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## Magazine: Naples Winter Wine Festival again tops

By Harriet Howard Heithaus  
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The Naples Winter Wine Festival is getting bigger — even though it's already the biggest.

On the heels of once again being rated the No. 1 charity wine auction in the U.S. by Wine Spectator magazine, the festival is announcing its chairs for the 2017 festival, for the first time to be shared by four couples.

The extravagant Naples event has topped the list for 10 of the past 15 years.

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"The ranking is based on total live auction — bid earnings, excluding paddle-raise or fund-a-need lots," Falewée wrote.

The 2016 rankings will be announced in 2017, after all wine festivals for this year are completed.

The Southwest Florida Wine & Food Fest, based in Lee County, was judged fourth in that ranking, just behind the

Sonoma Harvest Wine Auction.

The top six charity wine auction nets were split among events in California, which grows almost all the wine grapes in the U.S. (89 percent in 2013, the last year for which statistics were available), and Florida (less than 2 percent that year).

The 2017 Naples Winter Wine Festival is set for Jan. 27-29, again at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort in North Naples, according to a news release from the

[naplesnews.com/winefestival](http://naplesnews.com/winefestival)

Get the latest coverage about the Naples Winter Wine Festival.

organization, which announced the four-couple chairmanship. Three of the couples are veterans, and three members of those couples have served as chairmen:

■ Jeff Gargiulo, chairman for the founding year, and his wife, Valerie Boyd. They are owners of Gargiulo Vineyards in Oakville, in the Napa Valley, and split their time between Florida and California. The two have supported the festival

See WINE FEST, 5A

## Bonita Springs Heroin valued at \$1.28 million seized; 7 held

By Kristine Gill  
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Seven people in Bonita Springs were arrested on cocaine and heroin trafficking charges after an eight-month investigation by the Lee County Sheriff's Office.

Reports of the investigation, dubbed "Taquiera Takedown," say the owners of a Kwik Pick convenience store in Bonita Springs and a second one in Naples were running a drug ring, sometimes from their shops.

### BROTHERS ACCUSED

Records state Erick Nunez-Nino was running the businesses in his brother's place after Alan Nunez-Nino was jailed on multiple drug trafficking charges during a separate investigation that concluded in October.

### SOCCER PALACE

At that time, Lee deputies said Alan Nunez-Nino was selling drugs out of indoor sports arena, Soccer Palace.

Soccer Palace is now defunct, but Erick Nunez-Nino took over as the leader of his brother's drug organization after his arrest, reports state.

The investigation reports say Erick Nunez-Nino had other individuals working under him, including Enrique Elvira-Gonzalez, who allegedly acted as his protection,

See HEROIN, 6A



LUKE FRANKE/STAFF (2)



## Naples Boat Show Seafood and Music Festival underway

Mary Beth Stein, above left, gets comfortable at the helm as Capt. Marco Resh, a retail agent for Formula Boats, runs through the specifications of the 37-foot cruiser and Pam Andre watches Friday during the first Naples Boat Show Seafood and Music Festival. Among the attractions at the festival at Florida Sports Park southeast of Naples was The Paul Allodi Band, left.

## Keeping an eye on target: Device helps make sure drops fall right

“ Glaucoma medicine is \$100 to \$200 a month.”

Dr. Alexander Eaton, Retina Health founder and director, who, with colleagues, developed a device that attaches to an eye drop bottle to video-record how well patients administer drops



RETINA HEALTH CENTER

Stephen Caracciolo, a patient of Retina Health Center, learns how to administer eye drops with the help of a device developed by the center, as Dr. Alexander Eaton watches.

By Liz Freeman  
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Stephen Caracciolo has some experience using eye drops and doesn't mind a camera recording him in the act.

It's all in the name of helping others, no matter how small his role.

"I'm kind of having fun with it," he said. "The fact is I am able to do it, but I know a lot of people are helpless."

The 67-year-old Fort Myers resident had eye surgery last week at Retina Health Center

to repair a macular hole in his left eye. He needs to put in eye drops four times a day.

Dr. Alexander Eaton, founder and director of Retina Health, and colleagues have received a patent for a device that attaches to an eye drop bottle to video-record how well patients administer drops.

"Compliance is always an issue," Eaton said. "Some people do a good job, and some people struggle with it. It's probably 20 to 30 percent of patients

Patients might think the drop gets in the eye when it misses or nothing comes out, or they might waste drops.

See EYE DROPS, 5A

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The 2017 Naples Winter Wine Festival chairs are, clockwise from the left couple: Jeff Gargiulo and Valerie Boyd; Brian and Denise Cobb; Debra and Bill Cary; and Simone and Scott Lutgert.

**WINE FEST**  
from 3A

continuously as trustees and featured vintners, and she serves on the grant committee as vice chairwoman.

■ Brian Cobb, who was second chairman of the festival in 2002, and his wife, Denise, who has been the longtime chairwoman of the public relations committee. Both have had careers in the broadcast industry, she as one of the original anchorwomen of CNN, and he as founder of CobbCorp, involved in the brokerage of TV stations.

■ Scott Lutgert, fifth chairman of the festival, and his wife, Simone, who has served as auction day co-chair and marketing

and creative director. The Lutgert family has been involved extensively in real estate development in Southwest Florida, developing golf course communities, beachfront high-rises, shopping centers, office buildings and mixed-use properties.

■ Debra and Bill Cary, who first attended the Naples Winter Wine Festival in 2013 and became supporters, joining as trustees in 2015. Retired as president and CEO of GE Capital, he now is a director of Synchrony Financial and Rush Enterprises. She is a former community banker and has been active in philanthropy, currently serving on the Naples Children & Education Foundation grant committee.

“The very first Naples

Winter Wine Festival grew out of a conversation in our backyard with several friends who shared a passion for wine and a desire to make a difference in our community,” Gargiulo said in a statement from the festival.

“Since then, the festival has grown into a globally recognized event, but it has still maintained its intimate format,” Gargiulo said.

A statement from Simone Lutgert said the expanded number of chairs were in hopes to “push the envelope even further and elevate the excitement” in 2017.

“With the addition of a relatively new couple, who bring a fresh perspective to planning this event, we can’t wait to unveil what’s

in store,” she added.

The 2017 co-chairs selected “Bright Sunshiny Day” as the festival’s theme, with its aim as “shining a light on the needs of underprivileged, at-risk children.”

Since it began in 2001, the festival reported, it has raised more than \$146 million for its founding organization, the Naples Children & Education Foundation. The NCEF has awarded grants to more than 40 nonprofit organizations that have affected the lives of more than 200,000 children.

Ticket packages to the event start at \$10,000 per couple.

Information: Barrett Farmer at barrett@napleswinefestival.com or 239-514-2239.

**EYE DROPS**  
from 3A

who struggle. It is not a small number.”

Patients might think the drop gets in the eye when it misses or nothing comes out, or they might waste medication.

Insurance companies typically provide 30 percent more than what is needed, and that’s it, Eaton said.

More than 20 percent of patients end up having to get a refill because they use too much medicine or it doesn’t make into the eye.

Running out of a prescription eye medication can mean the patient is on the hook for a refill, and that can be costly, he said.

“Glaucoma medicine is \$100 to \$200 a month,” Eaton said. “It’s some money.”

Physicians at Retina Health, which has offices in Fort Myers and North Naples, realized that baseball players and other athletes review videos of their movements to see what they are doing wrong and to foster improvements.

Retina Health decided to develop a camera device, with the help an engineer colleague, that uses the same concept.

The patient takes the device home, clips it on the eye drop bottle, and turns it on as he or she puts drops in an eye, and the camera records it all.

After a few days, the patient brings the device back to Retina, and the video is reviewed with the patient in case some training on administering drops is needed.

Some patients have shaky hands, arthritis and vision defects that create hardships.

The device doesn’t have a mechanism to measure or control how much drop is administered, but Retina realizes that is a concern,

Eaton said.

Part of the problem is there are many variations among bottles.

One billion bottles of eye drops are sold each year, which includes over-the-counter drops and prescription medications, he said.

People use drops after surgery and to treat infections, dry eye syndrome and other eye conditions, he said.

Retina has used the camera device in studies with about 100 patients, and the research is ongoing.

Caracciolo, the Fort Myers patient, has had cataracts in the past. When his vision became blurry in his left eye several months ago, his regular eye doctor thought cataracts were the problem.

However, tests revealed he had a macular hole, and he was referred to Eaton for surgery to repair it.

Eaton asked Caracciolo to use the device to record how well he puts in eye drops for his recovery.

“I’m pretty good at it,” he said, adding that the device is easy to handle.

Retina submitted the designs to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and patents were awarded in March.

Eaton said his staff researched whether approval is needed from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use with patients. Because the camera is not medication and not a device that gets implanted or interacts with the patient, FDA approval isn’t necessary, he said.

Regardless, Retina still is collecting data with patients and historically has worked with an institutional review board connected with the Lee Memorial Health System.

For more information, call Retina Health Center at 239-337-3337 or see www.retinahealthcenter.com.

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