

The Coastal Star

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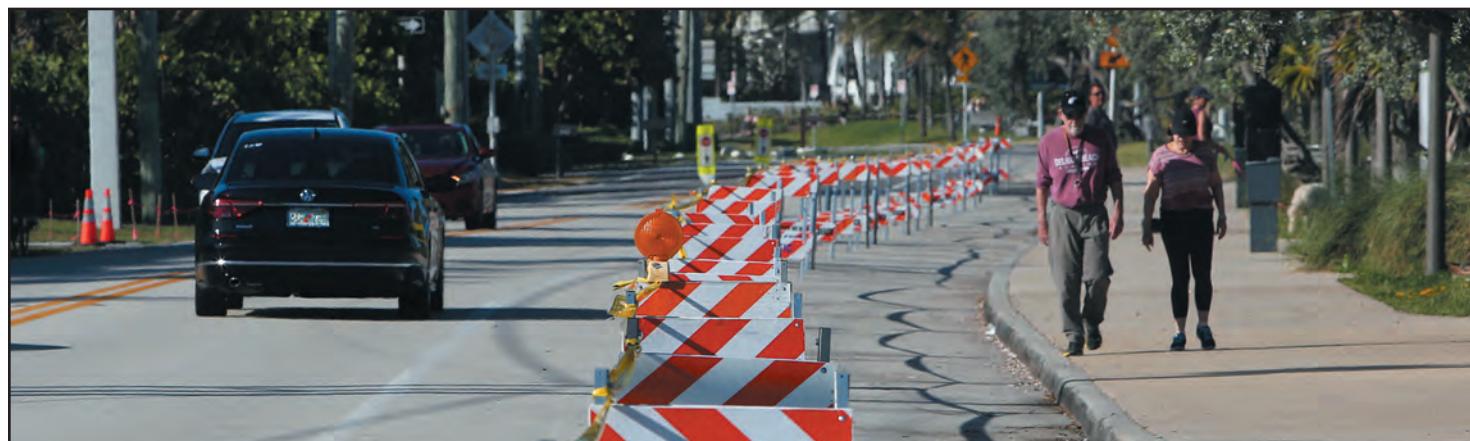
April 2020

Serving Hypoluxo Island, South Palm Beach, Manalapan, Ocean Ridge, Briny Breezes, Gulf Stream and Coastal Delray Beach

Volume 13 Issue 4

Along the Coast

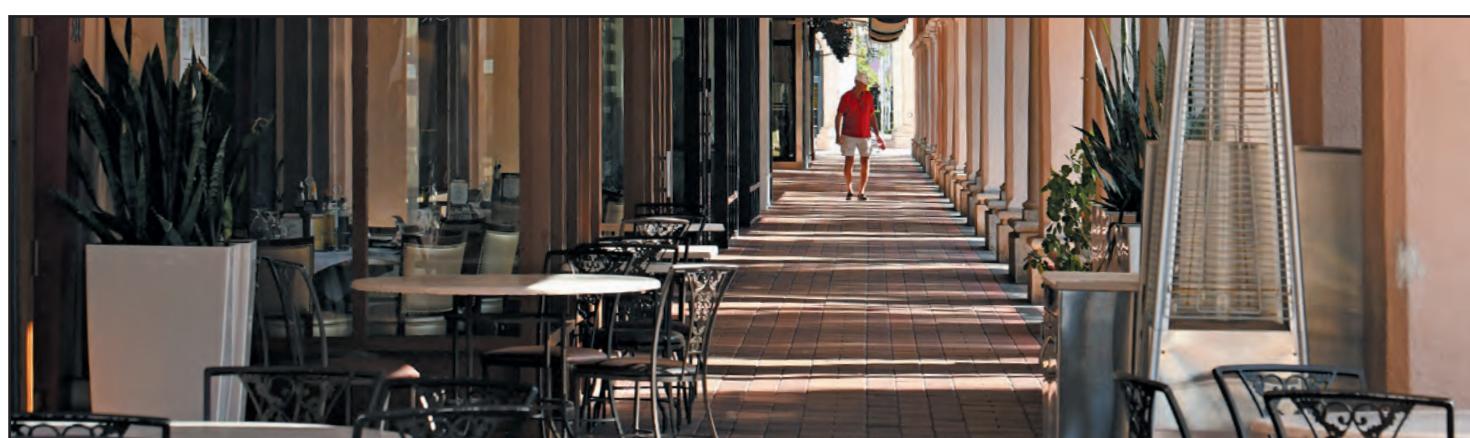
Empty reality of virus fallout hits home



DELRAY BEACH: Barricades block off metered parking on State Road A1A, reinforcing the countywide public beach closure. In March and April the road is usually packed with vehicles and pedestrians. Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star



LANTANA: Joshua Cobb carries a fishing rod while riding his skateboard across the empty parking lot at Sportsman's Park. Boat ramps and marinas were closed to recreational boaters. Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star



BOCA RATON: With the ordered shutdown of gathering areas in restaurants and bars, typically jam-packed locations like Mizner Park are desolate. Some establishments stayed open to fill takeout and delivery orders. Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

Governments get creative on meeting, **Page 23**
Hospitals, senior residences take action, **Page 24**

What to do with homebound kids, **Page AT17**
Changing the ways we worship, **Page AT19**

In two short weeks, businesses go from flush to famished

By Mary Hladky

At the start of this year, Florida's economy was humming and the state's unemployment rate had dropped to an all-time low of 2.8%. Hotels and restaurants reported a strong tourism season.

By mid-March, COVID-19 had turned all that on its head.

As customers retreated to their homes and with anchor stores like Macy's and Nordstrom closing, the Town Center mall in Boca Raton, The Gardens Mall in Palm Beach Gardens and the Mall at Wellington Green shuttered.

Iconic Palm Beach County hotels, including The Breakers in Palm Beach, the Eau Palm Beach in Manalapan and the Boca Raton Resort & Club, temporarily closed as room occupancy rates dropped precipitously.

County restaurants tumbled like dominoes after Gov. Ron DeSantis on March 20 ordered them to close on-premises dining. But many tried to grab hold of the one lifeline he held out, allowing them to offer meal delivery and takeout service.

His order to Palm Beach and Broward counties also closed bars, nightclubs, movie theaters, auditoriums, gyms and beaches and gave county administrators leeway to add to the list.

The impact of these and other closures across the state and nation was felt quickly, with job losses mounting by the day.

Nationally, 3.3 million people filed unemployment claims during the week ending March 21, according to

See ECONOMY on page 22

Delray Beach

Restoration of reclaimed water service pushed back to end of month

By Jane Smith

As the lawns of coastal residents continued to parch, Delray Beach pushed the timeline for restoration of reclaimed water service from early March to the end of April,

according to city plans.

The reclaimed water lines provide partly treated wastewater meant solely for lawn watering. The lines were installed as part of a settlement that Delray Beach reached with state and federal regulators to

stop sending raw sewage into the ocean.

But due to causes the city continues to investigate, the partly treated sewage water cross-contaminated regular drinking water in a small number of houses, which

sickened some residents and left a foul smell emanating from some kitchen faucets.

Delray Beach, focused on efforts to contain the coronavirus, now plans to restore the reclaimed water service citywide in phases,

with the two public and two private golf courses returning to service first. The courses are west of the interstate. Then, the city would restore the barrier island service in six phases,

See DELRAY WATER on page 21

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Because of coronavirus, most events have been canceled. Go online for updates at www.thecoastalstar.com

Editor's Note

Become a Coastal Star, help us support local businesses

We're all in this together. In our lifetimes, this adage has never been more true. How we act as individuals can have life or death consequences for us all.

Wash your hands, don't touch your face, and keep 6 feet away from each other — even while walking the dog, picking up takeout, or standing in line at the grocery store. It could save a life — or many.

Although it's the health concerns of this pandemic that keep us awake at night (we each have family members with serious health conditions), the economic fallout is casting a dark shadow of its own.

Small businesses all over are struggling and many won't survive. The same holds true for arts venues and nonprofits. When marquees go dark, the community grows dim. When organizations that help those in need aren't there to respond, the safety net begins to sag.

At *The Coastal Star* our advertising revenue for this edition dropped by more than 50% — and April should have been one of our most profitable editions, one that would help us make it through the lean times of summer. We expect the next few months will be

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Advertising Director Chris Bellard sales@thecoastalstar.com	Michelle Quigley Clare Shore Scott Simmons Michele Smith Margot Street Tom Warke Amy Woods	The Coastal Star 5114 N Ocean Blvd. Ocean Ridge, FL 33435 561-337-1553
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even more severe.

All local businesses count on the abundance of the season to make it through the off-season. Consider the restaurants, family-run hotels, dry cleaners, salons and personal service providers. We are all searching out the fine print in the recovery act to see if there is a lifeline available to keep us operating. At press time it was too soon to tell.

In the meantime, we're asking our coastal neighbors to assist their favorite local businesses (including this newspaper) by purchasing advertising until the pandemic subsides.

Here is how you can help

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Mary Kate Leming, Executive Editor
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Coastal Stars

Boca couple cherishes people connections in support of arts, kids

By Margie Plunkett

The couple met as teens in Hollywood, Florida, where they worked at the same record store. Today, music is a mainstay in their lives — and Stacey and Dr. Evan Packer routinely attend concerts in a group of friends fondly called the Bocachellas.

"What we love more than anything — and this dates back to the day we met in the music store — is music," Stacey Packer said. Dr. Packer "probably knows more about music than anyone I've ever met. I swear, if he could come back as anyone, he would be in the music industry."

"It's funny. The path he chose is so the opposite of that," she said.

Dr. Packer is a neurosurgeon and managing partner at the Brain and Spine Center in Delray Beach, practicing at both Delray Medical Center and Boca Regional Hospital. The path the couple has taken since those Hollywood days has led to the family they've established in Boca Raton and their active support in the community, primarily aimed at the Boca Raton Museum of Art, Florence Fuller Child Development Centers and Pine Crest School.

After meeting in Hollywood, the Packers maintained a long-distance relationship during college. She got her bachelor's at the University of Maryland, he from Michigan.



Dr. Evan and Stacey Packer stand in front of a painting by Marin Majic inside their Boca Raton home. The Packers served as co-chairs of the 70th Anniversary Gala for the Boca Raton Museum of Art. **Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star**

They both headed to Tampa when he went to the University of South Florida's College of Medicine for his medical degree. Stacey joined Tampa General Hospital's marketing department, and later became vice president of development at its Foundation. Meanwhile, Dr. Packer did his residency through USF at Tampa General and received advanced training in neurosurgical oncology at Moffitt Comprehensive Cancer Center and Research Institute.

In 2005, the couple moved to Boca Raton for family, and Dr. Packer joined the Brain and

Spine Center.

"We slowly got involved in the community," Stacey said. "I got to meet some great people who got me involved at our kids' school at first."

The Packers' children, Julia, 21, and Isabel, 16, both attended Pine Crest School in Boca Raton through eighth grade and then its Fort Lauderdale high school. Julia is now a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin. Dr. Packer, an alumnus of Pine Crest, today serves on its board.

Stacey describes Pine Crest as a community to her. She met her closest friends there. Through Pine Crest, she got to

know the people at Florence Fuller, where she began to volunteer, joined the board and is serving her third and final year as chairwoman. She praised Florence Fuller for its dedication to providing access to education to people who can't afford it.

Through their common interest in art collecting, the Packers, who are both 48, met people at the Boca Raton Museum of Art who ultimately asked whether Dr. Packer was interested in joining the board. "It's just amazing that the folks involved with the museum have made it a priority to support a facility like that," Stacey said. "They teach my husband and I so much. It's stimulating in a very different way."

The Packers co-chaired the museum's 70th Anniversary Gala this year, a record-breaking fundraiser. Dr. Packer "says I'm kind of a connector," Stacey Packer says. "I try to connect the dots between people" and put people together whose interests may be synergistic. She brought that quality and her fundraising background to the gala, asking for two more co-chairs — "to bring in people with different strengths."

"I'm good at raising money, but I have a friend, Carrie Rubin, who knows how to put on an event. I don't have to worry about that," she said. Packer also asked John Tolbert of Boca Raton Resort & Club to host because of the goal to

increase attendance this year.

"John is so community minded," Packer said.

"You have to connect people. Friends give to friends. Friends support friends."

Music and charities aside, Packer spends her leisure time ballroom dancing — an interest spurred by a friend's participation in Boca's Ballroom Battle. She dances four times a week at Fred Astaire Studio and competes throughout the state. Dr. Packer is pursuing a business degree, traveling once a month to Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.

Family is most important of all to the Packers. The couple is close with their daughters and their large, extended family. "We have an awesome one. If the family is OK, then bring everything else on," she said. The family includes two dogs that Dr. Packer calls "chompsters" — Bailey, a rescue Lab mix, and Stella, a King Charles.

Advice to anyone following in their footsteps: "It's really important to have face-to-face honest relationships with people. Most of the great things we experience in this community start with a great friendship," Stacey said. "It's connection that can be so gratifying. That really creates community spirit. That's what a community is — all the relationships that exist." ★

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Letters to the Editor

Former vice mayor unhappy with resident's comments

Swing vote, or deciding vote, but the correct vote.

At the March 2 Ocean Ridge commission meeting (my last meeting as vice mayor), I was personally admonished by a resident for my vote on regulating synthetic grass. I was told that my vote in favor of this ordinance on second reading would be a disservice to the residents that I was elected to support.

The unfavorable comments went further, suggesting that by moving from Ocean Ridge, I no longer cared that a group of residents wanted me to vote against Ordinance 2019-15.

To say that I was taken aback would be a gross understatement.

It was definitely not the way I wanted my last meeting as vice mayor to end.

I was elected to the Town Commission in 2017 by a 35% voter margin. Those who knew me understood that I would always work hard to preserve the unique ambiance of our community.

My mandate was clear, based on Ocean Ridge's comprehensive plan, which reads: "Ocean Ridge is a beach-oriented town characterized primarily by single family homes with lush, well-maintained landscaping."

To my mind, "lush, well-maintained landscaping" did not include synthetic grass.

LETTERS: The Coastal Star welcomes letters to the editor about issues of interest in the community. These are subject to editing and must include your name, address and phone number. Preferred length is 200-500 words. Send email to editor@thecoastalstar.com.

My involvement during the past three years as a steering committee member of the Southeast PBC Coastal Resilience Partnership and a member of the PBC Water Resources Task Force have provided me with a useful education concerning South Florida's water resources. I understand completely the need to reduce water unnecessarily used on residential property. Synthetic grass is a viable option in that regard.

The pros and cons of synthetic grass were well researched and presented at commission meetings. But, without the passage of Ordinance 2019-15, the positive effect and use of synthetic grass will be lost in a maze of personal choice.

To say that my vote was prejudiced based on my moving from Ocean Ridge was a totally unfair tactic. After the comments by the resident — and knowing that I was still planning to vote in favor of Ordinance 2019-15 — the town attorney was asked if I should be recused from voting based on my term ending and my moving from Ocean Ridge. Another ridiculous tactic.

Ocean Ridge is "my hometown." I voted to keep its "lush, well-maintained landscaping." I voted understanding the months of work put forth by the Planning and Zoning board drafting the ordinance. I voted understanding that, first and foremost, an ordinance must require a permit to install synthetic grass in order to protect the aesthetics of Ocean Ridge as defined in our comprehensive plan. I voted understanding that a "home rule" ordinance now could protect us from state laws in the future.

Time will tell as to the forethought of P&Z's drafting Ordinance 2019-15 and the wisdom of three commissioners who approved it by a swing vote, or deciding vote, but the correct vote.

Don MaGruder
Former vice mayor
Ocean Ridge

Respect and obey public safety workers

Our little town is in uncharted waters.

There is confusion as we try to limit exposure to the coronavirus. I get numerous phone calls each day — some from citizens upset that we have not closed the bridges, others upset that they cannot go to the beaches.

Some asking that the Old Ocean Boulevard promenade be closed due to heavy pedestrian traffic.

Despite the differences of opinions, there is one constant as each day passes: the Ocean Ridge Police Department. The officers are doing the best they can to achieve one common goal — keeping us from catching the virus.

Sometimes a citizen refuses to listen to their guidance. In each of these cases the officers are working as politely as possible with residents to achieve one goal — to keep people safe.

So please do not confront or argue with law enforcement officials who are putting themselves at risk by interacting with more people each hour than you interact with all day. Remember, they too have families and friends, and are at greater risk of contracting the same virus you are trying to avoid.

Town Manager Tracey Stevens, Police Chief Hal Hutchins and town staff are in daily briefings with the county and the state.

They are implementing any new directives to the best of their abilities and using common-sense discretion whenever possible.

They are doing an incredible job under these stressful circumstances and should be thanked by each of us.

Stay safe and healthy.

— Steve Coz
Mayor of Ocean Ridge

Garden Club tropical nights was an event to remember

On behalf of the membership of the Ocean Ridge Garden Club, we want to send a heartfelt thank you to the community for its collective support of our "Tropical Nights Gala" on Feb. 29.

We count on the gala to provide the revenue we need for the philanthropic and community service activities in which we engage as a club. This year's gala raised the most money ever and set a new bar for future fundraising events.

The support we received from the community was a key part of the success. The town of Ocean Ridge graciously provided the venue, and the tropical plants and flower arrangements provided by Johnny Mango's transformed the Ocean Ridge Town Hall into a beautiful tropical garden setting.

The family of Walter B. Smith provided a generous donation at the Diamond Level, and Wells Fargo Advisors, Chris Wayne & Associates Inc., Douglas Elliman Real Estate and Arbonne Independent Consultant Carrie Patterson Besler provided generous sponsorships at the Silver Level. Our thanks go to each of these partners and sponsors!

Additionally, there were numerous community members and local retailers who contributed gift cards/ certificates and merchandise that were combined into beautiful gift baskets and raffled at the gala. The ORGC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and is Ocean Ridge's sole community service organization, with

a mission to further the education of members and the public in the fields of gardening, horticulture, floral design, garden-related art, civic outreach, environmental awareness, conservation of natural resources and civic beautification.

With this in mind, the club's Patrice Mahon Scholarship fund is the primary way revenues from the gala will be spent. In 2020, as in the recent past, we will award scholarships to three students who are studying horticulture at Palm Beach State College.

ORGC also uses funds raised from the gala to benefit the community with natural plantings at the entry points to Ocean Ridge, promoting conservation and replanting of the dunes, installing native orchids in the Ocean Ridge Hammock Park, making Valentine's Day flower arrangements for shut-ins served by the Community Care Center, and taking a leading role in the festivities for the holiday "Light the Lights" event at the Ocean Ridge Town Hall in December and other seasonal community events.

Finally, we thank all those who purchased tickets and hope everyone in the community enjoyed the evening as much as ORGC members did.

Jackie Reed
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Gulf Stream

Duck's demise prompts plea from second-graders

By Steve Plunkett

A duck that sadly became roadkill near the Gulf Stream School may become the impetus for new warning signs for motorists in town.

Second-graders Emma Imperatore and Valentina Autiero implored town commissioners to consider creating the signs in what Mayor Scott Morgan proclaimed was an "excellent presentation" on March 13.

"Good morning, everyone," Valentina began while standing before commissioners. "A few weeks ago outside of our school on Gulfstream Road near the Little Club golf course, I saw a duck that had been run over and killed.

"We don't want that to happen again because the black Muscovy ducks ... cross the street many times a day," she continued, flanking with Emma a poster board the two girls had handcrafted. "We would like to have two street signs installed that tell people: 'Slow down, ducks cross here.' Thank you."

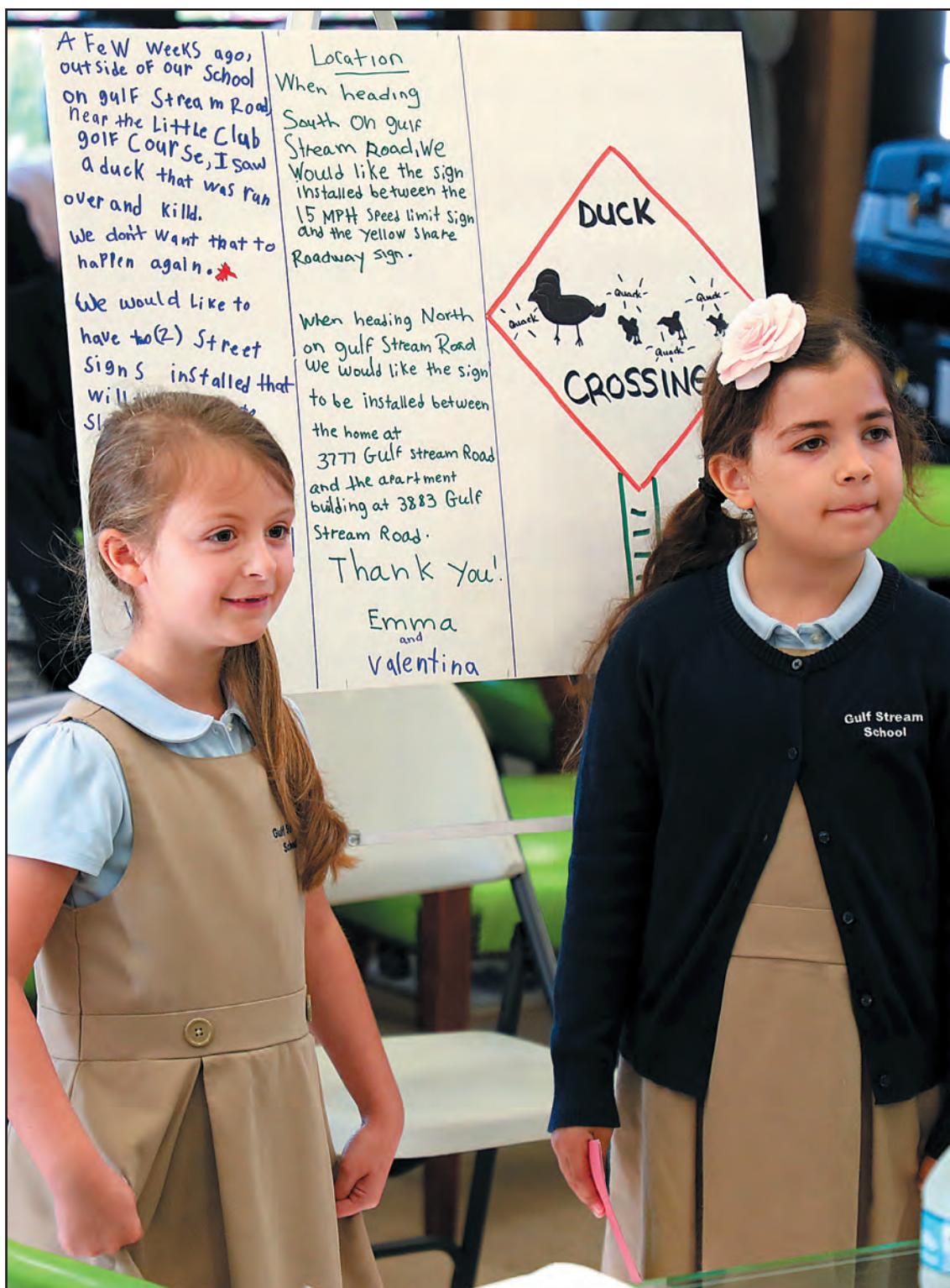
With their teachers and classmates watching, Emma then gave the girls' recommendation on where the signs should be located, one for southbound traffic and one for northbound.

Morgan praised the second-graders for undertaking "a very important civic experience."

"That is, you've seen a problem in our town, you want to address it and so you've come before the municipal body that has some authority to help grant what you're seeking," he said.

Because their proposal would affect both the Gulf Stream School and the Little Club, Morgan told the girls to contact the school's headmaster and the club's president and get their consent to installing the signs, then return to the commission on April 9.

"You were very persuasive," Commissioner Donna White added.



Second-graders Emma Imperatore and Valentina Autiero presented their request for duck crossing signs to the Town Commission after a duck was killed near Gulf Stream School. "We don't want that to happen again," Valentina said. **Rachel S. O'Hara/The Coastal Star**

Vice Mayor Tom Stanley wanted more information about Valentina and Emma's suggested sign, which featured a mama duck leading her three ducklings.

"Can you read the little words on the sign? I mean 'Duck Crossing' is good — we all know what that is. But there's also some extra words

on there for emphasis. Can you tell us what those are — for the record?" he asked.

"Quack, quack, quack, quack," Emma and Valentina replied to the delight of the commission chambers.

In other business:

- The Little Club withdrew its controversial application to build four pickleball courts.

Neighbors at the Hillside House and St. Andrews Club, some of whom lived just 50 feet away, had protested that the fast-growing but noisy sport would detract from their quality of life.

- Town Manager Greg Dunham said he was not permitting members of the public to enter the business

side of Town Hall because of the coronavirus. He and other town employees meet people who need services in the lobby, he said.

• Dunham showed commissioners a map of a proposed street running from the entrance of Place Au Soleil to the Intracoastal along the north side of the subdivision. The street would have 14 lots, with the four nearest the waterway being larger than the 10 others.

The Gulf Stream Golf Club and the Florida Inland Navigation District own the land. Dunham said he has hired a land-use expert to evaluate the proposal.

• Commissioners denied a request for a variance from Daniel Stanton that would have let him add a second floor to his Place Au Soleil house 14 feet from the property line instead of 15 feet. Stanton had proposed buying a longtime eyesore next door, demolishing part of it and combining both it and his existing house to make what would have been the largest residence in Place Au Soleil.

Commissioners said the size and mass of the proposed structure were not in keeping with the neighborhood. His purchase of the decrepit house hinged on his getting approval of the remodeling plans.

Real estate broker Zac Mazur, representing the heirs of deceased homeowner Richard Lavoie, said if commissioners would rescind a demand to demolish the property at 2775 Avenue Au Soleil, he could sell it within 90 days to someone who would renovate it.

Over 10 years Lavoie ran up \$1.9 million in code enforcement violations at the property, primarily for having a dead lawn and no fence around his swimming pool. Commissioners last October agreed to reduce the lien to \$125,000 after Stanton proposed joining the lots. ★



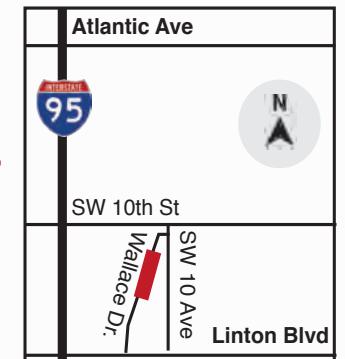
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Boca Raton

Municipal services worker saves woman in canal

By Mary Hladky

recognition."

Turner could not be reached for comment after the ceremony. But he described the experience to CNN and WPBF 25 News.

"Scary," Turner told WPBF. "The water is coming in all around you, and it's brown water, and I'm in a black interior car. Scariest moments of my life."

As the car started sinking, Turner's two sons let him know his life was in danger even as one of them shot video.

"Hurry up! Dad! Dad! Get out! Dad! Jump out," they yelled.

Pedrone regained consciousness as Palm Beach County Fire Rescue arrived. She was briefly hospitalized.

She told CNN she has been epileptic for 13 years, but her last seizure was two years ago. She does not remember the incident or her rescue.

"Shawn is the hero," she told CNN. "I'm so very thankful he did what he did. We should all be more like that, ready to jump into action."

Turner says he isn't a hero. "I didn't do it for the appreciation. I didn't do it for stardom or fame," he told WPBF. "I just did it because I saw a bad situation and I knew somebody was in need of help." ★

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Ocean Ridge

Developer claims ownership of Ocean Ridge canal

By Dan Moffett

Developer William Swaim has opened a new front in his quest to conquer the submerged lands of Ocean Ridge.

After battling in court for six years with the town and Wellington Arms condo owners over property rights in the lagoon behind Town Hall, Swaim is focusing on the Sabal Island neighborhoods farther north now.

In January, some two dozen homeowners on North Ocean Boulevard, Sabal Island Drive and River Drive received letters from Swaim's attorney, Michael Nullman of Palm Beach Gardens, informing them that their docks, boat lifts and boardwalks were "intruding" on canal property owned by McCormick Mile Investments and an affiliate, Coastal Energy Resources.

Swaim is listed as the corporate manager of MMI and Coastal Energy, according to records from the Florida Secretary of State. Both entities were formed late last year.

"At present, your Docking Facilities intrude upon MMI's Canal," the letters said. "Moreover, every time any of you, your guests, your invitees, your licensees, your successors

or your assigns traverse the Canal en route and into the Intracoastal Waterway, each such occasion constitutes a trespass through MMI's property."

Nullman offered residents a deal, however. For a "non-negotiable" payment of \$150,000 from each homeowner, MMI, Coastal Energy and Swaim would be willing to grant an easement for travel across the canal "in perpetuity."

"We hope and trust that this matter can be resolved amicably," the letters said.

The unexpected demand left residents incredulous.

"I think it's a scam," said Gilbert Panzer, who has owned his home on North Ocean Boulevard for 37 years. "It's ridiculous. They can't claim to control navigation on that waterway."

"They're claiming to own the entire canal," said one homeowner who asked to be unnamed. "It's absurd."

At roughly the same time in January, town officials also received a letter from MMI, Coastal Energy and Swaim. It told them to cease and desist issuing permits for dock construction along the canal. The letter essentially put a freeze on waterfront permitting in the

neighborhood — and real estate sales — as another round of legal conflict opened between the town and Swaim's associates.

"We are still reviewing the matter," Town Manager Tracey Stevens said of the impasse.

For Wellington Arms condo owners, the Sabal Island news is all too familiar. Six years ago, Swaim claimed ownership of submerged lots and demanded the condo residents remove their docks from the lagoon behind their buildings.

Earlier this year, Swaim and the condo group agreed to settle their dispute after dozens

of court skirmishes and six-figure legal bills. The parties declined to disclose terms of the settlement.

Nullman said residents in the Sabal Island neighborhood have had little to say about Swaim's offer to sell them easement rights.

"We have received surprisingly little communication back from the

property owners in response to MMI's correspondence," Nullman said, "and zero substantive attacks on the merits of MMI's position, because MMI's position is legally sound. Nevertheless, MMI remains optimistic that this matter can be quickly and amicably resolved between all parties involved." ★

The next edition of *The Coastal Star* will be delivered the weekend of May 1

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The city of Boca Raton is raising concerns about the safety of the proposed 'diverging diamond interchange' at Glades Road and Interstate 95. Rendering provided

Traffic

Design for Glades interchange alarms Boca Raton staff, council

By Steve Plunkett

City officials want to put the brakes on the plan to build a "diverging diamond interchange" at Glades Road and Interstate 95 until the state assures them the design is safer and better than other approaches.

"Our concern obviously is safety No. 1, but also if they're going to do a project that is going to be in place for 30 years, we want it to be successful and beneficiary, as [opposed] to detrimental and doesn't work and causes a bigger problem long term," City Manager Leif Ahnell said.

The Florida Department of Transportation's original concept, presented to the city in March 2016, included a "flyover" ramp that would divert westbound traffic on Glades headed for the interstate away from the intersection with Airport Road.

That intersection has one of the highest traffic volumes in the city and one of the highest crash incidences, Zach Bihr, the city's municipal services director, said at the March 9 City Council workshop.

With a flyover, "This traffic is separated from the rest

of the vehicles traveling on Glades and removed from the intersection of Glades and Airport Road," Bihr said.

Prince Contracting, the design-build firm spearheading the DDI design, was supposed to present its plan for final approval to the FDOT's central office and the Federal Highway Administration on April 23 provided the coronavirus battle did not affect the schedule.

Bihr said he wanted to know that the DDI design is as safe as the flyover concept with the grade separation for the interchange. He also questioned the benefits touted by FDOT of the diamond design's reducing left-hand turns and the number of traffic signal phases.

"The interchange in its existing configuration does not have left-turn movements in any direction onto the interchange," Bihr said.

He also said a Federal Highway Administration report recommended no less than a 45-degree angle between opposing approach lanes but said the DDI plan uses approaches of 15, 17, 19 and 25 degrees.

"Staff is concerned that too flat an approach angle may

lead to inadvertent maneuvers down the wrong way of an interchange," Bihr said.

City traffic engineer Maria Tejera added that she does not understand how the diamond interchange's level of service will be better than that of the original concept where the flyover took traffic out of the intersection.

She said the FDOT should provide traffic simulations for each peak period for the entire project corridor so she could see how Boca Raton would coordinate red lights.

Deputy Mayor Jeremy Rodgers wanted to skip to the bottom line.

"Where does that leave us?" he asked. "Can we put the stop on this? Where do we go from here?"

Mayor Scott Singer said Boca Raton should ask its state and federal lobbyists to help. Council member Andy Thomson agreed.

"I was under the impression, this is just the way it's going to be. Yes, we're going to come tell you, city of Boca Raton, and we hear you, but put your comment in the comment box," Thomson said. "If that means calling in the government relations folks, we absolutely have to do that."

In a diverging diamond interchange, drivers switch sides of the road at multi-lane X crossings guarded by traffic signals at either end of the diamond. The synchronized signals "facilitate the smooth flow of traffic, reducing delay times and minimizing conflict points," the FDOT said. A DDI would decrease travel time, improve safety and mobility at the interchange and handle expected traffic increases through 2040, the agency said.

Its diamond interchange in Sarasota, the first in Florida and the largest in the nation, won the American Council of Engineering Companies' National Recognition Award in April 2018.

The Glades Road interchange, part of a \$148 million project to add express lanes to Interstate 95 through Boca Raton and into Delray Beach, is scheduled to open in late 2023. ★

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Delray Beach

Newcomer ousts one incumbent as another retains commission seat

By Jane Smith

Newcomer Juli Casale edged incumbent Bill Bathurst in the Delray Beach City Commission elections for Seat 2.

Casale, who ran a grass-roots campaign that raised \$34,963, won by 106 votes on March 17.

In comparison, Bathurst raised \$95,140 in mostly \$1,000 donations from developers, hoteliers, attorneys and restaurant owners doing business with Delray Beach.

In early March, Bathurst received two large donations from the Republican Party of Palm Beach County. The party donated \$4,500 on March 2 and \$1,500 on March 11.

Bathurst, a residential Realtor, could not be reached for comment, despite multiple voicemail messages left for him.

On March 26, he sent out an email blast: "I would like to congratulate Juli on her election and wish her the best of luck in serving on the Commission. I would also like to thank Jennifer Jones and Debra Tendrich for stepping up to run for public office. I hope you both continue to be involved in serving our community."

"I feel great. I'm thrilled," said Casale, a community activist. She says she worked hard to win by knocking on more than 5,000 doors.

"My Sable Lakes neighbors watched me work hard for two years," she said.

Concerned about overall density in her section of Delray Beach, Casale led an effort to block a developer's plan to build a 102-unit complex near her single-family community. The builder later agreed to construct 40 single-family homes.

Delray Beach does not hold runoff elections.

That allowed Casale to win with 36.03% or 4,006 votes, Bathurst received 35.07% or 3,900 votes, businesswoman Jones tallied 20.11% or 2,236 votes and nonprofit owner Tendrich received 8.79% or 978 votes. In that race, 11,120 votes were cast.

Commissioner Shirley Johnson easily retained her Seat 4 with a margin of nearly 7.7 percentage points or 834 votes over challenger Chris Davey.

"So many factors helped me win," said Johnson, a retired businesswoman. "They believed in the service I gave for the past three years."

She also credited her outreach to the Haitian community in Delray Beach. "They really want to be part of the city," Johnson said.

Johnson raised \$63,199. Davey raised \$25,775, mostly from self-loans, and public

schoolteacher Angela Burns raised \$9,635.

"Shirley ran a good campaign," said Davey, a residential real estate consultant. "The anti-incumbent vote was split between two candidates."

Johnson received 39.29% or 4,260 votes, Davey tallied 31.6% or 3,428 votes and Burns received 29.1% or 3,157 votes.

Also on the ballot was a city charter change that would allow the commission to receive salary increases without having to wait six months before an election. It failed by a nearly 2-1 margin, with 7,127 voting no and 3,729 supporting the measure.

Before election day, several polling locations were changed to protect people living in nursing or assisted-living facilities from the voters entering and possibly carrying

the coronavirus. Older adults and people with existing medical conditions are the most vulnerable to the virus.

On election day, poll workers did not arrive in at least six Delray polling places. Most were older adults who likely feared contracting the coronavirus.

Voters were turned away, told they could vote a provisional ballot at another precinct or waited more than two hours to cast a mail-in ballot at the supervisor's South County office in Delray Beach.

On March 31 at the commission's annual reorganization meeting, Ryan Boylston was chosen as vice mayor and Johnson as deputy vice mayor. Commissioners canceled their April 7 meeting.★

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South Palm Beach

Voters add McMillan to council, OK 3 of 5 charter changes

By Dan Moffett

Ray McMillan eked out a 17-vote victory over Elvadianne Culbertson in the March 17 municipal election to claim a seat on the South Palm Beach Town Council.

McMillan, a New Yorker who has been a part-time resident of the town for 32 years, was buoyed by the endorsement of two council members, Bill



McMillan

LeRoy and Mark Weissman.

However, a week before the election, Weissman rescinded his endorsement, citing differences with McMillan over the fate of Town Hall.

What to do about the aging building became a central issue

in the campaign. The council is considering how to renovate or rebuild the structure, and many residents told candidates they worried about the expense.

Palm Beach County Sheriff Ric Bradshaw has told officials he would be willing to partner with the town on the project, with the idea of improving the working facility for his deputies.

Some voters told the candidates about concerns the sheriff's help might lead the council to spend too much money on the project. McMillan was endorsed by the Palm Beach County Police Benevolent Association, the police union, and Culbertson was not.

Both McMillan and Culbertson said they favored a limited Town Hall renovation — not a full reconstruction or expensive overhaul. Weissman has said he would consider a

more extensive project.

"I'm for making repairs, not rebuilding," McMillan said, and called his election win "fantastic."

"Our priority now would be getting the Town Hall updated," he said.

Both McMillan and Culbertson had lost previous attempts to join the council. McMillan ran unsuccessfully in 2017, and Culbertson lost a reelection bid in 2019 after being appointed to an open seat three years ago.

The other winner last month was Vice Mayor Robert Gottlieb, a homeowner in South Palm since the early 1970s, who coasted to reelection with 44% of the vote (297 votes) in the three-way race for two seats.

McMillan got 29.3% (198) and Culbertson 26.8% (181).

Gottlieb will be serving his seventh term after first joining the council in 2005. The election brings to an end a 10-year run in office for Stella Gaddy Jordan, who late last year decided not to

seek another term.

South Palm voters also overwhelmingly approved three of five proposed amendments to the town charter.

The most significant change was the approval of an amendment that increases the terms of council members and the mayor from two years to four. McMillan and Gottlieb now will serve until 2024, and the other three council members will come up for reelection in 2022.

Voters also approved giving the mayor power to declare emergencies during natural disasters or other crises and a provision that updates and revises language throughout the charter.

Voters overwhelmingly rejected a proposal that would give council members the power to increase their pay while in office, and a measure that would have reduced the signature requirements needed for ballot initiatives from 15% of registered voters to 10%. ★

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Stalking charge against ex-cop leads to lawsuit against town

By Dan Moffett

The town of South Palm Beach is facing a lawsuit stemming from the forced resignation of a police officer in August.

Alicia and Michael Baum have filed a suit in Palm Beach County Circuit Court naming the town and former Officer Jose M. Fernandez as defendants and claiming damages in excess of \$30,000 because of what the suit calls his harassment activities last summer.

The town declined to comment on the suit.

Palm Beach County Sheriff's investigators booked Fernandez at the county jail on Aug. 28 and charged him with two misdemeanors — stalking Alicia Baum and unlawfully installing a GPS tracking device on her car.

Fernandez resigned from the department two days later. In October, the Sheriff's Office took over the department and policing in the town.

Michael Baum told PBSO investigators in July that Fernandez, 51, had carried on

a yearlong affair with his wife that she wanted to end. Baum said he found a GPS device attached to the bottom of his Toyota SUV, and investigators then traced the tracker's registration to Fernandez.

Alicia Baum told deputies she was "constantly looking over her shoulder" because Fernandez was following her and, despite her requests, refused to end their relationship. She accused Fernandez of following her while she jogged on Ocean Boulevard and while she shopped outside the town.

Alicia Baum said she did not fear physical harm from Fernandez but felt harassed.

Fernandez admitted to investigators, according to the PBSO report, that he bought the device and placed it on the car a few days before Michael Baum discovered it on July 30. But Fernandez said he did so because he feared retribution from Baum.

The former officer denied he was stalking the woman. He posted a \$500 bond and left the jail shortly after his booking. No trial date has been set.

The Baums' suit, filed by Palm Beach Gardens attorney Stuart Kaplan, accuses Fernandez of a "pervasive pattern of constant harassment" and violation of their constitutional rights. The suit accuses the town of negligence and "failing to supervise" Fernandez. The complaint also alleges the town's police had pressured the Baums to sign a nonprosecution agreement. ★

Along the Coast



OCEAN RIDGE: ABOVE: Bulldozers work in the surf at the north end of Palm Beach County's Hammock Park as sand is pumped from the dredge through the floating pipe and then to shore, where a sand and water slurry is spread to widen the beach.

RIGHT: Three days later from the same location, the beach sand is much wider.

Photos by Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star and Kimberlee Duke Pompeo



Federal dollars replacing sand taken by 2017 hurricane

Restoration projects wrapping up along beaches with public access

By Jane Smith

Sand lost to Hurricane Irma was restored by mid-March to the coast in southern Delray Beach and along Boynton Beach's public beach and into Ocean Ridge. Renourishment efforts continued in Boca Raton.

The Army Corps of Engineers, which is managing the \$26.5 million project, split the work in two with Delray Beach, Ocean Ridge and Boynton Beach grouped together and Boca Raton by itself.

The Delray Beach segment, about 1.8 miles from Casuarina Road south to the city line with Highland Beach, wrapped up March 13, Army Corps of Engineers spokesman David Ruderman said in an email.

The dredge then moved up to Boynton Beach/Ocean Ridge over the March 14 weekend, Ruderman said.

In Boynton Beach, heavy equipment was stationed at the city's Oceanfront Park. The beachfront park, about 1,000 feet long, received sand, as did the beach about 3,000 feet north of the park and about 2,000 feet south of it. Both parcels sit in the town of Ocean Ridge.

That part of the work was finished March 27, according to Tom Mahady, ocean rescue chief for Boynton Beach.

"They're removing their gear, which is estimated to be done by April 1," Mahady said in an email.

In northern Boca Raton,

from just north of Spanish River Boulevard south to Red Reef Park, 1.45 miles of beach restoration is underway.

That work, which started in early March, involves placing 770,000 cubic yards of sand on the beach. "They are about 35% complete," Ruderman said March 25.

The contract award was for \$12.8 million.

"They are aiming to be done by April 30," Ruderman wrote. "They should be off the beach in time for the major part of the sea turtle nesting window."

Sea turtle nesting season started March 1.

The sand renourishment was paid for using federal tax dollars authorized by Congress in June under the Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies Act.

The approximate cost for restoring the beaches in Delray Beach, Boynton Beach and Ocean Ridge is \$13.7 million. The beaches received nearly 800,000 cubic yards of sand, equal to the amount needed to fill about 250 Olympic-size swimming pools.

Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Co. of Illinois dredged the sand offshore for the three beaches. Weeks Marine Inc. of New Jersey is handling the Boca Raton work.

Tracy Logue, coastal geologist with the Palm Beach County Environmental Resources Management department, said extra steps were needed once the sea turtle nesting season started March 1:

- Hourly nesting surveys within the construction area.
- Relocation of any nests that could be affected by construction to a designated site outside of the project limits.
- Limited construction lighting for nighttime operations to avoid excessive illumination of the water's surface while meeting federal standards for construction lighting at night. ★



BOCA RATON: A Weeks Marine crew positions a dredge pipe on Boca Raton's northern beach. Work there should wrap up by the end of April. Photo provided by City of Boca Raton



DELRAY BEACH: Cliffs up to 3 feet tall are common along the edge of renourishment projects as ocean waves work to level the newly pumped sand. This is usually a prime spot to gather shells. Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

Lantana

Library to be renovated — or perhaps rebuilt in new location

By Mary Thurwachter

One way or another, substantial changes are coming for the Lantana

Public Library. The town has earmarked \$400,000 for upgrades to the building, and architectural plans for those renovations are to be viewed

by the Town Council on April 13.

But at the March 9 town meeting, a few other proposals were pitched by a developer hoping to build a hotel on or beside the town-owned library at 205 W. Ocean Ave.

Tony Mauro and his son Michael Mauro, who own the land behind the library (where the old bowling alley once stood) as well as the post office building next to the library, said they wanted to include the town in the vision for their development.

"Michael and I feel we have

enough land with the bowling alley property to do something nice, but in all the design we've been playing with for over a year, it's become pretty clear to us that to do something that will withstand the test of time, and make everyone very proud, it would be nice to be able to bring the library into the project," Tony Mauro said.

"Our No. 1 choice would be to design and develop a hotel," he said. "The design would be very different if it were just on our portion of land right now, and if the library were included it would change the design totally."

One of the options the Mauros proposed was for them to purchase the library for a sum to be determined by multiple appraisers. Another option would involve exchanging the library for another parcel in the town and funding the construction of a new building.

A third proposal would be to build a new library at 500 Greynolds Circle to create a more centralized town municipal center, which would allow all of the funds to be utilized for the structure itself.

Council members quickly declined to consider a fourth option, which would be to provide a dedicated and

permanent location for the library within a new overall project designed by the developers.

"Our library needs to be not in control of anyone else's facility," Mayor Dave Stewart said.

But some of the other proposals would be worth looking at, council members agreed. The Mauros will return with more fleshed-out ideas at the May 11 meeting.

In the meantime, the town will have an opportunity to see plans two Miami architects have put together for the Library Foundation.

Robert Barfknecht, president of the Lantana Library Foundation, asked the council to delay any decision on the Mauro proposals until he had a chance to show them the architectural plans the foundation had sponsored.

"We're delighted to know that the town has budgeted a significant amount of money to upgrade the library to conform to ADA laws, etc., and we have offered to support architectural drawings and a new concept for this upgrade," Barfknecht said. "We have dedicated \$10,000 of our funds from the foundation to create architectural drawings and plans which will include cost estimates for upgrading the library. We'll be ready to present these to the council in April and I think you'll be delighted to see what's coming along."

"The architects we have working on this are coming up with some very interesting ideas to make it a beautiful building which will include community spaces," Barfknecht said. "I think you'll be very pleased and proud that the building can be something really special. It already is special, but it can be much more special."

"The way I see this, these are just ideas," Stewart said. "We are getting ready to spend considerable money on the library and before we spend considerable money on the library, I think the question is would the council like to see a new building somewhere else, or would they like to see it as part of whatever project is going to be on the property? And there are all kinds of stipulations."

For one thing, if the town would choose to sell the library, that would need to be voted on by residents, according to the town charter.

Lantana's Public Library was founded in 1947 in the former bridge-tender's house on Ocean Avenue. The town bought the current library building, which is 50 years old, in the early 1990s after the Carteret Savings & Loan failed. It is operated by one full-time employee and a small army of volunteers. ★

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Lantana

Political novices unseat incumbents in Lantana

By Mary Thurwachter

A couple of political newcomers looking to turn the tide in Lantana will have a chance to do so after handily beating two Town Council incumbents in the March 17 election.

Karen Lythgoe, the top vote-getter with 690 votes, defeated incumbent Phil Aridas, who received 487 votes for the Group 4 seat he has held since 2011.

The other newcomer, Mark Zeitler, outpolled incumbent Edward Shropshire, who has just completed his first three-year term. Zeitler received 637 votes to Shropshire's 567 for the Group 3 seat. Three years ago, Shropshire defeated five-term incumbent Tom Deringer by a two-vote margin.

"It's apparent that the residents of Lantana looked at the issues and looked at the candidates and felt maybe it was time for a change," said Mayor Dave Stewart. "I will reach out and work with those who have been newly elected and, hopefully, as a council we can do the things that the residents feel are important."

Lythgoe, 60, said her sizable win took her by surprise.

"Everybody told me you're never going to win the first time out, we wish you well, don't take it personally, we're not going to give you money because we don't know that you can be elected," she said. "When I began to see the initial returns, I was shocked. And as it kept going I was like, wow, I'm by myself, I'm self-quarantining and I've got nobody to tell."

Before long, she was flooded with calls and congratulatory text messages.

Having garnered the most votes of any of the four candidates also amazed her.

"I sent out no fliers, no door hangers and my signs were tiny," Lythgoe said.



Zeitler, 63, an air-conditioning contractor, spent election night watching TV and pacing outside his home.

"It kept saying 80%, I was waiting on the whole thing to come about," he said. He awakened early the next morning to see congratulatory texts from friends and fans. By 5:30 a.m., he was out collecting campaign signs before going to work.

"I didn't know how it was going to go and he did have a pretty good team and I thought because of that it would make things a little harder," Zeitler said of Shropshire.

Both Lythgoe and Zeitler say their first order of business will be to listen and learn what they need to know about serving on the Town Council.

"I need to understand how the sausage is made, I have

questions, I have things I'm wondering about," said Lythgoe, an IT specialist who works in risk solutions for LexisNexis. One of the things she plans to investigate is how well the town is covered as far as computer vulnerabilities. "We need to protect our data."

Zeitler said he needs to begin finding out "what's what



ABOVE: Mark Zeitler is sworn into office. **LEFT:** New Commissioner Karen Lythgoe brought her granddaughter Sadie Smith to the ceremony. Photos by Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

and what needs to be taken care of and what things are put on the table. I want to take a look at code enforcement, the aggressiveness of it."

One of the reasons he ran, Zeitler said, was that he felt the town and Shropshire had become too gung ho about code enforcement. The two men live across the street from each other in the Lantana Heights neighborhood.

At the swearing-in ceremony on March 23, Lythgoe brought along Sadie Smith, her granddaughter. Sadie celebrated her seventh birthday the day after the election and was so happy and excited for her Nana. "One of the reasons I ran was to show her you can do anything you want to do," Lythgoe said.

Another birthday was not as joyful.

Aridas, a county park ranger, turned 66 on election day but didn't quite get the present he hoped for — another three-year term. He took the news well and appreciated all the kind words he received from residents who called him to say they were sorry he lost.

"I had nine years in there, and it was a great experience," Aridas said. "I thought the voter turnout was kind of lousy, but you just never know about an election. I hope everything goes very well. There's some very important things coming up in the town and I hope they're handled right."

Shropshire, who did not return calls as of press time, encountered a rocky road in his quest for second term.

In January, he was told by town staff that he had not qualified for the election, that his name would not appear on the ballot and that Zeitler won by default. Shropshire, 67, had not turned in the petitions from registered voters necessary to qualify, although the County Supervisor of Elections Office certified he had them and he was cleared by the former town clerk as having checked all the necessary boxes to qualify.

After Shropshire challenged the decision in court, a circuit judge ruled that he could remain on the ballot. ★

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Lantana

Town commits to contract for Fourth of July fireworks display

By Mary Thurwachter

Despite the uncertainty connected to the coronavirus, Town Manager Deborah Manzo didn't have to wait long for an answer when she asked whether or not to commit to a fireworks contract for the Fourth of July.

The \$30,000 contract with Zambelli Fireworks would need to be signed soon to reserve the date, Manzo said. But if the town decided at some point to cancel, Lantana would lose between \$6,500 to \$17,000, depending on how close to the show date the cancellation was made.

The council voted March 23 to go ahead, regardless of the possibility of cancellation due to COVID-19.

Even if a large gathering in Bicentennial Park were prohibited at the time, the fireworks could still go off from a barge on the Intracoastal Waterway so residents would have something special to watch that evening, council members agreed.

Memories of the last time Lantana didn't have fireworks on the Fourth of July, in 2011, still haunt Mayor Dave Stewart and Vice Mayor Lynn Moorhouse, who were both on the council at the time.

"I had 50 unhappy people at the door. We had sad little kids dressed in red-white-and-blue turn out at Bicentennial Park," Stewart said. Father David Kennedy of Church of the Holy Guardian Angels "was praying

for me. He said fireworks are America and help people shake off a depressing economy."

"It was horrible," Moorhouse added. "Let's have fireworks!"

Stewart said the plus side of contracting for the fireworks show outweighed the possibility of financial loss.

"Fireworks make people feel good," Stewart said, "and people need that."

A concrete answer for the nature trail

On another matter, the council voted to pave the Lantana Nature Preserve trail with concrete, a choice rejected previously as it was considered too costly (about \$130,000). In addition to money the town has already set aside for the

project, about \$60,000, funds will be taken from reserves and paid back from annual payments received from the Carlisle assisted-living facility for maintenance.

The council debated what type of material to use for the trail for more than two years, and twice decided on asphalt — an unpopular choice with Friends of the Nature Preserve.

In February, another option was considered: crushed concrete, which was less costly than asphalt and more eco-friendly.

But on March 23, Stewart proposed concrete, considered the best long-lasting solution.

"We've kicked this tin can down the road so long it's not even a can anymore," Stewart said. "I don't want this to come

up ever again in my lifetime!"

"That's music to my ears," Manzo said.

In other news, the council, for safety reasons, voted to remove obtrusive road striping on Hypoluxo Island in compliance with Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices guidelines for streets and highways. Removing the yellow lines will cost about \$5,000.

Islanders, in person and with letters, urged the town to remove the double yellow lines after several residents had to leap into the bushes to avoid being hit by speeding vehicles whose drivers would not pull over.

Hypoluxo Island does not have sidewalks. ★

Briny Breezes

Incumbents overwhelmingly retain their council seats

Three incumbents easily won reelection in the March 17 municipal election to keep their at-large seats on the Briny Breezes Town Council.

Christina Adams led all candidates with 103 votes, or 31.2% of the ballots cast. Bill Birch got 102 votes (30.9%) and Kathy Gross received 101 votes (30.6%).

Political newcomer Charles Swift had 15 votes and Lynne Weiner nine.

A month before the election, Weiner withdrew from the race, though her name remained on the ballot.

Council members serve two-year terms. Adams has served four years on the council.

Birch and Gross are beginning their second terms. All three cited improving relations between homeowners and building officials — in particular, simplifying and improving the town's permitting procedures — as a priority for the council.

About 31% of Briny's 330 registered voters turned out, compared with Palm Beach County's overall turnout of 26.6%. ★

— Dan Moffett

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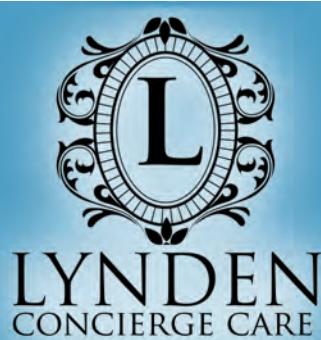
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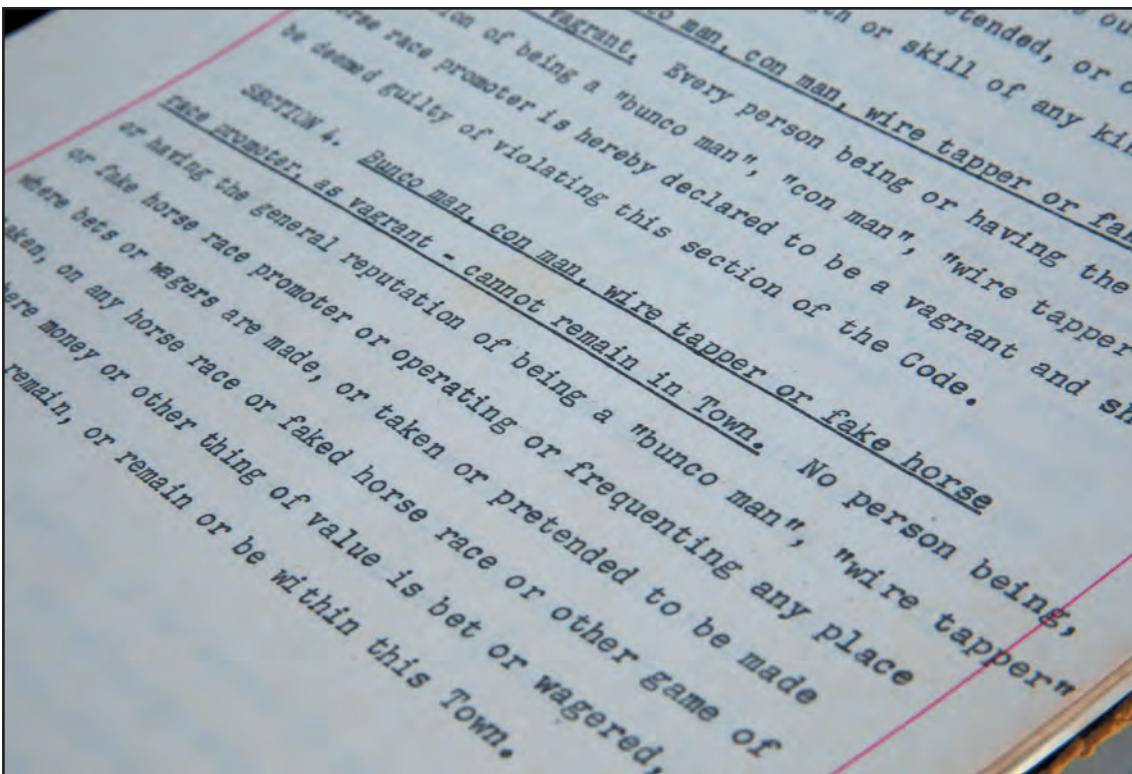
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ABOVE: One page from the historic documents found inside the box describes concerns about vagrants and con men at the time. BELOW: Commissioners Evalyn David and Peggy Gossett-Seidman with the documents. Photos by Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

Highland Beach

Forgotten safety deposit box holds decades-old surprise

By Rich Pollack

It was a Highland Beach happening that had all the earmarks of a made-for-TV special.

A safety deposit box is discovered that no one currently involved with the town knew anything about and that apparently hadn't been opened for years.

Commissioners give the town staff the green light to move forward and a date is set to have the box forced open, mystery contents revealed.

"We authorized them to open it hoping it would contain valuable Spanish gold coins or something like that," said Commissioner Peggy Gossett-Seidman, adding that she couldn't help thinking of Geraldo Rivera's opening of Al Capone's vault in 1986.

Alas, when the day came to open the box and its contents were at last revealed, what was discovered inside was indeed valuable — if only to town historians.

Tucked away were some important papers, including the original Town Charter created 75 years ago and other documents that could have historical significance.

"Sadly, there was no gold," Gossett-Seidman said.

What was inside might have continued to be a mystery had a bank representative not asked if Highland Beach wanted to keep the safety deposit box.

The answer from town officials was "What safety deposit box?"

"We were surprised when we got the call," said Town Manager Marshall Labadie.

Even John Rand, a former commission member some 30 years ago, was surprised to learn the box existed.

"He couldn't believe it," Gossett-Seidman said. "He said



he never heard of it."

Former town finance director Cale Curtis said he was aware the box and a couple of other safety deposit boxes existed but didn't know historical documents were stored inside.

During a Town Commission meeting last month, Labadie announced contents of the box, which included water revenue bonds dating to 1956. He said

the town is working to find ways to make it possible for residents to view the documents.

"There was no gold bullion or anything cool like that," he said, much like the disappointing Al Capone vault opened on TV 34 years ago.

That led to a witty comment shouted from the audience.

"Or so you say," a smiling resident said. ★



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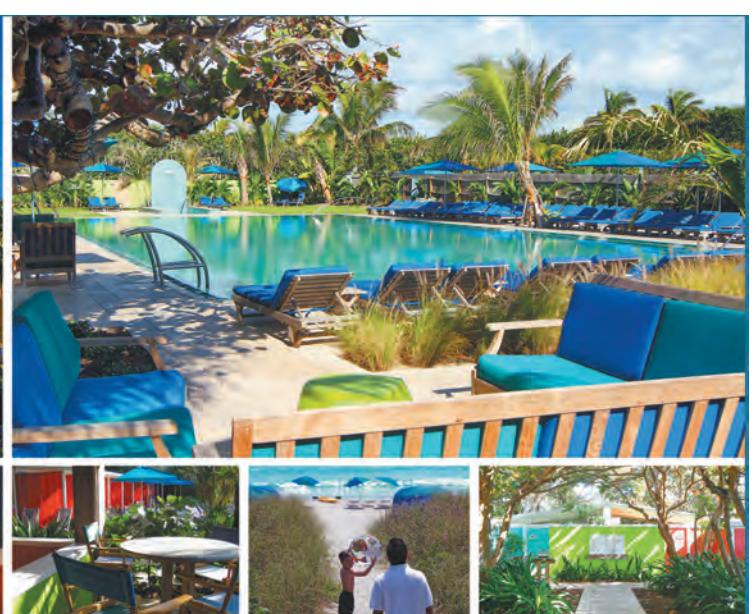
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Ocean Ridge

Crown Colony's music man keeps jive alive for residents

By Ron Hayes

Bob Layton has an intriguing theory about popular music.

"I've heard," he says, "that the music you were hearing when you were 14 years old affects your musical taste for the rest of your life."

For him, that was 1943, when The Mills Brothers' *Paper Doll* was the year's biggest hit.

Layton was born on July 14, 1929, the year of *Tip Toe Thru The Tulips*. He's 90 now, with a long life of singers and songs between his ears and in his heart.

For the past 20 of those 90 years, he's shared those singers and their songs with his neighbors at the Crown Colony Club in Ocean Ridge.

On Tuesday evenings during the season, men and women in their 70s, 80s or 90s gather to hear him play the old recordings that make them feel 14 again, and learn a few bits of biography and musical trivia along the way.

"Jive At Five," he calls it, and it's a hit, too.

By 4:45 p.m. on the last Tuesday in February, they're wandering in to the community's clubhouse, water bottles, beers, Cokes and Chex Mix in hand, greeting, gossiping and settling down along the bingo tables.

"Maximum capacity 44," a sign on the wall says.

By 5 p.m., there are definitely 44 people waiting. Salvatore Renna is in the kitchen, boiling the hot dogs, getting the wine and beer set up for later. Layton is at his table up front, and his sound man, Dom Pillaria, is at the tape deck nearby.

Showtime!

"This is the best music of the 20th century," Layton begins, "from the 1920s to the 1970s. I promise you won't hear anything after 1980."

Yes, he has strong musical opinions.

"Nineteen-eighty is my cutoff point," he will tell you, lip threatening to curl. "That's when the amateurs took over."

Bruce Springsteen?

"I was born in New Jersey and went to Asbury Park High School, but I don't get him at all," Layton says. "I tried. What's his problem?"

Stephen Sondheim?

"He's a one-hit wonder, as far as I'm concerned."



Crown Colony residents smile as they listen to Bob Layton (right) talk about music history.

Layton had three more 'Jive At Five' sessions planned this season when the president of the homeowners association

called him March 16 to say all events had been canceled in light of the coronavirus threat. 'They've locked both clubhouses,' Layton says. 'The only good news in this is, I won't have to work as hard getting ready for next year. I'm almost halfway there.'

Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

And that one hit, of course, is *Send In The Clowns*. But Layton favors the Sinatra version, not Judy Collins' big hit.

"No, I'm not crazy about her, either."

Layton and his neighbor, Thomasina Cole, have a friendly dispute regarding Barbra Streisand.

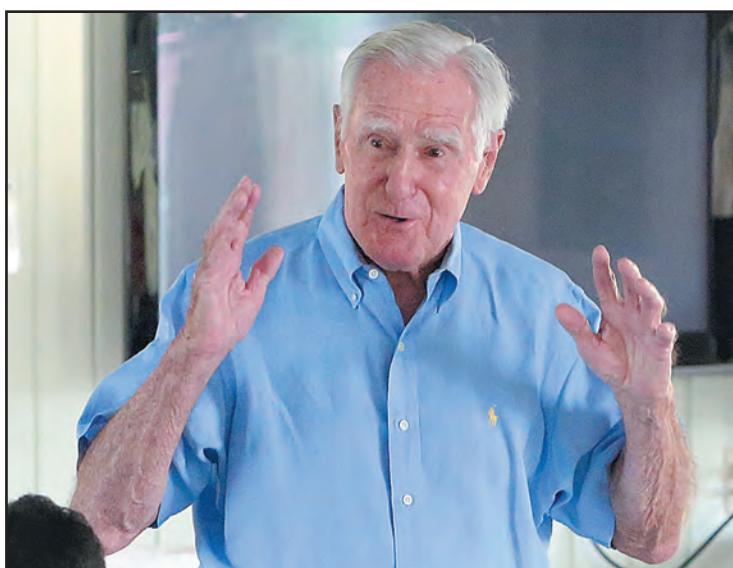
"She's not on my list," Layton says, making the thumbs-down sign. "She's got a whiny voice that's irritating to me."

When Layton hears whine, Cole hears tone.

"She's one of my favorites," she says, "but not one of Bob's. He has a blind spot, but I love her tone."

Cole considers the Streisand tone. "Maybe it's something to do with her nose...."

A retired ad executive from Newtown Square, Pennsylvania, Layton had about 2,000 LPs in the attic five years ago when he and Irene, his wife



of 65 years, decided to live in Ocean Ridge full time.

"I sold a few, but most of them went to Goodwill," he says, "and I can tell you, they're really heavy."

Anything worth keeping he put on tape. Now he has 15 shoe boxes full of cassettes from which to choose and mix his weekly listening sessions.

"This gives me something to do in the summertime," he explains. "I get an idea while I'm shaving, so I get a pad and make a list of what I have."

During each Jive At Five, Layton will introduce and comment on about 15 songs. Every session has a theme, drawn from three categories — an artist, composer or subject.

"I've never repeated a program in 20 years," he's proud to say.

He's done "Songs With Love In The Title," "How World War II Changed American Popular Music," and even "Music With Sexually Suggestive Lyrics."

But that's sexually suggestive lyrics from before 1980, you understand, so you get *All Of Me* (*Why Not Take All Of Me?*).

Tonight's theme is "Fifteen Italian Singers Take Over American Pop," and Layton has come up with a clever way of introducing them.

"Vito Rocco Farinola," he announces, to puzzled frowns. The audience knows him as Vic Damone. Layton tells them of the time young Farinola cornered Perry Como in an elevator, asked to sing for him, and won a few words of encouragement.

Then he plays *You're Breaking My Heart*, Damone's 1949 hit.

Did you know the melody was based on an older Italian song called *Mattinata*?

Francesco Paolo LoVecchio. He became Frankie Laine, who sang *That Lucky Old Sun*.

Genaro Louis Vitaliano? Jerry Vale, and Layton plays *Summertime in Venice*.

Pierino Ronald Como was an easy guess, and they hear Perry Como's *Prisoner of Love*.

Jasper Cini? They know him as Al Martino of *Spanish Eyes* fame.

"Next, a record where Dean Martin seems to be sober," Layton jokes, and *Memories Are Made Of This*.

John Katsaros, 96, is tapping his cane, bobbing his World War II Purple Heart cap and grinning. Shot down over Frankfurt on March 20, 1944, he bears a shrapnel scar still visible on his right forearm.

"I love this," he says. "I been coming here since they started it. You know, I saw Glenn Miller in Haverhill, Mass., before he became popular. Yeah."

Walden Robert Cassotto? That's Bobby Darin.

"But I'm not going to disappoint you on this," Layton says. "I'm not going to play *Splash Splash*.

He knows his audience, and so of course they hear *Mack The Knife*.

The story goes that Darin chose his last name when he glanced out a hotel room window and saw a neon sign for a Chinese restaurant called Mandarin, with the first three letters dark.

"But that may be apocryphal," Layton concedes.

By now, much of the audience has stopped resisting the urge to sing along.

Everyone knows Anthony Dominick Benedetto, of course. But did you know that in 1957 the great songwriter Johnny Mercer got a letter from a grandmother in Youngstown, Ohio, enclosing what she felt sure would be a great line for a song?

Merger agreed and wrote *I Wanna Be Around* — "to pick up the pieces when somebody breaks your heart."

Tony Bennett got a big hit out of it, and Sadie Vimmerstedt got a third of the royalties.

And now, the finale.

Do we really need to tell you his name?

Jacques Revaux wrote the melody, Paul Anka wrote the English lyrics, and he sang it his way.

Sally Valenti, 93, leans over to her neighbor.

"You know," she confides, "my friend had a funeral home in New Jersey, and when Frank Sinatra's father died, my friend called me up and said, 'Sally, we got Frank Sinatra's father!'"

Bennett, Como, Damone — they're all fine. But this is a Sinatra crowd, so Layton announces that Frank has agreed to do an encore.

New York, New York.

And suddenly they're all on their feet, swaying from side to side and singing along, clapping for Frank, for New York, for the songs that were young when they were young, and for Bob Layton. ★

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10 Questions

It was about the time Barbara Flores had her third book published that she decided she needed to learn how to write.

Flores, a 71-year-old South Palm Beach resident who in 2019 published her memoir *Separated, Acting Badly* to positive reviews, produced a book of quotes for Al-Anon families and two cookbooks before actually making the time and effort required to consider herself an accomplished writer.

"I started out as a graphic designer, and getting the design right was actually more important to me than what the book had to say," she said.

When her third book, *The Great Book of Pears*, became a finalist for the International Association of Culinary Professionals Cookbook Award in 2001, she decided to take a different tack.

"That was what I call my big-ass award," she said. "That was when I decided to get interested in writing. I didn't even call myself a writer then. I really wanted to design more than write."

Living in the Bay Area, Flores started by taking writing classes from Adair Lara, a columnist with the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

"I took so many of her classes she got sick of me, but we became writing partners, so everything she wrote for the *Chronicle* she sent me, and all the crap I wrote I sent her. We had to write a column every day, and I got very good very fast, and that's when I had the thought of writing a memoir."

Her plan was to catalogue the ups and downs of her marriage, which had lasted more than 30 years, but it was about that time her husband had an affair with a younger woman and left her.

"So, there goes the book idea, but then people said why not write about the experience of him leaving, so that's what I did."

That was in 2004, and in 2006 she decided to leave the Bay Area to join her parents in South Palm Beach. After years of grieving over the failed marriage and many stops and starts, she wrapped up the manuscript last year.

"We had a very long separation before we got the divorce, so that's the 'separated' part, and the 'acting badly' part is me acting badly," she said.

Flores, who has married again — to artist George Canberg — has spent many years as a teacher, first at an inner-city school in Oakland and more recently at G-Star School of the Arts in the village of Palm Springs. That background contributed to her latest manuscript, a work of fiction involving guns. The book is intended for ages 11-13.

— Brian Biggane

Q: Where did you grow up and go to school? How do you

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR: Barbara Flores



Barbara Flores, a designer and author, stands in front of two of her poster creations and holds copies of her four books, including a memoir about her marriage breakup. **Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star**

think that has influenced you?

A: I grew up in a village, yes a real village, called Menomonee Falls outside of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I wanted to leave as fast as I could. I wanted to see the world, the ocean. I wanted notoriety as an artist. I already won awards in high school and college — my artwork sold — and I grew too big and too bigheaded for my small hometown. Now I really appreciate the people. They're so kind, friendly, soft-spoken ... just don't schedule anything during a Packers game.

Q: What professions have you worked in? What professional accomplishments are you most proud of?

A: My career as an artist/writer/teacher has been a seesaw of peaks and valleys. My writing mentor, Adair Lara, a former *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist, has called me a serial enthusiast. In college in Madison, Wisconsin, I began illustrating shoes like Andy Warhol did. By the time I was 22 my illustrations for Nunn Bush shoes were appearing in *Playboy* and *GQ*. That gig allowed me to buy a small starter cottage in the Bay Area. I raised three kids in the '80s and when the youngest was 2 I decided to quit my job as a magazine art director to be home with them and do volunteer work for the war-torn refugees flooding into the Bay Area.

I founded a work program called Manos with grants. But I was broke and had to ask my husband for a food allowance to feed the kids. After five years, my graphic design work picked up and I opened a graphic design studio in Berkeley.

One of my good friends from

church was the mother of Mark Miller, the Coyote Café chef. She had a wacky idea that I should fly to New Mexico the day after Christmas and talk to him about designing a chile poster. This was in 1990 when no one had even heard of a jalapeño or a chipotle. It launched a 12-year career of designing food posters and authoring cookbooks for TenSpeed Press.

After my husband, whom I had adored, left after 31 years of marriage, I needed something more in my life. I decided I wanted to write more than I wanted to design. I published essays and took a job teaching writing to inner-city kids in Oakland. I moved to Florida and taught at G-Star School of the Arts.

At age 60 I got a degree in writing and literature at Bennington College, Vermont. I've been honored to teach at U.C. Berkeley Extension, Moraga College and Palm Beach Atlantic University.

Now I teach adults, edit manuscripts, care for my granddaughter and I'm on the third draft of my next book, a tween fiction.

I am most proud of my work with women. Today I continue to volunteer to mentor disadvantaged, marginalized and abused women in recovery.

And I am proud of my memoir, *Separated, Acting Badly*.

Q: What advice do you have for a young person seeking a career today?

A: Success is where your greatest passion meets the needs of the marketplace. You hear "follow your heart," but with the cost of education today, your heart can lead to financial

ruin. Yes, follow your heart but there's also a stomach(s) to feed. In my twisty-turvy career path I've taken low-paying jobs serving ice cream, teaching high school, and after my husband left and my third book won a big cookbook award, I took a serving catering job just so I had a party to go to every Saturday night.

Also, if you want to work in a creative field — film, design, publishing — I suggest you work as an intern at the most prestigious company you can find. Find the win/win in every difficult situation.

Q: How did you choose to make your home in South Palm Beach?

A: When I first moved to South Palm Beach in 2006 a stranger said, "Everyone that moves to Florida is either moving away from something or moving to something. Which one are you?" I didn't miss a beat answering that I was moving away from a marriage breakup. I ran away from California as far as I could until I hit an ocean. And the ocean healed me. Also my parents lived here, and I needed them, especially my dad.

Q: What is your favorite part about living in South Palm Beach?

A: The exquisite aqua sea. I never get tired of looking at it. Also my grandmother was one of the first residents in South Beach when there was only the Tropicana on the Intracoastal side. My aunt also lived in the Imperial. Some South Beach trivia: The Imperial is built around a two-story beach house that was once owned by Howard Hughes. My Aunt Alvina lived

there. I came here at 13 and fell in love with South Palm Beach. I watched the (recently demolished) Hawaiian Motel being built from my grandma's third-story condo. Then the view was all beach and dunes and palm trees.

And now my granddaughter and her daughter live a few steps away. My husband, George Canberg, an artist, has a trailer at Briny Breezes where he paints. I call Briny my happy place.

Q: What book are you reading now?

A: I'm writing a kids fiction book so I'm into YA. I'm reading *With the Fire on High*, by Elizabeth Acevedo. One of my students also recommended *Little Fires Everywhere*.

Q: What music do you listen to when you want to relax? When you want to be inspired?

A: I'm a visual person and I'll listen to whatever George puts on. He plays old rock 'n' roll. I love it. I love to have music served to me. If I play music (salsa mostly) it's to dance not relax. If I want to relax, I'll meditate.

Q: Have you had mentors in your life? Individuals who have inspired your life decisions?

A: My father. I feel sorry for the men who married me because my father was a hard act to follow. He was always very proud of me. But then I've been a workaholic who carried a briefcase to first grade. He was a small-town dentist, honest, humble, admired and he never said a bad word about anyone. I must have been in my 40s or 50s when I realized that my father was one of the grandfathers of the National Basketball League, a forerunner to the NBA.

Every time I drive into my condo parking lot I think I see his green station wagon. He passed last April at age 99.

Another mentor is Adair Lara. She was a columnist, not an academic, but she taught me how to write and teach.

Q: If your life story were to be made into a movie, who would play you?

A: I've been told that I'm a weird mix of wit, sophistication, and immature naiveté. I'd like it to be Meryl Streep because she can capture nuance and paradox.

Q: Who/what makes you laugh?

A: Honesty. Brutal honesty. A very successful writer told me once, "Barbara, when you write, you're so funny. But when you talk, you're not funny at all." I find that hilarious.

Also my 7-year-old granddaughter, Giselle Solis. I can't get enough of her. I wish I could see the world through those beautiful brown eyes.

Visit www.barbaraflores.net for more on her work.

Delray Beach

Standard safeguards usually stop mix of drinking, recycled water

By Rich Pollack

Using reclaimed water for irrigation, especially in coastal communities, is generally a safe and economical way to keep lawns green and shrubs and flowers healthy.

As what happened with a few homes in Delray Beach shows, however, mishaps can occur, and they have the potential to create health issues.

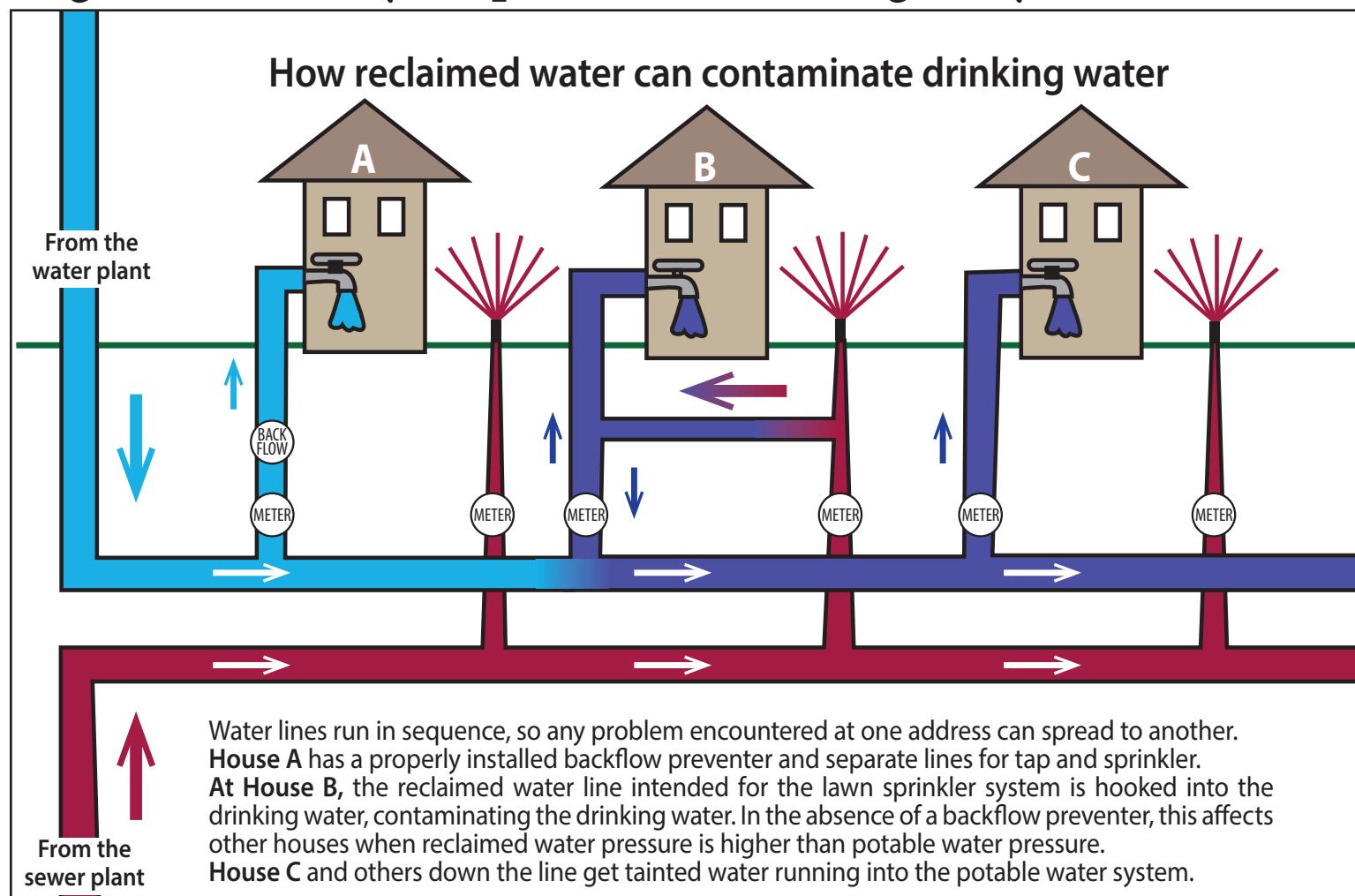
Generally there are several steps that utilities take to prevent drinking water and reclaimed water from mixing together, according to Chris Helfrich, Boca Raton's utility services director.

In Delray Beach and Boynton Beach, reclaimed water from the South Central Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant is pumped to communities through main lines generally colored purple. It then reaches a home irrigation system through a metered line, which is inspected at the time of installation.

Drinking water arrives through separate force mains, usually colored blue, and is metered as it flows into the home through connections to the main line.

Water utilities have several methods of preventing drinking water and reclaimed water from mixing. First they make sure — through on-site inspections — that the two pipes coming into the home are separated.

A second step is to install



SOURCE: City of Boca Raton Utility Services Department Coastal Star Graphic by Rich Pollack and Bruce Borich

backflow preventers on the fresh-water line to ensure the water flows from the main line into the home and no water flows from the home back into the main. A third way to prevent backflows is to ensure that drinking water pressure is higher than reclaimed water pressure.

In cases similar to what is suspected of happening in Delray Beach, a homeowner concerned about irrigation water pressure being too low connects the drinking water line to the reclaimed water line.

If backflow preventers are not installed and drinking water pressure is lower than reclaimed

water pressure, the reclaimed water will flow into the drinking water at the home and eventually enter the main line.

State regulations are in place to minimize health problems from reclaimed water. Locally reclaimed water from the regional plant is treated to what is called advanced secondary

treatment standards and is passed through a sand filter and highly chlorinated before it is distributed.

It is tested at least daily to ensure that all fecal bacteria and parasites are removed, with reports sent to state agencies on a regular basis.

Still, the reclaimed water coming to Delray Beach from the regional treatment plant is not considered suitable for drinking by state standards.

"Reuse water does contain higher nitrogen levels than most potable water, which is good for irrigation," said Colin Groff, Boynton Beach's assistant city manager for public services. "It could also contain small traces of heavy metals that are not harmful to the environment but could be to humans, which is why it is not used for potable water without a higher level of treatment."

Groff, whose city along with Delray Beach oversees the operation of the South Central Regional plant on Congress Avenue, says some communities elsewhere in the country do have drinkable reclaimed water.

Could reclaimed water make people sick if they drink it?

The answer is yes — and no.

"It could," says Helfrich. "It depends on a lot of variables."

One of those variables is the health of the person drinking the water. Another is how individuals react to the nutrients in the water to which they might not be acclimated.

"I don't have a fear of drinking reclaimed water," Helfrich said, quickly pointing out that he doesn't recommend it. "Reclaimed water quality here is better than drinking water quality in many countries throughout the world."★

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DELRAY WATER

Continued from page 1

reversing the order of how the lines were installed.

On March 25, Delray Beach employees distributed door hangers to scores of reclaimed water customers.

It noted that "the majority of potable meters at locations serviced by reclaimed water had the appropriate backflow protection. However, some metered connections had inadequate backflow protection or were not accessible for inspection."

In those instances, the reclaimed water was locked out of the property.

"There's some cause for optimism," said Ned Wehler, a barrier island resident who hand-watered his plants throughout the hot and dry March. He noted this line in the city notice: "Please be advised that it may take up to four weeks for your property to be tested."

The last time the city watering service stopped by his house was March 7.

But barrier island resident Bill Petry was puzzled by the notice.

In the second paragraph, it said, "The City will perform on-site cross-connection testing of individual properties." Petry thought the cross-connection inspections were done. Cross-connections can create a health problem because they can possibly allow reclaimed water to mix with drinking water.

"What does it mean? It was not comforting at all," said Petry, who serves on the board of the Beach Property Owners Association. He and his wife are seasonal residents who planned to return April 1 to New England.

Delray Beach turned off its reclaimed water system on Feb. 4 to avoid a citywide boil-water order that the Florida Department of Health wanted. As of March 31, the reclaimed water lines were not working to the barrier island.

The last part of the barrier island system began operating in October 2018, but was flawed from the program's start in 2005, according to notes from Christine Ferrigan, an industrial pretreatment inspector in the city Utilities Department.

Ferrigan found the reclaimed water system was not installed or monitored properly by outside contractors, according to her notes released by the state Health Department under Florida's open records law.



In an effort to help Delray Beach residents who have been without reclaimed water for weeks, employees like Curtis Duscan (center) and city contractors Clay Carroll (left) and Anthony Coates have started watering lawns on the barrier island. Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

Doing so cross-contaminated an unknown number of drinking water lines between October and December 2018 and potentially exposed residents to hepatitis A, Giardia, fecal coliform and other contaminants, according to Ferrigan's notes.

The Health Department does not have a standard it uses when people claim to be sickened by poor water quality, according to Alexander Shaw, its spokesman. The department relies on the individual health providers to make that determination.

The Health Department was alerted to the Delray Beach situation on Jan. 2 by a concerned resident.

Neither Ferrigan nor Marjorie Craig, who was the utilities director in 2018, could be reached for comment.

As a result of the resident's complaint — backed up with Ferrigan's notes — the Health Department asked Delray Beach to issue a citywide boil water order.

Citywide action averted

City Manager George Gretsas, though, was able to persuade the department not to take such drastic action by ordering the reclaimed water system shut down and having all 1,326 reclaimed water connections inspected.

Although no cross-connections were found, city staff discovered that 237 reclaimed water customers citywide did not have backflow preventers, Gretsas said on March 2.

The devices prevent the reclaimed irrigation water from mixing with the drinking water supply, important because the city drinking water is supplied at a lower pressure. Water quality experts, though, say drinking reclaimed water — while not recommended — will not sicken a healthy person.

Delray Beach still has 13 barrier island locations to examine to see whether the drinking water meters have backflow devices, according to Gretsas' March 16 letter to the

Health Department.

He admitted that the city does not have dates that each property was connected to the reclaimed water system. "All available information was collected," Gretsas wrote on March 16.

"If the city of Delray Beach is found to have failed to notify the DOH as required [of the possibility that residents became sick from drinking poor quality water], then that would be a violation," wrote Shaw, the county Health

Department spokesman.

Because of the variables involved, Shaw could not say what the penalty might be.

When it's finished complying with the Health Department, Delray Beach will hire a forensics firm to review the entire reclaimed water program, according to Gretsas.

"We spent a lot of the taxpayers' money on city staff time and hiring contractors," Gretsas said in February. "We want to find the cause before we point fingers." ★

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ECONOMY

Continued from page 1

U.S. Department of Labor data. In Florida, 74,021 people filed for unemployment, up from 6,463 the previous week.

But the national and state numbers do not show the full picture. Many more people tried to file but failed because the avalanche of claims overwhelmed unemployment systems.

"This is the worst I have ever seen," Peter Ricci, director of Florida Atlantic University's hospitality and tourism management program, said of the impact on business and the economy.

After the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, people continued to eat out and travel, but "not now," he said.

"The impact was immediate and disastrous on hotel workers and restaurant workers," Ricci said. "The effect on Florida is also disastrous because we rely so much on visitors. It has impacted our tax collections gravely."

"It is an economic crisis," said Troy McLellan, president and CEO of the Greater Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce. "We are throwing a health crisis on top of that. This is exponentially worse."

"9/11 was a one-time event. You're able to recover," he said. "We can't recover because we don't know what the damage is. Right now, we are living day to day without knowing the end to this."

The situation is so unprecedented that "there is no playbook for this," McLellan said.

In 2019, 8.2 million people visited Palm Beach County, and 2020 started out strong, said Glenn Jergensen, executive director of the county's Tourist Development Council.

"We were having a very good year. We were hitting all our key performance measures" through February, he said.

And then it all crashed.

"We have been putting all advertising on hold. No one wants to know how great your property is," Jergensen said. "It is something we have never seen before. We really don't know when it will stop and flatten and turn around."

Worst case: Jolt lasts years

FAU's Ricci said that if the crisis abates in six weeks, Palm Beach County will be able to rebound this year.

"Six weeks is the breaking point," he said. "If we go beyond that, we are in for a rough ride for multiple years."

As the number of COVID-19 cases increases exponentially in Florida and the nation, the likelihood of a fairly quick recovery grows dimmer by the day. Business groups are bracing for the worst and have pleaded for a massive bailout.

Congress approved a historic \$2 trillion stimulus bill on March 27, but it was unclear if money will come quickly enough to stave off disaster for



The typically bustling scene at Max's Grille is just a backdrop for a single bicyclist in Boca Raton's Mizner Park. Max's closed in reaction to the coronavirus threat. Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

many businesses.

"The coronavirus epidemic is the greatest crisis our industry has ever faced," the National Restaurant Association said on its website.

It estimates that restaurants and the food service industry could lose \$225 billion and eliminate up to 7 million jobs over the next three months.

A March 17 analysis by the U.S. Travel Association projects that decreased travel will inflict an \$809 billion hit on the U.S. economy and eliminate 4.6 million travel-related jobs in the United States this year.

The picture is no brighter for hotels. The American Hotel and Lodging Association estimates nearly 3.9 million total jobs either have been or will be lost in the next few weeks. Since mid-February, U.S. hotels have lost \$2.4 billion in room revenue.

The restrictions on restaurants have inflicted pain across Palm Beach County. While many are trying the take-away model, they say it brings in only 10% to 20% of their normal revenue.

They don't know how they can sustain that if the pandemic is not brought under control soon.

Layoffs at restaurants, bars

The Death or Glory bar and restaurant at 116 NE Sixth Ave. in Delray Beach closed voluntarily on March 17 for at least 30 days and laid off about 25 employees.

"We had noticed how bad this could get if people don't quarantine," said co-owner Annie Blake. "We thought it was the prudent thing to do."

She is now trying to bring in some revenue with take-away. Customers pay online in advance and pick up their packages without contact with employees.

While Blake laid off employees to allow them to collect unemployment, she tried to soften the blow by giving each \$1,000 to help them pay living expenses.

"They were understandably

nervous to be out of work, but they thought, as do we, the better we can contain this, the sooner we can get back to work," she said.

Luke Therien, whose family owns Prime Catch and Banana Boat in Boynton Beach, temporarily closed his Intracoastal waterfront restaurants on March 18 and laid off about 250 employees.

"There's a lot of good people who will be out of work for a while. That is very concerning," he said. "A lot of our employees are family people. ... They are all worried about this [virus]. There comes a point where safety was more important. It was definitely time."

But Therien is not trying to retool as a take-away business because it would take a lot of work for very little financial reward.

"People want to enjoy their experiences at the restaurant," he said. "They want the best, the freshest food. ... It is not food meant to be tasted 25 minutes later."

Customers would likely say, "This doesn't taste the way it did two weeks ago when I was sitting with an icy margarita," he said. "We don't want that kind of perception."

Hotels adapt or close

While some hotels are closing, others are struggling to find a way to stay in business.

Cathy Balestriere, general manager of Crane's Beach House in Delray Beach, has adjusted and readjusted operations as the business environment has changed.

She has pivoted from the leisure market to extended-stay guests, perhaps those who have nowhere else to go, or planned a cruise only to find out cruise sailings have been canceled, or don't want to return to a place with rampant infection rates.

All of the 28 rooms in her privately owned boutique hotel, located between the ocean and Intracoastal Waterway at 82 Gleason St., have full kitchens, which makes the idea feasible. The pool remains open, with

lounge chairs spaced far apart. Staffers sanitize the hotel hourly, and hand washing and hand sanitizer stations are located throughout the hotel.

Guests have no contact with staff, and check in by phone. Guests choose the time they want housekeeping services, or can forgo them and ask for towels and sheets to be dropped off outside the room.

And although hotel rooms go for more than \$400 a night in her area, Balestriere has dropped the price to \$129.

As of March 20, 18 rooms had guests, a far better occupancy rate than the 15% or less elsewhere in the county.

"People are reading a book, sitting by the pool. They feel comfortable and safe," she said. "Seeing people relax made us feel good."

One of Balestriere's goals is to not lay off her 23-person staff.

A Palm Beach County emergency order effective March 26 requires hotels not to accept new reservations from anyone who is not a "critical lodger." These include health care professionals, first responders, law enforcement, airline crew members and patients' families.

But it also allows for displaced residents or visitors and people who are temporarily unable to live in their homes, which seems to include the guests Balestriere is seeking.

The Eau Palm Beach took a different course in deciding on March 25 to close because business came to a "screeching halt," said public relations director Nick Gold.

"We feel we will be closed for at least six weeks," he said. "If we can open sooner, that would be the best news ever."

The nearly 600 full-time and part-time staff members will be paid 80% of their salaries and retain health insurance for six weeks.

While other hotels might be able to tweak their operations, a five-star resort "is all about service delivery, and we weren't able to reinvent our business model," Gold said.

Charities see greater need

COVID-19's financial impact is a wide one, and those affected include nonprofits.

Boca Helping Hands canceled its April 18 Monopoly Event and Casino Night fundraiser due to limitations on events that would draw large crowds.

The charity, which provides food, medical and financial assistance, expected the fundraiser would bring in as much as \$300,000, or 10% of its budget.

Instead, Executive Director Greg Hazle would like to schedule a virtual event like a silent auction to make up some of that lost revenue.

Hazle hopes supporters will understand that they will be asked to do more at this time. But he also realizes the stock market plunge might curtail giving.

The coronavirus has caused additional disruptions. Volunteers who felt they were susceptible to infection backed away. But Hazle said others were willing to step up.

"We are taking advantage of people's willingness, and obviously people have a little more time on their hands," he said.

Panic buying in supermarkets didn't help, reducing food donations by 70%. Hazle hopes that is temporary.

He also has changed how Boca Helping Hands distributes free meals at a feeding center. Because of the need for social distancing and efforts to eliminate crowds, the nonprofit is operating a drive-thru where meals are given out. The same goes for distribution of food pantry bags.

"We may not be a first responder. But I guess we are a next responder, responding to the folks who are losing their jobs and income," Hazle said. "It feels to us we are an important part of the response community."

Another casualty of the coronavirus was the March 14 Bethesda Ball at The Breakers, Bethesda Hospital's biggest annual fundraiser. It was expected to raise more than \$600,000 for upgrades to the emergency room, registration areas and the women's center, among other projects.

"We take the health of our community very seriously, and it was the right thing to do for our community," said Barbara James, executive director of the Bethesda Hospital Foundation.

But many Bethesda Ball sponsors volunteered to help. "We have been blessed that many have said, 'Keep our sponsorship money.' That is taking a little bit of the ouch out," James said.

She hopes the foundation will end up with at least \$200,000, and she will look for other ways to raise funds.

"This is a generous community that knows having preeminent health care in their backyard is important, and it is especially needed at a time like this," she said. ★

Along the Coast

Governments get creative on how to meet and make decisions

By Rich Pollack

In South Palm Beach, council members held a special meeting in the Town Hall parking lot.

In Highland Beach, a television screen was placed in front of Town Hall so residents could see what was happening inside.

And in other cities and towns throughout coastal South County, chairs in commission chambers were cordoned off with yellow tape and elected officials took alternating seats on the dais to make sure they kept 6 feet away from each other.

For most local municipalities, finding ways to govern effectively during the unprecedented coronavirus crisis is requiring innovation, often aided by technology, as well as huge amounts of patience and flexibility.

"There are going to be as many ways to hold meetings as there are cities until things become clearer," said attorney Glen Torcivia, whose firm represents Highland Beach, Ocean Ridge and South Palm Beach.

Conducting meetings while making sure the public has an opportunity to participate, as required by Florida's Sunshine Law, is just one of the challenges that local governments face.

Another is the task of making difficult decisions at a time when situations change from hour to hour — and when no one knows for sure when everything will be back to normal.

Add to that the task of figuring out how to ensure municipal services aren't interrupted and employees are safe while encountering new situations every day, and you can understand why city and town managers have a lot to be concerned with.

"Things are changing so fast," said Boynton Beach City Manager Lori LaVerriere. "It's like trying to stay abreast of a moving target."

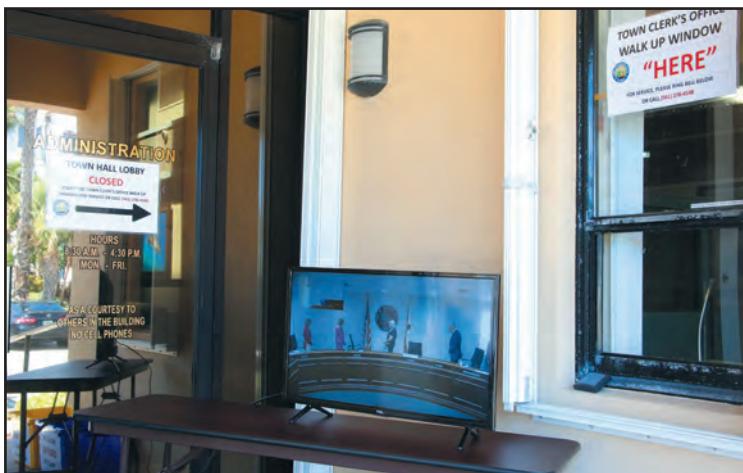
LaVerriere said that in some cases she would pull her leadership team together for a meeting in the morning but then have to call members back together in the afternoon to present new information and tell them to disregard what they heard a few hours earlier.

"You have to be adaptable," she said. "You try to stay two steps ahead of what's coming."

Because circumstances change quickly, with information from health officials evolving and executive orders coming from the governor, many decisions that would have been made by a city council or commission are now being made by city or town managers.

In Boca Raton, for example, last month's decision to order nonessential businesses to close was made by city staff members, led by City Manager Leif Ahnell.

That decision, which under



normal circumstances might have been made by the City Council after discussion, was made by Ahnell with input from the mayor and council members.

"We're in a situation where we are not the direct governing source," said Delray Beach Mayor Shelly Petrolia. "There are a lot of policy decisions that the city manager has to make."

She said waiting until a city commission could meet to make decisions in an emergency situation would be unwise.

"You would be well behind in every decision," she said.

Petrolia said that Delray Beach's new city manager, George Gretas, has been in constant contact with her and other members of the commission, listening to their input and advising them of decisions he is making.

"He's using us as a sounding board," she said.

That same process holds true in a small town like Manalapan, where Town Manager Linda Stumpf is in daily contact with members of her commission.

"We have a fully engaged commission," said Mayor Keith Waters, adding that Stumpf and commissioners are accustomed to working together even in non-emergency situations.

Last month, Manalapan canceled its commission meeting in a move similar to what Boca Raton did when it canceled its March 23 and 24 City Council meetings.

Waters, who credits the town staff and residents for making sure Manalapan runs smoothly during the crisis, said there weren't enough pressing issues on the agenda to warrant holding a meeting in an emergency.

For many communities, however, the meetings are a necessity in order to ensure residents receive services.

"We're trying to do everything we can to not debilitate the services we provide to the community," Boynton's LaVerriere said.

Although they're in an emergency situation, local governments still have to pay bills, make payroll, issue building permits, ensure public safety and provide other services.

Municipalities in the area are all still working, although most are not permitting residents to enter the town or city halls. In some cases employees are working from home.

In Manalapan, where employees work in close quarters, Stumpf devised a plan

where staff members alternate days working from home so as not to be within 6 feet of each other at the office.

For managers like LaVerriere, it's often necessary to get commission approval before a contract can be signed or a major purchase can be made. There are also policy decisions that commissioners need to make that are timely but not urgent.

Recognizing the need for local governments to meet, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed an executive order last month that allows commissions and councils to meet electronically and to meet without a quorum.

"That was huge," LaVerriere said.

While towns such as Lantana and Ocean Ridge initially continued to hold actual meetings in town halls, others switched to electronic meetings.

Briny Breezes, for example, held its council meeting last month via teleconference, the first electronic meeting in the town's 57-year history. Council members approved policies and procedures for future emergency conferences.

The ground rules say that the public must have a physical place to attend (large enough to allow social distancing) and hear all electronic meetings while the council members participate by phone. The place typically would be Town Hall.

One of the challenges for municipalities is figuring out how to ensure they comply with Florida's open government laws, which require an opportunity for public participation in meetings.

"The optimal situation is that the press and public have an opportunity to be in the room," says Florence Snyder, a First Amendment lawyer and strong

ABOVE: Briny Breezes Town Manager Bill Thrasher runs the council meeting last month with appropriate social distancing and phone technology allowing aldermen to attend from home.

LEFT: In Lantana, crime-scene tape in alternating chairs helps keep attendees apart.

BOTTOM: In Highland Beach, a television is set up outside to broadcast the live-streaming of the commission meeting.

Photos by Jerry Lower and Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

advocate of the state's open government laws.

Still, Snyder says, there has to be flexibility in emergencies.

"As long as we have government that's accessible, that's good," she said.

Figuring out how to hold meetings electronically can be a challenge for some places, even in Boca Raton, Delray Beach and Highland Beach, which live-stream their meetings over the internet.

"We never offered virtual meetings before because of the Sunshine Law," said Chrissy Gibson, Boca Raton's communications manager.

Some options include teleconference and conference calls with options for residents to be on the call. Another option being explored is to have meetings available to residents electronically with an option for them to send in comments via email.

Towns and cities along the South County coast hoped to have details worked out before their meetings this month.

Highland Beach Town Manager Marshall Labadie said his town is making a sincere effort to ensure the public has an opportunity to participate in meetings and he believes most other public officials are taking similar actions.

"We all want the public to participate because it is in the best spirit of good governance," he said.

Labadie said that whereas municipalities already have plans for a hurricane, the COVID-19 emergency comes with uncertainty about when — and perhaps if — the way towns and cities govern will return to how they were just a few weeks ago.

"There's no playbook for this," he said. ★

Along the Coast



LEFT: South Palm Beach resident Denise Bach takes clean clothes and prescriptions for her mother at the Carlisle Palm Beach in Lantana on March 28. Because the facility closed to visitors during the coronavirus crisis, Bach had not seen her mother in more than two weeks. **ABOVE:** Even health aides allowed to enter the Carlisle are screened for signs of illness such as a fever by staff members wearing masks and gloves. ‘We don’t want anything to happen to our residents,’ Carlisle executive director Richard Tournesy says. Photos by Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

Hospitals gear up amid moves to protect seniors, others at risk

By Charles Elmore

A region built as a haven for retirees finds itself under siege from a virus with no respect for advanced years.

Area hospitals and senior-care communities have barred nearly all visitors and taken a host of extraordinary steps as state health records showed the first 14 deaths attributed to COVID-19 in Palm Beach County all involved residents 73 or older. That ranked as the most deaths overall in any Florida county as of March 31.

At Harbour’s Edge in Delray Beach, resident Nancy Flinn called herself “very supportive” of measures to stem the spread

of the virus, even if they mean no more meals or activities in large groups and no visits with loved ones except by phone or computer.

“The average age here is 88,” Flinn said. “I’m in my late 70s. They’re handling each of us as a jewel that has to be protected.”

County deaths associated with the virus included eight men and six women ranging in age from 73 to 94, according to data the Florida Department of Health posted March 31. Three of them were known to travel, to Egypt, Germany, France and New York, and four had known contact with a confirmed case.

Among cities with confirmed cases of coronavirus infection, Boca Raton (103 cases as of March 31), Boynton Beach (83) and Delray Beach (72) all ranked in Florida’s top 20. Also reporting confirmed cases: Lake Worth Beach (37), Lantana (6) and South Palm Beach (1).

The virus poses a threat to everyone, but its most relentless pressure has fallen on seniors.

A 92-year-old man who said he lives alone in Delray Beach told U.S. Rep. Lois Frankel,

D-West Palm Beach, in a teleconference March 26 he was concerned about getting help buying groceries. She and others on the call issued reassurances such help is available.

Options include dialing 211 for Helpline Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, a telephone hotline designed to connect people with social-service agencies. Its services also include helping people who are feeling mental and emotional stress during the crisis.

Walking outside can be fine, but it is important to try to stay about 6 feet away from others, officials said.

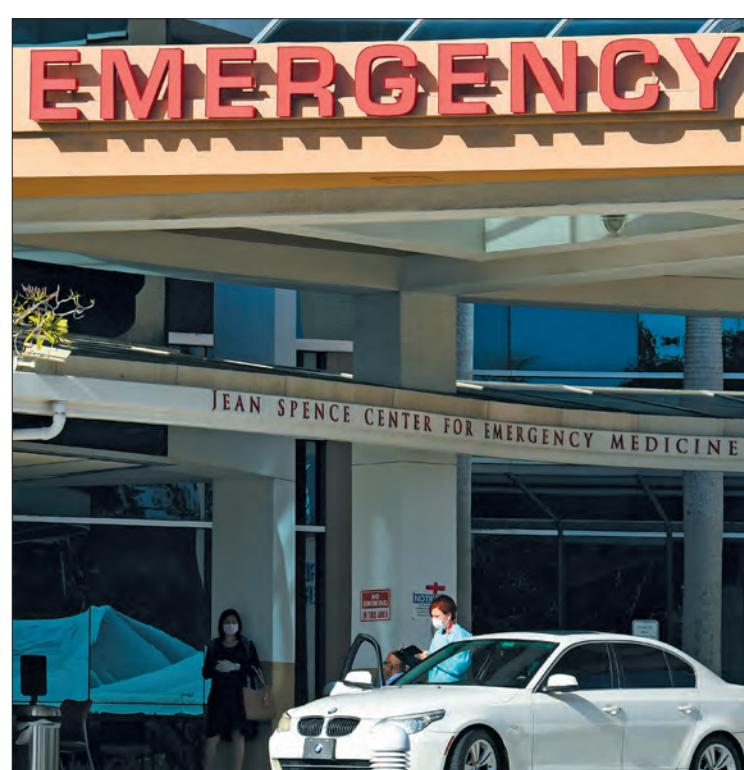
“There’s no question for senior citizens and for medically vulnerable people, this is much, much more deadly than the seasonal flu,” Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said.

All of this hits home in a region where the median age exceeds 65 in several municipalities, according to U.S. Census data that acknowledges varying margins of error: Briny Breezes (74 years), Manalapan (66.5), Highland Beach (65.7) and South Palm Beach (65.6).

Other local towns and cities also surpass the national median age of about 38 years old: Ocean Ridge (58.9), Gulf Stream (54.5), Boca Raton (48.5), Delray Beach (46), Lantana (43) and Boynton Beach (41.5).

Nancy Messonnier, director of Centers for Disease Control’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, said about the virus, “Starting at age 60, there is an increasing risk of disease and the risk increases with age. The highest risk of serious illness and death is in people older than 80 years.”

Even before a state-ordered visitor ban, the Carlisle Palm Beach in Lantana had undertaken a series of precautions to protect its more than 230 residents, from



Staffers in protective gear check in a patient at the Bethesda East emergency room on March 29 in Boynton Beach. The hospital is using an app to evaluate and advise people before they decide to come in. Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

curtailing group activities to building up supplies of soap, sanitizers and wipes, said executive director Richard Tournesy. “We don’t want anything to happen to our residents,” he said.

A notice on the facility’s website says new admissions and tours have been suspended.

Hospitals begin to adapt

Hospitals face their own set of challenges. Delray Medical Center, with 512 beds, became the area’s first hospital to ban visitors, on March 20.

“We are happy to assist our patients with virtual visits via their personal devices,” the hospital’s website said.

Spokesman Ryan Lieber added, “Our clinical leadership will work with families on an individual basis for compassionate care situations including pediatrics and end-of-life.”

At some hospitals, personal devices are also being encouraged for use by potential

expected “most individuals with COVID-19 will have a mild case” and perhaps 80% can be “home-treated,” the website noted.

Medical authorities nationwide have expressed concern that people with mild symptoms might inadvertently spread the virus in emergency rooms or urgent-care offices also populated with the “worried well,” making it all the more challenging to provide prompt treatment for those who might have more severe cases.

Hospital staff will employ “specific protocols when a patient does meet (COVID-19) criteria for an in-person evaluation based on their assessment on our tele-platform,” Mishkin said, referring to Care on Demand. “We’re going to guide them by notifying the facility, working with our infection control team and the Department of Health to make sure that it’s done in a very safe and smooth manner.”

Baptist Health spokeswoman Georgi Morales Pipkin said, “Some patients are able to self-quarantine, and others may need additional care, according to their condition.”

Delray Medical Center’s parent company, Tenet Health, said in a statement that it has “made preparations to handle the expected surge in patients presenting for emergency evaluation of COVID-19, and we have the proper care protocols to care for the subset of patients needing hospitalization while minimizing exposure to our staff.”

Meanwhile, Frankel told constituents, “You are the best defense against the virus.”

Keeping a safe distance from others, washing hands often and cleaning frequently handled surfaces have become familiar advice, with the CDC reminding: “The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.” ★

Along the Coast



A bicyclist on Old Ocean Boulevard in Ocean Ridge zips past crime-scene tape and a sign on March 29 that declares all public beaches closed by order of the governor.



On March 27, a Palm Beach County sheriff's deputy explains to South Palm Beach resident Kumar Kalola that public beaches and other gathering venues are closed because of the emergency situation.



The Rev. Danis Ridore of St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church in Delray Beach greets Boca Raton resident Joseph Liguori, 21, at the church's drive-thru confessional March 28. The drive-thru is one of several creative methods to serve that churches have adopted during the coronavirus threat. Another is to live-stream services with public gatherings prohibited.

Closed beaches, empty shelves, even drive-thru confessionals reflect our new normal



Golf carts are lined up for when customers return to the Raymond Floyd Par 3 course in Palm Beach. Golf courses and parks were some of the public locations closed by March 27 in an effort to stem the spread of COVID-19.



Shoppers at the Publix in Manalapan on March 14 contributed to the hoarding of a bewildering supply of goods at local groceries, ranging from logical items like meats and cleaning supplies to the less obvious like toilet paper.

**Photos by Tim Stepien
and Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star**



Lisa Petersen, Manalapan's town clerk, checks out books and movies to Mary Ann Kunkle, a resident of Manalapan. The town temporarily opened its library doors on March 25 so customers could load up on materials to keep their minds busy as they shelter in place.

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— Obituary submitted by the family

Delray Beach

Fire chief resigns; city declines to explain

By Jane Smith

Delray Beach Fire Chief Neal de Jesus abruptly resigned on March 10, according to an email he sent to the city manager.

Keith Tomey, assistant fire chief, took over as interim chief at a 10% boost to his salary, City Manager George Gretsas decided.

The city gave no public explanation for the unexpected departure of de Jesus, who is in his late 50s. "I feel my time has come to move on and focus more on my family," he wrote on March 10.

"The city does not comment on personnel matters," Gina Carter, Delray Beach spokeswoman, said in a March 24 email. De Jesus' most recent salary

was \$175,684. His temporary \$2,000 monthly housing allowance was made permanent in March 2017 while he was serving his first stint as interim city manager.

He left the city with 180 days' pay and three months of health insurance to June, according to a city memo.

At the Sept. 10 City Commission special meeting, commissioners agreed to double de Jesus' severance to 180 days and not require that he have a college degree. The vote was 3-2 with Mayor Shelly Petrolia and Vice Mayor Shirley Johnson dissenting.

In response to a public records request made by *The Coastal Star*, the city attorney's office responded that it is unable to release documents involving de Jesus because there is an ongoing investigation.

De Jesus came to Delray Beach in March 2016 to be the fire chief. He has nearly four decades of experience in the fire-rescue field. He started as a

firefighter in Sarasota County at age 18.

De Jesus retired from Coral Gables Fire-Rescue in 2002 after a 20-year career with that city. In 2010, he resigned after two years as a city commissioner of Cooper City to join the Broward County Sheriff's Office Fire Rescue and Emergency Services. He left that position in 2013 after the election of Sheriff Scott Israel.

In late December 2016, de Jesus was recognized for his leadership skills by then-City Commissioner Mitch Katz. He recommended de Jesus for the interim city manager opening.

De Jesus then served as interim city manager and returned to his fire chief position in November 2017. He became interim manager again in March 2019 until Gretsas arrived on Jan. 6.

De Jesus served as the point man in the city's investigation of its reclaimed water issues from February until his resignation.★

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Business Spotlight

Loan programs, local chambers aim to boost small businesses

The Small Business Association and local Chambers of Commerce have some suggestions to aid businesses in getting through the coronavirus pandemic. Here are some of them.

The Greater Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce suggests "shop local, utilize local" by buying gift certificates, buying tickets to future events, ordering restaurant food to go, and by attending online classes, concerts, religious services, and so on in support of local businesses. This has been a repeated message on the chamber's Wednesday morning weekly videos, "Delray Morning Live" posted on its Facebook page (www.facebook.com/delraybeach).

The city also has links to resources on its homepage at www.delraybeachfl.gov.

The Delray Chamber has a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/delraybeach) with a weekly video on Wednesday mornings to help community members stay abreast of business news.

The Boca Chamber lists various links for businesses, where among the resources are links to Small Business Loans and SBA Disaster Assistance, and information about the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program. Visit https://web.bocaratonchamber.com/the_chamber/coronavirus.aspx.

The emergency loan program, activated by Gov. Ron DeSantis, will provide short-term, interest-free loans, and the application period runs through May 8.

Small business owners with two to 100 employees located in Florida and affected by COVID-19 can apply for short-term loans up to \$50,000. These loans are interest free for up to one year and are designed to bridge the gap to either federal SBA loans or commercially available loans.

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, manager of the program, will work with the borrower to ensure that repayment of the loan isn't an overwhelming burden. To be eligible, a business must have been established prior to March 9, 2020, and demonstrate economic impacts as a result of COVID-19.

For more information, contact the Florida Small Business Development Center Network at 866-737-7232 or email Disaster@FloridaSBDC.org. Link is here: <https://floridadisasterloan.org/>

On another note, the U.S. Small Business Administration is working to help small business owners with counseling to navigate the pandemic. It will also work with state governors to provide long-term disaster relief loans, up to \$2 million in assistance per small business. It also offers

guidelines for loans made by its partnering lenders, community development organizations and micro-lending institutions. For information, visit www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans.

The Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties, in partnership with philanthropists, business leaders and government entities, has established the COVID-19 Response Fund, which will deploy resources to community-based organizations that are working with those disproportionately affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

These include community health centers, homeless shelters, preschool and after-school programs, food pantries and other social service providers.

As of March 14, nearly \$500,000 was raised in less than 48 hours. Contributions included \$100,000 from Florida Power & Light Co., \$100,000 from the Stoops Family Foundation and \$100,000 from the Community Foundation. Additional funding partners included Jim Robo and Meredith Trim; SBA Communication Corp.; Sherry and Tom Barrat; Julie and Peter Cummings, and Susan and Peter Brockway. Contributions may be made at www.yourcommunityfoundation.org.

Because of the evolving nature of needs during the pandemic, responses from government and other organizations are constantly changing. Please check with the organizations for updates.

Christel Silver, owner of Silver International Realty in Delray Beach, served as a global ambassador of the National Association of Realtors at real estate meetings in Vienna, where she spoke to young real estate agents in Austria on how to be international members of NAR.

The Institute for Regional Conservation, a nonprofit that aims to protect, restore and manage ecological diversity in the long term, received a \$1,000 individual "Volunteer for Good" grant from the New York Life Foundation. The award recognized the volunteer service of John Campanola, an agent with New York Life's South Florida General Office in Sunrise.

The grant supported a coastal restoration field trip of Earth science students from Atlantic Community High School, who worked to remove nonnative asparagus fern while learning about the root nodules full of water that make this plant so invasive. Additionally, students picked up trash from the beach, focusing on micro-plastics.

South Palm Beach County agents were among the



Workers stock shelves at the Publix in Plaza del Mar in Manalapan. Some items like toilet paper and fresh meats and eggs have been hard to keep in stock. Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

honorees at Douglas Elliman Real Estate's annual awards ceremony, the Ellies, last month in Uncasville, Connecticut. Among the top 10 teams from Florida were the Senada Adzem team, which placed fifth; the team of Randy Ely and Nick Malinosky, which placed seventh; and the Marisela Cotilla luxury team, which placed ninth.

These teams also received the Pinnacle Club Award for earning more than \$1 million in 2019.

Annie Davis, owner of Palm Beach Travel, which has an office in Manalapan, received the inaugural Black Pineapple Award from the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, at an event held at Sarabeth's Park Avenue South in New York City. The Black Pineapple Award, named after a type of pineapple that's found only in Antigua, honored Davis as one of 40 key partners, tour operators, resorts, travel agents and media who worked to promote Antigua and Barbuda in 2019.

The Bill Gove Golden Gavel Toastmasters Club of Boynton Beach celebrated its 20th anniversary and Bill Gove's birthday on Jan. 24 in Citrus Glen.

Founded by professional speaker Steve Siebold and insurance sales trainer Ed Lamont, the club was named for Bill Gove, who died in 2001. He served as the first president of the National Speakers Association and earned Toastmasters' Golden Gavel Award in 1991. He was a charter member of the Boynton club.

Bill Gove Toastmasters has achieved Toastmasters International's highest club award of "President's Distinguished" for 13 consecutive and 17 of 19 years. Three members have served as District 47 governors, and one was elected to Toastmaster International's board of directors and is in line to become the organization's international president in 2022.

Bernard and Maggie Palmer,

of SRD Building, sold a new waterfront estate at 320 S. Maya Palm Drive to Robert Irene for \$12.6 million on Feb. 26, according to public records.

The four-bedroom, 7,753-square-foot home sits on the Fishtail Palm Waterway in Royal Palm Yacht & Country Club in Boca Raton. Irene heads Asembia, a New Jersey firm that provides services to

pharmaceutical and biotech companies. The property was sold by David Roberts of Royal Palm Properties.



Send business news to Christine Davis at cdavis9797@gmail.com.



Prime Catch will be closed until the county and state decide it is safe to reopen.

We have over 120 employees and we will all be very anxious to get back to work. In the meantime, we will miss our amazing guests. We look forward to seeing you as soon as it is safe to do so. Prime Catch will keep you posted on our reopen date. Thank you for all your past, present and future business.

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Dreamy Beach Cottage | \$965,000 | 3 BR, 2 BA | Pool home east of AIA with deeded beach access. | Web# RX-10601658



Ocean Ridge Yacht Club | \$799,000 | 3 BR, 2.5 BA | Waterfront townhome in prime location. Approx. 2,265sf living. | Web# RX-10542056



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Around Town

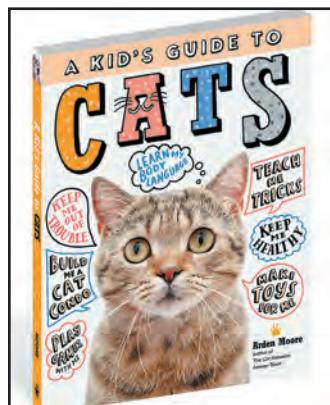
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 Tots & Teens - AT17
 Calendar - Online
 at www.thecoastalstar.com

April 2020

The Coastal Star

Inside**On the Water**

The king of the seas during spring months. Page AT20

**Paws Up for Pets**

Stay-at-home fun for everyone. Page AT15

**Finding Faith**

Worship leaders get creative amid shutdowns. Page AT19

**House of the Month**

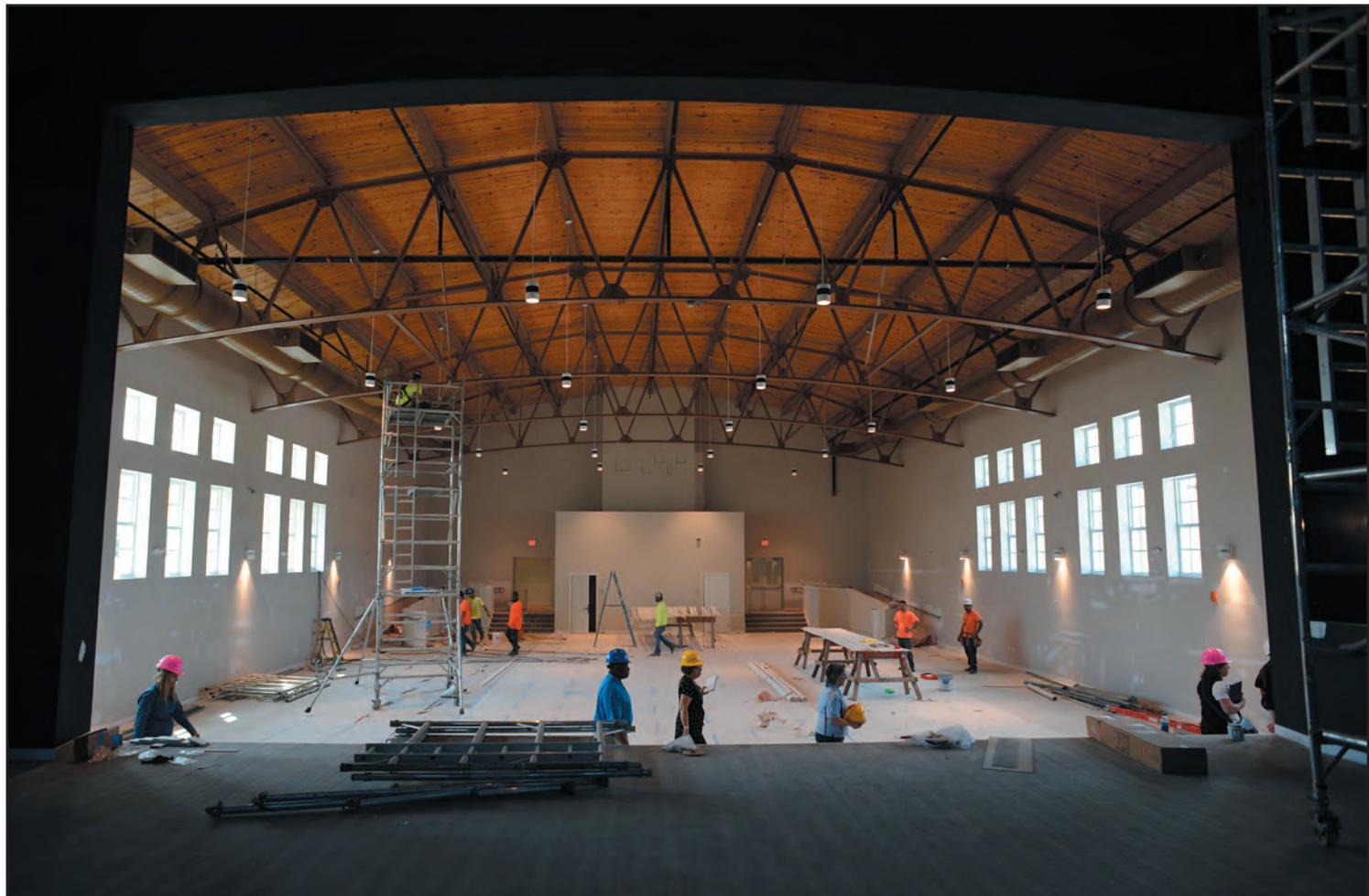
An Old World retreat in Highland Beach. Page AT23

'This building will be engaged 24/7.
 This will be the place to be.'

— Colin Groff,
 assistant city manager



An original crest, depicting a shield, wreath and torches, still adorns the facade of the building.



This view from the stage shows the restored roof of the auditorium of the historic 1927 Boynton Beach High School. The ceiling still boasts its original Dade County pine beams. Photos by Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

Finishing touches

Years in remaking, old Boynton high school soon to raise curtain as arts center

By Jan Engoren

Rescued from demolition by a grass-roots effort and transformed into a dynamic cultural arts and activities destination, the historic Boynton Beach High School is nearly ready to shine as the centerpiece of Town Square.

Town Square is a public/private partnership between the city of Boynton Beach and E2L Real Estate Solutions LLC and is scheduled to be up and running this summer, with the old high school to open sometime before then.

According to the city, the 20-acre development will be "a place for connecting — connecting the city's historic past to its

See SCHOOL on page AT13



The windows of a planned office offer a view of the preserved kapok tree, a landmark near the corner of Ocean Avenue and Seacrest Boulevard.

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For information, call **Membership Director Rosalie Blood** at 561-701-9025 or visit us online at SeagateSummerMembership.com

The Seagate Summer Membership 2020

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Philanthropy Notes

Junior League of Boca Raton's Diaper Bank gets big boost

The Boca West Children's Foundation far exceeded last year's tally by collecting more than 52,000 diapers from a record number of donors for the Junior League of Boca Raton's Diaper Bank.

The annual drive took place Feb. 18.

Clean diapers are as essential as food and shelter for a baby, and access to diapers affects not only the health of children but their parents' ability to work.

"Our mission is to help local kids in need, and with the cost of diapers being prohibitively high for many families, the Diaper Bank is such an impactful way to help," said Pamela Weinroth, executive director and chief operating officer of the Boca West foundation.

"With so many people out of work due to the pandemic, the need for diapers is greater than ever," Christy Stewart-Harfmann, president of the Junior League, said in late March.

To help, email community@jlb.org.

Nonprofit asks for help in feeding needy residents

Because of consumers' concerns about coronavirus, Boca Helping Hands has seen a drastic drop in its intake of surplus food from local grocery stores and restaurants.

As a result, the nonprofit that distributes 70,000 pantry bags and serves 55,000 hot meals annually is having to reduce its numbers.

"If anyone has a little extra food at home, or if any local restaurants have a surplus of food as they are forced to cut back on hours and in-dining service, we would very much welcome any sort of food donation," said Greg Hazle, the organization's executive director. "We serve a population of vulnerable children and families, and we are in particular need of produce, meat as well as any sort of packaged or canned food."

MorseLife starts campaign to aid Holocaust survivors

As part of a larger commitment by MorseLife to ensure that no Holocaust survivor in Palm Beach County is left to live without basic services, the organization has launched a campaign via GoFundMe to assist two impoverished survivors during the next five years.

Named Tabor and Ella to protect their privacy, the couple met in a displaced persons camp and have been married for 70 years. They live on a meager monthly income and struggle to make ends meet. MorseLife's goal is to raise \$100,000 through online donations. To donate, go to www.gofundme.com/f/morselifefoundation-now-for-holocaust. "Our objective is to provide

five years of uninterrupted care to these two individuals, which will allow them peace of mind as they live out their daily lives," said Keith Myers, MorseLife's president and CEO.

Retired executive tells teens to dress for success

Achievement Centers for Children & Families' Teen Program welcomed Lori Haram, former Estée Lauder Cos. senior vice president of business affairs and operations, to a special workshop titled "Dress for Success."

The teens learned about first impressions, personal grooming and professional wear, and the workshop ended with a bonus question-and-answer session on etiquette.

"I felt like there was more to retirement than playing golf," said Haram, a Boca Raton resident. "I'm so glad to have done it, and I really hope the kids got something out of it."

Bound for College program expands in South County

A high school diploma often is not enough for students to build rewarding careers. Unfortunately for many youths, lack of academic and emotional support at home coupled with challenging financial times prevents them from obtaining a higher education.

Bound for College offers academic, emotional and financial resources for teens from underserved communities to help them reach their full potential. When founded, the program served two schools: Village Academy Center and Atlantic Community High School, both in Delray Beach. Now it also serves Boca Raton and Boynton Beach community high schools.

"To see the direct impact that Bound for College's ACT/SAT tutoring has on our local kids in the form of college-acceptance letters and multiple scholarships is inspiring," said Craig Menin, who donated \$50,000 to the cause.

Boca woman receives international award

Diane Diamantis, co-founder of Dollars 4 Tic Scholars, won an international honor at the .ORG Impact Awards, an event that recognizes the achievements of nonprofits around the world.

Diamantis, of Boca Raton, received the Rising Star Award — a category aimed at professionals with five or less years of experience at his or her organization — for her commitment to encouraging students with Tourette syndrome to attend college.



Send news and notes to Amy Woods at flamywoods@bellsouth.net.

Pay it Forward

Impact 100 plans 'virtual' votes to award much-needed grants

By Amy Woods

While Impact 100 Palm Beach County will not have the Grand Awards on April 15, it plans to distribute every dollar donated by its members to five nonprofits serving South County.

The meeting previously set to take place at Lynn University in Boca Raton has been canceled amid coronavirus concerns, and as of press time, contingencies had yet to be finalized.

"We're not going to hold the live event like we have in the past, but we are still going to announce our finalists and award the grants," President Kathy

Adkins said. "That's the good news."

Last year, Impact 100 gave five organizations in five focus areas \$100,000 grants. An additional \$43,000 was divided evenly among five semifinalists. This year, the goal is to raise \$600,000, enabling the organization to provide additional funds to the semifinalists.

"There's so much need in the community, and that's why we're continuously trying to grow our membership," said Adkins, noting that more than 100 applications seeking the financial aid were submitted. "People think that our area wouldn't typically have these needs, but they exist right in

our backyard."

Members agree to donate \$1,000 when they join as well as attend one meeting — the Grand Awards — at which they cast one vote. The vote follows presentations by each of the five finalists about the program or project they want funded.

The five focus areas are arts, culture and historic preservation; education; environment and animal welfare; family; and health and wellness.

"The needs include everything from feeding underserved people, getting them the resources that they need, to helping our environment and our coastal areas," Adkins said. "There's everything from

trying to provide music and art and education for children to the health and wellness piece."

When, where and how the vote will take place is something the executive committee will have to decide.

"Our team has been hard at work, creating a virtual version of our Grand Awards event for our 2019-2020 grant cycle," Adkins wrote in an email blast announcing the cancellation. "This will allow us to safely still fulfill our promise to our community to award five \$100,000 grants to our local nonprofits. ★

For information, call 561-336-4623 or visit www.impact100pbc.org.

Two local feeding programs to merge at Boynton site

By Jane Smith

The Community Caring Center of Palm Beach County merged April 1 with a larger nonprofit geared to feeding hungry people from Boynton Beach.

The CCC was about to start a fundraising program last September to build a 5,000-square-foot commercial kitchen in east Boynton Beach.

That's when City Commissioner Ty Penserga contacted one of the center's board members, said Doreen Robinson, the board president. He suggested that the CCC

talk with Feeding South Florida, a much larger group with a commercial kitchen under construction west of the interstate, on Park Ridge Road.

"We talked with Feeding South Florida and learned there are duplicate services between our groups," Robinson said. "We can be more effective together. They provide meals and food at about one-third of our costs."

Boynton Beach's Community Redevelopment Agency paid \$205,000 for the CCC's building at 145 NE Fourth Ave. on Jan. 31 and provided an extra \$45,000 for relocation

assistance.

"The CRA and the CCC did not enter into a formal agreement to sell the organization the CRA-owned vacant parcels at the corner of NE Ninth Avenue and NE Third Street," Michael Simon, CRA executive director, said in an email. "CRA staff recommended handling the two transactions separately in order to protect the Agency from an unforeseen circumstance such as a merger between the CCC and Feeding South Florida."

Under a deal with the CRA, the CCC will stay at its current location until the end of

June, when the merger will be completed.

The new kitchen on Park Ridge Road will be named Feeding Palm Beach County Community Caring Center. That 5,000-square-foot kitchen should be finished in mid-April, Sari Vatske, executive vice president of Feeding South Florida, told Boynton Beach commissioners on March 3.

The warehouse will be named the Community Caring Center.

Sherry Johnson, the chief executive who has been the face of the CCC for nearly three decades, announced her

retirement in late March.

In a press release, Johnson said she feels confident that her life's work has been placed in the competent hands of Feeding South Florida.

Robinson and Nancy Flinn, CCC board vice president, are serving on the organization's Palm Beach County advisory board.

"We will continue to serve the 300 frail and elderly seniors who live in the heart of Boynton Beach," Robinson said. "We operate a senior caregiving program with our own Veggie Mobile." ★



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Celebrations

70th Anniversary Gala Dinner & Dance

Boca Raton Resort & Club — Jan. 25



Boca Raton Museum of Art Executive Director Irvin Lippman announced two major philanthropic milestones at this year's event. The first was news of a \$1 million contribution by Martin and Jody Grass for educational initiatives. The second was that more than \$630,000 was raised that night — the most the museum has ever brought in. 'These two philanthropic milestones represent the generosity of Boca Raton and the personal commitment to the museum's trajectory of making a difference for the community,' Lippman said. ABOVE: (l-r) Amy Kazma, Gina Santosuoso, Stacey Packer, Carrie Rubin, Denise Zimmerman and Yvette Drucker. Photo provided

2020 Call to Heart Ball

Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa, Manalapan — Jan. 25



Caridad Center broke its fundraising record with more than \$500,000 coming in during the 31st annual event. A crowd exceeding 400 came out to support the nonprofit's mission of bringing health care to uninsured, underserved Palm Beach County families.

LEFT: Beth Hecht and Dr. Robert Hecht CENTER: Nancy and Paul Zarcadoolas RIGHT: Caridad Center Chairman Richard Retamar Photos provided by Caridad Center

Tropical Nights Gala

Ocean Ridge Town Hall — Feb. 29



The Ocean Ridge Garden Club sponsored its annual event with 100 guests who were greeted by professional James Bond impersonator John Allen, of Ocean Ridge. Hors d'oeuvres were passed, gift baskets were raffled off, a deejay provided music, and an estimated \$8,000 was raised. 'The gala is the one and only fundraising event we count on to provide the revenues we need for the philanthropic and community-service activities in which we engage as a club,' recording secretary Jackie Reed said. 'This year's gala raised the most money ever and set a new bar for future fundraising events.' ABOVE: (l-r) Gala volunteers Carol Besler, Lisa Ritota, Val Coz, Polly Joa, Mickey Austin Farley, Janet Schijns and Stella Kolb. Photo provided

Founder's Luncheon

Kravis Center, West Palm Beach — Feb. 4



The Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties welcomed more than 400 board members, donors and fund holders as well as local nonprofits, corporate sponsors and community leaders to the seventh annual event. Recent initiatives were highlighted, grant partners were recognized, and a panel discussion titled 'Power of Place — A Conversation on Housing' was featured. ABOVE: Charlotte Pelton and Jeff Stoops. Photo provided by Tracey Benson Photography

'An Evening with Christian Van Horn'

The Breakers, Palm Beach — Feb. 10



Palm Beach Opera's 2020 Gala featured a performer whose voice has filled great opera houses around the world, including The Metropolitan Opera in New York, Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Paris Opera. Van Horn performed arias as well as musical-theater pieces. The exclusive concert also featured pianist Craig Terry and was followed by a delectable dinner. More than \$600,000 was raised. ABOVE: Henry and Marsha Laufer. Photo provided

Concert

Palm Beach Atlantic University, West Palm Beach — Feb. 8



Il Circolo, The Italian Cultural Society, gathered to hear professional singers from the Benenson Young Artist Program of the Palm Beach Opera. The performance was a stunning example of outstanding talent and included arias from Giuseppe Verdi, Gioachino Rossini, Vincenzo Bellini, Gaetano Donizetti and Giacomo Puccini. A standing ovation at the end of the program attested to the members' support of the budding artists. ABOVE: Frank LoRe and Louis LoRe. Photo provided

Celebrations

Gem of an Evening Gala

Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa, Manalapan — Feb. 8



The sold-out 35th annual event, themed 'Carnival in Venice,' raised more than \$715,000 for JDRF to accelerate life-changing breakthroughs for the cure, prevention and treatment of type 1 diabetes. In addition, Rebecca DiStefano, president of the Southern Florida Chapter-Greater Palm Beach Office, announced a \$2.8 million gift from the estate of Marguerite Mae Rosner. The gift was made on behalf of 11-year old Juliet Baum, who has the disease. ABOVE: (l-r) DiStefano with Jill Baum, holding a plaque of recognition, and Juliet. **Photo provided**

Legacy Luncheon

Royal Palm Yacht & Country Club, Boca Raton — Feb. 13



Boca Helping Hands honored supporters and informed them about how the organization's leaders are working to ensure that the nonprofit service provider continues its mission through an endowment fund. The Rev. Andrew Hagen, of Advent Boca Raton and Advent Lantana and a Boca Helping Hands board member, served as the guest speaker. ABOVE: (l-r) Mary Anna Fowler, Gary Peters and Isabelle Paul. **Photo provided**

A Brazilian Carnivale

The Loft At Congress, Boca Raton — Feb. 20



Florida Atlantic University's Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters' first Culture, Arts and Society Today (CAST) party fundraiser generated more than \$100,000 for student scholarships. The event featured Brazilian entertainment and performances by the college's theater, music and dance faculty and students. 'Through the generosity of donors, we are able to support students who may otherwise not be able to attend college, including some that are the first in their families to go to college,' said Michael Horswell, the college's dean. ABOVE: (l-r) Marilyn Weinberg and Jim and Marta Batmasian. **Photo provided**

Flavors

The Addison, Boca Raton — Feb. 6



The Junior League of Boca Raton's annual culinary event involved hundreds of guests voting on their favorite dishes from participating restaurants. Patrick Duffy served as honorary executive chef. Funds raised will support the organization's focus areas of hunger, child welfare and nonprofit support. ABOVE: Kurt Harfmann and league President Cristy Stewart-Harfmann. **Photo provided**

Moon Over Morikami

Morikami Museum & Gardens, Delray Beach — Feb. 8



The outdoor venue's first gala in 10 years was a star-gazing success as nearly 200 guests strolled the exquisite grounds amid live music and taiko drumming. The al fresco evening coincided with a rare opportunity to get a close-up look at the super moon. A moon monologue was delivered by Ata Sarajedini, the gala's honorary chairman, to mark the occasion. ABOVE: Shelley and Craig Menin. **Photo provided by Tracey Benson Photography**

American Humane Hero Dog Awards

Sailfish Club of Florida, Palm Beach — Feb. 24



The nation's top dogs and human heroes gathered for a gala luncheon to honor America's most courageous canines. Seven such animals were celebrated for their extraordinary accomplishments in categories including Military Hero Dog, Law Enforcement Hero Dog and Therapy Hero Dog. Philanthropist Lois Pope, children's author Loretta Neff and veterinarian Terry Morris were recognized as well. ABOVE: Denise Rizzuto and Erika Rizzuto. **Photo provided**

Dining

Restaurants seek to carry on with carryout, delivery

By mid-March, Florida's governor had ordered all restaurants to shut their dining rooms, giving them the options to go to takeout and delivery in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

More restrictions may be ordered as things progress, but for now, that's the situation.

While some restaurants have closed, others are trying to get by, offering takeout or delivery, a weekly meal pickup, or other types of to-go food preparation.

Menus are limited in many cases, manageable for kitchens that are working with skeleton crews after layoffs. Still, they try to accommodate their diners.

Chef Jeremy Hanlon of Benny's on the Beach in Lake Worth Beach is watching the situation, and for now, offering takeout and delivery.

"It will be interesting to see what the weekend brings," he told us just after closings were announced. He's taking it "day by day right now."

He was cooking off his full menu to start.

Chef Emerson Frisbie of Delray Beach's 3rd and 3rd has created a bao-bun pop-up. Boxes of the Chinese-style filled buns, with a variety of fillings for both omnivores and vegans, are popular takeouts. He also offers spirits and wine to go.

Alcohol sales may help save restaurants. Jimmy Everett, owner of Driftwood in Boynton Beach, said being able to sell beer, wine and spirits with a meal is "huge."

Like others, he's been changing plans day to day as the closures evolve. He offers takeout meals from a limited menu that changes daily.

But the alcohol may help him hold on by a thread.

"If you think about it,



Farmer's Table is selling vacuum-packed meals that can be refrigerated for up to three weeks. **Photo provided**

alcohol is a huge part of a restaurant inventory. It's already paid for. Usually people have a lot more in stock than food, because it will keep," Everett said. If liquor stores close, it will be even more of a sales point.

Rebel House in Boca Raton is offering family meals — enough to feed four, as a pickup. "Latke'd & Loaded" was a recent choice, with brisket, latkes, carrots and peas. A gluten-free Italian meatloaf with mac 'n' cheese and Brussels sprouts were served another night. It's comfort fare for stressful times.

Josie's Ristorante in Boynton already had a takeout audience, but now it's 100% of the business. Pizzas and Italian specialties, and wines, are served for pickup or delivery.

Crazy Uncle Mike's in Boca Raton offers curbside pickup of its craft brews. Delivery Dudes also will deliver growlers and bottles from Uncle Mike's to your home.

Chains such as P.F. Chang's and Capital Grille are going to delivery and curbside service as their dining rooms are closed. At Capital Grille, steaks are still cut to order from a limited menu, and wine and spirits, including cocktails, are available to go.

Vacuum-packed meals and individual foods are available from Farmer's Table in Boca Raton. Cooked foods prepared there keep up to three weeks in the refrigerator. Diners can reheat the foods easily. The restaurant is known for its healthy cooking techniques.

Delivery services step up

The delivery companies are busier than ever before with customers deciding to order food delivery rather than risk exposure to other people. Online or phone orders, along with cashless payments, ease the process. Most delivery people will place the foods on your porch, and no human contact is needed for the transaction.

Uber Eats is the same

nationwide service as the ride-share service founded as a smartphone app. Ordering is done on the phone once you choose your own restaurant. No money changes hands.

At press time, the fees Uber usually charges restaurants to deliver for them were being waived; the diner still pays for delivery, however.

Delivery Dudes, based in Delray Beach but delivering throughout Palm Beach and Broward counties, has added the Dudes Bodega, available via a phone app or at www.deliverydudes.com/restaurants/the-dukes-bodega-delray-beach-fl-8690. Drivers will pick up and deliver restaurant meals, foods and pet items from the grocery, prescriptions and other drugstore items, and alcohol. ID is required at your end.

Grub Hub is another nationwide service that handles many chain restaurants; it's found as an app or at www.grubhub.com.

Many groceries such as Publix and Aldi, and stores such as Target and Walmart that carry food, will shop for you and have it ready for pickup through their websites. You also can order through delivery services such as Shipt, which delivers for Publix. It's available as a phone app or online.

Tips for ordering

Here are some tips for ordering takeout, pickup and delivery:

Make sure your favorite restaurant is offering takeout. Some may have shut down after all. Support those that are open, if possible, by passing the word around on social media, and leaving good feedback on their sites.

Plan ahead. If you can order a day or more ahead for

lunch or dinner, it helps the restaurant plan its output. It can't afford to have much food left over. Popular restaurants may run out of nightly specials early on.

Get an estimated time of delivery as you order, and ask if the restaurant has a thermal bag for delivery to keep the foods hot. Allow extra time for a large order, and realize the independent drivers may come from elsewhere to pick up the foods and not wait at your restaurant. If you have multiple restaurants as pickups and order at rush hour (5:30-7:30 p.m.), expect an even longer wait.

If possible, order directly from the restaurant; some delivery spots and menu sites have fees charged to restaurants. You still may have to pay for delivery, but the restaurant doesn't pay extra for delivery service.

Don't expect fast-food pricing just because it's takeout. The overhead is much greater, even with smaller staffs. There's the cost of quality food, pay for chefs who are prepping and cooking, workers packing, and the packaging materials. It adds up.

Don't forget ethnic restaurants that need to stay afloat. Their overhead may not be as much, but neither are their profits. Support those restaurants and small sandwich and sub shops in your community that you usually frequent.

Just as if you were in the restaurants, let them know ahead of time of any serious dietary restrictions on your orders, but don't expect the wide variety of substitutes from a full menu. Don't harass the staff about it, either; you'll look silly.

If you prefer, ask your driver to leave your food on a porch or patio; make sure you are explicit with how to contact you once it's set out. If there's a chance you'll be indisposed at the time of delivery, put a cooler outside to prevent insects from getting to the food first.

If you're ordering groceries or fresh produce, be prepared with several substitute choices, because all shoppers are facing emptier shelves. Also expect a long delivery time — up to three days as the number of delivery orders soars.

Tip your drivers, especially if you've asked them to shop for you. They are frazzled these days and putting themselves out there on the front lines so you don't have to.



Jan Norris is a food writer who can be reached at nativefla@gmail.com

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An April without the arts

Local organizations hopeful even as future looks bleak

By Jan Engoren
ArtsPaper Contributing Writer

When the Cannes Film Festival is canceled and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City is projected to lose \$100 million after closing down because of the coronavirus, the impact on the arts and culture all over the world is significant.

And Palm Beach County is no exception.

While many sectors are suffering, arts organizations and cultural institutions are particularly vulnerable.

The Cultural Council for Palm Beach County, citing a 2017 arts and economic prosperity study, said the cultural sector has created over 14,000 full-time jobs in the Palm Beaches, and arts and cultural organizations contribute over \$633 million in economic impact to the area.

According to CEO David Lawrence, even this early in the game, dozens of Palm Beach County cultural organizations have lost millions of dollars in revenue from canceled performances, lost fundraising galas and productions, not to mention lost revenue from ticket sales.

"Many of these organizations have little resources to cover those losses. Individual artists — especially those in the performing arts — have lost critical income that they were counting on," Lawrence said.

Also of concern to the council is the loss and future loss of tourism dollars to Palm Beach County, and Lawrence said the county is already feeling the impact.

Kelly Smallridge, president and CEO of the Business Development Board of Palm Beach County, said the county currently has no plans to provide economic relief.

See ARTS on page AT11

Our writers' lament: What we'll miss most of what we're missing

By ArtsPaper Staff

The coronavirus pandemic, coming as it did in the heart of the arts season in South Florida, almost literally stopped *Palm Beach ArtsPaper* critics in their tracks. And it's not just the arts events themselves that they miss. Here's a roundup of mini-essays from some of our critics as they take a look at a season that stopped:

Camaraderie vanished, too, as theaters closed

In just a few days, the South Florida landscape, as well as that of the nation and world, has seen its performing arts vanish, attributed to a new, instant cliché, "an abundance of caution" over the highly

infectious coronavirus.

With the prospect of no audience, theater companies have postponed or canceled their spring productions, leaving previously contracted actors, designers and crew members without jobs and theatergoers without the emotional sustenance that the arts can provide.

In the more than half a century that I have been encouraging — and more than occasionally admonishing — theater companies, this will mark the longest period of time that I have not viewed live theater and written about my reactions to it.

What will I miss the most? We were heading into an extremely promising part of the

local theater season, including Slow Burn's *Ragtime*, Zoetic Stage's *A Little Night Music*, Palm Beach Dramaworks' *Light in the Piazza* and FAU Theater Lab's *To Fall in Love*. Most, though not all of these, will likely resurface later this year. But even those shows to which I was not looking forward represented the community camaraderie of theatergoing that keeps the area's arts scene so vital and vibrant.

Meanwhile, scroll the internet for its profusion of full-length productions of shows, either for free or minimal cost. True, they are a poor substitute for live theater, but they will suffice until we are back together experiencing the real thing. — *Hap Erstein*

Concert cancellations also ended my gigs

How do I miss the arts? Let me count the ways.

As a freelance writer specializing in music, I was overjoyed to write a feature about, and interview members of, jazz/fusion veterans Brand X to promote the band's March 25 show at the Funky Biscuit in Boca Raton. I'd discovered the act in the late 1970s, and couldn't wait to see the world's greatest electric fretless bassist, Brit Percy Jones, and write a review of the concert. The wait will obviously continue for an unforeseen time.

There are countless other shows I was looking forward to, by touring artists like Japanese jazz pianist Yoko Miwa at the

Arts Garage in Delray Beach on March 27. And no one can predict what will become of the June 6 concert at the Mizner Amphitheater in Boca Raton by British progressive rock godfathers King Crimson, with openers the Zappa Band.

And as a professional musician myself, eight of my 10 performances in March were canceled. I feel lucky to have had two that weren't.

April will be even worse. I'm lucky to have a wonderful girlfriend who is totally on board with live music being my mistress. And thankfully, she's also OK with the knowledge that I miss that mistress terribly. — *Bill Meredith*

See WRITERS on page AT10

Film

Filmmaker battles expectations, elements to bring ‘Wendy’ to life

By Hap Erstein
ArtsPaper Film Writer

When your feature film debut becomes an international sensation, pulling in four Oscar nominations, the conventional wisdom is to quickly produce a follow-up to cash in on the first movie's success.

That is precisely what director-screenwriter Benh Zeitlin did *not* do after 2012's *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, a remarkable film about climate change in the Louisiana bayou as seen through the eyes of a



6-year-old. Instead, he tackled his dream project, a retelling of *Peter Pan* with an emphasis on the Wendy character.

He knew it would be an arduous shoot, set partially on the side of an active volcano with a cast of young novice actors. In fact, it took seven years to complete, but the results — titled simply *Wendy*, which opened Feb. 28 — are as original and compelling as his earlier film.

Zeitlin's desire to make



Devin France stars in *Wendy*, director Benh Zeitlin's vision of the Peter Pan story as seen through the young heroine's eyes. Photo provided

Wendy goes back to his childhood, a project he long talked about tackling with his sister Eliza, who became the film's co-writer. "When we were kids, we dreamed of retelling this story in our own way. It was always our dream project. And we also knew that it was the most difficult choice that I could imagine I could make," he says. "So, on the tail of *Beasts* it was like, 'We're finally going to get this opportunity to really make whatever we want, however we want to make it.' So we sort of jumped on it. I thought I would never make this film."

Cast in the title role is Devin France, 12, whose

character hops a freight train that transports her to Zeitlin's version of Neverland. A complete novice at acting, France was just a 7-year-old second-grader when she learned of the role from a handbill circulated by the film's casting director. She auditioned and won the part of Wendy, says Zeitlin, because she had a quality about her that was "exactly what I had envisioned all these years ago."

Based on the success of *Beasts*, Zeitlin got a first-look production contract with Searchlight Pictures that allows him to continue making films his way, but with a financial safety net. Crucial to his

process is a dedication to being open to momentary experiments as they present themselves.

"It was a battle to maintain this process, for sure," says Zeitlin. "But it was an absolute necessity." Zeitlin took his cast and crew to shoot at an active volcano on the Caribbean island of Montserrat in 2017. "If I tried to find a more treacherous site to film at than this, I don't think I could," says Zeitlin, with pride of achievement in his voice.

"I call what I do guerrilla filmmaking. And with the studio backing me, I was able to do it on a grand scale," he says. "It felt like what we were able

to do on *Beasts*, but on a giant canvas. All of my work so far you could call being in a kind of Neverland. The difference this time is people were aware of what we were doing and eager to see the results."

As Zeitlin readily concedes, he has a personal identification with Peter Pan — a disinterest in growing up. "In a way, that explains the career I chose, or that chose me," he says. "Both movies were hard to make with a lot of built-in challenges, but that's the adventure of filmmaking. I wouldn't want it any other way. Because I retained a childlike perspective, my sense of wonder and curiosity, I was able to make *Wendy* and see its events from a child's point of view."

With his seven-year journey with *Wendy* coming to fruition with the film's release, Zeitlin looks back on it with awe and amazement.

"Bringing *Wendy* to the world will be as mind-boggling to me as anybody else, I think. This shoot was so challenging, it could have gone wrong so often, but that is what made it worth doing," he says. "Whether or not people like it, well, that is out of my control."

WRITERS

Continued from page 9

Missing the rituals that are part of art season's joy

When I think about what I miss about the arts, the first thing that comes to mind is Ritual.

The standard operating procedure for a classical music concert has been churchlike for a couple centuries now, as people quietly gather at some hospitable venue to take in a couple hours of inspiration. To the outsider, it seems perhaps stiff and pompous, but to those of us who cherish it, it's a good environment to take in the music and find yourself thinking not just about sonic thrills or beauty, but about the big questions that good art raises, and that we as a species cannot do without asking.

And we get there through these rituals — the program notes, the silence between movements of a large work, the feeling of satisfaction as the concertmaster comes on stage moments before an orchestral work begins. That hits home for me more than just in being a spectator: In addition to my work as a journalist and educator, I am a promoter, having co-founded a series of concerts featuring contemporary music by living South Florida composers (Zimmermann's Café Chamber Music).

We have rituals at Zimmermann's, too, including the food we serve and the way we solicit audience feedback, but I am always struck most

of all how receptive those audiences are to a new artistic experience, to hearing something they've never heard before, to assess a fresh work of composition. It's that interaction I miss the most, that silent engagement as a human being with something aspirational, something created out of dark times and light, something that in its very existence suggests an endless possibility.

But maybe that's what we need to look to in these perilous days: Artistic creativity is nothing less than the sound of hope. — Greg Stepanich

Opera at home isn't quite the same as on stage

To paraphrase Gabriel Maria Marquez, it's love (of the arts) in the time of coronavirus. Tough love, indeed.

More specifically, in 2020, it's the unique thrill of the live musical experience that will be missed the most. I can still listen at home to a CD of a Schubert song cycle; or watch *Don Giovanni* on DVD. But it's not the same as being right there in the theater.

I was particularly looking forward to Florida Grand Opera's now-canceled production of *Rigoletto*. The title part had been assigned to Todd Thomas, one of today's real "Verdi baritones." And soprano Jessica E. Jones, a recent alumna of the company's Young Artist program who has already become a polished, subtle artist, was to have taken on her largest assignment to date as the opera's hapless

heroine, Gilda.

Speaking of high-powered baritones, the formidable Michael Chioldi, a regular at Palm Beach Opera, was scheduled to perform the title role of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* in the Kravis Center at the end of March. Another loss for serious opera fans.

Seraphic Fire's February Enlightenment Festival was so rewarding that I could hardly wait for this accomplished ensemble to produce a complete *Messiah*, mid-April. That too, sadly, is unlikely to take place — at least, not this season.

So, it's back to our own devices. Met Opera on Demand is streaming free encore presentations, culled from its invaluable Live in HD transmissions, while the company is closed. Look out for your favorite operas there. — Robert Croan

Performing arts were in trouble before pandemic

Where do we go from here? Has technology made us fat, dumb and not-so-happy? We have become addicted to a stream of incessant information. Consequentially, and methodically, we overdose on it, caring less and less whether the accounts are true or false.

Tethered to our devices, we overindulge, oblivious of wasting the most valuable gift of all — time.

I've been concerned about the future of the performing arts for quite some time; so whenever I go to the theater, I always look around to see

exactly who still makes the effort nowadays to attend a performance. With too few exceptions, it's always the same: A sea of gray- and white-haired heads whose numerous eyeglasses reflect the lights of the stage.

But one thing has changed. As soon as the house lights come on, all those heads are now bowed as if in prayer, illuminated by the screens of their handheld devices. No longer do they take a moment to savor or reflect on what they've seen live onstage. There's no shared conversation with their companions; instead they allow themselves to be sucked back into the black hole of cyberspace. If seniors are this addicted, what hope exists that young people will ever start attending performances?

Just before everything was shut down by the pandemic, I happened to ask my students after class exactly how many performances they attend a year. Keep in mind these are very talented ballet dancers on a full-time professional track. Some looked away. Some shrugged and smiled. "Maybe one," was the answer as they edged toward their dance bags to check their iPhones.

With what is happening now with social distancing, will human interaction in the future happen mostly on devices rather than in person? If so, that will be a death sentence for the performing arts, making it yet another victim of COVID-19. — Tara Mitton Catao

Art world may be in crisis, but art will go on

"Just as ripples spread out when a single pebble is dropped into water, the actions of individuals can have far-reaching effects," says the Dalai Lama.

Leave it to the Lama to know this. Someone ate something exotic in China and shut down the world. You wouldn't think this was possible in this overpopulated, advanced culture, yet it has happened.

It used to be more difficult to equate global trends with the local art scene, but the ease of travel and money has made this happen here in ways now both exhilarating and terrifying. While the places to see art are closed, the places where art is being made are ramping up.

As the wave of closure and cancellation notices flooded into my inbox over the last weeks, I was still reeling from the searing, introspective artist self-portrait show *Eye to I* at the Boca Museum.

While I miss openings and seeing new work, I know there will be greater work down the line, just as diamonds are made from coal under pressure.

My Pulitzer Prize-winning art critic friend Jerry Saltz says, "Art will go on. It always has. All we know is that everything is different; we don't know how, only that it is. The unimaginable is now reality."

Hard? Yes. Life-changing? Possibly. End of the world? Nah.

Hey artists, get back to work. We'll see you soon. — Sandra Schulman

ARTS

Continued from page 9

"If we can come out of this pandemic in a few months, the stronger arts and cultural organizations will survive and register a blip on their radar screens, but smaller venues are already struggling and may not make it out of this epidemic," Smallridge said.

"Here in Palm Beach County, the arts and culture community faces a challenge with their ticket revenue and donations," she said. "If this continues much longer, businesses and the arts will have to figure out a Plan B."

From figures projected by the Washington-based nonprofit Americans for the Arts, financial losses as of March 15 were estimated to be \$3.2 billion, since the first U.S. case of COVID-19 was reported on Jan. 20.

The \$3.2 billion figure includes actual revenue losses from admissions (ticket sales, subscriptions, memberships), non-admissions income (gift shop sales, sponsorships, contributed income), and unexpected expenditures (new cleaning and disinfecting protocols, adoption of new technologies, cancellation fees).

The Society of the Four Arts in Palm Beach was one of the first cultural organizations to shutter its doors, followed by a steady stream of the county's other performing groups and museums, even as Gov. Ron DeSantis was issuing orders closing restaurants, bars and the state's beaches.

Annabel Russell, executive director of The Symphonia, a chamber orchestra based in Boca Raton that canceled the last concert of its season, laments the loss of income for her musicians, most of them gig workers.

"We're all reeling from the abrupt end to our season," Russell said. "But artists are strong and resilient people, and if there's a possible bright spot it's that this comes at the tail end of 'season' here in South Florida, and we're hopeful we can have a successful 2020-21 season."

Marilynn Wick of the Wick Theatre in Boca Raton announced March 14 the opening and closing weekend of *A Chorus Line*.



Wick

"This is the first time I've ever had an opening and closing gala the same weekend," she said. Upbeat, Wick has already rescheduled the show for April 23, pushing back *Nunsense* to September and said she's in good company.

"I'm reassured that we're not alone," she said. "Isn't there a song like that?"

She's optimistic that next year's subscription sales will hit 4,000, as compared to this year's 3,700. She's encouraging patrons to donate tickets from



The cast of *A Chorus Line*, which played for one weekend at the Wick Theatre in Boca Raton before the shutdown was announced. Photo by Amy Pasquantonio

William Hayes, artistic director of Palm Beach Dramaworks, which will celebrate its 20th anniversary next year, is already brainstorming with his staff about how to move forward.

The Light in the Piazza, Craig Lucas and Adam Guettel's Tony-award winning musical, was scheduled to run this month and has now been postponed.

The set was built, the custom-made costumes were delivered, the 14 actors in the production were ready to go, when the bottom dropped out. Hayes offered two weeks severance to his cast and made no-cost housing available to them. He hopes the staff will remain available and committed to the show when it can run.

This season was one of the company's best and box office sales were up 20%, according to Hayes.

To continue, Hayes said, "We need to do some creative thinking, be proactive, redefine what we do and think outside the box, including how to make use of technology."

In addition, Dramaworks has canceled the summer production of Jason Robert Brown's *Last Five Years*, but Hayes hopes Kenneth Lonergan's *Lobby Hero*, and *The Light in the Piazza* can be produced before the calendar year ends.

"We're fortunate that we've been fiscally conservative and operated in the black the last 19 years," Hayes said. "We have some money in reserve and will most assuredly be dipping into this reserve fund."

"I hope our patrons and clientele will recognize that we are struggling and consider our long history of being fiscally responsible and understand we have no choice at this point," he said.

"We hope that over time our patrons and donors will step up to the plate and show their support," Hayes said.

missed performances back to the theater, as are many local theater companies including Dramaworks in West Palm Beach and Primal Forces at the Sol Theatre in Boca Raton.

"We enjoy producing live theater and providing the best cultural experience," said Wick. "We're just having a longer intermission than usual."

Nearby at Primal Forces Theatre, which suspended the run of its March show, Kenneth Lin's *Warrior Class*, artistic director Keith Garsson said he

was grateful to have a smaller venue and a cast of three for this production.

"Because we're a small theater, I was able to call our attendees and let them know we were canceling performances," said Garsson. Fifty people came to opening night March 11.

"My heart goes out to bigger theaters," he said. "For us, it's not as big a disruption as it is for the Wick or the Maltz Jupiter theatres."

Luckily, he said the theater has a good landlord who may accommodate Primal Forces, but if the productions are rescheduled for summer, they may run into the summer camp season at the Sol Theatre.

"We hope the virus peaks early and we can salvage the end of our season," Garsson said, "But, in the real world, we just hope everyone stays safe."

Farther north, the Maltz Jupiter Theatre postponed its upcoming production of the musical *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* until the fall, originally slated for March 17 to April 5, while it was in the final stages of a three-week rehearsal process.

Box office staffers have been contacting ticketholders directly regarding options for their tickets, according to Andrew Kato, artistic director.

"Nothing is more important than the health and safety of the Maltz Jupiter Theatre's patrons, employees, volunteers and visiting artists, and postponing our next production is the responsible action to take," said Kato.

"While this is devastating to us to have to make changes, we understand the significance of acting swiftly to avoid the possible spread of COVID-19 and make sure our community remains safe," he said.

In the same boat as the other regional nonprofit theaters, Kato is working with unions, tradespeople, staff, crew, musicians and artists to coordinate details for the fall's productions.

Kato noted that the economic repercussions of postponing, canceling or reshuffling the productions are significant. By the time the production is canceled, the organization has already invested an enormous amount of time and money into its creation that it will not be able to recoup.

"The best way for patrons to help organizations like the Maltz Jupiter Theatre is to consider donating their tickets back to the theater for a tax-deductible donation or making a new contribution," he said.

"Think of it as an investment in our future," Kato said. "It is in critical times like these that we ask our supporters to stand by and believe in our work. Most nonprofits do not have the huge reserves to shoulder these catastrophic losses and we ask that the public be mindful of that as we journey through this difficult time."

"We will get through this together, and we'd like to thank our patrons in advance for their support," Kato said.

Locally, the Cultural Council is looking to address these concerns by initiating strategies to support creative professionals with small grants to help with lost income.

The council plans to extend its drive-market campaign, MOSAIC (Month of Shows, Art, Ideas and Culture), to funnel resources into advertising, activations, public relations and other support efforts through the summer/early fall.

It will coordinate with Brightline to attract visits from Broward and Miami-Dade, and offer hotel packages through Discover the Palm Beaches to encourage visits, staycations, and additional tourism.

Additionally, the council is working with some of its board members and other community leaders to create a task force that will address these recovery efforts from a national, state and local level.

On the national level, Americans for the Arts has put together a number of demands for Congress to act, including designating a minimum of \$4 billion — to be distributed through the National Endowment for the Arts — to help offset losses in

the nonprofit arts industry and to expand federal programs to ensure artists, entrepreneurs, and small businesses can utilize business interruption relief.

The group requested making additional sums available to the artists and art organizations in the for-profit arena.

Thanks to the \$2 trillion emergency stimulus package passed by Congress during the last week in March, \$300 million in economic relief will go to support nonprofit cultural organizations, including museums, libraries, public broadcasting, and state and local arts agencies.

Funds have been allocated as well for independent contractors such as actors, musicians and artists in nonprofit organizations and small businesses, as well as those working in the creative economies.

"Our research shows that the coronavirus is already having a devastating effect on arts organizations and artists," said Robert L. Lynch, Americans for the Arts president and CEO. The nonprofit arts sector is a \$166 billion industry and it is suffering.

"There will be a measurable economic and social ripple effect that will be felt in every city and town as arts organizations and performances close, leading to further losses for restaurants, bars, parking facilities, hotels, and much more."

"The economic damage will be in the billions," Lynch said.

And yet some remain hopeful.



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Books

Delray author's debut thriller aims for 'Homeland' territory

Sandblast, by Al Pessin, 422 pp., Kensington Books, \$9.99.

By Sharon Geltner
Contributing Writer

Goodbye, *Homeland*. Hello, *Sandblast*. Showtime's hit series *Homeland* ends in May. But covert ops fans can turn to *Sandblast*, the first book in an action, adventure and suspense trilogy by Al Pessin, who covered the world's hot spots from Afghanistan to Washington, D.C., before retiring in 2015 and moved to Delray Beach.

The plot: After terrorists blow up a plane carrying the secretary of defense, the Defense Intelligence Agency creates Operation: Sandblast.

The top-secret asset is California-raised, Afghan-American Lt. Faraz Abdallah. His heritage and military training make him the perfect undercover agent, but can he fool the Taliban? Then can he uncover its terror plots and assassinate the leaders?

The president is on board. "We're facing our toughest threat since 9/11, and if we don't handle it right, we could end up living in a very different world, a much more hostile one."

Besides the intrepid Abdallah, the other hero is military and security expert Dr. Bridget Davenport, in a role similar to Carrie Mathison.

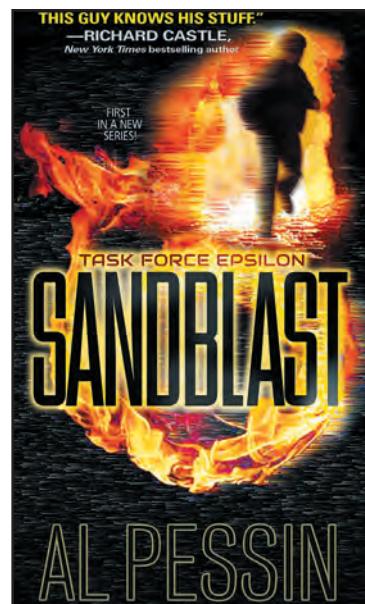
The book moves fast and the complex plot makes sense. Pessin is most persuasive describing how tough it is for Faraz to maintain two identities at once. He has to fit in, quote the Koran, remember his emergency extraction code, avoid recruitment as a suicide bomber and not be subsumed by the Taliban.

The Afghan village scenes are plausible, and Pessin offers many authentic details of the Pentagon.

Bridget's relationship with an officer is the book's only false note, such as when the two debate whether to call each other sugar pie or sweet cakes.

Otherwise, *Sandblast* reads like the real deal.

Pessin was a journalist at Voice of America for 39 years,



15 of them overseas. His first foreign assignment was Hong Kong in 1984. He's also worked in Pakistan, Guantanamo Bay, Ukraine (in flak jacket and helmet), Jerusalem, London and New York. He enjoyed his first six-month tour in Islamabad so much, he offered to stay longer.

One of Pessin's proudest moments came in 1989, when China expelled him for covering the Tiananmen Square massacre. He also reported from the White House and the Pentagon, traveling with two defense secretaries to Iraq and Afghanistan.

"[Years later], when I returned for a visit to Islamabad, I went to the old market and it was tense. All eyes were on me. I was the only foreigner there."

Pessin speaks some French, Spanish, Hebrew, Arabic, Mandarin and Cantonese. "I wanted to know if the side conversation was discussing lunch or about kidnapping me and selling me to Hamas," he said.

He said in Gaza and the West Bank, "Being Jewish was never an issue. No one asked. I felt they didn't know."

Pessin was inspired to write *Sandblast* during his six years at the Pentagon, when he came across an outdoor naturalization ceremony for people who joined the military as legal residents and were then being sworn in as citizens. Their happy and proud families were dressed in colorful dress from their home countries.

"I thought about what sort of unique capabilities they bring to our military. They are our generation's new Navajo code talkers [from World War II.]"

Sharon Geltner is the author of *Charity Bashed*, available on Amazon and in bookstores.

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Reviews

Excellent offerings from the before-times

Here are edited reviews of performances that occurred in early March. For complete reviews, see palmbeachartspace.com

A Chorus Line (March 14, Wick Theatre)

This production of *A Chorus Line* is arguably the best work in the Boca Raton troupe's seven seasons of operation.

Of course, it had a head start with the nine-time Tony Award- and Pulitzer Prize-winning show that strips the musical of its usual colorful sets and costumes for a look backstage at chorus dancer auditions led by Zach, a somewhat sadistic director-choreographer who uses his power to pry into the lives of his cast hopefuls.

Still, it is a difficult show to pull off well, but you would never know it from the pitch-perfect Wick production, staged by Mitzi Hamilton, a veteran of the show's original London company and later of the Broadway cast, as well as the inspiration for the character Val of "Dance: 10, Looks: 3" renown. Hamilton is a keeper of the flame of the late Michael Bennett's iconic direction, keeping it alive in subsequent productions like this one.

From the opening cattle call, which winnows the wannabes down to 17, to their apprehensive poses in a line waiting for their interviews, to the ethereal "At the Ballet," to the raucous "Hello 12, Hello 13, Hello Love," to the finale "One," in which they become the autonomous unit Zach has been rehearsing them to be, Hamilton crafts her cast into an ensemble on a par with any tour of *A Chorus Line* that has ever danced its way to the area.

There is not a weak link in the Wick cast, but certain roles are natural standouts. As Cassie, the director's former girlfriend who failed to catch on in Hollywood, Jessica Lee Goldyn is stunning in the narcissistic solo of anguish, "The Music and the Mirror," as graceful and powerful as any performer I've ever seen in the role. And Jonathan Fleites is heart-breaking with Paul's monologue of his days as a female impersonator, based on the life on the show's co-writer, Nicholas Dante.

Emily Tarallo is probably too young for the role of chorus veteran Sheila, but she conveys all of the character's hard-bitten attitude. And Jawan Hayes is always worth watching as Richie, the former kindergarten teacher.

The trick now will be keeping this cast together until the production can return in late April. Those theatergoers intrepid enough to attend in mid-March were treated to a remarkable show that more deserve to experience.

—Hap Erstein



YouTube sensation Postmodern Jukebox closed Festival of the Arts Boca in rousing style. Photo by StoryWorkz Photography

Postmodern Jukebox (March 8, Festival of the Arts Boca)

The final evening of this year's festival at the Mizner Park Amphitheater in Boca Raton was damn cold, with a biting wind.

Still, the not-too-comfortable folding chairs on the amphitheater lawn were nearly filled, thanks, in large part, to the appearance of Postmodern Jukebox, an ensemble of genre-bending singers and musicians known for taking songs originally done in one style and presenting them in a totally different way.

A reworked "Thriller" (Michael Jackson) was among the offerings. Michael Cunio (who introduced himself as "Coolio") did the vocal honors and immediately notched the audience's attention.

Known widely as PMJ, the jazz and soul-fueled troupe is a rotating musical collective founded by arranger and pianist Scott Bradlee in 2011, when he began shooting videos with friends from college in his basement apartment in Astoria, Queens.

In less than a decade, PMJ has amassed more than 1.2 billion YouTube views and 4 million subscribers. When Cunio asked the audience how many had seen the group before or were fans, at least half applauded.

Since debuting, Postmodern Jukebox has featured 70 performers and has toured six continents.

PMJ brought some fine lady vocalists, including Tia Simone, a soulful dynamo who hit some high notes that shook the stage lighting. She, Hannah Gill and Brielle Von Hugel all walked to their assigned spots in a variety of different, elegant costumes.

The audience largely chilled through the early songs, including Taylor Swift's "I Knew You Were Trouble," given a bouncy beat by Cunio, Simone and Gill.

In the more-intense second half, PMJ twisted a couple of tunes with remarkable agility and ability. Meghan Trainor's "All About That Bass" was an up-tempo success.

Postmodern Jukebox closed out with an encore tracing the evolution of the *Friends* TV theme, "I'll Be There for You."

—Dale King

Swallow (opened March 6)

It's about time somebody made a movie about pica, the psychological condition, first described by Hippocrates, of habitually consuming non-nutritive objects: soil, paint, glass, needles. Because of pica's generic intersection between psychodrama and body horror, one might have thought that somebody would have been David Cronenberg.

But *Swallow* is the work of a new voice — Carlo Mirabella-Davis, in his debut as writer-director — whose approach is no less fastidious, and no less squirm-inducing. While his ear for dialogue could use some occasional polish, his freshman effort is auspicious and intuitive, seeing past the surface of his protagonist's destructive condition into the cluttered belly of the matter: a controlling patriarchy whose micro-oppressions drives the behavior in the first place.

Haley Bennett, in a performance of career-catapulting depth, bravery and ambiguity, plays Hunter, a housewife who appears to be enjoying a charmed life of privilege. Her husband Richie (Austin Sowell) is an upwardly mobile businessman with wealthy parents, whose generosity paid for their comfortable New York manse.

When she learns that she's pregnant, it is cause for much celebration from Richie and her in-laws, if not Hunter herself.

There are reasons for her reticence. Richie is an inattentive, emotionally absent Type A male. Hunter's in-laws (Elizabeth Marvel and David Rasche) are callous and passive-aggressive to a point of unnecessary extremity.

Hunter is a textbook case for pica, which occurs most frequently in pregnant or postpartum women, or in those with physical or mental impairments. Hunter checks off both boxes.

But *Swallow* endeavors for a deeper, more psychologically astute depiction — one that, for Hunter, becomes synonymous with a drug addiction.

Swallow missteps in its need to date Hunter's disease to a psychological trauma from her childhood and then resolve it a bit too tidily.

—ArtsPaper staff

SCHOOL

Continued from page AT1

vibrant future; residents to each other; community members and visitors to arts, culture and other activities."

The 28,009-square-foot high school building at 125 E. Ocean Ave. was neglected and vacant since 1990, and in need of some major TLC. Assistant City Manager Colin Groff, who is in charge of the project and gave a tour of the site in mid-March, said it took at least eight months of mold remediation, and cleaning up mildew, asbestos and lead paint before restoration of the property.

When finished, the school renovation alone is estimated to come in at \$11.3 million, according to Groff.

"We want the community involved in using this building and all the activities we have planned — from art, dance, yoga, karate and fencing classes to rotating public art installations," Groff said. "We want to bring people downtown to eat, shop, have fun and play."

"We are re-creating downtown Boynton Beach," he says. "This building will be engaged 24/7. This will be the place to be."

Renovations were designed to keep the historical aspects of the 1927 structure intact, as the building is listed on the Boynton Beach Register of Historic Places. Efforts have been made to preserve the bell tower; historic window shapes (bringing them up to code and adding hurricane impact); and the school's crest, original art on the facade (torches depicting enlightenment and learning) and a shield with laurels representing achievement.

But everything else has been upgraded for modern conveniences — Wi-Fi, air conditioning, elevators and ADA accessibility. Even the bathrooms were redesigned as replicas of the originals with updated hardware and facilities.

Diane Valentini, who will manage the new cultural arts center, says it will have an on-site Fred Astaire Dance Studio, "every art class you can imagine," and will work with the Lake Worth Playhouse to bring live performances to the venue.

Outdoors, a patio space will be available to rent for events, Groff says, and the grounds will include a family adventure park with themes tied to the city's history. Examples include a ship, a 25-by-12-foot butterfly representing local endangered butterfly species, a large jellyfish figure, a Flagler train and a statue of the Barefoot Mailman.

The "pride and joy" of the renovation, says Groff, is the old school auditorium/gym, with its eight original Dade County pine beams. As one of the largest auditoriums in South Palm Beach County, it will seat 300 at tables and 500 in other chairs. It will be the future home of the city's



Brian Martin installs ceiling tiles in a second-floor classroom of the old Boynton Beach High School, which has been updated with new electrical, plumbing and air-conditioning systems.

Photos by Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star



Assistant City Manager Colin Groff discusses plans for the exterior of the 1927 high school building, which will be the centerpiece of Boynton's Town Square.

renowned biennial kinetic art events.

"We're very proud of it," Groff says.

Plans call for staff to move into the building as soon as a few months and to initiate programs over the summer.

The new City Hall is scheduled to open July 21, when construction moves to the outer edges of the project, including building a parking garage, completing the landscaping and breaking ground on a hotel.

Eventually the complex will include retail stores, restaurants, residential units and a new fire station and library.

City seeks donors

Groff says that the city is looking for donors and that naming rights are available to individuals, organizations, businesses and foundations that would like to support additional technology for the auditorium and other rooms.



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Diane Valentini, who will manage the new cultural arts center, says it will have art classes and displays and live performances.

Mailman's Adventure Trail will cost \$20,000.

Groff emphasized that the building complex will be secure and safe. "Our residents have made the right decision in going forward with these plans and should be very proud of their new building and downtown," he said.

"Bring your mom, grab a cup of coffee at City Hall, drop the kids off at dance or the library, park once and take advantage of everything there will be to offer in our new downtown," said city spokeswoman Eleanor Krusell. "This is an inclusive complex with something for everybody." ★

Rights start at \$1,500 for the "Wish Upon a Starfish," a 3-D graphic starfish, and go up to \$2 million to have your name on the Schoolhouse Children's Museum building.

Naming opportunities are available for all aspects of Town Square. In the Children's Museum, new features include "Water World," an interactive coastal and mangrove exhibit, available for \$150,000, and the "Pepper Patch," an interactive farming exhibit, for \$125,000.

Reflections and Synesthesia, kinetic art pieces on the plaza, can bear your name for \$300,000 and \$100,000, respectively.

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Theater

Dogs paw for the chance to be Annie's shaggy sidekick

By Larry Keller

This was no cattle call, but a canine casting search at the Lake Worth Playhouse.

The March 8 audition was for the role of Sandy, Little Orphan Annie's dog in the musical *Annie*. Only four animal aspirants vied for the job.

The play's timing is notable. The Lake Worth Playhouse opened in 1924 as a movie theater — the same year that the comic strip *Little Orphan Annie* debuted. The first performance of *Annie* on Broadway wasn't until 1977.

Now *Annie* is in local theater limbo with events at the playhouse suspended indefinitely because of the coronavirus. These are gloomy days coping with a pandemic, but Annie would have understood. She sang:

*The sun'll come out
Tomorrow
So ya gotta hang on
'Til Tomorrow*

Director Cathy Randazzo-Olsen and artistic director Daniel Eilola were seeking a midsize dog, preferably sandy-colored — to match the character's name. And — in keeping with Sandy's personality — a loner, yet friendly.

Randazzo-Olsen had the dogs' owners demonstrate their pups' aptitude to respond



The winning dog was Parker, a 2-year-old golden retriever who gave Lake Worth Playhouse artistic director Dan Eilola a sniff during his audition for the role of Sandy. At right is Reese Lores, 11, one of two actresses who will play Annie in the musical. Seated are stage manager Lara Palmer and Andrea Gershbein, Reese's mother. **Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star**

to a few hand signals that could be given offstage. And she tested them on their ability to respond to a voice command — "Come, Sandy" — because the dog needs to respond correctly when told by Annie to come to her.

Reese Lores, 11, of Palm Beach Gardens, one of two youngsters slated to play Annie, tried out the verbal command with each dog.

The first hopeful hound to audition went to Reese when called, then flopped at her feet

for a belly rub. "She's a people person and loves little girls," her owner said. Clearly.

Next, a Bedlington terrier named Cha Cha responded to Reese's command to come to her but walked past her — twice. And while Cha Cha was cute as a lamb and resembled one, the 3-year-old had neither the size nor coloring of Sandy.

The youngest candidate was Bailey, a 4½-month-old golden retriever owned by Randazzo-Olsen's sister. Bailey was remarkably good at such a tender age, but would she be overwhelmed in a production with 20 adults and 17 children?

Then there was Parker, a 2-year-old golden retriever.

With his tail wagging like a high-speed windshield wiper, he was already demanding star treatment, parading around the rehearsal room expecting and receiving a pat from each person there. His Lake Worth agent — um, owner — Mike Gantner watched.

After a couple of false starts, as well as brief foray out an open door to Lake Avenue — perhaps to sniff out paparazzi — Parker returned and came to Reese when she called him.

"I think Parker probably had the most personality," Randazzo-Olsen said afterward. "We'd really have to work with him. I think he is our best bet."

And so, Parker got the job.

The original theatrical Sandy missed only 14 of 2,377 performances on Broadway in a nearly six-year run that ended in 1983, his owner and trainer told *The New York Times*. He was hours away from being euthanized at an animal shelter when he was rescued and found his calling as a performing pooch. He lived to age 16.

Parker will have a far less arduous schedule if and when *Annie* is presented. Still it will be no walk in the dog park. With rehearsals and 15 actual performances during the play's run — which had been planned for April 9-26 — he will be practicing and performing at the theater around 50 times, Randazzo-Olsen said.

That's fine with Reese, who seemed to like all the dogs and approved of Parker as a co-star. "He's not too crazy," she said. "And he's not lazy."

As for those critters and their owners who didn't make the cut: Well, there's always *Tomorrow*. ★

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Paws Up for Pets

New books offer tips, insights and games to pet lovers

Kids and pets rule. There, I declared it. When given the opportunity, kids and pets can bring out the best in all of us. And we need the happy, healing magic of this "pawsome" duo now more than ever.

As we all contend with this coronavirus pandemic, I'm betting that you and your family are probably going a bit stir crazy at home and looking for ways to productively spend your time together. You can't spend a weekend at Disney World. Or catch a movie at your favorite theater. Or even chow down at your favorite pizza joint.

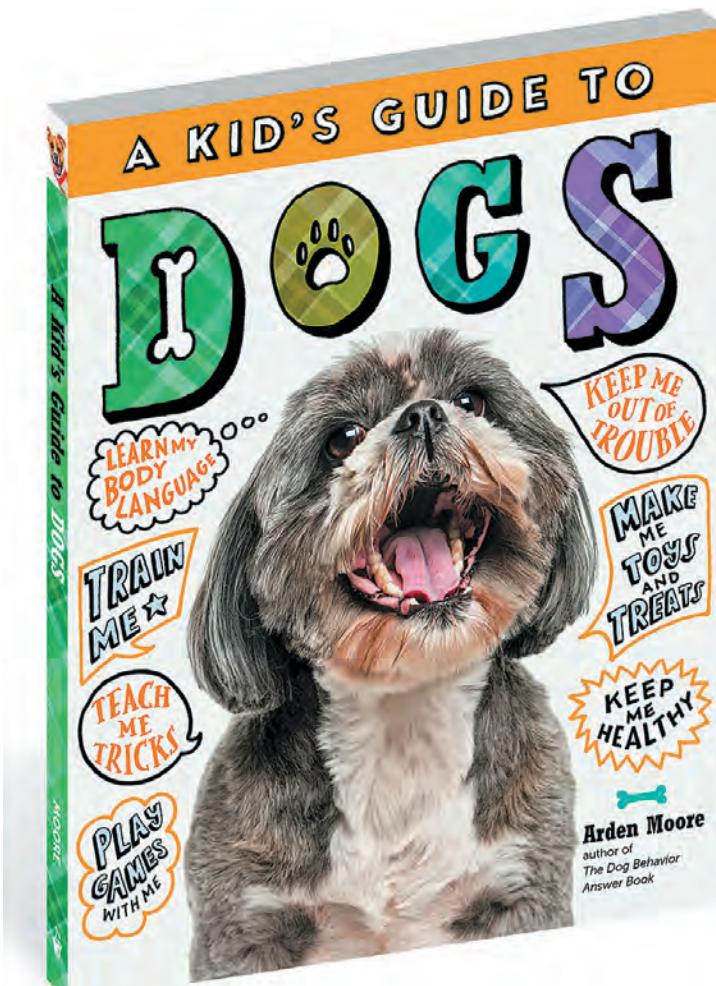
I share my home with my spouse and our two dogs, Kona and Bujeau, plus four indoor cats, Casey, Mikey, Rusty and Mort. We are limiting exits out of our home to pick up takeout food or essentials at our supermarket.

And, like you, we are using hand sanitizers, spending lots of time hand washing and practicing other heightened hygiene habits.

So, I'm on a mission to bring out the wonderful kid in all of you, regardless of your age. In the pages of my just-published pair of books, *A Kid's Guide to Cats* and *A Kid's Guide to Dogs*, I offer all pet lovers lots of tips, insights, fun games and DIY projects to boost that bond you have with your pets and your family members.

My books feature running sidebars with "comments" unleashed from Pet Safety Dog Kona and Pet Safety Cat Casey to readers. These shelter alums are also certified therapy pets, who travel all over the country to assist me in our pet first aid and pet behavior classes.

Casey, my comical, confident orange tabby, for example, explains why cats are branded finicky in his response: "It's true that we're more selective about what we eat than our canine chowhounds. Perhaps one reason is that cats have only 473 taste buds (dogs have 1,700!), so we like food that has a lot of flavor, which usually means it smells strongly, too,



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Want to get your paws on my new books? In two or three sentences, email me how your cat or dog makes your life better. Send a photo of you with your pet if you wish. I will choose a winner for each book, *A Kid's Guide to Dogs* and *A Kid's Guide to Cats*, and announce the winners in next month's column. Send email to: arden@ardenmoore.com. Deadline to submit is April 14.

like fish. Yum!"

In one of Kona's sidebars, my sweet and smart terrier mix shares this canine insight: "Woof! Hello! Hola! Did you know dogs are multilingual? We speak Dog, of course, but we all know some human words. In fact, I speak five languages: Dog, English, Spanish, sign language and a little Cat.

"Arden taught me *sit* and *come* in English, Spanish and sign language, so she can communicate with me without saying a word if we are at a busy, noisy place. As for Cat, I know to approach my feline sibs when they're purring and to back off if they hiss!"

Here are some tips to share with your pet-loving family from the pages of these books published by Storey and

available on Amazon.com:

- Cats are good for your health. Petting your cat can release calming brain chemicals, lower blood pressure and slow your heart rate.
- Dogs are better at reading human body language and postures than people are at interpreting canine body language. So, choose your words, tone and body language carefully when "chatting with" your dog.
- A cat's tongue features spiky barbs that aid in grooming, lapping up water and scraping meat from a bone.
- Fend off boredom in the house by creating a makeshift mini-obstacle course for your dog. Balance a broom on two piles of books or a couple of



Making a treat puzzle for cats is fun and easy, if you follow the book's instructions. Photos provided

large cans and encourage your dog to hop over it. With your dog on a short lead, have him weave between a line of objects on the living room floor, such as paper plates, books or small pillows.

Here are a couple fun do-it-yourself projects to create:

- Give new life to an old, hard-sided suitcase by transforming it into a cozy bed for your dog. Decorate the interior lid with your dog's name and use the pocket to hold a favorite toy. Stuff a pillow into the larger side of the opened suitcase. To keep the lid from closing, attach a block of wood or a strap of fabric to the back of the suitcase with heavy-duty glue.
- Create a treat puzzle toy for your cat. Cut two or three holes along the length of a toilet paper tube — just a little larger than the size of the

treats. Decorate the toilet tube with a funny cat face using crayons. Fold down the sides of one end to close the tube. Drop in a few cat treats into the tube and fold the other end shut. Call your cat over and encourage him to paw at it to release the treats.

My wish for all of you is to recognize the many benefits our cats and dogs give us every day. It goes without saying, that pets do a body good.

Arden Moore, founder of fourleggedlife.com, is an animal behavior expert and host of the *Oh Behave!* show on petliferadio.com. Learn more at www.ardenmoore.com.



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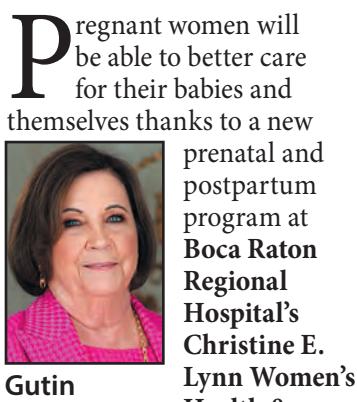
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Health Notes

\$3 million gift to Boca Regional brings new prenatal, postpartum program



Christine E. Lynn Women's Health & Wellness Institute.

The woman who made it possible is longtime Boca Raton resident **Barbara C. Gutin**, who made a \$3 million donation to the institute in March.

"This program will allow pregnant women and new mothers to be better equipped to understand their changing bodies and to know what is a normal part of pregnancy and

what may require additional care," said Dr. Kathy Schilling, medical director of the Women's Institute. "New mothers will work with their personal physicians, the Toppel Family Place at Boca Raton Regional Hospital, as well as the team of clinicians at the Women's Institute."

This includes a board-certified urogynecologist, doctoral trained physical therapists, mental health professionals, nurse practitioners and others. Gutin, along with her now-late husband, had previously established the Barbara C. Gutin Center for Pelvic Health at the Women's Institute. Their gift to the hospital of new technology in 2013 established the Irving and Barbara C. Gutin Center for

Robotic Surgery. Their first transformational gift was in 2008 to help create a stroke program at Boca Raton Regional Hospital.

In February, **Jean Blechman**, co-founder of Twinlab Corp., made a significant financial

commitment to **Keeping the Promise — The Campaign for Boca Raton Regional Hospital** to name the Jean and David Blechman Surgical Intensive Care Unit.

"Jean's commitment throughout the years has been remarkable and enhances vital care for all," said Lincoln Mendez, CEO of Boca Raton Regional Hospital. The \$250 million Keeping the Promise campaign is the largest in the hospital's history.

It is supporting plans to reimagine the hospital campus. The project includes construction of the Gloria Drummond Patient Tower, the Toby and Leon Cooperman Medical Arts Pavilion, an expansion of the Marcus Neuroscience Institute and Christine E. Lynn Cardiovascular Institute, new operating rooms, renovation of the existing facility to create an all-private patient room environment, and the recently opened Schmidt Family Parking Facility.

Blechman has been a longtime supporter of the hospital and has a special interest in cardiology programs. When her donations helped create the Jean and David Blechman Center for Women's Specialty Care and Preventive Cardiology, she felt for many years that cardiac care for women was badly neglected. Subsequently, it became known that cardiac disease is the No. 1 killer of women, still true today.

Specialties for this program include breast health, cardiology, and general and robotic surgery.

Maureen Mann, assistant vice president of Boca Raton Regional Hospital's Eugene M. & Christine E. Lynn Cancer Institute and Christine E. Lynn Women's Health & Wellness Institute, was elected vice chair of the **American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network**. In her job, she has administrative responsibilities for strategic and daily operations. In her role as vice chair, she will work with volunteers to educate elected officials on important cancer-fighting policies and help them enact legislation that will support cancer research, prevention and treatment.

— Christine Davis

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Tots & Teens

What to do with the kids when you're homebound

By Janis Fontaine

As you self-isolate, you're going to be looking for things to do at home with the kids.

Part of the time you'll be homeschooling, and plenty of resources are available through your child's school and online, including top education sites like Ted-Ed, Brain Pop, Khan Academy, Scholastic Learn at Home and Quizlet.

But what about the rest of the time? A new series of free online programs called Keep Kids Smart with ART is being offered by the team at the Boca Raton Museum of Art. Connect with it at www.bocamuseum.org/covid-19-status-update.

Its goal is to help parents and their children by providing visual arts programs.

Experts say art can help us deal with difficult emotions, and Executive Director Irvin Lippman said the museum will support the community by creating new virtual enriching experiences online.

Library resources

Our libraries may be closed, but they have tons of content, available in traditional and digital form. The Boca Raton Public Library has an extensive learning platform for students at www.myboca.us/963/Digital-Library.

There is also a vast selection of audio- and e-books, music, newspapers and magazines, movies and TV shows available to download with your library card. Not sure how to use it? Video tutorials are available on demand for many of the digital services and research databases.

The Highland Beach Library canceled all events and community meetings until May 1. On March 18, the library cut its hours to 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, but materials are available only by calling or emailing the library with your request for pickup. You can search for available materials via the online catalog, and the library staff will assist residents with downloading e-books.

If you must have a paper



Second-grade teachers Marie Boslow and Lizzie Paskal work in one of the courtyards at Gulf Stream School on March 16, to organize take-home packets for their students to use while the school is closed. All Palm Beach County schools are closed in response to the coronavirus pandemic. **Rachel S. O'Hara/The Coastal Star**

book, the library will provide a pickup time to collect materials from a restricted area at the entrance. For more information, visit <https://highlandbeach.us/departments/library/>.

The Lantana Public Library at 205 W. Ocean Ave. is closed until further notice, but will offer walk-up services during normal library hours for those who call ahead. Patrons can place books on hold via the library's Koha system, or call 561-540-5740 to make arrangements. The library will offer virtual story-time and other children's activities on its Facebook page.

Online instruction

In response to school closures, Delray Beach-based Space of Mind, a modern schoolhouse, is offering personalized online teaching, enrichment activities and standards-based curriculum for students grades 1-12, as well as coaching and programming for parents and families.

In addition to offering programs for all mainstream learners, SOM personalizes its curriculum to serve students with ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, visual and auditory processing challenges, anxiety, dyslexia, giftedness and the like. Online courses are taught live in small groups that are tailored by learning style.

Space of Mind is at 102 N. Swinton Ave. For info, call 877-407-1122 or visit <http://findspaceofmind.com>.

Other ideas

Connect the generations: This stay-at-home mandate won't go away as quickly as you'd like, so this may be the time to undertake a long-term project like researching your family history.

Sandwich-generation parents — with both school-age kids and elderly parents — can make it a family project by connecting the two groups. Have kids ask questions and use the Boca Raton library's new genealogy tool, MyHeritage Library Edition, to access one of the largest, most internationally diverse genealogy databases in the world. Find it under the Online Resources link on the library's website.

Craft a solution: If the Boca museum's art classes are a little too challenging, consider an easy craft. Research shows that purposeful use of the hands can decrease stress, relieve anxiety and lessen depression. From knitting to needlepoint, rock painting to fashion design, now might be the perfect time to rekindle an old interest or kick-start a new one.

With the area's supply chain semi-intact, yarn and crochet hooks will cost just a few bucks if you haven't stocked

craft materials in the spare bedroom. Don't know how to knit? YouTube it. Or perhaps Grandma knows. Hook her up with the kids on Google or FaceTime. And there's a bonus at the end — like a handmade winter scarf for future travel or gifting.

Take a fresh-air approach: Doctors and mental health professionals agree that fresh air and sunshine (needed to process Vitamin D) and spending time in nature are important to staying healthy.

Playgrounds may be off-limits, but you can use your yard to play with the kids. Get out the soccer ball, the baseball and glove, put the basketball net back up, and take the kids out to play. Easy sports for kids and parents like badminton, croquet, bocce, cornhole and pingpong can reduce stress and anxiety. Even easier? Take a walk or a bike ride.

Use distraction: It seems counterintuitive, but keeping the hands busy lets the mind rest. Dig out that 1,000-piece puzzle you got as a secret Santa gift. And don't forget the board games.

Find joy in cooking: Since you'll likely be cooking and eating more at home, make it a family thing. Cooking and baking can challenge math and problem-solving skills, and kids are more likely to eat something they had a hand in preparing.

Meditate on it: Even young kids can learn to quiet their minds. A few minutes spent in a quiet, comfortable position paying attention to your breathing can help lower blood pressure and reduce the release of stress hormones like cortisol. Start with two minutes and work up from there. Try to keep it positive, but don't discourage talk about fears and anxiety. ★

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Religion Notes

Christian group and car dealership provide van for after-school program

Holocaust and its victims won't be forgotten.

For Holocaust survivors, Days of Remembrance can be a double-edged sword.

"We need to remember, but for survivors it can be a trigger for bad memories, especially as the population ages," said Danielle Hartman, president and CEO of Ruth &

Norman Rales Jewish Family Services.

JFS helps about 800 South Palm Beach County survivors each month with

financial, physical and mental health care and spiritual needs. About 30 new clients are signed up each year, but 2019 was a big year with 60 new clients, Hartman said, likely because of the publicity surrounding the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The program's aging van was limping along, and two Palm Beach Commandery members stepped up to help. Candace Tamposi of Ocean Ridge worked with the Cathleen McFarlane Foundation of West Palm Beach to acquire grant money and Marie Ryan, who works for Grieco Mazda, secured a deal from Grieco Motors. The van has room for 15 passengers.

The SOSJ's designated philanthropic project is to build a new multipurpose building for the First Haitian Baptist Church Youth & Children Development Center. The organization will continue work on that goal, but in the meantime, the wheels on the bus will continue to go 'round and 'round.

Holocaust remembrance delayed, not forgotten

But for the coronavirus, the Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust, an eight-day period for civic commemorations and special educational programs focused on the Holocaust, would have been marked by somber events nationwide.

And Yom Ha Shoah, Israel's national commemoration of the Holocaust on April 21, would have been accompanied by events at local synagogues, but all in-person events have been canceled.

Any commemorations will be virtual this year. But the

Ceremonies are important for keeping the stories of the Holocaust alive, but many survivors prefer to acknowledge the passing of another year privately, Hartman said.

And the stories and the lessons are preserved with programs like From March to Miriam, which matches teens with survivors to strengthen the intergenerational bond. The teens commit to keep the memories alive.

Visit the Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County website for information about virtual ceremonies and commemorations at <https://jewishboca.org>.

—Janis Fontaine

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Finding Faith

COVID-19 and God: How coronavirus is changing way we worship

For millions of Americans, to have no church on Sunday or Shabbat on Friday is the crudest of the restrictions on our lives so far, especially when we need comfort and spiritual support the most.

People depend on their faith and its rituals like Mass, prayer, confession and Communion even more during times of crisis. Worship fosters a soothing optimism that comes from the belief that God will take care of us.

In mid-March, just as we began coronavirus restrictions, the Rev. Ben Thomas, associate rector at St. Gregory's Episcopal in Boca Raton, got a phone call asking him to perform last rites for a parishioner who had been hospitalized suddenly. He performed rites over the phone, the first time he's ever done that or heard of it being done.

"The beeping of the machines seemed louder," Thomas said.

The person didn't have COVID-19, but visiting the hospital is a real concern for Thomas, a father of five children, ages 6-12.

It's just as important to let people know the church has not forgotten them, and the leaders are using every avenue available to reach the congregation. The clergy and senior lay people have divided up the names of the 1,200 members and they will call each one, Thomas said.

At Boca's Advent Lutheran, live streaming-only of services started in mid-March.

Churches are electing to live-stream services in place of in-person worship, as are some synagogues, but Orthodox synagogues don't allow the use of technology, so those rabbis are encouraging families to pray at home together.

Social media helpful

For many spiritual people, technology is their lifeline to God right now.

"Now is the time for social media," Advent Pastor Andy Hagen said.

On that first Sunday, 140 families logged in to live-stream, and the church got lots of good feedback. "We want to make services more intimate, and there are just some things that work better live," he said. "We will also be taking live questions via text."

Hagen worries about the older parishioners, especially, because "church is their meeting place, and seniors love to be together." For now, Bible studies will be virtual, and the church connects its parish with programming from Right Now Media, a nonprofit membership service with streaming of Bible study videos and other positive programming. Email Hagen at AHagen@GoAdvent.org for information on getting access.

If you need a special prayer for yourself or a loved one, you can post a request on the Advent Prayer Wall. Or you can find



Father Dominic Toan-Tran of St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church in Boca Raton distributes Communion to parishioners at the last allowable Mass, until further notice. Photo provided by Lisa Browne-Banic



celebrate daily and Sunday Mass without congregations, and a list of local parishes live streaming Mass and television stations airing Mass is available at www.diocesepb.org. The Diocese of Palm Beach airs Sunday Mass on WTVX Channel 34 at 10:30 a.m.

On March 13, the Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida canceled all worship, events and other gatherings until at least March 30, hoping that Easter services on April 12 wouldn't be restricted. But on March 20, the diocese said with the exception of 12-step programs, all worship, events, and other gatherings are canceled until at least April 15. This means Easter, "our most sacred liturgies of the year," Father Paul Kane of St. Paul's Episcopal of Delray Beach said, "will be virtual this year."

Kane says we should really call this physical distancing, because in some ways we're more socially connected than ever before. "We'll continue to spread God's word, just not the virus," he said, pointing parishioners to the church website, YouTube channel and Facebook page. The church is committed to keeping person-to-person communications alive, especially for older adults, reaching out by phone and email as much as possible.

Kane also recorded a message addressing the sacrament of communion: Can we take it at home? According to the Episcopal Church, yes.

"When being present at a celebration of the Eucharist is absolutely impossible, such as during this pandemic, this act of prayer and meditation can provide the means by which you can associate yourself with the Eucharistic Action and open yourself to God's grace and blessing."

To find out more, visit [www.stpaulsdelray.org](http://stpaulsdelray.org).



LEFT: Usher Larry Farr and resident Beth Foland exchange elbow bumps as a safe welcoming gesture before the interdenominational church service at Briny Breezes on March 15. **ABOVE:** More than 60 people attended and other Briny residents watched the service on BBC-8, the community cable service. By the following Sunday, Briny had closed the services to the public until further notice. They still will have a pastor and choir, and each service will be on BBC-8. Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

people who need prayers and pray for them. "I've seen the church family really pulling together, and that will make a difference," Hagen said.

There's no shortage of information for people looking for spiritual reassurance. "All the resources springing up are pretty cool," Thomas said. "A friend of mine said, it's like 'where do I want to go to church today?' It's a chance to make technology really meaningful."

Virtual attendance is up. The daily Eucharist at St. Gregory's has minimal attendance, but the stream on Facebook Live is attracting hundreds of people who need a daily dose of prayer.

Appreciation is up, too. "People are telling us how

grateful they are we're here for them," Thomas said.

Other classes and groups will meet on Zoom, the videoconferencing/webinar service, and new ways of communicating will spring up. "I don't think we're going back to the way things were," Thomas said.

And there's another message the Rev. Andrew Sherman of St. Gregory's wants to send: "God is not quarantined," he wrote in his letter to parishioners on March 13, which included his cellphone number.

To symbolize God's eternal presence, St. Gregory's has established a "Tent of Meeting" outside the church to make its

support visible. It's a reference to the Old Testament and the tentlike sanctuary Moses carried. Destruction of the temple does not stop worship. Separation by physical distance doesn't stop faith. But it does change it.

"Our presence in front of the church is symbolic, to show people we are here for them," Thomas said. "People are looking to us for guidance, and we're going to be there. Father Sherman said it's like we're learning to be priests again."

Catholics are being asked to watch services on TV, too. On March 20, the Diocese of Palm Beach suspended public celebrations of Mass within the diocese. Priests will continue to

Janis Fontaine writes about people of faith, their congregations, causes and events. Contact her at janisfontaine@outlook.com.



On the Water

Kingfish reign this time of year

Fishing action heats up with water temperatures during April and May, leading anglers to catches of rod-bending king mackerel, better known as kingfish, along the coast of Palm Beach County.

Kingfish are hard-charging fish that make reels sing and are relatively easy to catch. That makes them tempting targets for a variety of anglers, from drift-boat novices to saltwater tournament veterans.

One of the easiest ways to catch kingfish is a personal favorite: a dead sardine on triple 5/0 hooks topped with a quarter-ounce sinker and a flashy kingfish "duster" that covers the weight and the leader-to-hook connection.

Thread the sardine onto the trio of hooks so that the bait covers the hooks. Use 30- to 50-pound leader (monofilament or fluorocarbon), depending on water clarity. The clearer the water, the lighter the leader.

Start by drifting in 80 to 120 feet of water, watching the depth finder for "marks" of fish below the boat. Drop the bait over the windward side of the boat and let it sink slowly. Kingfish love a falling bait, so watch the reel and engage it if the line starts to fly off the reel.

Check the baits frequently; you could be fishing with bare hooks.

Fighting a kingfish requires steady tension. Anglers who get too excited and create slack in the line often lose toothy kingfish when they bite through the leader.

If the kingfish turns and charges the boat, be prepared to reel fast to wind in the slack. If the fish takes off for Grand Bahama Island, hold the rod tip up and let it run.

The bend in the rod will tire it, assuming the reel drag is properly adjusted.

Other methods for catching kingfish include using live bait, such as goggle-eyes and blue runners. Use wire leader and double hooks to reduce the

chance that the kingfish will sever the leader or eat half the bait and miss the hook.

Try rigging live baits with about 2 feet of No. 5 fishing wire holding a 5/0 live-bait hook and connected to the monofilament leader with a small 80-pound swivel — or tie the wire directly to the mono leader with an Albright knot.

Some anglers use trailing treble hooks, or "stingers," to catch kingfish, especially in tournaments that allow treble hooks. I prefer double J hooks.

Smaller live baits such as pilchards and threadfin herring can be deployed on 3/0 or 4/0 hooks tied to about 6 inches of light fishing wire, then attached to the leader with a small swivel or Albright knot.

Trolling spoons (often towed behind planers or downriggers) will catch kingfish, as will vertical jigging with metal jigs, flashy bucktail jigs or diamond jigs. Like their smaller cousins, Spanish mackerel, kingfish will strike flashy jigs, spoons and lures.

Kingfish are oily fish, making them good candidates for smoking. Try soaking the meat overnight in the refrigerator in water mixed with kosher salt and brown sugar. Then dry it and smoke it at 200 degrees or so for about four hours.

Mix the smoked kingfish with mayonnaise to create a dip that can be served on crackers with hot sauce or a jalapeño slice. (Every angler seems to have his or her own favorite recipe for smoked kingfish dip.)

Smaller kingfish also can be marinated in mojo or Italian salad dressing, then grilled.

Mercury warnings apply to kingfish. The Florida Department of Health (www.floridahealth.gov) advises young children, women of childbearing age and pregnant women to avoid eating kingfish.

Healthy adults should limit consumption and avoid kingfish over 31 inches, according to the state.



Anglers should consider releasing large kingfish. Smaller ones (24 to 31 inches) make better table fare anyway.

Regulations for kingfish include a minimum size of 24 inches (measured to the fork of the tail). Daily bag limit is two kingfish per angler.

Water-related events postponed or canceled

The Palm Beach International Boat Show and the Superyacht Show, originally set for March 26-29, have been postponed until further notice. As of late March, www.pbboatshow.com listed May 14-

Capt. Bruce Cyr of the Lantana-based Lady K drift fishing boat shows the 60-pound kingfish he caught off Boynton Inlet in early May 2019. Cyr's kingfish hit a dead sardine on double 5/0 hooks in 180 feet of water. Photo provided by Bar Jack Fishing

17 as new dates for the shows.

The Boynton Beach Firefighters Fishing Tournament and Chili Cook-Off, set for April 18, was canceled because of coronavirus concerns. It's possible the tournament could be rescheduled. For updates, go to www.boyntonbeachfirefighters.com.

The kickoff party for the Lantana Fishing Derby and Kids Derby has been postponed until the second week of April. As of mid-March, the captain's party was still set for April 30, followed by fishing May 2 and the awards party May 3. Go to www.lantanafishingderby.com.

The West Palm Beach Fishing Club's annual yard sale, originally set for April 18, has been postponed until further notice. Some club meetings have been canceled. For updates, call 561-832-6780 or go to www.westpalmbeachfishingclub.org.

Tip of the month

Help fisheries managers track populations of recreationally caught fish in the South Atlantic by reporting your catches through the MyFishCount smartphone app. The app allows anglers to create a personal fishing log while sharing much-needed recreational fishing data with fisheries managers. For details, and to see what other recreational anglers have reported, go to www.MyFishCount.com.



Willie Howard is a freelance writer and licensed boat captain. Reach him at tiowillie@bellsouth.net.



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Bigeye Tuna

Juno Beach — March 14



The fishing team aboard Hy Jenx celebrates the catch of this 194.8-pound bigeye tuna that hit a trolling lure intended for wahoo in about 80 feet of water near the Juno Beach Pier. The fight by angler Beau Kelly, far right, lasted about an hour. Capt. Steve Jenkins of Hobe Sound, second from right, said the big tuna didn't count in the Shamrock Shootout fishing tournament, but remains a once-in-a-lifetime catch. Photo provided by Steve Jenkins

Boat ramps and public parks closed for now

Effective March 25, Palm Beach County closed all public and private golf courses, parks and natural areas within its borders, including those inside municipalities, to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The action followed a March 22 order closing all boat ramps and marinas to recreational boaters. Also, islands, sandbars and Intracoastal Waterway lands were prohibited for use by the public.

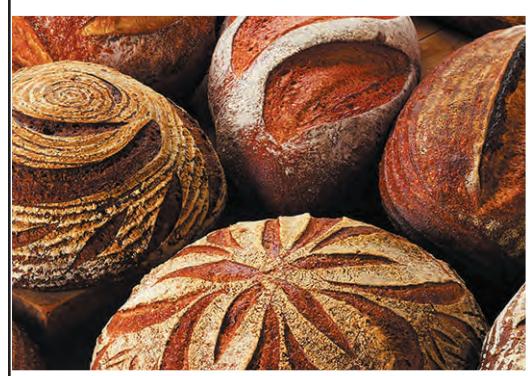
The emergency order was amended the next day to cover any other venues utilized for launching vessels to be used

for recreational purposes, "including but not limited to fishing charters, boat tours, diving excursions, and the like." The closures will remain in effect "until further notice."

Licensed commercial fishermen, commercial marine operations and support services were permitted to operate.

The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and other law enforcement agencies were enforcing the closures.

For updates, visit www.pbcgov.com.



The GreenMarket will be closed until further notice.




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Greenmarkets

Delray GreenMarket preparing for next season's 25th anniversary

By Linda Haase

For years, Lori Nolan and her daughter had a Saturday ritual: They walked to the Delray Beach GreenMarket.

And until the coronavirus came calling, they still reserved Saturdays for the greenmarket — Nolan is the market's manager; her daughter is a vendor.

While Nolan waits to hear if the summer greenmarket can open, she's planning next season's winter greenmarket — which is its 25th anniversary.

"It's a shame having to close the market but there was no way around it," Nolan said. "It is so sad. It's not only a great place to buy fresh food, it is such a part of the community."

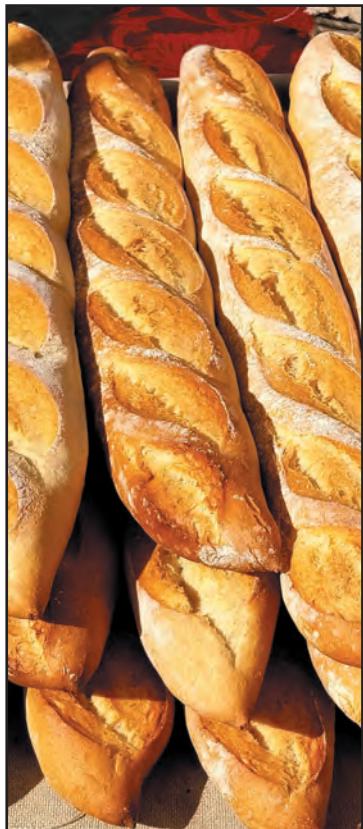
Nolan is using the downtime to work on planning "special things" for the anniversary.

"We will celebrate all season long with activities, giveaways and several other things. We will be a quarter of a century old and every year it just gets better," she said.

So what will visitors find when the market reopens?

"It's a healthy, happy Saturday morning vibe. Coming to the park and shopping at the market is a nice way to start your weekend. You can bring the dog, the kids. You go home with healthy fresh groceries," Nolan said.

The market, which has relocated at least 10 times since it was created in 1996 by the Community Redevelopment Agency, draws big crowds at its



LEFT: Customers can follow their noses to fresh breads from the French Bakery.
CENTER: Spices include Nigerian and Egyptian mixes, lemon pepper, tandoori and ginger.



RIGHT: Dana Bass, who owns La Paella Chef, serves up steaming hot paella.

Photos by Linda Haase/The Coastal Star

FOURTH IN A 4-PART SERIES

current Old School Square Park locale.

"See you next weekend" is an oft-repeated phrase here, as visitors wind their way through the 60-plus vendors selling fresh cut flowers, plants and gourmet fare.

What's not there? Jewelry, clothes and other items of that ilk.

"The market is food- and

plant-based. We don't sell other products. That is not our mission. The vision of the CRA is that we maintain a true farmer's market," explained Nolan.

Arrive when the market opens at 9 a.m., pick up an instrument and join the two-hour family music circle.

"It gets jamming over there and the playground is also right there. It's a kids' dream on Saturday morning," said Nolan.

Live music continues all day — another band plays from 11



a.m. until the market's 2 p.m. closing.

The event is nirvana for foodies, who can savor Italian, Cuban, Peruvian, Mexican, American and other tempting cuisine. What's here? Pierogis, paella, açai bowls, crabcakes, arepas, tamales, beans and rice, vegetable spring rolls, smoothies, Italian ices, Hungarian cinnamon horn rolls, and so much more.

There are plenty of places to sit and enjoy the food, but the take-home items are just

as tantalizing. Bone broth, homemade granola, fresh seafood, produce, spices galore, salad dressings, chocolate cashew butter, chocolate ginger rooibos tea, meatballs, sausage, pork chops, fresh pasta (gnocchi linguine, squid ink and more), salsa and guacamole, pumpkin bread, cookies of every shape and flavor, the list seems endless.

There's even a chef's showcase featuring mini cooking lessons and samples.

Signs denoting gluten-free, dairy-free, vegan and sugar-free are plentiful here. There's a reason for that, Nolan explained: "People are food savvy, they want to know where their food is coming from and what's in it. Many have dietary restrictions. They want to talk to the people who made, grew or produced their food. They can do that here."

The market is dog-friendly; some vendors cater to canines with food and treats and support dog rescue groups.

"People can't adopt on-site, but I have heard of dogs who have found forever homes after people visiting those booths found out about them," Nolan said.

It's just another reason the market is so special.

"I loved the market back when I was a customer. It is my passion now. I have the best job in Delray Beach. And my daughter is still with me on Saturday mornings," Nolan said. ★

Online farmers markets emerge as local ones close down

By Linda Haase

Canceled. Postponed. Suspended. Shut down.

One by one our favorite places closed in fallout from the coronavirus — including greenmarkets in Lake Worth Beach, Lantana, Delray Beach, Boca Raton and beyond.

With social distancing the new normal, several farmers markets have carved out versions of working remotely.

Less than 24 hours after organizers at the Lake Worth Beach Farmers Market were told to close, they came up with a plan: an online market, where they would coordinate transactions between vendors and customers and arrange deliveries.

"Giving up just isn't in our nature and we decided

Online greenmarkets

- Lake Worth Beach Farmers Market: Lakeworthfarmers-market@gmail.com or a private message on Facebook.
- Delray Beach GreenMarket: Farmersmarketstogo.com.
- Lantana Shoreline Green Market: Shorelinegreenmarkets.com or via Facebook.

that there had to be a way to turn a negative situation into a positive experience, as opposed to just giving up on our customers and vendors," explains manager Emily Theodossakos.

The response has been phenomenal — about 20 vendors are participating.

Among items available: raw, local unfiltered honey,

fruit, farm fresh eggs, vegan muffins, baked goods, coconut water, olive oil, specialty clothing and jewelry, soap and edible flowers.

"In addition, and what we are most proud of, is that our main farmer is making a variety box that includes various fruits, vegetables, leafy greens, and two dozen farm fresh eggs," says Theodossakos. "We are taking orders from customers and arranging for home deliveries. So far we are up to about 50 produce box delivery orders and it's only been two days since we started this."

The Lantana Shoreline Green Market, in its inaugural season, may have been the last to close — its last day was March 15.

Now, Hector V. Herrera,

the market's founder and manager, is spearheading a virtual greenmarket focusing on essential foods that can be ordered online and delivered.

"We want to give people hope and a light at the end of the tunnel," he said about the project, which should launch by early April. "We are working hard to make sure farmers can still have a direct connection to people who need their products."

The abrupt closures also halted the winter/spring Delray Beach GreenMarket and the Boca Raton Greenmarket, along with the Artisans & Green Market at Mizner Park, which opened for the first time on Feb. 9.

"The vendors were in tears and the customers were asking how they were

going to get things," said Laurie Landgrebe, who sells homemade gourmet granolas and muesli at her booth, Laurie's Pantry, at the Delray market. "It is devastating. March and April are high season for us, when we make money."

So, she reached out to vendors from several greenmarkets in South Florida, offering her Hallandale warehouse as a distribution point, and is in the process of setting up an online market.

Customers will find items sold at several greenmarkets, follow a link for more information about them, and order home delivery, she said.

Keeping greenmarkets in business is vital.

"All our vendors are local small businesses who have families to support and they rely on the market income, so these closures have put many in a difficult financial position," says Theodossakos. "As we always say, the fruits and vegetables don't stop growing, but if the farmers don't have a way to sell it, sadly it goes to waste. We're trying to do our part to help everyone through this difficult time." ★

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