

YOUR DAILY DOSE OF OPTIMISM



SUNSHINE POST

04	CREDIT UNIONS	08	4TH OF JULY	10	FIFA WORLD CUP	20	AI-PROMTS
----	---------------	----	-------------	----	----------------	----	-----------

At 2:13 a.m. on a Thursday morning, while most of Florida is asleep, a transaction begins moving through a system that almost nobody can see.

Every year on July 4th, the United States comes alive in a way that feels both deeply traditional and joyfully spontaneous.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup approaches like an advancing storm — bigger, louder, and more unpredictable than ever before.

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



Photos courtesy of Clemens Müller

Aging healthily seems to be much more complex than one might generally think.

And, believe it or not, it gets even more complicated. Essentially, it's just a matter of a few simple basic rules regarding everyday decisions: exercise, nutrition, fresh air, and mental awareness. But lurking behind these are some nasty pitfalls that can render a well-intentioned activity or lifestyle choice virtually ineffective.

At this point, I'll revisit the example of exercise. Exercise alone simply isn't enough. It has to be real (muscle) training. Otherwise, we won't achieve the effects described in previous issues.

And today I'd like to point out an unexpected pitfall in the area of nutrition.

Generally speaking, the less processed a food is, the healthier it is. "Processed" means that raw ingredients are altered through processes such as heating, pasteurization, freezing, or mixing to improve shelf life, taste, or safety.

[Read more about our series Healthy Aging on Page No. 19 →](#)



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

Sunshine, celebration, and the joy of summer

Dear Readers,

June arrives with a certain energy that feels impossible to ignore. The days stretch a little longer, the evenings glow a little warmer, and life seems to move outdoors once again. It's the beginning of a season filled with celebration, connection, and the simple moments that remind us to slow down and enjoy where we are.

In this issue of Sunshine Post, we embrace that spirit wholeheartedly. As communities across the country prepare for the Fourth of July, we bring you a variety of features dedicated to the traditions, gatherings, and celebrations that make this time of year so memorable. From ideas for family festivities to reflections on what the holiday means to different generations, this edition captures the excitement and togetherness that summer so often brings.

At the same time, we also turn our attention inward with several stories centered around happiness and well-being.

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

Sunshine Post

HERO OF THE MONTH



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

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

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



Professional Window Cleaning

Shops, offices, family homes, apartments & more

GERMAN quality standards & craftsmanship

30+ years experience · True passion & professionalism



Get in touch:
contact@spenchi.com
(239) 486-0585

Sunshine, celebration, and the joy of summer

Dear Readers,

June arrives with a certain energy that feels impossible to ignore. The days stretch a little longer, the evenings glow a little warmer, and life seems to move outdoors once again. It's the beginning of a season filled with celebration, connection, and the simple moments that remind us to slow down and enjoy where we are.

In this issue of Sunshine Post, we embrace that spirit wholeheartedly. As communities across the country prepare for the Fourth of July, we bring you a variety of features dedicated to the traditions, gatherings, and celebrations that make this time of year so memorable. From ideas for family festivities to reflections on what the holiday means to different generations, this edition captures the excitement and togetherness that summer so often brings.

At the same time, we also turn our attention inward with several stories centered around happiness and well-being. In a world that often moves too quickly, taking time to understand what truly brings fulfillment can be one of the most valuable conversations we have. Whether it's finding joy in everyday routines, strengthening relationships, or simply spending more time in the sunshine, we hope these articles inspire moments of reflection and positivity.

Our continuing series on Healthy Aging takes a deeper dive this month, exploring how physical health, emotional balance, and lifestyle choices all work together to shape the way we experience the years ahead. Growing older is not simply about adding years to life, but about adding life to those years — something we believe deserves thoughtful attention and open conversation.

Summer also has a way of bringing people together like few other seasons can. Neighbors gather outside, families reconnect, and communities come alive through local events, shared meals, and warm evenings spent under open skies. That feeling of togetherness remains at the heart of everything we do here at Sunshine Post.

As always, this issue is more than a collection of articles. It is a celebration of community, curiosity, and the shared experiences that connect us all. We wish you a June filled with sunshine, laughter, meaningful moments, and a summer full of possibilities.

Sunny regards,

Rouven Tietz Editor-in-Chief

Sunshine Post

Editor-in-Chief/Managing Editor
Rouven Tietz

Contact Information
info@sunshine-post.com

Advertising Department
advertising@sunshine-post.com

Published monthly

Quality journalism
for everyone.
Find the Sunshine
Post at many
locations across
Cape Coral and Fort
Myers.



Entrepreneurs in crisis – What happens to the company? Germany and the US in comparison

A sudden accident, illness, or unexpected absence can affect any entrepreneur. But who decides when the managing director becomes incapacitated? Who can sign contracts, take out loans, or pay employees? The answers depend heavily on the country and the legal provisions in place. In Germany and the US, different mechanisms are in place to ensure that companies can continue to operate in an emergency. However, a lack of provisions can lead to financial losses, standstill, and uncertainty for family and employees.

Germany: Legal guardianship and business risks

In Germany, if a managing director suddenly becomes legally incompetent and no power of attorney has been granted, the guardianship court intervenes. It appoints a legal guardian who takes over the capacity to act on behalf of the person concerned.

Typical consequences for entrepreneurs

- **Contracts and loans:** Without power of attorney or court approval, existing contracts cannot be fulfilled and new ones cannot be concluded.
- **Employees and salaries:** Payments to employees may be delayed.
- **Company management:** Strategic decisions are blocked.
- **Liquidity:** Short-term financial decisions, such as those relating to suppliers or investments, cannot be made.

This can threaten the existence of family businesses or small companies in particular. Banks, business partners, or customers expect continuity. The absence of the managing director without provision can therefore have massive economic consequences.

USA: Corporate governance and contingency planning

The situation in the United States is similar, but often more structured. Many companies, especially LLCs

and corporations, have corporate governance rules that apply in emergencies.

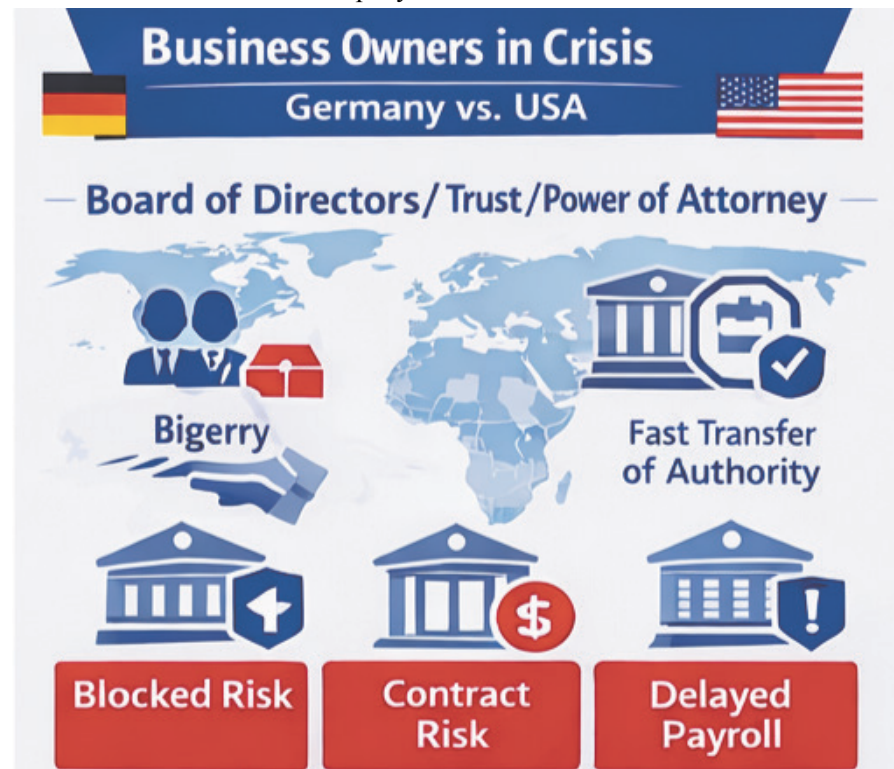
Important mechanisms

- **Succession provisions in contracts:** Shareholder agreements or articles of association specify who makes decisions on a temporary basis.
- **Durable power of attorney:** Entrepreneurs can authorize a specific person to make decisions for the company at

governance, the same applies here: without clear powers of attorney or succession arrangements, an unexpected absence can have costly consequences.

Practical example: Family business with an international focus

A German family business also owns real estate and bank accounts in the US. The managing director suddenly suffers a stroke. Without a power of attorney, the guardianship court can only take limited action.



Photos courtesy of: Bernd Roebers

- an early stage.
- **Board of directors:** In stock corporations or larger companies, the executive board or board of directors often takes control at short notice.

Financial consequences without precautions

- Delayed decisions on loans, rent, or wages
- Potential breaches of contract and legal risks
- Financial uncertainty for investors and partners
- Loss of image and business disadvantages

Although the US has stronger mechanisms for structuring corporate

- In Germany, the court blocks the release of the accounts.
- In the US, separate powers of attorney are required to gain access to real estate or bank accounts.
- Suppliers remain unpaid, loans continue to run, investment decisions are delayed.

A clearly defined power of attorney structure would have prevented this standstill and ensured the company's operational capacity.

Tips for entrepreneurs

1. Set up powers of attorney. Decide early on who will make decisions if the managing director is unable to do so.

2. Review corporate governance. Articles of association and shareholder agreements should contain emergency provisions.
3. Create international powers of attorney. Separate documents are required for real estate, bank accounts, or company shares abroad.
4. Create an emergency folder. Make all important documents, contracts, access data, and contact details available in one central location.
5. Regular updates. Powers of attorney, contracts, and corporate structures should be reviewed regularly.

Conclusion

A company's ability to act depends crucially on its contingency planning structures. In both Germany and the US, without clear power of attorney or succession arrangements, the courts will intervene and investments and operational decisions may be blocked. For entrepreneurs, this means:

- Financial risks are minimized
- Company assets remain secure
- Employees and business partners are protected
- International investments remain available

Precautionary measures are therefore a central component of corporate asset strategy – not just a legal formality, but a decisive factor for economic security.

By Bernd Roebers



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

Comparison between Germany and the USA		
Topic	Germany	USA
Mechanism in the event of default	Court appoints guardian	Corporate governance, board, powers of attorney
Company decisions	Often blocked until approval	Structured representation, but power of attorney required
Costs	Court proceedings, delays	Legal costs, but often faster
International assets	Separate documents required	Separate powers of attorney required
Liquidity risk	High if no provisions made	High if power of attorney does not apply

The comparison shows that entrepreneurs should make arrangements at an early stage for both national and international assets. Without provisions, even small companies can quickly find themselves in financial difficulties.



Interested in Buying or Selling?
Contact us! We can help you in English or German.

Contact Information:

Daria US Brokerage LLC

Tel: (239)-342-9051

E-Mail: brokerage@daria-us.com

Address: 1525 Hendry St, Fort Myers, FL 33901

License Number: CQ1072232



The Invisible Infrastructure

Inside the Technology Powering the Neo Credit Union

At 2:13 a.m. on a Thursday morning, while most of Florida is asleep, a transaction begins moving through a system that almost nobody can see.

A 24-year-old freelance designer named Jordan Vega is sitting in a dim apartment in St. Petersburg, finishing edits for a client in Berlin. The invoice has just been approved. Payment arrives instantly in euros.

Jordan opens a banking app.

Within seconds:

- the euros are converted into dollars at a transparent exchange rate,
- a portion is automatically moved into savings,
- another portion goes toward estimated taxes,
- and the remainder appears in Jordan's spending account.

No branch. No forms. No waiting. No wire desk. No "processing window."

The entire sequence takes less than three seconds. Jordan barely notices it.

But behind that simple experience lies one of the most profound technological shifts in the history of cooperative finance. Because what powers this new generation of digital-native credit unions is not merely a prettier app. It is an entirely different infrastructure philosophy.

And that philosophy may determine whether credit unions remain relevant in the next era of banking — or quietly fade into nostalgia.

The Problem Nobody Sees

Most consumers think banking is an app. It isn't. The app is merely the visible layer — the paint on the surface.

Underneath lies the machinery.

And in much of the banking world, that machinery is astonishingly old.

Many traditional financial institutions still rely on core systems originally designed decades ago. Some trace their architectural roots back to the 1970s and 1980s — an era when banking happened primarily in branches, overnight processing was normal, and "real time" barely existed.

These systems were never built for:

- smartphones,
- instant payments,
- global transfers,
- AI-driven support,
- open APIs,
- or 24/7 digital banking.

Yet institutions have spent years layering modern experiences on top of aging infrastructure, creating what one fintech architect jokingly described as:

"A Ferrari dashboard attached to a steam engine." For many legacy credit unions, this creates daily friction:

- delayed settlement,
- limited integration capabilities,
- maintenance complexity,
- vendor dependency,
- expensive upgrades,
- and operational rigidity.

Members don't always see these limitations directly. But they feel them. The app freezes. Transfers lag. International wires require paperwork. Customer service can't access real-time data. The experience feels... old.

And for younger generations raised on instant digital platforms, "old" is fatal.

From Branch-Centric to Cloud-Native

The new generation of de-novo credit unions is approaching infrastructure differently. Instead of modernizing old systems piece by piece, they are building from scratch. And when you start from scratch in 2026, you build in the cloud. Not "cloud-enabled." Not "cloud-adjacent." Cloud-native. That distinction matters enormously. A cloud-native institution is architected around:

- distributed computing,
- elastic scaling,
- real-time processing,
- API interoperability,
- and continuous deployment.

In practical terms, this means the system behaves less like traditional banking infrastructure and more like Netflix, Uber, or Spotify. Always on. Always updating. Always connected.

The New Core: Banking as a Platform

Historically, the "core banking system" was a giant monolithic platform — one enormous software environment responsible for accounts, transactions, ledgers, payments, loans, and reporting. Changing anything was risky.

Modern neo credit unions are moving toward modular infrastructure.

Instead of one giant system, there are interconnected services.

Think Lego blocks instead of concrete slabs.

One service handles authentication.

Another manages payments. Another handles foreign exchange. Another runs fraud analysis. Another powers notifications. All connected through APIs.

APIs: The Digital Nervous System

If cloud-native architecture is the skeleton of the neo credit union, APIs are the nervous system.

API stands for Application Programming Interface.

But in simpler language, APIs allow systems to talk to each other instantly.

Your budgeting tool communicates with your transaction engine.

Your fraud system communicates with your payment rail.

Your AI assistant communicates with your account history.

Without APIs, digital banking feels fragmented.

With APIs, everything becomes fluid.

This is how a member can:

- receive real-time notifications,
- categorize spending instantly,
- freeze a debit card immediately,
- or transfer money internationally in seconds.

Older systems struggle here because they were built in isolated environments.

Modern infrastructure is built for connectivity from the beginning.

Real-Time Means Real-Time

One of the most important changes in modern financial infrastructure is the move from batch processing to real-time processing.

Traditional systems often settle transactions in scheduled batches.

That made sense decades ago.

It makes little sense now.

In a neo credit union:

- balances update instantly,
- transfers settle immediately,
- fraud scoring occurs in milliseconds,
- and risk models analyze activity continuously.

This requires massive processing capability — but cloud-native systems scale dynamically.

If transaction volume spikes, additional computing resources activate automatically.

No downtime.

No waiting for overnight cycles.

Members increasingly expect money to move at the speed of messaging.

Infrastructure must now behave accordingly.

AI Beneath the Surface

Much of the future neo credit union will be powered by AI.

But not necessarily in the flashy way people imagine.

The most important AI systems are invisible.

Fraud engines monitor transaction behavior continuously.

Machine learning models identify anomalies:

- unusual spending,
- impossible travel patterns,
- suspicious login attempts,
- or account takeover indicators.

The system reacts instantly.

Sometimes before the member even notices a problem.

Meanwhile, AI-powered support agents handle thousands of routine interactions simultaneously:

"What's my available balance?"

"When does my paycheck arrive?"

"How much did I spend on dining this month?"

But unlike traditional call-center automation, next-generation AI agents operate contextually.

They understand history. Patterns. Preferences. And when complexity increases, they escalate seamlessly to human specialists.

The goal is not replacing humans.

It is removing friction.

Identity Without Paper

Identity verification is another area undergoing radical transformation.

Traditional onboarding is slow because compliance requirements are extensive.

Modern infrastructure solves this digitally.

A neo credit union may use:

- biometric verification,
- document scanning AI,
- behavioral analytics,
- device fingerprinting,
- and real-time fraud databases.

The result:

A secure onboarding process that feels nearly invisible to the member. Open the app. Scan your ID. Take a selfie. Done.

This process once required branch visits and paper forms. Now it happens in minutes.

Cybersecurity as Infrastructure

The more digital banking becomes, the more cybersecurity becomes existential.

For neo credit unions, security is not an add-on.

It is foundational architecture.

Modern systems increasingly rely on:

- zero-trust frameworks,
- end-to-end encryption,
- tokenized credentials,
- behavioral anomaly detection,
- and distributed cloud security models.

Older financial institutions often bolt security onto legacy systems.

New digital-native cooperatives embed security from the beginning.

And because many are cloud-native, security patches can deploy continuously — sometimes dozens of times per day.

Members never notice.

Which is precisely the point.

International Banking Without the Pain

One of the biggest infrastructure advantages of neo credit unions may be global payments.

Legacy international transfers are notoriously inefficient.

A typical wire transfer may pass through:

- correspondent banks,
- multiple settlement layers,
- foreign exchange intermediaries,
- and manual review processes.

Each layer adds:

- delay,
- cost,
- and opacity.

Modern infrastructures connect directly to newer payment rails and FX providers through APIs.

This allows:

- near-instant transfers,
- transparent exchange rates,
- reduced intermediary costs,
- and real-time tracking.

To younger globally connected members, this won't feel innovative.

It will feel normal.

Which is exactly why it matters.

The Robo-Branch Infrastructure

Physical branches are not disappearing entirely. They are evolving. The neo credit union branch may resemble an Apple Store more than a bank. Or in some cases, a highly automated micro-location.

A robo-branch may include:

- biometric kiosks,
- secure consultation pods,
- digital notary systems,
- AI-assisted onboarding,
- and remote video specialists.

A single employee may oversee multiple locations remotely.

Routine banking becomes fully self-service.

Human interaction becomes intentional rather than mandatory.

Why Legacy Institutions Struggle to Compete

If this infrastructure is so clearly superior, why doesn't everyone simply adopt it? Because replacing core banking

infrastructure is extraordinarily difficult. It involves:

- operational risk,
- regulatory complexity,
- vendor dependency,
- migration costs,
- staff retraining,
- and cultural resistance.

Many legacy credit unions are trapped in what technologists call "technical debt."

The past accumulates.

And eventually the cost of maintaining old systems becomes greater than replacing them — but replacement itself becomes terrifying.

De-novo institutions avoid this burden entirely.

They begin clean.

The Cooperative Advantage

Interestingly, the technology itself is not the real differentiator. Large banks can buy technology. Fintechs can build elegant apps. The true differentiator is alignment. A neo credit union combines modern infrastructure with cooperative incentives. The institution succeeds when members succeed. That changes design priorities fundamentally. AI is used to reduce fees, not maximize them. Automation reduces friction, not employment costs alone. Data improves member outcomes rather than advertising precision. Infrastructure becomes a service layer for human wellbeing.

Building the Financial Operating System of Daily Life

What ultimately emerges is something larger than a bank.

The neo credit union becomes a financial operating system.

A platform integrating:

- spending,
- saving,
- borrowing,
- investing,
- international payments,
- budgeting,
- identity,
- and financial planning.

All in one ecosystem. Always available. Always connected. Always evolving.

Quietly, the Future Is Already Being Built

Across the country, small groups of technologists, cooperative strategists, regulators, and financial architects are already assembling these systems.

Vendor evaluations are happening.

Cloud providers are being selected.

Compliance frameworks are being drafted. Infrastructure diagrams are growing more detailed.

And somewhere in those discussions lies a simple realization:

The next generation of credit unions may not look like credit unions at all.

At least not from the outside.

They may look like the apps younger generations already love.

Fast. Invisible. Seamless.

But underneath, they will still carry the same cooperative DNA that began in rural villages more than 150 years ago.

People helping people.

Only now powered by APIs, cloud clusters, AI agents, and real-time payment rails.

The Next Survey

The second survey launched in the previous edition produced another wave of responses — particularly around international payments, multi-currency functionality, and mobile-first design.

Now a third survey is being prepared.

Its focus: What level of automation do members actually want? Would members trust AI-powered financial coaching? Would they prefer fully digital onboarding? Do they still value branches — or only access?

On the opposite page, readers will again find a QR code linking to the newest survey.

The infrastructure of the neo credit union is being designed right now.

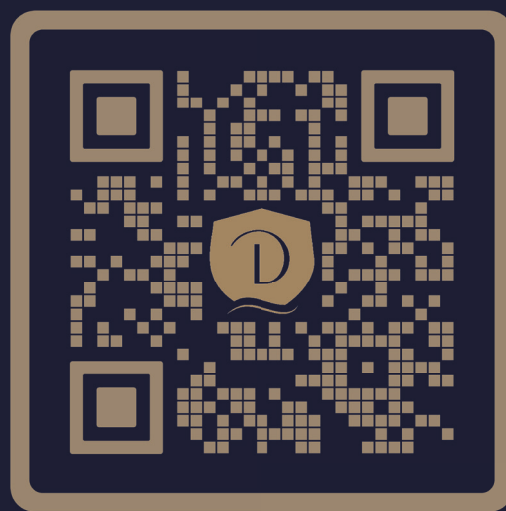
And, fittingly for a cooperative institution, its future members are helping shape it before it even exists.

The Credit Union: June Survey

Your voice matters! Scan the code to participate.



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



SCAN ME

VIKTORIA'S HOME

WE ALWAYS GO ONE STEP FURTHER

What happens when a remarkable designer works with the world's finest furniture?



VIKTORIA'S HOME - EUROPEAN DESIGN EXCELLENCE.



Why Many LLC Formations Become Expensive Later

Even When Everything Seemed “Done Right”

“We formed the LLC. Now we’re ready to go.” This is exactly where many entrepreneurs between Germany and Florida make their first costly mistake. Because the real challenge is often not the LLC formation itself — but the tax strategy behind it. More and more Germans are forming LLCs in Florida. The reasons sound convincing: easy setup, flexible structure, international business opportunities, U.S. investments, or preparation for a future move. Online, everything looks simple. The LLC is registered quickly, the EIN is issued, and the bank account is opened. But an LLC is not a tax strategy. At first, it is only a legal structure. Whether it truly protects you, works efficiently for taxes, and remains compliant in both countries depends entirely on how it is managed.

An LLC Must Fit Your Personal Situation

The most important question is not: “How fast can I form an LLC?” The real question is: “Which structure actually fits my tax situation?”

Important considerations include:

- Are you still living in Germany?
- Are you planning a move to Florida?
- Do you own assets, real estate, or investments?
- Will the LLC operate actively or hold assets?
- Will income be generated in the U.S., Germany, or both?

This is where two very different systems collide. The U.S. may treat an LLC one way, while Germany may classify it completely differently. What appears practical in Florida may later require extensive explanation to German tax authorities. That is why an LLC should never be formed in isolation, but always with both tax systems in mind.

Bookkeeping Starts on Day One

Many entrepreneurs only think about bookkeeping once tax filing season begins. In reality, that is often far too late. Because bookkeeping does not start at year-end. It starts with the very first transaction.

From day one, it should be clear:

- What is business-related?
- What remains personal?

- Which expenses belong to the LLC?
- Which payments are contributions, loans, or income?
- Which documents does the IRS require?

When personal and business transactions become mixed, receipts are missing, or bookkeeping cannot be explained clearly, chaos begins. And chaos becomes expensive.

The Most Common Mistakes After Formation

During tax season, we repeatedly see the same issues:

- LLC formed, but no bookkeeping maintained
- Form 5472 or pro forma 1120 overlooked
- 1040-NR filing ignored
- personal expenses paid through business accounts
- U.S. income not properly reported in Germany
- no relocation or investment strategy in place

Most of these mistakes happen because people were never properly informed. Many believe the formation itself is the

most important step — when in reality, it is only the beginning.

Why Early Planning Protects Wealth

For Germans planning to form an LLC or relocate to Florida, early planning is critical. Assets, investments, or reserves may suddenly become tax relevant once residency or income structures change. Those who plan early can build strategically. Those who react later often end up repairing costly mistakes. Good accounting is therefore not just administration. It is asset protection, decision-making support, and a strategic business tool. This is exactly where DARIA US Accounting Service LLC comes in. Alexandra Welsch and her bilingual team support German-speaking entrepreneurs between Germany and Florida — from LLC formation and bookkeeping to international tax structuring. Because in the end, success is not determined by how quickly an LLC was formed. What matters is whether it was structured correctly from the very beginning.

In the next issue: Paying taxes twice in Germany and the United States? What many Germans in Florida realize too late.
By Alexandra Welsch

A REAL SYSTEM - NOT JUST DATA ENTRY

Bookkeeping that supports growth and smart decisions

We don't just “enter transactions.” We build and maintain a bookkeeping process that stays clean - so you can scale, invest, and plan with confidence.

Results you'll notice:

- ✓ Fewer financial surprises
- ✓ Faster, smoother year-end
- ✓ Better cash flow visibility
- ✓ Stronger control over spending and profitability

Get in touch:

Daria US Accounting Service LLC
Alexandra Welsch, Founder & Tax Professional
Phone: (239) 955 1711



Scan to visit our website



30+ Years of Experience.

As a Platinum Partner, we recommend and work with Xero.



IS YOUR BUSINESS STUCK IN MANUAL MODE?

Manual paperwork, messy spreadsheets, and disconnected systems are costing you time and money.

- **Custom Digital Solutions** for local businesses in Fort Myers and Cape Coral.
- Specializing in web apps, databases, and **automated workflows**.
- We use cutting-edge **AI-driven** automation to help your business learn and adapt.
- We speak both ‘business’ and ‘tech’ to ensure **smooth, stress-free projects** from start to finish.

READY TO UPGRADE YOUR WORKFLOW?



Independence Day in the USA: A Celebration of Pride, Freedom, and Togetherness

Every year on July 4th, the United States comes alive in a way that feels both deeply traditional and joyfully spontaneous. Independence Day is more than just a public holiday—it is a nationwide celebration of identity, history, and the shared values that continue to shape the country.

Independence Day is therefore not only about the founding of a nation, but also about the values it represents: liberty, opportunity, democracy, and resilience.

The day marks the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, when the thirteen original colonies declared their freedom from British rule. More than two centuries later, this moment is still remembered with pride. Across the country, flags are raised early in the morning, homes and streets are decorated in red, white, and blue, and communities prepare for a day filled with gatherings, food, and celebration.

For many Americans, the pride connected to this day comes from more than history alone. It is rooted in the idea of freedom and self-determination—the belief that the country was built on the possibility of shaping one’s own future. Independence Day is therefore not only about the founding of a nation, but also

about the values it represents: liberty, opportunity, democracy, and resilience.

It is a moment where people reflect on the sacrifices made over generations, by soldiers, immigrants, and ordinary citizens, who contributed to building and protecting the country. This sense of shared history and responsibility is what gives the celebration its emotional depth.

What makes July 4th especially unique is its strong sense of togetherness. In small towns and big cities alike, people come together in parks, on beaches, and in backyards.

Families organize barbecues, friends gather for picnics, and neighbors who may not see each other often reconnect over shared meals and laughter. Classic American foods—grilled burgers, hot dogs, corn on the cob, watermelon, and homemade desserts—become part of the tradition, not just for their taste but for the memories they represent.

Throughout the day, parades often take center stage. Local marching bands, veterans’ groups, firefighters, and community organizations move through streets lined with cheering spectators. Children wave flags, ride decorated bicycles, and collect candy tossed from floats. These parades are not about grandeur, but about community pride—showing appreciation for the people who help build and support everyday life.

As evening approaches, anticipation builds for the moment many consider the highlight of the day: fireworks. From small towns to major cities like New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., the night sky is illuminated with color and sound. Families gather on blankets, couples sit side by side, and children look upward in awe as fireworks burst overhead. The displays often reflect not just

celebration, but emotion—joy, gratitude, and a shared sense of belonging.

In many places, music is also an important part of the celebration. Patriotic songs such as “The Star-Spangled Banner” and “America the Beautiful” are performed at concerts and public events, often accompanied by live bands or community choirs. These moments create a pause in the festivities, reminding people of the history behind the celebration and the values it represents.

Nowhere is the holiday more relaxed and scenic than in Southwest Florida, where the Fourth of July blends national pride with coastal living. In towns like Fort Myers Beach, Sanibel, Captiva, and Naples, the day often begins with beach time—families arriving early with umbrellas, coolers, and chairs set up along the Gulf of Mexico.

The atmosphere is festive but unhurried, shaped by sea breezes and open skies. In the afternoon, the beaches fill with families enjoying swimming, paddleboarding, and picnics in the sand.

Children build sandcastles decorated with tiny flags, while adults prepare casual beachside meals. There is a distinct sense of community, as visitors and locals share space, stories, and the rhythm of a long summer day.

As night falls, Southwest Florida transforms into one of the most atmospheric places in the country to experience Independence Day. Fireworks are launched over the water, reflecting across the Gulf and creating mirrored bursts of color on the waves. Popular viewing spots include Fort Myers Beach, Naples Pier, and waterfront parks where people gather shoulder to shoulder, often arriving hours in advance just to secure a view. Smaller traditions also define the

region. In some coastal towns, boat parades glide through canals and marinas, each vessel decorated with flags, lights, and patriotic colors. Families line the docks, waving as boats pass by, turning waterways into floating celebrations. Live music, local festivals, and community events often continue late into the evening, reinforcing the feeling that the entire region is celebrating together.

Perhaps what stands out most about July 4th is its emotional balance. It is both festive and reflective. While it is a day filled with food, laughter, and fireworks, it is also a moment to recognize the meaning of freedom and the long journey the country has taken since its founding. For many Americans, it is a day of gratitude—not only for history, but for the present moment shared with family, friends, and community.

At its heart, Independence Day is about unity. Despite differences in background, beliefs, or experiences, people across the country come together under a shared flag and a shared sense of belonging. It is this feeling—simple yet powerful—that gives July 4th its lasting significance.

As the final fireworks fade and the night sky returns to calm, what remains is not just the memory of a celebration, but the feeling of connection. A reminder that pride in a country is often found not only in its history, but in the moments people create together.

By S. Mechalik

These parades are not about grandeur, but about community pride



Photos courtesy of: S. Mechalik

Classic American Cheeseburger

Nothing says 4th of July quite like a freshly grilled cheeseburger at a backyard barbecue.

Why it fits July 4th:

The burger is simple, social, and made for outdoor cooking—everyone gathers around the grill while the food is being prepared, which is a big part of the Independence Day atmosphere.

By S. Mechalik

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

- 500–600 g ground beef (80/20 fat ratio is ideal)
- Salt and black pepper
- 4 burger buns
- 4 slices of cheddar cheese
- Lettuce leaves
- Tomato slices
- Pickles
- Ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise (optional)

OPTIONAL TOPPINGS:

- Grilled onions
- Bacon
- BBQ sauce

1 Form the ground beef into 4 equal patties. Do not press them too tightly—this keeps them juicy.

2 Season both sides generously with salt and pepper.

3 Grill the patties on medium-high heat for about 3–4 minutes per side, depending on thickness.

4 Add a slice of cheddar cheese on top during the last minute so it melts.

5 Toast the buns lightly on the grill for extra flavor.

6 Assemble the burger with lettuce, tomato, pickles, and sauces.



Photos courtesy of: S. Mechalik

New Paths to Take – St. John’s Day as a Feast of New Beginnings

St. John’s Day on June 24 is one of the special days in the church year. It falls in the middle of summer, when the days are long and bright and nature is in full bloom. It is no coincidence that John the Baptist is placed into this time. His message is a message of light, of new beginnings, and of hope. John is a person who has the courage to try something new. Someone who shakes people awake and invites them to realign their lives with God. For this reason, his message has lost none of its relevance today.

Many people experience our time as a time of great change. Familiar structures are breaking down, certainties are being shaken, and much that once seemed self-evident must be rethought. Church communities are also facing this challenge. Parishes are changing, new forms of community are emerging, and people are searching for orientation and genuine fellowship. In such a time, people with courage are needed – people who are willing to set out and trust that God will go new ways with them.

Hermann Hesse captured this idea impressively in his famous poem *Stages*. It says: “And to every beginning there is a magic inherent that protects us and helps us to live.” These words carry a deep truth. Every beginning is initially uncertain. No one knows exactly where the path will lead. And yet it is precisely in this that a special

strength lies. Those who begin anew open themselves to change, hope, and growth. The magic of beginnings lies in the fact that God trusts human beings to take new steps.

The Gospel also tells of such a beginning. After John the Baptist has been imprisoned, Jesus begins his public ministry. Matthew describes this moment as the fulfillment of an ancient promise of the prophet Isaiah: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.” With Jesus, something new begins. In the midst of uncertainty and darkness, hope shines forth.

It is remarkable how Jesus begins his path. He does not withdraw into solitude, nor does he seek closeness to the powerful. He goes to the people – right into their everyday lives. He meets fishermen by the lake, simple workers, people with rough hands and ordinary lives. It is precisely them whom he calls to follow him.

This contains a strong message for our time as well: God does not first build his community with the perfect, the influential, or the successful. He calls people out of their everyday lives – people with questions, doubts, and hopes. People who are willing to be moved.

The first words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew are: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” This call to conversion has often been

misunderstood – as a threat or a moral accusation. But Jesus means something much deeper. Conversion for him is not fear, but realignment. It is about turning again to God and shaping one’s life from his love. It is about the courage to leave old ways of thinking behind and to become open to God’s future.

John the Baptist especially embodies this courage for change. He is not someone who lives comfortably or tells people what they want to hear. John stands for clarity and truth. At the same time, he knows that he himself is not the goal. His task is to point to Christ. “He must increase, but I must decrease,” John later says about Jesus. This also contains an important message for every community: true greatness is not shown in putting oneself at the center, but in preparing the way for others.

Perhaps this is one of the great tasks of our time: to create spaces in which people can rediscover faith, trust, and community. Many long for genuine togetherness, for hope, and for a faith that carries them in everyday life. New community emerges where people listen to one another, support one another, and stay on the way together. Jesus himself shows us this path. From the very beginning he does not walk it alone. He gathers disciples, forms community, and sends people out. Christian faith was never meant to be a solitary path. Faith lives from walking

together. In this lies its strength.

St. John’s Day therefore reminds us that the Church must always be a Church of new beginnings. Not stillness, but movement belongs to its essence. Not fear of change, but trust in God’s presence. John the Baptist is a forerunner – and perhaps our time needs such forerunners again: people who sow hope instead of resignation, who have the courage to begin anew, and who believe that God still allows community to grow today.

Often, new beginnings start very small: in a conversation, in an invitation, in the willingness to listen, in a person taking the first step. Great changes rarely begin loudly or spectacularly. They grow where trust is given and people set out together.

St. John’s Day can therefore be an invitation for all of us to rediscover the “magic of beginnings.” Perhaps it takes courage right now to let go of old certainties and to take new paths. Perhaps it takes the belief that God grants a future even in difficult times. John the Baptist shows us: those who have the courage to set out can become forerunners for others. And Jesus shows us: no one has to walk this path alone. Where people are touched by God’s light, new community emerges. There hope grows. There the future begins.

By Tobias Leininger

Southwest Florida’s Beaches: Small Treasures and Big Family Moments

Southwest Florida’s coastline is wonderfully diverse, offering families far more than just sun and sand. Each beach has its own personality—some quiet and nature-focused, others lively and full of energy—making it easy to find the perfect match for both small children and older kids. Practical details like restrooms, picnic spots, and easy access can make all the difference for a relaxed family outing—and fortunately, many of these beaches are well-equipped.

On Sanibel Island, everything revolves around shells—and not without reason. It is widely known as the “Shell Capital of the World.” Its unusual east-west shape allows currents to deposit thousands of shells along the shore every day, turning a simple walk into a treasure hunt. Families quickly adopt the famous “Sanibel Stoop,” bending down to search for delicate finds. Younger children enjoy collecting anything that catches their eye, while older kids often become surprisingly serious about identifying rare shells. Several public beach access points on Sanibel offer restrooms and outdoor showers, making it convenient for families planning to stay longer. Picnic tables are often available, and the

relaxed atmosphere makes it easy to spend an entire afternoon here without feeling rushed.

To take that curiosity a step further, a visit to the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum adds an educational layer to the experience. Interactive exhibits and colorful displays help children understand what they’ve found on the beach, turning a handful of shells into stories about marine life. It’s a perfect complement to a morning spent along the shoreline and makes Sanibel especially appealing for families who enjoy combining fun with learning.

Just before reaching the island, the Sanibel Causeway is a destination in its own right. These small sandy islands between the mainland and Sanibel feel laid-back and local, with plenty of space to spread out. While facilities are more limited here—restrooms are not always available—the causeway is a favorite for casual family picnics right by the water. It is also dog-friendly, which makes it especially appealing for families traveling with pets. On windy days, the atmosphere shifts—kites fill the sky, and kiteboarders and windsurfers glide across the water. It’s an easy place to stop, relax, and enjoy the view.

In contrast, Fort Myers Beach is all about movement and excitement. The wide shoreline and shallow water make it perfect for families, especially those with younger children who want to splash safely near the shore. This beach is one of the best equipped in the area, with public restrooms, nearby restaurants, and rental options for umbrellas and chairs. It’s also a great choice for families who don’t want to pack everything themselves.

Older kids and teens will find plenty to do, from jet skis to parasailing. During parts of the year, locals mention “stingray season,” but there’s no need for concern—these animals are shy, and a simple shuffle of your feet in the water keeps everyone safe. Dolphins are a common sight here, often appearing just offshore. Fort Myers Beach is also a fantastic sunset spot, where families gather in the evening to watch the sky change colors over the Gulf.

For families who enjoy wildlife in a quieter setting, Bunche Beach Preserve offers a completely different experience. This natural, less-developed beach is especially popular with bird watchers. At low tide, the shallow flats attract a wide variety of wading birds, making it easy to spot herons, egrets, and other coastal species up close.

Facilities here are simple, but restrooms are available near the parking area. Bunche Beach is also a lovely place for a peaceful picnic, especially for families who prefer a quieter setting. Its wide open views make it one of the lesser-known but beautiful spots to watch the sunset.

Further north, Venice Beach offers something you won’t find just anywhere: fossilized shark teeth. Known as “Shark Tooth Beach,” it’s a natural playground for curious minds. Kids can spend hours sifting through the sand, hoping to uncover a small, dark triangle that once belonged to a prehistoric shark.

Venice Beach is also very family-friendly when it comes to amenities, with restrooms, picnic areas, and easy beach access. And it has another

unique charm—the local drum circle. Especially around sunset, musicians and visitors gather on the beach, creating a relaxed, rhythmic atmosphere. Families often stay into the evening, letting children dance in the sand while enjoying one of the most memorable sunset experiences on Florida’s Gulf Coast.

For those looking for a quieter connection to nature, Lovers Key State Park stands out. It feels more untouched, with fewer crowds and plenty of space to explore. The park offers restrooms, picnic areas, and shaded spots, making it ideal for a full family outing. You can easily combine beach time with kayaking through mangroves or short walks along nature trails. It’s not unusual to spot birds, fish, or even manatees, adding a sense of discovery for children of all ages.

Meanwhile, Captiva Island offers a softer, almost storybook-like atmosphere. The beaches here are peaceful and perfect for unwinding. While amenities vary depending on the access point, many areas provide basic facilities and picnic spots. Captiva is especially known for its sunsets—arguably some of the most beautiful in Southwest Florida. Families often gather quietly along the shore, ending the day together as the sky turns shades of orange, pink, and purple.

What makes Southwest Florida special is this variety. Some beaches invite quiet discovery—like shelling on Sanibel or birdwatching at Bunche Beach—while others encourage play and adventure, such as the lively shores of Fort Myers Beach or the treasure hunts at Venice. Some are perfect for a well-planned family picnic with all the comforts, while others feel more natural and spontaneous.

It’s a coastline that doesn’t rely on big attractions. Instead, it’s the mix of nature, movement, and small shared moments—a dolphin passing by, a newly discovered shell, a picnic by the water, or a sunset shared together—that makes it unforgettable for families.

By S. Mechalik



Photos courtesy of: S. Mechalik



FIFA World Cup 2026 – Knockout

Fillable bracket – official pairings

ROUND OF 32

M74 1E
 best 3rd team from A/B/C/D/F

M77 1I
 best 3rd team from C/D/F/G/H

M73 2A
 2B

M75 1F
 2C

M83 2K
 2L

M84 1H
 2J

M81 1D
 best 3rd team from B/E/F/I/J

M82 1G
 best 3rd team from A/E/H/I/J

M76 1C
 2F

M78 2E
 2I

M79 1A
 best 3rd team from C/E/F/H/I

M80 1L
 best 3rd team from E/H/I/J/K

M86 1J
 2H

M88 2D
 2G

M85 1B
 best 3rd team from E/F/G/I/J

M87 1K
 best 3rd team from D/E/I/J/L

ROUND OF 16

M89 Winner M74
 Winner M77

M90 Winner M73
 Winner M75

M93 Winner M83
 Winner M84

M94 Winner M81
 Winner M82

M91 Winner M76
 Winner M78

M92 Winner M79
 Winner M80

M95 Winner M86
 Winner M88

M96 Winner M85
 Winner M87

QUARTER-FINALS

M97 Winner M89
 Winner M90

M98 Winner M93
 Winner M94

M99 Winner M91
 Winner M92

M100 Winner M95
 Winner M96

The Stage of Giants

The Stage of Giants: The 2026 FIFA World Cup Rises

The 2026 FIFA World Cup approaches like an advancing storm — bigger, louder, and more unpredictable than ever before. Three host nations, 48 teams, one continent where stadiums become cathedrals and every match turns into the battlefield of a new football order. “This is no longer just a tournament,” says a coach working in Europe, “this is a test for entire football cultures.” In this atmosphere, two nations stand especially in the spotlight: Germany, with its tradition-rich precision, and the United States, which as co-host carries both the longing of a host nation and the urge for self-assertion. Above it all lies the backdrop of three countries — the United States, Canada, and Mexico — whose cities, climates, and stadiums shape the tournament into a unique and monumental spectacle.

The Format and Its Brutality — Chased Across Three Nations

The expansion to 48 teams has stretched the schedule and increased uncertainty. Four-team groups, more knockout matches, shorter recovery periods — a marathon in which every sign of exhaustion is punished. Match venues with extreme climate differences, long journeys across North America, constant media pressure: anyone hoping to survive here will need not only footballing quality, but also a logistical, psychological, and medical masterpiece. Mexico brings high-altitude arenas and

renewed focus. Yet one question lingers in the nation’s mind: can theory survive on football’s sacred grass?

The national team coach follows a clear credo: flexibility over dogma.

His system thrives on fluid transitions between possession dominance and lightning-fast counterattacks.

“We want to read the game, not just play it,” he said in a recent interview. The young talents bring speed and courage, yet they must withstand the pressure of international expectations. Veteran leaders provide stability, younger players provide sparks.

The danger lies elsewhere: injuries and psychological strain could destroy the fragile structure. A former international warns:

“A tournament lives from stability. Too much experimentation can become a catastrophe.”

Tactically, Germany relies on a flexible 4-3-3 capable of shifting into a 4-2-3-1 or even a 3-4-3. The full-backs are key figures expected to carry the game forward, while the defensive midfield closes spaces. The attack offers several options, but creativity still depends heavily on a few individuals — should one disappear, a dangerous void could emerge.

The strengths are obvious: tactical discipline, individual quality in Europe’s top leagues, and an extraordinary development structure.

Yet the risks are equally dramatic: vulnerability against rapid counterattacks,

As a collective, though, we can trouble anyone.”

Home advantage is real: shorter travel distances, packed stadiums, and national euphoria. Yet pressure can suffocate as easily as it inspires. Expectations range from the quarterfinals to the semifinals; failure would spark fierce debate, success would be celebrated as a triumph.

The United States appears perfectly suited to benefit from the expanded tournament — more group-stage and knockout opportunities, more favorable pathways.

Still, one weakness remains: against deep-defending elite opponents, the team sometimes lacks the creative precision to unlock matches through footballing quality alone.

The Dynamics of Place: Climate, Travel, Fan Zones

The venues across North America are not neutral stages. Heat across the Gulf region, thin air in Mexico’s high-altitude cities, cool Pacific breezes — all of this affects dribbling, stamina, and tactical execution.

Teams may rely on acclimatized lineups in Mexico, while Canada could reward speed and precision.

Added to this are fan festivals in New York, street celebrations in Toronto, and the blazing atmosphere of Monterrey — a cultural mosaic that fuels both pressure and euphoria.

“Some teams will not only compete against opponents, but against weather

The path then leads to Seattle, where cooler temperatures, passionate football culture, and intense stadium acoustics create entirely different conditions. Finally, the team returns to the West Coast — to San Francisco, where comparatively shorter travel distances and familiar surroundings further strengthen the home advantage.

“The crowd can carry this team,” says a former U.S. international, “but it can also consume them.”

When Continents Collide: An Imagined Duel Between Germany and the USA

A meeting between these two nations would feel symbolic:

method against raw energy.

Germany would attempt to dictate rhythm through ball circulation and spatial control; the United States would rely on pace, physicality, and set pieces as weapons.

The decisive moments would emerge in the margins: who wins the duels, who stays mentally calm? Games like these are often decided by tiny details — a deflected shot, a corner kick, a positional error.

The Backdrop: Economy, Identity, Risk

The 2026 World Cup is an economic giant. Infrastructure projects, broadcasting rights, tourism flows — everything hangs by a fragile thread.

For the host nations, the opportunity



Source: Pixabay

fiery atmospheres, Canada offers cool and organized stadiums with northern precision, while the United States delivers massive capacities, glittering metropolises, and stadium-ready heat.

The Hosts: USA, Canada, Mexico — Contrasts That Shape the Tournament

The three host nations create the dramatic backdrop. In the United States, megacities such as New York, Dallas, and Los Angeles gather inside packed arenas beneath a media machine that polishes every emotion to perfection. Canada, with cities like Toronto and Vancouver, contributes cool efficiency, young football audiences, and modern infrastructure. Mexico, with football-proven venues in Monterrey and Mexico City, delivers blazing atmospheres, passionate chants, and the challenge of extreme altitude. These contrasts mean teams must adapt not only tactically, but also climatically and logistically — another severe test of endurance. Here, ocean breezes and mountain air collide with floodlights and traditional fan culture — this will not be an ordinary tournament.

Germany: The Expected Phoenix — or a Tragic Collapse?

Germany enters the tournament carrying the weight of history and the impatience of a new generation. After recent setbacks, rebuilding efforts began: academies, football philosophy, scouting — much now operates with

the crushing burden of expectation, and the fragility of a squad still in transition. German media outlets phrase it openly: “A semifinal is mandatory — anything less would be a national shock.” Whether the team possesses the emotional resilience required for a deep tournament run remains the defining question.

USA: Hoping for Glory — The Young Power on America’s Streets

For the United States, this World Cup is more than a sporting event; it is a national performance.

Home matches mean massive crowds, capital, and media spectacle — but also enormous pressure. “We do not want to make a guest appearance, we want to make history,” says a U.S. team official passionately. Major League Soccer continues to gain attraction, talents are developing rapidly, and more American players are gaining experience in Europe. The result: a team that is athletic, fearless, and tactically ambitious.

The American coach favors intensity and transitions. Wing play, set pieces, and physical dominance shape the style, though the team is also evolving toward a more possession-oriented buildup. The balance is still developing.

Personnel-wise, the squad combines domestic stars with players molded in Europe — a mixture of robustness and emerging creativity. One veteran remarks: “We are deep, but not world-class everywhere yet.

and time itself,” says a physiotherapist.

Team Germany and the Burden of Travel

Germany’s national team will face not only opponents during the group stage, but entire landscapes.

The opening match in Houston promises heavy air, extreme temperatures, and the electrified atmosphere of giant Texan arenas where every game feels like a national event. Further stops include Toronto and New York — metropolises separated by enormous distances and contrasting conditions that challenge even the most experienced teams. From the humid American South to the dense urban intensity of the East Coast, the journey itself becomes part of the tournament.

For Germany, this means constant adaptation. Climate shifts, time zones, and travel fatigue will all become tactical considerations.

“This World Cup forces teams to constantly arrive all over again,” says a staff member close to the national team.

Team USA and the Epic Venues

The United States, meanwhile, moves through the group stage on a stage seemingly built for national spectacle. The opening match in Los Angeles — inside the gigantic SoFi Stadium — is expected to become a patriotically charged media event fueled by Hollywood glamour, celebrities, and tens of thousands of supporters.

is enormous: investments in stadiums, transportation systems, and youth development could create long-term effects. At the same time, much remains at stake:

extreme weather, political debates surrounding security concepts, and the relentless pressure of global scrutiny.

Conclusion: A Race Against Time, Climate, and Expectation

The 2026 World Cup is a conflicted epic: it promises glory, yet carries countless dangers.

Germany represents duty and methodology; the United States symbolizes rise and ambition. Canada and Mexico shape the tournament through cool efficiency and fiery passion. Both nations — and every participating team — possess the potential to define this World Cup.

Yet the path is steep, marked by exhaustion, media frenzy, and moments in which a single mistake can decide everything.

In the end, victory will belong not merely to the better tactic or the stronger squad. It will belong to the team capable of controlling its nerves, managing exhaustion, and seizing those fleeting moments in which football transforms into legend. The world looks toward North America — expecting drama, triumph, and the unexpected.

By John Heinrich

FIFA World Cup 2026 – Group Stage

Fillable Schedule – Group Stage



Source: Unsplash



GROUP A

Match	Result
Mexico – South Africa	: :
Korea Republic – Czechia	: :
Czechia – South Africa	: :
Mexico – Korea Republic	: :
Czechia – Mexico	: :
South Africa – Korea Republic	: :

GROUP B

Match	Result
Canada – Bosnia and Herzegovina	: :
Qatar – Switzerland	: :
Canada – Qatar	: :
Switzerland – Bosnia and Herzegovina	: :
Switzerland – Canada	: :
Bosnia and Herzegovina – Qatar	: :

GROUP C

Match	Result
Brazil – Morocco	: :
Haiti – Scotland	: :
Brazil – Haiti	: :
Scotland – Morocco	: :
Morocco – Haiti	: :
Scotland – Brazil	: :

GROUP D

Match	Result
USA – Paraguay	: :
Australia – Türkiye	: :
USA – Australia	: :
Türkiye – Paraguay	: :
Türkiye – USA	: :
Paraguay – Australia	: :

GROUP E

Match	Result
Germany – Curaçao	: :
Côte d'Ivoire – Ecuador	: :
Germany – Côte d'Ivoire	: :
Ecuador – Curaçao	: :
Ecuador – Germany	: :
Curaçao – Côte d'Ivoire	: :

GROUP F

Match	Result
Netherlands – Japan	: :
Sweden – Tunisia	: :
Netherlands – Sweden	: :
Tunisia – Japan	: :
Japan – Sweden	: :
Tunisia – Netherlands	: :

GROUP G

Match	Result
Belgium – Egypt	: :
IR Iran – New Zealand	: :
Belgium – IR Iran	: :
New Zealand – Egypt	: :
New Zealand – Belgium	: :
Egypt – IR Iran	: :

GROUP H

Match	Result
Saudi Arabia – Uruguay	: :
Spain – Cabo Verde	: :
Uruguay – Cabo Verde	: :
Spain – Saudi Arabia	: :
Cabo Verde – Saudi Arabia	: :
Uruguay – Spain	: :

GROUP I

Match	Result
France – Senegal	: :
Iraq – Norway	: :
France – Iraq	: :
Norway – Senegal	: :
Senegal – Iraq	: :
Norway – France	: :

GROUP J

Match	Result
Argentina – Algeria	: :
Austria – Jordan	: :
Argentina – Austria	: :
Jordan – Algeria	: :
Algeria – Austria	: :
Jordan – Argentina	: :

GROUP K

Match	Result
Portugal – DR Congo	: :
Uzbekistan – Colombia	: :
Portugal – Uzbekistan	: :
Colombia – DR Congo	: :
Colombia – Portugal	: :
DR Congo – Uzbekistan	: :

GROUP L

Match	Result
England – Croatia	: :
Ghana – Panama	: :
England – Ghana	: :
Panama – Croatia	: :
Panama – England	: :
Croatia – Ghana	: :



Match

Each row is a group stage match.



Enter result

Write the score after each match.



Group stage

12 groups compete in the first stage.



Qualification

32 teams qualify for the knockout stage.

t Stage



SEMI-FINALS

FINAL

M101 Winner M97
Winner M98



M104 Winner M101
Winner M102



M102 Winner M99
Winner M100



THIRD-PLACE MATCH

M103 Loser M101
Loser M102



Bracket

Winners advance from round to round.



Enter result

Write the winner or score for each match.



Third-place match

The semi-final losers play for third place.



Match numbers

M73–M104 are the official match numbers.

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!

Cape Coral – “Red, White & BOOM!”

Where? Around Cape Coral Parkway and the Cape Coral Bridge

When? Starting in the late afternoon

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

04

Fort Myers – Celebration in the River District

Where? Downtown Fort Myers and Caloosahatchee River

When? All Day

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

04

Fort Myers Beach – Fireworks on the Beach

Where? Fort Myers Beach | Times Square and the beachfront area

When? All Day

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

04

Punta Gorda – Harborfront Celebration

Where? Punta Gorda | Fishermen’s Village and the Charlotte Harbor waterfront

When? Afternoon and evening

- Throughout the afternoon and evening, visitors can enjoy live music, food vendors, and family activities. Later, crowds gather along the harbor to watch the fireworks over Charlotte Harbor Bay, typically beginning around 9:00 PM.
- The reflections on the water and the view of the boats create an especially charming and relaxed atmosphere.

04

Beach and Waterfront Events

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

Naples – Fireworks at the Pier

Where? Naples | Naples Pier and the surrounding beaches

When? Evening

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

04

**Send Us Your Event
Recommendations!**

info@sunshine-post.com



Photos courtesy of: S. Mechalik

The Music We Still Hear: Remembering Jimmi Melton in Downtown Fort Myers



Photos courtesy of: Katharina Kaufmann

Some people become part of a place so naturally that, after a while, they are no longer just someone we see.

They become part of the rhythm of our days, part of the sound of a street, part of the feeling of a community.

In Downtown Fort Myers, Jimmi Melton was one of those people.

For decades, Jimmi shared his music in downtown.

His presence was familiar, steady, and real. Whether someone stopped to listen, waved while passing by, or simply heard him playing in the background of a busy day, Jimmi added something special to the atmosphere. His music became part of Downtown's heartbeat.

It made ordinary moments warmer and reminded us that a city is not only made of buildings and businesses.

It is made of people.

Now, the place where he could so often be found feels different.

When I heard that we would no longer hear Jimmi playing music on the street, my first reaction was tears in my eyes. Not only because of sadness, but because I realized how much he had meant to this community and myself. Jimmi was more than a musician in downtown.

He was a familiar face, a kind presence, and a reminder that some of the most important people are not always the ones with the biggest title or the loudest voice.

Sometimes they are the ones who simply show up with heart, again and again.

I would see Jimmi from time to time on the street.

At first, our conversations were simple: a hello, a few words, a smile.

Over time, those moments became more meaningful. Sometimes we would get coffee together.

Sometimes we would grab a slice of pizza.

Our conversations were light, deep, and honest all at once. We talked about real life, real situations, and the experiences that shape us.

As a younger person, I valued those conversations deeply. Jimmi allowed me to see different sides of life through his eyes.

He had a story, as every person does, and while every detail is not mine to share, I can say this: his presence mattered.

His words mattered. His music mattered. The way he connected mattered.

Jimmi reminded me that every person we pass has a history, a perspective, and a story worth respecting. He reminded me that wisdom is not always found in obvious places.

Sometimes it is found in a simple conversation on the sidewalk, over coffee, or in the music someone offers to the world without asking for much in return.

Seeing the memorial for Jimmi touched my heart. The photographs, the flowers, and the love left in the place where people were used to finding him say something powerful.

They say that people noticed. They say that people cared. They say that Jimmi was not just passing through Downtown; he was part of it.

That is what makes this moment so meaningful. It is not only a moment of loss. It is a moment that shows us who we are as a community.

When people stop to remember, leave flowers, share stories, and honor someone's place in their lives, it shows that our community is alive.

It shows that people still see one another. It shows that love, even when quiet, has a way of gathering.

Jimmi's passing leaves a missing piece

in the puzzle of Downtown Fort Myers. The streets will continue to move. People will continue to meet for lunch, walk to work, visit local businesses, and enjoy the life of the city.

But for those who knew him, listened to him, or simply felt comfort in his familiar presence, something has changed.

A sound is missing. A face is missing. A piece of the community's heart feels different.

And still, this is not meant to be only a sad reflection. It is also a reflection of gratitude: gratitude for the music Jimmi shared, for the smiles he created, for the conversations he offered, and as a reminder that one person can leave a lasting impact not through wealth, status, or a large platform, but through kindness, consistency, and love.

In our world, we often measure contribution in numbers. We ask how much someone built, how much they earned, how many people knew their name.

But Jimmi reminds us that there is another kind of contribution, one that cannot be measured so easily.

A person can shape a community by being present.

By listening.

By speaking honestly. By bringing music into the day.

By making another person feel seen.

That kind of impact is real.

It is real when someone smiles because of you. It is real when a conversation stays with someone long after it ends.

It is real when a place feels warmer because you were there. It is real when, after you are gone, people stop in the very spot where you once stood and leave flowers to say thank you.

For me personally, Jimmi left a footprint. He made me smile. He made me think. He reminded me to listen, and to recognize the human stories all around me. And more than anything, I hope Jimmi knew, or maybe still knows somewhere, that he left a footprint behind. Not just on the streets of Downtown Fort Myers, but in the hearts of the people who met him, listened to him, spoke with him, or simply passed by and felt the warmth of his presence.

I hope he knew that his music reached people. I hope he knew that his conversations mattered. I hope he knew that he became a meaningful part of this community and that so many people will carry pieces of him with them moving forward.

Maybe that is the most beautiful thing we can say about a person: that they

made people feel less alone, more seen, and more connected to the place they call home.

Jimmi did that.

As we remember him, we are also invited to look around us with more care. Who are the people we pass every day without fully seeing? Who brings warmth to our routines? Who makes our neighborhood, our street, our city feel more human? Often, the people who shape a community do it quietly. They do not always ask for recognition. They simply give what they have to give.

Jimmi gave music. He gave conversation. He gave presence. He gave heart.

And Downtown Fort Myers noticed.

The flowers, photographs, tears, smiles, and stories are proof. A community does not remember someone this way unless that person has touched something deeper than the surface. Jimmi touched the heart of this place.

Now his music continues in another form. It continues in the people who remember him. It continues in the kindness we choose to show because of him. It continues when someone stops to listen to another street musician, when someone takes time for a real conversation, when someone understands that every person has a story.

That is the message he leaves behind.

Community is not only created by what we buy, build, or own. It is created by how we treat one another. It is created through open hearts, open ears, and the courage to be present. It is created through small acts of love that may seem ordinary in the moment but become unforgettable when we look back.

Jimmi Melton was part of Downtown Fort Myers. He was part of its sound, its spirit, and its story. And although the street may feel quieter now, the music he gave us has not disappeared. It lives on in the memories people carry, in the flowers left behind, in the photographs, in the stories, and in the love that remains in our hearts.

Thank you, Jimmy, for the music.

Thank you for the conversations.

Thank you for the smiles.

Thank you for reminding us that one person, with kindness and heart, can leave a lasting mark on an entire community.

Thank you, Jimmi Melton.

By Katharina Kaufmann

Exclusive Stretch Limousine

Unforgettable moments begin here

PRIVATE RIDE

Dinner · Night Out · City Tour

PARTY & CELEBRATION

Birthday · Bachelor Party · Prom Night

SPORT & EVENT SHUTTLE

Panthers · Buccaneers · Concerts

WEDDING & SPECIAL MOMENTS

Wedding · Gala · Engagement

Our Packages

Book your stretch limousine - DARIA US Travel Service - limo@daria-us.com

Hidden Sparks Pets Looking to Shine

Not every spark shows itself in the same way. Some shine quietly through gentle companionship, while others burst into a room with opinions, charm, and enough personality to keep life interesting. And sometimes, the very traits that make an animal “a little extra” are exactly what make them unforgettable. This month, we’re introducing two lovable characters from the Cape Coral Animal Shelter who each bring their own special energy into the world. One takes his royal duties very seriously, the other is perfectly content enjoying life in his own cozy rhythm. Different personalities, different stories—but both are simply looking for a place where they can be fully loved for who they are. Because not every spark looks the same. Some glow softly, others burst forward with charm and spirit—but every one of them deserves the chance to shine. Maybe one of these two noble souls is ready to bring their spark into your life—and maybe your heart is exactly where they are meant to shine. *By Jennifer Hagemeister*



SIR WIGGLES

Sir Wiggles is a 1–3-year-old male — small in size but absolutely overflowing with personality. Officially self-appointed Protector of His Kingdom, Sir Wiggles takes his duties very seriously and always keeps a close eye on everything happening around him. He has opinions, standards, and plenty to say about both.

Like any distinguished gentleman, he’s selective about his inner circle. But once you’ve earned your place among his chosen humans, you’ll receive his full loyalty, devotion, and enthusiastic daily commentary delivered with unmistakable flair. He loves deeply, stays close to the people he trusts, and makes sure they always know exactly what’s going on.

He may have a spicy side, especially when it comes to guarding his space, but beneath all that sass is a loyal companion with a huge heart and a lot of charm. If you appreciate a dog with character, humor, and strong opinions wrapped up in one handsome package, Sir Wiggles might just rule your heart. His adoption fee is \$225.



Photos courtesy of Cape Coral Animal Shelter.

SIR CHONK

Sir Chonk is a 3–5-year-old male — a relaxed, lovable guy who approaches life with the confidence of someone who knows exactly how to enjoy the good things. Yes, he may be “working on his summer body,” but he’s fully accepting encouragement, compliments, and the occasional healthy treat along the way.

Behind his charmingly chunky appearance is an incredibly sweet and easygoing companion who loves spending time with his people. Sir Chonk enjoys cozy naps, quiet company, and simply relaxing near the humans he loves most. He’s the kind of cat who brings warmth and calm into a home without ever trying too hard.

With his laid-back personality and affectionate nature, Sir Chonk makes it very easy to fall in love with him. If you’re searching for a mellow best friend with a big heart and plenty of love to give, he thinks you just might be the perfect match. His adoption fee is \$70.

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



Sunrise. Coffee. Enjoy life. Repeat.

Freshly baked Croissants
German Bread & Rolls
Traditional Schnitzel
Home-made Angus Beef Goulash

German Cuisine
Breakfast & Lunch
Traditional Recipes
Premium Ingredients

Visit Us in Cape Coral
3512 Del Prado Blvd S Suite
104 Cape Coral, FL 33904
Phone (941) 249 3384
daria-gastro.com



GET 10% OFF
Your purchase when you
bring this coupon to:
Daria's German Bakery & Bistro

The Legend of Oma Kleinmann and the Best. Schnitzel. Ever.



Photos courtesy of Jacob Kugmun

At this point, calling Daria's German Bakery & Bistro "just a bakery" feels a little like calling Oktoberfest "a small gathering." Technically possible, perhaps, but wildly inaccurate.

Because what started as a beloved local bakery in South Cape Coral has steadily evolved into something far larger: a place where German tradition, heartfelt hospitality, culinary ambition, and a surprising amount of schnitzel energy have collided in the most wonderfully delicious way imaginable. And apparently, Southwest Florida has noticed. Again.

Because while the flour was still settling from the bakery's recent recognition as the number one bakery in the Caloosahatchee region, the next wave of praise was already arriving: One glowing five-star review at a time. Day after day, more enthusiastic guests continue to celebrate the work of Jörg "Joe" Domscheit and his team, whose commitment to quality, warmth, and genuine hospitality has transformed Daria's into one of those increasingly rare places people do not simply recommend but enthusiastically insist their friends must visit immediately.

And as if that momentum were not impressive enough already, the next major recognition followed almost immediately: Daria's was officially crowned one of the "Best Places to Eat

in Florida." Not bad for a place where many guests originally came "just for bread."

The Secret Ingredient Has Never Been a Secret

What makes Daria's so successful is not marketing magic, social media tricks, or carefully manufactured hype. In fact, the entire operation feels almost stubbornly old-fashioned in the best possible way. Things are done properly here. Recipes are respected. Guests are remembered. Corners are not cut, especially not when those corners could otherwise hold gravy.

And at the center of it all stands Joe, whose calm but relentless pursuit of quality has become the driving force behind the Daria success story. Under his leadership, the bakery expanded into a full bistro experience featuring hearty German comfort food, decadent cakes and pastries, rich goulash, roulades, giant schnitzels, homemade soups, and a growing collection of

dishes that have caused many homesick Germans to become unexpectedly emotional somewhere between the first bite and dessert.

But if anyone thought Joe might pause for a moment and enjoy the success, they clearly underestimated him. Because now comes the next mission. And it is crispy: "Best. Schnitzel. Ever." That is not merely a slogan. That

is the standard.

And Joe intends to achieve it with the same seriousness that German engineers typically reserve for sports cars and precision machinery. To make that vision reality, he has brought in someone whose family history is deeply intertwined with one of Germany's most legendary gastronomic traditions: Ralf Kleinmann.

And with that decision, the story of Daria's suddenly stretches far beyond Florida all the way back to Cologne, Germany, and to a family legacy that began in 1949.

The Legend of Oma Kleinmann

In post-war Cologne, Willi and Paula Kleinmann rebuilt a destroyed tavern with the support of several German breweries and reopened it under the name "Zum Goldenen Krug." What began as a modest pub quickly evolved into a beloved restaurant known for hearty German cuisine, extraordinary hospitality, and an atmosphere so welcoming that guests occasionally overflowed into the family's own living room. The Kleinmann family was already well known in Cologne gastronomy, but over the decades, something even more remarkable emerged: a true institution.

Eventually, the restaurant became known as "Bei Oma Kleinmann" ("At Grandma Kleinmann's"), named after Paula Kleinmann, lovingly known throughout Cologne simply as "Oma Kleinmann." And to call her beloved would be an understatement.

Born in 1914, Paula Kleinmann became nothing short of a culinary icon in Cologne. She welcomed everyone with the same warmth - students, workers, celebrities, regulars, first-time visitors. Among her guests over the years were many known German personalities, yet despite the fame, the spirit of the restaurant never changed. It remained authentic, grounded, and deeply personal.

In 2001, Paula Kleinmann received the Gastro Award for her lifetime achievement. And even after decades in gastronomy, she continued peeling potatoes for the restaurant well into her nineties. Not because she had to, but because some people simply never stop caring. She passed away in 2009 at the age of 95. But in Cologne, legends rarely disappear quietly. And perhaps no sentence captures her legacy more beautifully than this:

On August 31, 2015, the new street sign for "Paula-Kleinmann-Weg" was unveiled posthumously in Cologne.

A street named after a woman who spent most of her life feeding people. If that is not the definition of leaving a mark on a city, what is?

From Cologne to Cape Coral

Today, Ralf Kleinmann carries that legacy forward and now brings that extraordinary tradition, expertise, and philosophy directly to Southwest Florida together with Joe. And yes, this means exactly what many people are hoping it means: The schnitzels are about to become serious. Very serious.

At the upcoming Daria's German Restaurant in Northeast Cape Coral, Joe and Ralf are currently developing what may very well become the most ambitious schnitzel menu Florida has ever seen. Up to fifteen different schnitzel variations are already being planned, including vegetarian and vegan options, all tested extensively with the kind of dedication usually associated with scientific research or late-night football strategy sessions.

And because authenticity matters, Joe did not stop at recipes. He even ordered an oversized professional schnitzel press directly from Germany to ensure the meat is properly thin. But before anyone worries - the schnitzels themselves will still be enormous. Very enormous. Somewhere in Florida, a plate is already nervous.

More Than a Restaurant - A Growing Family

With the upcoming opening of Daria's German Restaurant in North Cape Coral and a second Daria's German Bakery & Bistro planned for Fort Myers Downtown at the Daria headquarters, Joe's food, hospitality, and unmistakable commitment to quality will soon reach across the entire Caloosahatchee region. And with that expansion comes opportunity: Anyone who wants to become part of the growing Daria family, whether in baking, service, hospitality, or simply because they believe food should still be made with pride, is warmly invited to stop by the bakery at 3512 Del Prado Blvd S, Cape Coral, FL 33904. Just ask for Joe. No corporate maze. No impossible application process. Just people building something special together.

And if recent history has proven anything, it is this: Joe is not slowing down anytime soon. In fact, he is already working on expanding the Daria's German gastronomy experience even further. New ideas are brewing, new concepts are developing, and somewhere behind the scenes, another chapter is almost certainly already being planned.

And of course, the Sunshine Post will be right there to follow the story. So stay tuned. Something tells us the best is still yet to come.

By Jacob Kugmun



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.

The Florida Edit: Why Deep-Sea Fishing Captures the Soul of Florida

There is something deeply magical about leaving the shoreline behind.

Not in a dramatic movie kind of way, but in a quiet, almost emotional way. The moment the boat slowly pulls away from the marina before sunrise, something shifts. The city becomes smaller. The noise fades. Phones stop mattering. Conversations become calmer. And somewhere between the coastline disappearing and the first fishing line hitting the water, people suddenly begin to breathe differently.

Maybe that is why so many people fall in love with deep sea fishing in Florida. Because offshore fishing is not simply a sport here. It is part of the culture, part of the lifestyle, and for many people, part of who they are.

Florida has always belonged to the water. Long before luxury high-rises, beach clubs, and vacation tourism shaped the image of the Sunshine State, fishing communities were already building their lives along these coastlines. Generations grew up surrounded by marinas, docks, bait shops, and stories about “the one that almost got away.” Especially in places like Fort Myers, Naples, Destin, Sarasota, Miami, and the Florida Keys, fishing is woven deeply into everyday life. You feel it everywhere.

In the weathered captains preparing their boats before dawn. In small dockside restaurants serving fresh grouper sandwiches. In local fishing tournaments that bring entire communities together. In framed photos hanging inside marinas of proud fishermen holding catches bigger than themselves.

And once you experience offshore fishing personally, you begin to understand why this lifestyle has such a strong emotional pull. Because deep sea fishing changes people.

Most visitors experience Florida from the beaches, hotels, rooftop bars, shopping districts, or resort pools. And yes, those things are beautiful. But offshore, Florida feels different. Rawer. More authentic. More connected to nature.

The ocean does not care who you are, what job you have, or how stressful your week has been. Out there, everyone becomes equal.

That might be one of the biggest reasons people feel so drawn to it. Especially on a full eight-hour offshore

trip.

Because an eight-hour fishing charter is not simply “an excursion.” It becomes an entire experience. A full day completely disconnected from normal life. And honestly, that is what makes it so unforgettable.

The day usually begins before sunrise. Still half asleep, coffee in hand, people slowly arrive at the marina while the sky is still dark blue. Boats gently rock against the docks. Pelicans wait nearby hoping for bait fish. The air smells like saltwater, fuel, and ocean breeze. There is excitement in the atmosphere because everyone knows the day ahead is unpredictable in the best possible way. Then the engines start. And suddenly, the adventure begins.

The ride offshore alone already feels cinematic. The Gulf waters slowly open up around the boat while the shoreline becomes smaller and smaller behind you. Dolphins sometimes appear beside the boat, jumping effortlessly through the waves. Flying fish skip across the water’s surface. The sunrise reflects across the ocean in shades of orange, gold, and pink.

Eventually, there is nothing left around you except endless blue water.

And somehow, normal life starts feeling very far away.

That is the moment many people fall in love with offshore fishing for the first time.

Not because of the fish.

Not because of the sport.

But because of the feeling.

There is something incredibly freeing about being miles away from land with nowhere else to be and nothing else demanding your attention. Then, of course, comes the adrenaline.

One second everything feels calm and peaceful, and the next, a reel suddenly starts screaming as something powerful pulls line aggressively into deep water. Everyone onboard immediately jumps into motion. Hearts race. Adrenaline takes over. Arms begin burning while trying to reel in a fish that refuses to give up.

And depending on what is hooked, that battle can last quite a while.

Florida’s offshore waters are home to an incredible variety of fish species

throughout the year. During spring and summer, anglers commonly target mahi-mahi, snapper, grouper, kingfish, tuna, amberjack, and cobia.

Mahi-mahis are especially loved because of their bright neon colors, acrobatic jumps, and aggressive fights. Watching one leap beside the boat almost does not look real.

Further offshore, experienced anglers often chase blue marlin or swordfish, species considered dream catches in the sport fishing world.

During the winter months, especially in South Florida and the Florida Keys, sailfish season becomes one of the biggest highlights of the year. Sailfish are among the fastest fish in the ocean and catching one is considered an unforgettable achievement. Entire tournaments revolve around them.

Then there is red snapper season in the Gulf of Mexico, which almost feels like an unofficial Florida holiday. The season itself is limited each year, which creates huge excitement among fishermen all along the Gulf Coast. Boats leave the marinas before sunrise, coolers get packed the night before, and entire weekends are planned around getting offshore as early as possible.

But the truth is, deep sea fishing has never only been about catching fish.

It is about everything happening in between.

The laughter when lines get tangled.

The excitement when someone hooks their first big catch.

The music quietly playing in the background while everyone watches the horizon.

The moments where conversations somehow become more honest out on the water.

There is a certain atmosphere offshore that is difficult to explain unless you have experienced it personally.

People talk differently out there.

They slow down.

They become more present.

Maybe because the ocean forces you to.

You cannot rush the water. You cannot control the weather. You cannot force fish to bite. Offshore fishing teaches patience, humility, focus, and respect for nature in a way modern life rarely does anymore.

And honestly, that might be one of the reasons why so many people describe these trips as therapeutic.

In today’s world, most people spend their days constantly connected to notifications, schedules, responsibilities, and stress. But offshore, none of that feels important anymore. For a few

hours, life becomes very simple: water, sky, adrenaline, patience, and the people around you.

That simplicity feels rare now.

And maybe that is exactly why people crave it so much.

What makes these trips even more special is the connection they create between people. Spending eight hours together offshore naturally brings people closer. Whether you come with family, friends, coworkers, or complete strangers, something about the ocean creates genuine connection. By the end of the day, people who barely knew each other in the morning often leave feeling like lifelong friends.

Then comes the ride back to shore.

Usually sometime around golden hour.

Everyone is exhausted, sunburned, salty, happy, and carrying coolers full of fish and stories they will probably tell for years. The energy onboard becomes quieter in the best possible way. People sit back, watching the sunset reflect across the Gulf while the Florida coastline slowly reappears in the distance.

And honestly, that final ride home might be one of the best parts.

Because somewhere during those eight hours offshore, something shifts inside people.

Maybe it is the adrenaline.

Maybe it is the peace.

Maybe it is simply the reminder that life does not always have to move so fast.

Florida has countless beautiful experiences to offer, but deep-sea fishing gives people something many vacations no longer do real adventure. Not staged.

Not artificial.

Not filtered.

Just open water, endless horizon, salty air, and the possibility that absolutely anything could happen that day.

And maybe that is the real reason people keep coming back to the ocean. Because somewhere offshore, far beyond the shoreline, people often end up finding pieces of themselves again.

By Katharina Kaufmann

**Out there,
everyone
becomes equal.**

**You can reach us
anytime for inquiries
at:**

booking@daria-us.com

DOWNTOWN FORT MYERS

MUSIC WALK

FRIDAY MAY 15TH 6-10PM

featuring

WOODSHED
DJ JC
JUST 4 FUN!
NORTH OF NOVEMBER
DEEP FREYED BLUES
COOL VIBES

EDDIE Z
SCHOOL OF ROCK
TOP SHELF RHYTHMS
DOWNTOWN TROUBADOURS

EXPLOREFORTMYERS.COM

Sunshine Post Series on Healthy Aging: Part 7

Aging healthily seems to be much more complex than one might generally think.

And, believe it or not, it gets even more complicated. Essentially, it's just a matter of a few simple basic rules regarding everyday decisions: exercise, nutrition, fresh air, and mental awareness. But lurking behind these are some nasty pitfalls that can render a well-intentioned activity or lifestyle choice virtually ineffective.

At this point, I'll revisit the example of exercise. Exercise alone simply isn't enough. It has to be real (muscle) training. Otherwise, we won't achieve the effects described in previous issues. And today I'd like to point out an unexpected pitfall in the area of nutrition.

Generally speaking, the less processed a food is, the healthier it is. "Processed" means that raw ingredients are altered through processes such as heating, pasteurization, freezing, or mixing to improve shelf life, taste, or safety.

Aging healthily seems to be much more complex than one might generally think.

They range from largely harmless "field-fresh frozen" to harmful "highly processed ready-made products."

Since, as is so often the case, the devil is in the details, I would like to highlight an important issue that is frequently overlooked by people who consciously eat healthily.

Nature has its own natural rhythm, and this rhythm, for example in agriculture, yields its corresponding harvests all on

its own. But what do we humans do when the yield is insufficient, or when our specific dietary desires cannot be met due to an inopportune harvest window?

Specifically: In the past, entire harvests were often lost due to pest infestations. And if I crave strawberries in November, that is not necessarily the typical harvest window for this early-summer fruit.

We humans have learned to "give nature a helping hand" to meet our needs. We fertilize, we poison the pests, we import fruits and vegetables from distant countries to keep everything available 24/7 everywhere.

But have you ever thought about the price we pay for influencing nature?

For example, studies on growth acceleration in agriculture show clear trends: While yields are rising, nutrient density is falling. A meta-study (published, among others, in "Nutrients" 2024) indicates that the content of essential minerals in fruits and vegetables has decreased by 9–38% over the past 60 years.

There is a risk of a "hidden hunger" effect: Although we consume enough calories, our intake of critical micronutrients—such as iron, zinc, calcium, magnesium, and vitamins like vitamin C and riboflavin—is declining.

That's crazy! You've all finally decided to eat a lot more fruit and, above all, vegetables, and now I'm telling you that you actually have to eat three times as much to even get the desired amount of nutrients. You might as well skip the steak altogether, especially since it's full of antibiotics anyway—but more on that later.

So even with a supposedly healthy diet, you might not be getting enough of the necessary nutrients, and your motivation will gradually fade as the hoped-for effects of this supposedly healthy diet fail to materialize.

What solutions are there for this?

First: Buy exclusively from local organic farmers who work without the use of growth accelerators or pesticides. This solution obviously cannot feed the entire world population, as the demand is simply too great—which is why we ended up in this dilemma in the first place.

Second: Use targeted dietary supplements to make up for the missing amounts. Although it is important to ensure optimal bioavailability in each case. Bioavailability describes the proportion of the nutrient that actually enters your bloodstream. This depends on the chemical form, solubility, the nutrient's natural antagonists, and the liver.

Nevertheless, this option should be considered a viable solution due to its potential precision and the cost of supply.

Why are micronutrients, in addition to macronutrients, actually important for the body?

While macronutrients serve as energy sources, micronutrients are responsible for a functioning metabolism, a stable immune system, and healthy cell functions—in other words, for the quality of the copies our body produces during the aging process.

In my experience, the following three most important micronutrients tend to be deficient—in some cases significantly so—and should be supplemented:

Omega-3
Vitamin D
Magnesium

As always, the rule is: Measure, Know, Act

Have these levels checked during your next visit to your doctor or naturopath and compare them to the reference ranges. Note: The reference ranges indicate that you have an "adequate" supply of this nutrient. "Adequate" is a C grade. Personally, I'd like to provide my body with a supply that's an A or, at most, a B...

Finally, let's take a look at a recommended dietary strategy:

intermittent fasting.

The most common form of intermittent fasting is the so-called 16/8 fast. This means that I fast for 16 hours daily and my eating window is 8 hours.

The main effect intended to be achieved through fasting is called autophagy.

Autophagy is the body's own recycling program that breaks down and recycles defective or excess cellular components. This essential cleansing process, often referred to as "cellular garbage collection," ensures cellular health and can slow down the aging process.

How is autophagy activated?

Autophagy is particularly stimulated by a lack of energy.

Fasting: A strong response begins after 12–14 hours without food, with the peak often reached after 48–72 hours.

Intermittent fasting: 16-hour fasting periods (16:8) are considered a good way to get started and kickstart the process.

Exercise: Physical activity promotes cellular cleansing

To get started with mindful dietary restraint, I recommend the following strategy:

Start with the low-carb strategy, meaning you omit carbohydrate-rich "filling side dishes," especially at evening meals.

Then, over the course of a few weeks, you can gradually extend your "fasting window" from 10 hours to 12 hours, then to 14 hours, and finally to 16 hours. Start with 1 day per week and gradually increase to 5–7 days a week. Personally, I skip the weekend, as I love celebrating classic meals like breakfast and dinner, or having a barbecue, with family and friends.

During the fasting window, the following are allowed:

Water, unsweetened tea, unsweetened coffee, or espresso. Nothing else.

By Clemens Müller



Photos courtesy of Clemens Müller

Sunny Chicken Protein Bowl

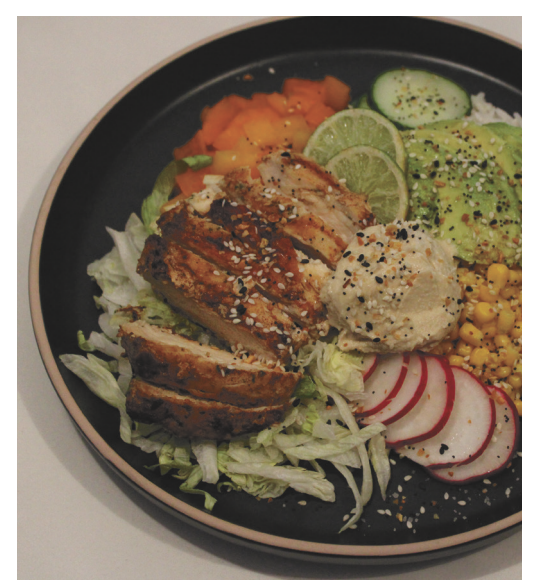
INGREDIENTS (SERVES 1)

- 150–200 g grilled chicken breast
- (alternatively: vegan chicken strips)
- 1 cup jasmine rice
- ½ avocado
- ½ cup sweetcorn
- ½ cup diced peppers
- 10 slices of cucumber
- 10 slices of radish
- a little rocket or iceberg lettuce
- 2 tbsp hummus or skyr
- 1 lime
- salt, pepper, sesame seeds
- optional: hot honey or Sriracha

- 1 Heat the rice in the microwave.
- 2 Chop the vegetables into small pieces.
- 3 Sear the chicken briefly.
- 4 Place everything in a bowl.
- 5 Mix the skyr, lime juice and spices together and pour over as a dressing.
- 6 Optionally, top with a little sesame, hot honey or Sriracha.

FACTS

- approx. 40–50 g protein
- super filling
- perfect for Florida summers
- suitable for meal prep
- minimal cooking required



Photos courtesy of Dina Veronique Scheve

Revolutionary: How AI Can Transform Your Day

Artificial intelligence is not science fiction – it hasn't been for a long time.

More and more people are using AI tools to master everyday challenges – from weekend trips, to what's for dinner, to budgeting. In this series, powered by the insights of our tech team and seasoned AI connoisseurs, we will show you how you too can benefit from this technology.

by Marc Siewert

DID YOU KNOW?

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

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

What's your everyday AI Question?

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

info@sunshine-post.com

Subject: "AI Prompt Submission"

Fourth of July Celebration Planner

"We're celebrating the Fourth of July in Southwest Florida for the first time. Plan the perfect Independence Day with fireworks, family-friendly activities, and local traditions."

AI suggests:

1. Arrive early at waterfront events for the best fireworks views
2. Pack folding chairs, sunscreen, and plenty of water for the summer heat
3. Look for local parades and live music events during the afternoon
4. End the evening with fireworks over the beach or marina
5. Wear red, white, and blue to fully embrace the holiday spirit

Summer Happiness Reset

"I want to feel happier, more energized, and less stressed this summer. What simple lifestyle habits can help improve my mood and overall well-being?"

AI suggests:

1. Spend at least 20 minutes outdoors every morning for sunlight and fresh air
2. Create a summer routine that includes movement, relaxation, and social time
3. Limit screen time in the evenings and enjoy sunsets or walks instead
4. Keep a gratitude journal focused on small everyday moments
5. Prioritize sleep and hydration during hot summer months

Healthy Aging Summer Guide

"I want to stay active and healthy while enjoying the Florida summer. What are the best habits for healthy aging during the hotter months?"

AI suggests:

1. Exercise during cooler morning or evening hours to avoid extreme heat
2. Choose low-impact activities like swimming, walking, or yoga
3. Stay hydrated throughout the day, even before feeling thirsty
4. Schedule regular social activities to support mental and emotional health
5. Focus on nutrient-rich meals with fresh fruits and vegetables

Perfect Beach Day Planner

Perfekter Strandtag-Planer

"We want to spend the perfect summer beach day in Southwest Florida. What should we bring, where should we go, and how can we avoid common mistakes?"

AI suggests:

1. Arrive early for easier parking and cooler temperatures
2. Bring reef-safe sunscreen, shade, and plenty of cold drinks
3. Visit beaches like Sanibel Island or Fort Myers Beach for calm waters and sunsets
4. Check tide and weather conditions before leaving home
5. Stay for sunset – some of the best summer moments happen after the heat fades

On Living a Happy Life After Loss

"Surely you can't already be in love with a new partner just four months after the death of your husband and children."

Grief and happiness. Is it permissible to utter them in the same breath? How far apart do they truly lie? When is happiness allowed to take up residence again after one has grieved? How can I ever be happy again? — These are the questions that arise when one contemplates this subject—or is forced to confront it because one is facing it personally.

Societal Expectations and Norms

Just as quickly as we are expected—or *should* be expected—to function again in our jobs, surely our "private" period of mourning ought to remain free of dating for at least a year... right? Once you've survived the first round of anniversaries and holidays without the deceased, the ones that follow surely can't be quite as bad... can they? Who are we to presume to impose a rigid template upon another person's grief?

"Surely you can't already be in love with a new partner just four months after the death of your husband and children." — This is how one young widow describes the reactions from those around her; she even recounts receiving hate mail because of it (her new partner happens to be a public figure). "Why the hell are you leaving me alone to deal with this situation?" — This can be a genuinely furious question directed at the deceased, existing side-by-side with the sadness! — Or it may even surface as the very first emotion. "It's been over three years since your wife died—pull yourself together, find someone new, and start living again. Just go back to being normal, for crying out loud!"

How does that land with you? — Does it perhaps trigger feelings of incomprehension or rejection?

If there is one thing I have learned during my time as a funeral director—and through my own personal experiences with grief—it is this: Grief is profoundly individual. But that shouldn't come as a surprise, really—after all, we *are* individuals!

The Journey from Grief to Happiness

Grief begins at widely varying times—and very rarely coincides exactly with the death of a loved one. Most often, it starts long before (if the deceased suffered from an illness), or else (in cases of sudden death) only after the phases of denial (refusing to accept



Source: chatGPTgo

the reality) and anger ("Why is he/she doing this to me?" or "Why must I endure this?").

And here, too, a caveat applies: these are merely theories—metaphorical attempts to describe the process—as illustrated by the example of the young woman who lost her husband and children in an accident, yet was able to find love with a new partner after only a short time.

Contained within this example is the very essence of my perspective on grief:

No one knows you as well as you know yourself—and no one else can truly know how you are coping, or how you *can* cope, with your loss. Therefore, no one who deviates from

well-intentioned and valuable models for navigating grief should be looked at askance or socially ostracized.

For while judgment may come all too easily in such matters—and however much our socially conditioned mindset may resist the notion—judgment is simply not possible here. Period. I cannot presume to know how someone feels who has lost a husband and children—and here is the crucial point:

"Not even if the exact same thing had happened to me."

For... I have a different situation, a different past, different formative influences, different experiences, and a personal perspective on things... and therefore, I process extreme situations

differently than you or anyone else! That is why the most valuable thing we can offer those who are grieving is not well-meaning advice or pity. Rather, it is: presence and basic support (providing food and drink, taking over chores, etc.).

And the very same principle applies to the journey back to happiness—which is great: sharing how you managed to achieve it yourself is good, yes. But even better is accepting that the bereaved person may be pursuing a different approach. Here, too, this means: being present, listening—and perhaps simply enduring the silence or emotion.

Provided that no concerning signs are present following a loss or personal

tragedy, the timeline for returning to happiness is also a completely individual matter; it is acceptable in whatever form it takes and cannot be forced into a uniform mold.

However, one issue does warrant consideration: are new emotional bonds being sought out of a place of processing, acceptance, and a genuine will to live—or are they merely an attempt to mask or repress one's own pain? That would constitute an unhealthy dynamic—one whose underlying tension would likely resurface elsewhere or at a later time. For me—someone convinced that polarity is one of the defining factors of our lives, and who has been shown by life itself the many facets that grief can take—such personal accounts serve as a constant reminder of how vital it is to maintain a personal, individualized perspective on such powerful themes as grief and happiness.

Normality despite loss? Does that imply forgetting?

In any case, key aspects include self-acceptance—acknowledging that the past will always remain an integral part of one's future life—and transforming this reality (painful though it may be) into a loving memory.

Here, I like to speak of the "New Normal"—a cornerstone for a happy life in the future, following a loss.

My appeal: Do not judge yourself, nor others. Feel... COMPLETELY. And, to put it flippantly:

"If you're going through hell right now—keep going!"

Life is a field rich with experience and growth. This encompasses grief just as much as "finding happiness again"—form loss is an intrinsic part of life.

By Matthias Erbacher

Our Member Trip – A Journey Unlike Any Other

On this special member trip, we not only heard about the values Daria wants to convey to us, but also experienced them first-hand. It was not a trip that simply went according to plan – on the contrary. It was the unexpected twists and turns that made it so unique.

We started out as strangers: different personalities, different backgrounds, our own expectations – and yet a common goal: a week in Florida, full of exchange, inspiration and shared experiences. None of us suspected at the time that it would not be the destination itself, but the journey there that would have the greatest impact on us.

Even before we set foot on American ground, an unexpected challenge put us to the test – and this laid the foundation for a community that grew closer together than any perfect travel plan could ever have achieved.

It all started with a cancelled flight. Due to technical difficulties, we were unable to take off to Fort Myers as planned. The rebooking options offered by the airline were not acceptable to us: arriving in Florida two days later was not an option. We wanted to get to our destination as quickly as possible. What initially seemed like a setback brought us – complete strangers – closer together. The situation forced us to talk to each other, find solutions and make the best of the moment. Looking back, nothing better could have happened to us.

Together, we looked for solutions, supported each other and fought –

with the great help of Daria US Travel Service LLC – for an earlier flight to the USA. With success: that same evening, we were rebooked on a flight to Washington.

Instead of summer temperatures, however, we were greeted by freezing cold. Without winter clothes in the frost, we would have had every reason to complain – but we still managed to keep smiling. We were just happy to have made it this far together. After a short night in the hotel, we continued on to Fort Myers the next day, feeling



Photos courtesy of: Dirko Albath

reasonably fit – at last!

We spent the rest of the week almost exclusively together. We did everything together, cooked and ate together in the evenings, and laughed endlessly. Rarely have I experienced such an intense bond forming in such a short time – based on shared values and experiences.

On the evening of our arrival, we were invited to watch the Super Bowl together. On the way there, the boot suddenly popped open during the drive – another moment that made us smile rather than despair. On Monday, our slightly chaotic journey continued with police check for driving the wrong

way. However, with a dose of charm and honest cluelessness, we were able to resolve the situation with confidence. This was followed by an airboat tour, during which some of us realized rather late that every word we spoke could be heard by everyone else – much to everyone’s amusement. While shopping together, we lost track of ourselves and bought so much salad that we had to eat it almost every day without it visibly decreasing. In the end, however, we had to admit defeat. Finally, a particularly funny moment

occurred at the supermarket checkout when one member of our group tried to stop the cashier from packing our shopping with an energetic ‘Stop!’, assuming she was trying to steal something from us. In a flash, someone else from the group jumped in and took over the packing. The surprised cashier probably didn’t know what had happened.

Of course, we also wanted to explore Sanibel Island – and decided to do so in a sporty way by bicycle. Without further ado, we grabbed the last available bikes and set off on what we thought would be a short ride.

The equipment was modest: no hand

brakes, just a coaster brake that worked rather poorly and was sometimes replaced by vigorous ringing of the bell. The saddle also made it unmistakably clear with every bump in the road that comfort is a matter of definition. After a week of travelling exclusively by car, the 40 kilometres suddenly seemed much more ambitious than we had initially thought.

But with a little perseverance and a good dose of humour, we finally reached our destination and once again had a story that was well worth telling. However, it took a few days for our backsides to recover.

Over the course of the week, we collected numerous stories that will keep us laughing for a long time to come. We shared memories from our past, talked about values, dreams and goals – and got to know each other better and better.

When the question about the most emotional moment was asked at the end, the answer came easily to me: it all started with the cancelled flight. A moment that was disappointing at first – but then turned out to be the beginning of something very special. Who knows how this week would have gone without that bumpy start? Our positive attitude and zest for life were not shaken by a flight cancellation. This trip showed us that something good can come out of even the most difficult situations – if you face them together. Thank you all for letting me get to know you. And a special thank you goes to Daria, who makes all this possible!

By Lea Albath

June in Southwest Florida: A Mid-Year Property Check-In

As June arrives in Southwest Florida, the year reaches its halfway point. While the first months often focus on seasonal transitions and weather preparation, June offers a different opportunity: stepping back to evaluate how a property is performing, both in condition and in management. For homeowners, especially seasonal residents and vacation property owners, this is the ideal moment to ensure everything is operating as expected. A structured mid-year check helps identify small issues early, confirm maintenance routines, and keep the property aligned with long-term value goals.

At Daria US Property Management LLC, we focus on consistent, proactive care that protects both homes and investments. Through regular oversight and professional management, we help ensure properties in Southwest Florida remain in excellent condition year-round.

By S. Mechalik

Peace of Mind for Seasonal Owners

For absentee homeowners and snowbirds, managing a property from a distance can be challenging. Without regular oversight, small problems can go unnoticed for extended periods.

Professional property management ensures that homes are regularly checked, maintained, and reported on—providing transparency and reliability throughout the year.

This allows owners to remain confident that their investment is protected, even when they are not present.

Mid-Year Property Evaluation

Every home experiences gradual change over time. Even well-maintained properties benefit from regular reviews to ensure nothing is overlooked. Addressing small issues at this stage often prevents larger and more expensive repairs later in the year.

A mid-year evaluation typically focuses on:

- Overall interior and exterior condition
- Signs of wear from occupancy or seasonal use
- Functionality of key systems and appliances
- General presentation and curb appeal
- Any recurring maintenance concerns

Vacation Rental Performance Review

For vacation rental owners, June is also a useful moment to review performance outside of peak winter season. While occupancy levels may vary, quality standards should remain constant year-round. Strong property performance is not only measured during peak season, but throughout the entire year.

Important points to evaluate include:

- Guest feedback and recurring comments
- Cleanliness and presentation consistency
- Response times and guest communication
- Functionality of amenities and equipment
- Pricing strategy adjustments for seasonal demand

Property Management Tip

June is the perfect time for a mid-year property review. Taking a structured look at condition, maintenance, and performance ensures the second half of the year begins on a stable and well-managed foundation.

Maintenance Consistency Matters

One of the most important aspects of property ownership is consistency. Rather than reacting to problems, successful property care relies on scheduled, preventative maintenance. A consistent maintenance rhythm ensures the property remains stable and reduces unexpected disruptions.

Key areas to review in June include:

- HVAC performance and filter replacement schedules
- Plumbing systems and hidden leak checks
- Appliance efficiency and early signs of wear
- Roof, seals, and exterior condition
- Pool, irrigation, and landscaping systems

Protecting Long-Term Property Value

A well-managed home is more than a place to stay—it is a long-term investment. Regular inspections and structured oversight help preserve value by preventing small issues from developing into costly repairs. June is an ideal reminder that property care is not seasonal—it is continuous.

Properties that are consistently monitored tend to:

- Maintain higher market value
- Experience fewer emergency repairs
- Attract better tenants or guests
- Deliver more predictable long-term performance

Daria US Property Management LLC

booking@daria-us.com



DARIA
dreams come easy



INVEST IN YOUR DREAMS

