and strategic accounting.

Introducing: Alexandra Welsch, Where Professional Expertise meets Foresight

Behind the consulting of DARIA US Accounting Service LLC is, among others, Alexandra Welsch with extensive experience. She comes from practical experience, is a certified accountant and tax professional with over 30 years of experience in German accounting, and has been an independent entrepreneur for more than 15 years. Since 2015, she has also been active as a business and financial consultant and has specialized in fixed

assets and cross-border structures between Germany and the USA. The focus of her work is on supporting investors and entrepreneurs who are already active in the USA or wish to become active here. This specifically includes US LLCs, existing company structures, as well as early tax planning for wealth building or relocating one's primary residence to the USA. It is precisely in these situations that the importance of understanding both tax systems becomes apparent, rather than just handling individual forms.

What Alexandra does differently: Classic US bookkeepers record numbers. CPAs prepare tax returns. German tax advisors often think nationally.

Alexandra's work combines these areas and intentionally takes it a step further. This includes a deeper understanding of the tax differences between Germany and the USA, combined with practical

experience from daily accounting. Numbers are not only recorded but considered in context. Decisions are not only documented but also prepared. The approach is clearly structured:

- Understanding of both tax systems
- Accounting learned from the ground up, not just theoretically
- Thinking in solutions and asset protection instead of just in forms
- Translation of tax office and IRS language into understandable decisions
- Personal support in entrepreneurial and private decisions

Personal, bilingual, and strategic
The consulting is deliberately personal. Clients are served in German and English, supported by a bilingual team in Germany and the USA. The goal is to build structures correctly from the start so that future tax or legal problems do

not arise at all. Accompanied services include, among others:

- Company formations in the USA
- Application for EIN and ITIN
- Ongoing bookkeeping and accounting for small businesses
- Tax returns in the USA, e.g., 1040, 1040-NR, 1065, 5472, or 1120
- Planning of corporate and asset structures

We are interested in your experience: What challenges are you currently facing in the area of accounting, taxes, or international structures between Germany and the USA?

Feel free to write a letter to the editor to editor@sunshine-post.com with your questions or experiences. We are happy to address practical topics in one of the next issues.

By Alexandra Welsch

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Get in touch:

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The “Spouse Error”: Why Spouses are Often Not Automatically Allowed to Make Urgent Decisions

Many people assume that, for example in a medical emergency, their spouse is automatically allowed to make decisions about their assets or medical treatment. This belief is widespread, but in practice it is often wrong. Both Germany and the United States have clear legal regulations that show that trust alone is not enough to ensure the ability to act. This article highlights the legal differences between Germany and the US and sheds light on the financial consequences this misconception can have.

Germany: No automatic decision-making rights

In Germany, the principle of personal responsibility applies to all adults.

A spouse cannot automatically dispose of their partner’s assets, bank accounts, or real estate if their partner becomes legally incompetent.

Without the appropriate advance directives, the guardianship court will intervene.

The court will appoint a guardian to act on behalf of the person. Even close relatives, including spouses or adult children, can only make decisions after a court review.

Typical consequences for families

- Banks block accounts if no power of attorney is in place.
- Real estate transactions such as sales or encumbrances require court approval.
- Business decisions may be delayed until a guardian is appointed.

Many spouses only realize in an emergency that they have virtually no power to act without a power of attorney—a risk that can be particularly serious in the case of larger assets and international investments.

USA: Spousal rights vary greatly

In the United States, too, there is no general automatic right of decision for spouses. Instead, much depends on the state.

A spouse can only act without power of attorney if the relevant laws apply or a court order has been issued.

The solution: Durable Power of Attorney

To avoid this problem, many American families use a durable power of attorney.

- It regulates who makes financial decisions if someone becomes legally incompetent.
- It also applies if the person is no longer capable of making decisions – this is what makes it “durable.”
- Without it, spouses may have to have a guardian appointed by a court, which is time-consuming, expensive, and public.

Another advantage in the US is that banks often accept a valid power of attorney more readily than in Germany, provided it has been drawn up in accordance with the applicable formal requirements.

Financial consequences of the misconception

The widespread belief that spouses can act automatically can have significant

consequences:

- Delayed access to funds: Bills, taxes, or ongoing loans cannot be paid on time.
- Blocked real estate transactions: Necessary sales or mortgages become impossible.
- Business standstill: In family businesses, the ability to operate may be jeopardized.
- International investments: Without international powers of attorney, a property in the US, for example, may be inaccessible for weeks or months.

The situation becomes particularly dramatic when several family members have different ideas or the assets are structured in a complex manner.

Power of attorney vs. marital status

A power of attorney clearly regulates who is authorized to act—regardless of marital status or relationship. It is the only way to legally empower a spouse to make decisions in an emergency without having to wait for court proceedings.

Practical example:

A married couple owns several properties in Germany and the US. The wife suddenly becomes legally incompetent.

Without power of attorney, a guardian must be appointed who has to approve every transaction.

This blocks sales, rent payments, and investment decisions. With power of attorney, the wife could have acted immediately to secure the assets.

Medical decisions: Another common misconception

It is not only assets that are affected. Many people also believe that spouses can automatically make medical decisions.

- In Germany, this is only permitted with a living will or power of attorney for health matters.
- In the US, spouses often make decisions, but only in accordance with clear legal requirements or powers of attorney.

The combination of financial and medical provisions is crucial to ensure the ability to act in all areas.

Practical tips for families

1. Create powers of attorney early on: Financial and medical powers

of attorney should be drawn up in a timely manner by a notary or in a legally effective manner.

2. Observe international regulations: In the case of real estate or accounts abroad, it is essential to check whether powers of attorney are recognized there.
3. Update regularly: Life situations change: children, company investments, or real estate purchases may require adjustments.
4. Create an emergency folder: All important documents, access data, and insurance information should be stored centrally and easily accessible.

Final Words

The widespread belief that spouses can automatically act on behalf of each other in matters of property and decision-making is a dangerous misconception—in Germany as well as in the US.

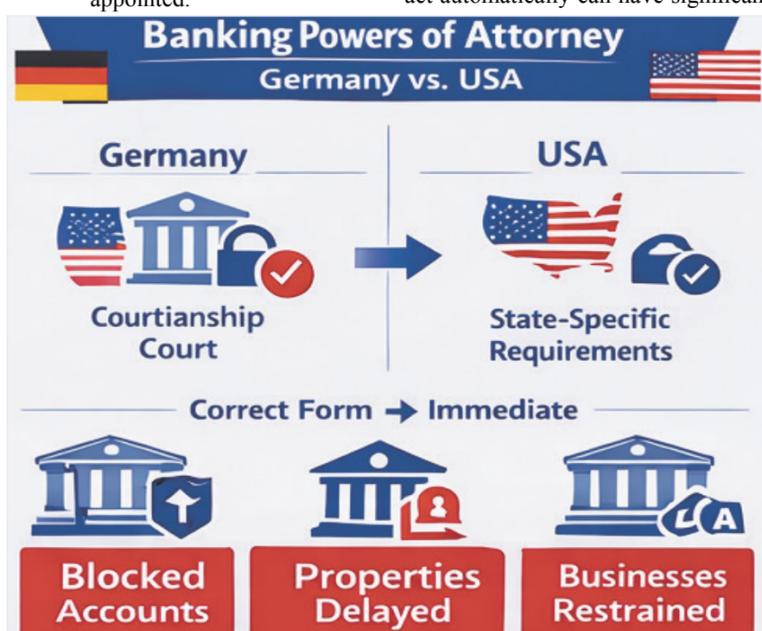
Those who draw up powers of attorney in good time can avoid these risks. The ability to act is retained, financial decisions can be made without delay, and family assets are protected.

Precautionary measures therefore not only provide legal certainty, but are also a central component of modern asset strategy, especially for families with international investments.



By Bernd Roebbers

A senior consultant, Bernd Roebbers works with people who are considering emigrating to the United States and/or starting a business. In this column, he regularly shares practical tips and “stories” with us.



Banking Powers of Attorney: An overview (Photos courtesy of Bernd Roebbers)

Recipe of The Month: Pineapple-Glazed Easter Ham

A pineapple-glazed ham is a classic American Easter dish, especially for large family gatherings. The sweet flavor of pineapple and brown sugar balances the salty ham and creates a caramelized glaze while baking. The pineapple slices and cherries also give the ham its traditional festive look on the Easter table.

By S. Mechalik

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 1)

- 1 fully cooked spiral-cut ham (8–10 lbs / 3.5–4.5 kg)
- 1 can pineapple rings (reserve the juice)
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup honey
- ¼ cup pineapple juice (from the can)
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tbsp melted butter
- maraschino cherries (optional, for decoration)
- whole cloves (optional)

1 Preheat the oven: Preheat oven to 325°F (165°C).

2 Prepare the ham: Place the ham cut-side down in a roasting pan. Cover loosely with aluminum foil.

3 Bake the ham: Bake for about 15 minutes per pound (about 2–2½ hours).

4 Prepare the glaze: In a small saucepan mix: Brown sugar, honey, pineapple juice, Dijon mustard, melted butter. Heat gently until the sugar dissolves and the mixture becomes a smooth glaze.

5 Add the pineapple topping: About 45 minutes before the ham is finished, remove the foil. Arrange pineapple rings on the surface of the ham and secure them with toothpicks. Place a maraschino cherry in the center of each ring. If desired, insert a clove into the ham near each pineapple slice.

6 Brush the ham generously with the pineapple glaze. Continue brushing every 10–15 minutes while the ham finishes baking so the glaze caramelizes.

7 Remove the ham from the oven and let it rest 10–15 minutes before serving and slicing. Enjoy!



Our tip for an exotic yet traditional flavor combination to elevate your Easter gathering (Photo courtesy of S. Mechalik)

TYPICAL EASTER SIDE DISHES

- Deviled eggs
- Scalloped or mashed potatoes
- Roasted asparagus or green beans
- Dinner rolls
- Carrot cake or coconut cake

The combination of sweet pineapple glaze and savory ham has made this dish a centerpiece of many American Easter meals for generations.

An Empty Tomb and The Courage To Start Again: The Story of Easter

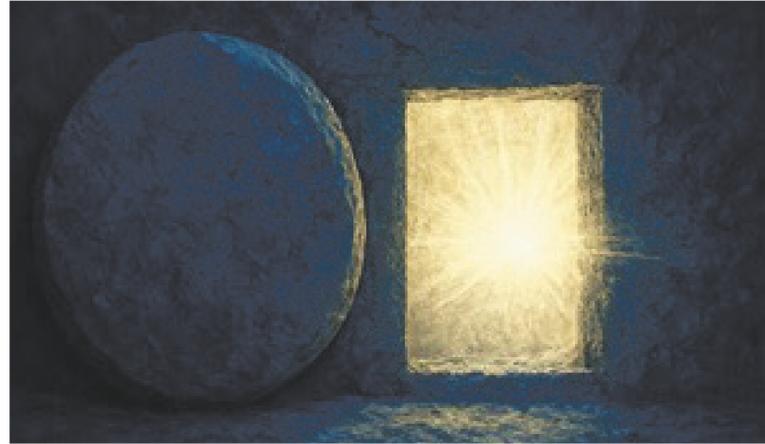
The day begins with a sense of unrest in the early morning. The world still lies in half-darkness, everything seems the same as before—yet suddenly everything is set in motion. A woman discovers an opened tomb and runs, frightened, to the disciples. Two of them set off immediately, almost as if in a race. Breathless, they finally stand before the burial place of their friend. What they see is surprising—and at the same time unsettling: the tomb is empty. This is how the Gospel of John tells the story of Easter morning. No triumphant spectacle, no angels loudly proclaiming victory. Only an open tomb, a few linen cloths left behind—and people who are not quite sure what to make of it. And yet it is precisely here that one of the greatest stories of hope in human history begins.

The Surprising Power of Emptiness

The empty tomb has unsettled many people—then as now. Who would not prefer clear proof? A straightforward explanation, a spectacular miracle? Instead, there is at first only a gap, an absence. Yet this is precisely where the real point of the Easter message lies. The place where death was supposed to demonstrate its power is empty. Its cave contains nothing anymore. The Gospel narrates this moment with remarkable restraint. The disciples see only traces: linen cloths neatly folded. No dramatic scene, no grand explanation. And yet a new thought begins to grow here: perhaps death does not have the last word. This emptiness is therefore not a sign of loss, but of possibility. Where something is no longer occupied by the power of death, space is created—space for life, for hope, for a future.

Easter Sets People in Motion

What is striking is how much movement there is in the Easter story. Mary Magdalene runs to the tomb. She runs back to the disciples. Peter and the so-called beloved disciple run off themselves. It is a scene full of energy: footsteps on dusty paths, quickened breath, a race against one's own fear.



The Miracle of Easter: A story of hope, Divine Power and life (Photos courtesy of Tobias Leinesser)

The evangelist does not describe this movement by chance. Easter is not an event for silent spectators. The message of the resurrection sets people in motion. Those who hope do not remain standing still. Hope drives people forward. Hope makes them set out, ask questions, search, and keep going—even when not everything is yet clear.

A Woman Becomes the First Witness

There is another surprising turn in the story. While the two disciples return home after visiting the tomb, Mary Magdalene remains behind. She stands there weeping—and eventually encounters the risen one. Of all people, she becomes the first witness

of the resurrection. She recognizes Jesus, speaks to him, and receives the commission to bring the news to the disciples. In doing so, the Gospel overturns expectations of the time. It is not the leading disciples who are addressed first, but a woman who had long been overlooked.

Easter apparently turns many things upside down—customs, hierarchies, certainties. God often begins something new exactly where people least expect it.

A Hope That Can Transform People

The Easter message did not remain confined to that morning in Jerusalem. It has moved generations of people to dare something new and to spread hope. Again and again, people inspired by this faith have founded initiatives, built communities, or begun projects that once seemed unthinkable. The history of Christianity is also a history of new beginnings. Sometimes such beginnings start very quietly. One person recognizes a need and decides

to change something. A small group gathers and creates space for encounter. Take DARIA, for example, and the people who founded a new community in the United States. They noticed that many people in a large city were searching for genuine community—and simply started their mission. One meeting, one room, one idea. Today it has become a place where people live together, share life, and experience hope. This too is a form of Easter: the willingness, in an open situation, not only to see what is missing, but the possibility of a beginning.

The Courage to Dare Something New

The empty tomb is therefore not a final full stop, but a starting point. It invites us to look at life anew. If death does not have the last word, then our perspective on many things changes: on crises, on failure, on the future. Then an ending can also be a beginning. Then something can grow out of emptiness. Perhaps this is the deepest message of Easter: That hope can arise precisely where people see nothing but emptiness.

An Open Space in the Midst of Life

The image of the empty tomb therefore remains one of the most powerful symbols of the Christian faith. It shows an open space in the midst of life—a place where the power of death comes to an end.

In this emptiness, hope grows. In this emptiness, love can begin anew. In this emptiness, the future emerges.

That is why Easter is more than a religious festival. It is an invitation: To set out, to dare something new, and to trust in life.

For sometimes the greatest new beginning starts exactly where we first see only an empty tomb.

Happy Easter.

By Tobias Leinesser

Sunshine, Family, and Easter Traditions in Florida

When people think of Easter, they often imagine spring flowers, cool weather, and the first warm days after winter. In Southwest Florida, however, Easter arrives with bright sunshine, warm temperatures, and the feeling that summer is already close. For many families in this region of the United States, the holiday is not only a religious celebration but also an important day for family, traditions, and spending time outdoors.

The Easter weekend often begins quietly but meaningfully. Many families attend church services on Sunday morning, which celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Churches are often decorated with flowers such as lilies, and the atmosphere is joyful and hopeful. In Southwest Florida, some congregations hold sunrise services directly on the beach. Families gather early in the morning, sometimes bringing folding chairs or blankets, while the sky slowly becomes lighter over the Gulf of Mexico. As the sun rises, pastors lead prayers and choirs sing hymns. The combination of the ocean, the gentle morning breeze, and the rising sun makes these services especially memorable. For many people, this peaceful moment is the spiritual heart of the holiday.

After church, the focus of the day usually turns toward family traditions. In many homes, children wake up with excitement because they believe that the Easter Bunny has visited during the night. Similar to Santa Claus at Christmas, the Easter Bunny is a beloved character in American culture. According to tradition, he hides eggs and leaves baskets filled with candy, chocolate, and small gifts.

Parents often place these colorful baskets on the kitchen table or in the living room before their children wake up. Watching the children discover their baskets in the morning has become a treasured moment for many families.

One of the most popular activities of the day is the Easter egg hunt. In backyards, gardens, parks, and community centers, adults hide dozens of brightly colored plastic eggs filled with candy or small toys.



We all once enjoyed a fun Easter egg hunt!

(Photo courtesy of S. Mechalik)

Children run around with baskets in their hands, searching under bushes, behind trees, and in flower beds. Their laughter and excitement fill the air as they compete to see who can find the most eggs. Sometimes there is also a “golden egg” with a special prize inside.

Across Southwest Florida, many parks, neighborhoods, churches, and community organizations also host large public Easter egg hunts. These events often take place on the Saturday before Easter or on Easter morning. Families gather in local parks or open

fields where thousands of colorful eggs are scattered across the grass. At a signal, groups of children rush forward to collect as many eggs as they can. For younger children, there are often special areas where the eggs are easier to find.

A highlight of these community celebrations is the appearance of the Easter Bunny. Someone dressed in a large bunny costume greets families, waves to the children, and poses for photographs. Parents often line up with their children to take pictures with the Easter Bunny, creating memories that will later appear in family photo albums. In addition to the egg hunts and photo opportunities, these events may include face painting, music, small games, and food stands. They have become an important way for neighbors and communities to celebrate the holiday together.

Food plays a central role in the celebration as well. Easter is often one of the few days in the year when extended families gather for a long meal together. In many homes, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins all meet for a festive brunch or dinner. A traditional Easter menu in the United States often includes baked ham as the main dish. Side dishes may include deviled eggs, potato salad, fresh vegetables, and spring salads. Desserts are also important, and many families serve carrot cake, coconut cake, or cupcakes decorated with pastel-colored icing.

In Southwest Florida, however, meals often reflect the warm climate and coastal lifestyle. Families frequently eat outside on patios or in gardens, enjoying the sunshine and the fresh air. Some families add local seafood such as shrimp or fish to the menu, while others prepare a barbecue. Children

run around the yard while adults talk, laugh, and share stories. The relaxed atmosphere is one of the reasons why many people in the region especially love celebrating Easter here.

The afternoon often continues with outdoor activities. Because the weather is typically warm and sunny in April, families take advantage of the beautiful surroundings. Some go for a walk along the beach, collecting seashells or watching dolphins in the distance. Others spend time boating, fishing, or simply relaxing by the water. Parks and beaches are filled with families having picnics, flying kites, or playing games together.

For many residents of Southwest Florida, Easter also marks the end of the busy winter tourist season. During the winter months, thousands of visitors come from colder northern states to enjoy the warm climate. By Easter, many of these “snowbirds,” as seasonal visitors are often called, are preparing to return home. The holiday therefore becomes a moment when communities slow down again and local families enjoy time together before the long summer begins.

Despite the sunshine and the relaxed atmosphere, the deeper meaning of Easter remains important for many people. It is a day that reminds families of faith, hope, and new beginnings. Churches are full, families reconnect, and traditions are passed down from one generation to the next.

In Southwest Florida, Easter may look a little different from celebrations in colder parts of the world. There are no coats, no chilly spring winds, and often no need to stay indoors. Nevertheless, people from the Sunshine State continue to create memories that will stay with them long after the holiday has passed.

By S. Mechalik

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!

South Cape Business Easter Egg Hunt

(Family Easter Event)

Where? South Cape Coral

When? Typically 11 AM – 3 PM

- Children collect Easter eggs from participating businesses along Cape Coral Parkway
- Free Easter Bunny photo booth
- Treats, candy, and prizes at many local stores

4
5

The Farm at Buckingham Fort Myers

(Easter Brunch & Dining)

- Rustic countryside restaurant and event venue
- Popular Easter brunch buffet with live music
- Family-friendly atmosphere on a working farm

4
5

Community Easter Egg Hunts Lee County Parks

(Family Easter Event)

Where? Various Lee County parks in Fort Myers and surrounding areas

- Many local parks organize family egg hunts
- Separate areas for different age groups
- Special “golden eggs” with prizes
- Often includes a visit from the Easter Bunny

4
5

Cristof’s on McGregor Fort Myers

(Easter Brunch & Dining)

- Well-known local brunch spot
- Classic American breakfast and seafood dishes

4
5

Fancy’s Southern Café Fort Myers

(Easter Brunch & Dining)

- Southern-style brunch favorites
- Known for biscuits, shrimp & grits, and comfort food

4
5

Downtown Fort Myers Easter Scavenger Hunt

(Family Easter Event)

Where? Fort Myers River District

- Families search for hidden Easter eggs in storefront displays
- Children collect letters from eggs to solve a puzzle
- Prizes and Easter baskets for participants

4
5

Oxbow Bar & Grill Downtown Fort Myers

(Easter Brunch & Dining)

- Riverfront dining along the Caloosahatchee River
- Holiday brunch and lunch menus

4
5

Bass Pro Shops Easter Bunny Photos – Fort Myers

(Easter Bunny Photo Event)

Where? Bass Pro Shops, Gulf Coast Town Center

When? Usually held on weekends and booked days before Easter

Families search for hidden Easter eggs in storefront displays

- Families can take a free professional 4x6 photo with the Easter Bunny
- Reservations recommended due to high demand
- A popular pre-Easter family tradition

4
5

First Watch Cape Coral & Fort Myers

(Easter Brunch & Dining)

- Popular daytime café chain
- Healthy brunch options, pancakes, and fresh juices

4
5

Typical Easter Weekend in Southwest Florida

Many families celebrate Easter with a combination of activities:

- Sunrise church services (sometimes on the beach)
- Public egg hunts in parks and neighborhoods
- Photos with the Easter Bunny
- A festive Easter brunch with family and friends

The warm weather allows most celebrations to take place outdoors, giving Easter in Southwest Florida a relaxed and family-centered atmosphere.

Send Us Your Event Recommendations!

info@sunshine-post.com

Miracle on Ice 2026: A Historic Moment in Milan

A Historic Moment in Milan

When the final buzzer sounded in the sold-out Milano Santagiulia Ice Hockey Arena in Milan, an explosion of joy, tears, and disbelief erupted on the American bench. Forty-two years after the legendary triumph in Lake Placid in 1980, the U.S. men’s ice hockey team had once again won Olympic gold. What unfolded at the Olympic tournament is already being called one of the greatest chapters in American sports history – a new “Miracle on Ice.”

A Strong Team with Big Ambitions

The road to the final was anything but easy. The U.S. team, led by captain Auston Matthews, arrived with a fast and offensively powerful roster. Alongside Matthews, players such as Jack Eichel, Jack Hughes, Matthew Tkachuk, Brady Tkachuk, Matt Boldy, Quinn Hughes, and goaltender Connor Hellebuyck shaped the identity of the team. While experts considered the Americans strong contenders, Canada, Sweden, and defending champion Finland were widely seen as the tournament favorites.

The Perfect Start Against Latvia

However, the very first preliminary round game already showed that Team USA was a serious contender. Their opening opponent was Latvia. From the very beginning, the Americans controlled the game with high speed and aggressive forechecking. Goals by Brock Nelson (2), Brady Tkachuk, Tage Thompson, and Auston Matthews secured a convincing 5–1 opening victory and gave the team early confidence for the tournament.

“We wanted to show right away that we came here to win gold,” captain Auston Matthews said after the game. “This team believed in itself from the very beginning.”

The United States remained consistent throughout the rest of the group stage. The offensive line centered around Jack Hughes impressed with creativity and speed, while the defensive unit led by Quinn Hughes provided stability.

In goal, Connor Hellebuyck repeatedly delivered spectacular saves.

“Connor was incredible throughout the entire tournament,” defenseman Adam Fox said. “When you have a goalie like that behind you, you automatically play with more confidence.”

The Difficult Road to the Final

The true turning point came in the semifinal against Slovakia.



The Olympic rings, a sign of solidarity, sportsmanship and excellence. (Photo: Pixabay)

The Americans once again had to show their class and composure under pressure to secure a spot in the final. With disciplined defense, efficient scoring, and a complete team performance, they managed to claim the decisive victory – setting up the dream final against their eternal rival, Canada.

A Final for the History Books

The gold medal game between the United States and Canada turned into an instant classic. Canada, led by superstars Connor McDavid, Nathan MacKinnon, Mitch Marner, and Cale Makar, put heavy pressure on the Americans early in the game. But Connor Hellebuyck kept his team in it with several spectacular saves. “I just tried to stay in the moment,” Hellebuyck later explained. “When you play against players like that, you have to treat every shot like it’s the most important one of the game.”

In the second period, the United States struck first.

After a quick transition play, the puck reached Matt Boldy, who finished clinically to give the U.S. a 1–0 lead. American fans turned the arena into a frenzy.

“When the puck went in, I could hardly believe it myself,” Boldy said. “I just knew that it could be a really special moment.”

Canada responded in the third period when defenseman Cale Makar fired a precise shot from the blue line to tie

the game. The tension inside the arena became almost unbearable. Both teams created scoring chances, but neither Hellebuyck nor his Canadian counterpart allowed another goal.

the game. The tension inside the arena became almost unbearable. Both teams created scoring chances, but neither Hellebuyck nor his Canadian counterpart allowed another goal.

The Moment of Jack Hughes

The game went to overtime. Just 1 minute and 41 seconds into the extra period, the moment that would enter American sports history arrived. After a quick rush, Zach Werenski passed the puck into the slot to Jack Hughes. The young forward wasted no time and blasted the puck under the crossbar. Golden goal.

For a split second, there was stunned silence. Then the arena erupted in deafening celebration. American players stormed the ice, throwing gloves and helmets into the air and piling on top of Hughes in celebration.

“This is every kid’s dream who grows up playing hockey,” Hughes said afterward with a huge smile.

“Scoring in overtime of an Olympic final – it doesn’t get better than that.”

With a 2–1 overtime victory, the United States defeated Canada and won Olympic gold in men’s hockey for the first time in 42 years. For many experts, it was one of the best ice hockey games of all time. Goaltender Connor Hellebuyck, who made 41 saves, was one of the game’s greatest heroes.

The Women Also Make History

But that was not the end of the story. The U.S. women’s team also made history at this year’s Olympic Games.

Led by captain Hilary Knight, Kendall Coyne Schofield, Alex Carpenter, Amanda Kessel, and goaltender Aerin Frankel, the team also fought its way into the final – where their longtime rival Canada awaited once again.

The championship game developed into a dramatic battle similar to the men’s final. Canada took the early lead and defended it with determination for most of the game. But the Americans refused to give up and scored the equalizer shortly before the end of regulation.

“We kept telling ourselves: stay calm, our chance will come,” Hilary Knight explained after the game.

The match went to overtime as well. There, the United States seized its opportunity when Megan Keller scored the decisive goal for a 2–1 victory. Players and coaches rushed onto the ice, flags waved in the stands, and once again the American national anthem played at an Olympic hockey medal ceremony.

“This is bigger than ourselves,” Kendall Coyne Schofield said. “If young girls watched this game today and thought, ‘I want to do that someday,’ then we’ve accomplished something special.”

A Double Miracle

That both the men’s and women’s teams won gold at the same Olympic tournament is a historic double triumph. For many fans, it symbolizes the tremendous development of American ice hockey. Thus ends an Olympic tournament that will be remembered for a long time: two teams, two gold medals, and a nation celebrating hockey.

Or, as many fans are already calling it: The “Miracle on Ice 2026.”

By John Heinrich

| USA (Men’s Ice Hockey at the Olympic Games) | |
|--|--|
| <u>Category</u> | <u>Data</u> |
| Team | United States men’s national ice hockey team |
| First appearance | 1920 |
| Gold medals | 3 |
| Silver medals | 8 |
| Bronze medals | 1 |
| Total medals | 12 |

| Olympic gold medals | | |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Year | Host/Location | Notes |
| 1960 | Squaw Valley | First Olympic gold medal |
| 1980 | Lake Placid | First “Miracle on Ice” |
| 2026 | Milan–Cortina | 2–1 OT win over Canada in the final |

↑

| Canada (Men’s Ice Hockey at the Olympic Games) | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <u>Category</u> | <u>Data</u> |
| Team | Canada men’s national ice hockey team |
| First appearance | 1920 |
| Gold medals | 9 |
| Silver medals | 4 |
| Bronze medals | 2 |
| Total medals | 15 |

| Olympic gold medals | | |
|---------------------|----------------|-------|
| Year | Host/Location | Notes |
| 1920 | Antwerp | - |
| 1924 | Chamonix | - |
| 1928 | St. Moritz | - |
| 1932 | Lake Placid | - |
| 1948 | St. Moritz | - |
| 1952 | Oslo | - |
| 2002 | Salt Lake City | - |
| 2010 | Vancouver | - |
| 2014 | Sochi | - |

Canada is historically the most successful men’s ice hockey team at the Olympic Winter Games.

| Head-to-Head Matchups at the Olympic Games (Men) | | | |
|--|------|--------|-------|
| Team | Wins | Losses | Draws |
| CA | 12 | 4 | 3 |
| US | 5 | 12 | 3 |

The two teams have faced each other 19 times at the Olympic Games, with Canada leading the overall record.

| Olympic finals | | |
|----------------|--------|--------|
| Year | Winner | Result |
| 2002 | CA | 5-2 |
| 2010 | CA | 3-2 OT |
| 2016 | US | 2-1 OT |

- ### Summary
- Canada is historically the most successful nation in Olympic men’s ice hockey.
 - The United States has fewer titles but some of the most iconic victories in hockey history (e.g., 1980).
 - The USA–Canada rivalry is one of the most significant rivalries in international ice hockey.

The Florida Edit: Adventures in the Everglades



Dangerous or majestic? Florida's wildlife never fails to fascinate

(Photos courtesy of Katharina Kaufmann)

There are places in Florida that feel almost untouched by time - landscapes where the rhythm of nature still dictates the pace of life. The Everglades are one of those places. Over the past year, I have returned there nearly every week, and each visit has reminded me how unique this ecosystem truly is. No matter how often you step into this vast wilderness, the Everglades always reveal something new: a sudden splash in the water, a heron lifting into the sky, or the quiet movement of grass in the warm Florida breeze.

Stretching across much of southern Florida, the Everglades are often described as a "river of grass." Water flows slowly and almost imperceptibly from Lake Okeechobee toward Florida Bay, creating one of the most remarkable wetlands on Earth. At first glance, the landscape might appear simple, but the longer you spend here, the more complex and fascinating it becomes. Sawgrass marshes stretch endlessly across the horizon, cypress domes rise from the water like natural cathedrals, and winding trails invite visitors into a world that feels far removed from the busy coastal cities of Florida.

This environment supports an extraordinary diversity of wildlife. The Everglades are home to more than 350 species of birds, making them one of the most important bird habitats in North America. Great blue herons stand patiently in the shallows, snowy egrets glide gracefully above the water, and roseate spoonbills bring flashes of bright pink to the green landscape. Beneath the surface, turtles move quietly through the dark water while fish dart through submerged grasses. And of course, the Everglades are famous for their most iconic resident: the American alligator. These ancient reptiles have lived in this ecosystem for millions of years and remain a powerful symbol of Florida's wild side.

With a bit of luck, visitors might even encounter one of the rarest animals in North America - the Florida panther. Fewer than a few hundred of these elusive big cats remain in the wild, and much of their habitat lies within the protected areas of southern Florida. The Everglades and the surrounding preserves are essential to their survival. But the Everglades are not only a place of extraordinary wildlife; they are also deeply connected to the cultural history of Florida. Long before Florida became

a modern state, Native American tribes lived in harmony with this environment. The Seminole and Miccosukee tribes found refuge in the Everglades during the Seminole Wars of the 19th century, when many Native Americans were forced from their lands. Instead of leaving, they retreated into the wetlands - a landscape that outsiders often considered uninhabitable but which the tribes understood intimately.

The Everglades are not simply a place to visit. They are a place to experience - slowly, respectfully, and with a sense of wonder that stays with you long after you leave.

Living on raised platforms called chickees, traveling by canoe through narrow waterways, and relying on the resources of the land, the Seminole and Miccosukee people built a life deeply connected to the rhythms of the Everglades. Even today, their presence

remains an essential part of the region's identity. Their communities continue to honor traditions that have been passed down for generations, reminding visitors that the Everglades are not just wilderness, but also a living cultural landscape.

Another fascinating chapter in the region's history emerged during the early 20th century. During the era of Prohibition in the United States, when alcohol was illegal between 1920 and 1933, the remote and labyrinth-like waterways of the Everglades became ideal routes for smugglers transporting liquor through southern Florida. Hidden camps, secret trails, and isolated outposts turned parts of the wetlands into a shadowy network far from the reach of authorities. Over time, however, the importance of protecting the Everglades became increasingly clear. Massive development projects in the early 1900s attempted to drain large portions of the wetlands in order to create farmland and expand cities. While these projects brought growth to Florida, they also disrupted the natural water flow that sustained the Everglades ecosystem. Recognizing the need for conservation, large areas of the region were eventually protected. Everglades National Park was established in 1947, becoming the first national park created specifically to protect an ecosystem rather than a scenic landscape. Nearby, the Big Cypress National Preserve - located just south of Naples - was later designated to safeguard additional wetlands and wildlife habitat. Together, these protected areas now represent one of the most significant environmental preservation efforts in the United States.

Spending time in the Everglades today is a reminder of just how valuable this ecosystem remains. It is not only a sanctuary for wildlife, but also a critical part of Florida's water system. The wetlands naturally filter and store freshwater that millions of Floridians depend on.

For me personally, the Everglades have become a place of reflection and discovery. Week after week, walking through these landscapes has deepened my appreciation for the quiet beauty of Florida's natural environment. It is easy to overlook how special this place truly is until you slow down long enough to notice the details - the reflection of cypress trees in still water, the distant call of a bird, or the silent glide of an alligator beneath the surface.

Because of this deep connection, I will soon begin offering guided Everglades walking experiences for those who wish to explore this extraordinary landscape more closely. These hikes will take place during Florida's cooler winter months, when temperatures and

humidity allow visitors to comfortably spend several hours outdoors. The walk will last approximately four hours and will lead participants through carefully selected areas that reveal the hidden beauty of the Everglades.

Exploring the wetlands on foot creates a completely different perspective. You begin to notice how alive this environment truly is - every movement, every sound, every subtle change in the landscape tells a story about how this ecosystem functions.

After the hike, we will stop at the charming Island Café, a local favorite that offers the perfect setting to relax, breathe, and enjoy a well-deserved meal. With its laid-back atmosphere and classic American comfort food, it provides a welcoming pause after a morning immersed in nature.

To complete the day, guests will experience the Everglades from yet another perspective with a guided airboat tour. Gliding across the open wetlands, visitors will gain a deeper understanding of the scale and beauty of this remarkable environment while learning even more about its wildlife and history.

This carefully curated program is designed to offer more than just an excursion. It is meant to create a meaningful connection with Florida's natural heritage - a chance to slow down, reconnect with nature, and discover where Florida truly comes from.

If you are currently in Florida and would like to join one of these Everglades experiences, or if you are planning a future visit and would like assistance organizing your trip, we would be delighted to help.

Beautiful vacation homes can be arranged by Anja Behrendt, while Diana Siegel (both mentioned in the April issue of the Sunshine Post) will gladly assist with flights, travel planning, and complete travel arrangements. Together, we can help create a Florida experience that is truly unforgettable - whether you are traveling alone, with family, or with friends.

By Katharina Kaufmann

We're happy to arrange your dream Florida experience! Reach out to us anytime for inquiries at booking@daria-us.com



A Perfect Family Day: Lakes Park in Ft. Myers

Another Sunshine Post Tip on Ways to Explore Your Neighborhood!

Fort Myers, Florida — In Southwest Florida, where sunshine and palm trees define the landscape, Lakes Regional Park offers families a relaxed way to spend a few hours—or an entire day—outdoors. Spread across nearly 279 acres, the park combines lakes, gardens, playgrounds and shaded walking trails, making it one of the most family-friendly green spaces in the Fort Myers area. From water play areas, train rides to farmers markets and seasonal festivals, the park offers activities that appeal to both children and adults while remaining surprisingly affordable.

Affordable Outdoor Fun

One of the reasons Lakes Park is popular with local families and visitors alike is its low cost. Parking is \$1 per hour or \$5 for the entire day, making it easy to spend a full afternoon without worrying about fees. Many attractions inside the park—such as playgrounds, trails and gardens—are free. Other activities come with small additional charges. The miniature train ride, one of the park’s signature attractions, typically costs about \$5 per person.

Splash Park and Playgrounds

For families with young children, the splash park is often the first stop. Water jets, fountains and sprays allow kids to cool off safely while running through the interactive water features—a welcome relief during Florida’s warm weather. Nearby playgrounds provide climbing structures, swings and slides, many shaded by large trees. Parents can relax at nearby benches or picnic tables while children play. These areas are among the busiest spots in the park, especially on weekends and

school holidays.

The Miniature Train Ride

A highlight for many visitors is the miniature train operated by the Railroad Museum of South Florida. The charming ride lasts about 15 minutes and travels roughly one mile through the park, passing small lakes, wooded areas and miniature villages. The train crosses small bridges and even passes through a tunnel—details that make the ride especially exciting for younger passengers.



Exploring the scenic trails in Lakes Park, Ft. Myers, is great fun for the entire family! (Photos courtesy of: S. Mechalik and Anja Behrendt)

Typical operating hours are:

- Monday to Friday: around 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Weekends: around 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Tickets generally cost about \$5 per rider, making it an affordable family activity.

Walking, Biking and Nature

For families who prefer a slower pace, Lakes Park offers about 2.5 miles of paved walking and biking trails winding around scenic lakes and through tropical landscaping. The paths are stroller-friendly and

popular with joggers, cyclists and birdwatchers. Along the way, visitors often spot turtles, butterflies and a variety of Florida birds.

The park also features several gardens, including a children’s garden, fragrance garden and community gardens, adding color and educational elements to a simple walk.

Bike and Boat Rentals

Families who want to explore the park in a more active way can rent equipment near the main lake. Popular options include:

- Swan paddle boats: about \$25 per hour
- Single Surrey bike (up to 3 adults + 2 children): about \$28 per hour
- Double Surrey bike (up to 6 adults + 2 children): about \$38 per hour

Surrey bikes—four-wheeled pedal vehicles—are especially popular with families, allowing everyone to ride together along the park’s scenic paths.

The Weekly Farmers Market

Every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Lakes Park hosts a lively farmers market that attracts locals and visitors. Dozens of vendors offer:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Local honey and baked goods
- Plants and flowers
- Handmade crafts
- Prepared foods and snacks

Many families combine a park visit with a stop at the market to pick up picnic supplies or lunch before exploring the trails.

Seasonal Events Throughout the Year

In addition to everyday activities, Lakes Park hosts several popular seasonal events that draw large crowds.

One of the most anticipated is the Halloween-themed train ride, when the miniature railway is decorated with spooky displays and families ride through festive scenes. Children often arrive in costumes, turning the park into a lively fall celebration.

During the holiday season, the park transforms again for the Christmas train event, when the train route is decorated with lights and holiday scenes. The attraction has become a local tradition for many Southwest Florida families. Other seasonal festivals, craft fairs and community events are also held throughout the year, bringing additional entertainment and activities to the park.

A Relaxed Florida Escape

Open daily from 7 a.m. until dusk, Lakes Regional Park offers a blend of nature, recreation and family entertainment in a setting that feels far removed from the busy streets of Fort Myers. Whether families spend an hour at the splash park, ride the miniature train, explore the walking trails or visit during a holiday festival, the park provides a simple but memorable way to enjoy Southwest Florida’s outdoor lifestyle. For many locals, it remains one of the easiest—and most enjoyable—ways to spend a day together outside.

By S. Mechalik and Anja Behrendt

The park also features several gardens (...), adding color and educational elements to a simple walk.

Sunshine Post Highlights Where a Community Builds Something That is Bigger Downtown Ft Myers

Downtown Fort Myers is one of those places that does not reveal itself all at once. It unfolds slowly. Walk along the brick-lined streets of the River District in the late afternoon and you begin to feel it: historic buildings reflecting the warm Florida light, restaurant patios filling with laughter, music drifting out of open doors, and people lingering just a little longer than planned. This district is not just a collection of restaurants, boutiques, and galleries. It is a living ecosystem built over decades by people who believed in the potential of this place long before it became what it is today.

Over the past few months, two conversations with local business owners offered a deeper look into the heartbeat of downtown. In interviews with Nils Richter of Sip & Sizzle and Dr. Tim Ferguson of Enjewel, one theme emerged again and again: Downtown Fort Myers is shaped not by individual businesses, but by the collective effort of a community. Richter knows this transformation better than most. Long before opening Sip & Sizzle, he worked as a contractor restoring historic buildings in the River District. He saw downtown during its quieter years and watched it gradually come back to life. As he explained during our conversation, every business that opens its doors downtown becomes part of something bigger - a shared ecosystem where restaurants, galleries, and boutiques support each other’s success. Dr. Tim Ferguson shared a similar perspective when speaking about Enjewel. Having lived in the community for more than fifty years, he remembers a time when downtown Fort Myers would quiet down by early evening.

Today, the atmosphere tells a different story - one filled with new restaurants, growing retail, cultural events, and visitors exploring the historic streets. That transformation is not accidental. Downtown Fort Myers is part of a historic district that includes dozens of preserved buildings and local businesses, creating one of the most recognizable historic areas in Southwest Florida. And yet, the story of Downtown is far from finished. Like many city centers experiencing renewed growth, the River District faces its share of challenges. Parking is a topic often mentioned by visitors and business owners alike,



The dynamic and thriving heart of Downtown Fort Myers (Photo courtesy of Katharina Kaufmann)

and the seasonal rhythm of Southwest Florida means that the lively winter months can feel very different from the quieter summers. But these conversations also show something encouraging - people care deeply about the future of Downtown. Because ultimately, the success of a place like this does not depend on buildings alone. It depends on participation.

Downtown Fort Myers thrives when people choose to show up. One of the most visible examples of that community energy is the calendar of events that fills the River District throughout the year. The monthly Art Walk transforms the streets into an open-air gallery where artists display their work and visitors explore local creativity. Music Walk brings live performances to downtown and turns the district into a celebration of local talent. Then there is the Fort Myers Farmers Market, where residents gather around fresh produce, local honey, flowers, pastries, and handmade products, a reminder that supporting local businesses can be as simple as choosing where to spend a Saturday morning.

Events like these are supported by organizations such as the River District Alliance, which continues to promote and strengthen downtown as a cultural and economic hub for the community. But involvement does not always require organizing events or running a business.

Sometimes the most powerful contributions are the simplest ones. Spend an evening downtown instead of staying home. Attend a gallery opening. Support a local restaurant. Stop by a boutique you have never visited before. Share your experience with friends or visitors who might not yet know what downtown has to offer. These small actions create momentum. And sometimes that momentum becomes visible in surprising ways. After the recent feature on Enjewel was published, customers mentioned walking into the boutique specifically because they had read the story. Moments like these are small reminders that storytelling and curiosity can help connect people to the places around them. Downtown Fort Myers has never been just about commerce. It has always been about people - about the relationships between business owners, artists, residents, and visitors who continue to shape the district together. Places like Sip & Sizzle and Enjewel represent more than successful businesses. They represent long-term belief in a community and a willingness to invest in its future. And perhaps that is the real story behind downtown. Not the buildings. Not the restaurants. Not even the events. But the quiet decision, made every day by hundreds of people, to keep showing up and contributing to something larger than themselves. Because downtown is not simply a place you visit. It is a place you help build. And every step taken along those brick streets becomes part of the story still unfolding in the heart of Fort Myers.

By Katharina Kaufmann

Hidden Sparks: Pets Looking to Shine

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

This time, we're introducing two very different personalities from the Cape Coral Animal Shelter—each with their own unique way of showing who they are. One might speak her mind a little more than expected, the other may take a moment to warm up. But both carry that unmistakable spark—the kind that brings character, laughter, and heart into a home. Because sometimes, the brightest light doesn't come from perfection, but from personality. Maybe one of these furry souls is waiting just for you—ready to shine.

By Jennifer Hagemeister



(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

HAFLINGER (MERCY)

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

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

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

Her adoption fee is \$225.

SARAI

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

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

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



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Bold Flavors, Golden Edges: A Tradition Reborn in Cape Coral



Jörg "Joe" Domscheit (Photos courtesy of Jacob Kugmun)

Cape Coral has always been a place where stories are written in sunshine, salt air, and the quiet pride of a community that values tradition. And if there is one place where that spirit now shines brighter than ever, it is Daria's German Bakery & Bistro — the beloved former Rock'n Rolls that has recently stepped into its elegant new blue-and-gold identity. But while the name and look may have received a stylish upgrade, the true star of the show remains exactly what it has always been: Tradition. And if there is one thing the DARIA family believes in deeply, it is that tradition should never be rushed, watered down, or replaced. It should be honored, celebrated, and - preferably - served warm on a plate.

German Heritage Meets Cape Coral Tradition

At Daria's German Bakery & Bistro, the philosophy is beautifully simple: Traditional German recipes meet the customs of Cape Coral. The result is a place where locals, snowbirds, curious food lovers, and homesick Germans can all sit down at the same table and feel right at home.

And if anyone still believes this is just a bakery, they are about to be pleasantly surprised.

Yes, the display counters still tempt visitors with the legendary breads, pastries, cakes, and baked delights that made the original bakery a beloved institution. But behind the scenes, the culinary imagination of Jörg "Joe" Domscheit, the familiar and trusted face of the bakery, is already preparing the next delicious chapter.

Joe's vision for the bistro reaches far beyond coffee and cake. In the near future, guests will find themselves choosing from a mouth-watering lineup of hearty classics that would make any German grandmother proud. Imagine biting into an authentic Berlin-style Döner Kebab, enjoying a perfectly prepared traditional Schnitzel, or daring to conquer the impressive XXL-Schnitzel, available with tender chicken or flavorful pork. Lovers of hearty comfort food can look forward to rich Goulash, lovingly rolled beef roulades, creamy chicken fricassee, and even a robust homemade Chili con Carne that warms both stomach and soul.

And of course, no proper German kitchen would be complete without beloved

classics such as Sauerbraten (marinated roast), minced meat sandwich, fluffy potato dumplings, or a comforting bowl of lentil soup or potato soup — dishes that carry generations of culinary tradition in every bite.

Reading the menu alone might already make mouths water.

But as every good meal deserves a sweet finale, the bakery's dessert selection continues to shine as well. Guests can treat themselves to rich chocolate cake, silky cheesecake, and other irresistible temptations that turn even the smallest indulgence into a moment of pure joy.

Honestly, who could resist?

Hospitality That Begins at the Door

Great hospitality is often found in the little details — and here, too, the team has thought of everything. Convenient handicap parking spaces directly in front of the bakery ensure that everyone can comfortably visit and enjoy what has quickly become one of Cape Coral's most welcoming culinary destinations.

Yesterday, Today... and Tomorrow
Yet even with all this delicious excitement, the story of Daria's is only just beginning.

Following the motto "Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow," something truly remarkable is already on the horizon for Southwest Florida.

Soon, a brand-new destination will open its doors in Entrada Plaza on Del Prado Blvd North in Northeast Cape Coral: **Daria's German Restaurant.**

And this will be far more than just another gastronomic experience.

The new venue is designed as a vibrant gathering place where outstanding food meets unforgettable experiences. Guests will be able to enjoy Joe's carefully crafted German and international dishes in a beautiful restaurant setting, but the space is also designed to transform effortlessly into a dynamic event location.

Whether **celebrating birthdays or weddings, hosting corporate presentations, dancing the night away to live music**, or enjoying a lively evening with friends, the possibilities are nearly endless. A massive LED screen will allow **major sporting events** to be experienced in spectacular fashion, while a dedicated stage will welcome **live bands or DJs** to keep the energy high.

In short, the sky truly is the limit.

For those who already love Joe's cooking but wish they could enjoy it in the evening, this **new restaurant** will be the perfect destination. The same dedication to quality, the same authentic flavors, and the same passion for great hospitality will now be available well beyond breakfast and lunch.

Or perhaps guests will simply settle in at the impressive **ten-meter-long bar**, order a freshly tapped German beer, and watch the evening unfold in the relaxed, welcoming atmosphere that the Daria family has become known for.

The Future Looks Delicious

What began as a beloved German bakery has grown into something even greater - without ever losing its heart. It is a place where tradition matters, where recipes are respected, where hospitality is genuine, and where the community of Cape Coral continues to gather around the universal language of great food.

And at the center of it all stands the man everyone knows.

Joe.
Smiling behind the counter.
Perfecting the next dish.

Making sure every guest feels like family.



Because in the end, the story can be summed up in four simple words:

Blue.
Gold.
Daria's.
And Joe leading the way.

By Jacob Kugmun



Soon: Don't miss the newest gastronomic jewel sparkling at the heart of Cape Coral – Daria's German Restaurant. See all important updates and opening dates in the next issues of the Sunshine Post!

Sunshine Post Series on Healthy Aging: Part 5

This is a story about doctors. About five new doctors in your life. All five of them are responsible for your path to healthy aging. Together, they form your immune signature. The idea behind this is to restore the effectiveness of your immune system. The goal is “chronic health.”

This means:

- High cellular energy
- Low chronic inflammation
- A strong immune system
- High adaptability.

The idea comes from German physician Dr. Gerrit Keferstein, who worked with athletes after completing his medical studies at the University of Wisconsin and the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs.

The immune signature is the health fingerprint of your immune system, determined by lifestyle and metabolism. The most important levers are the 5 Doctors:

1. Exercise
2. Nutrition
3. Sleep
4. Breathing / Stress Regulation
5. Nature & Environment

Every person has a unique combination of metabolic, immune, and lifestyle factors.

This combination determines:

how well your body fights pathogens
how quickly you recover
how high your risk of chronic diseases is.

Our immune system has 8 different immune barriers:

1. The proactive immune system: The natural distance we maintain from others
2. Reflexes: Coughing, sneezing, tearing, etc.
3. Mucous membranes : Defensive and lactoferrin
4. Phagocytes
5. Natural killer cells
6. Complement system
7. T-cells
8. B-cells: Antibodies

Regeneration literally means “re-creation.” This occurs through the formation of new cells. But it is not only the speed of regeneration that matters, but also its quality.

The opposite of regeneration is degeneration.

By chronic diseases, we mean a long-term disruption of the body’s regulatory capacity, often accompanied by silent inflammation. The main causes of chronic diseases are lifestyle factors, environmental factors, chronic inflammation & infections, psychosocial factors such as stress, and, in some cases, genetic predisposition. The likelihood of developing a chronic condition increases with age.

The concept of the 5 Doctors of the Immune Signature primarily combines three areas:

1. **E n e r g y m e t a b o l i s m**
How well your cells produce energy (ATP). When metabolism is disrupted (e.g., insulin resistance), the immune system also weakens.
2. **I n f l a m m a t i o n s t a t u s**
Chronic silent inflammation (“metaflammation”) is considered a central factor in many diseases.
3. **L i f e s t y l e f a c t o r s**
Sleep, exercise, diet, stress, environment, etc., directly influence immune function.

That is why Keferstein says: Health is primarily shaped by lifestyle and cellular energy—not just by medication.

How is the Immune Signature measured?

In this approach, the immune signature is derived from various biomarkers and lifestyle factors, such as:

- Blood sugar
- Blood lipids
- Inflammation markers
- Body fat (especially visceral fat)
- Blood pressure
- Energy levels / Sleep
- Exercise

This data is analyzed together to determine:

How well your immune system is functioning

Which factors are weakening it

How it can be improved.

Let’s take a closer look at the 5 doctors:

Dr. Exercise: We’ve already covered this extensively in previous issues. Getting enough exercise, especially strength training, is absolutely essential for healthy aging. Age-related loss of muscle mass is directly linked to a higher susceptibility to chronic diseases. Declining muscle mass prevents effective fat burning, and fewer muscle cells produce fewer myokines.

If you missed the previous issues, I strongly recommend reading the articles there on exercise, the special role of muscles, and the need for mobility.

Dr. Nutrition: The next part of the “Healthy Aging” series will delve deeper into this topic. It has long been no secret that our current dietary habits are not species-appropriate. Both the quality and quantity no longer match our activity levels and are often even nutrient-deficient and harmful to the body.

We will take an in-depth look at the macronutrients carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, as they are the energy sources for our bodies.

But micronutrients also play an important and largely underestimated role, which we will examine.

Dr. Sleep: Healthy sleep is a key factor for good physical and mental regeneration. Yet we are increasingly forgetting to pay attention to both the duration and the quality of our sleep. As an example, I’d like to paint the following picture: If we imagine the function of memory as a wardrobe into which memories and experiences are placed during the day, these are then neatly and orderly sorted into appropriate drawers and compartments at night, so that they are easy to find and immediately available in the future. If we don’t give our brain cells enough time to clean up and organize, accessing information will take longer than necessary, and over time, this may result in a pile of unorganized “laundry” that we perceive as absent-mindedness or brain fog. Additionally, the body’s repair processes can take place at night.

The following guidelines are recommended:

- School-age children: 9–12 hours
- Teenagers: 8–10 hours
- Adults: 7–9 hours

In addition to the duration of sleep, sleep quality is crucial. Here, you should pay attention to the following factors:

- Optimal sleep environment—A quiet, completely darkened room with a temperature of 60–64°F
- Develop a sleep routine—Consistently stick to bedtimes and wake-up times
- Evening rituals & relaxation – A walk, light yoga, a bath, or breathing exercises to wind down help reduce stress
- Diet, alcohol & caffeine – Don’t eat anything 2–3 hours before bed, and avoid caffeine after noon. Unfortunately, the idea that 1–2 beers or 1–2 glasses of wine lead to better sleep is also a myth. Try tracking your sleep with a good wearable...
- Exercise: Daily physical activity promotes sleep. Avoid intense workouts too late in the evening
- Digital Detox: No smartphones by the bed, no screen time in the hour before bed

Dr. Breathing: Our breathing has a direct impact on stress and the heart. Through specific breathing techniques, we can activate the vagus nerve. The vagus nerve is the tenth cranial nerve and the main player in the parasympathetic nervous system, which acts as the “rest

and digest” system, controlling heart rate, digestion, and regeneration. High vagus nerve activity improves stress resilience, while low activity is linked to stress, inflammation, and mental health issues such as depression.

A simple breathing exercise to activate the vagus nerve: exhale twice as long as you inhale. Example: inhale for 4 seconds, exhale for 8 seconds. Do this 3 times for 1 minute each day and whenever you feel tense.

Dr. Breathing has an assistant: Dr. Cold. Regular cold treatments offer numerous benefits for our body. Extended cold showers or visits to cryo chambers support faster recovery after exercise, relieve pain and inflammation, boost metabolism, strengthen the immune system, release the “happiness hormone” endorphin, and reduce tension. Breathing meditations help you tolerate the cold treatment better, which is why these two doctors go hand in hand.

Dr. Nature & Environment: Unfortunately, we have often lost touch with nature, or even try to control it. Yet we are an inseparable part of nature. We are in symbiosis with our environment. Our gut serves as an example. About 10 to 100 trillion microorganisms live in the gut alone, and the crazy thing is: the more there are, the healthier the gut is... Therefore, it doesn’t make sense to try with all our might to shut out nature’s microorganisms (bacteria, fungi, algae, and viruses).

In fact, it is actually the case that our own immune system is strengthened when it comes into contact with unknown microorganisms. This is also why children are generally sick more often than adults. An adult’s immune system has usually already encountered these microorganisms in earlier years and has already produced antibodies against them.

Regular time spent in nature also stimulates the vagus nerve, has a calming effect, and, if you look closely, is also inspiring.

From nature, we also learn the principle of evolution: constant development, the constant triumph of the stronger over the weaker. This phenomenon was aptly described in the story of “Alice in Wonderland”: In the story, Alice and the Red Queen run as fast as they can in a bizarre race, yet remain in the same spot. The Queen explains this by the need to exert maximum effort just to maintain their position. This is also known as the “Red Queen Hypothesis.”

In Japan, there is a trend that is already well known in the West within the realm of holistic wellness. Shirin Yoku means “immersing oneself in the forest atmosphere.” Through slow walking and focused awareness using all the senses, the forest is experienced intensely, which has been proven to reduce stress, lower blood pressure, strengthen the immune system, and promote mental relaxation.

By Clemens Müller

Column 6 : The New Mindset

Our time needs more than new strategies - it needs a new mindset. This column series explores values such as trust, freedom, respect, responsibility, excellence, purpose, and creativity.

Not as abstract ideas, but as lived principles that shape the way we think, act, and relate to one another. Because real change always begins when people consciously decide which values they choose to live by.

Purpose & Creativity – Why People Need More Than Just Tasks

People don’t just want to work. They want to understand what they are working for.

Tasks can be delegated. Purpose cannot. Purpose emerges where people feel that their contribution matters –

to others, to a community, or to something greater than themselves.

Why Purpose Matters

Many organizations believe motivation comes from targets, numbers, or incentives. But lasting motivation comes from something deeper: the feeling of being part of something meaningful.

When people understand why their work matters, their mindset changes. They don’t just work more efficiently – they work with greater commitment, creativity, and responsibility.

Creativity Is Not a Talent – It’s an Environment

Creativity doesn’t grow under pressure. It grows where there is trust, freedom, and the feeling of being heard. People begin to think differently, create, and

explore new paths when they feel safe bringing their ideas forward. Where purpose exists, creativity naturally follows.

The Gift of Purpose-Driven Work

People who see meaning in what they do bring more than just their time. They bring ideas. Responsibility. And often a kind of enthusiasm that becomes contagious.

A Societal Reflection

Perhaps one of the most important questions of our time is not: “How can people become more productive?” But rather: “How can we create environments where people are able to contribute something meaningful?” Because when purpose becomes visible, creativity tends to follow almost naturally.

Reflection Prompt

When was the last time you truly felt that your work had meaning? In what environment do you feel invited to contribute something valuable? And where could you create space for new ideas today?

Quote of Choice:

“The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.” (Pablo Picasso)

By Jutta Burmeister

This column is an invitation to take a stand, live with depth, and lead from a place of inner freedom.

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”**

DID YOU KNOW?

The best AI prompts are specific!
Specificity equals

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

“Artificial intelligence is not a substitute for human intelligence; it is a tool to amplify human creativity and ingenuity.”

Fei-Fei Li, Co-Director of the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence

Tax Season Last-Minute Planner

“It’s mid-April and I still haven’t filed my taxes. I’m a Florida resident with rental income, Social Security, and some investment gains. What are my options for getting this done quickly and correctly before the deadline?”

AI suggests:

1. The federal tax deadline is April 15 – file an automatic extension (Form 4868) if you need more time, but remember: the extension is for filing, not for payment
2. Florida has no state income tax, but you still need to report rental income and capital gains on your federal return
3. Gather your 1099s, W-2s, Social Security statements (SSA-1099), and property expense records before visiting a tax preparer
4. Local CPAs in Fort Myers and Cape Coral often offer walk-in appointments in early April – H&R Block and local firms on Del Prado Boulevard handle last-minute filings
5. If you’re over 65, check whether your Social Security benefits are even taxable – many retirees in Florida owe less than they expect

Easter Weekend in SW Florida

“Easter falls on April 5 this year and we have family visiting from Germany. Plan a memorable Easter weekend in Southwest Florida that combines American traditions with outdoor activities the whole family can enjoy.”

AI suggests:

1. Saturday: Head to one of the community egg hunts – Centennial Park in Fort Myers and the Cape Coral Kiwanis Easter Eggstravaganza are local favorites with games, prizes, and Easter Bunny photos
2. Easter Sunday brunch: Book early at waterfront restaurants like The Lighthouse Waterfront Restaurant on Sanibel or Rumrunners in Cape Harbour – Easter brunch fills up fast
3. Afternoon beach outing at Bowditch Point Park on Fort Myers Beach – April temperatures average 84°F (29°C), perfect for shell collecting and sandcastle building
4. Show your German guests a Florida twist on “Osterspaziergang”: a sunset walk along the fishing pier or a nature trail at Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve
5. For a quiet Good Friday, visit the Edison and Ford Winter Estates gardens – the grounds are especially lush in spring and offer a peaceful escape

Reliving Olympic Hockey Glory

“Team USA just swept gold in hockey at the Milano Cortina Olympics – men’s, women’s, and Para hockey. I want to throw a watch party for the replays with friends who are new to hockey. Help me plan a fun evening that explains the excitement.”

AI suggests:

1. The men’s team beat Canada 2–1 in overtime on Jack Hughes’ iconic goal – their first gold since the 1980 Miracle on Ice. Stream the full replay on Peacock or NBCOlympics.com
2. Create a simple one-page cheat sheet for hockey newcomers: explain icing, offsides, power plays, and why overtime in Olympic hockey is sudden-death 3-on-3
3. Set the menu American-style: sliders, nachos, and cold beer – bonus points for red, white, and blue decorations and USA Hockey jerseys
4. Don’t forget the women’s team – they also beat Canada 2–1 in overtime. Show both finals back-to-back for the full golden experience
5. For local hockey fans: the Florida Everblades play at Hertz Arena in Estero – catch a live game to keep the Olympic spirit going through spring

Retirement Wealth Check-Up

“We just retired to Cape Coral and want to make sure our savings last. We have a 401(k), some IRAs, and a paid-off home. Can you help us think through a basic financial check-up for retirement in Florida?”

AI suggests:

1. Review your Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) – if you’re 73 or older, the IRS requires annual withdrawals from traditional IRAs and 401(k)s
2. Florida’s lack of state income tax is a major advantage – but factor in property taxes, HOA fees, and hurricane insurance when budgeting
3. Consider consulting a fee-only financial advisor rather than commission-based – firms in Southwest Florida specializing in retirement planning can provide unbiased guidance
4. Build an emergency fund covering 6–12 months of expenses separately from your investment accounts – hurricane season and unexpected home repairs are real considerations here
5. Look into Florida’s Homestead Exemption if you haven’t filed yet – it can reduce your property tax bill by up to \$50,000 in assessed value



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.

What if The Answer To The Question of Happiness As Based on The Wrong Question?

Is “*How* do I become happy?” the right question? Let’s find out together in this series on happiness and quality of life!

Mostly, you’ll find countless methods and approaches to finding happiness, some more promising than others. There are good scientific studies and excellent analyses of them, and thus plenty of factors that science claims are responsible for long-term happiness. So you can apply tried-and-tested methods for *how* you should become happy. But do you see the issue here?

It’s general approaches...

Let me tell you a story that illustrates what I believe it takes to find the right, individual approach for you: When life showed me what dark valleys look like, I felt like I would never be able to laugh again. In my despair, I googled “happiness” and lo and behold: a “Happiness Evening” was taking place very close to where I was at the time. Without hesitation, I signed up. But contrary to my expectations, I did not find what I was looking for there; instead, I was supposed to do something first...

We were a small group of about 10 people in a huge town hall. We probably looked kind of lost in our tiny circle of chairs in the middle of this vast space. And then... the task: Write *your* definition of happiness on a small piece of yellow paper and place it in the hall where you think it belongs.

Aside from the fact that I had absolutely no idea how to define happiness, I was completely horrified, which is my first thought about my placement of choice: I can’t even reach that high!

Wait a minute – is that really my first serious thought about it? – I want to hang my own happiness so high that it’s hard for me to reach it? How perverse is that – and where does that thought come from?

Today I know that conditioning, for example from family and society, usually dominates our ways of thinking and acting over acquired knowledge, and you need a special approach if you want to change it, to turn it in a way that benefits you. But first, let’s consider how you define happiness.

Could you answer that question spontaneously?

Because in my opinion, that’s one of the two necessary steps: knowing *what* makes me happy. Independent of all the studies in the world, it’s about exploring your own needs. And even though I’ve realized that material things don’t contribute much to happiness, there will be people for whom material things are a need in a specific context—for example, experiencing the thrill of technology in extreme situations with their own sports car. The important thing is to know: What makes *me* happy? And how do I find out what that means exactly? And of course, not under the motto “after me, the deluge.”

The second necessary step is to identify *where* I have a deficit. So, even after I know *what* makes me happy, I might still not (yet) see what area I’m lacking happiness in.

For this purpose, there’s the so-called “Happy-Me-Check” with 13 key questions, which provide a clear overview of whether and where a deficit exists:

The possible answers are: agree / tend to agree / can’t answer right now / tend to disagree / disagree

The prompts are:

1. I enjoy getting up in the morning; 2. I enjoy my work; 3. I feel seen; 4. I feel valued; 5. Being outdoors in nature is great; 6. My relationship is characterized by growth and togetherness; 7. I have people around me with whom I enjoy exchanging ideas/talking; 8. I exercise/am physically active regularly; 9. I am free to make my own decisions; 10. I handle the unexpected with ease; 11. I want to continuously learn; 12. I enjoy food and pay attention to what I eat; 13. I have no addictions.



Happiness can be found in many places (Photo courtesy of Justin Bockey)

For me, recognizing your own needs, coupled with analyzing whether and where you’re lacking something, is *the* approach to a happier life. Provided, of course, that you don’t let yourself be guided by Hollywood kitsch and pure consumerism when discovering your needs...

This leads to the question: What dominates your mind right now? What definition of *happiness* have you internalized as an adult (after the happiness of childhood)? And how, or rather, why has that changed?

Let’s now look at what has influenced your definition of happiness and how it manifests in your everyday life.

As an adult today, you might research the definition of happiness online, read what’s in books, and participate in self-help courses. And you can acquire all that good knowledge, yet you already have a definition of *happiness* stored within you. Completely unconsciously. Because your

environment—external influences—shaped it within you during your childhood and adolescence.

Our fundamental patterns are established in our early childhood – including our attitudes towards joy and happiness. Broadly speaking, this means that if a child grows up in a sheltered home where everything is structured and comfortable routines are established, feelings of security, comfort, and trust are fostered. However, traumatic experiences can also leave a lasting impression, often unconsciously impacting adulthood, even if you don’t consciously remember the childhood event. And these experiences don’t necessarily involve accidents, acts of violence, or other terrible events.

In relation to our topic of happiness, I find that if you’re inexplicably unhappy despite having acquired knowledge about how to become happier, it’s definitely worth taking a look inside your mind... Because you might find yourself, after studying and learning about approaches to happiness, having done or decided something again that makes you unhappy, even though you’ve now read everything about it, created a plan, and followed through with it... Then perhaps a childhood imprint has pushed you back into the deeply ingrained groove of familiar patterns... Perhaps it’s also about issues you’ve already asked yourself about, like why you keep ending up in the same relationships? Relationships that turn out to be unsuitable. Or why you keep getting stuck at your job or not finding fulfillment, even though it’s a top position and very well paid.

Or are there – quite simply – small, everyday “coincidences” that keep pushing you out of a reasonably happy, or at least acceptable, state...?

Have you ever felt like you didn’t deserve a happy life? You don’t need to know how to change that right now – the valuable, positive realization is that you can transform even such powerful patterns! Add to that the right analyses, approaches, and a daily dose of optimism, and you’re almost there! See you next month.

By Matthias Erbacher

Sunshine State of Mind

Part 4: Finding a New Routine – Nature, Sports, and the Flow of Freedom

A little over a month and ten days have passed since we left German soil. Sitting on our terrace in North Fort Myers in the morning, everything still feels a bit surreal. We are here, we are experiencing this place—at least for the time being, as we patiently wait for the moment we hold our final visas in our hands. As I reported in the last part, our start was defined by community: A manatee tour where the sea cows remained elusive, and a Super Bowl party with my future colleagues that made us feel instantly welcome.

The Search for Serenity:

From the Heath to the Wilderness

We come from a very rural area near the Lüneburg Heath in Northern Germany. Anyone who knows that region knows of its vast, calming landscape. Naturally, one of our first missions here in Florida was to find places that could give us that same connection to nature. You can’t replicate home one-to-one, but you discover new facets that fascinate you in entirely different ways.

A definite highlight was our trip to Babcock Ranch. During an eco-tour through the “wilderness,” we discovered a wildlife world that has nothing in common with the deer and rabbits of the German Heath. We were particularly impressed by the visit to Fred Babcock’s historic 19th-century

ranch, which instantly transports you back to the pioneer era. The silence, interrupted only by the sounds of flora and fauna, left a deep impression on us. We are enjoying this new kind of vegetation—the palms, the cypress trees, and the subtropical light that bathes everything in an almost magical atmosphere.

Mountain Bike Flow in the Pine Woods

Sports are an integral part of our lives. In the northeast of North Fort Myers, we discovered a mountain bike trail that simply thrilled us. This trail was lovingly built by volunteers and is available to the public for free. It was a pure joy to “cruise” along there with our six years old son. In Germany, we loved our tours through pine forests, but here we found something new: A true “flow.” The terrain is different, the challenges are new, but the feeling of freedom on two wheels is universal. The fact that such high-quality facilities are created through volunteer commitment and are accessible to everyone is a side

of America we have come to deeply appreciate.

From Tennis to Pickleball Fan

In Germany, I actively played tennis in a Men’s 40 team. Here in Florida, there is no escaping the new trending sport of Pickleball. And what can I say? It’s incredibly fun! Especially playing doubles brings a dynamic that you just have to try for yourself. The rallies are often fast-paced and require a completely different reaction than on the tennis court.

At first, I was skeptical and actually thought, “I won’t even hit a ball here.” But the ball-feel from



Quality family time (Photos courtesy of:

Marc Siewert

tennis helps tremendously, and I got the hang of it quickly. What completely thrills me is the infrastructure: there are first-class courts throughout the Fort Myers and Cape Coral city areas. Many are lit at night and—just like the bike trail—are completely free to use. It’s great to see how this sport brings people of all ages together in such an

easygoing way.

Planning for the Future: The School in the Woods

A central point of our exploratory stay is, of course, the future of our children. We used the time to look at various schools and found an elementary school that captured our hearts. By American standards, it is rather small and family-oriented. What we particularly liked: the children grow their own vegetables there. In addition to the obligatory huge sports field, the school has its own piece of forest with trails. A school that integrates nature and sports so organically into everyday life is exactly what we want for our boys once the visa is granted.

Preparations Behind the Scenes

While we explore the “American Way of Life” and test our potential daily routine, preparations for my new IT company in Fort Myers are running in the background. Our stay also serves to hold initial meetings and set the infrastructural course. It is an exciting phase of planning and envisioning, though I prefer not to reveal too much about it until the time is right.

We are enjoying this lightness of being that Florida conveys. Perhaps it’s because we know how dark and cold it is in Northern Germany right now, but it’s more than that. It’s the openness of the people and the sheer breadth of possibilities. We are here, we are learning, we are discovering—and every day, we feel a little more settled.

By Marc Siewert

Letters To The Editor: April 2026

Instinct and Charity: The Story of Sabine



Sabine Seeliger (Photo courtesy of Marco Arnoldt)

Sabine Seeliger lives with her very sick partner Olaf and her dog in a small house in the tranquil village of Regesbostel, located in the district of Harburg in northern Germany. Sabine is 77 years old, mother of three children, and worked as a teacher for decades. She loved imparting knowledge and showing children a perspective on life, because helping others is second nature to her. Sabine saved up quite a bit from her handycraft work and, looking back, lived very modestly.

At some point, my path crossed hers.

I told her about a wonderful community that values truthfulness, courage, honesty, gratitude, and standing up for others.

I told her about the Young Manager Academy, where our youngest members, aged 14 to 18, are guided onto the right path with the values mentioned above. I noticed that her heart opened up when I talked about the children. Throughout her professional life, children and teaching them these values had been her priority. Now Sabine wanted to know more details about DARIA US. As we talked, I noticed that she was already connecting with our community, mentally at first, like an invisible bond, a unity. Sabine couldn't wait to be part of it. She later learned that we also help people and families in need of financial aid or independence.

She asked me how she could join. I explained to her that there is a member investment pot where everyone can put something in and from that those families are then supported. Sabine did not think long and took a large sum of money from her savings and enabled seven people to enter our community.

That has touched me a lot to this day. Thank you Sabine for being the way you are. Let's continue helping each other under the motto: All for one, one for all.

Marco Arnoldt

Gulf Shore Singles: Flow of Freedom

We come together as single men and women for the purpose of socialization, making friendships and having fun. The friendships that are made can be lifelong strong and lasting bonds. So, if you enjoy a variety of social activities and want to meet nice people, please come and join our group! We meet on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at Fort Myers Christian Church hall located at 5917 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, FL 33919 at 6:30 PM (Gulf Shore Singles is a non-religious group).

During the monthly meetings we recognize birthdays, acknowledge past activities and discuss upcoming new and fun activities planned for future months. We have several committees, such as travel, picnics and dance committees. Monthly calendars are prepared based on member recommendations, and may include plays, concerts, bowling, car shows, card and game nights, dinners and luncheons, shopping tours, day trips, and cruises at discount prices and various other activities. You can pick and choose what you like to do, make new friends with different interests and socialize with a nice group of people.

There is a little something for everyone.

For more information call 859-468-1599.

Elizabeth Breeden



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Breeden

Celebrating Life's Milestones with the Sunshine Post!

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

Tamara Störrle
 Vladimir Sugak
 Franz Bernd Leinesser
 Marvin Neipp
 Sandra Beckmann
 Michael Domke
 Wilhelm Shell
 Walter Fritzsche
 Regina Lange
 Andy Metschurat

And a special congratulation to:

Christina Greene
 Andreas Walter
 Maximilian von Garnier
 Christian Bühner

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"

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.

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