



Conversation with
Mark Lyons
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How to catch a rooster

He's loud, destructive and downright cocky at times. Park Trace Estates residents, meet your new neighbor, Randy the Rooster.



Home to roost

Meet Randy the Rooster, the new resident who has neighbors of an Osprey subdivision crowing over his reputation as a troublemaker.

DAVID CONWAY
NEWS EDITOR

When Daniel Knauf agreed to step in as president of the Park Trace Estates Homeowners Association, he knew he wasn't assuming the most glamorous position.

A resident of the Osprey subdivision for a decade, he'd seen the type of eccentric personality that such a residents group could occasionally attract. He'd also read some far-out stories, including one about a Fort Myers man who parked a tank in his driveway to protest his association's ban on pickup trucks.

"I expected some craziness from my research and my experience," Knauf said. "I did not expect to have to deal with a rooster."

And yet, that's exactly the issue he's been grappling with this summer. Over the past four months, the presence of the somewhat-affectionately named "Randy the Rooster" in Park Trace Estates has given Knauf a previously unthinkable experience.

He's discussed rooster-related

issues at neighborhood meetings, reached out to animal services and even ordered a 16-ounce bottle of a product called Rooster Booster Poultry Insect Repellent online. Still, the problem persists — and Knauf is determined to solve it.

"I've got a sense of humor," Knauf said. "It's an absurd kind of situation. Right now, though, the rooster's gotten the better of us."

When one imagines the havoc a rooster can wreak within a community, the first image might be ill-timed crowing. People living near the Legacy Trail entry point Randy frequents have complained about the bird's noise, but the trail of destruction doesn't end there.

It extends 50 feet or so, to Bay Street and Willow Bend Way. Randy has gotten into the habit of digging up landscaping on an island there, sending a significant amount of mulch onto the street.

Although Randy has a reputation as a troublemaker, he's also got his share of supporters. Knauf is searching for a solution that won't bring harm to the rooster — leading to the purchase of the Rooster Booster repellent

(which was effective until the rain washed it away, he said).

"I don't want to go after the rooster, because he's cute, and people like him," Knauf said.

Inquiries to the Audubon Society and Save Our Seabirds were unproductive. Dialogue with a landscaping company and a Venice animal rescue group has been inconclusive. Four months after Knauf first mistook Randy-related damage for shoddy landscaping, he's no closer to a solution.

"If someone's got a brilliant idea and they want the rooster and they've got a home for it, we're listening," Knauf said.

For residents of the 134 homes in the subdivision, one major question remains unanswered:

Where did this rooster come from?

Knauf speculates it could have wandered off a nearby property, but a Randy sympathizer — who takes the time to feed him corn but did not want to be identified — doubts the rooster was ever in a domestic environment.

Although Knauf may not share the affinity for the rooster that Randy's most fervent supporters do, he does admit the bird is cunning. He recounts times when the rooster came out to Knauf returning the mulch to the island area, seemingly mocking him in the process. Attempts to chase him



Photo by David Conway

Randy the rooster comes out to feed near the Legacy Trail in Osprey Tuesday afternoon.

down proved unsuccessful.

"He's not like a falcon or an eagle, but he can fly and go over a fence and land on the other side," Knauf said. "He's fast, and he's smart."

He might toss in some colorful language if asked for more adjectives. But for all the talk about Randy's bad attitude, the rooster's enemy status is largely a put-on. Still, Knauf feels the homeowners association has to address the real problems the rooster is causing.

"I don't have anything really against the rooster," Knauff said. "By rooster standards, he's probably a really good rooster, but we don't need a rooster tearing up our property."

ANIMAL CONTROL

Are you an amateur ornithologist? Looking for an opportunity to prove your poultry-wrangling prowess? If you have any tips or theories for how Park Trace Estates can resolve their rooster rigmorale, send us an email at dconway@youobserver.com. We'll pass it along to the homeowners and share the best suggestions with our readers.

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— Daniel Knauf, Park Trace Estates Homeowners Association president