

"Our estate series is selling faster than anything else. I think a lot of people are buying the bigger homes because they can work from home and want a bigger space."

— **Scott Schilling**, area sales manager for Lennar Homes



Bougainvillea Exterior

Homeowners
start moving into

THE NATIONAL



The National Golf & Country Club.

BY **ROBIN F. DEMATTIA**

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

CAROL AND DON VOGT WILL BE AMONG THE first residents of The National Golf & Country Club. And, in a way, they are actually moving north to do so.

The couple has owned time shares on Marco Island for 35 years and stay there when not living in Colorado.

After deciding to move to Florida full time, the couple said The National fit exactly what they were looking for.

SEE **NATIONAL, A8** ►

Above: Carol and Don Vogt



AVE MARIA SUN COURTESY IMAGE

Ave Maria ranked Top 50 Master-Planned Community

Special to The Ave Maria Sun

In recognition of Ave Maria's record-setting 506 new-home sales in 2020 and the caliber of amenities and lifestyle it offers, two respected national real estate consulting agencies, RCLCO Real Estate Advisors and John Burns Real Estate Consulting (JBREC), have named the development one of the 50 Top-Selling Master-Planned Communities (MPCs) in the United States.

According to RCLCO Managing Director Gregg Logan, the purpose of their annual ranking is not just to highlight real estate trends and locate markets with the most significant momentum, but also to commend the most successful communities and identify development best practices from MPC pioneers.

Collier County's Ave Maria experienced one of the highest year-over-year growth rates in new home sales of all Top Master-Planned Communities. "With a 95% increase over its sales pace in 2019, Ave Maria's strong performance in 2020 reflects the careful planning and investment in community place-making done by Barron Collier Companies," says RCLCO report writer Karl Pischke.

The master-planned community benefits from a great quality of life and a small town feel that offers residents everything from schools, shopping and activities, most within walking, biking or golf-cart riding distance from their home. "We expect continued growth for Ave Maria in 2021 as future residents escape crowded cities and towns to find walking trails, bike trails, wide-open spaces and a family-friendly town," JBREC reports.

SEE **AVE MARIA, A8** ►

"We are very pleased with this record-breaking milestone and expect our sales growth to continue into 2021."

— **Cee Cee Marinelli**, director of development for Ave Maria

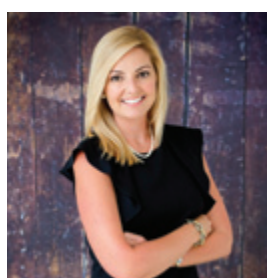
Around town

Blues, brews, BBQ, tacos, margaritas and much more. **A2** ►



Meet a townmaker

Cee Cee Marinelli, vice president of commercial real estate for the Barron Collier Companies. **A4** ►



Play ball

Retired MLB pitcher pitches in helping little leaguers. **A19** ►



AROUND AVE MARIA



Plenty of fun was to be had at Ave Maria Blues, Brews & BBQ, with music from Little Eddie and the Fat Fingers.



Margarita & Taco Festival in Ave Maria Town Center.



In and around Ave Maria outdoor markets.

PHOTOS BY ANNALIE HULL / AVE MARIA SUN



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FACFAS, DABLES, DABPS
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Meet a Townmaker: Cee Cee Marinelli

BY **ROBIN F. DEMATTIA**
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Helping build Ave Maria runs in the family for Cee Cee Marinelli, vice president of commercial real estate for the Barron Collier Companies.

Her father, Paul Marinelli, joined the company in 1986 and served as president and CEO before he passed in 2008.

“I always admired him and looked up to him, Ms. Marinelli said. “We grew up talking real estate and development. I enjoyed it.”

Born in Tampa, Ms. Marinelli moved to Naples at age two when her father took the job with Barron Collier.

“I have very fond memories of growing up,” she recalls. “We were a big boating family and loved the beach and outdoors. We went camping and fishing, and I played sports. It’s a nice area. It’s why people move here.”

While earning a bachelor of science degree in economics from Elon University in North Carolina, Ms. Marinelli took an urban economics class. She enjoyed studying how cities and towns are developed.

The timing coincided with the launch of Ave Maria. Ms. Marinelli took a six-month internship with Barron Collier Companies and, she quips, “I never left.” She has been with the company for 15 years.

“It was fun to be part of a brand new project,” she recalls of her start in 2006. “They were so busy and just threw me into it.” She got involved with pre-leasing, pre-selling, marketing and tenant coordination of the first buildings.

Her dad’s passing two years later reaffirmed her commitment to the project.

“Losing my dad made me personally invested to see the town thriving. It is now becoming his vision, which makes it exciting.”

Today, she works not only on Ave Maria but

handles all commercial real estate for Barron Collier Companies.

“I love it,” she said. “It keeps me busy.”

One of the best parts of her job, she said, is that it allows her to meet many people and to help them achieve their goals as Ave Maria has flourished.

“I’ve really enjoyed the excitement of the growth. We all knew it was going to happen. Being part of it and getting to know the residents, who are so committed and passionate, is never boring.”

She praises the “pioneer tenants” who shared the developer’s vision and got in on the ground floor. She said she worked with them during the economic downtown.

“I like to think we were good partners and worked together to get through that time. A lot of our decisions are based on making sure our tenants become successful.”

Ms. Marinelli encourages businesses to consider operating in Ave Maria. She points out that they have built around 3,000 of the proposed 11,000 homes, so there is room for growth. She also notes that Ave Maria is the top selling master planned community in Southwest Florida, and it is in the top 50 of master planned communities nationwide.

“We’re validated by a lot of organizations,” she said. “The growth is happening. If they can get in early, they can capitalize on the upside.”

She calls the Collier family’s vision and commitment to Collier County “second to none.”

Her own family consists of her husband,



Cee Cee Marinelli is the vice president of commercial real estate for the Barron Collier Companies.

“I’ve really enjoyed the excitement of the growth. We all knew it was going to happen. Being part of it and getting to know the residents, who are so committed and passionate, is never boring.”

– Cee Cee Marinelli

outdoors, the beach, fishing and boating to them.

Ms. Marinelli earned her MBA from Florida Gulf Coast University and was named to the Business Observer’s 40 Under 40. She serves on the board of directors for the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce and volunteers with the Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida.

“I know that in order to keep the community a great place to be, it’s important to give back.”

While she acknowledges how her past in southwest Florida gave her such enjoyment and contributed to her success, she keeps her eye on the future and how Ave Maria will do the same for its residents. 🌸

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I-75 to Exit 111 (Immokalee Road), go east 10 miles then turn right onto Oil Well Road. After 10 miles, turn right onto Ave Maria Boulevard. Continue 1 mile to the National Golf & Country Club, turn right. Welcome Home Center is located on the first street on the left past the gatehouse.

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Spring events bring Ave Maria residents together

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Spring into fun with all the clubs, events and activities planned by the Ave Maria Master Association.

“Our social committees and subcommittees do a fantastic job,” said Carol DiFlorio, lifestyle director for the Ave Maria Master Association. “They helped with the recent health and education fair and we are planning a lot of outdoor things right now.”

The town has many sports leagues and pick-up teams, including flag football, Little League and a disc golf group that meets on Saturday mornings at the nine-hole course.

Soccer and basketball are played twice a week, a bocce group plays on Wednesday mornings, and on Sundays there are coed softball groups for adults and for those 55 and older.

Plans are being made for half-day, day and weekly summer camps once students are out of school. Interest areas include sports, dance, arts and crafts, CPR, and swimming. Ms. DiFlorio said to watch for details from the lifestyle department.

She confirmed the activities below for the next few months. Ave Maria residents should read emails from the master association and check the association’s Facebook page for updates and to see which events are open to the public and which are for Ave Maria residents only.

April 7
National Beer Day
Enjoy specials and activities at Oil Well Craft Beer and other local restaurants.

April 7
National Walking Day
Ave Maria celebrates its lake and park trails. “We are asking people to take 30 minutes on



COURTESY PHOTO

Ave Maria residents during an outing to Naples Beach.

this day to get out and walk,” said Ms. DiFlorio. “They can even take their canine pals.” She invites people to send their walking pictures to the lifestyle department or post them on the master association’s Facebook page. A big event on the Sunday after National Walking Day is planned.

April 9 from 5 to 7 p.m.
First Friday’s Celebration
Open to the public
This family event at the Park of Commerce will include a food truck, specials at Oil Well

Craft Beer, music and lawn games with prizes. Residents are encouraged to bring lawn chairs if the musician is playing outside.

April 10 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
OnSpot Dermatology mobile clinic
Pre-registration required for screenings and various treatments; walk-ins are welcome if spots are available. “We started this in February and it has been going really well. I thought this would be a lot easier for residents, especially if they’re new to town and don’t have a dermatologist yet.”

April 10 at 2 p.m.
Outing to PopStroke in Ft. Myers
The new 36-hole putting facility and restaurant is a new chain developed by golfing legend Tiger Woods. Residents will meet at 1 p.m. in front of the master association office and convoy to PopStroke.

April 16 from 8 to 9:30 p.m.
Dive-in Movie at the Ave Maria Water Park
Residents can have the option to float around in the water while enjoying the Disney animated film Lilo and Stitch.

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April 17 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Community Yard Sale in North Park
Residents must pre-register for a spot in the park to sell their items. St. Matthew's House will be on-site to accept donations from all residents, whether or not they participate in the yard sale. A golf cart service company will offer vehicle checkups and annual service at a discounted rate. Ave Cares will collect towels, blankets, sheets, canned pet food for dogs and cats, animal toys, and financial contributions for the Humane Society. Kids of all ages will also enjoy the petting zoo and a food truck.

April 17 at 8 a.m. in Annunciation Circle
Lipman 5K Run/Walk For Backpacks
Open to the public.
Proceeds from this 11th annual event help purchase backpacks and school supplies for Lipman's Annual Backpack Giveaway in Immokalee every August. There will also be a 1-mile walking course and a free Junior Fun Run for kids 10 and under. Register at lipman-familyfarms.com.



April 20 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Bloodmobile
Held in the parking lot at the corner of Avila Avenue and Roma Street. Pre-registration required; walk-ins welcome if spots are available.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Participants in the Ave Maria 5K Fun Run .

April 27 at 7 p.m.
Embrace the Journey photography presentation
Ave Maria resident Pat O'Flaherty is a wild-life and nature photographer who has traveled the world. He set his beautiful images to music and includes inspirational quotes while answering questions about his travels. Mr. O'Flaherty is the author of two photography books. Learn more about embracinglifephotos.com. Free.

April 29 at 6:30 pm
Outing to Yucatan Beach Stand
Residents will meet in front of the master association office at 5 p.m. and convoy for dinner and sunset in Fort Myers Beach.

May 7 from 5 to 7 p.m.
First Fridays celebration
Open to the public.
This family event at the Park of Commerce will include a food truck, specials at Oil Well Craft Beer, music and lawn games with prizes. Residents are encouraged to bring lawn chairs if the musician is playing outside.

May 14 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
OnSpot Dermatology mobile clinic returns.
See April 10 listing.

May 15 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
International Water Safety Day
Activities at the Water Park will include music, games, poolside exercise, water safety talks and more. Free.

May 29 from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m.
Glow Party
High school juniors and seniors will gather at the water park for music, food and a volleyball tournament, all highlighted with glow sticks.

May 31 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Memorial Day
Residents will honor the day with a parade into South Park led by the Ave Maria Veterans Association and the Knights of Columbus. Names of Ave Maria residents who are veterans will be read during a ceremony that includes remarks from a veteran and the playing of Taps. A hot dog lunch is provided by the Knights and residents are given pinwheels to put in their lawns to honor a loved one. Free. (Veterans are invited to join the Ave Maria veterans club. Contact AveMariaVets@gmail.com.)

June 5 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Splash Into Summer
Mark your calendar for this annual event that is held at the water park.



Residents honor veterans on Memorial Day with a parade, a name reading ceremony and more.

June 11 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Flip Flop Day
Get crafty with a flip flop decorating kit distributed at the water park and enjoy other activities. Pre-registration and payment required.

June 19
Father's Day Golf and Brunch Outing
A special day to celebrate dads living in Ave Maria. 🌻

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NATIONAL

From page 1

“There were two things we preferred,” Don Vogt said. “We wanted a golf community, and we preferred new construction.” He said the peace and quiet of Ave Maria along with reduced traffic also appealed to them.

They purchased a three-bedroom Bougainvillea, which has enough room for their three children and four grandchildren to visit.

Carol Vogt said they “feel like pioneers” moving in so early in the community’s construction. “We’re very excited.”

The National Golf & Country Club offers Lennar’s signature designs in both single family and multi-family homes with stunning views of water, the golf course or both. Luxury upgrades are incorporated in every home with Lennar’s Everything’s Included® program, and all homes include a bundled golf membership.

Residents will enjoy on-site amenities, including an 18-hole championship golf course that is now open, resort-style pool, state-of-the-art fitness center with sauna, tennis center, and the community clubhouse.

The National is set in the town of Ave Maria, a six-time recipient of Collier County’s Community of the Year award, recognizing the master-planned community’s incredible amenities that include parks, trails, sports fields, nature, a vibrant town center and more.

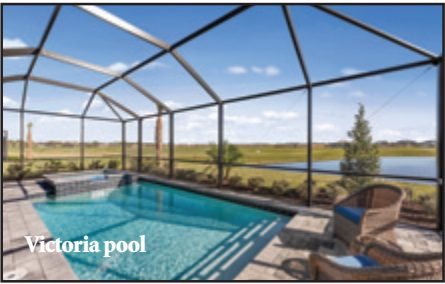
“Our estate series is selling faster than anything else,” said Scott Schilling, area sales manager for Lennar Homes. “I think a lot of people are buying the bigger homes because they can work from home and want a bigger space.”

He noted that in all Lennar communities, the larger floor plans are selling faster than the two bedrooms that typically appeal to seasonal residents.

The top sellers at The National are the Bou-



Maria dining room



Victoria pool



Victoria open living room

Lennar has fully furnished models of the Bougainvillea, Maria and Victoria.

gainvillea and the Napoli.

The Bougainvillea, which the Vogts purchased, is 2,800 square feet on one level with a separate office, spacious undercover lanai and large pool deck.

The Napoli, with almost 2,400 square feet, is similar in size but the guest room has its own wing.

The Maria and the Victoria, in the executive series, are also popular.

“The Maria is a great entertaining home because the kitchen opens up to the living room and dining room,” Mr. Schilling said. The four bedroom, three bath has 2,247 square feet and a lot of kitchen cabinets.

The two bedroom Victoria appeals to people who want a second home and don’t expect a lot of visitors, Mr. Schilling said. He noted that the side-load garage of the 1,850-square-foot home is aesthetically appealing to a lot of people.

Lennar has fully furnished models of the

Bougainvillea, Maria and Victoria. The builder will open six more models, including of the multifamily homes, this fall.

Mr. Schilling said buyers are coming from the northeast, midwest and even Florida’s east coast.

“A lot of people are keeping their condos in Miami and having a second home in Ave Maria or commuting from Ave Maria,” he said.

Golf is a big draw for many people he hears from.

“Typically, our golf communities attract semi-retired or retired folks,” he said, “but recently we’ve seen families looking at the community and the lifestyle. They love the small town feel and that they don’t have to leave town for shopping or dining.”

He said activities such as the university’s athletics, the waterpark and community events help people visualize all the things they can enjoy in Ave Maria.

Construction is underway on amenities that

The National will have for its residents. These include a pool, pool café, fitness center with spa, tennis courts and tennis pro shop. Lennar plans to open these features by January 2022.

Of course, the golf course is a huge draw. Since opening in January, the course had an average of 200 players per day. A highlight of the Gordon Lewis design is the longest par 5 in Collier County at 701 yards from the back tees.

“Golf has been a huge benefit to us in our success that we’ve had so far,” Mr. Schilling said. “People have raved about the course and said the undulations of the greens are different than any course Gordon Lewis has done for us. People are coming for the lifestyle and the bundled golf.”

To learn more, call 888-214-1476, visit The-National-AveMaria.com or stop by Lennar’s Sales Center located at 6098 Artisan Court, Ave Maria. 🌟

AVE MARIA

From page 1

“We are very pleased with this record-breaking milestone and expect our sales growth to continue into 2021,” says Cee Cee Marinelli, director of development for Ave Maria. To date, they have sold over 200 new homes this year. More than 3,000 new homes have been sold since the community first opened in 2007.

Home sales were reported from all four, award-winning residential builders in Ave Maria—CC Homes, Del Webb Naples, Lennar, and Pulte Homes—in prices ranging from the low \$200,000s to more than \$500,000. “We are seeing families, young professionals and retirees moving to town,” says Marinelli.



AVE MARIA SUN COURTESY IMAGE

“With over 75 floor plans to choose from, including condominiums, attached villas and single-family homes, Ave Maria offers something for everyone.” More than 20 model homes are open daily for viewing.

The allure of a well-envisioned and main-

tained MPC is that it is self-contained, with everything a homeowner might need or want close by. “Buyers see the value of owning a home in our master-planned community. People are drawn to the recreation and amenities, education options, lifestyle and ideal location between both coasts of Florida,” Marinelli explains.

Ave Maria is the result of a partnership between Barron Collier Companies, a family-owned real estate developer for more than 100 years, and Tom Monaghan, founder of Domino’s Pizza. Their vision was to create a town that values family, education and community, taking full advantage of Southwest Florida’s temperate weather and exquisite natural setting.

Among numerous amenities and social opportunities are championship golf courses, an amphitheater, bocce and tennis courts, walking and running trails, a dog park, soccer and baseball fields, a water park and fitness center, the Town Center with boutiques and

restaurants, a Publix supermarket, a commercial center with a Mobil gas station, preschool and K-12 schools, an awe-inspiring church and Ave Maria University—an accredited liberal arts university—as well as free events throughout the year. The Ave Maria Master Association organizes ongoing events for residents including virtual trivia, happy hours, fitness classes and club meetings, while providing access to free outdoor seasonal events with proper social distancing guidelines.

Upon completion, the development will include up to 11,000 residences and 1.7 million square feet of retail, office and business park uses in its 4,000 acres. Ave Maria is located at the intersection of Oil Well and Camp Keais roads in eastern Collier County. The main entrance, on Oil Well just west of Camp Keais, leads to the Town Center. Take I-75, exit 111, follow the signs east to Ave Maria for approximately 20 minutes. For more information, visit Ave-Maria.com or call 239-352-3903. 🌟



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Ave Maria Denistry providing comprehensive dental services in Town Center

BY **SANDA YEYATI**
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Whether it's a winning smile or being able to eat anything pain- and worry-free, Ave Maria Dentistry offers solutions for adults and children in the heart of Town Center. Led by oral surgeon Dr. Wisdom Akpaka, a team of hygienists and dentists perform a full range of services, including preventative checkups and cleanings, root canals, crowns, veneers, bridges and even implants.

Dr. Wisdom studied dentistry in the Republic of Ghana, in West Africa, where he was born, and practiced there for three years in the early 2000s. "Healthcare delivery was pretty substandard in Ghana, and I wanted to be a dentist to help my people," he says. "We saw so many who were sick and didn't get the attention they needed. The nation needed a lot of healthcare providers, and I decided to be one of them."

In 2009, he came to the United States to study advancements in dental technologies. "We didn't have most technologies back home, so I came here to improve myself, and then ended up staying," he says. Through an advanced standing program, he earned a Doctorate in Dental Surgery at the New York University College of Dentistry.

"I love dentistry. I don't think I want to do anything else," Dr. Wisdom says. "In other fields, if you have diabetes, they give you medication, but the diabetes doesn't go away, or if you have high blood pressure, they give you pills to take for the rest of your life. In dentistry, we don't manage, we treat. If you have a toothache, I treat the tooth and the toothache is gone; if



WISDOM



COURTESY IMAGE

Ave Maria Dentistry offers solutions for adults and children in the heart of Town Center.

you're missing a tooth, we can put an implant in, and the problem is solved. When you can help somebody like that, it's one of the best feelings in the world."

In addition to his surgical skills, Dr. Wisdom is a savvy entrepreneur. By 2018, he already had four dental practices in Broward County and two in Naples when he decided to purchase an existing dental office in Ave Maria. "I thought it was a good opportunity to have a community to myself," he says, noting that he has a home in Fort Lauderdale and one in Ave Maria, and regularly crosses the state to serve patients on both coasts.

When putting together his team at Ave Maria Dentistry, Dr. Wisdom's first order of business was to address children's need. "There are many families in Ave Maria that have multiple kids per household, so it was important for me to find a dentist who specifically focused on kids, and I brought in Dr. Steve Criscuolo, a very fantastic pediatric dentist," he says.

Dr. Wisdom also asked Dr. Kenninthon Munoz to join the team. "Dr. Munoz has one of the most amazing bedside manners that I

know. You meet him, you don't want to see another dentist. He's seen my patients when I'm not there, and they don't come back to me," Dr. Wisdom relates with a chuckle.

Also on board is Dr. Carolina Cortez. "She is a very strong, restorative dentist. She knows how to do crowns, fillings and such things very, very well. And I do the surgery, so that covers every aspect of dentistry. Anything surgical we can do in the office. Anything cosmetic we can do in the office. For patients who are afraid and need loving, tender care from Dr. Munoz, they get it, and then of course the kids are not left out. That was my mentality at Ave Maria, to make sure that people didn't have to travel to get things done. We can provide them comprehensive dental care right here."

The hygienists play an integral part. "As dentists, we fix and solve problems, but the hygienists are like primary care physicians and the key to keeping the good oral healthcare that we want to deliver to patients," Dr. Wisdom says, noting that every six months, they spend close to one hour per visit with patients, cleaning their teeth and educating them on how to maintain

their gums and the supporting structures of their teeth. A biannual professional cleaning and check-up is the recommended protocol to prevent cavities and maintain proper oral hygiene.

When more extensive work is required, like whole mouth rehabilitation or cosmetic dentistry, dental images are taken to provide a clear understanding of their oral health. After reviewing the pictures, Dr. Wisdom will meet the patient for a free, initial consultation. "I go through the steps that are involved. I let them know how long it will take, how much discomfort or pain to expect, how much time they're going to miss from work and the medications they will need to take," he says. "We have many different ways to provide solutions for patients—some are more costly than others. This gives them the information and allows them the time to make a decision as to which of the options they want."

Dr. Wisdom is an avid student of the latest technologies, clocking 50 to 100 continuing education hours every year. "We are perfecting dentistry so much that the failure rates are becoming lower and lower," he says. "The transition between when you lose your teeth and having all new teeth back is becoming really smooth, and I'm really excited about that."

Ave Maria Dentistry accepts all dental insurance and works with Care Credit to help patients pay for their dental work. According to Dr. Wisdom, "Care Credit pays us up front on behalf of the patient. In return, we pay the interest for the patient, and the patient has a fixed loan to pay little by little."

The dentists are available for emergencies, whether it's after hours or on weekends. Because of COVID-19, patients are asked to wait in their cars rather than in the reception area to minimize interactions with other patients.

For appointments and more information, visit AveMariaDentistry.com or call 239-919-6930. 🌻

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Students recognized with Do the Right Thing Award

BY MARY WOZNAK
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

All Bryana Hamilton knew was that she saw people hurting in the wake of a natural disaster and she wanted to help. She never expected that she and three of her fellow students would wind up being recognized for their efforts with the Do the Right Thing Award.

Bryana, an Ave Maria resident and Corkscrew Middle School student, initiated a project to raise money to help the people of the Bahamas who were devastated by the impact of Hurricane Dorian. The Collier County Sheriff's Office presented the award recently to her and the students who supported and assisted in the fundraising campaign: Omar Rosado, Kadyln McMillan and Zoey Seng.

Hurricane Dorian was a Category 5 hurricane and considered the worst natural disaster in the recorded history of the Bahamas. The winds of the 2019 storm reached a height of 185 mph.

Bryana, now 13 and in the eighth grade, remembers that she was scrolling through the news online when she saw photos of how the storm ravaged the island and how its people were suffering in the aftermath. She also learned about the Bahamas Relief Fund.

Bryana knew from having traveled occasionally with her father in his work to several Caribbean islands that the island residents are often poor and lack resources to deal with a large-scale natural disaster. Her father's work involves installing Geotube systems by bodies of water, to help protect against erosion and storm damage.

She started gathering information together, created a PowerPoint with accompanying documents and statistics, and presented them to Ronna Smith, her school principal. Smith was enthusiastic in backing the project. "It was amazing to have her support," Bryana said.

The fund-raising method was a tried-and-true one: selling candy. She knew that it would be popular and something everyone would enjoy, Bryana said. "Candy was kind of our best target market." Omar, Kadyln and Zoey pitched in. The students purchased the candy themselves and then sold it before school and after school, on school grounds. They also sold candygrams and delivered them to classrooms.

"My friends, they started the project and I thought I should help," Omar said. "No. 1, they are my friends. No. 2, it is the right thing to do. And in Florida, we know what it's like to deal with hurricanes." Yet, the Bahamas is an island nation surrounded by water, so that makes it more vulnerable, he said.

Friendship also helped spur Zoey's participation. She also lives in Ave Maria. "I decided to help Bryana because she is one of my close friends and she was very passionate about this," Zoey said. "She thought it would be a good experience for us."

The students ended up raising \$200 to \$300, Bryana said. She was in sixth grade at the time of the project. She learned of the award just



The students display their Do the Right Thing certificates, standing with friends and family at the awards ceremony in Ave Maria. Students holding certificates, L-R: Zoey Seng, Kadyln McMillan, Bryana Hamilton, Omar Rosado.



Do The Right Thing winning students: Omar Rosado, Bryana Hamilton, Kadyln McMillan and Zoey Seng

recently. Her principal had nominated the students.

"I was very surprised," Bryana said. Doing the fundraiser was reward enough and they didn't think twice about it, she said. Then to receive a phone call that they were receiving an award "was so unexpected, so kind," she said.

At the awards ceremony in North Park in Ave Maria, the students received certificates, trophies, medals and gift cards. The Collier County Sheriff's Office went above and beyond with their presentation, said Allyson Hamilton, Bryana's mom. "Many police cars and officers came in with lights and sirens blaring and really made it a special event for the kids. And they even gave the moms bouquets of flowers."

The Collier County Sheriff's Office part-

nered with the national "Do the Right Thing" program in 1998. The program recognizes and rewards area youth for exemplary behavior, accomplishments, good deeds and making a difference in their communities.

"The Do the Right Thing Program is always looking for kids who are doing the right thing – the name says it all," said Cpl. Eric Grundeman, who oversees the committee responsible for this program at the sheriff's office. "The sheriff's office is big on getting kids the recognition they deserve." This also lets adults see that so many children, like these students "are out there doing good stuff," he said. "That's what I love about our program."

After the fundraiser was complete, they put the collected money in an envelope and the

"The Do the Right Thing Program is always looking for kids who are doing the right thing – the name says it all."
— Cpl. Eric Grundeman

principal and staff sent it to a corporation in Naples that sent it straight to Bahamas. The students received a letter that the fundraising money made it safely, and that the community was so thankful for the donation.

Since the Hurricane Dorian project, Hamilton and a group of friends have donated to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. During COVID-19 last year, she and three other girls donated to Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida, including a large check, hand-made blankets, masks and more.

Bryana wants to inspire people to be kind to others and spread the word. And she already knows what she wants to be when she grows up. "I definitely want to be a businesswoman," she said. Bryana has already started a small business selling gemstone jewelry and essential oils. She wants it to grow and make charity fundraising and volunteering a part of it, to give back to the community.

Omar also encourages others to make a difference with positive action in their communities. "If you see someone in need, you should always try to help if you can," he said.

Zoey agrees. "It's good for everybody to get out there and experience helping others," she said. 🌟

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Ave Maria Communities

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Avalon Park

About the Community

From \$240s - \$600s

It's easy to stay active and have family fun at Avalon Park. Located within the highly sought after Collier County School District, Avalon Park attracts families looking for exceptional schools, close proximity to neighborhood parks, plenty of living space, and walkability to downtown Ave Maria. Avalon Park offers spacious homesites, unique architectural exteriors, and

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easy personalization options and versatile living spaces make everyday moments easier and more enjoyable. With a focus on quality construction and a simplified buying experience, Pulte will help you get into your new home easily, without the headaches. That's More Life Built In®, and that's exactly what you'll find at Avalon Park.



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Director who plans clubs, classes and events all year long. With so many ways to stay active and have fun, it's easy to see why Del Webb Naples neighbors become long-time friends. Offering 21 home designs to choose from including carriage homes, villas and single family, starting from the \$190s to \$600s, you are sure to find a home where you can create an inspired, personalized design to fit your style, and budget. End your search for your ideal Florida oasis...it's all waiting for you at Del Webb Naples.

Del Webb[®]

No one understands the importance of community like Del Webb. Del Webb communities are an extension of the homeowners who live there – a collection of passions and activities you love to enjoy with others. When you choose to build in a Del Webb 55+ active adult community, you get the benefit of more than six decades

of homebuilding experience. With homes designed for how you live, including the features that matter most to you, all backed by a warranty you can rely on, you'll feel secure now and in the future. And, a streamlined process makes it easy for you to build the home you've always wanted, in the vibrant community you've been looking for.



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About the Community

Maple Ridge at Ave Maria is a thoughtfully designed community with a myriad of home designs, all of which combine beautiful curb appeal with impressive interior layouts built for modern lifestyles. CC Homes is the builder behind this community and they are among the many reasons Ave Maria has become such a rapidly growing neighborhood attracting new residents from the Gulf Coast, Southeast Florida and beyond. With more than 75 years of combined experience in South Florida real estate, Mr. Armando Codina and Mr. Jim Carr along with Mr. Andres Miyares have set a new standard for quality new construction homes in desirable communities, with a wide range of pricing from entry-level to prestigious exclusivity.

CC Homes communities throughout the State of Florida have been recognized for their incredible market appeal, outstanding quality, and resident satisfaction time and time again, having built thousands of homes and residences. Homes built by CC Homes are designed to improve people's lives. Modern features, smart floor plans and upscale amenities combine for the ultimate South Florida lifestyle. Homeowners at Maple Ridge are pampered with high-end designer features included in the base price. Maple Ridge neighborhoods include a brand-new clubhouse for residents with resort-style pool and cabanas, fitness center, billiard room, exercise park, concierge, coffee bar, exhibition kitchen and kids' room.

New Contemporary Homes Available Now at Maple Ridge, Tour New Models Today!



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CC Homes is ranked as one of the top five new home builders in South Florida and Southwest Florida, offering affordable single-family luxury in Ave Maria's Maple Ridge neighborhoods. Homeowners are pampered with high-end designer features included in

the base price. Maple Ridge neighborhoods include a brand-new clubhouse for residents with resort-style pool and cabanas, fitness center, billiard room, exercise park, concierge, coffee bar, exhibition kitchen and kids' room.



Harbour

- 3,522 a/c square feet
- 4 to 6 bedrooms
- 3.5 to 5.5 bathrooms
- Ground floor owner's suite
- 2 or 3-car garage

Maple Ridge
5009 Alonza Avenue, Ave Maria, FL 34142
833-729-1783 | www.MapleRidgeFL.com



About the Community

As part of the highly sought after new home community, Maple Ridge at Ave Maria- Silverwood offers exciting residential choices to buyers. Silverwood provides homeowners the perfect home at a great value. All of these single-family homes are beautifully designed with Mediterranean-inspired architecture and an inviting array of designer features included as well as some custom options available. Both Silverwood and Maple Ridge have a superb location within Ave Maria, so residents benefit from a great school district and sense of community.

Floor Plan Spotlight: The Huntington is a new construction, one-story home with 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, great room, eat-in kitchen, storage, master suite with walk-in closet and attached garage. Premium features included standard, such as designer brand faucets & fixtures and tile flooring. Gourmet kitchens have stainless steel appliances, European-style wood cabinetry and quartz countertops. A spa-like master bathroom features double sinks with quartz vanity tops, a spacious shower.



Starting from \$274,990 to \$325,990

CC Homes is ranked as one of the top five new home builders in South Florida and Southwest Florida, offering affordable single-family luxury in Ave Maria's Maple Ridge neighborhoods. Homeowners are pampered with high-end designer features included in

the base price. Maple Ridge neighborhoods include a brand-new clubhouse for residents with resort-style pool and cabanas, fitness center, billiard room, exercise park, concierge, coffee bar, exhibition kitchen and kids' room.



Huntington

- Model home is now open for viewing.
- 1,630 a/c Sq. Ft.
 - 3 bedrooms
 - 2 bathrooms
 - His and her walk-in closets at master bedroom
 - 1-car garage

Maple Ridge
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833-729-1783 | www.MapleRidgeFL.com



THE NATIONAL
GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB
AT AVE MARIA, FLORIDA

About the Community

Lennar is excited to bring its popular Everything's Included® homes and resort lifestyle amenities to the charm, convenience, and values of Ave Maria. The National Golf & Country Club will offer a fresh coastal aesthetic throughout the home designs and on-site amenities including an 18-hole Gordon Lewis-designed golf course, complimented by world-class amenities for the entire family to enjoy. A variety of floorplans will be offered in Terrace and Veranda Condominiums, plus Executive and Estate single family homes, starting from the upper \$100s.

The National Golf & Country Club will feature its own Clubhouse with a pro shop, formal and casual dining, a resort-style pool and spa, state-of-the-art fitness center with yoga/aerobics room, spa treatment rooms and beauty salon. Active residents can take advantage of Har-Tru tennis courts, pickle and bocce ball, putting green, chipping area, and a driving range. This all-encompassing amenity campus is designed to bring our community together, with spaces to congregate with friends new and old.

Whether you are a seasonal resident or looking to lay down roots, The National Golf & Country Club has the ideal home for you!

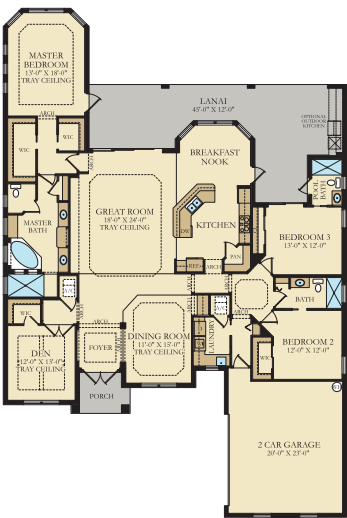


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**MINUTES AWAY
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Ave Maria now offers 36 holes of golf

BY **ROBIN F. DEMATTIA**
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Just as Ave Maria got a second golf course, one of them is going offline for six months. But, that's actually a good thing.

Panther Run Golf Club, which opened in 2007, will be undergoing its first renovation and come back as an even better place to play.

The entire course will be re-seeded, with Bimini replacing Celebration on the fairways, and refreshed TifEagle on the greens, which will be re-contoured. Bunkers will get new liners and new sand, and drainage will be improved.

"Golfers will have improved playing conditions throughout the year, because this (fairway) grass is supposed to hold a lot better during the winter months," said Gerardo Lugo, head pro. "Once we reopen, we expect it to be in tip top shape year round."

Original course architect Gordon Lewis, a Naples resident, is overseeing the renovations.

Panther Run will hold a Renovation Kick-Off Party for members only on May 2. The event will feature an 18-hole par three contest followed by lunch and then long drive and chip & putt contests.

"We wanted to give members one last final run at the course and send them into summer with something fun," said Mr. Lugo.

The course will officially close on May 3, though the maintenance staff will start to kill off grass in mid-April.

Panther Run is managed by Hampton Golf, so members will have access to local Hampton properties such as Golf Club of the Everglades, The Plantation and Verandah.

Practice facilities will also be closed, but Mr. Lugo encourages members to use the club's golf simulator or to speak with him about golf lessons that he will offer at nearby clubs.

Mr. Lugo expects the course to reopen on Nov. 1.

Luckily, golfers now have a second course in Ave Maria to enjoy.

The National Golf & Country Club, managed by ICON Management Services, opened to the public on Jan. 15 and has been extremely popular. The course sees an average of 200 golfers each day and had almost 10,000 rounds played within its first two months.

"The response has been great," said Ryan Hagerman, head golf professional. "People are loving the course."

Mr. Hagerman said people are traveling from Naples, Fort Myers, Port Charlotte and even Florida's east coast to see and play the new course.

One of the enticements is the longest par 5 in Collier County at 701 yards from the tips.

"It's a beast of a golf hole," Mr. Hagerman laughs. "You could land a jet on it. It's unique and a conversation starter."

There are also two shorter par 3s that balance the course.

The National was designed by golf course architect Gordon Lewis, a long-time Naples resident who has worked on dozens of courses for Lennar and about 100 courses in southwest Florida.

"I told him I think he's outdone himself here, and he agreed," Mr. Hagerman said.

He said the course has a lot of doglegs and "an abundance" of water.

"Off the tee, be sure what you want to do," he advised. "It can reward you for taking an aggressive line off the tee box but punish you if you don't accomplish your goal."

Mr. Hagerman said the greens are exciting and challenging, and that golfers need to "think their way around" the course.

The five sets of tees range from around 5,000 to 7,300 yards. "The course can accommodate a variety of skill levels," Mr. Hagerman said.

New courses often require some time to settle in, but Mr. Hagerman said the course is in good shape and getting better every day.

"It takes time for grass to fill in and develop a root system to really thrive and handle an abundance of traffic on it. It will age and soften up."

He expects to see increased play as the area's full-time residents explore the new course this summer and as people realize that Panther Run is closed for renovations.

He and first assistant golf professional AJ Pascua are also available for lessons.

"We're ready to get people excited about the golf course and we're ready to help them achieve their goals," he said. 🌻



PHOTOS BY ANNALEE HULL

Maria Scott tees off at the Panther Run Golf Club driving range.

"We're ready to get people excited about the golf course and we're ready to help them achieve their goals."

— **Ryan Hagerman**, head golf professional at The National Golf and Country Club at Ave Maria



The National Golf & Country Club opened to the public on Jan. 15.

AVE MARIA GOLF COURSES

>> **The National Golf and Country Club at Ave Maria**
5909 Double Eagle Ct.
239-867-9090
thenationalgcc.com
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYMA_Mq6He8

>> **Panther Run Golf Club**
6005 Anthem Pkwy.
239-304-2835
pantherrungolfclub.com

Ave Maria is a place the Greens have loved from Day 1 (and still love)

BY **GLENN MILLER**
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

It was a golfing trip to Ave Maria by Tom Green with a buddy named Dave Iuliani from his kindergarten days that changed everything for the Green family.

Changed everything for the better. ...

Mr. Green was visiting from Parsippany, N.J., a place where winters can be cold and bleak and long. On his trip to play at Panther Run Golf Club, Mr. Green took a 15-minute tour of Ave Maria.

It took one look. ...

Just one. ...

Just 15 minutes. ...

Just a quarter of an hour. ...

Mr. Green was compelled to tell his wife about this wondrous place called Ave Maria and convinced her to pack up and move more than a thousand miles away from the state where they both grew up. Mr. Green was convinced it would be a good move for their two young children as well.

In August of 2018 they left the Garden State for the Sunshine State, left dreary weather for sunshine, left the hustle and bustle of the Northeast for a community nestled in a quiet corner of sub-tropical Southwest Florida.

They built a house and have made it a home in a community of homes.

Ave Maria is a place they've loved from Day 1 and still love.

"Oh, it's an oasis," Ms. Green said.

They've helped make it a community. Their children, 12-year-old Thomas III and 10-year-old Nina, attend the Donahue Academy.



The Green family, Tom, Nicole, Thomas III and Nina.

The children have settled in to the community. Thomas plays Little League and has started playing basketball. Nina has joined a swim club, plays basketball and is in a junior choir. Nicole served for a time as president of the Ave Maria Little League.

Ave Maria is an oasis for more than its balmy climate for the Green family.

"We enjoy like-minded civic people," Ms. Green said. "Friends go out of their way to help neighbors."

Here, she believes, neighbors are more than neighbors. They are friends. Moms look out,

she said, for the children of other moms.

The idyllic lifestyle she has discovered and treasures can't be found many places, she believes.

"It doesn't exist now," Ms. Green said. Except in Ave Maria.

The impersonal hurly-burly of a megalopolis does not exist here, in Ms. Green's experience. In Ave Maria, neighbors are neighborly, "They wave," she said. "They know your name."

Yes, Ave Maria, Nicole Green has learned, is not like other places. What her husband told



Nina Green and Gov. Ron DeSantis, when she served as president of the Ave Maria Little League.

her after his golfing trip with a buddy has proven true.

"People have to see it to believe it," Ms. Green said.

Mr. and Mrs. Green are professionals. Tom is an associate director in human resources and IT for Merck. Nicole has an accounting degree from The Catholic University of America in Washington and an MBA in information systems from Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey.

Parsippany and far-away New Jersey is now in the Green family's rearview mirror. Their home has been and will remain Ave Maria. It was suggested to Ms. Green that perhaps in a few years Thomas III and Nine might stay in town and attend Ave Maria University.

"They're so young," Nicole Green said.

Yes, they have more years of childhood, more Little League games and swim meets and choir practices and recitals to enjoy in Ave Maria before college beckons.

Nicole and Tom and the kids have embraced Ave Maria but Nicole still misses close friends and family back in New Jersey.

But New Jersey is most definitely in the rear-view mirror for Nicole Green and her Florida family. 🌻

Retired MLB pitcher pitches in helping little leaguers

BY **GLENN MILLER**
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

When Josias Manzanillo left his Dominican Republic hometown of San Pedro Macoris as a teenager in 1983 to report to the Boston Red Sox minor-league camp in Winter Haven he didn't speak English.

He left behind his family and the comfort of knowing the culture currency and language of the Dominican Republic for an adventure.

He could not have foreseen as one of 11 kids born to parents who owned a bakery the miles he would travel and places he would see and the town he would someday call home.

Now, nearly 40 years later, Mr. Manzanillo is 53, a veteran of 11 big-league seasons as a pitcher and an Ave Maria resident with his wife, Delmaris. He helps coach ballplayers in the Ave Maria Little League and regularly commutes to Davie on the east coast in his Ford F-150 to coach there.

"We love it here," Delmaris said.

They are building a home and have been renting for four months. They expect the new house to be finished by December.

The couple fell in love with the town when they visited more than a year ago. Mr. Manzanillo fell in love with Delmaris a long time ago and calls her his "gift from God."

On early visits to town Mr. Manzanillo was pleased to see kids riding bikes to Publix. The couple kept returning, driving across the state from their east coast home.

On one of their trips they spotted a sign for the Ave Maria Little League and reached out to Nicole Green, who was then league president. Manzy, as he is widely known, offered his expertise to the league.

He operated a coaching clinic on the east coast known as Manzy's Pitching Farm. The name will soon change.

"We are re-branding now," Mr. Manzanillo said.

Mr. Manzanillo brings an incredible depth of experience to coaching Ave Maria. He's played all over North America in either the minors or majors.

After his 1983 signing, he worked his way steadily but surely up through the Red Sox minor-league system.

Finally on Oct. 5, 1991, the 6-foot, 190-pound right-hander made his major-league debut. It was in Fenway Park vs. the Milwaukee Brewers.

"I was so nervous I looked like an amateur," Mr. Manzanillo said

The statistics back up his recollection. On his page at baseball-reference.com, it shows that Mr. Manzanillo pitched in one game in the majors that year and had an earned run



MANZANILLO



Josias Manzanillo pitched for seven MLB teams from 1993 through 2004.

average of 18.00. He pitched one inning, walked three, gave up two hits and two earned runs but also struck out two.

Despite the rough outing, Mr. Manzanillo wasn't done.

From 1993 through 2004 he pitched for seven teams, bouncing from the Brewers to the New York Mets and the New York Yankees and Seattle Mariners, back to the Mets and then three seasons with the Pittsburgh Pirates, on to the Cincinnati Reds and finally, in 2004, with the Florida Marlins, who are now known

as the Miami Marlins.

In 11 seasons, he compiled a 13-15 record with six saves and a 4.71 earned run average. Through his career teammates included Hall of Famers Wade Boggs, Robin Yount, Eddie Murray, Ken Griffey, Jr. Edgar Martinez, Randy Johnson, Mike Piazza, Rickey Henderson and Barry Larkin.

He also played with all-time greats Roger Clemens and Alex Rodriguez.

Now, this man who pitched in Fenway Park and Yankee Stadium, brings his expertise to Ave

"To see kids who don't know how to hold a glove now be able to play catch. That is priceless. So memorable."

— Josias Manzanillo



Maria. Mr. Manzanillo's career ended before today's Little Leaguers were born.

"Normally, I don't get many questions from them," Mr. Manzanillo said.

But according to LeWayne Cheney, coach of the Nationals in the Ave Maria Little League,

players know about Mr. Manzanillo.

"They know who he is," Mr. Cheney said.

The kids can use Google and find out about the coach's career. More important than his resume is what he is doing now.

"He's already making an impact," Mr. Cheney said.

But if the young players have baseball questions he can answer.

His goal as a coach isn't to reminisce. It's to teach the game and values.

"To see them develop is my biggest joy," Mr. Manzanillo said.

His goal isn't developing pitchers for the Marlins, Mets or Yankees. The goals are more meaningful than statistics.

"To see kids who don't know how to hold a glove now be able to play catch," Mr. Manzanillo said "That is priceless. So memorable." 🌟





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New businesses to explore in Ave Maria

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

A woman’s clothing store, one-stop shop for sports, and the town’s first nail salon are among the new businesses opening in Ave Maria this spring.

■ Hoja de Menta

Many people have met Reina Del Mar Torres at the farmer’s market, where she sells women’s clothing, handmade jewelry and custom furniture. Now, they can find her in Hoja de Menta, her retail store at 5052 Pope John Paul II Blvd., Suite 112.

Hoja de Menta, which means “mint leaf,” represents the Bohemian feel that Ms. Torres said she presents.

“My husband came up with that name and I fell in love with it. It’s a fresh vibe.”

Her goal is to help young women be “trendy and effortless.”

For the past 15 years, Ms. Torres worked as a stylist for brands such as Louis Vuitton, BCBG and Dolce & Gabbana. She also styled celebrities, including Gloria Estefan, for red carpet events.

The pandemic motivated the Ave Maria resident to focus online and locally.

“My experience of styling and having sales experience was the key that motivates me to start this beautiful journey,” she explained. “I started the business online and then saw the opportunity to open a booth in the farmer’s market.”

She said she enjoys showing ready-to-wear clothing and to providing one-on-one styling consultations. She said that people appreciate her affordable prices and expertise.

“Since I was 16 years old and started with BCBG,” she explained, “I discovered that I have an eye to style other people’s bodies no matter their silhouette. That critical eye helps people feel and look beautiful with what they are wearing. It’s very satisfying.”

Ms. Torres buys her inventory from boutiques in California and expos in New York, Las Vegas and Orlando. Her focus is on maxi and mini dresses and handmade accessories.

Hoja de Menta is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Ms. Torres can be reached at 787-412-9338 and thestyl-istsecrets@gmail.com. Learn more at hojade-menta.shop.



COURTESY IMAGE
Reina Del Mar Torres, owner of Hoja De Menta modeling for Dolce & Gabbana.

■ Ave Maria Bike Rental

Not only is Ms. Torres taking Hoja de Menta out for a spin, she’s inviting Ave Maria residents to literally do the same with her second new business, Ave Maria Bike Rental.



AVE MARIA SUN COURTESY IMAGE
For the past 15 years, Reina Del Mar Torres, owner of Hoja De Menta worked as a stylist for brands such as Louis Vuitton, BCBG and Dolce & Gabbana.



She has adult and children’s bicycles on racks in front of her new retail store.

“They are charcoal gray with mint to flow with the store’s mint leaf vibe,” she said.

Ms. Torres said bicycles are a great way for families and their friends to explore Ave



COURTESY IMAGE
Ave Maria residents Christina Zibell and Adrien Harris started Ave Maria Youth Sports and are co-owners of So Balling Sportswear store.

Maria.

Adult bicycle rental rates are 1 1/2 hours for \$20. Each additional 1/2 hour for \$7. Kids bicycle rentals (training wheels optional) are 1 1/2 hours for \$15. Each additional 1/2 hour for \$5.

■ Ave Nails

When Danny Dang and his wife, Marie Nguyen, took a vacation from their home in Fridley, Minnesota, to Southwest Florida, they visited Ave Maria and fell in love with the town.

So after 20 years of working in nail salons up north, Mr. Dang and his family are now Ave Maria residents and the owners of Ave Nails.

“Since I’ve been in the business so long, I’m pretty confident and I’m good at it,” Mr. Dang said. “There’s not a nail salon in this



town. We specialize in what we do and the products we provide.”

The salon offers manicures, pedicures, gels, waxing, and lash lift and tint. There is a staff of four, but Mr. Dang is looking for more licensed manicurists. “I think this is going to be a busy location.”

Mr. Dang said he designed the salon to have a modern, classic and bright atmosphere. He emphasized that he takes pride in his cleanliness and sanitation practices to protect his clients and staff.

To celebrate its grand opening, Ave Nails is offering 20 percent off during the month of April, including on the purchase of gift cards.

Ave Nails is located at 5052 Pope John Paul II Blvd., Suite 110. It is open Monday through Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Sundays by appointment. For more information, call 239-658-5745.



AVE MARIA SUN COURTESY IMAGE
Ave Nails Danny Dang and wife Marie Nguyen

■ So Balling Sportswear

Athletes will begin running to So Balling Sportswear this month. The new retail store stocks clothing, accessories and equipment for just about every sport.

“We’re like a small Dick’s Sporting Goods,” said Adrien Harris, who owns the store with Christina Zibell. “We have everything that we can fit in without looking cluttered.”

So Balling Sportswear is a Nike dealer and affiliated with the NFL and Jr. NBA.

The clothing includes soccer and football pants and jerseys, fitness shirts and shorts, and yoga wear. Brands include Adidas, Under Armour and Nike as well as a custom So Balling Sportswear line.

The store will carry shoes and cleats for all types of exercise.

Swimmers will find goggles, pool floats and oversized beach towels to purchase.

Bats, basketballs, footballs and other sports equipment are due in later this spring.

So Balling Sportswear is located at 5064 Annunciation Circle, Suite 108. The store is open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. 🌻

ALL AROUND AVE MARIA

Ave Maria Master Association Events (resident only)

April 7
National Beer Day
 Watch for specials and activities at Oil Well Craft Beer and Local Restaurants.

April 10 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
OnSpot Dermatology mobile clinic with screenings and various treatments. Pre-registration required; walk-ins welcome if spots are available.

April 10 at 2 PM
Outing to PopStroke in Ft. Myers.

April 16 from 8 to 9:30 p.m.
Dive-in Movie at the Ave Maria Water Park

April 17 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Community Yard Sale in North Park.

April 20 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Bloodmobile

April 27 at 7 p.m.
Embrace the Journey photography presentation. Ave Maria resident Pat O’Flaherty is a wildlife and nature photographer who has traveled the world. Learn more about embracinglifepotos.com. Free.

April 29 at 6:30 pm
Dinner & Sunset Beachwalk Outing to Yucatan Beach Stand for dinner and then enjoy walking on the Fort Myers Beach to watch the Sunset.

May 14 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
OnSpot Dermatology mobile clinic returns. See April 10 listing.

May 15 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
International Water Safety Day
 Activities at the Water Park will include music, games and poolside exercise, water safety talks and more. Free.

May 29 from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m.
Glow Party
 High school juniors and seniors will gather at the Water Park for music, food and a volleyball tournament, all highlighted with glow sticks.

May 31 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Memorial Day
 Residents will honor the day with a parade into South Park led by Ave Maria Veterans Association and the Knights of Columbus. Free. Contact AveMariaVets@gmail.com.

June 5 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Splash Into Summer event at Ave Maria Waterpark

June 11 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Flip Flop Day
 Get crafty with a flip flop decorating kit distributed at the Water Park. Watch for additional details. Pre-registration and payment required.

June 19th
Father’s Day Golf & Brunch Outing!
 Look out for more details to come on this event.

Open to the Public
Ave Maria Farmer’s Market 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Every Saturday now through May 1st
 Over 20 vendors offering one-of-a-kind items such as handmade jewelry, candles, soaps, fresh produce and jams.

April 17 at 8 a.m. in Annunciation Circle
Lipman 5K Run/Walk For Backpacks.
 Register at lipmanfamilyfarms.com.

April 9 from 5 to 7 p.m.
May 7 from 5 to 7 p.m.
First Friday’s celebration
 This family event at the Park of Commerce will include a food truck, specials at Oil Well Craft Beer, music and lawn games with prizes. Residents are encouraged to bring lawn chairs if the musician is playing outside.

June 5 from 4 to 6 p.m.
First Friday’s celebration
 This family event at the Town Center will include food specials, live music, and lawn games with prizes.

Oil Well Craft Beer
 (Open to the public)

April:
Friday Fun! Friday, April 9th from 5PM to 7PM
Saturday, April 10th - New Food Truck: Chef Global from 5PM-8PM
 Karaoke Dance PARTY with DJ DiFLO from 8PM-11PM!
Meet & Greet Tuesday, April 20th at 7PM
 Are you new to Ave Maria? Come out and meet your neighbors at Oil Well Craft Beer’s Welcome to Ave Maria Meet & Greet! FREE WELCOME bags!

May:
Free BINGO - Saturday, May 1st from 6PM to 8PM. Open to ALL ages! Eden Earth, Wind & Fryer Food Truck will be serving AMAZING food from 5PM-8PM.

May 5th at 5 p.m. celebrate **Cinco de Mayo** at Oil Well Craft Beer with Taco Tummy Food Truck, Mexican inspired BEER, Margaritas, GAMES and More.

Meet & Greet – Tuesday, May 25th at 7PM
 Are you new to Ave Maria? Come out and meet your neighbors at Oil Well Craft Beer’s Welcome to Ave Maria Meet & Greet! FREE WELCOME bags!

June:
June 4th is **National Doughnut Day**-Beer and Doughnut pairing at Oil Well Craft Beer- 7 PM. Come try 4 DELICIOUS Doughnuts paired with 4 AMAZING BREWS-\$15 per Flight of 4.
Free BINGO on Saturday, June 5th from 6PM to 8PM. BINGO is open to ALL ages!

June 14th is **National Bourbon Day!** Come ENJOY \$2 off our BEST-SELLING Beer, Kentucky Bourbon Barrel Ale at Oil Well Craft Beer-ALL DAY LONG!
Meet & Greet – Tuesday, June 29th at 7PM
 Are you new to Ave Maria? Come out and meet your neighbors at Oil Well Craft Beer’s Welcome to Ave Maria Meet & Greet! FREE WELCOME bags!

The Secret Ingredient Women’s Boufique
 (Open to the Public)
Every Monday at The Secret Ingredient is 55+ and FABULOUS Day-10% off your FAVORITE item-ALL DAY-EVERY MONDAY!

April:
Don’t WINE, Just Go TRAVEL EVENT on April 21st from 6PM-8PM.

May:
May 4th is National Teacher Appreciation Day! Teachers can receive 20% off their FAVORITE item at The Secret Ingredient!
Sunday, May 4th is National Moscato Day-Come ENJOY a FREE glass of Moscato while you shop at The Secret Ingredient. Must be 21 and older.
Tuesday, May 25th is National Wine Day-Come ENJOY a FREE glass of WINE while you shop at The Secret Ingredient. Must be 21 and older.

June:
Saturday, June 5th is National wear BLUE Day! Wear ANY BLUE outfit into The Secret Ingredient and receive 20% off your FAVORITE item!
Friday, June 18th is National Flip Flop Day-10% off ALL of our FLIP FLOPS at The Secret Ingredient!
Wednesday, June 23rd is National wear PINK Day! Wear ANY PINK outfit into The Secret Ingredient and receive 20% off your FAVORITE item!

Fellowship Church
Fellowship Academy Open Enrollment
 Grades 1-12
 Email: info@fellowshipacademy.co
 Website: www.fellowshipacademy.co

Family Conference
 Description: Parents and their kids will be equipped to serve the Lord in a Deuteronomy 6 manner. Kids will do crafts and games. Parents will have interactive seminars.
 Dates: July 25-28
 Time: 6:30p-8:30p
 Email: info@fellowshipchurch.co

Student Camp
 Description: Student Camp is 3 night/4 day event for students grades 6-12.
 Dates: July 25-28
 Cost: \$75
 Grades: 6-12
 Email: info@fellowshipchurch.co

Camp Ave Maria
Summer Camp registration is OPEN! Summer Camp begins Monday, June 14. Visit CampAveMaria.com for more information about this recreational summer camp for kids ages 6-12.

Ave Maria Dance Academy
Summer Dance Registration is OPEN!
 Summer Dance begins Tuesday, June 15th. Visit AveMariaDance.com for more information.
May 21 and 22nd Ave Maria Dance Academy is holding their 13th annual dance recital at the O’Bryan Performance Hall in Ave Maria.

Ave Maria University
4th Annual Golf Tournament, April 30, 2021
 Afternoon shotgun – Scramble format
 All proceeds to benefit AMU’s NAIA Football Team. Register online at: www.GlideGolf.com

Ave Maria University Athletics
Home games schedule.
 Live streaming available only at www.thesundigitalnetwork.com/avemariagynes

April 6 at 12 p.m. and 3 p.m.
 Baseball vs Florida Memorial
April 7 at 2 p.m., 4 p.m.
 Lacrosse vs Webber
April 9 at 3 p.m.
 Baseball vs St. Thomas
April 10 at 12 p.m.
 Baseball vs St. Thomas
 Softball vs Keiser
April 10 at 1 p.m.
 Men’s Tennis vs Warner
 Women’s Tennis vs Warner
April 10 at 2 p.m.
 Softball vs Keiser
April 10 at 3 p.m.
 Baseball vs St. Thomas
April 14 at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.
 Softball vs Southeastern
April 19 at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.
 Softball vs Trinity Baptist
April 22 at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.
 Softball vs Thomas
April 23 at 12 p.m. and 3 p.m.
 Baseball vs Thomas
April 24 at 12 p.m. and 2 p.m.
 Softball vs Coastal Georgia
April 24 at 3 p.m.
 Baseball vs Thomas
April 30 at 12 p.m.
 Baseball vs Southeastern
May 1 at 12 p.m. and 3 p.m.
 Baseball vs Southeastern 🌻

— Events are subject to change. Events will be following CDC guidelines and social distancing procedures. Visit AveMaria.com for more information.

New Public Safety Complex almost ready to open

BY **ROBIN F. DEMATTIA**
 Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Construction of the Immokalee Fire Control District Ave Maria Public Safety Complex is proceeding smoothly, according to Michael J. Choate, fire chief and Immokalee Fire Control District manager.
 Groundbreaking took place on March 5, 2020. With slight delays and pricing increases due to materials shortages during the pandemic, the new building is still expected to be ready for occupancy in late spring.
 “For the most part, it’s still on time,” Chief Choate said. “We’re at the part where it doesn’t look like there’s progress, because they’re working indoors, but I expect us to be in by the end of June.”
 The complex will serve as an emergency operations center and house the fire department, county sheriff’s office staff and EMS.
 The main 22,000-square-foot building has

three bays that can hold six vehicles, including a ladder truck, medic unit, brushfire unit and water tender.
 One wing has offices and a board room. The other wing is the living quarters where four firefighters and two medics will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
 “They’ll be moving into a very efficient and ergonomically-friendly building that flows properly for response times,” the chief said. “Everything is designed for their benefit and, in turn, benefits the end user of our system.”
 The support services captain will work out of the 5,400-square-foot logistics building in the back of the complex. This building will house the reserve engine that is used when the main engine is out for maintenance, hurricane and brushfire materials, and supplies such as hoses, boots, helmets, gloves and air packs.
 Energy efficient elements such as light sensors and low-flow water were used in the construction, as well as smart technology to control features

through an iPad. It’s a big change from the 1970s-era former trucking company metal building that has served the district’s headquarters.
 “It was never designed to house public safety or be a fire station,” Chief Choate said. “What we’re coming from and going to is a complete contrast.”
 But the district’s history will be represented in old photos and memorabilia throughout the public spaces. “We don’t want to forget where we come from,” Chief Choate said.
 Funding for the \$10 million public safety complex came from impact fees, not taxes.
 “Every homeowner in Ave Maria paid an impact fee and it can only be used for expansion of services like a new fire station and new apparatus, not to pay personnel or replace apparatus,” the chief explained. “All of the impact fee money that the residents of Ave Maria and Immokalee have given us, we’re giving back to the community (in this complex).”
 The board room, complete with dais, will be available for community organizations to use.

The complex is built with further expansion of services in mind, including space for 14 staff to sleep. Chief Choate said he anticipates that this station will utilize two fire trucks within five years.
 “Our call volumes are increasing every year in Ave Maria,” he explained. “We went from one or two a day to about four or five a day. We know that trend will continue as folks continue to build in Ave Maria. It’s our job to be ready for that.”
 The chief encourages certified firefighters, EMTs and paramedics as well as secretaries to watch for job openings in the 234-square-mile district. “We would love to hire from within our district,” he said.
 A public grand opening celebration with tours will take place this summer on a date not yet announced.
 “We tried our very best to make sure we’ve provided not only something for the residents of Ave Maria to be proud of but something our firefighters will be proud to live in every day.” 🌻

Judi's Gym will honor donor and benefit student athletes

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

George P. Schwartz has been good friends with Tom Monaghan for decades. So when Mr. Monaghan said he was going to build a town in Southwest Florida, Mr. Schwartz came with him from Michigan to tour the tomato fields and hear more about the plans.

"A lot of people have said, jokingly, that they thought Tom was dreaming too big," Mr. Schwartz said. "But he's a visionary and knew what he wanted to build. He put a lot of his own money into it and helped raise money from outside. It's been a great success from everything I can see."

Mr. Schwartz and his wife, Judi, invested in the town right from the start. They bought a condominium 10 years ago and now own two, opened a branch of their financial services company in Ave Maria 10 years ago, and have supported Ave Maria University for years.

"We think it's a fabulous place to live and visit and do business," Mr. Schwartz said.

Sadly, Judi P. Schwartz passed away in April 2020, leaving behind George, her husband of 52 years, as well as five children and their spouses, and 10 grandchildren.

The family wanted to honor Judi's life with a legacy gift. They combined her love of sports with the family's commitment to Ave Maria by creating Judi's Gym. The outdoor pavilion near the university's rugby field and dorms will house six outdoor basketball courts. The complex will have a 25-foot ceiling and steel roof.

George P. Schwartz donated \$2 million to Ave Maria University last year to pay for the construction.

"Judi and I were big supporters of Ave Maria University," Mr. Schwartz said. "We're very impressed with the board of directors, administration and faculty. It's such a first-rate university that were very enthused about."

Construction should be completed in August or September.

Mr. Schwartz said his wife was very athletic



COURTESY IMAGE

Judi and George Schwartz, front, with their children Annie Malcolm, Michael Schwartz, Tim Schwartz, Bob Schwartz and Katie Hord.

growing up. She played basketball, volleyball and softball, and she enjoyed swimming. With her encouragement, all of her children played basketball, some in high school and some in college. Judi Schwartz enjoyed watching women's basketball.

"After her passing, I told Tom I wanted to have some sort of memorial in honor of Judi and we came up with this," Mr. Schwartz shared that Mr. Monaghan suggested the name of Judi's Gym.

"The athletic director thinks it will get a lot of student play," Mr. Schwartz said. "I think

exercise is crucial for mental development besides physical development and socialization. I think getting exercise is much more beneficial than sitting at a computer screen."

Mr. Schwartz expects the university's basketball teams to practice on the courts, intramural teams to play there, and students to enjoy pick-up basketball games as well. The space can also lend

itself for other university activities.

Among those who will enjoy seeing the courts utilized are Judi and George Schwartz's children and grandchildren who live in or near Ave Maria.

Michael Schwartz is executive vice president for Schwartz Investment Counsel, Inc., which has an office in the Ave Maria Town Center. He and his wife, Lisa, and their daughter, Madison, have lived in Ave Maria for almost nine years. Michael Schwartz has served on the Ave Maria University board of trustees for the past five years and previously was chairman of the board for Donahue Academy.

Katie (Schwartz) Hord lives in Ave Maria with her husband, Andy, and their two children, Nicky and Aubrianna Judi. She works in the family business.

Tim Schwartz has lived in Naples for the past nine years with his wife, Trish, and their son, Gabriel. He is president and chief investment officer for Schwartz Investment Counsel, Inc.

Two other Schwartz children live in Michigan. Annie Malcolm is married to Greg and has three children, Kristen Malcolm, Matt Malcolm, and Jennifer Strickland, who is married to Ben and has a daughter, Marianne Ruth. Annie Malcolm is operations manager for the firm.

Bob Schwartz and his wife, Michelle, are parents to Emily, Russell and Ryan. He is senior vice president and portfolio manager for Schwartz Investment Counsel, Inc.

A groundbreaking ceremony for Judi's Gym was held in February with a luncheon and remarks from Ave Maria University President Christopher Ice, Athletic Director Joe Patterson, and George P. Schwartz.

Michael Schwartz was recently appointed chairman of the university's new physical plant committee. He looks forward to overseeing all infrastructure, including progress on Judi's Gym. 🌸



New lifestyle director brimming with ideas

BY MARY WOZNAK

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Alejandra Vazquez is making things happen at The Club at Maple Ridge and she's loving every minute.



VAZQUEZ

Vazquez is the new lifestyle director at the club, which is the amenity complex exclusive to homeowners living in the Maple Ridge neighborhood of Ave Maria. The club features about 10,000 square feet of recreation and relaxation space. That's a lot of ground to cover, but

Vazquez is up to the task. With just about two months under her belt in her new job, she is up and running and brimming with ideas.

Vazquez plans events, schedules fitness classes, books parties and rentals and basically coordinates activities in the club according to the needs and wants of the residents.

She was previously an attendant for a year and a half at the club, taking care of the front desk, walking around the club making sure residents were happy and that everything was going smoothly. In short, it was great training for her new position. "Now I still do all those things, but I have more responsibility," she said. Vazquez was inspired by watching the previous lifestyle director and found herself thinking, "Maybe one day I can do that," she said.

She is also balancing her new job with finishing up her degree in accounting as a last-semester senior at Ave Maria University. Ironically, working as a lifestyle director is completely different from her field of study, but it works, Vazquez said. "Accounting is really black and white. The lifestyle director job is really creative. It balances two aspects of my

life," she said.

Every month, she prepares an events and social calendar. Activities had been curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but now things are slowly starting to rev up again, she said. Of course, new activities will resume or be added according to CDC guidelines.

The Club features a gathering lounge that serves as a community space for special events, casual meet-ups, and social celebrations. A fitness center with state-of-the-art equipment has adjacent men's and ladies' locker rooms. There is also a private fitness studio to host group classes.

Fitness classes include yoga, self-defense and Zumba, Vazquez said. She is starting a new health and wellness group called "Mindful Mandate," which features a life coach coming to the club to talk about issues like how to handle stress and live a more mindful life. For example, one session is called "Calming Confidence."

Then there's the new Pickleball club and soon, a new billiards club and chess club. There will be more art classes and even BINGO.

The club also has a billiard room for men and a card room; and a children's room, designed with murals by a local artist. Outdoors, there is a resort pool, outdoors fitness trail and children's playground.

Maple Ridge residents come to Vazquez with ideas, but she also goes out to the residents. "I want to make sure the residents have the kinds of activities they want," she said.

Lori Russo, community association man-



COURTESY IMAGE

Alejandra Vazquez, new lifestyle director at the The Club At Maple Ridge, shows off the club's lobby area filled with natural light.

ager for Maple Ridge, is more than happy with the new hire. "She is excellent. She is just such a pleasure," Russo said of Vazquez.

Maple Ridge is built by top-ranked Southwest Florida builder CC Homes, a Codina-

Carr company. The fast-growing community currently has about 1,150 homes, with buildout expected to be about 2,780 homes, Russo said.

The community has a wide demographic mix, from toddlers to families to older people. Vazquez has a great personality to work with that range of people, Russo said. "She is very engaging, very comfortable." Because Vazquez is a college student who is just about to graduate, she should also bring in the younger-age residents, tweens, teens and college-age. "She's got a lot of community spirit," Russo said. "She's got really good energy. It was a very good fit."

When Vazquez graduates in spring, will her degree in accounting still be in line with her future career goals? "The type of person I am, I learned I can't have a set plan," she said. "The world will always pull you different places. This is another side to my personality. I had a plan. Plans always change. Let the world take you where you need to go at the moment."

Vazquez currently lives in Immo-kalee, but she has been a part of the Ave Maria community since she started living in the dorms as a student in 2017. "I do feel like I live here," she said. "When you work in the club you kind of live and breathe it."

For Vazquez, Ave Maria feels like home. "What I like about Ave Maria in general is that it's so peaceful," she said. "I love the openness of it, how safe it feels, how homey it feels. It's just a beautiful place to live." 🌸

Ave Maria University athletes triumph in gyms and on fields

BY **GLENN MILLER**
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Playing through the worst pandemic in more than a century, Ave Maria University athletes triumphed in gyms and on fields through the winter and into the spring.

“We have the strongest teams in the history of the school,” athletic director Joe Patterson said.

■ **Softball**

The softball team was 14-4 overall and coming off a doubleheader sweep of St. Thomas in the first two games of conference play. The Gyrenes beat St. Thomas 9-1 and 11-3 on March 17.

Coach John Kelly has big expectations. The program has never won a Sun Conference title.

“Hope to change that this year,” Mr. Kelly said.

One of the team’s assets, according to Mr. Kelly, is speed. Mr. Kelly believes his Gyrenes are the fastest team in the country.

One of the keys is freshman Marisa Michi, who was batting .378 as the calendar turned to spring. She led the team in RBI (25) doubles (4) and homers (3).

“She’s going to be an All-American,” Mr. Kelly said.

At the same date on the calendar Miriam Padgett was hitting .537 and pitcher Sarah Shepard was 6-2 with a 1.88 ERA.

Through 18 games they had 81 stolen bases, which led the nation. No other team had more than 53. Ave Maria’s 4.50 steals per game also lead the nation. Mr. Kelly said the Gyrenes are “the fastest show on dirt.”

Kalie Romig led the team with 30 steals in 33 attempts and Ms. Padgett was 24-for-24 in steal attempts.

Ms. Romig, who already has an accounting degree from Ave Maria, said more than speed explains the team’s success.

“The key point has been playing together,”

Ms. Romig said.

She said the team’s improvement can also be attributed to Coach Kelly recruiting players with “grit and desire” as well as a “love” for the sport.

Ms. Shepard also evoked the same trait to explain the success. She also used the word “grit.”

Ms. Padgett cited another reason.

“I’ve never played on a team that has as much togetherness,” Ms. Padgett said.

That was evident as the team prepared for the season through its conditioning and extra practice before the coaching staff began working with players.

The season is far from over and the players are looking to snag the first conference softball title in school history and advance to the NAIA World Series.

“We are a team to watch,” Coach Kelly said.

The first conference championship in program history is one goal.

“We won’t be satisfied,” Ms. Shepard said.

The bigger goal is reaching the NAIA World Series.

■ **Lacrosse**

The lacrosse team had played only two matches as this issue of the Sun was being prepared. The team lost both but had five matches scheduled between March 22 and April 10.

The leading scorers in the first two matches are both from Maryland - Emma Davis and Orianna Eldridge.

■ **Beach Volleyball**

The beach volleyball team had also yet to hit the meat of its schedule as spring was winding down. At that point Gyrene beach volleyball was 4-1.

■ **Women’s Tennis**

The women’s tennis team entered the change of seasons with a 6-3 record.

The headliner on the women’s team is Bra-



AVE MARIA SUN COURTESY IMAGE
The women’s tennis team entered the change of seasons with a 6-3 record.

zilian Lara Teodoro, who in 2020 set a school record with 11 consecutive wins. She is far from the only Gyrene on the team with a winning record.

“We can’t win with just one player,” tennis coach Carlos Pinel said.

Indeed, other players are performing well. Katie Fuller from England was 11-6. Two other International players were 8-5 - Brazilian Kelly Oliveira and Aethelle Kelboom from Aruba.

■ **Men’s Tennis**

The men’s tennis team started 4-4. The best individual records were 7-3 by Brazilian Luca Cirenza and 9-5 by Nicholas Hofmeister.

■ **Baseball**

Nearly two months after opening the baseball season the Gyrenes were 8-17. They started 1-5 and were 2-8 after 10 games but improved along the way. In late February Ave Maria won a weekend series at Edward Waters College in Jacksonville.

Several Gyrenes are enjoying stellar seasons. Junior Kolby Blanchard from Prairieville, La, was hitting .366 with 11 stolen bases three weeks into March.

Brody Rubenstein, a speedy 5-foot-7 outfielder from Bushnell, led the team with 16 stolen bases in 18 attempts and also led the team with four homers.

Ethan Bergkamp from Wichita, Kansas, a catcher and first baseman, was hitting .294 at that point with a team-leading 25 RBI.

Freshman pitcher Ethan Wood from Vero Beach was 2-0 with a 0.64 earned run average. In 14 innings, he had struck out 17 and walked only four.

■ **Women’s Basketball**

The women’s basketball team posted an 8-19 record but played with pluck right to the end in a 65-59 loss to St. Thomas in the quarterfinals of the conference tournament. Ave Maria outscored St. Thomas 26-14 in the fourth quarter to make a game of it.

Senior Taylor Allen closed out an outstanding career with a team-high 14 points in the game. She was named second-team All-Conference, averaging 11.4 points per game.

■ **Men’s Basketball**

The men’s basketball team was 20-11 overall and 13-7 in conference play.

Senior guard Eric Klekas led the team in scoring, averaging 17.5 points a game. He also led the team in minutes played, averaging 36.4 minutes per game.

Coach Jamon Copeland was effusive in praise for the student he described as a “devout Catholic.” Coach Copeland talked about the heart and soul he displays in athletics and academics. Klekas sports a 4.0 grade point average.

“I could go on and on,” the coach said.

The Gyrenes won 20 games for the third consecutive season. games. They were noticed around the country, receiving votes in the NAIA Top 25. 🌻



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