

Caloosa

Neighborhood of the Week: 'It's like a little village in Vermont'

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Horses are at the heart of Caloosa, but dogs and cats have their fans, as well, and many found their owners the hard way.

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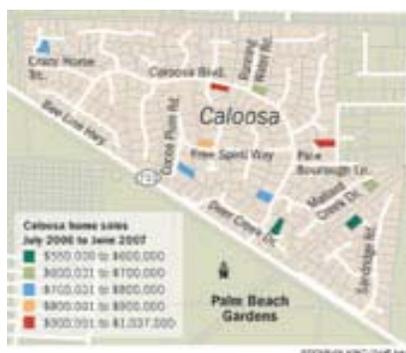
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'WE ALWAYS WANTED A HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY': Ann McEver's pride and joy, a 9-year-old Appaloosa named Lyn's Wings of Magic, was 'born in my lap right in my back yard.' She and her husband, Wendell (above), who retired after 39 years at Pratt & Whitney, also find that Caloosa's 5-acre lots are great for another purpose: big parties. 'Cops are called all the time to parties around here,' Ann says with a laugh. 'But we've never had the cops come, and we've tried and tried and tried.'





[History of home sales in Caloosa](#)

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Because the neighborhood is located along remote Beeline Highway - State Road 710 - it's often the place people from other places stop to dump their pets.

Many lucky strays have found their way to loving homes in Caloosa.

Samantha the Rottweiler at Carl and Stephanie's house.

Kobe the spaniel mix at Wendell and Ann's house.

Three stray cats at Dave and Sally's house.

And Lisa Loewenberg can take you to the barn at her house and introduce you to a couple of mustangs, Ren and Diego, rescued in New Mexico by the Bureau of Land Management and auctioned in Okeechobee. Her husband, Keller Williams Realtor Mark Loewenberg, is chairman of Caloosa's equestrian committee.

Horses were key to the community from the start. Almost 30 years ago, developer Fox Trails Inc., part of Hardrives of Delray Beach, cleared 1,854 acres of raw Florida land dense with scrub pines, live oaks and vegetation. It created homesites on minimum of 5-acre lots and dug 35 miles of canals.

The canals served two purposes. The dirt was sold to the government during the building of I-95, and the land on either side of the canals became 70 miles of riding trails.

A 33-acre park with horse show competition rings, basketball and tennis courts, and a large picnic area completed the layout.

"The cool thing about living at Caloosa is that almost every lot backs up to or has a canal running alongside the property," says Re/Max Realtor Cindi Stage, who lived in Caloosa for more than 20 years. "And along every canal is the riding path, where you can ride for miles and miles on a path dedicated only for horses."

Caloosa is not gated community. Its main entrance features a canopy of live oaks and Spanish moss instead of a guard shack.

Homeowner association fees are \$1,500 annually and cover maintenance of common grounds, garbage pickup, a full-time property manager and a maintenance worker. The fees also cover the \$96,000 it costs annually to have a full-time sheriff's deputy assigned to the neighborhood. Add the Citizens on Patrol - both in vehicles and on horseback -

and you have a nearly crime-free neighborhood.

"We may average four burglary attempts each year, and they are always caught," says Carl Creedon, a home-owners board member. "Our deputy even knows all the dogs and where they live."

In addition to serving as Caloosa's emergency center - with a generator, water and grills for food - the horse park offers a regular series of shows and competitions and is ground zero for neighborhood parties for Halloween, Christmas, July 4th and other holidays and occasions.

Some homeowners at Caloosa are choosing to tear down and build instead of buying one of the 40 undeveloped lots, which start at \$400,000. New luxury homes are being built for \$2 million and \$3 million, by home-owners from places like Miami-Dade.

Stage estimates it costs \$100,000 and up to clear a 5-acre lot, complying with the myriad environmental laws. Horse owners, she explains, want cleared pasture land.

That's fine at Caloosa, where the quaint, cozy way of life isn't considered threatened by outsiders.

"We haven't had a big change because people come here for the horses, whether they own them or just love them," says board president Dave Clark, an attorney with Oxbow Corp. "Could it change in the future? Sure. But I haven't felt it. If someone tried to change Caloosa, there would be a big push back.

"People from Miami aren't from Miami when they move here. They're from Caloosa."

Total number of homes: 310

Homes listed for sale: 16

Median sales price this year: \$700,000

What residents say...

ANN and WENDELL McEVER

THEIR HOME: 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2,000 square feet (under air), game room, hot tub, enclosed porch

WHEN THEY MOVED IN: April 1987

WHAT THEY PAID: \$32,500 for the lot, \$84,000 for custom-built home that included

labor from, says Wendell, "friends, family and whoever else I could scare up."

CURRENT VALUE (from Zillow.com): \$536,000

WHY THEY LOVE IT: "I'm a car guy," says Wendell, before he shows you his black '99 Corvette and limited edition 2003 black Chevy SSR. "This is the perfect place to live for guys who love motorcycles, cars and horses."

Not only are there car shows up the Beeline at Moroso but also not far away at Abacoa.

Then there's the regular runs up the Beeline to the nearby gas station, where guys sit around and talk about whatever.

"We call it Club Shell," Wendell says.

Ann's the horse lover and owner of Lyn's Wings of Magic, a 9-year-old Appaloosa that was "born in my lap right in my back yard."

The couple lived at a neighborhood near 45th Street and Military Trail while Wendell worked his way through 39 1/2 years testing jet engines at Pratt & Whitney.

"We always wanted a house in the country," says Carl. "I passed by going to work a million times. We decided, 'Let's go in there and see it.' We fell in love with it."

"Our lawns are bigger and our pets are bigger," says Ann, vice president field support/customer service for Trilogy (www.healthypetnet.com).

As for those who say Caloosa is too far west, Ann says, "we have more miles to travel, but you get there at the same time as people with city traffic."

Wendell says it's 10 minutes to Publix and 20 to 25 minutes to any great restaurant in Palm Beach Gardens.

"There are no stoplights on the Beeline," he reminds you.

In addition to the horses, another benefit of having a house on a 5-acre lot is that you can throw really big parties.

"If we have a party, we don't bother any of our neighbors," says Ann. "We've had 40, 50 cars here.

"Cops are called all the time to parties around here," she adds with a laugh, "but we've never had the cops come and we've tried and tried and tried."

DAVE and SALLY CLARK

THEIR HOME: 4 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, 2,800 square feet, with an enclosed pool and barn

WHEN THEY MOVED IN: June 2004

WHAT THEY PAID: \$685,000

CURRENT VALUE (from Zillow.com): \$762,000

WHY THEY LOVE IT: Dave and Sally Clark had lived in Palm Beach Gardens since 1989 and boarded their horse in Jupiter Farms. But it was time to bring both sides of the lives together.

"Unless you want to change your lifestyle - and we did - you wouldn't come here," Dave says.

The Clarks have two horses. Ticky is a Welsh quarter-horse cross, and Elfie is a Welsh pony. And there are also six cats - three that live around the barn and three in the house, with a golden retriever named Shadow.

Like most residents, they've taken in strays, including one of their cats.

"It had no hair and was emaciated," says Sally. "It looked like something out of Stephen King. Once it was healthy, it's a beautiful Himalayan."

For Sally, "all the space and the sense of community" are what make her neighborhood unique. "We have a lot of community activities to bring people together. Then we've got wildlife. Sandhill cranes, wild pigs, fox, gators. How lucky we are to live with all these birds!

"It's a lovely place. We don't go out to dinner as much as we used to because we like being at home."

The Clarks' daughter Hilary is at Grinnell College in Iowa. Daughter Gillian is in fifth grade at The Benjamin School.

Dave, an attorney for the Oxbow Corp., is president of the Caloosa homeowners board. As a former Palm Beach Gardens City Council member (he served for 11 years), he believes the best way homeowners can ensure that Caloosa's way of life doesn't change is to watch the world around them.

"We can't stop development, but we want to participate to preserve what we have here,"

Dave says.

"We stay alert to new developments. Realtors stay alert for the opportunity a new development can give them, but we stay alert because it could change Caloosa's lifestyle."

CARL and STEPHANIE CREEDON

THEIR HOME: 3 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, 3,000 square feet with a 3-car garage

WHEN THEY MOVED IN: May 1998

WHAT THEY PAID: \$300,000

CURRENT VALUE (from Zillow.com): \$638,000

WHY THEY LOVE IT: Carl and Stephanie Creedon love the community feel at Caloosa. It reminds them of home, Sugar Bush, Vt., where Carl had a horse farm with seven employees and 54 horses.

Stephanie is a clinical psychologist with an office in Palm Beach Gardens, while Carl continues his career as a builder/developer of office buildings.

"We lived at Admiral's Cove," says Carl, "but we were used to country and animals."

"And you wanted oak trees," Stephanie adds.

"And you wanted a big open kitchen," Carl counters.

They moved to Caloosa almost 10 years ago, but not with horses. They love horses but not the work that goes with keeping them.

"Here she can run 8 to 10 miles a day," Carl says of Stephanie. "It's an oasis in the middle of metropolitan America."

Eight years ago, an abused Rottweiler wandered into their lives. Its collar was so tight that it was having trouble breathing. It had been hit by a car. A \$5,000 vet bill saved the dog, which they named Samantha.

There are foxes that Carl feeds most mornings near his garage.

"This is an extension of a little village in Vermont with the community spirit we thought we'd never find in Florida," he says.

Public events at Caloosa

Dec. 1: Equestrian Tack Sale at the community pavilion, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. \$10 per table to sell equestrian items.Free.

Dec. 15: Holiday Horse and Vehicle Parade at the community park, noon. Free.

Jan. 19: Hunter Pace (cross-country jump course event), begins at 9 a.m. Free to watch. \$20 to ride.

Jan. 27:'Introduction to the Horse,' part 1 of 3-part series at the community park. 1p.m. \$10 per family. Free to Caloosa residents.

Feb. 16: Hunter Show (jump course event), starts at 9 a.m.Free to watch.

Feb. 17:'Introduction to the Mechanics of the Horse,' part 2 of 3-part series at the community park. 1 p.m. \$10 per family. Free to Caloosa residents.

March 16:'Introduction to Riding,' part 3 of 3-part series at the community park. 1 p.m. \$10 per family. Free for residents.

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